



Step by Step 2021- Step 2

Communication in Education: Word – Gift - Relationship

EdU- educationforunity
Mail: dialogoedu2020@gmail.com

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Step by Step 2021

Studying Together Educational Pathways in the thinking of Chiara Lubich

Step 2 - Communication in Education: Word - Gift - Relation

Presentation (Graciela del Campo)

Graciela: Good morning, good afternoon, good evening to everyone. I am Graciela del Campo, I live in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

I welcome you to this meeting from the "Iberian-American" area, of Latin America and the Caribbean, together with our Spanish friends of "Edu" and those responsible for the central commission of Edu, we give a warm and affectionate welcome to all for this moment of encounter, entitled "Communication in Education: Word - Gift - Relationship", the second stage, Step 2 of the pedagogical journey in the footsteps of Chiara Lubich's Doctorate Honoris Causa in Pedagogy.

I am told that connected via zoomthere are people from the 5 continents, the countries of origin are:

I will take you through this hour and a half introducing you to the speakers and the educational experiences that bear witness to this way of doing education.

Are the translations OK?

an OK per language in the Chat means that the audio is correct.

I give the floor to **Gabriela Di Lascio**, Graduate and Professor of Educational Sciences, originally from the City of Buenos Aires, Argentina, primary and university educator, who will introduce us to the central theme of this "Internship".

We are all ears Gabi

Introduction (Gabriela di Lascio)

Last year we met to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Chiara Lubich's Honorary Degree in Pedagogy from the University of Washington. From that moment we felt the need to deepen together, in the light of today's educational context, the relevance of Lubich's proposal.

We are now in the second stage of this formative journey, in order to deepen together these keys to the interpretation of educational action according to the charism of unity. We began with an understanding of educational leadership, a leadership that does not seek to emphasise a person, but the community and seeks to understand its deepest being, to help it to be more and more itself.

Now another important point of the pedagogy that Lubich shows us: The Word made life. Through the word we get to know who the other person is, either because he tells us what he thinks, what he feels, or when he doesn't, he speaks through his gestures, his silences, his gaze. Through the word "we enter into the other", and "the other enters into us".

Lubich recounts that by living the Word of the Gospel one sentence at a time, they understood the heart of God, because they saw the effects of making these words of His come alive. Using the very simple pedagogical technique of graduality and fullness, even though they were small, they were able to understand the centre of God's message, visible in his Word which is wisdom.

Today we want to reflect and share experiences on how we make flesh the words that inspire our pedagogical works. Words that aim to teach love, that aim at the person in his or her integrity, uniqueness and at the same time with his or her relational dimension. And so this involves a respectful but profound dialogue, which seeks to seal in others a communicative model that is a reciprocal gift that generates new relationships. It is a word that does not want to impose but to be a gift, which, if it finds the right disposition, is returned and becomes a place for dialogue. So, as Chiara said, we have one strong spiritual and educational experience at the same time.

This is what happens to us with the little ones who come to school and with whom we learn the value of respectful and loving communication. It is what happens to us with adolescents who, tired of verbalism, question us about the value of our words and ask us about their correlation with reality. It is what happens to us with the young people and adults with whom we share tasks, who seek an encounter that can give new meaning and bring about changes in daily action.

And it is this existential unity between Word and Life that we want to draw out from the Pedagogy of Communion that is spreading around the world. We are witnesses of the profound changes that it provokes in life both on a personal and community level, a true educational process

Graciela: Thank you Gabriela! Now I would like to present to you two educators, who have bridged the distance across the Atlantic and have put together through different approaches and cultural perspectives, the first part of today's theme: "The Word in Education".

Alfonso Alarcón, from Cochabamba, Bolivia, Bachelor of Communication, Masters in Audiovisual and Multimedia Education. Professor at the Catholic University of San Pablo, Bolivia

And **Jesús García**, from Seville, Spain. Educator and trainer, Professor at the Faculty of Theology in Seville.

Friends, the floor is yours.

Theme: The word in education (Alfonso Alarcón - Jesús García)

Alfonso: The word is that common code that names and conveys concrete and abstract meanings, that allows people to create and live in community; however, it is the communicative relationship that will shape the understanding of these codes in particular contexts, and will lead to (re)meaning and eventual effects, beyond the significant load that these words carry.

This occurs, even more so, in an educational context, whether formal or non-formal, planned, circumstantial or spontaneous.

Yes, as Plato said, 'the word that educates is that which writes in the soul', the communicative dynamic is inexorably destined to go, so to speak, beyond itself to write in the soul of the other, that is to educate. But it is no longer enough to express ourselves with words, educational dialogue is also shaped by gestural and non-verbal language, by silences, attitudes and today, by images.

It is in this dialogue, which is increasingly evident, that the aspect of content perception must be considered, in which the educator-learner relationship is fundamental, since it can condition the interpretation and appropriation of meaning, and therefore learning.

