



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

**PhD Course in in Education in the
Contemporary Society
XXXVIII cycle, a.y. 2022/2023**

PhD Executive Positions

N.1 linked to research project: *"The Municipality as promoter of "local pedagogical coordination Groups" and quality monitoring systems of ECEC services and educational policies within the Integrated System 06: models, processes and organizations."*

Company: Città di Torino

Abstract:

The Executive doctorate project intends to pursue, within the Educational Services Division of the City of Turin, research, study and in-depth analysis on models of governance, pedagogical coordination and improvement of the quality of the Integrated Educational System 0-6.

Our institution has always had a 0-6 years old childcare system, but today it finds itself having to relaunch and rethink both its role as manager and as a body with the function of governance, support and stimulus to the pedagogical-organizational project of the services and of the system, with particular attention to the 0-3 as the basis and driving force behind a culture of childhood that recognizes and actualizes more and more the rights of children.

There is now a widespread awareness that public policies are acted by different actors, not only belonging to the Public Administration, and that only an integration between them allows their development and progress, as well as with the Legislative Decree 65/2017 it has become clear the need for the Municipality to consider the recipients of these policies all boys and girls of the city and not only those who attend municipal services. In this framework, the construction of an Integrated Education System has become one of the strategic objectives of the Division, albeit lagging behind other virtuous realities. It should be added that we have the well-founded conviction that only with the convergence of plural resources can we sustain the challenge of an adequate offer at the moment, both in qualitative and quantitative terms, also in the necessary perspective of the extension of services for 0-3 years old, an age group in which many people still do not use any service.

As a result of the political choices made over the last five years, the Division has tried to combine systemic planning, which requires planning from above, strategic actions, policies that take a long time, with the support and development of actions from below, closely linked to the life of the services and the processes of pedagogical coordination and educational reflection.

The construction of a new organizational system requires the dedication of resources in terms of research and planning on what models, strategies and methodologies also creatively allow for the development of a structure for **coordinating the Quality of the Childhood System**, internal to the institution but strongly linking the city with the other partners in the integrated system. We need a structure that acts as a promoter-guarantor of the diffusion and growth of a culture of quality of the pedagogical project, of reflective evaluation, of the improvement of practices, of research and continuous training (in the perspective of the teacher-researcher): what possible functions? What organizational models? What system of relationships/communications? What tools and processes to support the **improvement of the Quality** of services, the continuing education to the role of **professional educators and researchers** (processes of self-evaluation, sharing of tools for observation and evaluation, design of innovations and changes, conducting research-action)?

Forms and models of functioning of **local pedagogical Coordination Groups** are to be analyzed: what can be their aims and functions, in relation to the territory, to educational policies and to the creation of a widespread and shared culture of childhood? What organization and composition can support the quality of the services of the integrated educational system? What is the role of the various components (coordinators/teachers/educators/objectives), within their services and in relation to the Integrated System? What are the possibilities for co-design, with whom? What are the ways of relating/communicating/working and developing thoughts and actions?

How to accompany coordinators, managers, and personnel involved in acquiring skills to read the local realities? Can the pedagogical coordinator be understood as a lever and engine of change? How to accompany him/her in the re-organization of his/her role as a "system figure"? Which tools support him/her and which practices restore intentionality and possibilities of action in the complexity of services?

What methods, tools and bodies can keep local coordinations connected to a central coordinating and directing function that does not disperse but instead strengthens the identity and quality of services in the city or metropolitan area?

In the new role of the Authority, we are interested in giving value to the experience and training that the City has as a manager of services 0-6 years, valuing the educational staff, in terms of career development but also in support of exchanges and confrontations between different entities and with the local University, enhancing resources and skills and accompanying the transitions of teachers and educators, also in view of aging.

What methods, models and organizational devices for the development of educational staff?

How to foster the **creation of "communities of practice"** between education professionals from different agencies, a genuine sense of belonging and comparison? What role can the municipality assume in supporting them?

N.1 linked to research project: *"Pedagogical, social, and cultural coordination in Childcare Services within a competent system. Childcare services as a presidium of an integrated and territorial competent system"*

Company: PRO.GES. Società Cooperativa Sociale

Abstract:

Skills	Training activity and duration	Expected result
The roles of coordination and project management in ECEC Services	Internal specialist course for ECEC services (and of complex services) manager N° 30 h	Increased design and strategic planning skills of integrated and complex projects of educational services
Social marketing techniques and development of social communication	Internal specialist course and training N° 30 h	Increased design and strategic planning skills for MKT Project (in ECEC Services)
The Public Administration: operating principles and types of service	Interviews with PA personnel and participation in "consultation tables" (from area plans, territorial service coordinations, consultations, district or area committees, "unified services conference" ...). N. 50 h During the PhD	Achivement of fundamental information for the development of territorial projects and of the participatory tools used

English course	Achievement B1 Level	Improve a correct use of spoken and written English for PhD activities
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TITLE/TOPIC

Pedagogical, social, and cultural coordination in Childcare Services within a competent system
 Childcare services as a presidium of an integrated and territorial competent system.

