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Developing Educational Practices in the Globalized World

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1. Introduction

In the globalized world scenario we can identify new social needs to which new educational needs correspond, with the aid of a matrix focused on individuals, communities and societies and their relationship.

This matrix is particularly useful in making visible -in different cultural and social contexts- the emergence and development of educational demands, which need to be acknowledged and responded to through multiple devices and tools.

We have to cope with the demands of very different kinds of people, from various parts of the world, who are asking to be involved in a common educational journey; these demands are grounded in global educational needs: the need to grow, to develop individual and collective capabilities, to learn lifelong and lifewide and to acquire higher levels of awareness and consciousness.

As far as global educational needs are by-products of global social needs, we are asked to reflect on the emergence and development of social needs on a broad perspective connecting them with the main social issues characterizing the globalized world scenario.

The above mentioned needs concern broad groups of people, who are not localized in a particular cultural or territorial area but are widespread in different countries and are identifiable not for their race, cultural heritage or nationality, but for their sharing of particular conditions of life, experiences, learning, stories and understandings.

In a global framework, it therefore becomes necessary to reflect on the conditions and opportunities which sustain the educational agency as a response to the above mentioned needs and demands; this is necessary in order to understand its role and functions with a pedagogical perspective.

The challenge here is to integrate local and global, contextual and more general perspectives in a mirror game which can help us to have an effective portrait of the complex reality we are asked to deal with.

Global educational needs call for a deep change in educational models, practices and systems, which are required to have a greater sustainability and validity, in order to respond effectively to the requests emerging in the new social scenarios.

Within this context, it is increasingly necessary to provide specialized educational responses through specific strategies, devices and methodologies, as well as to develop and implement dedicated educational practices, aimed at responding to the multiple educational needs emerging in the globalized scenarios; these practices have to be acknowledged and cultivated as a particular kind of social practice as they exercise and express a specific agency within social structures and have a significant impact on social contexts at a multiple level.

2. The multi faceted scenarios of the globalized world

The process of globalization we can observe in contemporary world scenarios has, indeed, its roots in modernity (Giddens 1990). However, it has further developed in the present direction since the end of the nineteenth century according to three big patterns involving different trends over time: the *globalization of countries*; the *globalization of companies*; and the *globalization of individuals* (Friedman, 2000).

While there is, at the moment, an ongoing debate regarding the precise nature of the causal forces behind globalization, there is also a wide agreement on the idea that this process is not to be considered simply as the outcome of international trade and investment drives; therefore, it cannot be explored through an exclusive focus on economic factors, as far as it involves a complex combination of *different* trends, with significant cultural, political and social implications.

Within this framework, globalization can be considered as a relatively long-term, multi-pronged process which has been growing more intensively in the recent decades. It is sustained by three different driving forces which manifest themselves in many different arenas of social activity: *deterritorialization*, *interconnectedness*, and *social acceleration* (Scholte, 1996, Kofman & Scholte, 2000).

This process has involved new forms of interaction and integration between productive forces, governments, institutions and people (Harvey, 1989 1996) through a set of dynamic relationships involving *four core units*: *societies*, *international systems*, *individual selves* and *humankind*; these units are deeply interconnected and integrated within different contexts, thus impacting on multiple dimensions of human living (Giddens 1990; Held, McGrew, Goldblatt & Perraton 1999).

Within this complex and multidimensional framework, economical, political and social dimensions are implied, whose evolution and intersection - in a short as well as a long term perspective - can be studied through a multivariate approach; in this way, it is possible to focus on the developmental trends of new forms of associate living, governance and production, which have a different impact on cultural, economical, political and social development within the different countries (Dreher, Gaston and Martens, 2008).

Each facet of globalization is determined by the above mentioned driving forces and elements, and consists of a complex and relatively autonomous series of empirical developments; these involve a variety of social activities and events, bearing a more or less extensive and strong influence and impact on different local and regional endeavors, irrespective of their geographical location and condition (Ruggie 1993; Tomlinson 1999; Scholte, 1996; Kofman & Scholte 2000).

Globalization also implies deep changes in the spatial and temporal contours of individual and collective existence, which modify many essential forms of social agency and social activity in very different ways (Eriksen 2001; Scheuerman 2004); over time, the degree of these occurrences can become predictable and regularized (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt & Perraton 1999) and these forms may be better understood, in order to orient and manage them in a more sustainable way.

Linking together human activity across regions and continents, as well as adding and expanding crucial links, globalization activates multiple processes of change which underpin a deep transformation in the "organization of human affairs" (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt & Perraton 1999).

With this perspective, globalization involves processes of *societalization*, *internationalization*, *individuation*, and *generalization of consciousness* about humankind (Robertson 1991: 215-6; 1992: 27) which determine both the "compression" of the world as well as the "intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson, 1992:8); individuals and communities are therefore asked to define an identity and to assume a position with reference to the emerging global whole (Robertson, 1991: 216; 1992: 29).

This means that, within the global scenario, people are constrained to "care about" the world and to work in order to develop the conditions under which "caring for" global issues can flourish as a direct response to acknowledged and expressed needs, to be monitored according to its results and outcomes (Noddings, 2005).

Within this framework, in order to "care for" the above mentioned social and educational needs, it is necessary first of all that individuals, communities and societies start to "care about" them in order to create the cultural, economical, political and social conditions under which it can be really possible to manage them through dedicated actions, policies and practices.

In these terms, globalization poses a cultural, political and social problem, identifiable as the problem of "globality" which implies the development of a "world culture", denoting the multiple ways of defining the global situation, conceived as a response to this shared predicament (Robertson, 1992: 132).

Capturing "the form in terms of which the world has moved towards unicity" (Robertson, 1992: 175) globalization and globality can help us to define and explore in a different way the issues at stake in contemporary world scenarios; this involves taking into account first of all some universal questions -such as what it means to live and grow in the globalized world, how this world should be organized, how it may be developed - which are basically global in their inner structure and meaning but may receive different answers from individuals and societies, according to different conditions and perspectives.