"The capacity to love that each person possesses becomes a relationship, a communication." This phrase by the sociologist Vera Araujo highlights this symbiosis between relationship and communication, this fertile dependence that guarantees an adequate exchange of messages in the educational field. It must be said that the quality of education depends on a rich dialogue, verbal and non-verbal, based on a relationship that provides the conditions for mutual understanding and growth.

The Argentinean-Uruguayan Mario Kaplún, who interpreted Paulo Freire in the field of popular communication, said that "Defining what we mean by communication is equivalent to saying what kind of society we want to live in".

Jesús: Chiara Lubich, a teacher of dialogue and the art of loving, shows precisely this path to perfecting communication, both in terms of content and relationship, and in the personal, educational dimension, of transformation and improvement of society and the world.

As she defines it, dialogue 'is a mutual enrichment... (and) is true if it is animated by true love. Love is true if it is selfless ... (which) means giving what we have inside out of love for the other and then also receiving and enriching ourselves ... "

The pedagogue Paulo Freire, whose centenary we are celebrating, also said this: "If I don't love the world, if I don't love life, if I don't love people, dialogue is not possible", in this sense, the personal and collective construction of meaning is based on daily interpersonal relationships.

Subsequently, we will expand on the pedagogical importance of the word, which in the context of this dialogical pedagogy or reciprocity, opens us up to the possibility of mutual giving.

Alfonso: Narratives, as constructions built with words, have enabled people to develop horizons of meaning that allow them to make sense of reality, external and internal, and above all allow the consolidation of community and identity.

Going back to education, in the individual and also communitarian sense, it can be said that personal narratives are built up in educational dialogue, that is, individual vocations are born in it and from it and have communitarian projections. Often people discover in dialogue their 'call' to personal fulfilment with social projection, in a profession, cultivating an art, making a decision about what they want to achieve in their lives.

Words inspire, motivate, give life to dreams; they have the capacity to create a climate favourable to respect, where change can germinate and where they serve, at least, to foster it.

Let us not forget that all authentic pedagogy, as Chiara said, makes a utopia possible. And if we understand utopia as that which is not yet (present), but that will be (in the future). education is a particular relationship between what is and what should be; in other words, in the words of the poet Salinas: "... I want to bring out the best in you. What you have not seen and what I see".

According to Kaplún, 'communicating is an attitude, a skill. But it is above all an attitude ... True communication does not begin by talking, but by listening. The main condition of a good communicator is to be able to listen. "From listening it will be possible to pronounce the appropriate word that will become part of a person's internal heritage in their own narrative fabric and if it has the necessary strength. it will become part of your main narrative thread that will guide you through life.

Jesús: Chiara Lubich, intuited this and put it into practice, first of all because she allowed the Word, born of the dialogue of a God with his People, to become part of her personal narrative; secondly, because it invited us to express ' words that bridge' capable of generating unity and inspiring vocations.

"Where the trunk is, the roots are" reads an indigenous Andean saying. Today we can see the trunk and the fruits of Chiara Lubich's thought, but what are the roots of this tree?

She said so herself:

And precisely because of this existential unity between Word and Life, between saying and doing, our experience is credible and convincing for many, it provokes profound changes in personal existence, which is why it sets in motion a true educational process in so many people.

Lubich taught us with her life to be "living words". That is, she promoted the messenger to become the "message" itself and this pedagogy of being exemplary and coherent is a proposal with infinite educational potential, in the face of pedagogical verbalism, in the face of the verbosity that overwhelms us.

This can be affirmed, firstly, because the greater the coherence between what is said and how it is lived, the greater trust and credibility are generated; secondly, because it is demonstrated in one's own life that the words one says are born of personal experience and have the capacity to enrich and illuminate one's own personal narratives and those of those being taught.

Alfonso: Our words need to be open to fruitful dialogue, words that not only sow, but also prepare the soil, that water and nourish, that pay attention and see the fruits before they are even produced. These are the words that Lubich put into practice and that infected so many.

These words that educate, insofar as they are life, "engraved in life", Lubich would say, are experience and witness; and, above all, they escape current verbalisms, even in the pedagogical sphere where the media and technologies run the risk of usurping the educational relationship by merely transmitting information (one more form of verbalism) that is deprived of this relationship.

Therefore, this 'authentic' and profound word offers (to educators and students) an existential unity that helps to overcome the fragmentation/disintegration that the person often experiences in his relationship with himself, with others, with society, with God, while bringing out, at the same time, the uniqueness, originality and the fact that each one is unrepeatable.

One might add, with regard to communication mediated by today's technologies, that these offer very good and effective formats for the transmission of content, but they bring with them certain weaknesses: poverty of relationship, poverty of truth, poverty of constructive dialogue; weaknesses to which attention should be paid, since there is a danger that educational dialogue will become impoverished under beautiful virtual wrappings.

