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Silvia Zanazzi

Inclusive Education

A critical view on Italian policies

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A CRITICAL VIEW ON ITALIAN POLICIES

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Contents

Acknowledgments 9
Introduction 11
Presentazione del testo 19

Chapter 1 – Inclusive education from an international and intercultural perspective 27
1.1. Paradigms and theoretical models in Europe 30
1.2. Approaches to inclusive education 33
1.3. Where, and how, is inclusive education best provided? 35
1.4. Equity in education 36
Appendix 1 - Early school leaving 42
Appendix 2 – If you are a teacher/if you are a student 44

Chapter 2 – Disability: an evolving concept 45
2.1. From the medical to the social model of disability 46
2.2. The ICF model 49
2.3. Disability studies: a new perspective 52
Appendix - If you are a teacher/if you are a student 55

Chapter 3 – The path towards *integrazione scolastica* 57
3.1. Current structure of the Italian education system 61
3.2. Development of the Italian inclusive education model 65
3.3. Factors leading to *integrazione scolastica* 72
3.4. The childhood issue 75
3.5. The role of civil society 76

Chapter 4 – A long tradition of inclusiveness 77
4.1. Maria Montessori 78
4.2. Father Lorenzo Milani 83
4.3. Andrea Canevaro 91
4.4. Other inclusive pedagogues 93
Appendix - If you are a teacher/if you are a student 98

Chapter 5 – Inclusive education: the Italian model 101
5.1. The role of *insegnante di sostegno* 101
5.2. Other individual and collegial roles 103
5.3. Education and training for support teachers and other figures 105
5.4. Categories of Special Educational Needs (SEN) 106
5.5. Didactic implications 107
5.6. Does mainstreaming work? 109
5.7. What kind of "inclusive classes" are really inclusive? 113
Appendix 1 – An experience in Rome 119
Appendix 2 – A different experience overseas 125
Appendix 3 – After school: forms of protection and support for people with disabilities 130
Appendix 4 – Work-study programs and inclusion 135

Chapter 6 – The multicultural school 141
6.1. Foreign minors in Italian schools 141
6.2. The educational model for a multicultural school 149
6.3. Policies for integration of students with immigrant backgrounds 151
6.4. Citizenship and integration 154

Chapter 7 – Inclusive education in Europe: main trends and issues 159
7.1. Inclusive education in Europe, at a glance 161
7.2. Methodological issues 163
7.3. Comparative indicators 165
7.4. School segregation in Europe 167
7.5. Moving towards more inclusive education systems in Europe 168

Chapter 8 – Assessing and evaluating inclusion 173
8.1. The Italian policy framework 173
8.2. The international policy framework and guidelines 179
8.3. The Index for inclusion 186

Chapter 9 – From past to present: risks and opportunities 195
9.1. The industry of exclusion 197
9.2. Along the path towards integration 197
9.3. At the frontiers of justice 198
9.4. Inclusion, or oppression? 199
9.5. Constructing inclusive education 202

Chapter 10 – A world that builds diversity
by Pietro Lucisano 205

Conclusion 211

References 217

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May our daily efforts to realise, improve, and communicate the beauty of inclusion continue, in spite of all obstacles we might encounter along the way.

Introduction

"We live in a world of unprecedented opulence, of a kind that would have been hard even to imagine a century or two ago. There have also been remarkable changes beyond the economic sphere. The twentieth century has established democratic and participatory governance as the preeminent model of political organisation. Concepts of human rights and political liberty are now very much a part of the prevailing rhetoric. People live much longer, on the average, than ever before. Also, the different regions of the globe are now more closely linked than they have ever been. This is so not only in the fields of trade, commerce and communication, but also in terms of interactive ideas and ideals.

And yet we also live in a world with remarkable deprivation, destitution and oppression. There are many new problems as well as old ones, including persistence of poverty and unfulfilled elementary needs, occurrence of famines and widespread hunger, violation of elementary political freedoms as well as of basic liberties, extensive neglect of the interests and agency of women and worsening threats to our environment and to the sustainability of our economic and social lives. Many of these deprivations can be observed, in one form or another, in rich countries as well as poor ones.

Overcoming these problems is a central part of the exercise of development. We have to recognize the role of freedoms of different kinds in countering these afflictions. Indeed, individual agency is, ultimately, central to addressing these deprivations. On the other hand, the freedom of agency that we have individually is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available to us. There is a deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements. It is important to give simultaneous recognition to the centrality of individual freedom and to the force of social influences on the extent and reach of individual freedom. To counter the problems that we face, we have to see individual freedom as a social commitment" (Sen, 1999, p.xi-xii).

In Amarthya Sen's quote above, development is seen as a process of expansion of the real freedoms that people enjoy in their everyday life. Focusing on human freedoms means striving to remove the sources of "unfreedom", recognizing that, despite undeniable progress in many areas of human ways of life, our contemporary world still denies basic freedoms to large numbers of people. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2011), today more than a billion people, equal to 15% of the world population, experience

disability. They have generally poorer health, lower education achievements, fewer economic opportunities and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities. The majority of the children with disabilities in the world live in developing countries and face insurmountable obstacles to their participation in society every day. This is largely due to the lack of services available to them. These limitations, denials of basic freedom, are not unknown in our western countries, either, including in Italy.

The firm belief that the roots of "development as freedom" (Sen, 1999) are grounded in education and in its power to build social cohesion made me decide to write this book. And knowing that my country has built, over the last 40 years, a model of inclusive education that is still unique in the world, I decided to write it in English, so as to be able to share my knowledge of it with as many people as possible, whose countries have different systems and traditions.

Delving into the historical development of the inclusive education model in my country was like walking on a long trail, becoming step after step more and more aware of the extraordinary achievements, of the great courage, of the far-sightedness demonstrated not only by policy makers, but by the whole civil society. Undoubtedly, nowadays there are many shadows falling on our education system and on its inclusiveness, yet I believe that the sun is still shining and that the vision of the past is still present. I wrote this book by interviewing school administrators, teachers, parents and students about their experience with inclusive education, their opinions about our model, and their feelings and hopes for the future. I had the opportunity to observe activities planned to include all students, regardless of their physical and/or mental disabilities, their knowledge of the language, their learning impairments, and their attitude towards school and education. It was clear to me that inclusive education is a difficult challenge, it is a never ending journey, it is a fight against all possible forms of exclusion, some of which might be hardly visible. And yet, I believe that forty years of experience in dealing with all forms of diversity are a precious legacy on which we can build new knowledge, reflection and action, to have a school that is really "a school for all", representing a valuable model to look at, for those who are just starting their journey towards inclusive education.

In my work, I tried to present the strengths and weaknesses of the Italian model of inclusive education within a wider framework, that of the international movement for inclusion in education. Both the international organizations and the academic world are advocating for more inclusive education systems, where

people's minds and hearts are taught the beauty and the immense potential of diversity. In this global context, Italy is only a tile of a mosaic, made of many different pedagogical traditions, policies and practices. New perspectives come from this intercultural debate, together with feedback and increased awareness of the results so far obtained.

In order for a non Italian reader to be able to contextualise facts about inclusive education, I decided to give a brief overview of the historical development and current structure of the Italian education system. Moreover, I dedicated a whole chapter to our inclusive pedagogical tradition and to some important figures, including the renowned Maria Montessori. An Italian reader might find these parts superfluous. Yet, my hope is that by recalling already established knowledge, the Italian reader may be able to look at the whole sequence of events concerning our inclusive education from a distance, from a lateral perspective, perhaps developing a stronger appreciation for the clear-cut, far-sighted political decisions made decades ago.

This book is divided into 10 chapters.

Chapter 1 analyses the concept of "inclusion" in education from an international perspective, considering the landmarks in its evolution over time and the many different meanings given to it in the current debate. Inclusive education has been widely recognized, in the international debate, as a human right: consequently, international organisations and governments have been asserting that schools must be inclusive, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of their students. In spite of the unanimous acceptance and sharing of this principle, there is still a lack of consensus about the real meaning of inclusive education and its concrete implications in terms of policies and practices. Worldwide, there are many different conceptualizations of the notion of inclusive education, on a continuum between the two theoretical models of *integration* (reductionist paradigm) and *inclusion* (systemic paradigm). After setting the scene, the chapter describes in detail the five main approaches to inclusive education in Europe.

The concept of disability is discussed in **chapter 2**, starting from the definition given by the UN in 2006 which emphasises the importance of the interaction between a person, with his/her own physical, mental and psychological characteristics, and the environment. Different theoretical approaches to

disability are described, as well as their implications in terms of policies and practices. Going back in time, the chapter tracks the origins and development of the social model of disability from which the subdiscipline called *disability studies* has developed over the last four decades. It explains why this approach differs radically from the individual/medical model of disability, which was prevalent before the 1980s, and how this new perspective on disability may change the concept of inclusive education and the research work in the field.

Chapter 3 describes the historical evolution of the Italian model of inclusive education and the factors that influenced its development until recent times. After going over the history of the Italian education system, its current structure and characteristics, the chapter illustrates the main steps in the development of a legislation supporting inclusive education and specifically the integration of students with disabilities in mainstream school settings. The process began much earlier than in most other European nations. It is rooted in the political and social history of a country that, since its unification, had to deal with profound diversities and fractures. In this context, the policy for *integrazione scolastica* introduced starting in the 1970s was not an isolated fact; rather, it appeared as one of the tiles of a broader political and civic movement, concerned with safeguarding constitutional rights, limiting political conflicts and, ultimately, increasing social justice.

Some important Italian pedagogues played a crucial role in the development of educational theories supporting inclusive education. Their stories are narrated in **chapter 4**. These figures were quite different in many ways, but largely similar in their drive towards social justice and in their faith in education as a powerful instrument for social change. Their strong messages contributed to the development of educational theories supporting inclusive education. Their heritage lives in the model of inclusive education that Italy developed starting in the seventies. And yet, even if we've come a long way since then, their challenges to an unequal society, and to a conservative education system that feeds it, are still relevant today.

Chapter 5 describes how the legislative framework for school inclusion translates into policies and practices at the school level. Moreover, it discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the Italian model of inclusive education,

referring to the relevant academic literature at the national and international level. The role of support teachers, specialised assistants, communication assistants and other figures dedicated to implementing inclusion practices within schools are described. Then, the chapter explains the different categories of special educational needs recognised by the Italian legislation and goes over the main contents of an Individualised educational plan (PEI) and a Personalised didactic plan (PDP). Finally, it presents the current main findings of research in the field of inclusive education.

Over the past several decades, migration processes have impacted Italian schools. Nowadays, in many areas of the country, schools are multicultural: newly arrived immigrants from diverse backgrounds, together with second generation immigrants, make up significant percentages of the total enrollment. This constant evolution poses new challenges for the education system and its inclusiveness. **Chapter 6** describes the policies implemented in the education system to manage this new reality, aimed at valuing diversity in cultural origins and backgrounds. It also presents the theoretical model behind such policies, tracing its roots in the Italian tradition of inclusiveness in education. However, educational policies are not the only necessary tool for building a really inclusive school. Many "foreign" students have spent their whole life in Italy, but they can't be fully integrated in society until their right to citizenship is recognized. Recent proposals to reform citizenship laws have been rejected, leaving an alarming void in integration policies.

Chapter 7 describes the observable trends in inclusive education policies and practices in European countries and the main areas of improvement, drawing mainly on research findings made available by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE), an independent organization that acts as a platform for collaboration among its member countries, working towards ensuring more inclusive education systems. The EASNIE is the only European body maintained by member countries with the specific mission of helping them improve the quality and effectiveness of their inclusive education provisions for all learners. Due to methodological issues, indicators on inclusive education are hardly comparable, except for those concerning different forms of segregated provisions. In spite of a clear and widely shared policy framework, European countries have reached different levels of inclusiveness in their

education systems. School segregation is still common in many countries and this can translate into serious damage to the quality of education systems. It is essential for governments to commit to reforms aimed at creating schools that are fully inclusive, as stated in the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

An overview of the policies implemented in Italy for monitoring, assessing and evaluating inclusion in educational setting is provided in **chapter 8**, that also describes the EASNIE guidelines and indicators for correct and effective assessment of school inclusion in member states. The importance of assessing and evaluating inclusion is widely shared among European countries and, along with this commitment, both academics and the international policymakers have proposed models and indicators. Assessment and evaluation can be done both at the system level and at the level of individual schools, where it can be internal (self assessment and evaluation) and external. In Italy, systemic evaluation processes are in a phase of change and inclusion has been recently introduced among the indicators to be monitored for external evaluation. In Europe, countries adopt different policies, but the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education has worked with a bottom up approach to collect all members' experiences and opinions and has finally issued guidelines and indicators. At the level of individual schools, the most authoritative framework for self assessment and evaluation is the Index for Inclusion, an internationally validated tool for measuring the level of inclusiveness in the school environment, which takes the social disability model as a theoretical reference, focusing its analysis on barriers to learning and participation.

In **chapter 9** the main concepts extensively covered in the book are summarized, and the analysis is enriched with theoretical reflections coming from authoritative literature. Italy has come a long way since the dawn of school inclusion and has reached important goals. However, light and shadow live together in the reality of today's schools. While building social cohesion becomes more and more of a priority every day, the risks of marginalisation for many groups becomes higher as well. After deconstructing Italian policies and discussing the "shadows" that lie over them, the chapter reiterates the crucial areas to construct effective policies.

Finally, **chapter 10** is an original contribution from a university professor who has also worked as a school teacher when the policy of *integrazione scolastica* was moving its first steps. It is a reflection on the role of educators struggling with a world that seems to construct diversity in order to fix it, in a perverse cycle guided by blind rationality. The conclusion is a proposal to look at diversity, and inclusion, in a new light.

Presentazione del testo

"Viviamo in un mondo di un'opulenza senza precedenti, che uno o due secoli fa sarebbe stato difficile persino immaginare; e anche al di fuori della sfera economica ci sono stati cambiamenti importanti. Il ventesimo secolo ha fatto della democrazia partecipativa il modello principe di organizzazione politica, e oggi i concetti di diritto umano e libertà politica sono fortemente presenti nel linguaggio dominante. In media viviamo molto più a lungo che in tutte le epoche precedenti; le diverse parti del mondo sono legate l'una all'altra più strettamente di quanto lo fossero mai state, e questo non vale solo nei campi del commercio e delle comunicazioni, ma anche per l'interazione fra idee e ideali.
Eppure viviamo anche in un mondo in cui le privazioni, la miseria e l'oppressione sono grandi. Esistono molti problemi, vecchi e nuovi: povertà persistente, bisogni primari insoddisfatti, carestie, fame di massa, violazione di diritti politici elementari e di libertà fondamentali, disprezzo - diffusissimo - per gli interessi e il ruolo attivo delle donne, minacce sempre più gravi all'ambiente e alla sostenibilità, economica e sociale, del nostro modo di vivere. E troviamo, in una forma o nell'altra, molte di queste privazioni non solo nei paesi poveri ma anche in quelli ricchi.
Il superamento di tali problemi non può che essere un aspetto centrale dello sviluppo. In questo libro io sostengo che si deve riconoscere il ruolo che vari tipi di libertà svolgono nella lotta contro simili mali. In verità, al centro della lotta contro la privazione c'è, in ultima analisi, l'azione individuale; ma quella libertà di agire che possediamo in quanto individui è, nello stesso tempo, irrimediabilmente delimitata e vincolata dai percorsi sociali, politici ed economici che ci sono consentiti. Esiste una profonda complementarità fra l'azione dell'individuo e gli assetti della società, ed è importante riconoscere contemporaneamente sia la centralità della libertà individuale, sia la forza delle influenze sociali sull'entità e la portata di tale libertà. Per affrontare i problemi che incontriamo dobbiamo imparare a vedere la libertà individuale come impegno sociale" (Sen, 1999, p.5).

Nel mondo attuale, molteplici fenomeni minacciano la realizzazione di quella "società inclusiva" evocata a parole, non sempre tradotte in politiche e norme adeguate per realizzarla: le ineguaglianze economiche e sociali crescenti, i flussi migratori che ne rappresentano la più evidente e dirompente conseguenza, le profonde trasformazioni dell'economia e dei mercati del lavoro divenuti flessibili e fortemente segmentati, un'organizzazione sociale sempre più "liquida"

(Bauman, 2006) e individualizzata in cui vengono progressivamente a mancare punti di riferimento collettivi stabili.

Ecco perché la coesione sociale è oggi una priorità e come tale richiede un ripensamento ed un rafforzamento di quelle istituzioni chiamate a promuoverla e a garantirla.

Amartya Sen ha descritto lo sviluppo di una società come un processo di espansione delle libertà reali delle persone e come il percorso che consente ad ognuno di noi di vivere una vita a cui attribuisce valore. Pensare allo sviluppo come libertà e per la libertà significa battersi per eliminare tutte le cause di non libertà, riconoscendo che, nonostante l'innegabile progresso raggiunto in molte aree della vita umana, il mondo contemporaneo nega ancora libertà elementari ad un gran numero di persone.

Secondo l'Organizzazione Mondiale della Sanità (WHO, 2011), oggi nel mondo più di un miliardo di persone, pari a circa il 15% della popolazione globale, ha qualche forma di disabilità. Queste persone, in rapporto a coloro che non hanno una disabilità, hanno una salute più fragile, risultati inferiori nel mondo dell'istruzione, meno opportunità economiche e più alti tassi di povertà. La maggior parte dei bambini e dei giovani in età evolutiva con disabilità vive in paesi in via di sviluppo e affronta quotidianamente ostacoli di natura sanitaria, educativa, riabilitativa e culturale generati dalla disabilità al fine di ottenere opportunità di inclusione nella scuola e nella società (De Luca, Zappella, 2013). Questo dipende in larga parte dalla carenza di servizi a loro accessibili. Limitazioni come queste, negazioni di libertà fondamentali, non sono sconosciute nei paesi occidentali, e nemmeno in Italia. Adottare una prospettiva inclusiva, quindi, significa tener conto del fatto che l'espansione delle libertà ha un ruolo essenziale per la realizzazione di cambiamenti politici e sociali che rappresentano fini primari dello sviluppo.

Nel pensiero di Sen, l'uomo è posto al centro di un processo di crescita che fa leva sulla *agency* delle persone, cioè sulla loro capacità di intervenire sulla realtà e di trasformarla per renderla più adatta a promuovere il nostro benessere. Questo processo non dipende semplicemente dalla disponibilità di risorse, quanto dalla capacità di trasformare tali risorse in opportunità, capacità e funzionamenti reali. La libertà è quindi il fine dello sviluppo, ma anche uno dei principali mezzi per realizzarlo. Ed è nelle "fortissime connessioni empiriche che legano libertà di tipo diverso" (Sen, 1999, p.16) che Sen vede la possibilità per noi di essere in

modo completo individui sociali che "possono sia plasmare il proprio destino, sia aiutarsi reciprocamente in modo efficace" (Sen, 1999, p.16).
La diversità, una caratteristica propria del genere umano, determina le capacità particolari che ognuno di noi ha di utilizzare le risorse come strumenti di sviluppo.
La ferma convinzione che le radici dello sviluppo inteso come libertà affondino nell'educazione, nella sua capacità di valorizzare le diversità, di creare connessioni tra le persone, di costruire coesione sociale mi ha portato a scrivere questo libro. E, sapendo che il mio paese, l'Italia, ha sviluppato nel corso degli ultimi quarant'anni un modello di educazione inclusiva che è ancora pressoché unico nel mondo, ho deciso di scriverlo in inglese, per poter condividere la mia conoscenza con persone i cui paesi hanno sistemi e tradizioni diverse dalla nostra.
Approfondire lo sviluppo storico del modello di educazione inclusiva nel mio paese è stato come percorrere un lungo sentiero, rendendomi conto passo dopo passo degli straordinari risultati, del grande coraggio, della lungimiranza dimostrata non solo dai decisori politici, ma anche e soprattutto dalla società civile. Indubbiamente oggi molte ombre gravano sul nostro sistema scolastico e sulla sua capacità di essere inclusivo, ma io credo che il sole continui a splendere, e che la visione del passato sia ancora presente. Ho scritto questo libro mentre intervistavo insegnanti, personale scolastico, dirigenti, genitori e studenti sulla loro esperienza di educazione inclusiva, sulle loro opinioni riguardo il nostro modello, sui loro sentimenti e speranze per il futuro. Ho avuto l'opportunità di osservare attività progettate per includere tutti gli studenti, indipendentemente dalle loro disabilità mentali e fisiche, dalla loro conoscenza della lingua italiana, dalle loro difficoltà o disturbi dell'apprendimento, dal loro atteggiamento nei confronti dell'istruzione e della scuola. Mi è apparso chiaro come l'inclusione scolastica sia una sfida difficile, un viaggio senza destinazione finale, una continua lotta contro tutte le possibili forme di esclusione, alcune delle quali difficilmente visibili. Mi è apparso altrettanto chiaro che molte battaglie debbano essere ancora combattute nel nome dell'inclusione scolastica. Eppure, io credo fermamente che i nostri quarant'anni di esperienza nel gestire tutte le forme di diversità siano un patrimonio prezioso, a partire dal quale si può costruire nuova conoscenza, riflessione e azione, per avere una scuola che sia veramente "la scuola di tutti".

Nel mio lavoro, ho cercato di presentare i punti di forza e di debolezza del modello italiano all'interno di una cornice più ampia, quella del movimento internazionale per l'educazione inclusiva. Sia le organizzazioni internazionali che il mondo accademico stanno promuovendo sistemi scolastici più inclusivi, in grado di far comprendere alla mente e al cuore delle persone la bellezza e l'enorme potenziale della diversità. In questo contesto globale, l'Italia è solo una tessera di un grande mosaico composto di tante tradizioni pedagogiche, politiche e pratiche diverse. Nuove prospettive si aprono grazie al confronto interculturale, e grazie al riscontro e alla crescente consapevolezza dei risultati finora ottenuti.
Per agevolare il lettore non italiano e far sì che potesse contestualizzare gli eventi e le riflessioni relative al modello di scuola inclusiva, ho deciso di inserire all'inizio del capitolo 3 una breve panoramica dello sviluppo storico e della struttura attuale del nostro sistema scolastico. Inoltre, ho dedicato l'intero capitolo 4 alla nostra tradizione pedagogica inclusiva e ad alcune figure importanti, come quella di Maria Montessori. Queste parti potrebbero risultare superflue per un lettore italiano. Tuttavia, è possibile che il richiamare conoscenze già consolidate e l'osservare gli eventi relativi all'inclusione scolastica da una prospettiva diversa porti anche il lettore italiano ad apprezzare maggiormente le scelte nette e lungimiranti fatte in passato.

Questo libro è diviso in dieci capitoli.

Il **capitolo 1** analizza il concetto di inclusione educativa in una prospettiva internazionale, ripercorrendo le tappe fondamentali della sua evoluzione nel tempo e i diversi significati che ha assunto nel dibattito contemporaneo. L'educazione inclusiva è stata ampiamente riconosciuta come diritto umano: di conseguenza, le organizzazioni internazionali e i governi hanno affermato che le scuole devono essere inclusive, riconoscendo e rispondendo ai diversi bisogni espressi dagli studenti. Nonostante l'unanime accettazione e condivisione di questo principio, manca ancora un consenso rispetto al reale significato dell'educazione inclusiva e alle sue implicazioni concrete in termini di politiche e pratiche. Nel mondo, ci sono diverse concettualizzazioni del termine "educazione inclusiva" lungo un *continuum* tra due modelli teorici, l'integrazione (paradigma riduzionista) e l'inclusione (paradigma sistemico). Dopo aver

descritto il contesto, il capitolo approfondisce i cinque principali approcci all'educazione inclusiva in Europa.

Il concetto di disabilità viene discusso nel **capitolo 2**, a partire dalla definizione data dall'ONU nel 2006 che enfatizza l'importanza dell'interazione tra la persona, con le sue caratteristiche fisiche, mentali e psicologiche, e l'ambiente. Vengono descritti i diversi approcci teorici alla disabilità e le loro implicazioni in termini di politiche e pratiche. Guardando al passato, il capitolo traccia le origini e lo sviluppo del modello sociale della disabilità da cui è nato e si è sviluppato negli ultimi quarant'anni l'approccio dei *disability studies*. Si spiega perché questa prospettiva differisce radicalmente dal modello individuale/medico della disabilità, prevalente prima degli anni '80, e come essa può cambiare il concetto di inclusione in educazione e la ricerca in questo campo.

Il **capitolo 3** descrive l'evoluzione storica del modello di educazione inclusiva nel nostro paese e i fattori che ne hanno determinato lo sviluppo, fino ai giorni nostri. Dopo aver ripercorso le principali tappe della storia del sistema scolastico, e la sua attuale struttura, il capitolo illustra i passaggi principali della produzione normativa a favore dell'inclusione scolastica e, nello specifico, dell'inserimento degli studenti con disabilità nella scuola di tutti. Questo processo, iniziato in Italia molto prima che in altri paesi europei, è radicato nella storia politica e sociale di una nazione che, fin dalla sua nascita, ha dovuto gestire profonde diversità e fratture. In un tale contesto, la politica di integrazione scolastica introdotta a partire dagli anni '70 non è stata un fatto isolato, bensì è apparsa come una tessera di mosaico nell'ambito di un ampio movimento politico e sociale teso alla salvaguardia dei diritti costituzionali, al contenimento dei conflitti politici e, in ultima analisi, al miglioramento della giustizia sociale.

Alcuni pedagogisti italiani hanno giocato un ruolo cruciale nello sviluppo di teorie educative a supporto dell'educazione inclusiva. Le loro storie sono raccontate nel **capitolo 4**. Queste figure erano molto diverse da numerosi punti di vista, ma anche molto simili per il loro impegno verso la giustizia sociale e per la loro fede nell'educazione come potente strumento di cambiamento sociale. La loro eredità vive ancora oggi nel modello di scuola inclusiva che l'Italia ha sviluppato a partire dagli anni '70. E tuttavia, anche se da allora molta strada è

stata fatta, le loro critiche nei confronti di una società iniqua, e di un sistema scolastico conservatore che la legittima, sono ancora oggi attuali.

Il **capitolo 5** approfondisce le modalità con cui il quadro normativo si traduce in politiche e pratiche a livello di istituti scolastici. Inoltre, analizza i punti di forza e di debolezza del modello italiano di scuola inclusiva facendo riferimento alla letteratura scientifica nazionale e internazionale. Vengono descritti i ruoli dell'insegnante di sostegno, degli assistenti educativo culturali o specialistici, degli assistenti alla comunicazione e di altre figure dedicate alla realizzazione dell'inclusione. Successivamente, il capitolo spiega le diverse categorie di bisogni educativi speciali e presenta i principali contenuti di un Piano Educativo Individualizzato e di un Piano Didattico Personalizzato. Infine, viene riportato lo stato dell'arte e i principali risultati della ricerca sull'educazione inclusiva.

Negli ultimi decenni, i flussi migratori hanno avuto un impatto significativo sulle scuole italiane. Attualmente, in molte zone del paese, le scuole sono multiculturali: immigrati di nuovo ingresso con diverse provenienze e culture, insieme agli immigrati di seconda generazione, costituiscono una percentuale significativa della popolazione scolastica. Questa costante evoluzione pone delle sfide al sistema scolastico e alla sua inclusività. Il **capitolo 6** descrive le politiche disegnate per gestire questa nuova realtà, finalizzate a valorizzare la diversità delle origini culturali e dei percorsi di vita di tutti gli alunni. Viene presentato anche il modello teorico sotteso a queste politiche, che affonda le sue radici nella nostra tradizione pedagogica inclusiva. Tuttavia, le politiche educative non sono l'unico strumento necessario per costruire una scuola realmente inclusiva. Molti studenti nelle nostre scuole hanno trascorso la loro intera vita in Italia, ma non possono essere pienamente integrati nella società fino a che non viene riconosciuta loro la cittadinanza. Le recenti proposte di riforma della legge sulla cittadinanza sono state respinte, lasciando un vuoto allarmante nelle politiche per l'integrazione.

In Europa le scelte riguardanti i sistemi educativi e l'inclusione sono molto diverse, è possibile tuttavia identificare alcune tendenze comuni nelle politiche e nelle pratiche e alcune aree da rafforzare. Questi aspetti sono trattati nel **capitolo 7**, a partire dai dati della *European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education* (EASNIE), un'organizzazione indipendente che ha il compito di favorire la collaborazione tra gli stati membri per la creazione di sistemi educativi più

inclusivi. L'Agenzia è l'unica istituzione europea gestita dai paesi membri con la missione specifica di aiutarli a migliorare la qualità e l'efficacia dei loro sistemi scolastici. A causa di problemi di natura metodologica, gli indicatori sull'educazione inclusiva sono difficilmente comparabili, eccetto quelli riguardanti le diverse forme di "segregazione" educativa. Nonostante vi sia un quadro di linee guida molto chiaro e ampiamente condiviso, i paesi Europei hanno raggiunto finora livelli di inclusività molto diversi nei loro sistemi educativi. La separazione delle persone con disabilità, disturbi dell'apprendimento o altre caratteristiche è ancora comune in molti paesi e può provocare seri danni alla qualità dei sistemi educativi. E' essenziale che i governi prendano piena responsabilità e promuovano riforme finalizzate a creare scuole realmente inclusive, come dichiarato nella Convenzione ONU sui diritti delle persone con disabilità.

Nel **capitolo 8** viene proposta una panoramica delle politiche italiane per il monitoraggio e la valutazione dell'inclusione nei contesti educativi, oltre ad una descrizione delle linee guida e degli indicatori diffusi dalla *European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education* (EASNIE) per la valutazione corretta ed efficace dell'inclusività dei sistemi scolastici. L'importanza di misurare e valutare è condivisa dai paesi europei e, a partire da questo principio, sia il mondo accademico che i decisori politici hanno proposto modelli e indicatori. In Italia, l'inclusività, già presente tra gli indicatori per l'autovalutazione delle scuole, è stata di recente inserita tra gli aspetti da considerare anche nella valutazione esterna. In Europa, i paesi adottano diverse politiche, ma l'Agenzia ha lavorato con un approccio *bottom up* per raccogliere le opinioni e le esperienze dei paesi membri, arrivando a proporre delle linee guida e degli indicatori. A livello di singola scuola, la metodologia più autorevole è proposta all'interno dell'Index per l'inclusione, uno strumento validato a livello internazionale per misurare l'inclusività di una ambiente scolastico. L'Index prende ha come riferimento teorico il modello sociale della disabilità, focalizzandosi quindi sulle barriere all'apprendimento e alla partecipazione.

Il **capitolo 9** riprende i principali concetti esposti nel testo arricchendo l'analisi con autorevoli contributi teorici. L'Italia ha fatto molta strada dall'alba dell'inclusione scolastica e ha raggiunto importanti risultati. Tuttavia, luci ed ombre convivono nella realtà delle scuole di oggi. Mentre la coesione sociale

diventa sempre più una priorità ogni giorno, aumentano anche i rischi di marginalizzazione dei gruppi più svantaggiati. Dopo aver decostruito le politiche italiane e discusso le ombre che minacciano l'inclusività della scuola italiana, saranno approfonditi i punti principali cui prestare attenzione per la costruzione di politiche efficaci.

Infine, il **capitolo 10** offre l'originale contributo di un Professore universitario che è stato anche insegnante quando la politica dell'integrazione scolastica muoveva i suoi primi passi. E' una riflessione sul ruolo dell'educatore alle prese con un mondo che sembra costruire diversità per poi "correggerle", innescando un circolo vizioso guidato da una razionalità cieca. La conclusione è una proposta, che consiste nel vedere la diversità, così come l'inclusione, in una luce nuova.

Chapter 1
Inclusive education, from an international and intercultural perspective

"The ultimate vision for inclusive education systems is to ensure that all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers"
(EASNIE, 2015, p.1)

In 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights established that the right to education is a human right:

"Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.

Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace" (UN, 1948, Article 26).

This sentiment has since been echoed in numerous intergovernmental acts. For example, Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities required states to recognize the right of people with disabilities to receive education and defined how this should be done in an effort to foster "the full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth", "the development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and

creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential" and ultimately to enable "persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society" (UN, 2006). In recognizing the right of people with disabilities to an equal education, the article requires that people with disabilities not be excluded from the general education system. It similarly affirms the necessity that "effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion" (UN, 2006).

The importance to provide equal access to mainstream schools is similarly espoused in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Actions on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994). This in Chapter I, Art.7 put forth the concept that schools must be able to meet the needs of all students in order to be fully considered inclusive education environments:

"The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school" (UNESCO, 1994).

Since Salamanca, an increasing number of international and intergovernmental institutions have been suggesting that inclusion is the key principle through which equality in education can be achieved. Although this principle is widely shared among experts, policy makers and educators, there is still a lack of consensus about the real meaning of inclusion and its concrete implications in terms of policies and practices (UNESCO, 2011; D'Alessio, 2011). As a consequence, there are many different conceptualizations of the notion of inclusive education. One of them concerns the provision for children identified with special education needs and how the settings that they are put in for their education can respond to the different necessities. Another widely held perception of the idea of inclusive education concerns the education for all (EFA) movement, aimed at guaranteeing basic education for all pupils. This priority has been expressed in numerous governmental decrees, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989, Art.28) and the subsequent

United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalizations of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, which stated that all children, regardless of disability, should be entitled to the same education opportunities "in an integrated setting" (UN, 1989b).

Recently, the interpretation of inclusive education has been changing, going beyond the support to be provided for specific categories of pupils, to incorporating the study of how educational contexts should evolve to welcome the diversity of the student population (D'Alessio, 2011). According to this concept of inclusion, a process of reform must take place on a grand scale, rather than merely focusing on individual cases or specific categories of needs:

"Inclusive education is not merely about providing access into mainstream school for pupils who have previously been excluded. It is not about closing down an unacceptable system of segregated provision and dumping those pupils in an unchanged mainstream system. Existing school systems in terms of physical factors, curriculum aspects, teaching expectations and styles, leadership roles, will have to change" (Barton, 1998, p.84).

In this perspective, inclusive education is seen as a process of reform in the sense of restructuring the education system in general to one that is more capable of responding effectively to the needs of all students. This means that, rather than putting the emphasis on access and equality in relation to students with impairments or disabilities, systemic educational amendments must be made in the interest of all students. Moreover, it is essential that the idea of inclusive education be looked at not as a static condition, but as something evolving and changing. Inclusive education can therefore be defined as

"[…] the educational principle that aims at transforming education systems and creating more equal and just societies. It is concerned with all of us and suggests possible routes to make radical educational and social changes. It fights against political, social, economic and cultural barriers that hinder the participation of all students in the process of learning regardless of their biological conditions, social and economic background and ethnic origins" (D'Alessio, 2011, p.27).

While there are, in the current international debate, many different interpretations as to what the term inclusion refers to, it is clear that inclusion in education is a human rights issue and should be a priority across the world. It is important that education systems are transformed to create more equal and just societies, in which differences are valued, rather than simply tolerated (Barton, 1998).

1.1. Paradigms and theoretical models in Europe

In May 2009, the European Council, in its Strategic Framework for European Co-Operation in Education and Training (ET 2020) included in its scope and indeed highlighted inclusive education as a priority and a fundamental imperative in education to achieve a just and equal society:

"Education and training policy should enable all citizens, irrespective of their personal, social or economic circumstances, to acquire, update and develop over a lifetime both job-specific skills and the key competences needed for their employability and to foster further learning, active citizenship and intercultural dialogue. Educational disadvantage should be addressed by providing high quality early childhood education and targeted support, and by promoting inclusive education. Education and training systems should aim to ensure that all learners — including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with special needs and migrants — complete their education, including, where appropriate, through second chance education and the provision of more personalised learning. Education should promote intercultural competences, democratic values and respect for fundamental rights and the environment, as well as combat all forms of discrimination, equipping all young people to interact positively with their peers from diverse backgrounds" (EU Council, 2009, p.4).

Until recently, however, at an international level it was common to talk about "integration" and "special needs education" rather than "inclusion" and, as highlighted by D'Alessio et al. (2010), the differences between these terms have not always been clear, and neither have their implications for policy and practice. In the international literature, it is now widely recognized that a change in terminology implies a shift in educational paradigms as well and, most importantly, in the agenda for policy and practice (UNESCO, 2009; EASNIE, 2016). The shift from "integration" to "inclusion", started around the end of the 1980s, has an important meaning: while "integration refers to the process of integrating learners back into the mainstream school from which, at some point, they have been excluded, inclusion refers to a learner being a part of their local educational community from the beginning" (D'Alessio et al., 2010, p.113). Therefore we can say that, although the terms integration and inclusion are often used as synonyms, they refer to very different paradigms. As emphasised by some experts (Ainscow, Booth, 1998), integration is often mentioned in opposition to segregation (special schools and/or special classes), while inclusion

is compared to exclusion. The latter may occur also in mainstream education: it can take many different forms, each of them translating into a specific barrier to learning.
The following table summarizes the differences in the two paradigms, from their founding principles to the practical implications.

Table 1 – Differences between school integration and school inclusion

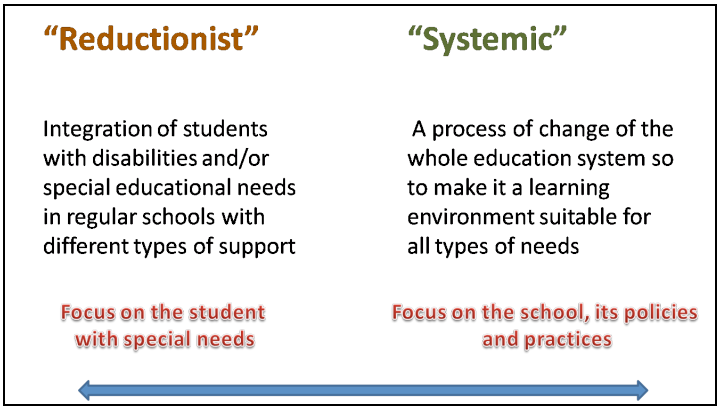
SCHOOL INTEGRATION	SCHOOL INCLUSION
Focus on the students with special needs and how to integrate them in a regular class. *How does the student need to be supported so to be able to learn and participate as much as possible in the class activities?*	Focus on the school environment but also on the social and political environment. *How is the school (society) organized so as to become a learning and socializing environment for all types of students (people) and needs?*
Principle: compensation of individual deficit	Principle: recognition of difference as a human condition and recognition of the opportunity to change teaching/learning practices when they do not take into account such possible differences
Reference: medical disability model (*)	Reference: social disability model (*)
Goal: obtain additional resources and specialized personnel for the student(s) with disability and/or special needs	Goal: obtain resources needed to make mainstream school function well for everybody, intervening to improve the academic environment and remove all types of barriers (physical, cultural, didactic …) that could hinder students' participation and learning
In practice: integrate within the existing framework students with disability, immigrant students, students with special needs or any kind of disadvantage	In practice: reform the existing framework taking into consideration the changes in society and all possible educational needs that might emerge

(*) For an explanation of the medical disability model and the social disability model, see chapter 2.
Source: D'Alessio et al., 2010. Re-elaboration by the author.

The historical evolution from the paradigm of "integration" to that of "inclusion", starting from the late 1980s, reflects a broader, more general change of perspective. Several authors have talked about two theoretical models of school inclusion: the first is called *reductionist* and it focuses on the students with special needs and their integration in mainstream schools, with different types of support; the second is called *systemic* and it focuses on the school environment, its policies and practices, advocating for a process of change in the whole education system, so as to make it a learning environment suitable for all types of needs (Ainscow et al., 2006; Ainscow, 2007; Ainscow, Sandill, 2010; Armstrong et al., 2011).

We could draw a continuum between the reductionist and the systemic theoretical models: while the line represents a chronological development in the way inclusive education has been interpreted in the theoretical debate - from special education, to mainstreaming and school integration, to school inclusion - it is also true that policies and practices in the different countries still reflect different forms and phases in the evolution of such concepts, and could therefore be placed somewhere along the same line. Figure 1 visually represents the models as the two theoretical extremes of a continuum.

Figure 1 – Main theoretical interpretations of school inclusion in Europe



Source: D'Alessio, 2011. Re-elaboration by the author.

1.2. Approaches to inclusive education

From an analysis and re-elaboration of the most relevant literature, it is possible to go into more details in order to identify at least five different approaches to inclusive education in Europe (Clough, Corbett, 2000): psycho-medical; curricular; sociological; inclusive school; and disability studies. Each approach does not necessarily exclude all the others, rather in the reality of educational policies and school contexts one is likely to find a mix of approaches. However, the prevalent approach determines conceptions, ultimate goals and reasons framing the school settings, the managerial and pedagogical choices, as well as the perceptions of people's responsibilities and tasks as well as of the environment's strengths and weaknesses.

