

from pandemia to polifonia: community “declaration of dependence”

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abstract

In times of crisis, connections among people, cultures, and societies seem to be the main antidotes available against the risks of individualism, auto-referentiality, and a revenge culture. Connectivity offers opportunities to nurture human generativity (Santi, 2021) in the service of better futures and cosmopolitan scenarios, contrasting the delusion of autarchical economies, the rhetoric of political nationalism, and the reinforcement of social polarization by way of competition/marginalization, which applies to education as well. The pandemia that occurred in 2020 brought both risks of isolation and opportunities for connection: it has been a paradoxical and even paroxysmal situation that has challenged us to think about forms of dependence, especially in instructional contexts. The stimulus for an inquiry that was carried out with 817 students at the University of Padova was the provocative title of an album by well-known musicians: “Declaration of Dependence.” The aim was to think about dependencies in the form of regular roles such as “study/student” that are important for our human existence, and which were profoundly upset by the “sindemia” (Singer, 2009). Our aspiration was to explore what it means to belong to a thriving university whose over-arching goal is to serve the dependencies of people in a generative community of future horizons. Our efforts led to the drafting of the “Declaration of Dependence,” a shared manifesto by the research group that enumerated a thorough list of the students' self-declared dependencies, and which was later shared with the university community in multiple languages. This led, in turn, to the use of the Declaration to launch multiple focus groups, which discussed these dependencies in a setting devoted to dialogue and the practice of complex thinking. Subsequently, in a workshop carried out in 2020 at the 20th Biennial Conference of the International Council of Philosophical Inquiry with Children (ICPIC) in Tokyo, we opened an international dimension on the reflections that had preoccupied us in the Padova University context. Here, the aim was to reflect on the personal, collective and educational dependencies of the present historical moment through the practice of community of philosophical inquiry, which offers a paradigmatic time and space for sharing, listening, questioning, and gaining perspective. The conference workshop offered an international group of scholars

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and practitioners from various socio-political contexts the opportunity to deliberate on how the pandemic has impacted both their local and the global community. Considering the new educational and philosophical challenges presented by the pandemic, the group expressed an urgent need to deconstruct established boundaries and return to “origins.” Invoking metaphors taken from the natural world (Roversi et al, 2022), an inquiry into the nature and scope of our fundamental dependencies reminds us that we are part of a socio-cultural ecology that is grounded and nurtured in our relationship with others. A community that understands its dependencies as gifts that call us to the design of a better future could in fact represent a foreshadowing of a better tomorrow.

keywords: declaration of dependence; P4wC; study.

dalla pandemia alla polifonia: una “dichiarazione di dipendenza” di comunità

abstract

In tempi di crisi le connessioni tra persone, culture e società sembrano essere i principali antidoti disponibili contro i rischi dell'individualismo, dell'autoreferenzialità e del revanscismo. La connettività rivela opportunità per alimentare la generatività umana (Santi 2021) verso futuri migliori e scenari cosmopolitici, contrastando la chimera dell'economia autarchica, la retorica del nazionalismo politico, il rafforzamento delle polarizzazioni sociali come la competizione/marginalizzazione, che abbracciano anche l'educazione. La pandemia del 2020 ha fatto emergere i rischi di isolamento e le opportunità di connessione: è stata una situazione paradossale e persino parossistica in cui pensare alle dipendenze, enfatizzate nei contesti educativi. Il pretesto di un'indagine proposta a 817 studenti dell'Università degli studi di Padova è stato il titolo provocatorio di un album di noti musicisti: “Declaration of Dependence”. L'obiettivo è stato quello di riflettere sulle (in)dipendenze che creano processi e stati “regolari” come “studio/studente”, responsabili della nostra esistenza umana e completamente stravolti dalla “sindemia” (Singer, 2009). L'aspirazione è stata quella di svelare il senso irrinunciabile di appartenenza ad un'università fiorente che tiene conto delle dipendenze di tutti e ciascuno in una comunità generativa di orizzonti futuri. I nostri sforzi hanno portato alla stesura del manifesto condiviso “Declaration of Dependence”, un documento che sussurrava e gridava le dipendenze degli studenti, condivise in seguito con la comunità in molteplici forme e linguaggi plurimi. Nella primavera 2021 la natura ha accolto l'incontro delle dichiarazioni attraverso la pratica filosofica e il dialogo, inteso come paradigma del pensiero complesso. Nel workshop che abbiamo proposto all'ICPIC 2022 - 20th Biennial Conference di Tokyo abbiamo dato un respiro internazionale alle riflessioni che ci hanno accompagnato nel contesto universitario padovano. Lo scopo è stato quello di riflettere sulle dipendenze educative, collettive e personali della comunità odierna attraverso la pratica della P4wC come tempo e spazio di ascolto, contaminazione e prospettiva. È stata un'occasione per dare voce a pensieri, vite e contesti socio-politici differenti rispetto a ciò che la pandemia ha ricordato, cambiato e generato. Alla luce delle nuove sfide educative e filosofiche sentiamo urgente la necessità di destrutturare i confini prestabiliti e di tornare alle origini. Richiamare la metafora della natura (Roversi et al, 2022) nel mondo delle dipendenze ricorda all'umanità il suo essere parte di un'ecologia socio-culturale che si sostanzia e nutre nella relazione con gli altri. Una comunità che ricerca le sue dipendenze come doni per progettare un futuro migliore sembra che possa essere l'alba del domani.

parole chiave: dichiarazione di dipendenza; P4wC; studio.

