UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, LAW,
AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Master's degree in
Human Rights and Multi-level Governance

Save the Children and Educational Poverty

A case study of the NGO's impact in Italy

Supervisor: Prof. Pietro de Perini
Co-supervisor: Ludovica Aricò

*Candidate:*Sofia Vaz Guimarães Mendonça

Matriculation No.: 2072574

A.Y. 2023/2024

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of Save the Children in addressing educational poverty in Italy, with a focus on the organization's impact through initiatives such as "*Punto Luce*" and "Equip Today to Thrive Tomorrow (ET3)". Educational poverty, a multidimensional form of deprivation, impedes children's cognitive, emotional, and social development, perpetuating cycles of socio-economic inequality. The study explores this issue through a comprehensive analysis of relevant literature as well as international and regional legal frameworks. It further investigates how Save the Children operates within the international and Italian contexts, utilizing both theoretical and practical approaches to combat educational deprivation. Through case studies of the *"Punto Luce"* and ET3 programs, this research highlights the NGO's localized interventions aimed at providing children with access to academic and extracurricular support, fostering essential life skills for future success. Ultimately, this work argues that long-term, sustainable solutions are essential to effectively address educational poverty, and non-governmental organizations play a crucial role in bridging gaps between global frameworks and local implementation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

“The future is in the hands of children. Let every hungry child be fed, every sick child be treated, and every orphan, street child, or marginalized child be given protection and support.” (Eglantyne Jebb, 1919)

“Humanity owes the child the best it has to give.” (Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child, 1924)

ACRONYMS

AFL- American Federation of Labour

AU - African Union

CASEL - Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning

CoE- Council of Europe

CSOs - Civil Society Organizations

ECOSOC - United Nations Economic and Social Council

ET3 - Equip Today to Thrive Tomorrow

EU - European Union

ICCPR - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

INVALSI- Istituto Nazionale per la Valutazione del Sistema educativo di Istruzione e di formazione.

ILO - International Labour Organization

ISTAT- Istituto Nazionale di Statistica

MLG- Multi-Level Governance

NCLC- National Child Labor Committee

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

OECD - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OSCE - Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PISA - Program for International Student Assessment

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

SEL - Social and Emotional Learning

STEM- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

UDHR- Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN - United Nations

UNCRC - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNDP- United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

Introduction

Educational poverty represents a critical issue that extends beyond the lack of access to formal education. It is a multifaceted form of deprivation that encompasses the absence of material and non-material resources essential for a child's overall development. Educational poverty affects cognitive, emotional, and social growth, depriving children of the necessary tools to thrive in their adult life. As a result, these children are not only disadvantaged in their academic progress but also in many other life opportunities. This deprivation can perpetuate cycles of socio-economic inequality, where children from vulnerable backgrounds are denied access to opportunities that could help get them out of poverty. In Italy, educational poverty is particularly acute in southern regions, where geographic and socio-economic disparities exacerbate the issue.

Educational poverty is a concept rooted in both theoretical and empirical research, drawing on various academic perspectives. Scholars like Amartya Sen and Gary Becker have made significant contributions to the understanding of educational poverty by emphasizing the link between education and broader social and economic inequalities. Sen's capability approach views poverty not just as a lack of income but as a deprivation of the freedom to achieve one's full potential. Education, in this sense, is a critical tool for expanding individuals' capabilities, enabling them to lead more fulfilling lives. Becker's human capital theory similarly stresses the importance of education as an investment in an individual's future productivity, with higher levels of education leading to greater economic success. These theoretical frameworks help explain how educational poverty affects both individual life outcomes and societal development.

The concept of educational poverty encompasses a multidimensional understanding of child poverty, extending beyond the material aspects characteristic of mainstream poverty index, to include factors such as the learning environment, access to leisure, and sports. These elements are essential to guaranteeing dignified child development, especially for those from vulnerable backgrounds. If these factors are

overlooked, the cycle of poverty is perpetuated, preventing future generations to have access to more opportunities when compared to the previous generation.

This thesis seeks to explore these dimensions of educational poverty in Italy and assess the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), particularly Save the Children, in addressing both the theoretical and practical aspects of the problem. Save the Children has been instrumental in tackling educational poverty by intervening in both material and non-material dimensions, as well as in theory and practice to create holistic solutions that promote the comprehensive development of children.

Education plays a crucial role in both personal development and social development. Children who do not receive quality education are not only at risk of poor academic outcomes but are also less likely to succeed in other aspects of life. Educational poverty extends beyond the classroom; it impacts a child's capacity to develop essential life skills, such as social and emotional resilience, critical thinking, and adaptability which are more and more looked for in the labour market. For children in disadvantaged regions of Italy, particularly in the southern areas, these challenges are often compounded by systemic inequalities, including poor infrastructure, lack of access to digital tools, and limited extracurricular activities. This thesis aims to assess how NGOs like Save the Children have sought to combat these challenges through targeted, localized interventions.

The international legal framework on children's rights plays an important role in shaping policies and strategies aimed at combating educational poverty. The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is particularly relevant to this discussion, as it contains the right of every child to an education that nurtures their personality, talents, and abilities in a document that has been broadly ratified. The UNCRC provides a comprehensive understanding of what education should entail—not just formal schooling but also the development of respect for human rights, cultural diversity, and the child's emotional and social growth. These legal commitments should guide local efforts to reduce educational inequality, ensuring that children's rights to education are respected and promoted. Save the Children, operating within this legal framework, has taken a leading role in advocating for the protection and fulfillment of children's educational rights.

The methodology of this thesis includes a qualitative analysis of existing literature on educational poverty and case studies of Save the Children's initiatives in Italy. It draws from theoretical frameworks, legal documents, and program evaluations to assess the effectiveness of NGO interventions. Moreover, I was given access to internal documents on the explanation of *Punto Luce* activities, ET3 sessions and ET3 report which allowed me to build the case studies with trustworthy information.

The first chapter of will focus on a comprehensive examination of the international legal framework surrounding children's rights, with a particular focus on education. It will trace the historical development of legal instruments such as the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child , the 1959 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, leading up to the 1989 UNCRC, all of which form the foundation for modern children's rights.

Additionally, the chapter will cover important international actors such as the League of Nations, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations (UN), which have played a role in shaping children's rights and educational provisions. It will also explore the role of main regional human rights systems and how they incorporate (or not) international treaties on children's rights and more specifically the right to education.

The second chapter will explore educational poverty through a literature review, examining how it has been defined, measured, and addressed in academic discourse. The chapter will cover important socio-economic dimensions, highlighting the impact of educational poverty on both cognitive and non-cognitive skills. In order to do so we will recall the pioneer works of Daniele Checchi and Jutta Allmendinger, whose research highlights the links between educational inequality and broader social disparities and were the among first to introduce the term educational poverty to the academic dialogue will be discussed. The final session of this chapter will provide a brief examination of how NGOs, like Save the Children, function within multi-level governance frameworks to advocate for policy changes as representants of civil society.

The third chapter will present a historical overview of Save the Children, beginning with its founding by Eglantyne Jebb in 1919 in response to the devastation caused by World War I. The chapter will examine how Save the Children evolved to become a leading global advocate for children's rights and how it began operations in

Italy in 1947, focusing on education and child welfare. The chapter will analyze how Save the Children has adapted to changing challenges over the decades, maintaining its commitment to education and the well-being of children, particularly in Italy's most disadvantaged regions. Moreover, we will explore the development of Save the Children's Educational Poverty Index, drawing from initial documents up until its influence on official government indexes. This analysis will provide crucial context for understanding the organization's contemporary role in shaping policies and interventions to combat educational poverty in Italy.

The fourth chapter will provide case studies of Save the Children Italia's work in the combat on educational poverty, focusing on two key initiatives: *Punto Luce* and Equip Today to Thrive Tomorrow (ET3). The *Punto Luce* centers are Save the Children Italy main action to defy educational poverty and consist in offering academic support and leisure activities to children in marginalized communities through after-school programs, access to safe spaces that promote participation of the local community through partnerships with local government and civil society organizations as well as the parents and the students active voice. These centers have therefore become essential in providing opportunities for children to develop critical life skills beyond the classroom.

Additionally, within the broad *Punto Luce* framework of action, the ET3 is considered to be a pillar. It focused on developing the youngsters digital and technological skills, preparing adolescents to thrive in a modern, digitalized labour market while promoting gender sensitivity (specially when it comes to prejudices faced by women in STEM) and cultural diversity. These localized interventions have been instrumental in improving educational outcomes and fostering resilience and social inclusion among vulnerable children in Italy leading to the development of further initiatives that followed ET3's footsteps. Finally, basing on the analysis of ET3's report, this chapter will identify the program's strengths while also discuss the need for ongoing support and the adaptation of these programs to ensure their long-term success.

A central argument of this thesis is that addressing educational poverty requires long-term, sustainable interventions that go beyond temporary solutions. Programs like ET3 have shown significant success, but its continued impact depends on funding, political support, and the ability to scale these initiatives to other regions.

Ultimately, this thesis aims to demonstrate that educational poverty is a complex, multidimensional issue that requires a comprehensive and sustained approach. By analyzing Save the Children's work in Italy, this research will show how targeted interventions addressing both cognitive and non-cognitive skills can make a significant difference in reducing educational inequality. The case studies of Punto Luce and ET3 will illustrate the critical role that NGOs play in bridging the gap between international legal frameworks and local implementation. Through its analysis of Save the Children's initiatives, this thesis will contribute to a deeper understanding of how educational poverty can be effectively addressed through multi-level efforts.

1. The international legal framework in children's rights

Children nowadays are seen as a special category in society, recognized as a vulnerable group and therefore entitled to specific rights. This recognition derives from an understanding that children, due to their specificities, require special protection and care to ensure their well-being and proper growth. This perspective has gained significance over the years and is responsible for shaping policies, educational frameworks, and social services to safeguard children's welfare. Rights such as access to free and compulsory primary education, non-discrimination, and the best interest of the child are among the pillars of contemporary children's rights.

In the international legal context, however, the journey towards establishing binding, participative, and broadly ratified instruments for the protection of children's rights has been a complex and arduous one. This path has been marked by a series of significant movements and initiatives aimed at addressing and countering the extensive rights violations that have historically affected (and still affect) children across the globe. These movements relied on a broad participation of civil society that touched upon issues such as child labor, trafficking, abuse, neglect, and lack of access to education and healthcare.

In the late 1700s and early 1800s, factories in England and the U.S. began using child labor due to its cost-effectiveness. Children worked long hours under harsh conditions, prompting growing concern over their health and education by the mid-1800s. Reform movements, such as the Working Men's Party's 1876 proposal to ban employment of children under 14, and the American Federation of Labor's (AFL) 1881 resolution, played a crucial role in trying to combat this issue. These efforts led to the creation of organizations like the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) in 1904, which fought to end child labor and promote compulsory education (Paul, 2017). These were seen as one of the first organized efforts on the protection of children's rights.

In the following years, as a response to these widespread issues, various international bodies and organizations have worked towards the development and implementation of legal frameworks that offer robust protection for children. These efforts have culminated in the establishment of several key international instruments that

form the backbone of child protection laws and practices today. These instruments, which include conventions, treaties, and declarations, have been designed to ensure that children's rights are not only recognized but also actively upheld and enforced by nations worldwide having in mind the special needs of children (Smith, 2013).

In this section, we will explore the international legal road that culminated in the main instruments of child protection in action nowadays. We will shed light on the historical context and key milestones that have shaped the current landscape of children's rights, examining pivotal documents such as the Geneva Declaration of 1924, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child of 1959, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 (UNCRC), among others. Moreover, we will see how international agencies have contributed in this path and briefly observe the regional reflection of this scenario that culminated in the construction of regional treaties, emphasizing how much space children's rights and more specifically the right to education have in their agendas. This overview will provide a comprehensive understanding of how these legal instruments came to be, the challenges encountered along the way as well as their impact on the global efforts to protect and promote the rights of children.

1.1 The protection of the child in the League of Nations

It was the aftermath of World War I, a period characterized by hunger, displacements, and the multiplication of orphans, which, according to Moody, put into the center of the debate a need for a solution for children's survival (Moody 2015). In that context, within the framework of the League of Nations (The League)[1], the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the first international document to recognize the specific needs of children and the adult responsibility towards their protection, came into force.

This document was an adaptation of a statement adopted by the international Organization Save the Children Union, created in 1920, as a reaction to the devastating scenario faced by children in the period (Dijk, 1979). Save the Children Union's founder

[1]The League of Nations was established in 1919, after the end of World War I, as part of the Treaty of Versailles aiming to promote international cooperation and achieve peace and security(UN,1919).

Eglantyne Jebb sent the document to The League, stating that "The Child, it has been well said, is an international question'(Jebb, 1929, p. 29)[2].

The preamble of the five-article Declaration declares " that mankind owes to the Child the best that it has to give"(Geneva Declaration, 1924), a phrase that was remembered in documents to come. According to Kerber-Ganse, the main points present in the Declaration bring about Jebb's conviction that there should be a mutuality of giving and receiving when it comes to the relationship between the individual and the community, going beyond the bare minimum for survival. Moreover, the Declaration planted a seed for the protection of the rights to education, vocational training, protection against exploitation, consideration of the best interests of the child, participation in public issues, and the right to non-discrimination (Kerber-Ganse, 2015).

Although unanimously recognized by the forty-nine member States of The League on the 24 of September 1924, it is important to emphasize the nature of the instrument was non-binding and brought about some questioning.

> "A declaration, even though from such a high-ranking international body, is not an international Treaty, which defines rights and obligations of states parties. The Declaration adopted by the League of Nations did not require ratification by national parliaments and, consequently, it did not entitle children to rights. In this regard, the name "Declaration of Geneva on the *Rights* of the Child" (my italics) is misleading. The Declaration evoked a strong moral appeal. It expressed the longing of the international community for a sustainable peace based on children whose indispensable needs are satisfied" (Kerber-Ganse, 2015).

There was, therefore, still a lack of a robust and enforceable document in the field of Children's Rights. However, new actors were entering the international arena and they

[2] "The original organization, Save the Children Fund, was founded in Great Britain in 1919 by Eglantyne Jebb and her sister Dorothy Buxton to provide relief to starving children in Germany and Austria-Hungary during the Allied blockade, which continued after the end of World War I. The organization subsequently broadened its concern to the needs of children worldwide, eventually providing medical and child-care services, nutritional assistance, and family self-help and community-development projects.(Watson,2024)

would be of great importance in this path. One of them was the ILO, which will be explored in the following session.

1.2 The ILO framework to protect children at work

The post-first war period in the framework of children's rights was highly impacted by the creation of the ILO in 1919, as part of the Treaty of Versailles. The ILO was the first specialized agency related to the League of Nations and, although the main goals of this Organization and its founding mission were related to promoting labor peace and social justice, the ILO adopted important resolutions concerning the protection of children and young workers.

When looking at the Organization's constitution, we can see among its aims a reference to a central issue related to children's rights: child labour, giving great importance to education as a means to fight against it. The ILO's constitution of 1919 says "the abolition of child labour and the imposition of such limitations on the labour of young persons as shall permit the continuation of their education and assure their proper physical development"(ILO, 1919).

The years in between wars were characterized as standard settings when it came to the definition of the minimum working age in different sectors of society, inside both industrial and non-industrial spheres, and counted with key minimum age Conventions to discuss the topic(Quinn, 2019). Moreover, under the title "Employment of children", themes such as working during the night and working in unhealthy processes were discussed in the first International Labour Conference of the ILO in 1919. Although there was a relatively bigger rate of acceptance when it came to the establishment of a minimum age for employment in various sectors, the ratification rate was still low and many issues concerning child labour were still out of the legal standards reach (Fyfe, 2007).

With the outbreak of the Second World War, The League's purpose of peacekeeping had failed, and gradually a new Organization came into place in 1945, the UN.[3] The UN was created by 51 countries committed to "maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress,

[3] The United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO) took place in San Francisco on April 25, 1945, resulting in the final United Nations Charter. Delegates from 50 countries worldwide attended. (Fomerand, Lynch, 2024).

better living standards and human rights"(United Nations,1984). Within its structure, the UN relies on a broad number of specialized agencies, organs, and experts in many different fields.

Once The League was dissolved, the ILO became part of the framework of the UN. This, however, did not lead the ILO to abandon its fight against child labour, but rather the incorporation in the UN reinforced its mission and, particularly the attention to educational obligations.

In this context, the ILO adopted the Philadelphia Declaration which was incorporated into the Constitution of the Organization and "included a call for attention to children's welfare and equality of educational and vocational opportunity" (Quinn, 2019). Seeking to further strengthen and standardize the previous ILO's minimum age Conventions, in 1973 the Minimum Age Convention (N.138) was adopted. The minimum age established varied according to factors such as the level of danger encountered in the job as well as being directly connected to the completion of the compulsory years of schooling by the young worker. As a result, the established age ranged from fourteen to eighteen years depending on the variables mentioned (Quinn, 2019).

Moreover, as the years passed, in the 1980s, mostly due to movements coming from non-governmental organizations, there was a growing tendency to look at children coming from poor and marginalized backgrounds. In the 1983 International Labour Convention, the then director of ILO Francis Blanchard included in his report the direct relationship between poverty and child labour.

> "Child labour is rooted in poverty. Unemployment and underemployment, precarious incomes, low living standards, and insufficient opportunities for education and training are its underlying causes. Children work because they must — for their own survival and that of their families" (Blanchard,1983 on Quinn, 2019)

In 1999 the ILO produced yet another standard-setting document, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention. The Convention recalled important preceding instruments such as the 1973 Minimum Age Convention[4] and the 1989 UN Convention

[4] The 1973 and 1999 ILO Conventions are now the basis of a core labour standard.

on the Rights of the Child[5]. With the purpose of eliminating the worst forms of child labour, the Convention defined it as :

> "(a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
>
> (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
>
> (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
>
> (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children." (ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999)

Moreover, the Convention made an important connection between education and the eradication of the worst forms of child labour:

> "Each Member shall, taking into account the importance of education in eliminating child labor, take effective and time-bound measures to:
>
> (a) prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labour;
>
> (b) provide the necessary and appropriate direct assistance for the removal of children from the worst forms of child labour and for their rehabilitation and social integration;

[5] Using the definition of Child as all persons under the age of 18 as it its present on the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

(c) ensure access to free basic education, and, wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training, for all children removed from the worst forms of child labour;

(d) identify and reach out to children at special risk; and

(e) take account of the special situation of girls. (ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999)"

According to the UN, the 1999 ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour has reached universal ratification within the ILO, meaning that all 187 member States of the ILO are signatories of this document, which is an important achievement that also contributes to its better enforcement. The ILO reported that child labor and its most severe forms decreased by nearly 40% between 2000 and 2016, as more countries ratified international agreements and implemented laws and policies, including those setting minimum working ages (UN, 2020). It is important to emphasize that the Organization keeps on fighting against child labour and is an important ally in the promotion of the right to education.

1.3 The United Nations framework to protect children's rights

Apart from the previously mentioned ILO, two other UN agencies that follow more closely the issues constituting children's rights were established in the 1940s; they are the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) established in 1945, and UNICEF established in 1946, initially only as an emergency fund and later on becoming a permanent part of the Organization in 1953(Jolly Richard et al, 2009). Additionally, within the UN's legal framework and considered a milestone in the field of Human Rights Protection, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drafted by the UN Commission on Human Rights, and set forth by the UN General Assembly in 1948.

The previously mentioned 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924, although having the support of many of its adherents inside the UN, also received criticism. Among them was the UN Czech Delegation which noted that the Declaration was "outdated, not systematic as a whole and not sufficiently expert" (Czech Delegation,

1948). There was, therefore, a need for an updated and specific Charter on Children's Rights within the framework of the UN.

After consulting with national delegations, specialized agencies such as the ILO, UNESCO, and UNICEF, as well as International Non-Governmental Organizations involved in drawing up the Declaration of Geneva, the UN orchestrated the draft of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child that entered into force in 1959 (Moody,2015).

In its preamble, it describes its purpose as

> "that he (the child) may have a happy childhood and enjoy for his own good and for the good of society the rights and freedoms herein set forth, and calls upon parents, upon men and women as individuals, and upon voluntary organizations, local authorities, and national Governments to recognize these rights and strive for their observance by legislative and other measures progressively taken in accordance with the following principles" (UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child, 1959)

The UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child of 1959 was composed of ten principles. The first principle states the right to non-discrimination of the enjoyment of the rights outlined in the Convention, the second principle says that children are entitled to special protection in order to develop in the condition of freedom and dignity, moreover, this principle also emphasizes the paramount importance of taking into consideration the best interests of the child[6]. The third principle refers to the birthright to have a name and a nationality.

The fourth principle tackles the right to social security mentioning the rights to adequate nutrition, housing, recreational, and medical services; moreover, it covers the protection of the mother in prenatal and postnatal care. Within the fifth principle, the rights to special treatment, education, and care for children with disabilities are discussed. On the sixth principle, the Declaration talks about the right to an enabling environment to have full and harmonious development, moreover, in cases of need, the State should

[6] Which would later one become on of the pillars of the main international judicial instrument on the protection of childrens rights nowadays, the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

provide payments or other types of assistance to children without a family and/or means of support (UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child, 1959).

The seventh principle is very important for our central debate since it refers to the right to education, and, therefore, will be presented in its full original text.

