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Master's degree in
Human Rights and Multi-level Governance

EDUCOMMUNICATION FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

PROMOTING THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF ADOLESCENTS IN THE ERA OF INFORMATION

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"If nothing is left from these pages,
we hope at least one thing remains: our trust in people.
Our faith in human beings and in the creation of a world
in which it is less difficult to love".

Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1968

Abstract

How is it possible to realize an educational approach that is able to value adolescents by promoting rights, transmitting competences and attitudes, and fostering motivation to participate and transform the globalized world of today? On the basis of various contributions collected with different stakeholders, the Thesis presents a conceptual and practice-oriented reflection on this question and identifies *Educommunication* as a successful paradigm in promoting everyone's opportunity and capacity to change the world with a human rights-based perspective.

As a concrete example, this Thesis refers to *Let's Take Care of the Planet - Europe (LTCP)*, an Educommunication-based project organized in Europe since 2009 and inspired by three National Youth Conferences and one International Children and Youth Conference for the Environment held in Brazil starting from 2003. *LTCP* aims at mobilizing students, teachers and the whole *"educational community"* to promote political actions in the field of human rights education, education for global citizenship and socio-environmental education.

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Preface

"I just want to tell a small story from my childhood. I grew up on a small farm on the countryside in Denmark. A very beautiful place which I loved very much. And the reason why I loved it, was because of all the nature that surrounded the farm. It was right next to a very big forest and from when I was pretty young, me and my brother, were allowed to go into the forest and play, whenever we wanted. [. . .] But, I also remember walking along a road, a car passing and the window opening and the people inside the car just throwing a bunch of trash out on the blooming beautiful roadside. And I looked at my mom and asked why someone would do that. [. . .] So, I started to develop a concern for nature [. . .] And I couldn't bear to see politicians making decisions, which I thought were so wrong. If they just heard what I had to say, they would have known what to actually do!

But, when I was younger, I always felt that the grownups didn't listen to me. Or more, I felt like I was not allowed to tell my opinions to adults. I was not clever enough, I didn't have enough experience. I didn't study for a whole life and read a ton of books. How could I possibly have something to say that the grownups haven't already thought about? But, I forgot a very important thing. I forgot that I had a head exploding with new ideas and imagination. And a heart eager to explore and discover and make changes. [. . .]

Try for one second to be aware of all you, young people, in this room. [. . .] And imagine all the ideas in your minds. [. . .] All the things you want to change and you know how to change, because you all have the courage to try to change them. [. . .] You are all here because you want the same. Because you want to save this Planet and because you have solutions and ideas, and the courage to save this Planet. And because you want to show those grownups that it is

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possible to change things. That you can find solutions together. That's why
they should listen to you!"

The 21st May 2018 I was listening to Lærke Vejsnæs who, as me, was a facilitator at the Third European Youth Conference of *Let's Take Care of the Planet*, an Educommunication-based project in the field of socio-environmental education. With this inspiring speech, Lærke introduced the opening ceremony of an incredible experience gathering together, in Portugal, many European youngsters between 13 and 16 years old. Inspired by the 2010 International Youth Conference for the Environment held in Brazil with more than 600 participants from 47 different countries, *Let's Take Care of the Planet* pursues a specific and ambitious goal: promoting the transformative potential of adolescents.

Very often and maybe too often are youngsters perceived as "not mature enough" for dealing with the social, cultural, political and economic challenges of today's world. Indeed, it is not uncommon to hear teachers saying that their students are not interested in learning and, thus, know nothing. Nor is it impossible to find parents who are obsessed with the safety of their children and impose every decision on them. Adolescents are generally believed not to possess competences to think, choose and act responsibly in society and, thus, they tend to be put at the margins of decision-making processes. The constant depreciation of youngsters' capacities is, then, magnified by the excessive forms of protection directed at them from the *"dangerous world outside"*, i.e. the *"world of the adults"*. Eventually, the right to be heard and youth participation remain general concepts, which are fashionable, but difficult to realize in practice.

Introduction

1   Rationale

Given the context pledged in the Preface, this Thesis wants to start with a simple introductory reflection claiming that there are at least two reasons impeding youth participation. The first obstacle amounts to the common attitude of dealing with youngsters[1] without recognizing them as subjects of law, namely individuals who enjoy the same dignity and rights assigned to adults in proportion to their age and maturity. Thus, in the most fortunate cases, young people appear to be given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate, reproducing, therefore, what Roger A. Hart identified as *"tokenism"*.[2]

Beyond neglecting adolescents true opportunities for acting in the society, a second obstacle is represented by the tendency not to acknowledge the fundamental responsibilities that education has, at all levels, to form good citizens. Indeed, participation very much depends on the competences and attitudes that educational practices convey to adolescents, and often the way in which knowledge is transmitted as well as its contents endanger responsible participation. In this regard, already in the 1960s, Paulo Freire argued against the traditional conception of education, the so-called *"banking model"*, that is structured top-down as a process of depositing knowledge into passive learners.[3] Moreover, students are generally overloaded with notions and concepts without being given opportunities for experiencing human rights-based values such as equality, respect for diversity and solidarity.

In addition to these two issues, it has to be admitted that youth partici-

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pation requires motivation. This means that adults need to question their educational approach and understand how to awaken adolescents' interest in making the difference in this world, which, now more than ever, needs to re-start with human rights. Therefore, this Thesis is primarily directed at adults, given the guidance they can offer to youngsters, with the hope of transmitting them the courage and enthusiasm to implement a more open, democratic and participatory approach in all human relationships.

2 Scope and aim

This Thesis seeks to understand how to realize in practice an educational approach which is able to value adolescents by promoting opportunities, conferring competences and attitudes as well as fostering motivation to participate and transform the globalized world of today.

In order to respond to these challenges, this Thesis is structured into four Chapters. Chapter I presents the multi-level legal framework in the area of children's rights and participation on which public policies need to be based by firstly recognizing youngsters the chance to participate in society.

Subsequently, Chapter II acknowledges the fundamental task of education at all levels to put adolescents in the condition of participation and, thus, advocates for a revision of the purposes of learning in the current globalized society.

Consequently, Chapter III defines the paradigm of *Educommunication* as the practical realization of an educational approach that aims to value the individual and his or her capacity to change the world. *Educommunication*, emerged in Latin America during the fight for human rights, has been defined as a new field of social intervention in the interface between education and communication including all actions inherent to the planning, implementation and evaluation of processes, programs and products that are oriented towards developing open, democratic and participatory *communicative ecosystems*.

After a comprehensive analysis of *Educommunication* in conceptual terms, Chapter IV describes *Let's Take Care of the Planet - Europe (LTCP)* as a concrete example of Educommunication-based project drawn from the experience of the Association Viração&Jangada to which I personally participated as facilitator and coordinator.

Eventually in the Conclusion some final considerations on *Educommunication* are made and three main recommendations for strengthening *Educommunication* in *LTCP* are outlined with the hope that they can stimulate a deeper discussion within the European *LTCP* network.

3   Personal motivation

I believe it is important to justify my choice in devoting a Thesis to adolescents and, especially, to *Educommunication*. Beyond having dealt with adolescents in many occasions of my life during volunteering activities and summer camps, I have always trusted youngsters' hidden potential to discuss, innovate and question the several challenges that our world presents to us every single day. Adolescents can be creative, critical, friendly and emotional bringing freshness and innovation in decisions and actions.

At the same time, though, I also recognize the fundamental role of education in forming responsible citizens. It is indeed quality education at all levels, from the formal to the informal, that shapes good people and transmits them fundamental ethical values, such as the respect for diversity, and attitudes, like broad-mindedness. In this regard, I myself can witness what I have just written. For example, I am sure that without the several experiences of life that I lived while studying abroad in Europe and Asia and meeting a multitude of lifestyles, traditions, ideas and dreams, I would not be the same person that I am today, a person who, one day, back from Africa, decided to study with passion and live everyday human rights.

In addition to that, while I was starting to think about my final Thesis, I luckily met Paulo Lima, an incredible person and educommunicator who

inspired me to study and experience the paradigm of *Educommunication* both at work and in my personal life. Thanks to him, I discovered the inevitable connections between *Educommunication* and human rights and, thus, I chose to study the paradigm for the purposes of this Thesis, and also to practice it as professional activity. Currently employed at the Association Viração&Jangada, I am learning a lot about *Educommunication* and how it can be effective in promoting youngsters' right to freedom of expression and, consequently, participation in society. Therefore, for me, it is not a *cliché* to say that this Thesis is not the end of a long phase of research and commitment, but is surely the beginning of a journey in the field of *Educommunication*, full of surprises and new emotions.

4   Methodology

This Thesis has been written on the basis of several contributions gathered in various occasions, especially starting from December 2017. First of all, this work is based on my personal experience as a student in Human Rights and Multi-Level Governance at the University of Padua. The academic programme provided me with the conceptual background on which this Thesis is based, namely the paradigm of human rights. Moreover, working since January 2018 at the social-promotion Association Viração&Jangada in Trento, I had the chance to follow the project *Let's Take Care of the Planet - Europe (LTCP)* described in this Thesis and, thus, to gather personally several pieces of information and contributions during the phases of the project from January to May 2018.

To sum up, the main references collected for this Thesis are:

- An interview with David Buckingham, British scholar, writer and consultant specializing in young people, media and education, at the XXVII Summer School *"La Media Education nell'era della post-verità. Dalle fake news alla creatività partecipata"* promoted by the MED - Italian Association for Media Education between 3rd and 8th July 2018 in Lucca (Italy).

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I participated at the Summer School and contributed to the formulation of the interview questions asked on behalf of the MED in Lucca (Annex 1);

- A Skype interview with Ismar de Oliveira Soares (25th July 2018), leading Brazilian scholar on *Educommunication* and President of ABPEducom, Brazilian Association of Researchers and Professionals in *Educommunication* (Annex 2);

- An interview with Paulo Lima (2nd August 2018, Trento - Italy), Brazilian journalist, educommunicator and social entrepreneur working in Brazil and Italy with youngsters and founder of the associations Viração Educomunicação (San Paulo) and Viração&Jangada (Trento). Working with him in Italy, I have the opportunity to learn day-by-day from his 30-year experience in the field of *Educommunication* for adolescents (Annex 3);

- An interview with Delphine Astier (8th June 2018, Grenoble - France), French director of the Association Monde Pluriel, partner of Viração&Jangada and coordinator of the European dynamics of the project *Let's Take Care of the Planet - Europe (LTCP)* since 2009 (Annex 4);

- Educommunication-based tools from the Italian Youth Conference (16th March 2018 at the C.N.R. Research Area in Bologna, Italy) and from the European Youth Conference (21st - 24th May 2018 in Cascais, Oeiras and Lisbon, Portugal) of *LTCP* (Annexes 5, 6, 7). All pictures included in this Thesis were taken in the framework of the project by youngsters and by the team of the Association Viraçao&Jangada;

- Evaluations of young participants in the *LTCP* project edition 2017-2018, some of them collected informally during the events while other in written form;

- Teachers' evaluation of *LTCP* 2017-2018 summarized in the common statement *Education for Environmental Citizenship* (21st - 24th May 2018 in Cascais, Oeiras and Lisbon, Portugal) (Annex 8).

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The theoretical framework of this Thesis is particularly based on:

- Legal framework of youth participation at the international level (*UN-CRC* and *UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 12 and 17*), European level (*Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*) and Italian level (*Law No. 176 "Ratification and execution of the CRC"*);

- UNESCO's publications about humanistic education (among others, *Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good?*);

- Academic writings by Professor Léonce Bekemans (specifically, *A Values-driven Education for Intercultural Dialogue*; *Globalization vs. Europeanisation. A Human-centric Interaction*; *Educational Challenges and Perspectives in Multiculturalism vs. Interculturalism*; *The Roles and Responsibilities of Educational Institutions and Strategies for Intercultural Citizenship Education in a Globalizing World*);

- Theoretical contributions to *Educommunication* (in particular, the research project *Comunicação/educação emergência de um novo campo e o perfil de seus profissionais* of the Communication and Education Center at the University of San Paulo and academic papers on *Educommunication* written by Professor Ismar de Oliveira Soares);

- Pedagogical contributions to *Educommunication* (especially, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire).

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[1]Taking into account the age range established in the project *Let's Take Care of the Planet*, all terms used in this Thesis, such as *"youngsters"*, *"children"*, *"adolescents"* and *"young people"*, refer to individuals under 18 years old and, particularly, over 12-13 years old.

[2]Roger A. Hart, *Children's participation: from tokenism to citizenship*, ed. UNICEF (Florence: Italy: Earthscan Publications Limited, 1992).

[3]Paulo Freire, *La Pedagogia degli Oppressi*, ed. Edizioni Gruppo Abele (Italian edition 2011, 1968).

Chapter I

The legal framework of youth participation

Introduction

Over the last few decades the issue of youth participation has become crucial as a wide range of stakeholders realized that the challenges of the new Millennium would have to be played not only *"for"* but *"with"* children. Chapter I aims to illustrate the main legal framework in the area of children's rights and participation on which today's policy initiatives, programs and strategies at the international, European and national level should be grounded. In this regard, the primary condition for enabling youth participation is acknowledging children's rights as equal, inalienable and for everyone belonging to the same human family.

Chapter I starts with an overview of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most comprehensive UN treaty for the worldwide promotion of children's rights fostering youth participation in public and political life. Subsequently, it analyzes the main progresses made within the European Union to support the development of children's human rights. In this sense, the introduction of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in 2000 represents one of the main steps for the promotion of a human rights-based agenda on young people. A final section of the Chapter is devoted to

the Italian approach towards youth participation. Specifically, Law No. 176 "Ratification and execution of the CRC" set the basis for a gradual process towards the planning and implementation of appropriate child-centered policies.

1   International law

Starting from the last century, especially due to sufferings and persecutions during wartime, the legal landscape on children's rights begun to change as new constitutions and treaties explicitly incorporated references to children's human rights, while older constitutions were expanded to include doctrines borrowed from emerging human rights principles.[1] From that moment on, many legal instruments were drafted for the protection of children's rights as human rights. Nevertheless, in 1924, when the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted by the Fifth Assembly of the League of Nations as the first international instrument on children's rights, the child was not seen as a holder of rights of his own, but rather as an object to be *"given means for its normal development"*, to be *"fed"*, *"nursed"*, *"helped"* and *"protected"*.[2] The same was emphasized in 1966 by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights[3] and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations[4] which both spoke of a child's right to *"measures of protection"*.

A step towards the recognition of the civil and political rights to the child was made with the adoption of the Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC) by the UN General Assembly on 20th November 1989. While confirming the centrality of the family and the parents' responsibilities in contributing to the development of the child, the Convention recognizes a set of fundamental rights which seek to support youngsters' participation in society. These articles on participation have been precisely elaborated to address the legal and social status of children, who, on one hand lack full autonomy but, on the other, are subjects of rights because inheriting

an equal moral dignity which justifies an equal entitlement, ownership and exercise of human rights. In this sense, the UNCRC does not only highlight the needs of children, but also acknowledges their capacities to understand their entitlements and claim them according to their age and maturity.

Although the term *"participation"* does not appear in the UNCRC, several provisions in the Convention reflect children's right to participation.[5] To start with, Article 12 makes a strong, although very general, call for youth participation emphasizing that children are entitled to influence those decision-making processes which are relevant for their life:

> *"States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child".*[6]

Beyond outlining a right *per se* that requires a clear commitment and effective actions, the right to be heard represents one of the most important values of the Convention which, according to General Comment No. 12, should guide the interpretation and the implementation of all other children's rights.[7] Indeed, no article of the Convention can be fully implemented without the child being respected as a subject with his own views. In this sense, respecting youngsters' opinions should not be interpreted as an obligation to *"endorse"* children's views automatically, but rather as a duty to *"consider"* them before making the final decision because every action concerning young people should firstly safeguard the *"best interest of the child"*.[8] These considerations imply that dialogue and exchanges have to be encouraged in which children assume increasing responsibilities and become active, tolerant and democratic.

Certainly, in such a process adults, such as the family but also teachers, social workers, lawyers and other members of the society at large, must provide direction and guidance to youngsters in a manner consistent with their evolving capacities.[9] In other words, the more the child himself knows,

has formed and experienced his own views, the more adults have to *transform direction and guidance into reminders and advice and later exchange on equal footing*".[10] Although recognizing the impossibility to determine a fixed age threshold beyond which the child may be considered mature enough to decide for himself, the Committee on the Right of the Child has acknowledged that children can form their conscience and opinions from a very early age and, thus, they need to be encouraged to contribute their views in different settings.[11]

As a consequence, if it is important not to underestimate the role of adults in guiding children, it is equally fundamental to support a behavioral change among those that consider the creation of a culture of greater respect for youngsters' views as a threat. In other words, the promotion of children's rights should not be seen as an attempt to endanger parental rights, as some critics of children's rights have feared, but rather as an opportunity to reinforce them.

Precisely in this regard, much has been discussed about the entitlements guaranteed to the child under Article 14 of the UNCRC on the freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Considered as recognizing an important freedom that fosters youth participation, Article 14 specifically entitles the child to choose, according to his evolving capacity, whether and in what to believe also if this choice clashes with parents' convictions. Taking the concept of participation into account, Professor Barbara B. Woodhouse has argued that the right to freedom of religion given to children should not be interpreted so much strictly to preclude a more nuanced understanding of what it means to all human beings, children included, to inherit and embrace a religion and to be free to follow one's conscience without coercion.[12]

In addition to this analysis, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has clarified that the child's ability to form and express opinions, as outlined in Article 12, is dependent on the fulfillment of several other Convention's rights, such as the right to freedom of expression (Article 13) and the right to information (Article 17).[13] Indeed, it is fundamental to support the creation

of a child-friendly environment, consistent with Article 12, in order to let children build their capacities to exercise the right of freedom of expression. Moreover, an effective realization of the right to express views needs the fulfillment of the child's right to information because only by providing information about options that exist and the consequences of such options, youngsters can gain the necessary skills, confidence and maturity in making informed and free decisions.[14] Additionally, Article 15 extends children's rights to include the right to freedom of association and of peaceful assembly. Combined with Article 12, also this article is critical to the development of a democratic society and to the participation of children in the realization of their rights.[15]

Other relevant comments to mention in this regard have been given by the scholars Roger A. Hart and Janusz Korczak, who consider Article 31 on the child's right to participate freely in cultural and artistic life highly relevant for youth participation. In this regard, Hart[16] and Korczak[17] have clearly recognized the necessity for all children to live a carefree childhood in an environment that motivates them to take part in meaningful projects. In other words, children should be put in a condition that enables them to express freely their subjectivity, to maximize the use of their competences and more than all those, to have fun and enjoy the rest of their fundamental rights.

These considerations follow the Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 17 that identifies play and recreation as forms of participation:

> *"Play and recreation are essential to the health and well-being of children and promote the development of creativity, imagination, self-confidence, self-efficacy, as well as physical, social, cognitive and emotional strengths and skills. [...] Play and recreation facilitate children's capacities to negotiate, regain emotional balance, resolve conflicts and make decisions".*[18]

In this sense, the right to play is of intrinsic value to children and helps them to experience the world, new opinions and roles and, by so doing, to understand their role in society.

In real practice though, despite the UNCRC being the most widely accepted international human rights document counting 196 ratifications, countries are struggling to fully implement the Convention. On several grounds, seventeen countries in the world have submitted at least one official reservation to the UNCRC articles dealing with participation.[19] In particular, Article 14 on the freedom of thought, conscience and religion counts twelve reservations that are mainly motivated by the inviolability of the principles and provisions of Shariah. In other cases, like for Bangladesh, states have simply affirmed their opposition to children's right to freedom of religion without justifying their reservations to the Convention.

Even more worrying are the cases of those countries ratifying the UNCRC although reserving the right not to apply any provision of the Convention which is incompatible with other laws, beliefs or values.[20] Even Article 17 on the access to information has been met with some forms of opposition. Specifically, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates do not consider themselves bound by the article if its application would violate other domestic laws, traditions and cultural values. Another ground for opposing to the Convention has been argued by Oman which guarantees the application of the UNCRC provisions only in accordance with the limits imposed by the available material resources of the state.

Such oppositions to the Convention express the difficulty and, sometimes, the unwillingness of countries to find universal consensus on the priority of children's rights. Moreover, also those countries which have not submitted any reservation to the UNCRC tend to see children's rights as unrealistic or something for the future and thus struggle to respect, protect and fulfill the legal obligations deriving from the Convention.[21]

As noted by Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe from 2006 to 2012, the right to be heard is probably

the least implemented aspect of the whole UNCRC although no country has submitted a formal reservation to it.[22] This is because, in practice, the amount and form of participation accorded by parents and the community to the child depends on cultural practices, attitudes, political and economic barriers and, thus, is something which cannot be prescribed universally.[23]

Although the UNCRC seeks at setting the foundational principles for the establishment of a legal and moral code on children in every nation, a lot of time will have to pass before achieving substantial changes in the attitude towards youth participation. Notwithstanding the fact that the near universal adoption of the UNCRC has not transformed the lives of the world's youngsters, it still does represent a precious legal instrument for the affirmation and realization of children's rights as human rights at all levels of governance.

2   European law

At the European level, the right to participation is clearly specified by Article 10(3) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) which states: *"Every citizen shall have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union. Decisions shall be taken as openly and as closely as possible to the citizen"*. More specifically as regard the EU action in the youth field, Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) promotes participation of *"young people"* in democratic life in Europe and Article 6 TFEU calls the European Union to collaborate with Member States in the field of youth and to give them additional resources and support to plan and implement policies targeted at youngsters. Nevertheless, in the past, European child law was particularly aimed at tackling specific child related aspects of broader economic and political initiatives, for example in the field of consumer protection and the free movement of persons.[24]

It is only more recently that the EU member countries have acknowledged the need to develop a comprehensive long-term strategy to encourage

cooperation, mutual learning and practices which would then respond to the young citizens' demands to participate in the Union.[25] For this reason, in the 2000s, the Union started to implement *"The European framework for cooperation in the field of youth"*[26], a strategy aimed at tackling the problems of young people as a social group, but by putting them at the center as the fundamental actors for the advancement of the whole society. This well-structured human rights-sensitive agenda on children's rights focused on two key steps:

- The introduction of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000) consistent with the European Convention on Human Rights, the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and its Protocols, which are ratified by all EU countries and need to be acceded by any country wishing to become a member of the Union.[27]

- The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty (2009) amending the Treaty on European Union and the former European Community Treaty (now the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

With its introduction, and particularly after being recognized by the Treaty of Lisbon as a primary source of EU law[28], the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights binds the EU institutions and bodies to respect fundamental rights as well as national governments when they are implementing EU law. Consequently, the promotion and protection of the rights of the child has become one of the main objectives of the European Union.

The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights contains the first detailed references to children's rights at the EU constitutional level, including the recognition of children's right to receive free compulsory education (Article 14 (2)), a prohibition of discrimination on grounds of age (Article 21), and a prohibition of exploitative child labor (Article 32). More specifically, the Charter includes a special article on children's rights (Article 24).[29] Article 24 of the Charter, which is based on the UNCRC to which every Member State is committed, seeks to promote youth participation with the same strength emphasized at the international level.

More specifically, the European Union recognizes the child as an holder of rights rather than solely as an object of protection, and aims to guarantee the child's right to express opinions freely and in accordance with his age and maturity (Article 24 (1)) and the right to have child's best interests taken as a primary consideration on all matters relating to him (Article 24 (2)). The importance of the UNCRC in guiding the development of EU children's rights was emphasized by the Commission's Agenda for the Rights of the Child stating that *"the standards and principles of the UNCRC must continue to guide EU policies and actions that have an impact on the rights of the child"*.[30]

A more coordinated agenda on children's rights at the European level emerged also thanks to the Lisbon Treaty, which, as noted above, entered into force on 1st December 2009. By amending the TEU and the former European Community Treaty, the Treaty of Lisbon made important institutional, procedural and constitutional changes to the EU legal system which enhanced the Union's potential to advance children's rights. Indeed, today the TEU clearly identifies the *"protection of the rights of the child"* as a main objective of the EU[31] and as an important aspect of the EU's external relations policy.[32] Moreover, the TFEU now enables the European Union to enact legislative measures aimed at combating sexual exploitation and trafficking of children.[33]

This stronger human rights-sensitive approach of the European Union seems to emphasize a shared and conscious attitude towards youngsters' human and social capital as one of Europe's greatest assets for the future. Indeed, the midterm evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018 has emphasized the general ferment across the EU member countries to adopt the principles and objectives of the EU Youth Strategy and in particular those focused on youth participation.[34]

In addition, the most recent EU Youth Report roadmap, published by the European Commission the 6th February 2018, has found that *"the Youth Strategy has already proven its value"*.[35] This means that the strategy was successful in triggering concrete changes at national and organizational level leading to the adoption of common approaches and principles across the

majority of Member States. Specifically, Member States whose youth policies did not have clear frameworks in this area now do. Although with some variations, the youth strategies across the Union are very much linked to the European priorities.[36] Moreover, the attitude of the European Union towards children's rights has improved coordination and enabled national administrators to exchange experiences, learn from each other and promote together dialogue with young people.[37]

As regards the child's right to be heard, the European Commission has noted that the several steps taken so far to consult children and listen to them are starting to provide concrete opportunities for greater youth participation in the planning and implementation of policies that affect them, such as for example in the field of education, health and environment.[38] For this reason, it can be concluded that the EU strategy to support youth participation is today strongly relevant to the needs and problems of the young Europeans since it is providing them with leverage and legitimacy to make claims regarding their participation and inclusion.

Nevertheless, although noting considerable several progress of the Union in different fields, the European Commission President Juncker has expressed in September 2017 his desire to *"build a more united, a stronger and a more democratic Union"*.[39] Such an objective should inevitably include a more alert approach towards children's rights and especially towards those young people living in poor social or economic conditions which constrain their ability to participate and, instead, favor exclusion.[40]

It is clear that the Union as a community of states can bring essential added value in the field of youth participation by using its global presence and political weight to push children's rights at the forefront of national agendas and worldwide. Moreover, the EU supports Member States in their efforts to respect, protect and fulfill youngsters' right to participation and provides opportunities for exchanges and mutual learning within which states can identify and adopt the good practices found across the Union.

3   Italian law

The 1948 Constitution of the Italian Republic is the primary source of law for the country, not only because it sets the basis for the creation of a republic, but also because all national laws and acts should comply with it. Consequently, all constitutional articles that deal with children are of primary importance since they guide every kind of action in the field of children's rights. Under section *"Fundamental Principles"*, Article 3 of the Constitution recognizes the equal social dignity and the equality before the law of all citizens without distinction of any kind. In addition, the same article recalls the state's duty to remove obstacles of an economic or social nature which constrain the freedom and equality of citizens, thereby impeding the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all citizens in the political, economic and social organization of the country.[41] Such an unchangeable principle seeks to include also youngsters.

Precisely for the purpose of promoting children's right to participation, Article 21 of the Constitution declares the right of everyone to *"to freely express their thoughts in speech, writing, or any other form of communication"*. Although not explicitly mentioning young people, this article was taken as the basis for the promotion of child's rights to expression within the family[42] and within the school environment.[43] In addition, Article 10 of the Constitution binds the Italian Republic to adapt its legal system to the generally recognised principles of international law, including, thus, those that deal with children's rights. Following this obligation, in 1991 Italy incorporated the UNCRC within its legislation through Law No. 176 *"Ratification and execution of the CRC"*.

Law No. 176, which represents one of the most important steps towards the recognition of children's rights as human rights at the national level, specifies at least two obligations for the country. First, every institutional body with legislative and administrative functions should take into account the values and guiding principles affirmed in the UNCRC and second, the

Italian Republic should adopt specific legislative measures in order to realize children's rights as defined in the Convention.[44] Consequently, many of the Italian laws regarding youngsters were drafted as the outcome of the disposals contained in the UNCRC.[45]

The UNCRC ratification process in Italy was a unique occasion to debate about children's rights. For the first time, different actors, such as administrators, experts, professionals, educators and volunteers, each of them with personal opinions and competences and belonging to organizations with different backgrounds and missions, were called to negotiate on an issue of general interest with the aim of formulating a common policy program. The discussion about children's rights involved the Italians in the sharing of common values, co-responsibilities and trust for the sake of implementing and improving the public interventions and services in the field of youth. In those years, a big social network emerged in Italy which developed the necessary social capital to implement laws devoted to children's rights and participation.[46]

In this regard, Law No. 285/97 emphasized for the first time the need to conceive the well-being of young people as not only the result of the absence of risks and problems, but especially as the capacity of youngsters to play their role in society. Focusing more on the experiences of participation lived by children within their communities, the law calls different actors, such as policy makers, academics and the local communities, to support the planning and implementation of projects specifically devoted to children and adolescents.[47]

More specifically, Law No. 285/97 created the National Fund for Childhood and Adolescence which finances many projects at different policy levels, like for instance children's and young people's municipal councils, that seek to promote children's rights as required by the UNCRC.[48] Law No. 285/97 is only an example of the many attempts of the country to promote the implementation of the UNCRC and other related international human rights instruments within the whole territory. As a second instance, in 2011 Italy

created the Italian Authority for Children and Adolescents (IACA) supported by other sixteen Regional Authorities for Children and Adolescents which are trying to increase the involvement of children in programs about participation and active citizenship, responsible behavior towards technologies and education.[49]

Even though the Committee on the Rights of the Child has appreciated the Italy's efforts towards the promotion of youth participation, a number of concerns have emerged in the Third Supplementary Report to the CRC written in 2017 by the Italian CRC Group on the Ombudsman for childhood and adolescence. For instance, in defiance of the country's official responsibilities taken during its candidacy for the United Nations Human Rights Council as well as despite the recommendations in the Universal Periodic Review and of the UN Human Rights Committee, Italy has not yet established an independent national institution for the promotion and protection of human rights. With a delay of twenty years, the country has failed to create the main mechanism for democratic participation in the field of human rights which could have dramatically reinforced the prestige and work of the Italian Authority for Children and Adolescents.[50]

Moreover, as revealed by the Youth Participation Dossier 2017, the child's right to be heard tends to remain an abstract value rather than a concrete objective to be fully achieved by the Italian government.[51] For instance, although youth participation is frequently mentioned in the IV National Plan on Childhood and Adolescence with structural and general measures and also in relation to the 2013/112/EU Recommendation *"Investing in children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage"*, such a National Plan does not include specific implementation tools to realize the right to participation.[52]

As a consequence to the excessive vagueness in the field of youth participation, children and adolescents continue to find too much constraints in contributing to the drafting of laws that affect themselves. These results are explained by the tendency of political parties to disregard the issue youth participation and, instead, to plan single interventions only aimed at fixing

specific situations. Indeed, it is not a case that Italy lacks a cohesive and structural agenda on children's rights to be implemented independently form any political or other color.[53]

Additionally, the CRC Group on the Ombudsman for childhood and adolescence has defined the insufficient coordination between the national and regional administrations as one of the main problems regarding the social policies for childhood and adolescence in Italy. Indeed, such lack of organization creates incoherence in the planning and application of the policies related to children's rights on the whole territory.[54] These inconsistencies are unfortunately reinforced by regional disparities as regards the available financial resources for child-related projects which are often scarce or exclusively devoted to individual interventions rather than to comprehensive social policies.[55] Moreover, not only are some projects inefficient due to the lack of public funding, but also some successful programmes, such as the Children's Councils and the so-called *"child friendly cities"*, which were increasing in the decade 1995-2005[56], are now becoming less effective due to decreased support, coordination, continuity, public attention and financing.[57]

In conclusion, at the present time Italy needs a stronger direction which would able to coordinate and implement a range of social policies devoted to children and adolescents. Furthermore, it is essential to rethink the governance on children's rights to assure a homogeneous application of the UNCRC in the whole country. As revealed in 2015 by the Italian Authority for Children and Adolescents' analysis, the current Italian governance seems too complex and inefficient to assure a coherent achievement of objectives, strategies and decision-making processes which recognize the true value of children's rights and participation.[58] In any case, such conclusions should not discourage all involved stakeholders that are working everyday for the well-being of youngsters and of the society at large. The negative results are there to be understood and improved, and to encourage the Italians to believe more in their children, in their potential and in the role that they can play for the whole country both in the present and in the future.

Assessment

Chapter I on youth participation has analyzed the main legal framework in the area of children's rights and participation with the aim of illustrating the existence of many legal principles that recognize children as active participants in the promotion, protection and monitoring of their rights. The presence of such legal guarantees is a necessary condition for the development of child-focused projects aimed at upholding youngsters' human rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989, is the primary reference supporting youth participation in society as it acknowledges children's capacities and their inherent equal moral dignity to claim rights according to their age and maturity.

Following the Convention, the right to be heard is not only an entitlement *per se*, but rather an overriding principle guiding the interpretation and the implementation of all other children's rights since no article of the Convention can be fully implemented without the child being respected as a subject of his or her own view. Such considerations are translated also at the European level especially in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights which endorses the same standards and principles of the UNCRC. The yet strong human rights-sensitive approach of the EU seems to support a more conscious attitude of the Member States towards youngsters' human and social capital as one of the most important treasures for the present and the future of the Union. Also the Italian government has chosen to ratify and execute the UNCRC through Law No. 176. The debate on children's rights and participation in Italy opened up the possibility for citizens to share common values, co-responsibilities and trust for the well-being of their children and the society at large.

Although a lot of time will have to pass before achieving substantial changes in the attitude towards participation at all level of governance, legal guarantees are there to testify that it is possible to change society and to

enable social practices for the fulfillment of the right to participation. The formal recognition of the importance of youth participation is thus the first step towards the concrete involvement of young citizens in the development of their community.

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[1]OHCHR, *Legislative History of the Convention on the rights of the child*, United Nations: New York and Geneva, Vol. 1, 2007.

[2]LoN, *Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child*, 1924, Art. 1-5.

[3]UNGA, *ICCPR International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights*, December 1966, Art. 24.

[4]UNGA, *ICESCR International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, December 1966, Art. 10.3.

[5]The UNCRC uses the term *"participation"* only in relation to Article 23 (Children with disability) ensuring that "mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active *participation* in the community".

[6]UNGA, *UNCRC Convention on the Rights of the Child*, November 1989, Art. 12.

[7]The Committee on the Right of the Child has defined the right to be heard (Article 12), the right to non-discrimination (Article 2), the right to life (Article 6) and the consideration of the child's best interests (Article 3) as foundational principles of the Convention which *"should be considered in the interpretation and implementation of all other rights"*. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), *General comment No. 12: The right of the child to be heard*, CRC/C/GC/12, July 2009, § 2.

[8]UNGA, *UNCRC Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Art. 3.

[9]Ibid., Art. 5.

[10]UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), *General comment No. 12: The right of the child to be heard*, § 84.

[11]Ibid., § 85.

[12]Barbara B. Woodhouse, "Religion and Children's Rights," in *Religion & Human Rights: An Introduction*, by John Witte and M. Christian Green (Oxford University Press, Inc., 2012), p. 301.

[13]UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), *General comment No. 12: The right of the child to be heard*, § 75-83.

[14]Ibid., § 81-83.

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[15]Ibid., § 86-88.

[16]Hart, *Children's participation: from tokenism to citizenship*, p. 6-7,41.

[17]Janusz Korczak, *The Child's Right to Respect. Janusz Korczak's Legacy: Lectures on Todays Challenges for Children*, ed. Commissioner for Human Rights (Council of Europe, 2009), p. 23-27.

[18]UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), *General comment No. 17: On the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts (art. 31)*, CRC/C/GC/17, 2013, § 9.

[19]According to the *Status of Ratifications, Reservations and Declarations of the OHCHR*, Algeria, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and United Arab Emirates have submitted some reservations relatively to at least one of the articles on youth participation. See: OHCHR, "Status of ratification Interactive Dashboard," [accessed 12/04/2018], `http://indicators.ohchr.org/`.

[20]See Iran, Mauritania, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria and Singapore. Mainly Muslim countries are opposing to children's right to freedom of religion because incompatible with Shariah law. The case of Singapore is unique in its genre since it is the only country submitting a reservation to all prescriptions that are not contained in the Constitution and in the laws of the Republic of Singapore with the view that national laws *"provide adequate protection and fundamental rights and liberties in the best interest of the child"* and thus the accession to the Convention *"does not imply acceptance of obligations going beyond the limits prescribed by the Constitution [. . .] nor the acceptance of any obligation to introduce any right beyond those prescribed under the Constitution"*. See: `http://indicators.ohchr.org/`.

[21]Hart, *Children's participation: from tokenism to citizenship*, p. 10.

[22]Korczak, *The Child's Right to Respect. Janusz Korczak's Legacy: Lectures on Todays Challenges for Children*, p. 41.

[23]Hart, *Children's participation: from tokenism to citizenship*, p. 7.

[24]See for instance: Directive 2009/48/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18th June 2009 on the safety of toys, OJ 2009 L 170 which enforces safety measures for children's toys; Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and Council of 29th April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the EU and EEA member states.

[25]See for instance: 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-18): *"Youth policy cannot work in isolation. Cooperation and complementarity with policies [. . .] is essential. [. . .] European cooperation in the youth field should be part of a broader political agenda for young people. To have real impact, policy-makers at EU and Member State level must work together*

with practitioners, service providers, educators and businesses on the ground to mobilise resources and funds to reach a critical mass of young people. They should aim to deliver innovative solutions to the complex phenomena that are marginalisation, exclusion and lack of participation. [. . .] we need a comprehensive approach to match the challenge ahead".

[26]The European framework for cooperation in the field of youth (EU Youth Strategy) has been put into effect by specific action plans designed for specific periods of time. See for instance: The White Paper "A new impetus for European youth" (2001), Youth Programme (2000-2006), Youth in Action (2007-2013), etc. At the moment, the European Union is implementing the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018) developed by the European Commission and adopted by the EU Council on 27th November 2009 with the objectives to 1) provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the labor market and 2) to encourage young people to be active citizens and participate in society. Since the EU Youth Strategy will expire in 2018, the Europe's Youth Communication [COM(2016) 940] announced the Commission's intention to renew its Youth Strategy beyond 2018 for the period 2019-24.