Social needs and educational needs have to be acknowledged and analyzed according to the paradigm of "globality" in order to be understood in all their complexity, focusing on their interconnectedness and on their impact on social endeavors, considered from a global perspective.

This has a significant educational implication as far as it calls for the development of a *global education framework* which should promote both the rise of a general global consciousness as

well as the development of new knowledge structures and new understandings regarding relevant global issues.

Only the propagation and development of a global perspective (including both awareness, consciousness and understanding) can ground the possibility of a multiple and sustainable coexistence in the world, considered as a single place for all and everybody.

3. The globalization of social needs and trends

One of the main problems we have to deal with, is the globalization of social issues, which need to be analysed within a global consciousness framework and with reference to a "global culture" (Robertson, 1992).

Social systems may appear very different according to their different continental and national locations, but the problems at stake in contemporary cultural and political scenarios seem to have a common matrix, which helps us to identify them as global issues.

For this reason, it is necessary to take into account the core drives which characterize contemporary scenarios and are strictly interconnected in a global perspective, even if each of them has specific connotations.

These drives can be identified as: social change, social development, social inclusion and human development.

Social change is a common and widespread process determined by a transformation in the social order of a social group or society as well as a modification in social institutions, social behaviors, and social relations which can occur in different ways, times and spaces.

Since societies are driven and sustained by macroscopic and permanent social movements - brought about by inner driving forces engaging them in intensive and perpetual self-transformation- we can consider *social change* as a *constantly ongoing process* (Etzioni, 1968).

This process is determined both by the interaction of evolving social structures -which have the potential to operate through specific policies and practices- and individual and collective agency (Archer, 1995; Buckley, 1998); agency is shaped by structures, but it can eventually reshape these structures, through action and praxis, in a new and different way (Archer, 1995).

For this reason, the relationship between structures and agency should be understood as a dynamic perspective considering the *structuration processes* underlying the development of new social patterns (Giddens, 1990) determining *social change* and *social development*.

Generally, *social change* refers to changes that are beneficial to society, but it may result in negative side-effects or consequences that can, for example, undermine or eliminate existing forms of associate life.

Moreover, there could be contradictions, more or less strong, resulting from differential rates of change in various sectors of society, and this may produce internal and external tensions.

There may also be contradictions between structural characteristics and individual and collective aspirations or cultural themes, which can generate different kinds of dialectics (of

equality; of socialization; of universality) therefore bringing further complexity to the growth and change of human societies (Aron, 1972).

This is particularly true if we consider the phenomenon we are referring to as a global one, even if its manifestations and development may be different within different territorial areas.

Indeed, social change may be driven by cultural, religious, economic, scientific or technological forces, which come to target the underlying causes of critical social problems through different methods (such as for example direct action, protesting, advocacy, community organization, community practice, revolution, and political activism..) having an overall impact on social organization, structuration and development.

It must therefore be understood that social change is not an isolated phenomenon as far as it can be seen as a general drive in the development of world societies. Moreover, even when it occurs in a specific country, *social change* comes to have an influence and impact also on other social systems, more or less distant, through the circulation of information, ideas, representations and practices.

In this process a significant role is played by new forms of communication, information and interaction through the use of new technologies (such as for example social networks, you tube, skype..) which have impressively contributed to the propagation of images, sounds, texts....as well as to the construction of multiple public spaces of communication, exchange, encounter, debate and reflection.

The basic mechanism driving *social change* is, at a general level, the *increasing awareness and consciousness* of social problems by individuals and groups. This results in the search for better opportunities for progress and in the development of new forms of organization and of new structures, which are more able to direct the available social energies, skills and resources towards new actions and practices.

It is therefore extremely important to promote -through different forms of actions, activities and practices- the increasing of the levels of social awareness and consciousness which in practice will determine the activation of a process of *social development*.

Social development can be acknowledged as a process (natural or planned) pertaining to all societies at all historical periods and may, therefore, be considered as a "global process". As a *natural process* of development it occurs as the result of the actions, activities and practices of numbers of individuals through which societies achieve new forms of organization without being necessarily conscious of it; as a *planned process*, it is the result of deliberate conscious initiatives by organizations and institutions to speed up development through dedicated actions, programs and policies.

In any case, this process is characterized by an upwardly ascending movement featuring growing levels of "energy, efficiency, quality, productivity, complexity, comprehension, creativity, mastery, enjoyment, and accomplishment" for all the social systems distributed in the global scenario (Jacobs, Asokan, 1999:152).

As theorists point out, *development* occurs through different stages (*physical, vital and mental*) and processes which involve the *organization* of resources and social forces in an increasingly effective way in order to cope with the challenges imposed by the new world scenarios (Cleveland, Jacobs, 1999): the creation of new *institutions* which derive from the maturation of organizations into more structured and stable systems; the *cultural transmission* of

aspirations, projects and understandings through social organizations (such as families or educational systems) which maintain and sustain the development process as far as its *driving forces* are *human beings* and *not* material factors (also considering that in the mental stage, we observe an increasing power of ideas to change social life).

From this perspective, the main factors determining *social development* are *attitudes, competences, knowledge, skills* and *values* which combine at an individual and collective level, generating new forms of human agency, experience and practice.

In order to produce a real developmental process, these elements must be expressed by all social groups and not by a limited number of individuals or groups.

For this reason, *social change* and *social development* are strictly connected, in a circular perspective, to *social inclusion* which is, indeed, a crucial issue in the globalized world scenario.

In very different social contexts all over the world, it always happens that individuals and even entire communities are systematically blocked from the essential rights, opportunities and resources due to all members of any society, which are the key to social integration; the results are various kinds of deprivation, which exclude individuals and communities from full participation in economic, social, and political life.

EU documents identify social exclusion as “a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and life long learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination. This distances them from job, income and education and training opportunities, as well as social and community networks and activities” (European Commission, 2004). This is due to the intersection of multiple factors (economical, cultural, political and social) which have a negative impact on social systems, making them not function as they should.