But Chiara Lubich does not stop at individual education, not even formal and classroom education. She proposes an education for life and launches the utopia of building a more united world where

fraternal, reciprocal and collective love prevails, built on the basis of men and women capable of making it happen through fuller relationships.

In other words, Chiara does not only inspire personal narratives, but also collective narratives in a planetary dimension. Lubich's narrative capital, as Luigino Bruni would define it, is oriented towards social change and fulfils the necessary conditions that mobilise and benefit the whole community.

It is precisely mutual giving, love, put into practice, that creates a reality that goes beyond individuals, as it surrounds and surpasses them. Chiara called it UNITY.

From this other perspective, the multiplicity of contents, which can be based on these narratives, and the coherence with the words, strengthens and reinforces bonds that are "mutually oriented and transitively open", capable of generating communities that are more cohesive but at the same time inclusive.

Thus, this new narrative generates a renewed educational space, a pedagogical experience from which emerges a communitarian ideology of education, which considers the educational field in a non-fragmented way and in which there is no education outside the community.

Therefore, new categories are introduced to read reality, such as unity or giving, introducing the new generations to virtues and values such as commitment, respect, solidarity/responsibility for humanity and care for nature as a common home.

In short, it is a pedagogy that helps to overcome fragmentation within a discipline and among academic disciplines and confirms that pedagogical love generates dynamism.

Finally, a few words about something that has not yet been said. The absence of the word. Silence.

Silence creates pauses, makes it possible to distinguish one word from another, one sentence from another; it allows gaps. This void of words acquires a meaning and cannot be forgotten or despised. It is the gap that also finds its place in personal and collective narratives, if seen in perspective.

If Chiara invites us to be the message, it is understandable that it is made up of words, gestures, attitudes, but also of silences. On the one hand, our own silences, which are part of the personal voids in the search for meaning to recompose the internal narratives and which Chiara invites us not to evade, but to face.

On the other hand, we can highlight other silences, those that build relationships. Creative silences. Let us not forget that "childhood" comes from the Latin "infans" which means "the one who does not speak"; there are therefore also fertile and conscious silences that leave and open up space for being-other.

Silence, which is part of making space for the other in oneself, which requires emptying of self in order to welcome the other in the best possible way. In the words of the philosopher Gennaro Cichese, 'the word, if it is deprived of its vital relationship with silence, becomes a vain, empty and uncertain word, that is, incapable of creating communion and community'.

Finally, there is the silence that cries out in society, the painful silence of those who are deprived of a word, of those who live their silence without being able to find the word that illuminates their emptiness. There are so many silent faces that Chiara calls us to meet and give life through the Word.

If, as Herman Hesse said, "the beginning of every art is love", it is also the beginning of any educational act. That love, which is the "intention" of helping the other to grow, to become a

person, to transform and be transformed, needs to "transform itself" into education and, for this, it uses communication.

A new culture of communication is emerging, that of those who have knowledge because they love. The Centre of this culture is new, because it is no longer the individual (however great he or she may be), but the community. We are the pioneers in "experiencing" this new culture in ourselves and among ourselves (Vera Araujo).

Educational experiences

Graciela: Next, there will be **four educational experiences** that show the personal and communal appropriation of the Pedagogy of Communion proposed by Chiara Lubich. In particular, they focus on this aspect of the "unity between the Word and Life", making it a unique, holistic and communitarian existential experience.

First we will listen to **Isabel Gatti**, from Buenos Aires, Argentina. María Isabel Gatti has a degree in Science of Social Communication from the University of Buenos Aires (UBA) and is a specialist in Communication in Education. Masters in Communication and Education at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. She will refer to the experience of the "Aurora" School, an educational centre for the training of students in artistic and intercultural work, located in Santa María, Catamarca province in Argentina.

Experience Aurora School (Isabel Gatti)

Isabel: Thank you very much for the invitation. What I am about to offer you are a few brushstrokes of a broader research that I have developed in 2019 and that is still ongoing.

The School "Dawn of a New World"- Aurora, was born as an echo of the life that Chiara Lubich together with her first companions shared in Trent, at the beginning of the Focolare Movement. The city of Santa María de Catamarca, where the school is located, lies in the Andes of Argentina and historically its original villages belonged to the Inca Empire, which are in present-day Peru. This is one of the first places in Latin America to have received the spirituality of unity.

This first community of Santa Maria began to live the Word; as proposed by the Focolare Movement, where the life of the Word, is not only seen as an exclusively religious fact, because of the concrete service it involves, but manifests itself with a great transforming power in society. This is the background of the school born in 1970.