[27]The ratification of the ECHR, the UNCRC and its Protocols is a prerequisite for the accession to the Union. The 1993 Copenhagen Criteria require *"the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities".* The 1997 Treaty on European Union (TEU) incorporated this criteria into the EU treaty system under Art. 6(1) which states that *"the Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, principles which are common to the member states"* and under Art. 49 declaring that *"any European State which respects the principles set out in Article 6(1) may apply to become a member of the Union".*

[28]Art. 6 TEU recognizes the Charter of Fundamental Rights as a primary source of EU law. Art. 6.1. TEU *"The Union recognises the rights, freedoms and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of 7 December 2000, as adapted at Strasbourg, on 12 December 2007, which shall have the same legal value as the Treaties".*

[29]European Union, *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, December 2007, Art. 24.

[30]European Commission, *Commission Communication from the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 15 February 2011: An EU Agenda for the rights of the child*, COM/2011/60 final, February 2011, p. 3 (Introduction).

[31]*"The Union [. . .] shall promote [. . .] solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child".* European Union, *TEU Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union*, December 2007, Art. 3(3).

[32]*"In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and*

interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to [. . .] the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child". ibid., Art. 3(5).

[33]European Union, *TFEU Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*, December 2007, Art. 79(2)(d); Art. 83(1).

[34]European Union, *EU Youth Report 2015, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union*, 2016, p. 10-15.

[35]European Commission, *EU Youth Report roadmap and new framework post*, Ares 710116, EAC B3, 2018, p. 2.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid., p. 3.

[38]European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: 2016 Report on the Application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights*, COM/2017/0239 final, October 2017, p. 14.

[39]*Message of the President Jean-Claude Juncker on the State of the Union*, 2017.

[40]European Commission, *EU Youth Report roadmap and new framework post*, p. 1-2.

[41]Republic of Italy, *Constitution of Italy*, December 1947, Art. 3.

[42]Italian Civil Code, Art. 147 on duties towards one's children and Art. 315 bis on the rights and duties of the child.

[43]D.P.R. 29 May 1998, i.e. President of the Republic's Decree on the Regulation "Secondary school students' statute".

[44]*L. 27 maggio 1991, n. 176: Ratifica ed esecuzione della Convenzione sui diritti del fanciullo, fatta a New York il 20 novembre 1989*, May 1991.

[45]See especially: Law 451/97 "Institution of a Parliamentary Commission for Children and a National Observatory for Children"; Law 285/97 "Provisions for the promotion of rights and opportunities for children and adolescents"; Law 269/98 "Norms against the exploitation of minors for prostitution, pornography and sexual tourism"; Law 476/98 "Ratification and execution of the Convention on the Protection of Minors and cooperation in international adoption (Aja, 1993)"; Law 148/2000 "Ratification and execution of Convention No.182 relative to the prohibition of the worst forms of child labour and to the immediate action for abolition"; Law 38/2006 concerning the fight against the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography and via the internet; Law on the establishment of a National Ombudsperson for Childhood and Adolescence, July 2011.

[46]Paola Degani and Paolo De Stefani, *Diritti umani e pace. Materiali e proposte per l'educazione*, vol. 4, Quaderni del Centro interdipartimentale di ricerca e di servizi sui diritti della persona e dei popoli (Venezia: Maerne: Università degli Studi di Padova, 2001), p. 94-96.

[47]Ibid., p. 96-97.

[48]*L. 28 agosto 1997, n. 285: Disposizioni per la promozione di diritti e di opportunità per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza*, August 1997.

[49]See for instance: *Generazioni Connesse* (Safer Internet Centre III, National Center for the promotion of a safe and positive use of internet and technologies); *Io sono qui* (project aimed at promoting legality and fighting school dropout); *Dallo scoltro all'incontro: mediando si impara* (project on school mediation); *Care Leavers Network* (the first Italian network of young people from 16 to 26 years old who live or have lived away from their families and are involved in a program about participation and active citizenship).

[50]CRC Group on the Ombudsman for childhood and adolescents, *III Rapporto Supplementare alle Nazioni Unite sul monitoraggio della Convenzione sui diritti dell'infanzia e dell'adolescenza in Italia*, 2017, p. 34.

[51]Starting from the CRC Committee's observations to Italy in 2011, the Italian NGO Group for the CRC has developed a dossier on youth participation following ten indicators defined by the Council of Europe for the CPAT (Child Participation Assessment Tool) in order to monitor the country's main improvements in the field of youth participation and children's rights. CRC Group on the Ombudsman for childhood and adolescents, *Youth Participation Dossier 2017*, 2017, p. 2

[52]Ibid., p. 3.

[53]Ibid.

[54]CRC Group on the Ombudsman for childhood and adolescents, *III Rapporto Supplementare alle Nazioni Unite sul monitoraggio della Convenzione sui diritti dell'infanzia e dell'adolescenza in Italia*, p. 10-12.

[55]Ibid., p. 12.

[56]See for instance *Città Educativa Palermo*, available at: `http://palermoeducativa.blogspot.it/` [accessed 21/04/2018].

[57]Ibid., p. 55.

[58]Ibid., p. 12.

Chapter II

Reshaping the purpose of education

Introduction

Chapter I has illustrated the multi-level legal framework of youth partici-
pation. In particular, it has specified the terms in which youngsters should
be called to participate in society: not anymore as passive objects of protec-
tion, but rather as active subjects to which rights and responsibilities are
recognized. However, it is not any longer sufficient to recognize child's right
to participation through laws and principles given the urgent necessity to
realize such right in practice.

In this regard, a major problem seems to be precisely the gap between
the adoption of international human rights norms and their implementa-
tion. Moreover, it has to be clarified that promoting access to the right to
participation does not only mean *"providing opportunities"* to children, but
firstly *"making them able"* to fully express themselves. This challenge is even
more critical today in an increasingly complex and uncertain society char-
acterized by globalization and its effects on people and communication as
well as by other global threats such as climate change and terrorism. In this
sense, Chapter II argues that by equipping individuals and communities
with grounded competences and attitudes, education at all levels (formal, in-

formal and non-formal) is crucial to respond to the economic, political, social and cultural realities of XXI century. Nevertheless, in the current context of social transformation a revised educational approach has to be promoted.

In order to follow a logical reasoning, Chapter II is divided in three sections. Based on the UNESCO's guidelines and particularly on its recent publication *Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good?*, the first section supports a humanistic revision of the purposes of education grounded on a set of core human rights-based principles. Therefore, it is argued that the universal facilitator for a human-centric governance in education is undoubtedly the human rights paradigm which recognizes every single adolescent as an active and precious subject in the process of learning.

Subsequently, by acknowledging the implications posed by the humanistic vision of education on the notion of citizenship in a globalized society, the second section advocates for the broadening of citizenship's understanding as to promote a sense of belonging to the same human family, namely a new model of identification beyond the nation-state and the European Union. In this sense, teaching global citizenship relates to educating youngsters to become responsible citizens who are capable of contributing to the development and well-being of the society in which they live, namely a society that is wide, shared and interconnected and which is intertwined between the local, national and global level.

Eventually, after recognizing the fact that within the process of transformation education should be able to benefit from the new opportunities offered in the era of Information, the third section tries to understand how to integrate digital and communication technologies in education for the youth by escaping dangers such as manipulation of information as well as commodification of human relations and social deterioration. In this regard, without forgetting the human dimension, education should take responsibility for promoting a critical understanding and intelligent use of the means of communication.

1   The basic foundation: a humanistic vision of education

The deep sense of crisis of today's world is strictly linked to two main worldwide transformations: globalization and the emergence of multicultural societies. It seems, indeed, that the integration of markets for goods, capital and services, the rapid development of communication as well as the increased cross-border movement and the subsequent lack of cultural homogeneity within states, have led to substantial economic, social, political and cultural changes and contradictions. For instance, although economic growth has reduced global poverty, inequality and exclusion have increased within and across societies.[1] Such a paradoxical situation can be explained by considering, for example, women's situation: despite the progressive empowerment of women and girls through greater access to education, they continue to face discrimination in public and professional life and gender-based violence persists consistently.[2]

In such complex scenario, it is argued that education at all levels (formal, informal and non-formal) should take the lead in providing individuals with the necessary attitudes and capabilities to deal with today's global challenges. This reflection is made on the basis that, beyond being a right *per se*, education is also an empowering right, namely an entitlement which enables people to develop fundamental skills, competences and confidence to secure other rights. Therefore, it is firstly education which gives people the ability to access information and to grow in knowledge. Hence, in relation to youth participation, the idea is that by providing a variety of competences, youngsters will have more chances for self-development and responsible participation in society.

Nevertheless, in order to avoid a pure economic dimension of education that tends to persist in the current international debate, a revision of its purposes and role is demanded. Specifically, a profound reflection has to be made on the way in which knowledge should be transmitted and also on the

type of capabilities that individuals should acquire to cope with their present and future encounters and experiences.[3] Such needs have been captured by Sustainable Development Goal number 4 (SDG4) which, differently from the previous MDG2 *"Achieve universal primary education"*, seeks to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"*.[4]

As expressed by UNESCO in its recent publications, the need for a humanistic education *"has never been so urgent"*.[5] Therefore, following the approach of the UN, this Thesis aims to rethink education in a human rights-based perspective. In this sense, education needs to ground its methodology as well as its contents on a set of universal values belonging to the human rights' paradigm which, in turn, serves as the basis for subsequent delineations of educational approaches.[6] Hence, a human-centered approach to education would not be focused exclusively on the acquisition of technical skills to be employed in the labor market, but rather on the transmission of fundamental underlying values.[7]

As defined by UNESCO in *Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good?*, a people-centered approach to education is directed at *"sustaining and enhancing the dignity, capacity and welfare of the human person, in relation to the others"* both in conceptual and in practical terms.[8] Consequently, the respect for everyone's life and dignity as well as the valorization of each contribution in the practices of teaching and learning represent the first fundamental aspects to consider in a reviewed approach to education.[9] For such purpose, all examples of learning systems that alienate individuals and treat them as commodities and marginalize or divide should be rejected. Such de-humanizing educational practices are, unfortunately, not very distant from the traditional education system implemented in many countries of the world since decades.

As already written in the late 1960s by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, *"education is suffering from narration sickness"* since it favors a one-sided relation between the teacher, i.e. the narrating subject, and the student,

i.e. the passive object in which concepts are merely *"deposited"*.[10] Under these conditions, creativity and transformation are not encouraged and knowledge does not flourish given that the so-called *"banking model of education"* ignores the fundamental process of knowledge-building, namely a *"constant process of questioning the world, in the world, with the world and with others"*.[11] In sum, the rigid hierarchical relation between the teacher and the student leads to oppression because it presumes that the teacher has knowledge, and thus is entitled to lead, while the student does not and, thus, is irremediably ignorant. The traditional education practices criticized by Freire do not pay much attention to what, instead, a humanistic vision of education considers as a priority, namely the respect for everyone's dignity and rights.

In addition to this first consideration, a human-centric approach to education *"should favor a move from the (increasingly) conflicting state of multiculturalism to the dialogic stage of inter-culturalism"*.[12] As noted by Professor Léonce Bekemans, educational practices need to accommodate diversity, not in a passive way, namely by surrendering to a simple multicultural co-existence, but rather with an approach aiming at valuing mutually influencing differences and appreciating them as one of the bases for the acquisition of critical thinking, creativity and self-affirmation.[13]

Not without reason, it is said that education is a dynamic process of learning that creates added value and forms the individual to integral development in so far as it is conceived as a *"meeting with the other"* which welcomes open dialogue between cultures and reciprocal learning.[14] Such shift from multiculturalism to intercultural dialogue reduces the chances of falling into the trap of cultural relativism and provides the foundation for a true *"living together"*, namely one of the four fundamental pillars of learning, together with *"learning to know"*, *"learning to do"* and *"learning to be"*.[15]

Specifically, according to the UNESCO Report directed by Jacques Delors, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, the concept of *"learning to live together"* means essentially trying to develop an understanding of others and their history, traditions and spiritual values and, on this basis, creating a new spirit which

would induce individuals to implement common projects or to manage the inevitable conflicts in an intelligent and peaceful way.[16] Based on this definition, *"learning to live together"* implies two complementary and mutually reinforcing learning processes: the discovery of others and the experience of shared goals. On one side, the discovery of others permits the emergence of stronger identities. By nature, identity requires an open attitude towards *"the other"*, i.e. the other human being in his or her differences, and the learning to listen and to benefit from dialogue with other peoples might eventually lead to a mutual enrichment. On the other side, the experience of shared goals increases the possibility for the emergence of a sense of belonging to the same community.

This idea of having an integrated approach to education at all levels that includes the development of intercultural competences is very urgent today where the cultural landscape is characterized by increased diversity of peoples living more and more closely.[17] This is why already in 2009 the UNESCO World Report *Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue* defined *"cultural literacy"*, namely the capacity of adopting an open approach to diversity, as a new skill with the same importance than reading, writing and numeracy and indispensable for *"transcending the clash of ignorances"*.[18] In this regard, schools and other educational institutions have the responsibility to offer sufficient quality, formal and non-formal learning opportunities for intercultural dialogue where people can first *"experience"* genuine respect and appreciation of differences and, then, develop cross-cultural skills.[19] Indeed, if a global culture of human rights is the goal to reach, a people-centered education needs to develop the appropriate competences for holding true intercultural dialogues.

Moreover, an approach towards achieving unity beyond diversity, would eventually reinforce a sense of internal and external solidarity and shared responsibility for a common future.[20] Challenges such as climate change and migration require common global solutions, clearly implying common responses which, in turn, ought to be grounded in jointly shared and widely

entrenched moral values and obligations. In this context, given that global problems require individual and collective local actions, it is essential for education to promote a sense of common purpose both with local and national environments as well as with humanity as a whole.

Consequently, these considerations advocate for an education seeking at introducing to the youth the concept and practice of responsible citizenship, i.e. a concept which goes well beyond the so-called *"clientelistic citizenship"*, namely the common attitude to consider citizenship as an exclusive container of rights without responsibilities. It is indeed fundamental to avoid transmitting the message that obligations towards others are less important than entitlements, since it is by teaching and exercising rights *and* responsibilities that a citizen becomes a responsible citizen within a community. In addition, exercising citizenship in a globalized society and with a sense of solidarity and shared global responsibilities means being engaged also in transnational situations. In this sense, the idea of external solidarity clearly challenges the notion of citizenship and the role of the nation-state as the sole focus of authority. The next section of this Chapter will therefore focus on the development of a more holistic view of citizenship.

In sum, this Thesis argues that a human-centered education which is founded, firstly, on the respect for everyone's dignity and rights, secondly, on the valorization of diversity and, thirdly, on external and internal solidarity and common responsibility, has the potential of engaging the youth in the process of active participation in society at all levels of governance. Furthermore, a humanistic vision of education is not only more inclusive and participatory, but also constructive and non-violent because it affects the conscience by opposing to conformism and authoritarianism.[21]

In *Diritti Umani e Pace: Materiali e Proposte per l'Educazione*, it is argued that human rights open up the possibility for the so-called *"pedagogy of conflict"* which goes beyond the traditional options of either *"escape"* or *"violence"*, namely options that tend to neglect or overcome conflicts by destroying them. Education in this sense strives at shaping behaviors capable of re-structuring

the conflict in non-violent terms and, possibly, in a way which satisfies all involved parties.

From an educational point of view, it is very important to know and experiment that disagreements can be faced without frustration or brutality, but rather in non-violent terms.[22] This approach supports the purpose of education for peace as defined by UNESCO in its Constitution: *"since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed"*.[23] In this sense, the so-called *"conflicting non-violent model"* implies that the teacher or educator accepts to work by *"problematizing"* without hiding or emphasizing conflict, but rather by assuming it and trying to solve problems with the involvement of everybody who is encouraged to contribute with different points of view.

In conclusion, a human rights-based education as the basis for different methodological approaches is able to offer a more complete answer to the youngsters' needs to understand themselves and the world, if it is implemented in a holistic way. In this sense, an interdisciplinary and transversal approach to education overcomes traditional dichotomies between cognitive, emotional and ethical aspects and integrates different disciplines and perspectives. Although transversal approaches can appear difficult to realize, they promote even more collaboration among young people and between them and teachers or educators.[24] Eventually, a humanistic education which is confident in the youth capabilities to change the current social context in a way that is more human rights-sensitive, has the potential of transforming our mind-set and our worldview.

2 Education towards a global understanding of citizenship

In order to clarify the role of education for the promotion of a global understanding of citizenship, two assumptions have to be made. On one

hand, humanistic education should recognize the central role of the individual and his or her capacity to influence society. On the other hand, human rights values including respect for everyone's dignity and rights, openness to diversity and human solidarity need to become the guiding principles for acting responsibly within the community, in other words for becoming a *"good"* citizen. Consequently, the adoption of a human rights-sensitive vision of the *"good"* citizen re-defines the narrow conception of *"national citizenship"* by substituting it with the concept of *"global"*, if not, *"planetary"* citizenship.[25]

Traditionally, in European legal culture, and particularly with the Westphalian system of XVII century according to which nation-states were the exclusive owners and holders of sovereignty, citizenship denoted the ascription of a subject to a national state circumscribed within a specific territory.[26] Nevertheless, the definition inevitably linking territory, nationality and citizenship gradually started to become ambiguous when citizenship was understood on one side, as a legal status based on rights, and on the other, as a form of belonging. As noted by Margiotta, citizenship as a legal status specifies the difference between the *"citizen"* and the *"foreigner"* whereby the citizen has rights and duties established by a positive legal order. Instead, from a political perspective, citizenship includes all individuals who *"belong"* to the state, namely who feel to be in a *"spiritual union"* with the state.[27] This political dimension of citizenship, thus, reveals a wider conception tied with the notion of identity.

The difficult relation between these two poles of the semantic field of citizenship was particularly tackled by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992. By claiming that *"every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union"* under Article 8 (now Article 20 TFEU), the Treaty of Maastricht officially changed the relation between territory, nationality and citizenship.[28] Especially with the institution of the European citizenship and the discussions about the European identity-building process, citizenship was not anymore related to a single nationality and territory, but rather to a vast union of Member states with different nationalities and a great

multiplicity of identities.[29] In this sense, the true meaning of European citizenship embodied a sense of identity recognizing both the need to share common values and the importance to value diversity.

In addition to the historical break represented by the creation of the European citizenship, current global changes and their consequences on people and communication are drastically re-shaping the relation of the individual with the environment and, thus, the concept of citizenship and identity. The global village in which we are living and where the *"other"* is our neighbor is recalling a revised conception of citizenship which transcends national as well as European borders.

In this regard, although recognizing that terms such as *"citizen"* and *"citizenship"* are neither fixed nor limited to a single definition, the Council of Europe defines the citizen of today as *"a person co-existing in a society"*.[30] This is not to affirm, however, that the idea of citizen referring to the nation-state is no longer relevant or applicable. It only implies that the nation-state is not anymore the sole authority. Therefore a need was felt to develop a more holistic view of the concept which transcends the confines of the country and relates to the concept of community, i.e. a notion that embraces the local, the national, regional and the international contexts in which individuals live.

Within such understanding, the idea of citizenship includes notions of *"status"* and *"role"*. It involves issues relating to rights and responsibilities, but also ideas of equality, diversity and social justice. It is no longer sufficient to limit the conception of citizenship to the process of voting. It should also include actions exercised by every single individual that have an impact on the life of the community at the local, national, regional and international level.[31] This is exactly what it means to be engaged in good practices of multi-level governance.

Unfortunately, though, such reality has not been fully understood or accepted by many people and politicians throughout the world. This is causing today not only indifference and generalized hostility towards diversity, but also conflicts and deathly violence. It is sufficient to mention the *"paradox of*

globalization" in our current society: the more globally connected people become, the more insistently local and particular identities are being articulated around the world, often leading to tension and conflict.

To counter this phenomenon, a humanistic education needs to urgently play the role of promoting and reinforcing global citizenship-building. Forming global citizens is a lifelong process embodying theory and practice, embracing formal, non-formal and informal contexts. It means working on cognition, emotion and behavior for the achievement of traditional but also more transversal competences such as, for example, critical spirit, empathy, collaboration and dialogue.[32] Although the task is challenging, this Thesis argues that only by promoting a global understanding of citizenship, active and committed youth participation to the democratic and peaceful life of the Planet can be realized.

3   Educational challenges in the Era of Information

Education has always been very much linked to cultural developments throughout history which consequently have modified its role in society. For instance, the global spread of the printing press was perceived in the XIII century as revolutionary because, for the first time, the cultural heritage of society, potentially available to everyone, permitted an easier spreading of local cultures to other territories that contributed to the recognition of cultural diversity.[33] In this sense, the wide diffusion of Internet is only one of the most recent transformations drastically shaping human activities, namely the way in which people interact, access knowledge, work, have fun and so on. According to the International Telecommunication Union, especially young people are at the forefront of today's digital economy: in 2017, 71% of the world's youth population aged between 15 and 24, 94% if considering only developed countries, was online.[34] In this sense, digital technologies

are an unavoidable fact of modern life, explicating the Era of Information.

Nevertheless, the growing interconnectedness facilitated by the world-wide spread of digital technologies has led to both positive and negative consequences. Living in a scenario mediated by technologies such as mobile devices and social networks, which are potentially available to everybody, might indeed hide some dangerous scenarios. Of course, it is important to recognize the positive sides of digital technologies in terms of greater and easier opportunities for participation, exchange, cooperation and mobilization.[35] As an example, the emergence of transnational social or political communities and civil society, as in the case of the Transnational LGBT activism, has resulted in greater political legitimacy, strength, unity and solidarity.

However, on the other side, a misuse, an abuse or an intentional manipulation of digital technologies and online information might lead to intolerance, hatred and violence from cyber-bullying to criminal activities and radicalization, as well as to invasion of privacy and data mining.[36] In this regard, since 2017 a big debate on online fake news has emerged in society. Although fake news is not a recent phenomenon, teachers and educators are now perceiving the issue as a problem to address in class or in other educational contexts, probably due to the recent developments in technology. Indeed, as noted by Gili and Maddalena, globalization and digitalization have surely contributed to the increased magnitude of fake news circulating around Internet, to their capability of penetration into every single user's account and to their speed of circulation within the communication system.[37] As a consequence, globalization has accentuated the effects of fake news on people ruining the quality of information to which they access every day.

Moreover, in such complex scenario, the British scholar and media educator David Buckingham has noted another challenging situation, namely a *"new digital divide"* between what students do at school and in their leisure time. While in learning environments youngsters tend to receive de-contextualized training in functional skills, which is rather boring and unimaginative, during free time technology becomes a medium for popular

culture. Thus, when adolescents can, they prefer to use digital technologies for activities that they really like such as playing games, social networking, downloading, editing, ect.[38]

According to Buckingham, such a gap in the use of technology reflects an historical educational attitude to refuse students' everyday popular culture: *"there is a kind of paranoia about the loss of control that happens when popular cultures enters the space of the school"*.[39] Such situation is then magnified by the unhelpful and common debate between the enthusiasts about the use of technology in learning contexts, who see it as the salvation for education, and the pessimists who refuse to integrate technology into their curriculum because they believe that it does not bring added value to teaching and learning.

Under these challenging circumstances, it is therefore fundamental and urgent to address from another perspective the role of education in relation to digital youth participation. First of all, it has to be accepted that people are today immersed into digital technology and, thus, it would be impossible to discard it in education.[40] There is no sense in treating new media as a menace, but it is rather more convenient to consider them as allies in fostering youngsters' motivation and in creating new, free and open spaces for participation.

However, as affirmed by Buckingham, beyond understanding how to teach with technology, teachers need to acknowledge *"what children need to know about it"*.[41] In this sense, more importantly than focusing on the use of the media in education, teachers and educators are required to direct learning processes for the acquisition of literacy competences, namely skills that allow for critical understanding of news, and subsequently for responsible participation.[42] In this regard, it is worth pointing out that digital technology is just a newer form of technology than the newspaper and, thus, any sort of media, being it an article on the web or one in the journal, needs critical interrogation.[43]

More precisely, a critical approach to media education advises learners to

make sense of the vast amount of news encountered every day, to identify credible sources, to understand how information is produced and, on this basis, to check its reliability and validity.[44] Moreover, critical thinking, or *"healthy skepticism"* as called by Buckingham, encourages young people to question the authenticity and accuracy of news, connect new knowledge with prior learning and contextual background and, then, discern its significance in relation to information already known.

In addition, in order to encourage youngsters to investigate critically, a good strategy would be to start by observing mundane everyday practices of students and then to continue by analyzing these obvious actions from a more distant perspective. *"Making the familiar strange"*, namely de-familiarizing common daily actions, is thus a successful strategy to stimulate enthusiasm and interest in questioning the media.[45] Moreover, it has to be considered that while media education includes teaching about the whole range of news, it also means analyzing changes in the media industry as well as in the political environment.[46] In this sense, such approach implies engaging young people in a proper, coherent, deep and long-term critical analysis of the means of communication that would provide them with grounded knowledge for responsible digital participation.

Yet, if a critical approach to media education is essential to promote responsible digital youth participation in society, Gili and Maddalena have argued that, in effect, true critical thinking is shaped by both an intellectual and an emotional component, the intellectual one being more about awareness of the self and of the context, while the emotional one especially about social relations, identity and feelings.[47] In this sense, critical thinking develops through a constant interaction between intellectual and socio-emotional attitudes. The reason for Gili and Maddalena to stress on the human relations dimension has been motivated by the risks to which individuals are exposed and that might push them towards passive. Opposed to critical thinking, passive skepticism persuades people to distrust and underestimate in principle everything and everyone, albeit living in a world characterized

by mutual trust because based on knowledge mediated by information and stories received from others.[48]

As a solution to passive skepticism, educational practices at the formal, informal and non-formal level should support the development of an intermediate party between the central state institutions and the individual citizen that is composed by a network of associations, communities and non-traditional media where people can experience a sense of belonging and where they can enjoy the opportunity to act independently from institutionalized powers. Thus, schools are encouraged to promote networking with civil society associations in order to offer students a deeper and more comprehensive educational program integrated by different experiences, expertise and points of views. Subsequently, youngsters will discover more spaces for relationships, sincere dialogue and open debate, civil and social engagement, where to freely help each other to understand and analyze media.

In this way, the development of critical thinking becomes in itself a participatory process and, consequently, keeps alive the sense of solidarity where *"friends' eyes are the indispensable mirror where the self can discover its image and establish its identity"*.[49] Therefore, as affirmed by Pope Francis during the 2018 World Communication Day:

> *"The best antidotes to falsehoods are not strategies, but people: people who are not greedy but ready to listen, people who make the effort to engage in sincere dialogue so that the truth can emerge; people who are attracted by goodness and take responsibility for how they use language"*.[50]

Eventually, education also needs to accommodate new occasions for creative youth participation in the cyber world by providing different kind of spaces to develop critical thinking in a participatory way.

Assessment

Chapter II has affirmed that education at all levels has a crucial responsibility in making adolescents able to exercise their right to participation. However, especially today in a new complex society, the role and aims of education should be rediscovered as the conceptual basis on which subsequent educational approaches can be developed. In this sense, Chapter II has argued for a humanistic revision of education which necessarily seeks at transmitting to younger generations not only functional competences, but also a set of fundamental ethical values belonging to the human rights paradigm.

In short, it is firstly necessary that young people are given chances to be valued in their own dignity and rights. Secondly, education should provide opportunities for valuing diversity in a perspective oriented at intercultural dialogue so as to support the strengthening of *"cultural literacy"* as an indispensable competence for the youth. Thirdly, a humanistic vision of education is grounded in the conception of common responsibility shared by the global community. Lastly, humanistic education is holistic inasmuch it permeates all disciplines with the aim of disseminating human rights not as part of a subject in itself, but rather as a systemic approach.

Consequently, the affirmation of human rights as foundational elements challenges the narrow conception of national citizenship to reach a global understanding based on a shared sense of belonging to the same human community that transcends both national and European borders. Such a paradigm shift is essential for promoting responsible youth participation because being a citizen today in a society marked by complex global challenges means being engaged in practices of multi-level governance, namely both at the local and at the global level. Promoting occasions to experience joint actions for achieving a global success is, thus, a new task for humanistic education.

Eventually, educational practices need to be contextualized in the current

Era of Information. Therefore, education needs to prepare youngsters for digital participation by teaching them how to adopt a critical approach to the use of the media and eventually escape the dangers of digital technologies. In this sense, a true critical thinking will emerge only when both its intellectual and emotional dimensions are taken into account. Again, then, feeling part of a unified community composed by different social actors is fundamental for the development of a critical sense and, consequently, for a responsible digital participation.

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[1]According to the World Bank (2015) and Bourguignon and Morrison (2002), 44% of world population lived in absolute poverty in 1981. Since then, the share of poor people in the world has declined very fast - in fact, faster than ever before in world history. In 32 years, the share of people living in extreme poverty was divided by 4, reaching levels below 11% in 2013. Future projections suggest that the incidence of extreme poverty would fall below 10% for 2015. Our World in Data, "Share of the World Population living in Absolute Poverty, 1820-2015," [accessed 01/07/2018], http://ourworldindata.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/World-Poverty-Since-1820.png.

[2]UNESCO, *Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good?*, Paris: France, 2015, p. 11.

[3]Ibid., p. 37.

[4]Differently from the focus of the eight Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015), the new seventeen Sustainable Development Goals agreed by the UN to be reached by 2030, seek at the achievement of sustainable development in its three dimensions: the economic, social and environmental. Moreover, going far beyond MDGs, SDGs – defined as a *"far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Goals"* – are accepted by all countries in the world and applicable to all according to the *"principle of common but differentiated responsibilities"*. Such *"supremely ambitious and transformational vision"* includes a commitment to education as *"quality education"*, namely *"providing inclusive and quality education at all levels - early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational training"* for *"all people, irrespective of sex, age, race, ethnicity, and persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, children and youth"* including *"life-long learning opportunities that help them acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society"*. In addition,

with SDG4 countries seek to *"provide children and youth with a nurturing environment for the full realization of their rights and capabilities, helping our countries to reap the demographic dividend including through safe schools and cohesive communities and families"* (§ 25). The shift in quality between MDG2 *"Achieve universal primary education"* and SDG4 *"Quality education"* is thus significant. See in detail: UNGA, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2015, A/RES/70/1; UNESCO, *Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4*, 2015.

[5]UNESCO, *Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good?*, p. 10.

[6] In supporting a humanistic vision of education, Bekemans (2016) defines the human rights' paradigm as a *"powerful and universal transcultural and transnational facilitator for human-centric governance in education"*. Léonce Bekemans, "The Roles and Responsabilities of Educational Institutions and Strategies for Intercultural Citizenship Education in a Globalizing World," in *Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute* (2016), p. 5.

[7]A humanistic vision of education might be linked with Amartya Sen's alternative view of human development which is connected to the concept of freedom and recognizes the active role of individuals who, with adequate social opportunities, can effectively shape their own destiny and help each other. See in detail: Sen, Amartya. *Development as freedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

[8]UNESCO, *Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good?*, p. 36.

[9]Ibid., p. 38.

[10]Freire, *La Pedagogia degli Oppressi*, p. 57-59.

[11]Ibid., p. 62-63.

[12]Bekemans, "The Roles and Responsabilities of Educational Institutions and Strategies for Intercultural Citizenship Education in a Globalizing World," p. 5.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Léonce Bekemans, "Educational Challenges and Perspectives in Multiculturalism vs. Interculturalism," chap. Citizenship Education for Intercultural Realities in *Interculturalism and Multiculturalism: Similarities and Differences*, ed. Martyn Barrett (France: Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2013), p. 10.

[15]The 1996 Delors Report identified an integrated approach to education which includes four pillars of learning: *"Learning to know*, by combining a sufficiently broad general knowledge with the opportunity to work in depth on a small number of subjects. This also means learning to learn, so as to benefit from the opportunities education provides throughout life; *Learning to do*, in order to acquire not only an occupational skill but also, more broadly, the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams. It also means learning to do in the context of young peoples' various social and work experiences which may be informal, as a result of the local or national context, or formal, involving courses, alternating

study and work; *Learning to live together*, by developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence - carrying out joint projects and learning to manage conflicts - in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace; *Learning to be*, so as better to develop one's personality and be able to act with ever greater autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility. In that connection, education must not disregard any aspect of a person's potential: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacities and communication skills." See: Delors, Jacques L. J., et al., *Learning: the Treasure Within*, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education of the Twenty-first Century (UNESCO, 1996), Part two: Chapter 4.

[16]Ibid.

[17]As defined in UNESCO's publication Intercultural Competences (2013), intercultural competences might be split into separate skills: *savoirs* (knowledge of the culture), *savoir comprendre* (skills of interpreting/relating), *savoir apprendre* (skills of discovery/interaction), *savoir être* (attitudes of curiosity/ openness), and *savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness). See: UNESCO, *Intercultural Competences Conceptual and Operational Framework, Intersectorial Platform for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence, Bureau for Strategic Planning*, France: Paris, 2013, p. 14.

[18]UNESCO, *World Report Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*, France: Paris, 2009, p. 17.

[19]Léonce Bekemans, *A Values-driven Education for Intercultural Dialog*, Reflections on UNESCO's International Decade of the Rapprochement of Culture (France: Paris, 2015), p. 6.

[20]UNESCO, *Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good?*, p. 38.

[21]Marin, (2001), *Educare ai diritti umani: educare a non starsene in pace*. In: Degani and Stefani, *Diritti umani e pace. Materiali e proposte per l'educazione*, p. 124.

[22]Ibid., p. 124-125.

[23]UNESCO, *Constitution*, 1945, Preamble.

[24]UNESCO and International Cooperation Centre, *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives*, Italy: Trento, 2018, p. 46-47.

[25]In Degani and Stefani, *Diritti umani e pace. Materiali e proposte per l'educazione*, Abati and Trentabue argue that *"human rights deconstruct the narrow conception of "national citizenship" to reach the awareness of a "planetary citizenship"*, p. 143. In this regard, in *Un altro mondo è possible* (2017), Agué claims that *"We are today in the heart of an imagination process, if not actually in the conception phase, of what a "human planetary society could be"*, p.33.

[26]The classical concept of citizenship firstly emerged within the Westphalian system of XVII century. In the past, when nation-states were the exclusive owners and holders of sovereignty exercised within a well-defined territory, the concept of nationality, territory

and citizenship coincided. Indeed, the *"people"* were identified by the governments ruling over them and, then, defined as *"nationals"* since belonging to the territory. Through this status, nationals were entitled to citizens' rights. In this sense, citizenship assumed exclusively a legal connotation. To deepen the issue refer to Léonce Bekemans, *Globalization vs. Europeanisation. A Human-centric Interaction* (Brussels, Berlin, Bern, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Wien: International Academic Publishers Peter Lang, 2013), p. 248.

[27] Costanza Margiotta, *Cittadinanza Europea: Istruzioni per l'uso*, ed. Editori Laterza (Italia, 2014), p. 10.

[28] Article 8 Treaty on European Union signed in Maastricht on 7 February 1992. European Union, *TFEU Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*, Art. 20.1.

[29] Bekemans, "The Roles and Responsabilities of Educational Institutions and Strategies for Intercultural Citizenship Education in a Globalizing World," p. 6.

[30] Karen O'Shea, *Developing a Shared Understanding, A Glossary of Terms for Education for Democratic Citizenship* (France: Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003).

[31] Ibid.

[32] In 2018, the International Cooperation Center of Trento, in collaboration with UNESCO, has published the first Italian pedagogical UNESCO's guide on global citizenship education *"Global citizenship education: topics and learning objectives"* [original title]. The document is the result of an intense global collaboration in the field of research and education suggesting practical examples of learning and teaching processes starting from three fundamental conceptual dimensions that are common to different definitions and interpretations of global citizenship education. Such interrelated dimensions include and are based on aspects which belong to three main domains of learning: cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioral. On the basis of these three domains, the document identifies main results, students' characteristics, thematic areas with corresponding learning outcomes, divided by different age groups and school levels. See in detail: UNESCO and International Cooperation Centre, *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives*, p. 12-38.

[33] Bekemans, "Educational Challenges and Perspectives in Multiculturalism vs. Interculturalism," p. 4.

[34] ITC Data and Statistics Division, *Facts and Figures*, technical report (Switzerland: Geneva: Telecommunication Development Bureau, 2017).

[35] UNESCO, *Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good?*, p. 22.

[36] Ibid., p. 23.

[37] Guido Gili and Giovanni Maddalena, "Post-truth and Fake News: Origins, Current Meanings, Unexpected Protagonists and Probable Victims," [accessed 06/07/2018], 2018, p. 8-9, http://riviste.erickson.it/med.

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[38]David Buckingham, "Beyond Technology. Rethinking Learning in the Age of Digital Culture," [accessed 12/07/2018], 2008, p. 2, `https://ddbuckingham.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/beyond-technology.pdf`.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid., p. 5.

[41]Ibid.

[42]García-Pernía, Maria Ruth, et al., "Young People, Media Literacies and Mobile Devices: An Ethnographic Study," [accessed 12/07/2018], 2006, p. 344, `http://riviste.erickson.it/med`.

[43]*Interview with David Buckingham in Lucca (Italy)*, Interview in English (July 5, 2018).

[44]Buckingham has investigated the economic dimension of media and how to teach students the economic forces behind the media industry. See ibid., (Question 2).

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Gili and Maddalena, "Post-truth and Fake News: Origins, Current Meanings, Unexpected Protagonists and Probable Victims," p. 13.

[48]Ibid., p. 14.

[49]Ibid.

[50]*Message of the Holy Father Francis for the 52nd World Communications Day*, 2018, January, 24th.

Chapter III

The paradigm of Educommunication

Introduction

The role and aims that education needs to pursue in the Era of Information inevitably have important practical implications for the definition of pedagogies as well as of the role of teachers in the process of learning. Getting to the heart of this Thesis, Chapter III continues the discussion introduced in Chapter II and recommends *Educommunication* as a concrete trajectory of citizenship-building and social transformation that recognizes the inevitable converging relation between education and communication. The paradigm of *Educommunication* is considered suitable for promoting everyone's opportunity and capacity to participate in society and to transform it by improving the quality of human relations.

