

# Supporting Teach For Italy in reducing early school leaving in Sardinia and Sicily

Grantee: Teach for Italy

Location: Italy, Europe

Grant Cycle: 2026-2028

Type of Grant: two-year program support, Human Welfare & Rights

Website: [teachforitaly.org](http://teachforitaly.org)

Teach For Italy is a non-profit organization founded in 2020 and part of the global Teach For All network, active in 64 countries to address educational inequality. Its mission is to strengthen public education in Italy by reducing educational disparities and empowering teachers as key agents of social and systemic change.

To advance this mission, Teach For Italy recruits, selects, trains, and supports highly motivated individuals from diverse academic and professional backgrounds through a two-year Fellowship programme focused on educational equity and leadership development. Fellows teach full-time in public schools serving socioeconomically disadvantaged communities while participating in a structured programme of pedagogical training, instructional coaching, and leadership development aimed at fostering long-term impact within the education system.

School dropout is one of the most serious issues affecting the Italian education system. When a student leaves school early or does not gain the skills needed for future education or employment, the consequences affect not only the individual, but also society as a whole. Research shows that students from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to disengage from education and leave school early. The problem is particularly severe in Southern Italy and the Islands, with Sicily and Sardinia recording some of the highest school dropout rates in the country.

Education is a fundamental driver of social change and personal development, particularly for young people living in vulnerable conditions. Guided by this belief, the **Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation** (NaEPF) is committed to promoting the right to quality education by strengthening the everyday functioning and inclusiveness of schools in disadvantaged contexts.

Within this framework, the project supported by the NaEPF and implemented by Teach For Italy seeks to address early school leaving and student disengagement in Sicily and Sardinia, where many schools operate in contexts marked by high levels of educational poverty. The initiative aims to strengthen and consolidate the "Southern Italy and Islands Model," a scalable and replicable educational approach developed by Teach For Italy to support schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged communities and to foster more inclusive, engaging, and equitable learning environments.

At the heart of the model is the figure of the Teach For Italy Fellow: a highly motivated graduate, selected from diverse academic and professional backgrounds for their commitment to social and educational impact, and trained to work in schools where educational poverty is most acute. Over the 2026-28 period, the project places two Fellows as co-teachers, one at a secondary school in Cagliari, Sardinia, and one in Ribera, Sicily. The Fellows work daily alongside teachers in the classroom, initially supporting one class in each school and later expanding their work to a second class. The

primary beneficiaries are approximately 80 students across four classes identified as highly vulnerable.

Through student-centred and personalised teaching, Fellows help foster each student's sense of belonging, self-awareness, motivation and ability to take ownership of their own learning. They contribute to creating a more positive classroom environment and support teaching teams in monitoring student progress and sharing effective practices across the school. In parallel, they promote collaboration with families and local organisations to strengthen educational continuity and reinforce each school's role as a civic and educational hub within its community.

Throughout the project, Fellows are supported by Teach For Italy through a structured training and didacticpedagogical coaching pathway. All activities and results are tracked through an established monitoring system, enabling continuous improvement and generating evidence to support future replication of the model in other disadvantaged territories across Italy.

The project is expected to generate measurable impact at four interconnected levels: the professional and personal growth of the Fellow co-teachers; improved socio-emotional skills, engagement and learning outcomes among students in the target classes; stronger collaborative teaching practices and a more shared sense of responsibility within schools; and deeper connections between schools, families and local communities, all contributing to the prevention of early school leaving.