da pandemia à polifonia: “declaração de dependência” comunitária

resumo

Em tempos de crise, as conexões entre as pessoas, culturas e sociedades parecem ser os principais antídotos contra os riscos do individualismo, da autorreferência e da cultura de vingança. A conectividade oferece oportunidades para nutrir a generatividade humana (Santi, 2021) rumo a futuros melhores e cenários cosmopolitas, em contraste à ilusão da economia autárquica, à retórica do nacionalismo político, ao fortalecimento de polarizações políticas como a competição/marginalização, que abrangem também a educação. A pandemia que ocorreu em 2020 enfatizou os riscos do isolamento e as oportunidades de conexão: tem sido uma situação tanto paradoxal quanto paroxística pensar sobre formas de dependências, especialmente nos contextos educacionais. O pretexto da investigação proposta a 817 estudantes da Universidade de Padova foi um provocante título de um álbum de músicos conhecidos: “Declaração de Dependência”. O objetivo era pensar sobre (in)dependências que criam papéis “regulares”, como “estudo/estudante”, que são importantes na nossa existência humana e foram completamente abalados pela “sindemia” (Singer, 2009). A aspiração era revelar o inalienável senso de pertencimento a uma universidade próspera que considera as dependências das pessoas numa comunidade generativa de horizontes futuros. Nossos esforços levaram à elaboração do manifesto compartilhado da “Declaração de Dependência”, um documento que sussurrou e gritou as dependências dos estudantes e que foi, posteriormente, partilhado com a comunidade em múltiplas linguagens. Em 2021, a natureza acolheu a reunião das declarações através da prática filosófica e do diálogo, como um paradigma do pensamento complexo. No workshop realizado no ICPIC 2022 - 20ª Conferência Bienal em Tóquio, demos uma dimensão internacional às reflexões que nos acompanharam no contexto universitário de Pádua. O objetivo foi refletir sobre as dependências educacionais, coletivas e pessoais da comunidade contemporânea através da prática da FpcC na natureza como um tempo e espaço para a escuta, para estar aberto e ganhar perspectiva. Foi uma oportunidade de dar voz a diferentes pensamentos, vivências e contextos sócio-políticos sobre como a pandemia impactou, mudou e gerou. Considerando os novos desafios educacionais e filosóficos, sentimos uma necessidade urgente de desconstruir as fronteiras estabelecidas e retornar às origens. Recordar a metáfora da natureza (Roversi et al, 2022) no mundo das dependências recorda à humanidade que ela faz parte de uma ecologia sociocultural que se fundamenta e se alimenta na sua relação com os outros. Uma comunidade que busca suas dependências como dádivas para projetar um futuro melhor parece ser o amanhecer de amanhã.

palavras-chave: declaração de dependência; FpcC; estudo.

de la pandemia a la polifonía: “declaración de dependencia” comunitaria

resumen

En tiempos de crisis, las conexiones entre personas, culturas y sociedades parecen ser los principales antídotos disponibles contra los riesgos del individualismo, la autorreferencialidad y la cultura del desquite. La conectividad ofrece oportunidades para alimentar la generatividad humana (Santi, 2021) al servicio de futuros mejores y escenarios cosmopolitas, contraponiéndose al engaño de las economías autárquicas, la

retórica del nacionalismo político y el refuerzo de la polarización social a través de la competencia/marginalización, lo que se aplica también a la educación. La pandemia que sobrevino en 2020 trajo consigo tanto riesgos de aislamiento como oportunidades de conexión: ha sido una situación paradójica e incluso paroxística que nos ha desafiado a reflexionar sobre las formas de dependencia, especialmente en contextos de instrucción. El estímulo para una investigación que se llevó a cabo con 817 estudiantes de la Universidad de Padua fue el provocativo título de un álbum de conocidos músicos: "Declaración de dependencia". El objetivo era reflexionar acerca de las dependencias en la forma de roles regulares como "estudio/estudiante" que son importantes para nuestra existencia humana, y que se vieron profundamente alteradas por la "sindemia" (Singer, 2009). Nuestra aspiración era explorar qué significa pertenecer a una universidad pujante cuyo objetivo general es estar al servicio de las dependencias de las personas en una comunidad generativa de horizontes de futuro. Nuestros esfuerzos desembocaron en la redacción de la "Declaración de Dependencia", un manifiesto compartido escrito por el grupo de investigación que enumeraba una lista exhaustiva de las dependencias autodeclaradas de los estudiantes, y que posteriormente se compartió con la comunidad universitaria en varios idiomas. Esto condujo, a su vez, al uso de la Declaración para poner en marcha múltiples grupos focales, que debatieron estas dependencias en un entorno dedicado al diálogo y a la práctica del pensamiento complejo. Posteriormente, en un taller realizado en 2020 en la 20ª Conferencia Bienal del Consejo Internacional de Investigación Filosófica con Niños (ICPIC) en Tokio, abrimos una dimensión internacional sobre las reflexiones que nos habían ocupado en el contexto de la Universidad de Padua. Allí, el objetivo era reflexionar sobre las dependencias personales, colectivas y educativas del momento histórico actual a través de la práctica de la comunidad de investigación filosófica, que ofrece un tiempo y un espacio paradigmáticos para compartir, escuchar, cuestionar y adquirir perspectiva. El taller de la conferencia ofreció a un grupo internacional de investigadores y hacedores de diversos contextos sociopolíticos la oportunidad de deliberar sobre cómo la pandemia ha afectado tanto a su comunidad local como a la mundial. Considerando los nuevos retos educativos y filosóficos planteados por la pandemia, el grupo expresó una urgente necesidad de deconstruir los límites establecidos y volver a "los orígenes". Invocando metáforas tomadas del mundo natural (Roversi et al, 2022), una indagación sobre la naturaleza y el alcance de nuestras dependencias fundamentales nos recuerda que formamos parte de una ecología sociocultural que se enraiza y nutre en nuestra relación con otros. Una comunidad que entiende sus dependencias como dones que nos llaman a diseñar un futuro mejor podría, de hecho, representar el presagio de un mañana mejor.

palabras clave: declaración de dependencia; FpcN; estudio.