The first section of this Chapter briefly discusses the interrelation between education and communication understood in Latin American countries according to their historical and social circumstances experienced throughout the years.

The second section offers an analysis of the academic research conducted between 1996 and 1999 by the Communication and Education Center (University of San Paulo) and the Department of Social Communication (University

of Salvador) in Brazil, whose results led to the emergence of *Educommunication* as a new field of social intervention in the education-communication interface. The research has been extremely relevant since it systematized many isolated practices of Latin American social movements under a comprehensive field of knowledge.

In order to contextualize the Latin American approach to the interrelation between education and communication, the third section investigates the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire, a humanist and militant educator and philosopher of education who devoted his entire life for building an open and democratic society. The Freirian conception of education as a social and political act recognizes the humanistic traits of *Educommunication* arguing for the need to support a nonviolent fight towards the continuous transformation of the world.

The fourth section is divided into three sub-sections and scrutinizes *Educommunication* in order to understand its fields of actions and main peculiarities contextualized in the Era of Information. In particular, a focus is made on the concept of *communication management* that is the foundation for free expression and participation since it includes everyone, adolescents too, in the planning, execution and evaluation of all activities, programmes and projects that are developed in the relationship between education and communication. By giving individuals the opportunity and competences to manage processes and become cultural producers, *Educommunication* distinguishes itself from other approaches towards education and communication such as *Media Education*. Subsequently, also the role of new technologies in *Educommunication* is investigated by stressing the idea that it is not the domination of technologies, but rather the domination of the way to use them which is fundamental in *Educommunication*.

In conclusion, the fifth section describes the approaches to be adopted by everyone ready and willing to join the educommunicative paradigm. In order to offer concrete examples, this Thesis refers to the practice of Viração, a Brazilian non-governmental organization working since 2003 with

adolescents through the paradigm of *Educommunication*, and to the personal experience of its founder and executive director Paulo Lima.

1 Education and communication in Latin America: a historical note

The relation between education and communication has always been very complex. Depending on each country's priorities and needs as well as on its social circumstances and preferences, many different approaches for the integration of the two fields have been developed throughout the years. For example, in Brazil during the 1920s communication started to be seen as a potential means for spreading education to the poorer segments of the population. Such moral conception of education was shared by the anthropologist Edgar Roquette-Pinto who, envisioning the radio potential for educational uses, convinced the federal government to purchase the necessary equipment for installing *Rádio Sociedade do Rio de Janeiro* (PRA-2), the first radio broadcaster of the whole country. Through the waves of the radio, many Brazilians had, for the first time, the chance to access directly from home different forms of educational and cultural products.[1]

Later on, another perspective on communication systems emerged. Especially with the spread of programs exploring violence by the means of mass communication, people started to worry about the negative influences of media especially on children. In this context, education was seen as fundamental to defend individuals from certain forms of communication.[2] For this reasons, many workshops called *"Leitura crítica de los medios"* were organized in Brazil with the aim of training the ability to understand and question information delivered by the various means of communication. However, both the moral and the defensive visions did not lead to any integration between education and communication since one was only about appropriation of technology, while the other about acquisition of critical sense.

Simultaneously, though, it was noted that, unlike formal education, popular and social movements in Latin America were able to better integrate education with communication. Already in the 1970s, during the fight for human rights, and particularly for the right to communication and freedom of expression, many initiatives organized by popular educators and activists of the so-called *"alternative communication"*, led to mobilization and involvement of adults in social discussions about poverty, gender, ethnic diversity, indigenous people, etc.[3] In those years marked by military dictatorships, the use of communication at grassroots level was deeply characterized by the experience of colonization both in historical and cultural terms. In this regard, many communication experiences focused not only on the critical reading of media, but especially on the production of contents, emphasizing local particularities in order to face the diffusion of Western cultural models, especially coming from Northern America.[4] In addition, since Latin American countries were deeply afflicted by internal social and economic disparities, education to communication was seen by the poorest as an opportunity to claim their human right to communication and, consequently, to combat exclusion and achieve social transformation. In this sense, the Latin American movement for communication in education was fueled by strong political and social reasons.[5]

Later in time, the Latin American social and political claims started to be recognized by the international community. In this regard, in 1980, UNESCO delivered *Many Voices One World*, also known as the *"MacBride Report"*, which revealed that, generally, communication flows tended to favor developed countries. Among the other problems, the report identified as major concerns the concentration and commercialization of media as well as the unequal access to information and communication. Therefore, the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems suggested a *"New World Information and Communication Order"* to further peace and human development and, thus, guarantee democratization of communication and the strengthening of national media. While the MacBride Report had strong

international support, it was condemned by the United Kingdom and the United States as an attack on the freedom of the press. These reasons led to the temporary withdrawal of both countries from UNESCO respectively in 1984 and 1985.

The necessity to address education in relation to media was also supported through the promotion by UNESCO of four *Trainings on Education to Televisions* across the Latin American continent, precisely in Santiago (1984), Curitiba (1986), Buenos Aires (1988) and Las Vertientes (1990).[6] The meetings contributed to the affirmation of a common desire to share and systematize the multiplicity of practices in the fields of education and communication. Furthermore, these experiences were replicated and consolidated at the international level with two international conferences on education and communication organized in May 1998 in San Paulo and in October 1999 in Bogotà.[7]

In the specific case of Brazil, a gradual interest to investigate more in the education-communication interface emerged at the University of San Paulo. Having acknowledged the presence of many, but secondary and peripheral practices combining education with communication, the Communication and Education Center at the University of San Paulo (NCE-USP) committed to identify and systematize the multiplicity of thoughts about the interrelation between the two fields of knowledge.[8] Although it was not an easy task, the NCE-USP eventually detected a point of convergence of the many Latin American experiences and named it as *Educommunication*.[9]

2 The emergence of Educommunication as an independent field

The affirmation of *Educommunication* as an independent field was the conclusion of the three-year research project *Comunicação/educação emergência de um novo campo e o perfil de seus profissionais* developed between 1996

and 1999 by the Communication and Education Center at the University of San Paulo (NCE-USP) under the direction of Professor Ismar de Oliveira Soares in partnership with the Department of Social Communication of the University of Salvador.[10] The methodology used for the academic research included, first of all, an exploratory questionnaire submitted to a sample of people belonging to the *Diretório Latino-americano de Pesquisadores e Especialistas em Comunicação e Educação*, namely a group of specialists in the field of education and communication created during the 1980s and 1990s and including around 1.200 names among cultural producers, art educators, technologists, teachers, researchers and professionals from all over Latin America. Specifically, the research sample was formed by 178 experts.[11] Moreover, during the three-year project additional information was gathered from 25 in-depth interviews directed at researchers and professionals as well as from workshops and seminars. Particularly relevant for the research were two international congresses on education and communication promoted by the NCE-USP in May 1998, namely the *World Meeting on Media Education* and the *International Congress of Communication and Education*.[12]

The research started from the evidence that deep transformations in the contemporary society were taking place, especially in the field of human sciences. That situation led to a renovation of the educational methodologies and approaches. Moreover, it was acknowledged that after the first experiences promoted by social movements, also national institutions (such as the Ministry of Education) and international agencies (like IBRD, UNESCO and the World Bank) were starting to recognize the discourse on the interrelation between education and communication. Additionally, universities were accompanying the discussion and promoting research groups, training and specialization courses. Eventually, the concern to identify and describe the interrelation between education and communication as an autonomous field of social intervention and academic research was shared by the absolute majority of respondents, and particularly advocated by those involved in postgraduate projects, such as communicators, educators or cultural agents

seeking to deepen and specialize in the new field.[13]

Thus, after three years of investigation, the NCE-USP research identified in the concept of *Educommunication* a new field of social intervention emerged in the interface between education and communication. The term, which already existed but had a different connotation, was not randomly chosen. As explained by Soares:

> *"We took the concept of Educommunication that already existed, but was [. . .] more a synonym for critical reading and was little used in Latin America and even in the whole world. [. . .] In Brazil and Latin America, we advocated that we needed a unique word, because the term "Educação para a Comunicação" would have made education prevailing over communication: it would have meant education looking at communication. And with "Comunicação Educativa" there would have been a predominance of communication, namely communication looking at education. Double words are sentences, not concepts. Understanding would have been difficult. So, we have appropriated a word that already existed and we have "re-semantized" it, to identify Educommunication with this Latin American movement".[14]*

In any case, though, *Educommunication* was not conceived as a separate discipline to be added in school curriculum, but rather as:

> *"[A] new procedural, inter-discursive and trans-disciplinary paradigm being experienced in the practice of social actors through concrete areas of social intervention".[15]*

In other words, *Educommunication* was not described as a limited field of knowledge, but rather as a paradigm based on a variety of transdisciplinary concepts and on analytical categories transversal to many fields of knowledge.[16]

3 Paulo Freire's pedagogical contributions to Educommunication

An in-depth analysis of the main characteristics of *Educommunication* needs to start with a brief review of the main pedagogical concepts inspiring the practices of many popular organizations working in the field of education and communication in Latin America during the 1970s. Actually, *Educommunication* brings as pioneers of its theoretical framework many personalities such as the Polish educator and doctor Janusz Korczak, the French pedagogue Celestin Freinet, the naturalized Columbian specialist in culture and media Jesús Martín-Berbero, the Argentinean scholar on communication and education Mário Kaplún and, last but not least, the Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire. It is exactly on Freire that this Thesis aims to focus, given the revolutionary nature of his pedagogical reflections about the need to ground the processes of teaching and learning on the recognition of everyone's equal dignity and rights. His approach to education as a political reading of reality and a liberating practice inspired the emergence of the empowering and human rights-sensitive traits of *Educommunication*.

Born in 1921 to a middle-class family in the Northeastern part of Brazil in Recife, Paulo Reglus Neves Freire had first-hand experience of poverty and hunger especially during the Great Depression of the 1930s. As an adolescent, he lost his father, had to abandon his studies for some years and started the *"ginásio"* (high school) at the age of sixteen rather than eleven or twelve. Freire's relation with the school was at the beginning very difficult due to his social status and his older age in relation to his classmates:

> *"I wanted very much to study, but I couldn't as our economic condition didn't allow me to. I tried to read or pay attention in the classroom, but I didn't understand anything because of my hunger. I wasn't dumb. It wasn't lack of interest. My social condition didn't allow me to have an education. Experience showed me once again the relationship between social class and knowledge".*[17]

Especially some of his childhood experiences, such as going to school and playing soccer with other poor children, influenced his thoughts about education, and pushed Freire to dedicate his entire life at improving the social conditions of the 15 million Brazilian illiterates in a way that could guarantee them access to *"liberating"* education. In the early 1940s, he enrolled at the University of Recife and then, his personal career as educator started to flourish. Freire developed the *Método de Alfabetização*, an alternative pedagogical methodology directed at adults from the working classes, and started to experiment it at the beginning of the 1960s in the State Rio Grande do Norte.

The ambitious alphabetization project carried out by the militant educator led to excellent results because, by starting from the ordinary life situations of poverty, unemployment, hunger and diseases, it stimulated the problematization of reality and, thus, the development of people' awareness of their problems and of possible solutions. Therefore, the method assumed a political and social meaning because it taught the reasons for poverty and the causes of illiteracy that were substantially linked to economic and political motivations.

Considered as *"too revolutionary"*, the method was criticized by the élite and in 1964, following a military coup, Freire was imprisoned for 70 days. In addition, accused of *"subversion and ignorance"*, the man was sent to exile in Bolivia and Chile until 1969 and, then, in the US and Switzerland from which he returned home only in 1980.[18] Nevertheless, Freire turned his exile from Brazil into an opportunity to experience his pedagogy in other contexts, to evaluate it in practice and to systematize it theoretically.

Among other things, by serving as counselor in the educational reform of Guinea-Bissau in the 1970s, Freire had the chance to approach the theories and practices of Amilcar Cabral. That encounter radicalized Freire's thoughts by keeping his humanist pedagogy, but with a better understanding of the dehumanizing dimension of the economic system.[19] As noted by Moacir Gadotti, Director of the Institute Paulo Freire in San Paulo, Freire's experience

in rural and urban peripheries of African countries helped him to develop a new theory of *"emancipatory education"* which become even more holistic and open to cultural diversities:

> *"Emancipation means "take your hands"; to emancipate means freeing yourself. There are several conceptions of education. It can be both liberating when domesticating. What we stand for as a conception of education is an emancipatory conception of the human being. All human beings have the right to fully develop all their abilities. Everyone is entitled to an "emancipatory education". This is one of the lessons we can draw from this memorable meeting between Freire's pedagogy and the political praxis of Amilcar Cabral, whatever the new contexts".*[20]

Therefore, irrespective of his exile, the pedagogy of Freire permeated around the Latin American continent as well as in Africa and in Europe. Many of his books were translated into different languages and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, probably his major work written in 1968 and published in 1970, came to be considered one of the most significant contribution to the pedagogy of the XX century.[21]

Undoubtedly, Freire's ideologies both created enthusiasm and controversies. For instance, the Brazilian educator continued to be described as subversive for his political conception of education and his ideological position on the side of the excluded and subordinated people. Critiques on his thoughts did not only come from politics, but also from scholarship[22] that contested the way in which Freire built some of his main considerations.[23]

In Freire's critical pedagogy, education is a political act, an act of knowledge and a creative act. Moreover, education aims at humanization, being a permanent vocation of individuals, who are aware of their imperfections and are in a permanent effort for the purpose of *"being"*, i.e. seeking at humanizing themselves. Moreover, education as a humanizing practice sees each individual as someone who learns by teaching and who teaches by learning.[24]

Such approach opposes the *"banking model"* of education, very much criticized by Freire as an instrument of oppression, impeding self-development because presupposing vertical power relations between the teacher as the knowing subject, and students, as objects of the learning process. Following the *"banking model"* of education, it is indeed the teacher as the subject of the learning process who teaches, knows, thinks, talks, disciplines his students, chooses and imposes his choices, acts, decides the program content and asserts his authority. On the other hand, students are objects who are taught, know nothing, listen meekly, are disciplined, obey, have the illusion of acting and adapt to the teacher's choices.[25]

This conception of education hinders authentic thinking since it pushes people to adjust to the world rather than to reinvent it. Indeed, this approach conceives reality as something static, immutable and detached from the students' experience undermining the creative power of individuals. By strongly supporting the necessity to trust in the oppressed and in their ability to reason and act, Freire introduces the *"problem-posing"* concept of education as an instrument for liberation. According to his view, *"problem-posing"* education should be seen as a mutual process of teaching and learning grounded on dialogue as part of the true nature of human beings:

> *"Through dialogue, the "teacher-of-the-students" and the "students-of-the-teacher" cease to exist and a new term emerges: "teacher-student with students-teachers". The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. In this process, arguments based on "authority" are no longer valid; in order to function, authority must be on the side of freedom, not against it. Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. People teach each other, mediated by the world".[26]*

Therefore, in order to stop human domination over other humans, education needs to be based on dialogue among equals and on the continuous

questioning of the world to shape new knowledge. According to Freire, dialogue needs to be understood as a *"thinking together"* which is not a negotiation between parties, but rather a process of sharing, innovating, creating new meanings through joint effort.[27] As a consequence, communication is inevitably needed in education, or better it is the reason for the existence of education since: *"without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education"*.[28] Freire's views on the interface between education and communication inspired a dialogical perspective to the use of several communication media and to the need of reframing education from the perspective of communication processes that are inherent to teaching and learning.

In addition, the Freire's conception of dialogue as an equal dialectical relationship between subjects supports not only everyone's right to expression, but consequently everyone's right to action. In this regard, Freire criticized the traditional education methodologies which undermine the essence of dialogue, namely the meaning of the language, because they separate reflection from action. On the contrary, a critical pedagogy should break the *"culture of silence"* to favor the emergence of new meanings and the transformation of the world with the contribution of everyone:

> *"Human existence cannot be Silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men and women transform the world. To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. [...] But while to say the true word - which is work, which is praxis - is to transform the world, saying that word is not the privilege of some few persons, but the right of everyone"*.[29]

Eventually, the educational process towards the transformation of the world needs to start from an analysis of the daily reality of the subjects involved in the process, so that they will able to understand the situations of their daily life and, consequently, build knowledge. The fundamental concepts embodied into Freire's pedagogical thought affirming human equal

right to expression and action promotes the transformative potential of individuals as the starting point for the critical analysis of the world and, thus, the beginning of the world's transformation. The need to strive toward systematic change as advocated by Freire is replicated by *Educommunication* as its major objective.

4 An analysis of Educommunication

4.1 Areas of intervention in the education-communication interface

As affirmed by Soares:

"throughout the world this practice [of Educommunication] existed, but was peripheral. What we did was to say that it was not peripheral, but already existed in the everyday practices of society, that it was a paradigm supporting actions and that these actions were present in many places and transformed society".[30]

Precisely, indeed, many activities in the interface between education and communication already recognized two basic assumptions that were later proclaimed by *Educommunication* in an official way. First, education is only possible if conceived as a *"communicative action"* given that communication is present in all forms of human development. Second, all forms of communication, namely both symbolic production and exchange or transmission of information and opinions, are in themselves *"teaching activities"*.

Technically, *Educommunication* gathers together under a comprehensive perspective different fields of social intervention, each of them dealing both with education and communication.[31] As it was concluded by the NCE-USP research project, the paradigm combines:

- *Educação para a comunicação* (education oriented to communication), including reflections on the communication process and on the edu-

cational programmes about critical reading of media. Such area includes different approaches ranging from more defensive and moralistic projects to programs aimed at the appropriation of the means and languages of communication by children and adolescents.

- *Mediação tecnologica na educação* (technological mediation in education), comprising procedures and reflections on the influence of information technologies on people's life and on their multiple uses in educational contexts, both for presence and distance learning.

- *Reflexão epistemológica* (epistemological reflection), corresponding to the set of studies, theoretical background and research on the nature of the phenomenon constituted by the interrelation between communication and education. Such area aims at guaranteeing the legitimacy and consistency of the practices of *Educommunication*, allowing them also to evolve.

- *Gestão comunicativa* (education-oriented and technology-mediated communication management), designating all actions directed to the planning, execution and evaluation of social intervention plans, programs and projects in the interface between communication, culture and education and creating communicative ecosystems based on the principle of communicative action and dialogue. It is this area which characterizes *Educommunication* from other approaches that relate education with communication.

Nevertheless, the four fields identified by the academic research were not understood as fixed and exclusive, but as a first synthesis of the various possible actions within the interrelation between education and communication.[32] In this regard, research on *Educommunication* in the past 20 years has described at least three other new areas of intervention including *"communicative expression through the arts"*, *"pedagogy of communication"* and *"media production"*.[33] This shows the paradigm openness in receiving new contributions which expand the varieties of citizenship practices. Moreover, after

the NCE-USP academic project, hundreds of studies on *Educommunication* were carried out to highlight lots of practices within the above referred fields. This Thesis seeks to provide a fresh contribution to the studies on *Educommunication* by analyzing in Chapter IV an Educommunication-based project organized in 9 European countries that is producing positive results in terms of youth participation despite the different geographical and social context in which it is implemented.

4.2   Communication management as foundation for free expression and participation

As analyzed in the previous sections, the emergence of *Educommunication* was inspired by philosophical theories and popular practices emerged during the fight for human rights and having as major priority the humanization of society, namely its transformation in a way that would have fulfilled everyone's right to communication. Exactly for this reason, *Educommunication* is a powerful paradigm which is ready to mobilize the whole society for the sake of promoting the right to expression, consolidating opportunities for participation and realizing the right to citizenship.

In order to change the model of society, *Educommunication* faces a pedagogical challenge: moving from media education based essentially on the critical analysis of messages and communication means to the necessity of enabling everyone, youngsters included, to communication *tout court*. Such shift in approach is realized by providing democratic opportunities for communication management within each *communicative ecosystem*.

In this regard, Jesús Martín-Berbero, Colombian theorist on communication and media, has defined *communicative ecosystems* as educative spaces for human relations and social identification where everything is intertwined, as it happens in the natural ecosystem. As a result, in such spaces, where the economic sphere is not anymore independent from the cultural one, communication takes a double meaning: on one side, it is a production tool, on

the other a privileged space to assert personal identity and cultural differences.[34] Therefore, *communicative ecosystems* represent great opportunities for self-development and cultural identification.

Nevertheless, every sort of *communicative ecosystem* involved both in formal and non-formal education and, thus, ranging from the school to the community, the cultural center and the family, requires clear management of communication processes. Such management, what Soares defines as *gestão comunicativa*, does not assume so much an economic connotation, but rather concerns all the actions aimed at planning, executing and evaluating plans, programs and projects that have an educational or cultural aim and are relative to the use of resources, technologies and means of information. Therefore, such management addresses the roles and relations of power within the ecosystem.[35]

What *Educommunication* advocates is a specific type of *communication management*, namely an open, democratic and participatory management of communication flows. In this regard, media consumers become also agents of the media's creation because they are empowered to participate in information production. Consequently, not only is the human being highlighted, but especially the whole communication process which becomes accessible to the bottom.

Therefore, by replicating Freire's dialogic approach towards teaching and learning, *Educommunication* becomes an alternative to the unidirectional flows of information imposed top-down because it promotes horizontal relations where everyone is involved in the flow of information as a *homo comunicacionalis*.[36] In this sense, communication management is understood as giving individuals, first, the opportunity and, second, the capacity to freely express opinions and values, and produce accordingly culture. Indeed, beyond promoting critical understanding on how communication works, it is fundamental for *Educommunication* to create concrete spaces for the exercise of autonomy and power in the society, spaces that welcome everyone, youngsters included, as active agents for social transformation.

In short, by promoting open, democratic and participatory *communication management* that balances and harmonizes interpersonal relations among the whole process of learning, communication loses its importance as a product, and rather acquires a deeper meaning: communication becomes a process through which individuals empower themselves, dialogue, share, debate differences and respect each other. In other words, *communication management* enables individuals to approach the world in a more humanistic perspective and, consequently, to change the model of society in which they are acting.

In many European countries, Italy included, the approach towards education and communication has been formulated on the notion of *Media Education* rather than on *Educommunication*. By comparing these two fields of knowledge, Bruni has confirmed that *Educommunication* constitutes an official stance on pedagogy which needs to be a liberating and dialogic practice.[37]

In this sense, Paulo Freire's thoughts permeate the reflection of this point. Indeed, while in *Media Education* there are different implicit theories on the function of education and media, in *Educommunication* the beginning and end of the story is based on the Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, namely in the utmost need to break the hierarchical dichotomy between teacher and student and to favor democratic participation of every individual.[38] Therefore, *Educommunication* striving to dialogue and democracy reaffirms and reinforces the revolution started by grassroots movements during the fight for human rights. It is a revolution that speaks of people and their rights and imagines a not only revised models of education and communication, but especially a new type of society based on the respect for the equal inherent dignity and rights of every human being.

Thus, a big difference can be traced between the researchers and professionals of the two fields: media educators focus especially on the presence of information technology and media in society and in educational practices. On the other hand, in addition to the critical reception of media, educommunicators are concerned with the very management of the communicative processes in the service of the construction of learning on citizen practices.[39]

The unique power embedded in the paradigm of *Educommunication* was for the first time actualized with the project *Educom.radio* implemented in 2001 in the Municipality of San Paulo in collaboration with the Secretary of Education of the municipality and the Communication and Education Center at the University of San Paulo. As part of the *Projeto Vida* of the local administration, *Educom.radio* was implemented in 450 primary and secondary schools to face the problem of youth violence in the cities and to improve the teacher-student relation within the school. The idea was to create educational radios where both students and teachers would have worked together to produce communication products. In an interview with Soares, he affirmed:

> *"The goal was not technological [. . .] Educommunication was seen as possibly able to reduce violence in schools. We brought the soul and the heart of the non-formal education into formal education, we brought at school popular and social movements. We said we were not giving a course "for" teachers, but we wanted to work "with" the community, everybody: students, teachers and community members all "together"; [. . .] we managed to break the school structure and bring within the same school a sort of mobilization that is typical of social movements: a freer attitude and the questioning of human relations in communication. When we met with teachers, we discussed about the reasons they were together and how they could produce communication together. We taught children to do radio, and then they themselves taught to their teachers".*[40]

The project was the first of many successes in increasing awareness of the importance of the education-communication interrelation and of the concrete effects of *Educommunication* within the school environment. *Educom.radio* provided concrete free spaces for expression and communication and improved human relations. Young people, especially the most marginalized, grew in self-esteem because had the opportunity to be valued and to ap-

pear interesting to others. The project today is still going on in the Municipality of San Paulo as well as in other Brazilian regions with many other Educommunication-based projects implemented both at the formal and informal level having the objective to realize children's right to participation.

Educommunication, defined by Soares as a universal utopia that motivates people to understand themselves as producers of culture, recognizes the importance of participation in society and the need to seize the means of communication as well as the right to do so.[41] Such powerful paradigm, recognizing the central role of the individual and his or her capacity to influence the community in which he or she lives, represents, then, a practical realization of the main objectives of the humanistic vision of education presented in Chapter II.

4.3 The reaction of Educommunication to digital technologies

In the Era of Information, digital resources have quickly become objects of interest for the interrelated education-communication field. Indeed, when employed in educative performance, technologies modify and recondition *Educommunication* by enlarging the spectrum of opportunities for the realization of freedom of expression and participation. As Soares has remarked:

> *"It is precisely in this area, where pedagogic and technical conditions*
> *are ensured for the development of teacher and student expression, that*
> *Media Education and Educational Technology meet, forming, alongside*
> *Art and the suppositions that govern Education for Citizenship, a new*
> *field of educational experience, or educommunicational experience"*.[42]

Therefore, technologies represent new means to achieve educational aims which can bring added value to the learning process by enlarging the students' and teachers' chances to express themselves and, thus, facilitate the process of citizenship-building. Nevertheless, in the Era of Information

technologies have led both to positive and negative consequences. For example, as argued in Chapter II, the proliferation of fake news through social networks is leading to negative experiences of hatred, intolerance and violence. In this regard, it has been argued that schools or other educational institutions could provide spaces to train critical thinking, i.e. the ability to analyze and discuss the information society.

However, with the proposal of *Educommunication*, this Thesis wants to go deeper in the discussion by claiming that an adequate incorporation of technology in pedagogic projects is meaningful if it increases the chances for youngsters' mobilization toward social change. As argued in the previous section, in order to achieve the aim of social transformation through technologies, it is fundamental for *Educommunication* to promote an adequate management of information resources in the educative space. Thus, according to Soares and Viana:

> *"Educommunication does not ask about the reality of the equipment installed in schools or even about the type of training that should be provided to teachers and students - this is already part of the ideology presiding over modernization of education - but, essentially, how parents, teachers, and students should transform Internet resources into instruments that strengthen their relationships to advance the potential solidarity that the group can generate for the benefit of the whole educational community and society in general".*[43]

Consequently, the primary focus for *Educommunication* is not digital technology *per se*, but rather the approach towards its use that could activate an empowerment process for the benefit of all involved subjects. In other words, it is not the domination of technologies, but rather the domination of the way to use them which is important in *Educommunication*. In this regard, Soares has argued that *Educommunication* is not only an education and communication methodology, nor a procedure or an activity for using technology, but is rather the paradigm behind this technology.[44]

Moreover, it is important to recall that, actually, digital technologies are just newer means of communication requiring the same attention and analysis used for more traditional forms of communication. Here again, the idea promoted by *Educommunication* is that only the adoption of a dialogical approach, which includes both educators and adolescents, as well as of a democratic and active management of the information resources can fully exploit the potential of technologies in favoring youth participation.

Hence, the inclusion of technologies in the interrelation between education and communication enlarges the definition of *Educommunication* as including:

> *"[…] sets of actions that are inherent to the planning, implementation and evaluation of processes, programs and products oriented towards developing and strengthening communicative ecosystems within edu-cational or* virtual environment, *as well as towards improving the communicative ratio of educational actions*, including those related to the use of information resources in the learning process".[45]

An example showing youngsters' empowerment towards the development of communicative ecosystems characterized by intense exchanges of opinions and actions mediated by information technologies is *Latanet*, an Educommunication-based project carried out by the non-governmental organization *Oficina de Imagens - Comunicação e Educação* from 2000 in Brazil.[46] *Latanet* aim was to restore the stereotyped images and opinions about some communities of the Brazilian *favelas* by putting groups of children and teenagers in communication, via the Internet. In order to eliminate the myths surrounding the process of image and information production, the project involved youngsters in rethinking their own reality through the production of alternative forms of communication products on the basis of their own perspectives.

By taking pictures and writing texts on their personal experiences in the *favelas*, adolescents had the opportunity to reflect and understand their

social status, investigate and discuss their situation with their family and the community. They could also represent the reality according to their personal feelings and, then, share the new representation with other youngsters through the Internet. Beyond learning technical skills such as taking good pictures, digitalizing and sending them through e-mails, adolescents were given unique chances to rethink reality by learning to question the representations spread by traditional means of communication.

In addition, through the exchange of images with other Brazilian teenagers living in *favelas*, youngsters had the occasion to understand and discuss some social, political and cultural issues present in their country. For the first time, each adolescent actively participated in a network at the community and national level and had the opportunity to develop his or her own reality as an exercise of citizenship.

The exchange of information strengthened this process by valorizing specificities in each groups and promoting the cultural richness of the Brazilian culture.[47] Moreover, the project actively involved teachers in training sessions that led to the creation of the *"Caderno do Educator"*, systematizing Educommunication-based practices like democratic approaches for the production of information, strategies on the use of communication tools to make education more dynamic, activities to promote dialogue and socio-cultural exchanges among students. In 2007, the success of *Latanet* was officially recognized by the Foundation Bank of Brazil with the certification *"Social Technology"*.[48]

As this example shows, *Educommunication* is not only interested in technologies as such. They illustrate a methodology through which social transformation can be achieved if they are managed in an open, participatory and democratic way. This allows *Educommunication* to work and collaborate in every sector. For instance, since 2005, in Brazil the Ministry of Environment is working with the concept of *"socio-environmental Educommunication"* aware of the fact that media and propaganda are not sufficient to mobilize people and promote sustainability. In addition, Brazil is currently exploring for the

first time the use of *Educommunication* to mobilize young people and the society in general in defense of health and, essentially, against disease that come from *aedes egity*.[49]

Although the perspective of *Educommunication* is not hegemonic, it has been officially recognized as having the great potential to motivate individuals to feel part of a community and, thus, to act accordingly as a responsible citizen. Digital technologies have enlarged the opportunities to act at different levels, from the local to the global.

5   The role of the educommunicator through the practice of Viração

As explained by Soares, the emergence of *Educommunication* has clearly outlined the profile of a new figure called *educommunicator*, namely a person who is supposed to add to the teaching competences a complementary view of the world, the *"educommunicative paradigm"*.[50] In order to understand such paradigm in practice, this Thesis refers to Viração, a non-governmental organization founded in 2003 by Paulo Lima in San Paulo (Brazil), which has put into practice the fundamental concepts of *Educommunication*.[51]

Viração was created as a social project of collaborative journalism with the goal of defending the rights of adolescents and youth by including, mobilizing and empowering them as active protagonists in Brazilian society. Through time, Viração become a larger organization counting many projects for youngsters at the local, regional and national level on different issues related to human rights which are implemented through *Educommunication* and peer education. In 2016, the organization founded its international branch with the name Viração&Jangada in Trento (Italy). As described in the website of Viração:

> *"It's important to emphasize that all the work we do is based on the understanding that adolescents are subjects of rights. Therefore, they*

*need to be considered in their unique condition of development, with
specific vulnerabilities and potentialities, acknowledging their cultural,
social and racial diversity".*[52]

Before the systematization of the term *Educommunication* by the NCE-USP
academic research, Viração was one of the many social movements already
experiencing practices in the interface between education and communi-
cation. Paulo Lima, the founder and executive director of Viração, works
with *Educommunication* for more than 30 years both in Brazil and in Italy and
defines the paradigm as:

> *"[. . .] the air we breathe. I mean, is the culture in which we are im-
> mersed, where we have shaped ourselves, where we have also questioned
> ourselves. It is that culture which takes out the best of each of us, that
> culture which makes us being "more" as Paulo Freire taught us. Thus,
> Educommunication requires us to promote social projects that are hu-
> manistic so that people can become "more". Being less means denying
> rights, being more means affirming rights. So from the beginning, we
> have always taken into consideration that what we would have done
> inside or outside the organization should have followed this perspective
> of humanization".*[53]

Therefore, the practical realization of humanistic education through *E-
ducommunication* expects from the educommunicator a change in approach
towards every individual participating directly or indirectly in Educommu-
nication-based activities.

First of all, the educommunicator should become a good mediator of
communication processes. In this regard, mediating means embracing the
Freirian conception of education which completely refuses the traditional
education system based on hierarchical relations of power between the
teacher, as the knowing subject, and students.[54] Teachers must therefore be
re-educated to leave behind the *"knowledge-transmission role"* and embrace an
"inquisitiveness-developer role".[55] In other words, educommunicators should be

ready and willing to revolutionize the school system in a way that encourages horizontal relations between all subjects involved in the learning process and, thus, promotes the questioning of the world and its transformation.

The horizontal dimension of education recognizes teaching and learning as two complementary and indivisible processes in which mediators and students equally assume the role of teachers and learners. The mediator's openness towards learning from youngsters should not however be justified by the idea that young people, now called *"digital natives"*, are plausibly better at teaching new technologies. This understanding would emphasize a concept of media education focused exclusively on technologies. On the contrary, teaching and learning should be seen as mutual processes in order to support and recognize the often underestimated potential of adolescents in transforming society.[56]

In addition, the educommunicator must be open to dialogue, namely should be able to manage both internal and external human relations in a democratic manner. As argued by Freire, although anyone has an innate ability to dialogue, it is also true that without dialogue there is no humanity or progress.[57] Therefore, it is essential to experiment interaction every day. Dialogue among equals means recognizing to everyone the same power as well as the same opportunities to access information. Moreover, dialogue ought to be understood as a process of *"thinking together"* where hostility and passive listening are not contemplated. Therefore, the educommunicator is called to manage human relations in every sort of situation with a dialogic perspective. As explained by Lima:

> *"[Dialogue] means that a doctor in human rights or a janitor can be equally educommunicators and both must dialogue on equal terms. It is possible to dialogue on equal terms with everyone: whether the person is a manager, a student or a guy participating in a education project in a favela. We must not feel less than the manager, and not feel more than a student or a boy from the favela".*[58]

Consequently, the encounter with others guides learners to question their own beliefs and compare their assumptions with new ones. In addition, a reflective approach to dialogue support self-development and empowerment and leads to *"emancipatory education"*. In promoting the emergence of critical consciousness through education, Freire exactly stated that: *"at the point of encounter there are neither utter ignoramuses nor perfect sages; there are only people who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know"*.[59]

A democratic management of processes and communication resources must therefore provide for shared responsibilities. Consequently, this sharing leads to self-emancipation because each individual is accountable for a small part in the entire process. For this reason, the educommunicator ought to recognize everyone's right to participate, to become autonomous and responsible and, thus, to take responsibility and actions. Viração has been the first non-governmental organization officially opening a job position by clearly writing as a professional category *"educommunicator"*. As Lima has explained, everyone can have the chance to act as an educommunicator:

> *"At Viração we have the educommunicator-cleaning lady, the edu-communicator-journalist, the educommunicator-marketing professional because, first, they all have breathed the air of Educommunication that the organization tries to live in its daily life in its relationships; and then, they have also learnt methodologies that help them to recreate a participatory, democratic and open environment and to manage processes democratically. And processes can be those consisting in taking the decision to buy cups, or coffee. Thus, the cleaning lady learns to handle the decision in a democratic way. [. . .] [T]he intern in Viração can make decisions without me, the executive director, or the coordinator having to say what and how to do things. [. . .] The concept of emancipation in education is fundamental: if the educommunicator does not have a conception of "emancipatory education", he or she will not be able to help others to empower themselves".*[60]

Thus, without doubts the educommunicator is conceived within this approach a fundamental figure and a mediator of processes who does not know more than others and does not impose teachings, but is rather ready to accept new assumptions and prepared to transform his or her practices.

Consequently, the educommunicator needs to support the communicative processes that unfold within the communicative ecosystems with a flexible and open approach. After 15 years of work, Viração has not a specific receipt on how to implement *Educommunication*: *"Based on our principles and values, our actions are endowed with creativity and openness, because if we arrive with an already-established idea, we are not offering spaces for adolescents to really participate"*.[61] Openness to participation needs to occur at all stages, namely from the planning to the evaluation of activities. This is, for example, why Viração gives adolescents the opportunity to adjust projects on the basis of their own ideas and interests:

> *"For example, at Viração when we write a project, we do it for 70% while the remaining 30% is left for "life" - we say. We tell youngsters that we want to recreate the project with them. And so, we re-think part of the project based on what is interesting to them. In this way, adolescents feel motivated and start thinking about peer-to-peer activities or new themes. The pedagogy of the project we use a lot is this: let's do it together"*.[62]

Beyond avoiding the paternalistic perspective which sees the teacher as working *"for"* adolescents, it is important for the educommunicator to adopt an attitude which goes beyond working *"with"* adolescents. As Lima explained, although working *"with"* young people is already a positive approach that seeks at inclusion, it is *"on the basis of youngsters that real systemic change can be reached"*.[63] In other words, it is not enough to work together with adolescents on predetermined subjects, rather it is the work itself that must be based on adolescents, namely on their preferences, desires and fears as well as on the cultural and social context in which they live. For that reason, the educommunicator becomes a sort of *"cultural agent"* who,

indeed, acts as facilitator of others' actions and makes sure that others are given the chance and capacity to elaborate materials starting from their needs and interests, becoming themselves producers of knowledge.

For example, in Brazil, many adolescents coming from the outskirts often feel foreigners in their own cities because they are socially excluded. In order to face this situation, Viração organizes activities within the cities that consist in visits of social and cultural places such as parks, museums and exhibitions that every youngster has the right to know despite his or her economic, cultural and social status.