> "The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education that will promote his general culture and enable him, on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his abilities, his individual judgment, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.
>
> The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents.
>
> The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavour to promote the enjoyment of this right." (The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, 1959)

In this principle, we can see some very interesting elements such as the call for State and parental responsibility toward the realization of this right through a child-centered lens, as well as the inclusion of "play and recreation", non-formal academic activities, within the educational umbrella. This reasoning will be of central importance to our debate on educational poverty.

In the eighth principle, we look at the right of children to receive protection and relief whatever the circumstances might be. The penultimate principle of the Declaration sheds light on child protection from neglect, cruelty, traffic, and exploitation. It also mentions the prohibition of being employed under a minimum age or in a job that can

cause the child harm (which can be directly connected to the work developed by the ILO seen before). Finally, on its tenth principle, the 1959 UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child recalls the need for a spirit of tolerance, understanding, and friendship, necessary for a child to be raised in an environment protected from discriminatory practices.

This Declaration, however, did not have the same adherence as its predecessor (the 1924 Geneva Declaration). The motives were many such as the conception of some States that the existing Human Rights protection framework already satisfied children's protection needs, as well as criticism of the dissemination strategies and the content of the new document (Moody, 2015). The New York Times in 1959 noted that "the document [was] an enunciation of general principles without the teeth of international law to enforce them" (Hofmann 1959, p. 8).

UNESCO was also responsible for important questions made on the content of the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child of 1959. According to its officials, there was not an explicit use of the term "rights of the child". This made it complicated to locate whether the Declaration was more connected with previous values of the League of Nations or had the prescriptive characteristics of the newly founded UN. The discussions also passed by the need to guarantee both the basic rights of children such as water and food but also safeguarding their fundamental freedoms (Moody 2015).

Parallelly, in this period, other efforts in the international arena that affected child protection deserve emphasis.

In 1960, a General Conference held in the scope of UNESCO led to the establishment of the Convention Against Discrimination in Education, the first legally binding international instrument fully dedicated to the right to education, which recalled the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) importance and qualified discrimination in education as a violation of the "right to non-discrimination", a pillar of UDHR. The 1960 UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education included the definitions of both "education" and "discrimination", and set forth State obligations to prevent discrimination in education (UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education, 1960).

Overall, the 1960 UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education tackled central issues on the right to education, looking at it not as a luxury but as a fundamental human right. The main provisions outlined in this document are the right to

free and compulsory primary education, secondary education that is available and accessible to all, higher education accessible to all on the basis of individual capacity, equivalent standards of education in all public educational institutions as well as opportunities for continuing education and training opportunities for the teaching profession (UNESCO,1960).

Moreover, the 1960 UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education expressed that education should focus on the development of human personality with strong respect to human rights and fundamental freedoms. It also touched upon the issues of parental freedom to make a decision on their children's education in conformity with their beliefs as well as the right of national minorities to carry out their educational activities(UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education, 1960).

Midst the discussions on what aspects a general document concerning Children's Rights should encompass, inside the UN, in the 1950's the creation of a Covenant on the field of Human Rights and its contents were being debated. In this context

> "(...)discrepancies regarding the nature of the rights to be included - and, accordingly, the rights and duties to which they gave rise and the international oversight mechanism - coupled with the political readings of those rights in the light of the Cold War - finally led to the decision of having two different treaties to be submitted simultaneously to the consideration of the General Assembly" (General Assembly resolution 543 (VI) of 5 February 1952 in Pinto, 2020)

As a result, two legally binding instruments were included in the UN framework in 1966: the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Both treaties were the result of over eighteen years of negotiations. With these documents in place, the member States were committing to guarantee that equal rights would be upheld, including education and protection for all children (United Nations,1987).

Such commitment is made clear in Article 13 of the ICESCR which has a comprehensive approach to the right to education and goes as follows:

"1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the UN for the maintenance of peace.

2.The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of this right: (a) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all; (b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education; (c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education; (d) Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education; (e) The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which

conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

4.No part of this article shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principles set forth in paragraph 1 of this article and to the requirement that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State."(ICESCR,1966).

Moreover, article 14 of the ICESCR calls for the establishment of a plan to ensure free and compulsory primary education in any state that has not yet secured this right (ICESCR,1966). As a result, the UN framework on children's rights protection was becoming more robust.

Following this tendency, on the thirty-fourth session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, held in 1978, a representative of Poland made a draft of a resolution to be adopted by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in which a new binding Treaty, based on the 1959 UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child should be developed on the field of children's rights (United Nations,1978). The draft already included important topics one of them being the right to education as we can see below

"Article VII

1. The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture and enable him, on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his abilities, his individual judgement and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.

2. The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents.

3. The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavour to promote the enjoyment of this right."(Commission on Human Rights, 1978)

The Polish draft was the seed of the drafting of the most important international instrument on children's rights to date: the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 (UNCRC).

1.4 The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The timing of the Polish draft was favorable since the UN General Assembly had proclaimed that 1979 would be the International Year of the Child (General Assembly resolution 31/169 of 21 December 1976). At the time, the Year of the Child was celebrated as an outstanding success, an event that helped to heighten social and political awareness of the status of children in both developing and industrialized countries, and which brought to light a plethora of new global issues, including street children, children with disabilities and children in armed conflict (Lindkvist, 2019).

During the International Year of the Child[7], in 1979, institutional movements happened inside UN agencies such as the ILO. The agency provided a summary of a 15-state study on child labour and, as a result, a meeting of social scientists was held to discuss how to better study this issue (Quinn, 2019).

Having a legally binding document was of the essence since children, especially when considering those living in the developing world, were dealing with harsh environments characterized by apartheid, war, racism, and colonialism. The idea of creating a Treaty focused on children was well received by the member states that were consulted in 1978 by the UN Commission on Human Rights. The draft made by Poland, however, was seen with concern. Some States considered it dated since it was roughly a

[7]The year 1979 was designated as the International Year of the Child, it played a key role in making children's well-being a focus of international efforts and revitalized the tradition of UN observances.(Lindkvist, 2019).

repetition of what the 1959 UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child proposed, failing to address current issues, moreover, the draft was also considered too vague to be a binding instrument as well as a duplication of many previous instruments (Detrick 1999).

When discussing the formulation of a new Treaty focused on children's rights, there was a worry that it might weaken the protection already provided by ICESCR and ICCPR and its Additional Protocols (Cantwell, 2007). Therefore, State delegations, such as those of Poland and Germany, made interventions stressing the importance that the future Treaty would be complementary to the 1966 Covenants, should focus on specific rights that affected children, and that all the rights that were previously stated in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two 1966 Covenants should be considered also for children (Detrick, 1999).

The solution was the creation of a working group that from 1979 would be responsible for the elaboration of the upcoming Convention having in mind the previous comments made by the international actors as well as the Polish draft. Non-governmental organizations, however, were not quick to embrace the idea; initially, UNICEF was skeptical of the utility of having an international instrument focused on the rights of children (Lopatka, 2007). This changed after a more participatory role was given to NGOs and UN agencies in the drafting process; Executive Director, James Grant, recognized the importance of having UNICEF as a core participant. Other actors such as the ILO, UNESCO, and the Committee of the Red Cross became more involved in the drafting procedures (Tobin, 2019) and their participation had an unprecedented impact on the elaboration of the Convention (Cohen, 1990).

Although the idea was to have the Convention finished within a year, issues such as the definition of the concept of "child" and the minimum age to participate in armed conflicts (Cantwell, 2007) were among the debated matters that led to the final text of the UNCRC to be reached only in 1988 when it was sent to be approved and adopted by the UN. The adoption of the UNCRC by the UN General Assembly took place on November 20, 1989, thirty years after the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989). It is interest to note that the UNCRC has been ratified by 196 States although one important international actor has not ratified it, the United States, then becoming the only UN member State not to do so. Other

countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia ratified the Convention but made reservations on specific topics.

The UNCRC consists of a preamble and 54 articles. The first article is of paramount importance since it contains the much-discussed definition of what a child is " For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier"(UNCRC,1989). This definition was necessary in order to establish who were the rights holders of this Convention.

The Convention articles are divided into three parts and, according to UNICEF, have four main pillars: "Non-discrimination" (all children are entitled to the rights outlined in the charter without discrimination from any type of status), "Best interest of the child" (the child's interests should be of primary consideration), "Right to life survival and development" and "Respect for the views of the Child" (highlights the importance of listening to children on matters that affect them directly). Moreover, over the years, three Optional Protocols to the UNCRC came into force: The Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography (2002), the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2002), and the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure (2011) which allows children to make complaints about child rights violations (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

The Preamble of the UNCRC sets the scene and principles of the Convention as well as recognizes children's rights as part of the Human Rights international legal framework (recalling important international instruments such as the Geneva Declaration of 1924 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child of 1959).

Part I englobes articles 1 to 41 which consists of "Substantive Rights" that are divided into "Survival and Developmental Rights", such as the right to life(Art.6), health (Art. 24), nutrition (Art 27) and education (Art. 28), which we will go into more depth in a further session; "Protection Rights" such as protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence (Art. 19, 32-36); "Participation rights" such as to express opinions, be heard, and participation on decision affecting their lives (Art 12-15) and finally "Non-discrimination rights" (Art. 2).

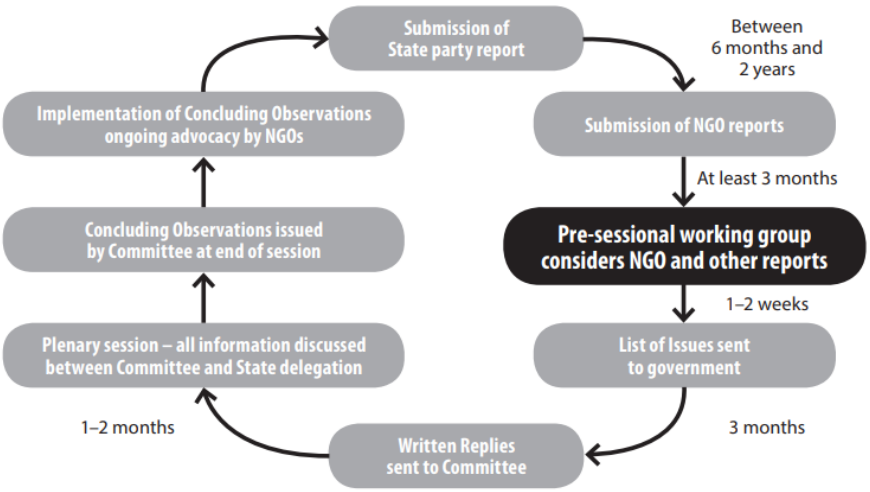
The second part consists of articles 42 to 45 and elaborates on the implementation and monitoring of the Charter. They include provisions for the dissemination of

information on the Convention's Contents by State Parties and the Establishment of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The Committee is composed of eight independent experts who are elected by secret ballot. There is, however, an intensive engagement from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the committee's reporting cycle. According to the "Working methods" document, it welcomes written submissions from various organizations at international, regional, national, and local levels, whether from individual NGOs or national coalitions[8].

Using this written information, the Committee invites selected NGOs to participate in its pre-sessional working group. This group enjoys the opportunity to have a dialogue about the implementation of the UNCRC. Important and well-known NGOs such as Plan International, Human Rights Watch and Save the Children have taken part in numerous sessions of the CRC Committee.

The following scheme portrays a summary of how the pre-sessional working group works.



Save the Children, 2014

The pre-sessional working group meetings are private, with no public observers allowed. During its twenty-second session, in 1999, the Committee established "Guidelines for the participation of partners (NGOs and individual experts) in the pre-

[8]OHCHR | Rules of procedure and working methods. (n.d.). OHCHR. https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crc/rules-procedure-and-working-methods

sessional working group of the Committee on the Rights of the Child" (CRC/C/90, Annex VIII). According to this document, Non-Governmental Organizations, National Human Rights Institutions, and other relevant bodies may also request private meetings with the Committee.

Finally, the third part of the UNCRC consists of “Final Provisions” that are present in Articles 46 to 54. They delve into procedural and legal matters such as Ratification and Accession, the conditions in which the Convention enters into force, Amendments and reservations to the Convention as well as languages and Depositary functions (role given to the Secretary-General of the UN). Overall, the UNCRC is structured to provide a comprehensive framework for the protection and promotion of children's rights, detailing specific obligations for State parties and establishing mechanisms for monitoring and implementation.

One specific right, which is central to our discussion on educational poverty, presents in this and other international documents on children's rights is the right to education which we will see in this next session.

1.4.1 The right to education in the UNCRC

“Everyone has the right to education”. The essence of this powerful sentence is present in different international instruments such as the UDHR, the ICESCR, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and of course the 1989 UNCRC. According to Rhona Smith, this right has a pivotal role in securing the universality of Human Rights (Smith, 2013).

Article 28 of the UNCRC delves into a child’s right to education

> “States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:
>
> (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
>
> (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and

accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

(c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;

(d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;

(e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries."(UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989)

Additionally, article 29 of the UNCRC, defines the aims of education and it was the theme of discussion of the General Comment 1 (2002) of the UNCRC Committee. The article states that

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment." (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989)

When discussing the topic of education, the UNCRC Committee emphasized the importance of having a holistic approach to education aiming for a balance between the physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional aspects of education. Moreover, the goal of education should be to "(...)maximize the child's ability and opportunity to participate fully and responsibly in a free society" as well as being child-friendly, allowing children to develop their capacities. (UNCRC Committee, 2002).

It is interesting to observe how article 28 makes an explicit reference to developing countries, which are historically overlooked. Additionally, on article 29 the aims of education are defined in a way that recognizes the broadness of what having a good quality education should encompass, with mentions that go from the individual child to their family, society up until the natural environment that surrounds us. Moreover, having these definitions in such a central document is of the essence when trying to build on policies that aim to confront multifaceted issues in the realm of child education as it is the case of educational poverty.

When moving from the international to the regional level of Human Rights protection we can observe a continuous tendency of inclusion of the rights of children within regional legal frameworks. Moreover, the right to education has been broadly featured, reflecting the importance of this central right. In the following session, we will

make an overview of the main regional systems of human rights protection localizing where children's rights and the right to education stand in these frameworks.

1.5 Children's rights in Regional Human Rights Systems

Zooming in from the international level to the regional one, a very important step taken towards the goal of effective protection of Human Rights was the development of Regional Human Rights Systems. These systems should be seen as complementary to both national and international legal frameworks. According to the "Textbook in International Human Rights", by Rhona Smith, there are many advantages to developing regional systems such as a higher level of cultural, linguistic, and traditional homogeneity as well as stronger political consensus, since fewer States are involved. The three main Regional Human Rights Systems nowadays are: The European, the Interamerican, and the African Systems, and each of them has important mentions and connections with children's rights and the right to education (Smith 2013).

They work within the framework of intergovernmental organizations to support human rights protection within specific geographic areas. Usually, these systems revolve around one or more legal instruments, a monitoring mechanism to oversee if States are being compliant with the obligations outlined in the Treaty and judicial (courts) or quasi-judicial (commissions) bodies that can resolve claims of violations of human rights against State parties (Shaw, n.d). The acceptance of individual claims in Regional Human Rights Systems also varies in different regions.

1.5.1 Children's rights in the European System

The first region to develop its own system was born in Europe. With the end of the hostilities that characterized the period of World War II around twenty European governments decided to create the Council of Europe (CoE) in 1948. The CoE then drafted its own Human Rights Charter, dragging inspiration from the UDHR, as a result, the European Convention on Human Rights came into force in 1953 (Smith, 2013).

Although not mentioning specifically the rights of children in the Charter, the Council of Europe, in 1996 drafted the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights. This Convention sought to deepen the realization of rights present in the UNCRC and include it in the jurisdiction of the CoE. Moreover, there was a central

preoccupation with realizing the participation of the children in the decision-making process to guarantee their best interests, which is considered a pillar of the 1989 UNCRC Convention (Smith, 2013). This aspect can be seen across the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights, for example in the case of articles 3 and 6.

> "Article 3 – Right to be informed and to express his or her views in proceedings
>
> A child considered by internal law as having sufficient understanding, in the case of proceedings before a judicial authority affecting him or her, shall be granted, and shall be entitled to request, the following rights:
>
> a to receive all relevant information;
>
> b to be consulted and express his or her views;
>
> c to be informed of the possible consequences of compliance with the views and the possible consequences of any decision.
>
> Article 6 – Decision-making process
>
> In proceedings affecting a child, the judicial authority, before taking a decision, shall:
>
> a consider whether it has sufficient information at its disposal in order to take a decision in the best interests of the child and, where necessary, it shall obtain further information, in particular from the holders of parental responsibilities;
>
> b in a case where the child is considered by internal law as having sufficient understanding:
>
> – ensure that the child has received all relevant information;
>
> – consult the child in person in appropriate cases, if necessary privately, itself or

through other persons or bodies, in a manner appropriate to his or her understanding, unless this would be manifestly contrary to the best interests of the child;

– allow the child to express his or her views;

c give due weight to the views expressed by the child." (Council of Europe, 1996).

When it comes to the right to education within the European legal framework, another supranational union has important participation in children's rights defense; the European Union (EU). The EU was established through the Maastricht Treaty, which entered into force on November 1, 1993. This Treaty aimed to strengthen political and economic unity in Europe and nowadays it has 27 members (Gabel, 2024). Within the EU's legal framework, an important reference is made in Article 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union stating that

> "Everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training. This right includes the possibility to receive free compulsory education. The freedom to found educational establishments with due respect for democratic principles and the right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical, and pedagogical convictions shall be respected, in accordance with the national laws governing the exercise of such freedom and right. (Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2000)".

It is interesting to observe how this article tries to balance the rights and freedoms of different actors involved in the educational environment such as the establishments, the parents, and the children. It is important to note that this definition is in tune with the UNCRC's holistic approach on the aims of education, which can be interpreted as a reflection of the international legal framework on regional standards.

1.5.2 Children's rights in the Interamerican System

In the Americas, the Organization of American States (OAS) was established in 1948, with the aim of strengthening regional peace and security, promoting representative democracy, and encouraging economic and social cooperation (OAS, 2009), has also developed its own Regional System of Human Rights protection. The American Convention on Human Rights was signed in 1969 in San José, Costa Rica, and counts with a court, a commission (Smith, 2013) and currently has 34 member States. The Commission can receive individual complaints and forward them to the court in case the violation cannot be resolved through a friendly settlement between both parties.

Within its legal framework, the protection of children's rights is mainly addressed via the Additional Protocol of San Salvador (1988), which includes specific provisions for children, particularly on the right to education, health, and protection. One representative example is Article 16 on "Rights of Children".

> "Every child, whatever his parentage, has the right to the protection that his status as a minor requires from his family, society and the State. Every child has the right to grow under the protection and responsibility of his parents; save in exceptional, judicially-recognized circumstances, a child of young age ought not to be separated from his mother. Every child has the right to free and compulsory education, at least in the elementary phase, and to continue his training at higher levels of the educational system. (Organization of American States, 1988)."

The right on child's access to social security presented above aligns with the UNCRC and ICESCR by recognizing that social security is critical for ensuring children's access to healthcare, education, and protection from economic vulnerabilities. The guarantee of free and compulsory education at the elementary phase is crucial when it comes to preventive measures to combat child poverty. However it its important to mention that not only should it be guaranteed but also the quality of the education made available should be dignified, which is not always the case.

1.5.3 Children's rights in the African System

Another Regional Human Rights System was established in the African continent in 1981 by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was created in the context of the decolonization of the continent and is now replaced by the African Union (AU) founded in 2001. The African Charter on Humans and Peoples Rights, the system's guiding document, was designed to reflect Africa's specificities, and it was the only one among the three main Regional Systems to include Civil, Political, Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in a single document. The internal plurality characteristic of the African continent, together with the cultural tradition of giving the community great importance is reflected in the protection of different "peoples" by the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (Smith,2013).

The African System, apart from the chart on Human and Peoples Rights, has taken important steps towards the protection of children's rights in the region with the adoption of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) by the OAU in July 11th, 1990. This instrument has been ratified by 50 AU Member States (Agiubu-Kemmer, 1992) reflecting the scope and popularity of the UNCRC, and entered into force in 1999.

Already in the preamble of the ACRWC there is the recognition that African children are entitled to specific needs and vulnerabilities " (...)the situation of most African children remain critical due to the unique factors of their socioeconomic, cultural, traditional and developmental circumstances, natural disasters, armed conflicts, exploitation and hunger"(OAU, 1990).

According to the ACRWC, protecting the rights outlined in this document is a duty of all, and, following the profile of the African Charter, it outlines that children have a responsibility towards the family, society, State, and the international community (Smith, 2013). To monitor compliance with this charter a Committee of Experts (Art 42) was appointed and held its first meeting in 2002. This group has the mandate to receive individual complaints and deal with them confidentially.

When it comes to the right to education, the African System has diffused it in different documents such as Article 17 of the Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, Article 11 on the Rights and Welfare of the Child as well as on the Maputo Protocol. These documents form the foundation of the right to education within the African Human

Rights system, establishing obligations for African states to ensure access to education for all individuals, with particular attention to vulnerable and marginalized groups such as children and women.

