



Step by Step 2021- Step 4

**Inclusion and authentic sociality:**  
*An educational challenge*

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## Step by Step 2021

### Educational Pathways in the thinking of Chiara Lubich

#### Step 4

#### Inclusion and authentic sociality: an educational challenge.

30<sup>th</sup> October 2021

#### Step 4 - Inclusion and authentic sociality: an educational challenge.

##### Presentation (Jelena Adamlje- Croatia)

**Jelena:** Good morning, good afternoon, good evening everyone. I am **Jelena Adamlje**, a graduate in Social Pedagogy and I work in Zagreb, Croatia in a Non-Governmental-Organization called: Pragma.

Today is the opening of the Academic Year 2021/22 of the Sophia Institute of Higher Education situated in Loppiano nearby Florence in Italy - where I also graduated in 'Foundations and perspectives of a culture of unity' with a thesis entitled: "Educational relationship as Trinitarian relationship. Pedagogical outlines in the light of Chiara Lubich's charism of unity".

As I said, I am Jelena Adamlje, a graduate in Social Pedagogy working actually in Zagreb, Croatia in a Non-Governmental-Organization called: Pragma.

On behalf of the 'Pedagogy of Communion' Network in Croatia, and the international commission of the Pedagogy of Communion, we warmly and affectionately welcome you to this meeting, the fourth in the 'Step by Step Pedagogical Journey', which began with the webinar celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the honorary degree conferred on Chiara in Washington D.C. in 2000.

Each Step dwelled on a point of Chiara's dissertation on that occasion, hoping to bring out fundamental aspects of the 'Pedagogy of Communion'. The previous steps can be viewed at [www.eduforunity.org](http://www.eduforunity.org).

Today's step deals with a key point of Chiara's address in Washington: unity and the relationship that flows from it.

I am told that people from the 5 continents are connected through zoom ....., the countries of origin are:....

I will be your host in this hour and a half and introduce you to the educational experiences and the speakers at the round table who bear witness to this way of doing education.

The first speaker of today will be Dr. **Maria Teresa Siniscalco**, who has a PhD in experimental pedagogy and works as an expert for the National Institute of Evaluation of the Italian School System, collaborating in national and international surveys.

**Introduction – Inclusion, authentic sociality, challenge (Maria Teresa Siniscalco- Italy)**

**Mimma:** In this introductory talk I would like to draw attention to the words of the title of this Step: inclusion, authentic sociality and challenge.

Let us begin with **inclusion**. It is a term that is omnipresent in educational discourse today, and this is a sign of the aspiration not to leave anyone behind, to take everyone in.

How is inclusion defined? We can look at the international discourse on education?

In a document of 2009 UNESCO defined inclusion as "an on-going process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination". Hence inclusion aims at quality education for all, respecting diversity, eliminating discrimination.

The reflection on diversity and inclusion was deepened in an OECD project entitled 'Strength through diversity', which identified 6 main dimensions of diversity present today in our educational and social contexts. Diversity related to migration; to the presence of multiple ethnicities, minorities and indigenous peoples; to gender and gender inequality; to special education needs; to giftedness, that is gifted students; and to sexual and gender minorities.

Having outlined this broad picture of diversity, the OECD specified that achieving inclusion in education means "achieving equity and ensuring self-worth and sense of belonging". This statement shifts the focus from those who include to those who are included and describes the outcome of inclusion in observable terms, providing two criteria for determining whether inclusion is successful: self-worth and a sense of belonging. If inclusion is successful, those included are supported in developing their sense of self-esteem and feel they belong to the group they are in.

Finally, among the current documents of international standing, we should quote the Global Compact on Education, in which Pope Francis invites everyone to renew their passion for a more open and inclusive education, (...) to form people capable of rebuilding the fabric of relationships for a more fraternal humanity".

Inclusion is indeed **one of the challenges** facing the world of education today (here is another word in the title) and those who work in schools feel this challenge. The latest international survey of teachers and school leaders, TALIS 2018, shows that despite the fact that schools are putting in place policies to respond to student diversity, many teachers still feel unprepared and say they need a higher level of training precisely to be able to deal with diversity, i.e. to work in multicultural and multi-ethnic environments and with students with special needs.

International surveys have also shown that Finland is one of the countries that has succeeded in achieving excellent results in education while at the same time ensuring a very high level of equity, i.e. leaving no one behind. The question is how did they manage? Andreas Schleicher, OECD Director of Education and Skills, said the secret to this success is an idea of inclusion with no compromises. If you focus on 95% of the school population and accept the failure of 5%, inclusion is over. Only if you aim to bring everyone forward will there really be inclusion.

