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Parents between present and future: intervention hypotheses to support parenting with a view to sustainability and social inclusion

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*To Andrea and Filippo,
future adults, raising whom is my greatest privilege.*

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Introduction

In recent decades, the concept of parenting has undergone a radical transformation, influenced by the pressures of neoliberal society and evolving expectations (Beck, 1986; Faircloth, Hoffman, & Layne, 2013). Historically, parenting has always been considered a crucial part of adult life, a fundamental role through which parents contribute to the development and growth of their children. However, with the rise of neoliberal economic and social models, the approach to parenting has changed significantly. From a traditional role, parenting has been progressively reinterpreted as a "task" requiring specific skills and constant adjustment to ever-higher standards (Jarvis & Georgeson, 2017).

This evolution has led to the spread of phenomena such as intensive parenting and helicopter parenting. Intensive parenting, characterized by excessive involvement and high expectations for children (Hays, 1996; Furedi, 2002; Shirani, Henwood, & Coltart, 2012), and helicopter parenting, which involves constant surveillance and control, are manifestations of increasing social pressure on parents (LeBlanc & Lyons, 2022; Turner, Elkins, Walther, Short, & Schanding, 2023). These approaches, driven by neoliberal values of self-responsibility and individual success, have contributed to a significant increase in stress among parents and higher expectations for performance, with negative consequences for both children's development and their mental health (Cui, Darling, Coccia, Fincham, & May, 2019; Odenweller, Booth-Butterfield, & Weber, 2014). At the same time, parents themselves experience an impact on their mental health and overall well-being (Mikolajczak, Raes, Avalosse, & Roskam, 2018; Brianda, Roskam, & Mikolajczak, 2020; Mikolajczak, Gross, & Roskam, 2021).

In this context, social sustainability emerges as a potential response to these challenges. Social sustainability is based on values of equity, inclusion, and social cohesion (Cuthill, 2010; Partridge, 2014; Barron, Cord, Cuesta, & Larson, 2023). These principles could positively influence parenting, offering an alternative to models based on excessive pressure and expectations (Layard & Dunn, 2009; Lansford, et al., 2021).

This study aims to examine how a greater propensity towards a supportive economic and social model might influence sustainability practices among parents and how this, in turn, could impact children's well-being and social cohesion.

The first chapter of the work will explore the existing literature on neoliberalism and the associated parenting models, analyzing their impacts and evaluating the possibility of using social sustainability principles as an alternative to these models.

The second chapter will present an intervention hypothesis aimed at parents of children aged 0 to 6 years, through a workshop designed based on the collected evidence. This workshop aims to stimulate parents to develop critical thinking regarding the cultural values of neoliberalism, which permeate many aspects of daily life and profoundly influence self-perception and parenting practices. Additionally, the workshop intends to open a reflection on the prerequisites for building a more inclusive and sustainable future society.

The third chapter will present the research hypotheses, methods used, and results obtained.

Finally, the practical implications of the results will be discussed, with particular attention to the proposed interventions for parents and the promotion of values related to sustainable development.

This study serves as a starting point for rethinking the role of parents in relation to sustainable development goals and the interventions designed for them. Promoting critical thinking towards neoliberal culture and encouraging parenting practices based on values of sustainability and inclusion can not only improve parents' well-being but also contribute to building a more equitable and resilient society.

1. Parenting in Neoliberal Times: The Risks of Intensive Parenting and the Path to Inclusion and Social Sustainability.

Neoliberalism is considered as a political and economic phenomenon, which takes place differently in various times and place (Ong, 2006), influencing political and governance decisions. Neoliberalism is characterized by the concepts of free market, privatization, deregulation, and little state intervention in social and welfare areas. In this context, human beings are considered as “market actors” who approach the different areas of their lives as entrepreneurs or investors (Brown, 2015). It is clear that neoliberalism has moved beyond the sphere of the economic discourse and has become central to everyday life, shaping the common sense, the way of life and the self-perception of people who are required to be rational, calculating, and self-motivating, to make sense of their lives making the better choices and pursuing them through freedom and responsibility, despite the constraints they may face (Ehrstein, Gill, & Littler, 2020). The personal mindset is then shaped around an “entrepreneurial subjectivity” that sees the *self* as a business to be worked and optimized, by embracing risks and overcoming any difficulty thanks to a “positive attitude” (Scharff, 2016).

This attitude, that characterizes the 21st century Western human being, must confront itself with the risks of the *post-industrial* era: starting from the 19th century, the modernization process has given rise the industrial society has produced a huge amount of richness. The counterpart of this richness is the production of risks: while in the industrial society the logic

of the production of richness dominated the production of risks, the *post-industrial* society of the 21st century has inherited what Beck calls the “*reflexivity modernization*”: the globalization and the unbearable pace of consumerism and of natural resources exploitation represent a” threat to the life of plants, animals and human beings”, which can be seen as a boomerang effect of modernization. The modernization has shaped the society, the roles of men and women in it and the family model in modern society the standard family is the nuclear one. The paradox lies in the fact that the nuclear family is also seen as an old-fashioned division of sex roles, but the “tradition of the nuclear family” that encompasses marriage, parenthood, sexuality, love, has its apex during the industrial age (Beck, 1986).

As we can see, neoliberalism cannot be considered just as an economic model, but it is a broader philosophy, where the primacy of the market is just one aspect, accompanied by the concepts of individualism and personal responsibility (Roberts, 2021). Individualism has been investigated as a construct opposed to sociocentrism among parents of different cultures (Tamis-LeMonda, et al., 2008; Harwood, Handwerker, Schoelmerich, & Leyendecker, 2009; Fevre, Guimares, & Zhao , 2020). In brief, individualism is characterized by a focus on the individual as an independent, self-contained, autonomous entity, whereas a sociocentric or interdependent perspective highlights the essential connectedness of human beings to one another. (Harwood, Handwerker, Schoelmerich, & Leyendecker, 2009). The concept of individualism is rooted in the Protestant work ethic, as proposed by Max Weber, which links the development of capitalism to values like personal responsibility, goal-oriented focus, hard work, and innovation. These principles are considered foundational to American ideals in specific, and individualistic cultures in general. In these cultures, parents encourage their children to grow into independent, autonomous individuals with limited social ties to the

broader community. Four key values associated with this goal of autonomy are: (1) personal choice, which allows children to make decisions and assert their identity; (2) intrinsic motivation, which drives them to achieve goals from within; (3) self-esteem, which is believed to be crucial for success and happiness; and (4) self-maximization, which involves realizing their full potential. These values collectively reflect the belief that children who can make their own choices, stay motivated, feel good about themselves, and achieve their potential will develop into unique and autonomous individuals (Tamis-LeMonda, et al., 2008).

In this context, the child is seen as an individual whose personality, talents and personal abilities should be developed at its full potential (Fevre, Guimares, & Zhao , 2020), at the same time, children are seen as more vulnerable to risks that can affect their physical and emotional development (Faircloth, 2023). At the same time, as seen above, in the modern society the risks are increasing, and everyone can be vulnerable despite their wealth or position on the earth (Beck, 1986).

Families are evidently impacted by the neoliberalist culture in the post-industrial era: the Fordist model of the male breadwinner and the female caregiver has given way to a model where every person should produce richness and become the best version of oneself, despite the difficulties one may face. The second wave of feminism has endorsed and requested a change in family roles, demanding more egalitarian conditions for men and women at work (Fraser, 2016). The ground for this change has been prepared after the Second World War, when females have been more broadly included in education, especially in the higher levels. During the late 1980s women's expectation was to access to job market according to their preparation and achievements (Beck, 1986). This let the emergence of the "two earner

family”, where both parents have a paid job career and contribute to the family economy and expenses. In this context, the neoliberal politics, instead of giving more support to families or rebalance the possibilities for both parents to take care of their family, has ripped back systems of welfare support facilitating the privatization of state structures and making the cost of living far more expensive (Ehrstein, Gill, & Littler, 2020). Research on maternal employment has evolved from focusing on its potential harm to children to a more nuanced understanding that considers the broader context of cultural, socioeconomic, and environmental factors. Initially, studies often assumed negative impacts, but later research revealed that the effects of maternal employment are mediated by variables like parenting style, family dynamics, and economic conditions. The current perspective encourages a more positive view, emphasizing how maternal and dual-earner employment can contribute to adaptive parenting and support children's development (Gottfried, Gottfried, & Bathurst, 2002). It is evident how neoliberalism has facilitated and encouraged women to involve in work and become economic resources, but at the same time research has tried to figure out whether women’s involvement in working life could have any negative casual effects on their children’s development.

Parenting in neoliberal times can be challenging: all persons – including children – must reach their full potential in an environment where dangers are redefined as risks which must be managed by the individuals themselves and they have the personal responsibility about their achievements and about the success, failure or danger of those who depend on them too: policy makers, experts and parents themselves see parents as deterministic in an individual child development and future; mothers and – less frequently – fathers are expected to become experts on all aspects of childrearing to ensure an optimal infant

development (Faircloth, 2023). Parents are seen as both the problem and the solution in child development, so parents *must* develop “parenting skills”, better with the help of experts (Jarvis & Georgeson, 2017). This has led to a phenomenon that scholars define as *intensive parenting*.

1.2. Intensive Parenting: The Perfect Parent Raises the Perfect Child

Intensive parenting

Mothers and fathers of the 21st century are expected to do much more “explicit” parenting than the previous generations (Faircloth, 2020): even the word “parent” – which is a recent term, originated in 1950s in the fields of psychology, social sciences and self-help – has changed its meaning from a noun indicating a relationship (something “you are”) to a verb (something “you do”) (Faircloth, Hoffman, & Layne, 2013) indicating that people who parent children have a specific task to accomplish as key agents, together with teachers, in training future citizens who will follow the right path, making the right choices (Jarvis & Georgeson, 2017). Raising a child has become a complex task: while it has always been subject to moralizing and guidance, nowadays parents are expected to protect to make a bigger effort to protect their children and optimise their development (Faircloth, 2023) this has led to the practice of “intensive parenting”, that goes well with the broader neoliberal project (Shirani, Henwood, & Coltart, 2012).

In recent decades, research has highlighted how involved parenting positively affects a child's growth, suggesting that there is an optimal range of involvement and attempting to measure it (Schiffrin, Godfrey, Liss, & Erchull, 2015). On one hand, considering situations of severe neglect and environments lacking in stimuli, research has provided evidence that

a shortage of proximal care negatively impacts a child's development, and it can be observed through neuroimaging techniques too (Chugani, et al., 2001). On the other hand, psychological and neuroscientific research have supported with scientific evidence the central role of the caregiver in developmental outcomes starting from the earliest moments of life. For example, some studies have measured the face-to-face interactions between a child and their caregiver and their influence on the connection between their neural activities, which in turn affects the child's development of communication skills, mimicry, and language (Leong, et al., 2017; de Klerk, Lamy-Yang, & Southgate, 2018). Research has also explored the role of affective touch in emotional regulation and socio-emotional understanding (Della Longa, Carnevali, & Farroni, 2023), the benefits of parental involvement in stimulating early cognitive skills (Weisleder & Fernald, 2013), and the development of prosocial skills by examining maternal and paternal involvement and their respective outcomes (Day & Padilla-Walker, 2009; Feldman, Braun, & Champagne, 2019). Simultaneously, neuroscience has focused on the neurobiological correlates underlying parental behavior and involvement, aiming to understand the structural changes in the brains of mothers (Hoekzema, et al., 2017; Barba-Mueller, Craddock, Carmona, & Hoekzema, 2019; Hoekzema, et al., 2020) and fathers (Feldman, Braun, & Champagne, 2019; Paternina-Die, et al., 2020; Diaz-Rojas, et al., 2021) and how these changes support them in their parental roles. The results of these studies are fascinating and essential for professionals working with families, and aim to empower parents to be more involved in their children's lives, particularly in their education, to the extent that parental involvement is now considered a key ingredient in a child's academic success (Fan & Chen, 2001).

Both scientific research and institutions view parenting, particularly motherhood, from a purely functional perspective. Motherhood, in particular, has been described as "*historically one of the most regulated but least supported social institutions*" (Hey & Bradford, 2006). Neoliberalism further raises the bar, imposing even higher performance standards on mothers and parents in general (Schiffrin, Godfrey, Liss, & Erchull, 2015), far exceeding the expectations set by Winnicott in the 1950s with his concept of the "good enough mother" (Winnicott, 1953): "[...] *The good-enough mother ... starts off with an almost complete adaptation to her infant's needs, and as time proceeds, she adapts less and less completely, gradually, according to the infant's growing ability to deal with her failure*" (Winnicott, 1953).

