Intercultural Learning in European Youth Work:
Which Ways Forward?

Seminar report by Ingrid Ramberg

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Against the Waste of Experiences in Intercultural Learning

Dedicated to Jean-Marie Bergeret and Peter Lauritzen,
for their guidance, for their intellectual rigueur and for their inspiration.

Teresa Cunha & Rui Gomes

*"Ce qui nous manque
c'est le courage de comprendre tout ce que nous savons
et d'en tirer les conséquences."* [1]

Introduction

Intercultural learning has played a key role in non-formal education processes with young people, especially those associated with youth programmes and activities of the Council of Europe and of the European Commission.

The main purpose of intercultural learning – to inflect ethnocentric perspectives, fight prejudices and promote solidarity actions that support equality in human dignity and respect for the plurality of cultural identities – remains fully valid and more relevant than ever in European societies whose futures are further intertwined and interdependent with the rest of the world.

This article seeks to engage in a critique of intercultural learning by restating its key premises, exploring current challenges and proposing a renewed criticism of the concepts and practices of intercultural learning as a way to make possible the potential it carries for social transformation. The article also explores a possible relationship between intercultural learning and intercultural dialogue in which the former can be understood as the necessary educational approach to the latter.

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

One of the major sociological features of the twentieth century in Europe was the clear acknowledgement of youth as a social group and a public entity with a powerful voice, able to claim changes and ask for real par-

ticipation in social and political terrains. These developments contrasted with the instrumentalisation of 'youth' by the totalitarian regimes of the first half of the century. This became more evident after the sixties when youth movements began challenging, seriously, the *status quo* of political actors and public power. One of the most interesting results of this movement triggered by political action was the inclusion of 'youth participation' as one of the major topics in the political discourse and, symmetrically, a major concern for educators and policy makers (Guilherme, 2002:1). This societal atmosphere and turbulence in Europe and the intense exchange between European and non-European thinkers brought to the arena of the educational discourse a new approach which was named 'critical pedagogy'. This critical pedagogy is not only a critique of the past but aims to give education a strong potential of reflection, dialogue, dissent, empowerment, and democratic learning, that is, to contribute to the shaping of active and autonomous citizens based on critical thinking. As Paulo Freire[2] alerted at the time, education is intrinsically a political act because it does not aim to establish just a formal literacy, but the ability to read the world in a critical way in order to transform it (Freire, 1970). So, ethics are crucial and are at the heart of education (Giroux, 1989, 1997). The critique of critical pedagogy that is nowadays fashionable in some circles – notably by partisans of a focus on the 'primary' function of education, which critical pedagogy has never been against, in any case – is often an attack on the ethical foundations of critical education, even if disguised by a denunciation of its excesses.

Some years later, Europe, mainly in the early nineties, was intensively shaken again by profound changes: the fall of the wall in Berlin and its enormous political and social consequences; the war in the Balkans countries; the intensification of globalisation processes[3]; the generalised dismantling of welfare states; the new demographic realities of increasingly older European societies; the perceived increase of migration 'waves' from non-European countries as well the new transnational alliances among workers' unions and social movements and a new awareness of common inheritances of humanity: these are some of the most important macro events that have had an effect on the way that young people, politicians and educators have started to re-think education.

Education has become a clear political stake that concerns schools and the context outside schools – the so-called non-formal education and out-of-school activities – for the construction of a new subjectivity, let's say, a renewed European identity based on a certain set of cultural specificities: a democratic Europe from the west to the east, from the south

to the north; the social European model informed by the Rule of Law and Human Rights; a multicultural Europe living in peace together and an economically efficient Europe, which education and lifelong learning would make the most competitive space in the world by 2010 (Lisbon agenda). In continuity with the first experiences of the eighties, it was in this context that the recognition of the value and importance of non-formal education transformed it in a European policy aiming especially at young people.

Progressively, the youth policies of the European institutions would adopt some of these realities and transform them into objectives. The various European youth programmes, including youth exchanges and the European voluntary service schemes, have gradually become instruments for these aims, provided with specific resources, clear aims and functioning as the necessary complement of schooling. It also became clear that the 'critical pedagogy' born in those now challenging decades of the sixties and seventies was not able to change the school system as deeply as necessary, and as had been the hope of those generations[4]. New spaces for 'citizen education' and renewed methodologies started to be recognized among the youth initiatives and youth organizations.