We come now to the concept of "**authentic sociality**". This idea of inclusion presupposes, in order to be realised, a relational paradigm consistent with it. We find this paradigm synthesized in the point of the Washington discourse where Chiara speaks of unity. By this word Chiara means the presence of God himself in our midst, made possible by mutual love. Precisely unity is for Clare Chiara "*the aim of the educational process (...) Unity is a sign and a need of our times. However, this inner drive toward unity must be made to emerge positively: this implies, on all levels of human*

action, an educational action consistent with the demands of unity (...)"'. Chiara adds that in unity "we experience (...) **the most authentic sociality**". A sociality that allows us to build a community while respecting the individuals who make it up... with all their differences... through a process whose point of arrival is to "embrace the whole of humanity".

An inclusion, which truly encompasses everyone and realises itself as authentic sociality is the challenge we face, which requires creative and ever new responses.

**Jelena:** Thank you!

Let's now take a look at two educational experiences concerning the theme of inclusion, which generates authentic sociality. They are two kindergartens, one called the 'Sun Ray' (in Croatian "Zraka sunca") in Križevci, Croatia and the other 'Ray of Sun' (in Slovenian "Sončni žarek") in Škofja loka, Slovenia.

We begin with a video prepared by the "Sun Ray" kindergarten in Križevci (Croatia), which started in 1995 after a fierce war in the Balkan countries. The aim of the school was to educate children holistically in the perspective of being free individuals, protagonists of their own education, responsible and actively participating in the life of the community. With its 26 years of life, it is considered, as demonstrated by a research study, (and I quote) a "community school that educates in constant interaction with parents, the local community and institutions". (Stop quote). Thanks to the team of educators and experts, including the pedagogue Dr. Anna Lisa Gasparini, it is a place of reflection, confrontation and research which has initiated study paths and resulted in two master's degrees on the 'Pedagogy of Communion and the Agazzi method' at the Učiteljski faculty Sveučilište in Zagreb and on 'Intercultural Education' at the Faculty of Pedagogy, in Skopje in North Macedonia.

## Educational Experiences

"Sun Ray" kindergarten (Križevci – Croatia) *Video*

**Script: We live inclusion. The kindergarten "Sun Ray" and city Križevci**

1. **Picture of the children: The beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its people.**

**Terezija Horvat, director of the kindergarten „Sun ray“**

From the very beginning of its operation, the kindergarten „Sun Ray“ from Križevci has focused on the practice of inclusion, in accordance with the Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education and other documents of the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia, that is the practice of children with disabilities and their families being full members of the community and having more opportunities for learning, development and creating positive relationships.

**Anna Lisa Gasparini, co-founder of the Sunray Kindergarten**

A few pedagogical guidelines

Education for peace, (with oneself, with the other and with nature), social, ethical and civic education, education for a culture of acceptance and intercultural education, education for ecology, education for communication and education to learn how to face difficulties and transcend obstacles ...

Inclusion is present throughout the curriculum, with specific programs for children with disabilities, and for several years now, even for gifted children.

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2. **Picture of the children: Inclusion is when everyone plays together and goes to kindergarten and school.**

**Ružica Bjeličić, preschool teacher advisor**

We wanted to give a new quality to our inclusive activities, their concretization in everyday life. That is what led to the idea for the initiative to build an inclusive playground.

3. **Picture of the children: Some children aren't able to do everything. Some of them can't see well, some of them can't hear well. Some of them can't speak, some of them can't walk...but we love to play with everyone.**

4. **Picture of the children: It would be great if a playground where everyone could play together existed. We drew it for you. We would like to build it together.**

We submitted the proposal to the City of Križevci representatives, who recognized the value of this initiative. We envisioned it as a safe place developmentally appropriate for children with disabilities, but which can be used by all children.

Inclusive play means that not every element of the play is available to everyone, but the experience of playing is equally good for every child.

Socialization is one of the most important advantages: children with disabilities can communicate with their peers and feel better while developing motor skills and abilities, also gaining self-confidence when they master an activity.

An inclusive playground was opened this year in the presence of the City and "Dandelion" Association (Udruga "Maslačak") representatives. The opening was an opportunity to meet, socialize and play with children with disabilities, which was our goal - to live inclusion.

**Mila Mudrić: (7 years)**

At first we were drawing a lot about it and learned about those kids. Then we send it all to the mayor. One day as we were walking towards the kindergarten, we saw that the playground was finished and we were very, very happy, because children using the wheelchair can play on it now.

**Suzana Mudrić (mother of Mila and Roko)**

It warms my heart when I see that my children have empathy for children using the wheelchair, that they would approach them, laugh and play with them and ultimately be their friend.