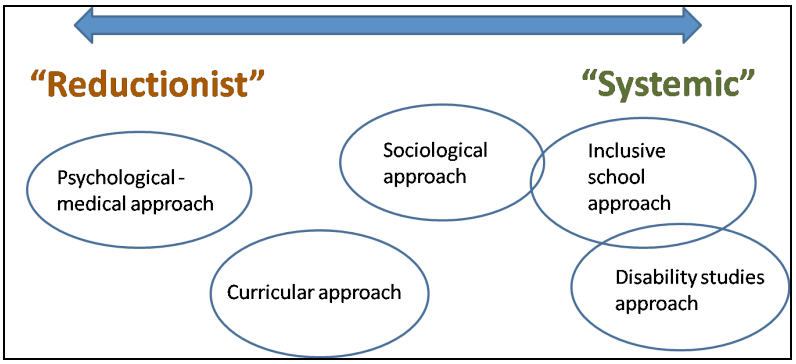
Table 2 synthesizes the main characteristics of the five above-mentioned approaches. Figure 2 shows how we could place the five approaches along the integration – inclusion line. The first two are definitely closer to the integration model, since they focus respectively on the "deficits" of students with special needs and on the adaptations that have to be made in the curriculum as a response to the special needs. The sociological approach is on the center of the line, slightly more towards the right end, because it focuses on reforming the entire school system as a means of creating a more equal society, but this goal has to be reached through an incremental process of adaptation and change in school policies and practices (for example, reforming evaluation methods). Conversely, the inclusive school approach implies a deep change in values and assumptions, before impacting policies and practices. The disability studies approach sees inclusive education as a tile of a larger mosaic, that of the entire society, and aims to fight all forms of discrimination and "construction" of disability in terms of pathology and inferiority. This is why it can be placed at the extreme right of the continuum.

Table 2 – Five different approaches to inclusive education

APPROACH	Main theoretical references	Assumptions and implications
Psycho - medical approach	HMSO (1978); Warnock (2005)	Inclusive education = special needs education. Focus on a deficit that needs to be cured and/or compensated for. Special education needs and disability are "matters" for doctors and psychologists only.
Curricular approach	Meijer, 2003; Ianes, 2005; Ware et al.(2011)	Inclusive education = adaptation of curricula and teaching strategies. Focus on finding connections between standard curricula and individualized plans so as to allow students with disabilities and/or special needs to participate as much as possible.
Sociological approach	UPIAS (1974); Tomlinson (1982); Barton (1986)	Inclusive education = means to achieve a more just, equal and democratic society. Focus on reforming the school system: against standardized curricula and testing, summative evaluation and hyper-selection.
Inclusive school approach	Booth, Ainscow (2002); UNESCO (2008, 2009)	Inclusive education = process of deep change of the education system (values and assumptions, policies and practices). Focus on the factors that influence the school system and its level of inclusion.
Disability studies approach	Oliver, Barnes (2012); Baglieri et al. (2011); Medeghini et al. (2013)	Inclusive education = human right. Focus on the entire society and on all forms of discrimination and "construction" of disability in terms of pathology and inferiority. Direct involvement of people with disability in theoretical debate and policy making.

Source: Clough, Corbett, 2000; D'Alessio et al., 2014; D'Alessio, 2011. Re-elaboration by the author.

Figure 2: Five approaches along the integration – inclusion continuum



Source: elaboration by the author

1.3. Where, and how, is inclusive education best provided?

Due to the widely varying viewpoints and interpretations of the meaning of inclusion in education and the various contexts in which it can be applied, there can be different ideas as to where and how inclusive education is best provided. The "radical" position, well represented in the Italian model, strongly supports the dismantling of segregated schools for those with or without disabilities and promotes the education of all pupils within mainstream school settings (D'Alessio, 2011). According to a more "moderate" current of thought, for certain students with disabilities, mainstream schools could prove to be detrimental (Warnock, 2007). Therefore, its proponents support the maintenance of some special schools for students with profound learning difficulties and severe impairments. A third stance is referred to as the "UNESCO position". The emphasis of this viewpoint is that inclusion doesn't depend on where we educate children – whether in mainstream or special schools – but on how difference is addressed in educational settings. Thus, this method aims to reform schools in order to meet all students' educational requirements. This vision does not deny the importance of special schools, given that certain needs of students with disabilities can be better addressed in special settings (D'Alessio, 2011).

Two opposing perspectives emerge. One addresses the necessary provision of resources depending on the pupils' needs and therefore supports the use of classification systems of students to ensure that such provisions are accounted

for. An alternative perspective aims to eliminate these systems of classification out of fear that these systems will end up discriminating against students based on such labeling (D'Alessio, 2011). As such, in efforts to facilitate inclusion in education systems, exclusion may ironically happen. It is through this unfortunate and unintentional result that differences, instead of being celebrated, begin to fade or are seen as discriminatory factors. This is the result of the process of trying to eliminate diversity by simply "fusing the abnormality with the normality" (Sticker, 1999, p.136). When resources are allocated to promote the inclusion of some students with disabilities into the mainstream education system, this likewise contributes to the construction of the identification of the disabled students as "outsiders".

1.4 Equity in education

According to the OECD[1], equity in education means that
"personal or social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin or family background, are not obstacles to achieving educational potential (fairness) and that that all individuals reach at least a basic minimum level of skills (inclusion)" (OECD, 2012).
In this view, a new concept is discussed, strictly intertwined with that of inclusion: fairness, the situation in which personal or social circumstances do not hinder the achievement of educational potential. In the scientific literature, fairness in education is often discussed as an aspect of a broader concept: social mobility, namely the ability of individuals or groups to move upward or downward in status based on wealth, occupation, or some other social variable, such as education.
The debate on the connection between education and social mobility includes

[1] OECD is the *Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development*, with 35 member countries, from North and South America to Europe and the Asia-Pacific. It includes many of the world's most advanced countries, but also emerging countries like Mexico, Chile and Turkey. Its roots go back to the rubble of Europe after World War II. Determined to avoid the mistakes of their predecessors in the wake of World War I, European leaders realised that the best way to ensure lasting peace was to encourage co-operation and reconstruction, rather than punishment of the defeated. OECD was established in 1961.

many positions, some of which are opposed to each other. One way of thinking about education and social mobility is that the first is a structure that society sets up to equalize opportunities. The opposing view is that education is organized in such a way that it ends up reproducing inequality, favoring children from higher social class families. Those who see education as a source of social mobility emphasise that educational results derive mainly from performance and commitment to education, and that socio-economic success is largely a function of individual academic achievement. International organizations such as the OECD, UNESCO, and the World Bank strongly support this view. On the contrary, those who believe that education tends to reproduce the structure of society and its inequalities emphasise that academic performance is heavily influenced by students' socioeconomic status and that students' performance in education is much less important than family status and social capital. In other words, social origin can be a source of opportunities for those who received good education, or it can be a sort of indelible mark. Several important works, among which those of Bourdieu (1974; 1977) and Boudon (1974) in particular deserve to be cited, have highlighted the relationship between socio economic background and results obtained in the educational system.

According to Bourdieu, the education systems of industrialised societies function in such a way as to legitimize class inequalities. Success in the education system, in fact, is facilitated for those who possess cultural capital and higher-class *habitus*. Cultural capital consists of familiarity with the dominant culture in a society, and especially the ability to understand and use "educated" language. The possession of cultural capital varies with social class, yet the school system assumes the possession of cultural capital, making it very difficult for lower class pupils to succeed in the education system. *Habitus* indicates a set of attitudes and values. Since the dominant *habitus* is a set of attitudes and values held by the higher classes, the *habitus* works with cultural capital to the disadvantage of lower class students. A major component of the dominant *habitus* is a positive attitude towards education.

Starting from very different premises, Boudon (1974) also argues that educational results are heavily affected by social origins. His theory helps us to understand the relationship between psychological and social factors and their connections with educational choices and outcomes. Boudon explains differences in educational achievement with reference to two mechanisms: the primary and secondary effects of social stratification. The primary effects are cultural inequalities that determine the abilities of pupils in school. The

secondary effects are the different costs and benefits associated with different educational decisions for pupils from different social classes. For Boudon, the benefits associated with each option vary with social class, because ambition is relative to the social starting point of an individual. The social costs of taking an educational option may also vary by social class. For example

"not choosing a prestigious curriculum may represent a high social cost for a youngster from a middle-class family if most of his friends have chosen it; but choosing the same course may represent a high cost for a lower-class youngster if most of his friends have not" (Boudon, 1974, p. 30).

In the scientific literature there is evidence that the educational system can contribute to educational and social mobility, but there is also evidence that, as a mobility enabler, the educational system is structurally limited by its location within unequal societies (Downey and Condron, 2016; OECD, 2016). This means that the State has to take a proactive role in order to fight against its own inequalities and bias in the provision of education, in teachers' training and in guiding students towards educational and occupational choices.

Nowadays, across OECD countries, students from low socio-economic backgrounds are twice as likely to be low performers, implying that personal or social circumstances are obstacles to achieving their educational potential (lack of fairness). The results of PISA[2] 2015 offer interesting insights on this matter. A section entitled *How performance differences relate to socio-economic disparities among students* (OECD, 2016, p.214) examines the survey results from the viewpoint of fairness. The indicator is called the "socioeconomic gradient" and, measuring its strength and slope, it is possible to assess the level of equity, and specifically fairness, in our education systems.

"The strength of the socio-economic gradient refers to how well socio-economic status predicts performance. When a student's actual performance is not the same as would be expected given his or her socio-economic status […], the socio-economic gradient is considered to be weak. When socio-economic status becomes a good predictor of performance […], then the gradient is considered strong […].

[2] The *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA) is a triennial international survey run by the OECD which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. In 2015 over half a million students, representing 28 million 15-year-olds in 72 countries and economies, took the internationally agreed upon two-hour test. Students were assessed in science, mathematics, reading, collaborative problem solving and financial literacy.

The strength of the gradient provides an indication of the extent to which education policies should target socioeconomically disadvantaged students specifically, or low-performing students in general. If the relationship between social background and performance is weak, then other factors are likely to have greater bearing on student achievement, and focusing on students with low socio-economic status might not be so effective. By contrast, when the relationship is strong, then effective policies would be those that eliminate barriers to high-performance linked to socio-economic disadvantage[…]. The strength of the socio-economic gradient is measured by the proportion of the variation in performance that is explained by differences in socio-economic status" (OECD, 2016, p.215).

"The slope of the socio-economic gradient refers to the impact of socio-economic status on performance, or the average difference in performance between two students whose socio-economic status differs by one unit on the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status[3]. That is, the slope shows the magnitude of the impact on performance that socioeconomically targeted policies could potentially have […]. As such, it is a summary measure of the differences in performance observed across socio-economic groups" (OECD, 2016, p.216).

All in all, PISA results show that, on average across OECD countries, students' socio-economic status explains a significant share of the variation in their school performance. In 15 countries, the strength of the socio-economic gradient is above average and students' socio-economic status explains more than 15% of the variation in performance in science. By contrast, in 26 countries, among which Italy and the US, the strength of the gradient remains below the OECD average (respectively 9.6% and 11.4% of the variation). Similar results are observed for other domains of assessment where, on average across OECD countries, socio-economic status accounts for 11.9% of the variation in reading performance and 13% of the variation in mathematics performance.

The slope of the socio-economic gradient is a summary measure of the differences in performance observed across socio-economic groups and it shows the magnitude of the impact on performance that socioeconomically targeted policies could

[3] In PISA, a student's socio-economic status is estimated by the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS), which is derived from several variables related to students' family background: parents' education, parents' occupations, a number of home possessions that can be taken as proxies for material wealth, and the number of books and other educational resources available in the home. The ESCS indicator is constructed so as to be internationally comparable (OECD, 2016, p.2015).

potentially have. On average across OECD countries, a one-unit increase on the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status is associated with an increase of 38 score points in the science assessment. Again, in science performance 15 countries scored below the average, among which were Italy (30) and the US (33).
The detailed results for the member countries and for the different domains of assessment will not be examined in this book[4]. Rather, for the purpose of our discussion about equity in education it is interesting to consider the overall results and the policy guidelines provided by the OECD. In general, PISA 2015 data show that
"home background influences success in education, and schooling can either reinforce or mitigate that influence. Although poor performance in school does not automatically stem from socio-economic disadvantage, the socio-economic status of students and schools can have a powerful influence on learning outcomes. Because advantaged families are better able to enhance the effect of schooling, because students from advantaged families attend higher-quality schools, or because schools are simply better-equipped to nurture and develop young people from advantaged backgrounds, schools may sometimes reproduce existing patterns of socio-economic advantage. However, because schools are also environments that harmonise children's learning experiences, and because they can serve to channel resources towards disadvantaged children, schools can also help create a more equitable distribution of learning opportunities and outcomes (Downey and Condron, 2016). The degree to which reinforcing or compensatory mechanisms prevail depends both on the level of socio-economic inequality in a country/economy and on the characteristics of its school system" (OECD, 2016, p.214).
All in all, while it is indisputable that across OECD countries socioeconomic status influences school performance, the PISA 2015 survey results also confirm that "poverty is not destiny" (OECD, 2016, p.217). As a matter of fact, many socially disadvantaged students all over the world succeed in attaining high levels of performance and the performance of students with similar socio-economic status can vary widely across school systems (OECD, 2016). Achieving equity and quality in an education system is possible by implementing policies focused on ensuring that personal or social circumstances do not hinder achieving educational potential (fairness) and that all individuals reach at least a basic

[4] The results can be downloaded by clicking on the Statlinks provided in the OECD publication.

minimum level of skills (inclusion). They include investing in early childhood education and care, tackling system-level policies that may hinder equity (such as grade repetition, unsupported school choice or early tracking) and supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds (OECD, 2015).
As far as fairness is concerned, specifically, some policy implications can be drawn from an analysis of the socioeconomic gradient's strength and slope across OECD member states. The following table summarizes four different cases and the relative recommendations:

Table 3 – Policies to improve equity in education, based on socioeconomic gradient

Characteristics of the gradient	*Most effective policies*
Flat and weak Performance differences across the socio-economic spectrum are small and students often perform differently than expected given their socio-economic status.	Universal policies (for example, changing curricula or instructional systems and/or improving the quality of the teaching staff, etc.)
Steep and weak Performance differences across the socio-economic spectrum are large, but students often perform differently than expected given their socio-economic status.	Targeting low performing students and/or schools (for example, evaluation, feedback and appraisals for students, teachers and schools, or establishing early-warning mechanisms and providing a modified curriculum or additional instructional support for struggling students)
Flat and strong Performance differences across the socio-economic spectrum are small, but students tend to perform as expected given their socio-economic status.	Compensatory policies providing additional support, resources or assistance for disadvantaged students or schools (for example, free lunch programmes or free textbooks)
Steep and strong Performance differences across the socio-economic spectrum are large and students tend to perform as expected given their socio-economic status.	Mix of policies targeting low performance and socio-economic disadvantage (reducing performance differences and improving performance, particularly among disadvantaged students, are combined policy goals)

Source: OECD, 2016. Re-elaboration by the author.

APPENDIX 1 - Early school leaving

Across OECD countries, nearly one in five 15-year-old students does not reach a basic minimum level of skills to function in today's societies, indicating lack of inclusion (OECD, 2015). Moreover, as described in the previous paragraphs, students from low socio-economic background are more likely to be low performers, implying that personal or social circumstances are obstacles to achieving their educational potential (lack of fairness). Lack of inclusion and fairness fuels school failure, of which dropping out before finalising upper secondary education is the most visible manifestation (OECD, 2012).

The European Education Ministers in 2003 agreed on defining early school leavers as "people aged 18-24 who have only lower secondary education or less and are no longer in education or training" (European Commission, 2016b). Early school leaving (ESL) is acknowledged to be the result of factors belonging to two main categories: school based factors and factors related to the individual, family and social background. For example, there is a strong link between leaving education and training early, social disadvantage and a low level of parental education (European Commission, 2016b). Some school factors exerting a direct and significant impact on ESL concern the school climate (conflicts with teachers, bullying, violence in school), academic practices such as grade retention, and administrative choices such as "segregation" of certain groups (European Commission, 2016b).

ESL is a problem for several reasons. First of all, young people leaving school early are more likely to be unemployed, or in precarious/low paying jobs, and to be, as a consequence, more dependent on welfare measures. In some cases, a failure in school can impact on one's propensity to learn over the course of one's life, which becomes a weakening factor for the person as a whole. Early school leavers, in fact, are much less likely to be involved in lifelong learning and to act, in general, as "active citizens".

The economic costs of ESL, in terms of lower productivity, lower tax revenues and higher welfare payments, are enormous.

Finally, early school leavers are more prone to poor physical and mental health and have a higher risk of antisocial behaviour and criminal activity.

It is clear that ESL in the long run "constitutes a tremendous waste of potential, for individual, social and economic development" (European Commission, 2016b, p.1). In order to prevent it, it is necessary to implement effective policies

at a systemic level and at the level of individual schools. Among the systemic measures, the European Commission includes access to quality early childhood education and care; relevant and engaging curricula, designed in such a way to reflect students' diversity; flexible educational pathways, with high investment in individualised learning and targeted learning support; better integration of newly arrived migrant children; smooth transition between different levels of education; high quality, attractive vocational education and training (VET); involvement of students and parents in school decision-making; strong and well developed systems of psychological and emotional support; and strong and well developed guidance systems (European Commission, 2016, p.2).

The Europe 2020 headline target is to reduce ESL to less than 10%. Seventeen Member States have already achieved this. Among the eleven countries still above the EU target, only Italy has reached its national target of 16%. Among the Member States below 10%, five have not yet reached their more ambitious national targets (Finland, The Netherlands, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland). The EU average rate of early leavers from education and training in 2016 was 10.7%, 0.3% less than in 2015 (European Commission, 2017).

APPENDIX 2 - If you are a teacher/If you are a student …

If you are a teacher, you can use this box to plan class discussions with your students starting from a film viewing. The list of questions does not claim to be exhaustive of the many complex themes featured in the films. If you are a student, you might find these non-academic sources useful for your understanding of the topics covered in this book. The questions can be used as inputs for personal reflection.

Our School: a film on inclusive education

You can find this film on the UNESCO website. While you watch it, try to answer the following questions, as inputs for further reflection:

- What kind of "connections" can you identify with the theoretical debate about inclusive education described in chapter 1 and, in particular, with the OECD analysis of equity in education?
- What kind of "exclusions" are featured in the short films?
- The film is about a poor area of Nepal. How can we "translate" it into reflections that are valid for our Western industrialized world, too? Do we see the same or similar type of "exclusions" in our schools?
- What is the idea of "disability" portrayed in this film? Do you agree with it?

On the way to school (Original title: *Sur le chemin de l'école*)

You can easily buy this UNESCO film online. While you watch it, try answering the following questions:

- What kind of "connections" can you identify with the theoretical debate about inclusive education described in chapter 1 and, in particular, with the OECD analysis of equity in education?
- Do you agree with the positive presentation of school and education portrayed in the film?
- Do you think your country/society favors social mobility and if so, what place does school occupy as a social mobility enabler?
- If your answer to the previous question is negative, try explaining the reasons behind the inability of the school system in your country/society to act a social mobility enabler.

Chapter 2
Disability: an evolving concept

"These children are born twice. They have to learn
to get by in a world that their first birth
made difficult for them.
Their second birth depends on you"
(Giuseppe Pontiggia)

There is wide consensus nowadays that disability is a human right issue. Many international documents have emphasised this point, including the UN World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled People (1982), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for People with Disabilities (1989b). The last, and most cited, international recognition of the human rights of people with disabilities is the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) whose purpose is "to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities[5], and to promote respect for their inherent dignity" (UN, 2006, Art.1). The Preamble of the CRPD states that disability "is an evolving concept" and that it "results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (UN, 2006, Preamble). This way of describing disability emphasises that it is not an attribute of the

[5] "Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (UN, 2006, Art.1).

person and that "progress on improving social participation can be made by addressing the barriers which hinder persons with disabilities in their day to day lives" (WHO, 2011, p.4).

2.1 From the medical to the social model of disability

Disability is an evolving concept whose meaning can be quite different depending on the historical period and on the perspective from which it is regarded (Sticker, 1999). Over recent decades, the concept of disability has evolved from an individual, medical perspective to a more systemic, social perspective. The medical model defines disability as the result of a physical condition, which is intrinsic to the individual, part of his/her body, that may reduce the individual's quality of life and cause disadvantages. From this perspective curing or at least coping with disability is the sole responsibility of trained healthcare providers and revolves around analysing it from a clinical perspective, understanding it, and then learning to control and/or alter its course. Disability is no different from a disease: the solution is medical intervention, in order to compensate as much as possible for the perceived deficit and the "personal tragedy" that it entails (Oliver, 1990).

On the contrary, the social model of disability promotes the notion that disability is not "in the individual", but rather that it is rooted in societies that fail to include people regardless of their individual differences. The ideas on which this model is based were first brought to the fore in the 1960s by Paul Hunt, who created the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS), a movement that contributed meaningfully to the development of disability studies in Britain and all over the world. The following excerpt from Paul Hunt's writings can give an idea of the type of discourse carried on by these activists, who interpreted disability as a form of social oppression:

"All my adult life has been spent in institutions amongst people who, like myself, have severe and often progressive physical disabilities. We are paralysed and deformed, most of us in wheelchairs, either as the result of accident or of diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy and polio. So naturally this personal experience forms a background to the views on disability that follow.

I do not mean to exclude altogether the large number of people who today are able to lead a more or less normal life in the community; those with relatively light disabilities, or with such handicaps as defects in sight, speech or hearing, epilepsy, obesity, heart disease, and so on. I hope that much of what I say will be relevant to this latter group since they have many problems in common with us.
But apart from the obvious value of writing from my own direct knowledge, it is also true that the situation of 'the young chronic sick' (as we are officially and rather unpleasantly termed) highlights, or rather goes to the depths of, the question of disablement. Our 'tragedy' may be only the tragedy of all sickness, pain and suffering carried to extremes. But disabilities like ours, which often prohibit any attempt at normal living in society, almost force one to consider the basic issues, not only of coping with a special handicap, but of life itself.
Being cheerful and keeping going is scarcely good enough when one has an illness that will end in an early death, when one is wasting away like some Belsen victim, maybe incontinent, dependent on others for daily needs, probably denied marriage and a family and forced to live out one's time in an institution. In these circumstances the most acute questions arise and the most radical answers are called for. I am not suggesting that all of us with such devastating handicaps probe deeply into the meaning of life, nor that we automatically gain great wisdom or sanctity. We have our defences like anyone else. But it does seem that our situation tends to make us ask questions that few people ask in the ordinary world. And it also means that to some extent we are set apart from, or rather have a special position within, the everyday society that most people take it for granted they belong to.
I want to look at this special situation largely in terms of our relations with others, our place in society. This is essentially related to the personal aspect of coping with disablement, which I hope it will at the same time illuminate, since the problem of disability lies not only in the impairment of function and its effects on us individually, but also, more importantly, in the area of our relationship with 'normal' people. If everyone were disabled as we are, there would be no special situation to consider.
This focus on the ways in which we are set apart from the ordinary does not mean that I see us as really separated from society. In fact the reverse assumption underlies everything I write. We are society, as much as anybody, and cannot be considered in isolation from it.

I am aware of the danger of concentrating on the ways in which disability makes us like each other and unlike the normal, and thus being trapped into the common fault of viewing people in terms of one characteristic to the exclusion of all others. Disabled people suffer enough from that kind of thing already. But whatever the differences between us, we do have certain sets of experiences in common. In dealing with this aspect of our lives I have tried not to forget two others - our uniqueness as persons and the human nature we share with the rest of mankind.

I think the distinguishing mark of disabled people's special position is that they tend to 'challenge' in their relations with ordinary society. This challenge takes five main forms: as unfortunate, useless, different, oppressed and sick" (Hunt, 1966, pp. 1-2).

A few years later, Mike Oliver first used the term "social model" when he was trying to explain disability as a social construction. He is now considered one of the most important proponents of the social disability model and he presents the difference between the individual/medical approach and his own approach in the following terms:

"There are two fundamental points that need to be made about the individual model of disability. Firstly, it locates the 'problem' of disability within the individual and secondly it sees the causes of this problem as stemming from the functional limitations or psychological losses which are assumed to arise from disability. These two points are underpinned by what might be called 'the personal tragedy theory of disability' which suggests that disability is some terrible chance event which occurs at random to unfortunate individuals. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. The genesis, development and articulation of the social model of disability by disabled people themselves is a rejection of all of these fundamentals. It does not deny the problem of disability but locates it squarely within society. It is not individual limitations, of whatever kind, which are the cause of the problem but society's failure to provide appropriate services and adequately ensure the needs of disabled people are fully taken into account in its social organisation. Further, the consequences of this failure does not simply and randomly fall on individuals but systematically upon disabled people as a group who experience this failure as discrimination institutionalised throughout society" (Oliver, 1990, p.3).

Gradually, the social disability model was developed and embraced by many other scholars such as Colin Barnes, Len Barton, Tom Shakespeare, Nicholas

Watson and Carol Thomas. Ultimately, this perspective "involves a sociological theorization of the phenomenon [of disability] and aims at changing society rather than helping an unfortunate minority of disabled people to adjust to society" (D'Alessio, 2011, p.44).

2.2. The ICF model

According to the World Health Organization, the medical model and the social model should be seen as two complementary, rather than dichotomous, perspectives. Disability, in fact, is not purely medical, nor purely social, because these two aspects are instead intertwined in actual situations: in fact, persons with disabilities can often experience problems caused by their health conditions (WHO, 2011).

A more balanced approach that gives appropriate weight to the different aspects of disability is the ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health), known as the "bio-psycho-social model" (WHO, 2011, p.4), officially endorsed by all 191 WHO Member States in the Fifty-fourth World Health Assembly on 22 May 2001 as the international standard with which to describe and measure health and disability (WHO, 2001). As we will discuss further in Chapter 5, the ICF is the model used to "measure" disability in Italy and Decree 66/2017 officially introduced it as the paradigm to build the pupil's "functional profile"[6], giving schools and teachers the necessary information to build an effective Individualised Educational Plan.

The ICF views disability as a dynamic interaction between health conditions and contextual (personal/environmental) factors, taking into consideration the physical-biological aspect, the psychological aspect (the personality of each individual) and the social aspect (the physical environment, the institutions, laws and policies). Clearly, the ICF acknowledges the premises of the social model of disability, considering the person globally and not only from the viewpoint of their health. This means recognising everyone's potential and resources, knowing that the natural, personal, social and cultural contexts can play an important role in determining if and how such resources are used. Health conditions are put in

[6] See chapter 5 for more details about the use of ICF and for the meaning of the term "functional profile".

context with social conditions and disability may result from this interaction.
ICF was developed through a long discussion involving doctors, experts from the academia and, most importantly, persons with disabilities. Compared to the previous International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps (ICIDH) (WHO, 1980) it puts more emphasis on the environmental factors that create disability. The environment, in fact, can have an enormous impact on the experience and extent of a given disability. What comes immediately to mind are the physical barriers: the most common example being a wheelchair user in a building without an accessible elevator (WHO, 2011). In reality, there are many other, less visible, environmental factors that can influence health and, hence, disability, such as water and sanitation, nutrition, working conditions, and climate. Moreover, disability has a bidirectional link to poverty: it may increase the risk of poverty, and poverty itself may increase the risk of disability (WHO, 2011). Institutions and organisations, policies and service delivery systems, as part of an environment, can also have an impact on the experience of disability. For example, an analysis of health care in Europe found organisational barriers that make it more difficult for people with disabilities to use said services (WHO, 2011). Another aspect of the environment is the knowledge and attitude of the general public. In order to create more inclusive settings, raising awareness and challenging negative attitudes towards disability is a priority. All over the world, in fact, "negative imagery and language, stereotypes, and stigma – with deep historic roots – persist for people with disabilities" and "disability is generally equated with incapacity" (WHO, 2011, p.6). Negative attitudes and behaviours can heavily impact on the self esteem and social participation of people with disabilities.
For all these reasons, the role of the environment is crucial in constructing the experience of disability. The ICF model features categories of environmental factors that can be either facilitators or barriers: products and technology; natural environment and man-made changes to it; relationships and support networks; attitudes and behaviours; and services, systems and policies. Personal factors are also recognised, such as motivation and self esteem, which can influence social participation, distinguishing between a person's capacity to perform actions and the actual performance of those actions in real life, "a subtle difference that helps illuminate the effect of environment and how performance might be improved by modifying the environment" (WHO, 2011, p.5).
The ICF Checklist (WHO, 2003) proposes some guidelines to help an examiner

when interviewing someone about their problems in functioning and life activities. The questions are related to mobility, self care, domestic life, interpersonal interactions, major life areas, community, social and civic life. An excerpt of the Appendix 2 of the ICF Checklist is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Examples of questions for participation and activities

VI. Community, Social and Civic Life

(Capacity)

(1) In your present state of health, how much difficulty do you have participating in community gatherings, festivals or other local events, without assistance?

(2) How does this compare with someone, just like yourself only without your health condition?

(Or: "…than you had before you developed your health problem or had the accident?)

(Performance)

(1) In your community, how much of a problem do you actually have participating in community gatherings, festivals or other local events?

(2) Is this problem made worse, or better, by the way your community is arranged or the specially adapted tools, vehicles or whatever you use?

(3) Is your capacity to participate in community events, without assistance, more or less than what you actually do in your present surroundings?

Source: *ICF Checklist*, p.14

As you can see, the first questions focus on the respondent's capacity to do something without assistance, and in particular on the limitations in capacity that are "inherent or intrinsic features of the person themselves" (WHO, 2003, p.11) being the manifestations of a state of health. By "assistance" the WHO refers to the help of another person, or that provided by "an adapted or specially designed tool or vehicle, or any form of environmental modification to a room, home, workplace and so on" (WHO, 2003, p.11). The second set of questions focuses on the actual performance of a task or action in the person's real situation and environment and aims to elicit information about environmental barriers or facilitators. The person's will is very important, in fact the WHO specifies that "you [the interviewer] are only interested in the extent of difficulty the

respondent has in doing things, assuming that they want to do them. Not doing something is irrelevant if the person chooses not to do it" (WHO, 2003, p.11).
In sum, the ICF model measures disability by referring to four key concepts:

- health conditions: diseases, injuries, disorders;
- impairments: problems or alterations in body structure, often symptoms or signs of health conditions;
- activity limitations: difficulties in performing activities (ex. walking, eating ...);
- participation restrictions: problems with involvement in any area of life.

Disability, arising from the interaction between health conditions and contextual factors, refers to difficulties encountered in any or all three areas of functioning (impairments, activity limitations or participation restrictions). This is why the disability experience can vary greatly, even if they are related to similar health conditions. Persons with disabilities are diverse and their capabilities can be different, depending on the kind of interaction that develops between them and the environment. Many people with disabilities do not feel unhealthy and while disability correlates with disadvantage, not all people with disabilities are equally disadvantaged (WHO, 2001).

2.3 Disability studies: a new perspective

The theoretical discussion about the social model of disability contributed to the development of a new perspective in research, education and training, named disability studies. With this term we refer to a rather new cross-disciplinary type of study, born in the UK (1970s) and the US (1980s) which investigates disability as a social, cultural and political construction, rather than an individual medical issue (D'Alessio et al., 2015; Medeghini et. al, 2013). Many disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, politics, and education are involved in disability studies. A crucial aspect of disability studies is that people with disability played a central role in trying to change the way society addresses disability. They are not the target of the studies; rather, they are the leaders of them.
From the disability studies perspective, disability is not a personal tragedy, but is about the barriers and other forms of exclusion that people who differ from an established norm have to face on a daily basis (Medeghini et al., 2013). A person might have an impairment, but that does not necessarily mean that he/she is disabled. This person might be disabled because of the barriers and biases that

he/she has to face because of the way society is constructed. This is why disability, from this perspective, becomes a political concept, a banner for changing the status quo (D'Alessio, 2017).

If disability originates from barriers, it means that it is a social phenomenon and a form of social oppression and exclusion. First of all, if there are forms of exclusion, we should ask ourselves: who is excluded? From what/where? Why? The way we interpret disability is essential to the way we define problems and devise solutions. If we have a person in a wheelchair in front of us, we might react in two different ways. We might provide him/her with rehabilitation and financial assistance, or we might first address problems of accessibility, fighting against all discriminations this person suffers from. If we walk along this second way, we are looking at mechanisms that disable people who differentiate from the norm, rather than focusing on the individual deficit. This perspective doesn't negate the role of medical professionals and the valuable support they can offer, but it believes that doctors need to deal with diseases, not with other areas of disability (D'Alessio, 2017).

How do disability studies relate to the bio-psycho-social model described in the ICF? Even if they consider this model a way forward, recognising many positive aspects of it in comparison with the medical model, they believe that it is still focused on the individual deficit and on measuring the distance from a standardised norm. For example, Oliver and Barnes in their work The new politics of disablement (2012) express their positions in these terms:

"[...] despite the surge of interest in 'disability' in political and academic circles[...], the dominant meanings attached to 'disability' in most western industrial and post-industrial societies remain firmly rooted in personal tragedy theory. Although there has been a radical reappraisal of the meaning of disability by disabled activists and some academics across much of the developed world since the 1960s, disability is still widely regarded as primarily a health issue by politicians, practitioners and the general public. This is routinely reaffirmed by the activities of policy makers, professionals and mainstream scholars and researchers who in one way or another explain disability in terms of medical diagnoses of individual pathology, associated functional limitations and culturally determined deficits. These assertions are clearly reflected in official definitions of disability, such as the recent World Health Organization's (WHO) 'bio-psycho-social' model of disability, its predecessor, the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH) (WHO, 1980) and subsequent

academic debates that stress a 'relational' approach to understanding disability [...]. Crucially, such definitions and arguments become authoritative and are assumed to provide generalized explanations for the multiple deprivations associated with disablement and a justification for often routine and invasive interventions by health and social welfare professionals in disabled people's lives" (Oliver, Barnes, 2013, p.11).

The change in epistemological premises in the study of disability has a deep impact on education, teachers' training and research. Inclusive education is not about mainstreaming learners with disabilities into unmodified education systems and schools, rather it is about transforming mainstream school settings in order to allow all learners to benefit from education. The change in perspective brought forth by the social model of disability and the wider current of disability studies is to shift from looking at "what is wrong within a child" to "what is wrong within the education system". When assessing what is wrong within the education system, the role of people with disabilities should be central (D'Alessio, 2017; D'Alessio et al., 2015).

In the research field, the disability studies perspective translates into the idea of producing knowledge that can be of benefit to disadvantaged people, what is called emancipatory research. The people with disabilities are involved in the research work: research questions, methodology and goals are shared with them. As previously mentioned, people with disabilities are not the target population, because the target, in this approach, are the disabling structural barriers (D'Alessio, 2017).

APPENDIX - If you are a teacher/If you are a student …

If you are a teacher, you can use this box to plan class discussions with your students starting from a film viewing. The list of questions does not claim to be exhaustive of the many complex themes featured in the films. If you are a student, you might find these non-academic sources useful for your understanding of the topics covered in this book. The questions can be used as inputs for personal reflection.

The Elephant Man (a film by David Lynch, 1982)

Some information on the real story

Joseph Carey Merrick was born in 1862 in the UK. Within the first few years of his life it became apparent that he suffered from a rare disease. He had grown deformities on his face and body and tumours on his mouth affected his speech. After leaving home, Merrick was unable to make a living and was trapped in a miserable life, performing in shows like a clown. One day, Merrick met a surgeon named Frederick Treves who invited him to the London hospital to be examined. Thanks to Treves, Merrick was allowed to live in rooms at the London Hospital where he became a celebrity in London's high society. He stayed there until his death in 1890. Frederick Treves wrote about Merrick's case in his memoirs of 1923.

While you watch this film, try answering the following questions:

- If Joseph Merrick was born nowadays in your country, what would his life be like?
- Among all the characters surrounding The Elephant Man, to whom do you feel closest and to whom do you feel most distant? Why?
- What kind of message does this film pass down to you?

Wonder (a film by Stephen Chbosky, 2017)

While you watch this film, try answering the following questions:

- What connections can you identify between the story featured in this film and the theoretical debate about disability presented in this chapter?
- Why, in your opinion, did the movie maker decide to represent the stories of many characters who revolve around the protagonist, Auggie?

- Do you think this film is effective in featuring challenges and opportunities of school inclusion? If yes, why? If not, why?
- How did the movie maker discuss the topic of bullying in school? Do you think it was effective in representing the reality of this phenomenon, and its exclusionary power?

Chapter 3
The path towards *integrazione scolastica*

"[…] building inclusion and equity in education
is an on-going process, rather than a one-time effort"
(UNESCO, 2017, p.13)

"[…] education is where old meets new, like two seas stirring curious currents. Italian schools have cost some ministers their jobs, and put up or connived with others, yet the schools survive. They have been promised endless reforms, and actually tried to implement some. In fact, school is a perfect thumbnail sketch of the way we are. It is an example of brilliant imperfection, with peaks of excellence and abysses of inefficiency. But school has achieved one thing. It has held the nation together" (Severgnini, 2006, p.188).

The Italian journalist cited above emphasises an important aspect of the Italian education system: the function of "cultural glue" that it has played since its creation. He calls it, in fact, "the workshop where shared memories are made" (Severgnini, 2006, p.185). In this paragraph, I will briefly present the main phases in the history of our education system and explain why and how school played an important role in building a national culture.

Right after unification (1861)[7], Italy was as a fragmented country from a cultural, social and economic point of view. The **Casati Law (1859/1859)** concerning the education system in the kingdom of Piedmont was extended to the whole new State, becoming the first Italian statute on public instruction. It aimed to centralize the system in the hands of the government and to create a national

[7] For a brief but effective overview of Italian history, you can refer to *A concise history of Italy* by Christopher Duggan.

culture able to contrast the centrifugal forces of the previous states. The Law introduced 4 years of elementary school, but only the first two were mandatory and free. At the end of the fourth year, different alternative paths were available: apprenticeships to learn a "mestiere artigianale" (craftsmanship); a school to become teachers; technical schools with four different specializations (general; industrial; agriculture and land surveying); *Ginnasio* followed by *Liceo*, theoretical schools for those who aimed to continue studying and pursue highly skilled professions. University was open initially only to those who had earned their degree from a *Liceo*, then it became accessible also with some of the technical degrees.

While the Casati Law introduced two year of mandatory elementary education, it did not provide control mechanisms to ensure the enforcement of this provision, that was in fact largely unattended especially in the most economically depressed areas of the country. De Mauro (1963) reports that in 1861 about 50% of the children did not complete compulsory education and in 1871 the rate was still at least 40%. In spite of this, between 1861 and 1871 the illiteracy rate still decreased from 80% to 76%. The problem of illiteracy was more effectively tackled with the **Coppino Law (3961/1877)** obliging local administrations to monitor school attendance and sanction families who did not respect the requirements. During Giovanni Giolitti's government (1903 – 1913) many provisions were introduced to strengthen the education system and its logistical resources. In particular, **Law 487/1911** increased the *obbligo scolastico* (mandatory education) to include the whole elementary cycle. The results were encouraging: between 1911 and 1921 the illiteracy rate decreased from 37% to 27% (Cives, 1990).

The national education system, created to support the unification process from a cultural and social point of view, became then a powerful tool in the hands of the Fascist regime. During the *Ventennio*[8] a second organic reform of the Italian education system was implemented, with the **Gentile Law (Decree of the Italian Kingdom 1054/1923)**. School became mandatory until 14 years of age. After 5 years of elementary school, the system broke into four different tracks: *avviamento professionale* (professional training) that allowed no access to further studies; teachers' training allowing access only to further studies to become

[8] *Ventennio* means "twenty years". This term is frequently used to recall the Fascist regime in Italy (1922 - 1943).

teachers (*Magistero*); technical schools allowing access to universities only in the related disciplines; and *Ginnasio* and *Liceo* allowing access to university studies in all disciplines.

After WWII, with the advent of the Republic, the Constitutional chart established the founding principles of the education system that we still have nowadays in Italy. The State committed to establishing schools for all grades and branches and to offer free compulsory education for at least 8 years. During the period of the reconstruction there was an intense debate about the principles on which public education should be founded, with opposing views between creating a lay system or preserving the role of the ecclesiastical institutions, and between offering liberal education to all citizens or channeling school paths towards more theoretical or more vocational oriented studies. However, none of the radical views could prevail and the school system did not see any organic reform for more than a decade, until **Law 1859/1962** abolished *avviamento professionale* and unified middle school in a 3-year general path. The political climate of the 1960s opened the way for a new, more egalitarian concept of education and the "double track" system created by the Gentile reform was, in fact, considered a factor of social inequality. **Law 444/1968** established the *scuola materna statale*: the norm extended the national public instruction system to also include preschool education (3 – 6 years old) that became free of charge, but not compulsory.

The intense political debate and the high social conflict in the 1970s generated protests and proposals to reform the education system to make it more progressive and internationally open, but at the same time conservative forces feared change and opposed it (De Giorgi, 2010). No substantial reforms were implemented, but some important novelties were introduced to adapt schools to a changing society. For example, as a response to the higher involvement of women in the job market, with **Law 820/1971** full time elementary school was established. A few years later, **Presidential Decree 416/1974** regulated democratic participation of students, family and non teaching staff in the school management and the following **Presidential Decree 419/1974** opened the way for ground-level trials of new didactic and organizational proposals in schools. This period saw an excessive and poorly managed proliferation of school types that resulted in a policy turnaround in mid 1980s when the Ministry of Public Instruction decided that more control was necessary and introduced top down, "assisted" experimentations.