At the end of the 1960s, throughout the movement, there was a growing awareness that Love - the core of the Gospel proclamation emphasised by the Focolare - could activate processes of universal brotherhood and could provide answers to the challenges posed by social structures that were contrary to human dignity. This state of affairs prompted Chiara Lubich to communicate an intuition she had had in various speeches that are known under the title of the "Coloured World". At that time she had understood that God's Love is like a Rainbow that from a single beam of light, it is refracted into seven colours, and she gave each colour an aspect of these shades of Love: red: the economy, orange: evangelisation, yellow: spirituality, green: health, blue: social issues, indigo: study, violet: communication. These dimensions, which are present in all the communities, were highlighted in a planetary dimension with the following logic: in every continent there is a problem linked to these aspects that prevents fraternity from being realised. For this reason, the movement

in that particular territory is invited to make a greater commitment to that particular aspect. It is interesting to note that each of these "colours" is linked to "words of life" that support it.

For Latin America, the proposal was to build fraternity by overcoming the social divide between rich and poor. The proposal was not foreign to the religious context of the time: already in 1968, in Medellín-Colombia, the Latin American Episcopal Council had coined one of the great objectives that marked the subsequent history of the Latin American Church: "The preferential option for the poor". For this reason, the dialogue between the international proposal of the Focolare and the local context pushed this community, who lived far from the urban centres of the time, to take a radical decision: to do something concrete for the poor of the city. They were not rich, but they had professional skills: a teacher, a carpenter, a nurse. It was these shared gifts that turned into the first workshops of the school "Opera di Maria", as that first initiative was called, which went from non-formal education to meeting the needs of the city. This pedagogical proposal aimed to promote social action would lay the foundations for true social inclusion. The fraternal relationships built, starting with communion, generated an initial response that was perhaps more individual, which then generated an association and then a network. This is evident in the evolution of this experience, which in the first years was more of a social action and through multiple variables widened its origins to that of redeeming original cultures.

In 1989, almost twenty years after its inception, the community met to consider a possible funding project, and together they asked themselves who the poorest people were at the time and what needs they had, if they were the same people as before. There they realised that it was the artisans who were the most marginalised, especially because of their culture linked to their ancestral knowledge. A few years later, youth camps from all over Argentina who came to collaborate voluntarily during the holidays, together with the contribution of teachers and groups, reinforced this objective. The second stage of this experience was born in 2005, where it took its current name, Aurora School (Dawn of a New World). On this date, official accreditation was obtained, with a consequent subsidy from the state, and three vocational training titles were recognised in: textiles, ceramics and metallurgy, recovering the knowledge of the original cultures. The titles awarded by this school were the first in Argentina and the second in Latin America.

The life of the word has sustained and still sustains this experience, which last year turned fifty. The school, is structured according to the principles of the spirituality that grounds it. The essential thing is the "we" that guides the community, which takes the form of a Council made up of the leaders of the school, together with the authorities of PROARVA, the civil association that owns the school, and two representatives of the Focolare Movement in the region. The Mission Statement and the School Development Plan, were drawn up in dialogue with the teachers, integrating the spirituality of the original cultures with the proposal of Christian spirituality, promoting common values. Institutional life maintains the initial idea of the colours of the rainbow and this makes it possible to affirm that the life of the Word has supported and sustains the global pedagogical proposal of the institution.

The Aurora School "breathes" fraternity through all its pores: teachers, pupils, directors. Meeting those who had left the school after completing their studies, I was able to see how much the desire for the original community that I began with has been realised. In talking to them I met people who were very happy with their school, but the most significant thing is that in the formative path they had travelled, they had learned to value what was their own and in so doing value themselves. This process occurs in the students, but to some extent to every person who, like me, has had the opportunity to come in contact with the Aurora School. The word generates life, a life that is lasting and always updated in the community of those who participate in this pedagogical experience.

Graciela: Now we will see a beautiful video about a first meeting between Schools inspired by the pedagogy of Communion in **Mesoamerica**. It was a way of exchange and dialogue between those who live the charism of unity and multiculturalism in their environments which are far from easy.

Mesoamerican Schools (Video)

Different contexts, different histories, but an extraordinary harmony of objectives, methodology and spirit. This is one of the most significant discoveries that have brought to light the meetings of the network of educational institutions inspired by the Pedagogy of Communion in the Mesoamerican region, in which they currently participate:

- Colegio Fiore of Guatemala,
- Colegio Santa María based in Puebla, Mexico,
- the ACUA Music Academy of Costa Rica,
- The Franco-English School of Mexicali, very close to the US-Mexico border.
- and the Chiara Lubich Academy of Panama

It is an open space of reciprocity to exchange challenges and projects, but also to share our experiences of how Chiara Lubich's pedagogical vision comes to life in our institutional contexts on the basis of common principles such as reciprocity, the art of loving and the perspective of universal brotherhood that promote a real and profound cultural and social transformation in the communities in which we are present.

Since 1992, some 15,000 students have passed through our five schools, and there are currently more than 500 enrolled.

The initial impetus for each institution was the desire to give a concrete response to the various wounds in our society that remind us of the suffering face of Christ: the marginalised, the ignorant, the lonely, those who have lost dignity or are discriminated against because of their race, sex or nationality.

