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Treasure Hunting.

The strength of Gratosoglio local network to contrast educational
poverty in times of uncertainty

Tesi di Laurea Magistrale in Urban Planning and Policy Design.

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ABSTRACT

Gratosoglio is a neighbourhood located in the southern-east area of Milan, Italy. The local community has a long tradition of cooperation between local actors active in the social solidarity and educational fields. The research aims to analyse the network of actors involved in *Scholé*, a project contrasting educational poverty, especially in the summer camp organized in 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic. The interviews to the actors who were part of the project and local associations helped us understand the degree of resiliency of this vulnerable neighbourhood. More particularly, the activity *Caccia al Tesoro* (“treasure hunting” is adopted as a case study, to investigate its potential in terms of social capital.

Gratosoglio · Vulnerable Neighbourhood · Resilience · Summer Camp · Educational Poverty

Gratosoglio è un quartiere situato a sud est di Milano. La comunità locale ha una lunga tradizione di cooperazione sociale tra associazioni e una forte propensione alla solidarietà. Questa ricerca ha lo scopo di analizzare la rete di attori coinvolti Scholé, un progetto di contrasto della povertà educativa, e in particolare nell'esperienza del centro estivo organizzato nell'estate 2020, in piena pandemia. A tal fine, attraverso interviste in profondità si analizza il ruolo di ciascuno di loro si approfondisce la loro capacità di resilienza. In particolare, l'attività denominata “Caccia al Tesoro” adottata come caso studio per investigare potenziale in termini di capitale sociale.

Parole chiave Gratosoglio · Quartiere Vulnerabile · Resilienza · Campo Estivo · Povertà Educativa

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*To my family Pilar, Tomeu and Biel for their
unconditional support and love.*

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1. Introduction

This thesis stems from the internship I carried out in 2021 within a project -Scholè- that aims at contrasting educational poverty in Gratosoglio, Milan. The Department of Architecture and Urban Studies (DAStU) of Politecnico is one of the partners of the project. The DAStU research group is responsible of the monitoring of the project, a compulsory activity foreseen in the call, as well as of the action called *Oltre la scuola* (“Beyond the School”), oriented towards enhancing the knowledge of the children about their neighbourhood and their city. I had the opportunity to join the DAStU research group in the months of June and July 2021, during which I was able to carry out interviews with the local actors involved, comprehend their dynamics and be part of the preparation and implementation of a one-day activity, called “Caccia al Tesoro”.

This thesis is organized as follows. After this introduction you are going to be able to find the aims and the methodology used for the development of this thesis. Chapter 3 composes a brief history of the field of work, neighbourhood of Gratosoglio and the explanations on The Scholè Project as a general framework in which the Summer Camp took place.

Chapter four focuses in educational poverty and the resilience of neighbourhoods facing this situation. Educational poverty is a complex phenomenon that involves a lot more factors than just grades at school. Section one of this chapter analyse the situation of Italy at both regional and local level, considering digital inequalities and other variables that pay a mayor role to explain educational poverty. And in section two mechanisms of resilience to face poverty are presented.

Chapter five is dedicated to the case study of “Caccia Al Tesoro”. Firstly, there is an explanation on how summer camps can work as educational mechanisms, after that the aim and the construction of the activity is explained including materials extracted from it. Finally, the chapter concludes with the results extracted from the analysis of the treasure hunting.

The **Chapter 6** analyses the nature of the network and how they work together during the project. From the analyses of the interviews done during the evaluation of the project, two main topics emerge which are the first two sections of this chapter. The first one which sets a common way of understanding the educational project of the neighbourhood, and the second one focused on the effects of the COVID-19 and the lockdowns. Similar to chapter number five, here the chapter concludes with the explanation on how the network of actors constitutes a success for the project.

To end up with, the conclusion of this paper, goes together with suggestions on how the work done could be amplified and some of the impacts this work had on the international congress of RC21 that took place in Athens on August 2022.

2. Aims and Methodology

The aim of this research was to study the neighbourhood of Gratosoglio as a vulnerable neighbourhood with a powerful social cohesion and a strong network of actors that make possible their resilience during the pandemics.

The study of the neighbourhood is done through the educational project of Scholé and the case study of the activity *Caccia al Tesoro* which was part of the summer school in 2021. Apart from that, the data found analyse the educational poverty of the region and their risks. As well as summer schools as potential mechanisms to constrain the effects of educational poverty and vulnerable neighbourhoods and their potentialities for increasing social cohesion.

This research is framed in a mayor project in which the research group DASTU of the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning of the Politecnico di Milano (PoliMi) was participating on. The Scholé project was mainly found by *Fondazione Cariplo* and I was part of it when doing my internship of the Master Degree of Urban Planning and Policy Design in 2021.

Methodologically, we did interviews to the actors of the projects. The interviews had a variable length considering the questions were open regarding the biographical trajectories of the actors and its role with the project and the relation with Gratosoglio, as well as the main tasks developed in Scholé Project. Their perceptions on the project and reflections on how everything worked-out were stressed, too.

The questions asked during the interviews can be grouped in four different parts: (i) presentation and background of the actor, (ii) self-evaluation of the activity/activities performed, (iii) relation with external actors (educators, families...), and (iv) evaluation of the project Scholé¹. A part from that, in the table below you can find more details on the conditions and date the interviews were performed:

¹ Note: original questions in Italian. See Annex 1 (guidelines for the interview). The questions were not necessarily answered one by one but those are guidelines of topics that need it to be tackle. The same interview was used for all the actors.

Table 1. Technical details of the interviews of the actors (June-July, 2021. City of Milan)

CODE/ACTOR	ROLE	DATE	FORMAT (Online: ONL/Face-to-face: /FTF)
E1. Don Giovanni	-Priest church San Barnaba	02.07.2021	FTF (church)
E2. Bovio	-Director IC Arcadia	21.07.2021	ONL
E3. Marilena	-Association Piccolo Principe Onlus	29.06.2021	FTF (Department of PoliMi)
E3. Elena	-Coordinator of after-school activities	29.06.2021	FTF (Department of PoliMi)
E4. Paolo	-Volunteer in theatre activity and church activities	16.07.2021	FTF/ONL (Church and online)
E4. Alina	-School teacher -Educator -Volunteer	16.07.2021	FTF/ONL (Church and online)
E5. Liliana	-Support teacher in dance activity	26.07.2021	ONL
E6. Daniela and Monica	-Theatre and dance (located in Teatro Oscar)	27.07.2021	ONL
E7. Daniela Frizze	-Parents training	27.07.2021	ONL
E8. Livia Rosato	-Coordinator of theatre (in Arcadia)	29.07.2021	ONL
E9. Andrea Panighetti	-Assistant of Montagna activity	19.07.2021	ONL
E10. Francesco Fabiano.	-Volunteer in Piccolo Principe	28.07.2021	ONL
E11. Stefano Bisanzon and Suor Elisabetta Stocchi.	-Supervisor at Centro Asteria	28.07.2021	ONL
E12. Silvia Fortunano and Francesco Leone,	-Feraboli coordinator and Arcadia primary school coordinator	19.07.2021	ONL

Source: own figure with the information extracted from the interviews.

3. The context: a multi-actor project in Gratosoglio, Milan

3.1. Brief history of Gratosoglio

Gratosoglio was before part of *Corpi Sant di Porta Ticinese* and the node connecting Milano and Pavia. The grow of the neighbourhood is the result of the presence of water and the construction of two main churches. The first communities started settling there, the first monasteries were founded and two main industrial areas were developed: Riseria Gariboldi (Cascina Santa Croce) and Cartiera Binda (Conca Fallata).

Gratosoglio was part of the construction project that took place along *Via Missaglia* from Chiesa Rossa to Rozzano isolating the area.

The construction of mass housing (1963-1971) responds to the emerging demands as the population rapidly grows: 52-line *buildings* were planned. In 1972, eight towers were added to the plan to host the incoming population (Baro, 2007).

The transformation of the district from a rural to an urban area is the result of the public housing building constructed in the area in less than 20 years. As said, during this period, the master plan of 1953 was executed to give respond to the increase of migrant population and the demographic expansion.

Gratosoglio, is the result of the Plan of Social and Economic Housing known as PEEP that would provide 120000 housing units to the area. The peripheral location of the neighbourhood permits the rapid construction and its growth because of the availability of vast fields (Coppola, 2010; Oliva, 2002).

As said in Coppola (2010) the design of the building presents a structure that protects the area from the outside although it generates spaces that feel hermetic from the outside and in between buildings where there is not a sense of openness: “*Ad organizzare lo spazio sta un sofisticato sistema di barriere che isola*

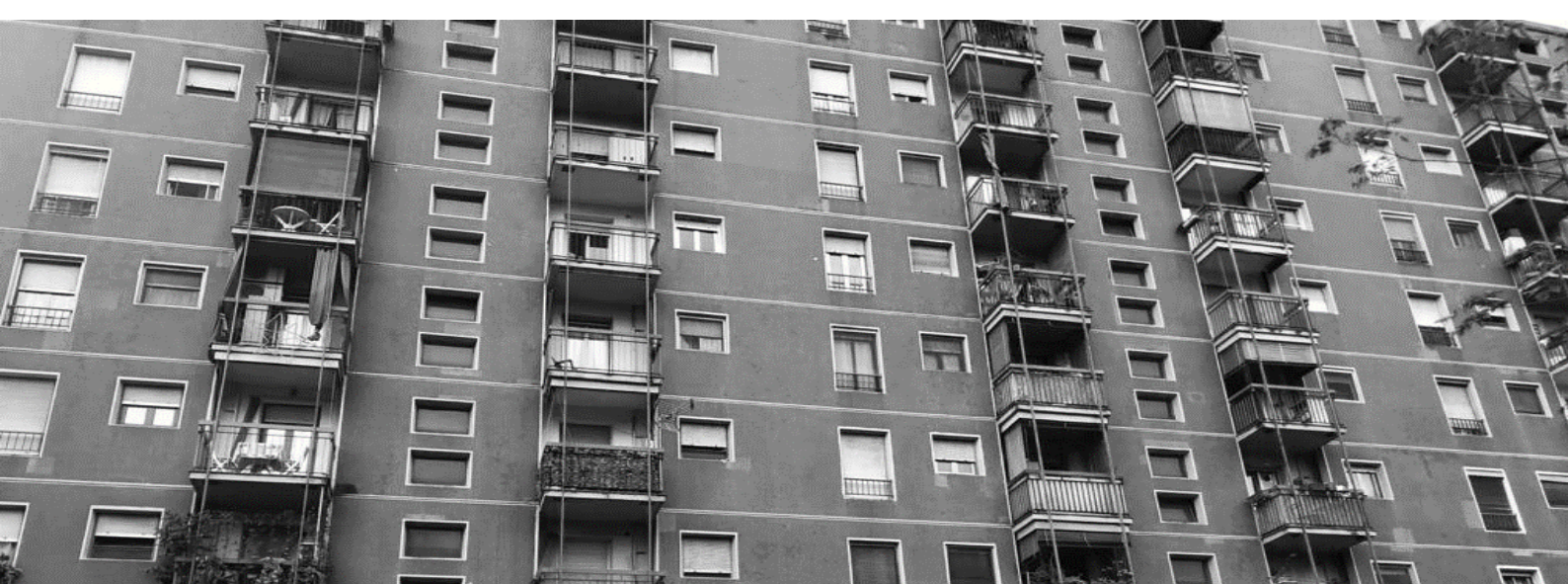


1Location of the NIL in the city of Milan, and map of the neighbourhood of Gratosoglio. Source: own elaboration (map of Milan) with Anna Tagliaferri (map of Gratosoglio used in the internship, 2021)

l'edilizia dalla strada - la quale ha un'unica funzione: l'accesso ai cancelli dei singoli lotti - ma che separa anche i diversi lotti fra loro”.