One final interesting point that portrays the resonance of the African regional system and the international legal framework on children's rights regard girls access to education, which is a pressing issue. Article 12 of the Maputo Protocol calls for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, particularly in education, by ensuring girls have the same access to education as boys. This is aligned with CRC Article 2, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender. The gendered lenses are necessary to approach the issue of educational poverty and we will further explore it when analyzing the ET3 case study.

1.5.4 Children's rights in the Arab League

Finally, even though not yet extensively established like the previous ones, the Regional System from the Arab League, a supranational group created in 1945, with the objectives of bolstering and aligning the political, cultural, economic, and social efforts of its members, while also offering mediation in disputes, makes important references to children's rights, and more specifically the right to education in its framework. The 2004 reviewed Arab Charter on Human Rights has an article that is dedicated to the educational issue and it addresses important aspects such as eradication of illiteracy, formal and informal education, and adult education.

"Article 41

1. The eradication of illiteracy is a binding obligation upon the State and everyone has the right to education.

2. The States parties shall guarantee their citizens free education at least throughout the primary and basic levels. All forms and levels of primary education shall be compulsory and accessible to all without discrimination of any kind.

3. The States parties shall take appropriate measures in all domains to ensure partnership between men and women with a view to achieving national development goals.

4. The States parties shall guarantee to provide education directed to the full development of the human person and to strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

5. The States parties shall endeavour to incorporate the principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms into formal and informal education curricula and educational and training programmes.

6. The States parties shall guarantee the establishment of the mechanisms necessary to provide ongoing education for every citizen and shall develop national plans for adult education. (Arab League, 2004)."

It is interesting to note that apart from reuniting important elements for the combat of educational poverty such as the gender, the guarantee to free primary education which were elements we saw present in other regional human rights documents, the Arab Charter on Human Rights mentions informal education as part of the educational framework. This is a central element that we will further discuss when talking about educational poverty.

This overview of the Regional Systems framework and its relationship with Children's Rights and more specifically the right to education shows us that the issue of access to quality education is broadly present in binding Human Rights Charters at the regional level, and should be guaranteed by State Parties. This, however, does not occur homogeneously and usually, poverty settings are where these rights remain the furthest from being fully fulfilled.

1.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, Chapter 1 has presented a comprehensive overview of the international legal framework governing children's rights, with a particular focus on the

right to education. The chapter establishes that children's rights have been a concern of international institutions since the early 20th century, evolving in response to the growing recognition of children as a vulnerable group in need of specific protections.

The chapter has traced the development of children's rights from early movements such as those led by the League of Nations and the ILO, shedding light also on the early work of Save the Children's founder Eglantyne Jebb which were instrumental in laying the groundwork for future protections against child labor and for the promotion of education. These early efforts culminated in the creation of significant international treaties and Conventions, such as the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child and later, the 1959 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, and finally the United Nations 1989 UNCRC. These milestones reflected the growing international consensus on the need to protect children's rights to health, education, and security, recognizing that a child's development is essential not only for the individual but for society as a whole.

The UNCRC formalized children's rights into a binding legal framework that has since been ratified by almost all countries. Its provisions on the right to education, non-discrimination, and the best interests of the child have become the cornerstones of national and regional legislation, shaping how governments and international organizations approach children's issues. The UNCRC also created mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement, emphasizing that states are not only responsible for providing free and compulsory primary education but also for ensuring that the educational experience fosters the full development of a child's personality and abilities.

In addition to international instruments, the chapter examines the role of regional human rights systems in reinforcing children's rights. It explores to which extent the European, Inter-American, African, and Arab League human rights frameworks are ensuring children's rights, with a specific focus on the right to education, while adapting the principles of the UNCRC to local cultural, social, and political contexts.

Chapter 1 therefore provides the foundation for understanding how Save the Children bases its work in international legal and institutional framework. It establishes that while international laws and agreements provide the structural basis for protecting children's rights, the actualization of these rights depends heavily on the engagement of civil society and non-state actors. By detailing the historical development and

significance of the international legal framework on children's rights, this chapter sets the stage for a more focused analysis of how these commitments are applied in the specific context of Italy, and how organizations like Save the Children contribute to addressing the challenge of educational poverty.

In summary, this chapter effectively substantiates its argument that the international legal framework on children's rights, particularly the right to education, provides a crucial foundation for efforts to combat educational poverty worldwide. It underscores that while legal frameworks are necessary, they are not sufficient on their own; the active involvement of NGOs and multi-level governance structures is essential to ensure that these rights are realized in practice.

2. Educational poverty: A Literature review

As established in Chapter 1, the international legal framework surrounding children's rights, particularly the right to education, plays a crucial role in shaping policies and practices aimed at ensuring equitable access to education worldwide. However, despite these global and regional commitments, significant disparities persist in how children experience their right to education, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This gap underscores the pressing issue of educational poverty, a multidimensional concept that goes beyond the mere lack of access to formal education.

In this chapter, we explore the concept of educational poverty through a comprehensive literature review, examining how it manifests in various socio-economic contexts and how it impacts the cognitive and non-cognitive development of children. By investigating educational poverty from both theoretical and empirical perspectives, this chapter sets the foundation for understanding how organizations like Save the Children work to address these inequalities.

Having established the international legal framework for children's rights, with a focus on the right to education, we now turn to examine the concept of educational poverty itself. Chapter 2 will provide a detailed literature review, analyzing educational poverty from various socioeconomic perspectives, and considering its impact both globally and within the specific context of Italy. This exploration will set the stage for understanding how Save the Children's initiatives are rooted in both global human rights frameworks and localized efforts to combat educational inequality.

2.1 Educational poverty in Socio-economic literature

To understand the importance of access to quality education and its impact on reducing (or worsening) inequalities, it is crucial to examine the relationship between education and poverty. However, before exploring this connection, it is essential to first define the concept of poverty on its own.

Poverty is a complex idea, without a universal agreement on its definition. Over time, various perspectives have emerged. The United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP) has identified three key perspectives that are widely used to define poverty: the income perspective, the basic needs perspective, and the capability perspective

> "Income perspective. A person is poor if, and only if, her income level is below the defined poverty line. Many countries have adopted income poverty lines to monitor progress in reducing poverty incidence. Often the cut-off poverty line is defined in terms of having enough income for a specified amount of food.
>
> Basic needs perspective. Poverty is deprivation of material requirements for minimally acceptable fulfillment of human needs, including food. This concept of deprivation goes well beyond the lack of private income: it includes the need for basic health and education and essential services that have to be provided by the community to prevent people from falling into poverty. It also recognizes the need for employment and participation.
>
> Capability perspective. Poverty represents the absence of some basic capabilities to function—a person lacking the opportunity to achieve some minimally acceptable levels of these functionings. The functionings relevant to this analysis can vary from such physical ones as being well-nourished, being adequately clothed and sheltered, and avoiding preventable morbidity, to more complex social achievements such as partaking in the life of the community. The capability approach reconciles the notions of absolute and relative poverty, since relative deprivation in incomes and commodities can lead to an absolute deprivation in minimum capabilities" (UNDP, 1997)

Apart from those three important definitions, the official definition used by the European Union (EU) is often referred to and it goes as follow

> "[p]eople are said to be living in poverty if their income and resources are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living considered acceptable in the society in which they live. Because of their poverty, they may experience multiple disadvantages through unemployment, low income, poor housing, inadequate health care, and barriers to lifelong learning, culture, sport, and recreation. They are often excluded and marginalized from participating in activities (economic, social and cultural) that are the norm for other people, and their access to fundamental rights may be restricted" (European Commission 2004 in Lecerf 2016).

These definitions emphasize the complex nature of poverty, which is crucial for our research. Understanding poverty in a multifaceted way is particularly important when considering it as a criticism of the widely spread resource-based approach, which traditionally links poverty only to the available economic resources (Ringen, 1988).

The relationship between multidimensional poverty and education is a debate that has evolved over the years with economists being in consensus on the importance of education both at individual and societal levels after the 1964 work of Gary Becker. The discussion on the role of education led to the conclusion that education should be looked at as a long-term process where early learning leads to future learning. Therefore, there might be life-long consequences to not having developed a specific competence at a determined age (Botezat, 2016). In the long run, the risk of being unable to access the labor market is biggest amongst individuals with a low level of education (Solga, 2006) since nowadays, more and more professionally qualified workers are required.

The concept of educational poverty entered scientific literature in the 1990s due to the work of two researchers, Daniele Checchi and Jutta Allmendinger, who in their analysis introduced the concepts of "*povertà di instruzione*" and "*Bindungsarmut*", respectively. It is important to emphasize that both authors look at educational poverty as

a multidimensional phenomenon (Botezat, 2016) and refer to Amartya Sen's two approaches: capability approach (in the case of Checchi) and living conditions approach (in the case of Allmendinger).

In Sen's theory, the so-called "capabilities" are a "set of functionings" that reflect on the freedom that that individual has in terms of choices and opportunities (Sen, 1999). In that sense, being poor for Sen falls under the definition of "capability deprivation" where elements such as a healthy life, a home, and access to education are not present (Sen, 1997). In this theory, education has an intrinsic value, that of allowing individuals to have the freedom of choice and therefore an indispensable tool to fight against poverty (Botezat, 2016).

Moreover, the use of the term "social exclusion" as a consequence of being educationally poor, according to Sen, succeeds in embracing both the notion of poverty related to living standards as well as the relational aspects of deprivation that characterize it. The author also considers "social exclusion" as having "instrumental importance", since the social exclusion can lead to a worsen in other types of deprivation in a continuous over time (Sen, 2000). Social exclusion, according to Botezat, has its meaning strongly correlated with education, in an inverse proportionality, having those with a low level of education being likely to have an increased risk of social exclusion. According to Botezat, in order to analyze the risks of social exclusion one should look both at the family background and social classes (Botezat,2016).

In order to better comprehend the relationship between poverty, deprivation, and social exclusion within a static or dynamic setting, Berghman has proposed the following table.

Concepts	Static outcome	Dynamic Process
Income	poverty	impoverishment
Multidimensional	deprivation	Social exclusion

Berghman (1997)

Allmendinger makes an explicit reference to Sen's capabilities approach and emphasizes the importance of taking into account both the material and immaterial aspects of social deprivation. Moreover, her original sketch of educational poverty

already emphasizes that the state of educational poverty requires social policy intervention (Allmendinger, 1999). Within this framework of analysis, Allemendiger and Leibfried move yet another step and make an important evaluation of the relationship between education and social policy getting to the conclusion that "focusing on an educationally oriented social policy per se contributes to a productive reorientation of social policy in general that is preventive and human capital enhancing ('social investment state')" (Allemendiger and Leibfried, 2003).

Moreover, Allemendiger and Leibfried, when studying more in-depth the German case realized that the missing competencies students in the secondary educational system had could be explained by a lack of investment in primary and lower secondary education (Allemendiger and Leibfried, 2003). There was, therefore, the interpretation that education becomes a decisive element in producing or reducing inequalities (Botezat, 2016). In this context, one concept that becomes of central concern is educational poverty.

Allmendinger together with Leibfried discussed how educational poverty could be defined and categorized. They got into two categories: educational poverty through certificates, which consider poverty as being "uncertified", and educational poverty through competencies, which makes use of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) as the basis to consider educationally poor students who have reached a level bellow 1 out of 5 on the PISA analysis (Leibfried, 2003).

Additionally, Allmendinger and Leibfried differentiated absolute and relative poverty. Those in absolute educational poverty are characterized by failing to achieve a minimum level of education, whereas those in relative poverty are found in the bottom quintile or quartile of the educational distribution. The authors come to the conclusion that there is no better or worse form of categorizing educational poverty and that the certificate and competencies measurements have to take into account the national context and as long as they do not duplicate one another they can be used in a complementary way (Allmendinger and Leibfreid, 2003).

Moreover, Lohaman and Ferger, when reflecting on whether relative or absolute educational poverty measurements should be used, emphasize that, on the one hand, in countries where an important percentage of the population has not achieved any formal education, there should be a focus on absolute educational poverty. On the other hand, in

countries where educational attainment of high level is the norm, the use of relative educational poverty would be more appropriate (Lohaman and Ferger, 2015).

Parallelly, Checchi also gives his definition of poorly educated as those "who do not acquire a minimum educational threshold needed to survive". According to the author, the individual who is educationally poor suffers both from a deprivation of access to the labour market and its earnings and also the ability to be a part of social activities which he categorizes as a double deprivation or "*doppia deprivazione"* (Checchi, 1998). Moreover, Checchi defends a combination of absolute and relative measurements and the use of compulsory education as a reference.

Additionally, in the context of the 2015 edition of the "Education and Training Monitor", the European Commission has also defined educational poverty considering both attainment, early school leavers, and the share of tertiary education attainment, and achievement, which, in order to embrace the plurality of countries in a comparative perspective took into consideration the PISA index and consider educationally poor those who fail to reach a level above two out of six present in the survey (European Commission, 2015). The European Commission's definition, although not explicitly, encompasses important elements such as "socioeconomic status, family background, home learning environment, migration experience, gender, and other structural and institutional factors" (Battilochi, 2020).

2.2 Measuring educational poverty

In the same line, while mentioning the works of Allmendinger and Checchi as a basis for analysis, Lohman and Ferger make central questioning on how to measure educational poverty. Firstly, the authors, using a relative concept of educational poverty, look at education as "a resource to facilitate social inclusion as well as a dimension of inclusion in its own right" and educational poverty as "a level of education which falls bellow a threshold which is defined as a minimum in a given society"(Lohman and Ferger, 2015), and after evaluating which variables are most present in educational poverty research and define three main variables, "Years of Schooling" "Educational Certificates" and "Test Scores".

In order to establish a threshold and draw the line between who is to be considered educationally poor, Lohman and Ferger examine four different approaches to the establishment of poverty thresholds:

-Relative Approach: This method defines poverty by comparing an individual's situation to the broader social context at a specific time. It's widely used in social research, often comparing households' access to education against societal norms (e.g., availability of digital tools for learning)

-Subjective Approach: Based on public perception, this approach gathers data from surveys to define the minimum required standard of living. In educational terms, this could include opinions on minimum schooling resources needed for success

-Expert Approach: Experts calculate a poverty line based on the minimum basket of goods necessary for well-being.

-Political Approach: Legislatively set minimum thresholds often emerge from political processes. These thresholds define who qualifies as "poor" by law, for instance, those without access to free, compulsory primary education as mandated by a government (World Bank,nd).

These approaches to understanding poverty when transposed to the realm of educational poverty may lose its accuracy due to a complex alteration of variables in different national contexts and educational systems. As a result, usually, more than one approach is used when analyzing educational poverty (Lohman and Ferger, 2015).

As seen before, the path towards finding a way of measuring this new phenomenon was only in its beginning and would have yet to be further developed. In the following session, we will see how educational poverty entered the realm of cognitive skills economic theory.

2.3 Educational poverty in cognitive skills economic theory

The beginning of modern research on the economics of education is set in the 1950s with the works of T. W. Schultz, Jacob Mincer, Sherwin Rosen, Gary S. Becker, and others. When looking at the correlation between the acquisition of education, the human capital approach is the one that traditionally explores it (Mincer, 1958) inside which Rosen defines education as “the stock of skills and productive knowledge embodied in people” (Rosen,1989).

According to the logic of this paradigm, as described by Alina Botezat, when one individual acquires education it is making an investment in human capital, which will lead to an increase in their productivity and provide higher earnings. As a result, in this line of thought, being economically and educationally poor can be seen as synonymous, and education is considered to be a means of development. Within the human capital theory, however, there is no idea of limitless investment in education, since they argue that one should invest until the marginal costs of education (which include direct and indirect costs of schooling) are equal to the marginal benefits of education (the prospect of higher wages) (Botezat, 2016).

When looking at the factors that influence the time one dedicates to schooling, one that stands out is family income. Usually, individuals from low-income families invest less in education than those who come from high-income backgrounds (Botezat, 2016). In the long run, studies have shown that there is a correlation between the degree of transmission of education of parents to children and the degree of intergenerational mobility in occupations and earnings between parents and children (Becker, n.d).

Within human capital theory Botezat also recalls the signaling theory as an important theoretical framework that highlights the positive connection between having a high level of education and market employability. According to this theory, the educational attainment of an individual sends a signal to the potential employer of their productivity. Since school levels and certifications can be evaluated without cost the employers prioritize looking at those "signs" rather than testing skills (Spence, 1973 in Botezat, 2016).

Finally, when looking from a perspective of human development, we can take education not simply as a tool for development but as development itself (Tilak, 2001). This goes hand in hand with the vision of multidimensional poverty, going beyond income poverty and seeking other factors that are mostly overlooked but compose and directly inflict on poverty levels.

In order to embrace this expansion, the concept of income poverty is broadened into "human poverty", which, according to UNDP "Poverty of life and opportunity -or human poverty- is multidimensional in character and diverse rather than uniform in content. Moreover, it reflects the denial of choices and opportunities for living a tolerable life" (UNDP,1997).

When looking beyond cognitive skills that characterize literature on human capital and the signaling theory, there is also a body of literature that correlates non-cognitive skills (such as motivation, self-esteem, and self-awareness) as important in the role of shaping the outcome of individuals. Within the different frameworks of analysis of non-cognitive skills and child poverty, we will focus on the Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Social and Emotional Learning Framework (SEL) since it is the one that mostly served as a theoretical basis for the implementation of Save the Children Italia projects in the field of educational poverty.

2.4 Educational poverty and non-cognitive skills: The SEL framework

EI and SEL can be connected and considered as a continuum, as indicated in the Yale Journal of Medicine: “EI is the ability to identify and manage one's own emotions and those of others. SEL is a process in which children gain emotional intelligence, develop empathy for others, and learn problem-solving skills" (MacMillan, 2020).

Furthermore, in the introduction of the 25th-anniversary edition of the book “Emotional Intelligence” by Daniel Goleman, the author mentions that CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning) was the way in which his original goal, that of making emotional intelligence part of education, has been successfully achieved. The author sees CASEL as an incorporation of the four domains of EI (Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Management) with the addition of Responsible Decision Making.

According to the creators of CASEL, a group of researchers, child advocates, professionals, and educators responsible for developing this framework, SEL can be defined as

> “the process by which all youth and adults acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and thoughtful decisions.”(CASEL,n.d)

The idea was to have a framework that included five basic skills: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Moreover, the SEL learning process relies on the communities, schools, families, and caregivers to be included.

Source: CASEL,n.d

This framework was initially designed as a curriculum that could be implemented in schools and has had many successful cases in improving both academically and emotionally thousands of students (DURLAK et al 2022). Although this type of approach is not, and should not be, limited to schools in affluent neighborhoods (Goleman,2020), when it comes to the relationship between SEL and poverty, some articles have highlighted specificities and future improvements that require attention.

According to Eric Dearing, the existing body of research on child poverty suggests that having a low family income has substantial and significant consequences for children's psychological growth, impacting both cognitive and socio-emotional aspects. This is evident through the numerous cases of academic difficulties and mental health problems observed among young people growing up in poverty (Dearing, 2008).

These psychological challenges arise primarily due to the constraints that poverty places on children's access to developmental stimuli and the high levels of stress in their physical and psychosocial environments. The author goes on to classify two main ways in which these issues can be framed “(1) externalization of interpersonal problems, such as aggression, destructive behavior, and hyperactivity, and (2) internalization of intrapersonal problems, such as anxiety, depression, and fear” (Dearing, 2008).

Regarding the connection between poverty and SEL, studies have shown that poverty has a direct impact on a student's SEL needs (Generali et al 2018). Children living in poverty are more likely to live in unsafe or inadequate housing, to have parents with stressful routines, and to belong to a minority group, thus facing prejudice and discrimination. Furthermore, middle school, has been shown as the main phase in need of developing SEL skills, given that it is a time of many changes in the adolescent’s life (McWhirter et al., 2016).

Implementing SEL in the context of child poverty can have extremely positive outcomes, however, recent research has shown that caution is needed and that some aspects of SEL implementation cannot be overlooked. SEL is traditionally seen solely as a program that can be applied to curricula. Researchers, however, argue that SEL should be implemented holistically as a pedagogy “focused on parent involvement and youth leadership as strategies to resist and prevent social inequities” (Hemans,2023).

One of the elements mentioned is social justice. “In applying a social justice education perspective to socio-emotional learning, the schools we document here intentionally adapt their practice to meet the needs of their respective student communities by working to empower students to be agents of change in their lives, for their communities, and for society in general "(Hamadani et al 2020).

Without labeling the power dynamics and effects of racism, sexism, heteronormativity, and other injustices, the social and emotional skills students learn are a disservice: students are not prepared for these realities, and they are not given taught

how to change them (Hemans, 2023). Another aspect of implementing SEL in a poverty context is the focus on being culturally responsive. Strong and McMain point out that "when SEL lacks cultural responsiveness, educators can further marginalize students who do not belong to the dominant culture (Strong and McMain, 2020)".

The presence of these points of attention in the academic literature is very important to ensure that SEL learning becomes constantly updated and adapted to contexts that may not have been considered as a model when this framework was initially idealized. In the Italian context, for example, due to its territorial asymmetries in access to education, the presence of migrants of different origins and strong gender stereotypes requires a personalized application of SEL to better respond to the country's needs in combating educational poverty.

2.5 Educational poverty and educational inequality: differences from a social policy perspective

Taking a further step into our discussion on educational poverty, Lohmann and Ferger make an important analytical comparison between the concepts of educational poverty and educational inequality as well as the role of social policy, which can be resumed in the following table.