5. **Picture of the children: Don't judge something you don't understand.**

**Tamara Premuš, president of "Dandelion" Association**

I am glad my daughter Sara can have a little fun on that playground since she is a child using a wheelchair and a disabled person. As a little girl, she could only play on swing and have fun on the carousel when she would sit on my lap but now this playground means real integration and that even children with disabilities can have fun and socialize with their peers.

I am glad that the city of Križevci recognized the initiative of the "Sunray" kindergarten and I am glad that integration has been implemented and that children with disabilities can play here.

**Mario Rajn, mayor of the city Križevci**

The initiative supported by the City of Križevci with 60 thousand kunas, when looking at the outcome, cooperation with the Association "Dandelion" and all the positive effects that this project had later, is immeasurable as a financial amount. Moreover, we have equipped another playground in a similar way in the city area and I am sure that we will continue to consciously support such initiatives.

As I said at the opening, my heart was warm then, but it is even warmer now when I go around the city and see our fellow citizens, i.e. children with disabilities, and children who go to the regular kindergarten programme, playing together. This is exactly what we would like the City of Križevci to promote.

#### 6. **Picture of children: Together we can achieve big things.**

##### **Roko Mudrić: (5 years)**

I like swinging on the swing and riding on the carousel...And now I feel better because we cheered up Sara who's in the wheelchair.

**Jelena:** We will continue with the experience of the 'Ray of Sun' kindergarten, Sončni žarek, from Slovenia. This kindergarten started 18 years ago as an example of the social commitment of the Focolare Movement. The Focolare Movement was founded in the ashes of the Second World War by Chiara Lubich, with the ideal of contributing to a united and fraternal world. The pedagogical approach of this kindergarten is inspired by the pedagogy of communion, which originated from that ideal. This school aims to educate "global-citizens", in the conviction that in the constitution of a human being lies the capacity of building relationship based on love. The Kindergarten has 111 pupils and 20 employees. They have prepared a video for us in which they describe very briefly how they practice inclusion, emphasising on the process of accepting the other, the 'one that is different'. It is a process that begins with each one individually and takes place at every moment of the day.

[Ray of Sun' kindergarten, Sončni žarek \(Škofja Loka- Slovenia\) Video](#)

##### **Script: Experience INCLUSION at Ray of Sunshine Preschool -**

In the life of Ray of Sunshine Kindergarten in Slovenia "inclusion" happens every day, all day long. It is the most important part of our educational approach and all of our educators - that is, every person that works in the preschool, in any role - is involved.

What does this look like in practice?

Let's start with the children... Every morning when educators enter the classroom, they meet each child with a smile and eye contact, exchanging a few words with them to make them feel welcome and accepted. This helps the children to build their self-esteem and also provides them with a model of how to interact with others. This attention given at the beginning of the day lays the foundation for a positive relationship throughout the day.

After the initial greeting, we join in the "morning circle". Through a game, a song or a nursery rhyme the educator says the name of each child, establishing eye contact and smiling. Each child greets the class too and from their facial expressions, and their smiles, you can see how important this feeling of being seen and welcomed by the group is.

Another way in which we encourage listening to yourself and to others is through the "My mood" signs. Each child says what his or her mood is that morning on arriving at school and can also explain why he or she feels this way. The rule is that no one interrupts them while they're talking, no one adds anything, no one corrects them or asks any questions.

The "friendship die", which is rolled every day, is another important tool. The die has a sentence on each face, inviting children to live in a friendly way with others. Children share how they experience the rolled sentence, thus encouraging each other to develop pro-social attitudes and behaviours, as well as strengthen their friendship. They also become more aware of their own behaviour and emotions and of the reactions of their peers, which gives them confidence and helps them to be more attentive to one another.

Children also take on different "roles" during the week. There are 24 roles, such as: "Master or Mistress Sunshine", who bestows acts of kindness during lunch; "Traffic Master", "Master Librarian", etc. (Da li možeš da objasniš ove druge 2 uloge - u čemu je poenta?) We ensure that these roles are carried out with an awareness not only of what is done, or how, but also why. In this way a spirit of intentional service is created, whereby each child feels responsible for contributing to the well-being of the whole group.

We can't forget our annual educational projects, for which diversity and inclusion are always important considerations. We also build relationships with families, being mindful of their diverse cultural origins.

I would like to conclude by saying that everything starts with all of our staff: teachers, administration staff, cooks, cleaners, the headmaster. We all have to live these values - empathy, responsibility and altruism. This is the only way to teach the children to embrace them. We meet twice a week and during these times we share our experiences and always seek to improve and do better. Working as a close-knit community, we are able to lose our prejudices and understand that each person is an individual and an equal.