By supporting a problem-posing version of education, the educommunicator should also recognize the importance the educommunicative process and, in any case, face the endless opportunities for improvement. In this case, then, *"learning by doing"* is an essential approach that the educommunicator should support: as people do, they learn and relate doing to previous learning. This, in turn, opens the mind and revels new perspectives from which to conceive diversity and the world. Moreover, it is by doing that participation can be awakened in practice and by building knowledge in a collective way that people transform their present.[64]

Referring to the Freire's theories about men as beings *"in the process of becoming"*, *Educommunication* focuses more on the process itself than on the final result. Accordingly, the educommunicator should be particularly concerned with the way in which the educommunicative process is managed and thus, needs to favor open, democratic, participatory as well as innovative and creative processes that favor the growth of the self, self-awareness and one's own identity.

In addition, if the primary aim of *Educommunication* is reaching social transformation, it is then essential to start from a participatory perspective that involves each single actor in the society, from the student, to his or her parents, to the school director to the local administrator both within and outside the school. For this reason, *Educommunication* is linked to the concept of *"educational community"* and recognizes the infinite opportunities and

contexts where to learn and teach:

> *"We believe that knowledge is in many places and not just in school, university and books. It is also in the networks, NGOs, institutions, parks, in other spaces of the city and in the life stories of many different citizens. Viração understands that everyone can teach and learn. For example, if you are in a group that wants to take action on the environment, you can arrange a conversation with an environmentalist from your city's environment secretary, or with an NGO working on the matter. The important thing is to be open to spaces, people and opportunities to learn and teach".*[65]

Given the multiplicity of actors in the process towards social transformation, Viração has identified five different approaches to adopt simultaneously in the strive toward systemic change. First of all, systemic change and every Educommunication-based practice and theory needs to start from the individual. *Educommunication*, which presupposes a continuous work on self-development and transformation, first and foremost affects our existence and change our way of being and acting. Thus, this first approach reminds educommunicators as well as learners, to analyze how themselves personally deal with everyday life, dreams, desires and fears and how things affect them and how they affect things. Working on the self is also fundamental because it helps at understanding the importance of human rights and their universal validity. Indeed, the acknowledgement of the true reasons for upholding human rights links the individual with the history of whole humanity.[66]

A second important approach for systemic change is *"the other"*. As noted by Lima *"we only know to be human because the other exists"*.[67] In this sense, the individual cannot live without relationships and more importantly, it is the quality of relationships that affects individuals' well-being. Thus, it is fundamental for the educommunicator to support the creation of opportunities for good coexistence between the individual and *"the other"* given that exchanges always lead to mutual enrichment.

The third approach regards the group. As a peculiarity of Viração, team-work has always been one of the most important methods to implement educommunicative actions.[68] Indeed, collective intelligence and learning are practical realizations of the concept of participatory democracy. Therefore, the educommunicator should stimulate the creation of funny, stronger, friendly and interesting environments where to work in groups with pleasure.

Nevertheless, the group or the organization is not enough to stimulate change. In this regard, the educommunicator should acknowledge and support networking, namely needs to stimulate cooperation between different levels, i.e. the local, regional, national and international level. Although networking involves a lot of political actions, exchanges of information, discussions and compromises, it seems the best solution to achieve comprehensive change. Indeed, networking means starting from local actions that through the network are replicated in other spaces and by other people to achieve a substantial effect.[69]

Eventually, the educommunicator should be aware of the environment where the individual, the other, the group and the network act. Knowing the environment means not only investigating its physical aspects, but also its human elements. Thus, the educommunicator should be conscious of the socio-environmental impacts of his or her actions in the context where he or she is acting.

The elements identified in this section outline a specific view of the world that realizes in practice the true essence of *Educommunication*. As argued here, the educommunicator is not and should not be a specialized teacher in charge of the course on media education at school. The educommunicator is much more: he or she is a person adopting a humanistic perspective, acting in every educational context for the purpose of social transformation and helping at the creation of open, participatory and democratic communication ecosystems. Therefore, everyone ready and willing to join the educommunicative aims and challenges can become an educommunicator.

Moreover, not only is *Educommunication* open to everyone, but it is also applicable to every context being it at the informal, non-formal and informal education level. Speaking about his personal experience as educommunicator both in Brazil and in Italy, Lima confirmed indeed:

> *"Educommunication is not only epistemological coherence for me, it is also a coherence of practice, of life. I use Educommunication wherever I go, in every country because I believe that every education or communication process must lead to emancipation, to true systemic change. And if I believe that Educommunication should lead to systemic change and if I think that systemic change is a universal value, then I cannot conceive the paradigm of Educommunication only for Brazil. I cannot think, "Only Brazil needs systemic change". No: in every reality, in every school, in every company, in every church, in every public administration, in every institution where no participatory, democratic and open ecosystem exists, Educommunication must be practiced".*[70]

Assessment

Chapter III has presented *Educommunication* as a paradigm for the realization of humanistic education and for the promotion of the transformative potential of adolescents as subject of social change. During the fight for human rights, the interrelation between education and communication started to emerge in Latin America as a result of historical, cultural and social issues dealing with colonization and poverty. At that time, many popular educators used communication to spread cultural values and knowledge to the whole population and thus, gradually, a need was felt to investigate more on the interface between education and communication. It is in this context marked by urgent internal issues that *Educommunication* emerged as an new field of social intervention.

Taking into account the historical background, Chapter III has analyzed the three-year research project *Comunicação/educação emergência de um novo*

campo e o perfil de seus profissionais developed by the Communication and Education Center at the University of San Paulo under the direction of Professor Ismar de Oliveira Soares in partnership with the Department of Social Communication of the University of Salvador. The results achieved by the academic research were brilliant because they led to the systematization and, thus, to the official recognition of many educommunicative practices that, until then, had remained scattered and dispersed throughout the Latin American continent.

Chapter III has argued that the humanistic traits of *Educommunication* were inspired by many philosophers and pedagogues, one of them being the Brazilian humanist and militant educator Paulo Freire. Freire devoted his entire life to the fight against oppression through a model of education grounded on the inherent dignity and right of people to express themselves and transform the world. The aims pursued by Freire are also those distinguishing *Educommunication* from other approaches in the fields of education and communication.

In analyzing *Educommunication*, it is very important to understand that this paradigm is not a limited discipline with fixed areas of intervention. Since its emergence, *Educommunication* has been open and ready to enlarge the varieties of citizenship practices within its field. For the purpose of this Thesis, Chapter III has devoted specific attention to the area of *communication management* as the foundation for free expression and participation. Indeed, *Educommunication* support an open, democratic, participatory management of communication processes in order to achieve social transformation. Thus, it is exactly by giving everyone the opportunity and capacity to manage communication processes that *Educommunication* promotes everyone's transformative potential.

Chapter III has also investigated the role of digital technologies in *Educommunication* arguing that technology *per se* is not a primary focus. What is rather very important for *Educommunication* is to understand the way in which technologies can strengthen human relations to increase the chances

for expression and participation. Therefore, the paradigm recognizes the potential of digital technologies provided that they are managed in a open, democratic and participatory way as it should happen for every means of communication.

Eventually, based on the educommunicative practice of the nongovernmental organization Viração working with adolescents both at the national level, in Brazil, and at the international level, Chapter III has outlined the specific vision of the world that every person needs to share for becoming an educommunicator. Shortly, the educommunicator is a humanist, a good mediator of communication process, a person open to dialogue and ready to learn from youngsters simply because recognizing the often underestimated youth potential to transform the world.

The educommunicator has also a conception of *"emancipatory education"* and thus, provides democratic and open spaces for shared responsibilities and effective participation. He or she works *"on the basis of"* adolescents rather than *"with"* them and takes into account the social, economic and political context in which each individual is immersed. Very important is that the educommunicator considers communication more as a process than as a final product and, thus, is ready to frame and re-frame his or her actions on a continuous basis. Eventually, the educommunicator is aware to operate in an wider *"educational community"* where the self, the other, the group, the networks and the environment continuously intersect to eventually reach a systemic social change.

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[1]Maria Célia Giudicissi Rehder, "An Educommunication-based approach for the rights of the child - Responding to the challenge of implementing article 12 of the CRC in Guinea-Bissau" (master's thesis, Università degli Studi di Padova - Human Right Centre & E.MA in Human Rights and Democratisation, 2013), p. 66.

[2]Ismar de Oliveira Soares, "Against Violence: Sensorial Experiences Involving Light

and Sight - Media Education and Educational Technology from a Latin American Point of View," in *Children and Media: Image, Education, Participation - Children and Media Violence, Yearbook from the UNESCO*, ed. Ulla Carlsson Cecilia von Feilitzen (UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children / Violence on the Screen at Nordicom, December 1999), p. 229.

[3]*Interview with Prof. PhD Ismar de Oliveira Soares*, Skype interview in Portuguese, translated to English (July 2018).

[4]Isabella Bruni, "L'Educomunicazione brasiliana sulle onde della radio - Analisi di caso" (master's thesis, Università "La Sapienza" di Roma - Facoltà di Scienze della Comunicazione - Corso di laurea in Teorie della Comunicazione e ricerca applicata - Tesi di laurea in organizzazione e gestione della Media Education, 2009), p. 11.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Centro de Indagación y Expresión Cultural y Artística and UNESCO, *Educación para la comunicación: manual latinoamericano de educación para los medios de comunicación* (Santiago: Chile: CENECA, 1992).

[7]Ismar de Oliveira Soares and Paulo Lima, "Cidadania, razão de ser da Educomunicação, na América Latina" (2017), p. 6.

[8]*Interview with Prof. PhD Ismar de Oliveira Soares.*

[9]The academic research of the NCE-USP did not obtain funding by CAPES, a major research funding in Brazil because conceiving education and communication as two completely distinct fields. The research project was financed by FAPESP, a public research foundation in the State of San Paulo. See: ibid.

[10]Ismar de Oliveira Soares, *Comunicação/educação emergência de um novo campo e o perfil de seus profissionais* (Núcleo de Comunicação e Educação da Universidade de São Paulo NCE-USP, 1998).

[11]Of the total of 178 experts, 67.61% were Brazilian and 32.29% Latin American and Spanish (7.95%from Argentina, 7.39% from Spain, 3.41% from Mexico). A smaller percentage - around 1.70% in each case - was represented by Latin American residents in countries such as Venezuela, Uruguay, Cuba, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Paraguay, Israel, France and Italy. See: ibid.

[12]Ibid., p. 3.

[13]Ibid., p. 4.

[14]*Interview with Prof. PhD Ismar de Oliveira Soares.*

[15]de Oliveira Soares, *Comunicação/educação emergência de um novo campo e o perfil de seus profissionais.*

[16]Ibid., p. 5.

[17]Moacir Gadotti, *Reading Paulo Freire His Life and Work* (US: State University of New York Press, 1994), p. 23.

[18]Ibid., p. 24.

[19]Amilcar Cabral (1924-1973) was a Bissau-Guinean and Cape Verdean leader of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde who brought Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde islands to independence from Portugal. He was assassinated about eight months before Guinea-Bissau's declaration of independence. He is remembered for his extraordinary leadership and enduring contribution to the fight against colonial oppression and apartheid and for freedom and unity of the African continent. See: Giudicissi Rehder, "An Educommunication-based approach for the rights of the child - Responding to the challenge of implementing article 12 of the CRC in Guinea-Bissau," p. 76-77.

[20]Moacir Gadotti, "Il messaggio di Paulo Freire - Dieci punti per una riflessione," in *Verso il III Forum Internazionale Paulo Freire - Re-inventando un messaggio* (Milano: Centro Sociale Ambrosiano, Coordinamento Nazionale Comunità di Accoglienza, May 2002), p. 6.

[21]Freire, *La Pedagogia degli Oppressi*, p. 7-8.

[22]For instance, the scholarship criticized the concept of *conscientização* (critical consciousness or conscientization), the use of the world *povo* (the people) rather than *classe social* (social class), the insufficient explication and characterization in sociological terms of the distinction between *oprimido* (oppressed) and *opressoras* (oppressors). See: ibid., p. 11.

[23]In a debate with Jean Piaget in Geneva, Freire differentiated the conception of *"awareness"* of Piaget from his notion of *"conscientization"*. According to Freire, Piaget's approach was exclusively dealing with intellect and, thus, was different from his idea of *"conscientization"* as a deeper consciousness which cannot separate the cognitive element from the emotional, the social and the political ones. See: Gadotti, "Il messaggio di Paulo Freire - Dieci punti per una riflessione," p. 6.

[24]Paulo Lima, "As contribuições da filosofia educacional de Paulo Freire para a educomunicação" (2011), p. 3.

[25]Freire, *La Pedagogia degli Oppressi*, p. 59-60.

[26]Ibid., p. 69.

[27]Ismar de Oliveira Soares and Luci Ferraz, "Educommunication and distance education tutoring: managing communication oriented at education, dialogue and critical thinking in distance education," in *Distance Education - Theory and Practice*, vol. 1, 5 (Revista FGV Online, 2015), p. 54.

[28]Freire, *La Pedagogia degli Oppressi*, p. 83.

[29]Ibid., p. 78.

[30]*Interview with Prof. PhD Ismar de Oliveira Soares*.

[31]de Oliveira Soares, *Comunicação/educação emergência de um novo campo e o perfil de seus profissionais*.

[32]Ibid., p. 3.

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[33]Throughout the years, *Educommunication* has been enriched with at least three new areas of social intervention: 1. communicative expression through the art (developing social process participants' authorship); 2. pedagogy of communication (dialogue between communicative practices and formal curriculum); 3. media production (dialogue between communication media-initiated projects and education agents or civil society). See: de Oliveira Soares and Ferraz, "Educommunication and distance education tutoring: managing communication oriented at education, dialogue and critical thinking in distance education," p. 46.

[34]In addition, the current interaction of new technologies in the global society is transforming the *communicative ecosystems* into even more vital and interconnected spaces which are reorganizing and reassigning power. See: Ismar de Oliveira Soares, "Educommunication and 21st century - teacher qualification," in *Challenges to teacher qualification in distance education*, vol. 1, 4 (Revista FGV Online, 2014), p. 20.

[35]de Oliveira Soares, *Comunicação/educação emergência de um novo campo e o perfil de seus profissionais*.

[36]de Oliveira Soares, "Educommunication and 21st century - teacher qualification," p. 26.

[37]Bruni, "L'Educomunicazione brasiliana sulle onde della radio - Analisi di caso," p. 30.

[38]Ibid.

[39]*Interview with Prof. PhD Ismar de Oliveira Soares*.

[40]Ibid.

[41]de Oliveira Soares, "Against Violence: Sensorial Experiences Involving Light and Sight - Media Education and Educational Technology from a Latin American Point of View," p. 235.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ismar de Oliveira Soares and Claudemir Edson Viana, "Parents, Children and the Internet: the ICT Kids Online Brazil 2012 Survey from an Educommunication Standpoint," in *ICT Kids Online Brazil 2012 - Survey on Internet Use by Children in Brasil*, ed. Brazilian Network Information Center (Brazilian Internet Steering Committee, 2013), p. 185.

[44]*Interview with Prof. PhD Ismar de Oliveira Soares*.

[45]de Oliveira Soares, "Educommunication and 21st century - teacher qualification," p. 26.

[46]Since 2000, *Oficina de Imagens* is part of the Brazilian Network *ANDI - Communicators for the rights of children and teenagers*, which has the objective to promote the use of communication as a tool to defend children's rights.

[47]de Oliveira Soares, "Against Violence: Sensorial Experiences Involving Light and Sight - Media Education and Educational Technology from a Latin American Point of View," p. 238-239.

[48]Oficina de Imagens - Comunicação e Educação, "Oficina de Imagens: 10 anos de ex-

perimentação e iniciativas no campo da educomunicação," in *Educomunicar - Comunicação, Educação e Participação para uma educação pública de qualidade*, ed. Educação e Participação Rede CEP - Comunicação (Bem TV - UNICEF, 2005), p. 48.

[49]*Interview with Prof. PhD Ismar de Oliveira Soares*.

[50]de Oliveira Soares, "Educommunication and 21st century - teacher qualification," p. 24.

[51]Viração was created in 2003 as a social magazine and then become an organization under the name Viração Educomunicação.

[52]Viração Educomunicação, "Who we are," [accessed 06/08/2018], `http://viracao.org/en/quem-somos/`.

[53]*Interview with Paulo Lima in Trento (Italy)*, Interview in Italian, translated to English (August 2018).

[54]de Oliveira Soares, "Educommunication and 21st century - teacher qualification," p. 17.

[55]Ibid., p. 23.

[56]*Interview with Paulo Lima in Trento (Italy)*.

[57]Gadotti, "Il messaggio di Paulo Freire - Dieci punti per una riflessione," p. 5.

[58]*Interview with Paulo Lima in Trento (Italy)*.

[59]Freire, *La Pedagogia degli Oppressi*, p. 81.

[60]*Interview with Paulo Lima in Trento (Italy)*.

[61]Paulo Lima, "A Educomunicação pelo olhar e prática da Viração" (2013), p. 2.

[62]*Interview with Paulo Lima in Trento (Italy)*.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Lima, "A Educomunicação pelo olhar e prática da Viração," p. 3.

[65]Ibid., p. 4.

[66]Ibid., p. 7.

[67]The original version is in Portuguese: *"Só sabemos sermos da espécie humana porque existe o outro"*. See: ibid., p. 8.

[68]*Interview with Paulo Lima in Trento (Italy)*.

[69]Lima, "A Educomunicação pelo olhar e prática da Viração," p. 9.

[70]*Interview with Paulo Lima in Trento (Italy)*.

Chapter IV

Let's Take Care of the Planet

Introduction

To promote the transformative potential of youngsters, Chapter III introduced the paradigm of *Educommunication* based on an open, democratic and participatory management of processes and striving towards the achievement of a systemic social change. After an in-depth reflection on *Educommunication*, Chapter IV describes a relevant example taken from the experience of Viração&Jangada, the international branch of the Brazilian Association Viração presented in Chapter III, with the aim of illustrating concretely the planning and management of social and environmental activities directed at adolescents.

Specifically, Chapter IV presents *Let's Take Care of the Planet - Europe (LTCP)*, an Educommunication-based project organized in Europe since 2012 and inspired by three National Youth Conferences and one International Children and Youth Conference for the Environment in Brazil that were supported by the Ministry of Education and of the Environment starting from 2003. The main purpose of the project is to mobilize students, teachers and the whole *"educational community"* to promote political actions in the field of human rights education, education for global citizenship and socio-environmental education.

After an historical background of *LTCP* presented in the first section of the

Chapter, the second section analyzes the fundamental structure of the project, namely its objectives, themes, involved actors and Educommunication-based principles.

Successively, Chapter IV describes in detail the multi-level implementation of the project during the school year 2017-2018. Regarding the local and national level, examples are drawn from the Italian experience coordinated by the Association Viração&Jangada in 17 middle and high schools of 7 regions involving more than 1.200 students between 11 and 17 years old. Subsequently, a fourth section outlines the European process culminated in May 2018 with a Youth Conference organized in Lisbon to which Italy participated with six youngsters, one teacher, one researcher, one facilitator and one educommunicator, together with other nine European countries. Eventually, some current initiatives for the dissemination of the project outcomes are presented in section five. The dissemination phase has just begun and will hopefully lead to more consistent results starting from mid-September 2018 with the beginning of the school year.

LTCP is mentioned in this Thesis not only for its relevance in the promotion of youth participation and in the strengthening of global responsible citizenship, but also because it involved me personally in the management of the project both at the national and European level. Working for the Association Viração&Jangada, I had indeed the chance to facilitate both the National and the European Youth Conference. The description of the process is documented with some pictures taken by youngsters and by the team of Viração&Jangada.

1 At the origins: from Let's Take Care of Brazil to Let's Take Care of the Planet - Europe

The origins of the European project *LTCP* are placed in the Brazilian context. In 2003, the Workers' Party candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva became

President of Brazil after winning the second round of elections and defeating with the 61,5 percent of the votes the Social Democracy Party's candidate José Serra. Since the beginning of his political career, President Lula was committed to encouraging grassroots participation in the political process and engaged to fight against social inequalities and to protect the environment. In 2003, his government debated about the launching of a public environmental program to empower Brazilian citizens, and particularly the youth, to take care of their natural resources, one of the biggest national treasures. In that occasion, it is said that an adolescent, who was listening by chance to the discussion, asked statesmen the reason for neglecting youth participation in that political decision. The question was specifically addressed to Marina Silva, appointed with the Lula's election as Minister of the Environment, by her young daughter.[1]

From that moment on, thousands of Brazilian children living in local communities were mobilized to assume individual and collective responsibilities and to adopt practical actions in caring for the environment. All public schools, local communities and homeless children received a handbook called Passo a passo para *Conferència do Meio Ambiente na Escola* by the Organization of the Youth Conference for the Environment as a didactic support to organize and manage a school conference as well as to deepen knowledge about environmental issues.[2] Moreover, three Youth National Conferences for the Environment *Let's Take Care of Brazil*, were organized respectively in 2003, 2006 and 2009 as part of the national environmental education policy. Their objective was to gather together lots of Brazilian adolescents and give them the chance to share their responsibilities and actions for the environment, connect them locally and nationally, recognize and value diversity and achieve sustainability and peace.[3] The whole project was a great success, involving around 21.000 schools and 13,5 million people between 2003 and 2009.[4]

The enormous mobilization movement triggered by the three youth conferences in Brazil supported the principle of participative democracy embed-

ded in many articles of the 1988 Federal Constitution. In the country, social pressures to promote participation had not limited democratic expansion to the electoral process, but rather enabled the creation of public spaces and forced the reconfiguration of relations between the state and civil society. Especially from 2003, the permanent dialogue with the government led to the organization of 67 national conferences in the field of environment, health and youth, as well as to various public policies and actions.[5]

In 2009, after seven years from the First Youth National Conference for the Environment, the Brazilian government wished to share with other countries the great success of the initiative and, thus, offered to all UN Member States the opportunity to collaborate in an international cooperation process. Already in 2006, the Swiss Foundation Charles Leopold Mayer showed its interest in organizing a wider event to congregate adolescents from the whole Planet by offering its financial help.

The official invitation to the international conference, made by the Ministries of Education and of the Environment in partnership with UNDP and UNESCO, was enriched by a short video filmed with the participation of Brazilian youngsters. The video intended not only to motivate the educational institutions, but also and more importantly the adolescents themselves to research on environmental topics, organize school and national conferences, and then elect their representatives for the youth conference in Brazil. In the video, Mariana, Rafael, Erika and Caio, young participants to the 2006 youth national conference, spoke to their international peers:

> *"We learnt that there is only one world and that we are all responsible: all of us and all of you, in this small community that we call "the Earth", lost in the Milky Way. We want to organize a meeting to bring together young people who, like us, want to ensure the survival of this community. That's why we invite you, you and you, so that together we take care of our Planet!".*[6]

In view of the first Youth International Conference, an astounding mo-

bilization process begun in April 2009 with the presence of 70 international observers from 43 countries at the Third National Conference *Let's Take Care of Brazil*.[7] In that occasion, initial commitments were set and the regulation for the international dynamics was collectively constructed. Specifically, the regulation outlined the general and specific objectives of the international conference and defined some important concepts that would guide the entire project, such as the notions of *"responsibility"* and *"action"*. Moreover, it provided instructions about the structure and topics to be dealt with during the national conferences organized by the adherent countries. The regulation focused particularly on the election process of the young delegates and provided, in this regard, some fundamental conditions. The national delegation had to be composed of 2 to 12 representatives aged between 12 and 15. Additionally, delegations should have reflected gender equality. Mandatory good knowledge of English, French, Spanish or Portuguese was agreed for accompanying adults. Eventually, each country was asked to pay special attention in guaranteeing participatory and democratic processes throughout the whole project.[8]

Following these instructions, 62 countries organized school and national conferences during the preparatory year adapting the Brazilian experience to their national context.[9] In Europe, the French organization Monde Pluriel based in Grenoble coordinated the network of the European participating countries.[10] In May 2010, the network created a six-day e-forum for exchanges with the aim of strengthening young Europeans' knowledge on climate change in their regional contexts and, more importantly, to enable first encounters, debates and collaborative activities among the European youngsters. The online seminar led to the drafting of a *European Let's Take Care of the Planet Manifesto* featuring the commitments and actions taken by the students at the European level.[11]

Eventually, from 5th to 10th June 2010 the Children and Youth International Conference *Let's Take Care of the Planet (Confint)* was held in Luziânia and Brasilia hosting 658 participants, of which 323 were children, coming

from 47 different countries.[12] The Conference set *"global socio-environmental change with a focus on climate change"* as the common central theme. Anchored to the United Nations Education for Sustainable Development Decade, the event constituted a great mobilization action with a pedagogical angle that brought the environmental policy dimension to education and communication and recognized young people as first social actors for change. Indeed, the initiative replicated a wide and diverse community where everyone was eager to learn and reach a commonly agreed goal.[13]

Particularly directed at the strengthening of the environmental citizenship of children and adolescents, the project involved them in different activities in the area of global sustainability. As noted in the final report of the international conference:

> *"[T]he qualified inclusion of students and youth into the international debate on sustainability brought new commitments in the direction of a world based on planetary ethics, global democratic governance, dialogue among the different and respect of biological and sociocultural diversity".*[14]

The outcomes of the conference were many and diversified, one of the most important being the *International Charter of Responsibilities Let's Take Care of the Planet* written collectively by the young delegates and including shared commitments aimed at sustainable development. Thanks to the methodology used for finalizing the Charter, it was possible both to highlight the diversity of contents coming from many countries, and to merge the cultural richness for achieving a universal standard for the youth and the environment.[15] The document was complemented by a *Musical Charter*, created by a selected group of young delegates, reproducing the spirit, unity and respect among cultures present at the Conference.[16] Based on the developed activities and on inter-generational dialogue, large steps were taken in the direction of great objectives namely contributing to the empowerment of the delegates to assume global responsibilities and local actions, strengthening youth movements and networks, and advancing the implementation of environmental

education policies through educators in the other countries.[17]

Each participating youngster and adult provided positive evaluations about the event, with an average of 90 per cent of the responses being *"excellent"* or *"good"*. The mix of origins, cultures, languages gathered in a funny and stimulating environment to agree on a universal goal attracted various countries to innovate their traditional education model by looking to the Brazilian conception of education defined by one adult at the conference as the *"pedagogy of happiness"*.[18] National governments were, thus, invited to transform their schools and local communities into public spaces of education for everyone in the search for other forms of possible and healthier societies. In this sense, the Brazilian government argued that schools were not *"reproducers"* of knowledge, principles and responsibilities, but rather first *"producers"* of new knowledge and actions.

In this regard, back from Brazil, the European network decided to put in practice the learnt lessons by turning them into something more than nice memories belonging to a past event. Coordinated by Monde Pluriel, in November 2010, a delegation of five young Europeans went to Brussels and handed the *International Charter of Responsibilities Let's Take Care of the Planet* over to the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, as well as to the former cabinet member Connie Hedegaard, then European Commissioner for Climate Action, and to Gerhald Stahl, Secretary-General of the Committee of the Regions at that time.[19] The event was a unique opportunity to value the voice of youth on sustainable development issues at the highest level of the European authorities. From that moment on, a common European dynamics was put into practice under the European coordination of Monde Pluriel gathering together both the European countries which joined the international conference, and additional partners belonging to the *Forum of Ethics & Responsibilities (FER)*.[20] At the same time though, despite the positive impacts of the first edition of the Youth International Conference and the intention to realize a second international cycle with start in 2011 and end in 2014, the international dynamics was abandoned.[21]

On the other hand, the European process was put in practice with the First European Youth Conference *Let's Take Care of the Planet (LTCP)* in Brussels from 14th to 16th May 2012, thanks to the partnership between the Committee of the Regions and Monde Pluriel. After local, regional and national conferences organized in several European countries, the European Youth Conference *LTCP* brought together 139 people, of which 60 were delegates aged between 13 and 16 and coming from 14 European countries.[22] With the same methodology used in Brazil, youngsters co-wrote an *Open Letter to Decision Makers* and produced communication products for spreading their engagement both at the national and at the European level. The collective outcomes were presented in June 2012 at the Rio+20 Summit by three young facilitators. Since then, the European project, which was adjusted in its structure to last every cycle for a period of three years, attracted new interested partners.

Consequently, a second edition of *LTCP* was organized between 2013 and 2015 at the local and national level in 14 countries and culminated at the European level with the Second European Youth Conference *LTCP* from May 19th to 23rd 2015 in Brussels. Held at the Committee of the Regions, the event hosted 161 people, of which 69 were delegates aged between 13 and 16 coming from 13 countries.[23] In preparation for the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) that would have taken place in December 2015 in Paris, the European Youth Conference focused specifically on climate change. One of the most expected results of the Conference was the drafting of the *Call for Co-responsibility*, a political document stating youngsters' commitments for sustainable development and calling upon decision makers such as school principals, mayors, representatives of international institutions, company executives, journalists and artists to share adolescents' responsibilities through concrete actions.

LTCP was again a success in promoting youth participation and global citizenship. Thus, after the second edition, a third European dynamics was

launched for the period 2016-2018. The culmination of the process was represented by the Third European Youth Conference *LTCP* coordinated by Monde Pluriel in partnership with ASPEA, Portuguese Association for Environmental Education, in Lisbon between 21st and 24th May 2018. The third edition, and in particular the school year 2017-2018 coinciding with the preparatory year to the European Youth Conference, is analyzed in this Chapter.

2 Fundamental structure

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the European project *Let's Take Care of the Planet (LTCP)* were elaborated on the basis of those envisioned in 2010 for the Children and Youth International Conference. Taking into consideration the aims identified for the International Youth Conference[24] together with those pursued during the three European Youth Conferences *LTCP* in Brussels (2012 and 2015) and in Portugal (2018)[25] and those determined for the 2016-2018 national process in Italy, this Thesis has re-elaborated them in order to achieve a unique comprehensive list.

The general objective of *LTCP* is to enable the youth of the world to participate in the identification, discussion and agreement of global responsibilities for the construction of more sustainable societies.

The general objective is articulated through specific ones:

- Recognize children and adolescents, including those with fewer opportunities, as active subjects in the society and enhance their individual and collective capacity and responsibility for transformation both in the present and in the future;

- Promote cross-cultural dialogue and exchanges among children and adolescents as well as intergenerational interaction at different levels

by recognizing and valuing diversities in order to favor the emergence of critical thinking, independence and self-emancipation;

- Sustain open processes to enable shared decisions and collective actions as well as democratic youth representation in each phase of the project;

- Approach the complexity of global issues related to sustainable development by promoting creative forms of context-based learning in order to foster youth motivation;

- Bring about youth understanding of how public institutions work through open dialogue with representatives of the world of politics;

- Raise awareness on socio-environmental issues though the creative use of communication;

- Give impulse to the processes of citizenship-building in its local, national, European and global dimensions by developing youngsters' openness to the world and sense of belonging to a community of shared values;

- Strengthen the role of the school in providing opportunities for practicing new ways of teaching and learning, and in influencing the construction of public policy related to environmental education.

2.2   Themes

LTCP has always had as central theme global socioenvironmental changes. Thus, it aims at encouraging the youth to study and understand the interdependencies between human beings, societies and the environment and, consequently, to find new solutions to the environmental impacts of human action on the Planet.[26] In order to deepen the central theme, a *Step-by-Step Guide* and *Thematic Booklets* were originally produced for the Third Brazilian National Conference in 2009 and made available in four languages to all countries for the International Conference in 2010. The didactic material described in an original way some major problems related to the four elements

of nature: earth, water, fire and air.

On the basis of these documents, a new and improved version of the Step by Step Guide has been written specifically for the project edition 2017-2018.[27] The guide develops a thematic approach inspired from the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations set in 2015 to be achieved by 2030. The themes of the project are further developed in the Thematic Brochure: Points for Consideration for Debating Sustainable Development developed by Monde Pluriel.[28] Among the seventeen SDGs, *LTCP* crosses seven of them with other two main topics, namely solidarity and citizenship. Here a short list of the main themes is presented with the corresponding SDG:

- *Well-being, good health and air quality*

  This theme is set to prompt youngsters to question their way of life and to turn to responsible behavior. The project edition 2017-2018 focused on air quality both outside and inside homes and on the effects of its pollution on people's health. The topic is dealt in connection with *SDG3 Good health and well-being*;

- *Water and sanitation*

  This broad topic includes the human right to sanitation, access to water and hygiene. The project edition 2017-2018 mainly discussed solutions related to water waste and water pollution. The theme is linked to *SDG6 Clean water and sanitation*;

- *Clean energy*

  At a time when energy needs are growing in industrialized and emerging countries, the debate on energy principally regards societal choices about the way in which energy is produced and consumed. *LTCP* 2017-2018 dealt mainly with the impacts of fossil energy on the environment and on the health of individuals as well as on the possible solutions in terms of energy saving and renewable energies. The topic is also a central goal for sustainable development, namely *SDG7 Affordable and clean energy*;

- *Responsible production and consumption*

  The theme dealt especially with the issue of over-consumption in western societies and its environmental and social effects. The project focused on responsible alternatives for consumption such as recycling, reducing food waste and buying zero km food. The topic is replicated by *SDG12 Responsible consumption and production*;

- *Climate change*

  The vast topic of climate change was approached with discussions on how to reduce global warming starting from everyday actions such as energy saving and trash collection. The topic is set as *SDG13 Climate action*;

- *Biodiversity and natural resources*

  The project edition 2017-2018 debated the causes and effects of the extinction of some living species present on Earth and the solutions to restore the equilibrium of biodiversity. The theme is embedded in *SDG14 Life below water* and *SDG15 Life on land*;

- *Solidarity and citizenship*

  LTCP is guided by a shared feeling of responsibility and mutual dependence both at the local and at the global level. The project investigated how to put in practice solidarity and citizenship through actions such as raising awareness campaigns, lobbying campaigns and supporting projects in distant countries, in order to restore the true meaning of the word *"community"*.

2.3   Involved actors

LTCP seeks to motivate a wide spectrum of different social actors to generate a real movement for change towards a more human, equitable and sustainable world. First of all, youngsters under 18 years old are involved in the project as main protagonists. To them, many creative opportunities are provided to deepen knowledge about socio-environmental issues as well as

to experience dialogue and take advantage from exchanges with others in order to finally gain the capability to access the opportunity of participation in society.

In addition, *LTCP* has always included a group of young facilitators over 18 years old with the task to manage the process of youth participation through creative facilitation techniques. In this sense, to each facilitator is given the chance to take responsibilities and to experience the role of the educommunicator. By starting from youngsters' interests and priorities, facilitators are responsible to lead educational activities by encouraging dialogue and motivation.

The project is also directed at teachers. No matter the discipline in which they are specialized, teachers are considered strategic actors because they are the ones having the power to revolutionize traditional teaching and learning methods following a more dialogic and creative approach. Moreover, the project represents a great opportunity to exchange with other colleagues new ideas and experiences and to imagine new methodologies for improving and disseminating the project.

Beyond these three categories of actors, *LTCP* also includes experiences of dialogue set in a wider community, the so-called *"educational community"*. Therefore, youngsters are called to interact for example with scientists. In this regard, experts in the scientific field can provide additional know-how and help students to analyze problems, detect feasible solutions, put them into practice and evaluate their effects. Additionally, scientists can enhance the project by supporting it as an effective path towards fostering youth motivation to develop a critical approach to the world. As external actors, they can link scientific research centers with educational institutions and foster collaborative actions between the two.[29]

The *"educational community"* to which *LTCP* is open also includes political actors both at the local and at the European or international level. By engaging in a free and sincere dialogue with strategic stakeholders, such as politicians, students gain even more strength and motivation to feel part of

the global community as valuable actors who can really make the difference.

2.4 Educommunication-based principles

The main conceptual *LTCP* principles were designed and tested in Brazil with the Ministry of Education and remained the same ones when the project started to be organized in Europe.[30] Such principles represent exactly the peculiarity that distinguishes *LTCP* from other environmental projects. In this regard, each country wishing to participate to the project is supposed to study and follow a common methodological reference called *Step by Step Guide* within which the main project's objectives and approaches are outlined. *LTCP* can be defined an Educommunication-based project since it is guided by some fundamental principles which relate to the main characteristics of *Educommunication*.

To start with, the project recognizes the transformative potential of adolescents and, thus, considers them as social actors living, acting and intervening in the present. Consequently, the project supports a coordinated intergenerational action based on three essential pillars:

- *Youth chooses youth*

  In many occurrences throughout the project youngsters are called to take decisions related to selection processes. Specifically, they are supposed to elect their representatives for the next project's phases according to collectively-formulated selection criteria such as linguistic skills, motivation, ability to speak in public, etc. The election of delegates follows a democratic and inclusive mechanism. Once elected, students' delegates have the responsibility of representing schoolmates' interests and opinions during the subsequent projects' phases. Moreover, they are supposed to keep their peers informed and to mobilize them to disseminate the project outcomes more widely.[31] The educommunicative dimension of the principle lies in the possibility given to students to experience in practice representative democracy.

- *Youth educates youth*

  The project is constructed starting from youngsters' interests, experiences and priorities believing in their capacity to assume commitments to transformative actions. In all phases, young facilitators are trained to support youngsters during the activities through interactive facilitation techniques. This approach assigns to facilitators the responsibility to manage human relations throughout the whole teaching and learning process.[32] By encouraging exchanges through respectful dialogue and debate, students and facilitators can discover and enhance cultural diversities. The educommunicative power embedded in the principle leads to the promotion and realization of everyone's right to free expression and participation.

- *One generation learns with another*

  The transmission of knowledge throughout the different phases of the project is not only downwards, from adults to youngsters, but also upwards and horizontal. Mutual learning between generations characterizes the project by enabling students to take on both the role of learners and the role of teachers. Moreover, *LTCP* encourages dialogues between youngsters and environmental experts or representatives of political institutions in order to recognize the essential interrelation between human beings for achieving transformation.[33] This educommunicative principle supports the integration of youngsters with the entire *"educational community"*.