It can be pointed out, that the feeling of enclosures perceived has to do with the small area thought for children to play, but also as a consequence of the height of the towers which created the sensation of being inside a box: *“Se ci fossero, i bambini risulterebbero ingabbiati nella piccola area attrezzata, sia per le dimensioni davvero ristrette della superficie coinvolta sia per l'altezza dei cancelli che la racchiudono”* (Coppola, 2010,1)

On top of that buildings are low quality constructions. In 1980 under constructional expansion logic, private actors were able to intervene the territory in the so-called *Piano Casa*, building the *Quartiere Le Terrazze*. Summarizing, there stages of construction the building history of Milan when rural areas were transformed into urban. In this final stage, projects left space for private actors to enter the game.



1.Facades of Gratosoglio. October 2020. Own elaboration.

Nowadays Gratosoglio is one of the richest neighbourhoods in terms of green areas and the agricultural areas are one of the most important ones -in terms of environmental value- of the whole area of Milan - ; are protected by *PASM* (which promotes its conservation). Since 2005, the neighbourhood has been better connected to the city centre by the tram line number fifteen and the metro stop *Abbiategrasso*.

The neighbourhood was designed developing the idea of creating a satellite neighbourhood that could be self-sufficient creating social and economic facilities to guarantee residents a good quality of life, including schools, church, social services, municipal offices, and other basic supplies.



2. Agricultural Field in Gratosoglio. October 2020. Own elaboration.

The additional white towers added to the plan, where key to highlight the centre of the neighbourhood and the surroundings were left to organize social life, but it did not achieve in having a cohesive neighbourhood centre (Belgioioso, 1967 cited in Coppola, 2010).

The idea of creating a sense of community in the centre of the area, as well as the thought of creating housing units safe for their residents failed since the self-sufficient idea end up isolating its inhabitants.

A final note on the feeling of isolation in Gratosoglio; in 2004 the regions of Italy were asked to define their own issues and limitations. According to Bricocoli (2005) the city of Milan identifies three lines of action: physical dimension (i) social dimension (ii) and redevelopment of the existing services at local level in which the city selected four districts excluding the one where Gratosoglio is located. It was thanks to the locations (mainly social cooperatives) who present the candidacy of Gratosoglio as a neighbourhood “in crisis” with a long tradition of claiming for economic funds to develop local projects.

The reasons given to consider Gratosoglio as a neighbourhood in crisis were: (1) building deterioration, (2) lack of communal spaces, (3) residential segregation due to concentration of vulnerable and (4) aging population, (5) problems related with cohabitation with migrants, (6) rise up of vandalism and minor crime (City council of Milan, 2005).



3. Panoramic View of White Towers. July 2021. Source: Matteo Fischi.

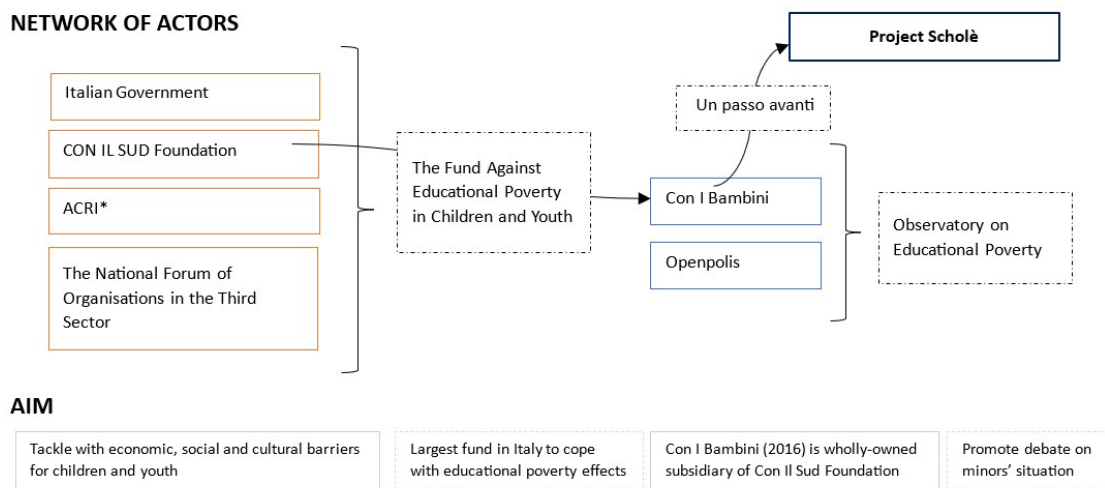
At the same time, they strengthen the potentials of the neighbourhood stating a high amount of empty space underuse that could be exploited as recreative and commercial spaces, the possibility of expansion of residential areas and green areas to assure quality of air and outdoor areas. Thanks to that, Gratosoglio was able to have access to the same economic funds as the other four districts.

3.2. The Scholé Project: contrasting educational poverty in Gratosoglio

To understand the nature of the project, we need to comprehend how the Scholé project was born. The Italian Government, together with the *Con Il Sud Foundation*, The National Forum of the Organisations in the Third Sector, and *Associazione di Fondazioni e di Casse di Risparmio Spa* (ACRI) mobilize to deal with the economic, social, and cultural barriers for children and youth of Italy who is suffering educational poverty.

Within this framework of action, the mentioned actors created the *Fund Against Educational Poverty in Children and Youth* along with the creation of the association *Con I Bambini* in 2016, in charge of handling the fund. Meanwhile, the association developed the Observatory on Educational Poverty in collaboration with *Openpolis* to promote the critical debate on the minors' situation in Italy.

The following diagram summarize the structure explained above to understand the network of actors:



1 Actors involved in the design of Scholé Project and aims. Source: own source.

Having the diagram above as a guidance, Scholé is a four years project founded through *Un Passo Avanti* under the control of the association *Con I Bambini*.

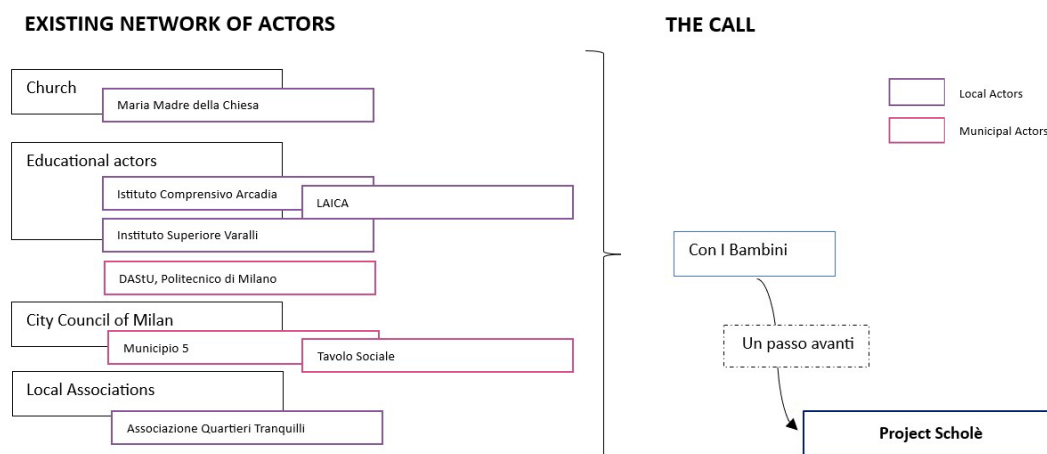
The Scholé Project aims to cope with educational poverty and the issue regarding drop-off schools in the southern neighbourhood of Milan, Gratosoglio.

The project's strategies happen in the schools of Gratosoglio and outside of it as extracurricular activities. Thanks to that, it encourages the collaboration of relatives, local actors, professors, and volunteers who participate in the educational system developing activities for minors between 6 and 17 years old.

The aims of the Scholé Project can be summarized in:

- (1) Strength the links among local actors and forecast their continuity in the Scholé project cooperating for the educational well-being of their neighbourhoods.
- (2) Facilitate the normal development of the minors and the integration of parents into the educational system.

Following the first diagram, here we are able to see the relation between the actors who collaborate in the design and the implementation of the project itself.



2 Actors involved in the designing call of Scholé Project. Source: own source.

In the first place, we have the different churches of neighbourhood which took an important role in the implementation because of their strong connections with numerous local actors. Following them, we can find the *Istituto Comprensivo Arcadia* where the association of mothers and fathers was shaped (known as LAICA). We can also find indirect partners such as the school *Istituto Superiore Varalli* or the neighbourhood association *Associazione Quartieri Tranquilli*.

Considering the role of the research group of the DASTU, they took a grate part in the evaluation of degraded public spaces of the area together with the church *Chiesa Parrocchiale di Santa Maria Madre della Chiesa*, the city council of the area (*Municipio 5*), the local associations and educative actors.

As a general framework, we are now able to situate the project Scholé, the origin and the aims. Some of the actors have already been presented through the diagrams, though in the following sections the reader is going to find more information about them, also to comprehend their dynamics and the interrelation that exists between actors.

4. Educational Poverty and Neighbourhood Resilience

4.1. Educational Poverty, A Complex Phenomenon

“Educational poverty is defined as the impossibility for children and teenagers to learn, experiment, develop and freely foster their capacities, talents and aspirations” (Save the Children, 2015).

The definition includes a lack of skills that makes it difficult to find a job which is associated with low incomes and higher rates of unemployment as privation of participation in communitarian life. Other indicators frequently used in educational poverty includes early school -leaving rates, grades, cultural offer and educational activities of the territory.

Educational poverty is associated with social and complicated familiar background. An example is intergenerational risk of social exclusion, in which the risk of social exclusion of a kid is higher is his parents came from vulnerable economic backgrounds. Therefore, is *a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be describe only by educational indicators* (Saulini, 2016).

In Italy, the results of the report by Save the Children reveals that it exists **geographical disparities** between the north and the south of the country: the 26,2-31,2 percent of the kids coming from poor families do not reach the minimum competences in the North, while in the South the percentages grow up to 44,2% These difference shows a geographic segregation and **intergenerational transmission of poverty** among poorer families.