Educational Inequality/Poverty - Theoretical foundations and implications

	1. Educational inequality	2. Educational poverty
Concept of social justice	equality of opportunity	equality of condition
Functional necessity	functional (meritocratic perspective)	dysfunctional
Social desirability	basically accepted in society (legitimate within the context of fair competition)	unaccepted in society (illegitimate)
Measurement concept	aggregate measurement, correlations between group characteristics and educational achievement	personal measurement, individual identification of educational poor
Main focus of analysis	(retrospective) causes of educational inequalities	current level of educ. poverty / welfare state interventions
Policy implications	create equal educational opportunities	abolish educational poverty, ensure minimum standards

Revised version of Ferger 2013 in Lohman and Ferger (2015)

From the table, Lohmann and Ferger**,** emphasize the importance of making the distinction between education inequality and educational poverty since the illegitimate root of educational poverty asks for interventions in the form of social policies. As a consequence, policies focused on education inequality and educational poverty are also different.

International policies aimed at eradicating educational poverty align with the principles of social policy interventions. These policies target individuals who are not able to reach minimum attainment in education. Similar to addressing poverty in general, the guiding principle for these policies is ensuring a socio-cultural minimum level of education, as guaranteed in welfare states. Policies that address educational inequality focus on establishing fair opportunities for all social groups to achieve educational success. For instance, implementing comprehensive school systems instead of segregated or tracked systems aims to lower the influence of socially selective transitions within the educational system (Lohman and Ferrer 2015).

There is, therefore, the need to address and contrast this socially unacceptable scenario which is educational poverty. The international, regional, and local levels, however, count many different actors besides the State Parties that contribute to the fulfillment of rights. In the case of the fight against educational poverty, very important actors are the NGOs. In the next session, we will take a look at how NGOs act in the Multi-Level Governance scenario.

2.6 The Role Of NGOs in Multi-level Governance

With the advent of new political structures, terms such as multi-level governance, polycentric governance, and others, started to appear in order to portray the power spread among different actors. When looking at the origins of this trend we find ideas from fields like federalism, public policy, and urban studies, who agree that a dispersed governance can be both more efficient and more ethical than having the whole power concentrated on the State. The main aspect is that governance should be spread among different scales so that it can effectively address the diverse territorial impacts of policy, from global issues like climate change to local concerns like city services. MLG is seen as essential for managing macro issues while adapting policies to local needs. (Hooghe and Marks, 2010).

Within the MLG framework of analysis, two lines of thought, entitled type 1 and type 2, are used to comprehend how MLG should be organized. The main characteristics of both types of MLG are summarized in the table below.

Type I	Type II
general-purpose jurisdictions	*task-specific* jurisdictions
non-intersecting memberships	*intersecting* memberships
jurisdictions organized on a *limited number of levels*	*no limit* to the number of jurisdictional levels
system-wide architecture	*flexible design*

Hooghe and Marks, 2010

When considering the role of civil society in the MLG arena, type II is usually used to adress multi-actor, trans scalar, defuse, and decentered networks (Scholte, 2010). It is important to try and define what is civil society since it comprehends a broad and contested concept (Cohen and Arato, 1992). Scholte argues that the commonly used idea of “non-state actors” carries a negative weight that should not be put into this category, and therefore, proposes civil society as “that arena of politics where associations of

citizens seek, from outside political parties, to shape rules that govern social life. Civil society associations encompass innumerable and diverse non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social movements" (Scholte, 2010).

NGOs are considered to be the stage of much of civil society activity in the contemporary MLG framework (Florini, 2000; Clarck, 2003). Since social movements tend to be more loosely organized, governance bodies usually find it more difficult to interact with them and therefore, it is through the non-governmental organizations that most of the exchanges between governance agencies and civil society occur. As a result, many use NGOs and civil society as synonyms nowadays (Scholte, 2010) which does not exclude a multitude of internal differences that shape NGOs.

According to Scholte, the multi-level character of contemporary civil society can be seen through different aspects (Scholte, 2010). One aspect is the lobbying of global regional regulatory agencies (Walker and Thompson 2008; Scholte 2011), and another one is the use of resources by CSOs that are drawn from a financial infrastructure that interlinks global, regional and national, provincial, and local dimensions. Finally, CSOs have a multi-level structure in terms of identities many having non-territorial bonds that are formed by collective bonds that transcend borders (Scholte, 2010).

Moreover, CSOs have been recruited by regional, global, and local institutions as well as the State. CSOs have, therefore, spread across different levels (Edwards and Gaventa, 2001) in order to respond to a reality characterized by problems that are "at one and the same time global challenges with regional variations, national contexts, and localized manifestations" (Scholte, 2010).

When it comes to the involvement of CSOs in the MLG policy processes they can be done either directly, through policy implementation and review, or indirectly, via legislative bodies, political parties, mass media, or public educational activities, for example (Scholte,2010). In the field of children's rights, one emblematic example of the direct participation of CSOs, as previously mentioned, is the one that occurs during the pre-sessional working group of the UNCRC Committee.

According to a report made by the NGO Child Rights Connect, since 1993, approximately 4,800 reports have been submitted by CSOs to the UNCRC Committee for the review of 796 State party reports. The volume of civil society reports has increased dramatically, rising from 4 reports in 1993 to 336 reports in 2017. Moreover, in the ten-

year period from 2009 until 2018, Child Rights Connect has identified that Save the Children was the lead organization when it came to the submission of reports by national coalitions (Child Rights Connect, 2019).

NGOs have also been responsible for important impacts within the MLG framework. From structural milestones such as being active proponents of the creation of the UN in the 1940s to influencing the agenda and priority of issues that will be addressed by MLG agents (Scholte, 2010).

Additionally, a central discussion when it comes to the relationship between civil society and MLG is whether the former can provide answer to the so-called "democratic deficits" of the latter (Falk 2000, Mackenzie 2009). Through their monitoring, civil society can raise accountability (Scholte, 2011) which leads to policy changes and institutional reorganization. Moreover, CSOs have also been responsible for promoting a redistribution of resources advocating for the equality of opportunities of participation. Also, the enlargement of the political space has also been an important CSO-fueled agenda.

Within the child poverty scenario, one important influence of civil society was on expanding the vocabulary and developing concepts that could embrace, on the one hand, the plurality of this realm, but also target these specific issues within the field of child poverty, as the case of educational poverty, for example. Schlote concludes that "the very acts of civil society engagement of multi-level governance (as against of states alone) are playing a part in effecting the historical transition from a statist to a polycentric, multi-level mode of regulation" (Scholte, 2010).

When it comes to the field of education and democracy, among the main examples selected by Scholte on how civil society advances democracy in multi-level Governance is thorough citizen learning. The author emphasizes that "Democracy cannot prevail when the people concerned are poorly aware of their situation and the policy options available to them"(Scholte, 2010). Moreover, Schotle recognizes that to practice collective self-determination one has to have the tools and information to do so. Therefore, the means to raise awareness

> "have included the promotion of relevant curricular changes in schools and universities; the provision of 'popular education' outside formal institutions of learning; efforts to influence mainstream mass media; the creation of

independent media outlets; the production and circulation of pedagogic literature; and the use of art forms ranging from theater to graffiti as vehicles of civic learning about governance in today's world"(Scholte, 2010).

2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, Chapter 2 provides a thorough exploration of educational poverty, drawing from a diverse range of socioeconomic literature to examine how educational poverty manifests as a multidimensional problem, one that transcends mere financial deprivation. Instead, it emphasizes the broader implications of educational inequality, addressing the cognitive, emotional, and social development of children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The chapter begins by reviewing the concept of poverty itself, noting that there is no single, universally accepted definition. In doing so, it highlights the European Union's perspective, which views poverty not only as a lack of financial resources but also as a deprivation of opportunities to participate fully in societal life. This broader understanding of poverty is essential for grasping the true nature of educational poverty, as it encompasses both material and immaterial dimensions. The chapter positions educational poverty within this framework, arguing that it is not simply about the absence of schooling but about the lack of access to a comprehensive range of experiences that are crucial for children's holistic development.

By engaging with key theoretical perspectives, such as those offered by scholars like Daniele Checchi and Jutta Allmendinger, Chapter 2 substantiates the notion that educational poverty has long-term consequences on both individual lives and societal structures. These scholars have been instrumental in broadening the concept of poverty beyond economic limitations, incorporating elements like cognitive and social capital as key determinants of a child's future success. This theoretical foundation is critical for understanding how educational inequalities persist and why they are so difficult to overcome.

Moreover, the chapter delves into the role of education in mitigating poverty and its importance in creating long-term positive outcomes. Drawing from economic theory, the chapter argues that education is a key driver for reducing inequality. It suggests that

education should be viewed as a lifelong process where early learning experiences lay the groundwork for future success. Without adequate educational opportunities in early childhood, children are at risk of experiencing lifelong disadvantages, such as limited access to the labor market and diminished social mobility.

An important contribution of this chapter is its focus on the measurement of educational poverty. This nuanced approach to measurement allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the disparities in educational opportunities available to children from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Additionally, Chapter 2 underscores the role of social exclusion as a consequence of educational poverty, drawing on Amartya Sen's capabilities approach. It argues that educational poverty leads to the deprivation of the capabilities necessary for individuals to lead fulfilling lives, further entrenching social inequalities. This perspective aligns with the broader human rights framework discussed in Chapter 1, highlighting the interconnection between the right to education and the broader goal of achieving social justice.

Furthermore, the chapter highlights the critical role that NGOs play in upholding these rights within the multi-level governance structure. NGOs, such as Save the Children, function as both watchdogs and advocates, ensuring that international legal commitments are translated into practical, enforceable policies. NGOs ensure that vulnerable children, especially those from marginalized or impoverished backgrounds, receive the educational opportunities that international law promises them.

In summary, Chapter 2 provides a detailed examination of educational poverty as a multifaceted issue that affects various aspects of a child's development. It lays the groundwork for the subsequent chapters by offering a conceptual understanding of educational inequality, informed by both theoretical and empirical research. The chapter's insights are critical for understanding the interventions discussed in later chapters, particularly those undertaken by Save the Children to address educational disparities in Italy. By framing educational poverty as both a social and economic issue, this chapter demonstrates the far-reaching implications of educational inequality and the urgent need for comprehensive, multi-level interventions to combat it.

3. Save the Children and educational poverty

Chapter 3 provides a comprehensive overview of the history, mission, and impact of Save the Children, both globally and in Italy. It begins by tracing the organization's origins, founded by Eglantyne Jebb in 1919 in response to the multitude of children affected by World War I. This chapter explores how Save the Children rapidly expanded its operations across the world, evolving from a relief-focused Organization to one that advocates for systemic avancements in children's rights. As the Organization's global mandate grew, Save the Children adapted to meet the emerging challenges facing children in diverse contexts, always maintaining its core commitment to ensuring that every child has access to education, protection, and opportunities for development.

The chapter then shifts focus to the Italian context, where Save the Children Italia has played a crucial role in addressing educational poverty. Starting from its early involvement in post-World War II Italy, Save the Children Italia has continuously worked to address inequalities in education, particularly in disadvantaged regions. By examining the historical trajectory and development of Save the Children Italia, this chapter outlines the Organization's efforts to bridge the educational gap in Italy. From creating its own Educational Poverty Index to advocating for policy changes and launching on-the-ground initiatives to provide vulnerable children with the tools and support they need to succeed.

This chapter sets the stage for understanding the evolution of Save the Children's strategies and their lasting impact on educational inequality. It offers critical insights into the Organization's guiding principles and the structural challenges that have shaped its interventions in Italy, establishing a foundation for the detailed analysis of its localized projects in later sections. The chapter underscores the importance of localized efforts in combating educational poverty, noting that Save the Children has played a pivotal role in shaping policy and advocating for educational reforms both globally and in Italy.

3.1 Origins, mission, and values

Although the work of Save the Children is carried out by thousands of employees and volunteers worldwide, one name is central to the history of the NGO: Eglantyne Jebb. Jebb had a revolutionary mindset for her time, arduously defending that children were entitled to have rights just as much as adults. Jebb's activism started after she saw pictures

of children who were starving due to Allied blockades during World War I. Over time Jebb initiated campaigning and raising awareness through early forms of founding and on the 19th of May 1919, in London, she founded Save the Children.

During the first decade of the Organization, Save the Children was responsible for feeding 650.000 children during the Russian Famine with the use of a cargo ship. Moreover, in 1923, Jebb wrote the first Children's Rights Charter, which, as previously seen, would be sent to the League of Nations and inspire the 1924 Geneva Convention on the Rights of the Child and later the 1989 UNCRC. During the 1930s and 1940s Save the Children acted in assisting Basque refugees from the Spanish Civil War as well as Jewish children who were escaping from Nazism. Additionally, the NGO played a role in the reconstruction after World War II, creating sponsorship programs that sought to provide children with shelter, nutrition, and education (Save the Children, 2016).

Currently, Save the Children has thirty so-called "member States" of the Organization, but reaches around 119 countries with its activities and counts on a staff of around fourteen thousand people. The NGO has also been granted consecutive status in ECOSOC (Save the Children, 2016).

3.2 Save the Children Italia

In Italy, Save the Children's first intervention took place in 1947 in the context of children facing hunger in the aftermath of the Second World War. It was only in 1998, however, that the Organization officially established itself in Italy under the name "Save the Children Italia" and is currently recognized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[9] (*Ministero degli Affari Esteri*). When looking at the NGO's areas of work some are outline by the Organization

> "Among the main areas of work and intervention of Save the Children in Italy are: the protection of migrant children and victims of trafficking or exploitation; poverty, including educational poverty; development education; the prevention and fight against the online sexual exploitation of minors (child pornography); the promotion of responsible use of new technologies among

[9] From march 2023, Save the Children Italia is also constituted as an association named "Save the Children Italia-ETS".(Save the Children, 2023)

children and adolescents; the promotion of children's participation; and advocacy and monitoring activities on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.[10]"(Save the Children, n.d).

Save the Children Italia states its mission as "To promote significant improvements in the way the world addresses children and to achieve immediate and lasting changes in their lives.[11]". It has five guiding values, namely: transparency, ambition, collaboration, creativity, and integrity (Save the Children, 2015). In 2023 Save the Children Italia reached 70 countries other than Italy sustaining 168 projects around the world as well as contributing with 131 humanitarian responses. In Italy, together with the support of 79 partners and the implementation of 123 projects Save the Children Italia was able to reach over 130.000 children and adolescents(Save the Children Italy, nd).

In order for us to look at some examples of Save the Children Italia projects that aim to combat educational poverty in Italy we first need to observe how poverty is distributed within the territory.

3.3 Child poverty in Italy

The current economic and educational poverty scenario in Italy, especially when considering minors, is marked by expressive regional and economic disparities. When taking into consideration the results from the 2023 and 2024 *Istituto nazionale per la valutazione del sistema educativo di istruzione e di formazione* (INVALSI) and *Istituto Nazionale di Statistica* 2023*(*ISTAT), and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) "Education at a Glance 2024", one can see that there is a connection between economic (or material poverty), and educational poverty, with minors being disproportionally affected.

[10] from the original "Tra i principali ambiti di lavoro e intervento di Save the Children in Italia vanno menzionati: la protezione dei minori migranti e delle vittime di tratta o sfruttamento; la povertà, anche educativa; l'educazione allo sviluppo; la prevenzione e il contrasto dello sfruttamento sessuale dei minori a mezzo internet (pedo-pornografia online); la promozione dell'uso consapevole delle nuove tecnologie fra bambini e adolescenti; la promozione della partecipazione dei minori; attività di advocacy e monitoraggio sull'attuazione della Convenzione Onu sui Diritti dell'Infanzia e dell'Adolescenza" (Save the Children, n.d)

[11] from the original " Promuovere miglioramenti significativi nel modo in cui il mondo si rivolge ai bambini e ottenere cambiamenti immediati e duraturi nelle loro vite." available at : Chi siamo | save the children. (2015, setembro 18). https://www.savethechildren.it/chi-siamo

In 2023, around 14% of minors were living in absolute poverty in Italy, representing over 1.3 million children. The situation is especially worrying in the so-called Mezzogiorno (the region that comprehends the regions of Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, Puglia, Sicilia, and Sardegna) where the incidence of poverty among minors was of 15.9%, almost two percentual points higher than the national average. Larger families, such as those with three or more children are at an even higher risk, with an incidence of 20.3% of poverty, while families of foreign origin face poverty levels of 35.6% (ISTAT,2024).

This image of profound internal inequalities is also portrayed in the 2023 INVALSI report. When analyzing the equity of educational opportunities in Italy, the numbers are highly different amongst the regions. In general, we note that the data from the Central-Northern regions tend to be in line with the reference standards, and, above all, the fairness of the system improves as we move from the second primary to the third lower secondary school. In the South, on the contrary, the situation is very different, and, in particular, in the Southern area, the equity indicator worsens significantly as the school years progress, with the exception of the Reading test (INVALSI,2023).

When analyzing the results of the Italian INVALSI 2023 test, parameters such as gender, social background, migratory origin, and territory were examined in more depth. At the end of both cycles of studies, girls obtained better results than boys (7.1 and 6.1 points more in the first and second cycles respectively), those with a socially advantaged family obtained 8.1 points in more than those least favored in the first cycle, but this number dramatically dropped to just 1.7 by the end of the second cycle. Migratory origin, especially at the end of the first cycle, is responsible for an expressive difference of 27.1 points less than Italians and 9.5 points less after the second cycle. The gap between the regions of the North-East and the South and Islands grows from 17.6 to 23.6 points ahead from the first to the second cycle (INVALSI, 2023).

Economic disadvantage heavily influences educational attainment, with children from poorer backgrounds, especially in the South, performing worse academically. The 2024 INVALSI results showed that first-generation immigrant children struggle more significantly than their native peers.

Moreover, we can see that parental education influences the education of the following generation, and education affects absolute poverty: the incidence decreases as

the educational qualification of the reference person in the family increases (ISTAT, 2023) “In Italy, 69% of 25-64 year-olds who have at least one parent with tertiary attainment also attained a tertiary qualification and 37% of adults whose parents do not have an upper secondary qualification also did not attain upper secondary education themselves”(OECD,2024). An analytical lens that takes into account the multidimensionality of child poverty reveals that investments in education and in the fight against economic poverty should be made parallelly so that the roots of the problem can be addressed as well as transversally taking into consideration gender and origin for example.

Following this path in the attempt to overcome the stereotype according to which child poverty is exclusively linked to a one-dimensional concept of poverty (which would only consider the lack of money and goods as sources of poverty) and firmly believing in the positive impact that education does not formal can have in formal education, Save the Children Italia has developed over the years theoretical and practical instruments that sought to address this neglected problem. A core contribution from the NGO to the theoretical framework on educational poverty, which set the stage for important changes, is development of Save the Children’s Educational Poverty Index, which we will see in the following session.

3.4 The role of Save the Children Italy in defining educational poverty

In Italian social-economic literature, according to Battilocchi, the concept of *“povertà educativa”* is considerably new, but the issue of educational poverty has been discussed under the term *“povertà di istruzione”* (Battilocchi, 2020). Apart from Daniele Cecchi, who has had a pioneering role in educational poverty studies, in the Italian scene, more recently, Barbieri and Cipollone present their definition of educational poverty as inadequate proficiency level such as those who are unable to achieve the lowest skill level at PISA survey (Barbieri and Cipollone, 2007).

The success of the term “*povertà educativa”* in Italy has been associated directly with efforts made by Save the Children Italia, which has sought to intervene in this topic whilst also expanding it embracing not only the previously mentioned aspects of cognitive function, and personal growth but also emotional, relational and life planning dimensions in its definition of educational poverty:

> … by educational poverty we mean the deprivation of opportunities for children and adolescents to learn, have experiences, flourish and freely develop abilities, talents and aspirations. For a child, educational poverty means being excluded from acquiring those skills needed to live in a world characterized by knowledge economy, by speed and innovation. At the same time, educational poverty means also limited opportunities for emotional and relational development, interpersonal relations and for the discovery of themselves and of the world (Save the Children, 2014, p. 4).

According to the document, *"Liberare i bambini dalla povertà educativa: A che punto siamo?"* published by Save the Children Italia in 2016, their definition of educational poverty inspired by the UNCRC as well as the Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum capabilities theory. Additionally, in the document, four dimensions of educational deprivation have been identified. They are:

> "1. Learning to understand, which involves acquiring the skills necessary to live in today's world;
>
> 2. Learning to be, which aims to strengthen motivation, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, fostering aspirations for the future and developing the ability to manage emotions even in difficult and stressful situations;
>
> 3. Learning to live together, which encompasses interpersonal and social relationship skills, cooperation, communication, empathy, and negotiation—in essence, all the essential capabilities for human beings as social individuals;
>
> 4. Learning to lead an autonomous and active life, which enhances life opportunities, health and integrity, and security as functional conditions for education."(Save the Children, 2016)

After attesting that the issue of educational poverty was severe in Italy, the NGO decided to create its own experimental index in educational poverty which was presented in 2014 in a document called "*La Lampada di Aladino*", whose title was an analogy made with the Disney movie "Alladin", stating that the access to quality educational and cultural activities could have the life-changing impact that the genie's lamp had on Alladin's life (Save the Children, 2014).