According to a “capability approach” social exclusion can, indeed, be understood as a limit on individual and collective “functioning” which refers to the states and activities constitutive of a person’s or a group’s social being (Sen, 1989; 1993).

This is connected to a limitation on the use of different kinds of resources (economical, cultural, social and structural), which causes the deprivation of different forms of capital (financial, human, physical and social) thereby excluding individuals and groups from access to earnings and wealth, educational opportunities, housing, social interactions and political power.

Considered from this perspective social exclusion impacts on all the states and activities embedded in any particular social system and influences the processes of social change and social development.

One determining factor of social exclusion is the presence of *cultural and structural barriers to participation* -both in the labour market and in society- which are due to a multidimensional process of progressive social rupture, that detaches individuals and groups from institutions and social relations and prevents them from full participation in different types of social activity at multiple levels.

Within this complex scenario, social groups such as children, the disabled, the elderly, immigrants, prisoners, unemployed and women..., have little possibility of being fully

included in the social systems they belong to due to the strong cultural and structural barriers which constrain the systems in question.

This is connected to what can be described as a “capability deprivation”, since depriving someone or some group of one or more capabilities means limiting the range of things that people can do or be in life.

As a consequence, certain individuals and groups who suffer from this kind of deprivation may never reach their full potential in certain kinds of society; these individuals and groups will also be excluded from participating in the labor force, the consumption of goods, wealth accumulation and social functions.

The presence/absence or deprivation of capabilities is, therefore, crucial in promoting social inclusion intended to mean the process of progressive inclusion and participation in a social agency of larger and larger numbers of individuals and groups, on the basis of new opportunities of access to essential goods and resources.

As we have pointed out, social inclusion is essentially based on and driven by an individual and collective capability development. In order to sustain the recovery, maintenance and development of capabilities it is extremely important to support individuals, communities and groups with devices and tools which help them to express fully their own potential *on the basis of an increasing level of awareness of their needs, possibilities and rights from a global perspective.*

Only if there is a wide consciousness of social needs -which implies a consciousness of social systems, individuals and groups in a global perspective- will it be possible to become aware of one's own educational needs and to connect with other individuals and groups which share the same conditions, even in very distant areas of the world.

According to the “capability approach” we should consider five components in order to be able to assess the presence/deprivation of capabilities within a social system: a) real freedom in the assessment of a person's advantage; b) the valorisation of individual differences in the transformation of resources into valuable activities; c) the presence of multivariate activities aimed at producing and maintaining happiness and well being; d) a balance of materialistic and non materialistic factors in human welfare; and e) a shared concern for the distribution of opportunities within society (Sen, 1989; 1993).

On this basis we can analyse the success or failure of different political systems, as well as the processes of globalization, democratization, development and economic growth, on a world wide perspective.

Global change, global development and global inclusion require, first of all, *cultural, political and social conditions* which support the overcoming of cultural and structural barriers and, secondly, the enhancement and growth of *individual and collective awareness, agency and understanding*, acknowledged as the *driving forces* of the advancement of societies.

As a matter of fact, there cannot be social development without *human development*. This latter is, indeed, both a condition and a consequence of the former and both are, indeed, deeply interconnected and interwoven.

The concept of *human development* is better understood if we consider it from a global perspective, since it refers to a global development model that can be applied to any country

or nation and is grounded on four main pillars: *equity, sustainability, production and empowerment*, which should be available to any human being in any part of the world (Streeten, 1994; Srinivasan, 1994); this means that each human being has the right to be cared for and educated, to earn a sustainable living, to participate in productive processes and exercise a powerful agency both for his or her own as well as for collective life advancement.

On this basis, we can identify some *essential conditions* (such as education, environmental sustainability, equality, health and wealth) which are indicated by the United Nations in the millennium goals program (UN, 2009) as well as some specific *goals and perspectives* (such as creating living environments in which people can develop and express their full potential and lead aware, creative, healthy and productive lives in accordance with their interests, needs, potentialities and resources) leading towards human development.

These goals are strictly connected to the possibility to develop and enlarge *human capabilities* providing the best conditions for the growth and agency of individuals and groups.

All human beings should have the capability to be healthy, knowledgeable and economically sustained with regard to their needs, and to be in the condition to participate fully in social activities contributing to the choices and decisions of the societies in which they live but also – on a global perspective- to the analysis and management of global issues.

Human development can be measured and monitored with some specific devices which, however, are not capable of providing a description and explanation of the complex processes involved. The United Nations has elaborated the Human Development Index intended as the normalized measure of life expectancy, literacy, education, standard of living, and GDP per capita for every country worldwide which is used as the basis of annual reports for consultation (UN, 1994). These indicators are, indeed, fully representative of the complexity of human development processes but provide only a general overview of the essential conditions and elements involved; for this reason, they are integrated with those provided by the Human Poverty Index which measures the deficiencies in the three indexes of human development (UN, 1997).

Moreover, it must be said that human development is strictly connected to human rights and human freedom, because it can be achieved only if the same rights are provided to all human beings who are acknowledged as individuals who are not constrained in their choices and deliberations within the cultural and social contexts they live in. In this perspective, human development must be considered as a moral, political and social issue to be taken into account in a global framework.

As far as it is *one* of the driving forces sustaining all the significant advancements in the globalized world human development must be studied together with *social change, social development* and *social inclusion* in order to grasp its potentiality and specificity.

These *driving forces* can be observed and measured from a more general perspective if we consider them as *global forces* and they should be analysed (according to the “capability approach” which, as we have seen, is particularly useful as a means of focusing on the social conditions facilitating advancement and development on a global perspective) in strict relationship with the social “functionings” in which they are expressed.

One of these “functionings” is, indeed, education, considered not only as one of the primary rights but also as one of the most powerful devices to promote not only human development but social change and development as well.

The expression of these potentialities is, indeed, not to be taken for granted if we consider that in many countries educational processes are not leading to the achievement of these goals or are simply not successful in terms of reaching educational objectives.