The **lack of graduated** people in Italy (EUROSTAT, 2022) highlights the **unequal access** to educational services. Even in the same city, these disparities are perceived (*ConIBambini*, 2022), although the city of Milan is one of the four urban areas of the region of Lombardy that has achieve the European Union's (EU) aim offering enough kindergarten spots with 36 new spots per each 100 residents (between 0 and 3 years old) in the city (ISTAT, 2021).

Moreover, depending on the neighbourhood the availability of kindergartens can vary. In general, in *municipio* number four, six and two, the number of new spots offered is higher than in the rest of the city. The explanation to that can be related with the management of schools, the number of families living in the neighbourhood and the birth rates.

When considering the management of schools: in the city centre the 43 percent of schools are managed by private entities plus only the 3,4 percent of residents are less than three years old (SISI, Comune di Milano, 2021), which could explain why it is **easier to access the educational system** in comparison with neighbourhoods where the same range of age is between 6 and the 7 percent (Municipio 6-9).

Indeed, the inadequate management together with the concentration of young population in peripheral neighbourhoods could explain these disparities. Nevertheless, **the housing prices** shows a clear difference between central and peripheral neighbourhoods in Milan which can also help explaining the concentration of young families with kids in those areas. For instance, the price per square metre in the centre of the city Centro is 9.823€/m² while in Navigli is 6.038€/m² whereas in Abbiategrasso, Chiesa Rossa (where Gratosoglio is located) the prices go down until 4.083€/m² (Immobiliare.it, 2022).

Another variable that indicates educational poverty is **dropping-off school at an early age**. This is commonly linked with inferior academic results even though the causes are related to complex economic conditions at home, or not feeling part of the educational system which can be associated with different cultural background and mother-tongues. In the report published in 2018 by the Ministry of Education of Italy, this question was already exposed as an issue that needs to be addressed in the whole country.

Indeed, in Italy the 12,8 percent of students leave high school before finishing the secondary education (EUROSTAT, 2022) while in Lombardy this percentage is of the 11,3%. The situation affects the 11,18 percent of the inhabitants of Milan which are between six and eighteen years old (ISTAT, 2021-2022).

The national records of schooling in Italy shows a gender gap in early abandoning school. The national average in men is the 4% while in women is the 2,6%. As said, territorial disparities are again reflected here even when in Lombardy the situation is quite better than in the rest of regions. In this case, the incidence is more present among children whose place of birth is abroad Italy.

In those cases, school which should work as a tool to offer an egalitarian base for children in terms of equal opportunities. According to Sen (1990) education can end up being a mechanism of social segregation indicating the inequalities among territories (Pasta, 2021; Saterini, 2019; Bravi, 2009). Particularly, because there exists a relation between **high levels of unemployment** and rising cases of dropping-off school:

“On average across OCDE countries, 58% of 25-34 years old adults who have not completed upper secondary education are employed compared to the 78% among those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment and 85% among those with tertiary attainment” (OCDE, 2021, 64)

Educational poverty in Milan occurs along with other urban issues related with the rapid expansion of the city whose youth population has a growth of +6,8% (ISTAT, 2022). The growth of the city can be linked with good accessibility in transport, offer in services and employment which attracts families to move to the city.

Likewise, the data of the ISTAT shows the disparities among the neighbourhoods where the proportion of unemployed people is higher in cases where **educational level** is lower. Moreover, in the neighbourhoods where the unemployment reaches the 10 percent such as Gratosoglio (10,6%) the amount of population with tertiary education is lower than the 60 percent. That is to say: *Se istruzione e occupazione vanno di pari passo, i quartieri più fragili su un piano sono generalmente più fragili anche sull'altro* (Openpolis, 2018).

To end up with, **access to cultural offer** is usually taken as secondary source to explain education poverty but it is a relevant mechanism when dealing with it. Through the data available in ISTAT (2020) and Openpolis (2022), during 2018 in Milan we were able to find 1,2 cultural goods (*beni culturali*) per each 1000 inhabitants, also: 1961 cultural assets, 1623 architectural goods, 67 archaeological places and one garden catalogued as *cultural interest*. Apart from that, a questionnaire done by the ISTAT back in 2019 pointed out that 34 out of the 64 museums included educational activities in their programs targeting both children and young adults. Even if that shows an interest for cultural institutions to offer educational knowledge the data reviewed was not exhaustive as require to make statements.

Moreover, even before the pandemics less than half of the young population (6-17 years old) visit a museum or other cultural facility, especially from the children living in the southern parts of the city. But even when Lombardy is the Italian region with the wider number of educational activities such as workshops only 19,2 percent of museums had activities oriented to children.

Unequal access to cultural offer shows the existence of residential segregation in terms of cultural accesses particularly in having information on the events located far from the southern city which could be tackled scattering the offer and implementing more cultural and educative activities through the entire city.

Digital inequalities are going to be briefly tackled here to understand how the pandemics rapidly increase the risk of social exclusion in Gratosoglio. Since the project took place in a context of post-pandemics constantly adapting their activities to the regulations of the government. Similarly, **green spaces** became fundamental in the *new normality* because they were open area where the minimum distance could be maintained.

Digital Inequalities in the Region of Lombardy

Equip schools digitally aims to cope with educational poverty. That is the reason why it is important to analyse the situation in Lombardy. There is a lack of data systematized in digital infrastructures in schools, and the data available is not updated. The relevant data to analyse here was the one of the lockdown and post-pandemic period (academic year starting in 2019-2020) onwards to see which was the pandemic's impact in online classes.

With that said, Lombardy has one of the quickest Internet connections of the entire country according to Agcom (2019), but that does not mean that every educational building has facilities for each kid such as laptops or tablets. Even if, in the city of Milan the schools are better digitally equipped than anywhere in Lombardy (most schools have more than 10 computers) when taking a deeper look at the data of the city, the digital equipment differs depending on the neighbourhood.

In 2018 the 14,3 percent of students were attending schools that were lacking of computers (ISTAT, 2020). But the difference in number of computers per student varies depending on the school. This created educational disparities between children according to their school. Consequently, educational level (here, the digital skills) can be highly influenced by the school children attend.

To put an example with data of the Ministry of Education (MIUR, 2018), both the neighbourhood of Barona and Gratosoglio have a 1,8% of children who come from families with risk of social exclusion. But, while if you attend a primary school in Barona (here, San Paolino, with 109 students) they have 18,3 computers per 100 students, when attending the primary school of Via dell'arcadia (291 students in total) they only had 25 computers or 8,6 computers per 100 students.

The Relevance of Green Spaces for Children

The district 41 (*Nuclei di Identità Locale*, NIL how is called in Italian) is where the neighbourhood of Gratosoglio is located and has 353263 square metres of green urban areas representing the 11,4 percent of the land of the NIL (PGT Milano, 2019). The importance of green spaces for children adopts a new dimension after pandemics. As most of us will remember, the first thing permitted after the lockdown were outdoors sports like walking or running.

Moreover, green spaces have always been essential to guarantee the wellbeing of inhabitants in urban areas. In particular, in Italy, Florence and Turin have the highest number of parks, while the city of Milan has green neighbourhoods (Ispra, 2019) from which Gratosoglio is a good example of.

These areas help reducing the temperature of urban centre produced by cars and paved roads, assure places for children to play, elder people to gather and foster social life in general. Besides that, green spaces are not enough to guarantee the quality of life because the conditions in which these spaces are determines the type of activities that can be performed and the target group, they are more suitable to attract (Openpolis, 2022). In Gratosoglio, green fields are guarantee but most of the time they are seen as vast spaces, lonely and isolated where nothing is going on. Even more, in some cases they are dirty spaces that are transformed into areas where rubbish tends to accumulate and untidiness discourage both youngest and their parents to choose those places as suitable to spend leisure time.

Risk of Social Exclusion

The social context until now and the indicators associated to it can have as a consequence social exclusion. Furthermore, a crisis like the COVID-19 as well as a period of instability usually puts in risk children coming from families with low incomes, either because of lack of job, difficulties accessing education and social instability. In fact, pandemics has been a huge handicap for most families in Gratosoglio putting in risk young children of the area.

According to the EUROSTAT, in 2019, in Italy people younger than 18 had a risk of social exclusion of the 27 percent. Although we do not count of the precise percentage of these last two years due to the lack of data during the pandemics, their estimations already point out a rise of more than two point dangerously getting close to the 30 percent (EUROSTAT, 2021).

Finally, getting back to the intergenerational risk of social exclusion, it needs to be emphasized that in 2020, the 54,98 percent of their residents between 25 and 49 years old had a tertiary educational level: either a university degree, PhD or a technical diploma. Whereas the index of social and material vulnerability of the population is 98,93 (calculated with municipal data of 2018 known as *Indicatore di vulnerabilità sociale e materiale*). This data, that out of context could perfectly give the effect that higher education is linked with material vulnerability too, when reading it after the whole context given until here makes us understand than educational poverty is not monocausal, but multi-factorial and that is also the reason why it needs to be explained with a combination of indicators and explanations rather than self-reasoning. In this sense, potential mechanisms and solutions needs also to consider that to deal with educational poverty in Gratosoglio.

4.2. Resilience in Vulnerable Neighbourhoods

Considering the definition of Parés, Blanco and Fernández (2018), we are going to understand here a neighbourhood as a socio-spatial unit with meaning and functioning for those who live in the area and interact with each other. It is relevant to take the definition of "neighbourhood" into account to understand the vulnerability and resilience of a neighbourhood such as Gratosoglio, given that we will later analyse the network of actors involved in the Scholé project who operate in the area.

Resilience might be the result of the challenges that have suffered a neighbourhood, which is why vulnerability usually has associated factors. In response to this vulnerability, people tend to self-organize developing shared solutions to daily problems that their governments or other public or private institutions have not solved.

In southern European countries, we have uncountable examples of vulnerable neighbourhoods in which austerity measures of the economic crisis cause severe risk to their inhabitants. Recently, the pandemic caused aggregated social problems to the existing disadvantages intensifying urban segregation. (Parés, Blanco and Fernández, 2018)

Resilience is context-based and -in vulnerable areas- the result of pre-existing social structures. That means if social infrastructures do not function properly and there is a concentration of vulnerable groups in the area and ethnic diversity, the vulnerability will increase. (Wickes et al., 2015).

In those cases where vulnerability spreads through the neighbourhood, schools are considered safety spots for children. Schools are educational institutions that can prevent children away from conflict after school time as a protective structure. This protection can be against crime, but also in cases of family abuse, absence of family members or frequent residential mobility (which make children struggle in making friends and engaging in school). In vulnerable neighbourhoods, extracurricular programs are considered desirable to avoid children dropping off school (Forrest-Bank *et al.*, 2014):

"Getting involved" with an extracurricular activity during the after-school period is a protective factor that can prevent young people from academic failure, violence exposure, and other risks associated with residing in underserved urban environments. (Woodland, 2014, 2)

For that reason, it is relevant to consider extracurricular activities because it does not only prevent risk exposure but vulnerability, which is associated with psychological distress (Green et al., 2015). Despite this, out-of-school programmes can contribute to an increased risk of vulnerability. For instance, poor relations between staff and children, under-educated staff or organized programs can cause confusion and mistrust in the community. (Woodland, 2014)

The capacity of a vulnerable neighbourhood to respond against risk is, according to Parés, Blanco and Fernández (2018), related to the (1) characteristics of their built environment, (2) social capital and (3) civic capacity.