The 1990s were characterized by important reforms of the public administration in order to make it more efficient, less bureaucratic and more effective at meeting the real needs of the citizens. Many changes were introduced in the name of "decentralization" and "deregulation" and in the realm of the so called "New Public Management", an approach to running public services by using private sector management models. As far as the school system is concerned, a landmark reform was introduced with **Law 59/1997**, known as the school autonomy law. Schools were recognised as having didactical and organisational autonomy, in addition to the possibility of having their own *Piano dell'Offerta Formativa* (POF, plan of didactic offer). Educational goals and core curriculums for each subject remained a duty of the State and, after the implementation of the reform, schools are still required to comply with the government's guidelines. However, empirical research has shown that the autonomy of schools has led educational practices, and specifically inclusive practices, to be extremely heterogeneous across the territory (Ferri, 2017). In the same year, **Ministerial Decree 307** established the National System for Quality of Instruction committed to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness of educational institutions.

A few years later the **Moratti reform (Law 53/2003)** set forth a general reorganisation of the education system, putting an emphasis on effectiveness and fostering standardised assessment measures for academic performance. This reform can be seen as a response to pressures coming from the European Union and to the results of surveys emphasizing poor outcomes of the Italian education systems in comparison with other neighbouring countries.

In 2014, a new reorganisation of the Italian educational system started under the government led by Prime Minister Matteo Renzi. **Law 107/2015**, so called **La Buona Scuola** ("The Good School") aimed to improve schools' efficiency, to enhance their autonomy, to boost the overall quality of education and its level of inclusiveness (Ferri, 2017; EASNIE, 2017b). One of the priorities was to hire thousands of temporary teachers as long-term civil servants. The reform also introduced meritocratic criteria for professional advancements and salary increases, as well as mandatory work-study programs in technical institutes and *Licei* to improve the link between education and the job market.

3.1 Current structure of the Italian education system

This paragraph describes the main characteristics of today's Italian education system, focusing on primary and secondary education. In order to understand how the system works, it is very important to read the Constitution's articles[9] that set up its founding principles.

Constitution of the Italian Republic (1948), Art. 33

"The Republic guarantees the freedom of the arts and sciences, which may be freely taught.

The Republic lays down general rules for education and establishes state schools of all branches and grades. Entities and private persons have the right to establish schools and institutions of education, at no cost to the State.

The law, when setting out the rights and obligations for the non-state schools which request parity, shall ensure that these schools enjoy full liberty and offer their pupils an education and qualifications of the same standards as those afforded to pupils in state schools.

State examinations are prescribed for admission to and graduation from the various branches and grades of schools and for qualification to exercise a profession.

Higher education institutions, universities and academies, have the right to establish their own regulations within the limits laid down by the law" (Senato della Repubblica Italiana, 2012).

Constitution of the Italian Republic (1948), Art. 34

"Schools are open to everyone.

Primary education, given for at least eight years[10], is compulsory and free of tuition.

Capable and deserving pupils, including those lacking financial resources, have the right to attain the highest levels of education.

[9] The official English translation of the Italian Constitution is available on the Senate's website (www.senato.it)

[10] At the time being, education is compulsory and free for ten years (6 – 16 years old).

The Republic renders this right effective through scholarships, allowances to families and other benefits, which shall be assigned through competitive examinations" (Senato della Repubblica Italiana, 2012).

As stated in the Constitution, the Italian Government has the responsibility of establishing public schools of all branches and grades. In fact, at the time being, the management of the education system is mainly entrusted to the State, running 88.6% of all primary and secondary schools in the country. Public schools, available everywhere and at all levels, host 95% of all students enrolled (ISTAT, 2017); they are completely free for the first ten years, and charge a nominal tuition thereafter.

The Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) is responsible for general administration of schools at national level. School education is organised at a decentralised level by the MIUR through the Regional School Offices (*Uffici Scolastici Regionali*) that oversee observance of general provisions for education, monitor performance standards and the effectiveness of training. The Regional School Offices have local branches that support and advise schools on administrative procedures and planning of the educational offerings. They also monitor implementation of provisions on school buildings and safety and deal with the integration of immigrants and students with special needs, the promotion of student participation in schools and, in collaboration with municipalities, ensure compliance with compulsory education. They also carry out any activities that are delegated to them by the head of the Regional School Office.

The education system is organised as follows (Eurydice, 2014):

- pre-primary school (*scuola dell'infanzia*) between 3 and 6 years of age;
- first cycle of education lasting 8 years, made up of: primary education (*scuola primaria*), lasting 5 years, between 6 and 11 years of age; lower secondary school (*scuola secondaria di I grado*), lasting 3 years, between 11 and 14 years of age;
- second cycle of education offering two different possibilities: upper secondary school (*scuola secondaria di II grado*), lasting 5 years for students from 14 to 19 years of age, offered by Licei, technical institutes and vocational institutes; 3 and 4-year vocational training courses organised by the Regions;
- higher education offered by universities, institutes of the Higher Education in the Arts and Music system (*Alta Formazione Artistica e*

Musicale) and Higher Technical Institutes (*Istituti Tecnici Superiori*).

At the time being, formal education in school is compulsory for 10 years (6 – 16 years old). This covers the whole of the first cycle of education, which lasts 8 years (5 years of primary school and 3 years of lower secondary school), and the first 2 years of the second cycle that can be undertaken at a State upper secondary school (*Liceo*, technical institute or vocational institute), or through a vocational education and training course within the jurisdiction of the Regions. In addition, everyone in Italy has a right - duty (*diritto/dovere*) to receive training for at least 12 years within the education system or on an apprenticeship (Eurydice, 2014).

After the first cycle of education, the national education system breaks into 2 tracks: general education (*Licei*) and technical/vocational education (*Istituti Tecnici* e *Istituti Professionali*). Tertiary education is accessible only for students who have passed the State examination at the end of upper secondary school (*esame di maturità*). The specific conditions for admission are decided by the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) or by individual universities and institutes.

The focus of primary school (6 - 11 years old) is to educate young citizens. A lot of emphasis is put on the value of community, relationships, and the environment. Other important goals are: to foster students' personal development and the acquisition of basic knowledge; to develop the pupils' cognitive skills; to set the basis for ICT literacy; to develop the pupils' capacities to express themselves in Italian and foreign languages; and to set the bases for the use of scientific methods in the study of the natural world, its phenomena and laws (MIUR, 2012). The subjects taught during the 5 years of primary school are: Italian, English, history, geography, mathematics, science, technology, music, art, sports science, citizenship and Constitution, and Catholic religious education (optional) (Eurydice 2014).

As far as assessment is concerned, students do not take final examinations at the end of primary school. The periodic and final evaluation of the students in a class is the responsibility of the teachers. Evaluation focuses on the learning process, learning outcomes and behaviour and it is expressed in numbers, from 0 to 10. At the end of each term and at the end of the school year, pupils receive a personal assessment document which includes their marks in numbers and letters for each subject, as well as a report of their behaviour (Eurydice 2014).

The focus of lower secondary school (11 – 14 years old) is to develop abilities according to the pupils' attitudes and inclinations and prepare them to make the appropriate choice concerning their future studies. Other goals are: foster independent study; strengthen the students' attitude towards social interaction; provide knowledge and skills related to the cultural tradition as well as to the cultural, social and scientific evolution of contemporary society; strengthen ICT skills; and introduce the study of a second/third EU foreign language (MIUR, 2012). The subjects taught for the 3 years of lower secondary school are: Italian, English, a second foreign language, history, geography, mathematics, science, technology, music, art, sports science), citizenship and Constitution, Catholic religious education (optional) (Eurydice 2014).

The periodic and annual evaluation of pupils focuses on the learning process, their behaviour and their overall learning outcomes. These assessments should be consistent with the learning objectives established in the educational offer plan (POF) of each school. In the POF, the Teachers' Council of each school also defines the methods and criteria for assuring that pupil assessment is uniform, transparent and fair. At the end of every term and every school year, the Class Council, made up of all the teachers for a given class, assigns the final marks to each student. A mark of 6/10 corresponds to a pass. At the end of each period and at the end of the school year, pupils receive a personal assessment document, which includes their marks in numbers and letters for each subject and for conduct (Eurydice 2014).

As far as upper secondary school is concerned (14 – 19 years old), the focus depends on the type of school. There are many different *Licei* (*classico, scientifico, linguistico, artistico, musicale, scienze umane*), *Istituti Tecnici* (*tecnico commerciale, agrario*) and *Istituti Professionali* (*artigianato, commercio e industria, alberghiero*). In general, the goal of the *Licei* is to prepare for university studies, while *Istituti Tecnici* and *Istituti Professionali* offer a more practical, applied preparation.

Assessment procedures are the same as for primary and lower secondary schools. In addition, in the final assessment for each of the last three grades of upper secondary school, students may receive up to a total of 25 points, depending on their average final mark in each subject, that count as a starting mark ("school credit") for the final exam. Students may be also awarded "training credits" for any approved experience gained outside of school (arts, sports, cultural activities). Such experiences must be duly documented and be related to the

specialisation of the State examination. Training credits contribute, along with school credits, to the final score in the State examination (Eurydice, 2014).

3.2 Development of the Italian inclusive education model

The origins of the Italian inclusive education model can be traced back to the promulgation of the Constitution, whose enactment "represented a turning point in anti discrimination legislation" (D'Alessio, 2011, p.6). After a period in which the Fascist regime had denied individual freedoms, one of the most important goals of the new democratic government was to protect personal dignity and the right of minorities, as stated in Article 3 of the Constitution:

"All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions. It is the duty of the Republic to remove those obstacles of an economic or social nature which constrain the freedom and equality of citizens, thereby impeding the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organization of the country" (Senato della Repubblica Italiana, 2012).

When speaking about school, it is also important to cite Articles 34 and 38 of the Italian Constitution. The first declares that "schools are open to everyone". The second states that persons with disabilities are entitled to receive education and vocational training:

"Every citizen unable to work and without the necessary means of subsistence is entitled to welfare support. Workers have the right to be assured adequate means for their needs and necessities in the case of accidents, illness, disability, old age and involuntary unemployment. Disabled and handicapped persons are entitled to receive education and vocational training. Responsibilities under this article are entrusted to entities and institutions established by or supported by the State. Private-sector assistance may be freely provided" (Senato della Repubblica Italiana, 2012).

Although the spirit of integration was already in the Constitution, it took a couple of decades for the Italian Parliament to start passing pieces of legislation specifically aimed at creating an inclusive education system. The logic of separation, as a matter of fact, prevailed in the laws implemented until the late

1960s. Below, the most important steps in the legislative path towards *integrazione scolastica*[11] are summarised.

The **Gentile reform** (1923) described in the previous paragraphs provided for the establishment of special schools dedicated to students with disabilities. Four decades later, **Law 1859/1962** (the same provision establishing the unified middle school) in its Article 12 stated that lower secondary school students (11 – 14 year old) with disabilities could attend mainstream schools, but should be placed in special classes with "adequate forms of assistance", and that teachers would be trained specifically for this purpose. The choice to enroll a student in a special class should be made, according to the same law, by a Commission. Among the members of the Commission, there should be two doctors, one competent in neuropsychiatry and/or psychology, and one in education. In sum, until the end of the 1960s, students with disabilities were guaranteed the right to education, but they were still placed in special classes for mild and moderate disabilities and in special education institutions (*scuole speciali*) for severe disabilities.

Law **118/1971** provided all ages of students with mild and moderate disabilities the right to access mainstream compulsory education, based on their family's choice and request. Special classes and schools were maintained only for the most severe cases of disability. This law was still mainly focused on logistical issues, such as free transportation, removal of architectural barriers, and financing, and was not particularly concerned with pedagogical issues. In this context, the Italian Ministry for Public Education established a Committee, led by Senator Franca Falcucci, to advise on actions to be taken for the acceptance and integration of disabled pupils and students into mainstream schools: it was the start of a new phase in education policies. The Committee concluded its work in January 1975 and issued a very meaningful final statement representing a new conception of education, more attentive to the potential and the different ways of learning of all students:

"The possibility of establishing a school able to face the challenge of integrating students with disabilities implies the belief that even pupils with developmental or learning impairments are to be considered the protagonists of their own growth. They have, in fact, the potential to learn, to act and to build

[11] The Italian legislation has always used the term *integrazione*. Only recently it has started to speak about *inclusione*.

relationships. Fostering the development of these potentialities is a specific role of the school, if we consider that its function is to help every young person to grow from a cultural, social and civic point of view" (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 1975)[12].

A year later, **Law 360/1976** stated that blind students had the right to access mainstream compulsory education and, the following year, **Law 517/1977** extended the same right also to deaf-mute students. The same provision closed down all special classes and set out the principle that all pupils with disabilities from the age of 6 to 14 years should be included in regular classes, supported by a specialized teacher (*insegnante di sostegno*) who works in conjunction with the health system operators and the classroom teachers to elaborate an individualized educational plan. In order to facilitate integration, the law established that classes hosting a student with a disability should not exceed 20 pupils. Following this norm, the policy of *integrazione scolastica* was then implemented also in preschool (**Law 270/1982**) and in upper secondary schools (**Italian Constitutional Court Judgment 215/1987**).

Law 104/1992 (Framework Law for the Assistance, Social Integration and the Rights of Disabled Persons) is considered the milestone of *integrazione scolastica* (D'Alessio, 2011). Adopting a change of emphasis, from focusing on the individual deficit to the settings in which people live, taking into consideration societal and environmental factors, this legislation provided for a detailed description of how people with disability are to be integrated into society, encompassing all sectors: employment, social services and education. It also underlined the importance of networking among institutional bodies and schools. In particular, the principles of inclusive education are stated in Articles 12-16:

[12] Translation by the author from the original text: "La preliminare considerazione che la Commissione ha ritenuto di fare è che le possibilità di attuazione di una struttura scolastica idonea ad affrontare il problema dei ragazzi handicappati presuppone il convincimento che anche i soggetti con difficoltà di sviluppo, di apprendimento e di adattamento devono essere considerati protagonisti della propria crescita. In essi esistono, infatti, potenzialità conoscitive, operative e relazionali. Favorire lo sviluppo di queste potenzialità è un impegno peculiare della scuola, considerando che la funzione di questa è appunto quella di portare a maturazione, sotto il profilo culturale, sociale, civile, le possibilità di sviluppo di ogni bambino e di ogni giovane" (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 1975).

- inclusive education means the development of a person's potential in learning, communication, socializing and in relationships, regardless of the type of disability;
- all-day nurseries, schools, universities and any other education provider in Italy, including private institutions[13], have the obligation to accept pupils with disabilities, also those who are severely disabled;
- pupils with disabilities have the right to be supported in learning by a professional;
- in order for inclusion to become a reality, of particular importance is the broad cross-sectoral participation and cooperation of stakeholders in working groups at different levels.

A few years later came school autonomy (Law 59/1997), and the Moratti reform (Law 53/2003) described in the first paragraph. These reforms did not directly oppose the development of an inclusive education system, but created a more competitive environment which "inevitably reduced the possibilities for fostering optimal conditions for the development of inclusive principles" (D'Alessio, 2011, p.6). Moreover, they led educational practices, and specifically inclusive practices, to be extremely heterogeneous across the territory. As a response, the government issued the **Guidelines for school integration of pupils with disability (August 4, 2009)**, a landmark in the history of inclusive education in Italy from the viewpoint of both general principles and practical recommendation and directions for schools (Ianes, Cramerotti, 2013). The Guidelines reiterated and strengthened the message that integration should be a priority for the Italian education system. In this text, school is described as an institution with the responsibility of fostering "not only knowledge, but also personal growth, through the acquisition of competence and autonomy, respecting the possibilities of each individual, implementing specific interventions with constant attention to education and socialization"[14] (MIUR,

[13] The obligations concerning inclusion for "scuole paritarie" (private schools recognised by the Ministry of Education) are described in details in Law 62/2000, *Norme per la parità scolastica e disposizioni sul diritto allo studio e all'istruzione.*

[14] Translation by the author from the original text: "Una scuola non solo per sapere dunque ma anche per crescere, attraverso l'acquisizione di conoscenze, competenze, abilità, autonomia, nei margini delle capacità individuali, mediante interventi specifici da attuare sullo sfondo costante e imprescindibile dell'istruzione e della socializzazione" (MIUR, 2009, p.3).

2009, p.3). The indications provided by the Ministry aimed to ensure that "educational institutions, within their functional autonomy and organisational flexibility, set up the conditions and implement the necessary activities for all students to reach academic success[15]" (MIUR 2009, p.3). This goal requires collaboration and synergy among support teachers, curricular teachers, headmasters, regional health/social services, and families.

Law 170/2010 filled a hole in the legislation by recognising for the first time dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, and dysorthography as *disturbi specifici dell'apprendimento* (DSA)[16], important elements to be considered in the school environment in order to set the right conditions for everyone to reach their maximum potential. The general objective of this act was to provide all students with equal opportunities to successful and efficient education, in accordance with their needs and abilities, in mainstream schools, strengthening teachers' training and ensuring a collaboration among teachers, parents and experts of the health services (Ferri, 2017). Students who are diagnosed with a learning impairment can have a personalised didactic plan and benefit from academic accommodations[17] (Ianes, Cramerotti, 2013). The law also affirms the need for specialized training for teachers who have to support students with learning disabilities (Ferri, 2017).

The **December 27, 2012 *Direttiva*** and the following **March 6, 2013 *Circolare applicativa* n.8**[18] recognised forms of disadvantage not deriving from disability and/or learning impairments. Socio-economic disadvantage, for example, or "cultural disadvantage" caused by language barriers, are characteristics that could determine special educational needs. In Italian, the term for defining all categories of disadvantage is BES, *Bisogni Educativi Speciali*[19]. This recent provision was the result of the dialogue with other European member States that encouraged the Italian government to extend the notion of "inclusiveness" to a variety of different circumstances other than disability or learning impairment.

[15] Translation by the author from the original text: "[…] affinché le istituzioni scolastiche, nella loro autonomia funzionale e flessibilità organizzativa, predispongano le condizioni e realizzino le attività utili al raggiungimento del successo formativo di tutti gli alunni" (MIUR, 2009, p.3).

[16] *Disturbi specifici dell'apprendimento* means "learning impairments".

[17] For the details, see Chapter 5.

[18] Direttive and Circolari applicative are binding acts issued by government bodies.

[19] *Bisogni educativi speciali* means "special educational needs".

La Buona Scuola Reform passed in 2015 had among its goals an improvement in schools' inclusiveness (Ferri, 2017). Being a delegation law, it provided for general principles that the government must respect when adopting legislative decrees, which have the same power as ordinary laws, laying down detailed provisions. As a matter of fact, **Decree 66/2017** entitled *Norme per la promozione dell'inclusione scolastica degli studenti con disabilità* concerns different aspects of the inclusive school model, but has "a limited innovative character, being more aimed to clarify and put order in what was already provided in various and scattered existing pieces of legislation" (Ferri, 2017, pp. 11-12).

In Article 1 the Decree affirms that inclusive education is accomplished through educational and teaching strategies aimed to develop the potential of each individual. It is important to highlight the choice of the term "inclusion" rather than that of "integration" used in all the previous laws.

Article 2 states that inclusion is realised through the definition of an Individualised Educational Plan (*Piano Educativo Individualizzato*, PEI)[20]. In this respect, the Decree "locates itself in continuity with Law 104/1992, which already prescribed the adoption of the PEI as inclusion tool" (Ferri, 2017, p.12), but then clarifies that the number of hours of support assigned to each student with disability will be decided by the school headmaster only after the PEI is laid down and adopted in collaboration with the family. "The number of hours, hence, will no longer be included in the PEI itself [...]. This innovation seems clearly aimed to limit the complaints to courts and to put an end to the avalanche of judicial cases seeking the annulment of PEI in front of administrative courts because of the insufficient number of hours assigned to the student. This innovation leaves to the school greater autonomy, but also greater discretion in deciding the amount of hours of support after the PEI is adopted" (Ferri, 2017, p. 12). Another novelty introduced by Decree 66 is that the PEI has become an integral part of the Individual Project for persons with disability (Article 14 of the Framework Law 328/2000 on social services), locating inclusive education "within a broader individual strategy to ensure social inclusion and independent living for people with disabilities" (Ferri, 2017, p.12).

Article 3 states that the number of pupils with disabilities and their gender will be considered when establishing the number of non-teaching staff for each school and article 4 affirms that inclusiveness will become one of the parameters

[20] For more detailed information about the PEI and other practices, see chapter 5.

for the overall evaluation process of the quality of school institutions. Both these articles represent a very important, concrete step to make inclusiveness a priority in the agenda of school institutions.

The Decree requires all curricular teachers to receive training on inclusive education, but according to some experts "their role in enhancing inclusive education remains *de facto* marginal", being mostly ensured by the support teacher (Ferri, 2017, p.13). Article 12 lays down rules for access to educational support in kindergarten and primary school, and new requirements for support teachers in secondary schools[21].

In addition, the Decree affirms the importance of guaranteeing continuous and stable support to students with disabilities, limiting the yearly turnover of support teachers. Article 14 states that fixed-term contracts of fully qualified support teachers can be renewed by the school upon the request of the family of the disabled student, but "no systemic solutions have been adopted" (Ferri, 2017, p.13) and the most remarkable weakness of the whole reform seems to be the limited amount of funding assigned to implement its provisions.

Another important novelty is the official introduction of the ICF model to measure and classify disability in the pupil's Functioning profile (Art. 5). This will be further explained in chapter 5.

All in all, the Italian legislative path described in this paragraph shows that inclusive education requires continuous effort. Law 107/2015 and Decree 66/2017 do not conclude a process, but they can definitely contribute to increasing momentum towards inclusiveness. Moreover, while progressive legislation is an essential ingredient, it is never sufficient on its own: rather, it must be followed by the concrete development of inclusive educational practices. Chapter 5 will focus specifically on this point, describing the practical implications of the laws and the *status quo* of school inclusion practices in the Italian education system.

[21] For more detailed information about education and training required for curricular and support teachers see chapter 5.

3.3 Factors leading to *integrazione scolastica*

As mentioned in the first paragraph, school has had an important role in building a national culture. Tullio De Mauro (1963), in his work *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita*, analyses the history of Italy from a linguistic viewpoint and discusses the contribution of the education system in spreading the use of Italian when many different dialects were used throughout the territory before and after unification. According to the author, the linguistic situation of newly unified Italy was one of the many aspects that clearly represented the deep fractures developed over centuries of history among regions and social classes. In the years after unification, the Italian speaking population was about 2.5% of the total inhabitants of the Peninsula and it was not possible to learn Italian through everyday activities and relationships. The only way to learn it was to attend school and, specifically, secondary school, since in primary school dialects continued to be used by students, and even teachers, long after the unification. Secondary school was a privilege of the élites and started becoming a mass phenomenon only in the 1950s. The institutions of the newly established Kingdom of Italy, among which the schools, and later the process of industrialisation, the internal migrations, and also, to some extent, the mass emigration towards Europe and America contributed to create a cultural mix and, slowly, to spread the national language (De Mauro, 1963). Undoubtedly, the role played by the education system in these processes was crucial. Public schools put together people coming from different parts of the country and people coming from very different socioeconomic backgrounds. This is why we could say that Italian public schools were born in the name of inclusion and diversity:

"Between 1960 and 1970, Italy experienced very strong internal migration. The economic context of industrial development created veritable satellite cities, and movements from the country to the city, and from south to north, and changed the life of entire communities. Inevitably, the school system was affected by this scenario of change, as it had to face the new responsibilities created by this situation. Initially, facing the consequences that can be broadly described as the emergence of new kinds of 'learning difficulties' – here we are referring to the Italy of dialects, where a child from Calabria or Veneto would find great difficulties relocating in Turin and would experience difficulties in learning because of the unfamiliar cultural and linguistic context. The response was to

create differentiated processes and settings, in other words special classes and special schools. The large number of solutions of this kind determined a reaction in Italian schools, involving both teachers and parents, and in society: the common aim should have been to include all children, whatever their condition, in ordinary classes: this issue lies at the heart of the origins of integration in Italy (Canevaro, 2009, pp.206-207).

Going into more details concerning specifically the policy of *integrazione scolastica* in recent times, D'Alessio (2011) explains the main factors leading to it, distinguishing them into four categories: historical-political, social-economic, pedagogical and religious. In the following paragraph I will briefly explain these factors, but I will also include other elements that are deemed to have influenced the Italian path towards an inclusive education model.

Among the historical – political factors D'Alessio mentions the influence of social protests by students and workers in the late 1960s and 1970s, inspired by an ideology of justice and equity. According to the author, the lobbying of associations for people with disabilities was not a separate voice, but part of a broader social movement which saw workers and university students campaigning together for justice and democracy for all social minorities. The years in which inclusive education started being realized in Italy are also known as "The Years of Lead" because they were characterized by political conflicts between new fascist movements and radical communist forces, both fighting against the State, that needed to provide a response for this tense situation. This might have been the reason why the government gave in to many social demands such as passing welfare assistance policies, in an attempt to control opposing forces. The policy of *integrazione scolastica* can be seen as one of the outcomes of the conflicted political climate of that time.

As far as social and economic factors are concerned, in the years of post war reconstruction integration policies, according to D'Alessio (2011), were also seen as a way to promote the development of capitalism. In this view, providing education for all meant maximizing the potential of the labor force. The education system was considered a crucial tool for building social cohesion and a productive working force to boost the economic revival.

Italy has a strong pedagogical tradition and the importance of pedagogical studies was also a crucial factor that paved the way to *integrazione scolastica*. As a matter of fact, this policy was influenced by the work of important scientists and pedagogues such as Montessori and Don Milani in Italy, Dewey, Piaget, Itard

and Séguin - among others – worldwide. They contributed to the development of educational theories supporting inclusion, challenged the traditional idea of learning as a one-way transmission of knowledge and questioned the concept of "ineducability". Chapter 4 will focus specifically on the heritage of some of these important pedagogues and on their contribution to the development of an inclusive education model in Italy.

Finally, religious factors might have also had a role in the passing of the Italian inclusive legislation (D'Alessio, 2011). The Catholic Church played an important role in creating the dominant ideology of inclusion and solidarity and always sought support from educational institutions to establish its role. The Christian Democratic Party ruled the country for over 40 years and, as a result of its long alliance with the Catholic Church, "somehow the Church was incorporated by the State so that they could both maintain their hegemonic power against opposing forces" (D'Alessio, 20112, p.19).

During the same years that saw the introduction of the first norms for *integrazione scolastica*, the socio-medical movement led by the psychiatrist Franco Basaglia was campaigning to achieve the dismantling of *manicomi* (institutions housing people with mental disabilities, also known as insane asylums) and to promote de-institutionalisation as a possible way to integrate people with mental disabilities in society, instead of segregating and merely "containing[22]" them. Academic studies about the effects of "total institutions", like those by Erving Goffman in the 1970s, described insane asylums as inescapable places that encompassed the whole human being, undercutting individuality, disregarding dignity, subjecting the person to a regimented pattern of life that has little or nothing to do with his/her own desires or inclinations (Lucisano, 1982). The first studies in modern psychiatry, among which those by Vincenzo Chiarugi in Italy and Philippe Pinel in France, presented new methodologies for medical, rehabilitative and educational treatment of disability (Lucisano, 1982). The emphasis was gradually shifting from a defensive stance, aimed at protecting society from possible dangers brought by the mentally ill, towards an idea of care and rehabilitation able to respond to the patients' diverse needs. The scientific debate and the social movement had brought awareness of the violence and exclusion suffered by some minority groups, due to their repression by the rest

[22] The term *contenimento* refers to the methods used in the *manicomi*, based mainly on physical control, coercion and limits to the patient's freedom of movement.

of the society (Lucisano, 1982). **Law 180/1978**, known as the Basaglia law, provided for a profound reform of the psychiatric system in Italy. It closed down all psychiatric hospitals and led to their gradual replacement with a whole range of community-based services. The reform can be read as a clear sign of the political priorities in those years.

3.4 The "childhood issue"

The discourse for school integration developed around that of the *questione infantile* ("childhood issue") referring to the tendency to segregate children who, for different reasons, could represent an obstacle to productivity and efficiency. In an economy that was booming after a hard post war reconstruction phase, civil society was responsible for abandoning these children, and an attitude of de-responsabilisation prevailed. The practice of "institutionalisation" was, *de facto*, a practice of segregation and isolation in places the opponents came to call "factories of retards" (De Luca, Zappella, 2013, p.44), as they were thought to aggravate the conditions of children due to isolation. "School dépistages" (De Luca, Zappella, 2013, p.45) was the strategy for diagnosing behavioural issues, and/or mental illness, and/or disability in order to divert the less productive and disciplined humans to special classes or special schools. At that time, some proponents of the international academic world were starting to demonstrate the ill effects of prolonged institutional care and/or frequent changes of mother-figure during the early years of life on personality development (Bowlby, 1969). In Italy, the "childhood issue" came to the fore in the more progressive political and professional environments; it started to be considered carefully, from the viewpoint of both health and psychology, and given political and social importance. The State had been absent up to this point. This was the reason why private institutes were proliferating without control, disability being exploited for their profit. But the "childhood issue" did not only concern disability and mental illness. In 1966, Father Milani and his students started writing *Lettera a una professoressa* where they argued against a selective and rigid education system, reproducing social class divisions between the rich and the poor[23]. It wasn't

[23] For more information about *Lettera a una Professoressa*, see chapter 4.

difficult to notice that more than 30% of children in special classes belonged to the working class, while the "profoundly" disabled were a tiny minority. The protagonists of school segregation were not, in practice, the children with disabilities, but the poor ones, often the children of immigrants, victims of a classist and authoritarian school (De Luca, Zappella, 2013).

3.5 The role of civil society

"At the dawn of school integration" (De Luca, Zappella, 2013), starting from the end of the sixties, Italian civil society discovered valuable resources in a highly conflicted phase of its history: health and social services, the labor unions, the local administrations, the volunteers and, specifically, the parents' associations. Health services progressively transitioned from the common practice of individual work, where one professional used to take on the whole responsibility of diagnosing and treating disability, to a new concept of équipe work, entailing an integrated and multidisciplinary assessment, and the cooperation of different branches of science. This way, science could make a real contribution to help those in need, rather than subjugating them to the established power and social control. For their part, labor unions were crucial in organizing movements and protests for social justice and civil rights and to advocate for safety in the workplace, at a time when lack of it was still an important cause of accidents, illnesses and, consequently, disability. Regions, provinces and municipalities promoted pilot projects in their territories and contributed to spreading the word and the know-how for school integration. Bottom up initiatives from citizens advocating for civil rights became more and more organised and gave birth to associations and movements. Parents of children with disabilities started gathering to help each other in a surrounding environment of abandonment and shame, in a time when having a child with a disability was considered sort of a divine punishment. Parents' associations were created, at the beginning, especially around two issues: the treatment of severe disabilities and the future of children with disabilities after their parents' death. In this way, they played an important role in paving the way towards the idea of disability as a social construction.

Chapter 4
A long tradition of inclusiveness

"The central message is simple: every learner matters and matters equally"
(UNESCO, 2017, p.12)

"In Italy, the policy of 'integration' that has been implemented since the 1970s, is based on a welcoming culture in the common school context, and represents a particular phase, both politically and socially, of Italian history. It is based on a system of relations around the person with a disability and on the reciprocal enrichment that allows the other students to understand a different way of learning which is concerned with living together. School integration allows the students to share a new understanding of education which is underpinned by the principle that by living together all students can acquire new ways of learning and new kinds of knowledge […]. Different cultures, different systems, different interpretations help us to understand that working with diversity leads to the development of a different culture. The person with a disability can provide new knowledge for other students, increasing the quality of education in the school system. We believe that this is a point of strength, especially when we talk about the integration of people with severe disabilities, because integration is not a one-way route […]. We have often tried to point out to colleagues from other countries that our attention is not focused only on the disabled student, but it is focused also on all students" (Canevaro, 2009, pp.203 - 206).

In the previous chapter we mentioned the importance of pedagogical studies in Italy as a factor in paving the way to laws and practices for inclusive education. As a matter of fact, the Italian policy of *integrazione scolastica,*

introduced in the 1970s, was influenced by the work of important scientists and pedagogues in Italy and worldwide (D'Alessio, 2011). They contributed to the development of educational theories supporting inclusion, challenging the traditional idea of learning as a one-way transmission of notions and questioning the concept of "ineducability".
This chapter will focus specifically on the legacy of some Italian pedagogues and on their contribution to the development of an inclusive education model.

4.1 Maria Montessori

Everyone with an interest in pedagogy has read about Maria Montessori or, at least, has watched a film celebrating her "revolution" in child development and education. Less known and less discussed has been, in Italy and worldwide, Maria Montessori's strong drive towards inclusion. This paragraph aims to highlight a characteristic of Montessori's life and way of thinking that strongly influenced her career as a pedagogue and the legacy that she left to her country and to the world.
Maria Montessori was born in 1870 in Chiaravalle, near Ancona, in central Italy, to a Catholic family that highly valued education. Due to her father's work, the whole family moved to Rome when Maria was a teenager. At the age of 13, Maria decided to attend an all-boy technical school to prepare for engineering university studies, but later changed her mind and decided to enroll as a medicine student in the University of Rome. The path was difficult and full of conflict; she was the only woman studying to become a doctor, in a time when girls were expected to stay home and take care of the family. Her father was a rather conservative man who strongly believed in the traditional division of roles between males and females in society: he did not approve Maria's conduct. Luckily, she could count on her mother's emotional support and, most importantly, on her drive to have an impact on society. In the end, she earned her degree in psychiatry from La Sapienza University in 1896, becoming the first women to have completed such a challenging path in Italy. After her medical training, she began working with "defective"[24] children and in 1900 she got

[24] This term was used at the time to refer to people with mental disabilities.

involved in a research project at the Rome mental hospital *Santa Maria della Pietà*, where she dealt with both adults and children. At the time, people with mental disabilities "[..] were institutionalised in bare rooms, their food thrown at them. Dr.Montessori saw their grasping at crumbs of food on the floor as starvation not for food, but for stimulation. She studied the methods of Jean-Marc Itard, who had worked with the Wild Boy of Aveyron[25], and his student Eduard Seguin seeking methods of providing such stimulation. Seguin had developed a set of sensory stimuli for the education of retarded children, and Dr. Montessori adopted these in her work, creating what in Montessori terminology are called the Sensorial Materials" (Lillard, 2008, p.16). Through observation and experience, Maria Montessori developed a successful method of educating children with disabilities, who then passed educational tests designed for all children, "an event that aroused international attention" (Lillard, 2008, p.16). Rather than being surprised for the result obtained, Maria Montessori "[...] instead marvelled at the fact that normal children were not doing better on such tests, given their obvious advantages" (Lillard, 2008, p.16). This is why she decided to extend her educational method to all children and in 1907 she opened the *Casa dei Bambini* (Children's House) in the poor neighborhood of San Lorenzo. The following year she opened three more schools and soon after, in 1909, she wrote and published *Il Metodo della Pedagogia Scientifica applicato all'educazione infantile nelle Case dei Bambini* (The Montessori Method: Scientific Pedagogy as Applied to Child Education in the Children's Houses).

We will not analyse the Montessori method in this book, but it might be useful to mention some aspects of it in order to grasp the theoretical and practical connections with our topic, inclusive education. Maria Montessori realised, through observation, the importance of the senses (touch, movement) in education and the crucial role of direct interaction with the environment and experiential learning. She began to teach children with disabilities very simple basic tasks, for example buttoning and unbuttoning a coat, until the children were able to dress and undress themselves. Later she wrote "if children could express their inner needs, they would say 'Help me to do it alone ...'. Children who are self-sufficient, who can tie their shoes, dress or undress themselves, reflect in their joy and sense of achievement the image of human dignity, which

[25] To know more about Jean-Marc Itard and the Wild Boy of Aveyron, see the appendix of this chapter.

is derived from a sense of independence" (Asher, 2010, p.144). She then tried for higher level skills such as reading and writing, cutting out letters from a wooden board and inviting the children to pick up a letter and find where it fit on the board. Thanks to the physical manipulation of objects and letters "the first Montessori miracle happened" (Asher, 2010, p.144) and the "defective" children, at the time considered ineducable, achieved very well in the state examination.

Generally speaking, with any group of students, Maria Montessori provided the children with toys and educational materials, but did not try to teach them anything; she wanted to see what the children would do on their own. All children were allowed to manipulate cardboard and wooden letters just as she had done when she was teaching children with disabilities. With this method, pupils showed sustained interest in educational materials and immediately began putting the wooden circles, squares, and triangular shapes into the correct spaces. The environment was also different from traditional education: classroom tables, chairs and cabinets were substituted with child-size furniture. Materials were stored in cabinets low enough for children to access them and put them back when they had finished. This organisation of spaces looked as opposite to what Maria Montessori had seen in traditional classes, where "[...] the children were like butterflies mounted on pins, fastened each to the desk, spreading the useless wings of barren and meaningless knowledge which they had acquired" (Asher, 2010, p.148).

As far as teacher's role is concerned, Dr. Montessori believed that it consisted of arranging the conditions for learning, rather than filling "an empty vessel". As a matter of fact she, as other theorists such as Dewey, Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky, belonged to the school of thought referred to as constructivism, believing that children construct knowledge rather than simply "taking it in" (Lillard, 2008, p.12). She observed that the environment itself can teach the children and, for this reason, the teacher must restrain herself: all her faith must reside in the child's latent powers (Asher, 2010).

Lillard (2008) summarises the principle of Montessori education in eight points:

"(1) that movement and cognition are closely entwined, and movement can enhance thinking and learning; (2) that learning and well-being are improved when people have a sense of control over their lives; (3) that people learn better when they are interested in what they are learning; (4) that tying extrinsic rewards to an activity, like money for reading or high grades for tests, negatively impacts motivation to engage in that activity when the reward is withdrawn; (5) that

collaborative arrangements can be very conducive to learning; (6) that learning situated in meaningful contexts is often deeper and richer than learning in abstract contexts; (7) that particular forms of adult interaction are associated with more optimal child outcomes; and (8) that order in the environment is beneficial to children" (p.29).

By 1910, news of the innovative technique had spread throughout Europe and beyond, and teachers were eager to learn it. Montessori method courses attracted students from all over the world, and within a few years there were Montessori schools on five continents. In 1912 Margaret Wilson, President Wilson's daughter, created the American Montessori Association and by the following year, there were nearly 100 Montessori schools in USA. Nowadays there are more than 20,000 Montessori schools worldwide.

As a public figure, Maria Montessori campaigned for women's rights and was recognized in Italy and abroad as a leading feminist voice. With the advent of the Fascist regime in 1922, the situation around her gradually changed for the worse. While initially Mussolini supported Montessori education mainly to exploit its prestige worldwide, soon it became clear that the regime's policies were no compatible with scientific based educational theories, and the relationship rapidly deteriorated. A sharp conflict developed and, as a consequence, Maria Montessori was forced to leave Italy in 1934. She spent many years in India and then came back to Europe. She died in 1952 in the Netherlands.

After this brief overview of Maria Montessori's life, professional experience and educational methods, it should be evident why she could be considered the ideal "mother" of the Italian inclusive education model. First of all, her method was initially designed to help children with disability and succeeded in demonstrating that they were as educable as the others, in a time when nobody would have ever believed it. Her scientific approach, based on observations and on intense, constant study and dialogue with international theories and experiments, led her to understand that constructivist environments encourage ownership in the learning process for all children, including those with disabilities, and that mental disability is not merely a medical problem, but also an educational challenge.

In Montessori schools, children learned all together through direct interaction with a prepared environment. They were not divided into age groups, so as to foster collaborative arrangements and solidarity. As emphasised by the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978), the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by

independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers. The author believed that when a student is in the ZPD for a particular task, providing the appropriate assistance will give him/her the necessary "push" to achieve the task. In the Montessori method, interaction with peers is an effective way of developing skills and strategies and teachers have to set up cooperative learning exercises where less competent children develop with help from more skilled peers, within the zone of proximal development. This argument can be seen as supporting inclusive educational environments where all children are together, regardless of physical impairments or mental disabilities.

Montessori students did not receive marks and they were not motivated by any extrinsic reward, as much as by their innate desire to learn and do things correctly. The debate over evaluation methods and inclusiveness is still very intense today. As mentioned in chapter 1, for example, the supporters of the sociological approach to inclusive education stand against standardized curricula and testing, summative evaluation and hyper-selection, considered to be potential barriers and factors of exclusion. While it is not likely that education systems worldwide will dismiss marks as evaluation tools, the importance of intrinsic rewards in child education and the tension towards each individual's potential, rather than towards standardised benchmarks, is a very important principle to follow, in order to make education practices more inclusive.

Most importantly, Montessori children enjoyed the trust of their teachers who believed in them and in their potential to learn and grow. An important legacy of Montessori's work concerns, in fact, forms of adult interaction and mental attitudes that foster learning in the child and "empowerment through education" (Montessori, 1940). If the adult has "faith in the child" (Montessori, 1950), in education and in the value of experience, the child will blossom. This can be considered a pillar of education and we should not forget that Maria Montessori developed such belief and attitude when she was working with the "lost souls" (Asher, 2010), children with mental disabilities that the society of the time would have otherwise segregated and forgotten.

