



Save the Children
100 ANNI



“WE ARE NOT ALONE”

Extraordinary program to take care of children and adolescents during the Coronavirus emergency

6 March 2020



"Coronavirus could reach most - if not all countries - in the world. But "we still have the possibility to contain it, if strong actions are taken to identify cases at an early stage, isolate and treat patients and trace contacts."

WHO spokesman, Christian Lindmeier

Via Coppi, Zen II, Palermo
Photo - Francesco Alesi

WE ARE NOT ALONE

THE CORONA VIRUS: A GLOBAL EMERGENCY

On December 31st, 2019, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission (China) reported to the World Health Organization a cluster of cases of pneumonia with unknown etiology in the city of Wuhan, in the Chinese province of Hubei.

The virus, shortly after discovered to be from the Corona Virus strain, quickly became a worldwide emergency. Italy was one of the most affected countries in the world, first in Europe for reported cases, with 3,296 people positive to the virus on the 5th of March.

The cases are currently divided as follows: 1,777 in Lombardy, 658 in Emilia-Romagna, 380 in Veneto, 120 in Marche, 106 in Piedmont, 60 in Tuscany, 41 in Lazio, 45 in Campania, 21 in Liguria, 21 in Friuli Venezia Giulia, 16 in Sicily, 12 in Puglia, 9 in Umbria, 8 in Abruzzo, 7 in the autonomous Province of Trento, 7 in Molise, 2 in Valle d'Aosta, 2 in Calabria, 2 in Sardinia, 1 in Basilicata and 1 in the autonomous Province of Bolzano.

Unfortunately, although the virus is not highly fatal, the deaths to date are 148 only in our country.

The situation has led the Government to take extraordinary measures to contain the spread of the infection, such as quarantine in certain areas, denominated red areas, and the closure of all educational institutions until March 15th (extendable date). We are talking about **8 million students who see their school cycle interrupted in a forced way.**

At the moment there isn't a national plan to deal with this deprivation, but many schools are equipping with digital tools to continue distance learning.



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The voices of our Punti Luce operators on the Coronavirus emergency

"Until today the situation in Potenza has been absolutely normal. Today, instead, has been complicated to contain the children, elated by the closure of the schools, but worried about the closure of the Punto Luce, confirming that we have become a very strong point of reference for them" Punto Luce Operator of Potenza.

"Families are very worried about the closure especially of the Punti Luce (it has never happened before) more than of the schools, because for them is a symptom of the seriousness of the situation" Punto Luce Operator of Catania.



THE CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY IN ITALY

The spread of Covid-19 in our country is generating complications of different relevance: health, first of all, but also difficulties in the economy, in the production, in trade, and so on. Among the different dimensions affected by the crisis, there is one that we cannot overlook: the impact that this health crisis has on children and adolescents in our country.

With the closure of schools, the suspension of all recreational and sports activities, the lives of children and adolescents have undergone a drastic change. As in all emergency situations, children are absorbing the anxieties and worries that the adult world transmits daily. On the other hand, it is essential to ensure that children and adolescents can live this period developing their resilience, exercising a responsible citizenship in their daily behaviour, demonstrating solidarity and acceptance of diversity, developing skills and abilities necessary for their growth.

The forced interruption of teaching can have serious effects, especially among children and adolescents of the most disadvantaged contexts, risking to increase inequalities and educational poverty.

In managing the crisis, it is essential to pay attention to children and adolescents who live in the most disadvantaged conditions.

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THE PROJECT “WE ARE NOT ALONE”

In facing the crisis, it is essential to pay attention to children and adolescents who experience the most vulnerable conditions. For this reason Save the Children Italy has launched an extraordinary intervention program for children and adolescents involved in our projects.

The program wants to be a valid support for vulnerable minors and for their families. We will implement several activities for the children and adolescents who daily attend our 25 Punti Luce, the 4 Civico Zero (in Milan, Turin, Rome and Catania) and the 13 Spazi Mamme throughout Italy.

The program has four main pillars of action:

1 – Fighting against educational poverty

Through Save the Children’s Centers and partner associations (Punti Luce, the Fuoriclasse educational Centers, the Spazi Mamme, the "Civico Zero" centers) we are in contact with children and adolescents who live in difficult contexts. In order to avoid that they experience the worst effects of the closure of all the projects, despite the fact that the centers are closed in compliance with government regulations, the educator teams are still fully operational to guarantee the right support.

This support can be achieved through:

1.1 - Doti educative 2.0

We planned to distribute to the most deprived families with children and adolescents both tablets and the connections necessary to continue their learning path also at home and to not remain disconnected from their peers. Such tools will be distributed by the educators in cases of real need, according to the methodology already experimented by Save the Children for the Doti Educative within the Punti Luce and the Fuoriclasse Centers.