In addition to these three aspects, *LTCP* is grounded on the *"principle of responsibility"* as necessary in an interconnected society for fostering youth commitment and independence and, consequently for practicing citizenship. In this regard, the project relies on the principle that everyone is called to assume responsibility both at the individual and collective level and according to his or her level of knowledge and power. Moreover, responsibility means being attentive to the positive and negative impacts of everyone's own actions both at the local and at the global level (concept of space) as

well as in the present and in the future (concept of time).[34] As a practical manifestation of the taken responsibilities, youngsters are then encouraged to act concretely at the local level for the benefit of the whole community. Embodying the principle in all phases of the project means recognizing the aim of *Educommunication*, namely to empower youngsters by putting them in a condition to exercise their capacity to participate in the society as active and transformative subjects.

Furthermore, another peculiarity of the project is that it tackles in principle cross-cutting and interdisciplinary subjects.[35] As advocated by *Educommunication*, systemic change is achieved only with the contribution of many different experiences coming from different fields. Moreover, although socio-environmental issues are the main project's themes, it has to be taken into account that *LTCP* is much more than an environmental project: it is an Educommunication-based project which seeks to involve people in a process of mutual learning and practice of respect for everyone's own dignity and rights, cross-cultural dialogue, human solidarity and planetary citizenship. Indeed, the whole program is based on the necessity to redefine a general interest for the whole of humanity, which requires both respect for universal human rights and the recognition of a universal responsibility to be shared by every individual.[36]

Beyond guiding the whole process, it has to be remarked that the principles of *Educommunication* in *LTCP* take shape in specific *Educommunication* workshops that have the aim to create communication outputs disseminating and valuing the commitments made by the youngsters during the project. In these practical workshops the power of communication is exploited to enable commitment to values that respect and preserve life and motivate youngsters to become true actors in the communication process. Indeed, as primarily responsible for the management of the whole communication flow, participants are encouraged to collaborate and agree with their peers on the type of media to produce, on its style and technique as well as on the work's subject matter. The decision process is done in an open, democratic and

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participatory way and is assisted by at least one young facilitator. Since the beginning, *Educommunication* workshops are included into *LTCP* as specific practical activities because they offer a new perspective with regards to communication languages and techniques, stimulate responsible participation and assure continuity to the project.[37]

3   National process

LTCP follows a multi-level structure according to which the project starts within the class, spreads out in the school and at the local level, is shared at the regional level and subsequently follows a national process in order to culminate at the European level with a youth conference organized over several days. The following sections describe the common step by step process realized during the school year 2017-2018. It is schematized in Table 1.

Regarding the national process, some relevant examples are drawn from the Italian experience coordinated by the Association Viração&Jangada.[38] Nevertheless, since *LTCP* is a European project, it has to be remembered that also other European countries have simultaneously lived similar national dynamics.[39] In particular, the process in 2017-2018 involved at the national level almost 500 schools of nine European countries impacting more than 30.000 students and 2.000 teachers. For the implementation of the project a methodological handbook and a dedicated website have been developed as common references for coordinators and teachers to homogenize the proposed activities in all European countries.[40]

3.1   Project coordinator: Viração&Jangada

The Italian process during 2017 and 2018 has been coordinated by Viração&Jangada, an international cooperation association located in Trento (Italy) and working at the regional, national and international level with adolescents. Viração&Jangada was born from the merger of the Brazilian

THE INVESTIGATIONS

In schools

Defining an issue for research and exploring it

October 2017- January 2018

THE LOCAL CONFERENCES

In schools

Young people aged from 11 to 18 debating local sustainable development issues and making proposals to be implemented locally

November 2017 - January 2018

THE REGIONAL OR NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Debating and making proposals to be implemented at different territorial levels, creating Educommunication tools

DISSEMINATION

AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Back-to-school season

THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE

IN LISBON

Elected European delegates aged 13 to 16 Intercultural exchanges, comparison of the local realities and challenges, pooling of proposals and shared responsibilities, creation of Educommunication tools and a common production
May 2018

Table 1: Step by step process 2017-2018.

organization Viração[41] with Jangada, an association in the region of Trentino which has dealt with international cooperation with Brazil for more than 20 years. The association's main objective is to promote the adolescents' right to communication as well as to contribute to the political empowerment of citizens by supporting and spreading democracy, human rights, education to peace, solidarity and respect for diversity. Particularly, the association collaborates with different entities such as schools, organizations, research centers and informal groups, to promote Educommunication-based projects

and social mobilization practices among adolescents and educators.

Viração&Jangada was one of the first European organizations to join *LTCP* in 2009 and to bring a national delegation composed by eight youngsters, one facilitator and two adults at the Children and Youth International Conference in Brazil.[42] From that moment on, Italy has always participated with a special focus on maintaining *Educommunication* as the primary basis for the successful implementation of the project. Moreover, since 2009 the association is supported by the C.N.R. Bologna Research Area, a research center located in the region of Emilia-Romagna offering services to the Italian National Research Council and to the National Institute for Astrophysics. The partnership between Viração&Jangada and the C.N.R. Bologna Research Area strengthens the quality of the project from the scientific point of view. Viração&Jangada is planning to start a new edition of *LTCP* at the national level in January 2019.

3.2   Participants

The national process took place between September 2017 and May 2018 in 17 schools of 14 different cities in seven Italian regions, namely Trentino, Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy, Apulia, Lazio, Campania and Sicily. Among the 17 schools, 9 were middle schools and 8 high schools with a total of 60 classes involved, 30 classes in each school type.

Viração&Jangada worked directly with 1269 students aged between 11 and 17, and with 86 teachers. The teachers collaborating in the project were specialized in different subjects ranging from science, literature and ITC to English and religion. The difference in expertise highlights the multidisciplinary perspective, one of the essential characteristics of *Educommunication* discussed in Chapter III. Table 2 summarizes the impact of *LTCP* at the Italian level.

SCHOOL TYPE	SCHOOL	CITY	NUMBER OF CLASSES	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	NUMBER OF TEACHERS
TRENTINO					
Middle school	Istituto Comprensivo Isera-Rovereto	Rovereto	4	80	2
High school	Liceo Bertrand Russell	Cles	3	60	2
High school	Liceo Martino Martini	Mezzolombardo	1	20	2
Middle school	Istituto Comprensivo Taio-Coredo	Predaia	5	100	15
			13	260	21
EMILIA-ROMAGNA					
Middle school	Scuola Secondaria di I Grado Viale della Resistenza	Cesena	2	50	5
			2	50	5
LOMBARDY					
High school	Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore di Stato Giuseppe Greggiati	Poggio Rusco	5	125	5
			5	125	5
APULIA					
Middle school	Istituto Comprensivo Giovanni Pascoli	Tricase	5	130	10
High school	Liceo Statale Girolamo Comi	Tricase	8	160	4
High school	Istituto Superiore Gaetano Salvemini	Alessano	3	75	4
Middle school	Istituto Comprensivo Foscolo Gabelli	Foggia	2	60	1
			18	425	19
LAZIO					
Middle school	Istituto Comprensivo Guicciardini	Rome	3	40	3
High school	Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore Sandro Pertini	Genzano	3	60	3
			6	100	6
CAMPANIA					
High school	Istituto Tecnico Industriale Fermi-Gadda	Napoli	4	80	4
			4	80	4
SICILY					
Middle school	Istituto Comprensivo Statale Giovanni Verga	Viagrande	4	80	4
Middle school	Istituto Comprensivo Fontanarossa	Catania	2	29	6
High school	Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore Enrico Fermi - Filippo Eredia	Catania	4	80	4
Middle school	Istituto Comprensivo Dante Alighieri	Catania	2	40	12
			12	229	26
TOTAL			60	1269	86

Table 2: Italian schools participating to Let's Take Care of the Planet - Europe in 2017-2018.

3.3   Investigations

LTCP has been launched by Viração&Jangada in each adherent school with an introductory activity. After a presentation of the project's his-

tory, methodological principles, objectives and past outcomes, students approached socio-environmental issues through dynamic games. According to youngsters' curiosities and concerns, Viração&Jangada organized short scientific trainings whose main objective was to stimulate in students the interest to further deepen the themes throughout the project.

Successively, the class split into small working groups that selected one of the four macro-themes proposed in the project, namely water, air, energy and earth. Once the topic of general interest was defined, students agreed to explore a specific sub-theme.

In order to facilitate the selection process of the issue for the research, preparatory meetings were organized in many schools with teachers, scientific experts, local administrators or environmental educators. For example, third class students of the middle school *Istituto Comprensivo Giovanni Pascoli* investigated the topic of sea pollution by participating to a seminar on climate change lead by a climatologist and to an online conference with two researchers from the COP23.[43]

After having chosen a specific sub-theme, youngsters begun to do research by using different sources such as school curricula, bibliographic research, scientific data and experiments, field outings, observations, etc. For instance, to investigate on young people's knowledge about trash collection, the students attending the high school *Istituto Tecnico Industriale Fermi-Gadda* created an online survey asking their peers questions related to the environment and to their habits. The quiz results showed an insufficient youngsters' knowledge about recycling as well as a generalized lack of interest to tackle the problem. The negative results of the questionnaire motivated a group of students to learn more about recycling in order to mobilize their peers and change the situation in the school.

Generally, the investigation phase was carried out both within the school and in neighboring territories. By extending the research to the local level, students had the opportunity to interact with a broader spectrum of actors such as citizens, administrators and experts. This approach has often led to a

better identification of local problems as well as to more coherent proposals for significant actions. For instance, in the case of the high school *Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore Enrico Fermi - Filippo Eredia* students decided to finalize their research about pollution in a public urban park. By taking pictures and filming, youngsters documented the park's poor maintenance and decided to take action in collaboration with the Department of Ecology and Environment of the city of Catania as well as with other youth associations and volunteers.[44]

3.4 Choice of responsibilities and actions

After the investigation phase, youngsters moved to the collective formulation of concrete proposals for facing the problems identified during their research. In practical terms, students participated in debating activities and selected three responsibilities and actions to be concretely realized within their school or community.

The discussion organized in each class was extended at the school level with a meeting called local conference and joined by class representatives and teachers. During the local conference the feasibility of each proposal coming from the classes was evaluated and, eventually, the most preferred actions were selected.[45] Moreover, class representatives identified other stakeholders, such as principal, school staff, parents or local administrators, to involve for the implementation of the school's actions.[46]

Lastly, at the local conference students and teachers also chose the school delegates to the national conference organized between all adherent Italian schools. Delegates are selected among all involved students on the basis of some eligibility criteria and qualities agreed previously between youngsters. They have the responsibility to represent the school during the national conference as well as to keep schoolmates informed about the outcomes of the subsequent phases of the project.

LTCP seeks to guarantee an open, democratic a participatory choice of responsibilities and actions by promoting dialogic relations among students.

Dialogue in this phase is indeed fundamental because it allows young people to move from the role of students to that of actors and enables everyone to express his or her opinions on the basis of personal knowledge and experiences. Additionally, the role of the teacher as mediator of debating activities is here essential since he or she is responsible for guaranteeing the respect of the debate's topic and the opportunity to everyone to participate.

3.5   Educommunication tools

Being specialized in *Educommunication*, it was very important for Viração&Jangada to promote both an educommunicative approach in the management of the *LTCP* processes and specific Educommunication-based workshops. The main communication outcomes of the workshops realized in Italy during the process 2017-2018 were:

- *Advertising posters*

  For the first time experienced at the 2010 Children and Youth International Conference in Brazil, the production of advertising posters is an essential Educommunication-based activity in *LTCP*.[47] The workshop aims at involving youngsters in practical and funny activities combining the power of advertising with environmental education. By following a standardized graphic scheme created by the European coordinators, youngsters generated creative posters including captivating slogans and visual productions portraying themselves as subjects, in order to communicate their responsibilities and actions for the environment. Each production phase related to the slogans and to the main poster's image was managed directly by youngsters. Viração&Jangada finalized the posters by inserting a common description in the bottom of the poster to maintain graphic uniformity among the different productions.[48] Advertisement posters were produced both in Italian and in English in view of their displaying at the European Youth Conference. During the school year 2017-2018 more than 80 advertising posters

were created in Italy, namely more than one per class.

- *Project posters*

  By systematizing the investigation process carried out by each working group, posters support students during their project presentation. By following a pre-determined structure for the realization of the project poster, students learnt how to organize a research in all its parts: introduction, goals, methodologies, results, conclusions and references. Project posters were produced both in Italian and in English in view of their presentation at the European Youth Conference. During 2017 and 2018, 12 project posters were created with a maximum of one poster per school.

- *Extra educommunicative productions*

  In addition to the two communication activities envisaged within the national process in some classes students produced videos, leaflets, school-radio programs, poems, performances with the aim of sensitizing public opinion about socio-environmental problems in their communities. For example, a group of students attending the middle school *Scuola Secondaria di Primo Grado Viale della Resistenza* realized a video entitled *"Eco Hackers"* with the aim of raising public awareness on the negative impacts of human activities on the health of the Planet. For their inventiveness translated into a funny and profound four-minute video, the students of *Viale della Resistenza* received a national prize in May 2018.[49]

3.6   Raising awareness activities

LTCP motivated participants to carry out raising awareness campaigns directed at other students within the school. In this regard, many different actions were organized by youngsters during class or school meetings such as, for example, contests[50], exhibitions in the canteen[51] and practical laboratories.[52] In addition, raising awareness activities were organized outside

the school for the whole community as for instance in the case of the middle school *Istituto Comprensivo di Taio-Coredo* that, in occasion of the Italian Campaign *"M'illumino di meno"*, organized a propaganda day for citizens on energy saving as well as a game session for children at the elementary school.

Moreover, as established in the project, in occasion of the Earth Day on 22nd April, each school of every adherent country was invited to organize a mobilization campaign on sustainable development either within or outside the school. The main objective of the campaign was to give visibility to the project by presenting to the public both the local actions and the whole *LTCP* initiative. In this regard, many Italian schools committed to implement practical actions such as cleaning a public park[53], collecting waste on the beaches[54] and on ditches[55] and organizing a fundraising campaign for planting trees in the school and in other areas of the municipality.[56]

Students of the middle school Istituto Comprensivo Fontanarossa in Catania (Sicily) clean their urban beach from rubbish.

Students attending the high school Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore Enrico Fermi - Filippo Eredia cleaned an urban public park in Catania (Sicily) as concrete political action.

3.7   National Conference

The objective of the National Conference is to debate the impacts of socio-environmental changes from a national perspective, share commitments

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and concerns, compare points of views, find similarities and differences of practices and, on this basis, formulate collective proposals.

The National Conference in Italy was held on 16th March 2018 at the C.N.R. Research Area in Bologna. Coordinated by Viração&Jangada, the conference hosted 69 people, of which 52 were elected delegates of 10 adherent middle and high schools.[57] The meeting was organized at the research center in order to highlight and support the scientific contribution to the project. In this regard, the conference scheduled three scientific presentations about sustainable development, climate change and ocean literacy as well as a group visit to the center led by experts in socio-environmental issues.[58]

One of the most important activities organized during the National Conference was the drafting of the *Italian Charter of Responsibilities Let's Take Care of the Planet*.[59] With the facilitation of Viração&Jangada[60], youngsters worked in groups to agree upon common responsibilities and actions to take at the national level on the basis of those previously decided during the local conferences in their schools. Each working group was responsible for a specific part of the Charter.

In the meantime, teachers met with the researcher Francesca Alvisi and evaluated together the overall project in its positive and negative sides. It was also an occasion for sharing new ideas about the future developments for the projects.

Another fundamental activity realized during the National Conference was the election of the candidates for participating to the European Youth Conference in Lisbon. The election process followed two phases. First, in the morning 16 youngsters, who previously expressed their availability to participate to the European dynamics, were called to present themselves in public by explaining in English their main reasons for taking part to the Italian delegation at the European Conference. The presentation of the candidates was an important phase to test youngsters' motivation and ability to speak in public. Second, in the afternoon, all youngsters were called to express their preference for a candidate by crossing secretly a voting paper.[61]

Furthermore, in order for youngsters to discover their peers' responsibilities and actions carried out in the schools and in local communities, an exhibition of advertising and project posters was organized in the conference foyer.

Presentation of the Italian Charter of Responsibilities at the National Conference in Bologna.

Poster session at the National Conference in Bologna.

4   European process

The final report of the *LTCP* European process is not yet ready due to its very recent end in May 2018. Official documents will be delivered by the associations Monde Pluriel and ASPEA by November 2018. Everything written in this section is based on my personal experience as facilitator of the European Conference as well as on information and commentaries collected during the event.

4.1   Project coordinators: Monde Pluriel and ASPEA

The European process was for the first time co-planned by the French organization Monde Pluriel, European coordinator since the beginning of the European dynamics, and the Portuguese association ASPEA-Associação Portuguesa Educação Ambiental. While Monde Pluriel is specialized in intercultural projects in the field of education for sustainable development and

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global citizenship, ASPEA is a non-profit association promoting formal and non-formal educational programmes on environmental issues. Apart from France and Portugal as general coordinators, a methodological committee including also the organizations from Denmark (Baltic Sea Project Denmark), Italy (Viração&Jangada) and Spain (Ingurugela), has worked since October 2017 to collectively construct the contents of all Conference activities that included three events:

- *Facilitators' training*
  Three-day training before the Youth Conference to prepare facilitators, youngsters between 18 and 30 years old, at least one from each adherent country, to conduct the Conference activities based on the principle *"youth educates youth"*.

- *Youth Conference*
  Four-day conference with young delegates elected in the participating countries, following the principle *"youth chooses youth"*, offering activities conforming with a collective learning environment and reflection about the topics treated, leading youngsters to identify their role in a world of global socio-environmental transformations.

- *Teachers' meeting*
  Following the principle *"one generation learns with another"*, the teachers' meeting is organized during the Youth Conference in different sections with the aim to debate the pedagogical, political, and environmental education dimensions of the Conference. Teachers also envision strategies for the continuity of the process in European countries.

4.2   Participants

The European process took place between 19th and 24th May 2018 in Oeiras, Lisbon and Cascais, European city of youth for 2018. It gathered 82 youngsters, namely 66 delegates between 13 and 16 years old and 16 facilitators aged between 18 and 30, representing thousands of European young

people who debated and committed themselves for sustainable societies and valorized their responsibilities through Educommunication-based tools.

Nine European countries - Denmark, Spain, France (including French Guyana), Georgia, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania and Turkey - took part in the event by sending to Portugal youth delegations. Belgium, the 10th adherent country, was represented by four facilitators from Monde Pluriel's partner organization in Brussels, the International Volunteering Service (SVI).[62] In parallel, 20 teachers from nine participating countries exchanged, networked and produced a statement document to make the pedagogical practices evolve in the area of Education for Sustainable Development. Italy participated to the facilitators' training with one youngster [63], to the Youth European Conference with a delegation of six students and to the teachers meeting with one teacher and one researcher. Together with Denmark, Spain, France, Georgia, Lithuania, Romania and Turkey, Italy is participating to the European project since its first edition in 2012.

4.3   Facilitators' training

The preparatory meeting from 19th to 21st May 2018 in Oeiras was organized for 16 young people, aged between 18 and 30 years old, with the objective of training them to deal with each methodological step of the Conference as well as with human and environmental questions at the event. [64] Table 3 summarizes the main activities of the training.

With the support of three trainers [65], the group learnt how to manage activities at the Conference by concretely doing them during the training. Thus, facilitators were initially involved in energizers, knowing-each-other games and cultural exchanges that revealed a great integrative capacity.

The group also got additional information about the projects' historical roots and received some feedback from the previous editions. Socio-environmental issues were deepened by sharing knowledge and by working in groups to construct thematic activities. Moreover, during the meeting the program of the Youth Conference was explained in detail to prepare in

FACILITATORS' TRAINING

Hours	Description
DAY 1 : SATURDAY 19TH AFTERNOON	
10:00 - 14:00	**Arrival and lunch together**
14:00 - 17:00	History of the project LTCP: the Taking Care Room Map of Issues
17:00 - 17:30	Coffee break
17:30 - 18:30	Game: "Knowing better each other" and cultural evening
Hours	**Description**
DAY 2: SUNDAY 20th – ALL DAY	
09:30 - 09:40	Energizers proposed by the facilitators
09:40 - 11:40	Workshop: Common responsibilities & Sustainable Development Goals
11:40 - 12:00	Coffee break
12:00 - 13:00	Preparing the delegates for the debate in the Parliament
13:00 - 14:30	Lunch break
14:30 - 16:30	Getting through the program Educommunication workshops
16:30 - 17:00	Coffee break
17:00 - 18:30	Game: the Superfacilitator
Hours	**Description**
DAY 3: MONDAY 21st MORNING	
09:30 - 11:00	Review the whole programme, FAQ Welcoming the delegations

Table 3: Facilitators' training agenda.

advance facilitators' management of *Educommunication* and thematic workshops. In order to promote dialogue and participative processes during the Youth Conference, facilitators experimented group mediation techniques and discussed socio-emotional competences and leadership skills. The preparatory moments during the training were fundamental to the success of the Conference because they contributed to the creation of a feeling of unity and mutual trust within the facilitators' group.

4.4   Youth Conference

The Third Youth Conference *"Cross-cultural Dialogues to Take Care of the Planet"* took place in the cities of Cascais, Oeiras and Lisbon between 21st and 24th May 2018. Hosting nine country's delegations with a total 66 adolescents, the Youth Conference represented the culmination of a bigger process involving in the whole dynamics, for the period 2017-2018, around 452 schools, 33.669 students and 2.043 teachers.[66]

The Youth Conference offered delegates a series of activities conforming

Programme

May 21st
- ● 10:00 - 15:30 » Arrival and Meeting
- ● 16:30 - 17:00 » Opening Ceremony
- ● 17:00 - 18:00 » Eurodeputies Meeting
- ● 18:30 - 20:00 » European Food Market
- ● 20:00 - 21:30 » Cultural Evening

May 22nd
- ● 9:30 - 11:00 » Projects' Fair
- ● 11:30 - 12:30 » CIEJD
- ● 12:30 - 14:00 » Lunch
- ● 14:00 - 18:00 » Workshop "SDO and Common Responsabilities"
- ● 18:00 - 20:00 » Free Time
- ● 20:00 - 21:00 » Dinner
- ● 21:00 - 22:30 » Preparation Parliament Debate

May 23rd
- ● 10:00 - 11:00 » Visit Portuguese Parliament
- ● 11:30 - 12:30 » Debate Portuguese deputies and "Parliament of Youngsters"
- ● 12:30 - 16:00 » Lunch
- ● 18:00 - 20:00 » Educommunication WS
- ● 20:00 - 21:30 » Dinner
- ● 21:30 - 23:00 » Games / Cinema

May 24th
- ● 9:00 - 12:30 » Educommunication WS
- ● 12:30 - 13:30 » Lunch
- ● 14:15 - 15:30 » Working Groups (Preparation Closing Ceremony)
- ● 16:00 - 18:00 » Closing Ceremony
- ● 18:30 - 20:00 » Free Time in Belém
- ● 20:00 - 21:00 » Dinner
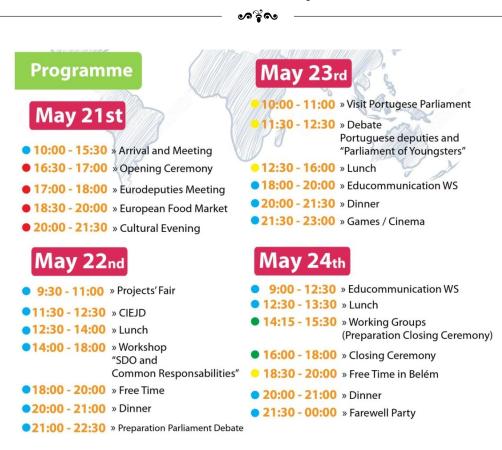- ● 21:30 - 00:00 » Farewell Party

Table 4: Youth European Conference agenda.

to a collective learning environment and reflection about socio-environmental issues, leading them to identify through theoretical discussions and practical experiences, their role is the world as actors for change. As such, the Conference agenda sought to combine moments of in-depth conceptual dialogue with practical, playful and cultural activities, as outlined in Table 4.

Opening: between politics and culture

The first day of the Conference began with an opening ceremony to celebrate the diversity of the participating delegations and to reaffirm youth commitment to care for the Planet. After a warm welcoming session lead by the organizational team, youngsters participated in a meeting with five Portuguese Eurodeputies.[67] The goal of the meeting was to allow the young delegates to dialogue with resource persons, who usually take part in the implementation or design of environmental public policies, in order to raise their awareness of the collective dimension of environmental problems.[68]

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The opening session was concluded in the evening with a European food market and cultural exhibitions. These entertaining activities were first occasions for delegates to discover the cultural diversity of Europe represented in different forms, namely through performances, folk dances, songs, poems, videos, etc.

Debate with Eurodeputes at the opening ceremony of the European Youth Conference in Cascais (Portugal).

Traditional folk dance presented by Lithuanian delegates at the cultural night in Cascais (Portugal).

Thematic activities

During the European Youth Conference, young delegates were involved in two thematic activities that had the aim of giving them the opportunity to share their local projects, become aware of the common and different challenges among countries, learn from each other, discuss their roles as actors for change and eventually define some common responsibilities and actions to respect individually and collectively.

a) Projects' fair

The projects' fair was the first thematic activity involving everyone in the sharing of local experiences relative to the concrete environmental responsibilities and actions carried out within or outside schools. In two rounds, delegates presented in English their local projects and, then, listened to others'

initiatives. The fair was structured in such a way as to allow each participant to interact with other youngsters. Indeed, projects presentations were held in groups of up to four people with the moderation of one facilitator ensuring goodwill and inclusion between delegates. The chosen methodology aimed at enhancing youth participation, encouraging free speech and debate, and strengthening a feeling of unity towards the achievement of a common goal.

The projects' fair was very enriching because it allowed the exchange of good practices and creative ideas that could possibly be replicated in other countries. As claimed by Samantha De Solda, Italian delegate:

> *"It was really important to report my ideas to other European delegates and, more than this, to listen to others' initiatives for living a more sustainable life. In this way, I had the chance to discover the actions taken in different countries and, once back to my country, to share them with other people and suggest similar initiatives that in my school we haven't thought about".*

b) SDGs and Common Responsibilities

The second workshop called *"SDGs and Common Responsibilities"* was co-ordinated by pairs of facilitators and held in thematic groups of 11 delegates who split according to their preference among the following thematic areas corresponding to the main themes of the Conference:

- Biodiversity

- Well-being, health, air quality

- Responsible production and consumption

- Clean energy

- Water and sanitation

- Climate change

After some ice breaking activities to encourage interaction among the participating youngsters, delegates were asked to share within their group

a local environmental issue. In order to do so, each delegate was required to fill a postcard with one of the most impressing local problems studied in class and, then, to share it in a group composed by three or four people. After that, delegates pinned their cards on a big map of Europe according to their country's location. Through the local issues activity youngsters discussed the most surprising concerns, differences or similarities among countries as well as causes and consequences of environmental problems.

Successively, youngsters were divided into two groups which received some project posters related to the topic of the chosen thematic workshop and realized at the national level by the participating European schools. By analyzing the posters, delegates were asked to do a list with the local actions they had implemented in their country in order to tackle the identified issues. Then, after having discussed about new actions that could tackle the issue, delegates added them to the common list.

Once actions were listed, youngsters agreed on a corresponding responsibility that could be assumed collectively. Successively, delegates created a big poster to summarize their decisions. The poster represented the guideline for the collective drafting of the European Letter of Commitments.

The workshop ended with a focus on the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals which were explained to youngsters through a creative video produced by World's Largest Lesson in partnership with UNICEF and UNESCO. [69] Eventually, in their groups, youngsters linked the correct SDG with their responsibilities and actions. The aim of this final activity was to show participants that United Nations' concerns are the same as theirs and, thus, it is essential to feel included also in those international projects which very often might seem too complicated and detached.

Debate with deputes at the Portuguese Parliament

An important event organized during the Youth Conference was the youngsters' visit to the Portuguese Parliament and the debate with eight national deputies of the Environment Commission. The debate at the Par-

Projects' fair at the European Youth Conference.

Facilitators discussing SDGs with youngsters during the SDGs and Common Responsibilities workshop.

liament in Lisbon followed a formal structure. In alphabetical order, one representative for each delegation had two minutes to present the country's main commitments and, then, deputes could comment on the countries' contributions. After two rounds following the same process, three representatives of the Portuguese Parliament of Youth intervened in the discussion to share with European delegates their experiences in the world of politics. It was a great opportunity for youngsters to realize that it is possible for adolescents to have a place in politics as it happens for the Parliament for Youth. After the presentation section, each delegation made direct questions to the deputes.

Youngsters were really active and committed to ask questions to politicians. During the session, specific issues were tackled such as waste management [70], clean energy [71] and SDGs [72]. Moreover, youngsters asked politicians' support for the achievement of sustainable development and were interested in knowing parliamentarians' personal commitments to environment as private individuals. For example, some challenging questions were asked by the Spanish delegation:

> *"[T]o start a future together, respecting the environment, we also need*
> *politicians support. We have already started the change, and you? [. . .]*
> *You are from different parties, but you work together in the Commission*

of Environment. How do your political ideas affect your work in the Commission? Since you work for the environment, have you changed your daily habits? And your family? Let's imagine that your children participate in a green commission at school. What could you do to support them from your position?".

The debate at the Parliament was a unique opportunity for youngsters to ask curious and coherent questions that actually challenged deputes' opinions on the matter. As stated by Simay Berber from Turkey:

"We had the chance to announce our voice to the authorities in the Portuguese Parliament by presenting the projects we have done, which made me the most excited person of the whole conference. It was incredible to sit in the chair on which the real statesmen sit on, to present projects, ask questions and listen to politicians' answers. How many times in our lives may we experience an opportunity like that?"

Debate session with deputes at the Portuguese Parliament in Lisbon.

A French delegate concludes her country's presentation at the Portuguese Parliament: "we are trying to reach out to you. We hope that our voice will be heard".

Educommunication activities

The results of the thematic workshops constituted a basis for the *Educommunication* activities, which aimed to disseminate and promote delegates'

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commitments for taking care of the Planet. *Educommunication* was used as methodology to enable youngsters to freely express their common responsibilities and actions in different forms of languages. Beyond learning how to handle communication tools that delegates would be able to use again in the future, they were involved in a participatory and inclusive process aimed at giving value to their own ideas and interests. Indeed, with the moderation of facilitators, communication products were essentially created on the basis of youngsters' points of view. Four main *Educommunication* workshops were organized, as summarized below.

a) Youth Press Agency

For the first time as permanent workshop during the four-day Conference, nine youngsters, one per participating country, were elected within their delegations to become members to the Youth Press Agency and participate at the event in a different manner, namely as reporters.[73]

The Youth Press Agency is an international initiative created in 2005 that encourages youth participation through the creative use of traditional and modern communication and information tools. Its main objective is to provide a space for free and independent sharing and dissemination of multimedia products whose contents, focused on issues related to human rights and socio-environmental sustainability, are told and analyzed on the basis of youngsters' interests and perceptions. The Agency works on the principles and techniques of *Educommunication* as well as of social and participatory journalism. [74]

For the purpose of the European Conference, the nine elected members to the Youth Press Agency were trained in advance by Viração&Jangada through Skype meetings. Specifically, before the European meeting, the nine participants did not only meet each other, but also worked together by producing communication products to animate the Facebook page of the Youth Conference. Preparatory meetings created a feeling of commitment and unity among the group's members and clarified youngsters' precise role

as reporters for *LTCP*.

During the European Conference, the nine youngsters followed the activities as the other delegates and at the same time produced different types of communication products. The reporters were left free to choose what to produce and in which format. Always working in teams to stimulate participation and creativity, the Agency was coordinated by two educommunicators of Viração&Jangada. [75]

In total, the group produced five creative videos, two articles, two big interviews with a politician at the Portuguese Parliament and with a coordinator of Monde Pluriel, one photo-reportage about the cultural performances at the Conference. Moreover, the Youth Press Agency realized a creative performance with pictures. In this regard, every youngster, facilitator and teacher at the Conference was asked to think about a personal commitment for taking care of the Planet and, then, to write it on a speech bubble and take a picture with it. The Youth Press Agency was responsible for coordinating and preparing the whole performance with the individual commitments' pictures that were given to each participant as a reminder of the Youth Conference during the closing ceremony.

In addition, the group documented the entire event by taking pictures and informing followers with daily posts on social media. Through the Youth Press Agency, the Italian delegation also realized a live video from Facebook that was followed by hundreds of students and teachers who participated to *LTCP* at the national level.

b) Letter of Commitments

One of the most expected outcomes of the Youth Conference has been the *Letter of Commitments*, namely a political document written collectively by youngsters and summarizing their common responsibilities and actions for the Planet, to be disseminated at the local, regional, national and European level.

To write the document, youngsters were divided in teams of three to four

Individual commitments' performance at the European Youth Conference.

The Youth Press Agency interviewing and filming the President of the Environmental Commission at the Portuguese Parliament.

people and, on the basis of the common responsibilities taken during the thematic workshop *"SDGs and Common Responsibilities"*, each group wrote a section of the *Letter*. The entire process was supported by facilitators that encouraged youngsters to express their personal contributions and ideas.

The *Letter of Commitments* was entitled *"Let's be the change!"* expressing youth desire to participate in society by transforming the world into a sustainable community. In order to be e ffective, youngsters asked adults and politicians to support their commitments and value their engagement for the Planet:

> *"The Let's Take Care of the Planet project gives us the opportunity to learn about other countries, cultures, but also about ourselves. Even if we have different cultures, we found common points like the desire that we all have to take care of the planet. We are expecting real actions instead of empty talks from adults and decision makers. We are ready to fight in the same direction as the Sustainable Development Goals throughout concrete collective actions. What about you?! If not us, then who? If not now, then when?".* [76]

Splitting in groups for the drafting of the Letter of Commitments.

Discussing the Letter of Commitments with the help of facilitators.

c) Advertising posters

As third Educommunication-based activity, a group of delegates planned and created five advertising posters to communicate their main common concerns with impressive slogans and creative pictures and eventually mobilize other peers:

- *Let Earth Breath*, about the problem of air pollution suggesting solutions such as planting trees, using public transportation or going to school by walk;

- *Food is for Taste, not for Waste*, about food waste suggesting eating locally while thinking globally;

- *Clean energy saves the Planet, you should save it too*, asking people to prefer renewable energies;

- *A Healthy Planet begins at School*, about the importance to have students who are able to take informed decisions about sustainable development;

- *Educate for Change*, to promote education as a powerful weapon that, combined with action, can improve the well-being of the Planet.

Using photomontage techniques, youngsters themselves designed the poster visuals and messages with the support of facilitators and two experts

in design, who did the graphics and finalized the posters. The most important part of the workshop was the planning phase that engaged participants in discussions and creative thinking.

d) Performance

As part to the Educommunication-based activities, a performance combining dances, speeches and drum music was created by a group of youngsters with the participation of facilitators and the moderation of some experts in performances. The workshop gave delegates the chance to express their concerns for the environment through creative arts. By performing an impressive exhibition, the group of delegates mobilized the audience for saving the Planet.

Youngsters plan the design of the one advertisement poster.

Performance at the closing ceremony of the European Youth Conference.

Closing ceremony

The closing of the European Youth Conference was the last occasion for youngsters to share with everyone involved in *LTCP* their socio-environmental commitments. The ceremony took place in the theatre of the Lisbon Youth Centre. In addition to delegates, facilitators, teachers and organizers, the event enjoyed the presence of Francisco Teixeira from the Portuguese Environmental Agency, Eduarda Marques from the Portuguese Institute of

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Youth, Eugénia Cândido from General Direction of Education, Delphine Astier, Director of Monde Pluriel and Joaquim Ramos Pinto, President of AS-PEA. These people were invited to support the importance of the project and officially recognize youth transformative potential for achieving sustainable societies.

During the ceremony, youngsters presented their Educommunication-based productions and teachers read the *Education for Environmental Citizenship Statement*, a document written collectively during special teachers' sections at the Youth Conference. The final celebration took place in a festive spirit, followed by emotion of farewells.

4.5 Teachers' meeting

The teachers' meeting took place in different sections between the 21st and 24th May 2018 while the delegates were participating to their exclusive activities, namely the thematic and *Educommunication* workshops. The objective of the adult meeting was mainly to evaluate the dynamics of *LTCP* by sharing ideas and experiences, detecting critical issues and possible solutions, discussing about the continuity and the diffusion of the project. Table 5 summarizes the main activities of the meeting.

One important activity carried out by teachers was the writing of the *Education for Environmental Citizenship Statement*, a common document summarizing the main teachers' concerns about the project to be submitted to the whole *"educational community"* in order to obtain support and recognition.[77] Teachers also participated as observers to several activities realized by their students at the Conference, such as the Eurodeputies meeting, the cultural evening, the projects' fair and the debate with the Portuguese deputies at the Parliament.

Programme (Teachers)

May 21st

- 10:00 - 15:30 » Arrival and Meeting
- 16:30 - 17:00 » Opening Ceremony
- 17:00 - 18:00 » Eurodeputies Meeting
- 18:30 - 20:00 » European Food Market
- 20:00 - 21:30 » Cultural Evening

May 22nd

- 9:30 - 11:00 » Projects' Fair
- 11:00 - 12:30 » First Meeting: Program and outputs
- 12:30 - 14:00 » Lunch
- 14:00 - 15:45 » Writing Common Statement on ESD in Europe (1/3)
- 15:45 - 16:15 » Delegates' workshops
- 16:15 - 18:00 » LTCP Network in the future
- 21:00 - 22:30 » Free time, logistics, delegations meeting

May 23rd

- 10:00 - 11:00 » Visit Portugese Parliament
- 11:30 - 12:30 » Debate Portuguese deputies and "Parliament of Youngsters"
- 12:30 - 16:00 » Lunch
- 18:00 - 20:00 » Writing Common Statement on ESD (2/3)
- 20:00 - 21:30 » Dinner
- 21:30 - 23:00 » Games / Cinema

May 24th

- 9:00 - 10:30 » Work on LTCP future
- 11:00 - 12:30 » Writing Common Statement on ESD (3/3)
- 12:30 - 13:30 » Lunch
- 14:15 - 15:30 » Outputs' Dissemination
- 16:00 - 18:00 » Closing Ceremony
- 18:30 - 20:00 » Free Time in Belém
- 20:00 - 21:00 » Dinner
- 21:30 - 00:00 » Farewell Party

Table 5: Teachers' meeting agenda.