4.2 Father Lorenzo Milani

The work of Don Lorenzo Milani (1923–1967), a priest and educator, is considered a landmark in the Italian pedagogical tradition. In chapter 1, we discussed equity in education, a condition where "personal or social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin or family background, are not obstacles to achieving educational potential" and where "all individuals reach at least a basic minimum level of skills" (OECD, 2012). Don Milani dedicated all his life to fighting for this ideal of equity in education (De Giorgi, 2016; 2009).

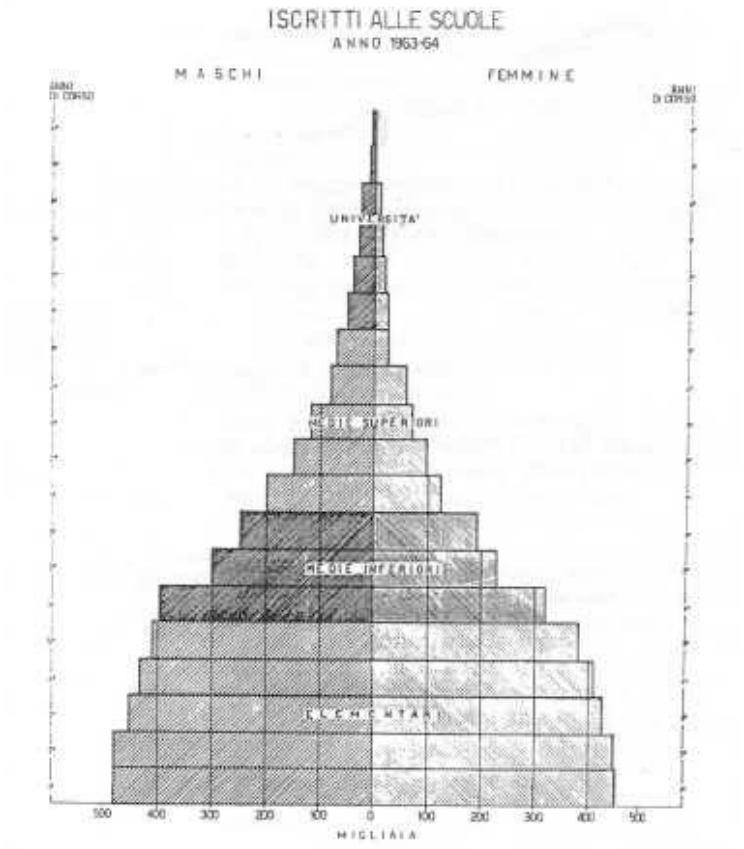
Born in 1923 to a rich and well educated bourgeois family of Florence, he studied in Milan at the Brera Art Academy. At the beginning of WWII the whole family was forced to go back to Florence, where the young Lorenzo met don Raffaello Bensi, a priest who became his spiritual guide for the rest of his life. In 1947 he was ordained a priest himself and after a few years, in 1954, he became the prior in Barbiana, a small mountain parish not far from Florence. There, as he had done in other parishes, he started organising after school activities for elementary school children and an evening school for young farmers and factory workers in the area. In 1956 he decided to commit to the secondary education of six students and established a vocational school for them in the buildings of the parish. There, he challenged traditional teaching methods by introducing new, more hands-on techniques, that could meet the requirements of under-privileged students, especially those migrating from the south of Italy or the countryside. In 1966, he and his students started writing *Lettera a una professoressa* where they argued against a selective and rigid education system, reproducing social class divisions between the rich and the poor. They wrote, and demonstrated with their own experience, that highly selective schooling not only deprived the poor of the means of expressing themselves, it also deprived the rich of "a knowledge of things as they are".

Father Milani died very young, in 1967, at the age of 44. Some of his students are still alive and actively contribute to spreading the word of their teacher, whose work can still be applied in our times.

Figure 1 and 2 reproduce some of the statistical analyses presented by Don Milani and his students in *Lettera a una professoressa*. As shown in the pyramid-shaped graph, school attendance at the time decreased sharply after primary education. The gender gap in educational attainment was wide but, most of all,

socio-economic conditions heavily impacted the possibility of receiving secondary and higher education.

Figure 1 – School attendance in 1963 – 1964

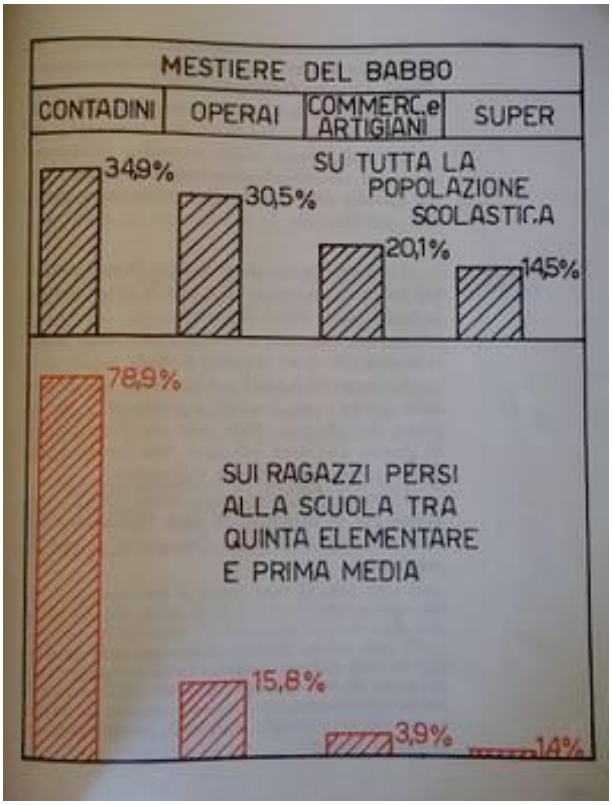


Source: *Lettera a una professoressa*

On the next page, in Figure 2 we can see different jobs and the percentage of fathers holding them: contadini (farmers), operai (factory workers), commercianti e artigiani (traders and craftsmen), and professionals (high skilled professions). At the bottom, the graph reports in red *i ragazzi persi tra la quinta elementare e la prima media*, the students lost to schooling between the fifth year of elementary school and the first year of middle school. It is immediately evident that the higher the socio-economic status of the family (expressed with a proxy, the father's job), the more likely was for a student to receive secondary

education. On the contrary, nearly 80% of the farmers' children ended their school experience after elementary school.

Figure 2 – Father's job and educational attainment



Source: *Lettera a una professoressa*

Lettera a una professoressa was translated into English in 1969[26]. Some of the most trenchant excerpts are reported here below:

"Dear Miss[27]

You won't remember me[28] or my name. You have failed so many of us.

[26] The translation by Edward Boyle is available on line at: http://www.swaraj.org.

[27] The word "Miss" generally refers to the kind of teacher the students had all known in the school system.

[28] "Me" and "I" refer to the group of students, led by Father Milani, who wrote the book.

On the other hand I have often had thoughts about you, and the other teachers, and about that institution which you call 'school' and about the boys that you fail.
You fail us right out into the fields and factories and then you forget us".

"[...] **The school for all** During the five elementary years the State offered me a second-rate education. Five classes in one room. A fifth of the schooling that was due me.
It is the same system used in America to create the differences between black and whites.
Right from the start a poorer school for the poor.
Compulsory School After the five elementary years I had the right to three more years of schooling. In fact, the Constitution says that I had the obligation to go. But there was not yet an intermediate school in Vicchio. To go to Borgo was an undertaking. The few who had tried it had spent a pile of money and then were thrown out as failures like dogs.
In any case, the teacher had told my family that it was better not to waste money on me: 'Send him into fields. He is not made for books'.
My father did not reply. He was thinking, 'If we lived in Barbiana, he would be made for books.' **Barbiana** In Barbiana all the boys were going to school. The priest's school. From early morning until dark, summer and winter. Nobody there was *not made for school*".

"[...] **The tables** Barbiana, when I arrived did not seem like a school. No teacher, no desk, no blackboard, no benches. Just big tables, around which we studied and also ate.
There was just one copy of each book. The boys would pile up around it. It was hard to notice that one of them was a bit older and was teaching.
The oldest of these teachers was sixteen. The youngest was twelve, and filled me with admiration. I made up my mind from the start that I, too, was going to teach.
The favorite Life was hard up there too. Discipline and squabbles until you didn't feel like coming back. But there a boy who had no background, who was slow or lazy, was made to feel like the favorite. He would be treated the way you teachers treat the best student in the class. It seemed as if the school was meant

just for him. Until he could be made to understand, the others would not continue.
Break There was no break. Nor even Sunday was a holiday.
None of us was bothered by it because labor would have been worse. Bur any middleclass gentleman who happened to be around would start a fuss on this question".

"[...] **Children as teachers** The next year I was a teacher; that is, three half-days a week. I taught geography, mathematics and French to the first intermediate year.
You don't need a degree to look through an atlas or explain fractions.
If I made some mistakes, that wasn't so bad. It was a relief for the boys. We would work them out together. The hours would go by quietly, without worry and without fear. You don't know how to run a class the way I do.
Politics or stinginess Then, too, I was learning so many things while I taught. For instance, that others' problems are like mine. To come out of them together is good politics. To come out alone is stinginess".

"[...] **The girls** None of the girls from town ever came to Barbiana. Perhaps because the road was so dangerous. Perhaps because of their parents' mentality. They believed that a woman can live her life with the brains of a hen. Males don't ask a woman to be intelligent.
This, too, is racialism. But on this matter we cannot blame you, the teachers. You put a higher value on your girl students than their parents do".

"[...] **Sandro and Gianni** Sandro was fifteen; five feet eight in height: a humiliated adult. His teachers had declared him an imbecile. They expected him to repeat the first intermediate year for the third time.
Gianni was fourteen. Inattentive, allergic to reading. His teachers had declared him a delinquent. They were not totally wrong, but that was no excuse for sweeping him out of their way.
Neither of them had any intention of trying yet again. They had reached the point of dropping out and getting jobs. They came over to us because we ignore your failing marks and put each person in the right year for his age.

Sandro was put in the third intermediate class and Gianni in the second. This was the first satisfaction they ever had in their unhappy school careers. Sandro will remember this forever. Gianni remembers once in a while".

"[…] Gianni could not be made to put the h on the verb 'to have'. But he knew many things about the grown up world. About jobs and family relations and the life of his towns people. Sometimes in the evening he would join his dad at the Communist Party meeting or at the town meeting.
You, with your Greeks and your Romans, had made him hate history. But we, going through the Second World War, could hold him for hours without a break. You wanted him to repeat the geography of Italy for another year. He could have left school without ever having heard of the rest of the world. You would have done him great harm. Even if he only wants to read the newspaper.
'You can't even speak properly' Sandro became enthusiastic about everything in a short time. In the morning he devoted hours to the same course he would have studied in the third intermediate year. He would take notes on the things he didn't know and at nights he would poke around in the books of the first and second intermediate years. This 'imbecile' took your exams at the June session and you had to let him pass.
With Gianni it was harder. He had come to us from your school illiterate and with a hatred of books. We tried the impossible with him. We succeeded in having him love not every subject; but at least a few. All that we needed from you teachers was to pass him into the third intermediate year and to give him lots of praise. We could have taken upon ourselves to make him love the rest.
Instead, a teacher said to him during the oral exam, 'Why do you go to private school, boy? You know that you can't even speak properly?'
We certainly do know that Gianni can't speak properly.
Let's all beat our breasts about that. But most of all, you teachers, who had thrown him out of school the year before. Fine remedies you have".

"[…] **Without distinction as to language** Besides, we should settle what correct language is. Languages are created by the poor, who then go on renewing them forever. The rich crystallize them in order to put on the spot anybody who speaks in a different way. Or in order to make him fail exams.
You say that little Pierino, daddy's boy, can write well. But of course; he speaks as you do. He is part of the firm.

On the other hand, the language spoken and written by Gianni is the one used by his father. When Gianni was a baby he used to call the radio 'rara'. And his father would correct him: 'It's not called rara, it's called aradio'.
Now, it would be a good thing for Gianni also to learn to say 'radio', if at all possible. Your own language could become a convenience in time. But meanwhile, don't throw him out of school.
'All citizens are equal without distinction as to language,' says the Constitution, having Gianni in mind".

"[…] **The hospital** This was our first contact with you. Through the boys you don't want.
We, too, soon found out how much harder it is to run a school with them around. At times the temptation to get rid of them is strong. But if we lose them, school is no longer school. It is a hospital, which tends to the healthy and rejects the sick. It becomes just a device to strengthen the existing differences to a point of no return.
And are you ready to take such a position? If not, get them back to school, insist, start from scratch all over again, even if you are called crazy.
Better to be called crazy than to be an instrument of racialism".

"[…] **The pyramid** Since the statistical tables may be hard to digest, we have put them into appendixes. Here in the text we cut them down to a human measure. To fit into a classroom that can be embraced with one loving glance.
We have decided to keep the pyramid diagram here. It is a symbol that leaves an impression on the eye.
It looks as if it is chopped out by hatchet blows. Every blow, from the elementary years up, is a creature going off to work before being equal".

"[...] **The Reforms that we propose**
1. Do not fail students.
2. Give a full-time school to children who seem stupid.
3. Give a purpose to the lazy.
The turner A turner at his lathe is not allowed to deliver only those pieces that happen to come out well. Otherwise he wouldn't make the effort to have them all turn out well.
But you, you can get rid of the pieces that you don't like whenever you wish to.

So you are happy taking care of those who are bound to be successful for reasons that lie outside the school".

"[...] **By piecework** If all of you knew that, by any means possible, you had to move every child ahead in every subject, you would sharpen up your wits to find a way for all of them to function well.
I'd have you paid by piecework. So much for each child who learns one subject. Or, even better, a fine for each child who does not learn a subject.
Then your eyes would always be on Gianni. You would search out in his inattentive stare the intelligence that God has put in him, as in all children. You would fight for the child who needs you most, neglecting the gifted one, as they do in any family.
You would wake up at night thinking about him and would try to invent new ways to teach him - ways that would fit his needs. You would go to fetch him from home if he did not show up for class.
You would never give yourself any peace, for the school that lets the Giannis drop out is not fit to be called a school" (Boyle, 1969).

Lettera a una Professoressa was published in 1967 and has great importance in the history of education in Italy because it highlighted, with much severity, its contradictions. It influenced teachers and students who, starting from 1968, criticised the school system and its inability to act as a social equaliser. In 1962, as we've seen in chapter 3, law 1859 had just abolished *avviamento professionale* and unified middle school in a 3-year general path. While education was compulsory for 8 years, the rate of students dropping out before the end of middle school was still very high and concerned mainly pupils from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. This was exactly the situation denounced by the School of Barbiana. La *scuola di classe*, in *Lettera a una professoressa*, is a school that reproduces and strengthens cultural and socioeconomic inequalities present in society, that hinders social mobility, that does not provide the means for diverse students to succeed in their education. It is, ultimately, a school that "destroys culture", depriving "the poor of the means of expressing themselves" and the rich "of the knowledge of things as they are" (Boyle, 1969). Unfortunately, many of the reflections contained in the 1967 document would still be applicable today, and not only in Italy. Referring to contemporary Italy, Domenici (2015) as a matter of fact describes a situation of variability in school results throughout

the territory, indicating lack of fairness, in addition to high dropout rates and low rates of completion of higher secondary and tertiary education. Moreover, he denounces the invisibility of differences and difficulties that, not being related to disability, tend to be considered "normal", "natural" and are, therefore, not adequately catered for. This is an unpleasant truth, in spite of the long way travelled by inclusive legislation since the writing of the Constitutional charter.

Constitution of the Italian Republic, Art. 3
All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, or personal and social conditions.
It is the duty of the Republic to remove those obstacles of an economic or social nature which constrain the freedom and equality of citizens, thereby impeding the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organisation of the country (Senato della Repubblica Italiana, 2012).

4.3 Andrea Canevaro

Born in Genova in 1939, Prof.Canevaro is considered the father of *pedagogia speciale* (special education) in Italy. His research and teaching activity has focused on the education of people with disabilities. He was among the first to emphasise the importance of responding to individual needs in a specific way, valuing each person's uniqueness. Special education was conceived, in his work, as a means to fight social exclusion. He advocated for
"[…] the passage from a concept of disability as a quantitative measurable datum in statistical terms – and therefore an element that will accompany the people throughout their lifetime – to a concept that considers adaptive operations, and therefore the necessity of thinking always in relation to a context, or better to different contexts. From this perspective, we can better understand education as a passage between the subject and his/her characteristics on the one hand and the environment on the other, with the possibility of creating mediations between the subject and the environment and mutual adaptations to reduce disabling barriers to participation. Education, therefore, can be a bridge between the subject, his/her features and needs, and the environment, helping to develop

the necessary and mutual adaptations that will reduce the situation of disability […]. We can trace this back to the mythical founder of education for the disabled people – Itard and the story of the 'savage' boy. Itard clashed with Pinel, the luminary of psychiatry in those days – at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th – a charismatic person in some ways, capable of creating an important change, the change of an epoch: that psychiatric inmates should not be chained. In spite of this open-minded vision of progress, when Pinel examined the 'savage', he considered him ineducable. His diagnosis was clear but not absolute, in that he was open to having his protege Itard develop his own hypotheses on the educability of the boy and the possibility therefore that there would be changes in both the boy and the diagnosis itself, a dynamic idea that was not common in his day. In time, it became possible that such an event could lead to greater possibilities in education – indeed, to a greater extension of the term 'education' itself. And this debate, or rather this contrast, is part of a long process that takes us from the time of the Enlightenment until today, with periods in which static diagnostic indications seem clear, times when a certain school of medicine seems to prevail, and other times when it is the educators that seem to prevail. We cannot but remember that history contains tragic events such as exterminations, that human beings have been considered 'rotten products', who must either live for a short time with no costs, or be killed. These are pages in history that should never be forgotten, and which make it even more important to embrace the prospect of *integrazione scolastica*" (Canevaro, 2010, p.209).

In 2008, due to a cerebral hemorrhage Canevaro developed a disability and affirmed that his personal experience brought him even closer to the themes that he studied and researched on for his whole life. In his approach to disability he always paid attention to the shifting border between inclusion and exclusion:

"[…] the possibility of exclusion does not need large manifestations but may be a part of normal everyday life, and it does not always need to show itself in overtly aggressive ways, but may also manifest itself through 'positive' prejudice, the possibility of extending exceptional favours to a disabled person by a somewhat selective, selected, privileged context. These reflections are even more interesting if we imagine that the law has made enormous steps forward in terms of guaranteeing an adequate body of legislation for inclusive policies and practices but does not bring about changes in attitudes and micro relations; rather these must be conquered at other levels by bringing about changes in attitudes and

convictions, and through the development of relationships and friendships based on principles of equality (Canevaro, 2010, p.212).

4.4 Other inclusive pedagogues

Maria Montessori, Don Lorenzo Milani and Andrea Canevaro are not the only pedagogues who contributed to a tradition of inclusiveness. There were many others. Some of them had an impact at a more local level and were less known internationally. However, they left a precious legacy that should not be forgotten. Extensive consideration of each of these figures is outside the scope of this book. Below is a brief overview of a select handful.

Father Roberto Sardelli is a priest and an educator. He was born in 1935 in the Ciociaria area, southern Lazio, and still lives in Rome. He belonged to a middle class family and was educated to value solidarity and compassion. Close to Don Lorenzo Milani, he was always particularly concerned about the disadvantaged. He took care of patients who were HIV+ and Roma immigrants, before committing his life to the education of poor people living in the area of *Acquedotto Felice*, a dilapidated neighbourhood in southern Rome. There, in 1968 he founded *Scuola 725* in a 9-square metres shack where he also used to live, to be closer to the people he wanted to help. The inhabitants of the shacks (*baraccati*) were mainly poor immigrants coming from the south of Italy, whose salaries were insufficient to pay a rent. Father Sardelli, like Don Lorenzo Milani, strongly believed that education could and should be a social equaliser, as well as a powerful instrument to change society. He wanted his students to be aware of the social deprivation they suffered and to do everything they could to make their voices heard. In the public schools, the *baraccati* were often marginalized and segregated in special classes, mostly because their academic results were heavily impacted by disadvantaged socioeconomic conditions. Thus, they had the worst, least motivated teachers who could not in any way exert a positive influence on them and did not make any effort to understand their living conditions. In the shacks there was no water and no electricity, hygiene was scarce and diseases would easily spread. Those who stayed behind and could not read and write at the age of 6 risked being stigmatised as "mentally retarded". Those who had the possibility of going to secondary school were often invited

by the teachers themselves to quit and find a job (Sardelli, 2013). This was the context that animated Father Sardelli's social and educational work. *Scuola 725* was a place of cultural and civic growth, where the students could read newspapers and comment on what was happening in the world. It was also a place where they could build awareness, political and ethical engagement, trust in their possibilities to create a better life for themselves and a more just society (Sardelli, 2013)[29].

Father Gerardo Lutte

Don Gerardo Lutte is another important priest-educator. He was born in Belgium, but he spent many years in Italy and taught Developmental Psychology at Sapienza University of Rome. Currently, he lives in Guatemala, where he works for and with the poor people, as he has done for his whole life.

During his years in Rome, Don Lutte had an experience in many ways similar to that of Father Sardelli. He worked in a deprived neighbourhood called Prato Rotondo, where immigrants lived in shacks because their manual jobs, mainly in the construction field, did not pay enough for rent. The battles fought by Don Lutte with the young people in the area were for basic rights, such as housing, water, electricity and hygienic living conditions. Education was, again, the means to make people aware of their oppression and of their force as a group, to transform an "agglomerate" into a "conscious proletarian community" (Tornesello, 2006, p.5)[30]. The priest, with the help of university and high school students, organised after school activities that were also a chance to raise awareness and build cohesion. His political commitment and positions weren't appreciated by the Church, which accused him of "disturbing the public order" and the "good social coexistence" (Tornesello, 2006, p.5). He responded that it was "the order of a concentration camp", a situation that "demonstrated the putrefaction of society and cried out for revenge" (Tornesello, 2006, p.5). In spite of the many attacks suffered by the Ecclesiastical order, Don Lutte is still working with street children and poor adolescents in Central America, where he founded the *Mojoca* (*MOvimiento de JÓvenes de la CAlle*), The Movement of Street

[29] The documentary *Non Tacere* (Fabio Grimaldi, 2008) narrates the events related to Scuola 725. The entire film (only in Italian) is available on Youtube.

[30] Translations (from Italian into English) by the author.

Youth that supports poor people in hygiene and health, education and instruction, jobs and housing.

Danilo Dolci (1924 – 1997) was an Italian poet, social activist and educator. He is known for his opposition to poverty, social exclusion and the mafia in Sicily, and is considered to be one of the protagonists of the non-violence movement in Italy. During his life, Danilo Dolci was always close to the disadvantaged and oppressed groups of western Sicily in order to study possible ways of change and the potential for a democratic social redemption. In this sense, Danilo Dolci considers the educational commitment a necessary element in order to create a more open and responsible civic society.

His methodological approach can be related to the concept of "critical pedagogy"[31]: rather than spreading ready-made truths, he believed that no real change can happen without the involvement and direct participation of the people concerned. The concepts of "maieutics" and "emancipation" are, in his philosophy, the means and the goal of educational work (Benelli, 2015). He strongly believed, in fact, that in Sicily the resources for change were present and should be sought in the people themselves. The story of the dam on the Jato river became famous: thanks to Dolci's social action work with fishermen and farmers of the area, they became more aware of their deprivations and fought to improve their lives. When, in 1968, the dam was finally built, barren lands became fertile, many small cooperatives and firms could be established and an important instrument of power was taken away from the local mafia that used to exercise full control over the scarce water resources.

In Partinico, a small town near Palermo, Danilo Dolci opened, in 1975, the Experimental Educational Centre of Mirto (*Centro Educativo di Mirto*). In class, he

[31] The field of critical pedagogy can be traced back to Paulo Freire's 1968 work, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The goal of critical pedagogy is emancipation from oppression through an awakening of critical consciousness. When achieved, critical consciousness encourages individuals to promote change in their world through social critique and political action.

used to put the students in a circle, read one of his poems, and then ask each of them: "What is your dream?". This question triggered a process of reflection and, slowly, created a positive climate of optimism and trust, the necessary foundations for any kind of social change.
The best known of Danilo Dolci's poems is entitled *Ciascuno cresce solo se sognato*. Difficult to translate literally, this title means that if we want to empower people, we have to dream for them. If we want a person to grow, to have better awareness and a richer life, we have to dream for that person. It is a strong message for all educators, and for society as a whole.

Ciascuno cresce solo se sognato
C'è chi insegna
guidando gli altri come cavalli
passo per passo:
forse c'è chi si sente soddisfatto
così guidato.

C'è chi insegna lodando
quanto trova di buono e divertendo:
c'è pure chi si sente soddisfatto
essendo incoraggiato.

C'è pure chi educa, senza nascondere
l'assurdo ch'è nel mondo, aperto ad ogni
sviluppo ma cercando
d'essere franco all'altro come a sé,
sognando gli altri come ora non sono:
ciascuno cresce solo se sognato.
(Danilo Dolci)

Aldo Capitini (1899 - 1968) was a political activist, philosopher and educator. Known as "the Italian Gandhi", he was one of the first in the country to embrace Mahatma Gandhi's theories of nonviolence. Capitini's nonviolent pedagogical theory, as emphasised by Catarci (2012), does not consist of the mere absence of violence. Rather, it implies struggle and commitment to transforming reality: it is a nonviolence that generates "liberation" from

exclusion, marginalisation and violence. In this perspective, peace can be constructed day by day through education. Knowledge of the world means capability and action to change it. If violence is a conservative force, education is an instrument for social change.

Capitini was born to a modest family. Thanks to a scholarship he could study at the Università Normale in Pisa, where in 1928 he graduated with a degree in Literature and Philosophy. During Fascism he incited intense anti-fascist and anti-violence cultural activity that led to his imprisonment.

From the end of World War II until his death, Capitini was involved in a number of important areas: religious, civil, social and political. Moreover, he promoted many educational activities all over the country and became the most important exponent of the nonviolence movement in Italy. In 1944 in Perugia he founded the *Centro di Orientamento Sociale* for adult education, where he held free discussions about local issues, and also debates on national and international political events. His first experiment was successful and the model spread to other Italian cities. In these centres, participation and democracy were exercised by expressing one's thoughts and listening to others' opinions. Meanwhile, Capitini visited other education centres in Italy, like the *Scuola di Barbiana* and the *Centro Educativo di Mirto*, creating meaningful relationships with Don Lorenzo Milani, Danilo Dolci and other pedagogues and political activists of the time.

From his dialogue with Don Lorenzo Milani, Capitini came up with another educational project called *Giornale Scuola*, a newspaper that was published in four editions between 1960 and 1961, and that had the purpose of commenting on the news by analysing words, explaining their meaning and their political content. As an example, the word "illiterate" has a political content when one explains why people are illiterate, revealing the inequalities that are behind educational poverty (Catarci, 2012).

On September 24th, 1961, Aldo Capitini organised the March for Peace and Brotherhood, 24 kilometres between Perugia and Assisi carrying, for the first time in Italy, the peace flag with the colors of the rainbow. The innovative message of the March was the awareness that social and international conflict prevention and mediation is not only a responsibility of the institutions, States or political parties, but also of the citizens, who have to organise themselves to demonstrate their position (Catarci, 2012).

APPENDIX - If you are a teacher/If you are a student …

If you are a teacher, you can use this box to plan class discussions with your students starting from a film viewing. The list of questions does not claim to be exhaustive of the many complex themes featured in the films. If you are a student, you might find these non-academic sources useful for your understanding of the topics covered in this book. The questions can be used as inputs for personal reflection.

The Wild Child (original title: *L'Enfant Sauvage*)

The Wild Child is a 1970 French film by director François Truffaut. It features a true story that happened in the south of France in 1798. You can easily buy this film online, in its original language (French) with English subtitles.

Some information on the true story

On a summer day in 1798, a naked teenager boy was found in a forest in the rural area of Aveyron in southern France. After being hunted like a wild animal, the child was captured and brought to the nearby town. Unable to speak or understand any language, the child had apparently grown up in solitude in the forest since an early age. He was brought to Paris and initially placed in a school for deaf-mutes. Dr. Jean Marc Gaspard Itard observed the boy and believed that he was neither deaf nor, as some of his colleagues said, an "idiot". Itard thought, instead, that the boy's behaviour was a result of his deprived environment, and that he could actually be educated. He insisted on personally taking on this responsibility. Itard, with the help of his student Édouard Séguin, monitored and documented the daily progress and difficulties of the child, informing the scientific community about the experiment and its results. His work and writings inspired many pedagogues of the time, among whom was Maria Montessori.

While you watch the film, try answering the following questions:

- The film begins with sounds only from nature—there is no speech for some time. Why do you think Truffaut made that decision?
- There are two doctors in the film: Pinel (the psychiatrist at the Institute) and Itard (the young doctor who takes Victor home). What are the differences in their approach to Victor? In what ways do their ideas differ radically?

- Why does Dr.Itard pay so much attention to Victor's "sensorial" perceptions?
- What does *lait* mean? And why does Itard feel such a sense of satisfaction in getting Victor to articulate it? Why is he disappointed in the end?
- Victor was found towards the end of the 18th century. What does Victor's story, as presented by Truffaut, suggest about the Enlightenment, the period in which he lived?
- In his writings about Victor, Dr. Itard said "Man is only what he is made". Apply this statement to the film. Does it fit? Explain.
- What does Itard mean by saying, in his writings, that he is "indebted to the works of Locke and Condillac"?
- Why in the end is the story of the Wild Child very important for discussing the development of inclusive education?

Chapter 5
Inclusive education: the Italian model

"If a child can't learn the way we teach,
maybe we should teach the way they learn"
(Ignacio Estrada)

In chapter 3, we had an overview of the legislation on inclusive education, starting from the 1970s up to the current day. We said that, as a result of the legislative path towards school inclusion, today in Italy nurseries, schools, universities and any other education institution, including private ones, have an obligation to accept pupils with disabilities. Moreover, all children with a certification of disability have the right to be supported in learning by a professional. Here, we can recall **Law 517/1977** that closed down all special classes and established the principle that all disabled pupils could be included in mainstream schools, supported by a specialised support teacher (***insegnante di sostegno***).

5.1 The role of *insegnante di sostegno*

Article 7 of Law 517/1977 stated that, in order to facilitate the concrete realization of the right to study and the full development of the pupils' personhood, educational planning could include school integration activities, some of which would be interdisciplinary, organized for groups of students of the same or of different classes, and initiatives aimed to offer individualised support, based on the needs of individual students. In this context, the law foresaw forms of integration and support in favour of students with disabilities,

to be realised through the requested use of qualified permanent or temporary middle school teachers[32]. It also established that classes hosting a student with a disability could not have more than 20 pupils. Then, the **Framework Law 104/92**, reiterating the importance of the *insegnante di sostegno* for the policy of *integrazione scolastica*, affirmed the principle of *contitolarità* (co-ownership) of the class, meaning that curricular teachers and specialised support teachers share the responsibility of educational and didactic planning and participation in school, class and teachers' councils[33].

From an in depth analysis of the norms, one can deduce the following:

- all teachers, curricular and specialised, must be able to respond to students' educational needs, with specific interventions based on the personal conditions of each individual;
- all teachers, curricular and specialised, must participate in the educational and didactic planning and in the evaluation of all students;
- the specialised support teacher has the same tasks as a curricular teacher, but with specific functions;
- the specialised support teacher received specific training for the realisation of integration projects, in which all teachers participate, aimed at developing the potential of all students;
- the specialised support teacher has the responsibility, together with the student's family and the health care workers, of assembling and verifying all documents necessary for the student's school integration process.

[32] Translation by the author from Italian: "Al fine di agevolare l'attuazione del diritto allo studio e la piena formazione della personalità degli alunni, la programmazione educativa può comprendere attività scolastiche di integrazione anche a carattere interdisciplinare, organizzate per gruppi di alunni della stessa classe o di classi diverse, ed iniziative di sostegno, anche allo scopo di realizzare interventi individualizzati in relazione alle esigenze dei singoli alunni. Nell'ambito della programmazione di cui al precedente comma sono previste forme di integrazione e di sostegno a favore degli alunni portatori di handicaps da realizzare mediante la utilizzazione dei docenti, di ruolo o incaricati a tempo indeterminato, in servizio nella scuola media e in possesso di particolari titoli di specializzazione, che ne facciano richiesta".

[33] Translation by the author from Italian: "Gli insegnanti di sostegno assumono la contitolarità delle sezioni e delle classi in cui operano, partecipano alla programmazione educativa e didattica e alla elaborazione e verifica delle attività di competenza dei consigli di interclasse, dei consigli di classe e dei collegi dei docenti".

We can therefore affirm that the support teacher's role consists of helping the *alunno con sostegno* (student with disability) in his didactic and socialisation process, but also of facilitating the dialogue between the student with disability and the curricular teachers, and between the student with disability and the rest of the class. In sum, the support teacher has the crucial role of building a network able to connect all the elements of a group, valuing all participants' diverse characteristics and making sure that nobody feels excluded or neglected. It is important to emphasise the fact that the *insegnante di sostegno* has co-ownership of the class with the regular teachers. He/she is not assigned to a single student, as is widely believed. While the support teacher is given to a class depending on the presence of at least one student with a certified disability, this norm doesn't mean that he/she is assigned only to that specific student. Rather, the *insegnante di sostegno* should be able to connect needs and resources, using resources available within the whole school community (Vianello, Di Nuovo, 2015). The support teachers are supposed to work in conjunction with the health care workers and the classroom teachers to design an individualized educational plan for each pupil who has a certification of disability issued by the local public health office.

5.2 Other individual and collegial roles

The support teacher is a crucial component of the school staff and he/she contributes meaningfully to the creation of a positive environment and climate for inclusion. However, there are four other important roles to be mentioned:

- the *coordinatore dell'inclusione* (coordinator of inclusion) oversees all inclusion processes in the school environment. He/she plans in advance all necessary adjustments to welcome and effectively include pupils with disabilities. He/she is responsible for the communication with families before and during the school year and for the collaboration and sharing of information among all support and curricular teachers. Finally, the coordinator for inclusion supports the school principal in the study and interpretation of norms and directives concerning inclusion and in all formal steps to request human and financial resources;
- the *assistente specialistico* (specialised assistant), or *assistente educativo culturale*, is assigned to a student, or to more than one student with a disability, depending on their needs, and has the responsibility of helping in the

practical everyday life and socialisation activities, removing the obstacles that the student faces due to his/her impairments and working towards his/her autonomy and independence;

- the *assistente di base* (paraprofessional) is assigned to students who are not self sufficient and is in charge of all their physical needs, such as ensuring that the student can move inside the school buildings, helping him/her to use the bathroom, to eat, etc.
- the *assistente alla comunicazione* (communication assistant) might be assigned, for example, to a deaf student or to a blind student and in these cases he/she will need to know sign language or the Braille system in order to be of help.

Every year, the school principal, based on the number of students with disabilities enrolled, and on the number of hours of support needed, sends a request to the Regional School Office[34] in order to have the necessary human and financial resources.

During the school year, the situation of each single student with a certified disability is examined and updated in periodic group meetings called GLHO (*Gruppo Lavoro Handicap Operativo*), where the school professionals dialogue with parents, health care professionals and social workers to have a complete view of the progress and difficulties encountered by the student, from different points of view.

At the single school's level, another group called GLI (*Gruppo Lavoro Inclusione*), composed of curricular teachers, support teachers and the coordinator for inclusion, members of the administration staff, and specialists of the local health care office, oversees all inclusion practices in the school regarding students with disabilities, DSA and BES[35], and is responsible for drafting the annual *Piano per l'Inclusione* – PAI (Annual plan for inclusion), which at the end of every school year "photographs" the state of inclusion needs, the available resources, the activities implemented, their costs and results, and the planning for the following school year.

Decree 66/2017 established other two other consultative organs at the regional and local level. The *Gruppo di lavoro Interistituzionale Regionale - GLIR* (Inter-institutional Regional Working Group) operating within the Regional School Office, which coordinates and supports the *Gruppi per l'inclusione territoriale* – GIT

[34] For a description of the role of the Regional School Offices, see chapter 3.

[35] For the meaning of DSA and BES, see paragraph 5.4.

(Territorial groups for inclusion) at the local level. In both cases, the public administration avails itself of the collaboration of the most representative disabled people's associations on the territory in order to better understand the diverse needs and perspectives. This is an interesting novelty introduced by the recent reforms.

5.3 Education and training for support teachers and other figures

After the approval of the 2017 Decrees for the implementation of the reform La Buona Scuola (**Law 107/2015**), the path to become a specialized support teacher in lower or upper secondary school entails three steps: a university master's degree (3 years then 2 years), a *concorso* (national public examination) and a 3 year training (FIT*: formazione iniziale e tirocinio*)[36]. In order to qualify for the public examination, all university graduates have to earn 24 credits in education, pedagogy, psychology and anthropology. The public examination has a common part for all aspiring teachers, and a specific part for those aspiring to become support teachers. The same is true for the FIT traineeship that also entails experience in the field, as an assistant curricular teacher or support teacher.
As far as primary school is concerned, the first step is the same for all teachers: a 5-year university degree in primary education (*Scienze della formazione primaria*). Then, in order to become support teachers, it is necessary to add 60 credits in inclusive pedagogy and 300 hours of traineeship.
The coordinator for inclusion is usually an experienced support or curricular teacher with excellent organisational and relation skills and a specific preparation on inclusion. There isn't a formal requirement for this role, apart from being a tenured teacher. The coordinator of inclusion is appointed by the school principal. Depending on the size of the school and on the numbers of students with disability, he/she might be exempted from teaching in order to dedicate themselves full time to coordinating inclusion processes and activities.
There aren't formal requirements for becoming specialised assistants and communication assistants, although schools tend to externalize selection processes to social cooperatives that hire based on education and training

[36] *Formazione iniziale e tirocinio* means initial training and internship.

credentials. For communication assistants, knowledge of the LIS (Italian sign language) and of Braille might be necessary for certain positions.
Finally, the *assistenti di base* are usually school janitors who have received training to deliver this type of assistance, or people with qualification as *Operatore Socio Sanitario* (paraprofessionals).

5.4 Categories of special educational needs (SEN)

In Italian schools there are three different categories for students with special needs:

- *alunno con sostegno* is the student whose parents formally requested a certification and, consequently, a support teacher. The request is based on a medical diagnosis of mental or physical disability. This is the only case, under the legislation in force, in which a support teacher can be requested;
- *alunno* DSA, standing for *disturbi specifici dell'apprendimento* is the student with learning impairments such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, and dysorthography (formally recognised by **Law 170/2010**). A slightly lower level of formality is required to have this type of recognition[37], but there always needs to be a request by the family and a medical certification;
- *alunno* BES, standing for *bisogni educativi speciali* (special educational needs). This term refers to formally recognised[38] forms of disadvantage not deriving from disability and/or learning impairments. In this case, there is no role played by the family in requesting additional support, and no medical certification, but the decision is made by the school, based on linguistic, socio-economic and/or behavioral difficulties. In fact, BES students may have different kinds of disadvantage. Socio-economic disadvantage, for example, or cultural disadvantage caused by language barriers, are characteristics that could determine special educational needs.

[37] While the certification of disability can be issued solely by the local public health office (ASL), the certification for DSA can be issued by any local health centre/medical professional accredited by the ASL.
[38] BES are regulated by the December 27, 2012 *Direttiva* and by the *Circolare applicativa* 8/2013 (see chapter 3).

5.5 Didactic implications

As stated above, only when a pupil possesses a statement of disability can he/she be assigned an *insegnante di sostegno* for a number or hours per week decided by the school and based on funding allocated by the Ministry of Education. In different situations, students who are certified as DSA or recognized by the school as BES are the responsibility of all teachers, together with the *insegnante di sostegno*, if present in the class.

As far as didactic organization is concerned, *alunni con sostegno* are assigned a specific *Piano Educativo Individualizzato* - PEI (Individualised Educational Plan), a very detailed document containing medical information, results of behavioral observations and pedagogical reflections/guidelines (Ianes, Cramerotti, 2013). In most cases, a PEI is structured as follows.

In the first page, one can usually find the name of the student, the class to which he/she is assigned, along with the schedule, and the names of the professionals involved: support teacher(s), specialised assistant(s), communication assistant(s), parents or guardians, health care professionals, and other figures working in and outside the school, if applicable[39]. The meetings organized to draft the PEI and the people who contributed to it should also be indicated.

Then, the type of PEI should be specified. In fact, for the *alunni con sostegno*, there can be three different types of PEI depending on the student's abilities: *programmazione di classe* (class planning) when the student follows the same syllabus as the other students in the class; *programmazione semplificata* (simplified planning) when minimum requirements are established for each discipline; and *programmazione differenziata* (differentiated planning) when the school drafts a syllabus *ad hoc* for the student, based on his/her needs and abilities.

Concerning the class, the PEI usually specifies the total number of students, the number of students with certified disability, DSA and BES and describes the characteristics of the group in terms of academic achievement, but also attitude and openness towards diversity and inclusion.