This lack of success depends on a series of elements and factors which weaken the social impact of education and reduce it to an ensemble of policies and practices controlled by outside forces (such as the economy, political power and spiritual power) which it contributes to maintain and strengthen.

These elements and factors are cultural, political and social and represent, indeed, the only real constraints on and oppositions to a full and true global development.

It is therefore extremely important to focus on education from a global perspective concentrating on the educational needs stemming from the social issues at stake in the globalized scenario and indicating the models, strategies, policies and practices that should be developed and implemented in order for education to fulfil its mission and role.

4. Educational needs in the globalized world

New educational needs correspond to the social needs previously identified, which require specialized educational responses.

As Nodding points out, the educational needs emerging in the globalized scenario are not mainly focused on knowledge, but instead on a true commitment to well informed choices and on a sound concern for global issues (Noddings, 2005). This means that education should not be conceived as a means of knowledge acquisition and construction, but as a means to sustain different forms of engagement and thinking for an aware and responsible ethical positioning regarding global issues, within a global development perspective.

As we have pointed out, all over the world, development can only be really effective and successful if it is the product of the intersection of four driving forces: social change, social development, social inclusion and human development.

Within this complex scenario, education is therefore called on to contribute to all these processes as they are indeed deeply interwoven.

We acknowledge as an educational need the need to have access to experiences and opportunities for growth intended as an ongoing never ending process directed at no other objective than the expansion of the growing potential of individuals and communities (Dewey, 1926).

Indeed, the need for growth can be understood as a global human need, not strictly connected to any particular historical, cultural or social situation, but it takes different forms within the particular groups and contexts in which this need is reflectively acknowledged and defined as a social problem.

For these reasons, the human need to grow has a particular meaning if it is interpreted within a social change scenario as we move on to focus on the social conditions which, impeding growth and therefore education, limit the possibilities of social change.

From this perspective we must analyze, for example, the interaction between educational and other social institutions as well as their inner modifications; we must take into account social behaviors and their educational implications; we must study the social relations embedded in educational processes.

If we consider education in relation to social development (intended both as a natural and planned process) we must focus on the actions, activities and practices (not only conscious and intentional but also in some way unconscious and implicit) of individuals and communities as well as on the deliberate and planned institutional and organizational initiatives, policies, programs and strategies which may limit, orient or sustain educational processes.

We can therefore view the emergence of intentions, ends and orientations which may sustain educational processes and practices as they are activated and promoted.

If we focus on education with reference to social inclusion we must consider the conditions that limit the access to educational experiences and opportunities for individual and groups but also look at the exclusive as well as inclusive dimensions deeply embedded in educational processes, with reference to both cultural as well as structural educational barriers; moreover, we must envisage the inclusive potential of education intended as an empowering social device aimed at developing the range of capabilities available for individuals and communities.

Last, but not least, education, if we consider it in relationship with human development, can function as a powerful device as far as it can provide individuals and communities with the cultural and personal resources needed to play an active and responsible role in all the activities characterizing global scenarios.

As we have mentioned above, educational needs concern not only individuals and communities living within a specific social context, but broad groups of people who are widespread in different countries and are recognized for their sharing of particular life conditions and experiences.

A first condition could be the collocation within increasingly deterritorialized, interconnected, and accelerated living contexts, which requires a constant adaptation to new life and work conditions through the acquisition and development of new devices and tools as well as new abilities, competences, knowledge, skills and understandings.

A second condition could be the increasingly intense experience of diversity (of cultures, habits, perspectives, religions and traditions) and of change (of living context, social status and employment...) which requires the development of a new and different understanding of human life.

A third condition could be the shared awareness of the world as a whole and the acknowledgment of global issues which call for the development of a global conscience and a global participatory agency for individuals and communities.

It must be considered, indeed, that the wide-ranging impact of globalization on human existence touches on many social issues (such as immigration, transitions, job changes, ageing, diversity management, environmental protection and the sustainable use of

resources.....) which are acknowledged as global issues and have a deep moral implication, taking into account the “mental” stage of development which characterizes contemporary social scenarios.

This last condition calls for the development of a global conscience, which is also the basis for an ethical positioning regarding the above mentioned issues, identified as specific problems to be analysed and approached through specific actions and practices.

From a “social development perspective”, we are challenged to perform a practical application of ethical ideals to daily social life, which is a powerful educational challenge.

This means that individuals and communities should be involved in educational processes aimed at providing them with tools useful to elaborate pathways of ethical inquiry regarding global issues and to perform a responsible ethical agency within the global arena.

A global conscience implies also the acknowledgement of the need for a global citizenship grounded on a keen awareness of the political, economic, social, and environmental concerns of our time on a global perspective, which calls for a deep understanding of nations, cultures, languages, and religions around the globe taking into account their diversities and similarities.

It is true that these issues may receive different analyses and responses according to the variation of conditions and perspectives characterizing different cultural, social and territorial frameworks.

However, it is also true that different analyses and responses can implement a wide range of possible positionings, thereby generating new forms of human agency, experience and practice which can lead to greater social accomplishment as far as they are developed and implemented through appropriate educational actions.

From the above mentioned conditions, which are strictly interconnected, stem clear educational demands which need to be addressed by specific interventions characterized by having a common matrix (as far as they address global issues in their inner structure and meaning), but also to be realized and implemented in different ways according to the social contexts they are situated in. The challenge here is to integrate contextual and more general perspectives in a mirror game which can help us to have an effective portrait of the complex reality we are asked to deal with.

To the development of a “global needs conscience” and of a “global citizenship” it is necessary to connect a wide awareness of the opportunities available in the different social systems within a global scenario, in order to sustain greater aspirations and release greater energies.

Within this framework, “global citizenship” can be considered as a result of both “global education” and the “globalization of education”.

Indeed, the call for a “global education” is a problematic issue from a pedagogical point of view.

Global education is not only a process aimed at providing all global citizens with abilities, knowledge, skills and understanding in order to create a well informed, trained, and motivated workforce (which may have an effective inclusion in a globalized job market

within a globalized economy), but a more complex and articulated process of cultural and social change and development, based on a new vision and a new understanding of global problems.