Childcare services are an important part of the social and cultural fabric of a territory, a presidium of tutelage for children. This relationship opens up to an experience of social management, a term originally coined within the law 1044, which today finds a new expression in the exercise of citizenship in one's own territory that the educational service can promote.

National guidelines for early childhood education services, January 2022

INTRODUCTION

The historical period we are living in poses various challenges to childcare services and underlines the urgent need to build an actual integrated system, to be considered not only as the mere union of the 0-3-year-old and 3-6-year-old segments. The push towards the universalization of access on the one hand - meaning the right to attend infant-toddler centers and preschools for all boys, girls and their families - and the need to build social cohesion policies also for children who, for different reasons, cannot access the services on the other hand, pose the need for a paradigm shift and a new idea of integrated socio-educational services. In this regard, it is necessary to build a frame of reference, opening up to an integrated approach between the different types of services (health, educational, social) and to identify system figures capable of operating within a complex apparatus.

As declared by many recently issued guidance documents (i.e., Pedagogical guidelines 0-6 years old; Guidelines for childcare services; the Recommendations of the European Council to the Member States of July 2021), childcare services are to be intended as factors of social cohesion. The same documents declare that nowadays it is necessary to overcome the separation and fragmentation of services that deal with children and families so that they can meet their actual needs (even more so for children with specific health and development problems and who grow up in vulnerable families). However, in the Italian reality, the sectors that deal with childhood and families very often act separately, sometimes with fragmentation even within individual sectors. This fragmentation becomes an obstacle for families, also aggravated by the total absence of system coordination figures.

Nurseries, kindergartens and supplementary services have, in this perspective, a responsibility and bring a specific knowledge, which cannot be limited to the minority of users of the services themselves, but must extend to the whole territorial community in which these services operate. This attribution must result in both an opening of the services to the community, and in a specific assumption of responsibility in promoting and guiding coordination processes and mechanisms between different services and sectors. This idea of services requires a person who can coordinate all the actions: Pedagogical Coordinator. This role today is spent in management functions and with a "pedagogical" horizon. However, we believe it is necessary to expand their key functions and identify in it a driver for new purposes of services, with broad views towards promotion and social commitment in order to guarantee an inclusive and supportive practice towards territories and communities.

Based on these premises, how childcare services can be innovated and become a proximity presidium in the construction of a competent integrated system that can foster a unitary path of development and well-being since birth? What configuration does the pedagogical coordination take in this new type of service?

Proges cooperative worked on this topic for 3 years (between 2017 and 2020, with a forced stop during the pandemic emergency) as part of its inter-territorial coordination, within two training/research courses: (1) the first one in collaboration with Arianna Lazzari, Lucia Balduzzi (University of Bologna), and Nima Sharmahd (as Visiting Professor at the University of Parma); (2) the second one in collaboration with the social enterprise "Con i Bambini", working on a National project called 'Ali per il Futuro', which aimed at tackling educational poverty. These two experiences had different but "complementary" aims and outcomes: (1) the first investigation, in collaboration with Bologna university and Sharmahd aimed at generating "common horizons of development and research" for the group and emphasized the need to a change in educational services (starting from Quality framework as a basis for shared work and through an in-depth study of a "competent system"; also thanks to the comparison of different European experiences in the management of services). (2) Thanks to the 'Ali for the future' project, we have concretely worked on the accessibility of fragile families

to 0-6-year-old services and on a new, more comprehensive and broader model of childcare. A new model, able to offer a series of services (such as job counseling; pedagogical counseling; cultural and sports activities, etc.) together with the admission to nursery/kindergarten. Another novelty was the introduction of the figure of the case manager, with orientation functions, individualized planning for families and territorial engagement and connection with welfare services. These two experiences have laid the foundations for seeking a systemization of the considerations that emerged and of the experiments activated.

RESEARCH

The aims of the current research project are:

- to gain knowledge on the existing experiences, also with a European perspective, of networks between different services and how the functions of the Pedagogical Coordinator are operated within those services;
- to gain knowledge on the institutional relationship between different sectors that provide services and opportunities for families, even in situations of vulnerability;
- to investigate and understand whether there are, in the territorial communities that will be chosen for the investigation, different levels of accessibility and reception in services to children and their families; and whether there is a need for new tools that, since birth, can respond to the right for everybody to access quality childcare services;
- to investigate what tools the services have to involve other stakeholders within the rethinking process;
- to investigate how educational services can be positioned in terms of actions and proactivity within the integrated and territorial competent system;
- to investigate how the Pedagogical Coordinator assumes a nodal and promotional role, as well as case management functions, in the construction of an integrated system.