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introduction

In this time of crisis, change and rediscovery, we feel an urgent need to return to what is original and communitarian by thinking of the light of tomorrow's dawn that will diminish the darkness of today. The pandemic has overwhelmed humanity colouring the world with a greyness of nostalgic, lonely, and suffering hues threatening our current and future well-being and our continued existence. In a syndemics approach, with the awareness of the close links between synergistic relationships and nature of interactions every corner of life has been turned upside down, not least that of education (Horton, 2020). All that remains are questions in search of answers that in the complexity of today's society struggle to make themselves heard. This challenge welcomes what is to come, learns to so-stay in the disequilibrium, get lost in the infinite new possibilities, and encourage a “knowledge constantly knowing itself” (Morin, 2017, p. 24). How to keep on sailing after a storm? How to re-know us and re-know the world after the pandemic? Knowledge brings us back to the dimension of the search for something that is still unknown and can never be fully revealed. The exquisitely social nature of research lives in the community understood as a safe creativity environment (Weinsten, 2016) in which it is possible to dare, risk, and discuss together to think about the complexity that surrounds us. How will this world made dry and arid by the pandemic be able to flourish again? What seeds will the philosophy of education be able to sow thanks to its valuable relationship with knowledge, its other-than-future gaze, and its search for origins?

Considering the epochal crisis that has engulfed humanity, therefore also education, we felt the need to reflect on the meanings of teaching and learning with the students, future educators, and teachers, of the University of Padua. Never had we realised that we depended on something or someone as people, students, and teachers. Although the world was tangled, intertwined, knotted returning a feeling of suffocating stillness, we realised that we depended on something in it. Capturing what was most evident at that moment, the idea of

study as an example of dependence allowed us to think more broadly about the dependencies that characterise our lives.

We are dealing with a process of transformation of our relations through the pandemic. How to evaluate the depth implications on the physiognomy of the concept of freedom of learning and growing together. Connectivity reveals opportunities to nurture human generativity (Santi, 2021). Pandemic events often marked turning points, in our case given a remarkable boost to the ecological turnaround: the education based on renewable alliance will be qualitatively different from the current one. Politically, the event was unpredictable, values such as respect, equality, and solidarity must be core to the mission of universities. In this perspective interconnectedness and interdependencies should frame pedagogy. Education must aim to unite us around collective endeavours and provide knowledge and innovation needed to shape sustainable futures for all anchored in social, economic, and environmental justice (UNESCO, 2021).

The experience of the Padua context went beyond mere activity; a gift of time and space to think about what rope we were hanging on, to understand whether it was an unbreakable bond or whether, before long, it would be broken. The dialogue in action builds a new social contract for education that must remain firmly rooted in a commitment to human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights written in 1948 sets out inalienable rights for the members of our human family and provides the best compass for imagining new futures of education.

From this growing substratum came “Declarations of Dependence” as an opportunity for reflection to declare something individually. The thoughts floating among musical notes, watercolours, words, and pixels that marked these documents could not remain locked within the walls of homes, they pressed to be shared. This was but a reflection of the pandemic situation, where individual dependencies were part of a collective experience. Within this horizon of meaning, the proposal of the community of inquiry as a method of thinking together and generating community dependencies opened the community value of what was believed could not only be individual. The community of inquiry unleashed the

strengths of individuals by creating a powerful tension of community on the way to a generative future for all. Transformation from individual to collective declaration practice was the creation of the Declaration of Dependence Community. It enclosed the courage to search for elements that bind to build common dependencies in a historical, social and cultural time and space that seems to be oriented only toward individualism. The value of philosophical practice as an experience to look beyond what is happening has already found fertile ground in the university context by demonstrating that it seeks in student communities new meanings of thinking and feeling (Pulvirenti et al, 2009); of fostering dialogue as a social practice that enables the expansion of epistemic openness, the recognition of cultural differences, and the enhancement of dialogical experiences; (Vadeboncoeur et al. 2015); of promoting multi-communities of children and university students to think together (Burdick-shepherd & Cammarano, 2017); and of generating authentic community performances such as the book “Classroom Action” (Heble, 2010).

This experience highlights something more than an educational model outlined to respond to the Covid-19 emergency. The practices implemented were not limited to being adaptation actions in response to a health emergency but defined a space for new ideas, values and desires that aim to constitute specific identities, relationships, and distinct hermeneutics from present to future (Giroux, 2021).