This perspective is enlightened in the Maastricht Global Education Declaration, which emphasizes that global education is “essential for strengthening public support for spending on development co-operation. All citizens need knowledge and skills to understand, participate in and interact critically with our global society as empowered global citizens” (EU, 2002).

From this perspective global education is principally envisaged as a process of empowerment for individuals and groups as far as we consider empowerment to be a multi-dimensional, complex process (Cuzba, Page, 1999), which leads to individual and collective growth, grounded on the possibility of a full acknowledgment and use of inner resources.

It must be considered that there is always the risk of a progressive process of deprivation of capabilities for the individuals and groups who are not able to cope with the new living conditions imposed by the globalization processes and are therefore not able to deal with the global issues at stake.

Empowerment, indeed, enables people to take control of their own lives but also to free themselves from the structures which dominate and constrain them. For these reasons, it is strictly connected to emancipation, considered as a process of progressive liberation from any kind of cultural and social constraint which may condition or limit one’s own agency and range of capability.

This connection is visible as far as the journey through which individuals and communities become more and more active, aware, conscious and responsible in respect of global issues leads them to identify the cultural, economic and social constraints that limit their possibility to grow, express themselves and participate.

On the basis of this progressive process of conscientization, in Freire’s terms, it is possible to get rid of beliefs, patterns of action, perspectives, representations, theories and world views and to construct new understandings of the worlds people live and grow in and , therefore, to plan and act in a different way.

Thinking globally imposes a different positioning regarding the events people experience directly and indirectly in their daily life through different kinds of media devices; this conclusion is based on the acknowledgement that it becomes easier to “care about” issues and problems which are no longer far away and therefore invisible and un-thinkable.

On this basis both individuals and communities are engaged in the development of the cultural, economic, political and social conditions which make it possible to “care for” these issues and problems through a more aware and reflexive management (Noddings, 2005).

Within this framework, it is possible to envisage the transformative potential of Global Education since “globality” requires a deep reframing of one’s meaning, perspectives and schemes (Mezirow, 1991, 2000) and the construction of new forms of agency in the social contexts people live in.

This implies that individuals and communities may come to identify themselves as global agents (therefore reframing their psychological, epistemic and socio-linguistic perspectives)

on the basis of the acknowledgement of the possibility to play increasingly significant roles within the processes leading to social change and social development at different levels.

For these reasons, Global Education calls for educational models, strategies and practices aimed at promoting the acquisition and development of conceptual tools; knowledge structures; and patterns of action useful to sustain differentiated and multiple forms of global agency in various contexts.

Global agency is a form of social agency which places each action, choice and performance within a global scenario and gives it a new meaning and significance. This requires a high level of awareness and reflexivity as far as it leads to a focus not only on the immediate effects and impacts of the above mentioned actions, choices and performances but on their broader consequences and effects within a global perspective. In these terms, it is also the essential condition for a full participation in all processes of change and development occurring at different degrees and levels worldwide.

Participation within a global perspective requires specific conditions which facilitate and sustain increasingly articulated and widespread information, communication and exchange processes, to be necessarily sustained by specific resources and tools, essential for any form of global agency.

Within this framework, global agency is therefore identifiable as a fundamental educational need, which asks to be fulfilled through dedicated educational actions and practices aimed at fostering and promoting new attitudes, abilities, capacities, competences and understandings.

Global agency requires first of all a specific attitude to look at each event, issue, problem and situation from a global perspective; secondly, the ability to analyze and explore them using categories, concepts, constructs and methodologies useful to frame and reframe them within a complex, multifaceted scenario; thirdly, the capacity to engage in a sound process of in-depth exploration of the conditions generating them; fourthly, articulated competences of action planning, positioning and revision on the basis of the elements of knowledge constructed through inquiry and reflective processes; and fifthly, a broad understanding of the meanings involved in the above mentioned issues, problems and situations.

Global agency can be fully expressed only under some circumstances and conditions since it requires people to have the possibilities and the tools to work out global issues and to plan and perform sustainable action and interventions within a complex scenario, requiring articulated connections and interactions.

For this reason, global education involves a radical turn towards interconnectedness and creates possibilities for achieving more equality, social justice, understanding and cooperation amongst peoples.

This can happen on the basis of a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thoughts, feelings and actions of individuals and groups which foster mutual knowledge and collective self-awareness.

Higher levels of global consciousness and social awareness are sustained by attitudes, competences, knowledge, skills and values expressed both at an individual as well as at a collective level.

One of the most powerful devices aimed at the acquisition and development of these essential elements is the system of education available in the different societies, which needs to be therefore acknowledged as a social development device as far as –within a lifelong perspective-it offers challenges and opportunities to raise social awareness and consciousness and, at the same time, develops individual and collective capabilities.

Global education calls for a deep change in educational models, theories and practices on the basis of a deep relationship between globalization and educational change.

This results from educational systems being involved – at different levels – in a deep process of transformation in order to respond to the educational demands emerging in the globalized scenario.

This transformation occurs through a re-organization of structures, curricula, methodologies and materials which require to be specifically tailored to both global and local educational needs.

Within this framework, the “globalization of education” is a very articulated process determined by the impact that worldwide discussions, processes and institutions may have on local educational practices and policies.

Indeed, in the globalized world all events happening on a global scale have an impact on events happening on a local scale (Spring, 2009) but, at the same time, it is also true that events and phenomena occurring on a local scale may become significant on a global scale as far as they impact on global issues. This means that some educational activities, policies and practices designed and developed to respond to local needs, may become a new input for global educational change.

Educational change is indeed a central issue in the globalized scenario. Economic and social change and development are strictly connected to the devices through which the different societies promote growth and circulate knowledge and information, considered as essential resources.

Within this framework, globalization and global economy shape the nature of educational opportunities and institutions and this poses a deep challenge to educational systems (Striano, 2009) which are forced to develop according to shared guidelines (Carnoy & Rothen, 2002) but, at the same time, to maintain a specific cultural and territorial configuration.