Post-industrial mothers do far more than just feed, change, and protect their children until they reach school age. They invest a significant amount of time, energy, and material resources in their children, driven by the strong belief that the child must come first, and that motherhood should be child-centred (Faircloth, 2023). While Hays initially introduced the concept of *intensive mothering* in 1996, the literature soon evolved to encompass *intensive parenting*, which includes fathers as well. Over time, the father's role has shifted from being solely a breadwinner to embodying a new hegemonic model of masculinity known as *caregiving masculinity*. This model emphasizes a father's active involvement in childcare, and the benefits of this approach have been extensively analysed in the work of Hunter and colleagues (Hunter, Riggs, & Augustinos, 2017)

Hays defines intensive parenting as an ideology that drives parents to invest an extraordinary amount of time, energy, and financial resources into raising their children. According to this ideology, the most appropriate methods for child-rearing are:

- Child-centred
- Expert-guided
- Emotionally absorbing
- Labor-intensive
- Financially expensive

While parents may not strictly adhere to these principles, this ideology serves as a normative standard, a benchmark for evaluating parental performance (Hays, 1996). This leads to a parental determinism—the belief that parents have the power and responsibility to shape their children's future (Lee & Macvarish, 2020). Consequently, child-rearing has become a task requiring specialized knowledge and expertise, turning parenting into a complex skill to be learned (Jarvis & Georgeson, 2017). In this context, love shifts from being a spontaneous emotion to a function or skill of parenting. Thus, the contemporary understanding of parenting is deeply infused with neoliberal concepts of choice and individual responsibility (Edwards & Gillies, 2013).

The paradox of the perfect mother in the neoliberal model

The intensive parenting model must contend with a fundamental pillar of neoliberalism: as previously mentioned, all adult citizens are expected to be economically active to maximize economic growth. This particularly affects mothers, who must balance societal expectations that they be highly involved in both child-rearing and paid work, effectively performing two roles within the economy. This situation transforms both adults and children into units of economic capital.

The representation of motherhood according to an ideal standard is particularly prevalent on social media, thanks to mom influencers and content creators who professionally engage in sharenting and become micro-celebrities among parents, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. They promote a polished image of balancing modern notions of the "good mother" with a career through emotional and empathetic narratives that serve the neoliberal, consumerist model (Jorge, Maropo, Coelho, & Novello, 2022). This ideal standard is incompatible with the real-life experiences of most working mothers, who endure fatigue, stress, and a sense of being overwhelmed in their daily lives. Nevertheless, it strongly influences mothers who view motherhood as a core part of their identity. In response to this ideal, social media has given rise to a second narrative stream that contrasts working mothers with stay-at-home mothers, leading to a phenomenon known as "mommy wars". The neoliberalist model has then created an absurd dichotomy that, on one hand, celebrates motherhood as a sacred and fundamental task and, on the other, devalues those who fully dedicate themselves to it (Faircloth, 2023).

The "army" of parenting professionals

Motherhood, and parenting more broadly, have become central topics in public and political discourse. What was once considered routine and private concerns of child-rearing—such as breastfeeding—has now ignited public debate about the effects of parental actions on the future development of children (Lee, 2011). This shift aligns with an increased awareness of the risks in modern neoliberal society, which frames dangers as risks and holds individuals responsible for managing them and ensuring the safety of those who depend on them.

As a result, there is an expectation that mothers become experts in every aspect of child-rearing, ensuring that children are not only safe but also optimized for development. Mothers are expected to protect their children from any potential risks by anticipating and preventing any threats that could interfere with normal development. According to Wolf, using risk as a central concept in defining the "good mother" without considering the psychological burden it imposes frames the mother-child relationship in an antagonistic manner. Mothers are tasked with optimizing and safeguarding every aspect of their child's development from pregnancy onward, regardless of their own will or needs, and are held accountable for any adverse outcomes, even those beyond their control (Wolf, 2011).

Two key players are involved in this framework: on one hand, educational services are evolving around child-centred concepts; on the other hand, parenting experts are replacing "amateur" parents who lack the necessary skills for optimal child development or assisting them in developing appropriate parenting skills (Jarvis & Georgeson, 2017).

Within the political discourse, institutions advocate for supporting parents. This support should ideally include access to quality childcare services, a child-friendly community, and the assurance that parents' decisions about their children's future are not constantly questioned by society. However, the way institutions and professionals approach parenting support is to educate "incompetent" adults to become skilled parents: this perspective disempowers mothers and fathers while empowering professionals (Furedi, 2002). Parents thus appear both as omnipotent protectors of their children and as the source of all their problems, necessitating expert assistance. This results in a loss of confidence among adults in their parenting abilities and their role as guides for the next generation. Children, in turn,

are placed in such a vulnerable position that their role in shaping the future is overshadowed, reducing them to mere outcomes of their parents' educational efforts (Faircloth, 2020).

1.3. The Dark Sides of The Intensive Parenting

The goal of intensive parenting is to protect the child from risks, promote the best possible developmental outcomes, and ensure academic success by being the most competent and efficient parent possible. Paradoxically, recent research has highlighted that excessive levels of parental involvement can become intrusive, leading to negative outcomes for the mental well-being of both children and parents.

1.3.1. Helicopter Parenting

The term *helicopter parenting*, first introduced by Cline and Fay in 1990, describes a behavior and parenting style characterized by excessive involvement and protectiveness. In this approach, the parent constantly communicates with their child, intervenes in their matters, makes decisions on the child's behalf, personally invests in the child's goals, and removes any obstacles that the child might encounter. The prototype of a helicopter parent is typically well-educated, part of a dual-income family, and born during the Baby Boom era, thus benefiting from the availability of ample resources (Odenweller, Booth-Butterfield, & Weber, 2014).

While the exact framework of helicopter parenting has yet to be precisely defined in the literature, it is generally considered a set of practices where parents "hover" their children to ensure their success and keep them away from danger – practices deemed inappropriate from a developmental perspective (Turner, Elkins, Walther, Short, & Schanding, 2023). Certainly,

the helicopter parent is a product of an era in which children are seen as "wanted," "protected," and "precious," leading adults to give them special treatment while simultaneously holding high expectations for the outcomes the child will achieve (Faircloth, Hoffman, & Layne, 2013).

The helicopter parenting has been associated with both authoritarian and indulgent parenting styles. The authoritarian parent tends to exhibit intrusive and disciplinary behavior, making decisions on behalf of the child and removing obstacles with a goal-oriented mindset (Reed, Duncan, Lucier-Greer, Fixelle, & Ferraro, 2016). In contrast, the permissive parent tends to adopt an overprotective attitude, removing challenges so that the child does not have to face them or attempting to avoid adverse situations (e.g., even mild illness) (Lee & Macvarish, 2020).

This type of parenting does not fade or decrease as children enter emerging adulthood, a stage where they are expected to begin assuming responsibilities related to adult life and living independently. On the contrary, parents persist in their behavior, striving to maintain their involvement and protection in various ways (Cui, Darling, Coccia, Fincham, & May, 2019).

The literature has extensively investigated and documented the effects of helicopter parenting on children's development, with broad consensus on its harmfulness, particularly during their emerging adulthood. Helicopter parenting is associated with high levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms, as well as emotional dysregulation in young adults (Cui, Darling, Coccia, Fincham, & May, 2019). It also leads to neurotic tendencies, dependency on others for support and validation, and a lack of effective coping skills (Odenweller, Booth-Butterfield, & Weber, 2014). Moreover, this parenting style is linked to low family

satisfaction, perception of a critical family environment, emotional difficulties, and low levels of psychological and physical well-being (Reed, Duncan, Lucier-Greer, Fixelle, & Ferraro, 2016). From a career perspective, individuals who report high levels of helicopter parenting experience significantly low levels of career adaptability and in-depth exploration, alongside high levels of career self-doubt (LeBlanc & Lyons, 2022).

1.3.2. Career-and-Care Crunch and Parental Burnout

When discussing parenting, the focus is generally on the impact of parental behavior on children's well-being and psycho-emotional development. However, understanding the aspects of parental well-being has implications not only for children's well-being but also for fertility and social health in general (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2020).

Due to global changes, including the increase in the average age of the population and the delayed entry of adults into the workforce and family life, the post-industrial era has necessitated a theoretical revision of the life cycle stages, introducing a new phase of adult development: the *established adulthood* (Arnett, Robinson, & Lachman, 2020). This life stage, which occurs between the ages of thirty and forty-five differs from the phase of emerging adulthood, especially in Western countries, which previously included some developmental tasks now associated with established adulthood.

The uniqueness of this "new" life stage is characterized by the *career-and-care crunch*. Established adulthood is a period where individuals pursue demanding goals in both career and family life, and they must balance the demands from both areas. On one hand, an increasingly dynamic and uncertain job market requires the individuals to a significant amount of energy in their career construction. On the other hand, this life stage often

coincides with the birth of a first child, bringing challenges and vulnerabilities associated with the transition to parenthood (Robinson, 2020). Additionally, in the context of a long-term relationship, it is a time for building a high level of intimacy. The term career-and-care crunch was identified by Mehta and colleagues to highlight the multiple, converging demands on individuals that peak during this life stage (Mehta, Arnett, Palmer, & Nelson, 2020).

In this context, the rise in economic inequalities and competition in the job market makes parents increasingly insecure about their children's future. This insecurity drives them to methodically cultivate their children's talents, academic achievements, and prospects through daily activities and interactions, in the hope that their children will not fall down the social ladder but continue to climb it (Schiffrin, Godfrey, Liss, & Erchull, 2015). This pressure fits into the model of intensive parenting, which is becoming increasingly unsustainable for parents (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2020).

Over the last decade, particularly following the global crisis caused by COVID-19 (Mikolajczak & Roskam, 2020), a new phenomenon known as *parental burnout* (PB) has emerged. This syndrome is characterized by intense exhaustion related to the parental role, driven by the perceived gap between the demands of parenting and the resources available to meet them, and it has severe consequences for both parents and children. Burnout is typically associated with excessive work, and it is no coincidence that this term was chosen by researchers: just as with work, parenting can be extremely rewarding yet equally stressful (Mikolajczak, Gross, & Roskam, 2021).

PB occurs when the stress from parenting severely overwhelms a parent's resources, leading to specific symptoms. First, the exhausted parent feels frustrated with their parental role.

Second, there is an emotional distancing from their children to conserve the few remaining energies. Third, the parent no longer finds joy in spending time with their children, to the point of not wanting to continue in the parental role. Finally, they no longer recognize themselves as the parent they once were or wish to be. While these symptoms can be experienced occasionally by many parents without necessarily constituting a syndrome, it is the frequency and duration of these symptoms that serve as direct indicators of the severity of burnout (Mikolajczak & Roskam, 2020).

Among the risk factors for parents, the pursuit of perfection has been identified as a significant contributor to PB (Kawamoto, Furutani, & Alimardani, 2018). Additionally, parents who lack emotional regulation and stress management skills (Leberet-Charon, Dorard, Boujut, & Wendland, 2018), and those who receive little support from their co-parent or social network, are also at heightened risk (Mikolajczak & Roskam, 2020).

In the United States, as of 2023, the percentage of parents reporting high levels of stress and considered at risk of PB was 33%, a figure that has remained relatively stable since 2013¹. Parents experiencing burnout are at risk of negative consequences both for themselves and their children. PB can lead to suicidal ideation among parents due to the perceived entrapment in the parental role (Mikolajczak, Raes, Avalosse, & Roskam, 2018). It also

¹ *Parental burnout and stress*, American Psychological Association
<https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/parental-burnout>

impacts the HPA axis (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis), leading to somatic symptoms and sleep disturbances (Brianda, Roskam, & Mikolajczak, 2020).

For children, the repercussions of parental burnout include an increase in violent behavior and neglect (Mikolajczak, Raes, Avalosse, & Roskam, 2018). The study by Brianda and colleagues provided evidence that the effects of PB on children are causal. After targeted psychological intervention for parents suffering from PB, a reduction in harmful behavior was observed, which was proportional to the reduction in PB indicators. This improvement was also reflected in the normalization of HPA axis activation levels (Brianda et al., 2020).

Mikolajczak views the reduction of parental burnout (PB) as both a personal and collective responsibility. To address PB effectively, she suggests two key intervention pathways: individual and social.

1) **Individual-Level Interventions:** These focus on reducing personal perceptions of stress and developing effective coping strategies. Parents are encouraged to build resilience and enhance their emotional regulation skills. This may involve mindfulness practices, therapy, or stress management techniques that help parents navigate the challenges of parenting without becoming overwhelmed.

2) **Social-Level Interventions:** These aim to create a society with fewer stressors by alleviating the pressure on parents and providing more external support. This could involve policy changes to improve work-life balance, access to quality childcare, and community-based resources that offer practical and emotional support. The goal is to foster an environment where parents do not feel solely responsible for their children's well-being but instead are supported by a broader network of resources.

By addressing PB through both personal and societal changes, Mikolajczak emphasizes that reducing PB requires a multifaceted approach that involves empowering parents individually while also reforming societal structures to better support families (Mikolajczak, Gross, & Roskam, 2021).