The characteristics of the built environment include urban morphology, housing property, neighbourhood facilities and the location of the area in the city (peripheral neighbourhoods tend to be more vulnerable and have more difficulties overcoming social problems due to cultural barriers or isolation, among others) (Fleury et al. 2008; Parés et al. 2014).

Social capital² is a concept in constant discussion in social science for its complex measurement. Here, we consider social capital as the accessibility to communitarian resources, social activism and its organization, civic engagement and the networks they have created, and the coordination among actors to assure mutual benefit. In addition, we could also consider social cooperation, trust between stakeholders of different natures and public policies meant to tackle vulnerability and forecast resilience. Besides that, mistrust, clientelism and community segmentations are variables equally relevant when studying the side effects of resilience in a neighbourhood (Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Wickes *et al.*, 2015).

Finally, civic capacity implies the ability to coordinate actions among different actors working together and how they manage those actions with external actors (governmental or not) to respond to local demands. An example is the case of the neighbourhood of Bellvitge in Barcelona. Their collective action stopped the construction of housing blocks and gained new public spaces by firming agreements between the local organizations and the city council: *It is the result of a combination of more than 30 years of collective action and a significant amount of public investment.* (Parés, Blanco and Fernández, 2018)

Resilience is a dynamic process through which a neighbourhood deals with a disturbance and adapts to it in its context. It is a concept that combines risk exposure and the capacity to achieve a positive solution to the conflict. The complexity of its use is due to the high overuse and the multiple ways of defining it (Woodland, 2014; Parés, Blanco and Fernández, 2018)

Another way of referring to resilience is through the magnitude of disturbance a system can tolerate, known as ecological resilience. In Gratosoglio, ecological resilience might be helpful to analyse the

² As Putman said (1993, cited in (Parés, Blanco and Fernández, 2018)): *“the denser social organization networks are, the higher the chances that the members of a given community will cooperate for the common good”.*

relations community-neighbourhood studying the links that create the school with the residents through after-school programs. (Forrest-Bank *et al.*, 2014)

However, if our will is to put social entities in the spotlight, studying social resilience could work better. Some papers use "civic capacity" as a synonym of social resilience. Social resilience has been defined as the ability of human communities to withstand external shocks to their social infrastructures (Colucci, 2012); Instead, to measure this type of resilience, Norris et al. (2008) considers four factors.

First, analysis of the economic development and resource distribution. Then, social capital considering received and perceived social support, citizens' participation, sense of community and attachment to the place. Third, the "communication factor" which analyse the narratives of the media related to the neighbourhood and the internal trust of residents. Last, community competence, problem-solving capacity, flexibility and creativity, collective strength and political participation.

When the object of analysis is education, complementary variables must consider: a long-term education plan involving the community, programmes aimed at supporting under-resourced families, adult mentoring and a safe environment. These are some of the variables mentioned in the literature.

As resilience rise, psychological distress goes down. Due to that, variables such as social cohesion, the number of years of residence in the neighbourhood and the confrontation with a known risk highly determine how strong resilience will be. In this sense, social cohesion promotes health-related behaviours, such as collective sports among children or adult meetings. It also implies greater communication parents-children, which means protection against minor robbery between residents and quicker detection of youth issues while it decreases self-pressure. After-school programs might be a great example of it: "*After-school programs often link youth with additional caring adults who provide mentorship, critical advice, and social support*" (Woodland, 2014,16).

For these reasons, strengthen social cohesion is key to guarantee community's well-being. Here, community agency is fundamental and is deeply connected with the relations created inside the community. Those relations can promote a sense of belonging through shared activities (called companionship relations), statements that aim to convince people of their own value (esteem relations), information, or interpersonal relations to meet a particular need which can be show as pro-social behaviour (instrumental relations), as well as aspiration relations that has to do with future expectations, which in the case of vulnerable neighbourhoods is fundamental to assure children's hope for the future (Forrest-Bank *et al.*, 2014).

According to Green et al (2015), resilience can improve with the help of direct, protective or curvilinear measures. Direct measure refers to any action having an immediate effect on vulnerability, for instance, governmental funds. Protective measures include actions meant to facilitate emotional stability, while curvilinear ones teach youth how to overcome ordinary risks. These measures can be applied separately or coexist as hybrid models without overlapping.

Resilient initiatives involve extra-curricular programs that work with emotions, such as writing techniques to express feelings and show the availability of peers. Among them, we can find extra courses for children who are not performing well in class encouraging them to ask for help. Similarly, the figure of volunteer tutors has helped (Forrest-Bank et al., 2014; Green et al., 2015)

One of the features that make after-school programs more interesting is when they work as a complement to the academic curriculum. The programs can be more flexible and adapt according to the needs and wills of children enrolled in the program.

Apart from that, organizers can consider the participation of neighbourhood associations. Meaning they can work as community revitalises forecasting stronger networks and improving the landscape of the neighbourhood simply by using it. (Woodland, 2014)

To end up with the initiatives' suggestions, including parents in after-school programs seems to have successful results, especially among migrant population since it can promote language courses in which kids and their parents can learn together in a sort of co-learning method. Parents' volunteering is also a recurrent practice in vulnerable neighbourhoods in exchange for stipends for meals for their kids, even though these practices are not free of controversy since they might not consider parents who work long hours. Above all, those programs have a positive impact on social cohesion and academic performance.

Other figures that increase resilience are "Neighbourhood Councils" which can help to coordinate inhabitants claims and initiatives, like in the neighbourhood of Bellvitge in Barcelona. However, they can also fail if the coordination of actors with multiple interests creates tensions, as it occurs in Ciutat Meridiana (Barcelona) when developing the "Community Development Plan".

A final comment regarding religious institutions considers the relevance of the local es as core actors of a neighbourhood. The literature on the topic is not extensive. Even though exists a long tradition of Chartism among local charities that host donations of furniture, clothing and food, as well as religious

communities who tend to engage youth in extracurricular activities in their infrastructures. (Wickes *et al.*, 2015)

The church, as well as schools, are considered safe landmarks in vulnerable neighbourhoods. They can act as mediators between associations and schools by arranging activities that increase social capital and are capable of assuring the creation of a local network of actors.

As a pivotal place for neighbours to gather together, they can join communities, especially in those areas where the centre is blurred or social life is not very active: “*religious organizations can establish places where pro-social attitudes and behaviours, expectations of achievement, and future-oriented planning is valued and encouraged*” (Regnerus and Elder, 2003).

Despite that, here we are mentioning religious institutions developing programs open to all the community without considering their religious affiliation or belief.

5. “Caccia al Tesoro”, A Case Study

This chapter studies "treasure hunting" as an activity performed during the summer of 2021 in the neighbourhood of Gratosoglio, understanding the case as an educational mechanism to analyse the solidarity of Gratosoglio. Part of that, "Summer Camps as Educational Mechanism", studies the use of it in other cities to deal with educative deficiencies.

The leisure activity named *Caccia al Tesoro* (treasure hunting in English) is part of the activities proposed by the research group *DAStU* of the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning of the *Politecnico di Milano (PoliMi)*. The institution was involved in the activity since it was part of Scholé Project. As explained before, the groups did a study defining the spaces that were suitable for the summer school to be settled attending the following considerations:

During the scholar year of 2020-2021 the National Sanitary Law³ was strict on the measures school need to follow regarding the situation of COVID-19. Due to that, schools adapt extraordinary circumstances and create *bubble groups*. That is, small groups of children would be together with an educator or a sports instructor and would develop all their activity without having contact others. To assure that, the university helped defining the spaces through spatial analysis of the territory, so every bubble group had a safe space to perform their activities. This meant defining several sports and considering different paths to access the spaces.

In the case of Gratosoglio, a maximum of 80 kids -among seven and fourteen years old- were able to enrol in the summer school. They were divided in 10 bubble groups of eight members each. That also assure that, in the unfortunate event of a positive case of COVID-19 only the affected bubble group went to quarantine while the rest of the summer school could continue their activity.

From the spatial analysis six desired spaces were considered to develop the summer school considering outdoors which fit the requirements of the national law valid at that time. Those spaces can be found in the church of *San Barnaba* and the church of *Santa Maria della Chiesa*. Moving all the activities in spaces

³ When a COVID-19 infection is detected at an educational institution at the elementary level, the following measures must be followed: (a) the whole class in which the infection is discovered must be suspended for 10 days; (b) antigen or molecular tests must be carried out immediately and repeated after five days; and (c) if two or more positive cases are detected in one class, online instruction for 10 days must be ordered. (D.L. No. 1, art. 4(1)(a)–(b).) Retrieved from: <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2022-03-16/italy-recent-measures-to-tackle-the-pandemic/?locl=calln>

where ventilation and security distance could be maintained was a measure other summer schools took over Europe.

In addition to that, in Gratosoglio, the high school *Comprensivo Arcadia* transformed two extra spaces to fit the two groups left.

Therefore, the summer school was the result of an open round table in which various actors of the neighbourhood took place such as churches, associations, volunteering actors, educative centres and schools, also the city council number five (*Municipio 5* in Italian, that is the city council from which the neighbourhood of Gratosoglio is part of) and the city council of Milan.

On top of that, the actors participate and were part of the children's event considering their availability, in economic feasibility human and cultural resources (DASU, 2021). With that said, the summer school is the result of a codesign plan that guarantee health of educators and children. Implementing the summer school to help in the reintegration of kids in the community within the pandemic's contexts and after hard the lockdowns of 2020.

The social context, helps us understand where the activity of the treasure hunting comes from. The following material is part of my *field diary* ►

The idea of the treasure hunting was the result of the brainstorming that took place during this meeting, together with the demands the group already had coming from the priest of the neighbourhood and the school that were highly involved in the process.



5.1. Summer Camps as Educational Mechanisms

Summer camps are programs developed during summertime for children and youth. These programs can be financed by public institutions such as governments or by private actors such as foundations. We can

also find mix-funded projects that involves the participation of the local community requiring volunteers to work, which is the case for most vulnerable neighbourhoods.

According to the studies consulted, summer camps have great benefits for children. Firstly, they can be a good space for children to socialize and meet new people considering that summer months make it hard for them to maintain their friendship. Moreover, it can also help with social isolation not only for the summer but also as a preparation for the new academic year being able to solve children's conflicts that took place during school-hours. (Michalski et al., 2003)

In this sense, summer camps are a good opportunity for children to learn how to share, set boundaries and solve problems among their peers while hanging outdoors experiencing their environment.

Consider too, that the pandemics had a negative impact on the amount of time children could spend outdoors while the scree-time consumption dramatically rise since it was hard for parents to entertain their kids while working from home. According to Sibthorp et al. (2021):

"Parents have struggled to keep their kids engaged, active, and off their phones. Children and youth, naturally seeking a degree of separation from their families, have had fewer opportunities to cultivate their interests, socially connect, and step-up as leaders under the helpful structure and guidance provided by summer camp [...] COVID-19 has been a stark reminder of the value of summer camps for many families."