International organizations, such as the United Nations and UNESCO, but also the World Bank and the European Community, together with many scientific and cultural organizations -at an international or national level- are strongly involved in the expansion of global education according to different aims and interests.

This process requires, indeed, the intervention of multiple actors and forces (governments, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations public and private schools, multinational corporations, communities and families...) which play a dynamic role in meeting multiple educational demands through the effort of constructing a global education superstructure.

Even if there is an increasing collaboration among these organizations (which are directly and indirectly connected on a global basis) there are also cultural and political drives which

tend to react to a wider unification of educational systems and call for new educational models and strategies, specifically tailored to the specificity of different cultural and territorial contexts.

Indeed, the analysis of educational systems within a global perspective requires a consideration of the presence of multiple elements which are, over time, deeply interconnected.

In the last few years, we have seen a *transformation of the public educational sector* which has been challenged by multiple and diverse requests and is working very hard to cope with the call for a global and intercultural education through a deep change of curricular structures, inner organization, activities and practices.

Moreover, we observe a *strong development of the private educational sector*, together with an expansion of a global education industry, which has involved several multi-national private educational companies, together with dedicated educational services.

This is connected to the emergence and growth of *non-profit educational institutions* at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, which have an increasing impact on educational processes.

Within this articulated framework, at different levels, the call for global education requires: a) the development of educational models and strategies that, beyond traditional modes of education, can cope with the characteristics and requests of very different kinds of people, from various parts of the world, who share common conditions and demands; and b) the development and implementation of specific educational practices which can be considered as a repertory to build up and share within a broad community of educational practitioners disseminated in different territorial contexts, who are called on to cope with the same educational needs within a globalized perspective.

5. Educational practices for the globalized world

What kind of *educational models and strategies* are required to cope with global change in order to sustain global development in an articulated educational scenario?

As we have previously pointed out, social change and social development are not brought about only by an economic development sustained by a competent, qualified and skilled workforce, but they occur and continue on the basis of greater levels of awareness and consciousness involving both individuals and communities.

The above mentioned processes are therefore sustained by educational actions, policies and practices which are intentionally directed towards individual and collective growth building community and mutual respect, creating social responsibility, instilling an appreciation for diversity, promoting emotional literacy and managing and resolving conflicts (Noddings, 2005).

This is a consequence of a “mental” stage of development, which therefore calls upon the necessity to invest most of all in actions and practices aimed at supporting the enhancement of mental forces and resources both at an individual as well as at a collective level.

Within this framework, education has to be considered as a powerful device for social development as far as it points to: a) the implementation and support of processes of

continuing growth; b) the growth of higher levels of global and social awareness and consciousness, which are the key elements of a global citizenship; and c) the acquisition, enhancement and implementation of abilities, competences, knowledge, skills and understandings meant as tools to cope with the requests of the global productive scenario.

Within this perspective, education becomes the only device that can support the elimination of cultural barriers, the development of capabilities and the enhancement of levels of civil and social consciousness both for individuals and communities.

On this basis, educational processes have to be strongly addressed to the enhancement of the levels of comprehension, creativity and mastery both for individuals and groups, who are constantly asked for an active and participatory involvement in activities and tasks, which produce more aware and responsible forms of agency, experience and practice.

This requires the design of specific *educational models* and *methodologies* aimed at sustaining and justifying educational strategies and practices.

A model is the product of cultural elaborations leading to collectively acknowledged and shared representations of determined social practices in their inner structure.

It can be understood as a conceptual schemata which helps in the connecting and ordering of different and multiple aspects and elements of educational situations according to guiding criteria or principles, which guarantee the model coherence and sustainability.

Each model is the expression of a particular educational perspective and performs a normative function within educational systems; for these reasons it has to be considered as a schema of connection between a *specific educational aim* (which comes from the direct experience and interpretation of the educational situation) and a *series of specific educational practices* (constructed, developed, implemented over time) which come to have meaning and sense but also concreteness, viability and visibility through specific structures.

Every model is strictly connected to the belief system as well as the organizational forms embedded in a specific society, guiding the organization of daily educational experiences and practices.

Within the contemporary cultural and social framework we notice the presence of two big educational models: a “specialist” model (technical and professionalizing) (which has evolved with the beginning of the modern age) and a “polyvalent” model (reflective, multifunctional) developed within a post-modern scenario (Bruner, 1996).

These models have been considered, indeed, somehow competitive but not alternative within the current global scenario, where we acknowledge the need for both specific technical and professional abilities and skills and for self awareness, consciousness, flexibility and reflectiveness.

Which educational model could be more suitable for the globalized world?

Should we orient educational processes towards the acquisition of abilities, competences, knowledge, skills and understandings in order to create professional profiles who can be effectively positioned in the global market scenarios or should we orient them towards the development of aware, capable, creative, flexible, reflective and responsible personal identities who can be active and purposive agents in multiple social contexts, therefore contributing to social change and development?

Indeed, both paths are required, but in order to fulfil the emerging educational needs in contemporary scenarios, they should be more and more integrated and interconnected.

The challenge is to select and use different elements from both the models, in order to construct and develop effective educational strategies, methodologies and practices, aimed at raising the levels of agency, ethical positioning and responsibility both within a local and a global perspective.

Moreover, in order to respond to the above envisaged educational aims, the educational models selected should be translated into an articulated, adaptive, comprehensive and flexible plan of action identifiable as a general strategy to govern and monitor educational processes within a global perspective.

For this plan to be effective, it is, moreover, necessary to refer to an operational methodology (intended as the scientific foundation and development of methods and practices) which should support different courses of action.

The Maastricht Declaration indicates a general methodology for Global Education aimed at “supporting active learning and encouraging reflection with active participation of learners and educators” (EC, 2002).

This methodology is based on the acknowledgement that the essential requirement of an educational process is its impact on social change and development; this means that all educational processes should be mainly oriented to provide resources and tools aimed at sustaining the above mentioned social goals within the UN Millennium Goals Scenario.