The difficult situation we are experiencing because of the pandemic has led us to share sorrows and challenges, but also the continuous interventions of Providence, which does not abandon us even in the most complicated situations.

They tell us from Mexicali: Discouragement is felt as to how to reach many of the students, so we have established permanent communication with parents to find a way to help our students and their parents in the best way possible. One very clear case was that of the family of Martín, a student whose house caught fire in the middle of the pandemic. We immediately took on the task of supporting the parents emotionally and financially within our means and witnessed how unimaginable signs of financial support to rebuild their home were miraculously arriving.

One of the most complicated situations is that of the Fiore Educational Centre, which has had to suspend its work due to the economic crisis. Aware of the great contribution of this school, a model of interculturality between Ladinos (mixed race) and native students, in order to specifically support the Reopening project, the ACUA Music Academy of Costa Rica jointly organised a solidarity concert,

with the enthusiastic participation of students and teachers, who found in this initiative an enormous motivation to donate their talents, feeling united across borders.

Graciela: Another truly unique experience is recounted by **Cármén Méndez**, from Costa Rica, Director and teacher of the Academy of Musical Education "**Acua**". An experience that allows us to evaluate the adaptation of the educators to the changes in the educational environment during the pandemic. It is an expression of that creative word, which goes beyond the verbal, that is love, respect and gift according to the characteristics of the students. A dialogue mediated by technology and based on listening and observing the other.

Experience by Acua Academy (Carmen Méndez)

Carmen: Since the end of 2020, at the ACUA Academy for the Learning of Arts, Costa Rica, we have had a rich experience of music education with an 8-year-old piano student (Andrés).

At the beginning of the pandemic, we had to do lessons virtually and it was quite difficult for him to concentrate. During the lessons, I felt I had to put myself in his shoes, try to enter his reality and I thought I could ask Mario, a Costa Rican composer and professor at the Academy, if he could compose something for Andrés.

So Mario, observing the extensions of his (Andrés's) little hands (8 years old), became interested in what music he could read and what might suit his musical possibilities, taking into account the level of his technical and interpretative skills. He made a collection and studied what the child was learning at that time. He chatted with him on several occasions. In this way, a fruitful dialogue was established between performer and composer. Mario created a work called *Móvil Collage*, which we would prepare for Andrés so that he could play it for the first time and so that he could participate in an international competition. The prize for this was to perform at Carnegie Hall, the famous concert hall in New York. We started organising this project in October 2020 with Andrés and the great cooperation of his parents.

They were absolutely respectful of the process and collaborated in everything, adapting their routines (visits to grandparents, shopping at the supermarket... everything), according to the practice hours we organised for Andrés. They recorded Andrés' practice (morning and afternoon) and sent them to us, allowing us to make corrections or suggestions as appropriate. On the other hand, we had the support of young teachers who were outside the capital or out of the country, who also watched the videos and sent us their advice, since they had the experience of participating in those competitions; they even sent distance learning lessons, to help them understand what it means to perform on an international level.

To compete, it was necessary to record the work and send it via the Internet. It is an organisation of Russian musicians and pianists who are based in New York and have a highly qualified and demanding jury. Therefore, we were working hard, as we had to reach the target in a short time; on 18 January this year we recorded the last recording and a few days ago we learned that he received an Honourable Mention and that, God permitting, he will make his presentation at Carnegie Hall in 2022!!! Our experience in communication fills us with joy, it is tiring, but at the same time it allows us to enjoy what life gives us by being able to make music together, in dialogue.

Graziela: The fourth experience is presented to us by **Cecilia Gatti**, who has a Doctorate in Educational Sciences. She is from Argentina and lives in Rome. It is about the gestation of the first branch outside Italy, of the University Institute 'Sophia', which was created by Chiara Lubich to form students to the culture of unity according to the paradigm of universal brotherhood. It is **SophiaALC**, Sophia in Latin America and the Caribbean. We're all ears Cecilia.

The origin of Sophia University in Latin America (Cecilia Gatti)

Cecilia: The experience I would like to share with you takes place in the university environment and particularly expresses how educational communication, through the Word (Word-giving-relationship), can give new meaning to university work. Right from the beginning of the Focolare Movement, there was talk of universities, but not in isolation, but within the framework of the citadels (the little towns) that were born, or would be born, as the fruit of the lived Gospel. And this became a reality in 2008, thanks to the inspiration of Chiara Lubich in Florence, Italy with Sophia. Its current academic project aims at human, academic and intellectual formation, including academic programmes that include that of Masters degrees in Trinitarian Ontology, Culture of Unity, Political Science and Economics, together with a doctoral school and a post-doctoral school.