In order to decide which variables were going to integrate the index, the NGO based itself on regional available data mainly from ISTAT and the Statistical Office of the Education, University, and Research Ministry[12]on the accessibility and quality of the educational offer, from kindergarten until secondary school as well as the level of participation of minors in recreational and cultural activities. Finally, in accordance with the Scientific Committee, Save the Children selected fourteen indicators to compose its first index(Save the Children, 2014).

Educational Poverty Index (IPE) 2014	
Sub-Index of educational poverty in a school context	1. Public provision of early childhood education and care services 2. Full-time classes at primary schools 3. Full-time classes at lower secondary schools 4. School complexes with a school meal service 5. Schools with certificate of occupancy 6. Classrooms with internet access 7. Early school leaving rate
Sub-Index of educational poverty in the local community	8. Children who have been to the theatre 9. Children who have been to museums or exhibitions 10. Children who have visited monuments or archeological sites 11. Children who have been to a concert 12. Children who regularly practise a sport 13. Children who use the internet 14. Children who have read a book

Save the Children (2014) in Battilocchi(2020)

Within the Sub-Indexes of educational poverty in the school context and in the local community , in its 2014 document *La lampada di Aladino* Save the Children Italia gives a context and an explanation to each indicator.

[12] from the original: "dall'Ufficio statistico del Ministero dell'Istruzione, l'Università e la Ricerca" (Save the Children, 2014)

The first indicator on public nursery coverage evaluates the availability and accessibility of public nursery services (including integrated services for children aged 0-2). Early childhood is a critical developmental stage, and access to quality care and education during these years can influence cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical development. The second indicator measures the percentage of primary school classes that operate on a full-time basis, offering more than 30 hours of schooling per week. The percentage of full-time classes varies widely across regions, with northern regions like Lombardia having better coverage compared to southern regions like Molise and Campania, where it is as low as 5%.

The third indicator is similar to the previous one and evaluates full-time schooling at the lower secondary level (middle school). Basilicata stands out in this category with over 40% of classes being full-time, while regions like Lazio, Abruzzo, and Molise show much lower percentages, indicating unequal access to educational opportunities. The fourth indicator focuses on the percentage of schools that provide canteen services. Access to school meals plays a significant role in reducing the educational gap between economically disadvantaged children and their peers.

The fifth indicator measures the percentage of schools that have official certification for structural safety and habitability. A lack of these certifications does not automatically mean the school is unsafe, but it raises concerns about whether appropriate checks have been carried out. The sixth indicator measures how many schools have internet access, especially high-speed connections. The last indicator from the first sub-index is on school dropout rate; early school leaving is a significant issue, particularly in regions with higher economic difficulties. This indicator monitors the percentage of students aged 18-24 who leave the education system without completing a secondary diploma or vocational qualification. High dropout rates are linked to poorer economic outcomes and reduced social mobility.

Moving towards the second sub-index, the eight indicator tracks how many children have attended theater performances in the previous year. Cultural engagement fosters creativity, empathy, and critical thinking. Regions like Bolzano show high participation (68%), while southern regions, including Molise and Puglia, reported significantly lower attendance, under 20%. Following the same direction, the ninth index

measures the frequency of visits to museums or exhibitions which is an important metric of cultural participation and education outside the classroom.

The tenth indicator measures how many children have visited monuments or archaeological sites. Despite the proximity to world-class sites, regions such as Campania and Calabria reported participation rates below 20%, revealing significant educational and cultural disparities. The eleventh indicator tracks how many children have attended musical concerts or performances in the previous year as engagement with live music helps foster artistic appreciation and emotional development. The twelfth indicator examines how many children regularly engage in sports activities as regular participation in sports is crucial for physical and social development, promoting teamwork, discipline, and a healthy lifestyle.

The penultimate indicator measures the percentage of children who use the internet daily. Internet usage among children is a critical factor for accessing information, educational resources, and as participating in a digital society. Lastly the fourteenth indicator focus on reading since percentage of children who read books, beyond those required for school, reflects engagement with literature and the availability of educational resources at home and in schools (Save the Children, 2014).

According to Battilochi, the two sub-indexes have different characteristics, on the one hand, the first one, which refers to educational poverty in the school context, is highly heterogeneous with main indicators relative to provision and only one relative to student outcome named “early school leaving rate”. On the other hand, the second sub-index, which evaluates educational poverty in the local community is more homogeneous since it concentrates on extracurricular activities (Battilochi, 2020).

The scoring of the performance of each of the Italian regions on the fourteen different indicators resulted in a main ranking and two secondary rankings that referred to regional performance on each of the sub-index. The Top four regions in the classification of lowest performance, and therefore highest level of educational poverty in Italy were Campania, Puglia, Calabria, and Sicilia (Campania being number one in the ranking). The conclusions drawn from the analysis of such classifications by the NGO depict a national reality in which the regions where children are most economically poor align with those where quality educational services and cultural opportunities are scarce.

In the following year Save the Children Italia made another important publication entitled *"Illuminiamo il futuro 2030: Obiettivi per liberare i bambini dalla povertà educativa"*. In this publication, the NGO emphasizes the importance that the "educating community"[13] has outside of school walls considering extracurricular activities but also there is a correlation between the economic situation of the families that can lead to a vicious cycle of poverty since material poverty, of one generation usually translates to fewer educational choices of the following one (Save the Children, 2015). According to OSCE, however, there is the possibility of creating resilience paths with the youth "at risk" especially considering the socio-economic condition of their families (OSCE, n.d).

As a result, Save the Children Italia created proposals and goals to be met as part of *"Illuminiamo il Futuro 2030"*. According to Save the Children Italia, their proposal was drawn from the "No one left behind" approach adopted by the UN. According to the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, the "No one left behind":

> "represents the unequivocal commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole."(United National Sustainable Development Group, 2022)

Three goals were defined by Save the Children Italia and then developed to target the main difficulties found by the NGO in the national scenario. They are:

Goal 1: "Learning and development: all minors should be able to learn, experience, develop capacities, talents and aspirations";

Goal 2: "Educational offer: all minors should have access to quality educational offer" and

Goal 3: "Eliminate child poverty: eliminate child poverty to favor educational growth"

In order for those goals to be achieved, Save the Children Italia emphasized a multi-level approach in which there should be an integrated intervention that joins the

[13] The "educating community" consists of the local actors committed to ensuring the well-being and growth of girls and boys.(Save the Children Italia,2020).

effort of "the central, regional and local institutions, the private sector and civil society (Save the Children, 2015).

In 2016, Save the Children Italia relaunched its monitoring and regional evaluations but had an updated version of the educational poverty index, which had new calculations and a different set of indicators (Save the Children, 2016). The latest index also had two sub-indexes and ten indicators that relate to the *"Illuminiamo il futuro 2030"* targets previously mentioned. The 2016 index was composed of the following indicators.

2016 Sub-Index of Learning and Development & Educational Provision

Sub-Index of Learning and Development	**Sub-Index of Educational Provision**
Percentage of 15-year-olds who do not reach the minimum competency levels in mathematics (OECD PISA tests)	Percentage of primary school classes without full-time schedules
Percentage of 15-year-olds who do not reach the minimum competency levels in reading (OECD PISA tests)	Percentage of lower secondary school classes without full-time schedules
Percentage of school dropouts as measured by the European indicator "Early School Leavers"	Percentage of students who do not benefit from the school canteen service
Percentage of minors aged 6 to 17 who have not participated in 4 or more recreational and cultural activities out of 7 considered	Percentage of students attending schools with inadequate learning infrastructures (OECD PISA indicator)
Percentage of children aged 0 to 2 without access to public educational services for early childhood	Percentage of classrooms without fast internet connection

Save the Children, 2016

Although using substantially different tools of analysis, the results from the 2016 Save the Children Educational Poverty Index portrayed yet again in their ranking the gap between North and South, having the top five regions with worse educational poverty scores being Sicilia, Campania, Calabria, Puglia, and Molise.

Even though the NGO states that the reviewed version of the Index intended to fix some of the issues present in the previous Index (Save the Children, 2016), the new index has received some remarks. According to Battilocchi, the 2016 index has an internal heterogeneity that still portrays a difficulty in finding a proper synthesis, and the former division between school and social environment present on the 2014 index was clearer

than the one between learning and development and educational provision that characterizes the 2016 index (Battilocchi, 2020).

One important aspect of Save the Children Italia's approach to educational poverty is the importance that it gives to out-of-school activities and different forms of cultural consumption (Battilocchi, 2020). Access to extracurricular activities is a big source of inequality since it is a characteristic of middle-class families to provide this type of access that allows their children to have a comparative advantage characterized by the development of social skills that children coming from low-income backgrounds are not able to profit from (Lareau, 2011). Apart from the social skills developed by having access to cultural stimuli, it has also been observed that having access to cultural resources leads to indirect advantages within formal education (Seow & Pan, 2014). From this scenario, Save the Children Italia began to create strategies and action plans on how educational poverty could be contrasted in the national sphere.

3.5 Save the Children Italia's influence on policy against educational poverty in Italy

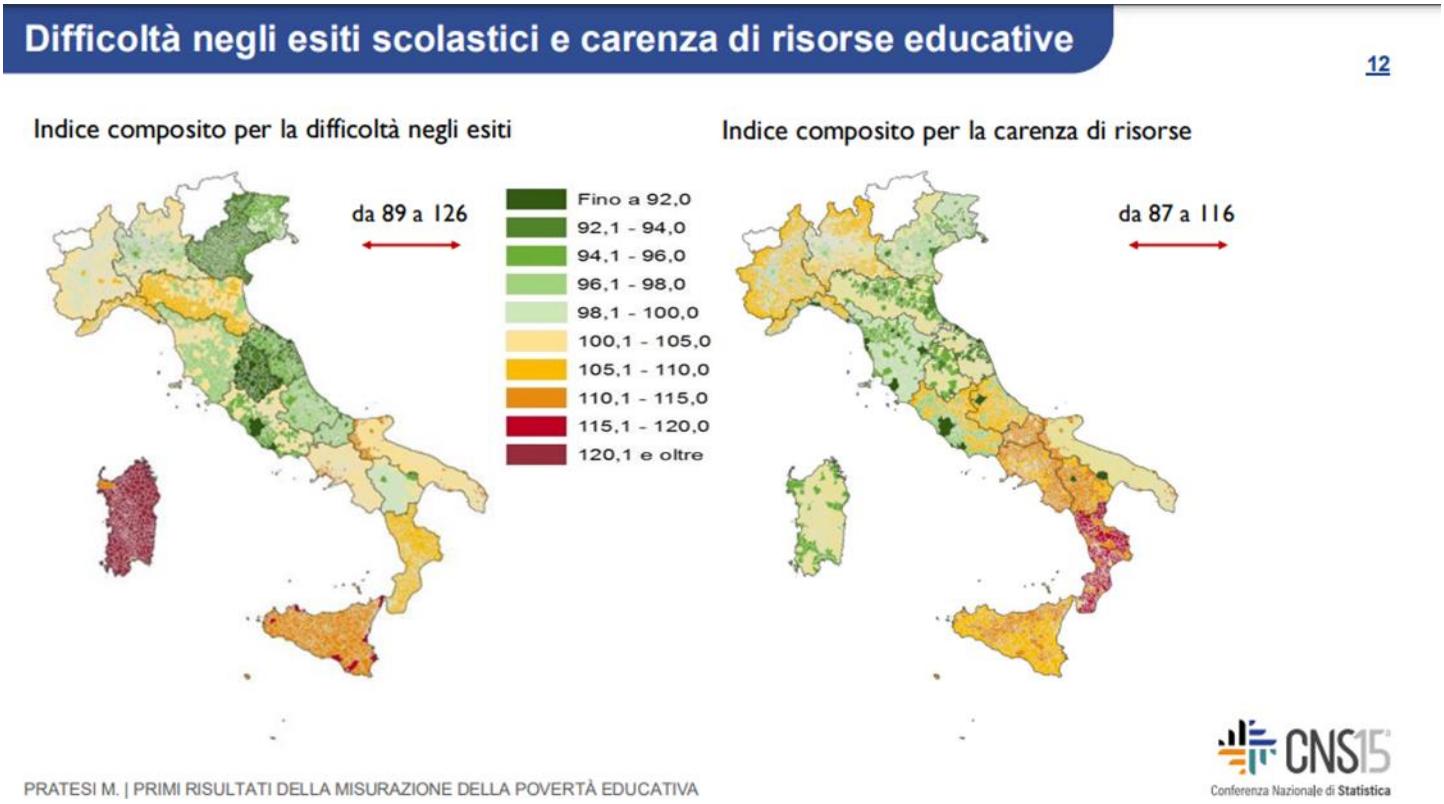
From direct or indirect participation, Save the Children Italia has raised awareness to the issue of educational poverty in Italy leading it to gain more and more space in the national debates.

As we have observed, the correlations made with educational poverty have been mostly indirect in major statistical studies. This, however, seems to be shifting since ISTAT announced in their 15th national conference on statistics that there has been a first attempt to measure educational poverty in the Italian territory within ISTAT. Monica Pratesi, the director of the Department of Statistical Production informed that:

> "The first choice we made was to address educational poverty by identifying two dimensions: one related to resources, which includes both economic resources and those provided by the territory and the educating community, and the other related to outcomes," (...) "Another important aspect is that the measurement of educational poverty cannot be limited to the school and cognitive dimensions alone; it is necessary to also consider aspects related to informal and non-formal education (so called "outcome poverty"). This is certainly a key point: we need to

move beyond just the school environment and invest more in other dimensions of learning [14]"(Pratesi, 2024).

ISTAT presented the results of this initial analysis, which follows the AMPI method and provides a pure number that ranges from 70 to 130, with the Italian average set at 100. Each unit of analysis is compared with the Italian average of 100. The value of 100 can be interpreted as a relative threshold. Thus, we can refer to situations of relative deprivation. Even areas with values below 100 show signs of deprivation (they are just below the national average). The results on the left portray the index on the difficulty of outcomes while the one on the right shows the lack of resources(ISTAT,2024).



Pratesi, 2024

ISTAT stated that the analysis highlights significant educational resource shortages and poor school outcomes in Sicilia, Puglia, Campania, and rural areas of the

[14] Translated from the original:«La prima scelta che abbiamo fatto è stata quella di affrontare la povertà educativa individuando due dimensioni, quella relativa alle risorse, che sono quelle economiche ma anche quelle messe a disposizione dal territorio e dalla comunità educante, e quella relativa agli esiti», «Un altro aspetto importante è che la misurazione della povertà educativa non può coincidere solo con la dimensione scolastica e cognitiva, occorre considerare anche gli aspetti relativi all'educazione informale e a quella non formale. Questo è certamente un primo punto fermo: bisogna uscire dal solo ambito della scuola e investire di più sulle altre dimensioni della formazione»(Pratesi, 2024).

Center-North. However, some regions, such as Lazio, Calabria, and Puglia, show better-than-average outcomes despite resource shortages. Most cities in the Center-North are doing well in both resources and outcomes, while some areas, like Piemonte, Liguria, and Sardegna, have good resources but fall behind in school results (ISTAT,2024).

This meeting included important representatives of civil society that are collaborating with the commission responsible for including educational poverty in ISTAT statistical analysis. Members from UNICEF, World Bank, UNESCO, Save the Children, Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito, Autorità Garante perl'Infanzia e l'Adolescenza, l'Impresa sociale Con i Bambini, ANCI and INPS were part of this expert group (ISTAT, 2024).

After the meeting, Save the Children Italy director Raffaela Milano issued a statement hoping that the initiative would lead to concrete actions in the country's fight against educational poverty

> "Educational poverty is now more than ever an emergency that must be addressed with all available tools. For this reason, we ask the institutions that, once ISTAT has completed the elaboration phase, the new measurement of territorial educational poverty should become a key criterion for the formulation of policies and for guiding all educational investments, in order to reduce the severe inequalities that continue to affect children and adolescents in our country."[15](Milano,2024).

In the same line, in 2014 the Parliamentary Committee on Childhood and Adolescence promoted a study on child poverty that was highly influenced by Save the Children Italy's efforts to bring up the importance of this subject. The approved document from the Parliamentary Commission on Childhood and Adolescence in Italy addresses the urgent issue of educational poverty, highlighting its detrimental effects on children's development and future opportunities. The committee's report emphasizes that

[15] Translated from the original:"La povertà educativa è oggi più che mai una emergenza che va affrontata con tutti gli strumenti a disposizione. Per questo motivo, chiediamo alle istituzioni che, appena conclusa la fase di elaborazione da parte di Istat, la nuova misurazione della povertà educativa territoriale diventi un criterio determinante per l'elaborazione di politiche e per orientare tutti gli investimenti educativi, per ridurre le gravi disuguaglianze che continuano a colpire i bambini, le bambine e gli adolescenti nel nostro Paese"(Milano, 2024).

educational poverty extends beyond mere academic shortcomings; it encompasses a lack of opportunities for emotional growth, social interaction, and personal development (Parliamentary Committee on Childhood and Adolescence, 2014).

During the hearings, Save the Children Italy played a crucial role in underscoring the significance of addressing educational poverty. In conclusion, the document calls for the creation of a national plan for childhood and adolescence, which would prioritize educational and social investments. This reflects a broader understanding that combating educational poverty requires not only economic support but also a commitment to improving the overall well-being of children.

By emphasizing these elements, the report reinforces the need for a multifaceted approach to ensure that all children, regardless of their background, have access to quality educational opportunities (Parliamentary Committee on Childhood and Adolescence, 2014). The change in the vocabulary and approach used in such documents portrays an important step in the direction of creating public policies that target the multiple roots of child poverty and not just the economic one as it was traditionally made.

Moreover, in 2016, the Fondo per il *Contrasto della Povertà Educativa Minorile* (Fund for Combating Child Educational Poverty) was established in 2016 as part of Italy's *Legge di Stabilità*. This fund represents a collaboration between the public and private sectors, involving major contributions from banking foundations, led by Acri (*Associazione di Fondazioni e di Casse di Risparmio*), in cooperation with the government, the *Forum Nazionale del Terzo Settore*, and other private stakeholders. Its mission is to dismantle social, economic, and cultural barriers that prevent children from accessing educational opportunities.

The Governance of the Fund is shared between public and private actors through a Strategic Steering Committee, which sets the intervention priorities, evaluates proposals, and monitors project implementation. The Fund aims to improve educational services, reduce school dropout rates, and strengthen community involvement in education. The *Fondazione CON IL SUD* is responsible for managing the Fund and creating the social enterprise *"Con i Bambini"* to implement its initiatives. *"Con i Bambini"* issues call for proposals aimed at supporting early childhood and adolescence, with a focus on improving educational services and combating school dropouts, particularly in disadvantaged areas (Musella et al, 2018).

Save the Children Italia plays a crucial role in this framework. As a key advocate for addressing educational poverty in Italy, it has been instrumental in raising awareness about the issue and influencing the policy agenda. Their advocacy contributed to the establishment of the *Fondo per il Contrasto della Povertà Educativa Minorile,* ensuring that educational deprivation is recognized as a distinct category of poverty. The Fund stands as an essential tool for promoting educational equality and preventing the intergenerational transmission of poverty, integrating public and private resources to address deep-rooted social challenges (Musella et al, 2018).

Another political choice that portrays the Italian government's recent interest in educational poverty is the use it made of the FEAD (Found for European Aid to the Most Deprived) Programme which took place from 2014 until 2020. Amongst the four categories of issues chosen by the Italian government opted to use the funds to address both child material poverty and educational poverty. The Programme was then set to provide for school supplies intended for children who were beneficiaries of financial help from the government as well as meals and tools for the schools to be able to open during the afternoons. According to Battilochi, this Programme "expressly refers to the activity of investigation and monitoring carried out by Save the Children" (Battilochi,2020).

The influence of Save the Children Italy in shaping policies against educational poverty has been significant, introducing key frameworks and tools, such as the Educational Poverty Index, to guide policy development and action plans. These initiatives have highlighted the importance of early intervention, quality education, and access to resources for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. As a result, Save the Children has not only contributed to policy reform but also implemented ground-level projects to tackle educational poverty. One such initiative is *Punto Luce*, a flagship program designed to provide tangible support to children and families in underserved communities. Transitioning from the broader policy landscape, we now turn to examining the specific interventions of *Punto Luce* and its impact on reducing educational poverty through localized action.

3.6 Conclusion

Chapter 3 has explored the origins, mission, and values of Save the Children, with a specific focus on its global influence and localized efforts in Italy. This chapter focuses

on the historical evolution of the Organization from its founding by Eglantyne Jebb in 1919 to its current status as a key global advocate for children's rights. We have seen how Save the Children's initiatives have developed over time, particularly in response to major global events, such as the world wars, that shaped its role in child protection and education.In addition to this global overview, the chapter emphasizes the specific role of Save the Children Italia. The Organization's early efforts in post-World War II provided essential relief, helping children recover from the devastation of the conflict.

Throughout this chapter, Save the Children's commitment to the right to education, as enshrined in international legal frameworks like the UNCRC, has been observed. These frameworks not only guide the Organization's work but also provide a basis for holding governments accountable for their obligations to children's education. . As a result, political changes have emerged in the last few years, giving more importance to educational poverty in the Italian domestic scenario. Furthermore, the chapter has demonstrated how Save the Children's work transcends legal obligations, focusing on creating real, sustainable impact through community engagement, direct intervention programs, and advocacy.