1.4 Social Sustainability and Inclusion: A Way Out of Intensive Parenting?

According to the framework described so far, parents seem to have lost perspective regarding safety and dangers; they meticulously analyze every daily decision and leave no room for their children to experiment and develop autonomy. The solutions proposed for intensive parenting usually involve expert guidance, suggesting the simple advice to "relax" (Layard & Dunn, 2009) or to review one's parenting style by encouraging resilience in children, although this still falls within the framework of intensive parenting (Lee, 2011). Alternatively, the feminist perspective suggests advocating for greater paternal involvement in child care, moving toward gender equality (O'Brien & Wall, 2017). As Lee points out, all these solutions tend to further burden parents, while also reinforcing the underlying message of intensive parenting, albeit implicitly, by maintaining an individualistic view of child-rearing (Lee & Macvarish, 2020). According to Hays, increasing fathers' involvement in child care again highlights the work-family dichotomy. Therefore, she proposes the need to radically rethink the perception of children's role in society—not as vulnerable individuals to be raised and developed along an optimal trajectory, but as active subjects in society and the construction of the future (Hays, 1996).

Despite the various proposals, the authors agree that the negative effects of intensive parenting on both adults and children necessitate the suggestion of alternatives and solutions. Given that the origin of this parenting approach stems from the neoliberal social environment in which families are immersed, promoting social sustainability and inclusion as a response to the pressures of neoliberalism represents an effective tool for human well-being in the present and for building the future (Rogers, et al., 2012).

Social sustainability is a broad term that refers to the social dimension of sustainability and, from a normative standpoint, aligns with the social objectives of sustainability strategies. Conceptually, the goals of social sustainability support and promote a just and equitable society (Partridge, 2014). The concept of social sustainability first emerged in the 1960s (Cuthill, 2010) and is one of the three pillars of sustainable development, though it has often been considered somewhat marginal compared to environmental and economic sustainability. It was only in 2015, with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), that social issues became central to the developmental challenge. In fact, the majority of the 17 SDGs focus on the social dimension in terms of responsibility, security, and inclusion (Barron, Cord, Cuesta, & Larson, 2023).

Social sustainability is closely linked to well-being, quality of life, and future generations (Koning, 2001). The principles that emerge can be identified as the improvement of human quality of life, both in terms of basic needs and in ways that do not compromise future generations; equity or social justice, which involves reducing disparities through redistributive measures and protecting the most vulnerable members of communities; inclusion and interconnectedness, meaning combating discriminatory practices and integrating marginalized individuals into social, political, economic, and cultural life; and

accessibility, which involves working towards ensuring that everyone - marginalized people in particular – has access to resources, services, and opportunities (Partridge, 2014).

Thus, social sustainability has evolved from being a marginalized pillar to becoming the point of connection and balance between economic and environmental sustainability pillars in terms of development. Cuthill's model highlights that environmental problems are, first and foremost, social problems: we cannot manage nature itself, but we can manage the people who impact the natural environment. Similarly, the economy should serve people, rather than promoting a view where people serve economic interests, especially when it comes to resource distribution (Cuthill, 2010).

The connection between parenting and social sustainability has been relatively underexplored in the literature. Most awareness programs related to social sustainability are typically found in educational services or marginalized communities, even when targeted at family contexts (Guruge, Arhelger, & Abhayasinghe, 2022; McCalman, McEwan, Tsey, Blackmore, & Bainbridge, 2010; Muthukrishna & Naidoo, 2016). However, it is rare to find awareness programs focused on inclusion and social sustainability specifically aimed at parents, especially in Western countries and areas with widespread economic well-being.

Nevertheless, this work has explored how parents living in neoliberal societies are not exempt from vulnerabilities, whether in terms of economic, occupational, and environmental uncertainty (Beck, 1986; Arnett, Robinson, & Lachman, 2020), or in terms of mental health (Mikolajczak, Raes, Avalosse, & Roskam, 2018).

Lansford and colleagues, through a study within the Parenting Across Cultures (PAC) project, analyzed how longitudinal data on parenting styles across different cultures can help

target and implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They specifically identified six goals that involve families: SDG1 (no poverty), SDG3 (good health and well-being), SDG4 (inclusive quality education for all), SDG5 (gender parity and equitable life chances), SDG11 (safe communities), and SDG16 (peace and justice). This study is one of the few where parents and children are considered key actors in achieving these goals.

Focusing on SDG3, which aims to promote well-being and mental health, Lansford and colleagues' work highlights how social relationships and parenting styles are predictive factors for well-being and mental health outcomes. Additionally, parenting style was found to be associated with cultural factors among parents (Lansford, et al., 2021). The quality of parenting and family life directly influences children's development, particularly in cultivating the skills necessary for achieving greater social sustainability, with positive effects for both individuals and society (Sanders, et al., 2022).

Parents play a key role in transmitting values, rules, standards, and ways of thinking and acting, providing a lens through which children view relationships and social structures. This is a universal role, though the cultural content conveyed may differ (Tamis-LeMonda, et al., 2008). If parental values are based on individualistic and neoliberal logics, these will be reflected in parenting styles, expectations regarding child development, and socialization goals (Harwood, Handwerker, Schoelmerich, & Leyendecker, 2009).

It is possible, therefore, to envision parent programs with objectives other than just developing parenting skills, which often risk generating additional stress and social pressure for parents. These programs can exacerbate the social divide between middle- to high-income families, who can more easily access and implement parenting training, and low-income families, who not only face difficulties in accessing such programs but also must

meet even more unattainable standards imposed by the neoliberal society (Jarvis & Georgeson, 2017).

Alongside this work, it is proposed the development of programs for parents that provide a space for reflection and sharing, rather than being directive and structured. These programs would be personalized, aiming to raise awareness about how the neoliberal model has shaped parenting practices, the vulnerabilities this exposes parents and their children to today, and the future implications for children as adults. The focus should be on recognizing the importance of autonomy in children's lives (Lee & Macvarish, 2020) and social inclusion as pathways to mental well-being for the entire family, and to the creation of a more cohesive and resilient society for future challenges (Magis, 2010).

2. “GEN-ALPHA”: A Workshop for Parents of Children Aged 0-6 on Inclusion and Social Sustainability.

"*GEN-ALPHA: Genitori di Nuova Generazione*"² (GEN-ALPHA) is an intervention proposal aimed at parents of children aged 0-6 – the so-called Alpha Generation. It is a three-session program designed to create a space for discussion, sharing, and reflection on the challenges of parenting in the post-industrial era, and the opportunities offered by sustainability and social inclusion perspectives.

2.1. This Is Not a Parent Training

Interventions aimed at parents have long been praised by the scientific community for their proven effectiveness on children's developmental outcomes, particularly when carried out in the early years of a child's life. Parents are the primary caregivers of young children, and research has shown that responsive parent-child relationships and parental support for learning during the earliest years are crucial for promoting early child development. For this reason, there is a recognized global need for parent training to enhance children's cognitive, linguistic, and motor skills and to foster responsive caregiving among parents, with a view to improving developmental outcomes in children (Jeon, Franchett, Ramos de Oliveira, Rehmani, & Yousafzai, 2021), with long-term effects, even in less privileged contexts (Jeong, O Pitchik, & Fink). Since the 1970s, numerous parent training programs have been

² Translated: “GEN-ALPHA: Parents of a New Generation”

developed, initially with psychoeducational aims for parents of children with disabilities and neurodevelopmental disorders (or more broadly, neurodiversity), to inform and support them in dealing with the challenges their child and family may face. Over time, parent training programs have evolved with the goal of promoting effective parenting, which scholars consider critical in fostering healthy child development (Bryanton & Beck, 2010), and responsive care, which refers to the caregiver's ability to understand the child's needs and respond appropriately, thereby promoting growth and buffering stress responses. However, for some parents, a social support network, along with parental education and support programs, is essential. Therefore, there is a need for parental education and support programs that strengthen informal social support networks (Nunes et al., 2021).

It is possible to distinguish between different types of programs: *universal*, aimed at all families as a complement to other universal educational or health services; *targeted-selective*, which focus on selected families considered at risk; *targeted-indicated*, directed at families whose children or parents have a pre-identified or diagnosed issue that requires more intensive support; and *specialist*, interventions for high-need families where there is a current issue or a serious child protection concern (Asmussen, Feinstein, Martin, & Chowdry, 2016).

The child-centred care model prioritizes children and their interests as the focal point of care. Therefore, parenting programs generally align with this goal, aiming to support families in promoting the well-being of their children. Parenting programs targeting parents of children up to 3 years old, generally adopt a family-centered care philosophy, aiming to respect each family's unique circumstances, provide them with information, enhance their literacy, and assist in making decisions that best fit their needs and contexts; however, parents report

facing barriers such as (1) a lack of empowerment to influence their children's preferences and (2) stress, fatigue, or lack of time, which make parenting challenging. They expressed difficulty in applying their knowledge and sought guidance on how to translate what they know into effective strategies (Ramos, Matos, & Soares, 2022), an issue that corresponds to the critics of the scholars we cited in the previous chapter. (Hays, 1996; Furedi, 2002; Faircloth, 2023).

Parent training programs are generally aimed at improving parenting skills, both as universal or targeted interventions, (Jarvis & Georgeson, 2017) or at improving the parents psychosocial wellbeing and reducing stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms as they can have consequences on the children wellbeing development, secure attachment and behavioural patterns; it has been shown that parent trainings aimed at the parents' psychosocial wellbeing have a statistically short-term intervention (Barlow, Smailagic, Roloff, & Bennet, 2012).

GEN-ALPHA, the intervention proposed in this experimental research work, should be preferably categorized as a workshop. Training and workshops are terms borrowed from the work environment. Specifically, training became widespread during the industrial era as part of the serialization of learning aimed at imparting specific skills to workers (Malvezzi, 2014). According to the Oxford English Dictionary³, the key difference between training and

³ <https://www.oed.com/>

a workshop is that training refers to the action of "teaching," whereas a workshop is a setting where the group will "engage" in intensive discussion and activity.

The proposal of intervention depicted in this research is not aimed at transmitting specific skills. Instead, it focuses on exploring how today's neoliberal and individualistic society impacts the lives of parents and their children, based on the experiences, concerns, and perspectives of the participants. The goal is to assess their visions for the future for themselves and their children, stimulate reflection on the values of sustainability and social inclusion, and explore whether they can view themselves and their children as capable of building a more cohesive and resilient community.

2.2. A Workshop on Inclusion and Social Sustainability

In this section, the organization and content of the workshop under study will be described in detail.

Preliminary Considerations

At the beginning of the workshop, it is important to ensure confidentiality regarding the information, experiences, and opinions shared during the sessions. Participants should be reminded that the group is a space where opinions and shares are welcomed with respect for others' experiences, adopting a non-judgmental attitude to create a safe environment for everyone. The facilitator must be able to use active listening and empathetic communication skills to understand the group's needs while guiding and moderating the intervention according to the session guidelines.

It is important to note that the content provided for each session is intended to stimulate reflection and sharing, rather than to impart knowledge for participants to learn.

Workshop structure

The workshop is structured into 3 sessions of 1.5 hours each, held weekly:

- 1) “Living in the Risk Society”
- 2) “The Performance-driven Society”
- 3) “Which Society for Which Future?”

Participants

The workshop targets parents of children aged 0 to 6 years, with the option for parents to bring their children if they wish. This arrangement facilitates the participation of parents, including both parents from the same family unit.

Setting

The workshop is organized in-person, with groups ranging from 5 to 15 participants to facilitate sharing. The seating arrangement involves placing participants in a circle, including the facilitator, to avoid a hierarchical setup and encourage equal interaction among parents and with the facilitator.

It is advisable to set up safe and comfortable areas in the center and nearby, tailored to the age-specific needs of the children present.

It is recommended to organize the workshop within schools or early childhood educational or recreational services. Other spaces should consider the families' needs, creating a safe and comfortable environment so that parents can fully engage in the workshop.

Materials

- Anonymous question cards with printed questions for each session
- Whiteboard with markers
- Pens
- Book: "*Cresci Come un Fiore*" by Luca Mazzucchelli, illustrated by Giulia Telli, published by Giunti

2.2.1. "Living in The Risk Society"⁴

Upon arrival, participants receive prompt questions to answer anonymously on a piece of paper:

"Is there something that worries you at the moment?"

"What difficulties are you and your children facing?"

Once everyone has completed their responses, the answers are collected. Then, the session moves on to introductions. Participants are asked to provide the names of the parents and any accompanying children, as well as the ages of the children present or at home. The facilitator concludes the introductions and introduces the workshop, asking participants about their expectations for the sessions.

⁴ Title inspired by the article "*Living in The Risk Society: An Interview with Ulrich Beck*" (Wimmer & Quandt, 2007)

Parent training and workshop

The concept of parent training is introduced, originally developed as an intervention to support parents of children with disabilities (Lee McIntyre & Neece, 2016) and now widely used as a tool for all families (Barlow, Smailagic, Roloff, & Bennet, 2012; Jeon, Franchett, Ramos de Oliveira, Rehmani, & Yousafzai, 2021; Ramos, Matos, & Soares, 2022). Participants are then invited to reflect on the concept of the workshop, emphasizing the importance of their active involvement and encouraging them to view themselves as integral to the work that will be carried out.