From its cradle in Padua, the experience of Declarations of Dependence has found an international scope at the ICPIIC 2022 - 20th Biennial Conference in Tokyo, a privileged context in which the value of the community of inquiry as a method of collective inquiry emerges. The epochal crisis due to the pandemic, as intimately felt as it is universally shared, has touched the boundaries of the world, leaving a not insignificant aftermath on education and schooling. Despite the geographical remoteness, the pandemic has enveloped all countries in one great cloak of instability, uncertainty, and disequilibrium by surfacing the salient issues of education connoting them universally. The community of inquiry as a method of transforming the individual dependencies so important and felt during the

pandemic was an opportunity to begin with questions, create provisional statements, and build community right through the dependencies themselves. Now more than ever there is an urgent need to open thinking about education to the global context, to search together for new horizons, to sit metaphorically under a tree to discuss the coming dawn. The thoughts co-generated in the communities of Padua University students were donated with respect and care to the international community so that they could be the origin of new plants with unexpected blooms. Education encompasses and expresses invisible internal and external forces that, in constant tension with each other, nurture a generative power capable of acting in a world that is not and will never be the same. Philosophical practice here becomes not only a method for seeking together but also for building more equitable and just communities through a delicate and intense movement from the individual to the collective to the imagination of a different society of the future.

the classroom-home: a university teaching activity for thinking about the dependencies of today's education

The dawn of the year 2020 represented the prelude to a historical, political, social, and cultural crisis never imagined, leaving a profound mark that would change the way we look at the world, relate to people, and think about the future by echoing the present. Instantly, the pandemic invaded the space and time of our lives, without permission, without warning, without giving us a chance to understand a complex phenomenon. Every nook and cranny of life has been affected, not the least of which is education.

Overwhelmed by the pandemic wave, academia acted as a sounding board for a noise that had probably existed for some time but in the form of a constant accompanying buzz was not yet turbulent enough to bother those in charge and prompt them to remedy it. With abrupt firmness, the pandemic brought out the urgency for change that had been clamouring for years by Italian schools. A change that does not want to limit itself to methodological boundaries but presses to shed light on pro-pedagogical concepts capable of restoring the essence and inalienable meaning of didactics at school. Didactics, understood as the art of

teaching, needs its complement in order to exist: learning. Does the process of teaching exist without the process of learning? And does learning exist without teaching? Are they dependent on each other? Considering the health emergency, as teaching experts, we wondered about the meanings of these processes by calling students, future educators, and teachers, to our table to share insights, feelings and thoughts in the space and time of the whole.

Our educational proposal was born as a “creative reaction” to the unique and unexpected experience of the pandemic during the first lockdown in March 2020 and continued in the following academic year in a climate highly sensitive to the criticality of an unprecedented time of humanity even before the University. Echoing this strong collective destabilisation involving teachers and students, an opportunity for reflection was launched that would promote the indispensable conditions to feel belonging to a real community though online university. All students of the General Didactics Course in the Degree in Education Sciences and Primary Education Sciences at the University of Padua were involved, for a total of 817 students between the academic year 2020 and 2021. The aim was to unveil the inalienable sense of belonging to a thriving university starting with a reflection on dependence toward study later expanded to every other area of life. Our efforts led to the drafting of the “Declaration of Dependence” manifesto as an act of witnessing and narrating a one-time event capable of shedding light on the conditions that make the educational relationship possible. All 817 students involved were invited to write their own “Declaration of Dependence” and to share it later with their peers. First virtually through the course platform then collectively in the exam, and finally, in a community of inquiry in the park. The questions that traced the horizons of these documents came from the wonder of the album “King of Convenience” by a well-known Norwegian duo and proposed by the teachers of the General Didactics courses. Both the name of the duo and the title of the album fascinated us because of the dramatic and emblematic moment we are living in: we must try to understand what is “convenient” for us as a human species; we must understand in a new way what we depend on and what we will depend on in the future.

We share below the questions that inspired the writing of the Declarations of Dependence by casting a glance at being a student and becoming a teacher and educator from the dependencies that universally but differently characterise our lives:

- *Didactics is the discipline of 'depends': is it worth reflecting today on our educational dependencies?*
- *What do we depend on?*
- *How have the priorities of dependencies' changed?*
- *How much does it “depend” on how students feel, despite everything and despite being forced to stay at home?*
- *What is your being a student going to depend on?*
- *What changes have threatened the way we relate to culture and knowledge?*
- *How did the pandemic situation affect studying as a human activity?*

In order to make this provocation accessible to all, we opened a forum on the digital course platform inviting students to publicly donate their “Declaration of Dependence.” A document that whispered and shouted the students' dependencies, shared with the community in multiple forms and multiple languages (videos, writings, images, songs) thus embracing the horizon of Universal Design (Rose et al., 2005). The communicative form of the “Declaration of Dependence” was deliberately left free to stimulate the use of multiple codes of expression and to foster the conditions of personalization (Baldacci, 2002). These works represented a historical, academic, and personal trace and documentation. In addition, the Declarations were a stimulus to connect to one's own needs and aspirations (Appadurai, 2014). The immersion in different forms of didactics was studied but also desired and desirable, as they emerged in times of crisis, showing the strong value of the pedagogical relationship. But they were also opportunities to share human and professional thoughts, finding harmony and comparison within a common “space” and “experience,” the pandemic.

A particularly relevant aspect was the “recursiveness” of the practice. In the year 2021, students in the same course “rewrote” their own “Declarations” from reading and comparing them with those of their classmates from the previous

year. It was a “long-distance” dialogue that made students strongly “close” in terms of emotions, feelings, reflections, and projections to be reworked with the categories offered by the study of didactics. The meaningfulness of this repeated task emerged clearly, “showing itself” for its existential and professional value.

This activity was thus conceived as an authentic performance capable of simultaneously capturing the instances of the historical moment, those proper to the discipline taught, and the personal reworkings of needs and necessities that would otherwise have remained implicit and silent.