The mission of Save the Children, both globally and within Italy, has evolved to address the growing complexities of children's rights in the modern world. The Organization has remained focused on its mission to ensure that all children, regardless of their background, are given the opportunity to thrive. In Italy, Save the Children's work addresses key social and economic barriers to education, particularly focusing on marginalized communities where poverty, regional disparities, and lack of resources have entrenched educational inequities

In conclusion, this chapter has laid the groundwork for understanding Save the Children's unique approach to combating educational poverty in Italy. By examining the historical evolution and the core values of the Organization, we can better appreciate the importance of the targeted interventions that Save the Children implements to tackle educational disparities. The analysis of its mission and historical context builds the way for a deeper exploration of the concrete actions Save the Children Italia undertakes, which will be further detailed in the following chapter.

4. Case Studies: Punto Luce and ET3

Chapter 4 explores two key case studies: the "Punto Luce" initiative and the ET3 project, which serve as practical examples of Save the Children Italia's efforts to combat educational poverty in Italy. These case studies are analyzed within the broader context of Save the Children Italia's work to contrast educational poverty, demonstrating how theoretical frameworks, such as Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), are translated into concrete actions that address both educational and social disparities in marginalized communities.

The *Punto Luce* initiative, central to Save the Children Italia's approach in the field of educational poverty, provides comprehensive educational and developmental support in underprivileged areas across Italy. These centers offer after-school programs, access to cultural and recreational activities, and a safe space for children and adolescents to engage in learning beyond the formal school system. The initiative is grounded in the belief that educational poverty cannot be solved through academic instruction alone; it requires addressing the broader social and emotional needs of children. By creating supportive environments, *Punto Luce* helps children build self-confidence, social skills, and resilience—key factors in breaking the cycle of poverty.

The second initiative, ET3, inserted in the framework of *Punto Luce* complements its work by focusing specifically on equipping children and adolescents with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the future. This project integrates SEL frameworks with practical skills training, helping young people develop not only academically but also in terms of life skills, such as teamwork, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence. ET3 also addresses issues of gender sensitivity and cultural diversity, ensuring that its programs are inclusive and responsive to the specific challenges faced by various communities in Italy.

Both initiatives operate within a broader theoretical framework that connects educational poverty to socioeconomic inequalities, regional disparities, and the lack of access to comprehensive developmental resources. By addressing these gaps, Save the Children Italia aims to foster long-term changes that go beyond immediate educational outcomes, creating sustainable improvements in the lives of children and their communities.

Furthermore, Chapter 4 will briefly mention challenges faced by ET3 based on the project's final report, particularly in relation to scalability, sustainability, and funding. The successes of *Punto Luce* and ET3 highlight the effectiveness of localized interventions, but they also underscore the need for continued investment and political support to ensure their long-term impact. By examining these case studies, this chapter contributes to the broader discussion on how educational poverty can be addressed through, multi-level, multi-faceted, community-based approaches that integrate educational support with social and emotional learning.

4.1 The *Punto Luce* initiative

Educational poverty, even if it has a very intimate relationship with material poverty, has gained space and a definition made by Save the Children Italia that embraced a multidimensional view of child poverty that required a multifaceted approach to be confronted. After the *"Illuminiamo il futuro 2030"* campaign, a central initiative named *"Punto Luce"* took off inside the Educational and Material Poverty department of Save the Children Italia.

The *Punto Luce* is defined by Save the Children as:

> " (...)socio-educational centers with 'high educational intensity' that are established in the most deprived areas of major Italian cities. They offer children and teenagers aged 6 to 17 the opportunity to participate in high-quality educational and formative activities free of charge."(Save the Children Italy, 2023).

The *Punto Luce* initiative today counts with 26 high-density educational centers distributed in 20 different cities within 15 Italian regions namely: Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardia, Marche, Piemonte, Puglia, Sardegna, Sicilia, Toscana and Veneto. Only in 2022, Punto Luce, toghether with their partnerships with local actors was able to attend to 13.741 young people and over 55.000 children were part of this intervention from when it first started (Save the Children Italy, 2023).

Save the Children 2023

Within their respective regions the 26 *Punto Luce* are located in the following sites (some sites have more than one *Punto Luce*): Ancona, Bari, Brindisi, Casal di Principe, Catania, Genova, L'Aquila, Milano, Napoli, Ostia, Palermo, Platì, Potenza, Prato, Roma, San Luca, Sassari, Scalea, Torino, Udine and Venezia Marghera.

Punto Luce is a product of the Educational Poverty Index developed by Save the Children, which we have previously explored combined with its many years of field expericence. Within this project, several activities are developed by professionals in different macro-areas of action such as study support and reading promotion; arts, music, and creativity laboratories; education on the responsible use of new media, digital competencies, and STEM laboratories; promotion of healthy lifestyles and promotion of

motor and sportive activities; active citizenship and environmental education paths; parental support; individual support and visits and outings.

These main areas of work developed within *Punto Luce* are described by Save the Children in its official documents and can be summarized as follows: Study support and reading promotion, where children are encouraged to become independent learners. This is achieved through structured study environments equipped with resources such as computers, allowing children to research, create projects, and improve their academic skills. In these activities educators are available to guide small groups, providing targeted support, especially for children with special educational needs (BES) and learning disorders (DSA).

In addition to traditional study support, workshops that focus on learning through play are organized, that seek to help children strengthen their math and language skills. Reading is also promoted as a tool for learning and creative expression, with books serving as the basis for artistic activities such as drawing, photography, theater, and music. Moreover, activities are held through artistic, musical, and creative workshops photography, theater, visual arts, music, dance, and even circus arts, all aimed at helping children develop self-awareness.

In digital literacy and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education, children and adolescents are taught how to use new technologies responsibly. Workshops in coding, robotics, and 3D printing are held in order to develop their digital skills while focusing on STEM. This initiative also seeks to prevent young people from becoming NEETs (not in education, employment, or training) by fostering their interest in technology and helping them envision a future in the field.

Punto Luce also places a strong emphasis on healthy lifestyles mainly as a response to the rising levels of obesity and sedentary behavior, exacerbated by the pandemic, various sports and physical activities are offered. These range from traditional sports like basketball and soccer to activities such as parkour, climbing, and martial arts.

In this context, *Punto Luce* launched in 2020, as a result of an important partnership, the project “Joy of Moving” in *Punti Luce* locations such as Rome Torre Maura and Rome Ponte di Nona, and later expanded to cities like Milan, Naples, and Genoa. The Joy of Moving (JOM) project, was implemented through a partnership between Save the Children and Kinder/Ferrero, to promote educational and physical

development through an innovative, scientifically validated method that emphasizes the role of movement in children's holistic growth. The project targeted children aged 6 to 11, with some activities extended to pre-adolescents and adolescents, and focused on fostering active lifestyles, self-esteem, and collaboration instead of competition (Save the Children, 2022).

The Joy of Moving methodology shifts attention from performance to enjoyment and from competition to collaboration, fostering key competencies in four main areas: physical fitness, motor coordination, cognitive function, and life skills. The program integrates daily physical activities, active breaks, and recreational moments into the children's routines, enhancing both their mental and physical health (Save the Children, 2022).

Within the framework of guaranteeing children access to sports, Daniela Fatarella, the director of Save the Children Italia points out

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us experienced firsthand how detrimental it can be to have to suspend certain activities, not being able to leave the house, meet people, or play sports. If this period was difficult for us adults, it had devastating effects on children. Physical activity, in fact, not only impacts well-being and physical health but, most importantly, the mental health of young children. It has been crucial for them to reclaim, thanks to this project, some spaces and activities, such as playing with their peers, interacting with others, and experiencing movement as a form of learning." (Fatarella,2023).

Moreover, *Punto Luce* has developed yet another important project: the *DOTi - Diritti ed Opportunità per Tutte e Tutti* project. Led by Save the Children Italia and supported by the *Istituto Buddista Italiano Soka Gakkai,* it provides personalized educational support to children and adolescents facing socio-economic difficulties. Known as *Doti Educative*, these interventions offer essential goods and services to minors in vulnerable situations, often identified by social services or schools. As of 2024, the project is now in its fifth year and has reached 1,430 beneficiaries up until December 2022, and in 2023 extended its support to an additional 574 children and adolescents across 10 Italian cities (Save the Children, 2023).

The *DOTi Educative* aims to improve access to educational materials, extracurricular activities, and opportunities for talent development in areas such as sports,

music, theater, and other creative fields. For adolescents, the focus has been on preventing school dropout and promoting their reintegration into educational or vocational pathways. The project also targets children and adolescents in particularly disadvantaged socio-economic contexts, offering long-term, individualized educational assistance through close collaboration with schools, social services, and local networks.

In 2022, 35% of the distributed *DOTi* have been sport-related, providing courses and equipment to promote active lifestyles. These initiatives help build resilience, self-esteem, and social integration among the young participants.

Maddalena Franz, from the Get Up association that manages activities at the *Punto Luce* in Udine, underlined the importance of collaboration with the community:

> "The DOTi project has been a springboard to implement the network work we have always promoted, offering a concrete example of what an educational community can achieve, with increasing co-responsibility towards the territory. Specifically, we have established solid collaboration with social services to manage complex cases, identifying and addressing problematic and high-discomfort situations quickly and jointly. We have also built strong relationships with local associations to provide integrated care for minors, working together with families and the minors themselves to address specific needs."(Franz,n.d).

The DOTi project continues to address both the immediate needs and long-term development of vulnerable children and adolescents. It also strengthens local educational communities by fostering collaboration among various actors, including schools, social services, and local associations, to provide comprehensive support for child development.

In 2022, the cities among those who provided the most sportive grants were:

City	Sport Courses	Sports Kits
Brindisi	21	2
Palermo	27	
Potenza	20	1
Prato	30	
Roma	24	
Udine	21	2

Save the Children, 2023

Additionally, within *Punto Luce* activities, there is a focus on environmental education and active citizenship, where children are encouraged to engage with sustainability issues and participate in creative recycling, climate change workshops, and projects aimed at recovering green spaces. This aims to cultivate a sense of responsibility for their communities and the environment, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

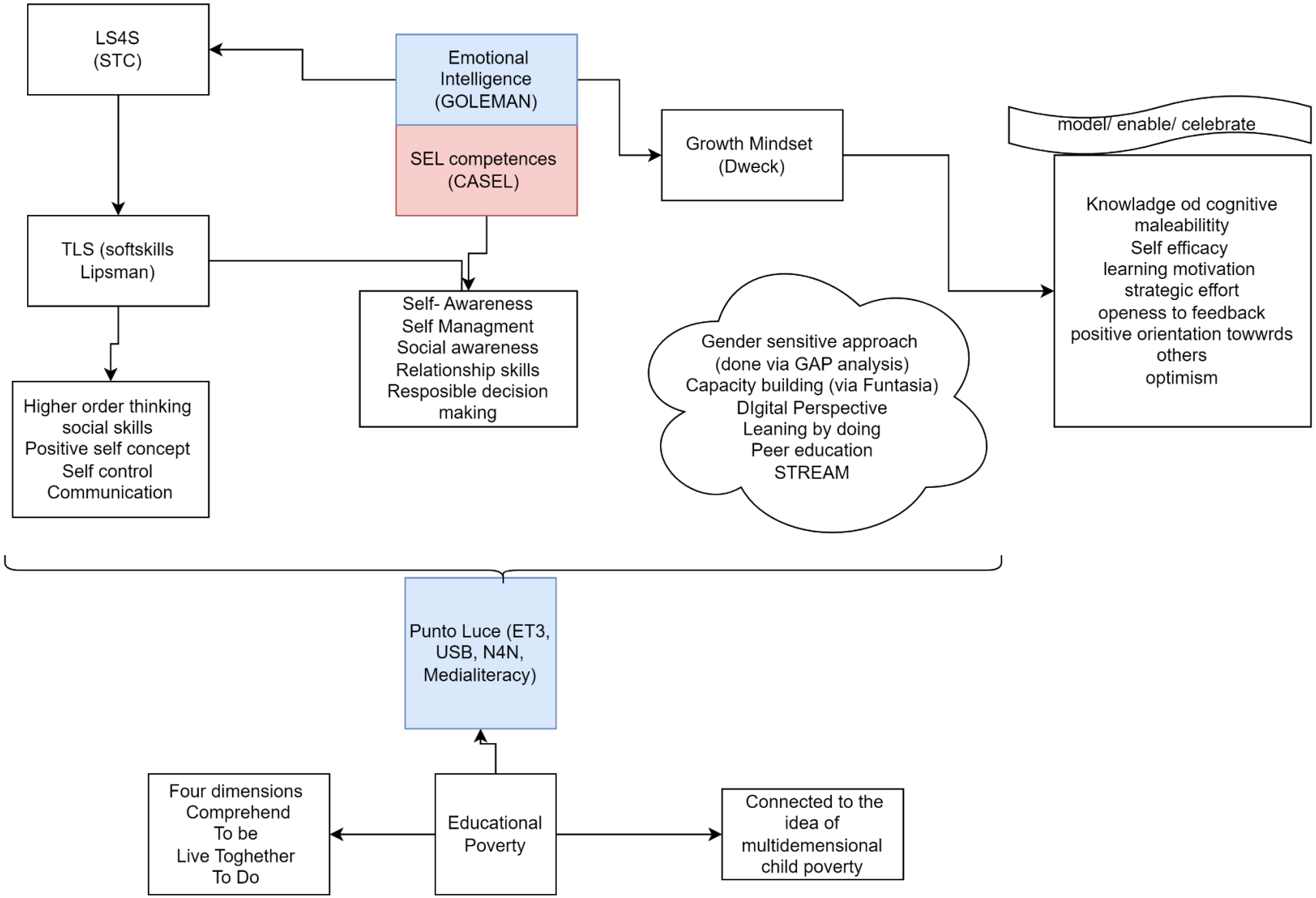
Finally, parental support is provided to ensure that families are involved in the educational process. This includes offering legal advice, psychological counseling, and organizing family-oriented visits to cultural landmarks, promoting an appreciation of local heritage, and fostering stronger family bonds (Save the Children Italy, 2023).

The idea that families are also included in *Punto Luce's* framework of action, goes hand in hand with how Save the Children envisions the foundation behind their work

> "(...) based on an integrated, community-focused approach aimed at strengthening the 'educating community' (including families) and fostering collaboration with various local stakeholders. Additionally, they implement individualized or personalized interventions through individual support plans (educational resources) dedicated to providing goods and services to children

> and adolescents, as well as their families, who are living in officially recognized conditions of poverty." (Save the Children, 2023)

When examining the main programs developed within Save the Children Italia's *Punto Luce,* we can find several projects that aim to address issues such as school dropout, digital literacy, and overcoming gender stereotypes. The following organizational chart was made while I was an intern at Save the Children Italy in order to better comprehend the multiple theoretical sources for *Punto Luce*. One of the main projects developed within *Punto Luce* was ET3, which we will explore in the following chapter.


LS4S
(STC)
Emotional
Intelligence
(GOLEMAN)
SEL competences
(CASEL)
Growth Mindset
(Dweck)
model/ enable/ celebrate
Knowladge od cognitive
maleabilitity
Self efficacy
learning motivation
strategic effort
openess to feedback
positive orientation towwrds
others
optimism
TLS (softskills
Lipsman)
Self- Awareness
Self Managment
Social awareness
Relationship skills
Resposible decision
making
Higher order thinking
social skills
Positive self concept
Self control
Communication
Gender sensitive approach
(done via GAP analysis)
Capacity building (via Funtasia)
DIgital Perspective
Leaning by doing
Peer education
STREAM
Punto Luce (ET3,
USB, N4N,
Medialiteracy)
Four dimensions
Comprehend
To be
Live Toghether
To Do
Educational
Poverty
Connected to the
idea of
multidemensional
child poverty

Organization chart of the main theoretical frameworks underlying the projects developed at *Punto Luce* made by me (2024).

4.2 Equip today to thrive tomorrow (ET3)

ET3 was a three-year project that took place from June 2020 to August 2023, developed by Save the Children Italia in collaboration with Accenture Foundation and Save the Children US. Its main goal was to support the development of human and digital skills in children aged 8 to 14, focusing on creativity and a growth mindset with an emphasis on gender inclusion. This project targeted over 44,000 beneficiaries, including 41.000 children and 3,000 parents, teachers, and educators, across nine Italian cities: Bari, Genova, Milano, Napoli, Palermo, Prato, Roma, Torino, and Udine within the *Punto Luce* structures(Save the Children,n.d).

ET3 sought to address this issue by integrating STEM education with a creative, multidisciplinary approach. The project included activities like hands-on learning, creative writing, artistic workshops, and visits to technological and cultural centers. It also focused on overcoming gender stereotypes in STEM education. Additionally, the project sought to raise awareness among parents, teachers, and communities about the importance of supporting children's learning, especially in digital skills.

The project also placed a strong emphasis on creating an "enabling environment" for children's development by training teachers and educators, conducting research on gender inequality, and fostering an inclusive, supportive atmosphere for learning through innovative teaching methods like problem-based learning and "learning by doing". This approach was later on updated and expanded to other Italian regions with the the NGOs project “USB” (Youth, Steam, and Beyond).

4.2.1 ET3 theoretical framework

The previously discussed SEL framework can be considered a pillar when talking about ET3, which was conceived as part of a Save the Children common approach called Life Skills for Success. This approach is described as focusing on

> “developing a set of key skills, competencies, behaviors, attitudes, and personal qualities that enable young people to move effectively in their environment, work well with others, achieve good outcomes, and achieve your goals. These

> are called “transferable life skills” because they can be used in many different areas of a young person's life. The approach focuses on the categories of skills that, according to global research, are most associated with workforce success and other positive development outcomes.”(Save the Children, 2023).

The life skills mentioned in the approach are Communication Skills, High-level thinking, Positive self-concept, Self-control, and Social Skills. These elements are deeply connected with the SEL pillars. Furthermore, the approach is based on participatory and experimental learning, real-life practice, and a supportive learning environment. Massimo Merlino, who coordinated the implementation of the ET3 project in Italy, said that the Life Skills for Success approach was then adapted to the Italian reality to better correspond to the issues faced at a national level and implemented on ET3. This step proved fundamental since the heterogeneous scenario of the Italian territory required a tailored approach.

Within the framework of ET3, not only the 5 components of the SEL wheel (Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision Making, and Social Awareness) have been implemented, but an integrated Social and Emotional Learning framework has also been introduced which includes the use of the “Growth Mindset” developed by Carol Dweck. The author defined the Growth Mindset as “The belief that one's most fundamental abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work, mind and talent are just the starting point. This perspective generates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great achievements”(Dweck,2016).

Apart from the SEL skills and Growth Mindset, Save the Children Italia used a gender-sensitive approach that is based on the GAP country analysis. GAP stands for “Gender and Power Analysis” and, in the case of Save the Children, it consists in

> “a type of action research that examines power relations. It explores gender inequalities and intersecting systems of oppression that impact the individual and collective ability of people to fully exercise their rights. SC uses GAP analysis to identify and analyze inequalities, break down barriers to equitable and meaningful participation, and advance gender equality and social

justice.SC's GAP Analysis Guidance is unique. It uses an intersectional and child-centered approach while recognizing the relationships, systems, and structures that shape children's lives. The guidance is grounded in human rights and the understanding that intersecting inequalities are key barriers that prevent children, their families, and communities from fully exercising their rights" (Save the Children, 2021).

When applying the GAP analysis in the Italian context two main questions guided the researchers: the first one was "How do gender inequality and other systems of oppression (e.g., classism, ageism, migration background, and socioeconomic status) impact girls' and boys' agency, self-esteem, opportunities and career choices, particularly in STEM fields?", and the second was "What are the available resources and supports in families, schools and communities that can be leveraged to promote gender-transformative interventions, challenge gender inequality and increase girls' inclusion and advancement in STEM?".

As a result of the research, Save the Children Italy established five main findings that should be addressed by their programs. They were:

"1. Boys and girls are oriented towards educational and professional choices in line with stereotypically "masculine" and "feminine" professions.

2. Limited access to technology, including computers and the internet, affects the development of mathematical and digital skills and interest in STEM subjects for both boys and girls living in poverty.

3. Both boys and girls demonstrated an emerging awareness of gender equality. Additional discussion is needed to deepen their understanding and break down binary conceptions of sex and gender, as well as inequitable gender norms.

4. Male and female educators reported a significant difference in their relationships with technology and digital skills. Men tended to be more interested in and comfortable with technology than women.

5. Gender biases, along with the socio-economic status of families, strongly influence children's future opportunities and choices. Caregivers' restrictive views of appropriate gender roles and lack of knowledge about study options and professional competencies lead to limited career expectations, especially for girls."

One of the key actions that were established as a way of contrasting these findings was the use of a digital perspective in the project (including the use of the STREAM approach, which adds to the previous elements of STEAM those of art and writing, which favors "learning by doing" and "peer to peer education").

This framework of elements can be summarized below:

Save the Children n.d

The importance of having qualified teachers implementing this methodology was central and this has been realized through the "Funtasia" approach. Funtasia is a transformative educational approach used to train educators through a combination of six key frameworks: Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL), Experiential Learning, Positive

Psychology, Growth Mindset, Project-Based Learning (PBL), and the Creative Empowerment Model (CEM). This method encourages a personal and transformative journey aimed at fostering curiosity, openness, inclusiveness, self-awareness, and community engagement in both educators and students (Save the Children,n.d). This methodology became a means to develop the idea of the learning curve where each lesson is built upon the previous one and provides educators with the tools to prepare to give continuity to a project that addresses many non-cognitive skills (Save the Children, n.d).

