

MANIFESTO

Reggio Children International Network

“Children’s earliest experiences form the basis for all subsequent learning. If solid foundations are laid in the early years, later learning is more effective and is more likely to continue life-long, lessening the risk of early school leaving, increasing the equity of educational outcomes and reducing the costs for society in terms of lost talent and of public spending on social, health and even justice systems” (excerpt from a communication from the European commission. **Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow**)

“Study after study shows that the sooner a child begins learning, the better he or she does down the road. But today, fewer than 3 in 10 four year-olds are enrolled in a high-quality preschool program. Most middle-class parents can’t afford a few hundred bucks a week for private preschool. And for poor children who need help the most, this lack of access to preschool education can shadow them for the rest of their lives. Tonight, I propose working with States to make high-quality preschool available to every child in America. Every dollar we invest in high-quality early education can save more than seven dollars later on – by boosting graduation rates, reducing teen pregnancy, even reducing violent crime. In States that make it a priority to educate our youngest children, like Georgia or Oklahoma, studies show students grow up more likely to read and do math at grade level, graduate high school, hold a job, and form more stable families of their own. So let’s do what works, and make sure none of our children start the race of life already behind. Let’s give our kids that chance” (President Barack Obama in his “State of the Union” speech on February 12, 2013)

“Education has shaped my life and the history of my country. I grew up in a society ravaged by war and mired in poverty. Schools had been destroyed. My classes were held in the open under a tree. We had no desks, chairs or other basic necessities. The Republic of Korea was on its knees, but education enabled the country to stand tall again. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and other international partners provided books and school supplies to help pave the road to recovery. I will never forget the hope that these basic tools gave us. Even in the worst circumstances, education helps to give children confidence to face the future. As Secretary-General of the United Nations, I want every child, without exception, to have the same opportunity that I had. The power of education to transform lives is universal. When you ask parents what they want for their children—even in war zones and disaster areas—they seek the same thing first: education. Parents want their children in school. (BAN Ki-moon United Nations Secretary-General New York, September 2012)

The idea of a Manifesto, an International Manifesto to state that education, in a broader sense, is a common good was born from the conviction that education is the primary element of a global democratic citizenship promotion and a right of all human beings.

“Those of us who work in the field of education have learned ‘on the job’ that many things can be affected by one’s cultural heritage, by theories and experience, by literature, art, and economics, by scientific research and technology. But many things are also born of intuition, taste, ethics, the choice of values, of reasons and opportunities, that in part we can control and in part we cannot control, and that are suggested only to a certain extent by the job of living itself.

Yet, even in this constellation hovering between theories and practice that are both stable and unstable, necessary, possible, and even accidental, and between the variations, imbalances, and even adversities of social policies, there is plenty of margin and freedom for us to use our intelligence, passion and creativity. So despite everything it is permissible to think that creativity, or rather knowledge and the wonder of knowledge (our most important right, which so often goes unrecognized) can serve as the strong point of our work. It is thus our continuing hope that creativity will become a normal travelling companion in our children’s growth and development” (Loris Malaguzzi, from the catalogue of the exhibit “The hundred languages of children”)

“Our experience also confirms that children need a great deal of freedom: the freedom to investigate and to try, to make mistakes and to correct mistakes, to choose where and with whom to invest their curiosity, intelligence and emotions. Children need the freedom to appreciate the infinite resources of their hands, their eyes and their ears, the resources of forms, materials, sounds and colors. They need the freedom to realize how reason, thought, and imagination can create continuous interweavings of things, and can move and shake the world. Children must have the freedom to do all this without anyone arbitrarily setting the timing, rhythms, and measures for them. Yet this valuable apprenticeship, which cannot be left to chance, can only be accomplished when children are assured of the broad and active co-participation of adults.” (Loris Malaguzzi, from the catalogue of the exhibit “The hundred languages of children”)

Education is essential to life of each human being and of the community.

Education is a fundamental right for all human beings with no distinction of race, color, gender, language, religion, political opinion, and it is a permanent condition for life. It is collective without limits and universal.

As water, nobody must be obliged to buy education for his or her own necessity, everybody has the right to have access to good quality education.

As it is a common good, education sets as its roots the sharing, the social bond, the collective initiative and proposes the themes of being the same, of democracy, of each person being owner of rights.

Through education, each person is able to be part of the civil collectivity and community since birth to receive and contribute to civil society in a relation of active reciprocity, respecting each other subjectivity and the different cultures.

The diminished economical resources, but especially the cultural and social issues in regard to the individual freedom versus the social solidarity and protection, risk to legitimate choices that are going against the idea of education as a common good.

Education cannot be guided by economical and market issues.

The town of Reggio Emilia, the Istituzione infant toddler centres and preschools, Reggio Children and the Foundation "Reggio Children - Loris Malaguzzi Centre" together with the Reggio Children International Network ask to support us in wording the value of education as a common good.

This Manifesto is asking to activate an International movement that could raise the voice on the right to quality education for all the children, our children, all over the world. With this Manifesto, we are trying to reach all the subjects - teachers, children with their families - with the aim to reach also governments that through their power and action influence on education can support us and give a strong basis for our work. It is a project that sees the responsibility lying in the hands of National, International government and National and local organizations.