The PEI also contains the summary of the *Profilo di funzionamento* (Functioning profile) that, according to Decree 66/2017 (Art. 5) substitutes two very important documents concerning the student: the *Diagnosi funzionale* (functional

[39] For example, if the student has private therapists working with him after school, their names and contact should be available.

diagnosis) and the *Profilo dinamico funzionale* (dynamic functional profile)[40]. The *Profilo di funzionamento*, in compliance with law 104/92 and with Decree 66/2017, is the analytical description of the disabled person's impairment(s) and abilities, as diagnosed at the local health unit using ICF to measure and classify disability and functioning. The *Profilo di funzionamento* is drafted, according to Decree 66/2017 (Art. 5, clause 3), by a multidisciplinary evaluation unit composed of medical professionals, social workers and therapists.

Another set of background information contained in the PEI is the student's possible dependence on aids (ex. wheelchair) or his/her need to use dedicated areas of the school buildings (ex. bathroom for people with disabilities), the regular administration of medicines and physical rehabilitation activities during or after school hours.

After this informative section, the PEI contains observations and comments by the professionals involved. For example, a very important area of information concerns the *comportamenti problema* (problematic behaviours) observed during school hours and coping strategies, which can be reactive or proactive.

The bulk of a PEI consists of observations made by all professionals involved, and goals to be achieved, in the different areas of the student's development: neuropsychological (ex. ability to orient attention towards stimuli), physical and practical (ex. ability to practice a sport), social (ex. ability to collaborate to obtain common results), autonomy (ex. ability to use money for small purchases), emotional/affective (ex. ability to recognise positive and negative emotions), communication and language (ex. ability to understand information), cognitive (ex. ability to compose a sentence correctly). According to this information, the PEI articulates educational and didactic goals, didactic strategies, and didactic planning, indicating which activities can be done individually, with a peer, or in small or large groups.

The PEI is drafted by a group of curricular teachers, support teachers, and specialized assistants, with the involvement and support of the student's parents, before the beginning of the year, but during the first GLH meeting it is examined together with medical professionals and might be revised according to

[40] *Diagnosi Funzionale* and *Profilo Dinamico funzionale*, which used to be two separate documents, are now unified in one document after the approval of Decree 66/2017. The new norm doesn't change these documents substantially. The only important change is the official use of ICF as the tool to "measure" disability and functioning.

the observations and results obtained during the first weeks of school attendance. The revised version is then approved by the group and becomes the official document to monitor the student's development. In sum, it describes the student's physical, psychological, social and emotional characteristics, his/her learning difficulties as a consequence of the health conditions, the possibility of recovering and filling in the gaps, and the possessed capabilities that need to be sustained, stimulated and progressively strengthened. In sum, it crystallizes the situation and the steps to be reached in the short term (6 months) and in the long term (2 years), and it is constantly updated to track any developments that happened during the school year.

Students who don't have a certified disability, but are recognised as DSA or BES have a *Piano Didattico Personalizzato* - PDP (Personalized Didactic Plan), a sort of contract between the family and the school, regulating expected behaviors to reach educational goals. The informative area of the PDP is similar to that of the PEI. The document, constantly updated according to the progress and/or difficulties observed, contains all observations made by the school staff about cognitive and behavioural characteristics of the student. In many cases, it is necessary to determine academic accommodations (*misure compensative* and/or *misure dispensative*)[41]. The school staff and the family agree on a set of measures for the student and on evaluation methods to be used.

5.6 Does mainstreaming work?

As described in chapters 3 and 4, Italy made a political and ideological choice when deciding to educate all children together in mainstream schools. This choice was made long before other European and non European countries even started thinking about inclusive education. Was there any scientific evidence that educating all children together would produce positive results? Do we have such evidence now? While in the 1970s there was little research on the topic, now we can refer to several national and international scientific contributions to justify

[41] *Misure compensative* are tools used to compensate for specific difficulties or simply to enhance learning, such as software, visual aids, multimedia resources etc. *Misure dispensative* are adjustments to the workloads or the standard rules, such as fewer or shorter readings required, extra time for tests allowed etc.

the choice made more than 40 years ago. Italy has been identified worldwide as an example of effective realisation of inclusive education. Many best practices have been documented and yet, empirical research on this topic appears to still be insufficient to give educators and policy makers solid methodological guidelines (Cottini, 2017). Vianello and Di Nuovo (2015), and Cottini (2017), present an overview of the most important research projects carried on in the field of inclusive education, in Italy and worldwide. In this paragraph I will try to summarise their themes, goals and results.

The first area of research investigates the opinions of different stakeholders about including all students in mainstream schools. Vianello (1990), Castellini, Mega and Vianello (1995), Vianello and Mognato (2000), Vianello, Mognato and Moalli (2000), Cornoldi, Terreni, Scruggs and Mastropieri (1998), Balboni and Pietrabissi (2000) and others investigated the opinions of teachers. The results of their studies are similar. In sum, the main findings of these studies are as follows:

- the length of a teacher's experience is a crucial factor. The longer the experience, the fewer problems he/she reports when dealing with students with disabilities;
- the type of disability impacts on teachers' attitude. Physical disabilities are considered less problematic than mental disabilities;
- disabilities that are better known (such as Down Syndrome) are generally considered less problematic than others;
- teachers' attention is directed mostly towards behavioural aspects. In absence of behavioural issues, teachers' attitudes are more positive;
- support teachers have, in general, better attitudes towards disability than curricular teachers;
- infant and primary school teachers have, in general, better attitudes towards disability than the others;
- teachers tend to have a better attitude the more hours they spend with students with disability. Knowing each other well is a crucial factor;
- Italian teachers have, in general, better attitudes than teachers from other countries towards inclusion of students with disabilities;
- teachers tend to believe that including students with disability in mainstream schools and classes has a positive impact on them and on the other students, but at the same time they think that more training and financial resources are necessary in order to implement inclusion policies effectively.

Several studies investigate the opinions of peers (Brunati and Soresi, 1990; Bak and Siperstein, 1987; Vianello, 1990; Vianello and Moalli, 2001; Diamond, Le Furgy, Blass, 1992) and come to similar conclusions:

- younger children have less resistance towards peers with disabilities than older children and adults;
- direct interaction and familiarity favour acceptance;
- it is possible to modify attitudes through training aimed to help children understand similarities;
- students with disability have a lower sociometric status[42] than the other students, but frequent and constant interaction with them improves peers' attitude;
- peers tend to be more available to help or defend students with disabilities, but less prone to study or do homework together;
- the longer the time spent together, the better are the attitudes of peers towards students with disabilities.

As far as parents are concerned, according to Vianello and Di Nuovo (2015) in the 1970s around 60% of the Italian population was already favourable to inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream classes. Several studies analyse parents' attitudes (Mantovani, 1978; Balboni and Pietrabissi, 2000; Bertoni, 2001; Moalli et al., 2006). The findings emphasise how having direct experience positively influence parents' attitudes. For example, parents whose child is in class with a student with disabilities develop a better attitude towards disability. In general, parents of students with disabilities believe that inclusive education favors their child's cognitive and personality development. They also believe that classmates are not "damaged" by the presence of a student with disability, but rather that they can benefit especially in terms of understanding differences. This is why parents believe that, in general, having inclusive schools is better than having regular and special schools as separate environments.

A second group of research projects investigates the state of the art of school integration (Cottini, 2017). A study concerning students with Down Syndrome specifically (Gherardini, Nocera, 2000) asserts that the "misuse" of the support teacher as a marginalising factor has been overcome, since in schools the support teacher now mainly works in class and in collaboration with curricular teachers.

[42] Sociometric status is a measurement that reflects the degree to which someone is liked or disliked by their peers.

However, there isn't full agreement in the answers given by support teachers and curricular teachers to the questions concerning collaboration among the two figures. Moreover, the collaboration in didactic planning seems to be still underutilised (Cottini, 2017). Another study (Canevaro, D'Alonzo, Ianes, 2009) summarizes the state of the art of school integration in Italy over thirty years (1977 – 2007). A questionnaire was administered to 1,877 people with disabilities and/or their families asking to express a degree of appreciation for different aspects of the school experience. The results show that students' attendance and parents satisfaction has been increasing constantly, but there has been a decrease in the percentage of time spent in class, with "mixed" situations reported in which the student with a disability spends part of his/her time in a separate environment. However, one has to consider that, while 40 years ago students with severe disabilities were still rare in regular schools, today mainstreaming is the norm, regardless of the gravity of one's disability. The decrease in time spent in class might be reflecting this change. Finally, the study describes the situation after completion of school as very problematic: almost half of the students in the sample (42%) ended up in daily centers, 23% simply stay home, 22% declared that they performed some unspecified work activities and only 16% work either in businesses or social cooperatives.

After giving an overview of research findings about opinions and about the state of art of school integration, the question that comes to mind is if there is evidence of real benefits obtained by including everyone in mainstream classes. Yes, there is evidence in many scientific surveys. However, we have to be cautious in the way we understand and present the results of research projects. Generally speaking, it is nearly impossible to implement, in this field, experimental research designs leading to identifying causality between variables. Given that we deal with people and with school environments that are made of groups of people interacting with each other, we will never be able to establish causality. If we did talk about causality, we would make the serious mistake of not considering all possible background factors and their effects, on which we have no control. Therefore, we aren't able to say that including a child with Down Syndrome in mainstream school automatically leads to better cognitive and social skills. Conversely, we can develop correlational studies in which we search for links between variables. We might be able to say, for example, that there is a statistically significant correlation between including a student with Down Syndrome in mainstream class and his/her academic and social

achievements. This is what Vianello (2008; 2012) and Vianello and Lanfranchi (2009; 2011; 2015) did, demonstrating a correlation between inclusive educational settings and better school performance, social development and social acceptance for students with Down Syndrome. The authors compared the intelligence level of people with Down Syndrome who were institutionalized in 1970-80s in the US, with that of people with the same syndrome attending mainstream schools in Italy in 2010s. Conscious of the possible effects of time (40 years of difference) and country (US and Italy), by correlating different sets of data they come to argue that being in mainstream school might be the most important factor to explain why the first group of people did not reach the mental age of 4 years, while the second group reached a mental age of 5 and 1/2 – 6 years. The authors theorise a "surplus effect": a situation in which school and social achievements are higher than expected given the intelligence level. This surplus effect, according to them, would be higher in pupils who study in inclusive classes, while separation would negatively impact cognitive and social development, producing a "deficit" (academic and social achievement lower than expected based on the intelligence level) (Vianello, Lanfranchi, 2015).

In general, from this and other scientific contributions, we can affirm that school results of pupils with disability are better, or in certain cases the same, of their peers in segregated classes, but social development and social acceptance are, in all cases, better for pupils in mainstream schools who can have more interactions and friendships, besides benefiting from increased self confidence (Vianello, Di Nuovo, 2015). As far as classmates are concerned, we can now affirm, based on the results of research, that academic achievement is not negatively affected by the presence of students with disabilities in the class (McDonnel et al., 2003). Some works have reported better school achievements also for classmates (Cottini, 2017; Cole et al., 2004). Everyone agrees with the fact that studying in a diverse environment has positive results on the students' ability to understand and value differences (Vianello, Di Nuovo, 2015).

5.7 What kind of "inclusive classes" are really inclusive?

There is, at this point, much concrete evidence showing that the steps taken so far in Italy to realise inclusion in education have reached meaningful results. Currently, 98% of students with disabilities attend mainstream schools in our

country (Ianes, 2015). The Italian National Bureau of Statistics (ISTAT) runs a yearly survey entitled *L'integrazione degli alunni con disabilità nelle scuole primarie e secondarie di primo grado* (The integration of students with disabilities in primary and lower secondary schools). In the academic year 2015 – 2016, the survey reports that the number of students with disabilities in primary schools was 88,281, equal to 3% of the students enrolled, and 67,690 in middle school, 4% of the students enrolled. In primary school, 8% of the pupils with disabilities were not independent in moving, eating or going to the bathroom. In middle school this group account for the 6% of the total school population (ISTAT, 2017b).
All over the country in the academic year 2015/2016, there were more than 82,000 support teachers, in average one for every two students with a disability. When asked how they spent their time with the students, more than 80% of them said they mainly worked on didactic activities, while 15% of them said they mainly worked on mediation activities, in order to prevent problematic behaviours or in reaction to them. A residual percentage of support teachers (3%) reported that they mainly offered basic assistance, in absence of dedicated figures (ISTAT, 2017b).

This data gives an overview of the numbers. But what happens every day in classrooms? It is very important to observe daily life in Italian schools in order to assess whether students with disabilities actually spend most of their time in class. And, even when they do spend most of their time in class, we should ask ourselves if the idea of "individualised" didactic planning corresponds to reality, or should we rather talk about "individual" planning. Ianes (2015) describes "push and pull mechanisms" that might determine exclusion processes. In the first case, the student with a disability is pushed out from his class because, for example, the teaching style is not suitable for him/her and not conducive to learning. In the second case, the student is pulled out from his class due, for example, to the presence of a classroom for students with disability, adequately furnished for them (*aula di sostegno*). Even when the students is physically in class, some authors talk about "micro-exclusions", because being there doesn't necessarily mean participating in the group activities (D'Alessio et al., 2015; D'Alessio, 2011). An example of micro-exclusion is when the didactic planning for the whole class and that for the student with a disability are not in any way connected. Another example is when students take the standardized tests for the INVALSI (National Institute for the Evaluation of Schools) and the students with disabilities are excluded, or their tests are simply not sent back to the

institution (Zanobini, 2013; D'Alessio, 2011). Finally, the presence of the support teacher can be a factor of micro-exclusion, if the perception is that of a one-to-one relationship and not that of having an additional resource for the whole class (Ianes, 2006). Incorrect practices and habits might accentuate this perception: for example, some demonstrated that, in many cases, drafting the PEI ends up being the responsibility of the support teacher alone and not, as it should be, of a group of people with different roles (Gherardini, Nocera, 2000; Canevaro et al. 2011).

The previously cited ISTAT annual survey can be of help in assessing the amount of time actually spent in class. In the academic year 2015 – 2016, students with disabilities spent the majority of their time in class: in average, 24.9 hours/week in primary school and 22.5 hours/week in middle school[43]. They also worked outside the class for a residual number of hours: 3.5 per week in primary school and 4.1 in middle school. However, for students having problems with autonomy (moving, eating and going to the bathroom), the number of hours outside the class decreased drastically: 9.9 hours/week in primary school and 12.1 in middle school (ISTAT, 2017b).

As far as field trips are concerned, the survey reports good participation of students with disability in daytrips: only 4.6% in primary school and 8.1% in middle school do not participate. However, when an overnight stay is involved, 8.4% of the students with disabilities in primary school and 20% in middle school do not participate. This is an important point: field visits and trips are a moment for learning and social interactions, and schools should be able to organise them in the most inclusive way possible, even if more resources are necessary (ISTAT, 2017b).

What are the ultimate causes of problems like push and pull out mechanisms or micro-exclusions? Ianes (2015) answers the first question with five points. In his view, risks of exclusions are rooted in the prevalence of an individual/medical culture of disability, in the special role given to support teachers, in the availability of spaces dedicated specifically to students with disabilities, in the norms according to which additional resources can be obtained only based on health certifications and, finally, in teaching styles, strategies and methods that are far from being fully inclusive.

[43] This is equal to more than 2/3 of weekly class hours in Italian schools.

How could we deal with such issues? There are two types of answer to this question. Some experts have ideas for possible improvements of the current model and practices. Basically, they believe that if the norms are better applied by the school system, inclusion will reach its highest potential. For example, Cottini (2017; 2014) believes that the role of support teachers as coordinators of resources for inclusion should be strengthened, as well as their technical training about different types of disabilities. Other experts think that deep structural reforms are necessary in order to change the education system as a whole and make it more inclusive, starting from a redefinition of the theoretical premises and assumptions on the issue of disability (D'Alessio et al., 2015; Ianes, 2015; D'Alessio, 2011; Treelle et al., 2011). Several proposals have been put forth. For example, some advocate for the overcoming of the separation between curricular and support teachers, modifying the education and training requirements and introducing mixed positions (half of the hours as curricular teachers and half as support teachers). The recent reforms did not go in this direction, as we said previously in this chapter, since the path to become curricular teachers is still different from the one to become a support teacher. Ianes (2015) harshly criticises this choice because, in his view, it might make the collaboration between curricular and support teachers even more difficult, threatening the positive results of inclusion.

In another contribution, Ianes (2006) affirms that "in Italy there is currently general agreement in identifying five large areas where effective inclusion strategies may work better, and they are the following: the link between individualized programming and the class curriculum; classmates' and schoolmates' involvement; integrating behavioural strategies into the regular learning activities and educational relationships; metacognitive teaching and learning; information and communication technology". He also states that "[…] the goal is building a 'special normality' encompassing the advantages of both specific strategies and comfortable normality. Thereby, we are trying to get over the dichotomy that sets what is normal against what is special. We believe that this is the main road to reach an actual good-quality school inclusion".

As to the first area, several authors argue that an essential component of good-quality inclusion is a close link between the PEI and the general curriculum of the whole classroom (Cottini, 2017). It is important to define objectives that are appropriate to the child with a disability, that are within his/her zone of proximal development and that, in this way, make significant his/her

participating with peers to classroom activities. However, adapting curriculum objectives to the needs of a specific child might be challenging. Ianes (2006) identifies five levels of possible adaptation: changing the input/output codes (ex. listening instead of reading; typewriting instead of handwriting etc.); changing the teaching/learning contexts and methodologies (ex. teaching/learning by role-playing); simplifying the content (ex. providing shorter texts to read); identifying basics of each discipline (ex. learning history by exploring the student's personal life); proposing hands-on educational activities.

As far as peer involvement is concerned, the importance of educating all children to accept and value individual differences is emphasised (Cottini, 2017; Ianes, 2006). This is the way to keep a far-sighted perspective on the disabled child's adult life and develop around him/her a supporting community. Many strategies are available for this purpose, such as cooperative learning methods, to be introduced after a climate of sharing, mutual help and support has been built, both in the classroom and outside of it. Another form of peer engagement widely used is peer tutoring, both within and outside the classroom. In the secondary school especially, many students support peers with disabilities in learning academic and social skills and help them in their integration process.

The third and fourth very important areas of improvement for school inclusion practices concerns development of behaviour analysis and metacognitive teaching strategies in the regular classroom activities. Many schools, for example, are bringing into the classrooms several components of behavioural approaches for autistic disorders, such as TEACCH[44], benefitting all pupils – and not only those with autistic spectrum disorders – in developing self-regulation skills. As far as metacognitive instruction is concerned, during the past fifteen years, a group of academics, researchers and teachers, led by professor Cornoldi of Padua University, have designed and developed many different teaching curricula that schools can administer to support the development of cognitive, metacognitive and academic skills (ex. study skills, memory skills, attention,

[44] TEACCH stands for Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication related handicapped Children. It is a training program for individuals of all ages and skill levels with autism spectrum disorders, based on the premise that people with autism are predominantly visual learners, so intervention strategies focus on physical and visual structure, schedules, work systems and task organization.

reading skills, spatial orientation, etc.). This is a positive example of productive cooperation between academics and school teachers.

The last area of improvement relates to information communication technology, where instructional software specifically designed for learners with special education needs and disabilities should be developed and made available for schools.

In sum, the evidence provided in this chapter seems enough to conclude that, after 40 years of *integrazione scolastica*, the balance is definitely and most largely positive. For the future, the Italian model of an inclusive school will face many challenges and opportunities, among which "building a strong basis of empirical data on the positive effects of full school inclusion, implementing the ICF model on a large scale, and making increasingly special our schools' normality that accommodates all Italian children" (Ianes, 2006).

APPENDIX 1 - An experience in Rome

Prof. Claudio Polticelli is the Coordinator of inclusion for a vocational high school (*Istituto tecnico agrario*) in Rome. Before taking up this position, he has extensive experience as a science teacher and, then, as a support teacher in several high schools in the Lazio Region and in Rome.
This interview was recorded in June 2017.

Q1. *Can you briefly describe the main responsibilities you have as Coordinator of inclusion?*

The Coordinator for inclusion oversees everything happening in school that concerns inclusion. First of all, every morning, before classes begin, I have to make sure that all support teachers and assistants are there, especially in cases of severe disabilities, when students are not self sufficient. If somebody is missing, I immediately have to provide for substitutions. All this happens between 7 and 8 am, it's fast paced and crucial in order to start off on the right foot. During the school day, I am always available to give advice and assistance to support teachers if needed. At the end of the lessons, parents come to pick up the students with disabilities, or the public school bus takes them home, but I have to be there to make sure that everything goes smoothly.
This is only a small part of my job. Other important aspects concern the assistance provided to the school principal and to the support teachers as a group. In the first case, I have to keep my boss updated on the progress of inclusion policies and activities. I write reports and have periodic meetings with him to discuss the situation of every single student, and all issues that may revolve around it. In the second case, I have to organise meetings with the support teachers at the beginning and during the school year, to train them on specific topics, inform them about policies and issues and discuss the advancement and results of their work. For each student with a certified disability and a support teacher, I participate in the GLHO meetings and strictly track all steps of their integration in the school environment, keeping constant relationships with the families and the medical professionals. As far as DSA and BES students are concerned, since mine is a very large school we have a person responsible specifically for them, although I have to be always informed about this area, too, since I report to the principal for all inclusion policies and all students with special needs.

As a matter of fact, inclusion begins long before the arrival of a student at school. At the end of each school year, we carefully look at the enrolment and plan each single step for the effective inclusion of all pupils with special needs. We meet families, we establish a dialogue with the medical professionals and we estimate the hours of support (teachers and assistants) needed in order to apply for funds. This is one of the most important and delicate phases of my work. Applying for funds is not an easy process and I oversee all aspects of it.

Q1. ***Do you think the legislative framework for school inclusion in our country is adequate to actually realise inclusion in context?***

Yes, I believe that our legislation is one of the most advanced in the world, but at the same time, in real contexts you need much more than a legislative framework. You need, first of all, people who strongly believe in the possibility of school inclusion and commit to it. And by "people" I do not only mean support teachers! Having good support teachers is essential, but they are just one tile of the mosaic. The school management is another tile: real inclusion entails extra efforts to motivate all the rest of the staff, it's a trickle-down process. I'll give you an example: in many schools, the PEI ends up being written only by the support teacher. What kind of inclusion is this? It's only *pro forma*, and not substantial. In order for inclusion to be real, substantial, each PEI should be the result of joint efforts between the curricular teachers, the support teachers, the assistants, the coordinator. Inclusion takes place in class, and in class you have curricular teachers, support teachers and assistants: all of them should contribute to didactic and educational planning. Given that the Italian legislative framework has aimed to *integrazione scolastica* since the early 1970s, successful inclusion cannot happen in real contexts without the full participation of all people involved and without a strong will expressed by the management.

Another important thing to say is that, although the Italian laws for school inclusion are considered advanced, sometimes in our everyday life at school we realize that they can be also a source of constraints and limitations. For example, bureaucracy obliges principals to determine all staff needs before the beginning of the school year. Sometimes, a new or newly identified need comes up, but the Ministry of Education doesn't respond, leaving the school without the necessary human resources to face it. In a highly regulated environment like that of Italian public administration, flexibility is scarce. Few people are available to take responsibilities on themselves, and the strict regulation often become an

"excuse" to protect the status quo and to favor conservative choices. Moreover, the Italian Constitution affirms that the State is responsible for educational inclusion, but the amount of resources invested for this goal has been decreasing over the years and is always insufficient.

Q3. ***How do you and the support teachers in your school behave when the legislation contrasts with the real, everyday needs of a class? For example, what do you do when a student with a mental disability starts screaming, disturbing all other students in class? The law says that all students should be in class, together.***

Each educational challenge is unique. There are no standardized procedures and rules that educators can rely on in order to solve educational issues. More so when there is a need to include "weaker" individuals, it is extremely important to be aware of dealing with many unique cases. This is what I can say: the law provides a framework, but the practice is determined by the constant evaluation of each single situation by the people involved. There might be cases when keeping the student out of class for some time is conducive to better learning and climate both for him/her and the classmates: if this is the case, we do it! Laws, rules, and procedures are important reference points, but ultimately the priority is the interest of all students, starting from the most vulnerable ones. The same legislative framework can produce different outcomes, depending on how ingrained the concept of inclusion is in the minds and hearts of people who operate in an educational context. A real, concrete dedication to inclusion, together with the capability to "think out of the box" (where the box could sometimes represent bureaucracy and strict regulations) are essential ingredients for the success of the final recipe.

Q4. ***Your school is considered one of the best in Rome for the effectiveness of inclusion policies and practices. What are the internal and external factors that, in your opinion, contribute to this positive result?***

Ours is a vocational high school in the city of Rome, focused on agriculture and farming. It is well known and has become a benchmark for school integration practices, both at the local and national level. Out of more than 900 students enrolled in the year 2016-2017, about 290 are *alunni BES,* including the ones with a certified disability, the DSA and the BES students. Here, the high number of

students with disabilities and special needs is not perceived as an obstacle to high quality teaching and learning for all students. Rather, over the years, the school management has been very effective in communicating to all families the importance of inclusion and solidarity, demonstrating that having many students with special needs doesn't necessarily imply simplifying the syllabi of the courses. On the contrary, the need for individualised planning translates into a better trained teaching staff and a wider variety of educational opportunities offered to all students. We believe that much of this result depends on the strong will of our principal. His role in shaping the profile and the practices of a school that he wants to be really inclusive is remarkable. His sensitivity towards all types of disability and special educational need is clear when he talks. Then, it is important to mention that our school is not like the majority of schools! It has its own 80-acre farm, with vegetable gardens, greenhouses, fruit trees, an olive tree grove and a vineyard. There are also horse stables where a private company offers horse-back riding classes. Animal breeding is one of the main activities of the farm, which produces and sells fresh cheese and milk, vegetables and olive oil. At first sight, the school appears like the ideal environment for experiential learning and for establishing connections between what is taught in class and the real farming work. I believe that the physical environment itself, the natural resources, the presence of a real farm and the availability of professionals such as farmers, breeders, vets and biologists, is among the first of the internal factors that positively impact the effectiveness of inclusion practices. In fact, having these unusual resources has made individualised planning more realistic. The school adopts a policy where individualised planning considers the capabilities of each student, clearly indicating which courses he/she can attend and which ones, on the contrary, would be unsuitable or too challenging. These are then substituted with field activities. Step by step, over the five years, the students acquire more autonomy and the number of hours in class can be increased. If a student with disability doesn't attend a class, he/she will not have a final grade. In some cases, it might be necessary to prolong the stay in school, in order for the student to acquire more autonomy and independence. Spending a longer time in school is often seen as detrimental for students without disability, but on the contrary it is an opportunity for students with disabilities, as it gives them more chances to become independent, preparing for the end of their education and their integration into a work environment.

Another important factor for the success of inclusion in this school are the students themselves. Peer support is crucial for the wellbeing of students with disability or special needs. Teachers and staff are very careful to transmit a message of solidarity and create an inclusive environment. Having the collaboration of peers means creating a network of positive relationships around each student with a disability. This network grows and strengthens over the five years of school. It even has the potential to last after school and become a second family for the student. Every year, our school gives a prize to the student who, aside from his/her academic merit, has been most proactive and generous in supporting other students with disabilities or any kind of difficulties. The prize itself is not what motivates the students to be inclusive, but it is an effective way to communicate that being supportive is as important as being academically proficient.

Finally, the teaching staff and the specialised assistants are also an important factor, thanks to their motivation and availability to collaborate and implement the administration's inclusion choices. In particular, the principal has made some recruiting choices that differentiate ours from other schools. Usually, the *assistenti specialistici* belong to social cooperatives and the schools entrust a cooperative to deliver the service. This way, the *assistente specialistico* receives less than half of the salary that he/she is entitled to, since the rest goes to the cooperative. Diverging from this common arrangement, we hire each *assistente specialistico* directly, allowing him/her to receive a competitive salary and positively influencing his/her motivation.

Among the external factors that favor inclusion, I should also mention the neighborhood. The school area is open to the public: anyone can enter and visit the farm, watch the animals, buy vegetables and the other available products. There is no fence and no limitations for the public to wander around and share the life of the school and the farm. This openness and movement of people fosters socialization and contrasts, ideally and practically, the idea of "isolation" that sometimes surrounds people with disabilities.

Q5. ***Have you ever been very disappointed for not being able to effectively include a student in your school environment?***

Sometimes I've been disappointed, yes, for example when, after doing our best, the student did not seem included or the family was not satisfied. However, inclusion in education is not a win or lose game. You can lose a battle and still

learn (and teach!) something important. This is to say that you can win every day by adopting inclusive behaviours: not waiting for others, or the "system", or "society" to realise inclusion, but doing it yourself first!

Social inclusion is a team effort, and schools have a crucial role. They are the "trainers" for all other members of society, the so called "stakeholders". School is where we begin educating all people to be inclusive. School is where we start creating a network of people understanding each other and caring for each other. This is true for all students, and even more so when we talk about individuals who have severe disabilities. The "bubble" of understanding around them becomes larger and larger, starting from school: teachers and peers have the opportunity to enlarge it every day, so as to build a better future for everyone, in a more supportive and cohesive society.

I want to tell you a story about a student and his peers. This student has a severe mental disability and does not control his behaviours. He is very affectionate to all his classmates, particularly the girls. His mental age is equal to that of a 5 year-old child and he often expresses positive feelings by touching people's bodies. There is no sexual connotation in any of his gestures and behaviours, but sometimes he hugs the girls in his class and touches their bodies in a way that might be very disturbing. We know that there is no possibility to change his behaviours, but we did explain everybody the reasons behind it. The girls know that his very warm hugs have nothing to do with sexual harassment. They've come to accept them as simply the signs of his affection towards them, nothing more and nothing less! At the beginning it was very difficult and the risk for this student was to be rapidly isolated by his peers. Thanks to a synergic work of all staff and to a group of open minded classmates who opened the way, the result in the end was positive. And the bubble around this student becomes larger and larger every day.

APPENDIX 2 - A different experience overseas

Lindsey Hooker Hartjes is the Program Administrator for CASE (Customised Alternative Solutions for Education), a special school in Minneapolis (MN, USA). She trained as a special education teacher and has extensive experience both in teaching and administration of educational programs. Her viewpoint is interesting for understanding the perspective of a special educator who works using a model completely different from the Italian one.

Q1. ***Could you describe the characteristics of your program?***

CASE is dedicated to students who aren't deemed suitable for regular schools, mainly due to their behaviour or to some kind of disability. The most frequent problems are autism, emotional behavioural disorders like anxiety and/or depression, conduct disorders, oppositional defiant disorder, and occasionally diagnosed mental conditions (such as schizophrenia) as assessed by a psychiatrist. In this last case, we might have a mental health professional in class with the student. CASE is a Federal Setting Four. Level four can apply to different categories of students who need a kind of support they can't get in a regular school. There are three programs in my organisation. Mainly we work with students who have high aggression and due to that, it would be unsafe to place them in a regular school (either unsafe for themselves, or unsafe for the staff). The program I coordinate offers the most intensive services. The other two programs have 6 students per class, a teacher and 1-3 care professionals. My program is dedicated specifically to students who could not be in a group setting. We offer individual support for them, so we have single offices where they can work individually if they need, and a central classroom where they spend some time with 2 or 3 other kids. Our service has different "layers", and my program offers the highest level of service before the kid would need to be placed in a homebound type of program.

Q2. ***Is CASE a public or publicly funded program?***

Yes, it is publicly funded. Families don't pay for it. Anybody can apply, but there is a significant application process: the school district does the paper work, and we must observe the student, to make sure it's a good fit. The home school district has to prove that they can't serve the student in any other way in regular

settings, before sending him/her to us. Even though the program is publicly funded, it is still very expensive for the district and so we're the last resort for them, too. Also, one of the pillars of special education in the USA is that a student should be served in what is called "the least restrictive environment". This means you can't take a student with a learning disability, for example, and put him/her in a special school, because with support he/she should be able to function in a regular class. Therefore the District has to prove that they've tried to educate the student in a regular classroom, but he/she needed more support that the school could provide. In this case the District gives the money to us and we host the student. The family doesn't have to pay for our service.

Q3. ***Do students mainly spend all their school years with your program, or do they often transition back into mainstream school?***

The goal, and the hope, is that every single student will go back to regular school after having gained the skills they need to be successful. But we do have some kids with severe disabilities for which this is really the right placement. They need small classrooms and specific resources, without which they would really struggle. These kids stay for their whole career, while roughly 50% transition at some point, usually after 2 years. When they do that, we're really happy and satisfied!

Q4. ***How were you trained for your job?***

I was a special education teacher in mainstream schools for 5 years. Then, I taught in this program for 2 years. Meanwhile, I got my Master's degree in special education with a focus on emotional and behavioural disability and also a specific license to teach students with autism. I've been a lead teacher for my district, which means coordinating and supporting other teachers, and then this position opened up, and I got it. I am the Dean of this program, a sort of Assistant Principal. I am almost done with my license for program administration, too.

Q5. ***When you were a special education teacher, did you work with curricular teachers?***

Nowadays there is a big movement in the US towards doing that, but when I was teaching it was not the case. You had your own classroom, it wasn't an inclusive model. Just during the last year, we started what was called "push-in", where the

special education teacher would go to regular classrooms for a small amount of time, at least. I did that with a math teacher for a year. Recently, this practice has become more common, but it's still pretty limited.

Q6. ***Would you change this educational model with a more inclusive one?***

Our model has both advantages and drawbacks. The year I worked on integration I really liked it, but we had very little time to coordinate. We were supposed to develop a team teaching model, but it was a new concept for both of us. In elementary school we do a much better job in integrating special education kids. But when they get older and start needing specific instruction in science, math etc., that's when the kids start to be pulled out, and this might make it harder for them to interact and make friends. Socialisation is already harder for them, being separated makes it even more difficult to bridge the gap. However, as far as my students are concerned … the population I work with now, there's no way for them to function in a regular setting. They've met with so much failure in mainstream school and when they arrive here, they get the attention they need, they find a place that understands their outbursts and can handle them without people feeling upset. It is a lot more understanding environment. Here, they find inner peace with how they function in the school environment. So, for my small segment of students, I think we serve a very important purpose, but I also think that, in general, we should practice more inclusion in school, or do a little bit or both: some hours there and some here.

Q7. ***How do students react when they are placed in your program?***

Some get settled right away. Some have a honeymoon period and then hit a wall … that's when you realise why they've come here! Finally, they all get settled. Some are social, but many of them due to their autism are not the most sociable creatures. Those who are social sometimes complain: "I don't want to be in a school with retards", reflecting a social stigma.

Q8. ***Do you do something for the after school phase?***

We do. We have programs for 18-21 year olds where they do community work. For example, we have an agreement with the local community college and some of our students can take classes there, around other kids. As far as job training is

concerned, that is offered by the County with the Vocational Rehab program. If the student qualifies, the family can apply and the student gets connected with job opportunities.

Q9. ***If the family and/or the student do not want to use CASE, who makes the final decision for the student?***

Each kid with issues has an Individualised Educational Plan (IEP) drafted by a team of professionals (teachers, administrators, occupational and speech therapists …) with the participation of the student's family, and the student, when possible. This group should be able to make a collegial and consensual decision.

Q10. ***Do you like your job?***

Yes. The kids I work with can be very difficult at times, but nobody wants to be bad … nobody wants to be that kid that nobody likes … They're trying so hard to learn … Individual days can be sometimes very difficult, but overall I like my job. I work with very dedicated people.

Q11. ***What has been your greatest satisfaction with this job?***

As an administrator, the fact that I've just started running this program and it's going very well. People want to come work here. We're doing really well and we've had no turnover. My staff is an incredible group of people who collaborate and are very open to each other.

As a teacher, I feel very accomplished when we go out and our kids have an awesome daytrip. We went to a zoo and we watched a bird show. One of my students got to hold the bird. He is not one of those kids who show lots of emotions, but we took a picture of him and he kept talking about it every day for weeks!

Q12. ***Do you work a lot to create a group among your students?***

We do try to encourage that, by connecting them to each other and to kids outside the school. But you must be aware that you're introducing a kid with a very severe disability to someone else's family, and they might not be ready. We definitely support naturally developing friendships. We try to set them up to do activities together, we encourage social behaviour. For example, one of our student turned 10 years old and he had his first birthday party. They went to a

fast food place with music and games, a big and loud place that's usually not the best for kids with autism. However, they talked and played and had a really good time. Their moms were so happy, they called me in tears!

APPENDIX 3
After school: forms of protection and support for people with disabilities

Snapshot on the macro context

In Italy, the average income per capita is equal to USD 26,063 a year[45]. The National Bureau of Statistics (ISTAT) calculated that in 2016 nearly 30% of the resident population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion[46]. This risk is unfortunately higher for persons with disabilities (about 3 million in the country)[47] and/or for their families.

The Regions regulate access to services for persons with disabilities on the basis of individual or family income, and this amount differs throughout the country. The families' contribution to the services can be up to 30% of the service cost.

Austerity measures adopted in 2011 entailed cuts in the national fund for social policies and, consequently, in social services, which were already poorly funded in comparison with other EU countries. As far as disability is concerned, Italy spends much less that the EU average, both for cash benefits and for services. Monetary transfers are more prevalent and the services supporting persons who are not independent are mostly delegated to families, inside which there is still a gendered division, with women mostly taking the responsibility of care and assistance roles.

Civil invalidity is recognized to people who have difficulties in performing everyday life tasks due to chronic illness or disability. The designation entails a monthly stipend and in some cases a stipend for the caregiver as well.

In case of a partial or a total reduction in work capacity, the person with disabilities can claim the following benefits (EC, 2013):

Invalidity allowance (assegno di invalidità). All workers whose working capacity is permanently reduced by more than two thirds, and who have accrued five years of contributions (three of which matured in the five years prior to lodging the benefit claim) may qualify for an invalidity allowance. The benefit is paid for up to 3 years, but it may be extended for subsequent 3-year periods. Once the

[45] www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/italy/

[46] www.istat.it/it/archivio/povertà

[47] www.fishonlus.it

allowance has been extended twice consecutively, the benefit can be confirmed indefinitely.

Incapacity pension (pensione di inabilità). The worker who has been assessed as having a total and permanent incapacity to perform any work activity due to infirmity or physical or mental impairment is entitled to an incapacity pension. Entitlement is conditional upon a minimum of 5 years of contributions, 3 of which accrued in the last 5 years prior to lodging the claim, as well as on the absence of all other forms of income, including earnings from self-employment and unemployment benefits. The incapacity pension can be passed down to the deceased pensioner's survivors and is replaced by the old-age pension at retirement age.

Responsibilities and competencies

After a Reform of the Constitution passed in 2001, the provision of social services is the exclusive responsibility of the regional and local authorities. While the State has the exclusive power for the "determination of the basic standards of welfare related to those civil and social entitlements that must be guaranteed in the whole national territory", the new article 117 establishes that "regional laws shall remove all obstacles which prevent the full equality of men and women in social, cultural and economic life, and shall promote equal access of men and women to elective offices"[48].

The regionalisation process surely contributes to make the system more efficient, but, on the other hand, it may represent a threat for the country's social cohesion, increasing territorial disparities in the quality or quantity of services offered. Central authorities have the responsibility to guarantee a minimum level of services all over the territory, but, according to some experts, so far they have not made use of the powers conferred on them by the Constitution (Costamagna, 2013).

An important role for the social inclusion of people with disabilities is played by private entities, mainly belonging to the so-called "third sector"[49]. They offer a

[48] Italian Constitution, www.senato.it

[49] This term refers to all different types of nonprofit organizations (such as associations, cooperatives, NGOs, etc.) that are "in-between" State and open market, because they offer services for the public good, but they don't belong to the public administration.

wide range of services created both to assist and to integrate people with disabilities in all areas of social life.

The main legislative provisions

Law 104/1992 is the main framework for all disability issues: it guarantees specific rights for people with disabilities and their families, provides financial assistance, stipulates full integration and the adoption of measures for prevention and functional recovery, and also ensures social, economic and legal protection. Article 9 of this law regulates domestic assistance for persons with disabilities. The regions, on the basis of a regional social plan, define the way in which access to these services is provided, but always linked to family or individual income, as defined by national guidelines.

Law 328/2000 defines the "integrated system of interventions and social services" at the national level. According to Article 14, parents/guardians, local health services and social services agree upon an "individualised life project" for their children, drafted based on the Functioning Profile and aimed at full integration within the family and social life, school and work. Starting from the year 2019, the individualised life project should also include the Individualised Educational Plan (PEI) elaborated by the school. The integration of these two documents is supposed to create better synergies among institutions favouring a more comprehensive approach to the social integration of the person with disabilities.

Law 68/1999 provides a framework for employment and job integration of people with disabilities. It regulates access to work for people with all forms of disabilities, based on the principle of *collocamento mirato* (targeted work placement). According to it, every company with more than 15 employees is obliged to hire at least one person with a certified disability; companies with 30-50 employees are obliged to hire two persons; companies with over 50 employees are obliged to ensure that at least 7% of their workforce consists of persons with a certified disability. According to **Decree 76/2013**, employers should provide reasonable accommodations in the workplace, as defined in the UNCRPD, in order to guarantee equal treatment for persons with disabilities.