During the eighties and nineties, in the Council of Europe, especially within its youth sector and its educational policy, a relatively new concept became the 'heart' of the most enthusiastic discussions and methodological thoughts and proposals, 'intercultural learning'. The focus on this concept fed on various factors: the evident rise and complexity of cultural diversity in Europe, the youth role in the public realm and the heritage of 'critical pedagogy' that always accompanied it: dialogue, dialogical relations between subjects and communities, democracy, redistribution of power and peaceful social transformation. The most striking example of this is probably the development of the programme of training courses of the European Youth Centre, in particularly the period leading to the creation and popularisation of the long-term training courses in which intercultural learning became an aim for, and an educational approach to youth cooperation. In parallel to this process, the Youth for Europe programme (and it successors) played a key role in streamlining intercultural learning.

Using Michel Foucault's powerful work on the *archaeology of the knowledge* (1972) where he shows the complexity of the discourse and asks, rather for the specificity of European thought, the differences developed within it over the time, we argue that 'intercultural learning' in European youth work has a complex and a multifunctional history. The

importance of this analytical approach is to ensure and clarify the discursive formations and the historical context, as well as the networking rules: these establish what is meaningful in order to allow an assertive justification to explain why, in the last two decades, 'intercultural learning' had a very important role in the development of critical thinking and innovative methodologies promoted by European institutions, including the Council of Europe and the European Commission[5].

What is intercultural learning – really - about?

The works of Hendrik Otten (1997) – with his 'Ten theses on the correlation between youth encounters' – and Peter Lauritzen (1998) – had a key role in establishing the conceptual frameworks and the epistemological foundations of intercultural learning.[6]

There are probably as many definitions of intercultural learning as there are of culture. We would like to use the one put forward by Equipo Claves that sees intercultural education as "a process of social education aimed at promoting a positive relationship between people and groups from different cultural backgrounds" (Equipo Claves, 1992:82), not only because it is at the basis of the Education Pack 'All Different – All Equal', but because it recognises the necessary correlation between personal/individual learning/action and group/collective learning/action. This is also what makes it a very valid approach for intercultural dialogue and particularly for a critical ownership of the intercultural dialogue speech by practitioners of intercultural learning and intercultural education.

It is important at this point to re-visit some of the fundamental topics, which 'Intercultural Learning' – as a concept but also as an educational methodology – brought to the discourse, into the debate and into the educational practices. We chose three of the most relevant issues that constructed the *corpus* of this quest for a positive intercultural living in European context.

Tolerance of ambiguity

First of all we would like to refer to the concept of 'the tolerance of ambiguity' (Otten, 1997)[7]. This concept meant/means, on the one hand, the recognition of the cultural differences amongst European societies and communities; on the other hand, acknowledging the intrinsic uncompleted character of each cultural system and, therefore, acceptance of the ambiguity and multiple uncertainties generated by the cultural encounter[8].

As stated above, the crucial potential of this concept of 'tolerance of ambiguity' is not only based on the recognition of diversity and difference, but also to learn how to learn from and work positively with it. It does also mean including uncertainty, in-determination in education – which is already revolutionary because education by definition should be normative and reproductive. Ultimately, this means not only developing the respect and reverence by the existence of the 'Other' but also educating our minds and social behaviour to the 'unknown' as a positive cultural research browser in order to enlarge our capacities of dialogue and living together.

> **'Tolerance of ambiguity' is the precondition of any intercultural approach that de-centres the discourse and the practices from the dominant culture, ensuring that it is possible to voice what is considered the 'margins'.**

The very modern presumption that everything has to be explained and verified is seriously challenged by this concept. In fact, 'tolerance of ambiguity' is the precondition of any intercultural approach that de-centres the discourse and the practices from the dominant culture, ensuring that it is possible to voice what is considered the 'margins'. Following this reasoning, 'tolerance of ambiguity' is a requisite to a dialogical route in the process of which even we do/will not master every element. This concept announces the emancipation for all, rather than the assimilation of some.