Risk and vulnerability

Based on the participants' responses to the initial questions— which can be anonymously recorded on the whiteboard using keywords— the facilitator collects the parents' concerns and the challenges they are facing now. The discussion is then guided towards the concept of *risk*: participants are invited to reflect on recent global events or issues that have arisen in places different from their own but whose consequences have impacted their lives or might potentially affect them (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic, the conflict between Ukraine and Russia) (Beck, 1986).

This opens up the topic of *vulnerability*, which can be defined to better frame it within the discussion. Vulnerability typically refers to the susceptibility to harm caused by natural events or human actions, and to experiencing situations that can result in challenges, distress, and adverse outcomes from social, economic, and psychological perspectives (Nota, Santilli, & Zucchini, 2023). Thus, vulnerability can be described as an element outside one's sphere of action or control that implies the possibility of being exposed to risk.

An example that can facilitate sharing is digital vulnerability. It's useful to explore what digital vulnerability means for adults, gauge the participants' sensitivity to this issue, and discuss how they manage this aspect of their lives. This can lead to a discussion on digital vulnerability concerning children, such as the phenomenon of *sharenting*, where parents share information and images of their children online. This discussion can help participants reflect on the implications and risks associated with digital exposure for both themselves and their children.

Sharenting refers to the growing trend of parents sharing detailed information about their children online, including photos, videos, and other media. Parents do this for various reasons, such as seeking advice, sharing experiences, staying connected with family and friends, documenting milestones, and building a supportive community. While it offers a platform for connection and mutual support, sharenting also raises concerns. It can influence how parents define parenting, share strategies, cope with stress, and even become distracted during interactions with their children. Ethical issues arise, particularly around consent and privacy, especially when parents use their children's content to build social media careers (Cataldo, et al., 2022). When children grow up, online opportunities and risks are often interconnected, with children experiencing both positive and negative effects. How well they cope with online risks depends on their age, psychological resources, and digital skills. Vulnerable children are particularly at risk when unintentionally exposed to harmful content during regular online activities, such as cybervictimization, cyberhate, and inappropriate material (Kalmus, Batista, Opermann, Tercova, & Jaron Bedrosova, 2024).

Vulnerability is not a condition that affects only people with disabilities; it can involve anyone at different times in their lives. Like disability, vulnerability can also be invisible.

For example, anxiety and depression are among the most prevalent mental health issues worldwide, with a 25% increase following the COVID-19 pandemic. These conditions represent 31% and 28.6% of diagnosed disorders in the adult population, respectively. It is estimated that 280 million people globally live with depressive disorders, and 301 million with anxiety disorders, with a higher prevalence in high-income countries (15.1%) but also significant presence in low-income countries⁵ (World Health Organization (WHO), 2022). In Italy, depression affects approximately 6% of the adult population⁶: in 2021 depression was one of the most common mental health disorders treated in the country, highlighting a significant gender disparity in both the occurrence of depression and the likelihood of seeking treatment. The prevalence of depression in Italy was notably higher among women, with 43.5 women per 10,000 individuals affected, compared to 25.6 men per 10,000 (Ministero della Salute, 2022).

Living with vulnerability in the neoliberal era

In a society driven by neoliberal principles, each individual is viewed as an economic unit expected to generate wealth (Jarvis & Georgeson, 2017) and achieve personal goals,

⁵ Differences in mental disorder prevalence across regions and income groups can be explained by several factors. Low-income countries have lower rates partly due to younger populations, where mental disorders are less common. War and conflict contribute to higher rates in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region. Sociocultural factors, such as differing views on mental health and higher stigma, also affect reporting, leading to potential underreporting in many low- and middle-income countries (World Health Organization (WHO), 2022).

⁶ Source: Sorveglianza PASSI: <https://www.epicentro.iss.it/passi/dati/depressione#impatto>

regardless of the barriers encountered. The overcoming of these barriers is often attributed to one's own willpower and responsibility (Ehrstein, Gill, & Littler, 2020).

This sets the stage for a reflection on the paradox inherent in our society and culture: on one hand, post-industrial modernity exposes us to greater risks, increasing our vulnerability; on the other hand, society demands that we reach our maximum personal and productive potential, with the responsibility to eliminate obstacles that lie outside our control.

The reflection should lead to the realization that those who are not productive or high-performing, or who cannot overcome obstacles, are at risk of exclusion from society. This highlights the possibility that everyone can be vulnerable at certain times in their lives, and such periods of vulnerability can be almost physiological, as seen in cases like unemployment (Beck, 1986).

In conclusion, it is important to acknowledge that being a parent in such a demanding socio-cultural context can be challenging, potentially leading to mental, emotional, and economic burdens. This is especially true if one feels pressured to meet imposed standards in this area of life as well. Recognizing these challenges can help in understanding and addressing the added stresses that parents face in striving to balance personal expectations with societal demands.

Finally, parents are invited to share a word or phrase that captures the key takeaway from this first meeting.

2.2.2. “The Performance-Driven Society”⁷

At the beginning of the session, participants receive an anonymous card to complete with the prompt question:

"What problems do you face most often as a parent?"

The Performance-Driven Society

After collecting the responses, revisit the content from the previous session, asking participants if they would like to share any reflections or discuss which theme impacted them the most. Participants' responses should lead back to the theme of performance: the neoliberal model has shaped Western culture, driving most people towards an unconscious "obligation to perform." This obligation extends from outward aspects—such as appearance, children's upbringing, daily activities, romantic relationships, sports or cultural activities, and the number of followers—to the inner world, including spirituality, creativity, personal growth, enhancement, and change (Colamedici & Gancitano, 2018).

In the discussion, participants are invited to reflect on what this drive and need to perform mean for them and how it affects their lives. They are encouraged to share how they feel and demonstrate their roles as good parents within this context.

⁷ Title inspired by the book *"La Società della Performance"* (Colamedici & Gancitano, 2018)

The Career-and-Care Crunch

Building on the theme of performance, the focus should shift to the pressure experienced by parents. It is helpful to use the participants' responses to the initial question, recording them anonymously on the whiteboard using keywords and grouping them. Ideally, two main themes should emerge: “**Family**” (e.g., education, time dedicated to children, emotional management of children, time for the couple, etc.) and “**Work**” (e.g., professional growth, returning to work, workplace bullying, time management, organization of household work, unpaid labor, etc.).

This outlines the concept of the "*Career-and-Care Crunch*," referring to the phase between 30 and 45 years old (known as "*established adulthood*"), where individuals must balance demanding career and family goals. This phase reaches its peak during this period of life and includes challenges and vulnerabilities related to transitioning into parenthood (Robinson, 2020), managing couple life, and navigating an increasingly complex and evolving work environment. It is important to note that developmental psychology scholars have revised the understanding of life stages, recognizing this period as complex and challenging, which contributes to vulnerability (Mehta, Arnett, Palmer, & Nelson, 2020).

Performance Society and Children

At this point, the conversation shifts to children: how does the sense of obligation to perform impact children growing up in this society? How does it influence parenting styles? For example, consider the educational system, which is geared towards excellence and competition, the numerous extracurricular activities designed to develop skills and talents,

and the heavy academic workload imposed on students to ensure academic excellence (Schiffrin, Godfrey, Liss, & Erchull, 2015).

Reflect on how parental involvement can sometimes turn into interference (Turner, Elkins, Walther, Short, & Schanding, 2023), affecting both school choices and relationships with teachers and peers, which can erode the child's space for autonomy and decision-making (Reed, Duncan, Lucier-Greer, Fixelle, & Ferraro, 2016).

Developing Skills for the Future: Between Self-Efficacy and Inclusion

The discussion can now shift to asking what it means to be "competent" for the future, for example, by reflecting on cases of "successful people." Parents can be invited to consider what personal skills they want for their children, reflecting on themes like self-efficacy, resilience, and autonomy (Odenweller, Booth-Butterfield, & Weber, 2014). At this point, it is also possible to reflect on what perspectives might create vulnerabilities in their children — such as in the case of a diagnosis of neurodiversity — and to think in terms of inclusion. What does this mean for the participants? Have they ever experienced exclusion? How do they feel they can promote inclusion in their areas of action?

It is important to keep in mind that the neoliberal narrative regarding inclusion and disability views disability in terms of the “effects of disability” on an individual (understood as limitations) and the productivity that the individual with a disability can achieve despite these limitations. In this framework, the person is seen as an economic unit of production (Mitchell & Snyder, 2020). Furthermore, the approach remains individualistic (Tamis-LeMonda, et al., 2008), focusing on the individual with a disability rather than what the context can offer.

A cross-cultural perspective

It can be useful to draw on concepts from collectivist cultures and philosophies to reframe individualism as a cultural aspect. For example, in Confucianism, each entity exists and defines itself only in relation to other entities, and for a person, based on the social roles they assume. Unlike Western philosophy, where the family is understood in a nuclear sense and is a product of the industrial age, the family is not an entity to detach from and become independent from upon reaching adulthood. Instead, it represents the place where most of one's personality develops and continues to evolve throughout life (Giordano, 2019).

An image that can stimulate reflection on inclusion is that of the network of precious gems, drawn from Buddhist philosophy. This metaphor can be presented in relation to the more familiar concept of a social support network, where each person can imagine themselves as a node at the center of a network, with the nodes represented by the people in their life, based on the relationships they represent for themselves and for others (Santinello, Vieno, & Lenzi, 2009). At this point, one can imagine each person in the network as a gem embedded in the nodes of the network, shining not only with its own light but also with the light of each nearby gem. Each gem shines also due to the light reflected from the others; thus, if just one gem stops shining, the light of the entire network will be less brilliant (Connolly, 2023). This metaphor can help open the conversation about the interdependence of human beings within their networks and how well-being is not the privilege of the individual but requires a community that allows each of its elements to shine.

Drawing on this metaphor, reflection can be opened on how each of us can act as an agent of inclusion in our own realities, and how this can be transmitted to our children. By using

everyday situations as examples, participants can be invited to consider concrete ways to promote inclusion. It is important to remember that parents play a role in guidance and impart values and modes of thinking to their children, helping to shape the society of tomorrow (Harwood, Handwerker, Schoelmerich, & Leyendecker, 2009).

In conclusion, parents are asked to share a few words that encapsulate their take-home message from the session.

2.2.3. “Which Society for Which Future?”

Upon arrival, participants receive the stimulus questions to fill out anonymously:

“ How do you see your future?”

“ What do you hope for the future of your children?”

The session begins with the reading of the book “*Cresci Come un Fiore*” by Luigi Mazzucchelli. The facilitator reads the book aloud, showing the illustrations to the participants and making the reading engaging with expressive intonation and pauses. The book tells the story of a badger who is given the seed of a plant. The protagonist has high expectations for the seed, which are soon disappointed. Despite various pieces of advice from experts—some helpful and others incorrect—the seed's growth is ultimately nurtured by the environment and the protagonist's care, who learns to accept and love the seed for the plant it becomes (Mazzucchelli, 2021).

Following the reading, the facilitator collects participants’ reflections on the book: What emotions did it evoke? Did it awaken any personal experiences or feelings related to their

own parenting journey? What expectations did they have (or still have) for themselves and their children? Have these expectations been realized? What barriers have they encountered?

Barriers

Obstacles and barriers are a natural part of everyone's life. However, neoliberalism has shifted the focus of responsibility from external factors to the individual. For instance, it is well established that experiencing a period of unemployment is highly probable for most people. Although certain social groups are more at risk, no level or field of specialization fully protects against the possibility of unemployment during one's lifetime, as there are not enough jobs for the entire population. Nevertheless, according to the neoliberal model, where everyone is seen as the ultimate architect of their own destiny, the responsibility for adversities falls on the individual. Even when external factors are at play (e.g., company failure), the individual is often deemed to have not done enough to prevent unemployment (Beck, 1986).

In the neoliberal model, individuals are driven by a belief in invincibility, striving to achieve their goals by overcoming every obstacle, immersed in a narrative that illusions them into thinking that anything can be achieved with enough willpower and positive thinking (Ehrstein, Gill, & Littler, 2020). The downside is that this mindset prevents individuals from developing the habit of equipping themselves with tools for difficult times when barriers are objectively insurmountable.

Looking to the Future

Participants can reflect on their attitudes towards life, aiming to highlight the concepts of resilience, confidence, and problem-solving. These are useful traits in life that parents likely

wish to develop in their children. Research has shown that resilience, confidence, and problem-solving abilities are predictors of psychological and physical well-being (Furedi, 2002; Bryanton & Beck, 2010; Schiffrin, Godfrey, Liss, & Erchull, 2015; Cui, Darling, Coccia, Fincham, & May, 2019; LeBlanc & Lyons, 2022).

However, often the way parents live is not what they wish for their children. To address this topic, it is possible to start with the responses participants gave at the beginning of the meeting, placing them on the board in two columns: one for their vision of their own future and the other for their desires for their children's lives. If a difference emerges, it can be shared with the group to highlight the contrast between their current way of living, influenced by neoliberalism, and their wishes for their children's lives. In the discussion, parents are encouraged to consider and share how they would like to help their children develop resilience, confidence, and problem-solving skills.