Active participation is therefore a basic condition as well as a target objective of all educational processes since it refers to a fundamental element for any social advancement and evolution.

This means that these processes should be methodologically sustained by participatory approaches and devices in order to make them consistent with global development requirements.

Interesting educational possibilities in these perspectives are offered by the use -in different contexts- of *participatory methodologies*, as far as these sustain the progressive active and responsible involvement of individuals and groups in processes leading to the construction of new understandings and the development of new social practices aimed at promoting and sustaining social development.

Within this framework, there is a strong connection between global education and participatory education considered as a “collective effort in which the participants are committed to building a just society through individual and socioeconomic transformation and ending domination through changing power relations” (Campbell, Burnaby: 2001, 1). Participatory education is a cyclical process during which participants identify and share problems emerging from individual and collective experiences and later move on to reflecting and developing a critical social analysis, in order to construct a deeper understanding of the social conditions affecting the problems at stake. This process is undertaken in order to develop strategies aimed at promoting action and change.

But it is also a process which helps people to explore power dynamics and power issues and to construct new patterns of power relationships, strongly modifying the pre-existing ones.

For this reason, participatory education can be seen as a device for individual and community empowerment as far as it allows the construction of focuses on both individual and community change, therefore identifying and sharing educational objectives and goals as common commitments, involving individuals and communities in a journey towards a continuous growth.

This can occur through dedicated pathways such as, for example, *participatory action research* projects (Orefice, 2004; Kandoor, Jordan, 2009) intended as educational opportunities aimed at the enhancement of levels of awareness, conscience and participation for individuals and groups starting from the analysis of local problems which can be related to global issues.

Participatory action research can therefore be understood both as a method for social research (as far as it helps in the identifying and working out of social issues) as well as a powerful educational device (as far as it works as an endogenous drive within social contexts aimed at promoting awareness, reflection and understanding).

One of the most relevant educational outcomes of participatory action research is a deep reframing and transformation of the meaning perspectives held by individuals and communities, which may be identified as the habits of expectation and the structures of assumptions within which new experiences are assimilated and transformed by past experiences (Mezirow, 1991); this happens during a culturally situated process of interpretation of the meaning and sense of those experiences, which constructs strong frames of reference.

The only possible way to de-construct and re-construct these frames of reference is to promote a critical and reflexive analysis of their origin and implications, which leads to a deep transformation of individual and collective understandings.

The focus here is not only on participation (both as a condition and a target objective) but also on the necessity that educational processes have a significant outcome in terms of learning considered as a transformative tool for individuals, communities and societies.

Within this framework, the Guidelines for Global Education provided by the Council of Europe suggest a methodological approach mainly focused on transformative learning processes as far as they promote a deep reframing of meaning schemes and perspectives regarding global issues.

According to the Guidelines, the above mentioned methodological approach is focused on some specific kinds of practices such as: experiential practices; collaborative practices; intercultural practices; action practices; and contextual practices, which are characterized as being powerfully involving and supporting active participation as well as critical reflection.

Within the transformative learning approach critical reflection is a process through which people become "critically aware" of their own and others' tacit assumptions and expectations and get to a deep "transformation" of meaning perspectives which implies changes in self understandings, a revision of belief systems and changes in lifestyles (Mezirow, 1991, 2000); on these bases, this process leads to an expansion of consciousness through the transformation of the basic worldview.

With reference to Global Education, considered as a primary educational goal in the globalized world scenario, the use of the transformative learning approach "implies a

radical change towards interconnectedness and creates possibilities for achieving more equality, social justice, understanding and cooperation amongst peoples" (EC, 2004).

This is not to be considered as an outcome only limited to Global Education contexts and processes but as a general outcome of any educational process conceived and developed within a global framework according to global development goals.

The reference to the transformative learning methodology is particularly interesting also because it contributes to a reframing of the meaning and role of education in global development processes.

Within this framework, it becomes possible to conceive of educational processes as transformative devices leading to a deep change of personal and collective perspectives, representations and theories.

This change is functional to a more aware and responsible process of the acquisition and use of knowledge conceived as a resource for development as well as a process of the construction of new understandings regarding different kinds of issues and problems.

In a globalized scenario education can be acknowledged and used as a powerful transformative device as far as it is conceived as a tool which can be easily suited to the specificity of the social and educational needs characterizing a determined cultural and territorial context but also understood (according to the "globality" approach) as a global resource that needs to be discovered (or re-discovered) in its general characterization and connotation (as well as in its intrinsic potential of development and growth) even in very different socio-political contexts.

We acknowledge, indeed, the above mentioned strategies, methodologies and practices as examples of *empowering social devices* as far as they activate processes aimed at: the overcoming of cultural, ideological and structural barriers as well as at the construction and use of new forms of knowledge; the development of *attitudes, competences, knowledge, skills* and *values* (combined at an individual and collective level); and the enhancement of individual and collective *capabilities*.

Through *empowering educational devices* individuals and communities (who are mutually interconnected) can recognize the inherent possibility they possess to control their own lives and access personal/collective power, authority and influence in order to use them when engaging in different kinds of social activities and processes (Jones, 2006).

Empowering educational devices require the design, cultivation and implementation of dedicated educational practices which have significant outcome in terms of social participation and transformative learning.

Good examples are *reflective as well as inquiry based educational practices* in different declinations since they: a) generate higher levels of critical awareness of individual and collective beliefs and forms of knowledge; b) help in projecting and realizing new patterns of agency reflectively constructed; and c) produce new structures of knowledge and new understandings.

These practices should not be localized only within formal educational contexts, but should be widely disseminated within educational systems with a lifelong and lifewide perspective, involving non formal and informal contexts as well.

This stems from the need to involve the whole social body in educational actions, which should not be confined to delimited areas and fields of influence but must have a greater impact on social growth.

As we have seen, within a global scenario, education is increasingly a shared concern which involves different actors and forces operating in multiple and various contexts and situations and according to different patterns.