Targeted work placement is based on an assessment of the residual ability of persons with disabilities. For each registered person, a technical committee from the employment services, which consists of experts from social, healthcare and

their own agency, creates a file containing information on qualifications, skills, personal preferences, and the nature and degree of disability. The committee also analyzes the tasks that can be performed and workplace adaptations that may be required. The targeted employment services staff are responsible for matching job requests with offers available. The law also envisages financial incentives for employers to recruit and retain persons with disabilities (as a percentage off the monthly gross taxable income depending on the type of disability and on the contract offered).

The Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 signed between Italy and the European Commission includes a legislative item to promote the dissemination and the customization of the ICF model at the local level. The **Decree 151/2015**, which partially modifies Law 68/1999, states that a bio-psycho-social approach is needed in evaluating disability and that barriers and enabling factors found in the working environment should also be taken into account. In practice, however, the assessment is often based on a medical approach with a focus on impairments. In fact, in order to access economic benefits guaranteed by the welfare system, the person must be recognized having a certain level of functioning.

The weakest point of Law 68/99 is that it applies only to employers who have at least 15 employees, whereas the majority of employers in Italy have fewer than that and are therefore not subject to the obligation of targeted placement. This is among the reasons why in Italy, despite the existence of legislation on the subject, only 19.7% of people with disabilities have a job, less than one in five[50].

In the current socioeconomic context, work occupies a key role in people's lives and unemployment may have a considerable impact on the identity of individuals and entire communities. As a matter of fact, work is not simply as an occupation for which one receives a salary, but it also represents a network of social relations, which has value in itself. This emphasis on work is even more important for some groups in society, particularly for people with disabilities.

Another weak point is related to the fact that there are no supported employment programmes at the national level. Since employment services to persons with reduced working capacity are provided at regional, provincial and local levels, there is no universal approach throughout the country and territorial

[50] http://www.fishonlus.it/media/infografiche/disabili_lavoro/

differences are quite common. While all local authorities are responsible for developing their own programmes to facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities, there are many differences between various provinces and municipalities in the way these programmes work.

An important role is played, again, by the third sector, and in particular by the social cooperatives, a type of nonprofit organization regulated by Law 381/91 that pursue the general interest of the community by offering social, healthcare or educational services and/or offering employment to people with reduced work capacity. There are two types of social cooperative: type A, which engages in the provision of social, health and educational services and type B, which carries out various activities, including agricultural, industrial, commercial or other work, aimed at the employment of disadvantaged groups and at the development of their professional skills. Another type of solution for persons with disabilities is employment support through supervised work placement. This type of work in Italy is particularly common among persons with psychiatric disorders.

APPENDIX 4 - Work study programs and inclusion

Maria Letizia Zaccaria is a support teacher in a vocational high school (*Istituto tecnico agrario*) in Rome. At the moment, she is also the coordinator of work-study programs for students with disabilities, as organised by the school[51]. Before taking up these positions, she had extensive experience as a science teacher.
This interview was recorded in February 2018.

Q1. *Can you describe the characteristics of the work study programs that you coordinate with specific reference to the students with disabilities?*

The Buona Scuola reform made *alternanza scuola-lavoro* (work-study programs) mandatory for students who attend the last three years of high school, but it didn't specify anything for the students with disabilities. For these students, we refer to previous laws saying that it is possible to include work activities run within organisations outside the school in the Individual Life Project. In relation to work study programs, for students with disabilities, we follow Decree 77/2005 establishing that experiential learning phases are planned so as to promote their autonomy in view to their integration in the job market. So, during the GLHO meeting, all members who follow the pupil's development (teachers, doctors, assistants and parents) decide if he/she can or cannot do experiential learning, how many hours to plan for and what the goals are. The decision is included in the student's Individualised Educational Plan. Even without doing *alternanza scuola lavoro*, the students with disabilities can still do practical and laboratory activities with their class, but these are not formally considered work-study hours. This way, everything is left to the initiative of teachers and to the good practices of schools. This situation is at odds with the idea of inclusive school written in our legislation, and it is even more contradictory if we think that there is already an Individual Life Plan for each person with disabilities which should include also the Individualised Educational Plan drafted by the school and the

[51]**Law 107/2015**, so called **La Buona Scuola** ("The Good School"), described in chapter 3, made work-study programs in both technical institutes and *Licei* mandatory, in order to improve the link between education and the job market. These programs, lasting 400 hours for the last three years of school, are a requirement for all students except for those who, due to disabilities, have a *programmazione differenziata* (for more details, see chapter 5).

work-study experience, as a way to develop useful skills for effective social and work integration. Instead, everything concerning "after school" is left to the initiative of parents, associations of parents, social cooperatives and other associations. There is nothing really structured, the idea of "assistance" is always prevalent over those of "independence" and "inclusion". For example, if the Region has funds for work integration of people with disabilities, it transfers them to associations and social cooperatives, based on projects (competitive allocation of funds). This way, the association or social cooperative "hires" the people with a disability, but it is not real work integration; the person with disability can work there only if and until the Region finances the project. The person is integrated through welfare and not really included in the work environment, even if he/she could work and give to society.

Q2. *What kind of work-study experiences can your school offer to students with disabilities in this context that you described?*

My school is located just outside the city center and has its own about 80-hectar farm, with vegetable gardens, greenhouses, fruit trees, an olive tree grove and a vineyard, and also animals. This means that we can offer work-study programs to students with disability at our farm. This solution has positive aspects, among which is the fact that we have technical practical instructors (ITPs)[52], we know the students, we know their residual abilities and their difficulties very well, and this makes it easier to organise activities that are suitable for them, and educational at the same time. Sometimes we have a chance to send them outside, too. We have agreements with some other local businesses and sometimes parents who have their own network of contacts help us, and we sign new agreements.

In general, it is difficult because work-study programs in Italy - all of them, not only programs for students with disabilities - don't give any benefit to the companies. In other countries, organisations have fiscal incentives to take students on board, and this compensates them for the time and energies invested in training. Here, the firms host students who might even be very motivated, but for sure they are still unprepared to work! The companies have to provide for a

[52] *Insegnante Tecnico Pratico* (*ITP*) is a type of school teacher who focuses on practical activities in vocational oriented schools.

mentor and constant supervision, and this is a loss of productivity that's not at all compensated. If the government wants the employers to consider work-study programs like an investment, it should give some form of support and/or incentives! Instead everything is based on the mentor idea of "the social responsibility" of enterprises, but it's not enough to make things work, especially when we talk about people with disabilities … for them everything gets even more difficult. Usually, if a business agrees to be part of a study work program, it accepts only one student with disabilities at a time. He/she has to go to work accompanied by the support teacher and the specialised assistant. The good thing is that often his/her peers will be there too, and the work-study program becomes a precious chance for socialisation outside of class.

Q3. ***Do schools receive any support by the government to organise work study programs?***

The schools receive a small amount of money based on the number of students. It is small, but it can be used to buy training services. As a matter of fact, work-study programs can also consist of training and simulations, for example drafting a business plan and starting a "simulated" enterprise. There are companies selling these kinds of services specifically customised for schools. The school has to designate a teacher for each class to be the mentor of work-study programs. Since the experience on the field is done by students during school hours, it is a "subject" like others and results have to evaluated at the end of the academic year.

Q4. ***You are also a support teacher. What is your personal view about the inclusive school model that we have in Italy, in which you take active part?***

I used to be a science teacher before becoming a support teacher. The first experience as a support teacher was terribly difficult, since I had two students with very severe autism, a boy with Down syndrome and one with a mental disability causing him problems in articulating sounds and, consequently, speaking. At first, I didn't know how to approach them. In general, I think our inclusive model is well designed and must be appreciated for the principles on which it is based. However, sometimes it clashes with reality, with practical everyday difficulties and with the limitations of the students themselves. Some students with severe disabilities can't really stay in class, and you can't force them

because the class environment is a source of stress for them. At the elementary school level it is maybe easier, because everything is based on playing, educational games, practical activities. My daughter had a boy with autism in her elementary class and things worked out well. But the more you go on, the more structured school becomes and the more difficult it gets for the student with disabilities. At the moment I am working with a deaf student who, in middle school, did not do much because his teachers used to limit, reduce or simplify topics too much. I had to start all over again, to explain to him that since his cognitive abilities are absolutely normal, he has to do as well as the other students, even if he sometimes might need more help to compensate for his physical deficit. Sometime we, teachers, get stuck, too, because we don't know the strengths and weaknesses of our students and we don't get appropriate support by the medical professionals. The help of a neuropsychiatrist in some cases would be invaluable, but most often either they don't come to the GLHO meetings, or they come, but don't give us any practical suggestion. My question is: "How can I help him/her at school?". And often I don't get an answer.

Q5. *When you have students with a severe disability, how do you work to connect class planning with individual planning?*

It is difficult. Bobby[53], the boy with Down syndrome, had very low cognitive abilities and couldn't speak, so we worked mainly with drawings, connecting the themes with what the rest of the class was learning. Eli, the boy with mental disability and speech impairment, worked a lot on sound articulation and with him the neuropsychiatrist and I used school subjects as chances to work on language practice. We also taught him to be more self confident and independent. We taught him how to use money when buying things at the school cafe. By the fourth year, Eli was known by all students, he used to walk around the school building and talk with everybody. He, for example, could work. He could give a lot to society. But at this point in Italy we don't have a system of social inclusion that allows us to look beyond school. There are, undoubtedly, realities that work well, like some daily centers. But daily centers are fine for people with severe disabilities who can't be independent. People like Eli shouldn't go to daily centers! Eli now works for a social cooperative, but he is

[53] All names have been changed for privacy protection.

paid with regional welfare funds and not for his work. Also the whole concept of domestic assistance for people with disabilities, in my view, is wrong. Assistance should be geared to take the people out, make them interact with the world, allow them to live a different dimension. Instead, domestic assistance contributes to "closing" them even more in their solitude. It is the opposite of what we mean by social inclusion ...

Q6. ***Do you have a positive episode to tell, a story of inclusion that gave you professional and personal satisfaction?***

Yes, I could tell you about many "small" episodes and moments ... For example, when Eli passed the final public examination to graduate high school... It was very difficult for him, and a source of stress, but we prepared everything together. On that day, he came to school very well dressed, accompanied by his parents and grandmother. He did his presentation, with PowerPoint, it went well, he was so happy! And I was, too. But usually, when we arrive to the last year of school, I am mostly worried and discouraged, because I know that after school my students will dive into a black hole ... Bobby, for example ... his parents could not find a place for him because he needs one-to-one constant supervision. At the end, they found a good daily center, and there he is. After he finished school, I saw him only once more, two years ago.

Chapter 6
The multicultural school

"No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive"
(Mahatma Gandhi)

In chapter 3 we mentioned the **December 27, 2012 *Direttiva*** recognising forms of disadvantage not deriving from disability and/or learning impairments. Among these, socio-economic disadvantage and/or "cultural disadvantage" caused, for example, by language barriers, are characteristics that could determine special educational needs (BES, *Bisogni Educativi Speciali*). Students who are newly arrived immigrants or refugees are often designated by their school as having special needs.
This chapter presents data and reflections about multiculturalism in the Italian education system and about policies to foster cultural integration of students with diverse backgrounds. Moreover, since a large percentage of foreign students attending Italian schools were actually born and have spent all their life in Italy, the chapter includes an overview of the laws and policies concerning citizenship, assuming that, for a student, not being a citizen and not being considered as such might imply forms of disadvantage, limitations and possible (perceived) exclusions (Cerbara, Tintori, 2017).

6.1 Foreign minors in Italian schools

Education is a right and a duty for all minors in Italy. Foreign minors have the same right/duty as Italian citizens, regardless of their immigration status. The principles regarding education of foreign minors are established by **Law**

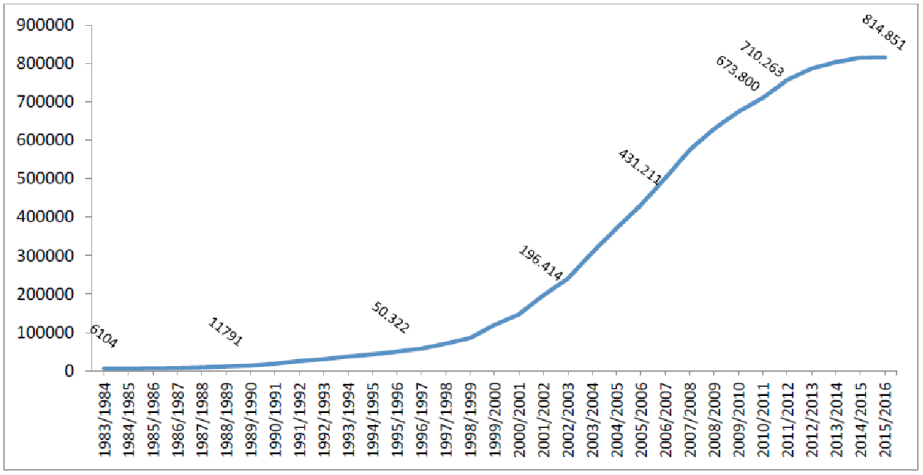
40/1998, **Legislative Decree 286/1998** and **Law 189/2002**. In particular, Art.36 of Law 40/1998[54] states that foreign minors are subject to compulsory education and that all laws and regulations concerning rights and access to education and participation to the school community are applicable to them as to the Italian citizens. The effectiveness of the right to education is guaranteed by the State, by the Regions and by the local administrations also through the offering of courses and initiatives for language learning. The school community welcomes linguistic and cultural differences as a founding value through which to build reciprocal respect and cultural exchange and promotes initiatives aimed at protecting cultural and linguistic identities.

The increasing presence in Italian schools of pupils with migrant backgrounds is nowadays a structural phenomenon. Students without Italian citizenship numbered 815,000 in the school year 2015/2016, more than 9% of the total school population (MIUR, 2017).

Figure 1 shows the increase in foreign school population in the last 30 years (from school year 1983/1984 to school year 2015/2016). The shape of the curve clearly explains how the phenomenon of multiculturalism in school has grown rapidly especially since the beginning of the 2000s, posing important challenges to the education system. Only in five school years (2009/2010 – 2014/2015) the number of foreign students increased by 20%, while the number of Italian students dropped by 2.7% and the total school population decreased by 0.9% (Santagati, Ongini, 2016).

[54] Translation by the author from Italian: "1. I minori stranieri presenti sul territorio sono soggetti all'obbligo scolastico; ad essi si applicano tutte le disposizioni vigenti in materia di diritto all'istruzione, di accesso ai servizi educativi, di partecipazione alla vita della comunità scolastica. 2. L'effettività del diritto allo studio e' garantita dallo Stato, dalle Regioni e dagli enti locali anche mediante l'attivazione di appositi corsi ed iniziative per l'apprendimento della lingua italiana. 3. La comunità scolastica accoglie le differenze linguistiche e culturali come valore da porre a fondamento del rispetto reciproco, dello scambio tra le culture e della tolleranza; a tale fine promuove e favorisce iniziative volte alla accoglienza, alla tutela della cultura e della lingua d'origine e alla realizzazione di attività interculturali comuni".

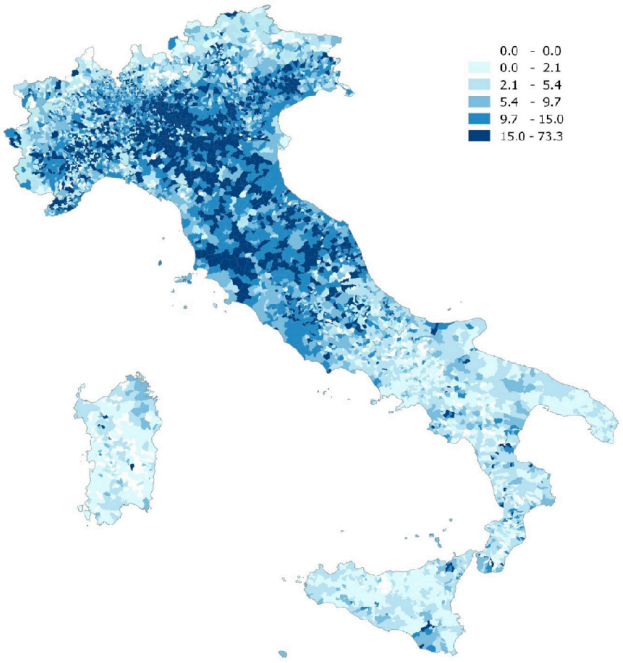
Figure 1 – Foreign students in Italian schools



Source: MIUR, 2017, p.7

Figure 2 shows the distribution of foreign students in the different areas of the Italian peninsula, with an evident concentration (darker colors) in the North and in some parts of the Centre.

Figure 2 – Territorial distribution of foreign students (percentage of total school enrollment) in school year 2015/2016



Source: MIUR, 2017, p.15

As already mentioned, foreign students are a very diverse group in Italy (Cerbara, Tintori, 2017). More precise definitions describing the characteristics of the possible subgroups are the following (MIUR, 2014):

- *Alunni con cittadinanza non italiana* (pupils with non Italian citizenship): students who were born in Italy, whose parents are not Italian citizens. Technically, they are foreign students, but in practice their level of assimilation with the local culture and their level of knowledge of Italian might be very high.
- *Alunni con ambiente familiare non italofono* (pupils with a non-Italian speaking family environment): students whose parents and family members have limited skills in the use of Italian language and can't, therefore, support them in their learning process, sometimes transmitting a feeling of insecurity. However, these students might be, in certain cases, academically strong, having attended good schools in their countries of origin. It is very important

to take into consideration their background and academic skills, so as to fight linguistic insecurity and foster their cognitive development.

- *Minori non accompagnati* (foreign unaccompanied minors): students who left their countries alone and don't have parents or legal guardians in Italy. In many cases, their life stories of deprivation and suffering might translate into a very difficult integration processes. Communication skills might be very limited also in the native language, making it necessary to adopt compensation strategies and academic accommodations.
- *Alunni figli di coppie miste* (children of mixed couples): students who have Italian citizenship because one parent is an Italian citizen. Their Italian language are usually strong, thanks to the presence of a native speaker in the family. Many of these students are bilingual, and this characteristic makes them more self confident and more easily adaptable to different social contexts.
- *Alunni arrivati per adozione internazionale* (children who came into the country via international adoption): students who were adopted by Italian parents and are therefore Italian citizens. For this reason their special needs are less immediately visible. However, depending on their life stories and on the age at adoption, these students might need dedicated support from both a didactic and socio-cultural integration viewpoint, also to improve their self confidence and perception of self efficacy;
- *Alunni rom, sinti e camminanti* (minors belonging to the Romani, Sinti and Camminanti ethnic groups): students who come from many different geographic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Some of them are children of nomad families migrating mainly from Eastern Europe, while the majority have Italian citizenship since they belong to families who have resided in Italy for a long time. The participation of these students in school cannot be taken for granted. Dropout and irregular attendance are very common issues. Besides economic disadvantage and cultural deprivation, these students tend to perceive school as an imposition, deriving as it does from social norms and language traditions that are very different from their own. For example, it is important to remember that the Romanì is only an oral language and therefore many of these students are not used to written communication in their communities.

The majority of foreign students in Italian schools are "second generation": children of immigrants who were born in Italy and have lived here their whole

life. In the school year 2014/2015, this group was equal to 55.3% of the total non Italian school population and to 84.8% of the total non Italian preschool enrollment. The newly arrived immigrant students numbered 33,054 in school year 2014/2015, compared to 40,154 in 2007/2008. However, this group started to increase again between 2012/2013 and 2014/2015 due to the arrival of many foreign unaccompanied minors and to family reunification procedures (Santagati, Ongini, 2016).

As far as the composition of the non Italian school population is concerned, in the school year 2015/2016 girls were 48% in primary and lower secondary school, but they outnumbered boys in higher secondary school. The most numerous national groups were the Romanians (157,806), followed by Albanians (111,029), Moroccans (102,179), Chinese (45,336), Philippines (26,533), Indians (25,436), and Moldovians (25,176). The Regions with the highest numbers of foreign students were Lombardia (203,979), Veneto (91,853), Emilia Romagna (96,213), Piemonte (75,789) and Lazio (77,062) (MIUR, 2017). The highest numbers of second generation immigrant students were in the North West, followed by the North East, Centre, South and Islands. As far as the cities are concerned, in 2014/2015 Rome had the highest number of foreign students (39,922), while Milan had the highest number of second generation immigrant students (21,633), Prato the highest percentage of them as a part of the total school population (22,7%), and Napoli the highest percentage of foreign students (62.9%) and the highest percentage of newly arrived immigrant students (15%) (Santagati, Ongini, 2016).

Some schools have a higher concentration of foreign pupils than others. This is an interesting aspect that has to be carefully monitored in order to avoid marginalisation and segregation issues. In school year 2014/2015 in Italy there were 2,855 schools (5,1% of the total) with more than 30% foreign student enrollment and 569 schools with more than 50% foreign students, 76 of which are in the province of Milan. Brescia is the city with the highest percentages of these schools (15% of the total number) (Santagati, Ongini, 2016).

School results are, in general, impacted by cultural background and socio-economic conditions (ISTAT, 2015). In the school year 2014/2015 the percentage of students who were delayed in their school path or had to repeat grades due to

insufficient performance[55] is much higher among the foreign population than in the native population: 13.4% in primary school (vs. 1.8% in the native population), 39.1% in middle school (vs. 7% in the native population), 63% in high school (vs. 22.4% in the native population) (Santagati, Ongini, 2016). A delay in the school path may become a risk factor for dropout or determine the passage to a more vocationally oriented education. Table 1 shows the percentage of students repeating a grade, divided by citizenship, school cycle and year.

Table 1 – Percentages of *studenti ripetenti*

School and year	**Percentage of students repeating a grade**		
	Foreign students	*Italian students*	*Gap*
Primary school	**1.4**	**0.2**	1.2
1st year	2.9	0.4	2.5
2nd year	1.5	0.2	1.3
3rd year	0.9	0.1	0.8
4th year	0.7	0.1	0.6
5th year	0.8	0.2	0.6
Middle school	**7.5**	**3.2**	**4.3**
1st year	9.7	2.8	6.9
2nd year	7.1	3.0	4.1
3rd year	5.6	2.2	3.4
High school	**12.8**	**7.1**	**5.7**
1st year	18.5	11.3	7.2
2nd year	12.9	7.7	5.2
3rd year	11.3	7.2	4.1
4th year	8.7	5.0	3.7
5th year	5.6	3.2	2.4

Source: Di Bartolomeo et al., 2017, p.174

[55] The Italian terms used in the cited sources are: *studente in ritardo* and *studente ripetente*. The first refers to a student who has been placed in a lower grade than his/her age would require, due to linguistic and/or cultural adjustment difficulties. The latter refers to a student who failed one or more school years and therefore had to repeat it/them.

Although this picture confirms that foreign students face more difficulties in school, it is important to say that the gap is slowly narrowing: the total percentage of foreign students delayed in their studies or repeating decreased more than 6 percentage points between school year 2010/2011 and school year 2014/2015 (Santagati, Ongini, 2016). The most important hurdle to overcome for foreign students is the language, followed by math and science. The ability of the school environment to support foreign students with its human and instrumental resources is extremely important, since often their families are considered socially and culturally "weak".

Table 2 – Choices among different types of schools

School	**Italian students**	**Foreign students born in Italy**	**Foreign students not born in Italy**
Licei	47.9	35.5	23.9
Technical Institutes	31.7	36.3	36.8
Professional Institutes	20.4	28.2	39.3
Total	*100*	*100*	*100*

Source: Di Bartolomeo et al., 2017, p.175

Table 2 compares the choices for different types of schools made by Italian students, foreign students and second generation immigrant students, showing how having an immigrant background increases the propensity towards vocational education. In general, foreign students tend to prefer Technical or Professional institutes over *Licei*[56] , although in most recent years there has been a growing propensity towards theoretical studies. This might be interpreted simply as a preference for less academically selective environments, or as a practical choice, aimed at developing immediately marketable skills, so as to reach economic independence immediately after school.

Higher dropout, lower academic performance especially in important subjects

[56] For an overview of the types of schools available in Italy, see chapter 3.

such as Italian, math and science, frequent delays, concentration in vocationally oriented schools - all these elements clearly show that foreign students face more challenges than natives along their educational path. It is therefore necessary for the Italian government to set up and implement effective policies to foster the inclusion of students with an immigrant background.

6.2 The educational model for a multicultural school

The Italian education system has faced the challenge of fostering multiculturalism by adopting a theoretical model called *pedagogia interculturale*. This approach considers all types of diversity as resources to respect and to value, finding its roots in our historical tradition of inclusiveness, described in chapter 4. The choice of *pedagogia interculturale* as a model has been supported by the administrative institutions, initially by creating the *Osservatorio Nazionale per l'integrazione degli alunni stranieri e per l'educazione interculturale* (National Observatory for the integration of foreign students and intercultural education). In 2007 the newly created Observatory issued a document entitled *La via italiana per la scuola interculturale e l'integrazione degli alunni stranieri* (The Italian way for a multicultural school and for the integration of foreign students)[57]:

"Choosing the intercultural perspective doesn't mean limiting our policies to

[57] Translation by the author from Italian: "Scegliere l'ottica interculturale significa, quindi, non limitarsi a mere strategie di integrazione degli alunni immigrati, né a misure compensatorie di carattere speciale. Si tratta, invece, di assumere la diversità come paradigma dell'identità stessa della scuola nel pluralismo, come occasione per aprire l'intero sistema a tutte le differenze (di provenienza, genere, livello sociale, storia scolastica). Tale approccio si basa su una concezione dinamica della cultura, che evita sia la chiusura degli alunni/studenti in una prigione culturale, sia gli stereotipi o la folklorizzazione. Prendere coscienza della relatività delle culture, infatti, non significa approdare ad un relativismo assoluto […]. Le strategie interculturali evitano di separare gli individui in mondi culturali autonomi ed impermeabili, promuovendo invece il confronto, il dialogo ed anche la reciproca trasformazione, per rendere possibile la convivenza ed affrontare i conflitti che ne derivano. La via italiana all'intercultura unisce alla capacità di conoscere ed apprezzare le differenze, la ricerca della coesione sociale, in una nuova visione di cittadinanza adatta al pluralismo attuale, in cui si dia particolare attenzione a costruire la convergenza verso valori comuni" (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione 2007, pp.8-9).

mere strategies for the integration of foreign students, nor to general compensation measures. It means, instead, assuming diversity as the paradigm of our school's identity, taking the chance to open the system to all differences […]. This approach is based on a dynamic concept of culture that avoids closing students in a cultural prison, among stereotypes and folklore. Raising awareness of the relativity of cultures, in fact, doesn't lead to absolute relativism […]. Intercultural strategies avoid separating individuals into different impenetrable worlds, promoting instead dialogue and reciprocal sharing, in order to make conflict mediation and communal peaceful living possible. The Italian way towards intercultural education consists of the capability to know and appreciate differences, of the search for social cohesion, in a new vision of citizenship, sufficient for the current multiculturalism, promoting convergence towards common values" (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 2007, pp.8-9).

According to Pastori (2010), the main implication of adopting *pedagogia interculturale* as a perspective is the need to view migrations and the deriving multiculturalism in school not as emergencies that require temporary and specialized solutions, but as continuous and structural phenomena. This translates into an urgent need to re-think educational, didactic, organisational and relational models: intercultural education is an element of a wider process of renovation in theory and practice of education, and in the whole society (Milione, 2017). As an example, some research projects investigated on the changes in the way textbooks have been featuring migrants and the phenomena related to migrations. Over the past decades, there has been a slow, but progressive evolution towards a portrayal of migrants and migration processes that are closer and closer to reality. While there are still many images of boats carrying desperate migrants, conveying the idea of an emergency and sometimes that of an invasion, nowadays migrants are often pictured in symmetric relationships with natives, migrant women are present in the illustrations and their identity as workers is acknowledged (Valente et al., 2017).

The experience of intercultural education in the Italian schools has been positively evaluated by many experts, but there are also some critiques, concerning specifically the scarce resources invested in this area, the distance between theory and practice, the lack of a systemic approach and controls over the implementation of policies. This has generated a situation characterised by non-homogeneous practices, with peaks of excellence and areas of inefficiencies. Moreover, due to the scarcity of the resources, the system could not afford the

deep reformation and re-thinking of curricula and teaching practices that would have been necessary to face such an enormous challenge (Zadra, 2014; Pastori, 2010). Favaro (2010) believes that the process of integration of foreign students in school evolves through three subsequent phases: reception, when students coming from different countries raise curiosity and fuel stereotypes, but there is no professionalism and no experience in intercultural education; integration, when compensation measures (such as language teaching, cultural mediation, evaluation of previously acquired skills …) are activated as a response to the increase in the number of immigrants; and inclusion, when school aims to equip itself to learn and teach a new normality, that of multiculturalism. Today, in spite of the positive results described in the literature, many Italian schools are still in the second phase and struggle to reach real inclusion.

6.3 Policies for integration of students with immigrant backgrounds

The Italian government finances all public schools based on two main criteria: the number of students enrolled and the infrastructures needed, depending on the type of institution (technical schools, for example, need more laboratories and more sophisticated equipment than theoretical schools). However, specific integration needs can be addressed through national and/or local "competitive allocation" of funds (*bandi*). In other words, while the government doesn't automatically recognise higher funding based on the presence of foreign students, in the individual institutions principals and teachers can draft integration projects to require additional resources through competitive allocations. As a consequence, the lack of a systemic approach can lead to many and profound territorial and institutional differences in the way cultural integration is managed in schools.

Foreign minors, based on their language level and overall previous level of education, are often placed one or two grades below their peers. Some of them, based on the discretion of the faculty, might be recognised as BES[58]. In this case they have a *Piano Didattico Personalizzato* - PDP (Personalized Didactic Plan), the

[58] For the legislative framework and policies concerning BES students, see chapter 3.

necessary academic accommodations and additional support (*"misure dispensative* and *misure compensative")*.

The Italian Ministry of Education issued in 2006 its *Guidelines for reception and integration of foreign students,* which were updated in 2014 to acknowledge the structural character of migration processes and the subsequent changes in the school environment (MIUR, 2014). The document provides policy guidelines concerning different phases: pre-enrolment and enrolment processes, relationship with families, evaluation, counseling and vocational guidance, measures to counteract dropout, grade repetition and academic delays, language teaching and teachers' training.

According to the Ministry, the distribution of foreign students among schools and within classes of the same school is very important to avoid risks of segregation and marginalization (Milione, 2017). This is why the pre-enrolment phase has to be coordinated among schools with the help of the Regional School Offices. Normally, the percentage of foreign students should not surpass 30%, even if there have been many situations where this limit was not respected. In the literature some experiences are documented in which mono-ethnic classes were formed in areas under strong migration pressure. In spite of the harsh critiques received from an ideological and political perspective, some of these experiences had positive didactic and social results (Magnanini, 2016).

A foreign student's enrolment can happen at the beginning or during the year, at the time of his/her arrival in the country, following the normal online procedure, although if the minor's family doesn't have a computer and/or an internet connection, the school has to provide the necessary practical support. After online enrolment, documents are requested: residence permit, health certifications and previous academic records. If the parents' and/or student's immigration status is irregular (absence of residence permit), the right to education has to be guaranteed anyway (**Presidential Decree 349/1999, Art.45**).

Schools have to build and maintain positive relationships with the foreign students' parents and families, making all possible efforts to understand their situation and offering cultural/linguistic mediation, also through parents' associations. Providing guidance to students and their families is essential. For example, many foreign parents underestimate the importance of preschool, which is instead a crucial step both for socialisation and language learning. Later on, when the student has to choose his/her academic path, it is important for school and teachers to offer guidance focused on the real skills and aspirations,

rather than being influenced by prejudicial views about immigrants' social status and economic needs. During the educational path, schools have to set up monitoring procedures and support mechanisms for students who lag behind or are at risk of dropping out (MIUR, 2014; Di Bartolomeo et al., 2017).

As far as language training is concerned, the Ministry identifies three phases in the process: the initial phase aimed at building basic communication skills (levels A1 and A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages); the second phase aimed at strengthening language skills in order to be able to use them for academic learning; the third phase in which solid language skills become a means of fostering intercultural learning in the whole class, an inclusive environment in which all students can share their cultural background.

As a matter of fact, in recent years, a new sensitivity has developed in Italian schools about the importance of valuing linguistic diversity (MIUR, 2014). This is obviously not only an Italian phenomenon. As a matter of fact, in 2015 the Council of Europe published its *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education* where it also provided some agreed-upon important definitions:

"Plurilingual and intercultural competence is the ability to use a plural repertoire of linguistic and cultural resources to meet communication needs or interact with other people, and enrich that repertoire while doing so. Plurilingual competence refers to the repertoire of resources which individual learners acquire in all the languages they know or have learned, and which also relate to the cultures associated with those languages (languages of schooling, regional/minority and migration languages, modern or classical languages); pluriculturality denotes the ability to participate in different cultures, inter alia by acquiring several languages. Intercultural competence, for its part, is the ability to experience otherness and cultural diversity, to analyse that experience and to derive benefit from it. Once acquired, intercultural competence makes it easier to understand otherness, establish cognitive and affective links between past and new experiences of otherness, mediate between members of two (or more) social groups and their cultures, and question the assumptions of one's own cultural group and environment" (Council of Europe, 2015, p.10).

Foreign minors are, in principle, evaluated with the same criteria as their Italian peers (**Presidential Decree 349/1999, Art.45 and Presidential Decree**

122/2009), but the Ministry specifies that formative assessment[59] should take into consideration the learning path of each student, and his/her previous academic experience and achievements. Only foreign students who are recognized as BES and have a Personalised Didactic Plan can be evaluated with individualised criteria. In case of serious communication problems, the presence of cultural and linguistic mediators might be required.

All principles and policies described in this paragraph require training teachers in order to be implemented (MIUR, 2014). Italian teachers often recognise their lack of skills in intercultural education. At the same time, the numerous documented practices of intercultural education suggest that there is already a store of knowledge and experiences to be valued and transferred. At the moment, the priorities are: the definition of a theoretical corpus of knowledge to support intercultural education practices; the identification of key competences for teachers to be effective in a multicultural environment; the study of effective methods and didactic approaches; and the design of training sessions. Research findings and teachers' training experiences so far have demonstrated that it is important to start looking at foreign students as people who have rights, and not only special needs. A real intercultural dialogue is possible, in education and, more generally, in society, only if symmetric relationships are established. Instead, nowadays, many foreign minors and adult immigrants live a condition of "subordinate integration" which cannot be the foundation for a peaceful multicultural society (Fiorucci, 2015). The issue of citizenship for second generation immigrants, described in the following paragraph, is a good example to describe the contradictory positions expressed by the Italian policymakers in the field of immigration and integration.

6.4 Citizenship and integration

The increasing number of foreign students born in Italy poses new challenges also from the viewpoint of policies concerning citizenship. The Italian

[59] *Formative assessment* refers to a wide variety of methods that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs and progress during a lesson, unit, or course. Formative assessments are commonly contrasted with *summary assessments*, which are used to evaluate student learning progress and achievement at the conclusion of a specific instructional period.

citizenship law currently in effect (**Law 91/1992**) is no longer adequate for a multicultural society, since it strongly privileges the principle of *ius sanguinis* over that of *ius soli*[60]. The legislation does not recognize the children of two foreign parents as Italian nationals until their eighteenth birthday, when they have one year to request citizenship, and requires that applicants demonstrate uninterrupted residence in the country since birth. Moreover, the current Italian immigration law makes their right to reside in Italy dependent on a legal work contract, thus exposing those who are unemployed, on temporary job contracts, or part of Italy's large under the table job market, to the constant risk of deportation.

The principle of *ius sanguinis* was introduced in the Italian legislation in 1912 with the first organic law on citizenship (**Law n. 155/1912**). At that time, the *ius sanguinis* principle was motivated by the necessity of giving the possibility of gaining Italian citizenship to the children of Italian emigrants, so that they could keep a link with their motherland. When the new law on citizenship was adopted, in 1992, the historical conditions that had justified the adoption of the *ius sanguinis* had ceased to exist for a couple of decades and Italy had started to be a country of immigration; however, Law 91/1992 kept the *ius sanguinis* principle in force.

According to Law 91/1992, the Italian citizenship can be acquired by:

- *Birth*: if at least one of the parents has Italian citizenship, the child will automatically receive Italian citizenship at birth.
- *Adoption*: if a foreign minor is adopted by an Italian citizen, he/she will automatically receive Italian citizenship.
- *Marriage*: the foreign wife/husband of an Italian citizen can acquire Italian citizenship after two years of legal residence in Italy since the date of marriage or, if resident abroad, after three years of marriage. These periods are reduced by half if the couple has natural or adopted children.
- *Birth and residence in Italy*: this is the case of second generation migrants. A foreigner who was born in Italy and who has resided in Italy without any interruption until the eighteenth year of age, can obtain Italian citizenship if, within one year from their eighteenth birthday, he/she declares their desire

[60] *Ius sanguinis* literally means "right of the blood". The expression refers to systems in which citizenship is inherited from parents. *Ius soli* literally means "right of the soil". The expression refers to systems in which citizenship is acquired by birthplace.

to become an Italian citizen.

- *Naturalisation*: the Italian citizenship can be obtained by a foreigner who has been legally residing in Italy for at least ten years; such period is reduced to four years in the case of EU citizens, and to five years in the case of stateless people, refugees and foreigners of age adopted by an Italian citizen. However, the access to citizenship by naturalisation is not automatic: once the interested person has fulfilled the prerequisites and has submitted its application, the granting of citizenship is at the discretion of the competent authorities who have to give a judgment on the basis of the level of inclusion of the interested person in Italian society, his/her personality (social status, past convictions) and his/her economic self-sufficiency.

On 13 October 2015, the Italian lower parliamentary chamber approved a proposal (**Draft Law 2092/2015**) to facilitate citizenship acquisition by children of long-term resident third country nationals. Had it been passed by the upper legislative chamber, the law would have facilitated the acquisition of Italian citizenship both for children born in Italy from parents in possession of an EU long term residence permit, and for children who arrived in Italy before the age of 18, have resided in Italy for at least five years, and have attended school in this country.

According to the proposal, Italian citizenship can be obtained in three different ways:

- *Tempered ius soli*: the minor born in Italy to foreign parents, at least one of which has a permanent residence permit, is given Italian citizenship. A permanent residence permit in Italy is given to those who have had a residence permit for at least 5 years, have an income of at least 6000€/year and adequate accommodation, and have passed an Italian language test.
- *Ius culturae*: the minor who was born in Italy or has arrived in Italy before turning 12, who has attended schools regularly in Italy for at least 5 years, with positive results in elementary school, and whose parents are legal residents in Italy, is given Italian citizenship.
- *Naturalization:* the minor who arrived in Italy between 12 and 18 years of age, has resided in Italy for at least 6 years and has attended and successfully completed at least one school cycle or a professional course, can receive Italian citizenship.

The draft law was supposed to be approved in 2016, but instead it has languished in the Senate for months, amid fierce opposition from the right wing parties that

improperly sought to link the proposed reform with the migration crisis that has seen thousands of people arrive in Italy. After a long and conflicted political debate, at the end of 2017 the governing Democratic Party (PD) has definitively given up on passing the reform before Italy's general election, which is expected in early March 2018.

Chapter 7
Inclusive education in Europe: main trends and issues

"Because children don't count if they are not counted, the capacity building of education systems to improve their data on children at risk of exclusion and marginalization is an important policy issue internationally"
(EASNIE, 2011, p.17)

As discussed in chapter 1, currently a growing body of scientific literature and policy statements is encouraging national governments to reform their education systems to make schools more inclusive. The Salamanca statement about inclusive schools is still the main pillar of this ongoing process:
"The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school" (UNESCO, Salamanca Framework for Action, 1994, p.7).
Many international agencies and think tanks are advocating for this interpretation of inclusive education. For example, UNESCO proposes different categories of

"justifications" for working towards inclusive practices and educating all children together:

- the educational justification: inclusive schools have to develop ways of teaching that respond to individual differences, benefitting all children;
- the social justification: inclusive schools are able to change attitudes towards diversity and form the basis for a just, non-discriminatory society;
- the economic justification: it costs less to establish and maintain schools that educate all children together than to set up a complex system of different schools "specializing" in different groups of children (UNESCO, 2009).

Financing and support of educational services for students with special needs is a primary concern for all countries, regardless of available resources. Yet, a growing body of research asserts that inclusive education is not only positive from a pedagogical viewpoint, but also cost-effective, and that equity is the way to excellence (Peters, 2004).

In order to realise the right to education, the *education for all (EFA)* movement is increasingly concerned with linking inclusive education with quality education. While there is no single universally accepted definition of quality education, most conceptual frameworks incorporate two important components: "the cognitive development of the student and the capability to promote values and attitudes of responsible citizenship and/or creative and emotional development" (UNESCO, 2009, p.10).