For example, they could choose to seek help when the family or work load becomes too overwhelming, to loosen control over their children's activities while maintaining sufficient involvement but reducing stress, and to acknowledge their own limits and external barriers. It's not about relaxing but changing perspective, accepting one's own and others' finiteness, including that of their children.

In conclusion, the meeting closes by reflecting on what tools we wish to leave for Generation Alpha. These could include:

- *Training in Resilience*: To foster hope.
- *Modelling Behavior*: To nurture confidence.

- *Allowing Self-Discovery*: Embrace one's own attitudes, limits, and barriers, starting with oneself and extending the same perspective to one's children. Encourage interests and aptitudes without seeking talent or adhering to societal expectations. The future is unpredictable; skills deemed essential today may not be the most valued tomorrow.

- *Nurturing a Sustainable Society*: Create an inclusive society where everyone can shine alongside others.

With the third meeting, the workshop concludes. If desired, it is possible to collect a word or thought as a take-home message from the participants about the meeting or the entire workshop.

It is also useful to gather anonymous feedback on the workshop to evaluate the course's progress, strengths, and areas for improvement for the future.

3. Parents between present and future: The Research

3.1. Purpose Of the Research and Research Hypothesis

The neoliberal model influences personal values, self-perception, and the definition of personal goals, which impacts the educational attitude of parents (Beck, 1986; Fraser, 2016; Ehrstein, Gill, & Littler, 2020). This leads to behaviors associated with intensive parenting (Wolf, 2011; Faircloth, Hoffman, & Layne, 2013; Jarvis & Georgeson, 2017; Faircloth, 2023). In its more extreme forms, intensive parenting can lead to helicopter parenting styles, with negative effects on children's psychophysical well-being, adaptability, autonomy, and self-efficacy (Cui, Darling, Coccia, Fincham, & May, 2019; Robinson, 2020; Lee & Macvarish, 2020; LeBlanc & Lyons, 2022; Turner, Elkins, Walther, Short, & Schanding, 2023), and on the mental health of parents, leading to outcomes linked to parental burnout, a condition that affects the well-being of both mothers and fathers as well as their children (Kawamoto, Furutani, & Alimardani, 2018; Leberet-Charon, Dorard, Boujut, & Wendland, 2018; Brianda, Roskam, & Mikolajczak, 2020; Brianda, et al., 2020; Mikolajczak, Gross, & Roskam, 2021). Through parents, cultural values and mental frameworks are transmitted that influence children, who will be the adults of future society (Tamis-LeMonda, et al., 2008; Faircloth, Hoffman, & Layne, 2013; Faircloth, 2020; Sanders, et al., 2022).

Research in the psychological and social fields highlights how, through their role and educational actions, parents transmit cultural values and shape the mental frameworks that structure the actions, choices, and tendencies of their children, the future adults (Tamis-LeMonda, et al., 2008; Faircloth, Hoffman, & Layne, 2013; Faircloth, 2020; Sanders, et al., 2022). When considering the future, the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be ignored,

especially the goals related to social sustainability, which: form the foundation for building a more resilient society (Magis, 2010); are both a prerequisite and a result for improving the population's mental health and ensuring that future generations will have sufficient resources (Dillard, Dujon, & King, 2009); have an impact on today's parenting style (Lansford, et al., 2021); and must also be promoted among parents to be achieved (Sanders, et al., 2022). However, unlike the focus on environmental sustainability, the dimension of social sustainability and the associated interventions have been marginally explored in research involving parents.

Starting from the literature and considering that: parents are influenced by social models in their parenting attitudes, particularly by the neoliberal model; that parents, in turn, transmit and influence values and attitudes towards life in their children, who represent the future society; that social sustainability represents a key goal for achieving sustainable development and that the principles constituting it can positively influence parenting, this work aims to investigate the dimension of social sustainability among parents. In particular, it is hypothesized that:

In particular, it is hypothesized that:

- I. Parents with a greater inclination towards a solidarity economy are expected to show higher levels of inclination towards sustainability;*
- II. Inclination towards a solidarity economy is predicted to be a predictor of inclination towards sustainability.*

3.2. Methods.

3.2.1. Participants

Participants were recruited by distributing the questionnaire electronically through social media platforms *Facebook* and *Instagram*.

The questionnaire received 157 responses: 95.5% of the respondents were women aged between 27 and 48 years (mean age 36.6), while 4.5% were men aged between 34 and 39 years (mean age 36.25).

Regarding the highest level of education attained, 0.6% had a middle school diploma, 23.4% had a high school diploma, 24% had a bachelor's degree, 38.3% had a master's degree or specialist diploma, 6.5% had a specialization diploma, and 7.1% had a doctoral degree.

3.2.2. Materials / Assessment Tools

The questionnaire consists of an introductory section that collects sociodemographic data and includes an initial closed-ended question asking parents if they have specific concerns about a child. If the answer is yes, a follow-up open-ended question requests details about the type of difficulties the child is experiencing.

The following scales were included:

- **“How Much Trust Do I Have in My Parenting Abilities?”** (Soresi, Nota 2009):
This questionnaire was developed to measure the level of trust parents have in their educational skills (Soresi, Nota, 2009). The tool consists of 18 items divided into three main factors, providing a comprehensive view of parents' perceptions of their effectiveness in their educational role:

- 1) *Beliefs in Educational Efficacy*: this factor assesses the parent's confidence in their ability to teach their children adequately, serve as a role model, use rewards and positive reinforcement, and manage inappropriate behaviors effectively. It includes 9 items and explains 43.43% of the variance. The internal consistency index (α) is .89.
- 2) *Beliefs in the Ability to Stay Calm and Interact Positively with Family Members*: this factor examines the ability to create positive and harmonious relationships within the family, maintaining calmness and choosing appropriate moments to address any difficulties with children or partners. It consists of 4 items and explains 6.85% of the variance, with an internal consistency index of $\alpha = .66$.
- 3) *Beliefs in the Ability to Support Children's Autonomy and Decision-Making Skills*: this factor measures the parent's confidence in promoting their children's interests, encouraging their decision-making abilities, and supporting them in considering their choices without imposing their own ideas. It includes 5 items, explains 6.02% of the variance, and has an internal consistency index of $\alpha = .85$.

- **The Satisfaction With Life Scale** (Diener, Robert, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985): Life Satisfaction is considered a factor within the broader construct of well-being. Theories and research suggest at least three components of well-being: positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction (Andrews & Withey, 1976). This component refers to the cognitive aspect of well-being. Life satisfaction is therefore regarded as an outcome of a judgment process related to the overall aspects of one's existence, using the personal criteria of the individual being interviewed (Pavot & Diener, 1993). The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) is a measure of life

satisfaction developed by Ed Diener and colleagues (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). This 5-item scale is designed to assess overall cognitive evaluations of an individual's satisfaction with their life. It does not measure positive or negative emotions, without focusing on specific areas like health or finances. It allows respondents to weigh and integrate different aspects of their lives according to their personal values. Participants rate their agreement or disagreement with each of the 5 statements using a 7-point scale, where “7” indicates “strongly agree” and “1” indicates “strongly disagree”. The scale has shown strong convergent validity with other subjective well-being measures and demonstrates moderate temporal stability (e.g., a correlation of .54 over 4 years). Additionally, the SWLS has proven sensitive enough to detect changes in life satisfaction, making it useful in tracking outcomes during clinical interventions. Importantly, it shows discriminant validity from emotional well-being measures, positioning it as a valuable complement to tools focused on emotional health or psychopathology. The SWLS provides an evaluative judgment of one's life based on individual criteria, making it a reliable and flexible tool for assessing life satisfaction. L'indice di coerenza interna (α) è stato più volte misurato ed è sempre risultato maggiore di .80 (Diener, Robert, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985)

- **The Courage Measure (Norton & Weiss, 2009):** in positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), courage is traditionally viewed as a vital personal resource (Snyder, Lopez, & Teramoto Pedrotti, 2014). In our "risk society" (Beck, 1986), where uncertainty, risk, and constant change are defining features of modern life, individuals must navigate an increasingly unpredictable world by cultivating

psychological resources. Courage stands out as one of these resources, alongside optimism, resilience, hope, and perseverance, which all support individuals during challenging life transitions (such as leaving home, unemployment, or divorce). Hannah et al. (2007) described a "courageous mind-set," theoretically linking courage with positive personality traits and identifying key characteristics present in courageous individuals (Hannah, Sweeney, & Lester, 2007). Research has shown that courage mediates the influence of positive traits on coping strategies, helping individuals choose more effective ways to confront adversity (Magnano, Paolillo, Platania, & Santisi, 2017). The Courage Measure (Norton & Weiss, 2009) uses a self-reported, 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*). This measure, in the (Howard & Alipour, 2014) version, used an operational definition of "persistence or perseverance despite having fear" with a 6-item scale. Sample items are "I act courageously" and "If the thought of something makes me anxious, I usually will avoid it." Howard and Alipour's work showed adequate reliability coefficients of 0.87; for this sample, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.84. In the questionnaire, the Italian adaptation has been used (Ginevra, et al., 2020).

- **Designing My Future** (Santilli et al., 2017):

this tool is used to evaluate resilience and future orientation among participants. These two constructs are essential as they are associated with the construction and planning of the future. The questionnaire consists of 19 items, to which respondents reply using a 5-point Likert scale, indicating their level of agreement with the statements provided. Here, a value of 1 represents "not at all," while a value of 5

represents "very much," with the intermediate numbers representing varying degrees of agreement. The two constructs measured by this tool are divided as follows:

- 1) *Future Orientation* ($\alpha = .88$): future orientation refers to the thoughts, feelings, and ideas that a person may have regarding their future. This factor is assessed using 11 items. Examples of statements include “*I have many aspirations about my future*” and “*I have some specific goals for my future.*”
- 2) *Resilience* ($\alpha = .88$): defined as the fundamental capacity to face adverse situations, challenges, and uncertainties that the future presents. This construct is measured using the remaining 8 items of the tool. Examples of statements include “*I always work hard to achieve my goals*” and “*I don't easily get discouraged after a failure.*”

- **Il futuro è ormai dietro l'angolo...cosa ci riserva? Un questionario sugli obiettivi dell'ONU in favore di uno sviluppo sostenibile e inclusivo** (*The Future is Just Around the Corner... What Does It Hold for Us? A Questionnaire on the UN Goals for Sustainable and Inclusive Development*) (Soresi, Nota, & Santilli, 2019): The participants are encouraged to reflect on their future and the choices they will need to make with a greater focus on altruism and the common good. The assessment is done using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represents “Not at all” and 5 represents “Very much.” The questionnaire consists of 34 items, with two items for each of the 17 goals proposed in the UN's 2030 Agenda. It asks participants to evaluate how much they believe these future scenarios will influence their quality of life and their educational and professional choices. Additionally, the test evaluates two main factors:

- 1) *Tendency to Consider Global Challenges in Determining the Levels of One's Own and Others' Quality of Life* ($\alpha = .92$): This factor consists of 17 items. An example of such an item is: "In the future, there will still be much to do to achieve fair wealth distribution. Could this issue, the reduction of the gap between rich and poor, affect your future and influence the quality of life of those around you?"
 - 2) *Tendency to Consider Global Challenges in One's Educational and Professional Choices* ($\alpha = .93$): This factor consists of 17 items. An example is: "In the future, there will still be much to do to improve people's physical and psychological health conditions, regardless of where they live or their economic means. How much could the issue of health promotion influence your future educational and professional choices?"
- **Thoughts on Development and the Future Economy** (Perry, 2005; Italian adaptation by Soresi and Nota, 2018): the perception of well-being and future fulfillment can be influenced by one's inclination towards these two opposing economic models and is connected to the impact of changes and developments occurring in the labor market and the economy of a country. Due to these shifts, economists and scholars of change propose different development hypotheses. The goal is, therefore, to assess which economic mindset might either facilitate or hinder future employment opportunities and/or professional achievement. This questionnaire aims to present various economic development models, asking participants to evaluate how well these models might support or hinder future employment opportunities and professional satisfaction. The goal of this tool is to encourage thoughtful reflection on a liberal view of the economy. The questionnaire

consists of 11 items focusing on themes such as well-being and future fulfilment ($\alpha = .78$). Examples of items include: “To promote employment and professional achievement, emphasis should be placed on competition, which motivates people to strive and develop new ideas”; “To support economic and employment growth, wealth and well-being should be distributed equitably”; and “Poverty and unemployment are more related to how the economy is regulated and how social supports and opportunities are managed than to individual factors.” Responses are measured on a 5-point scale, where 1 indicates “you consider this way of thinking very inadequate for your employment and professional fulfilment,” and 5 indicates “you consider this way of thinking very adequate for your employment and professional fulfilment.”

3.2.3. Procedure

The electronic questionnaire “Parents between Present and Future” (see Appendix B) was distributed via the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram, particularly through the profile “*Il Parto Positivo – BabyBrains*” (which, among its activities, facilitates the recruitment of participants for academic research aimed at parents) and Facebook groups such as “*Mamme Studentesse*,” “*Crescere Insieme, disciplina dolce e dintorni*,” “*Essere Mamme a Treviso*,” and “*Il Club delle Mamme*.”