If we look at the value given to words, the mere mention of the word 'university' in Latin America generates different reactions, depending on the collective imagination prevailing in those who hear it. For some, it means a place of prestige, of knowledge, the possibility of a very promising future; for others, however, it means a place for an elite, a place of exclusion for the vast majority. Faced with this experience, what is the proposal presented by the Sophia university experience? Just as in other universities there is a word that identifies them, such as quality, leadership, excellence, we can say that there is a central word that characterises all life at Sophia - **communion**, expressed in the collective construction of knowledge, by the mutual exchange and the affective and intellectual communion between its members.

In 2011, the first summer schools in Latin America began, which would later lead to the creation of Sophia's Latin American branches. Those who study the socio-historical evolution of universities emphasise the importance of the founding group and its internal dynamics as they will mark the future of the universities. The initial experience was extraordinary: sharing with more than 50 professors from over 20 nations, from Argentina to Mexico, together with students and professionals involved in civil society to realise the dream of creating university communities. University communities where dialogue, listening and reciprocity are the basis for building knowledge and social commitment with those excluded in mind.

An experience in which Life and Study are articulated. For example, in our meetings every morning at the Summer School before starting classes, everyone is invited to a moment of "sharing" a space shared by all the students, teachers, administrative staff, where we reflect on a word and share the effects that it operates in our lives and in our thinking as a result of the train of thought and life that each member of the academic community carries out every day. At the end of this experience, the students told us: "... Undoubtedly this is a school of life and a model of a new education. I am

strongly committed to return to my country, to rethink my reality and to work for a more fraternal world", "We are many, but we are one." Today I feel that Latin America is a road without borders that unites North and South in a single dream: fraternity.

Another important point in the experience of the beginnings of the Latin American centre was trust, because each one personally, thanks to the words "love your neighbour as yourself", was able to overcome the cultural preconception they had about the other and overcome the fragmentation with others, whether teachers or students. Understanding that this diversity that sometimes disturbs, if truly deepened, is what completes me in my thirst for truth and reciprocity and becomes the greatest wealth Sophia has: its people.

Sophia in Latin America is heir to the long tradition of the option for the poorest and for the Gospel. Since the 1960s, many communities have lived this by generating works, schools, enterprises, etc. Today, this commitment is being realised by the first educational centres being set up in three Sophia locations, in Mexico: Mariapolis el Diamante, in Brazil: Mariapolis Ginetta and in Argentina: Mariapolis Lia, where a Diploma in Community Leadership has already begun and the first degree in Pedagogy with an orientation in Holistic Humanism will be offered.

A small but promising start, especially because it does not follow the logic of a construction of an institute limited to a few, but, as the co-founder of the Focolare Movement, Pascuale Foresi, underlined, it was a construction that allowed "love to guide intelligence". It is as Lubich says when she defines the first point of the art of loving "to love everyone" and which in the *lectio* of her honorary doctorate is stressed in the challenge to "teach everything to everyone..."

Graciela: Thank you to each of the speakers! Now we invite you to take a journey with us... Let us travel to our **countries** and we will discover that there is already an **educational network** there... inspired by the pedagogy of communion proposed by Chiara Lubich.

After this journey from space, as is now the fashion, we now ask **Juan García Gutiérrez**, from Segovia, Spain, Professor of Philosophy of Education at the National University of Spain of Distance Learning, to present the second part of the theme that unites us: "The Pedagogy of Communion" as a common trait of educational institutions inspired by Chiara Lubich's charism of unity. It will introduce us to the analysis of the most significant words present in the "Ideario", (the Ideology or Vision) of each of the 11 American Spanish-speaking educational Centres, derived from a personal and communitarian experience of living the Words of the Gospel, made concrete in an existential commitment with their communities. Centres that we have "walked through" on our virtual journey. After seeing and listening to the synthesis of some institutional experiences, we will be able to better understand what identifies and expresses them: their adherence to the pedagogical paradigm of Unity and Fraternity proposed by Chiara Lubich.

Let's listen to Juan

Theme: The "pedagogy of communion" as the educational ideario (Juan García Gutiérrez)

The "pedagogy of communion" as the educational ideario (ideology or vision) of teaching institutions inspired by Chiara Lubich's charism of unity (Juan García)

Introduction

Thank you for the presentation and a greeting to all those who are following us, especially those who do not speak Spanish.

We began this session with the theme of the "word" in education. Then different educational institutions offered us their experience of how they have put into practice those educational words that flow from the charism of Unity. Now we will try to make an initial reading of these institutional educational experiences in order to construct what would be the "educational ideario" - not exactly translatable into English - the ideology, thought, the philosophy, that emerges from the pedagogy of communion and gives life to this diversity of educational initiatives. In other contexts, other terms may be used to express this according to the specific educational laws in each country: School Development Plan; School Charter, The Mission Statement...