In addition to eliminating screen time (Gately et al. 2015; Shafer, 2016), summer camps guarantee that children are getting exercised. As said, because of the lockdown and the use of screens, children adopt sedentary-related habits that can deplete their health: "...*sedentary lifestyles increase all causes of mortality, doubles the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and obesity, and increase the risks of colon cancer, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, lipid disorders, depression and anxiety – which, for the most part, are entirely preventable.*" (Child Abuse Prevention Treatment & Welfare Services, 2019)

Healthy habits acquired during summer camps include having a regular meal' schedule, not having access to junk food and being able to practice sports while having fun. That is even more relevant coming from vulnerable neighbourhoods and low-income families because summertime might be a synonym for food insecurity. Indeed, summer camps that provide meal programs are particularly successful in assuring youth's well-being (Park & Lee, 2015; Brazendale & Beets & Weaver, 2017; Anderson et. Al, 2018)

Overall, summer camps are spaces aimed at entertaining children while educating them. It is relevant to consider this since OCDE reports in 2008 evidenced that kids who do not participate in educative-related courses during summertime have lower grades in maths and fewer reading skills. Moreover, in the

organization of summer camps, we usually find volunteers and local associations that participate for free who can be positive role models for the youth. This type of program also assures the adult supervision of children during summer, guaranteeing their well-being and education and reducing the possibility of developing risky behaviours such as alcohol abuse or unsafe sex practices. (Gottfredson et al. 2010; National Academies of Sciences, 2019)

Some studies suggest that art summer camps are a great opportunity to give a second chance to children that drop off school. An example of this is "Makers Hub", developed in *Quarto Oraggio* which includes activities such as theatre and art-crafts that took place in abandoned spaces of the neighbourhood. This summer camp offers a spatial dimension that most summer programs are not considering. By choosing abandoned spaces, they challenge the urban sphere and invite children from other neighbourhoods to rediscover their city. Apart from that, there is evidence that employment programs that are part of summer camps related to arts can have positive effects as a mechanism for youth in correctional education. (Mariano & Martorell, 2013; Triani, Ripamonti & Pozzi, 2015; Heppen et al., 2016; Johson, 2017)

As we saw in the last section, dropping out of school is an ongoing problem that according to Frabboni and Balducci (2014), can be prevented at an early stage following three different levels of intervention: the first level is related to the performance inside the classroom at school-time, which embraces the educational community.

Then, if this first level is not enough, a second level is introduced: the aim is to give emotional support to the children paying special attention to those who are unmotivated. Lack of motivation can be a result of the dynamics of the educational system, the feeling of not being part of the system or related issues with their peers.

Finally, the third level is more complex in terms of giving personalized attention to a child, considering the specific context the child is coming from and taking into account the group of students it relates with and their dynamics. Usually, the interventions designed in this third stage involve local associations and voluntary work. That is to say, is a more holistic way of understanding youth education which implies involving the community in the educational system.

As a general framework of intervention, the method stated above can work. But other variables can complicate the task of teachers to avoid children abandoning school. It is the case of low-income families that need their children to work as soon as possible to gain a salary for the household economy.

Another situation that makes it tough to deal with is related to migrant children. As pointed out by Santerini (2010), avoiding ghetto dynamics is key to engaging migrant children to cooperate with other kids and designing activities that encourage it is especially relevant. On top of that, the educational level is the main complication: firstly, their educational level is not always the same as the one required for their age in the school; then, they usually face difficulties concerning the language, and finally, some cultural barriers facilitate them not feeling part of the system. As a consequence, dropping off school at an early stage is frequent among migrant children. (Forest-Bank et. al, 2013)

To end up with, there are two projects in Milan that we would like to give as examples of summer camps. Both projects worked following the level of intervention explained before and were launched by the "Centro di Ricerca sull'Educazione ai Media" and the other one by the "Catholic University". The two educational programs were working with workshops and creating a large network of schools (primary and secondary level) at a local level that cooperates to create: manual workshops, sports activities, educational visits and excursions, as well as educational internships. That was a successful way of reducing the number of school hours children would be inside the classroom just listening and engaging them in taking action for their education.

The case of Gratosoglio is an example of these kinds of initiatives we have mentioned. Their school called "Second Chance" is a referent in the area encouraging children not to abandon school by giving them the possibility to attend classes during the late afternoon making it compatible with labour's schedule: *Da un punto di vista storico, si richiama alle Scuole Notturne della Carità, "un'opera pia" nata nel 1941 e rivolta alle fasce deboli della popolazione per garantire istruzione scolastica anche ai ragazzi lavoratori.* (Fabbroni and Balducci, 2014, 3). Another historical example that proves the philanthropical tradition of the area took place in 1918 at the secondary school "Istituto Achille Ricci" intending to educate kids who lost their parents during the war or whose relatives were sick of tuberculosis.

5.2. Into the Treasure Haunting

This section is aimed to explain the case study of the treasure hunting performed during July (2021) in the neighbourhood of Gratosoglio with the children participating in the summer school of the Arcadia School in the church of San Barnaba.

The activity is going to help in understanding the role of the actors and their performance during the pandemics. Moreover, it will illustrate one of the factors that explains the success of the case and its resilience.

5.3. Aim and Relevance of Caccia al Tesoro

The preparation process is relevant because of the social implications it had. The creative thinking process, its execution and how some social issues of the neighbourhood emerge during the process are going to be detailed now.

First of all, the design of the activity had to consider between three and five activities to be carried out for some of the children participating in the summer school during half-a-day. In addition, the challenges had to be correlative to each other in order to create a path towards the final treasure.

Thus, the first part of the design involved the collaboration of the San Barnaba's church and its priest Don Giovanni, in order to establish a link of contact with the place and the teenagers from the neighbourhood. Those teenagers would act as volunteers during the activity (along with the educators). This is particularly relevant, because the resources they could provide were their availability (which was much flexible than the educators), and their knowledge on the neighbourhood, which is always of great relevance for an external actor.



4. Church Maria Madre della Chiesa. October 2020. Own elaboration.



5. Meeting with volunteers in the courtyard of San Barbaba. June 2021. Own elaboration.

Moreover, it should be emphasised that in terms of social cohesion, the approval of these volunteers was essential to ensure that the activity was carried out correctly. At the same time, it creates strong links between young people of different age ranges who lived in the same neighbourhood. In other words, we

create a dynamic process where neighbours voluntarily collaborated with each other for a joint purpose.

To design the activity, we made a consultation among the volunteers with the initial idea and jointly we decide the places that fit better. To do this, we met in the courtyard of the church of San Barnaba and presented them a map of the



6.Meeting with volunteers (2). June 2021. Source: Stefania Sabatinelli.

Gratosoglio on which to draw the routes, fix the spaces and understand the territory together.

During the process, there were several things that help us to understand (as external actors) the casuistic of the place. To begin with, there were places where teenagers were not willing to take the children, either because they did not consider them safe places (they mentioned alcohol abuse and young-adults smoking) or because accessibility to these places meant dealing with neighbourhood traffic.

Although Gratosoglio it is not very busy per se, and is one of the least dense neighbourhoods in the city of Milano, it is interesting to understand



7.Brainstorm with volunteers on Gratosoglio's map. June 2021. Own elaboration.

how risk behaviours associated with smoking or alcohol, as well as cars, pose an invisible barrier for young people, which makes them avoid certain places.



8.9. Abandoned furniture and street in poor conditions in Gratosoglio. November 2020. Own elaboration.

Technical language was a consideration we were reflecting on as working with teenagers. Rapidly, we realize that the common vocabulary we -as urban planners- include concepts like orthophotos, axonometries and other graphical tools that helps us understanding the territory could not be easily understood by everyone. Not everyone has an equal vision of the territory, nor understands the technicalities associated with architecture looking for a common language was an interesting process to do with them especially after the first teenager who was looking at the map of his neighbourhood ask: *where are we now in the map?*

Nevertheless, this experience also leads us to confirm that although we must adapt the technical language of our discipline, we should not disregard it. Throughout the process we continue to use visual techniques such as axonometric, not only with teenagers, but also the day of the treasure hunting with the children and we realize that it was also a matter of simplifying the technical specificities of the drawings so that they could work with them. They learn how to read the map highlighting known places in the neighbourhood which help them orient easier.

In addition to this, we also took into account the target population and the context. Of course, the pandemic made things difficult, but the neighbourhood has large areas outdoors that allowed proper ventilation and made possible to maintain a safe distance if necessary (in July 2021 the measures of COVID already permit those activities). The hot summer of Milan makes us consider weather conditions

when planning the activity. For instance, consider shadows to protect children from the Sun and access to water points or short walks under the Sun (no more than 15' walking).

Again, these considerations are easily to comprehend when working directly on the field, which let to understand than working together with population while proposing an activity is important to succeed.

5.4. The Activities of Caccia Al Tesoro

The first activity of the treasure hunting was in the main square in *Via Saponaro* between the white towers where ALER (Azienda Lombardia Edilizia Residenziale) offices are based.

The reason to do it there was that even if it is the main square, it is under used and at the time it did not had equipment (some trees and ping-pong tables were add afterwards). Moreover, it was convenient since the starting point was nearby, in the church's courtyard. The challenge of this spot was the lack of shadows but we wanted to do an intervention there to shake the social like of the neighbourhood.



10.

10. Ongoing constructions at the square of Via Saponaro. June 2021. Own elaboration.

11. Square Via Saponaro. June 2021. Own elaboration.



11.

To do so we develop a circuit of physical activities where a water balloons fight was also performed among the kids. The activity requires simple equipment that the church already had. The aim was to show the potentiality of the square as an open space where to do physical activities even in summer. The activity requires little economic resources and could be adapted according to the needs and the weather conditions. In this case, it was specially fulfilling how elder people who frequently just crossed by the square, were pleased to see the activity, they stayed in the square to watch the children playing and were interested on knowing about it which is an added value to the activity itself.



12. Activity at Via Saponaro. July 2021. Own elaboration.

Mada public park, was a sport suggested by the volunteers. It was not a spot that was considered at the beginning since it was closed to a street where traffic was frequent, considering there are multiple spaces without cars in the neighbour. Considering their proposal, we did a first visit to the park, known for them as *Parco Piramide* (since it has some equipment with a shape that reminds to a pyramid) and we delimit a safe area for kids we also decided to do there a drawing activity presenting them an axonometry of some empty areas of their neighbourhood.



13. Mada Public Park. June 2021. Own elaboration.



14. Mada Public Park. June 2021. Source: Stefania Sabatinelli.

As previously mentioned, there were doubts about the use of axonometries, especially because the goal was for children to imagine different scenarios on how these everyday spaces could be redesigned. Nevertheless, we obtain great results and drawings on -mainly- adding sports facilities to the area.