The element of originality of the practice is recognizable in its being “original,” that is, born from the inventiveness of an extemporaneous moment of improvisation. The teaching proposal, because of its being authentic, creative, and personal, actively and purposefully involved all the students of both two-year degree programs. The call to share the life and emotions provoked by the pandemic was not only an opportunity to reflect on their own dependencies but also an opportunity to make the students the real protagonists of their performances, from mere “content reworkers” to “reflecting mirrors” of them. It is in the encounter between University and Life, between listening and multiplicity of voices, between demand and care is where we can glimpse the students' feeling of fulfilment and gratification.

This didactic proposal, as intense in meaning as it is delicately intimate in fragility, was not exploited to collect research data, to give an aseptic restitution of the tragic crisis that has beset humanity. With deep respect for the lives of the students, we chose to read and analyse their texts so that they would become seeds of thoughts to be tended and nurtured in order to continue to search together for ways for the University of the future to flourish from the recognition and sharing of the dependencies that characterise it.

juxtapose these with the adjectives human, physical, direct, real, or authentic? There were many metaphorical images that coloured students' texts associating ropes, lianas, bridges, and umbilical cords with the idea of staying connected, hanging and connected. Staying hooked to this metaphor another category that was given ample space in students' texts was technologies. According to some, technologies can maintain one relationship, but can they also create others? Is real, living presence an essential ingredient for a relationship? What is the difference between connection, linkage, and contact? If feeling like a student depends on technologies or university classrooms because they allow us to stay connected with people, does that mean we are dependent on the medium or the end? Casting a glance at school inclusion, do technologies support or violate the right to education for each and every person? While the virtual world enables the assiduous participation of those who cannot be physically in the classroom, it does not guarantee for everyone the availability of resources needed to stay online.

From the reading of the texts, the last preponderant theme emerges as that of didactics. Paradoxically, distance education has been defined as flat, cold, impersonal, and unusual. It is curious how these adjectives are attributed to an extraordinary situation, usually conceived as alternative, other, different, and therefore more engaging, rather than to an ordinary one, more prone to fixed "normality." In this sense, one student pointed out that distance education has taken away from school "what is the beauty of school." But what does the beauty of school consist of? On what beauty do we depend? Also interesting is another student's perspective that makes "3c" - "conoscenza, cultura e contatto" - converge in didactics: culture, knowledge and contact with others. So, is the distinction between "online lessons" and "on-life lessons" possible? What is the difference between being a student and feeling like a student?

The sweet sounds of the students, their pictorial gestures and their touching words perfumed the "Declarations of Dependence" making visible concepts that refer of community as "common good"; of horizon as "better future" and of care as Lorenzo Milani's "I care" (School of Barbiana, 1996).

The pedagogical-didactic thinking underlying the birth of these documents has left a trail of authentic traces that can be retraced, regenerated, and created by anyone who feels called to give a piece of themselves to the community.

The educational innovation of the proposal is evident as much in its conceptual and methodological-didactic essence as in its generative openness to the context of life. The centre of teaching-learning processes was coloured by the voice of all students: active thinkers, future educators, and citizens of the complex contemporary society. The provocation to critical, creative, and value-based reflection on addictions opened the doors of the University to true listening, caring, and sharing of ideas, emotions and life paths embracing a vision of culture and complexity of thought that schools should strive for. Personalization and differentiation, as intrinsic components of teaching and learning processes, did not need obvious labels to be recognized as such. It is also possible to discern the innovative character of the proposal in the very concept of inclusion: from the extraordinary to the everyday. The space of “Declarations of Dependence” served as a network of confrontation, enrichment and contamination between feelings and needs within a common experience and a shared educational horizon. In this polyphony, permeated with new meanings of educational action constructed together, the contents of the taught discipline found a new meaningful contextualization and an opportunity to be reworked and re-discussed in a contemporary and “current” framework. Within this horizon, the “Declarations of Dependence” also found meaning and enhancement in the UNESCO International Jazz Day, a collective university event, far beyond institutional and local boundaries. The inventive character of the “Declarations of Dependence” can thus be traced in the teaching-learning processes, in the heartfelt participation and in the impact it has had on each student's life context. From an activity born in the university context of Padua as an opportunity to reflect on an unprecedented time that has turned humanity and the world upside down and grasping the dependence on study as an indispensable human activity, urgent during the pandemic, we have come to research first individually and then collectively the dependencies that characterise our lives.

from one's own declaration of dependence to the community declaration of dependence

In spring 2021, nature welcomed the gathering of “Declarations of Dependence” as a testimony and sharing of the marks that have inevitably left indelible traces in our lives. From the solo of the single voice enclosed within the walls of the home to the open polyphonic choir immersed in the breath of nature.

The syndemic nature of the crisis leads us to redefine closeness and livability. The 817 students of both Degree Courses in Education Sciences and Primary Education Sciences at the University of Padua were invited to sit under a tree, carrying with them the heart of “Declarations of Dependence” written individually during the first and second lockdowns. In that place we could relearn our interdependencies and our human place and agency in a more-than-human world.