1.2 - Games and educational material

Save the Children educators will distribute games and educational material for children living in difficult economic conditions, to ensure that children could spend their time in educational and play activities (books, drawing materials, puzzles...).

For the unaccompanied foreign minors, the Italian language lessons will continue as functional at a distance, with the delivery of texts and exercises that can be completed and reviewed remotely with the teacher.

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2 - Support for distance learning and back to school

In Italy there are still very few schools able to organize distance learning. This specific occasion of forced closure of schools should lead to an acceleration of this process.

In particular, the support of Save the Children for the distance learning will consist in:

- **Webinars** for teachers on distance learning;
- **Tutoring** for schools in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods to develop distance learning programmes;
- Helping schools to reach **"invisible" children**, with active intervention in the field, to prevent children in need of support from being abandoned and excluded from the class group;
- Support for teachers and classes on **safer internet issues**, considering the period of exposure for children and adolescent to the network;
- **Providing modules for teachers** to manage the delicate moment of "back to school" (both for the psychological and educational point of view, on the basis of Save the Children's previous experiences in other emergencies);
- **Preparation of supplementary educational modules** of the ordinary school offer **for returning to class**, in order to support children and adolescents in the most disadvantaged contexts to overcome the "learning loss", ie the loss, in the non-school period, of the learning previously acquired.

3. Parenting support

To support parents, grandparents and other family figures of reference in the difficult educational task of this period, Save the Children is committed to:

- **Provide expert advice and online guidance** to families on how to deal with emergency-related issues with children, how to make the best use of children's time, how to ensure safe use of the digital environment by children (safer internet);
- Support, through the strengthening of the "Fiocchi in Ospedale" project, the new parents at the time of delivery, thus **helping the hospital services network** which is experiencing a particular critical situation;
- **Enhancement of material support** to families in extreme poverty whose vulnerability has been further accentuated by the health emergency, through vouchers, shopping vouchers, and individualized support;
- **Support** - where requested by the health services - **families and children directly affected by Covid-19** in all their needs (both material and psychological support).

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The positive experience of teachers with online teaching

There are several digital tools that can be useful in this situation resulting from the Coronavirus emergency, but also during the normal course of school activities.

Riccardo Giuliano and Daniela Melucci, supporter teachers of **Fuoriclasse in Movimento** (Save the Children program that fights against early school leaving) share their direct experience:

*"We know that nothing can replace the presence and the "eye in the eye" relationship that we develop every day with our students, but in moments of weather alerts (and other emergencies ...), we turned need into a virtue and learned through facts that **the digital revolution can also help the development of other types of teaching**, which can make interactive the forced distance relationship between us and our students. In fact, there are now many free app that can help us make kids understand how their smartphone can and should be an active tool and not just a receiving antenna".*

4 – Facing fears

It is important to face the fears that children absorb from the world of adults, relating to both the health front and the uncertainty connected to the working future of their parents. It is important to keep in mind that today in Italy 1,200,000 minors are in absolute poverty and the crisis that will arise from the virus will have consequences on many families.

- **The fairy tale** is an indispensable tool to talk to children about what is happening and to support them in dealing with anxieties and fears. For this reason **Save the Children has asked a childhood writer to develop a fairy tale that will explain how to face fears;**

- Through the network, **Save the Children will provide parents and families with useful tools** on a daily basis, also responding to the needs that will be identified, to face the most complex issues of this phase in a peaceful way with children and adolescents.



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The testimony of a school manager in Veneto

Alfonso D'Ambrosio school director of a school located in the western part of the Euganean Hills, an area affected by the closure of schools as a preventive measure in the Coronavirus emergency, has chosen to immediately adopt **e-learning measures** or other study methods for students that are at home.

"In an initial phase, I consulted some teachers of my staff because there was the possibility of a 2-week quarantine with the almost certain closure of schools in the area. We decided to take action immediately, giving space to the ideas of all teachers, to find together the best solution to deal with this situation. So we thought of two solutions: 1-hour standard lessons for middle school students and live simpler lessons from 10 to 12 am for the youngest children of kindergarten and primary school supported by their parents".

"(...) The main communication experiment we did was through our Telegram channel (a free messaging platform) made up of 400 people between families and teachers. With this platform we are able to keep up to date and share resources. The solution to reach everyone, even in those situations where parents themselves are at home from work and use the PC, or when there is no internet access, is simple: these Apps allow us to record lessons and then share them in different ways and a phone number is enough to participate, even without an internet network".

"The initial difficulties were and still are in part the teachers' fear of not being ready and able to use digital teaching tools".

"We are sure that all this is replicable. After all, we are a very normal school located in small municipalities of 2-3 thousand inhabitants, so surely if you can do it here you can do it anywhere".