15. Activity at Parco Piramide. July 2021. Source: Matteo Fischi.



16. Activity at Parco Piramide (2). July 2021. Source: Matteo Fischi.



17. Activity at Parco Piramide (3). July 2021. Source: Matteo Fischi.

The third activity, was more socially based since it was located facing the nursing house of Gratosoglio. Each group received the lyrics of an Italian song and they had to performed the song. As said, this exercise has the aim of creating the sense of group among them, but also to entertain the elder people living in the nursing house which are usually left aside as if they were not part of the citizens of the neighbourhood anymore. Somehow, this also talks about creating links among different range groups of the community.



18. Activity in front of the nursing house. July 2021. Source: Matteo Fischi.

Related to this, the last activity was a mixture between reimagining existing places of Gratosoglio and interaction with neighbours. To do so, we design three different photomontages with the pictures we took during one of the field sites. As an example, in the *Gratobowl* which is an area of a park where you can find a skate park that is above the sea level, we create a swimming pool replacing the skates for water and the skaters for swimmers.



Imagine a new scenarios and ask resident to sign your petition. The aim is also to make them imagine new scenarios in their neighbourhood

Picture of Gratobowl retrieved from Google Maps (2021)

Photomontage of skatepark converted in a swimming pool used for one of the activities of Caccia al Tesoro. Own elaboration

19. Notes of photomontage in Gratobowl. July 2021. Own elaboration.

In order to obtain the treasure, each group had to convince the neighbours to sign a symbolic petition so that the utopian image that was created could become a reality. This was a very interesting exercise, because even if they did not imagine before how these areas could be converted, once the hunting treasure ended all the kids were talking about the idea of having a swimming pool. Of course, that could also be a bias considering the ideas were already given, but it suggests that these activities stimulate imagination stressing that utopias are necessary to start projecting alternatives to the deficiencies Gratosoglio has.



20. Activity at the Gratobowl. July 2021. Source: Matteo Fischi.

5.5. Outcomes of the Initiative

The activity of Caccia al Tesoro was part of the summer school, which had the aim of giving continuity to the efforts made during the pandemic for children not to lose the benefits of meeting face-to-face with their peers. At the same time, the academic year was difficult to follow during lockdown for those kids who did not have a personal computer or if they were sharing their space to study. For this reason, the summer school done during these years was particularly important.

Caccia Al Tesoro was a success because of the coordination with the priest, the volunteers and the people working in the team of Politecnico moving together from the beginning. All the actors had a voice in the process of designing the activity: the priest had the will of making children imagine new scenarios, volunteers were participating in choosing the places in which each activity composing the treasure

hunting would be performed and the PoliMi team was open enough to take all the ideas and shape them into the final activity.

The morning of the activity everyone knew which was their role since the team of PoliMi prepared an *opuscolo* (guidelines for the whole day) were to find the description of the activities, the locations and the materials.

In that sense the coordination of all the actors, the similar vision of the activity and the previous meeting and agreements made it easier for the activity to work smoothly. Personally, I need to highlight how some elder residents who were in the main square of the neighbourhood show interest in the activity and express their gratitude towards the fact that children were using the square.

Following the classification of relationships created by Forest-Bank et al. (2013) in which it is explained four kinds of community agency related relations during Caccia Al Tesoro, we are able to identify some of them. First, the relations of companionship are shown in the design of the activity since it was done thinking in the space they live: the neighbourhood of Gratosoglio. And the aim behind that was to make them discover new spots of the area creating a sense of belonging through a cooperative activity.



21. Activity at the Gratosoglio (2). July 2021. Source: Matteo Fischi.

Then, we can talk about instrumental relations since they used pro-social behaviour in order to solve the “*treasure hunting*” activity. They were competing in three groups, but more than that they need to guess the hints and the places where the activities would take place. Even more, all the activities required the participation of every member of the group in order to succeed.



22. Final reflections at the courtyard of San Barnaba. July 2021. Source: Matteo Fischi.

Finally, if we take into account the *aspirational* relationship considering the perception of their future, we can also link it with two of the activities related with re-designing their neighbourhoods. These exercises, makes children reflect on how their neighbourhood could improve and makes them project their visions of the future on a map.

We were also able to see how the priest, who was involved in the whole activity, is seen as a role model for them, as well as the volunteers who participate in the development of the activity, which are teenagers' part of the same community. According to the literature reviews those figures increase social cohesion and improves children's behaviour.



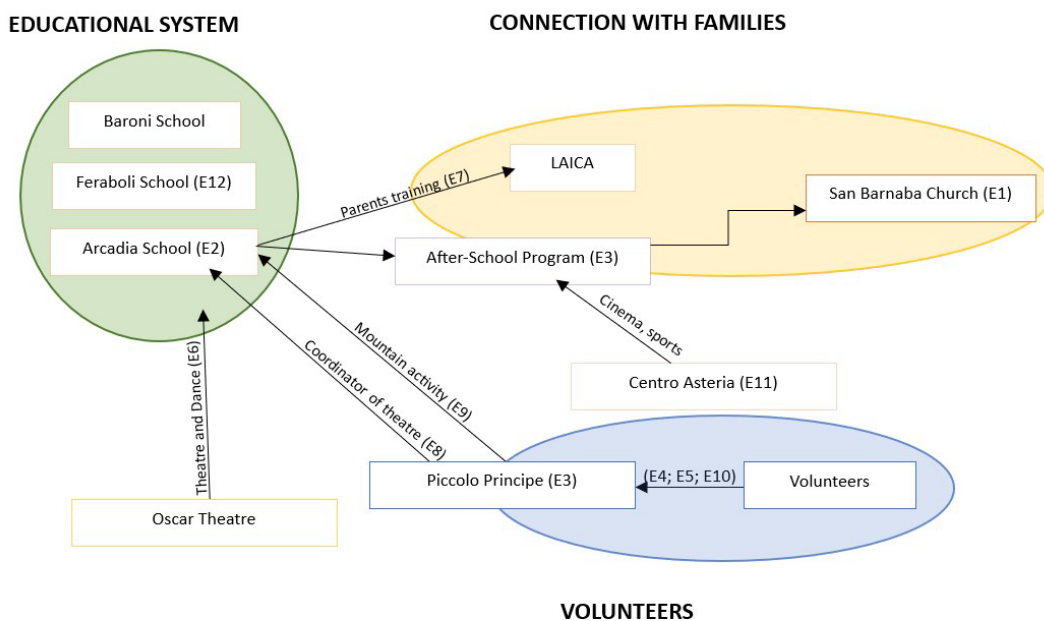
23. Children participating in the Caccia al Tesoro walking through the neighbourhood. July 2021. Source: Matteo Fischi.

6. The Project and the Local Actors: A Reciprocal Relation

The following section analyse the narratives of the interviews done between June and July of 2021 to the actors of the summer school, but also to the actors that Scholé Project. All the interviews were done in Italian language and transcript in the original audio, although here the quotes have been translated to facilitate the lecture.

First, the actors interviewed are going to be briefly presented to give context and, after that the analysis is separated in two main topics frequently debated during the interviews: the relations between actors of the project and the second the effect of COVID-19 regarding educational performance.

The following diagram shows the relations between the interviewees (E_x) and the actors involved in Scholé Project in a simplified image. As well as the systems that are in relation thanks to Scholé Project.



3 Network of Actors of the Scholé Project. Note: Please, find the codes of the interviews (E_x), names and functions of the actors in table 1 (page 9).

The priest of the main church is a well-known neighbour of Gratosoglio and so it is his great relation with the main associations and residents. He gives educational classes to the children too, as his vision of the church goes beyond religious duties. Also, by having the chance of educating the youth he is allowed to have contact with families and educators. These functions convert him one of the key nodes of the network of Gratosoglio.

The coordinator was in charge of assuring the well-being of the project, he finds a constructed network. His role was assuming which things he could handle and which not, as a result of the pandemics. He recognized the main role of the priest in the neighbourhood even when his ideal of school is a secular one.

Marilena and Elena did the interview together; Marilena was in charge of maintaining the cohesion among actors even if that was not her main role. Although everyone agreed in that statement, she was in charge of the good functioning of theatre and dance lessons and had experience in training parents as a familiar mediation with minors. Elena, is the school coordinator and the coordinator of after-school activities.

Paolo and Alina did the interview together; Paolo was always part of the neighbourhood community since as a teen attending the church. He was part of the sports activity and had direct contact with association *Piccolo Principe*. Aline, takes part in the theatre and dancing activity as an educator, as well as in the summer school, but she did not know the neighbourhood before.

Liliana was the professor of the dancing activity; she also constructs the garden with the kids in Arcadia school and had the idea with Marilena to do the activity of emotional management in the dance class. She was also in contact with the professor of physical education of the *Arcadia* school to coordinate the activities.

Daniela and Monica did the interview together. They were part of the *Oscar* theatre and their aim was to make children explore their limits in theatre and dance. Marilena was the one contacting them through association *Piccolo Principe*.

Daniele was the one in charge of the educational activities for parents. It was done online during pandemics. She knew the neighbourhood because she lives in the same municipio where Gratosoglio is located in Milan and used to work cooperating with the church, *Piccolo Principe*, the schools of Boconi and Arcadia, and Centro Stadia.

Livia was the coordinator of the theatre in the school of Arcadia, she came from the Oscar's theatre. She was in contact with Marilena and Paolo to manage the activity.

Andrea was in charge of the activity of the mountain, he needed to adapt the outdoors activities and design activities to do in the gym of the school Arcadia showing orientation and interpretation of maps, as well as doing activities in the garden of the school.

Francesco is mentioned in some interviews as *mental trainer*, he coordinates primary and secondary school's teachers of Arcadia and did activities related with mental health with the teachers to help them dealing with the pressure of the lockdown.

Stefano and Suor Elisabetta did the interview together. They were part of the Centro Asteria. Stefano was the figure who follow volleyball training and observe the dynamics of children with difficulties. That is to say (i) analyse the weekend matches and (ii) the relation of the families with sportive context. Sour Elisabetta was in charge of guiding the cinema activity that could not be done due to covid restrictions.

Finally, Silvia was the coordinator of Feraboli. She was a reference point to link the project Scholé with all the other actors, and she was the one contacting the *emotional educator* and had constant communication with Marilena when writing the reports of the project.

In order to make it easily readable, every interview has been codify as shown in table 1 and the citations extracted from the interviews were translate from Italian to English.

6.1. A Holistic Approach to the Contrast of Educational Poverty

MAIN IDEAS

- Pre-existing network of actors with strong cooperation.
- Challenge the network to work with more formal procedures.
- Dependence on external funds
- Education is beyond school, members of the community should be part of it.
- Time and continuity of the project are required to see results
- Lack of spaces to reflect and share experience among actors

The vast majority of actors live in Gratosoglio facilitating the correct functioning of the project since they knew the area, the socioeconomic situation and they collaborate with Barnabas' church.

In the interviews were the volunteers or actors were not from Gratosoglio, they had the impression of working in a multicultural neighbourhood with tendency of cooperating among actors. Besides that, they express an overwhelming feeling for the lack of formal procedure and clear guides.