We shall do so inductively, following, so to speak, a "case-study methodology". We will try to compose a "picture" that serves to know its identity or what it has in particular. We have examined the documents and websites of the different centres: Fiore, Santa Maria, Sol Levante School, Acua Music Academy, Aurora School, "Caffè con leche" educational project and Chiara Lubich International Academy. We have gathered those elements that would serve to identify its mission, vision, values and principles in order to make a unitary analysis, offering in a systematic way what could be a common "educational ideario". In addition, we have taken into consideration the narratives of the experiences of those who animate these projects and educational institutions because they help to show how this idearium is not just a "set of words" but are "lived words", becoming a lived experience.

What does the educational idearium consist of and why is it important?

The term "idearium" or "ideario" is used to identify a set of determined ideas, referring, for example, to those of a politician, an author, a philosopher, etc. The educational idearium is a "set of words in education" that serves "externally" to identify an institution or an educational community and, "internally", to orient, understand and give pedagogical meaning to the educational action and to the work of the teachers of an institution.

From a pedagogical perspective, the educational idearium constitutes the affirmation of a certain "collective identity" in the educational field; that is, the set of ideas and convictions shared by a group or a community which define it as such and which claim to be transmitted through education. Therefore, through the definition of the educational idearium, a community examines its identity and (re)elaborates its most valuable traits or distinctive elements. Those for which they want to be recognised and remembered, those they claim to pass on to future generations because they trust in their value.

Formally, the educational idearium is a public document in which an educational community manifests a certain educational intention, not an 'individual' one but a collective one. The contents consists of "educational" words, which arouse the adhesion of the educational community, which open up a vital and practical horizon, something that composes and compromises the ethos or culture of the centre. The educational idearium also contains an anthropological definition of the 'type of person' to whom education is directed, that is, what type of person it is intended to form and in what way. It must therefore also include the methodological aspects with which the educational community engages.

At birth, the human being needs to be welcomed into a certain symbolic universe... From these symbolic spaces, the new generations will be able to (re)create their personal identity in dialogue with those first structures such as the family and the school that welcome it. This is why it is necessary to think of the idea of transmission not as a "product" but as a process of reciprocity. That is, to go beyond the business-like visions that orient education as a tool to generate profits or focus the educational process only on preparation for a job. This anthropology of transmission helps us to understand the human being's need for care and acceptance, especially when he or she is most vulnerable.

It has been said that "We human beings are not heirs to a search for ourselves and the world, nor to an accumulated body of information, but to a conversation that began in primitive forests and spread and became more articulate over the centuries " (M. Oakeshott, 2000, p. 449). Once again we find the idea of the word.... because conversations are made up of words. This metaphor of "conversation" is important to understand the meaning and significance of the "educational idearium" as that space where a community becomes "a place that is welcoming and gives meaning". The idearium is called to converse constantly with the community that gives it meaning and can change it if it does not respond to its vital roots.

Legally, it is "a public document in which the particularity of the school is expressed" (García-Gutiérrez, 2009, 537); therefore, an (autonomous) right of the founders of the school to give the institution its own identity; and it is also an instrumental right that makes it easier for parents to choose the type of education they want for their children, in accordance with international declarations and conventions on human rights.

In a political sense, it is a "document" that opens up a space for families to relate to the centres. In a context of pluralism and diversity, it allows the development of this global educational pact between different actors, institutions and educational environments. Because pacts are not made as a result of equality between equal entities, but from the respectful recognition of differences, not as something that threatens unity but by "maintaining mutual differences and directing one's strengths to the service of the same project" (Educational Pact 2, openness to the other).

Education is not only a human right, but also the right to "be human", because only through education does the human being recognise himself as such, ready to achieve his full development (art. 26.2 Universal Declaration of Human Rights). This recognition also appears in the Global Educational Pact proposed by Pope Francis when, in accordance with the Church's social magisterium, the primary right of the family to educate and the right of social entities to support and collaborate with families in the education of their children are recognised (Pope Francis to the Diplomatic Corps, 9/1/2020). Hence the importance of those who plan education.

Starting from this approach of the Global Pact, the educational idearium strengthens the freedom brought about by pluralism and diversity of educational proposals for various reasons:

- As a "public document" through which a community, by means of an educational project, identifies those educational convictions (religious, moral and pedagogical) that ground, orient and give meaning to the educational process.
- As a "relational" element, it is a kind of "pact" or "pedagogical contract" that commits the whole educational community to its implementation.

- At the same time, in this relational approach, it constitutes a "bridge" between the centre and society, recognising the social responsibility of educational institutions.

The "words in education" that those planning education use, have the power to "animate", "dynamise", "vivify" the centres when they are lived and put into practice; they must be the soul of the centre of education... The vital root, the soul that characterises the different educational institutions we have presented earlier, that is, the ideas, principles, values that give meaning to these institutions are derived from the spirituality of unity and are the foundation of the pedagogy of communion. For this reason the educational idearium of the pedagogy of communion also presents the following elements: identity and model of the institution; anthropological model; pedagogical model.

Building an educational Ideario inspired by the charism of unity.