Some would state that 'tolerance of ambiguity' is, in this sense, a postmodern concept. However it is important to stress that this concept and its translation into educational methodologies ought not to be used as a mere celebration of the differences, but a common effort to find multiple senses and potentialities from the cultural encounters. It is a powerful tool of empowerment for local and global transformation.

Peter Lauritzen conceptualised much of this innovative insight and in a cooperative way constructed operational frameworks that could be applied to different educative activities as a paradigm of 'European Education'. The heuristic[9] capacity of the 'tolerance of ambiguity' in education has been demonstrated by the development of an important range of European training courses, workshops, and forums, realised and evaluated since the early nineties at the European Youth Centres or supported by its qualified trainers and advisors. At the *heart* of these initiatives was this main idea: it is possible to live together in peace if we tolerate building up a Europe where the *other,* the *unknown*, takes part of it and is fully recognised as constitutional to its richness. Intercultural

learning implies this discovery and transgression (Lauritzen, 1998) as well as being able to deal positively with insecurity and uncertainty. The ambiguity concerns the very concept of culture and cultural determination: it will be impossible to interpret and explain facts and behaviours on the basis of cultural diversity alone, while at the same expanding the capacity for cultural competence. Intercultural learning values knowledge about cultural diversity while at the same time it implies a relativisation of the role of cultural knowledge. Otherwise, the culturally competent will be the interpreter of the other in the same way that Orientalists[10] sought to understand and conceptualise better the 'Oriental people' than the ones concerned.

Diatopical hermeneutics[11]

Another competence associated to 'intercultural learning' practices and its theoretical discussions was/is the relationship between majority groups and minority groups in the European social and political context (Brander, Gomes et al., 1998; Council of Europe, 2004a). It is clear that diversity inside Europe happens socially and educationally within a power relations system where there are some who see themselves and are perceived as the majority, and those who are perceived or who feel they are the minority. The endless discussion about the overlapping identities and how, through them, each person can live as a member of a majority and at the same time belong to minority group is an important question, but is not the main concern of our analysis here. We believe that 'intercultural learning' aims explicitly to question ethnocentrism and its power to become normative (as in becoming the norm), the mainstream to which the other cultures have to be confronted and evaluated.

In this sense, approaching, discussing and educating for positive relations between majorities and minorities is a strong political and ethical standpoint. It means that we recognise and use cultural dynamism, global interdependency, and common responsibilities (Gomes, 1998: 75-77), as analytical and educational tools, putting into question the prevalence of one cultural mode over another one. In other words, a monolithic reason versus a cosmopolitan reason (Cunha, 2007). This can be criticised as cultural relativism, but in fact it is not. The main argument is that these dialogues and relationships amongst/between majorities and minorities have to be based on the development of mutual empathy, equality in human dignity and mutual recognition. This mutual humanisation (i.e. in seeing and accepting the others as fellow human beings with needs and aspirations of equal value and legitimacy to one's own) requires

responsive translation systems between cultures and powerful work methodologies. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2004; 2006) proposes a 'diatopical hermeneutics', which means that an emancipatory 'intercultural learning' has to adopt procedures that recognise that all cultural systems have concepts of human dignity, respect for the others, peaceful relationship modes, and positive conflict solving mechanisms. By refusing what he calls the "laziness of the modern reason", we can empower individuals and communities to build up social justice, and balanced relationships between majorities and minorities, provided that we do not waste the best features that exist in each culture.

> **Diatopical hermeneutics consists of discovering in every culture (majority or minority) their endogenous principles that inform non-racist, non-sexist, non-heterosexist and non-violent social practices. This means that inside every culture there are mechanisms that can be mobilised to construct an inclusive, respectful, peaceful society and a better Europe for everyone.**

This is crucial to the very idea of a European construction process that has to question hegemonic relationships and cultural dominance characterised by the monopolistic "hijacking" of positive human values. And it is also, of course, of paramount importance to shape intercultural dialogue between states and people in a globalised world where, precisely, some of the globalised elements may overshadow the local dimensions. The incapacity of ethnocentrism to provide education with strong answers to the complex questions faced by young people today is clear and increasingly accepted. This is why racism, sexism, hetero-sexism or xenophobia are topics to be dealt with by education, because they were and they are perceived, in each specific culture, as manifestations of, and blockages to the common good. So mutuality, 'diatopical hermeneutics', consists of discovering in every culture (majority or minority) their endogenous principles that inform non-racist, non-sexist, non-heterosexist and non-violent social practices. This means that inside every culture there are mechanisms that can be mobilised to construct an inclusive, respectful, peaceful society and a better Europe for everyone.