**Jelena:** Thank you! These experiences are inspiring!

We continue our program with the central part of our meeting: an interdisciplinary round table on the theme of inclusion, with 4 speakers. I give the floor to Dr. **Roberto Doneddu** who works for the Managing Authority of the European Social Fund for the Autonomous Region of Sardinia in Italy, an expert in labour policies, vocational training and social inclusion, who will moderate the interventions.

(Round Table with Dr. Majda Rjavec, professor of Positive Psychology at the Faculty of Education, University of Zagreb (Croatia), Dr. Vladimir Šimović, professor of Communicology, former Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Zagreb (Croatia), Dr. Agostino Spolti, sociologist, Dr. Sami Baša, professor of... )

### Round Table

**Roberto Doneddu:** Thanks Jelena. For the first part of our Round Table we will use the English language. While we give our interpreters a few seconds to organize themselves, we take the opportunity to thank them for the precious contribution they make to the success of our meeting. Without their support this real-time sharing on a global scale would not be possible. Thank you all! So let's shift to English language.



We are honored to have here with us:

Professor. Majda Rjavec

Professor Vladimir Šimović

Dr. Agostino Spolti

I will present them better in a few moments.

First of all I would like to thank them not only for having accepted our invitation, but most of all for the contributions they are going to propose to us in a few minutes.

Their contributions will certainly enrich the pathway of knowledge sharing and dialogue that we have undertaken with our Steps and furtherly inspire our common way forward.

We asked each of them:

1. to propose a definition of inclusion from the perspective of their academic disciplines, research areas and personal experience;
2. to propose what they consider the main strategies for a continuous improvement of inclusion while taking in due account the need for promoting the most authentic human relationships.

We are anxiously waiting to listen to their contributions, but before we kick off the Round Table.....

#### Tribute to the memory of Sami Basha

**Roberto:** It is with great sorrow that we must announce that one of the protagonists of this meeting, Professor Sami Basha, who had accepted our invitation to participate in today's round table and who we had the opportunity to meet last October 5, was taken away by Covid19 at 52 years old, on October 21: 9 days ago.

We would like to remember him with you.



Sami Basha was Palestinian and had been living with his family in Sicily for the last few years. He had a PHD in Science of Education from the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome and was an associate professor of Pedagogy in the Palestine University in Bethlehem and held many positions for the Palestinian Ministry of Education. In 2018, he had founded the American University of Sicily, of which he was the president.

He collaborated with many local and international associations as a consultant in clinical pedagogy, working for inclusive education with a focus on autistic syndrome.

He has been awarded for his work as a teacher and for his commitment in defence of disability and in support of inclusion in Palestine and is the author of several internationally appreciated books.

Beyond his titles, assignments and awards, those who knew him will testify that Sami combined scientific competence and extraordinary culture with a big heart.

The Gargallo High School in Syracuse, where Sami ran a counselling service last year, bears witness to the fact that his willingness to help and his ability to instil confidence made him a point of reference for the entire school community.

For Edu, and for some of us in particular, Sami was a friend and a “travelling companion” and we were happy to hear his wisdom in this meeting... We are sure that he will continue to accompany us with his smile.

**Roberto: Majda Rijavec** is full professor at Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb. Her main scientific interests are in educational and positive psychology. She (co)authored over 40 books, 15 book chapters, 4 textbooks and over 90 scientific articles in the field of psychology and education. She is one of the founders and president of the Croatian network of positive psychology and Croatian representative in ENNP (European Network of Positive Psychology). She widely cooperates with state institutions in the educational and business sector, as well as with the non-profit organizations on issues related to the leadership and teaching.

Professor Majda Rijavec the floor is yours

Majda Rijavec- Inclusion of students with disabilities from the perspective of positive psychology

**Prof. Majda Rijavec:** Generally, inclusion is defined as “the practice of teaching students with disabilities (regardless of their nature) in the same classroom as other students to the fullest extent possible, through provision of appropriate supportive services”. Students are educated in mixed-ability classes, with other students of the same chronological age, for all or nearly all of the day. It has been documented that the benefits of inclusion are numerous for all children as well as for their families. It is expected, that when we include all children in the same classroom, they learn acceptance and respect one for another, they learn from each other, and become aware that each of them has unique abilities. In this sense, inclusion has not only educational, but also emotional and social function helping all children to form strong social relationships, self-esteem and prepare them for future life.