Probably the impulse to sociability and the passion for teaching allowed us to transform individual students, future educators, into a community of educational research that gives itself experiences, thoughts and emotions to nurture together the education of tomorrow through the dependencies of today. We reflected on the meanings of teaching and learning that should preserve and deliver a thriving university that cares about creating the conditions for the future to be generative for each and all. Through philosophical practice and dialogue, understood as a paradigm of complex thinking (Lipman 2005, 2018), we have begun to sow our thoughts in anticipation that slowly and spatially they may one day sprout. We have chosen to propose Philosophy for Children sessions to university students because it is a method that does not involve children but seeks and nurtures the dimension of childhood present in each human being. In this sense, children are not taken as a chronological dimension of life but as an aionic aspiration of the essence of existence. Childhood as an open, continuous, and indeterminate experience thus becomes a possibility for the education, discovery and transformation of human beings (Kohan, 2006). Childhood is the cradle of the wonder of things and the world, a spark of essential questions that call forth possible and wandering itineraries of inquiry. “Inhabiting childhood is not so

much a matter of age as it is a matter of relationship to what we are and can be” (Kohan, 2006, p. 12). In childhood as an aionic time of life, philosophy facilitates a way of thinking that is in constant search, which is why we felt it was indispensable for university students' Declarations of Dependence to meet in this dimension. The Philosophy for Children sessions (Lipman 1988; Santi, 2005) began with the creation of the stimulus text made by collaging pieces of the “Declarations of Dependence” that each student had chosen to donate to the community. What we generated was more than the sum of the individual parts. Like a rope without beginning or end, the students connected and intertwined their dependencies, which, individually written, named or drawn, finally found a warm and strong echo in this environment, disengaging from the solitude with which they had been created. What on the surface, from home, seemed to be a sharing of fragility, became a set of forces ready to push beyond the boundaries of urges felt in pandemic. What forces lie behind fragility? Is invisibility (Gaivota Contage, 2019) understood as a force in power a sign of fragility?

The sharing of the dependencies that most mark the lives of the students was an opportunity to find each other and find themselves by feeling the community as a historically and culturally determined context of experience where through the sharing of creative, critical and value processes human development is possible (Santi, 2005). The dialogical encounter between the Declaration of Dependence generated an argumentative flow by fostering acceptance of each other's experience, conceptual change, restructuring of ideas, and openness to all possible infinities (Santi 2006b). At the heart of the common inquiry was the search for the common good through the sharing of first individual then collectively constructed dependencies, an aspiration perceived by students as an urgency from which the education and university of today and tomorrow cannot escape. In the common good lies the quest for the well-being and well-becoming (Santi & Ghedin, 2012) of each person possible if and only if the context generates the conditions so that human capabilities and agency (Sen, 2020) can be unveiled and given to the community through the free opportunity to aspire to values that one considers important for oneself and others. In this sense,

a university that nurtures the flowering of its students' capabilities not only fosters the pursuit of the common good but also the generation of thriving communities. The image of flourishing recalls the pedagogy of generability (Santi et al., 2022), which does not pretend to know at its own what humanity will need in the future but feeds on today so that slow pollination can continue to bring forth plants in the soil that will be there tomorrow.

The P4wC sessions at the park were opportunities to blossom together by sowing the seeds of a university that cares about growing communities capable of bestowing shared dependencies rather than solitary independence. It was a problematic, authentic, and meaningful experience (Dewey, 2014) that opened a track of inquiry never really explored. Many were the questions that the students themselves addressed to “Ms. University.”

Below are the questions generated by sharing the “Declarations of Dependence” in the community of inquiry at the park.

sessions in the community of inquiry at the park

Session 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dear University, how do you intend to welcome the students who are getting off at your stop relying on you to build their future?</i> • <i>How can the University drive the person in self-discovery? How can it help them discover and put their talents at the service of others?</i> • <i>How can an empathetic bond between students and teachers be created at the University?</i> • <i>What makes a good teacher? Does a good teacher improve?</i> • <i>Is it always necessary to demonstrate from a material standpoint one's participation in various activities?</i> • <i>How can passion be conveyed through the computer?</i> • <i>Can you touch the subject matter even from a distance?</i>
Session 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How does the University teach us to make school as a school of life?</i> • <i>How will the University ensure that we maintain our motivation in study?</i> • <i>Is it possible to enhance motivation? If so, how?</i> • <i>Who are we? Does a number make the person?</i> • <i>We put ourselves out there, what did you learn during this time?</i>

This representation reveals what students believe most impacts the realisation of the contemporary university. Echoing the critical dimension of thinking we find choice, limits, discussion, priorities, and structure. Looking at the creative component, creativity, imagination, perspective, ideas, and disequilibrium emerge. Finally, touching on caring thinking are listening, contact, sharing, dreams and passion, but also the feeling of home and welcome. A probably futile attempt to associate these terms with the dimensions of complex thinking because each, in one way or another, can find expression in all three.

The P4wC sessions held at the park thus returned a faithful picture of the critical, creative, and caring dimensions that the contemporary university must take into account starting with the dependencies that hold it together in order to imagine a generative future capable of recognizing that nothing will ever be the same again. It is therefore a matter of a university that can flourish again with its students by embracing the precious intention of building communities whose unifying gift is represented by the recognized and provisionally declared dependencies of its members.

a global community: dependencies in dialogue

The pandemic has affected lives around the world by making them dependent on something and someone, or simply by recalling dependencies that have always been silent and implicit. Although infinitely distant, the suffocating feeling of closure, loneliness and coldness has marked the everyday life of all humanity creating an invisible union between fragilities, uncertainties, and fears. Metaphorically, the survey community seems to have life movements very similar to those processes developed within plant communities. The plant community is a set of greenery species that occupy a defined space and interact. They find themselves living together and helping each other because they have similar ecological demands in dynamic equilibrium (Mancuso, 2019).

The intent of the workshop proposed at the ICPIC 2022 - 20th Biennial Conference in Tokyo was to give an international breath to the reflections that accompanied us in the Padua university context by using the community of

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inquiry as a method for recognizing, researching, and tentatively declaring community dependencies. How can we build a school in the world that values everyone's, each person's, and the community's dependencies? On what do teaching and learning depend today? Teaching, as a discipline of dependence, what does it actually depend on?