INSTRUMENTS

We would like to conduct a case study in each territory where Proges operates (Turin and Parma) through the direct involvement of the pedagogical coordinators (gathered in territorial coordination systems). The aim is to investigate the possibilities for "prototyping" the construction of a competent integrated system, through the interaction between different services that may rethink - within a shared frame of reference - childcare services as a presidium of proximity.

While working on the case studies, innovative tools for engagement and participation (e.g., community maps, photo voices, etc.) will be experimented in order to engage the stakeholders (i.e., local authorities, families and other professionals) into the definition of a new competent integrated system. The involvement of the Institutions in charge in the research process aims at investigating elements of social innovation in the management of services.

PREDICTED OUTPUT

The data, the contextual elements, and the insights collected during the investigation will hopefully become tangible tools useful to Proges so that we can foster both the transformation and change of childcare services and, the role of the Pedagogical Coordinator. This change should promote the creation of a solid model of childcare services, in terms of economic sustainability, organizational and management structure, cultural positioning, scalability of the intervention and competitiveness.

In this sense, the expected outputs are:

- fostering the creation of local networks between educational and non-educational services (i.e., socio-sanitary / cultural) in the territories in which Proges operates;
- to promote the construction of an integrated system of services and interventions in the 0/6 years old range;
- experimenting methods / tools / products with which the various services at the local level can collaborate in a coordinated competent system of interventions for children in their early years and their families;
- to develop extensive educational services which, maintaining the quality built up over the years, can amplify the possibilities of differentiation by working in close synergy with the territory and its integrative, cultural, social services (outreach services);
- to redefine the role of the Pedagogical Coordinator within our social cooperative, by giving them case management tools and skills based on research and development;
- to create a model of territorial Pedagogical Coordination integrated between public and private with planning functions;
- to build a Training Pack for services in order to support and engage other educational groups in the process of change;
- to involve Public Administrations in targeted agreements and projects where transformative objectives are shared and equally tested within several services.

N.1 linked to research project: *"The Hazara case: socio-political exclusion and cultural identity trauma in the contest of Afghanistan's ethno-regional tensions"*

Company: Associazione NOVE Onlus

Abstract:

This research proposal intends to investigate the ethno -regional tensions that have beset the Afghan State since its foundation, with particular reference to the condition of discrimination and social marginalization experienced by the Hazaras, a Persian- speaking ethnic group, of plausible Turco-Mongolian origin, and of Shiite faith. An accurate study of the heterogeneous Afghan ethnic mosaic and the regional tensions deriving from it is essential if we want to analyze the reasons for this system of discrimination and systemic exclusion.

It is actually extremely difficult to find any answers to the numerous reasons of an interminable conflict, which, despite changing shape and interpreters, has lasted for fifty years, without taking into account the causes that have often fed it and are still feeding it today.

In this context, the Hazara have been victims of a genocide endorsed by the state authority and not recognized by the international community precisely because of the obstruction of the various Pashtun -oriented Afghan governments over the years.

The advent of the Taliban in the late 1990s and the intensification of ethnic and religious tensions have led to a new massacre of the Hazara and to constant attempts to eradicate their precious cultural heritage.

The aim of this research proposal is to bring the academic community's attention to the Hazara question, to examine the historical, political and social reasons for the non-recognition of the Hazara Genocide. The case of the Rwanda International Criminal Court, in fact, confirms that the contribution of scientific and academic productions by researchers has proved fundamental to the realization of a shared historical truth on one of the greatest tragedies of the twentieth century.

Through the data collected in interviews and oral testimonies, I intend to demonstrate how discrimination and exclusion from power monopolies are endemic elements of Afghanistan that still bind the Hazara to difficult living conditions, often forcing them to emigrate.

In this regard, this research aims to analyse the long-term effects on the identity aspect after more than a century of systemic violence and discrimination and what has changed in these twenty years during which the Hazara have had the opportunity to study and to train skills which, however, with the return of the Taliban, they can't offer to their Country anymore.

N.1 linked to research project: *"Partecipation-based educational models in alternative care: what is their impact on the results of care decision"*

Company: SOS VILLAGGI DEI BAMBINI - ONLUS

Abstract:

PROJECT: The research project aims at analyzing the impact of an alternative care model that is inspired by the child right-based approach. What is the level of success of the aftercare phase for young people who experienced that participatory educational model? What is their level of integration in contemporary society and their individual well-being?

CONTEXT: SOS Villaggi dei Bambini is part of SOS Villages network, the world's largest organization which has been working for more than 70 years to ensure that children and young people who cannot receive appropriate parental care grow up on an equal footing with their peers, by realizing its full potential and the possibility of living an independent life.

We work in 137 countries and territories with children and vulnerable families at risk of disruption in a preventive perspective, to create an environment conducive to the growth of children and young people.

METHODOLOGY: qualitative research using interviews, focus groups, questionnaires. We want to reach 15/20 beneficiaries in Italia and 15/20 beneficiaries in one of the 70 SOS Children's Villages organization in Europe.