5 Dissemination

As planned in the *LTCP* step by step process, the last phase consists in the dissemination of its major outcomes in order to impact a greater number of youngsters and other stakeholders. The dissemination phase, scheduled in September 2018 during the back-to-school season, had already started with some first initiatives.

Supported by the local adherent organizations, country's delegates would need to share *"Let's be the change!"* in their schools with peers and the school principal as well as in their communities with the local administrators. For the diffusion of the document, the European partners are agreeing to translate *"Let's be the change!"* in the national language with the help of the interested students. In the meantime, the English version of the document has been shared with all partners and is published online.[78]

Some creative productions realized during the European Youth Conference, namely the individual commitments' pictures, were given to each participant at the end of the Conference and are published online by Monde Pluriel and ASPEA.[79] Advertisement posters as well as the teachers' *Education for Environmental Citizenship Statement* still need to be disseminated at the national level.

Moreover, the European coordinators are going to deliver the final report of the Third *LTCP* Edition by November 2018. Among other data, the document will officially convey the evaluation results.

A great success of the Conference has been the Youth Press Agency. During an evaluation Skype meeting organized at the end of June 2018, young reporters expressed their wish to collaborate in the next months both for the diffusion of the project outcomes and for the production of environmental-based information connected with *LTCP* in view of the new edition. Therefore, the Association Viração&Jangada is currently finalizing an Educommunication-based strategy to coordinate the international team. Monde Pluriel has shown its interest in following the process with Viração&Jangada.

At the Italian level, a first dissemination activity was organized the 5th August 2018 in Apulia with the collaboration of two delegates to the Conference during an event on recycling entitled *"Let's Take Care of the Planet"*. After the speech of a local administrator, two entrepreneurs and a marine biologist, the two delegates presented their experiences in *LTCP* to raise public awareness on the need to involve everyone, youngsters included, in the process towards a more sustainable and healthier Planet. As said earlier, the dissemination phase has just started with first steps in view of bigger initiatives to be organized in every participating European country starting from the mid of September 2018. As regards Italy, Viração&Jangada has sent to the Italian schools an invitation letter for participating to the next *LTCP* edition in January 2019.

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Assessment

Chapter IV has described the local, national and European process guiding *LTCP*, an Educommunication-based project with the general objective to promote youth participation for the construction of sustainable societies.

Implemented in Brazil with three National Conferences in 2003, 2006 and 2009, and with one International meeting in 2010, the project has been re-launched in Europe since 2009 replicating the same structural and methodological aspects. By tackling the themes promoted by the Sustainable Development Goals and those of solidarity and citizenship, *LTCP* has affected a large spectrum of actors including adolescents as main protagonists, young facilitators, teachers and members of the scientific and political community. Tied to the notion of responsibility, the project stands out from other environmental education projects as it promotes educommunicative processes, which are guaranteed by three fundamental pillars: *youth chooses youth*, *youth educates youth* and *one generation learns with another*.

Chapter IV has outlined the major activities and results of the latest edition of the project (2017-2018) carried out in Italy in 17 schools over 7 regions and, then, at the European level with the participation of 10 European countries at the Youth Conference organized in May 2018 in Lisbon. The described activities and project outcomes revealed that youngsters were the true managers of every process.

The project has not just put young people in the foreground by recognizing their potential but has made them actors of change. This means that *LTCP* does not only recognize the importance of youth participation, but rather empowers adolescents, namely gives them the necessary *knowledge* and *motivation* to participate in the transformation of the world.

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[1]Information gathered personally during the facilitators' training for the European Youth Conference *Let's Take Care of the Planet* in May 2018.

[2]Ministério do Meio Ambiente Ministério da Educação, *Passo a passo para a Conferência do Meio Ambiente na Escola - II Conferência Nacional Infanto-Juvenil pelo Meio Ambiente. Vivendo a Diversidade na Escola* (Brasilia, Brazil, 2005).

[3]Rachel Trajber, "Let's Take Care of the Planet: Education for Sustainable Societies," ed. Brazil Ministry of Education, *UNESCO*, 2010, p. 2.

[4]Ministério do Meio Ambiente Ministério da Educação, *Final Report of the Children and Youth International Conference* (Luziânia (GO) and Brasília (DF): Let's Take Care of the Planet, June 10, 2010), p. 5-6.

[5]Ibid., p. 6.

[6]Ministério da Educação, Ministério do Meio Ambiente, UNDP, UNESCO, *Let's Take Care of the Planet, promotional material (video)*, `http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/?s=films_details&pg=33&vl=Por&id=2463&vo`.

[7]Trajber, "Let's Take Care of the Planet: Education for Sustainable Societies," p. 3.

[8]Third National Conference - Let's Take Care of Brazil, *Regulation: Children and Youth International Conference - Let's take care of the planet* (2009).

[9]Ministério da Educação, *Final Report of the Children and Youth International Conference*, p. 6.

[10]Italy was a member of the European network. Nevertheless, the Brazilian call to Italy to join the project was not accepted by the Italian Education Ministry (at that time represented by the Minister Mariastella Gelmini), but rather by other stakeholders: the NGO Percorsi di Pace, the Association Jangada, the research center CNR - Area della Ricerca di Bologna, UNICEF Italy, Istituto degli Innocenti in Firenze, the Environmental Department at the Municipality of Casalecchio, the Municipality of Cles, the NGO EnergoClub, the Italian Association for Media Education-MED, Viração Educomunicação.

[11]Monde Pluriel, *Final Report of the 2nd European Youth Conference* (Brussels: Let's Take Care of the Planet Europe, May 23, 2015), p. 4.

[12]Of the total 658, there were 323 young delegates aged between 12 and 15, 69 youth facilitators between 18 and 25 years old, 110 accompanying adults, 20 administrative staff, 82 workshop leaders, 54 members of the coordination and support staff. Of the 47 countries present, 38% came from the Americas, 24% from Asia and the Pacific, 21% from Africa and 17% from Europe (Germany, Spain, France, French Guyana, Italy, Portugal, Czech Republic, Turkey and Russia). Italy was present with 8 delegates, 1 facilitator and 2 accompanying adults. See: ibid., p. 17-19.

[13]Ministério da Educação, *Final Report of the Children and Youth International Conference*, p. 5.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Children and Youth International Conference, *Charter of Responsibilities Let's Take Care of the Planet*, Luziânia - GO, Brasilia - DF, Brazil, 2010.

[16]Ministério da Educação, *Final Report of the Children and Youth International Conference*, p. 29.

[17]Ibid., p. 75.

[18]Ibid.

[19]The European delegation was composed by 5 adolescents aged between 14 and 16 (including one girl from Italy), 2 facilitators between 24 and 25 years old and 8 accompanying adults.

[20]The Forum of Ethics & Responsibilities (FER) is made up of professional and thematic networks, and organizations calling for *"an international effort of renewed reflection in communities, civil society, different sectors of the economy and the intellectual world as well as at political levels, on the relevance of individual and collective responsibility for the future of humankind and the planet"*. See: `http://www.ethica-respons.net/About-Us?lang=fr` [accessed 19/08/2018].

[21]Probably, political reasons influenced the end of the project. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva served two terms as President and left office on 1st January 2011.

[22]Among the 139 people involved, there were 60 delegates between 13 and 16 years old, 23 adult chaperones - mostly professors, 10 facilitators between 18 and 30 years old, 5 technical facilitators, 15 methodological facilitators, 5 media-coverage operators, 6 guests, and 13 volunteer interpreters. See: Monde Pluriel, *Final Report of the 2nd European Youth Conference*, p. 5.

[23]Netherlands participated to *Let's Take Care of the Planet* at the national level. At the European level the country sent only 1 methodological facilitator. Among the 161 people involved, there were 69 delegates between 13 and 16 years old, 25 adult chaperones, 11 methodological facilitators between 18 to 30 years old, 13 workshop facilitators, 2 art facilitators, 3 communication coverage experts, 12 interpreters, 1 facilitator trainer, 5 guests, 7 elected officials and members of the European institutions, 4 technical facilitators, 9 European organizers. See: ibid., p. 26.

[24]Ministério da Educação, *Final Report of the Children and Youth International Conference*, p. 7.

[25]Monde Pluriel, *Step by Step Guide Towards the 3rd European Youth Conference in Lisbon, May 2018*, 2017/18 Edition (Lisbon: Let's Take Care of the Planet Europe, 2018). See also: `https://europeanconference.wixsite.com/ltcp/about` and `http://careplanet-europe.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=11&Itemid=153&`

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`lang=en` [accessed 11/08/2018].

[26]Ministério da Educação, *Final Report of the Children and Youth International Conference*, p. 7.

[27]Monde Pluriel, *Step by Step Guide Towards the 3rd European Youth Conference in Lisbon, May 2018*.

[28]Monde Pluriel, *Thematic Brochure: Points for Consideration for Debating Sustainable Development Issues*, Project 2013-2015 (Let's Take Care of the Planet Europe, 2015).

[29]Viração&Jangada and CNR - Area della ricerca di Bologna, *Guida passo a passo: Prendiamoci cura del pianeta*, Edizione 2016-2018 (Let's Take Care of the Planet Europe, 2018), p. 9.

[30]Monde Pluriel, *Final Report of the 2nd European Youth Conference*, p. 7.

[31]Monde Pluriel, *Step by Step Guide Towards the 3rd European Youth Conference in Lisbon, May 2018*, p. 20.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Monde Pluriel, *Final Report of the 2nd European Youth Conference*, p. 7.

[36]Monde Pluriel, *Step by Step Guide Towards the 3rd European Youth Conference in Lisbon, May 2018*, p. 20.

[37]*Educommunication* workshops were already included in the three previous Children and Youth National Conferences for the Environment *Let's Take Care of Brazil* in 2003, 2006 and 2009. See: Ministério da Educação, *Final Report of the Children and Youth International Conference*, p. 31.

[38]All examples described in this section have been collected from the file archive of the Association Viração&Jangada which registered at least two responsibilities and actions per adherent school.

[39]The countries involved in the national dynamics of the third edition of *Let's Take Care of the Planet - Europe* were Denmark, Spain, France (including French Guyana), Georgia, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania and Turkey.

[40]As main reference for the process of 2017-2018, Monde Pluriel has published a *Step by Step Guide - Towards the Third European Youth Conference*. Moreover, a dedicated website has been created available at: `http://careplanet-europe.org/` as well as a Facebook page. The Italian Association Viração&Jangada has adjusted and translated in Italian the *Step by Step Guide* in order to deliver it to every adherent school. This section refers specifically to the *Step by Step Guide* and to its translated Italian publication *Passo a Passo - Prendiamoci Cura del Pianeta: indagare, dibattere, impegnarsi*.

[41]Viração Educomunicação is located in San Paolo (Brazil), founded in 2003 by the jour-

nalist and educommunicator Paulo Lima and recognized by UNICEF, UNESCO, USP, ANDI and Ashoka. See Chapter III: The role of the educommunicator through the practice of Viração.

[42]Ibid., p. 17.

[43]The high school *Liceo Girolamo Comi* illustrates another example. Students devoted some preparatory lectures to tackle issues related to the environment and consequently they organized thematic debates and watched documentaries related to environmental problems. Although debating activities and documentaries are simple educational methodologies, they allow young people to reflect on their personal concerns and eventually choose an interesting sub-theme to which, perhaps, they would have not given much attention before.

[44]As another example, the high school *Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore di Stato Giuseppe Greggiati* organized field observations to collect samples of water rivers in order to analyze them and check their degree of pollution.

[45]At the high school *Liceo Bertrand Russell*, students took the responsibility of reducing waste by substituting the plastic cups at the coffee machines with ceramic cups. The idea was that each student would have brought a ceramic cap from home to be stored in his or her personal locker and used during the coffee break.

[46]For example, to improve the quality of living in the city of Catania, the high school *Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore Enrico Fermi - Filippo Eredia* decided to adopt a public park in the city with the support of the municipal Department of Ecology and Environment and of other stakeholders. Indeed, the school managed the park by starting cleaning and repairing some spaces (squares, fountains, walls, etc.) in collaboration with volunteering associations and experts as well as with the help of the administration. To revive the park, students decided to host every Saturday exhibitions and events for the citizenry.

[47]The advertising poster is an *Educommunication* tool introduced originally at the Children and Youth International Conference in Brazil in 2010. A manual for its realization has been created by Monde Pluriel in order to maintain its educommunicative character. See: Monde Pluriel, *Guida per la Creazione del Manifesto Pubblicitario*, Translated to Italian by CNR - Area della ricerca di Bologna (2017).

[48]See an example in English in the annexes. The advertising poster was realized by the high school *Istituto Tecnico Industriale Fermi-Gadda* in Naples (Campania).

[49]Watch the video at: `http://www.giornalistinellerba.org/opere/eco-hackers/`.

[50]The students of the high school *Liceo Girolamo Comi* organized an exhibition and a contest among the advertising posters realized during the Educommunication-based activities. The best poster was elected by the majority of votes expressed by all school staff including teachers, other students, the school principal, administrative stuff, etc.

[51]The students attending the high school *Liceo Martino Martini* exhibited in their canteen

various posters about the true environmental costs linked to the massive consumption of meat.

[52]A group of students of the high school *Istituto Tecnico Industriale Fermi-Gadda* organized a laboratory for schoolmates to teach them how to recycle trash properly.

[53]During the Earth Day, a group of students of the school *Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore Enrico Fermi - Filippo Eredia* (Sicily) gathered at the urban park Gioeni in the city of Catania in order to clean it from rubbish.

[54]Students of the middle schools *Istituto Comprensivo Giovanni Pascoli*, *Istituto Comprensivo Dante Alighieri*, *Istituto Comprensivo Fontanarossa* and of the high school *Istituto Superiore Gaetano Salvemini* committed to clean their local beaches from waste.

[55]Students of the high school *Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore di Stato Giuseppe Greggiati* cleaned ditches in their city in Poggio Rusco (Lombardy).

[56]The high school *Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore Sandro Pertini* committed to mobilize schoolmates, parents and their communities to donate for buying trees to be planted by students and volunteers in the schoolyard and in other sites selected in collaboration with the municipality of Genzano.

[57]In sum, the National Conference hosted in Bologna 52 delegates aged between 11 and 17, 14 teachers and 3 staff members (Paulo Lima and Giulia De Paoli from the Association Viração&Jangada, and Francesca Alvisi, researcher at the C.N.R. Research Area).

[58]The presentations' topics directed both at students and at teachers were: Sustainable Development Goals, Threshold Effects of Climate Change and Ocean Literacy. Presentations were prepared and given by Francesca Alvisi, researcher at the C.N.R. Research Area.

[59]The *Italian Charter of Responsibilities* can be consulted in the annexes.

[60]I was personally involved in the organization and facilitation of the National Conference as member to the team of Viração&Jangada.

[61]In order to avoid youngsters voting for their schoolmates, students had to choose among the delegates of the other schools.

[62]Here, the names of the partner organizations in the participating European countries which were responsible for managing the national dynamics and that sent the country's delegation in Portugal. Belgium: *Service Volontaire International (SVI)*, international volunteering association; Denmark: *Baltic Sea Project Denmark*, international network of schools in the Baltic Sea area; France: *Monde Pluriel*, environmental education NGO; Georgia: *Women for Country's Future*, NGO; Italy: *Viração&Jangada*, environmental education NGO; Lithuania: *Vilnius Žemynos Gymnasium*, high school; Portugal: *ASPEA*, environmental education NGO; Romania: *APDD-Agenda 21* (Assistance and Programs for Sustainable Development - Agenda 21), NGO; Spain: *Ingurugela*, Regional Department of Education of the Basque Government; Turkey: *Turçev*, NGO. See: Monde Pluriel, *Participant Guide of the 3rd European*

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Youth Conference (Cascais, Oeiras and Lisbon: Let's Take Care of the Planet Europe, May 25, 2018).

[63]I participated to the European Youth Conference as the Italian facilitator.

[64]Facilitators came from 10 European countries, one from each adherent country except for Belgium, represented by four facilitators, Portugal by three facilitators and Denmark by two facilitators.

[65]The three facilitators' trainers were Nina Taarabit from Monde Pluriel, Laura Gonzalez from ASPEA and Cristina Gonzales Torrents.

[66]The data relating to the number of impacted schools, students and teachers have been delivered by Monde Pluriel to the Association Viração&Jangada by email. They are not yet officially published. The Association Viração&Jangada has verified its data (those refer exclusively to participants impacted directly).

[67]The Eurodeputes involved in the opening ceremony were: Ana Gomes, Marisa Matias, Carlos Zorrinho, José Ignácio Faria, João Ferreira.

[68]As reported by Birk Faxe, Danish delegate: *"During the dialogue, the Eurodeputies mentioned that nature cannot be separated by borders. This led to the discussion of the fact that we can't talk about borders when we talk about the climate, but that we will have to work together and embrace each other's different stands and needs. They also talked some more about how it is impossible to avoid the trend to globalize, but also how important it is to do it in a way that won't hurt the environment [. . .] And last, but not least, they talked how everything is connected and that we cannot speak just of a financial-, a social- or a environmental aspects, but that we have to create a harmony between the different sectors of politics if we want to have a chance of changing the world for the better"*. See: Youth Press Agency, "Talking politics with the Euro deputies," [accessed 14/08/2018], 2018, `http://www.youthpressagency.org/destinazionenews-ambiente?art=196`.

[69]*World's Largest Lesson* introduces the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals to children and young people everywhere and unites them in action. See the video at: `https://vimeo.com/138852758` (part 1) and `https://vimeo.com/178464378` (part 2).

[70]The Georgian delegation asked specifically:*"As we have already mentioned, Georgia has not introduced the waste sorting system, while it is already quite advanced in Portugal. What advice would you give to Georgia in this direction?"*.

[71]The Italian delegation asked specifically: *"In the last few years Italy has invested a lot in clean energy such as wind, solar, geothermal and hydro electric energy. Indeed, many Italian people have converted to renewable energy, and now Italy produces more than thirty percent of green energy. We would like to know what the Portuguese policy is about this topic and how the people feel about renewable energy"*.

[72]The Romanian delegation asked about Portugal's interest in submitting a voluntary annual report in 2018 on the status of implementation of the SDGs.

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[73]In the previous editions of *LTCP*, the Youth Press Agency was planned together with other *Educommunication* workshops as a specific activity for one or two moments in the Conference. This time, the methodological committee, and in particular the Italian Association Viração&Jangada, aimed at promoting a permanent Youth Press Agency in order to focus more on *Educommunication* as fundamental paradigm for approaching the whole project's dynamics.

[74]The Youth Press Agency was created during the Social Forum of Porto Alegre in January 2005 and is promoted in Brazil by Viração. Over the years, the Agency has grown by collaborating with multiple local and international associations. It is coordinated by the Association Viração&Jangada with the support of the Italian Association for Media Education (MED), Unimondo Portal and the Cultural Association In Medias Res.

[75]Working for the Association Viração&Jangada, I facilitated the Youth Press Agency team together with the educommunicator Paulo Lima.

[76]The *Letter of Commitments "Let's be the change!"* can be consulted in the annexes.

[77]The *Education for Environmental Citizenship Statement* can be consulted in the annexes.

[78]See the online publication of Let's be the change at: `http://careplanet-europe.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=43&Itemid=257&lang=en` [accessed 22/08/2018].

[79]See the online publication of the individual commitments' pictures at: `http://careplanet-europe.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=42&Itemid=256&lang=en` and `http://mondepluriel.org/educom-affiches`.

Conclusion

1 Final comments on Educommunication

1.1 A universal approach?

How is it possible to realize an educational approach that is able to value adolescents by promoting rights, transmitting competences and attitudes, and fostering motivation to participate and transform the globalized world of today? The leading question of this Thesis has stimulated several reflections in the field of adolescents' right to participation, education and communication and has found a suitable answer in *Educommunication*. Emerged in the practices of popular movements and identified at the academic level as a new field of social intervention at the interface between education and communication, *Educommunication* promotes the human right to freedom of expression and participation leading to great public mobilizations and to the transformation of the model of society, both at the local and the global level. Through educommunicative projects that enable communication and culture, youngsters mobilize other youngsters to conceive their reality in a more critical and democratic manner.

In Brazil, several non-governmental and governmental institutions work autonomously with *Educommunication* for the promotion of human rights in different fields such as education, culture, child protection, environment and health. [80] *Educommunication* has become a public policy in San Paulo in 2004 with Law No. 13.941.[81] Other municipalities of Brazil, such as those in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul, are currently trying to achieve the same

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result. Moreover, international organizations have studied and sustained a variety of Brazilian experiences that seek to reshape formal, non-formal and informal education through *Educommunication*. For example, the NGO Viração Educomunicação, presented in this Thesis, receives international support from UNICEF and UNESCO since 2004 as well as by Ashoka, an international organization for the promotion of social entrepreneurship. [82]

However, it should be clarified that *Educommunication* is not a hegemonic approach. As noted by Soares, two different reactions have emerged over time: on one side, the tendency of the international community to see *Educommunication* as a specificity of San Paulo, while on the other side the desire to re-interpret it to mean *"education for media literacy"*, as it is happening in Spain with the magazine *Comunicar*. [83] Also Italy has chosen a particular approach in the interrelation between education and communication, namely the Anglo-Saxon version of *Media Education*, which is implemented at the national level by the MED - Italian Association for Media Education.

Nevertheless, this Thesis has explained that *Educommunication* is in any case able to distinguish itself from other approaches identified in the interface education-communication. This happens because it pursues a universal goal that is applicable in every context: changing society to favor a more open, democratic and participatory management of relations. Thus, it automatically follows that the achievement of this human rights-based objective cannot be realized exclusively for San Paulo, but rather for the whole human society. By analyzing *Let's Take Care of the Planet - Europe (LTCP)*, an Educommunication-based project in the field of socio-environmental education promoted in Europe since 2009, this Thesis has supported the argument about the universality of *Educommunication* showing that it can be also applied with success in different contexts.

1.2   Just a participatory activity?

As argued in this Thesis, *Educommunication* is defined as a *paradigm* and, thus, understanding it just as an activity or a methodology would

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underestimate its power and strength in the promotion of youngsters' right to expression and participation. According to the dictionary, a paradigm is *"a set of theories that explain the way a particular subject is understood at a particular time"*. [84] In this sense, *Educommunication* represents a set of theories inspired by the practices of social movements in the fight for human rights as well as by the pedagogical reflections of different thinkers like the Brazilian activist Paulo Freire. These theories explain the way every single individual has the right to be treated, namely as an actor in the transformation of the world and, thus, able to participate in the ownership and management of every communicative and educative relation. Consequently, this Thesis sees *Educommunication* as a human rights-sensitive way of approaching life with the objective of changing the traditional model of society which puts adolescents at the margins of decisions-making processes.

By referring to the concrete example of *Let's Take Care of the Planet - Europe (LTCP)*, it can be argued that *Educommunication* as a paradigm has the power to overcame the three obstacles for the realization of youth participation presented in the Introduction of this Thesis, i.e. the lack of recognition of youngsters as subjects of law, the inadequacy of the purposes of education and the insufficient motivation of adolescents to participate in the society.

First, *Educommunication* inevitably fulfils youngsters' right to participation at all level of governance since it is based on the recognition of every individual as active participant in the promotion, protection and monitoring of his or her rights. In this sense, adolescents too are recognized as able to think, choose and act responsibly in the society in which they live. Such first important consideration is translated in the step by step process envisioned in *LTCP*. Indeed, to youngsters is recognized the right to select, analyse, prove and debate the most pressing socio-environmental problem in the local community and consequently to find, realize and evaluate concrete and appropriate solutions and actions. The recognition of students' right to be the first actors in this process is the *conditio sine qua non* for participating in *LTCP*.

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Second, *Educommunication* enables youth participation by completely revolutionizing the traditional conception of education and, thus, the model of society. *Educommunication* is indeed a dialogic and humanistic form of education carried out through the independent, critical and creative use of the means of communication and culture by youngsters who are recognized as the first owners and managers of every educative and communicative process. In practical terms, in the activities of *LTCP*, not only have participants deepened their knowledge through open dialogues involving politicians, scientists as well as other youngsters; they also have planned and carried out together concrete actions, such as performances, interviews, advertising posters or letters of commitments, on the basis of their own interests and concerns and with the aim of mobilizing others to take care of the Planet. The planning and implementation of concrete actions in the community at the local and European level has favored free and creative exchanges as well as democratic and participatory relations between people. In this way, all participants have had the chance to acquire the competence of questioning the reality in which they live and to experience values such as the respect for others' rights, openness to diversity and solidarity.

The scope of education in *Educommunication* becomes therefore broader: through an alternative use of communication the paradigm seeks to transmit competences *and* attitudes to promote a human rights culture based on dialogue and mutual learning. In turn, *Educommunication* transforms individuals themselves, their community and the environment in order to achieve a systemic change, a change that leads to a revision of the model of education and communication and, even more importantly, to the transformation of the world. Therefore, *Educommunication* does not only put adolescents' interests in the forefront, but rather turns adolescents themselves into true actors for change.

Third, going beyond the valorisation of the individual, *Educommunication* empowers and, consequently, stimulates motivation to take responsibility and act to transform society. As affirmed by Marianna, participant in *LTCP*:

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"After having participated in this project and, especially after having dialogued with young people from all over Europe, I am now convinced that we, the young people, can make the difference: we can change things. During the conference, I realized that in contexts different from mine, there are youngsters who, by becoming aware of environmental problems, are committed to change the world. The project was a first step for starting to make concrete actions - not just simple concepts that we often study at school but that, once treated, remain there on paper. After this experience, I feel more responsible, I feel compelled to do something useful, to do my part because it is not right to wait for others to decide for me or to let things be imposed on me from above. [. . .] This project was a fantastic experience, an opportunity that inspired my motivation to get to change the future of the Planet!".[85]

Moreover, the promotion of a new model of education and communication based on open, democratic and participatory relations strengthens the feeling of unity towards a shared goal. In this regard, *LTCP* is structured as to let youngsters conceive the project as their own project and consequently act together as global citizens. By tackling socio-environmental issues, namely global problems that require individual and collective actions, the activities conducted in *LTCP* stimulated the emergence of a sense of common purpose both within local and national environments as well as with humanity. This is exactly the precondition for experimenting practices of global citizenship. The sense of togetherness has been one of the strongest feelings emerged during the project. As noted by Delphine Astier, director of Monde Pluriel and member of the organizational team for the European dynamics of the project:

"[During the project] incredible synergies grow because everybody, really, everybody has his role to play. So, all give energy to the project and it becomes possible. It's a common work. To me, the Lisbon conference was a collective success and I think that it was a bit similar to what we

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had lived in Brazil: this feeling to have created something together. I
think this is incredible. If I imagine the reason why this project is still
alive, I can say that it is because everyone in the group gives but also
takes. Because he is proud, has been nourished, has learnt things. We
are learning from one another".[86]

2   Suggestions to strengthen Educommunication in LTCP

I would like to end this Thesis proposing three suggestions for strengthening *Educommunication* in *Let's Take Care of the Planet - Europe (LTCP)*. They are based on my impressions as coordinator and participant in the project as well as on other contributions coming from the Association Viração&Jangada, Monde Pluriel and teachers' representatives at the European *LTCP* meeting in May 2018 in Portugal. These short considerations are outlined here in general terms with the hope that they can stimulate a deeper discussion within the European *LTCP* network.

2.1   Training

LTCP is conceived as a process that starts locally, develops at the regional and national level and ends with a European meeting involving all participating countries. The whole dynamics is supported by a specific methodology based especially on three educommunicative principles, i.e. *youth chooses youth*, *youth educates youth* and *one generation learns with another*, and on the notions of *responsibility* and *action*. Moreover, going beyond the methodology *per se*, *Educommunication* as a paradigm permeates the entire project.

However, one of the main coordinators of the project, Delphine Astier, has admitted that the *LTCP* dynamics varies a lot from one partner to the other: *"I think it's [the methodology] very much depending on the countries. At Monde Pluriel, we are supporting the network, but we cannot control it. [. . .] in*

each country the processes are very different".[87]

Variations in the implementation of the project at the local, regional and national level depend on many reasons such as time, teachers' commitment, availability of the national coordinating association to be present in the classes, number of involved students, funding, etc. As affirmed by the teachers' representatives in the *Education for Environmental Citizenship Statement*, time seems to be one of the greatest challenges of the project. Teachers would need both adequate academic freedom to develop the project with students during the curricular program and sufficient time to prepare activities, receive training, find financial support and coordinate the educational community, etc. [88]

On this matter, it should be recognized that it is impossible to maintain exactly the same structure in every country. Probably, there are also advantages in the flexibility left to the national organizers to adapt *LTCP* to their specific context. As noted by Astier:

> *"The idea is not to monitor: it is each country that has the responsibility to follow the project step by step. And this is also the idea at the origin of the project [...]. I think this is a challenge because if everybody begins to do whatever they want, the project becomes an event and not a process anymore. I think that the project could be better, if we had a better vision of all the countries [...]. [W]e know that the project has to adapt in each context and this is the power of LTCP: to give the possibility of adapting to the local situation, otherwise the project wouldn't last".*[89]

On the other side though, care must be taken to maintain the essence of *LTCP*. This means not to focus too much on the content of the project activities, but rather on the way in which these activities are conducted. In this sense, *Educommunication* as a paradigm supporting democracy and youth participation needs to be the guiding philosophy in the whole process.

Based on these considerations, a first suggestion would be to invest more time and resources on training the subjects involved in *LTCP* and, in par-

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ticular those belonging to the organizing associations at the local, regional, national and European level. Conducted in preparation for the project, training sessions should mainly focus on the core principles of *Educommunication* to provide coordinators and facilitators with more tools and competences to manage communication and education processes in a more open, democratic and participatory way.

Supporting this suggestion, the Association Viração&Jangada has decided to offer between January and February 2019 in all participating Italian regions a four-hour training for the teachers coordinating *LTCP* within the schools. The programme of the training will include a general presentation of the project, an in-depth analysis of *Educommunication* and of the role of the teacher as mediator of processes, and eventually a discussion on the scientific themes dealt with in *LTCP*, i.e. climate change and socio-environmental education.

2.2   Networking

LTCP is developed through different levels both within and among countries to confer a broad collective dimension that exceeds territorial boundaries. Despite this multi-level structure, it has been observed that one of the greatest risks of the project is that each country organizes its socio-environmental activities independently from the other countries ignoring the meaning and importance of being part in a European network. As noted by Astier, referring in particular to the follow-up phase:

> *"One challenge that I see is to keep the network alive without a final conference. We see that it's very hard to strengthen the network if there is no physical meeting. So, to me a challenge of the follow-up of LTCP is really: "What are we, all together, if there is no conference? If there is no meeting, where does all our energy go?".*[90]

It should be noted that from 2009 until the last edition, the project used to have only one coordinator for the European dynamics, namely the French

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non-profit organization Monde Pluriel. Monde Pluriel has been responsible for supporting the participating countries in the implementation of their national process and in the definition of the scope and methodology of their projects.

The great amount of work assigned to a single European coordinator could however be shared among the partners to favour networking and improve the quality and richness of the project. If organized with the support of experts in the creation of networks, a shared leadership would stimulate more transparent relations and strengthen collaboration and trust between the parties. Working together in the management of the project would also satisfy the need raised in the 2018 *Education for Environmental Citizenship Statement* to improve the sharing of experiences, methodologies and ideas between teachers coordinating the project in the schools. In addition, a united network would be more effective in the dissemination of the project outcomes and in the research of new partners and sponsors.

As agreed by Paulo Lima, coordinator of the Italian dynamics since 2009 and member of the European methodological committee, by sharing the leadership of *LTCP* it could become possible to appoint an organization to take care exclusively of the educommunicative aspects:

> *"In my opinion, the management of this European project must be transformed into a network. Every member of the network should take responsibility for a specific area or a specific theme of the project. For example, Viração [Italian coordinating organization] could deal with Educommunication. But, this has to be agreed together, together we have to understand what the areas of a potential network are to be treated, and consequently we have to divide among us these tasks. Every decision should be taken together"*.[91]

Networking has already started to produce good results with the first partnership between Monde Pluriel and ASPEA for the organization of the Third *LTCP* European Youth Conference in Portugal. Despite all difficulties,

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Astier from Monde Pluriel has appreciated the common work with ASPEA:

"I was satisfied with the cooperation with ASPEA because it was a co-construction [...] To me, one of my responsibilities is to make sure that there are lots of people involved who want to empower themselves and carry on the project. I wanted to work with ASPEA also to transfer my knowledge and the work done in Monde Pluriel so that it will belong to the network and not only to us".[92]

In order to strengthen the educommunicative and scientific characters of *LTCP* as well as collaboration and the sense of unity between all involved subjects, it is therefore necessary to invest more on the idea of networking in the future.

2.3   Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is an essential process in every type of project because it gives participants the chance to express their personal impressions about the strengths and weaknesses, evaluate outcomes in quantitative and qualitative terms and might create new opportunities for improving the project in the subsequent steps. As regard *LTCP*, participants usually take part in an assessment activity after the completion of each project stage. The monitoring of the project often consists in filling out questionnaires or in submitting comments and observations to the organizing association. Subsequently, data are systematized by the European coordinator in a comprehensive final evaluation report summarizing the main results achieved at the national and European level.

Until now, the final report of *LTCP* has focused especially on quantitative data such as the number of schools, students and teachers involved directly and indirectly as well as on general information about the type of coordination (NGOs, university, network of schools, local authorities), type of conferences realized in every adherent country (local, regional, national)

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and main activities organized within the *LTCP* framework and after the European dynamics.

From an Educommunication-based perspective, it should be noted that the current evaluation of *LTCP* tends however to underreport the qualitative side of the project. Indeed, it seems that issues such as implementation of educommunicative methodologies, level of students' participation, self-esteem and empowerment, behavioral and attitudinal changes, degree of mobilization of the whole educational community (parents, friends, local administrators, associations, media, etc.) are insufficiently investigated, and particularly as regards the national level.

This Thesis has argued that a better qualitative evaluation would need more collaboration and exchanges of information among the adherent countries, as suggested in the two previous sections, but also more specific assessment tools. In this sense, it would be interesting to involve research centers in the creation of innovative instruments for analyzing the tangible effectiveness of *Educommunication* in *LTCP* in terms of youth participation and empowerment, for example. An adequate qualitative evaluation of the project at all levels would further highlight the power of *Educommunication* to change people and the environment in which they live.

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[80]As an example, in San Paulo, the Department of Education implements *Educommunication* by law and, thus, an autonomous coordination composed by 25 experts in *Educommunication* within the department is in charge of conducting specific trainings for teachers. This approach ensures the recognition of educommunicative practices, knowledge and expansion of the concept in the city. See: *Interview with Prof. PhD Ismar de Oliveira Soares*.

[81]*Lei N. 13.941 (regulamentada pelo Decreto N. 46.211/2005) institui o Programa Educom-educomunicação pelas Ondas do Rádio, no município de São Paulo, e dá outras providências*, [accessed 30/08/2018], December 28, 2004, `https://leismunicipais.com.br/a/sp/s/sao-paulo/lei-ordinaria/2004/1394/13941/lei-ordinaria-n-13941-2004-institui-o-programa-educom-educomunicacao-pelas-ondas-do-radio-no-municipio-de-sao-`

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[82]Beyond the institutional recognition by UNICEF, UNESCO and Ashoka Empreendedores Sociais, Viraçao Educomunicação is supported by the University of San Paulo NCE-USP, ANDI Comunicação e Direitos, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Pontos de Mídia Livre and Ponto de Leitura. Moreover, in 2016, the NGO was recognized by the National Ministry of Education as an *"institution which promotes innovation and creativity in the education field in Brazil* [Original version: "instituição de referência para a inovação e a criatividade na educação básica do Brasil]".

[83]The magazine *Comunicar* is one of the most comprehensive quarterly research journals produced in Spain (Huelva) with sections in English, Chinese and Portuguese. The journal is specialized in *Educommunication* understood as education for media literacy. As claimed by Professor Ismar de Oliveira Soares, member of the Advisory Board of *Comunicar*, the definition of *Educommunication* for *Comunicar* does not exactly coincide with its original conception (i.e. Brazil, and particularly San Paulo).

[84]See Cambridge Dictionary at: `https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/paradigm`.

[85]Marianna Stancher, member of the Italian delegation to the European Youth Conference in Portugal.

[86]*Interview with Delphine Astier in Grenoble (France)*, Interview in English (June 2018).

[87]Ibid.

[88]The Education for Environmental Citizenship Statement can be consulted in the annexes.

[89]Ibid.

[90]Ibid.

[91]*Interview with Paulo Lima in Trento (Italy)*.

[92]*Interview with Delphine Astier in Grenoble (France)*.

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Annexes

A1: Interview with David Buckingham

Interview in English (excerpt) at the XXVII Summer School *La Media Education nell'era della post-verità. Dalle fake news alla creatività partecipativa*, Italian Association for Media Education (MED), Lucca, 3rd July 2018

David Buckingham is a scholar, writer and consultant specializing in young people, media and education. He is an Emeritus Professor at Loughborough University, and a Visiting Professor at Kings College London. He was for many years a Professor of Education at the Institute of Education, London University, where he was the founder and director of the Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media. Buckingham is a leading internationally recognized expert on children's and young people's interactions with electronic media, and on media literacy education. He has directed several research projects on these issues, and been a consultant for bodies such as UNESCO, the United Nations, UNICEF, the European Commission, Ofcom and the UK government. Buckingham has been a Visiting Professor at several universities in the UK, the US, Norway, Australia, Italy, Hong Kong and South Africa.