As said the cases in which actors did not knew each other, the project was a great opportunity to "*get to know all the actors thanks to Scholé*" (E7) and enjoying connections: "*the project is done in a fragile context but you can see a strong network and how if you come from outside you want to stay*" (E4). At the same time

informality was a challenge for the new volunteers: *“it is so informal that is hard to understand how it works”* (E4). Likewise, between members of the project creating tensions: *“the summer school is not having a control of the enrolment, not even of the attendance and I can’t control everything. Everyone should have an attendance list”* (E3).

The of **cooperation among actors** explains part of the success of the Scholé Project in the area. Together with the priest of the area, the association of *Piccolo Principe* is frequently mentioned as an actor compromise with **increasing the educative quality** of the area.

Even if the informal links among actors have created a sense of community and a strong solidarity among residents, there is a need to develop formal procedures to codesign projects with others. The coordinator (E1) did also highlight the need of formality considering that the project depends on external funds.

Nevertheless, the external funds and extra formalities **challenge them to work in a more structured way**. Moreover, their definitions on the project and the way the **understanding of the educational system, is shared among actors**. This unshared understanding makes the network working in the same direction: *“We’ve created a structural network in which every actor was able to share its knowledge. Empath and loyalty are common values among the actors and the network share common goals and worked in a self-governed way”* (E2) and also *“...it’s a very ambitious project...that didn’t even work top-down showing the potentialities and transforming them into reality”* (E11).

Scholé was defined as **an educational project that goes beyond the activities done in schools** it is considered a cultural project (E2) with social implications: *“...goes beyond learning with educational purpose but also transform knowledge into something social”* (E10). The project **cooperates with multiple local actors** which is believed that **strengths the existing network**: *“...works and have contact with San Barnaba, Piccolo Principe, Schools Boconi and Arcadia, and Centro Stadia”* (E7); *“proves the strength of the network, even more, during pandemic”* (E3); *“I have always participated in both churches with teens and also in football with kids between 7 and 8 years old”* (E4). **Forecasting local solidarity** and the educational quality of Gratosoglio.

By embracing extra activities such as theatre, dance, sports activities, garden and mountain, as well as, putting mental health in the spotlight the project includes the participation of children, the schools *Arcadia, Baroni* and *Feraboli*, volunteers of the area, teachers and parents.

At this point, it is important to talk about the dimension of **time**. Scholé Project is *“four years project so that [it] have time to exist and creates a community with the same kids”* (E12). Indeed, it **requires a continuity** to be able to evaluate its progression and see the results since: *“it’s hard to create something that goes beyond and more in depth if it’s not sustained in time”* (E9). Therefore, to integrate common values it is crucial to consider activities as an **integrate part of the education**: *“... [time is crucial] to integrate the right values, if not it’s going to be a nice activity but nothing else”* (E6).

All actors think that project should have a continuity, but also that activities should last longer to have a **structured plan** that could evolve with the growth of the kids: *“to make the activities evolve with the children”* (E8), again here the dimension of time is need: *“it should last at least 2-3 years to see the evolution and keep working on emotions”* (E5).

At the same time, the general feeling was one of **hard work** coming from associations involved *“the associations and also of parents have worked excellent”* integrating the relation with the school as followed: *“...associations are the once who make it possible to use the school, where the associations were not involved, the school did not take part”* (E3), even if sometimes they were **lacking moments of reflection** and meetings to integrate children, educators and volunteers in the work: *“...lack a part of encouraging children participation with educators and volunteers”* (E1), *“but there must be a process of reflection among actors”* (E2).

From the picture drawn by the information extracted of the interviews which proves an **existing constellation of actors** in Gratosoglio, the particular places that occupies Marilena and Don Giovanni makes us understand them as **core nodes** of the dynamism of the area.

When it comes to the figure of Marilena, she is well **known by the vast majority** of the actors: *“...Marilena contact me because we use to work with new-coming children and complicated family situations”* (E6), relating her with Piccolo Principe and sometimes describing her as the **promoter** and designer: *“...had the idea with Marilena to do the activity of emotional management in the dance class”* (E5) of the activities (or their adaptation) and also as the **reference person** in the activities when there was a complex case: *“...she was very good at mediating and listen to everyone”* (E5); *“In more complex cases, Marilena was the one helping together with an educator”* (E8); *“...to some special occasions we had a videocall with Marilena”* (E4).

Likewise, when describing the role of the priest it was largely linked with the centre location of the church in the neighbourhood where the main square is. That is why Don Giovanni itself considered the church

“...as a capillary place for the neighbourhood” (E1) where activities have a place to be developed: “[theatre as an extracurricular activity] started as an activity in the church and now we have between 300 children per year so we move to have more space” (E6).

Related to that, he is considered a **member of the community**: “...the priest creates a community based on his principles and he was always there as a referent model. He works for the community, lives in the community and explains the experience abroad too” (E4). So, the purpose of the church is beyond a religious one: “priest takes care of the popular school for young adults” (E3); “the figure of the priest was catalysed during pandemics as a place considered also educative for children and their families. Due to that, the oratorio needs to offer more than Cristian education to them...I believe with help of educators and other schools’ members” (E2).

The relevance of the religious institution here requires working with them and adapting to the field even when the general idea of the school is one where **education is a public secular institution**: “The relation with the church is very special, it works as an organizing node that contains the cultural and social values of the territory, even if I have the idea of a secular school, we can’t ignore it’s importance” (E2). Similar to that, he is considered a positive role model: “they need a figure to whom they can talk, Don Giovanni is a referent for male kids” (E5).

Nevertheless, the project faces the **pressure of managing the whole project** in front of the partnership by making sure all the actors are well coordinated and priorities are established.

“Facilitate and mediate are the main tasks, also convince people who was part of the project that this was a great opportunity. It is important to stablish what is a priority and what goes after that. Also, teachers must be aware I am the coordinator, it is my role. And to motivate, be there when actors are tires or lacking of motivation” (E2) and “I was in charge of making sure everything worked well among the actors, especially during pandemics that was a double effort but it is a good chance to see how it really works the network” (E3).

The pressure mentioned above is also related with the economics funds as stresses the coordinator: “The issue about working with projects that finances is that if they don’t renewal your agreement you can lost all the work done” and also “you need to be able to generate feasible projects, but also use the economic resources available in the best way” (E2).

Moreover, the structure of the project and the requirements of the partner involved, sometimes were seen as **time-investors**. For instance, the complications of on the questionnaires frequently were associated with **lack of time** and overwhelming feeling because of pandemics: “In September it can work and it needs to be done during the enrolment of the children to the school because it takes about twenty minutes [both

enrolment and questionnaire] that otherwise are not done” also there is the suggestion of doing it online: “we didn’t have the chance to make it useful but is good to have it available though it would be better online” (E3).

Apart from that, there **exist difficulties to collect and fill correctly all the forms**: *“summer school sometimes can be very informal, we didn’t know how it would be organized or the schedule with time in advance, not even the attendance” (E3).* But also, the recognition by some actors on the role of the school: *“Some parents fill in the questionnaire when teachers call them and they did it by phone. In primary school there were more than twenty questionnaires missing” (E3)* and how could the system improve in the following scholar year. As an example, meeting at the beginning of the new scholar year (2021-2022), is suggested to explain the importance of the questionnaires.

Above all, most of actors had their tasks clear, although in the activities mostly affected by pandemics’ restrictions required a more fluid communication: *“we had a lack of information on sports activities, there’s only information on the enrolment of the school” (E3)* as to explain new procedures that could be dealt with regular meetings to update each other. An example of that, occurred at the beginning of the pandemics: legislation was changing all the time and schools did not know how to react or protect the children creating confusion among the actors (E12).

Finally, another factor that was not issued as in depth as required, has to do with heterogeneous cultural backgrounds which lead to **cultural barriers**. For instance, in the case of the gardening activity (also related with going out to mountain excursions): *“Ramadan which of course affected the activities because children were tired and the presence of Muslim children was high” (E4)*, when talking about the questionnaires: *“...was not well used by parents and when done was not filled well” (E3); “Educational forms were given by Marilena, but for those parents who didn’t speak or read Italian there were not fill in” (E5).*

Cases where parents did not know Italian, the questionnaire was not filled and the communication between them and the Italian families was complex: *“there is no relation between migrant and Italian families and in educational activities address to parents only Italian families take part which is bad considering that more than 60 percent of children are migrant” (E3).*

6.2. The Pandemics' Effect

MAIN IDEAS

- Confusion and feeling of overwhelming at the beginning of the pandemics
- Resilient capacity in activities as mountain and theatre
- Focused on mental health: emotions and feelings of children and teachers
- Redefinition of spaces at home (digital inequalities, lack of own space) and in the school (bubble groups, use of green areas)
- Increase relationship children-teachers
- Lack of communication with families and difficulties with complex cases.

The **pandemics challenged the strength of the existing network**: *“during the pandemics the fear was to lose all the efforts done and the community created”* (E1) raising the question about the feasibility of the project without them: *“the existing relation between children and associations makes it easier cause trust is already part of their dynamics, something visible in the relation with the parents too, whom already trust the project”* (E3); *“for children it strength the good existing relationship and the evolution”* (E5)

The **role of the actors was challenged** too, especially noticed in the coordination and organizational members of the network: *“pandemics made it harder for me, cause you need to be able to generate feasible projects, but also to use the economic resources available in the best way fitting the new normality* (E2). Also, there was some **confusion in activities** where the procedure was not clear since the activity needed adaptations following *new normality* measurements.

During this period, some activities were able to **adapt to the new sanitary requirements** of the country, while others were forced to **suspend their activity**. This last situation happened for the sports activity during lockdown, although the activity was converted into a cooperative one involving the church and the schools, the feeling of the interviewed actors was that covid slow-down the potentialities of the project and the possibility of having better cooperation educators-students.

The main reasons are the delay or cancelation of some activities and the lack of a structured plan. Besides that, they assure that it was very interesting to **put together educative actors** in an articulated project in which different schools participate (E11).

The activity regarding the theatre **was notably changed due to the COVID** situation. They decided to work with **emotions and feelings** which is believed to had *“increase the knowledge of their own bodies and identify their feelings”* (E8). The results of it need to be highlighted because somehow, they proof that the

system was not giving enough importance to mental health. This activity provides a space in which children could interact from the emotional point of view.

Lockdown also implies a **redefinition of the space** at home and in the communication through their computers, also during the *new normality* where distance was required. In this context having a space where children with behaviour issues were in direct relation with other children made them **work together** and **increase empathy** between them.

Moreover, since children were required to work from home, the feeling of the people interviewed was that *“families are stronger, they have more joy and a better relation with their children”* (E7). Of course, this should be treated with care not to be seen as a generalization but as an important of the resilience of the activity that helped children **dealing with emotional conflicts**.

The success of the theatre activity was the detection of **complex familiar cases** and the use of it as a platform to **improve the relation teachers-students**(E4). As it was mentioned in one of the interviews, professors realize that some of their students who may not have the greatest grades they had developed skills in creative and sports areas (E4).