Participants self-administered the questionnaire via Google Forms, providing consent for their data to be used anonymously and in aggregate form for this study. At any point, they could exit the questionnaire, and contact information was provided for any inquiries or clarifications.

3.3. Results

3.3.1. Preliminary Analysis

In order to investigate the preliminary correlations between the variables measured through the questionnaire, a bivariate correlational analysis was conducted using Pearson's r^* coefficient, with the support of the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) software.

Table 1 Preliminary Analysis - Pearson Correlation

Correlations										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1	,525**	,733**	,376**	,453**	,214**	-0,053	0,136	,343**	,585**
2		1	,461**	,275**	,349**	,163*	-0,002	0,033	,326**	,386**
3			1	,297**	,295**	0,148	-0,135	0,137	,326**	,428**
4				1	,316**	0,156	-0,078	0,073	,359**	,324**
5					1	,275**	0,124	0,062	,276**	,656**
6						1	-0,090	,305**	,167*	,193*
7							1	-,424**	0,069	
8								1	0,098	0,016
9									1	,498**
10										1

** . The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

* . The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

Legend:

- 1 = Beliefs in one's educational abilities
- 2 = Beliefs in one's ability to stay calm and interact positively with family members
- 3= Beliefs in one's ability to support children's autonomy and decision-making skills
- 4 = Life Satisfaction
- 5 = Courage
- 6 = Sustainability
- 7 = Neoliberalism (Conservative economy)
- 8 = Solidarity economy
- 9 = Future Orientation
- 10 = Resilience

As highlighted in the table, the analysis reveals a significant positive correlation between propensity towards sustainability and belief in one's parenting abilities, specifically for the dimensions related to educational capabilities ($r=.214$) and the ability to remain calm and interact positively with family members ($r = .163$), as well as courage ($r = .275$). Moreover there is a significant positive correlation between future orientation and sustainability ($r =$

.167), belief in one's parenting abilities, in specific with the belief in one's educational abilities ($r = .343$), in the ability to stay calm and interact positively with family members ($r = .326$) and in the ability ($r = .326$, and as well as with propensity towards sustainability ($r = .167$).

Additionally, a negative correlation is observed between propensity towards neoliberalism and sustainability ($r = -.090$).

3.3.2. Analysis of Variance

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess whether there were statistically significant differences between parents with a higher propensity towards a solidarity economy model and those with a higher propensity towards a neoliberal economy model.

The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in the sustainability variable [$F(1;156) = 12.034, p = .001$]. Specifically, parents with a higher propensity towards a solidarity economy model showed higher levels of sustainability compared to parents with a lower propensity towards a solidarity economy model (see Table 2).

Table 2 Hypothesis I – Analysis of Variance

	< Solidarity economy		> Solidarity economy		total	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	44,71	6,55	46,78	7,70	45,73	7,19
2	18,26	3,45	18,51	3,99	18,38	3,72
3	25,95	3,89	27,08	4,23	26,50	4,09
4	24,41	5,28	25,17	5,56	24,78	5,41
5	28,50	6,22	29,34	6,94	28,91	6,57
6	65,70	11,39	72,08	11,65	68,83	11,92
9	40,70	8,35	41,29	8,91	40,99	8,60
10	29,41	5,17	29,22	5,20	29,32	5,17

Legend:

- 1 = Beliefs in one’s educational abilities
- 2 = Beliefs in one’s ability to stay calm and interact positively with family members
- 3= Beliefs in one’s ability to support children’s autonomy and decision-making skills
- 4 = Life Satisfaction
- 5 = Courage
- 6 = Sustainability
- 7 = Neoliberalism (Conservative economy)
- 8 = Solidarity economy
- 9 = Future Orientation
- 10 = Resilience

3.3.4. Linear Regression Analysis

To investigate the second hypothesis, which states:

"The propensity towards a solidarity economy model in parents is predictive of propensity towards sustainability"

a linear regression analysis was performed. The analysis shows that the model, which considers the solidarity economy as a predictor of sustainability, is significant and explains 10% of the variance (see Table 3).

Table 3 Hypothesis II – Linear Regression Analysis

	B	ES	Beta	t	Sign.	R-squared	F
Solidarity Economy	43,57	6,40		6,81	.001	.10	15,90
	0,87	0,22	0,31	3,99	.001		

Dependent Variable: **Sustainability**

3.4. Discussion

The study aimed to explore whether:

- I. *"Parents with a greater propensity toward a solidarity economy model exhibit higher levels of propensity toward sustainability."*

As analysed in the first chapter, the literature identifies challenges faced by parents in the post-industrial era, where parental attitudes are influenced by neoliberal values. These challenges include:

- 1) *Individualistic Perspective*: The neoliberal emphasis on individual achievement and responsibility (Beck, 1986; Harwood et al., 2009; Fevre et al., 2020; Ehrstein et al., 2020).
- 2) *Pressure for Maximum Personal Achievement*: The drive for personal success and achievement, often resulting in intense parental expectations (Sharon, 1996; Bjorklund et al., 2002; Bryanton & Beck, 2010; Brown, 2015; Scharff, 2016; Jarvis & Georgeson, 2017; Colamedici & Gancitano, 2018; Ehrstein et al., 2020).
- 3) *Child as an Individual to Be Both Nurtured and Protected*: The view of children as individuals who need to develop their talents while being shielded from potential risks by an all-powerful parent (Furedi, 2002; Layard & Dunn, 2009; Fraser, 2016; Jarvis & Georgeson, 2017; Faircloth, 2023).

This perspective creates increasing pressure on parents, who come to feel a heavy responsibility for their children's developmental outcomes, under societal scrutiny (Lee, 2011; Shirani et al., 2012; Edwards & Gillies, 2013). This pressure contributes to the development of *intensive parenting* (Hays, 1996; Jarvis & Georgeson, 2017; Faircloth, 2023) and *helicopter parenting* (Lee & Macvarish, 2020), which in its extreme forms can have detrimental effects on both the well-being of children and parents (Odenweller et al., 2014; Schiffrin et al., 2015; Reed et al., 2016; Turner et al., 2023), including phenomena such as *parental burnout* (Brianda et al., 2020; Mikolajczak & Roskam, 2020; Mikolajczak et al., 2021).

Based on these assumptions, the study aimed to investigate whether parents with a greater inclination towards social sustainability values had higher levels of sustainability compared to those more inclined toward a solidarity economic model. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in the sustainability variable ($F(1;156)$). Specifically, parents with a stronger inclination toward a solidarity economy exhibited higher levels of sustainability compared to parents with a weaker inclination toward a solidarity economy. Conversely, parents with a lower inclination toward the solidarity economic model demonstrated lower levels of sustainability.

Secondly, the study aimed to investigate whether:

II. "The inclination towards a solidarity economic model in parents is a predictor of their inclination towards sustainability."

As reviewed in the literature, achieving sustainable development goals involves addressing three pillars: environmental sustainability, sustainable economic development (or solidarity

economy), and social sustainability (Barron, Cord, Cuesta, & Larson, 2023). Specifically, social sustainability serves as a crucial link between these three pillars and is fundamental to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda (Cuthill, 2010). Social sustainability goals encompass aspects such as the protection and promotion of physical and mental health, equal opportunities for all genders, access to quality education, building safe communities, and taking actions to ensure that future generations do not face disadvantages compared to previous ones (Partridge, 2014).

In light of this, the study explored whether a parent's inclination towards a solidarity economic model could predict their inclination towards sustainability. The analysis indicated that the model considering solidarity economy as a predictor of sustainability is significant and explains 10% of the variance.

Conclusion

This study fits into a framework that examines the contemporary challenges faced by parents, where the well-being of both the parents and their children—who represent the future society—is crucial. Literature highlights how the neoliberal model influences not only political and economic decisions in our society but also penetrates cultural values, psychological and emotional spheres, and even affects the structuring of self-image. This has repercussions on parenting attitudes: in the "Risk Society," children are seen as both extremely vulnerable beings and potential adults whose talents need to be discovered and developed to equip them for future uncertainties.

Parenting has thus evolved from a role to a task that requires specific skills (i.e., parent skills) to be developed with the indispensable help of experts. This approach to parenting is framed within the concept of *intensive parenting*, defined by Hays (1996) as an ideology that compels parents to invest a significant amount of time, energy, and economic resources in raising their children. Although this ideology is not literally implemented by all parents, it serves as a normative standard for evaluating parental performance.

As children grow, extreme manifestations of intensive parenting can lead to what is known as *helicopter parenting*. This style of parenting has been associated with authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, where the "hovering" parent becomes intrusive in the child's personal choices and dynamics to prevent failure. It stands in contrast to parenting styles that support autonomy, self-efficacy, and provide emotional support to children.

The research has highlighted the negative effects of helicopter parenting on children, particularly in the areas of mental health (presence of depressive symptoms and anxiety

disorders), the perception of a judgmental and unsupportive family environment, and reduced levels of autonomy, self-efficacy, resilience, and career adaptability.

From the parents' perspective, intensive parenting and helicopter parenting have been associated with the onset of *parental burnout* (PB), which occurs when the stress derived from the parental role severely overwhelms the parent's resources and manifests with specific symptoms, indicative of frequency and duration: frustration, emotional detachment, and distancing from the parental role. These symptoms can be experienced occasionally by many parents without constituting the syndrome. Risk factors for PB related to parents have been identified, including: the pursuit of perfection, lack of emotion and stress management skills, and insufficient support from the co-parent or social network.

The literature clearly indicates the need for interventions aimed at reducing the phenomenon of intensive parenting and the associated issues. However, it is also noted that proposals focused on developing parenting skills or encouraging less intense involvement in parenting have not proven effective. At the same time, there is a lack of a clear structured intervention proposal.

Given these premises, it is possible to summarize the findings from the literature, which are:

- The matrix of intensive parenting is rooted in values associated with the neoliberal economic model.
- The principles underlying social sustainability can influence parenting style with positive developmental outcomes.

This study aimed to investigate whether parents' propensity toward a solidarity-based economic model—contrasted with the neoliberal model—corresponds to higher levels of

sustainability and whether this propensity is predictive of sustainability. The results confirmed both hypotheses.

From this, it can be inferred that a personal inclination away from neoliberal values paves the way for a propensity towards sustainability, which underpins the development of a more inclusive and sustainable future society. This propensity represents a set of principles that can guide parenting styles for more favorable developmental outcomes. Furthermore, preliminary analyses showed a significant positive correlation between sustainability propensity and beliefs in one's parenting capabilities, courage, and future orientation.

Practical implications

It is therefore possible to imagine programs for parents with a different goal than developing parenting skills, which risk generating further stress and social pressure on parents. These programs could exacerbate the social distance between medium-high income families, who can more easily access and implement parent training, and low-income families, who not only struggle to access such resources but also face standards that are even more unattainable than those already imposed by neoliberal society.

As described in the second chapter, this work has developed an intervention proposal aimed at parents of children aged 0 to 6 years. To preliminarily explore existing programs for parents in the 0-6 age range, a search was conducted using Google with keywords such as “parenting courses,” “mothers’ courses,” and “family courses.” This search revealed that out of 82 parent training programs available online throughout Italy and in person in the provinces of Treviso, Padova, and Vicenza, 24.6% (n. 30) were in the field of childcare (e.g., breastfeeding, weaning, infant massage, managing baby’s sleep, etc.), 11.5% (n. 14) were in

the area of health prevention and promotion (e.g., first aid and pediatric choking prevention, safety, allergies, ophthalmology, and dentistry), and 30.4% (n. 37) were in the psychoeducational field (e.g., rules and limits, choice of educational style, parental behavior and its effects on children, emotions, self-soothing, digitalization, peaceful sleep, family changes, etc.) (see Appendix B).

Consistent with findings in the scientific literature, issues of sustainability and social inclusion do not appear in the programs offered to parents, whether by public or private entities. Furthermore, the majority of programs (96.3%, n. 79) among those reviewed are provided in a face-to-face format aimed at developing parenting skills. Some programs are offered as workshops, which, while providing scientific and/or psychoeducational information, do not prescribe a preferred parenting style and do not offer specific guidance to parents, instead allowing them to integrate the information into their daily lives (3.7%, n. 3) (see Appendix B).

The intervention proposal developed for this research was structured as a workshop to provide a space for reflection and sharing. This format allows parents to explore and develop a critical perspective on the neoliberal-inspired social model they are immersed in, the pressures they perceive regarding their parental role, and how this influences their educational choices and the lives of their children in building an inclusive and sustainable future and a more cohesive and resilient society for the challenges ahead.