When we examine elements indicated as important in the literature on SEL in poverty contexts, such as social justice and cultural responsiveness, we can see that they are part of the integrated SEL framework used on ET3. This can be seen especially when we look at the capacity for social awareness, which is described in the project framework as “The ability to take the perspective of others and empathize with others, including those from different backgrounds and cultures, and to understand social aspects, ethical attitudes and norms of behavior, both online and offline..."(Save the Children, n.d).

Furthermore, the environment proposed within the framework of the Save the Children Italia’s ET3 program involves listening to students and communicating in a respectful, friendly, and empathetic way. Moreover, avoiding reproducing prejudices, stereotypes, or discriminatory attitudes in the classroom on the part of the teacher and students and being reflective and working to overcome the teacher's limits and prejudices go hand in hand with the proposals made theoretically.

4.2.2 ET3 sessions

The ET3 project was developed in 19 sessions of which the first 12 focused on the work of human competencies, always supported by a digital lens while the last ones gave more focus to advanced technical competencies such as tinkering, coding, robotics, and using the 3D printer.

The first session was entitled “The Essence of Me” and had as its guiding question “What defines me as a human being?” The main theme explored was self-awareness, focusing on creative expression and the exploration of online identities. Participants reflected on how they present themselves online, the implications of their digital footprint, and the distinction between online and offline selves. Through this reflection, they learned

about the potential risks and benefits of constructing an online identity, raising awareness of how actions in the digital world can have long-term effects.

Building on the theme of self-awareness, session 2, called “Similarity Beyond Diversity” intended to respond to the question “Who am I in the community?”. Participants were asked to reflect on their role within a community, blending real-world and virtual community experiences. Contact games emphasized the connection with peers in the physical space, while discussions about online communities reinforced the idea that, when engaged consciously, virtual spaces can be a positive environment for shared interests. The session helped participants understand how their individual identity fits within broader social structures, both offline and online.

In Session 3 named “Destination Hug”, the question posed was “How can I develop compassion/empathy (towards ourselves)?”. The curriculum introduced empathy as a key concept, highlighting its importance for collaboration and understanding others. The session explored empathy not just in face-to-face interactions but also in digital spaces, where perceptions of others can be distorted. By discussing how online behavior can impact others, participants were encouraged to foster respectful, inclusive relationships, applying the principle of "care" in both their online and offline lives.

Session 4 “Finding My Way to Relate” intended to reply to “How do we see others and how we communicate with them?” and continued to build on relational skills, with a focus on authentic communication. Participants reflected on the difficulties they face when communicating online and discussed strategies for improving digital interactions. They were encouraged to produce and share positive content on social media platforms, reinforcing the importance of consistency between their online persona and their authentic self.

Session 5, was also called “Destination Hug” and had a similar question to session 3 on “How can we develop compassion/empathy (towards others)?”, and the theme of empathy was expanded to include strategies for dealing with negative or harmful interactions, particularly in online environments where anonymity can often lead to toxic behavior. Participants shared their experiences with online negativity, such as offensive comments, and were guided through strategies to navigate these challenges, helping them build resilience and emotional intelligence.

The final session of the first part of the program, Session 6 was called “Time to Dream” and had its leading question “How to create a shared vision for our community?”, it synthesized the human skills developed so far by encouraging participants to envision their ideal community. They were prompted to imagine a future free of stereotypes, where they could actively participate in shaping a more inclusive society. The gender-transformative approach was central to this session, with participants reflecting on and deconstructing traditional gender roles, and imagining new norms for their community. This exercise not only challenged existing paradigms but also allowed children to actively participate in creating a more equitable future.

With this strong conceptual foundation, the project transitioned to a focus on teamwork skills in Session 7. This session was named “Time to make it” and answered “How to express and sustain our opinions with a team?”. Participants engaged in activities designed to improve negotiation and collaboration while working together on a shared community project. The eighth session “Time to build” built on this, inviting participants to transform their ideas into concrete plans, with an emphasis on research and the reliability of information sources. This reflection on critical thinking skills helped participants understand the importance of verifying the accuracy of information, whether obtained from online search engines or personal networks.

Sessions 9 and 10 were named “Action time” and emphasized the development of a growth mindset, encouraging participants to work with motivation and perseverance as they designed and completed their community projects. Through these activities, participants learned to view failure as an opportunity for improvement rather than as a setback, fostering emotional maturity and resilience.

Session 11 “Time to Touch Up” encouraged participants to reflect on the learning process, particularly focusing on resilience. Participants are taught to view setbacks as learning opportunities, reinforcing the idea that failure is a natural part of growth. This session intended for adaptability and the refinement of their work, helping them understand the value of continuous improvement. In Session 12 “Time to present”, participants present their completed projects to their peers and facilitators. This session emphasizes public speaking and community engagement, as participants receive constructive feedback on their work.

The end of the 12th session marked the transition to the second part of the project, which focused on technological and digital skills. Session 13 was called “Time to collaborate: How to express and sustain our opinions in a team…building a robot!” and introduced participants to robotics, where they worked in teams to build robots using Lego WeDo 2.0 kits. The session began with a discussion on what defines a machine, leading to the concept of robots as advanced machines equipped with sensors. Participants designed robots aimed at improving the environment, incorporating teamwork and problem-solving into the project.

In Session 14 “How to transform ideas and inspirations in a 3D printed project” participants were introduced to Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM) technology. They designed personalized objects, such as keychains or bracelets, using 3D modeling software, and were guided through the entire printing process, reinforcing their understanding of design thinking and creativity in a STEM context.

In the following sessions, tinkering became the central theme. Session 15 on “how to transform ideas and inspirations from books into circuits” introduced participants to simple circuit-building activities, encouraging experimentation and creative problem-solving. Session 16 on “How to work with motivations and perseverance using a robot like Codey Rocky” deepened their understanding of robotics and coding, challenging them to apply these skills to community-focused projects, while Session 17 pushed participants further with advanced tinkering, exploring more complex designs and circuit systems.

Session 18 focused on refinement, encouraging participants to perfect their creations, fostering attention to detail and creative resilience. Finally, Session 19 celebrated the participants' achievements with a showcase of their projects, using tools like Makey Makey kits and Scratch to present their work. This final session emphasized self-confidence and the value of collective effort, as participants reflected on their journey of personal and technical growth.

4.2.3 ET3 final report

When we look at ET3’s final report, it is clear that it was considered predominantly positive. According to the report's conclusion, the project not only effectively achieved its objectives, but also exceeded the expected number of

beneficiaries. A total of 5,383 young people have undergone significant transformations, indicating a greater commitment to education and improvements in life skills, growth mindset, digital skills, and awareness of gender and social barriers.

Participants experienced notable improvements in collaboration skills, increased self-esteem, and the cultivation of a growth mindset; the testimonies mentioned how the post-pandemic context has made students even less developed in their human skills, such as promoting relationships with their peers and in this scenario the project proved to be even more important. The program also sparked career thinking, especially among younger participants. Effective strategies highlighted included language adaptation, incorporating dynamic activities, promoting strong relationships with teachers, and involving parents in the process.

Among the recommendations made in the report are even greater parental participation and involvement, which go hand in hand with SEL education and EI practices. Furthermore, it is important to underline the recommendation to continue to constantly invest in the training and support of educators, with a specific emphasis on cultural and intercultural media as it is essential to effectively navigate the different backgrounds of the children with whom they interact. This recommendation aligns with the struggles reported in articles about implementing SEL in poverty scenarios.

Regarding the strengthening of human skills, the report presented improvements in collaboration and cooperation between peers, favored the inclusion of students with learning needs, including those with autism, increased self-esteem, facilitated relationships with adults, an approach with a growth mindset, and new possibilities foreseen for future professional and training paths.

An important reflection in this regard is that in marginalized and excluded contexts, such as the peripheral areas in which the project is carried out, the simple creation of structured opportunities in itself has significant relevance when it helps to reduce the social gap between those who easily access similar opportunities and who not. *Punto Luce* educators also said that they have managed to make the culture of the program part of their *modus operandi* and now the challenge to make it sustainable is ensuring sufficient support, for example, for maintaining the kits.

By evaluating both the theoretical framework and the ET3 report it is possible to deduce that the use of an SEL framework integrated with gender sensitivity and looking

at cultural differences responds positively to the main points of attention that have emerged in the literature on educational poverty. However, especially in a post-pandemic context, there is a need to ensure that this *modus operandi* is not only sustainable but also expanded and continues to be adapted to the reality of each *Punto Luce*.

Given that the Italian case is complex due to its heterogeneous territorial realities and a high rate of child poverty, the multiplicity of elements present in the ET3 framework was essential to better respond to specific needs. It would be important that successful experiments such as those implemented by Save The Children in the context of the *Punto Luce* program were more studied, taken into account also considered by the academy in academic articles. Consequently, they could be expanded to other social projects addressing childhood issues in the Italian context and potentially adapted and replicated in other countries with similar challenges.

4.3 Conclusion

Since *Punto Luce* is an ongoing initiative, a start to finish evaluation cannot be done, however we can say that it has been an important means to empower children and their families, bringing sensitiveness to the topic and addressing in practice many of the roots of a multidimensional understanding of child poverty, demonstrating that localized, context-sensitive interventions are critical in addressing educational poverty.

The ET3 project has shown significant success in improving the educational and social outcomes for children and adolescents living in Italy's most disadvantaged regions. By offering a combination of academic support, social and emotional learning (SEL), and recreational activities, Save the Children Italia has created environments where children can thrive despite the socio-economic challenges they face.

The *Punto Luce* initiative has had a profound impact on children's academic performance and overall well-being. By providing access to educational resources and extracurricular activities, the program has helped children build critical life skills such as resilience, collaboration, and self-esteem. These outcomes are particularly important in disadvantaged areas where children are often deprived of the social and cultural experiences that are vital to their development. The program's holistic approach ensures that children receive not just academic support but also the social and emotional nurturing needed to develop into well-rounded individuals.

Similarly, the ET3 project has proven to be highly effective in equipping adolescents with the skills necessary to succeed in an increasingly complex world. By integrating gender sensitivity and cultural diversity into its framework, ET3 has ensured that its programs are inclusive and responsive to the specific needs of different communities. The project's emphasis on SEL has been instrumental in helping participants develop emotional intelligence, problem-solving skills, and a sense of personal agency—all of which are critical for breaking the cycle of educational poverty.

Despite these successes, the chapter also highlights several ongoing challenges. One of the most significant issues is the sustainability of these projects, particularly in the face of limited financial resources and varying levels of political support. While both *Punto Luce* and ET3 have shown that localized interventions can have a significant impact, their long-term success depends on continued investment and the scaling of such programs to reach more communities. Additionally, the projects must adapt to the evolving educational and social landscape, particularly in the context of Italy's post-pandemic recovery, which has exacerbated inequalities in education.

The findings from these case studies reinforce the importance of comprehensive, multi-dimensional approaches to tackling educational poverty. Addressing this issue requires more than academic instruction; it involves creating supportive environments where children can develop the social, emotional, and cognitive skills necessary to overcome the barriers they face. The success of these initiatives suggests that integrating SEL into educational programs is a powerful strategy for fostering both immediate and long-term improvements in children's lives.

In conclusion, the *Punto Luce* and ET3 initiatives serve as models for how NGOs, like Save the Children, can effectively address educational poverty through localized, context-sensitive interventions. These projects demonstrate that with the right support, even the most disadvantaged children can thrive. However, the continued success of such programs depends on sustained funding, political will, and the ability to adapt to changing social and economic conditions. As Italy—and indeed the world—faces new challenges in the years to come, it will be crucial to ensure that initiatives like these are supported and expanded, so that all children, regardless of their background, can have access to the educational and developmental resources they need to succeed.

5. Final Remarks

The issue of educational poverty is complex, multifaceted, and deeply rooted in socio-economic disparities that go beyond the mere lack of access to formal education. It encompasses a wide range of material and non-material deprivations, including inadequate learning environments, limited access to extracurricular activities, and the absence of social and emotional support. After been able to experience more closely the work of Save the Children Italia's child poverty department as an intern, I was instigated by how the issue of educational poverty could be defined and addressed in practice

Educational poverty not only affects cognitive development but also impairs children's emotional and social growth, leading to long-term disadvantages that perpetuate never-ending poverty cycle. Through the examination of the international legal framework in children's rights, literature on educational poverty, and specific case studies, this thesis, has aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of educational poverty in Italy, with a particular focus on the efforts of Save the Children Italia to mitigate this issue.

By examining the international legal framework in Chapter 1, we can observe that the complex fight against educational poverty is grounded in a robust set of international agreements. The legal path that led to broadly ratified documents such as the UNCRC was not easily made and had important figures such as Save the Children's founder Eglantyne Jebb as a voice that fiercely advocated for children's rights during the after World War I period.

The cornerstone of contemporary international legal framework on children's rights namely the UNCRC defines the right of every child to receive an education that not only addresses academic needs but also fosters personal growth, social integration, and respect for human rights. Other significant legal documents, such as the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the 1959 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, laid the foundation for the global recognition of children's rights importance and urgence. These international commitments highlight the importance of education as a tool for breaking cycles of poverty and inequality, a theme that resonates throughout this thesis.

Chapter 1 also emphasized the role of international institutions such as the ILO and UNICEF, which have played a significant part in advancing children's rights over the years. These organizations have contributed to shaping the global agenda on children's

welfare, advocating for policies that protect children from work exploitation, promote access to education, and create safe learning environments. The exploration of regional human rights systems further demonstrated how global principles are adapted to local contexts, with varying degrees of successfully addressing the transversal issue that is the promotion and protection of educational rights of children.

In Chapter 2, a detailed literature review on educational poverty provided the theoretical framework necessary for understanding this phenomenon. Drawing on the work of scholars like Amartya Sen and Gary Becker, this chapter examined how educational poverty is intrinsically linked to broader social and economic inequalities. Sen's capability approach, which views poverty as a deprivation of the freedom to achieve one's full potential, underscores the importance of education as a means of expanding individual capabilities. Similarly, Becker's human capital approach highlights the critical role of education as an investment in a child's future productivity and success. Both frameworks help contextualize how educational poverty operates on both the individual and societal levels.

The chapter also explored how educational poverty has been defined and measured in academic discourse. The pioneer works of Daniele Checchi and Jutta Allmendinger were particularly influential in showing how educational poverty affects not only cognitive skills but also non-cognitive skills, such as resilience, adaptability, and social-emotional learning. This understanding broadens the scope of what constitutes educational success, moving beyond academic achievements to include the holistic development of the child which became a basis for interventions such as the ones made by Save the Children.

Finally using a MLG lenses, we look at the influence of civil society in policy making. In examining multi-level governance, this thesis underscores the role of NGOs like Save the Children in bridging gaps between international legal commitments and national policy implementation. Through MLG frameworks, organizations can advocate effectively across local, national, and international spheres, ensuring that state obligations under the UNCRC and other international agreements translate into actionable, localized policies. By operating within these frameworks, Save the Children not only addresses immediate educational needs but also influences long-term policy reforms, emphasizing that the fulfillment of children's rights requires collaborative, sustained action across

multiple governance levels. This multi-tiered approach is essential in combating educational poverty by reinforcing accountability and adapting interventions to regional socio-economic contexts.

Chapter 3 focused on the history and mission of Save the Children, with a particular emphasis on its work in Italy. Founded in 1919 by Eglantyne Jebb, Save the Children has grown into a global organization dedicated to protecting children's rights, with education being a key area of focus. Since its arrival in Italy in 1947, Save the Children Italia has worked tirelessly to address the specific challenges faced by children in the country's most disadvantaged regions, especially in the south, where educational poverty is most acute. Through its advocacy efforts, the organization has played a pivotal role in shaping policies aimed at reducing educational inequality and ensuring that all children have access to the resources they need to succeed.

Chapter 3 also examined Save the Children Italia's specific contributions to defining and addressing educational poverty. The organization introduced Save the Children's Educational Poverty Index, a groundbreaking tool used to measure and address educational poverty in different Italian regions. This index reflects the organization's commitment to understanding and responding to the multiple dimensions of educational inequality, that goes beyond the school environment, embracing the educating community as a whole.

The organization's holistic approach, reflects a deep understanding of the interconnected nature of cognitive and non-cognitive development has on educational success. By focusing on the broader social and emotional needs of children, Save the Children Italia aims to break the cycle of poverty and offer a path to brighter futures for those who are most vulnerable. The chapter highlighted how the organization's efforts are aligned with Italy's legal obligations under international law, ensuring that children's rights are upheld in both policy and practice as well as how civil society movements can influence government policy in advancing human rights issues.

In Chapter 4, two of Save the Children Italia's key initiatives —*Punto Luce* and Equip Today to Thrive Tomorrow (ET3)—were analyzed as case studies. These initiatives offer valuable insights into how targeted interventions can effectively address educational poverty in marginalized communities. The *Punto Luce* centers provide academic support, extracurricular activities, and safe spaces for children to engage in both

educational and recreational pursuits. By focusing on SEL and promoting resilience, *Punto Luce* seeks to empower children to overcome the challenges posed by poverty and social exclusion.

The ET3 program complements this approach by equipping adolescents with the digital and technological skills necessary for success in the modern economy. As digital literacy becomes increasingly important, programs like ET3 are crucial in ensuring that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are not left behind. By addressing both academic and digital competencies, Save the Children is helping to bridge the gap between traditional education and the demands of the future workforce as well as addressing the gendered issue of the prejudice of women in STEM.

A central argument of this thesis is that addressing educational poverty requires long-term, sustainable interventions that go beyond temporary solutions. While programs like ET3 have shown significant success in improving educational outcomes, their sustainability depends on continued funding, political support, and the ability to scale these initiatives to other regions (and hopefully other countries). This thesis has emphasized the importance of ongoing investment in both the material and non-material aspects of education, from providing access to digital tools to fostering emotional and social development. Save the Children's work demonstrates that educational poverty can be effectively reduced when interventions are comprehensive, localized, and responsive to the specific needs of the communities they serve.

In conclusion, this thesis has demonstrated that educational poverty is a complex issue that requires a multidimensional approach to address effectively. By examining the legal frameworks, theoretical perspectives, and practical interventions related to educational poverty, this research has shown how Save the Children's initiatives in Italy offer a model for tackling this challenge. The *Punto Luce* and ET3 programs serve as examples of how NGOs can play a crucial role in bridging the gap between international legal commitments and local implementation. Their success underscores the importance of addressing both cognitive and non-cognitive skills, ensuring that children have the tools they need not only to succeed academically but also to have the possibility to choose what they want for their futures.

Ultimately, the fight against educational poverty is far from over. While significant progress has been made, much work remains to be done to ensure that all

children, regardless of their background, have access to quality education and the opportunities it provides. This thesis has contributed to the ongoing dialogue on how governments, civil society, and international organizations can work together to create a future where no child is left behind.

References

1919 - ILO between the two world wars - Bureau of Library and Information Services Home Page. (2015). Webapps.ilo.org. https://webapps.ilo.org/static/english/lib/century/

Adam Lopatka, 'Introduction' in Legislative History of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations 2007)

African Union. (1990). *AFRICAN CHARTER ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD*. https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36804-treaty-african_charter_on_rights_welfare_of_the_child.pdf

Allmendinger, J., & Leibfried, S. (2003). Education and the welfare state: the four worlds of competence production. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *13*(1), 63–81. https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928703013001047

Allmendinger, J., 'Bildungsarmut. Zur Verschränkung von Bildungs-und Sozialpolitik' [Educational poverty. On the Interconnection between Education and Social Policy], Soziale Welt, 50(1), 1999, 35-50.

Barbieri, G. & Cipollone, P. (2007). I poveri in istruzione. In Brandolini, A. & Saraceno, C. (Eds.), Povertà e benessere. Una geografia delle disuguaglianze in Italia (pp. 329-349). Bologna: Il Mulino.

Battilocchi, G. L. (2020). Educational poverty in Italy: concepts, measures and policies. Central European Journal of Educational Research, 2(1), 1 – 10.

Baynes, K., Cohen, J., & Arato, A. (1993). Review of Civil Society and Political Theory. *Political Theory*, *21*(3), 544–547. http://www.jstor.org/stable/191805

Becker, G. S. (1964). Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education. *The Economic Journal*, *76*(303), 635. https://doi.org/10.2307/2229541

Berghman, J., 'The resurgence of poverty and the struggle against exclusion: A new challenge for social security in Europe?', International Social Security Review, 50(1), 1997, 3-21.

Botezat, A. (2016). Educational poverty. NESET II Ad Hoc Question, 5. Retrieved from http://nesetweb.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/AHQ5_Educational-Poverty.pdf

CASEL. (2024). *What Is the CASEL Framework?* CASEL; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/

CFR.org Editors. (2022). *The Organization of American States*. Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/organization-american-states

Checchi, D., 'Povertà ed istruzione: alcune riflessioni ed una proposta di indicatori' [Poverty and Education: Some Reflections and a Proposal of Indicators], Politica economica, 14(2), 1998, 245-282.

Child Rights Connect. (2019). *Child Rights Connect: CRC Reporting Cycle | Working with the UN CRC reporting cycle*. https://crcreporting.childrightsconnect.org/

Clark, J.D. (ed.) (2003), Globalizing Civic Engagement: Civil Society and Transnational Action, London: Earthscan.