An associated issue related to **digital poverty** was the lack of computers in multi-large families: *“in families with five children, they didn’t have five computers, that implies a delay in the speed of learning process”* (E4) which complicates following online classes. It is mentioned too, the **lack of direct communication** families-teachers. Especially this was controversial when children were not attending classes and teachers could not contact their parents, which already is a preoccupation of the school in ordinary times due to the issue of dropping school that exists in the area. Above all, during lockdown *“children got tired of technology, there was a need to know how to do the basics to follow the class and that was tough”* (E4). Above all, it was highlighted that the relation between teachers and students improve and that it was more tangible when they saw each other again in class.

Mountain activity is an example of **resilience** in the project since it had to be completely adapted due to curfew (E4). This activity frequently takes place in the mountain with excursions but it was not permitted to exit the neighbourhood even after lockdown was over. As a result, they redirect the activity focusing on the *natural element* transforming the activity into an activity where children would learn about their environment, especially the flora present in Gratosoglio and worked in a garden inside the school.

This well-adapted and **oriented activity towards green spaces** had a great impact on children because it maintains them in **contact with nature** after a long period of lockdown which it was highly appreciated by kids. At the same time, the activity was used as an excuse to **implement knowledge** learned in class such as geography, maths and Italian vocabulary applied to nature, as well as **gaining knowledge** on their environment and on gardening (E12).

The project **has enriched relations** between teachers and their students. Although it cannot be dismissed that there was a general sense of **tiredness** coming from schools that at the beginning were afraid of taking any risk related with infected cases or the possibility to have any. As well as, with dealing with individualized or specific cases that required more time. In those cases, the communication was weak and the dialogue with the people in charge was missing, which is considered a weakness of the network: *“I think some professors did not enjoy the project because of the context of pandemics”* (E2). Of course, **online method challenge** some of the school activities: *“online was more complex and rigid, face-to-face was easier to control the situation and it was more fluid.”* (E5).

With that said, the school Arcadia was considered through the interviews a great example on how to do things since they were *“able to develop much more than other schools thanks to its social answer (most of schools just close) [...] there exist large open spaces which made possible activities to keep on with the new normality. I will say that open spaces and the sense of community was very important”* (E2).

Apart from that, it was also noticed that **schools used to be common space** for teens to meet in its open areas and with covid those *informal meetings* move to other **green areas** already occupied by groups which **cause tensions** that did not exist before the pandemics. Here it is interesting to notice that it was in the interview with the priest where this issue flourishes since the open areas of the church are also spaces used by the teens and so he was aware of the situation.

To sum up, the pandemics have an effect in the Scholé Project challenging all the actors at different levels: at an organizational level economic resources need it to be relocated and strengthen the value of every actor in the network.

Tiredness was also present in schools with online classes and it is believed that a better communication between the project and teacher would potentiate -even more- a cultural project that everyone considers as a great strategy for Gratosoglio.

Moreover, the project and the challenges of the pandemics has reinforced children in the emotional sphere, teachers are more aware of the need of taking care of mental health, and associations have the feeling of being stronger than they thought. Without, the *project helped in creating a network so that kids could move through it, decreasing fragmentation*” (E3).

6.3. The Success of the Network of Project Scholé

The main aim of this research, was not to analyse the resilience of Gratosoglio as a neighbourhood, but on the way to determine the succeed of Caccia al Tesoro and its network in the Scholé Project we can extract some conclusions which open the door to new research to analyse Gratosoglio as a resilient neighbourhood.

The representatives of the main associations have been living in the area for many years which we know from the literature (Green et al., 2015) it is a point to consider to understand the resilience of the network. Even when some of the actors involved were not living in Gratosoglio, most of them use to work in a regular base what gave them knowledge of how things function there. So that, they know the area, their people and how to operate.

The network was strong enough and they trust each other. As a result, they were able to adapt and were resilient in making the changes required to respect the measures of the *new normality*, after the lockdown. In particular, the dance activity change from a dancing performance to activities related with the movement of the body and the expression of their emotions. This type of activity -following the criteria of Forest-Bank et al. (2013) created both esteem and instrumental relation since everyone was valued for their own worth in a moment that was important to create sense of belonging to minimize the effects of lockdown.

Both Marilena and Don Giovanni, are reference people who people could address to in the network of Scholé Project. We can see that in the interviews because their mention constantly. The fact that the network has *natural ladders* helps in dealing with tensions and confusions, communications is faster inside the net and it is faster to work with actors that do not know each other. Those links could be studied in depth in future research.

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, schools and churches are considered safe spots for children in vulnerable neighbourhood. That also explains the relevance of Marilena and Don Giovanni in relation with primary schools and religious institutions. Both complement each other in the coordination and the

correct functioning of the project, since they are in contact with all the actors, and so understood as referent nodes.

Scholé Project worked successfully because the neighbourhood has a long tradition of self-organization considering that they were always left aside. The feeling of isolation can be found among the children in the area, the sensation of not being part of the city is intense and that could complicate the resilience of the area. Contrary to that, this tradition of cooperation and self-organization to solve common problem has made Scholé Project work in smoother way.

7. Conclusions

In the first studio of the master degree this research is part of, we were asked to do projections of our master plans to imagine and sketch how would our projects evolve in the following 1-3-10 years' time. This exercise is useful to project future scenarios and realize if the plans are feasible. Similar to that the actors working in the Scholé Project were claiming to have a long-term project for the neighbourhood to be able to observe a real change in the education of the youth.

Time it is also a variable required to establish proper relations inside the network, a claim that the partners involved in the project express during the interviews. Even if they are aware that time is also a matter of economic feasibility.

Inside the project there is the need to maintain a certain degree of formality. Especially in the educational programs in which minors are involved. From my point of view, higher control is required but it should be treated it with care since we are working in a vulnerable context were most of the actors use extra-time to assure everything is settle-up for children to enjoy and learn. The investment of *free-time* by the volunteers proofs the high social cohesion. Consequently, formality needs to exist without deluding actors to work for the neighbourhood, meaning that time consuming is a factor to consider.

Another point that must be highlighted from project Scholé is that in Gratosoglio resilience is proven on harder times because the community had strong local links before and powerful associations sharing a common goal. However, *resilience* can be a pervert concept when it is use by municipal institutions to avoid dealing with educational poverty.

The Scholé Project is an attempt to help palliate the effects of educational poverty. The actors involve share a holistic vision of education by which a project such as Scholé should not depend on external finance. Instead, public administration should be in charge to guarantee the educational quality, to decrease the fragmentation within the community as well as the residential segregation.

Through the interviews, we could see that the project permits children to understand their context, having a richer knowledge of their environment and increasing the empathy with the space. Thanks to activities such as excursion to the mountain or exploring the neighbourhood both are potential tools to protect the area. The activity of *Caccia al Tesoro* in the context of the summer school was a great attempt to prove the skills that were leant with these kinds of activities since they need to understand the map of the neighbourhood and identify specific locations.

Even when some actors have a secular idea of the school, they did not dismiss the importance of the church of Gratosoglio. They were awarded of the reality of the neighbourhood and how important they were for the well-functioning of the project.

Even though figures like the priest is a positive figure for kids, youth that do not attend the church because of religious belief are missing a role model. So having a mentor or a role model should not depend on gender or religious belief but it should be accessible to everyone. In this regard, it could be interesting to interview children and talk to them about their vision and effects of this role model. Also, we could integrate their point of view in the whole activity of *Caccia al Tesoro* what would be interesting, too.

Moreover, it could also be interesting to interview parents whose children where involve in the project. For instance, there were activities that helps breaking stereotypes especially when working on emotions (like in interview E6). Although there are changes in familiar roles when attending school meetings: mothers used to attend the meeting but, after pandemics teachers noticed a greater presence of fathers. This was a topic that we did not go in depth during the interviews, but it could be interesting to analyse.

Considering teachers' vision, mental health related activities have a great impact and everyone agreed that they should have continuity in following years. It is interesting to see how pandemics catalyse a phenomenon that was already ongoing which is the importance of mental health.

These activities involve space for the staff to express their feeling, too. In my opinion, it is quite innovative taking into account that child-oriented projects where actors promote kids' well-being tend to forget the well-being of the staff. This part of the project, which probably was developed thanks to the lockdown situation, should continue and could be extend to parents which would be a great idea to narrow the barriers among families.

To conclude, during the interviews all the actors were critique with their performance during the Scholé Project and self-reflections were frequent. In particular, they use to give advice and new ideas on how things could be done a better way.

In order to complete the research presented above and also as a way of sketching new ideas that could be used for future research, it would be a good idea to do interviews to the actors with a more in-depth approach adding those actors who were not directly involved in the design of the project but are present on the neighbourhood and work for it.

Other interviews that are interesting to consider are interviewing the volunteers. We know that the implication of them is key to understand the success of *Caccia al Tesoro* but we are missing their insights, even if in one interview we register the perception of an interviewer who was new in the area. Volunteering increases social capital and the capacity of Gratosoglio of being resilient. That is why knowing their motivations to volunteer would be very interesting to forecast it among other inhabitants.

In this sense, doing a longitudinal analysis will show the evolution of the project and the strength of the network of actors and their variations, dynamics and changes. To do so, new interviews should be done and even creating a longitudinal study of the case of Gratosoglio and its network will be very interesting and could show a successful way of working for other areas of the same city.

The questionnaire created and launched in the schools has more potentiality than the one it is used now for. It could be used to collect anonymized educational data and so to create an educational local survey in order to analyse and evaluate the evolution of educational poverty at local level considering the variables mentioned in section 3.1. of this thesis. According to the analysis of the data obtained, a better way of managing public resources could be the cocreation of projects between the municipality 5 and the local actors of Gratosoglio, instead of launching generalist policies that might not fit in their casuistic.

Finally, as a sociologist an urban planner is important to consider the impact we left in the area. For that, an evolution of the situation to know the real impact could be performed. In my case, I left aside this project and continue to the following one without considering *what is going on now* and it is only when doing this research that I start thinking about it again. In my opinion, a better closer to the project is required both for the inhabitants and for us as professionals.

Besides that, the presentation of the activity of *Caccia Al Tesoro* in the international congress of RC21 “*Ordinary Cities in Exceptional Times*” generates an interesting debate on resilience, vulnerable neighbourhood and we receive numerous requests to explain in depth the success of the project.

The presentation in Panel 22 on “Neighbourhood residents in vulnerable circumstances: Crisis, stress and coping mechanisms” conclude with a debate on how we could involve consistently different actors of the neighbourhood, especially when the area is fragmented. Of course, Gratosoglio is a unique case in terms of the internal cohesion of its network, but it was interesting to discuss the negative parts of it, too.

At the same time questions regarding if formal procedures are worth emerged since the risk of breaking social rights might be too high. The Scholé Project was working with minors, even when I agree with how complex is the introduction of formalities some sort of registration and control is needed.

The case study of *Scholé Project* and the opportunity to be in the field and work with the same volunteers of Gratosoglio has been a great insight for this research, which has permit me to obtain data that I could not have access too without having an implication with them.



24.
Source: Matteo Fisci.

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