In May 2024, the pilot project for the workshop “GEN-ALPHA: Genitori di Nuova Generazione” (GEN-ALPHA: New Generation Parents) was proposed to families with children aged 0 to 6 years in a province in northeastern Italy at a private nursery school. The workshop had 8 participants, including 7 women and 1 man. Some interesting aspects

emerged for this research, collected through prompt questions posed at the beginning of each session:

- Regarding concerns and difficulties, responses to the prompt questions revealed that parents fear not providing the “right” tools, not being able to support their children through current challenges (e.g., the birth of a sibling), not supporting their children emotionally, as well as practical issues related to sleep management and work-family balance.
- In terms of problems, issues emerged around time management with children, logistical and organizational challenges, feelings of guilt, managing children's emotions, encouraging uniqueness and non-conformity, and the weight of others' judgments about their choices.
- Regarding their own future, participants spoke of challenges, a sense of suspension, haste, lack of time, an “uphill” future, but also goals to achieve, a “bright” outlook, and a desire to “dive in with a smile.” As for hopes for their children’s future, responses focused on desires for peace, harmony, self-respect, hope for finding support in difficulties, calm and less frenzy, satisfaction, and achieving their own dreams.

At the end of the sessions, participants completed a brief questionnaire with a qualitative section. For this study, it is noteworthy that by the end of the workshop, participants:

- Displayed a critical perspective on neoliberal assumptions and reported feeling “less alone in this chaos.”
- Appreciated the discussion on global themes and reflection on concepts of independence and interdependence.

- Expressed satisfaction for having found a space for discussion, listening, reflection, and building awareness.
- Felt more effective in providing tools for the future, desired to reduce feelings of pressure and performance, and envisioned their children's future society as more inclusive and harmonious.

Limits of the Research and Future Implications.

This study has some limitations. Despite the large sample size, it was not possible to track the geographic origin of the respondents, which prevents an assessment of the implications and influence of different social contexts related to regional origins. Additionally, 95.5% of the participants are mothers, while only 4.5% are fathers, which limits the ability to detect significant gender differences and highlights the perspective of Italian mothers. For the future, it would be desirable to conduct research that tracks the regional origin of participants and assesses how context influences the variables studied, and also to include more fathers, for example by revising or expanding the recruitment methods.

Furthermore, a limitation lies in the quantitative methodology adopted for the research: the use of qualitative methods could have significantly enriched the results. In the future, it would be advisable to employ different tools to analyze the study variables.

Lastly, the workshop presented in this intervention included a participant number that was not sufficiently large to validate it. For future efforts, it might be worth considering offering it to a larger number of parents simultaneously with the collection of pre- and post-intervention data through a qualitative questionnaire, in order to assess whether there are significant changes in the constructs under investigation.

Despite its limitations, this study aims to serve as a starting point for re-evaluating the role of parents and interventions directed at them from the perspective of promoting mental health in the present and building a more sustainable and inclusive society for the future.

*“We don’t have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in change.
Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.”*

Howard Zinn

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Appendix A

INTRODUZIONE

Nell'ambito del Laboratorio LaRIOS dell'Università di Padova ci stiamo occupando dei problemi educativi che i genitori possono sperimentare ai giorni d'oggi in considerazione dei tempi difficili che stiamo vivendo. L'essere genitore è infatti un compito impegnativo e le condizioni che stiamo vivendo da un punto di vista socio-economico possono porre le persone di fronte a sfide nuove.

Pensare che si può costruire un futuro migliore per se stessi/e e i propri familiari, che l'impegno aumenta le possibilità di svolgere al meglio il proprio compito di genitori, che è importante avere obiettivi a breve e lungo termine, sono tutte considerazioni che sostengono le persone nell'affrontare le sfide che incontrano garantendosi maggiori possibilità di successo e una migliore qualità di vita.

Tenendo conto di ciò, di seguito le saranno proposti una serie di questionari al fine di stimolarla a riflettere su alcune risorse positive per il suo compito genitoriale e sul ruolo genitoriale anche in relazione ai contesti sociali e lavorativi in cui ci troviamo a vivere e in cui suo figlio/sua figlia si troverà a vivere nel prossimo futuro.

Le ricordiamo che le risposte che vengono raccolte sono vincolate al segreto professionale e non possono essere perciò divulgate. Inoltre, se lo desidera, può ricevere una relazione personalizzata su alcuni loro punti di forza. Chi è interessato a ricevere questa relazione personalizzata è invitato a indicare il proprio nome e cognome. Anche la relazione è vincolata al segreto professionale e verrà consegnata agli interessati in busta chiusa. Chi non fosse interessato a ricevere la relazione è libero di non indicare nome e cognome.

Nome _____ Cognome _____ Età: _____

Titolo di studio posseduto _____

Professione svolta _____

Relativamente all'essere genitore, ha un figlio o una figlia per cui nutre particolari preoccupazioni? Sì No

Se sì, che tipo di difficoltà presenta?

QUANTA FIDUCIA NUTRO NELLE MIE CAPACITA' DI GENITORE?

Istruzioni

Questo questionario contiene una serie di affermazioni a proposito dell'educazione dei figli. Le legga con attenzione una alla volta e, pensando alla sua vita di genitore, indichi con una crocetta quanto pensa di poter concordare con esse. Nel farlo tenga presente che:

se segna **1** vuol dire che la frase **non descrive per nulla** la sua attuale situazione e **7** che la **descrive perfettamente**.

Può ovviamente utilizzare anche gli altri valori (2, 3, 4, 5 e 6), che indicano posizioni intermedie. Ciò che riporterà su questo questionario è tutelato dal segreto professionale

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Sono un genitore che è capace di insegnare ai propri figli come ci si deve comportare.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Sono un genitore che è in grado di far fronte anche ai comportamenti inadeguati dei propri figli.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Sono un buon modello per i miei figli.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. So come e quando premiare adeguatamente i miei figli.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Sono un genitore che sa 'come prendere' i propri figli.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Sono solito/a evitare di litigare con il mio coniuge davanti ai figli.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Sono in grado di fornire ai miei figli l'aiuto di cui necessitano.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Sono un genitore che sa farsi ascoltare dai propri figli.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I miei figli seguono i miei consigli.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Mi considero in grado di affrontare qualsiasi problema possa capitare ai miei familiari.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Con i miei figli sono in grado di non perdere la pazienza.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Penso di conoscere bene le effettive capacità dei miei figli.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Penso di conoscere bene ciò che effettivamente interessa ai miei figli.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Sono in grado di criticare i miei figli senza perdere la pazienza.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. So come stimolare gli interessi dei miei figli.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Mi considero capace di non imporre le mie idee ai miei figli.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Sono in grado di aiutare i miei figli a prendere decisioni importanti per la loro vita.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Sono in grado di far ragionare i miei figli a proposito delle loro idee e delle loro azioni.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE

(Diener et al., 1985)

Istruzioni

Qui di seguito sono riportate alcune frasi relative alla soddisfazione nella vita. Non ci sono risposte giuste o sbagliate, ciò che è importante è che esprima esclusivamente il suo punto di vista.

Legga attentamente ogni affermazione e indichi il suo accordo o disaccordo, tenendo conto che:

1 = Completamente in disaccordo;

2 = Disaccordo;

3 = Abbastanza in disaccordo;

4 = Né d'accordo né in disaccordo;

5 = Abbastanza d'accordo;

6 = D'accordo;

7 = Completamente d'accordo.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Il più delle volte la mia vita è vicina al mio ideale di vita.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Le condizioni della mia vita sono eccellenti.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Sono soddisfatto/a della mia vita.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Finora ho ottenuto le cose importanti che voglio dalla vita.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Se io potessi rivivere la mia vita, non cambierei quasi nulla.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

IL CORAGGIO

(Norton & Weiss, 2009)

Istruzioni

Di seguito sono riportate una serie di affermazioni che le persone hanno espresso a proposito del coraggio. Legga attentamente ciascuna affermazione e indichi quanto spesso ritiene di comportarsi nel modo indicato. Non ci sono risposte giuste o sbagliate, ciò che conta è il suo modo di pensare e comportarsi. Nel fornire le sue risposte tenga presente che 1 sta per 'mai' e 7 sta per 'sempre'. Può ovviamente utilizzare anche gli altri valori, dal 2 al 6, che rappresentano valori intermedi:

1 = Non mi comporto mai così;

2 = Mi comporto così pochissime volte;

3 = Mi comporto così qualche volta;

4 = Mi comporto così abbastanza spesso;

5 = Mi comporto così spesso;

6 = Mi comporto così molto spesso;

7 = Mi comporto sempre così.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Tendo ad affrontare le mie paure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Anche se sono spaventato/a, vado avanti fino a quando non ho fatto quello che devo fare.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Faccio delle cose anche se mi sembrano pericolose.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Se sono preoccupato/a o in ansia per qualcosa, la faccio o la affronto in ogni caso.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Se c'è una ragione importante per affrontare qualcosa che mi spaventa la affronto.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Anche se qualcosa mi spaventa, non mi tiro indietro.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DESIGNING MY FUTURE

Istruzioni

Di seguito vengono riportate delle frasi che si riferiscono a cose che le persone potrebbero pensare o fare. Le legga una alla volta e risponda indicando quanto ogni frase la descrive. Nel fornire le sue risposte tenga presente che:

- 1 sta per **“molto poco”**;
- 2 sta per **“poco”**;
- 3 sta per **“abbastanza”**;
- 4 sta per **“molto”**;
- 5 sta per **“moltissimo”**.

Non ci sono risposte giuste o risposte sbagliate; ciò che è importante è il suo modo di pensare e di comportarsi.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Guardare avanti mi fa sentire pieno/a di energia.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Mi piace pensare a dove mi troverò tra qualche anno.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. A proposito del mio futuro ho molte aspirazioni.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. L'idea di poter in futuro realizzare i miei sogni mi appassiona sin d'ora.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Pensare al futuro mi emoziona.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Pensare alla mia vita futura mi riempie di speranza.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Mi piace sognare ad occhi aperti su ciò che il mio futuro mi riserverà.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Costruire un futuro positivo per me è qualcosa a cui penso spesso.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Mi piace pensare ad obiettivi che debbo ancora considerare con attenzione.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Per il mio futuro ho alcuni obiettivi ben precisi.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Quando penso al mio futuro punto l'attenzione sul tipo di persona che voglio essere.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Mi considero una persona forte.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Mi impegno sempre molto per raggiungere i miei obiettivi.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Mi considero in grado di affrontare tutto ciò che potrebbe capitarmi.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Anche sotto pressione riesco a concentrarmi e a pensare con lucidità, con attenzione.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Riesco a vedere anche gli aspetti ironici delle cose.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Posso farcela a raggiungere i miei obiettivi.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Aver affrontato situazioni di stress mi ha reso più forte.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Dopo un fallimento non mi scoraggio facilmente.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Il futuro è ormai dietro l'angolo... cosa ci riserva? Un questionario sugli obiettivi dell'ONU in favore di uno sviluppo sostenibile e inclusivo

Salvatore Soresi e Laura Nota

Istruzioni

Secondo alcune recenti riflessioni a livello internazionale e relativamente al futuro del nostro mondo, anche il mondo del lavoro e così anche coloro che hanno ruoli professionali dovrebbero provare a considerare l'opportunità di accettare qualche sacrificio e rinvio di piaceri, gratificazioni e soddisfazioni in favore del perseguimento di obiettivi probabilmente più impegnativi, ma, contemporaneamente, più rilevanti da un punto di vista sociale e maggiormente in grado di generare benessere e soddisfazione.

Questo questionario presenta alcuni scenari futuri di cui, anche secondo l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite (ONU), dovremmo farci carico dal momento che la qualità della vita delle prossime generazioni dipenderà anche da come riusciremo a fronteggiare una serie preoccupante di problemi e difficoltà. Tutto questo dovrebbe essere considerato con attenzione anche da coloro che hanno a cuore i processi di inclusione delle persone. Qui di seguito, parafrasando quanto in diverse occasioni ha suggerito l'ONU, saranno presentati, uno alla volta, i temi che l'umanità tutta dovrà impegnarsi a considerare in favore di un futuro di qualità per tutti.

Pensando a ciò la preghiamo di riflettere su ciascuno di essi ed indicare:

- a) Quanto ciascuno di questi temi potrà influenzare anche la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto;
- b) Quanto ciascuno di questi temi potrebbe interessare anche le sue scelte e azioni professionali.

1. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per ottenere concretamente un'equa distribuzione della ricchezza.

Questo, il tema della riduzione del divario tra ricchi e poveri, potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema dell'accesso alle risorse economiche e ad una loro più equa distribuzione quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

2. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per porre fine a tutte le forme di malnutrizione esistenti nel mondo.

Questo potrebbe riguardare anche il suo futuro ed influenzare la qualità della vita di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema dell'alimentazione e della distribuzione di un cibo sicuro e nutriente quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

3. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per far sì che migliorino le condizioni di salute, fisica e psicologica, delle persone, indipendentemente da dove vivono, dalla loro possibilità economiche, ecc.

Questo, il tema della promozione della salute, potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema della promozione della salute quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

4. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per far sì che si possa garantire effettivamente a tutti una istruzione di qualità.

Questo, il tema dell'accesso ad una istruzione di qualità per tutti, potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema dell'accesso ad una istruzione di qualità per tutti quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

5. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per far sì che si possa garantire una effettiva parità tra uomini e donne eliminando tutte le forme di discriminazione e violenza.