As every practitioner is aware, this is more easily said than done. Children with disabilities face numerous challenges in their daily tasks and support of the teachers and parents is crucial for them to be able to deal successfully with these challenges. Students’ deficiencies sometimes have very strong impact on their life resulting in disappointments with the self, anxieties and frustrations. All this may hinder their relationships and social integration. That is why supportive social environment is needed to help them to face these challenges. Unfortunately, typical social environment is not always supportive and friendly for these children. They are often excluded from some activities by their schoolmates, sometimes even by their teachers, which results in negative feelings and decreased psychological well-being. Teachers’ and parents of these students also face many difficulties. They often lack additional education and support from educational authorities feeling left out to deal with problems all by themselves.

In trying to help students with disabilities both teachers and parents are usually concentrated on overcoming their weaknesses. They often ask themselves *How can this student’s deficits be fixed?* or *How this student can overcome this particular weakness?* Instead of fixing on weakness I would suggest a positive psychology approach that is mainly oriented towards students’ strengths and well-being. Positive psychology is defined as “the scientific and applied approach to uncovering people’s strengths and promoting their positive functioning”. Instead of focusing on the question *What is wrong with the student* and *How can it be fixed?* we should ask *What is right with this student* and *How can I build on his/her strengths in my everyday practice?* Although this strength-based approach is especially useful for children with special needs, it provides a framework for

practitioners to build on all students' strengths. All students could benefit from being aware of their strengths and developing them.

Students' cognitive strengths are easily recognized because of their relationship with grades, that are usually the most important part of school life for students, parents and teachers. But positive psychology strives to identify all students' abilities, in addition to cognitive ones. These strengths include for example fairness, emotional/social intelligence, leadership, self-control, forgiveness, optimism, gratitude, humor etc. All students, including those with disabilities, have various valuable strengths that can help them, if recognized, to achieve authentic sociality.

Instructional practices should help students to become aware of the fact that various strengths exist, that each student have unique combination of these strengths and that all strengths can be valuable in some contexts. These instructional practices can be short and embedded in instructional process without taking time from on-going content instruction. Teachers in most countries are already very busy and under pressure to follow set curriculums and have no extra time for long programs in their everyday work. These short positive psychology interventions will help students build on their strengths, develop self-confidence and maximize their potential. All this will also increase their positive emotions and well-being, and help them live fulfilling and meaningful lives. When students align their thoughts and actions with their strengths they increase their authentic well-being. All students can benefit from strength-based interventions, but they may be particularly beneficial for students with various disabilities. Teachers should identify their strengths and plan individualized support. They should also help students engage in targeted activities for using and developing their strengths in order to achieve meaningful goals and goals that contribute to their idea of "good life".

Further, an emphasis on strengths can also be important for those that support students with disabilities, mainly teachers. Identifying, using and developing strengths in their work with these students can make it more successful, meaningful and help teachers increase their well-being and find more meaning both in their work as well as in their life in general.

Thank you

**Roberto:** Full professor **Vladimir Šimović** has a teaching and research interest in various fields of higher education, such as management in education, computer science and information and communication sciences, scientific and research methodologies and techniques, and computer and other technologies in general, in project management and operational research. In these areas, he is the author or co-author of more than ten books and over 100 scientific papers published in journals or at international conferences and leader or researcher of at least four international and eight national (Croatian) scientific research projects.

Professor the floor is yours.

Vladimir Šimović: Inclusion from the perspective of Social Science, Information and Communication Science

**Q1. What definition of inclusion would you propose from the perspective of your discipline?**

Prof. **Vladimir Šimović:** From the perspective of my discipline (Social Science, Information and Communication Sciences, and Higher Education), I propose a special definition of inclusion:

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**Definition:**

Inclusion is a universal human right. It represents the act or action of including or the state of being included within a group or structure or the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources to do something and treating EVERYONE fairly and equally. It is for people, someone or something, as part of a group who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as these people who have physical or mental disabilities and members of other minority groups, e.g., special needs people, etc.

E.g., that is the idea that everyone should be able to use the same facilities or to take part in the same activities and enjoy the same experiences, including people who have a disability or other disadvantages.

Inclusion is the act or practice of including or accommodating within the general student population students with disabilities and who become excluded because of their race, gender, sexuality, or ability, and the inclusion of students that have special needs, or are members of other minority groups, etc.

The practical aim of inclusion is to embrace all people irrespective of race, gender, disability, medical or other need. It is about giving equal access and opportunities and getting rid of discrimination and intolerance (removing barriers). It affects all aspects of public (and private) life.

Inclusion is vital for equality of diverse people and for equity and equality in specific areas of digital and communication transformation (D&CX), information and communication competencies (ICC), and digital and communication accessibility (DCA, or making DCA).

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are crucial for our success.

