

The Women's Empowerment and Children's Well-Being in Italy: An Empirical Research Starting From the Capability Approach

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Abstract : The present is one of those times when what normally seems to constitute a reason for living vanishes, particularly in times of crisis, during which certainties of all times crumble, and critical issues emerge, especially in already problematic areas such as the role of women and children. This paper aims to explore the issue of gender and highlight the importance of education for people's development and well-being. The study is part of the broader framework of the capability approach, a multidimensional approach based on the need to consider a person's wealth by virtue of their opportunity and freedom to live a 'life of worth. The results of empirical research conducted in 2020 will be presented, the main objective of which was to measure, through qualitative (project techniques, focus groups, interviews with key informants) and quantitative (questionnaire) methods, the level of empowerment of women in two Italian territories and the consequent well-being of their children. By means of the relationship study, the present research results show that a higher level of women's empowerment corresponds to a higher level of children's well-being in a positive virtuous process. The opportunity structure and education are the main driving guide both to women's empowerment and children's well-being, emphasizing the importance of education to gender culture as a key factor for the development of the whole society. Among all the traumatic events that broke the harmony of the world and caused an abrupt turn in all areas of society, the crisis of democracy and education are some of the harshest. Nevertheless, education continues to be a fundamental pillar of Global Development Agendas, and above all, democratic education is the main factor in the development of a generative society, capable of forming people who know how to live in society. In this context, recovering democratic and inclusive education can be the key to a breakthrough. In the capability approach Sen, and other Scholars, point out education from two different perspectives: a. education as a fundamental right capable of influencing other real fields of people's life (i.e., being educated to prevent illness, to vote, etc.) and b. spread communitarian education, tolerance, inclusive, democratic, and respectful, capable of forming human beings. This kind of educational system can directly lead to a general process of gender education that presupposes respect for essential principles: equality, uniqueness, and the participation of all in the processes of defining a democratic society. Many practices of women and children's exclusions essentially derive from social factors (norms, values, quality of institutions, relations of power, educational and cultural practices) that can build strong barriers. Respect for these principles and education for gender culture could foster the renewal of society and the acquisition of fundamental skills for a generative and inclusive society, such as critical skills, cosmopolitan skills, and narrative imagination.

Keywords : capability approach, children's well-being, education, women's empowerment

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