1. **Coming to the topic of the Summer School which is about Media Education in the post-truth Era, of course the topic of fake news is one of the main issues that we will be discussing. Fake news is not an isolated phenomenon, but rather a symptom of much broader tendencies in the words of politics and the media. What are these tendencies? Is there a role for Media Education to face these tendencies?**

   Well, we've been talking about fake news for maybe two years, maybe it's even less than that - I think really the beginning of 2017. So, this is quite a recent debate. Media educators have been teaching about news in the UK since the 1960s, probably before. We've always talked about questions of

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representation, it's a key conceptual issue in Media Education namely how media represent the world. So, when we look at news we're looking at how news is giving us a selected, constructed version of the world; so, we raise questions about biases and objectivity, we raise questions about how fairly different groups are represented in the media. This is really for us a very old concern.

One of the problems with the discussion about fake news is that we imagine this is a new phenomenon, but this is not a new phenomenon: it's part of a bigger continuum. So, part of my response here to say that yes this is important, but actually it's part of a bigger continuum of things that we really need to be teaching children about. We need to teach them about misinformation or disinformation or bias in all forms of news and all forms of representation. So, we're talking about news in an age of social media - actually now a lot of news is being spread on Twitter and on Facebook and these are things that as media educators we can be teaching about as well.

In a way, I think this focus on fake news really narrows the agenda. We need to be looking much more broadly. One of the things I've argued is that fake news is also a symptom of bigger changes that are going on. Part of my argument has been that we need to teach about the range of news, but actually we need to teach about changes in the media industry and changes potentially in the political environment as well.

[...]

I think if we're going to understand fake news, we need to be understanding and teaching about these bigger tendencies. And the problem for me is that a lot of the talk about fake news assumes that, actually, this is a straightforward simple problem and we can fix it quickly. So, what we'll do is we'll teach children to spot what's fake and what's real, and once we've done that we'll forget about what's fake and we'll just look at real news. My argument is: "what's actually real news?" These questions about representation, bias, objectivity, how the media give us selected constructed versions of the world - apply to all media and all forms of news. It's really not simple saying that we have truth here and fake news there. There's actually a continuum.

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I think there are things that are fake and false, I think there are lies. And I think there are also things that are true, there are facts. But, the problem is that between fake news and facts there are lots of things that are a kind of half-true or three-quarters true or things that are true in some ways and not true in other ways, there is where people are - as we say in England - "economical" with the truth, i.e. they tell us certain aspects and they just forget about other aspects. So, this is a complicated thing. Fake news in a way is more a symptom of something that is much bigger and it's the much bigger thing that we need to be teaching.

[...]

2. **How can you catch students' interest on the economic dimension of media?**

That's what I've been trying to do on my blog *[https://davidbuckingham.net/]*. One of the posts I did was to say how we understand this dimension, which I'm calling "production", but some people call it "industries", "institutions". I'm saying actually that there are many ways in which we can teach about this *[economic dimension]* and that are engaging for students.

[example 1] One of the first things I suggest is: *let's look at the Terms of Services of Facebook. You [Buckingham speaks to students]have all gone on Facebook or whichever platform and you just ticked that box. Let's look at this document that you've never read. What does it say? What does it tell us about the nature of this economic contract* - as it is an economic contract, partly? *What does it mean that you've signed the rights to third parties?* That's a very everyday way of starting with this *[teaching about the economic dimension of media]*.

[example 2] I think you can also look at these big companies and look at how those platforms work as companies in a public sphere. Look at a story. Fake news would be a good example of a controversy. Yesterday I looked on my newspaper on the back page of my newspaper there is an advertisement from Facebook and it says "fake news is not our friend". *Let's look at this. So, Facebook has paid many thousand pounds to take out an advertisement in newspaper and it's telling us fake news is not our friend. What's going on there? Is it Facebook trying to present itself as a responsible company because it had bad publicity because of the fake news controversy? Why is Facebook doing this?* Again, this is a very

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everyday thing. Students might see that in the newspaper. So, we start with something very every day.

[example 3] We can start with the search page of Google. *Let's sit down, you and I sit down, and let's put the same words into Google. What we find is we get advertising at the top* - I think most students would recognize what it means when it says "sponsored link", but maybe they won't. *So, what does that mean? Why do these things come at the top? Why is it that you get certain things and I get different once, I get different results? Why is it that if we go on Facebook we're getting different kind of advertising?*

I think one of the things you need students to be doing - one of the basic moves and educator - is to start with something that's really every day, that's banal, mundane, that is so obvious that we don't even notice it. And, then, we take a step back and we say *"how it came to be there?"*, *"why is that like that?"* *"what's going on here?"*. What we're doing is what the Russian formalists called "Making the familiar strange", i.e. trying to look at it suddenly from a much more distanced perspective and to think *"how did that come to be the way it is?"*. I think you can actually get some of these very big issues that we've been talking about like digital capitalism. But we can start from things that are really mundane and an obvious.

3. **How did you find the partners at the European countries?**

I've been thinking about this a lot recently. I think there is an easy cynicism that is very available to all of us, actually. Before, I was talking about conspiracy theory and one of the things you find in conspiracy theory is a feeling of distrust. In a way, this dynamic of trust and distrust it is partly what's at stake here. What you have very often within conspiracy theory is this sense of in principle distrust. It is almost a kind of common sense: *don't believe what they tell you, don't believe what you read in the newspaper* - this is what people used to say. On one level, we can say this is quite a healthy thing: we should be - I would prefer to say - "skeptical".

But, the difference between "healthy skepticism" and "cynicism" is that cynicism is a blanket response: we respond the same way to everything, we don't trust anything. The danger is that it becomes dysfunctional. Because,

actually, if we don't trust anything, then how do we function? How do we operate? We have to trust some things. The key point is that we need to think very hard about where we place our trust. That for me is being critical. So, part of what we're doing is we are interrogating sources of information and we're making informed decisions about what we trust and what we don't trust. That, I think, is different from this kind of generalized cynicism that I'm talking about, which is an absolute distrust of everything. I think that's not where we want to be, and that is not a good outcome for Media Education.

But this is a problem. And I've been writing recently and thinking: I keep using the term "critical thinking" and one of the problems is: "what is critical?". The danger of the term "critical" is that it's a kind of "us-and-them term": if I say that somebody is uncritical, often it's a way of me saying "I just don't agree with them", like "we are critical, they are uncritical". You often find this term "critical" that is used in this kind of "inside or outside" way. So, basically, if you see the world the same way that I see it, then you are critical.

For me, that everybody agrees with me is not the aim of Media Education. So, I have to have a different view of critical thinking. I have to actually be able to specify a bit more clearly what I mean. It seems to me that critical thinking is about skepticism, about sources of evidence; it's about checking lazy generalizations, it's about constantly asking yourself questions, it's about being reflexive about your own thinking; so it's about thinking about the assumptions that I'm making, it's about being able to go back to your own thinking and interrogate why you come to the conclusion that you do.

This is difficult and challenging. It's a general aim for education: we don't just want students to acquire information, we want them to turn information into knowledge, and we want it to be critical knowledge. When we mark an essay by a student, what we're looking for is for the student not make big generalizations, we want the student to use evidence, to be critical about that evidence, i.e. how useful, relevant and valuable that evidence is. We want them to interrogate assumptions and not come to easy conclusions.

The danger is that we are forever stuck in questioning and we never reach a conclusion. It seems to me, again, there is a problem that critical thinking

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needs to also lead to critical action. So. there's a danger that we get stuck in this sense of permanent doubt about everything. At a certain point we have to reach a position, we have to reach a conclusion. We may be aware that we don't have all the evidence. We may be aware that, actually, there is - for all of us - political thinking for example. It *[decision-making]* is often about emotions. It's not necessarily a purely rational process. But, we need to be aware of that: we need to be aware that we have emotional commitments and, perhaps, at some times, we have to proceed on the basis of those emotional commitments.

What I'm talking about is a kind of reflexivity about your thinking, that you are self-critical. But I think you have to be self-critical, but not to the point where you're paralyzed and you can't do anything. That for me is cynicism. Actually, cynicism is really easy. Cynicism is where you sit back in your chair and you say *"they're all lying to me, I don't trust anybody, I don't trust anything so I don't have to do anything, there's nothing to be done here".* That is not, it seems to me, the result that we want.

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A2: Interview with Ismar de Oliveira Soares

Skype interview in Portuguese, translated to English, 25th July 2018

Professor PhD Ismar de Oliveira Soares is a Senior Lecturer at the University of San Paulo with a Master's degree and PhD in Communication Sciences. He coordinated the NCE-Communication and Education Center of ECA-USP from 1996 to 2014. In 1999, after the academic research Comunicação/educação emergência de um novo campo e o perfil de seus profissionais he introduced the neologism Educommunication to designate an emerging field of social intervention in the interface between education and communication. In 2002, he promoted many Educommunication-based projects in Brazil such as Educom.TV (2002), Educom.rádio (2001-2004), Educom.rádio-Centro Oeste (2006-2007). Soares supervised many specialization and training courses on Education to Media directed at teachers, educators and journalists in different continents. He coordinated the implementation of the Degree in Educommunication at the School of Communications and Arts of the University of San Paulo (2011), working as Pedagogical Coordinator of the course. Currently, he is the President of ABPEducom, Brazilian Association of Researchers and Professionals in Educommunication.

1. **Which were the reasons in the 1990s for defining the concept of Educommunication and, therefore, for carrying out a research at the University of San Paulo on the interrelation between education and communication?**

   We have just finished the second year of the course in Educommunication which is open to professionals and teachers. Most of the participants came from social organizations. But, we also had a representative of the Health Department of the Municipality of San Paulo. She has suggested to organize an Educommunication-based project to mobilize young people and the society in general in defense of health and, essentially, against diseases that come from *aedes egity* (Cikungunha, dengue). This is to say that the concept of Educommunication is present in different sectors in Brazil: that of social organizations, in formal and informal education, in the program of the Ministry of the Environment and in area of health. I say this to introduce my answer to your first question.

   At the end of the 1990s, before the research of the University of San Paulo, the work that we did – I speak from my personal experience as a professor – concerned critical reading of communication. The work we did was valuable,

but could not bring about profound changes in the society. On the other hand, we noticed that the civil society, with whom we had many contacts, was able to approach communication in a way that the formal teaching system was not.

We perceived that education had two ways of looking at communication. The first had to do with criticality, critical reading. The education field believed to possess the necessary competences to guide young people in their relations with communication and that communication presented dangers for the formation of young people. So, education defended itself from communication. Secondly, education looking at communication perceived that the latter owned tools, methodologies and technologies that would be useful for education. So, it was a moral view on the one hand, and a utilitarian one on the other. These two visions did not lead to any integration. It was simply a critical look and an appropriation of technology.

On the other hand, we observed that popular and social movements - in that era there was not much talk about the word NGOs as today - integrated better education with communication. In reality, they were popular education activists working together with activists of the so-called "alternative communication". They two represented two marginal visions of education and communication. However, in the suburbs, these two visions were integrated. And this integration was strong and was able to put themes in the social discussion, it was able to mobilize people and involve adults – at that time there was not much to talk about teenagers and young people. These movements were fighting against the military dictatorship on problems regarding poverty, gender, Afro-Brazilian communities, indigenous people. These movements articulated well education with communication.

Thus, we decided to do research in order to see how experts belonging to the formal or non-formal education, as well as those involved in traditional or alternative communication production, were conceiving this interrelation. Unfortunately, CAPES *[major research funding agency in Brazil]* did not support us in this research because believing that educators had already sufficient competences in communication and communicators knew necessary things of the education field. Education and communication were conceived as two

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distinct fields, so the research was for them senseless. In the State of San Paulo, we got financed by the FAPESP *[public research foundation in the State of San Paulo]*, because they recognized the opportunity for innovation.

At the beginning, there were those who were suspicious, and those who believed but with reservations. We conducted research in 12 Latin American countries through a questionnaire and 25 in-depth interviews to identify the people's opinions on the matter. Therefore, we discovered that since 1960s some thoughts were circulating around the continent in support of new practices. But, as everything was secondary and peripheral, not in the heart of the system, nobody noticed or gave importance to it. What the research did was to systematize the multiplicity of thoughts supporting projects and practices by detecting the points of convergence of these thoughts. Throughout the whole continent, we found many isolated cases, but all with similar methodologies and thoughts.

To systematize these cases, we took the concept of Educommunication that already existed, but was synonymous with Media Education. The word Educommunication was more a synonym for critical reading and was little used in Latin America and even in the whole world. For example, in the 1980s there was a Catholic cinema organization called OCIC, today SIGNIS that had a small magazine called "Educomunication". In Brazil and Latin America, we advocated that we needed a unique word, because the term *Educação para a Comunicação* would have meant education prevailing over communication: it would have meant education looking at communication. And with *Comunicação Educativa* there would have been a predominance of communication, namely communication looking at education. Double words are sentences, not concepts. Understanding would have been difficult. So, we have appropriated a word that already existed and we have "re-semantized" it, to identify Educommunication with this Latin American movement.

I made a PhD in the US and in Eastern America they used Art to work with Afro-Americans and Indigenous people. Then, I discovered that this approach existed also in Southern Africa: to fight against apartheid there was a sort of educommunicative process to unite black and white children. Then, we

discovered the same also in India. That is, throughout the world this practice existed, but was peripheral. What we did was to say that it was not peripheral, but already existed in the everyday practices of society, that it was a paradigm supporting actions and that these actions were present in many places and transformed society.

We have also seen similar experiences: in France with Celestin Freinet, who brought the press at school with a dialogic and participatory perspective; in Poland with Janusz Korczak, who worked with democracy, dialogue and leadership; in Latin America with Paulo Freire, who argued that education was communication, otherwise was not education; and then also Mário Kaplún in Uruguay. The research recognized the existence of these scholars with their thoughts that could be systematized, identified people who worked according to these thoughts and described their activities and how to advance in other directions.

What we did initially was to bring the concept of Educommunication to a much closed network of public schools, that of the Municipality of San Paolo, and we implemented the *Educom.radio* project. The goal was not technological, but rather to support the teaching processes and fight violence in the school. Educommunication was seen as possibly able to reduce violence in schools. We brought the soul and the heart of the non-formal education into formal education, we brought at school popular and social movements. We said we were not giving a course for teachers, but we wanted to work with the community, everybody: students, teachers and community members all together; we would have not worked during school time, but on Saturdays in different spaces to gather people, not within the school. So, we managed to break the school structure and bring within the same school a sort of mobilization that is typical of social movements: a freer attitude and the questioning of human relations in communication. When we met with teachers, we discussed about the reasons they were together and how they could produce communication together. We taught children to do radio, and then they themselves taught to their teachers.

We worked 7 semesters: in 3 years and a half we worked with 455 public

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schools. And we have succeeded in introducing practices of popular and social movements into this universe. Today, we have 750 educational projects underway in the schools of San Paulo; it has become a public policy. We know that this paradigm of Educommunication is not yet a hegemonic paradigm. The school is not educommunicative, but it can now accept Educommunication-based projects. These projects take care of the environment, amplify and lead the philosophy of Educommunication to other sectors.

2. **Educommunication is defined as a new field of social intervention or as a paradigm rather than as an education and communication methodology. Why?**

Any methodology is allied or is the result of some references. For example, let's talk about information and communication technologies, i.e. ICT. Educators use very much the expression ICT to "modernize" teaching. But, teaching remains traditional. They use technology to reinforce traditional teaching. In this sense, it is understood that the teacher must dominate technologies and apply them to teaching. In this case, technology obeys a previous paradigm, i.e. it must improve what already exists. There is therefore a traditional education that will be improved through the use of technologies. So, technology is not a revolution *per se* because it produces faster action for thoughts that already exist, which are already accepted by everybody. Technology, which can reach any place, is sold by big technology companies like innovative. The concept of innovation says that everything is fine like that, that we will continue as before with just some adjustments to improve certain aspects.

When we talk about Educommunication, we do not speak exactly about this technology, but we talk about the paradigm behind this technology. When we *[educommunicators]* talk with schools about technology, we mean how students and teachers or how social movements can start an empowerment process, how they can dominate technology as a function of collective projects that they want to develop and manage. While they dominate technologies, they also dominate the way to use them. Therefore, for us Educommunication is the paradigm that speaks of democratic and participatory management and of dialogic processes, and uses everything that exists to implement this

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dialogue: our voice, our song, our dance, the radio, the TV, Internet and new technologies. All these technologies are subject to the Educommunication paradigm. In the interface between education and communication or between education and technology there is life that emerges, which arises and orients procedures. This life is Educommunication. Today, we can for example dialogue with the health system in San Paulo to think of a project to mobilize people for the importance of vaccines to safeguard life from the diseases transmitted by the *aedes egipty*. The population is opposing to vaccines, but every 3 years there is a great crisis caused by these diseases. The media talk about it and education as well, but so far we have not been able to mobilize people. So, it has been thought that Educommunication could help to mobilize people in defense of health. This interest of the San Paolo Health Councillorship indicates that Educommunication can collaborate with society.

3. **In many European countries, Italy included, the approach towards education and communication has been formulated on the notion of Media Education. What differentiates Educommunication from Media Education? May you refer to the so-called *gestão comunicativa* under the perspective of Educommunication?**

Perhaps we are facing two different paradigms, or maybe not. We are now at a time that we look at each other and identify two points of view. These two points of view come closer in some moments, and then detach themselves in others. In some moments, there are even clashes: Media Education groups accuse the Educommunication ones of invading their territories. Educommunicators believe there are substantial differences with respect to Media Education.

First, I would like to say that Media Education presents itself as a methodology emerged in the field of education. It has its origins in the concern of society - especially in the area of social psychology - on the use of violence in the US and European media. There were many opinions on the issue of violence and sex in TV and their repercussions towards children. For example, religious movement blamed media in relation to these issues. Some studies claimed that society had eliminated childhood, because adults' issues

were submitted to children. Traditionally, Media Education had this kind of moral, psychological, sociological style that concerned the negative impacts of media. This movement has evolved and today it has not anymore such a narrow perspective. Especially with the emergence of new technologies, it has adopted the perspective of empowerment, i.e. making children producing communication. Children learn how media work, but also control them to produce communication.

Initially, in Latin America, Educommunication emerged with this concern, but then was not focused on the deepening of the themes of Media Education. Educommunication was interested in understanding what educators and communicators did, how they related social practices with education. Its concern is not exactly in the area of education about the reception of information, but more oriented to the management of communication processes.

The essence of Media Education is the gaze of education about media; the essence of Educommunication is the gaze of social groups on communication management. And, while talking about communication management in Educommunication, there are different possibilities to enable this management. One of these is, of course, education for the understanding of communication. One of the so-called "areas of intervention" of Educommunication is precisely Media Education, i.e. education oriented to communication which implies a sort of self-analysis: those involved, will make a self-analysis of their communicative action and will evaluate whether it *[communication]* is right, adequate, manipulative, and how the communication process is managed. Starting from this self-analysis, people will discover spaces and practices of Educommunication.

Media analysis is only an element in Educommunication: it is not central to us. Actually though, we have in Brazil - in Rio de Janeiro for example - different practices than Educommunication. In Rio, people are doing research and projects on Media Education: there, there is a program called *Midia Educação*, the literal translation of Media Education. They prefer the English expression. Their work is based on a project considered educommunicative in the 1970s, the first educational project in Latin America that worked with children to

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make films. It was born as a movement in Ecuador and, then, arrived in Brazil with *Cineduc [Cinema e Educação, non-governmental organization]. Cineduc* inspired the City of Rio de Janeiro to adopt this methodology. So, in Rio Media Education means working with cinema. Each school has a *Cineclub* and equipment to let children make films. But Rio does not deal with the issue of the management of processes. They work a lot with creativity, but following traditional rules for cinema production.

In San Paolo, we work instead with Educommunication. We are collaborating, but on the other hand we understand that there are different approaches and understandings. In Spain, in Huelva, for example there is a Media Education Network also active in Latin America and Portugal, which produces the magazine *Comunicar*, in Spanish, Portuguese, English and Chinese. It is the main magazine about Media Education in the world, it is the most complete. Recently, the network has invited different educommunicators to dialogue. There are not anymore reasons for an ideological struggle between the two groups. But, of course, educommunicators are trying to advocate for what we call an "epistemological coherence" in their actions. In my personal experience, I have noticed that the concept of Media Education has not lead to great mobilizations in Brazil. In Brazil, there are 10 nucleuses that develop Media Education in Rio, Florianopolis, Fortaleza, but public policies have adopted the approach of Educommunication.

Academic research typically turns into books or e-books that are made available to other researchers. This exchange can generate social transformation or not, but surely it offers new orientations. It is the set of research results that guides social organizations. In the case of Educommunication, there was a very rapid proliferation of studies on the paradigm. Between the 1970s and the 1990s, I perceived small steps in the field of Educommunication - they were groups of experts who were mobilizing, but were not yet having a big impact. Starting with the affirmation of Educommunication as a new concept and with the experience in San Paulo that put into practice the concept in the schools of the City, it was possible to start collaborating with other sectors. In the case of San Paulo, we had a law passed by the City Council in December 2004, determining that the Municipality and the Department of

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Education had to implement Educommunication. Today, the Municipality has an autonomous coordination within the education department composed by 25 experts in Educommunication who train teachers. Thus, we are ensuring strong recognition of educommunicative practices, knowledge and expansion of the concept.

Some other municipalities look at San Paulo to create their own laws on Educommunication, such as the State of Mato Grosso do Sul. There, there are 156 schools developing educommunicative practices. In 2008, the Federal Government created the *Mídias Na Educação* program, which provides Educommunication-based activities and projects - even if they are not labeled like that. There are several thematic areas to keep students at schools in the afternoon: the area of sport, the area of culture and one of called *"Education and use of Media"* that provides a manual written by educommunicatros. As a consequence, in 2017, about 4 million students from Brazil did some activities in the area of Educommunication within this national program. This was a great achievement in terms of expansion. But, we do not know exactly what kind of work was done because it was impossible to know if they actually dealt with democratic management, dialogic relations, etc. In any case, we know that the Federal Government recognizes Educommunication and this orientates and motivates us.

In the field of non-formal education, we are working on the issue of environment since 2005 with the Ministry of the Environment that has understood that the media and propaganda could not mobilize people to promote sustainability. The Ministry adopts the concept of "socio-environmental Educommunication", convenes seminars, calls us, and creates publications to explain the concept. Even today the Ministry of Environment continues to work on Educommunication-based projects. Many NGOs work autonomously with Educommunication throughout the whole Brazil. The expansion of the concept of Educommunication happens with autonomy, with decisions of public managers and with epistemological coherence that is the relationship between theories and practices.

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4. **Which link do you see between Educommunication and global citizenship, namely the consciousness of being part of a global human family? Can Educommunication help youngsters to feel citizens of the world?**

This was exactly the perspective at the basis of our research on Educommunication. Initially, the research was done on the basis of the recognition of citizenship as a universal right. It was because we had people working with this perspective that Educommunication gained legitimacy and sustainability. There is a direct connection between Educommunication and planetary citizenship. In Brazil in 2010, a national *Human Rights Education Plan* was approved. It starts from the perspective of planetary citizenship. One of the basis on which human rights education must be based is rightly that on media and education. It means that even media must work together for human rights education. According to the national plan, every state had to develop its program. In San Paulo, we insisted to work with Educommunication because we understand the right to communication as the essence of every other right. Media are present in the program, but they are not the main element. In September, we will bring our perspective to a National Congress on Human Rights Education. Also the Paulo Freire Institute and other organizations intend that in the interface between human rights education and media there is a mobilizing element that is Educommunication.

5. **How has the international community, and in particular UNESCO, considered Educommunication?**

The international community is bound to a Media Information Literacy Program, on which UNESCO works. The concept of *"media literacy"* is American and does not translate exactly the European Media Education movement, for example. UNESCO is trying to articulate the field of communication and information. It is trying to bring information to the field of communication. For Media Information Literacy the concept of Educommunication is a little strange. For UNESCO, these three words sum up all important concepts so they ask us to adopt their concept.

Actually, there are two reactions to Educommunication. First, they say that Educommunication is a specificity of San Paulo, of Brazil: it is not universal.

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Second: they see Educommunication as a "re-semantisation" of education to media. In Spain, for example, the concept of Educommunication was seen with diffidence at the beginning because there were already concepts such as education to media, media skills, etc. Now, they have begun to use the term Educommunication to designate media skills. The articles in the magazine *Comunicar* speak a lot about Educommunication. But in Spain, Educommunication is education for media literacy, focused on media and especially digital media. As the concept of Educommunication is a neologism, people use it as they imagine it. So, our Latin American perspective of communication management is not hegemonic.

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A3: Interview with Paulo Lima

Interview in Italian, translated to English, Trento, 2nd August 2018

Paulo Lima is a Brazilian journalist, educommunicator and social entrepreneur. Graduated in Philosophy, Theology and Communication Sciences, he directed the monthly magazine of the Comboni Missionaries Sem Fronteiras in Brazil and was one of the founders and editor of the Brasil de Fato newspaper, promoted by Brazilian social movements. In 2003, he founded the non-profit organization Viração Educomunicação of which he is currently Executive Director. With the institutional support of UNESCO and the University of San Paulo, the NGO aims to promote education for human rights, active citizenship and communication among adolescents using Educommunication. For his commitment in defence of the rights of children and adolescents he has received several prizes, among them Jornalista Amigo da Criança delivered by UNICEF. Lima is a fellow of Ashoka Social Entrepreneurs since 2006. In Italy he founded the Association Viração&Jangada, the international branch of his Brazilian organization Viração Educomunicação. Lima is member of the MED - Italian Association for Media Education.

1. **How do you personally define Educommunication and what do you do in your everyday practice in order to implement it?**

   First thing: as Paulo Freire used to say, first we do things and, then, give them a name. We *[Viração]* had previously done Educommunication and, then, the Communication and Education Center lead by Professor Ismar *[de Oliveira Soares]* came and said to us that we were doing Educommunication. Educommunication was defined by them, but we already did it. For us Educommunication is just that: it is how to embrace education and communication to change the world. It is when education and communication embrace themselves and are in synergy, that we can change the world.

   Then, we looked at the concept of the University of San Paulo because, although we already did Educommunication, it was important to reflect on our practice. Already in 2004, a year after the creation of Viração, two NCE researchers wrote an academic paper about Viração. We started as a magazine that was used as a pedagogical tool in all the 450 schools participating in the *Educom.radio* project, which was the first project to implement the Educommunication after the systematization of the University of San Paulo.

   And from that moment, we thought it would have been important for us

that Professor Ismar and his Center became our partner. Because we always believed that the University should not stay away from the community and, therefore, we always felt that it was important to also occupy an academic space, that also the academic space was part of our journey.

Starting from our practice, for us Educommunication is the air we breathe. I mean, it is the culture in which we are immersed, where we have shaped ourselves, where we have also questioned ourselves. It is that culture which takes out the best of each of us, that culture which makes us being "more" as Paulo Freire taught us. Thus, Educommunication requires us to promote social projects that are humanistic so that people can become "more". Being "less" means denying rights, being "more" means affirming rights. So, from the beginning, we have always taken into consideration that what we would have done inside or outside the organization would have followed this perspective of humanization.

This also means changing the approach with which we deal with those who participate in our projects. Considering the official definition *[of Educommunication]*, we agree with the University of San Paulo that Educommunication includes all those processes and actions that favor, create or strengthen an open, democratic and participatory ecosystem through a democratic management. But, we have lived Educommunication over the past 15 years in our own way, as it must be for every collective reality. We have incorporated Educommunication firstly starting with 5 approaches for systemic change.

For achieving systemic change, all educational practices and theories must start first from the person, from the self: I must be educommunicative. So, me, the educommunicator, I have first of all to live Educommunication. I, myself, have to promote an environment which is participatory, respectful of rights, open. Me, Paulo, through an interpersonal communication. It is very important to work with the self and this also means working with my fears, my dreams, desires, with the challenges before me, with myself but also with my family, I in my life, I in my city, I in the world. But the self for us in Viração also means the organization and how can we create an organization that does not use Educommunication as a methodology, but that lives Educommunication.

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Then, the self becomes an institutional self. That is, I, Viração have a charter of principles. The Viração's charter of principles of was created together with youngsters. First, it was created at the team level and, then, it was re-created together with the adolescents who were attending our projects. We organized an educational activity where they re-wrote the charter of principles of Viração. To live personally Educommunication means generating a participatory environment where decisions are made in a way that respects various points of view. We *[Viração]* are inter-trans-multi-disciplinary. In the team, in these 15 years, we had people coming from the world of pedagogy, communication, sociology; we try to replicate the regional diversity of Brazil in our team so we do not only have people from San Paulo; we take into account the ethnic-racial diversity too - we have always looked for people of different Afro-Brazilian origins; we respect sexual orientation - we have always had people who have enriched with their personal experience the practices of Viração.

Another important thing for us to achieve systemic change is "the other". I am in relationship with the other person and, therefore, "the other" becomes for me a reference point when I implement any kind of educommunicative methodology. When we concretely create workshops we always try to take into account these two things: the self, but also the other, i.e. the interaction between the two. By promoting exchanges between the two subjects, I can also promote debates on very complex issues on which youngsters have never questioned. When I talk about the other I also mean the methodology of peer-to-peer education.

A third point for systemic change is the collectivity. Change takes place together. And so in our projects we also take into account the community, team building, working in groups.

The fourth thing is the network. Networking means working on different levels - at the local, national and international level - as well as getting together to become stronger. A change in public policies - one of our purposes - happens in an intersectorial way. Therefore, the government, together with us civil society, and the private entities try to make a systemic change by

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networking. In this regard, Viração has not only participated in networks, but in these 15 years has created and promoted the creation of networks. One of the main networks was the *Virajovem*, i.e. a network of young people who produced contents for young people and also carried out awareness-raising activities. Together with other associations we thought it was important to do advocacy on issues related to communication and youth and, thus, we created the *Rede de Adolescentes e Jovens Comunicadoras e Comunicadores RENAJOC* in San Paulo. In Trentino we are also promoting the creation of another network.

The last thing is the environment, where the self, the other, the group, the networks are acting. And this environment can be considered at different levels - local and global – and so also means the school. When we do Educommunication, traditional or new technologies are the last things we are about to think.

If we take into account these five fronts, we must ask ourselves how Educommunication can foster a democratic management not only of processes, actions and activities or of the communication and education projects, but especially how Educommunication can foster a change of the school system. In other words, *[we have to understand]* what we can do to produce a real change. Because we do not want youngsters just to produce a video. What is of interest to us is the process. And not only: the main purpose is to change the school, i.e. the power relations between people, the way in which decisions are made and pedagogical projects are built. We want to change this by starting from a perspective of participation that involves everyone from janitors, students, parents, teachers, managers and local administrators. The concept of "educational community" is here very strong.

In the reflections made by the University of San Paulo or in all the academic theses done so far, I have not seen an analysis about the "educational community". Generally, people work a lot with the concept of "formal" and "non-formal" education. But for us, in every situation within or outside the school, we must always speak of an "educational community". We cannot forget that there is the self, the other, the group, the network and the environment. This is our vision of Educommunication.

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2. **Why have you decided to become from a journalist to an educommunicator?**

Perhaps, I was first an educommunicator and then a journalist. When I was 14, I was part in a group of young people at the parish and one day the Priest Father Joao told me that we had to create something to improve communication between us. So, I participated in a group that created a newspaper of the parish called *"The Dialogue"*. There, in the parish, with other two boys I learnt the alphabetization method of Paulo Freire and we went to use the method with adults in a *favela*. That experience for me was great; I developed a passion for Paulo Freire and his way of seeing education and communication - that I have always liked. For me, these two experiences were fundamental. Then, when I went to the seminary, I always worked with the interrelation of education with communication.

3. **Why did you decide to work specifically with adolescents?**

I've always worked with teenagers. For me, it is also a political pretext. Adolescence has always been seen as a very problematic and challenging phase, and I like challenges. But, above all, I see in adolescents a huge potential for change. I also see a denial of rights to adolescents and I see them not only as legal entities, but as bearers of great potential for change.

And then I see that few people want to work with teenagers because it's a very big challenge to work with them. For young people after the age of 18 is different: the phase of new discoveries is perhaps already passed and there are many public policies in favour of young people. I have never seen so many associations working for adolescents with the awareness that they are subjects of rights and have the right to active participation.

Then, for me, it is not working "for" adolescents: this is a rather paternalistic perspective; it is never just working "with" adolescents: even if positive - this perspective means "I do it together with adolescents" and is not what brings to real change. The real change is realized only "on the basis of" adolescents, namely starting from their desires, their fears, or their suggestions, and then by thinking about everything with this new perspective. This approach is different.

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It is interesting that in the first academic article about Viração, in 2004, two researchers had precisely identified these three points of view in our way of working, with a particular emphasis on the "on the basis of" perspective. In this sense, we engaged in a process with UNICEF in 2005 to better understand how to deal with adolescents. For example, to UNICEF Brazil we asked to create a Council of Children and Adolescents so as to enable internal policies being created on the basis of youngsters' ideas. UNIFEC accepted and created various mechanisms to encourage youth participation: youngsters create their political documents, write plans for 5-10 years, and so on.

4. **According to your experience, what kind of role should the educommunicator play?**

The role of the educommunicator is that of the mediator. To mediate is a practice based primarily on the Freire's conception of education. I believe that an educommunicator cannot ignore the wisdom of the thinking of Paulo Freire. Educommunication, even after being codified by the study of the University of San Paulo, comes from a look at the practice of social movements, from which I also come. I am not an academic, and I have been working for more than 30 years with Educommunication and it is not just a work, it's my life. Being educommunicator means to have a conception of education that is different from the traditional one that is the idea of education as transmission of knowledge. Freire's conception is not this one, but it is the one based on "return", i.e. on the student who learns when the teacher learns. Teaching and learning are indivisible phases, like Siamese twins: there is not one without the other. And this means establishing a horizontal relationship: the mediator must have a conception of education that leads to a democratic management of learning-teaching processes. But, not because adolescents, the "digital natives", should teach their professors how to use a Smartphone. This is still a concept of Media Education focused on technology and not on systemic change. Actually, I have never heard about the word "systemic change" in the field of Educommunication in Brazil or at the University of San Paulo. Viração works a lot with this concept. So, first of all, the educommunicator must be Freirian or even must go beyond Freire to read through his thinking the new

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challenges of today's world.

Then, the educommunicator must be a person of dialogue, of dialogue on equal terms. This means that a doctor in human rights or a janitor can be equally educommunicators and both must dialogue on equal terms. It is possible to dialogue on equal terms with everyone: whether the person is a manager, a student or a guy participating in an education project in a *favela*. We must not feel less than the manager, and not feel more than a student or a boy from the *favela*.

When you work with this perspective and you identify precise characteristics that an educommunicator must follow, and then anyone can become an educommunicator, anyone can do this sort of mediation. Viração, which was the first organization in Brazil to open a job position by writing clearly as a professional category "educommunicator" sees everyone as educommunicator. At Viração we have the Educommunicator-cleaning lady, the Educommunicator-journalist, the Educommunicator-marketing professional because, first, they of all have breathed the air of the Educommunication that the organization tries to live in its daily life in its relationships; and then, they have also learnt methodologies that help them to recreate a participatory, democratic and open environment and to manage processes democratically. And processes can be those consisting in taking the decision to buy cups, or buy coffee. Thus, the cleaning lady learns to handle the decision in a democratic way. In Viração last year we created an array of decisions. And so, the intern in Viração can make decisions, without me, the executive director, or the coordinator having to say what and how to do things. Obviously, there are ways to make this decision. The concept of emancipation in education is fundamental: if the educommunicator does not have a conception of "emancipatory education", he or she will not be able to help others to empower themselves.

The role of the educommunicator is fundamental, if it is conceived as a mediation. An educommunicator is not someone who knows more than others or who imposes his thought. He is not working "for", nor "with" but "on the basis of" youngsters. So, he will have to create methodologies, to promote

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activities to work "on the basis of" adolescents. For example, at Viração when we write a project, we do it for 70% while the remaining 30% is left for "life" - we say. We tell youngsters that we want to recreate the project with them. And so, we re-think part of the project based on what is interesting to them. In this way, adolescents feel motivated and start thinking about peer-to-peer activities or new themes. The pedagogy of the project we use a lot is this: let's do it together.

And this has to do with another Freirian methodology which claims that we are incomplete beings, we are in a process. The word "process" is, in my opinion, fundamental in Educommunication. For 15 years, we have experienced everything as a process, which is not easy. This means knowing that we can improve, accepting mistakes. We do not care so much about the final product, but rather about the journey. It doesn't matter if the journey has been tiring, it matters how we lived that journey, that process. I mean, if it is participatory, innovative, creative, if it favours the growth of the self, self-awareness and one's own identity. For example, at Viração we had many collaborators who made very personal discoveries and, for instance, were able to acknowledge their sexual orientation, or they were able to report police violence.

5. **How do you practically work with adolescents who are interested in your projects in Brazil?**

Once the youngsters arrive in Viração, what we try to do is to be as systemic as possible. That is we work with different media: from the physical body, to dreams. In our training courses, which are divided into three distinct phases namely training, content production and awareness, we try to pay attention to the self, to dreams and hopes, working on very personal issues.

An important methodology for us is based on the concept "the city is mine". In Brazil, adolescents who come from the outskirts often do not feel part of the city, they are foreigners since they are socially excluded. We, therefore, try to make them feel citizens. We take them to social places or cultural places that they have the right to attend: exhibitions, museums, parks. There are young people in Brazil who have never seen the Paulista Avenue in San Paulo,

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the economic and financial heart of Brazil and Latin America.

Furthermore, we try to involve them in the evaluation processes by asking them how they felt during the project, what could be improved; so that it is possible for them to feel the sense of belonging to the project. They feel that the project belongs a bit also to them.