**Briefly**

- diversity is how people are different and the same at both individual and group levels;
- equity refers to the fair and just treatment of all;
- inclusion is an effort to ensure everyone participates in all aspects of an organization or organizational doing.

**Specifically**

- digital and communication transformation (D&CX) is the integration of digital and communication technology into all areas of a business and life, fundamentally changing how you operate and deliver value to customers or other people. This is also a cultural change that requires organizations and people to continually challenge the status quo, experiment, and get comfortable with failure. This sometimes means walking away from long-standing business and life processes that companies, or organizations use, to be in favour of relatively new practices which are yet being defined.

- Information and Communication Competencies (ICC) are the abilities of a person or a specialist to solve educational, professional, and other tasks using information and communication technologies (ICT). ICC represents a personal quality manifested in readiness and ability to use ICT independently. The process of ICC formation of a future specialist (or teacher) should obtain a developing character. Thus, the formation of ICC is the process of transition to a state where a future specialist (or teacher) becomes able to find, understand, evaluate and apply information and communication in various forms to solve personal, professional, social, local, or global problems.

- Digital and Communication Accessibility (DCA, or making DCA) gives suggestions as to how the information from schools is shared with students and students' families and make them more accessible for people of all abilities.

**Q2. How can we improve inclusion, in a profound and not just formal way, taking into account the need for promoting authentic sociality?**

(In a profound and not just formal way, and taking into account the need for promoting authentic sociality, from the perspective of my discipline and according to my specific definition of inclusion)

We can improve inclusion only with long-term sustainable and organized actions in all areas (real, virtual/digital, hybrid) and places. When speaking in public and privately we need to propose and support:

- inclusion as a universal human right, for all people irrespective of race, gender, disability, medical or other need, and need of giving equal access and opportunities and getting rid of discrimination and intolerance (removal of barriers);

- usage of so-called Inclusive Design (ID), which is about making all places that everyone can use them, or the way of place design, affects our ability to move, see, hear and communicate effectively (ID aims to remove the barriers that create undue effort and separation and enables everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently in everyday activities);

- that in education inclusion to become the right of parents, children, and students to access mainstream, formal and informal education alongside their peers, where parents want it, and children plus students' needs have to be satisfied;

- that integration (where the focus was on the children's ability to adapt) has to be replaced by inclusion because the goal for inclusion is on the setting ability to adapt to the needs of the child or student, altering where necessary the way it works (to satisfy individual and specific needs inclusion works towards providing effective planning and setting different activities - differentiation);

- a move towards inclusive education with orientation for improvement in general educational standards, in making the required reasonable adjustments for disabled children and students to ensure they have access to the curriculum, information, and the physical and virtual environment (it is committed to addressing issues of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, by the educational policy of placing students with physical, mental or other disabilities in regular classrooms and providing them with certain environment)

- a vision for the school with modern informatics, computing, and communication to create an inclusive environment where all feel welcomed and encouraged to thrive (where diversity paired with equity and inclusion are practice and make our school a better place for all)

- all new and good practices are defined (The most likely reason is that they have to: It's a survival issue. In the wake of the pandemic, an organization's ability to adapt quickly to supply chain disruptions, time to market pressures, and rapidly changing customer expectations has become critical. And spending priorities reflect this reality. For instance, these digital transformation elements: Customer experience, Operational agility, Culture and leadership, Workforce enablement, Digital technology integration. What drives digital transformation? A vital part of digital transformation is, of course, technology. But often, it's more about shedding outdated processes and legacy technology than it is about adopting new tech. It's also about enabling innovation.)

- the formation of ICT competence to solve personal, professional, social, or global problems (Modern ICT education uses the following elements: • Informational transfer environments. Examples include informational networks and educational platforms. • Methods of information exchange, depending on the technical environment. Modern ICT education has a lot of advantages: • Reduced costs on education. • Reduced time on education. • Students themselves can plan themselves their time, place, and duration of the lessons. • Convenience for groups to study. • Improved quality of education due to the use of modern technology.)
- to make Digital Communications Accessible (MDA) for people of all abilities (Educators take advantage of digital tools to communicate with families and communities but do we think enough about who can access the information we share? Accessibility is essential for leveraging technology and providing educational opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities and English learners (ELs). School systems need to ensure all information provided to the public, parents, and guardians is accessible.)
- in diversifying of the student body, staff, and faculty for equity and inclusion, all will encourage young people to discover their passion in technology through activities in a long-standing partnership with schools throughout the Informatics Diversity and Equity Enhanced Workforce (iDEEW) inclusion program or to meet best practices, etc.