At the core of inclusive education is the human right to education, stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1949. Equally important is the right of children not to be discriminated against, as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). As a result, all children have the right to receive an education that does not discriminate against them based on disability, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, or any other characteristics. This is the reason why, even if the school inclusion process has different degrees of advancement in different European countries, the consensus of experts and policy think tanks is widespread: students with special education needs must have access to mainstream schools, which should accommodate them with a child-centered pedagogy capable of meeting those needs (UNESCO, Salamanca Statement, 1994). Practically, this means that mainstreaming is a vital part of inclusion and that pupils with special needs have the right "to a curriculum that is *appropriate to their needs* and that *education systems have the duty to provide this*" (D'Alessio, Watkins, 2009, p.237). Moreover, the curriculum should have a "dual

focus" (D'Alessio, Watkins, 2009, p.237) taking into consideration both academic and social learning. All in all, inclusion should be always considered as a process and not a permanent state: schools and educators will always have to make progress in their practices to enable the full participation of all students (UNESCO, 2017).

According to the European Parliament, the goal of inclusive education requires, first of all, political will: "clear commitment at European and international levels will play a key role in supporting decision-makers at national level" (European Parliament, 2017, p.6). It also requires in-depth systemic change in order to be able to provide high-quality education for all learners in mainstream settings: "special attention needs to be devoted to learners at risk of marginalisation, exclusion and underachievement, by actively seeking to support them and responding flexibly to their circumstances and needs" (European Parliament, 2017, p.6). Third, a reflection on and re-definition of the existing human and financial resources is necessary: "inclusive education needs to be part of the general funding allocated to schools for the education of all learners" (European Parliament, 2017, p.6). In many cases, additional funding is given to schools, if required, to provide intensified support for learners at risk of failure. Extra financial resources targeted at learners in need of even more intensive support might also be assigned. However, this model requires some kind of "labeling" of learners based on official decisions, preventing schools from seeing diversity as an opportunity and possibly favouring exclusionary strategic behaviours. This is why international organizations encourage countries to adopt a preventive approach, instead of a compensatory approach, promoting educational settings that combine "universal design for accessible learning with extra support when needed. Inclusive design in educational accessibility promotes a school-based approach to inclusive education – instead of a needs-based approach – that focuses on learning environments designed for all learners in terms of curriculum, assessment and pedagogy" (European Parliament, 2017, p.38).

7.1 Inclusive education in Europe, at a glance

European member states are participating in the process towards inclusive education, but with very different starting points and educational philosophies

(D'Alessio, Watkins, 2009; European Parliament, 2017). The Italian model of inclusive school is unique at the moment. Different levels of inclusion/non inclusion are present in Europe: special schools and classes are still very common in some countries, while others are progressively reducing the number of them. Currently, despite the stated commitment of EU members to inclusion, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are still often placed in segregated institutions, or in mainstream settings with inadequate support. The evidence available shows that students with special educational needs frequently leave school with few or no qualifications, subsequently moving into specialist post-school training which takes them further away from the labour market. They are much more likely to be unemployed or economically inactive than non-disabled people, and those who are relatively successful in the labour market struggle to find a job paying a living wage (NESSE, 2012).

There are still many differences in the criteria used by member States to identify children with special educational needs and to decide where to place them following identification, whether in mainstream or special schools (D'Alessio, Watkins, 2009; European Parliament, 2017). For sure, ethnic minorities and socio-economically deprived pupils tend to be overrepresented in special needs settings. This raises serious questions about the role of special schools and/or classes in further isolating pupils who are already marginalised. Experts believe that they could, instead, be included in mainstream schools, if there were greater investment in the development of their language skills and a higher level of sensitivity to cultural differences (NESSE, 2012).

However, an analysis of recent legislative changes in European countries allows to us to identify some common trends that might lead towards higher levels of inclusiveness. First of all, the concept of "special educational need" is broadening. A good example of this trend is the move made by the Italian government with the December 27, 2012 *Direttiva* and the following *Circolare Applicativa* 8/2013[61] to formally recognise socioeconomic and/or "cultural disadvantage" as a source of special educational needs. Secondly, we can observe an extension in the range of rights for pupils with special needs and their families, concerning access to compulsory education, mainstream schools, and specialist support and services. Another visible trend is the progressive delegation of responsibilities concerning inclusive education to local and/or

[61] See chapter 3 for more details on this provision.

regional level bodies, together with improvements in the frameworks/structures of provision (such as, for example, the transformation of special schools into resource centres), and the promotion of specific tools to support learning and participation (D'Alessio, Watkins, 2009).
Similarly, the European Parliament comments on the ongoing changes in inclusive educational policies across EU members based on an analysis of official documents. These sources describe the move "from exclusion to the right to education, from integration to inclusion, from a charity or medical model to a rights-based model and from homogeneous models of education to personalized ones" (European Parliament, 2017, p.17).

7.2 Methodological issues

As with all sectors of social and education science, research on inclusive education uses qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data is useful to share concepts and information, and to build a broader understanding of developments and practices across member states. Quantitative data is also essential to assess the dimension of phenomena and to make comparisons among systems. Currently, there are no shared definitions of disability and/or special educational needs that we can use comparatively across European countries. At the same time, the imposition of "external" definitions of disability or special educational needs on data collection presents significant methodological difficulties, because countries use their own legislation and classification systems that are different across Europe. For this reason, EASNIE member countries have agreed to take a "bottom-up" approach that uses the country's own legal definition of special educational needs as the basis for data gathering (EASNIE, 2009). However, using country definitions of special educational needs also poses a number of methodological challenges, if the goal is to produce comparable datasets (European Parliament, 2017). According to D'Alessio and Watkins (2009), some issues are general and some are specifically related to the nature of the subject being studied. Among the general problems, we have to consider that national institutions are not always able to have data from the same academic year and, as a result, that there may be differences between, as well as within, countries. Moreover, the age range of compulsory school education is not the same across Europe, and some countries count

pupils outside the age range if they are enrolled in compulsory education. Proceeding on to issues specifically related to the topic of inclusive education, other methodological difficulties originate from the fact that countries have different legal definitions of special educational needs, and therefore different "categories" of special needs aren't recognized in the legislation. Obviously these differences do not reflect variations in the incidence and types of special educational needs in European countries, but derive merely from different legislation and assessment criteria. Additionally, while some countries provide official "recognition" of a pupil's special educational needs in the form of a certificate or other legal documents, other countries have chosen not to do so. And even within the countries that do have a procedure for issuing official decisions about special educational needs, these pupils are not the only ones counted. As a result, data about pupils with special educational needs are hardly comparable (D'Alessio, Watkins, 2009; European Parliament, 2017).

These points have led EASNIE member countries to the conclusion that operations such as comparing the overall numbers and/or percentages of pupils officially recognised as having special needs, or comparing the numbers and/or percentages of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools are highly questionable. The only comparable set of data between countries is the percentage of pupils who are educated in special institutions or special classes. In using such an indicator, the factor that is being compared is placement in a segregated setting, a concept that most countries are able to agree upon, referring to a situation where "the pupil with special needs follows education in separate special classes or special schools for the largest part (80% or more) of the school day" (D'Alessio, Watkins, 2009, p.242).

The EASNIE survey on inclusive education is run every two years based on data provided by official ministerial sources, using country-based definitions and classifications. The information provided on a periodical base is: the number of compulsory school-aged pupils (including those with SEN); the number of compulsory school-aged pupils who have SEN, in all educational settings; the number of pupils with SEN in segregated special schools; and the number of pupils with SEN in segregated special classes in mainstream schools; the number of pupils with SEN in inclusive settings. It is important to emphasise that these indicators cannot provide any information about the quality or appropriateness of the education provided for pupils with special needs. Other qualitative

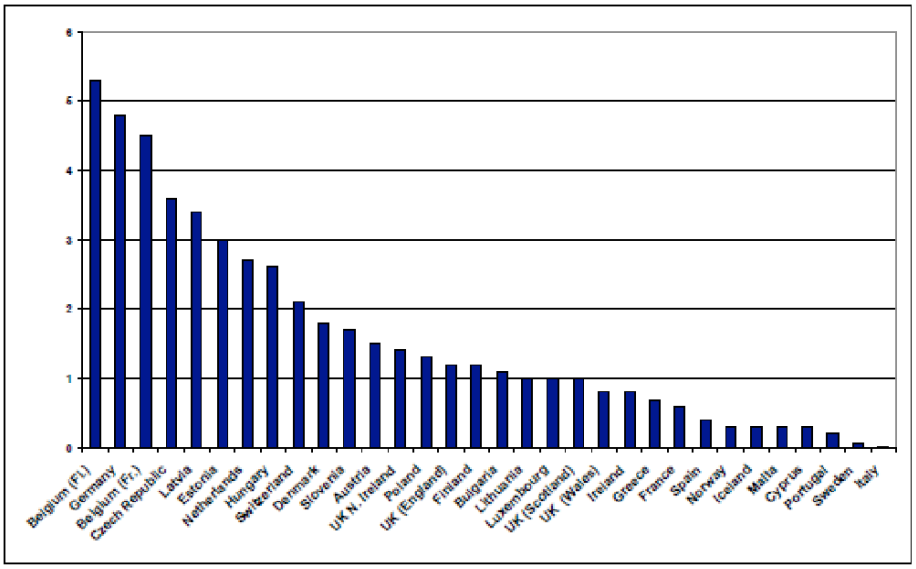
indicators should be considered in relation to statistical data, if trends in provision and movement towards inclusion are to be fully understood.

7.3 Comparative indicators

Inclusive education is a "policy vision" (European Parliament, 2017, p.21) for all European countries, but they are implementing it in different ways. None of EU countries has a fully inclusive system where all learners attend mainstream schools and are in class with their peers for 100% of the time. Countries use different forms of separate provision of education: separate special schools; separate educational units; educational provision maintained by health and social services; education provided by parents at home; and different forms of privately funded education. However, the role of specialist provision is becoming less important, in favour of mainstream schools (European Parliament, 2017).

As we previously explained, EASNIE experts believe that the only comparable data we have, at the time being, is data concerning pupils in segregated settings. Figure 1 displays the number and percentage of students with special educational needs placed in segregated special classes and schools in European countries. The data refer to the year 2010, since this is the latest available comparative statistics that includes Italy. We can easily observe how segregated placement is still quite common in countries like Belgium, Germany, Check Republic, Latvia, Estonia, the Netherlands, and others, while it is nearly inexistent in Italy, where segregated classes have been abolished since 1977.

Figure 1 – Pupils in special schools and classes as a percentage of the total population



Source: Nesse Network (2012)

Special schools, introduced in Italy with the Gentile reform in 1923, have never been abolished, but are definitely a marginal reality. In 2015 there were about 70 of them, mainly in the North of Italy, attended by approximately 1,800 students: nearly 1% of the total population with disabilities. The majority of these schools are public (only 2 of them are private) and work in collaboration with rehabilitation centers, residential communities for people with disabilities and/or hospitals. This way, they are able to offer both educational and health services and to strengthen the synergy between education, training and medical treatment (Trigari, 2015).

All in all, in Italy today 98% of all students attend mainstream schools (Ianes, 2015). There are also some examples of mainstream schools that developed special programs for inclusive education, opened to all students. For example, some institutes offer courses in Italian and, simultaneously, in the sign language and some others train all their students to read using the Braille system. These programs are examples of innovative inclusive settings (Trigari, 2015).

7.4 School segregation in Europe

As shown in Figure 1, the use of special school and/or special classes for students with special educational needs is still quite common, notwithstanding the fact that Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) imposes on member states a duty to ensure that children with disabilities can access "an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live" (UN, 2006). Across Europe, there are schools with high concentrations of children who are disadvantaged on the basis of their socioeconomic, ethnic or cultural background, or because of a disability. According to the Council of Europe, "their separation or concentration in specific schools and classrooms harms their learning opportunities and is a clear violation of their right to education and their right not to be discriminated against" (Council of Europe, 2017, p.7). It is also important to emphasise that access to mainstream schools does not necessarily guarantee inclusion, if some children are still separated from their peers in didactic activities, due to a lack of resources to ensure accessibility and provide forms of individual support.

Schools and governments refer to a series of factors to justify school segregation, such as language difficulties, parental preferences, residential patterns, the need to pay attention to specific educational needs, and others. Strong vested interests in the area of education can explain a certain passivity on the part of states in fighting against segregated education and/or situations of relative privilege in education (Council of Europe, 2017). This attitude can translate into a serious harm for the quality of education systems. As a matter of fact, "lower quality education in schools can be both the cause and consequence of school segregation" (Council of Europe, 2017, p.11). On the one hand, lower quality education tends to polarise educational demand, thus becoming a cause of increased school segregation. On the other, schools with a concentration of disadvantaged or vulnerable children require more human and financial means, strong leadership and ambitious educational projects to improve the learning experience of all children. However, in the absence of such means, education levels usually drop. In this sense, lower quality education can be seen also as a consequence of school segregation. In sum, lower quality education and school segregation are the ingredients of a dangerous vicious circle, in contrast with the right of all children to education on an equal basis and reducing their

opportunities to develop essential life skills through contact with others: "it is often a first step in a life of segregation" (Council of Europe, 2017, p.13). Moreover, students enrolled in special education do not usually obtain a recognised diploma and this clearly undermines their future in the job market.
For the most advantaged children, and for the majority of them, segregation prevents them from acquiring important social and life skills as a result of lack of interaction with students from a different ethnic or cultural background, or with children with disabilities, and weakens the bonds of social cohesion. For example, lack of intercultural contacts could translate into less understanding of diversity and may exacerbate attitudes of racism, discrimination and exclusion among youth. On the contrary, inclusive education facilitates the emergence of shared values in diverse societies (Council of Europe, 2017).
Evidence from research shows that school segregation has negative implications not only for minority students themselves, but also for the overall performance of education systems (OECD, 2012). This is due to the fact that heterogeneity in learning levels is positive especially for the most disadvantaged students, while the observable "loss" derived from heterogeneity for the most advantaged pupils is negligible (Council of Europe, 2017).
School segregation is also negative from an economic point of view. As a matter of fact, special schools and other forms of separate education are more expensive than mainstream schools (UNESCO, 2009; Council of Europe, 2017). Firstly, separation increases dropout rates, generating high costs in terms of human capital loss. Secondly, there are costs induced by the need to implement second chance programmes and other forms of remedial education, which could be significantly reduced with inclusive education (Council of Europe, 2017).

7.5 Moving towards more inclusive education systems in Europe

EU member states have the obligation to secure the right of every child to quality education without discrimination. In order to achieve this goal, the European Council has issued the following recommendations (European Council, 2017):

- ***Legal prohibition of discrimination***. In some countries, the prohibition of discrimination in education is not sufficiently established in legislation and it is therefore necessary to amend existing laws, eliminating every possible

ambiguity and clearly addressing "situations in which tradition, freedom of choice, parental consent or urban segregation are used to legitimise discrimination and high concentrations of Roma children, children with a migrant background or children with disabilities in specific schools" (European Council, 2017, p.19). Sanctions should be in place against decisions and measures which infringe on the right to education without discrimination.

- ***School de-segregation strategies***. De-segregation requires time and a strong political commitment. Short-term projects based on external funding are often unsuccessful. On the contrary, governments should adopt comprehensive de-segregation strategies, with clear targets and sufficient resources. Such strategies include: awareness-raising campaigns; measures to overcome specific vested interests; actions to ensure high expectations and high-quality education for all; funding mechanisms to ensure that all schools have the necessary professional expertise and means; and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- ***Awareness of inclusive education***. The importance of inclusive education for social cohesion should be clearly communicated. Campaigns to raise awareness of the benefits of inclusive education on aspects such as educational performance, reduction of dropout and labour market integration can have a positive impact on the attitudes and expectations of society as a whole.
- ***Quality of education in all schools***. High concentrations of special educational needs in some schools tend to lower expectations regarding the learning possibilities of children. Teachers have little incentive to remain in such schools, and staff turnover makes it more difficult to design quality educational projects. It is essential that policymakers implement measures to ensure the quality of education in all schools. As already mentioned, the lack of action to ensure the quality of education feeds a vicious circle of low quality of education and high concentration of students belonging to disadvantaged groups.
- ***Educational planning with inclusive lens***. Governments must ensure a balanced distribution of vulnerable children and adequate allocation of resources to improve school infrastructure in poor neighbourhoods. They also need to design and implement active policies to diagnose specific educational needs and to avoid high numbers of students starting school later

than is standard – such as migrant and refugee children – in the less desired schools.

- ***School admissions***. Rules about admissions to schools differ among European national education systems: some of them allow for choice, while others allocate students to the nearest school; some provide clear procedures for managing cases of oversubscription, others grant schools a degree of discretion in selecting students. The clearer the rules for school admissions, the lower the likelihood that discriminatory practices may take place. In order to avoid discriminatory decisions, schools should establish priorities of access for students with special needs, introducing means-tested systems and reserving places for students from certain disadvantaged groups. Robust monitoring mechanisms should be devised.
- ***Prohibition of selective testing***. In some education systems, schools can rely on the results of selection tests to exclude some students from enrolment. While enrolment tests are still allowed in some states, they should not be used to deny children access to particular schools. Moreover, disadvantaged families tend to feel intimidated by teachers or school principals, accepting testing as a legitimate practice. The best way to ensure that testing does not become a discriminating tool is the clear prohibition of this practice.
- ***Needs assessment***. Individual assessment of educational needs is a precondition for allocating additional support where it is required. Needs assessment should be carried out using validated and objective indicators, including language difficulties, learning difficulties or disabilities and individual circumstances which can hinder a child's possibilities of learning on an equal basis with others.
- ***Balanced distribution of vulnerable students***. As already discussed, a system in which some schools have large proportions of children from vulnerable groups, while others are much more socially and academically homogenous, might turn out to be very unequal, generating vicious cycles. It is therefore essential to devise adequate mechanisms to avoid high concentrations of disadvantaged students in specific schools. Each public or publicly funded school should reserve a minimum number of places for students with special educational needs. Additionally, governments should take actions to prevent disadvantaged students from being concentrated in the poorest and or less demanded schools.

- ***Socially balanced school districts***. Shaping school districts that mix neighbourhoods with different social characteristics and providing adequate transportation services may facilitate a balanced distribution of students, leading to a more inclusive education system. These measures should be balanced against the principle of proximity and the need for community involvement in education.
- ***Incentivising the best teachers***. Difficult school settings usually face high levels of teacher turnover that in turn prevent the consolidation of long-term educational goals. Measures that incentivise teachers for working in schools located in socially and economically deprived neighborhoods should be implemented because they are likely to make these schools more attractive to families that would normally refuse to enroll their children in such schools. Additionally, teachers working in difficult schools should be provided with specific training and support so as to be able to cope with challenges.
- ***Parental participation***. Families' lack of participation in school life is an important obstacle to inclusive education, generating cultural distance between these families and the school, and reducing opportunities for dialogue. The lack of information and involvement can lead parents to passively accept school segregation of their children. On the contrary, research at international level has demonstrated that parental involvement has a positive impact on school climate, social cohesion and educational performance. Only a few member states have developed specific policies to reach out and engage, for example, with migrant families. These practices include school or community mediators, who often play an important role in closing the gap between schools and families.

Chapter 8
Assessing and evaluating inclusion

"Inclusion involves change. It is an unending process
of increasing learning and participation
for all students. It is an ideal to which schools can aspire
but which is never fully reached. But inclusion happens as soon as
the process of increasing participation is started.
An inclusive school is one that is on the move"
(Booth, Ainscow, 2000, p.3)

Experts have repeatedly cited the absence of a structured system of assessment and evaluation as among the weakest areas of the Italian inclusive education model (Treelle, Caritas, Fondazione Agnelli, 2011; Ruzzante, 2017). However, systemic evaluation processes are in a phase of change and there are some recent developments in this area. As a matter of fact, inclusion has been recently introduced among the indicators to be monitored for external evaluation of schools. These novelties will be discussed below, after describing the general policy framework concerning evaluation of schools.

8.1 The Italian policy framework

The Presidential Decree 80/2013[62] established a national system for the

[62] Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica 28 marzo 2013, n. 80. *Regolamento sul sistema nazionale di valutazione in materia di istruzione e formazione.*

evaluation of schools (SNV) whose implementation started in 2014/15. It develops over a three-year cycle and it is structured into the following phases:
1) **self evaluation**: each school is provided with a wide set of data on its resources, processes and outcomes, and is then asked to produce a self-assessment report (*Rapporto di Autovalutazione*, RAV) identifying strengths and weaknesses, based on a standardised template from the National Agency for School Evaluation (*Istituto nazionale per la valutazione del sistema educativo di istruzione e di formazione*, INVALSI). Each school also has to identify areas to be improved and targets to be met over the next few years. These reports also include the results of the annual INVALSI standardised student tests;
2) **external evaluation**: external teams, coordinated by inspectors, visit up to 10% of all schools each year. Evaluation, based on indicators drafted by the INVALSI, provides the schools with elements to implement an improvement plan. Actions for improvement should be taken also with the collaboration of the National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research (*Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione per l'Innovazione e la Ricerca Educativa*, INDIRE) and/or through collaborations with universities, research institutions, and professional and cultural associations, within the limits of the human and financial resources available;
3) **public reporting**: publication of the self-assessment report including the results of the improvement process during the three-year cycle, using comparable data and indicators, with a view to offering stakeholders greater transparency (Piccioli, 2017; Corsini, Zanazzi, 2015).
The self evaluation report (RAV) contains a section dedicated to "inclusion and differentiation" (*inclusione e differenziazione*), dedicated to the strategies adopted by the school to promote inclusion processes and respecting of diversity, adaptation of teaching and learning processes in class and in other educational activities to the needs of each student. The area is divided in two sub-areas: inclusion of students with special needs; actions for valuing and managing differences; actions for remediation and development. The guideline for drafting the report contain inputs, under the form of questions, to help schools reflect on its policies and practices:

INCLUSION AND DIFFERENTIATION

- What are the activities done in the school to favour inclusion of students with a disability in their group of peers? Are they effective?
- Do curricular and support teachers use teaching methodologies that favour inclusion? If so, are these effective?
- Are the goals established in the Individual Educational Plans (PEI) reached? Is progress monitored regularly?
- In what ways does the school take care of students with special educational needs (BES)? Are the Personalised Didactic Plans (PDP) updated regularly?
- Does the school organise activities to welcome foreign students who have just arrived in Italy? If so, are these activities effective to favour their inclusion in the school community?
- Does the school offer courses of Italian language for foreign students who have just arrived in Italy? If so, are these effective to foster their academic success?
- Does the school organise activities on the theme of multiculturalism and diversity? What is the impact of these activities on the quality of relationships among students?
- Does the school management periodically verify if the objectives and goals written in the Annual Plan for Inclusion (PAI)[63] have been reached?

REMEDIATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- Which (groups of) students have the most difficulties in learning?
- What interventions have been promoted to respond to their learning needs? Are they effective?
- Does the school have constant monitoring, assessment and evaluation mechanisms in place for the students with the most difficulties in learning?

[63] At the single school's level, a group called GLI (*Gruppo Lavoro Inclusione*) is responsible for drafting the annual *Piano per l'Inclusione* – PAI (Annual plan for inclusion), which at the end of every school year summarises the state of inclusion needs, the available resources, the activities implemented, their costs and results, and the planning for the following school year. To have more information, see chapter 5.

- In what ways does the school work to improve the attitude of students with behavioural problems? Have these ways been effective?
- Is individualised teaching adopted during classroom work to respond to students' needs? How often?

Following these guidelines, schools have to produce a summary evaluation based on the following statement: "the school commits to the inclusion of students with special educational needs, values cultural differences and adapts teaching styles and methodologies to the formative needs of each student, also through remediation and development plans" (MIUR, 2017b)[64]. The summary evaluation is presented as shown in Table 1.

Tabella 1 – School self evaluation (RAV), section on inclusion and differentiation

Description of the situation	*Evaluation*
The activities organised by the school are insufficient to guarantee inclusion of students with special educational needs. The school doesn't dedicate enough attention to respecting cultural differences and diversity. The differentiation of didactic paths to respond to students' needs is absent or insufficient, or single teachers implement differentiation in few classes, without any school coordination.	**VERY CRITICAL** (Levels 1 and 2)
The activities organised by the school for students with special educational needs are sufficient. The quality of didactic interventions for students with special needs is generally acceptable, but there are aspects to improve. The educational objectives for these students are loosely defined and their	**SOMEWHAT CRITICAL** (Levels 3 and 4)

[64] Translation by the author from the Italian text: "La scuola cura l'inclusione degli studenti con bisogni educativi speciali, valorizza le differenze culturali, adegua l'insegnamento ai bisogni formativi di ciascuno studente attraverso percorsi di recupero e potenziamento

achievement is not monitored. The school dedicates little attention to respecting differences and cultural diversity. Differentiation of didactic paths in response to single students' needs is sufficiently structured, but it is not applied in a general way at the school level. Educational goals are not always defined and forms of monitoring and evaluation are not present. Individualised didactic interventions during classroom work are not widespread at the school level.	
The activities organised by the school for students with special educational needs are effective. In general, didactic activities are of good quality. The school monitors the achievement of the objectives established for students with special educational needs. The school promotes respect for differences and cultural diversity. Differentiation of didactic paths in response to single students' needs is well structured at the school level. Educational goals are defined and forms of monitoring and evaluation are present. Individualised didactic interventions during classroom work are widespread enough at the school level.	**POSITIVE** (Levels 5 and 6)
Different stakeholders are actively involved in the activities for inclusion (curricular teachers, support teachers, tutors, families, local administrations, associations, peers). Didactic activities for students with special needs are of good quality. The school systematically monitors the achievement of the objectives set for students with special educational needs and, as a consequence of this, the interventions are re-designed. The school effectively promotes respect for differences and cultural diversity. Differentiation of didactic paths in response to single students' needs is effectively structured at the school level.	**EXCELLENT** (Level 7)

In July 2015, the Italian government adopted *La Buona Scuola* reform (Law 107/2015) of the national education and training system. This provision aimed to affirm the central role of the school in society and had among its goals an improvement in schools' inclusiveness, strengthening its network through interactive collaboration with families and the local community as a whole, including local bodies, authorities, associations, and non-governmental organisations (EASNIE, 2017b). Being a delegation law, it provided for general principles that the government must respect when adopting legislative decrees. As a matter of fact, two years later **Decree 66/2017** entitled *Norme per la promozione dell'inclusione scolastica degli studenti con disabilità* was approved. Since all pupils with special educational needs attend mainstream schools, the provision is aimed at ensuring they receive good quality education and better job opportunities after school[65]. It seeks to build an ever more welcoming school for pupils with disabilities, strengthening the role of families and associations in inclusion processes and involving – especially through in-service training – all the school staff. Each school will have to draft a specific Inclusion Plan (*Piano Annuale per l'inclusione, PAI*) within the framework of the three-year plan of didactic offerings (*Piano Triennale dell'Offerta Formativa, PTOF*). School teaching and non-teaching staff will also be provided according to the school Inclusion Plan.

Decree 66/2017 also includes, in Article 4, an improvement of the school external evaluation procedure, introducing indicators for assessment. The National Agency for School Evaluation (INVALSI), together with the Permanent Observatory for school inclusion (*Osservatorio Permanente per l'Inclusione Scolastica*) established in Article 15, are supposed to define indicators for assessing the quality of school inclusion based on the following criteria:

- level of inclusiveness of the *Piano Triennale dell'Offerta Formativa*, *PTOF*;
- development of paths for individualisation and differentiation of educational processes, defined and activated by the school, on the basis of pupils' specific characteristics;
- level of involvement of the different stakeholders in the elaboration of the Plan for inclusion and in activating inclusion processes;
- realization of initiatives aimed at developing professional competence of the school staff;

[65] For more details on the Decree, see chapter 3.

- use of shared tools and criteria for the evaluation of students' results, also through the recognition of different ways of communicating;
- level of accessibility and usability of resources, equipment, structures and spaces, textbooks and management softwares adopted by the school.

8.2 The international policy framework and guidelines

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE) worked on the development of a set of indicators, with a clear focus on policy conditions that may support or hinder the development of inclusive education within schools. In particular, the project aimed to produce an initial set of quantitative and qualitative indicators to be used at national level and a smaller set of key quantitative and qualitative indicators relating to policy conditions to be used at the European level. The indicators, based on the outcomes of previous works and on those of a European hearing of young people with special educational needs (EASNIE, 2007), were developed with a bottom-up approach at the European level to ensure applicability to EU countries' diverse systems of education. They cover three key areas of inclusive education - legislation, financing and participation - providing a tool for countries to monitor their own developments and to identify key areas where further work needs to be done (EASNIE, 2009). The intention was to establish the basis for the development of a shared set of qualitative and quantitative indicators, each one accepted by the participating countries; having such indicators, constructive comparison is possible, as well as mutual learning from effective practices.
After choosing three key areas to focus on (legislation, financing and participation), the project experts identified sets of requirements for each of them. Requirements describe the conditions essential to inclusive education and the required level of quality. Finally, indicators represent one or more constituents of the requirement that needs to be assessed and monitored. Several indicators can be associated with each requirement.
The following tables show the requirements and indicators for the three key areas (EASNIE, 2009).

Table 2 – Assessing legislation for inclusion in education

REQUIREMENTS	INDICATORS
1. Full consistency of national legislation on education with international agreements.	**1.1** Consistency of national legislation on education with international agreements (e.g. Salamanca statement, UN Conventions, etc.).
2. Full consistency across different national laws.	**2.1** Consistency across different national laws (e.g. antidiscrimination law, education law, disability laws, children's rights laws, etc.).
3. Legislation on education covers all educational levels.	**3.1** Legislation on education covers all educational levels. **3.2** Established procedures for early identification of SEN in relation to pupils/students, teachers and other professionals and different levels of education. **3.3** Established procedures for as early as possible identification and assessment of SEN. **3.4** Sufficient resources for the early identification and assessment of SEN. **3.5** Support to pupils/students with SEN starts from the moment the needs are identified and is governed by the principles of inclusion. **3.6** Anti-discrimination legislation facilitates entrance to training, ongoing and higher education. **3.7** Longitudinal data on transition and destinations (work, ongoing and higher education, training) for different groups of pupils/ students is collected by government or other agencies. **3.8** Established procedures for access, continuing attendance and progress of all pupils/students in all stages of education. **3.9** The institutions providing vocational training develop flexible curricula that may be adapted to suit the needs and expectations of all pupils/students. **3.10** Established procedures for the necessary support, reinforcement measures and instruments to facilitate information and guidance for pupils/students with SEN.

4. Legislation on education addresses the quality of training and professionalisation of teachers, psychologists, and non-educational personnel, with special regard to dealing with diversity.	**4.1** Initial teacher training and in-service teacher training programmes include special education or inclusion related issues. **4.2** Teachers and other staff are supported to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding inclusion so they are prepared to meet all pupils/students' needs in mainstream teaching. **4.3** Courses and professional development opportunities to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills are available. **4.4** Teachers plan, teach and review in partnership. **4.5** Dedicated resources are set aside for appropriate professional development related to meeting special needs in inclusive education.
5. Legislation on education fully addresses issues of flexibility, diversity and equity in all educational institutions for all pupils/students.	**5.1** Rules/processes are established for inter-sector co-operation between the education, health, social sectors, etc. **5.2** Rules/processes are established for co-operation between the formal education system and non-statutory providers of education. **5.3** Rules/processes are established to respect equal opportunities, equal treatment and non-discrimination against all pupils/students without any exceptions. **5.4** Rules/processes are established for human and material resources to match all pupils'/students' needs. **5.5** Rules/processes are established for flexible adaptations of curricula and Individual Educational Plans. **5.6** Rules/processes are established for every pupil/student to receive a certificate when schooling is finished. **5.7** Established procedures for consultation of non-statutory organisations and informal education systems. **5.8** Rules/processes are established for pupils/students/ parents/professionals with regard to participation in decision making. **5.9** Established procedures to settle disputes.

	5.10 Rules/processes are set out for flexibility, providing opportunities for amendments to suit the needs and expectations of all pupils/students, teachers, parents, in the different stages of the education system.
6. Legislation on education fully addresses the issues of monitoring and accountability for all educational institutions and pupils/ students.	**6.1** Established rules for systems to monitor the effectiveness of provision (such as self-evaluation, inspection, provision mapping). **6.2** Established rules for systems to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning support. **6.3** Established rules for systems to monitor levels of participation (enrollment, completion rates, drop out and exclusion rates) for different groups of pupils/students.

Source: EASNIE, 2009. Re-elaboration by the author

Table 3 – Assessing financing for inclusion in education

REQUIREMENTS	INDICATORS
1. Policy on financing fully supports inclusive education.	**1.1** Basic funding allocated to schools to allow them to respond to the needs of all pupils/students with minimal recourse to additional funding for specific needs. **1.2** Essential and adequate funding for full access to inclusive education for all pupils/students is provided by governments and does not depend on voluntary/charitable organisations. **1.3** Funding supports the provision of inclusive education to all pupils/students based on needs, abilities, strengths and interests. **1.4** Established rules for eligibility criteria for levels of additional allocation of funding, starting with systems level (local area/schools) and only then at an individual pupil/student needs level (to avoid unhelpful labelling).

2. Policy on financing is fully based on educational needs.	**2.1** Policy is based (primarily) on the identification of required provision rather than category/labels of pupil/student difficulties. **2.2** The educational system adapts to the needs of the pupil/student and not vice versa. **2.3** A clear definition of 'educational needs' is adopted in relevant legislation. **2.4** Requirements for inter-sectoral co-operation are addressed. **2.5** Funds are available for early identification of SEN and early intervention in response to pupils/students identified with SEN ('early' refers to the age of the pupil/student and/or to early signs of difficulties in learning at any age). **2.6** The parents and the pupil/student concerned have a significant influence on the identification/description of the pupil's/student's needs and necessary provision. **2.7** Appropriate funding is allocated to identify and respond to needs across the life stages (from pre-school to primary school to secondary school and university) and to support transition from one stage to another. **2.8** The availability and effective use of assistive technologies is supported, including new and emerging technologies, to assist in meeting pupils'/students' identified needs, promoting independence and autonomy. **2.9** Pupils/students with SEN are treated equitably, taking into account gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, socioeconomic status and area of residence.
3. Policy on financing fully facilitates flexible, effective and efficient responses to pupils/students' needs.	**3.1** Rules and procedures related to the allocation of resources are easily understood by professionals, parents and the general public/citizens. **3.2** Resources can be managed flexibly at school and local levels (while ensuring sufficient centralised oversight and coordination to avoid unnecessary duplication).

	3.3 Funds are allocated on a timely basis for early identification and prevention. **3.4** Rules are established taking into account the optimal solution in each field, in terms of: effectiveness, efficiency, competence, quality, etc.
4. Policy on financing fully promotes support from related services and necessary inter-sectoral collaboration.	**4.1** Availability of a well-developed support service with an adequate level of professional expertise in the field of inclusive education. **4.2** Efficient and effective co-operation among institutions (government departments, schools, health and social services). **4.3** Professionals (psychologists, doctors, teachers, social workers and administrators, whether they are SEN specialists or not) work together. **4.4** Adequate funding is allocated to cover the necessary professional networking activities.

Source: EASNIE, 2009. Re-elaboration by the author

Table 4 – Assessing participation for inclusion in education

REQUIREMENTS	**INDICATORS**
1. Admission policies promote access into mainstream school for all pupils/students.	**1.1** Established rules for schools to provide learning opportunities for all pupils/students regardless of background or learning abilities. **1.2** Established rules for adapted transport facilities. **1.3** Established rules for accessibility issues in the construction of buildings, equipment, infrastructure. **1.4** Established rules for technical tools to be in place for all pupils/students according to their individual needs. **1.5** Pupils'/students' views on their learning environment are taken into account. **1.6** Numbers and percentages of pupils/students with SEN in mainstream classes, units in mainstream schools, segregated learning institutions, excluded from the

	education system, are collected and monitored at different levels of the system. **1.7** Numbers and percentages of pupils/students with SEN educated under the responsibility of health, social welfare (children in care) or youth justice, children at home, are collected and monitored at different levels of the system.
2. National curriculum guidelines, if present, fully facilitate the inclusion of all pupils/students.	**2.1** Established rules for flexibility in the curriculum to meet individual educational needs. **2.2** Established rules for curricula to be related to real life needs of pupils/students and not only to academic learning.
3. National testing systems, where present, fully follow the principles of inclusive assessment and do not act as a barrier to participation in assessment procedures or learning.	**3.1** Established rules for a wide range of learning outcomes to be valued. **3.2** Established rules for assessment to include and encourage the achievements of all pupils/students. **3.3** Established rules for the range of assessments used to allow all pupils/students to display their skills. **3.4** Established rules for accommodation and modification of testing methods and tools to be available when necessary.
4. The identification of educational needs and assessment systems fully promote and support inclusion.	**4.1** Procedures are non-discriminatory and based on best practice approaches. **4.2** Initial identification of a pupil's/student's needs is conducted from a holistic and primarily needs based view that links into not only teaching and learning, but also IEP development and review procedures. **4.3** Established rules for the system of identification of needs to be geared towards each pupil's/student's educational experiences.

Source: EASNIE, 2009. Re-elaboration by the author

8.3 The Index for inclusion

In 2002, Booth and Ainscow developed a highly functional set of indicators to support the inclusive development of schools, equipped with checklists and questionnaires to be adapted to specific contexts[66]. The tool, called Index for Inclusion, guides schools in the process of self-review and development, which draws on the views of staff, students and parents, as well as other members of the surrounding communities (EASNIE, 2009). Translated into more than 20 languages and used in more than 30 countries worldwide, the Index is nowadays the most authoritative model for self assessment and evaluation of inclusion within educational settings. It is also mentioned in the Italian Presidential Decree 80/2013 (Piccioli, 2017; Ruzzante, 2017) and subsequently in the March 6, 2013 Circolare applicativa n.8 about special educational needs. In these sources the Index is presented as an effective tool to build a culture of reflection on everything that, inside a school, can become a barrier or, ideally, a facilitator of inclusion. Also, the Index can facilitate the works of the GLI (Gruppo Lavoro Inclusione) and can offer insights for drafting the PAI (Piano Annuale Inclusione)[67] (Demo, 2013), also thanks to the questionnaires that are included in the kit. Schools can use it to analyse their cultures, policies and practices, to identify the barriers to learning and participation that may occur within each of these areas, and to decide priorities for change and to evaluate their progress (Booth, Ainscow, 2002). Activating this process can also prevent parties from interpreting the GLI meetings and the PAI as mere bureaucracy, giving them instead a meaningful step towards a real, concrete improvement of inclusion processes (Demo, 2013).

The specificity of the Index is that it gives a vision of the inclusive school as a school for all, that doesn't consider only students with disabilities, impairment or disadvantage, but aims to change the whole school environment to make it more and more inclusive, promoting co-responsibility of all community members (Benvenuto, 2017; Ruzzante, 2017).

In this interpretation, inclusion implies change: it is a path towards unlimited growth of learning and participation of all pupils, "an ideal to which schools can

[66] The Index for inclusion is available in its full version online at the following address: http://www.csie.org.uk.

[67] For more details on the GLI and the PAI, see chapter 5.

aspire but that will never be completely achieved" (Dovigo, 2008, p.36). The definition of inclusion on which the assessment and evaluation model is based is represented in Table 5.

Table 5 - Inclusion in education

Inclusion in education involves:

- Valuing all students and staff equally.
- Increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools.
- Restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in the locality.
- Reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students, not only those with impairments or those who are categorised as "having special educational needs".
- Learning from attempts to overcome barriers to the access and participation of particular students to make changes for the benefit of students more widely.
- Viewing the difference between students as resources to support learning, rather than problems to be overcome.
- Acknowledging the right of students to an education in their locality.
- Improving schools for staff as well as for students.
- Emphasising the role of schools in building community and developing values, as well as in increasing achievement.
- Fostering mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities.
- Recognising that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society.

Source: Booth, Ainscow (2002, p.3)

The Index takes the social model of disability and the disability studies approach as its theoretical references[68]; this is the reason why the concept of "barriers to

[68] For more information on the social disability model and the disability studies approach, see chapter 2.

learning and participation" has a central role, providing an alternative to the concept of "special educational needs". As a matter of fact, the document contains a detailed analysis of how barriers to learning and participation can be reduced for any student. "Like inclusion, exclusion is thought of in a broad way. It refers to all those temporary or longer lasting pressures which get in the way of full participation. These might result from difficulties in relationships or with what is taught, as well as from feelings of not being valued. Inclusion is about minimising *all* barriers in education for *all* students" (Booth, Ainscow, 2002, p.3).
The philosophy of the Index is to detect, value and channel all available resources, not only in the school, but also in the surrounding community, to foster inclusion. They can be found in students, parents/caregivers, communities, and teachers as well as in cultures, policies and practices. The resources in students, for example, may not be fully utilised, as may the potential for teachers and staff to support each other's development. Within a school there is a lot of explicit and implicit knowledge about barriers to learning and participation of students, which may not always be valued. The Index helps schools to draw on this knowledge to foster school development, through a cyclic process: assessment of the school's level of inclusiveness using the tools provided in the kit; elaboration of an improvement plan; implementation of such plan, monitoring and evaluating results.
The self review process in a school can start from a set of questions centered on the concept of barrier (Booth, Ainscow, 2002, p.6):

- What are the barriers to learning and participation?
- Who experiences barriers to learning and participation?
- How can barriers to learning and participation be minimised?
- What resources to support learning and participation are available?
- How can additional resources to support learning and participation be mobilised?