Intercultural learning and social change

The third topic that we would like to address is about 'intercultural learning' as a tool for social change. It becomes clear that using 'tolerance to

ambiguity' and 'diatopical hermeneutics' as the main framework for 'intercultural learning' we cannot avoid the following question: what happens if we put into practice those principles, values and methods on a Europe-wide scale? Europe would certainly change profoundly and the main actors of this change would be the young people who have been more exposed to this educational approach. So, why hasn't it happened already?

♦

These three dimensions of intercultural learning have to be associated and thought over with two other notions, as argued by Lauritzen (1998) and Otten (1997). They are empathy and solidarity.

Empathy is the attitude to try to see things from the point of view of the other (or how the other would feel) and ultimately the ability to place oneself in new situations (*Ibid.*) is also a necessary step towards addressing prejudice and ethnocentrism that all of us have been educated into. Acknowledging that empathy itself is influenced by prejudice and that it must take into account the respect of the identity (and uniqueness) of the other, will be also the role of tolerance of ambiguity.

The learning function of solidarity is perfectly described by Lauritzen as "the practical, social and political side to empathy" (1998: 10) and includes the capacity to interact and work with others, undertaking social and political action and be able to challenge and transgress existing power structures. In the globalised post-modern society, a particular emphasis is being placed on the individual responsibility to solidarity, as in inter-generational solidarity, citizenship education or the concern for environment protection, particularly strong with the concerns for human security, global warming and climate change, for example, in which the calls for individual responsibility often mask the inability of consequent political actions. In intercultural learning, and *a fortiori* in intercultural dialogue, the meaning of solidarity has to be rediscovered so as to recognise, for example, the solidarities of those who are the target of our solidarity and the need to take into account historical injustices.

Within Europe, the sense of solidarity also has to be reassessed so as to be placed back to the heart of European integration, especially for the young generations who discover 'Europe' as a matter of fact. In social terms, the concept of solidarity should also be used to balance the (excess) weight sometimes given to cultural difference and diversity in relation to social cohesion. Cultural identities are not the only determining factor in social relations and they can certainly not explain, nor legitimise, situations of social exclusion and growing levels of acceptance of poverty and misery as unavoidable. The role of human rights

education, in this respect, can only be highlighted in the same sense that human rights education and intercultural learning serve fundamentally the same purpose of securing equality in human dignity and the fight against all forms of discrimination.

Taking seriously this re-visitation to 'intercultural learning' means that we have in our hands not only an innovative re-interpretation of critical thinking and critical pedagogy, but also a relevant accumulated knowledge about its possibilities and limitations. In fact, we do recognise that all this work - done all around Europe, with so many different young people, qualifying hundreds of multipliers and trainers to disseminate and make operational these education values - is far from being a widespread reality. On the contrary, the recent years have brought more questions and more awareness about the possible limits of 'intercultural learning' than ever before. Somehow it has created a discredit of the 'intercultural learning' because it did not produce that decisive cultural change in order to create that balanced and peaceful Europe that the majority of Europeans dreamed of.

"The limits of intercultural learning are, in this respect, the same as the limits of any educational programme" (Bergeret, 1995: 3). They are also narrowed by the inherent freedom and creativity that are associated with intercultural learning in non-formal education practices. The popularisation of intercultural learning as mere techniques for group work and simulations of culture has, of course, not contributed to its success outside the circle of the converted. But we should certainly avoid throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

It is clear that the 'faith' in education has to be harmoniously questioned by a rationality which comprehends that deep changes are crossroads between various and complex factors and instruments. The theme of this reflection gives us some clues that can be useful for a more complete and complex analysis. Firstly, we are convinced that this discredit of the potentialities of 'intercultural learning' does not help to interpret the new societal conditions that have emerged in recent years where terms such as *unavoidable capitalist concentration*, *terrorism*, *exclusivity*, *fundamentalism*, *segregation*, *fear* and *insecurity*, amongst others, have