Cohen, C. P. (1990). The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations in the Drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. *Human Rights Quarterly*, *12*(1), 137. https://doi.org/10.2307/762172

Cohen, J.L. and Arato, A. (1992) Civil Society and Political Theory. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Commission, UN. (1978). *Commission on Human Rights :: report of the 34th session, 6 February-10 March 1978*. United Nations Digital Library System; UN,. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/220211?v=pdf

Commissione parlamentare per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza. (2014). *Indagine conoscitiva sulla povertà e il disagio minorile*. Camera.it. https://www.camera.it/leg17/491?idLegislatura=17&categoria=017bis&tipologiaDoc=documento&numero=002&doc=intero

Council of Europe. (1996). *European Treaty Series -No. 160*. https://rm.coe.int/european-convention-on-the-exercise-of-children-s-rights/1680a40f72

Craig, G. (2002). Global Citizen Action. Michael Edwards and John Gaventa (eds), Earthscan, London, 2001, 326 pp, pound14.95 (pb), ISBN 1 85383 834 9. Community Development Journal. 37. 270-272. 10.1093/cdj/37.3.270

Czech Delegation (1948, 2 September). Letter from the delegation of Czechoslovakia. Archives of the United Nations Secretariat [AUN-S], New York 1948—Child welfare—Declaration on the Rights of the Child—Information from member Governments (part A 1946–1948).

Dearing, E. (2008). Psychological Costs of Growing Up Poor. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *1136*(1), 324–332. https://doi.org/10.1196/annals.1425.006

Detrick, S. (1999). *A commentary on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. M. Nijhoff Publishers.

Durlak, J. A., Mahoney, J. L., & Boyle, A. E. (2022). What we know, and what we need to find out about universal, school-based social and emotional learning programs for children and adolescents: A review of meta-analyses and directions for future research. *Psychological Bulletin, 148*(11-12), 765–782. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000383

Dweck, C. S. (2016). *Mindset : the new psychology of success*. Random House.

Eccles, J.S., Barber B.L., Stone, M., & Hunt, J. (2003). Extracurricular activities and adolescent development. Journal of social issues, 59 (4) 865-889.

Edwards, M. and J. Gaventa (eds) (2001), Global Citizen Action, Boulder, CO: Rienner.

European Commission (2015). Education and training. Monitor 2015. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

European Commission. (2019). *EU action on the rights of the child*. European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/rights-child/eu-action-rights-child_en

European Commission. (2020). *Recovery plan for Europe*. European Commission - European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/recovery-plan-europe_en

European Union. (2000). *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* . https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf

European Union Agency For Fundamental Rights. (2012, March 11). *Charterpedia*. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. https://fra.europa.eu/en/eu-charter

Falk, R. (2000), 'Global civil society and the democratic prospect', in B. Holden (ed.), Global Democracy: Key Debates, London: Routledge, pp. 162–78.

Fegan, R., Mayers, L., & Bergman, L. (2014). *The Reporting Cycle of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: A guide for NGOs and NHRIs*. Save the Children's Resource Centre. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/reporting-cycle-committee-rights-child-guide-ngos-and-nhris/

Florini, A.M. (ed.) (2000), The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society, Tokyo and Washington, DC: Japan Center for International Exchange and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Fyfe, A., & International Labour Office. (2007). *The Worldwide Movement Against Child Labour*. International Labor Office.

Gabel, M. (2019). European Union | Definition, Purpose, History, & Members. In *Encyclopedia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/topic/European-Union

Generali, M. M., Yavuz, O., & Parzych, J. (2018). Perceptions of Social Emotional Learning Needs in High Poverty Schools. Çağdaş Yönetim Bilimleri Dergisi, 5(1), 42-53.

Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1924 -Text - Humanium. (2019). Humanium. https://www.humanium.org/en/text-2/

Goleman, D. (2020). *Emotional intelligence*. Bloomsbury.

Hamedani , M. G. (2020). *Social Emotional Learning in High School: How Three Urban High Schools Engage, Educate, and Empower Youth*.

Higheagle Strong, & McMain, E. (2020). Social Emotional Learning for Social Emotional Justice: A Conceptual Framework for Education in the Midst of Pandemics. *Northwest Journal of Teacher Education*, *15*(2). https://doi.org/10.15760/nwjte.2020.15.2.6

Hofmann, P. (1959, 20 October). Press cuttings, New York Times. ASG-IUCW, M.4.5, folder/71.1.

Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2010). MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE. *Stat & Styring*, *16*(04), 58–59. https://doi.org/10.18261/issn0809-750x-2006-04-21

Ibinabo Agiobu-Kemmer. (1992, July). *Child Survival and Child Development in Africa. Studies and Evaluation Papers 6*. Academia.edu. https://www.academia.edu/93790930/Child_Survival_and_Child_Development_in_Africa_Studies_and_Evaluation_Papers_6

ILO. (1919). *Key document - ILO Constitution*. Normlex.ilo.org. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:62:0::NO:62:P62_LIST_ENTRIE_ID:2453907:NO

ILO. (1999). *Convention C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)*. Ilo.org. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C182

INVALSI. (2024). *RILEVAZIONI NAZIONALI DEGLI APPRENDIMENTI 2023-24*. https://invalsi-areaprove.cineca.it/docs/2024/Rilevazioni_Nazionali/Rapporto/Sintesi%20primi%20risultati%20prove%20INVALSI%202024.pdf

INVALSIopen. (2023, July 14). *Presentazione del Rapporto Nazionale Prove INVALSI 2023*. INVALSIopen. https://www.invalsiopen.it/presentazione-rapporto-invalsi-2023/

ISTAT. (4 C.E.). *5ª CONFERENZA NAZIONALE DI STATISTICA POVERTÀ EDUCATIVA: UNA MAPPATURA DEL TERRITORIO RISORSE DISPONIBILI ED ESITI INDIVIDUALI: ZONE DEL MERIDIONE SOPRA LA MEDIA NAZIONALE RISPETTO A ZONE IN LOMBARDIA E VENETO MERCOLEDÌ 3 LUGLIO ORE 16:30*. https://www.istat.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/POVERTA-EDUCATIVA-3-luglio-2024.pdf

ISTAT.(2023). REPORT-POVERTA-2022.pdf - istat. https://www.istat.it/it/files/2023/10/REPORT-POVERTA-2022.pdf

ISTAT. (2024). *Resta stabile la povertà assoluta, la spesa media cresce ma meno dell'inflazione Spesa delle famiglie in valori correnti ancora in aumento per l'inflazione*. https://www.istat.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/STAT_TODAY_POVERTA-ASSOLUTA_2023_25.03.24.pdf

Jebb E., *Save the Child! A Posthumous Essay* (London: The Weardale Press, 1929).

Jolly, Richard & Emmerij, Louis & Weiss, Thomas & Annan, K.A.. (2009). Un ideas that changed the world. UN Ideas That Changed the World. 1-310.

Kakwani, N. & Silber, J. (Eds.). (2007). The many dimensions of poverty. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Kerber-Ganse, W. (2015). Eglantyne Jebb – A Pioneer of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, *23*(2), 272–282. https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-02302003

Lareau, A. (2011). Unequal childhoods. Class, race and family life. Second Edition. With an update a decade later. Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press

Lecerf, M. (2016). IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS. *Poverty in the European Union*. https://doi.org/10.2861/128014

Lindkvist, L. (2019). 1979: a Year of the Child, but Not of Children's Human Rights. *Diplomatica*, *1*(2), 202–220. https://doi.org/10.1163/25891774-00102004

Lohmann, H.; Ferger, F.,(2015) Educational poverty in a comparative perspective: theoretical and empirical implications, University of Bielefeld (SFB 882), 2015.

Lynch, C. M., Fomerand, J., & Mingst, K. (2018). United Nations | History, Organization, Functions, & Facts. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations

MacKenzie, H. (ed.) (2009), Democratizing Global Governance: Ten Years of Case Studies and Refl ections by Civil Society Activists, New Delhi: Mosaic.

Macmillan, C. (2020, November 6). *Why "Social and Emotional Learning" Is So Important for Kids Right Now*. Yale Medicine. https://www.yalemedicine.org/news/social-emotional-child-development

McWhirter, James & McWhirter, Benedict & Mcwhirter, Ellen & McWhirter, Anna. (2016). At-risk youth: A comprehensive response.

Mincer, J. (1958). Investment in Human Capital and Personal Income Distribution. *Journal of Political Economy*, *66*(4), 281–302. https://doi.org/10.1086/258055

Moody, Z. (2015). *The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959): Genesis, transformation and dissemination of a treaty (re)constituting a transnational cause*. PROSPECTS; Springer Nature. https://www.academia.edu/85323939/The_United_Nations_Declaration_of_the_Rights_of_the_Child_1959_Genesis_transformation_and_dissemination_of_a_treaty_re_constituting_a_transnational_cause

Musella, M., & Capasso, S. (2018). *LA POVERTÀ MINORILE ED EDUCATIVA*. https://www.sr-m.it/wp-content/uploads/woocommerce_uploads/2018/02/POVERTA_MINORILE_EDUCATIVA_WEB.pdf

Cantwell, N. 'Word that Speak Volumes: A Short History of the drafting of the CRC' in Jane Connors, Jean Zermatten, and Anastasia Panayotidis (eds), 18 Candles: The Convention on the Rights of the Child Reaches Majority (Institut international des droits de l'enfant Switzerland, 2007)

Nigel Cantwell, 'Word that Speak Volumes: A Short History of the drafting of the CRC' in Jane Connors, Jean Zermatten, and Anastasia Panayotidis (eds), *18 Candles: The Convention on the Rights of the Child Reaches Majority* (Institut international des droits de l'enfant Switzerland, 2007) 21, 21.

Nussbaum, M. (2002). Giustizia sociale e dignità umana. Bologna: Il Mulino

OAE. (1988). *General Secretariat Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity Department of Social Inclusion*. https://www.oas.org/en/sare/social-inclusion/protocol-ssv/docs/protocol-san-salvador-en.pdf

OAS. (2009, August 1). *OAS - Organization of American States: Democracy for peace, security, and development*. Www.oas.org. https://www.oas.org/en/about/purpose.asp

OECD. (2011). Against the Odds. In *PISA*. OECD. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264090873-en

OECD. (2024). *Education at a Glance 2024 - Country notes: Italy*. OECD. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/education-at-a-glance-2024-country-notes_fab77ef0-en/italy_c46299a8-en.html

OHCHR. (n.d.-a). *Child rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic*. Retrieved September 30, 2024, from https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Children/ChildRights_2030Agenda.pdf

OHCHR. (n.d.-b). *GUIDELINES FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF PARTNERS (NGOS AND INDIVIDUAL EXPERTS) IN THE PRE-SESSIONAL WORKING GROUP OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD 1*. Retrieved October 9, 2024, from https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/CRC/GuidelinesForPartners_en.pdf

OHCHR. (n.d.-c). *Office O f t h e United natiOns high cOmmissiOner f O r hUman rights LegisLative History of tHe Convention on tHe rigHts of tHe cHiLd voLume ii United Nations New York and Geneva, 2007*. Retrieved October 2, 2024, from https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/LegislativeHistorycrc2en.pdf

OHCHR. (n.d.-d). *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR A HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH TO POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES United Nations*. https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/PovertyStrategiesen.pdf

OHCHR. (n.d.-e). *OHCHR | Rules of procedure and working methods*. OHCHR. https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crc/rules-procedure-and-working-methods

OSCE. (n.d.). *YOUTH AND SECURITY EDUCATION Compilation of OSCE Commitments 1st Edition*. Retrieved October 9, 2024, from https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/6/6/455512.pdf

Patricia Benitez Hemans, Levine, R. S., Salas, E., Amy Vatne Bintliff, Holtzman, C., Carolyn Huie Hofstetter, & Kaur, G. (2023). Social and Emotional Learning pedagogy and practices for children living in poverty: teacher perspectives at two Akanksha foundation schools in India. *Intercultural Education*, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2023.2265845

Paul, C. A. (2017, October 9). *National Child Labor Committee - Social Welfare History Project*. Social Welfare History Project. https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/programs/child-welfarechild-labor/national-child-labor-committee/

Pinto, M. (2020). *INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS*. https://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ha/icescr/icescr_e.pdf

Pratesi, M. (2024). *Primi risultati della misurazione della Povertà educativa MONICA PRATESI Direttrice Dipartimento per la produzione statistica | Istat*. https://www.istat.it/storage/15-Conferenza-nazionale-statistica/slide/03_F_slide_pratesi_monica_CNS15.pdf

Quinn, P. (2019, June 13). *Tackling child labour: 100 years of action*. International Labour Organization. https://www.ilo.org/publications/tackling-child-labour-100-years-action

Reflections on the Economics of Education. (2011). *Handbook of the Economics of Education*, xi–xiv. https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-444-53444-6.00015-8

Resolutions concerning the protection of children and young workers, submitted by the Committee on the protection of children and young workers. (1945).

Rights, U. O. of the H. C. for H., & States, L. of A. (2004). Arab Charter on Human Rights. *Digitallibrary.un.org*. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/551368

Ringen, S. (1988). Direct and Indirect Measures of Poverty. *Journal of Social Policy, 17*, 351 - 365.

Rosen, S., Human Capital. In The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics. Vol.2 (eds. J. Eatwell, M. Milgate and P. Newman). London: Macmillan, 1989.

Save The Children. (2010). *The History of Save the Children*. Save the Children. https://www.savethechildren.org/us/about-us/why-save-the-children/history

Save the Children (2014). La lampada di Aladino. Roma: Save the Children Italia

Save the Children. (2014). *The Reporting Cycle of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: A guide for NGOs and NHRIs*. Save the Children's Resource Centre. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/reporting-cycle-committee-rights-child-guide-ngos-and-nhris/

Save the Children (2015). Illuminiamo il futuro 2030. Obiettivi per liberare i bambini dalla povertà educativa. Roma: Save the Children Italia

Save the Children. (2016). *Helping Children in the U.S. and Globally*. Save the Children. https://www.savethechildren.org/us/where-we-work

Save the Children (2016). Liberare i bambini dalla povertà educativa. A che punto siamo?. Roma: Save the Children Italia

Save the Children. (2023). *Life Skills for Success Toolkit | Save the Children's Resource Centre*. Save the Children's Resource Centre. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/life-skills-for-success-toolkit/

Save the Children . (n.d.-a). *Save the Children: da quasi 100 anni al fianco dei bambini in tutto il mondo*. Retrieved September 19, 2024, from https://cultura.gov.it/mibac/multimedia/MiBAC/documents/1448883584881_3__Save_the_Children_.pdf

Save the Children . (n.d.-b). *STATUTO Associazione Save the Children Italia - ETS TITOLO I DENOMINAZIONE, SEDE E DURATA*. Retrieved September 19, 2024, from https://s3-www.savethechildren.it/public/files/Statuto_2023.pdf

Save the Children . (2021). *Gender & Power (GAP) Analysis Guidance | Save the Children's Resource Centre*. Save the Children's Resource Centre. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/gender-power-gap-analysis/

Save the Children Italia. (2014). *I Punti Luce*. Save the Children Italia. https://www.savethechildren.it/cosa-facciamo/campagne/illuminiamo-il-futuro/punti-luce

Save the Children Italia. (2015, September 18). *Chi siamo*. Save the Children Italia. https://www.savethechildren.it/chi-siamo

Save the Children Italia. (2016, April 28). *La nostra storia*. Save the Children Italia. https://www.savethechildren.it/la-nostra-storia

Save the Children Italia. (2020, November 12). *Che cos'è la comunità educante e come costruirla: 7 suggerimenti*. Save the Children Italia. https://www.savethechildren.it/blog-notizie/cosa-e-una-comunita-educante-e-come-costruirla-7-suggerimenti

Save the Children Italia. (2021, August 31). *Equip Today To Thrive Tomorrow*. Save the Children Italia. https://www.savethechildren.it/cosa-facciamo/progetti/equip-today-thrive-tomorrow

Save the Children Italia. (2023a, March 31). *Kinder Joy of moving: il progetto per lo sviluppo motorio dei bambini*. Save the Children Italia. https://www.savethechildren.it/blog-notizie/kinder-joy-moving-il-progetto-lo-sviluppo-motorio-dei-bambini

Save the Children Italia. (2023b, August 9). *Cosa sono le doti educative?* Save the Children Italia. https://www.savethechildren.it/blog-notizie/cosa-sono-le-doti-educative

Save the Children Italia. (2024, July 3). *Infanzia: la nuova misurazione della povertà educativa Istat diventi un criterio determinante per orientare gli investimenti in educazione*. Save the Children Italia. https://www.savethechildren.it/press/infanzia-la-nuova-misurazione-della-poverta-educativa-istat-diventi-un-criterio-determinante

Scholte, J. A. (2010). Civil Society in Multi-level Governance. *Handbook on Multi-Level Governance*. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781849809047.00035

Scholte, J.A. (ed.) (2011), Building Global Democracy? Civil Society and Accountable Global Governance, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sen, A. K.,(1999) Development as Freedom, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999

Sen, A. K., 'Editorial: Human Capital and Human Capability', World Development, 25 (12), 1959–61, 1997.

Sen A. K., 'Social exclusion: concept, application and scrutiny', Social Development Papers No 1, Asian Development Bank, Manila, 2000.

Seow, P. & Pan, G. (2014). A literature review of the impact of extracurricular activities participation on students' academic performance. Journal of education for business, 89 (7) 361-366.

Shaw, M. (n.d.). *Guides: Human Rights Law Research Guide: Regional Human Rights Systems*. Guides.ll.georgetown.edu. https://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/c.php?g=273364&p=6025368

Smith, R. K. M. (2013). *Textbook on international human rights*. Oxford University Press.

Solga, H. (2006). Ausbildungslose und die Radikalisierung ihrer sozialen Ausgrenzung. In: Bude/Willisch. Das Problem der Exclusion. Ausgegrenzte, Entbehrliche, Überflüssige. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition. 121–146

Tilak, J. B. G., Household Expenditure on Education in India: A Few Stylized Facts, in Social and Economic Security in India (eds. S. M. Dev, P. Antony, V. Gayathri and R.P. Mamgain), New Delhi: Institute for Human Development, 2001, 191–218.

Tobin, J. (2019), 'Introduction: The Foundation for Children's Rights', in John Tobin (ed.), *The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: A Commentary*, Oxford Commentaries on International Law (; online edn, Oxford Academic), https://doi.org/10.1093/law/9780198262657.003.0001, accessed 2 Oct. 2024.

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2001). *General comment No. 1 (2001), Article 29 (1), The aims of education*. Refworld. https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/crc/2001/en/39221

UNDP, Human Development Report, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

UN General Assembly. (1959). *Declaration of the Rights of the Child*. Refworld. https://www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unga/1959/en/17170

UN General Assembly. (1976). *Research Guides: UN General Assembly Resolutions Tables: 31st Session (1976-1977)*. Un.org. https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/31

UN General Assembly. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_44_25.pdf

UNCRC Committee. (2002). *General Comment 1 UNCRC Committee.* Umn.edu. http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/crc/comment1.htm

UNDP. (1997). *HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 1997*. https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/hdr1997encompletenostats.pdf

UNESCO. (1960). *Convention against Discrimination in Education. | UNESCO*. Www.unesco.org. https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/convention-against-discrimination-education

UNICEF. (2010). *History of child rights*. Unicef.org. https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/history-child-rights

UNICEF. (2020, March 4). *Measuring and monitoring child poverty*. UNICEF DATA. https://data.unicef.org/resources/measuring-and-monitoring-child-poverty/

United Nations. (n.d.-a). *Predecessor: The League of Nations*. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/history-of-the-un/predecessor

United Nations. (n.d.-b). *The UN in general*. United Nations : Information Service Vienna. https://unis.unvienna.org/unis/en/topics/the-un-in-general.html

United Nations. (1919). *The Covenant of the League of Nations*. UN GENEVA. https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/league-of-nations/covenant

United Nations. (1966). *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - Main Page*. Legal.un.org. https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/icescr/icescr.html

United Nations. (1977, March 12). *Official Emblem for the International Year of the Child 1979*. UN Photo. https://media.un.org/photo/en/asset/oun7/oun7474253

United Nations. (1987). International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. *Human Rights Quarterly*, *9*(2), 274. https://doi.org/10.2307/762298

United Nations. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Refworld. https://www.refworld.org/legal/agreements/unga/1989/en/18815

United Nations. (2020, August 4). *Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labour Receives Universal Ratification*. UN News. https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1069492

United Nations. (2022). *UNSDG | Universal Values Principle Two: Leave No One Behind*. Unsdg.un.org; United Nations. https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind

Van Dijk, P., 'De internationale bescherming van de rechten van het kind' [The international protection of the rights of the child] – In: Familie- en Jeugdrecht, Vol. 1, No. 6, 1979, pp. 165-180.

Walker, J.W.St.G. and A.S. Thompson (eds) (2008), Critical Mass: The Emergence of Global Civil Society, Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press.

Watson, N. (2019). Save the Children | international organization | Britannica. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Save-the-Children

World Bank. (n.d.). *Measuring Poverty LECTURE 14 1*. https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/20f02031de132cc3d76b91b5ed8737d0-0050012017/related/lecture-14-1.pdf