The notion of barriers to learning and participation draws direct attention at what must be done to improve the education for any child. Barriers may exist in all aspects of the school, as well as within communities and policies. Barriers also arise in the interaction between students and teaching practices. Barriers to learning and participation can prevent access to a school or limit participation within it.

The indicators cover 3 dimensions:

Dimension A: creating inclusive cultures (Section A.1 Building community - Section A.2 Establishing inclusive values). "This dimension creates a secure, accepting, collaborating, stimulating community, in which everyone is valued as the foundation for the highest achievements of all. It develops shared inclusive values that are conveyed to all new staff, students, governors and parents/caregivers. The principles and values, in inclusive school cultures, guide decisions about policies and moment to moment practice in classrooms, so that school development becomes a continuous process" (Booth, Ainscow, 2002, p.8).

Dimension B: producing inclusive policies (Section B.1 Developing the school for all - Section B.2 Organising support for diversity). "This dimension makes sure that inclusion permeates all school plans. Policies encourage the participation of students and staff from the moment they join the school, reach out to all students in the locality and minimise exclusionary pressures. All policies involve clear strategies for change. Support is considered to be all activities which increase the capacity of a school to respond to student diversity. All forms of support are developed according to inclusive principles and are brought together within a single framework" (Booth, Ainscow, 2002, p.8).

Dimension C: evolving inclusive practices (Section C.1 Orchestrating learning Section C.2 Mobilising resources). "This dimension develops school practices which reflect the inclusive cultures and policies of the school. Lessons are made responsive to student diversity. Students are encouraged to be actively involved in all aspects of their education, which draws on their knowledge and experience outside school. Staff identify material resources and resources within each other, students, parents/caregivers and local communities which can be mobilised to support learning and participation" (Booth, Ainscow, 2002, p.8).

Each section contains several indicators and the meaning of each indicator is clarified by a series of questions. As an example, we report here below the indicators pertaining to the three dimensions presented above.

Table 6 – Dimension A: Creating inclusive cultures

Dimension A – Creating inclusive cultures	**Dimension B – Producing inclusive policies**	**Dimension C – Evolving inclusive practices**
A1. Building community	*B1. Developing the school for all*	*C1. Orchestrating learning*
A1.1 Everyone is made to feel welcome	B1.1 Staff appointments and promotions are fair	C1.1 Teaching is planned with the learning of all students in mind
A1.2 Students help each other	B1.2 All new staff are helped to settle into the school	C1.2 Lessons encourage the participation of all students
A.1.3 Staff collaborate with each other	B.1.3 The school seeks to admit all students from its locality	C.1.3 Lessons develop an understanding of difference
A.1.4 Staff and students treat one another with respect	B.1.4 The school makes its buildings physically accessible to all people	C.1.4 Students are actively involved in their own learning
A.1.5 There is a partnership between staff and parents/caregivers	B.1.5 All new students are helped to settle into the school	C.1.5 Students learn collaboratively
A.1.6 Staff and governors work well together	B.1.6 The school arranges teaching groups so that all students are valued	C.1.6 Assessment contributes to the achievements of all students
A.1.7 All local communities are involved in the school		C.1.7 Classroom discipline is based on mutual respect
		C.1.8 Teachers plan, teach and review in partnership

		C.1.9 Teaching assistants support the learning and participation of all students
		C.1.10 Homework contributes to the learning of all
		C.1.11 All students take part in activities outside the classroom
A2. Establishing inclusive values	*B2. Organising support for diversity*	*C2. Mobilising resources*
A2.1 There are high expectations for all students	B2.1 All forms of support are co-ordinated	C2.1 Student difference is used as a resource for teaching and learning
A2.2 Staff, governors, students and parents/caregivers share a philosophy of inclusion	B2.2 Staff development activities help staff to respond to student diversity.	C2.2 Staff expertise is fully utilised
A.2.3 Students are equally valued	B.2.3 'Special educational needs' policies are inclusion policies	C.2.3 Staff develop resources to support learning and participation
A.2.4 Staff and students treat one another as human beings as well as occupants of a "role"	B.2.4 A Special Educational Needs Code of Practice is used to reduce the barriers to learning and participation of all students	C.2.4 Community resources are known and drawn upon
A.2.5 Staff seek to remove barriers to learning and participation in all aspects of the school	B.2.5 Support for those learning English as an additional language is co-ordinated with learning support	C.2.5 School resources are distributed fairly so that they support inclusion

A.2.6 The school strives to minimise all forms of discrimination	B.2.6 Pastoral and behaviour support policies are linked to curriculum development and learning support policies	
	B.2.7 Pressures for disciplinary exclusion are decreased	
	B.2.8 Barriers to attendance are reduced	
	B.2.9 Bullying is minimised	

Source: Booth, Ainscow (2002, pp.39-41)

The following table, referring once again to the Dimension A – Creating inclusive cultures, shows the clarifying questions for the indicator A1.1 - Everyone is made to feel welcome.

Table 7 – Dimension A, Indicator A1.1: Everyone is made to feel welcome

Indicator	**Questions**
A1. Building community	
A1.1 Everyone is made to feel welcome	• Is the first contact that people have with the school friendly and welcoming? • Is the school welcoming to all students, including students with impairments, travellers, refugees and asylum seekers? • Is the school welcoming to all parents/caregivers and other members of its local communities? • Is information about the school made accessible to all, irrespective of home language or impairment, for example, translated, transcribed into Braille, taped, or in large print when necessary? • Are sign language and other first language interpreters available when necessary?

	• Is it clear from the school brochure and information given to job applicants that responding to the full diversity of students and their backgrounds is part of school routine? • Does the entrance hall reflect all members of the school's communities? • Does the school celebrate local cultures and communities in signs and displays? • Are there positive rituals for welcoming new students and new staff and marking their leaving? • Do students feel ownership of their classrooms or tutor room? • Do students, parents/caregivers, staff, governors and community members all feel ownership of the school?

Source: Booth, Ainscow (2002, p.42)

Finally, the Index kit also contains questionnaires for teachers and school staff, students, parents and caregivers that serve as a base to be adapted to specific contexts. In sum, the Index for inclusion provides schools with theoretical inputs and practical tools to improve knowledge of their environment, policies and practices and work constantly towards better inclusion. Monitoring, self assessment and evaluation of school inclusion become, in this cyclical model, a powerful lever to identify and remove barriers to learning and participation, valuing the active contribution of all stakeholders. In order for the process to achieve the desired results, it is very important to make sure that all the school staff is committed and actively involved in it (Benvenuto, 2017). While the application of the Index can start as an action research project led by a small group of stakeholders, they have to become "multipliers" - transmitting their enthusiasm and motivation to the rest of the staff. Moreover, it is crucial to build an Index team that is as diverse as possible and can represent the school community and its characteristics (Demo, 2013).

Chapter 9
From past to present: risks and opportunities

"Ethical life […] is based on being more
like a plant than like a jewel,
something rather fragile, but whose very particular beauty
is inseparable from that fragility "
(Martha Nussbaum)

In the film *Rosso come il cielo*[69], Mirko, a 10 year old boy living in a Tuscan village in the late 1960s, loses his eyesight in a domestic accident and, as a consequence, is forced to leave his family and travel to the north of Italy to attend the Cassoni Institute, a special school run by nuns for the visually impaired. At first, the distance from home, the rigid environment, the traditional teaching style, the isolation from the world nearby, the resignation of his classmates, all combine to plunge him into a deep dark hole of despair and frustration. Until, one day, he steals a tape recorder from a closet and starts working with his imagination, involving his friend Felice, who is as scared as he is intrigued by Mirco's anarchy and creativity. The two start making use of their residual senses, recording the sounds of nature and the passage of the seasons and escaping from the more structured, boring academic activities proposed by their teacher, Father Giulio. When they present the result of their work in class, the school's director reacts with outrage, influencing the young Father Giulio

[69] A film by Cristiano Bortone (2005) inspired by a true story. The full movie is available on Youtube.

who had silently appreciated the creativity and originality of Mirko and Felice's project. The two boys are mortified, but they don't lose heart. Mirco becomes friend with Francesca, the school cleaning lady's daughter, who is not visually impaired and does not attend the same school. She's been told not to play with the visually impaired boys, otherwise her mom will be fired. She and Mirco have fun together: they bike in the countryside and to the nearby town, where they come in contact with a group of young people protesting for work and civil rights. One of them is also blind, and has spent ten years of his life in the Cassoni institute. He tells them that now he studies at university and works at the local factory as telephone operator. He also explains to them that he is protesting for human rights, and for the rights of minorities, like the visually impaired. Back at school, Francesca and Mirco keep having new ideas and more of Mirco's classmates start joining the "rebel" group. One evening, they all escape from the institute and go to the movie theatre, where they discover that it's possible to understand a movie even without being able to actually watch it. Day after day, they realise that life can give many joys to the visually impaired, too, if the doors to the world are opened for them. But this is not acceptable to the close-minded director of the special school, who believes that discipline and routine and all forms of deprivation are necessary in order to prepare the visually impaired boys to fit into a role in society, and to learn a manual trade, forever resigned to their dependency and to the divine punishment that caused their blindness. Mirco is expelled from school due to his lack of respect for the established authority and its rules. At this point, Father Giulio is shocked. He laments to the cleaning lady: "Concettina, tell me something … You've been working here for many years … what is this school for? Who is it for? We teach these children to stuff chairs, to obey to us, we brag because we will make them good weavers, good telephone operators … but do you know what we really do? We take away from them the most beautiful thing that youth carries … their dreams!". The teacher feels that he is at a crossroads, that he has the opportunity to do something to foster a new way to educate, by valuing diversity instead of transforming it into a factor of subjugation. He speaks up and takes the lead of a new adventure with all the visually impaired boys in his class, and Francesca, who never leaves them. Together, they set up a wonderful theatrical play where each of them can show their imagination and talent. And while the parents are in tears of joy at seeing their children happy, for once, in spite of the limitations they suffer, a crowd of young protesters gather under the school building to ask

for the end of segregated education, for more respect for the rights of people with disabilities, for a new concept of diversity as a value.
In 1976, blind students gained the right to access mainstream schools in Italy.
We've come a long way since then. Our governments, our institutions, and we citizens have embraced this new concept of diversity in education as a value, with firm political determination, strong will, and perseverance.

9.1 The industry of exclusion

Before the movement for integration started in Italy, health care, social services and assistance were the components of an "industry of exclusion" (De Luca, Zappella, 2013, p.79), poorly managing the childhood and the disability issue. In this political framework, a person was judged in economic terms, based on the concepts of "average productivity" and "normality", parameters functional to the interests of those who had the power. The value of an individual was measured in terms of mental conformity, willingness to assent to power, and discipline, respect for rules, which in school translated into factual sterile knowledge and memorisation, rigid conduct and absence of critical thinking. Whoever didn't adhere to this norm was considered a deviant individual, useless or even potentially dangerous for society: someone to isolate, in order to prevent damage to others. Special schools and institutes were private organisations and had much to gain from "hunting the deviant" (De Luca, Zappella, 2013) and from the practice of "occupational therapy", resulting in an exploitation of the residual capabilities of the institutionalised person, forced to dedicate time and energies to manual work, without any consideration of their attitudes, capabilities and aspirations.

9.2 Along the path towards integration

The pioneers of school integration had a fundamental role in the path towards inclusive education. They acted with vision and determination: "at the beginning, we did not think about the limits, rather we fought for an idea of 'provocatively' unlimited integration" (De Luca, Zappella, 2013, p.111). And yet,

there were many limits and obstacles. Looking at disability as a social construction was still a rarity. As a consequence, the person with a disability was dominated by the fear of not making it; families tended to feel resigned and social services staff focused on deficits rather than on residual abilities. The concept of équipe work was not developed and professionals were accustomed to working individually. The movement for school integration did not form, at first, a synergy with that for the reform of psychiatry. Teachers' training for inclusive classes still did not exist and therefore many of them were professionally unprepared, even if they were motivated and believed in the ideals. Many teachers and school administrators resisted the idea of "labeling" or "categorising" students even if it was for a good cause, in that it enabled forms of individualised education for them. Peers and parents in mainstream school were not always ready to receive students with disabilities and/or impairments within their class and social groups (De Luca, Zappella, 2013). In spite of all these obstacles, the journey towards inclusive school began. The dedicated pioneers of school inclusion wouldn't have gone that far without the support of the institutions and civil society. The idea of school integration was strongly supported from the beginning by a wide consensus. The civil society of the time demonstrated its strong belief that diversity is a resource. Schools demonstrated that they could re-organise themselves to welcome the students with disabilities. Regional health services demonstrated that they could build new multidisciplinary équipes. The government passed legislation for the right to education. Families created advocacy groups and associations. All these components resisted for decades and became the pillars of the Italian way to inclusive education.

9.3 At the frontiers of justice

In Martha Nussbaum's school of thought (2007), people with mental and physical disabilities are not, at present, included in society on equal basis with others, as free and independent citizens. As a matter of fact, the tradition of western political thought and, specifically, the theory of social contract assumes the contractors to be equal in terms of capability to take on an economic role and produce. As a consequence, according to the American philosopher, people with severe impairments or disabilities are not considered in the group of those

who choose the fundamental principles on which our society is built. Their needs are cared for only after the basic structure of society has been planned: while they are primary subjects of justice, they can't participate in decisions concerning justice and this can have serious negative consequences on their equal citizenship. In Rawls' theory of social contract, the idea of reciprocal advantage is crucial: the parties abandon the state of nature in order to gain the benefits of political society. In this system, people take care of others' needs often in a limited and arbitrarily unequal way. Nussbaum proposes a new theory of social contract based on the advantage of having social relations regulated by justice, rather than by injustice; a new theory that conceives of humanity and human diversity in terms of mutual respect and reciprocity. In hers, as well as in Amarthya Sen's ideas (1999), primary goods are a list of capabilities, and not things. Capabilities are the basic human rights on which social justice is defined, and if we look at today's society with these lenses, we must recognise that "very many people across the world suffer from varieties of unfreedom" (Sen, 1999, p.15). In order for justice to exist, both the capability of giving and receiving care must be added to the list of primary goods, since they are fundamental needs of human beings. Education can do a lot to make ties among people deeper and more pervasive, building an idea of cooperation that considers justice and inclusion as intrinsically valuable ends since the very beginning: because human beings are political and social animals in search of social good, and for them the good of others should not be an obstacle to their own good, but rather a part of it (Nussbaum, 2007). Education can contribute to create human beings that value the good of others as an important part of their motivation and life goals, helping them to realise that "a regime which provides human beings no deep reasons to care about one another cannot long preserve its legitimacy"[70] (Sennet, 1999, p.148).

9.4 Inclusion, or oppression?

In Antonio Gramsci's writings, the status quo in power relations is supported by the permeation throughout society of an entire system of values, attitudes,

[70] Author's translation from Italian.

beliefs and morality. The philosophy, culture and morality of the ruling élite, "internalised" by the people, begins to appear as the natural order of things. Common sense is, according to Gramsci, a worldview uncritically accepted within the various social and cultural environments and it is linked with "folklore", consisting of beliefs, values and norms that are rigidly assimilated, contradictory and ambiguous (Baldacci, 2017). Against this scenario, the struggle for education as entitlement and as a public good becomes an important one to transition subaltern social groups beyond their oppressive condition. Education, as a right for all people, can fight against "folklore" so that common sense can be superseded and a new conception of the world, a superior culture, that of science, can be established (Baldacci, 2017). In this view, students from subaltern groups acquire the kind of powerful knowledge that does not confine them to the margins of economic and political life. Educators and learners have to engage critically through "praxis", obtaining the distance necessary to develop a more critical view of things and to understand the underlying contradictions in world, history, and specific circumstances. Gramsci's philosophy of praxis and Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed (1970) have a lot in common; they start from the idea that man is not the mere product of environmental circumstances, because the environment itself is deeply transformed by human beings. In this view, the relationship between people and the environment is dialectic. Educators and learners must act together in order to critically reflect upon their reality, so as to transform it. Freire's "conscientisation" is the process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through an effective integration of reflection and action. If it's true that any epoch is characterized by a complex of ideas, concepts, hopes, doubts, values and challenges in dialectical interaction with their opposites (Freire, 1970), in our society one of these themes could be the social control over the disabled and the diverse, developed through and within the education system, in opposition to the full inclusion of all people in society, starting with and from education.

From the policy of *integrazione scolastica* started in the seventies, to the more recent efforts for *inclusione scolastica*, some discourses have guided the legislative production and the everyday practices in school: the celebration of diversity, the special educational needs, the change in school organisation and teaching methods. Yet, experts have engaged in a critical effort of "de-construction" of Italian policies to show how the same discourses, originally designed for the sake of inclusion, seem "to have served as reproductive agents of forms of knowledge

that hamper the realisation of inclusion" (D'Alessio, 2011, p.120). When in educational contexts diversity loses against dominant ideas of success; when the concept of special educational need is used solely to justify teachers' behaviours in relation to people with disability; when less traditional, individualised forms of teaching are considered exceptional means to allow the participation of students with disabilities, then we can agree with the criticism and we must reflect on how to re-construct real inclusion. The first exercise should be that of identifying barriers and potential exclusionary pressures. An Individualised Educational Plan can be, for example, a powerful tool for inclusion, or it can reproduce an individualistic approach to disability, focused on deficit, rather than on potential. Its in-depth analysis of the student with disability, of his/her life and achievement can be a starting point for inclusion, or on the contrary "a powerful mechanism of social control" increasing a form of "surveillance through a system that investigates in depth the disabled pupil" (D'Alessio, 2011, p.122). The same can be said of any form of selective categorisation, such as *sostegno*, DSA and BES, concepts that can inform a deep process of organisational and didactic innovation, or translate into labels that rationalise and "normalise" (Focault, 1977) disability. Similarly, assessment procedures can be formative, if and when they are considered a way to collect useful information about students' progress and difficulties and re-orient teaching practices and goals, or they can be a factor of potential exclusion, when they are standardised and/or purely summative.

Nowadays, very few Italian people would question the choice of integration and mainstreaming made more than 40 years ago. And yet, risks present themselves in norms that are, in principle, similar to the past. While some experts argue that "what was once a liberating policy initiative has been transformed into an oppressive policy, or more specifically into a hegemonic discourse of normalization" (D'Alessio, 2011, p.125), I would instead propose a more balanced view of the Italian model of inclusive education that incorporates strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, recognising that many results have been achieved and, at the same time, many struggles still have to be resolved in the name of school inclusion. We must disentangle ourselves from an outdated conception of inclusion as merely in opposition to segregation, we must distance ourselves from a vision that identifies segregation as the only common enemy to fight in order to struggle against exclusion. We must acquire the habit of searching for and detecting all possible barriers to learning and

socialisation, being aware that the border between inclusion and exclusion is a "slippery slope", and that it is exactly that narrow border that we have to monitor constantly, in order to keep the bar high. We must be always conscious that the idea of "normality", engrained in our culture and individual minds, serves the purpose of "establishing and fixing" individuals (Focault, 1977) and can become an accomplice in visible or invisible marginalisation processes (Lucisano, 1982).

9.5 Constructing inclusive education

Monitoring the border between inclusion and exclusion means, first of all, being aware of all resources that can be used to create inclusive environments and cultures. As discussed in chapter 8, when describing the Index for Inclusion, schools often have more resources than they think, and many issues could be addressed by making a better use of existing resources. Inclusion of students with disabilities, impairments or any other forms of diversity can become an occasion for self assessment and deep internal change. Inclusion is an opportunity to develop new teaching strategies based on experiential learning, that make intensive use of technologies, that value cooperation and group work and the development of social skills (Cottini, 2017). Inclusion can foster processes of formative assessment, feeding virtuous cycles of continuous improvement (Lucisano, 1982). Teaching flexibility, collaboration between curricular and support teachers, and effective use of specialised assistants are crucial aspects to build real inclusion, as well as parental involvement, peer tutoring, and the habit of listening to students' voices and involve them in self assessment processes (D'Alessio, 2011). Other essential ingredients of inclusive education are a thoughtful design of spaces (Gennari, 1997), a constant attention to the social and "emotional" climate, the development of cognitive and metacognitive competences, the strengthening of social skills (Cottini, 2017), the empathy in the relationships (Bellingreri, 2005; 2013) and the attention to personalisation and autonomy, as ultimate goals of education (Bertagna, 2012). Given that the Italian legislative framework has held *integrazione scolastica* as a goal since the early 1970s, successful inclusion cannot happen in real contexts without full participation of all people involved and without a strong leadership expressed by the management (Benvenuto, 2017; Zanazzi, Polticelli, 2017; D'Alessio, 2011).

It is very important for teachers, school administrators, and assistants to be reflective practitioners. Professional situations are often complex and "ill-structured", meaning that "they possess multiple solutions and contain uncertainty" (Harris et al., 2010, p.4). Reflection, then, represents a fundamental process for the practitioner who must draw on theoretical knowledge, previous experience and knowledge of the current situation to determine the most convenient solution (Schön, 1983). Creating occasions for teachers to reflect on their practice, determine possible issues, and detect and remove barriers to inclusion (D'Alessio, 2011; Salerni, Zanazzi 2017) can be a fundamental step in the construction of inclusive education. Reflective practice can also effectively manage risks of "pitying" attitudes, of transforming compassionate attention into excessive protection for certain categories of students, into paternalism, into a tendency to justify everything, maintaining low expectations of in-capacity (Lucisano, 1982). Education on emotions is crucial, as emotions are integrated systems of physiological, cognitive and behavioural responses that can contribute to achieving goals or, on the contrary, become insurmountable obstacles. Obviously, the goal of creating an inclusive class where all students feel comfortable and can learn effectively to their potential requires that this dimension be carefully considered. The same attention should be given to training emotional competences of the teachers so that they can be of support for the students (Cottini, 2017).

Finally, schools have to invest in the creation of relationships with the outside world. Effective inclusion can't exist if inclusive practices end when school ends, if an inclusive environment is created, but remains limited to a certain phase of life and to a specific place and time of the day. The connection with the job market can be strengthened through work-study programs and other forms of partnerships that build bridges between school and the world (Lucisano, 1982). Schools can contribute to creating an inclusive culture that values individuals not only for what and how much they can produce, but also for their participation in a society where disadvantage is not defined based on the standards of efficiency that the majority defines "normal". Schools can contribute to creating a society that, like a dry stone wall, can make of diversity its strength, and can build on diversity its resistance to pressures and change (Lucisano, 2015).

Chapter 10
A world that build diversity

by Pietro Lucisano[71]

As educators, our task is to look at our society, determine what generates malaise, and propose solutions. When we can't find solutions for the most important problems, in order to maintain our role of professors, we invent new problems, and new solutions, and new terms with which to speak about these problems.

For example, in school we don't plan didactic activities based on content, abilities, or competences. As is the theme of this book, nowadays our problem is no longer that of "integrating" people who are diverse; we speak rather about "including" them. *Inclusion*: I must admit that this term gives me some negative feelings. Maybe we chose it thinking about the opposite of *exclusion*. But the fact is that the root of the word is the verb "to close": whether it is to close in, or to close out, there isn't much difference. The opposite of "to close" is "to open". School has to open itself to promote respect for every form of diversity. And so, based on these new words, we create projects, we train advocates who go to schools to enlighten our conscience, we invest EU money. And yet each of us, considering carefully, would realize that the encyclopedia of possible solutions for fixing the world is like an immense carousel, and the solutions proposed give us the vertiginous sense of having found a solution only for one turn of the wheel. Then, the carousel stops and everything is as it was before. "The wind

[71] Ordinary Professor of Education, Sapienza University of Rome.

blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course"[72].

Youth carries the illusion of having the power to change the world, the presumption of being able to create new people and new social organizations. This presumption pushes us to create an enemy and fight against them**,** in the name of new principles and new values. It prevents us from understanding our enemies' reasons, it leads us to take humanity away from them, to think that if our project entails sacrifices; however, these sacrifices are worthwhile, because we're fighting for good over evil. So the young leaders think that it is necessary to break with the past, to scrap history, and day after day they walk paths that we've already traveled. "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun"[73].

Rationality is what presides over this carousel, a rationality that builds models and strives to adapt the world to them. The models aim to simplify diversity, to reduce complexity, while our inexperience leads us to believe that the models are the reality. But reality is not a model, models are just approximations of it.

The great and the small reformers always build their models for the sake of others. For the sake of others, they sacrifice themselves to these models until they commit the ultimate sacrifice, that of doing bad for the good of others. This sacrifice is well represented by the figure of the great inquisitor, who pushes parents to punish; teachers to overwhelm students with homework; employers to mistreat workers; bureaucrats to invent laws and forms to fill out. Everything for our sake. And for our sake, forced to do bad, they feel bad. At the root, there is a love for the other that wants the other made in his own image, that wants him to do what we expect from him for his own sake. The mom protective of her disabled child, the drill sergeant of steel, the strict professor: the great reformers have in common a love that doesn't work. A love that loves the other for what they should be and not for what they actually are.

We also know that those who build the conditions for which the others suffer, suffer in turn. We've seen them pay astronomical fees to fill their evenings with solitude, we've seen them searching out emotions to fill their existential voids. We've seen them narrating their stories like the protagonists of Bradbury's "The Completist", who after telling all his life's successes to people he doesn't know,

[72] The Bible, Eclesiastes 1:6.

[73] The Bible, Eclesiastes 1:9.

asks them why his own son committed suicide. We know the concern of the young rich man who is held back by responsibilities towards his property and can't follow the Teacher[74].

Among the various models in education, the winner seems to be the one that promotes equity, defined as the possession of minimum standards of competencies and that identifies these standards in PISA tests, or, more locally, in the INVALSI[75] tests. Whoever doesn't reach these standards, whoever doesn't get a good grade, represents the failure of his teachers, and the disappointment of his parents. Whoever doesn't reach these standards is different, is poorly motivated, is incapable, needs to be cured, maybe "included". And certainly the model that we have built make those who don't reach these standards live poorly, live with the anxiety of being unworthy, of having disappointed their parents. So even a boy who's passionate about something else – music, painting, sport - for his own sake has to run the gauntlet of problem solving and multiple choice tests and in the end be summarized in a grade from 1 to 10. It doesn't matter to know that many brilliant people, from Einstein to Montalcini, to Recalcati, did poorly at school and that many students suffer and get discouraged during their studies.

The funny thing about this new mania of evaluating everything is that it can't alter the substance of things. It doesn't alter it, because our evaluators don't consider the possibility of scrutinising the rules of the game. Their specialty is to evaluate the weaker players, and to condemn them. Because you've got to start somewhere.

The fact that an entrepreneur can do what he wants with the profit made by the hard work of thousands of his workers is one of those "natural" laws that can't be put under scrutiny. The fact that the children of a temporary worker don't have the same chance to study, to finish university and even to have a long life expectancy compared to the children of a doctor, is unacceptable. An economy that grows, but can't divide is wrong; it needs to be re-thought. This economy generates malaise, that in turn generates hatred, that in turn generates fear, that generates violence. The Founding Fathers knew this and they wrote in the Constitution critical words against diversity originating from diverse social

[74] The New Testament, Matthew 19:20.

[75] Standardised tests administered by the Italian National Agency for School Evaluation.

conditions, and for a society in which work is recognized with adequate salaries.
A corollary of this folly is to look for quality in adherence to standards. It means making efforts to reduce quality in quantitative terms, to operationalize quality, to simplify it in order to be able to command it. A brick of quality is a brick that's in all ways equal to other bricks. A school of quality is a school in which everybody learns the same essential things, the minimum facts that a group of wise men has defined. In postindustrial quality there is no space for diversity. In postindustrial quality there is no space for quality, for the quality that makes us say that a person completely equal to all the other persons has no qualities. We feel that all this is wrong, but we can't escape a perverse mechanism that, once quality standards are defined, wants the parmesan cheese not to be put to age on wooden tables anymore, but on plastic surfaces, so as to avoid bacteria. We bend to industrial quality and yet, when we can, we prefer the flavor of a good artisanal ice cream, or our grandma's *gnocchi*, even if grandma maybe didn't even wash her hands very carefully. Inside us, lives a drive towards order and control, together with a natural appreciation for diversity, for nature that constantly tends to transgress. It doesn't matter if history taught us that progress has always come from people who had the courage to question this order, that history taught us that a big war can be won by a poet teacher who limped[76].
It doesn't matter if diversity has always attracted our attention and if all our attempts to contain art in standards collapse in the beauty of Aphrodite's gaze. We cultivate in rows, we order even the branches of trees, we weed out different herbs in our meadows. And yet, a breath of Spring is enough to show us the ridiculousness of our attempt to extend our power upon nature. Because poppies grow everywhere, even when not invited, the nettle grows unwanted, the rose hips grows, the bramble grows. As Hesse used to say "We don't have to search, but to find; we don't have to judge, but to observe and understand, breathe and elaborate what we have inhaled. From the wood and the lawn that is mown in autumn, from the ice and the field yellow with blossoms, through all senses should flow inside us life, vigor, spirit, meaning, value".

If only were we able to open ourselves, to listen to wonder. But diversity scares us, because it brings us back to our state of being ephemeral. The norm

[76] Tyrtaeus was a Greek lyric poet from Sparta known especially for political and military elegies, exhorting Spartans to fight bravely against the enemy.

reassures us, it takes us away from the embarrassment of responsibility, it gives us certainties, it lasts eternally.

We invented many explanations to avoid facing the wonder of diversity with respect. In the Book of Job the three wise men use the paradigm of the good God to state that if Job had adversities, it is because somehow he deserved them in this life. In other cultures, the adversities of the present are justified by bad behaviours in previous lives. Those who build the conditions for others to feel bad are anyhow exempted from judgement. It is easy to arrest the smugglers, while there are no courts for the decision makers of the western countries' foreign politics.

Each of us is different. We're even jealous of our diversity, nobody suffers like us, nobody has had our experiences. Now we must learn to love the diversity of others the same way we love ours and try to build together a world in which all these diversities can be tied in the name of their characteristics and not of their common denominator. A society in which everyone can accept the virtue of his own flaws and the virtue of others' flaws.

We have to build a society that, like a dry stone wall, can integrate different forms, different styles, different capabilities without them becoming necessarily differences of power, of richness, of dignity.

Bradbury, in one of his Martian Chronicles, describes the migrations of all blacks on earth to Mars and the bewilderment of the whites that remained because their society was founded on the servitude of blacks. Think about what would happen to us if all immigrant workers stopped working and fled to Mars. Each of us has the possibility to do their work because somebody else looks after the children, prepares meals, answers the phone, tidies up the papers, takes care of elderly parents. We would not do their jobs even if were very well paid. If we could choose, the salary being equal, between their job and ours, we would choose ours. And yet, it's obvious for us that they get salaries that aren't sufficient to live, it seems normal to us that their children don't have the same rights as our children. We have to think of a society with different rules. If universities and researchers have a task, it is that of trying to solve this problem and not that of making the funder or the politician in office happy, nor that of inventing new problems to hide the important ones.

We have a lot to learn from dry stone walls

Dry stone walls don't need cement and what renders them strong is their very openness, that lets water seep through. Dry stone walls have the rule of complementarity and each stone has its own identity, its own position: it is not just "another brick in the wall"[77]. We have to enlarge our understanding, to overcome rationality with sensibleness, to use models and reductions with the liberty of those who know that models and reductions are dangerous tools. We have to plan educational experiences that help pupils to grow curious, full of questions, capable of being happy in and of their own diversity. Only the courage to face the social issues will lead to overcoming educational inequalities.
Sometimes it may seem more difficult, but if instead of competing among us we focused on competing with problems, we would certainly have great strength. Learning together to recognise and love our diversity, we will live in a world of diverse people and we will discover a funny corollary (in Italian the word for funny, *divertente*, has the same root as that for *diversion*): where everyone is diverse, nobody, in reality, is diverse anymore.
And if nobody is diverse, there will be nobody to include.

[77] The Pink Floyd, *Another brick in the wall.*

Conclusion

Arrived at the end of this book, the reader will have understood that the model of inclusive education in Italy developed along several different tracks: the affirmation of principles, the re-organisation of educational contexts, the implementation of inclusive didactic methods and the assessment and evaluation of their effectiveness (Cottini, 2017). The first track, affirmation of principles, has been well developed over the past forty years, and is nowadays being enriched by international and intercultural perspectives. The second, re-organisation of educational contexts, has also been implemented through legislation, and is still in the spotlight, in order to update norms and practices based on new emerging needs, or on international guidelines. The third area, inclusive teaching, is still much weaker than the others. On the one hand, the results of educational research emphasise the urgent need to train inclusive teachers; on the other, international organisations and the academic world are putting forth proposals to improve the inclusiveness of teaching practices in schools. From the literature, and from my direct observations and interviews, I came to realise that this is a focal point for the future of the Italian model of inclusive education. Finally, as far as evaluation is concerned, the system is going through a transitional phase. Article 4 of Decree 66/2017 states that[78] "the evaluation of the quality of school inclusiveness is an integral part in the evaluation process of educational institutions" and that such quality can be made concrete also "through personalisation, individualisation and differentiation of educational processes designed and implemented by the school, based on the specific characteristics of the students". At publication, the National Agency for School Evaluation (INVALSI) is about to declare new criteria for the external evaluation of school inclusiveness.

In these final pages, I would like to propose some personal reflections about the current state of school inclusion in Italy and on the main areas of

[78] Translation from Italian by the author: "La valutazione della qualità dell'inclusione scolastica e' parte integrante del procedimento di valutazione delle istituzioni scolastiche" and "realizzazione di percorsi per la personalizzazione, individualizzazione e differenziazione dei processi di educazione, istruzione e formazione, definiti ed attivati dalla scuola, in funzione delle caratteristiche specifiche delle bambine e dei bambini, delle alunne e degli alunni, delle studentesse e degli studenti".

improvement for the future.

First of all, I believe that the Italian model of inclusive education is now transitioning from the necessary (and productive, both in terms of ideas and practices) phase of special needs and special education to a new dimension, that of school inclusion. Here, the policy of school integration gives way to a more comprehensive view of inclusion, based on which systemic educational amendments must be made in the interest of all students, rather than putting the emphasis on access and equality in relation to students with impairments or disabilities. This new phase happens to coincide with a time when education budgets are shrinking and resources are less abundant. This makes it even more difficult to hold firm the idea, in the minds of policymakers, teachers, and school administrators, that the quality of inclusion processes and the quality of school mutually and positively influence each other (Cottini, 2017). In this context, a crucial development will be marked by the implementation of new criteria and procedures for the external assessment of school inclusion. Recently, the "model of effective school" (Castoldi, Chiosso, 2017, p.42) has affirmed itself in Italy and worldwide in the assessment of educational institutions (Mattei, 2012). When more power over decisions is given to specialists in statistics and economics, and less to education science experts, and when assessment models are designed without taking into consideration the acquisitions of the educational assessment theory, the risk is to identify the quality of school with the results of standardised tests (Castoldi, Chiosso, 2017; Corsini, Zanazzi, 2015). In this view, "a school of quality is a school in which everybody learns the same essential things, the minimum facts that a group of wise men has defined" (Lucisano, chapter 10, p.208). This is the reason why, instead of asking ourselves what evaluation can give to inclusion, we should rather be thinking about what inclusion can give to evaluation (Corsini, 2016). The hope is that the reflection triggered by the need to evaluate inclusiveness will lead to a re-thinking of the whole system of school evaluation, a system that has so far hindered, more than fostered, the development of an inclusive culture in schools. It would be crucial to give an active role to the associations of people with disabilities and/or of parents in drafting the criteria for measuring school inclusiveness and in the assessment procedures. This way, the real experience of the students and their parents can provide feedback to schools and policymakers, preventing forms of self-referentialism and bureaucratisation.

The second reflection concerns the role of teachers and school staff, and how

they are trained to work "inclusively" in their classes. As described in chapter 5, after the approval of the 2017 Decrees for the implementation of the reform *La Buona Scuola*, the path to become a specialised support teacher in lower or upper secondary school entails three steps: a university master's degree, a national public examination and a 3 year long traineeship. In order to qualify for the public examination, all university graduates have to earn 24 credits in education, pedagogy, psychology and anthropology. The public examination has a common part for all aspiring teachers, and a specific part for those who want to become support teachers. The same is true for the traineeship; it also entails experience in the field, as an assistant curricular teacher or support teacher. Whether this new system will be more functional than the old one, it is still too early to say. Surely, the path to become a support teacher is long, requires strong motivation and resilience, and is likely to expose the candidates to many of the real issues one might encounter every day in school. And yet, this training path, no matter how long and selective, is insufficient to cope with the ever changing needs of a school system that wants to be really inclusive. Training opportunities need to be provided, free of charge, by schools and long training in associations, giving teachers and school staff the possibility to continuously update and increase their knowledge, open their minds to new perspectives, to reflect on their practices and transform experience into real learning (Bochicchio, 2017). This is something that already happens in schools, but as is often the case in Italy, there seems to be no systemic vision; rather, initiatives are spread unevenly throughout the territory and often depend on the good will of school principals and coordinators of inclusion. In addition to training teachers and school staff, the government should tackle the complex issue of regulating, from a legislative point of view, all the types of assistants whose role is essential, but not recognised by the law. Currently, there aren't any formal requirements for becoming specialised assistants and communication assistants, although schools tend to hire out the selection processes to social cooperatives that recruit based on education and training credentials. This absence of formalisation can translate into weaker recognition in the work environment, potentially threatening self confidence and, ultimately, the quality of work. The constant reduction of funds for the assistants, together with the low salaries they earn for a demanding and delicate job, makes this area an absolute priority for the government in order to preserve the quality of school inclusion.

Another crucial challenge concerns the relationship between the school and

the rest of society. It is important for schools to think in perspective, and use all policy tools they have in order to build as many bridges as possible with the whole world "after school". The statistics show that, for people with disabilities, the future after school graduation looks bleak, in spite of the legislation aimed to support job placement and social inclusion. We can't blame schools for this negative outlook, but we can expect schools to exert leverage on society, to establish positive constructive relationships with the organisations in their area, and to be open and proactive in creating connections and design future scenarios for their students. In particular, schools can work in close partnership with associations and, in general, with the nonprofit world, to progressively enlarge the "bubble" in which some disadvantaged students are forced to live. This way, we build an inclusion that doesn't "close", but opens new horizons. In this respect, I'd like to recall the words of Pietro Calamandrei, an Italian jurist and politician, who in 1950 defined school as a "Constitutional organ", meaning that it is through school that democracy is realised and becomes concrete in people's everyday life. School, like other government "organs", contributes to transform politics in laws and rights. School is a vital organ of democracy and if we had to compare it with a part of the human body, it would be a blood-producing organ like bone marrow, that reinvigorates daily all the other organs, giving them life, pulse after pulse (Calamandrei, 2008). This conception of school as a vector of democracy implies public commitment to open and maintain schools open to everybody (De Mauro, 2008), instruments of civic equity, of respect for freedoms, for all faiths and opinions. There can be no real democracy where and when access to education is not guaranteed to all people (Calamandrei, 2008; De Giorgi, 2010).

In this work, the importance of legislation, policies and informed practices in order to achieve inclusion in schools is strongly affirmed. However, as an educator, and a researcher who has observed how normative provisions and theoretical principles are implemented in practice, I feel the need to emphasise another aspect: the importance of each individual contribution and motivation to the creation of inclusive cultures. Each educational challenge is unique. There are no standardised procedures and rules that educators can rely on in order to solve educational issues. Rather, "the sources of educational science are any portions of ascertained knowledge that enter into the heart, head and hands of educators and which, by entering in, render the performance of the educational function more enlightened, more human, more truly educational than it was before" (Dewey, 1929, p.39). More so when there is a need to include "weaker"

individuals, it is extremely important to be aware of dealing with many unique cases. In exercising an educational function, management, teachers and the support staff need to work on a synergy of heart, hands and mind (Zanazzi, Polticelli, 2017). As Mortari emphasizes, "sensitive attention is not intellectual, but participatory; it is attention of the mind and of the heart" (Mortari, 2013, p.35).

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Starting in the 1970s, the Italian government has passed a set of legislative provisions known as *integrazione scolastica*. Separate special education classes were abolished and all students were admitted into mainstream schools, regardless of any disability, impairment, or any other personal characteristic or social circumstance. The Italian model seems to be an ideal context for the development of inclusive education when compared to other realities in Europe and in the world, where, in some cases, special schools and/or classes are still the only available options for students with disabilities or impairments. Does such perception correspond to reality?
This book aims to critically analyse and discuss the Italian model of inclusive education from international and intercultural perspectives, as a way to address a crucial theme for educators, school administrators, policymakers, citizens and parents.

Silvia Zanazzi is a Research Fellow and Adjunct Professor of Education at Sapienza University of Rome, and a faculty member at Fondazione IES Abroad, a consortium of US colleges. She has extensive experience in research and teaching of both Italian and international students. She is author of several publications about experiential and lifelong learning, intercultural education, and inclusive education.

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