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became a globalised crucial concern. On the contrary, 'Intercultural Learning' and its associated concepts represent an important tool for emancipation, justice, peaceful co-existence and addressing global concerns together. Paulo Freire, as well as Giroux (1997), both underline in their analyses that the right step forward is to pass from the 'pedagogy of the oppressed' (Freire, 1970) to the 'pedagogy of hope' (Freire, 2004). This means that we need to look carefully at the new conditions, and to use our collective genius to give significance to what is emerging.

Secondly, it is necessary to renew the collective resilience to act, transform and construct a Europe of and for the People and Social Justice, Intense Democratic Values, Inalienable Human Rights and the recognition of the pluriversalities of human dignity. It is interesting to recall here the inspirational alert made by Cândido Grzybowski[12] when he states that the worst thing that hegemonic globalisation is producing is the absence of plural thinking and the destruction of the capacity of hope and dream. We would thus argue that the possibility to undertake a contemporary critique of the 'Intercultural Learning' as we have experienced in the last two decades in Europe remains necessary in order to preserve intact our capacity for hope and dream.
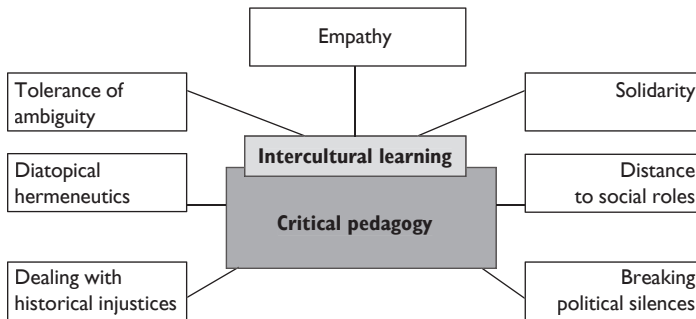
INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Intercultural dialogue has progressively emerged as the concept that seeks to embrace the processes associated with the coexistence of and communication between different peoples and cultures in a way that respects the needs for social cohesion and for respect of the diversity of identities and pluralities of belonging.

The notion of intercultural dialogue used by the Council of Europe for its White Paper is particularly useful for intercultural learning in

that it comprises an "open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage" that should lead to the understanding of different views of the world.

Making intercultural dialogue one of its core missions nowadays, the Council of Europe gives it a prominent role and acknowledges the need for consistent structures and policies for that exchange to occur. This mainstreaming of intercultural dialogue is also an admission of the coming of age of intercultural matters, too often left to the sole hobby and dedication of curious educational experts and idealists.

Intercultural dialogue, and the political emphasis placed upon it, is even more open to some of the critiques made of intercultural learning, namely the ones elaborated by Gavan Titley (2005). Chief among these is the reification of culture and the implicit culturalisation of social matters. How can we resolve the equation that culture encompasses virtually all human activity and yet it cannot be used as the sole criterion for interpreting the quality of human interaction? How can we deal with the fact that migrants and minority groups are not only cultural actors but also social actors? As we will see below, the questions of definition of the terms and language of the dialogue, and of the subsequent power relation, are especially relevant for intercultural dialogue to be genuine and purposeful.

The values underpinning intercultural dialogue, as outlined by the White Paper, are, nevertheless, fundamentally the same as those immanent to intercultural learning. The relationship between intercultural dialogue and intercultural learning can probably be developed as between wider political objectives and frameworks of intercultural relations (intercultural dialogue) and the social educational and didactical means for it (intercultural learning). This has the disadvantage of ignoring that intercultural learning can be a political and social agenda as well and that human rights education has similar educational objectives, although a different focus, and that human rights are necessarily part of the framework of intercultural dialogue.