Il tema del perseguimento di una effettiva parità di genere potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema del perseguimento di una effettiva parità di genere quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

6. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per far sì che si possa garantire la salvaguardia delle risorse idriche e una gestione che permetta a tutti di avere acqua potabile.

Il tema della salvaguardia delle risorse idriche potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema della gestione delle risorse idriche quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

7. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per far sì che si possa puntare sull'utilizzo generalizzato di energie rinnovabili e rendere accessibili servizi energetici a prezzi adeguati per tutti.

Il tema delle energie rinnovabili potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema delle energie rinnovabili quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

8. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per far sì che tutti possano svolgere lavori legali e dignitosi.

Questo, il tema della promozione del lavoro dignitoso per tutti, potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema della promozione del lavoro dignitoso quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

9. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per far sì che si possa promuovere, grazie all'utilizzo delle innovazioni tecnologiche, una crescita economica sostenibile ed inclusiva.

Questo, il tema di una crescita economica effettivamente sostenibile ed inclusiva, potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema di una crescita economica effettivamente sostenibile ed inclusiva quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

10. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per la riduzione delle disuguaglianze sia all'interno dei paesi che fra i paesi, per garantire pari opportunità, diritti, mobilità, ecc.

Questo, il tema della riduzione delle disuguaglianze fra cittadini, anche di paesi diversi, potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema della riduzione delle disuguaglianze quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

11. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per far sì che le nostre città diventino luoghi attenti alla sostenibilità, all'inclusione e alla partecipazione di tutti i cittadini.

Questo, il tema della costruzione di città sostenibili, inclusive, accessibili, potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema della costruzione di città sostenibili, inclusive, accessibili quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

12. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per ridurre lo spreco alimentare, la produzione di rifiuti, e il consumo sfrenato delle risorse naturali.

Questo, il tema gestione dello spreco e di un uso sostenibile ed adeguato delle risorse naturali, potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema della gestione dello spreco e di un uso sostenibile ed adeguato delle risorse naturali quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

13. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per far sì che si adottino misure adeguate per combattere il cambiamento climatico e per fronteggiare le conseguenze di ogni forma di inquinamento.

Il tema del cambiamento climatico e dell'inquinamento potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema del cambiamento climatico e dell'inquinamento quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

14. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare in difesa dei fiumi, dei mari, degli oceani e per la gestione sostenibile di tutti gli eco-sistemi.

Questo tema della difesa della acque e degli ecosistemi potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema della difesa della acque e degli ecosistemi quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

15. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per gestire le foreste in modo sostenibile, per ridurre la desertificazione, e salvaguardare i nostri paesaggi.

Questo, il tema della gestione sostenibile degli eco-sistemi terrestri, delle foreste, delle zone verdi, potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema della gestione sostenibile degli eco-sistemi terrestri quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

16. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per ridurre lo sfruttamento, l'abuso, la corruzione, e la costruzione di società pacifiche a capaci di garantire equità, giustizia e partecipazione.

Questo, il tema della riduzione delle ingiustizie e della promozione della pace, potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema della riduzione delle ingiustizie e della promozione della pace quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

17. In futuro ci sarà sicuramente ancora molto da fare per favorire forme di cooperazione internazionale, accordi fra tutti i paesi che facilitino scambi equi e uno sviluppo sostenibile globale.

Questo, il tema di una cooperazione internazionale di qualità, potrebbe influenzare la qualità della sua vita e l'esistenza di coloro che le vivranno accanto?	1	2	3	4	5
Il tema di una cooperazione internazionale di qualità quanto potrebbe interessare le sue scelte e azioni professionali?	1	2	3	4	5

Pensieri sullo sviluppo e l'economia del futuro

(Perry, 2005; Adattamento italiano a cura di Soresi e Nota, 2018)

Istruzioni

Il benessere e la realizzazione futura delle persone sarà influenzato anche dai cambiamenti e dalle evoluzioni che si registreranno nel mondo del lavoro e nell'economia di un paese. Gli economisti e gli studiosi dei cambiamenti a cui stiamo andando incontro propongono ipotesi diverse di sviluppo. Questo questionario ne riassume alcune: alcune potrebbero essere ritenute completamente condivisibili, altre meno.

Pensando alle situazioni lavorative che la riguardano, quanto le sembrano adeguati i diversi modelli di sviluppo economico qui di seguito riportati?

Le chiediamo di leggere con attenzione le frasi qui di seguito riportate, una alla volta, e di indicare quanto, a suo avviso, l'adozione di quel determinato modo di pensare all'economia potrebbe favorire o ostacolare il futuro lavorativo che la riguarda.

Tenga presente che:

1: sta ad indicare che **considera quel modo di pensare molto inadeguato per il futuro professionale.**

5: sta ad indicare che **considera quel modo di pensare molto adeguato per il futuro professionale.**

Puoi ovviamente utilizzare anche gli altri valori (2, 3, 4) che rappresentano le posizioni intermedie.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Per promuovere l'occupazione e la realizzazione professionale si dovrebbe puntare soprattutto sulla competizione, che stimola le persone ad impegnarsi e a sviluppare nuove idee.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Per favorire l'economia, l'occupazione e la realizzazione professionale, si dovrebbero garantire guadagni maggiormente consistenti a coloro che hanno capacità di iniziativa e che lavorano con maggior impegno.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Per ridurre la povertà e il rischio di disoccupazione è necessario che le persone si diano effettivamente da fare. Il lavoro non c'è e non ci sarà solo per coloro che non lo cercano e non vogliono impegnarsi.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Per favorire lo sviluppo dell'economia e dell'occupazione è necessario fare in modo che la ricchezza e il benessere risultino equamente distribuiti	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Per favorire l'economia, lo stato dovrebbe avere la responsabilità di assicurare a tutti il necessario per vivere dignitosamente.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Per favorire l'economia, lo sviluppo e possibilità lavorative, si dovrebbe dare maggior spazio ai singoli cittadini, alla libera concorrenza, al privato e alla privatizzazione.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Per promuovere l'occupazione e la realizzazione professionale è necessario ridimensionare drasticamente il mito della competizione che avrebbe soprattutto aspetti negativi e farebbe emergere il peggio delle persone.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Per un futuro economico e sociale soddisfacente si dovrebbe aumentare la libera concorrenza facendo in modo che soprattutto le grandi aziende e le multinazionali non subiscano regolamentazioni da parte di stati e governi.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9. Per favorire l'economia, l'occupazione e la realizzazione professionale si dovrebbe favorire maggiormente la presenza, nel mercato del lavoro, di supporti e servizi forniti dello stato.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10. Per favorire l'economia, l'occupazione e la realizzazione professionale si dovrebbe far in modo che si riducano le distanze negli stipendi e che si realizzino effettivamente per tutti pari possibilità di guadagno.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11. Per favorire l'economia e l'occupazione c'è bisogno, soprattutto, che ogni persona si impegni maggiormente per procurarsi il necessario per vivere dignitosamente.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12. Per favorire lo sviluppo dell'economia e dell'occupazione bisogna accettare anche il fatto che necessariamente alcune persone possono arricchirsi a svantaggio di altri.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
13. La povertà e la disoccupazione più che dipendere dai singoli sono in relazione a come è regolamentata l'economia e a come sono organizzati e gestiti i supporti sociali e le opportunità che vengono date.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
14. Per un futuro economico e sociale soddisfacente gli stati dovrebbero sorvegliare e regolare in modo più attento e severo le grandi aziende e le multinazionali.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix B

TARGET	SUBJECT	FEE	RESOURCES	COURSE ORGANIZATION	GROUP TRAINING	DURATION	SPONSOR/PARTNER
parents 18-48 mo		x	on line recordings , slide, QA	online DL	no	1,5h	
parents 0-36 mo+	childcare	x	on line recordings , slide, QA	online DL/live	no		
parents +12 mo	childcare	x	on line recordings , slide, QA	online DL	no	0,5h	
parents +12 mo	psychoeducational	x	on line recordings , slide, QA	online DL	no	1,5h	
parents 0+	psychoeducational	x	online	online live	yes	10 lessons	
parents 0+	psychoeducational	x	online	online DL	no	2h	
parents 0+	childcare	x	online	online DL	no	2h	
parents 0+	psychoeducational	x	online	online DL	no	1h	
parents 0+	healthcare	x	online	online DL	no		
parents 0+	healthcare	x	online	online DL	no		
parents 0+	psychoeducational	x	online	online DL	no		
parents 0+	psychoeducational	x	online	online DL	no		
parents 0+	childcare	x	online	online DL	no		
parents 0+	psychoeducational	x	online	online DL	no		
parents 0+	psychoeducational	x	online	online DL	no		
parents 0+	childcare	x	online	online DL	no		
parents 0+	childcare	x	online	online DL	no		
parents 0-6 yr	psychoeducational	x		online live / in person	yes		

parents 0+	psychoeducational	x	book, manual	online live / in person	yes	24 H	
parents 18+	psychoeducational	0	on line recordings	online DL	no	10 lessons	Windtre
parents 0+	childcare	x	on line recordings	online DL	no		
parents 0+	childcare	0	on line recordings	online DL	no		
parents 0+	childcare	x	on line recordings	online DL	no		
parents 0+	childcare	x	on line recordings	online DL	no	8 lessons	
parents 0+	healthcare	x	on line recordings	online DL	no	4 lessons	
parents 0+	healthcare	x	on line recordings	online DL	no	13 lessons	
parents 0+	healthcare	x	on line recordings	online DL	no	5 lessons	
parents 0+	healthcare	x	on line recordings	online DL	no	10 lessons	
parents 0+	healthcare	x	on line recordings	online DL	no	16 lessons	
parents 0+	healthcare	x	on line recordings	online DL	no	12 lessons	
parents 0+	healthcare	x	on line recordings	online DL	no	11 lessons	
parents 0+	psychoeducational	x	on line recordings	online DL	no	1h	
parents 0+	psychoeducational	0	on line recordings	online DL	no	1h	
parents 0+	psychoeducational	0	on line recordings	online DL	no	1h	
parents 0+	psychoeducational	0	on line recordings	online DL	no	1h	
parents 18+	psychoeducational	x	on line recordings	online DL	no	4h	
parents 18+	psychoeducational	x	online	DL	no	1h	
parents 18+	psychoeducational	x	online	DL	no	1h	
parents 18+	psychoeducational	x	online	DL	no	1h	
parents 0+	psychoeducational	x	on line recordings	online DL	yes	21h	
parents 0-36 mo	psychoeducational	x	on line recordings , PDF, book	online DL	yes	8 modules	

parents 0-36 mo	psychoeducational	0	//	in person	yes	4,5h	
parents 0-36 mo	healthcare	0	//	in person	yes	4,5h	
parents 12-36 mo	psychoeducational	0	//	in person	yes	3h	
parents 0-12mo	childcare	0	//	in person	yes	6h	
parents 0-7 mo	childcare	x	//	in person	yes	8h	
parents 0+	childcare	x	//	in person	yes	n.d.	
parents -9mo / 24 mo	psychoeducational	x	//	in person	yes	5 modules	
parents 12m-6 yr	psychoeducational	x	//	in person	yes	7,5h	
parents 0+	childcare	x	//	in person	yes	3,5h	
parents 0+	psychoeducational	x	//	in person	yes	2h	
parents 0+ teenagers / grandparents	psychoeducational	x	//	in person	yes	2h	
parents 24m-6 yr	psychoeducational	x	//	in person	yes	2,5h	
parents 0+	psychoeducational	x	//	in person	yes	2,5h	
parents 0+ /grandparents /baby sitter	healthcare	x	//	in person	yes	3h	
parents 0-18 mo	childcare	x	online recordings, PDF	online DL	no	3h	
parents 0-5yr	healthcare	x	online recordings, PDF	online DL	no	2,5h	
parents 0-18 mo	childcare	x	online recordings, PDF	online DL	no	2h	
parents 6-36 mo	childcare	x	online recordings, PDF	online DL	no	2,5h	
parents 0+	childcare	x	online recordings, PDF	online DL	no	2h	

parents 0+	healthcare	x	online recordings, PDF	online DL	no	4h	
parents 0+	psychoeducational	x		online DL	no		Stokke
parents 0+	childcare	x		online DL	no		Stokke
parents 0+	childcare	x		online DL	no	3h	
parents 0+	childcare	x		online DL	no	2,5h	
parents 0-36 mo	psychoeducational	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0+	psychoeducational	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0-24mo	childcare	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0+	childcare	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0+	psychoeducational	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0+	healthcare	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0+	childcare	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0+	childcare	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0+	childcare	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0+	childcare	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0+	childcare	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0+	childcare	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0+	psychoeducational	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0+	childcare	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0+	psychoeducational	0		online - live	no	1h	Chicco
parents 0-48 mo	psychoeducational	x	booklet	online / in person	yes	6 modules	
parents 0-48 mo	psychoeducational	x	booklet	online / in person	yes	3 modules	