In their differences, these actors and forces nonetheless acknowledge themselves as involved in practices characterized both by common elements as well as by particular differences linked to the specificity of the different contexts they are situated in.

Within this framework, educational practices should not be acknowledged as a technical repertory of tools to support educational processes, but as a fund of experiential and empirical resources, which can be adapted, shared, transferred and transformed within a wide community of practitioners involved at different levels, with different responsibilities and different roles in educational processes.

Moreover, practices are cultivated, developed and implemented by one or more communities of people (professionals, stakeholders and learners) who, with different documentation and reflection devices, contribute to the texture of an ongoing process of re-definition, re-interpretation and re-construction of those practices.

Within a global perspective, educational practices are not limited to a specific context but can become a shared repertory which can be cultivated and implemented over and over by a global community of educational practitioners disseminated in different territorial contexts, as far as they are called on to cope with the same educational needs all over the world.

For this reason, it is particularly important to create and maintain connections among the different communities of educational practices spread all over the world, through different forms of communication, exchange of experiences, materials and reflections.

These connections should therefore be documented and shared through multiple devices in order to allow their circulation and dissemination in different educational contexts and their adaptation, experimentation and modification by educational professionals.

In order that they do not lose their empowering and transformative potential, it is extremely important that educational practices do not become routine, but are developed, revised and transformed by different communities of practice worldwide.

An effective development of educational practices occurs when they are first of all acknowledged, identified and traced either within the communities of practice where they have initially emerged or within a broader network of educational communities which find them useful for their specific needs.

Through their application and experimentation in different and multiple contexts, these practices are then formalized, modelled and studied in a circular process connecting practice and theory.

It is therefore particularly useful to sustain this process with dedicated devices and tools which can help educational communities all over the world in the cultivation of their

practices, which may be further developed and implemented through a continuous process of reframing of their range of application and transfer all over the world.

There is, indeed, a constant interplay between processes of conservation and preservation of existing practices, acknowledged as “good practices” and therefore celebrated, sustained and transmitted and processes of critical revision, modification and transformation of practices which prove to be ineffective.

Communities of educational practices are conceived as “learning systems” in which “dynamic conservatism” operates at such a level and in such a way as to permit a “change of state”, without threatening the essential functions and practices the system fulfils for the self; these communities indeed, require to maintain their identity as well as to support the self-identity of those who belong to them, but they must at the same time be capable of transforming themselves and their practices (Schön 1973: 57).

As Schön points out, a community learns whenever it acquires a new capacity for agency and practice; learning may take the form of direct or indirect interaction between different kinds of communities acquiring a new capacity to act through continuing, directed inquiry into the nature, causes and resolution of the problems emerging from their practices.

The movement of learning may occur as much from periphery to periphery, or from periphery to centre, as from centre to periphery; therefore communities may function as facilitators of learning for broader networks just as the networks may help the communities in their learning processes (Schön 1973).

A true development of educational practices occurs, indeed, through reflective processes, emerging inside the educational practices, in particular, in the course of educational actions implied within those practices (Schön, 1987; 1991).

This may happen through the use of devices, which help education professionals to focus on their practices, analyze them, identify the internal processes which may undermine them making them less effective and powerful and conduct an inquiry on the problems emerging from inside the educational activities and contexts.

The act of reflecting-on-action enables professionals to spend time exploring why they acted as they did and what was happening in a group or in a situation; in so doing they develop sets of questions and ideas about their activities and practices.

Reflection involves looking to professional experiences, attending to the theories in use and building new understandings in order to inform educational actions in situations that are constantly unfolding.

Through reflection educational practitioners allow themselves to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in situations which they find uncertain or unique; they reflect on the phenomenon before them, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in their agency and in their performances; moreover, by reflecting on their actions professionals carry out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation (Schön 1987).

Reflective processes help practitioners to build up a collection of images, ideas, examples and actions that they can draw upon and that can be used as a repertory, which is constantly

implemented through further reflection as far as practitioners fall back on the routines in which previous thought and understanding has been sedimented.

The ability to draw upon a repertory of metaphors and images that allow for different ways of framing a situation is clearly important in creative practice and is a crucial insight for practitioners in their daily agency.

In order to do this, educational practitioners may write up recordings, talk things through with colleagues or with a supervisor, analyze and discuss their actions and practices in a small group, or compare with other professionals through multiple communication and interaction devices.

As practitioners think and act, questions arise that cannot be answered in the present, but the reflective space afforded by recording, supervision and conversation with other colleagues allows them to approach these as problems to be deeply explored through various approaches and perspectives (Smith 1994).

Reflective spaces are not only spaces for interactions in person but may also be virtual spaces which- on a global perspective-allow people belonging to different educational communities, widespread all over the world, to join together to focus on their problems and practices, to share experiences and repertories and to learn together through an ongoing process of reflection.

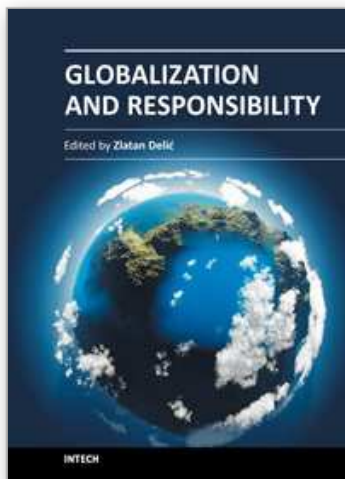
In this process we can see the significance of networks, flexibility, feedback and transformation, which can help educational communities in the construction of new learning and understandings in order to perform their educational agency in a more effective and powerful way.

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The book "Globalization and Responsibility" consists of 8 chapters. The chapters in the book offer a decentered and dynamic terminology. They show that globalization consists of not only an objective process, but also of a lot of statements that define, describe and analyze the different experiences of the process. The chapters are written by authors and researchers from different academic disciplines, cultures and social contexts, therefore different experiences and scientific analyses on the consequences of globalization have been unified, starting from the multicultural and social epistemology to ethics of responsibility. Each chapter can be read separately, but in a complex, interconnected global universe of intertextuality of our world.

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