**Roberto:** Thanks a lot Professor Vladimir Šimović!

For the third contribution planned for our Round Table we will shift to Italian language. While we give our interpreters a few seconds to organize themselves, we take the opportunity to thank them for the precious contribution they make to the success of our meeting. Without their support this real-time sharing on a global scale would not be possible: Thank you all!

**Dr Agostino Spolti** is a Sociologist specialized in the areas of Service Learning and Humanistic Professional Coaching. Co-Author of several books and articles for Teens. Designer and Co-ordinator of a large number of International Co-operation Camps for Young Volunteers willing to face and embrace diversity in extremely marginalized areas and countries all round the world. For the Focolari Movement at International level he's co-responsible for Training Projects/Activities for Teens and Young Adults. Among the most well-known projects, Run4Unity (Running for a United World) - a worldwide relay with over 300 cities connected around the world promoted by Teens4Unity and involving every year people of all ages who want to build a united world together!

Agostino Spolti- "In the beginning is the world-man".

**Dr Agostino Spolti:** The topic that we address today is very important especially considering what we are going through. No doubt the pandemic has disrupted our lives. It has affected society globally touching values such as inclusion, diversity and justice.

The pandemic has made inclusion even more crucial, all the more important. It has changed the map of the connectivity of relationships among people.

Society has realized that 'we are all in the same boat', using the words of Pope Francis; another phrase that summarizes it very well is 'you can't save yourself'.

Every word, like a coin, has two sides. If on the one hand we read inclusion, on the other we find exclusion/discrimination, but also the fear of the other, of what is different from us.

This aspect highlights a paradox: on the one hand, we are afraid of those who come to disrupt our lifestyle; on the other hand, we feel the need to create an enemy to preserve our identity.

The sense of being a crowd, which excludes others, strengthens our walls of security. The crowd is always like a besieged fortress, but in a double sense: it has the enemy before its walls and in the cellar. Elias Canetti.

“All societies produce strangers, but each type of society produces its own specific type of stranger, and it produces them in a unique way.” (Zygmunt Bauman)

Both inclusion and exclusion are among the pairs of words that capture and challenge the issues of development, politics, economics, civilization, religion, as well as micro and macro relations.

Émile Durkheim speaks more of integration, wherein members of a society are more easily integrated into it to the extent that it is itself integrated. In fact, the integration of the whole guarantees the integration of its parts, whether they are migrants or locals.

The American sociologists T. Parson and R. K. Merton view integration, following the footsteps of DURKHEIM, as a function inherent to the social system, which would guarantee it in a structured manner by law.

For Alain Touraine, the concept of integration goes hand in hand with that of “social inclusion”. In this context, integration is not in opposition to anomy (anarchy) but to social exclusion defined “as the accumulation of deprivations (resources, social relations, means of participation), exclusion (from employment, from school, from the city...) often added to social and/or ethnic segregation”.

Auguste Comte considers society as a social organism, as a “system” in which there is a basic and spontaneous harmony, a required consensus between its component units. Thus this organism must be formed by homogeneous elements that follow the same organizational criteria of the system: a common purpose (of the social order and stability) and a principle of subordination.

Charles Gardou, a French anthropologist, affirms that a social organization is inclusive when it knows how to regulate its own functioning, when it becomes flexible in order to offer everyone a place where they can feel at home.

When we move on to the social sphere, the word “inclusion” takes on a very special meaning. It means the ability to know how to be welcoming.

In essence, inclusion aims to eliminate any form of discrimination within a society, but always respecting diversity, which we call social inclusion.

Me and the other. Me and the others. The individual and the community. The part and the whole. The individual and the social dimension. The relationship with myself and with the other.

In her speech in Washington, Chiara Lubich highlighted the purpose of the pedagogical process that flows from the charisma of unity: the type of person who is born, who develops, is the person-relationship.

What is the aim of the pedagogical process emerging from the spirituality of unity?

“Ours is the same goal of Jesus,” says Chiara, “which we could define: his pedagogical aim: ‘That all may be one.’ To make our world not a soulless Babel but an Emmaus experience, of God with us capable of embracing all humanity.” (Washington, November 10, 2000 - ADDRESS FOR THE DOCTORATE IN PEDAGOGY HONORIS CAUSA by Chiara Lubich)

The characteristic of her message emerges from a mystical experience of union with God that radiates an infinity of practical consequences of effects and possibilities that illustrate how education embraces the various aspects and every expression of life.

An innovative element of Chiara's thought and action is the ontological primacy of relationship. Although this pedagogical vision is confirmed by thinkers such as Lévinas, Buber or Mounier, the novelty that is found in the experience of the Spirituality of Unity is a relationship seen not as a dyad but as a triad. It is a relationship that, proceeding from the two subjects that meet in the educational process, goes beyond them and stands as a real tertium, a psychosocial reality that stands in between them and acts on them.

