



DGB BILDUNGSWERK HESSEN E.V.  
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## Paola Massari Ottobre 2016

I have a huge attic, where I keep all of Luzzara's material, where I taught kindergarten for 14 years, from 1984 I moved to the town hall.

Of all the jobs, it's the one I liked the most, but for health reasons I had to accept the move to the school office, where I carried out a profession of an organizational nature.

When I started working as an educator in Reggio Emilia there were 11 schools and in Luzzara already 4, many in proportion to the size of the town. And the mayors boasted a lot of high schooling and sifting through the registration data at the registry office we went to visit the parents at home, arguing and supporting the enrollment of children in educational services.

Even then there was already a parish school. The children had all been in school for a very long time. I started working in schools in 1970 and I have always been to the Luzzara kindergarten. When the nest was born there was a whole year of discussion about who should go (occupying the same role).

I remember we held weekly meetings between the center and also with the fractions (even when there were incredible fogs).

In addition to the organizational aspects, it was important to share with all the staff a new sensitivity that puts the child at the center and not a top-down programme.

In Codisotto there were more than 30 or 40 children, a single class but often with separate programs for sections.

Working as teachers in the seventies, I came into contact with the social worker, the psychologist, the phoniatrician, etc., because since the opening of the first educational services it has been important to integrate different skills.

The teachers had, in those years, a "weak" training, from three to five years, but we carried out permanent updates, because we ourselves felt inadequate and were deeply motivated to learn everything that was necessary to better face the growth of the children. The Pedagogical Coordination was born from this personal participation.

The seventies were a period of intense politicization, our municipality was predominantly PCI, a programmatic document had been drawn up by the municipal administration, in which the organization of educational services 0-6 also formally included the committees of management with the social components (unions, workers ....) in addition to the parents (appointed by the school assembly), teachers, administrators (issue of the municipality, appointed by the council), but at the end of the seventies the experience - in these terms of strong participation - ends.

The committees discussed what the child should be like. We already had our doubts, discussing them in a group the doubts increased.

There was much talk of "society", of personalities to be included within society.

They wanted to leave us the political newspapers within the school (l'Unità, l'Avanti and that of DC) but



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we refused.

There was a lot of discussion about the activity to be carried out on the child but also about what school should be within the community: open to the demands of society and not ideological, everyone bringing their own convictions inside. Guidelines that also appear in the law 1044.

The first year of teaching I got to work with an old school teacher. Practically a general, with an assistant (when I entered the 1970s) and a janitor. Kindergarten children roared, sang.

But the trend had changed, they tried to think of an open school, without militarization - as the behavior of the old teachers persisted instead.

Much of what I saw was not acceptable, first of all from the point of view of the child understood as a person, an individual, even if it was a more moral and personal evaluation, which was not yet based on theoretical foundations other than I owned.

With the collaboration of colleagues and support specialists, who have begun to indicate formative readings on the child's emotional evolution, we have all grown up in the culture of childhood. A drive born of respect for the small individual with fewer defenses than the adult and must be protected by coercive and aggressive educational methods.

In 1970 there were only two sections but as soon as we entered we decommissioned a closet to be able to organize the children in an extra section. The physical space of the school was divided into various activities: bar/dressing up/puppet theatre. The children tidied up together with the teachers, maintenance was done. After a while the atelierista arrived, a large space was given to manual activity (clay, light, drawings...). There were many excursions and trips (from the butter factory to the slaughterhouse) even if the Po and the town have always been a special destination.

At the basis of the educational activity was the collective, which was the meeting of the educational and operational personnel (all the adults who worked within the school), in all the meetings there was also the psychologist. The collective takes care of organizing the activities and the educational vision, while the management committee took care of the parties, timetables... etc. etc.

In 1972 the kindergarten project centered on the collective was then shared with the management committee. We had more than thirty children each.

The insights of the collective dealt with topics such as:

- remove the negative socio-cultural influences that affect the growth and development of children.
  - family/school/society as fundamental components for educational effectiveness, with exchanges and participation for the harmonious growth of all.
  - kindergarten not as a place of assistance (parking), but in which the educational element is primary.
  - the game above all in practical activity
- reflection elements

A constant of the educational paths concerned the continuity between the nursery school and the kindergarten, but an attempt was made to give continuity also to the activities in the elementary schools. We have met many teachers.

Among the things that have marked me most of all as a teacher:



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>> Late Seventies (1978/79): Franco Frabboni, well-known Bolognese pedagogist, within a training activity for teachers.

I don't know how consciously we made this choice, a bit distant from Malaguzzi's Reggio vision. At that time we had chosen Bologna more than Reggio Emilia as a pedagogical reference.

In 1978 "Infanzia" was released, the magazine edited by Frabboni, who was also a guest and Luzzara for updates and activities

>> "If imagination rides reason" in 1982 in Reggio Emilia the great conference was held, organized by Loris Malaguzzi together with Gianni Rodari, with many important contributions in the educational field.

The Pedagogical Coordination was probably born to give an unequivocal answer to the needs of the municipalities also in this area (the training one, like that of services linked to education).

In the 1990s, all six sections of the nursery school were nationalized in Luzzara. It was a real blow to the heart, but it was the council that decided. It was a very painful decision, not because the system didn't work, but because of the need to make savings.