One could schematise the relationships in this way (see next page):

The extent to which this scheme is complete and useful is not the most important point of this paper. What really matters is the need and our ability to problematise intercultural learning in a contemporary context of which intercultural dialogue is used as a remedy for the "clashes of civilizations", a spiritual identity/mission of Europe or the resurgences of cultural domination. It is thus necessary not only to understand the

Intercultural dialogue

Intercultural learning

Human rights education

**Potential for
social transformation**
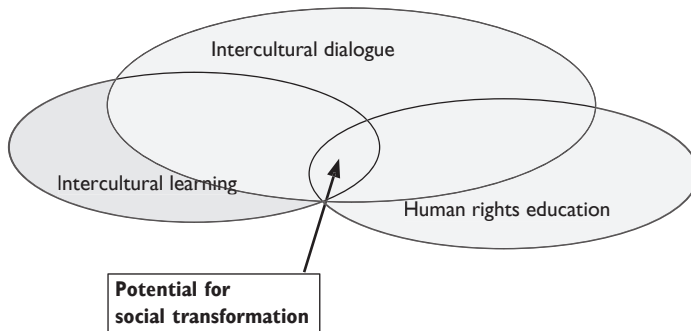
trap of simplistic analysis but also to realise that mainstream discourse is only the most visible part of the iceberg.

A NEW IMPETUS FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

In this sense we would like to propose some of the topics that have to be present in this critique in order to conceptualise an innovative twenty-first century 'Intercultural Learning' in Europe. The following proposals are still work in progress but aim to motivate people, trainers, educators and other actors to build up multiple re-significations and new re-appropriations of the potentialities of 'Intercultural Learning' in order to change minds, social relations, historical relations and educational approaches.

Dealing with historical injustice

First of all we must admit that 'Intercultural Learning' has often forgotten to deal properly with the historic injustice imposed by European colonialisms and the consequences that they have had in the collective meanings of the world. In line with Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Santos, 2004), and Enrique Dussel (1985), we share the idea that colonialism as a formal political system is probably finished, but that it maintains a central role in the social imagination as a system that legitimised roles and relationships of dominators and dominated, citizens and subjects, hegemonies and subalterns, based on cultural differentialism, racism, religion, and role in human history. The issue is obviously complex, but can be exemplified by the history of power relations between communities (majorities/minorities). Too often we assist in the re-emergency of these

long lasting history (at least five centuries), in the subjectivities and in social relations of the ex-colonised and ex-colonisers inside Europe. We argue that we can identify several and strong signs of this *coloniality*[13] as the rise of nationalisms, racial purity obsessions, the repetitive claim of Christian European identity, and the attempts to legitimise colonialism by stressing its positive role.

Having said that, we need, from now on, to include in the 'Intercultural Learning' a debate and an educational approach, not only on a contemporary and micro analysis concerning power relations between individuals, but also a macro and historical approach that takes into account more effectively historical injustices, inviting a better understanding of other perspectives of history and, consequently, of the world today. Mutual and responsive dialogue implies that we are willing and able to re-make and update our *archaeology of knowledge*. If we look carefully at our 'common' history, it is evident that it is full of violence, domination and segregation. Another consequence of this question is that history is only apparently common because the collective memories are deeply divergent about what we call 'historical facts'. For example, the memory and the associated knowledge of a Serbian, a Bosnian, a Croat or a Kosovo Albanian about the recent wars in the Balkans are probably contradictory. The same happens concerning the history of colonialism and the inherent violence between an Angolan and a Portuguese, a Frenchman and an Algerian, and a Zimbabwean and a British person. Role distance as an ability and a competence for practitioners of intercultural learning gets its full meaning in these encounters, but it is clearly insufficient.

Breaking the political silences

Secondly, we should complement the concept of 'tolerance of ambiguity' with another, 'political silences', to give more density to our analysis. This can be done if we turn political what is normally interpreted as methodological. For example, it is not neutral or a mere question of form/working method when we work on Interculturality and Intercultural Learning, to discuss and to problematise (or not to discuss nor problematise) the following issues:

♦ Who is involved in the culture encounters?
♦ Who defines it as culturally relevant or relevant for dialogue?
♦ In what language(s) does the process go on?
♦ What are the un-discussed *topoi*, because we assume to be common what is probably divergent and a cause of dissent – such as the notion

of emancipation, human rights, women's rights, secularism, sexual identity, racism, amongst others?

♦ Who sets the themes of the culture dialogue?
♦ To whom are they really important?
♦ Who has the power to start and to end the dialogue?
♦ Who sets the agenda, the place, and the time of the encounter?