This understanding of the educational relationship is a principle of sociality. It introduces the person into a process of socialization that is ever new and open, projecting it within the dialogical dimension and into a relationship of 'reciprocity'.

«In 'Where two or three are united in my name, I am in the midst of them' we experience the fullness of God's life which Jesus gave us, a Trinitarian relationship. It gives us the most authentic form of sociality, where a marvelous synthesis takes place between the pedagogical instance of educating the individual and that of building up the community.» (Washington, November 10, 2000 - ADDRESS FOR THE DOCTORATE IN PEDAGOGY HONORIS CAUSA by Chiara Lubich)

Trinitarian relationship: being ourselves by being the other.

"In the beginning was the world-man», this is how I paraphrase the beginning of John's Gospel, 'In the beginning was the Word'. My intention is to emphasize the most solemn paradox: at the very moment when the Son does not feel union with the Father, the highest form of relationship is revealed to us.

In that most dramatic exclusion was experienced the moment of fullest union, of perfect inclusion. In his abandonment, the God-Man could not feel "being looked at" for he could not look at himself; he had become one with the Father.

The relationship par excellence, the most perfect inclusion, passes through the gaping wound of this immense pain. In it there is all of humanity and all of the divine; in this relationality, there is the being of the God-Man, thus declaring that man is primarily a 'relationship'.

"What do you think is the model of a man for the future generations?" a teenager representing thousands of peers attending their International Supercongress, had asked Chiara.

"I think that the model of a man for the future generations is the man of unity...whom we have called 'world-man,' who takes to his heart all the treasures that others from the various continents will give, and who is able to give his treasures to others. The man of the future is the man of unity, the world-man. ( Chiara Lubich - Supercongress 1997

**Roberto:** We have reached the end of our round table full of inspiring ideas for all of us.

Let me just thank our speakers personally once again and on behalf of all the participants in the meeting. Thank you very much for the quality of the contribution that each of you has proposed to us this afternoon. We hope there will be further opportunities to work together so that we can proceed, step by step, along our common pathway.

Thanks Majda,



Thanks Vladimir

Thanks Agostino

**Jelena:** Thanks to each of the speakers for their valuable contribution that deepened and widened the perspective on inclusion!

We will listen to a **musical interlude** performed on the flute by **Lora Likan Kelentrić**, a second year student at the Academy of Music in Zagreb, recorded for us and whom we thank in advance! (Video)

[Musical interlude -performed on the flute by Lora Likan Kelentrić -Croatia \(Video\)](#)

**Jelena:** Thank you Lora for your artistic contribution and best wishes for your studies!

We are now proposing a moment to dialogue, so that we can listen to everyone's voice and exchange our experiences and reflections on the theme of inclusion and relationships.

We would like to carry out this dialogue together by giving space to each other so that we can share ideas and experiences, even if they would be contradicting.

We will have 20/25 minutes for dialogue in groups of 6 people. What is important during the group conversation is the quality of our listening to each other and making sure that everyone can speak.

To guide us in the dialogue we propose a question.

**What is a situation in which you felt included, taken in, and what made you feel that way, what behaviours?**

Let's take two minutes of silence to think about our answer and to write it down, so that everyone in the group will have an opportunity to talk.

Here is the question again:

**When you think of a situation where you felt included, and this made you feel good, what behaviours of others made you feel this way?**

You are now invited to find your room and come together as a group.

Entering the room takes a few seconds. We have to be patient. And if one room is already full, you just move yourself to another room without any problems, even if you enter late. Don't worry if you don't manage to join a group and remain in the main session. We will form here another group.

One minute before the time is up a message will alert you that the rooms will soon be closed. After that you will automatically be brought back to the main session. So now yes... GOOD WORK!

## Conclusion

**Jelena:** Welcome back and we have come to the end of this meeting!

We would like to thank the committee from Croatia and the Pedagogy of Communion, and in a very special way would like to thank the translators, because thanks to their competent work we were able to follow in the different languages.

For the next meeting we pass the baton to friends and educators from Brazil. The next Step will be held around March 2022 and we will inform you of the date as soon as it is fixed.

A thousand thanks to all those who made this event possible! **A special thank to the translators... Lola, Dina, Teresa, Marie Therese, Giovanna... You have done an essential job!!!** We truly are moving forward in the practice of planetary citizenship and a more inclusive education.

**To conclude, we propose to share a thought in the chat. We can write "one thing I take away from this meeting is..."**.