**COOPERATION**

Cooperation is the opposite of individualism, selfishness, oppression, depredation of common resources, war.
Educating on cooperation is necessary to find interest in collective values ​​and give meaning to life, to imagine and build better worlds.

In today's world characterized by heavy inequalities and destructive individualisms, educating on cooperation is necessary to build social balance, to fight iniquity and injustice, so that fundamental rights are recognized to all human beings and everyone takes responsibility for their accomplishment.
In a world where conflicts are the main feature of social relationships and the sound of weapons is getting louder and louder, it is necessary to educate on cooperation:

• to find interest in collective values ​​and give meaning to life, to imagine and build better worlds
• to build social balance, to fight iniquity and injustice
• to grant fundamental rights to all human beings and save life on the planet
• to achieve a real culture of peace

Since you are a child, cooperating means knowing oneself and the others, developing the ability to listen, to give and receive trust, to know how to work together with a common project, to be accepted and recognized with one's own identity and his own history and be enriched by comparing other people’s identities and histories.

Expanding perception, building solidarity as well as reinforcing competition and inequality avoid the creation of stereotypes regarding social events.
At school cooperation takes place if the educational environment is designed to welcome and develop relationships in daily life, if adults show appreciation, curiosity and are good listeners without judging behaviour and performance. ‘*To give* *everyone the possibility of finding the meeting point of the deepest reasons of their lives and their own research at school*  '(Andrea Canevaro).

That means acting on space and time daily, establishing a dynamic order democratically and implementing a pedagogy of research and narration ( 'thinking through stories').

Besides it implies studying strategies to improve people’s lives, to allow them to feel good together in order to share experiences and emotions of similarities and differences.

It means creating a school conceived as a social workshop. which is a meeting point of cultures and ideas, a new agora open to the territory.

A living school with an IDENTITY, a system of memorized documentation, with multi-tasking spaces.

S. Asch wrote in'Social Psychology': *'the action of cooperating is similar to the formation of a group: the group and the task represent a system, and the change in every part of the system modifies all the other parts*.'

C. Freinet defined his teaching as a set of 'techniques' and claimed that each technique has a training value if it is a **life technique** inserted into a system of values. The set of techniques modifies the setting, the rhythm, the rules of the school through practices, and tools. It creates the conditions to grow together in a social environment overcoming negative aspects, marginalization, stereotypes, ethnocentrism, partial points of view.

Working on such ideas, broadening perception, building solidarity instead of reinforcing competition and inequality, avoid a rigid and unchangeable representation of social events.
Fernand Oury, father of institutional pedagogy, added that 'human relationships are educational' as they enrich mutual perceptions.
A class organized in a cooperative way isn’t a world in itself, but a complex and coherent evolving system, which creates its own 'institutions', which works thanks to strategies or projects that are not linear or based on efficiency parameters, but on an 'ecological' sensitivity . Reflecting on how to regulate the common life, on how to take into account the opinions and rights of all, is a path across the whole school experience, and it educate citizens to became active men and women . Mario Lodi, commenting on a budget session of the cooperative in his class, underlines the importance of ' accounting to others', of sharing responsibility, of assuming the common good as a value  in a country subjected to amoral familism, to deregulation, to the stage of capitalism that Ph. Meirieu calls 'compulsive'.
Cooperation is the strategy and the main aim of the school, it is the utopia of a better society.

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