The aim of the workshop was to reflect on the educational, collective, and personal dependencies of today's community through the practice of P4wC as a time and space for listening, contamination, and common horizon. The workshop was aimed at a diverse community with the hope of walking in a plurality of paths to unknown destinations. The polyphony of voices that participated in the session coloured it with an exquisite international tinge, navigating from Latin America to the Middle East, from Europe to Africa. Although we were all in different times, we each remained at the same time as the other creating a time together. The kronos gave way to the aion reminding us of the light intensity of childhood and a child's wonder at the immeasurability of things and the world. We envisioned and proposed this workshop in the wake of the nature experience we had with university students but in an online, remote mode, attempting to let the participants savour that evocative moment that only so-being together in the park was able to give us. The challenge was to bring the past into the present trying to reconstruct that newfound closeness with the students' contact around a tree, a symbol of life, generosity, and generativity. The generative value of thoughts in the research community, as much in the Padua context as in the international context of the Conference, was nourished by the excess (Tiozzo Brasiola, 2020), that more that opened the possibility of nourishing other than what was already there. In a community of inquiry that shares individual dependencies as gifts, nurturing excess means looking for what binds those dependencies together in order to imagine a community capable of holding them together and recognizing that it could not be otherwise.

We raised the curtain of the workshop with the notes that began the authentic performance generated in the Padua context. The background music of the King of Convenience duo evoked in us delicate and deep memories made of

insights, connections, emotions, and thoughts about to blossom. This nostalgic air completely overwhelmed the community members attending the workshop, making them part of something they were experiencing through our words, eyes, and bodies, albeit virtually. In this atmosphere of suspended past time but at the same time heavy present reality, we shared with participants the experience of “Declarations of Dependence” as an evocative provocation to what was happening during the lockdown, both in the social and academic context. The intent to deliver to participants what was experienced with the university students were chosen with the curiosity to generate more from this, to understand if and how these declarations might find fertile ground elsewhere to germinate and create new movements of thought. Prompted by the “Declarations of Dependence” written by Padua university students and used as stimulus texts, we therefore invited community members to discuss dependencies together. As was the case during the nature meeting in the Padua university setting, we initially asked participants to write their own Declaration of Dependence and share the most meaningful words, phrases, and images with the rest of the community through a shared digital platform. From the collage of these gifts, we generated a new community “Declaration of Dependence,” a sign of how being a community is more than the sum of its individual parts. This document represented a shift from recognizing individual dependencies to a first brave and tentative attempt to imagine them communally.



New questions blossomed from this document, leaving a desire to open a discussion, to know and perhaps understand all the meanings behind each of them. These questions have generated new scenarios for inquiry, leaving the community with some provocations about existence, being, depth, and the relationship between beginning and end, all of which are related to dependencies, individually written, collectively shared, and communally acknowledged. The beginning and end of dependence represents a particularly interesting plane of discussion because one usually imagines the end of a process with the telling of it to others, but in the context of the community of inquiry it is precisely the sharing of it with others that represents the beginning of a new journey yet to be discovered. The questions about dependencies generated from the community “Declaration of Dependence” highlighted the urgency of searching for that link that unites the dependencies themselves in the knowledge that their unravelling might come through the wonder and doubt of inquiry.

- *How can we no longer depend on deep ends?*
- *Can anyone be fully independent? Would it be better if we were?*
- *Are dependences pending? From where? De-pending? Deep-ending? De-pend-ing? De-pen-ding? Deep-en-ding? Deep ending? Deepen ending? Beginning to end? Ending to begin?*
- *when we depend, do we deepen?*
- *Is our movement stopped or fostered by our dependences?*
- *What does dependence depend on?*
- *Who am I? Who would be without others?*
- *Declaration of independence?*
- *How is it possible to feel so deep the connection among our thoughts, even if they are so pending, and not grounded in the same culture?*
- *In what ways should higher education professionals respond to today's life-long students' declarations of dependence?*

In the international community of inquiry, creative ideas, critical postures, and value dreams met in a polyphony of new horizons and meanings. The workshop was an opportunity to give voice to different thoughts, lives, and

socio-political contexts with respect to what the pandemic has remembered, changed, and generated. This was possible through the dialogic-argumentative method that lives in the community of inquiry as it is the process of inquiry itself that identifies those dependencies that distinguish it and hold it together. In the common imagination, the concept of dependence conceals both a positive and a negative meaning. The negativity of dependence often takes precedence over its dimension of caring and bonding with respect to something or someone. Reflecting on dependencies today, in an international context that cherishes community as a method of inquiry to imagine beyond the horizon, becomes more urgent and essential than ever. A community that searches for the addictions that hold it together, courageously acknowledges them, and provisionally declares them seems likely to be the dawn of a new society of tomorrow.

conclusions

The experience in the Padua context first and the workshop at the ICPIIC 2022 - 20th Biennial Conference in Tokyo later, attest to a social, political, and cultural moment of intense fragility by reminding humanity of the inalienable sense of communally preserving and handing over what is of value to present generations as a push toward a more dependent and democratic future. Never as before has there been such a need to declare one's independence from others, each country believing that it sustains itself by thinking firmly that it is bringing enough to itself. The risk, already experienced and experienced during the pandemic, is isolation. In today's lonely, individualistic time, what is the value of grasping dependencies and nurturing the opportunity to build communities based on them? In an international context such as ICPIIC, rediscovering the value of the community of inquiry as a way to be aware of dependence on others, to have the courage to acknowledge it openly and to declare it, however tentatively, calls to mind the urgency of cultivating interdependence. In the community of inquiry, participants are together in the dependencies they declare and learn to declare together. Here a community of inquiry that cares about dependencies becomes an antidote to solipsism by reading dependence no longer as an individual concept but a common one, built together to be free. The community of inquiry here

becomes a place, occasion, and method for building community dependencies, for being aware of them and having the courage to declare them provisionally. In this horizon of meaning, community Declarations of Dependence are not acts of faith arising from dogma but are processes of faith that arise and emerge from seeking, doubt and research. Each dependence, in addition to grounding the community in its fragilities, is an antidote to fundamentalism and the basis of the shared process of inquiry.