The answers to these questions need to be found together, amongst the participants in any intercultural encounter, and this is a political issue, which has often been silenced or, at best, remains implicit. What we propose is to puzzle up the 'tolerance of ambiguity' with a much more demanding concept of what is relevant in the political sphere, today.

None of this is likely to make the task of thinking, or practising intercultural learning any easier. It requires conceiving and valuing time in another way. Deep changes need time, strong efforts, hard work, resilience, perseverance and patience. All these values seem to be out of fashion. But if we do not find any stronger answers, we cannot face the possibility of constructing another social and political paradigm which does not end up in another set of certitudes and values and, in doing so, effectively annihilates the emancipatory role of learning. We do need to educate to an interculturality that empowers people to fundamental serenity in order to deal with transition, openness, diffusion, uncertainty, polycentrism, and poly-rationalism, which configure another way of knowing, thinking and keeping in touch with our Europe inside our World.

Are we able to do it ourselves?

As Peter Lauritzen wrote, Intercultural Learning is discovery and transgression, change and revision, insecurity and uncertainty, openness and curiosity - and perseverance, Jean-Marie Bergeret would have added.

How able are we to do it ourselves? A continued critique and reflection about it is a crucial pre-condition.

Footnotes

1   Sven Lindqvist, 'Utrota varenda jävel', traduction francaise, Le Serpent à Plumes / Editions du Rocher, 1998 ("Exterminez touts ces brutes!").
2   Paulo Freire is one of the most known Brazilian thinkers and pedagogues. During the military dictatorship in his country he was exiled for many years in Europe, mainly in Switzerland, where he developed an important part of his thinking on education as a political act or, as he called, 'a citizen education'. See, amongst

others books, 'The Pedagogy of the Oppressed' and 'The Pedagogy of Hope'.

3   We follow Boaventura de Sousa Santos when he alerts us that globalisation is a very complex phenomenon and does not consist only of a neo-liberal, financial and capitalist transnationalisation. He says that "in the field of transnational social and culture practices the anti-hegemonic transformation consists of the construction of an emancipatory multiculturalism, or, in other words, the democratic construction of reciprocal rules of recognition between distinct identities and cultures. (Santos, 2002: 30)

4   It can be argued to what extend the Eastern and Central European societies living under dictatorships were part of the same movement. Despite the seemingly opposite political perspectives between youth movements in the East and the West in those times, it can also be argued that they were all genuinely liberation movements that represented a breakaway from the conformism or resignation of older generations.

5   It is important at this point to make a reference to the set of new Training Courses that emerged in the Youth Directorate after the first editions of LTTC.

6   Youth organizations and their experiences played an important role in defining and validating intercultural learning, notably the organizations specifically involved in individual and group youth exchanges and those involved in international voluntary service activities (such as workcamps and long-term voluntary service exchanges). The role of the authors mentioned and the institutions associated with their work was nevertheless essential in translating the diversity of educational and organisational practices that is typical of youth organisations into mainstreamed institutionalised youth policy objectices at the service of the project called "Europe".

7   See also "Community Modules for Youth worker Training".

8   It is not the aim of this article to discuss the concept of culture. Being aware of the complexity and the enormous theoretical and empirical debate going on, we use the term 'culture' in this reflection meaning that set of shared characteristics that gives to a person the sense of belonging to a certain community.

9   By heuristic we mean using a method that encourages learners to discover solutions by and for themselves.

10 See *Orientalism* by Edward Said.

11 This concept *starts from the idea that all cultures are incomplete and can, therefore, be enriched by dialogue and confrontation with other cultures* (Santos, 2004: 40). This means refusing a monolithical thought but, instead a pluri-topical – diatopical capacity of reasoning and interpreting the reality.

12 Brazilian sociologist whose cultural background combines Polish/European and Brazilian/South-American experiences. See, among other sources, www.forumso cialmundial.org.br; www.ibase.br.

13 See, among others, the works of Enrique Dussel, Aníbal Qijano or Walter Mignolo where they explore the idea of the remaining understated elements of colonialism as power relations, in social realm and subjectivities after the political colonial cycle, as such, was over.

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