Based on Chiara Lubich's "spirituality of unity" there emerges a pedagogy of communion that we can make concrete in the following elements, as an educative ideario:

The Identity of the Centre and model of the institution: as a relational institution

A concrete and particular identity is defined in the clearest possible way. The centres inspired by the charism of unity, may use among other signs of identity, hymns, logos or shields and flags to symbolise what they want to transmit pedagogically to society. Both the institutions and the educational projects are spaces that are open to dialogue, where everybody can live together and learn, where everyone is appreciated and respected. That is why they are also open to the community with a view to social responsibility and commitment, especially with the needs and problems affecting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in mind. Thus the idea of improvement not only acts to better the entity itself but also looks outwards. It promotes a management and administration model oriented towards the common good, characterised by the search for reciprocity, transparency and honesty. It therefore generates dynamics of constant improvement and the search for unity. It takes the form of welcoming everyone without prejudice.

The Pedagogical model

Educational and training centres inspired by the pedagogy of communion promote a holistic education. This holistic education is offered at every level of education, field or type of educational process. This holistic education is based on:

- Experience as the nuclear element of the teaching-learning process;
- interdisciplinarity leading to a global approach to problems;
- Exemplarity and coherence between what is proposed and how it is done.
- A progressive pedagogy and constant innovation as a loving response to the needs of each individual, allowing for the articulation of methodological contributions from other pedagogical approaches or traditions.
- A pedagogy of reciprocity, where the asymmetry of the educational relationship and authority are read in terms of service and mutual enrichment leading to the development of the other.

The educational process has as its premise the pact or the practice of mutual love between its teachers, pupils, employees and families to form a true educational community, well aware that the fruit of that lived unity is the presence of the Educator, Jesus Master. Education therefore constitutes that itinerary which the educatee (individual or community) undertakes with the help of the educator towards what one should be. The end of which is considered to be valid (even precious, one can say) for man and for humanity.

The Model of person and society

Education is oriented and based on a vision of man as being-in-relationship. For Chiara Lubich this relationship has its model in the Trinity, which she defines as authentic sociality. A relationship that is also open to transcendence in its relationship with God and with others (brothers and sisters). An anthropological model that defines itself as the "new man" (in clear reference to the Gospel) or as "man-world". Hence fraternity as an expressed educational goal. A person who develops in all his dimensions (physical, cognitive, affective, social) including the spiritual dimension that enables him to be active in realizing himself and having the responsibility to direct his abilities to the service of the common good. In this way, communities will be able to develop in a fraternal and sustainable way, emerging as a model of community as a space of freedom and respect, pluralistic and intercultural, capable of generating a culture of unity and peace.

Graciela: Thank you Juan for your invaluable contribution which has helped us to see the motivating threads, the ideas which lead us to live the pedagogy of communion in each of these educational institutions and the question arises spontaneously... why not transfer them to our schools or universities?

Working groups

Graciela: We now come to the **working groups**. Since we are dealing with educational communication today, we propose it to be a moment of dialogue, where every word spoken is valuable, and has the nuances we have been talking about.

To divide ourselves into rooms, one must click on the group selection, which appears at the bottom of the image. By opening the icon (group, groups ..., a small grid) a drop-down menu will appear where the different rooms appear according to the language. Next to the language one or two words are displayed.

These are the themes which we aim to discuss. That is, you need to choose the language and the theme. As you can see, these are words that have very broad meaning which allow for many readings. We deliberately want to leave these quite open-ended, an "enigma", because we invite you to build this dialogue together about the educational value of communication, to have an open space where you can share ideas and experiences, even if they are conflicting. The important thing would be to "provoke" in each one of us deep listening, to be free and open, without prejudice, the total gift of what we are, as we have experienced it, so that in the next 25 minutes we can build relationships of pedagogical communion.

These words are:

Verbalism and authentic language

Communication-communion

Word and silence

Word that imposes and word that generates

Life and thought

Dialogue as a mutual gift

Therefore, we choose our room. Once inside, some of the participants will take note of what is emerging and after the meeting will send a summary to the email that will appear on the screen. In the following days we will prepare a document with all the contributions that will have arrived and these will be sent to each participant.

Entering the room takes a few seconds. You have to be patient. And if one room is already full, switch to another one without any problems, even if we are a bit late.

In case someone is left out of the room, no problem! We will have a group in parallel.

When the time is up, the programme warns us and takes us back to the general room. So now I wish you all... GOOD WORK !!!!

Conclusion

Graciela: Well, we have come to the **end of this meeting** and we hope you enjoyed it as much as we have. So we say goodbye until the next step, which will be on the 26th June 2021 and we will pass on the baton to our friends and educators in Brazil.

Through the chat you can leave your impressions, just one word, what you have learned, what you would like to share with us ...or write an email at dialogoedu2020@gmail.com

A thousand thanks to all those who made this event possible, we are moving forward in the practice of planetary citizenship and of an education which is positively transformative.