Recalling the experience, we have proposed, like a single red thread running through time and space, the “Declarations of Dependence” have generated thoughts that, finding fertile ground elsewhere than where they were born, have in turn generated other thoughts that can be sown in lands of soft brown hues. In this sense, the generativity of thought leaves marks that conceal internal forces ready to show themselves to the world as soon as they encounter external conditions, other than themselves, capable of nurturing tensions that in some direction will lead to something new, original and authentic. It is thus a process without beginning or end that, precisely because of its inhabiting places where the common good is guarded and regenerated in the union of yesterday-today-tomorrow, can find in the pedagogy of generability possibilities for nourishment (Santi et al., 2022). The pedagogy of generability is “able to think of research as a creative practice of the unexpected, the unknown and the dreamed in order to build possibilities not to sustain the future of the world, but to generate future worlds” (Santi et al., 2022, p. 113). Community research rooted in the unforeseen cannot imagine a priori what will happen but lets itself be carried away by the sudden dialogic flow by welcoming the signs it will encounter as it goes along. The philosophising experienced in communities of inquiry shows points of contact with improvisation understood as a “process in which participants are asked to connect what is happening with what has gone before and/or with what will follow, to find a sense, lend a value to the whole” (Zorzi & Santi, 2020, p. 10). Such value lies in the precious and indispensable gifts that each community shares and seeks together by moving beyond the imagined (Santi, 2006a): dependencies. The thread that connects “*munus*” to “*cum*” is a link of

attention as time to be present and to be willing to welcome and wait. Presence as attention is an experience of “*attensione*” (Masschelein & Simons, 2013) and as such is closer to the idea of corporeality than physicality. It is an attentive, active, and participatory tension that unites seemingly opposite poles that continually attract each other but also similar poles that have a deep desire to share something important. Dependencies as “*attentions*” toward others are invisible but perceptible and recall that atmosphere of suggestive meaning that colours childhood and its time. Childhood as possibility, power, and life force open to continuous becoming, becoming, and experiencing (Kennedy & Kohan, 2008) is that dimension of meaning, of a circle that is never completely closed that we tried to recall during the sessions with university students in nature and the workshop at the Tokyo Conference. The time of childhood is the time of invention, of poetic perception, of fragility and intensity; it is a time that is never late (Skliar & Brailovsky, 2021) and as such looks beyond the timeline to embrace the circularity of what will happen. According to Larrosa and Skliar (2009), readiness to embrace what happens has to do with presence, with being there in whatever form and language. In this perspective, time and space make it possible to imagine, experience and unite geographically and chronologically international experiences such as that of the “*Declarations of Dependence*” at ICPIC in Tokyo in a generative process that starts from individual dependencies to community dependencies. Nature here becomes a space understood as a learning environment that generates pedagogical (Weyland & Galletti, 2018) and communal identity from dependencies but also a time felt as duration without beginning or end that generates movement, circularity, and life (Kohan, 2006). Inspired by tree wisdom which move towards the search for greater well-being, towards a condition of better generativity. Community tends towards the flowering of new paths of research, of unexpected new meanings. We try to discover the signs of life can be: responsive and responsible, not built on individuality or competition but flourishing in community; passionate, hooked and amazed by mutual responsibility on built new boundaries of freedom (Roversi et al, 2022).

Rethinking the university and society together so that they can aspire to a generative future for all from community dependencies means seeking new places in the culture of education (Bruner, 1996) and recalling the original meaning of school as free and liberated time (Kennedy & Kohan, 2014). Time to question, to explore curiously and to cherish knowledge as a free, unproductive, and unconditional movement of knowledge that is generated and regenerated in the experience of encountering others and the world. It means looking for the most fertile soil to sow critically, creatively, and valuably thought so that strong trees grow, delicate flowers bloom and cyclically pollinate mysterious new lands.

The metaphorical appeal to nature emerges deeply: nature is dependence. Indeed, in it lives a mutual dependence among living beings; it is unthinkable to imagine one without the other. It is a dependence that does not render nature powerless but, on the contrary, returns it with more power because that is what distinguishes it and makes it so. Today's society is arrogantly scrambling in search of an independence that is only apparent, ephemeral, and unreal, each nation believing that it is bringing itself to suffice on its own. This is why that after the pandemic, proposing research communities in nature, even if only metaphorically, means tapping into models we are in danger of forgetting by restoring value to the dimension of the outside, often rejected because of an individualistic ego that tends to turn its gaze inward, the closed, the isolated. Nature as an example of collective dependence invokes an idea of social ecology and community that feeds on complex thinking as generative and social. In a time that walks in reverse, the challenge is thus to search for the communal dependencies that bind the community itself as a critical, creative, and caring aspiration for a polyphonic, dependent and generative world.

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submitted: 05.12.2022

approved: 22.06.2023