Sometimes we also involve parents. We had a project called *Quarto Mundo on TV*, a TV project with the University of San Paulo that won in 2011 a national award for the best university TV program in Brazil. Once a year we had a meeting with parents and youngsters together. It was great. Because many times non-formal education projects do not take parents into account as subjects involved in the project. And it was great because the parents said *"Wow, I didn't know that my son was so good at interviewing or at being on TV"*. And here again the concept of "educating community" comes back.

6. **Here in Italy and in Europe we work very much on the concept of "education to global citizenship" whose goal is precisely that of conceiving a society that goes beyond the local level by using different educational techniques among which, in my opinion, we can also include Educommunication. In your opinion, can Educommunication really help to awaken the sense of belonging to a global community?**

Yes, I believe. Because, again, if we come back to the idea of "the self" and "the other", "the other" is not necessarily another person, but it can also be the Planet. That is, the Planet can also be a subject of law. Today in Brazil, we already talk about the right of the river. Then, when we do education to human rights through Educommunication, we try to work with young people with a broader vision. It is a vision that does not conceive the "uni-verse" but the "multi-verse", that tries to get out of the too much anthropocentric conception we tend to have. It means to go beyond a humanistic vision that also Paulo Freire defended and move on to a more holistic vision. For what I have read, also some of the writings of Paulo Freire have this perception of "planetary community". Actually, this concept was further developed by Moacir Gadotti, the current President of the Institute Paulo Freire and also by other theorists.

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We always have a holistic conception of all that we do: it means to see not only my part, but the whole. It means believing in a planetary citizenship. I give an example. When we work on racism we always try to connect the phenomenon and analyze it at historical level or geographically. And so, you start to leave Brazil, which is already is a country as big as a continent. Or, when we talk about climate change, for example, we start from the universal to get to my place, to my life in the *favela* and so I discover that floods are the effects of climate change, and that climate change affects me. No matter where to start – from the local to the global or vice versa - but this approach leads us to experiment, study and deepen feelings and this sense of planetary citizenship. It is fantastic.

Planetary is not the same as global. "Global citizenship" has much more to do with the geographical globe, with globalization, while "planetary citizenship" deals with the Earth that is a subject of law. I personally conceive planetary citizenship as a vision of the "being", as a connection between all living beings, therefore humans, animals and plants, but also as an African vision, i.e. that of the ancestors - because we, Brazilians, come from these meetings between different cultures. This planetary vision comes from social movements. And this, in my opinion, has not been captured by the definition of Educommunication.

7. **Last question on Educommunication. I think that Educommunication is certainly very much connected to the context where it was born. However, at the same time, you are now working in Italy with Educommunication because, as you said, it is also a lifestyle. Since you've been here since 2009, what can you say about the implementation of Educommunication in Italy?**

Educommunication is not only epistemological coherence for me; it is also a coherence of practice, of life. I use Educommunication wherever I go, in every country because I believe that every educational or communication process must lead to emancipation, to true systemic change. And if I believe that Educommunication should lead to systemic change and if I think that systemic change is a universal value, then I cannot conceive the paradigm of Educommunication only for Brazil. I cannot think, "Only Brazil needs

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systemic change". No: in every reality, in every school, in every company, in every church, in every public administration, in every institution where no participatory, democratic and open ecosystem exists, Educommunication must be practiced. So, for me, it is a challenge to work in schools. For example, in Italy many times the concept of education is still top-down, promoting a paternalistic perspective. But this also happens in Brazil in schools and even in Brazilian social organizations working with teenagers. I think that Educommunication must intervene wherever there are educational environments that do not favour human emancipation and autonomy.

Media education for me is another story. I am part of the MED *[Italian Association for Media Education]* since 2009, and there the approach is focused on technologies or on how technologies can benefit, learning or teaching, for example. But, there it is not emphasized that children must empower themselves, must become autonomous, must promote change. That's why we, in Viração, work with every kind of subject: from bullying, to HIV prevention, to racism. Because it is the process, the method with which we do things that is important to us.

8. **Focusing now on the project Let's Take Care of the Planet that is coordinated by Viração&Jangada, your association in Italy, which aspect or activity in the project is for you the most important?**

In my opinion, the most important activities are the small political actions that youngsters make during Let's Take Care of the Planet. As far as the advertising poster is concerned, the product is important, it is important how the poster is created - whether the management of the production processes of the poster have been democratic, open and participatory or not - but change is even more important.

Professor Ismar *[de Oliveira Soares]* says that Media Education is focused especially on technologies while Educommunication on communication management. According to my vision of Educommunication in this European world, it is not only that, but there is another element that is social change. I give an example. Bullying: youngsters decide to make a video on bullying. Thus, students learn to analyze critically the world of cinema, video and

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communication. They also learn how to make the video together. In all Media Education laboratories students work together and the media educator, following the Decalogue, must be a mediator. *[Until this point, Educommunication and Media Education can coincide].* But, when it comes to change I do not know if Media Education imagines anything other than the video itself. It is true, the video itself already promotes a change - which is already good - but, in my opinion, Media Education does not deal with other aspects. For example, I don't think that Media Education investigates what to do in the school if there is bullying. Educommunication, on the other hand, would try to understand what children can do together to stop bullying. For example, making an assembly together with the school principal to discuss the problem.

That's why at Viração, all projects we have, have three fundamental axes: training, production and awareness - we call it mobilisation *"mobilização".* In my opinion we must go beyond the critical reading, beyond the development of critical sense; we must go beyond the final product and we must arrive at change that goes beyond the message promoted by the final communication product. I'm interested in focusing on how to achieve systemic change, which can be through a performance, a flash mob, a signature collection, a campaign.

9. **Therefore, are you saying that the peculiarity of Educommunication is more than the idea of communication management as it is argued by Professor Soares?**

Yes, I see it *[Educommunication]* beyond management. And I would ask myself if management is really a differential. Professor Ismar has not lived in Europe in the last few years since education has been systematized 20 years ago. At the MED *[Italian Association for Media Education]*, and I am part of it, they focus on content production. And there what is missing is Paulo Freire, there is no conception of education other than the traditional one we live every day.

Actually, sometimes here in Europe, I find schools where there is not this thing *[traditional vision of education].* For example, the schools *Change Makers* that Ashoka *[international organization promoting social entrepreneurship]* is trying to identify all over the world are schools that have a very different conception of education from the traditional one. In these schools *Change Makers*, which

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are schools with original teaching methodologies, there is a conception of "educating community", of an education that is more democratic, horizontal, and so on. Perhaps they favor it *[systemic change]*. Or maybe not.

Again,*[what is important is]* the conception of teaching-learning. So, can a media education projects in Italy become educommunicative? Yes. Under which condition? Under the condition of promoting democratic management as well as change. There are different types of change. We can say that youngsters have changed because they became more autonomous. But, in my opinion, this is still a very subjective vision. It is not that conception including the self, the other, the collective, the network and the environment. This type of change remains in the self and in the other, sometimes in the group - in the class that has changed, it has become more attentive. But, the network is missing, and the environment is missing - that is, social change in the surrounding environment.

When young people make small political actions in the project *[Let's Take Care of the Planet]*, they are in contact with local associations, local administrations, parents, etc. By organizing a mobile phones collection for example, or an activity in the main square, or a flash mob, they start to raise awareness on other people about environmental issues - but it can also be done on bullying, racism and other issues. And all this goes beyond technologies. So, it's fine to use the Smartphone, the tablet, but why do we do it? This is important.

10. **The project Let's Take Care of the Planet is carried out in Italy since 2009. I believe it is very difficult to convey to the participating schools the peculiarity of the project, namely Educommunication. I saw personally the difficulty in maintaining and monitoring the educommunicative approach, especially when it comes to the European level. This can unfortunately compromise a fair vision of the project. The risk, in fact, is to conceive Let's Take Care of the Planet uniquely as an environmental education project. So, what is your role as an educommunicator when you go to the participating schools to present the project? What are you trying to convey to them? What do you say to teachers?**

First of all, we debate on the concept of education. The project involves the

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participation of youngsters in a certain way. And this is the *conditio sine qua non* to do the project. Concretely, I tell the teacher that students choose the macro-themes and the sub-themes. Sometimes, it happens that the teacher tells me that for the next year he had already thought about doing some work on an already-established theme. So, if the teacher has already chosen a macro theme, I tell him to let youngsters to decide on which sub-themes to work. However, the ideal would be a previous step.

Sometimes, I clash with a very top-down conception of education, where decisions are taken by the teacher, the teacher who has the knowledge, who scolds, who says that students know nothing. I talk to them about all the values like respect, horizontal dialogue, that I *[the teacher]* learn and students learns with me *[the teacher]*. But, I realize with you Giulia that we need more training for teachers on these concepts.

It is interesting that while I am talking to teachers about the educommunicative principles of the project, many are very open - they are teachers who have an open mind for change. So, when I see an openness, I share materials with these teachers - that's important. Actually, all teachers participating in this project are open-minded, otherwise they wouldn't have said yes to the project. And I'm not just talking about science teachers. Teachers of French, Italian, English, history, geography and mathematics are involved. So *[the project]* is trans-disciplinary, and this is very important.

11. **In your opinion, what is missing in the project Let's Take Care of the Planet and what could be improved?**

I realized, in recent years, that what is missing is how to evaluate this project. In other words, if students decide to carry out a certain action, were they able to make it the year after? If not, why? If they did it up to a certain point, why? Why not 100% as expected? A good evaluation of the project is to be done through a partnership with a university, with researchers who can create an evaluation system that is specific for Let's Take Care of the Planet to measure its impact. Until now, the impact of the project at local - Italian - and even at the European level is only considered from a quantitative point of view - number of schools, students, etc. But, how many actions have been promoted?

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And *how*? Maybe it would be interesting to even create a grid to evaluate participation, or to make an educommunicative evaluation. Professor Roberto Trinchero, member of the MED *[Italian Association for Media Education]*, created in 2010 a very interesting evaluation grid to evaluate a Media Education project. This is what we wanted to do in Brazil, also in Viração, developing evaluation tools for Educommunication projects.

In my opinion, in Let's Take Care of the Planet there is also a lack of communication between the different countries at the level of exchange of methodologies. I would suggest, for example, in each participating country, some training sessions for teachers on Educommunication. Because Educommunication in the project does not have to be an activity, it is everything.

In my opinion, the management of this European project must be transformed into a network. Every member to the network should take responsibility for a specific area or a specific theme of the project. For example, Viração could deal with Educommunication. But, this has to be agreed together, together we have to understand what the areas of a potential network are to be treated, and consequently we have to divide among us these tasks. Every decision should be taken together. In my opinion, we must take this step.

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A4: Interview with Delphine Astier

Interview in English, Grenoble, 8th June 2018

Delphine Astier graduated from the Institute of Political Studies of Paris (International Relations) and then in Territory Management (Economics-Grenoble). After completing her studies, she worked for six years at the Ecole de la Paix (Grenoble) as project manager for Colombia, coordinating advocacy and solidarity projects as well as educational projects. In 2006, she created the association Monde Pluriel. Currently in charge of the administrative management of the association, she coordinates the projects in collaboration with various actors. Passionate about languages, she founded Monde Pluriel with the idea of creating bridges between the current issues of society and interculturalism as well as networks between environmental issues and international relations. "Young people are indeed curious, inventive, sensitive and have a real thirst for openness to the world" – this is why she is convinced of the importance of raising awareness about citizenship-related issues at school.

1. **How was the project Let's Take Care of the Planet in Europe created and why did Monde Pluriel take the lead of it at the European level?**

   The European aspect of Let's Take Care of the Planet began during the International Youth Conference in Brazil in 2010. The Ministry of Education invited all the countries in the world to participate in that event and several European countries applied to go there. The foundation which is funding Monde Pluriel [Foundational Charles Leopold Mayer] was very involved at the European level and, wishing to create a European feeling, decided to create a network between European countries. At the national level we cannot face global problems, we have to unite. So, before the international conference in Brazil, we begun to create the network. At the global level we are identified as "Europe", people don't know France, Italy or Corsica, we are "Europeans". So, the network of European countries went at the Conference in Brazil but after it anything else was done: the Brazilian Ministry of Education stopped the project, the Brazilian coordinator quitted her job. We were a bit frustrated because we had lived such an incredible experience without later results.

   For this reason, at Monde Pluriel I decided to start the project, its process and methodology, at the national level. At that time, I didn't think at the European level. In parallel, there was another person, Lydia Nicollet, who was working with the Foundation Charles Leopold Mayer and had my same

wish to follow up the project at the European level. At the beginning she was working at the Foundation and also I, so we met like that, and the Foundation said that it would be good that Monde Pluriel existed as the link with the schools. Together we thought that, as there was nothing at the European level, if we didn't anything, everything would be abandoned.

With Lydia, we wrote a project and together we searched funds to finance the European dynamics so that it would not die and rather carry on. The Foundation Charles Leopold Mayer in Paris decided to help us to fund the project at the European level.

2. **How did you find the partners at the European countries?**

Well, most of them were in Brazil but actually there are two origins of the European network. Beyond all the countries that were in Brazil, there is also another network which is called the "Forum of Ethics & Responsibilities (FER)". It is an international network and both Lydia and I were participating in that. And then, new partners came because we met people at the Committee of the Regions, they gave us the names of the school directors and Lydia contacted them. So, there are three interconnections.

3. **As you said, Let's Take Care of the Planet was inspired by the International Conference of the Youth in Brasilia and then became a European project. Which main aspects and principles of its methodology persisted despite this shift from the international to the European level?**

The main principles of the project which remained are for sure the three pillars of LTCP which are "young elects young", "one generation is learning with another" and "youth educates youth". But, I think it's very much depending on the countries. At Monde Pluriel, we are supporting the network, but we cannot control it. And it was the same in Brazil: they sent us a Step by Step Guide, but then you don't really know - in Italy, for example I don't really know the process very well. So, I think that the strong things that remained were these three principles and also the notion of responsibility.

Another thing that is remaining is it the idea of *poupée russe* – when you have different dimensions: at school at the local level, at the regional level, at the national level and then at the international level. This concept remains, but

then in each country the processes are very different. I wrote years ago about the reason why this project keeps on carrying on: I think it's because these three pillars and the notion of responsibility are very strong and stronger enough for the project to continue. Educommunication of course but it's not the methodology is more an activity.

4. **If you are able, how do monitor the methodology that each partner at their own national level uses within the school to carry on the project? Being the European coordinator, do you know how the partners are dealing at home, or is it a very autonomous process?**

Well, we have notions and ideas, but we have them because I am here since the beginning. The problem in every human project is that when somebody goes away, the person goes with his memories. So, as there are new people, they don't know the network really well. The idea not to monitor: it is each country that has the responsibility to follow the project step-by-step. And this is also the idea of the origin of the project: Brazil sent us a lot of materials, we had outputs to send to them - it was a national charter - but the way this national charter was done at home, well, they couldn't control that. Sharing is a suggestion to work in transparency, but we cannot monitor all the activities in each country, it's not possible. I think this is a challenge, if everybody begins to do whatever they want, the project becomes an event and not a process anymore. I think that the project could be better, if we had a better vision of all the countries, but I know a little bit: I know the people involved. In the past, we had lots of a meetings of the European coordinators to prepare the conference. So, we met one year before to prepare. This year we couldn't do that so we did it with the methodological committee in Lisbon but there was not a representative for each country.

So, the idea is monitoring with Step by Step guide, with outputs and always by recalling the methodology of the project. But we know that the project has to adapt in each context and this is the power of LTCP: to give the possibility of adapting to the local situation, otherwise the project wouldn't last. Things take very long to change in our mentality, we need urgent changes, but we know that society changes very slowly and I think it's incredible to have a

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project that is lasting so long. For lots of projects, it's not like that: you to do them for 2 years and then you don't have funds anymore and you create another project. LTCP is incredible, it gives us strength.

5. **How important do you think is the concept of youth participation in Let's Take Care of the Planet? Are you satisfied with the involvement of youngsters in the project? How do you guarantee youth participation?**

Youth participation is the core of the project. Well, in Brussels we had very heterogeneous attitudes: countries sent delegates that were really involved, really engaged and that wanted to participate. Since the project is within the school framework, other students were more just following the processes, not knowing really why they were there. This is maybe because countries did the elections in the wrong way or maybe because in that class there was nobody very engaged or interested in environmental issues.

We have to be realistic, it's like in society: there are people very involved and others that take the opportunity to do something, but they are not so engaged. I think that even if some youngsters attending the conference and are not very implicated, the way the conference is thought will involve them - it's the main purpose - and at the end also they will feel more involved and more touched, even if at the beginning there were not; and for the others that are very engaged and want to do things and do already things in their schools, the conference of LTCP will help them to do more and to have more confidence on what they are already doing.

The election – youth elects youth – is one of the principle that has to guarantee youth participation; having workshops all the time, maybe small workshops in small groups is another thing that guarantees youth participation, because if you are sit down two hours listening to the Members of the Parliament, well you won't participate. For instance, when we had the debate with the Member of the European Parliament, the delegations were asked to prepare questions for them: that sort of preparation was to guarantee youth participation; the way the process was thought in the Parliament guaranteed participation: it was not just the politicians saying what they had to say, but each country had to present and each delegate had to agree within the delegation which project

to present. We are trying to change a little bit the habits and give more voice to the youth.

6. **Which is the role of the young facilitators within the project? How is it possible to become a good facilitator according to your opinion?**

A good facilitator is somebody who knows already facilitating methods, who has experimented facilitating workshops with young people and if he doesn't know, he is going to learn that during the training.

The ideal facilitator has to have knowledge on environmental issues otherwise the facilitator lets young delegates saying things that are not true. So, the scientific approach is important. Even if the facilitator doesn't have to give his opinion, he has to know what is right and what is not or at least able to say: "I cannot answer to this question, so I will ask a scientist and I will come back to you", but we cannot let youngsters saying things that are not scientifically true.

Another important aspect regards the attitude and the motivation during the conference to make it a success because I think that a project like this works since everybody has a role to play and facilitators have there a big role because they facilitate all methodological aspects.

Last thing which is very important is that the facilitator should be in contact with the national delegation, know what schools have done before - and this year was not the case, actually there were facilitators that didn't really know and this is not normal so to say. In the process, the facilitator should have gone to the schools before to know the students, should have maybe participated in the national conference to know how the delegates created the National Charter of Responsibility and so on, and after the conference the facilitator should also have a follow-up on the delegation and be the link with the LTCP network at the European level.

7. **You mentioned the scientific approach, and this was also one of my question. In relation to the main aim of Let's Take Care of the Planet, which is the guarantee of youth participation, how important is it to adopt a scientific approach to deepen the subjects that are tackled during the project?**

Well, it's really really important. The people who created and worked on the notion of responsibility say that responsibility is proportional to knowledge and power: the more power you have, the more responsibility you have and the more knowledge you have, the more responsibility you have. I think that environmental problems need to be deepen with knowledge because there a lot of things that we don't know and so we cannot have the power on these things. If you don't know something, for example if you don't know that the pesticides are killing you, well, you don't have the freedom and the capacity to fight that. So, I really think that the role of the scientist is to spread that knowledge and to be a bridge for the schools. I think that this is something in the educational systems of all over Europe that should be reinforced: we should reinforce very much the link between scientific centers, researchers and schools. Youth participation is great, but also the learning of the youngsters is important. Issues such as sustainable development, global warming, oceans, agriculture re very important. In order to participate, it is necessary to understand very well all these things, otherwise you participate but just to say that you participated.

While scientific knowledge is important, it is however not enough. I think that it's like we are walking in two legs: we use to say that we have to walk with our two legs which are action and reflection because if you are only acting but without reflecting, without learning, without knowing things, it is action for action; and if you just reflect in your room and you don't act in the world or in the society, it is not very useful. So, really, I think that everybody – I mean me, you, researchers, teachers - we have to take both actions and reflections, we have to follow trainings, we have to create links with researchers although it's not easy. For us, the scientific approach has to be adopted before and then you participate. I hope that all the schools do that. Because then you can maybe have an impact on politicians. There are lots of things to do with researchers; in that field, there are more projects that have a scientific approach and less projects with the aim to foster youth participation.

8. **Which are the main challenges for the implementation of this project in Europe?**

There are a lot of challenges. One challenge that I see is to keep the network alive without a final conference. We see that it's very hard to strengthen the network if there is no physical meeting. So, to me a challenge of the follow-up of LTCP is really: "What are we, all together, if there is no conference? If there is no meeting, where does all our energy go?" It's very difficult to have the network alive without a final meeting.

In Monde Pluriel, we are building the project and we do that because there is no other organization; but, maybe, in the future someone else will want to take the lead on that. This year we co-operated with ASPEA, we have to create co-responsibility in our network. I don't know if we will do it or not, but it is one of the challenges. I was satisfied with the cooperation with ASPEA because it was a co-construction and I think that if we don't do that, if Monde Pluriel stops, well, everything will stop. To me, one of my responsibilities is to make sure that there are lots of people involved who want to empower themselves and carry on the project. I wanted to work with ASPEA also to transfer my knowledge and the work done in Monde Pluriel so that it will belong to the network and not only to us. Thus, in that point of view it was a success.

Another challenge is the project funding because it was really hard to get financial support for this last conference. We tried to apply for two Erasmus funds and didn't got them.

Institutional recognition is also a challenge because for what I see, when people change, institutional recognition changes also. We work with the Committee of the Regions and if people who knows LTCP stop to work there, this recognition stops. So, the issue is to understand how to structure relations so that they won't stop in the short run, but will continue in the middle term.

9. **Based on these challenges and on the positive sides of the project, how do you evaluate LTCP considering the whole process that started many years ago? What did you learn from the whole process?**

When the International Conference in Brazil was created, they had huge means in terms of communication and people: there was a Ministry of Education involved. Monde Pluriel is a NGO with three people while the international

project was originally started by a Ministry. So, imagine. We are just a small organization with a big network. As a consequence, in Brazil the conference was really well organized and so we had a feeling of well-being. In the last conference we organized, there were less means and less people. Maybe, the logistical aspect and the organizational aspect could have been better. There were not many people present there to assure the methodological aspect and the logistical aspect, so the team could have been bigger and better trained before.

It was really a challenge to organize the conference from two countries with Laura because it meant to co-ordinate all the time, to make Skype calls, she did things we didn't know and we did think she didn't know - it was the main challenge to organize the project with all that distance.

But having told all that, I think that despite of the small means we had, the result was incredible because I think that everybody felt that the conference was organized and planned. At the beginning, I told everybody "Monde Pluriel is not competent, it is impossible to organize a new conference, we cannot do it!". Then, I remember that a colleague told me "You know, Delphine, I think we can make it!", I said "Wow, you think so?" because it was really a huge challenge. Now, it seems that it's normal to have a European conference, but it is not at all. This is maybe one of the nice things I learnt at the personal level: you think that things are not possible, you think that you are too small, you think that you are not legitimate and suddenly you suggest something and everybody gives you that legitimacy because they have confidence in you, in the project and its principles. Then, incredible synergies grow because everybody, really, everybody has his role to play. So, all give energy to the project and it becomes possible. It's a common work.

To me, the Lisbon conference was a collective success and I think that it was a bit similar to what we lived in Brazil: this feeling to have created something together. I think this is incredible. If I imagine the reason why this project is still alive, I can say that it is because everyone in the group gives but also takes. Because he is proud, has been nourished, has learnt things. We are learning from one another. I think that the new century has to be the century

of cooperation, otherwise we are all going to fail. And this project, to my personal point of view, was an opportunity to teach me how to co-ordinate all the people and see that everybody does something and at the end we collectively achieve a common goal.

10. **And on the basis of that, do you see a future for the project? And if yes, how do you see it?**

Yes, I think that now - 8 years later - lots of things have been consolidated. I have got the impression that the project is stronger in each country; maybe not in all the countries, but for instance in France there is a legitimacy that is growing.

For the moment, there will be another mobilization day, actually it's not a day but it's a week between the 10th and the 25th of June: the idea is to collect what has been done in all the schools and then to but all the materials on the website to show that the dynamics is following up.
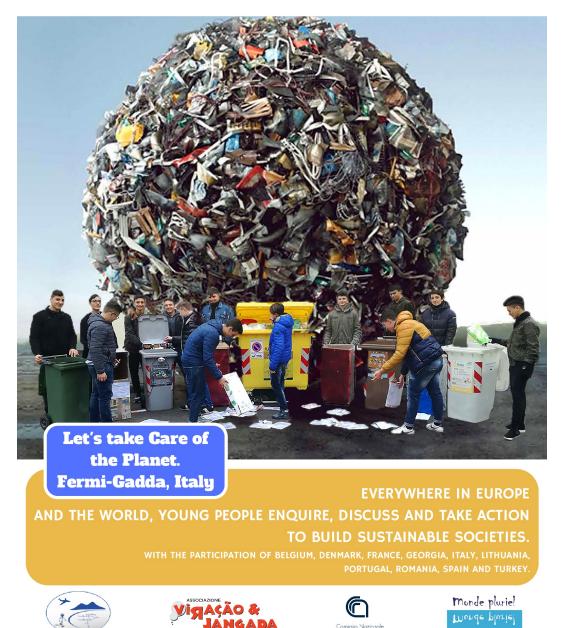
Then, there will be twin-schools and exchanges at a peer-to-peer level. Twin schools is a dynamic programme to ensure that the European process exists even if there is no European conference. For example, a school from Italy exchanges with a school from France: these schools work together all the year through internet and sometimes they do also physical meetings. The idea is to exchange on climate change and to deepen the scientific knowledge, and after three years to meet. This is how LTCP will continue. So, for sure there is a future. For me, at the personal level, in Lisbon I could feel that. Maybe it was not the case before - because I thought that Monde Pluriel was carrying too much - but now I see that this challenge of having more collective tasks is successful. There are many people that don't want the project to die.

A5: Advertising poster *"Make the difference… Differentiate!"*

Advertising poster realized by the high school Istituto Tecnico Industriale Fermi - Gadda, Naples (Campania).

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A6: Italian Charter of Responsibilities *"Let's Take Care of the Planet"*

"Let's Take Care of the Planet" 2018 – *Charter of Responsibilities*

Charter of Responsibilities
"Let's Take Care of the Planet"

March 16th, 2018
Bologna - Italy

We are secondary school students coming from different regions of Italy (Trentino, Lombardy, Emilia Romagna, Lazio, Puglia, Campania, and Sicily). We represent 1500 students attending seventeen different schools in different towns (Taio, Coredo, Mezzolombardo, Cles, Rovereto, Poggio Rusco, Cesena, Rome, Genzano, Tricase, Alessano, Naples, Catania, and Bronte). Our goal is very clear: raising awareness among young people about environmental issues and fulfilling changes for our, and our Planet's, health.

We the young people and representatives in today's Bologna National Conference invite you to share with us the responsibility of taking care of our Planet.

With this document, we mean to make it clear that, despite our young age, we can contribute to caring for the environment. We need, however, help from each and every one of you.

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"Let's Take Care of the Planet" 2018 – *Charter of Responsibilities*

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIONS

1. If we wish to fight climate change, we must start from our own eating habits. Today is the right time for us to take responsibility for the world's health.

- Start public awareness campaigns to encourage the population to consume less and less red meat and palm oil;
- Promote, in school canteens, information about the environmental costs of frequent meat consumption;
- Promote GMO-free (Genetically Modified Organisms) agriculture, and organic agriculture in particular, in order to prevent the use of chemicals products;
- Make food producers and consumers aware of the advantages of organic food products;
- Organize seminars and awareness campaigns to educate young people about healthy eating habits and raise awareness of the consequences of their environmental impact;
- Encourage people to buy local food products.

2. We can start changing things by trying our best not to waste electric energy, beginning to reduce the energy consumption in our own homes and schools.

- Use renewable energy in order to reduce greenhouse gases emissions;
- Raise awareness on the consequences of excessive electric energy use;
- Replace high wattage bulbs with LED lamps;
- Monitor enforcements of energy conservation policies at municipality level;
- Join the awareness raising campaign "Mi illumino di Meno" promoted by RaiRadio2 program "Caterpillar";
- Start mass media and social media public awareness campaigns.

3. We believe it is necessary to carry out concrete action to fight air pollution in order to preserve future generations' and our lives.

- Become aware of the negative effects of greenhouse gases emissions caused by our actions;

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"Let's Take Care of the Planet" 2018 – *Charter of Responsibilities*

- Improve our own habits by using renewable energy and public transportation;
- Raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity and ecosystems by creating groups in both schools and communities;
- Make our community aware through governmental actions and by using every available means of communication in an interactive and dynamic way;
- Keep ourselves informed about the socio-environmental situation of our planet.

4. We demand to live on a healthy and green planet, fighting incivility.

- Take care of the urban open spaces in our cities, so that there are more green areas;
- Plant trees in the proximity of both our schools and our houses, recycle and reuse paper in order to fight deforestation;
- Encourage young people to group and schedule shifts to keep our parks clean. Also organize activities for children so that our parks are always active;
- Discourage the lighting of fires in green areas and improve surveillance;
- Organize campaigns to teach young people to behave correctly in green areas;
- Discourage the use of chemical pesticides in agriculture in favor of organic agriculture and natural fertilizers;
- Eliminate soil-polluting unauthorized landfill sites and companies that produce chemical pesticides. Demand that local administrations reclaim polluted areas.

5. We want to contribute in reducing waste generation.

- Decrease plastic use by introducing non-disposable cups and glasses in our schools;
- Make sure that every bin for waste sorting is available in our schools, aluminum bins too;
- Compile a "Golden Rules of Waste Sorting" manifesto and organize theater events to raise awareness on the matter;
- Promote information campaigns on waste sorting by organizing themed public conferences, talks, school assemblies, and interviewing people on whether household waste sorting is commonly practiced in their territory.

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"Let's Take Care of the Planet" 2018 – *Charter of Responsibilities*

6. It is our duty to take care of the water we use every day.

- Use less water whenever we wash our hands or take a shower;
- Use biodegradable bags and non-disposable implements (glass and porcelain);
- Care for our sea and our beaches avoiding to pollute them and cleaning them up whenever they are littered.

7. Our "Caring for the Planet" proposals are meant to raise awareness and promote an ecological culture based on the "5Rs" ("Reflect, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle").

- Urge local administrations to fund environmental development and awareness campaigns;
- Organize events, activities, talks about environmental issues for young people and children;
- Organize mass media campaigns (TV, social networks, radio) to raise awareness on the issue;
- Promote leafleting in schools.

Our Planet's health depends on every single one of us. Therefore, we ask you to act responsibly, because with our every action – be it small or enormously significant – we have some power to change everyone's life.

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A7: European Letter of Commitments *"Let's be the change!"*

"LET'S BE THE CHANGE !"

We, young people aged 13-16 years old, from **9 different European countries**, gathered in **Lisbon in May 2018** to work on the most critical environmental issues at **the 3rd "Let's Take Care of the Planet" European Youth Conference.**

Mindful of the **Sustainable Development Goals** promoted by the United Nations, we shared the environmental problems our countries are facing. We came to the conclusion that **only collective action is the solution**. In fact, most of the problems are *common* for every country.

From every young student in Europe to every politician, decision-maker, journalist, scientist, and to every citizen of the world – we challenge you to **act immediately**!

Our planet's health is in danger and it's affecting many vital resources (water, air, soil and biodiversity)

The planet needs our help!

We now realize that **clean water has become a scarce resource** and we feel responsible for **reducing the waste of water and saving it.** To meet this responsibility, we built **dry toilets** in our middle school in *Die, France*

We realized that there is a huge quantity of carbon emissions caused by transports and factories causing **global warming**.

We feel concerned about **reducing global warming for us and the future generations.**

To contribute to this objective that is also **SDG 13 Climate action**, we feel it's important to save energy like we did in our schools in *Naples and Lecce, Italy* by creating all types of bins and a prototype of bin with sensors for **a correct separate trash collection**.

We also think it is paramount to **use renewable energies** and to begin to do it in our schools to show the example like we did in *Istanbul, Turkey* by setting up **solar panels next to the windows. To keep acting on this issue, we are ready to use other means of transport like bicycle to reduce carbon emissions.**

We feel responsible for having a **conscious society that takes care of the health of the soil so that we can benefit from balanced food.**

To do our part on this issue, we created in our school in *Buzau, Romania* a vegetable garden at school to know where it comes from and our fellow students from *Barcelona, Spain*, created compost at school to reduce food waste.

We thought about encouraging food from GMO free agriculture in our schools.

The newest research show that an increasing amount of **pollution in the air** have resulted in a **growing number of children suffering from asthmatic problems**.

We feel responsible to **decrease the amount of atmosphere pollutants let out by transportation of school students** e.g. cars. In *Lisbon, Portugal,* we have already changed our habits by meeting up once a week between classmates at a station called **Pedibus** and we all go walking to school so we can avoid going with our parents by car.

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In Denmark there are special roads for bikes, always a safe place to park, and a special traffic light for bikes as well, this makes ridding your bike a much better and simpler choice. In fact, **about 80% of the Danish population ride their bike at least 3-4 times a week**. In *Aarhus, Denmark* the school have provided about 600 parking spaces for the student's bikes.

In other countries we thought about providing parking spaces for bikes as well so it would become more attractive for students to ride their bikes to school. To afford this we could earn money by setting up events and campaigns to sensitize about the air quality issue happening in the world.

In order to **raise awareness about efficient energy management and usage**, a school in *Vilnius, Lithuania* organised an international conference and in *Georgia* some students participated to talks about energy consumption to find ways to use energy more efficiently.

Preserving our natural resources and conserving the variety of the local animals and plants is another issue that is dear to us. For instance, in *Portugal*, **seasonal wild fires** are very frequent and thus threaten both our forests and our natural ecosystem. To do something about this issue, many of us from different countries, we planted different trees in our schools. In the future, we would also like to encourage the use of biopesticides (like the use of wasps to reduce pest population while preserving vegetation).

The Let's Take Care of The Planet project gives us the opportunity to learn about other countries, cultures, but also about *ourselves*. Even if we have different cultures, we found common points like the desire that we all have to take care of the planet. We are expecting **real actions instead of empty talk** from adults and decision makers.

We are ready to fight in the same direction as the Sustainable Development Goals throughout concrete collective actions.

What about *you*?!

"If not us, then who?
If not now, then when?"

http://www.careplanet.org

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Youth
Conference
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French organisation Monde Pluriel has been coordinating the project "Let's Take Care of the Planet" in France and Europe since 2009 and fosters intercultural exchanges in the field of sustainable development.

The 3rd European Youth Conference is the fruit of a yearlong partnership between Monde Pluriel and ASPEA, environmental education association from Portugal.

A8: Teachers' Statement *"Education for Environmental Citizenship"*

EDUCATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP STATEMENT

The Education for Environmental Citizenship (EEC) has become a central issue for European growth and well-being and therefore it is fundamental to educate European citizens on connected themes. The topics that they deal with, whether it is clean water, biodiversity, energy, climate or food, are fundamental issues that need to be addressed to succeed in making a more sustainable society.

At a pedagogical level, the questions linked to EEC are by nature complex and interdisciplinary. Each issue needs the collaboration of different disciplines which involves role players in different fields and at various levels. The importance of these issues for the students, the teachers and the whole educational community is a strong incentive to create interest and involvement.

Most European countries have already included the EEC in their educational curriculum. This is a necessary step but it is not sufficient. The European LTCP network, which we are part of, for more than ten years, has been mobilizing young people and teachers about these issues. The methods used invite the students to investigate before debating and then to commit to implementing the concrete solutions usually at a local level.

We, the European teachers, reunited in Lisbon for the 3rd European LTCP Youth Conference, ask for your help to be able to develop better future EEC projects in the following areas:

1. Time

- We need official time for teachers to prepare their projects, to investigate the needs of the projects, to find funds, to coordinate the whole educational community, to organize activities and to receive training.

Eg: In French Guyana, in some schools, every Thursday afternoon, the teachers don't have lessons with students and they have 4 hours to work together on projects.

2. Academic freedom

- We need curricular time to develop projects with the students during the curricular program.

In Portugal, 25 % of the students' schedule is dedicated to developing interdisciplinary projects (local autonomy of the school).

3. National and European framework

- We need to make EEC become a priority in educational policies within the European territories and we need EEC to be included in the next EU 'Strategic Framework – Education and Training' in 2020.

In Portugal, the Environmental Ministry launched ENEA (National Strategy for Environmental Education) and the Education Ministry launched the Environmental Education for Sustainability Framework.

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4. Networking

- **We need school networks** to exchange experiences, ideas, projects and other moments such as partnerships.

In **Spain**, ESenRED interconnects 11 networks from 11 territories with 3,000 schools to develop the LTCP experience as well as other EEC projects.

5. Mobilization of the whole educational community

- **We need the involvement of the whole educational community**, including teachers, teacher advisors, directors and the Ministry of Education to support EEC projects making them become more effective.
- **We need to involve families** in their children's projects so that they feel responsible for the problems connected to EEC.

In **Spain**, the schools that are part of the ESenRED network have 'Sustainability School Committees' where pupils, teachers, parents, school directors and advisors from local authorities work together and manage the projects, sharing the responsibilities equally.

6. Partnerships

- **We need partnerships between schools**, scientific communities and local authorities.

In **Lithuania**, the whole country is involved in a common project called 'Let's do it together Day', a clean-up day when even the president takes part.

- o Partnership with local governing authorities for technical and human support.

In **Denmark**, in Roskilde, the local government invites students to participate with their ideas on how to deal with heavy rainfall, using sustainable urban drainage in recreative areas like skateboard parks.

- o Partnership with scientific communities to receive technical information and scientific methods as well as to have their presence in the schools to supervise school methods. NGOs can bring their expertise and share the information to the groups involved.

In **Italy**, there is a Scientific Dissemination Project between the CNR (National Research Council) and the schools in that Region called LdR – Linguaggio della Ricerca/The Language of Research.
In **Turkey**, the NGO TURGEV (Turkey Environment Education Foundation), supports schools to do projects and teacher training, and ensures collaborative work with other countries regarding EEC educations. Teachers meet once a year to share their ideas and projects.

- **We need funds** to develop projects in order to support teacher's training, activities, organisation of events, materials and other important parts of a project.

EX: In several regions in **France**, local authorities give funds to the schools for EEC projects and for school modernization (solar panels, geothermal energy, etc.)

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