



Officina 2022: Spaces for inclusion and democracy

Green Table Report

July 13th, 2022

Participants:

Valentina Tudisca (CNR-IRPPS, coordinator), Chiara Belingardi (Unifi, facilitator), Alessia Vaglivello (USR Lazio, facilitator), Milla Rose Abbenda (Provincial Student Council of Latina), Emma Amiconi (Fondaca), Adriana Aprea (IC Pontassieve), Elisabetta Borgia (Ministry of Culture), Domenico Braccioldi (IISS Leonardo da Vinci in Cassano delle Murge), Eva Cammerino (Councilor for the V Municipality of Rome), Roberto Castaldo (ISIS EUROPA of Pomigliano d'Arco), Pietro Clementelli (Provincial Student Council of Rome), Brigida Di Schiavi (IC Carducci King of Casoria), Antonella Festa (Classical High School of Lanciano), Roberta Fulci (Radio3 Scienza), Francesca Gambetti (Roma Tre University), Marina Imperato (Ministry of Education), Angela Miniati (INDIRE), Claudia Hassan (University of Tor Vergata), Noemi Santini (Provincial Student Council of Viterbo), Anna Soffici (Uffizi Galleries), Pina Cochi (AT Latina USR Lazio)

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE:

Adriana Valente, Valentina Tudisca, Claudia Pennacchiotti (CNR-IRPPS)
Elena Gaudio (DGOSV-MI)
Alessia Vaglivello (USR Lazio)

The table was organized within the European project Erasmus plus INCLUDE

The aim of the table was to identify objectives of democracy/inclusion to be valued with reference to educational contexts, formal or informal, so to identify possible facilitators able to support their achievement.

The individual reflection of each participant, through the metaplan methodology, and the subsequent clustering of the emerged proposals, led to the following group of (interconnected) objectives:

- 1) **School as open city.** This objective refers to a concept of school open to relations with the rest of the world, both in a territorial and in a social sense. A more "participatory" school that becomes a point of reference, including and being in dialogue with the territorial context, in order to become part of a larger educating community. This objective also includes, in a broader sense, the projection of the school in the planetary context and, in this sense, the need to give particular emphasis, within the scope of education, to the theme of environmental sustainability and scientific citizenship.
- 2) **Memories, cultures, narratives.** This objective refers to the need of more inclusivity in school, but in society as well, of different points of view, in a broad sense, in order to problematize the dominant epistemology. The plurality of points of view refers to different cultures, different memories, different values. This objective can be traced back both to the theme of immigration and to other phenomena linked to social exclusion that are not sufficiently dealt with, such as the theme of mental health. In particular, with the aid of the 20th century's reminiscence, what transpired was the strive to contribute to the development of civic awareness, inclusion and democratic participation.
- 3) **(Active!) Daily practice of democracy (and accessibility of resources).** This objective refers to the school formal educational context, expressing the need for education in political participation since primary school: education in listening and understanding the opinions of others, education in representativeness, education for active citizenship.
- 4) **Equal opportunity (of gender, starting conditions, and in a broader sense),** with reference both to the formal educational context and to society in a broad sense.

For each of these objectives, consideration was given to possible facilitators.

As far as objective 1) "School as open city" is concerned, it was proposed to multiply the learning and exchanging opportunities with the world outside school, including civil society as well as institutions. In this sense, opportunities should be created, on the one hand, to reorganize and use the school's physical spaces in a different way and, on the other, to create connections with the territory as an environment and social space. The school's spaces are expanded to include the spaces of the territory, while the school's structure opens up to the outside world and, within it, enabling spaces are predisposed, so to allow inclusion and openness. Research-action projects could facilitate the creation of such links. At the same time, cultural mediation processes could represent a valuable facilitator.

With regard to objective 2) "Memories, cultures, narratives", the creation and use of spaces that encourage active involvement in listening, in order to recognize and enhance each person's experiences, narratives and cultural background have been proposed as facilitators. Furthermore, education on collective cultural heritage should be strengthened, and cultural-linguistic mediation processes should be promoted, not to mention greater accessibility and openness of educational resources. The use of open educational resources, in addition to textbooks, offers the opportunity to include multiple points of view in teaching and at the same time also greater accessibility, for

example in linguistic terms. Also in this case, research-action projects could favour the achievement of the objective.

As for objective 3) "Daily practice of democracy" the following facilitators have been identified: the introduction - and teachers training - of specific laboratory/experiential/collaborative didactic methods, which promote the practice of democracy and inclusion; the systematic introduction of the debate on current issues in the classroom; the introduction of peer-tutoring practices among students; greater empowerment of students through, for instance, the possibility of self-management spaces; the real accessibility of educational resources, also thanks to a greater diffusion of digital culture. In this case the theme of enabling spaces returns once again: from the arrangement of chairs and desks inside the classroom to the shared use of other spaces of the school and the territory, up to the use of virtual spaces for dialogue. By implication, the introduction of these innovations would strengthen the motivation to participate, which is an essential element.

As regards to objective 4) "Equal opportunities", it was proposed to apply specific teaching methodologies to recognize and deconstruct gender stereotypes which are already present in the formal educational context. The need for more information and communication about the accessibility opportunities already available has also emerged, as well as the proposal to "start from needs" in suggesting new opportunities; in this sense, the role of student councils could be strengthened.

In the wider social context, the need has been recognized for greater awareness of these issues and, on a concrete level, for wider welfare interventions, such as a greater diffusion of nursery schools as support for female work (and parenting).

Some facilitators emerged as transversal to all objectives: greater flexibility and the full application of school autonomy; the creation of opportunities for meeting and exchange between schools from different territories (even from different districts of the same city); the accessibility of teaching materials; a different conception of school spaces.

Finally, the need to problematize the concept of inclusion was raised in the table, which presupposes a hierarchy of power between those "including", which actively include, and the "included", which are passively included. The same etymology of "include", from the Latin "claudere", literally means "close", implicitly assuming the concept of exclusion and a lack of opening.