Remaking Communities and Adult Learning

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1 Framing a Critical Response

As a critical response to the contemporary mainstream discourses of adult education and learning – which habitually forget adult education and all too often only focus on education and skills for the labour market – it would seem to be urgently necessary to develop counter-hegemonic research to recuperate the ideas of emancipation and personal and social development that were born from the ideas of authors such as Paulo Freire, Shirley Walters, Raymond Williams, and others, in the past century. These ideas were linked with decolonising processes around the world and the emergence of post-colonial theory and produced powerful concepts such as critical democracy and popular culture, popular education, and literacy movements worldwide. These ideas also promoted methodologies that embodied practices of democratic participation and critical reflexivity, such as participatory research, feminist research and ecological research activism, to name only some.

At the present time, much of adult education is not providing any response to the great social problems: environmental issues, populism and the return of authoritarian practices, racism, gender inequality, xenophobia, precariousness, and so on. The COVID-19 pandemic, which erupted in the first months of work on this book and has accompanied its development, has added even greater urgency to finding answers to these global issues, as well as sharpening our awareness of other originally less obvious problems.

It seems important, then, to recuperate what was at the heart of adult education and learning in their connection with people living in communities. Communities, with all their contradictions, remain privileged spaces for the organisation of social relationships and, however they may be structured, they are the natural place where people live. In the pandemic they have proven time and again to be the places where problems are felt most sharply, and where some of the most creative responses are born.

We invited contributions to a book that should explore and discuss these questions. Contributors were asked to explore critical approaches to adult learning and adult education that enable people living in communities to defy

the challenges that people have to face in their daily life and that affect them not only at a local level but also on a global scale.

By undertaking this effort to explore learning in communities in the early 21st century, it should be possible, we thought, to uncover in the present and for the future what is still rich and vigorous in the tradition of community-based adult learning and to work towards recognition of new developments and new directions that learning communities can take today to confront the challenges coming from the global mainstream and facing the global margins. In addition, we wanted to ask to what extent the margins – traditionally despised and discriminated – are the unequivocal avant-garde in the creation of new concepts for globally-connected communities.

2   Between Global and Local

This book is the work of the research network Between Global and Local – Adult Learning and Community which comes together and discusses under the friendly roof of the European Society for the Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA). Since 2006 the network has pitched its tents in Spain and Portugal, Poland and Slovenia, Germany and Croatia, Hungary and Belgium and Turkey. The most recent conference, 2021 in Seville, Spain, inevitably took place because of the pandemic via zoom, a development that no-one previously expected and one which, most no doubt hope, will not become the only norm for the future, despite certain interesting aspects of distance-conferences. Costs are an obvious factor, though it must be said that the notion of the conference-for-nothing is a dangerous fallacy: high-value conference organisation in zoom times has significant costs, too. More salient are the considerations around reduced CO_2 footprints and environmental effects generally. However, as an international network operating within a bundle of other internationally operating institutions and activities, the pitching of tents will remain an important moment of *communitas* – or as this book will have it, of *vivencia* – of physical exchange and dialogue in the spaces in which we respectively work and are active and from which we draw much of our research energy and the desire to go on.

In the spirit of moving ahead, the editors agreed back in 2019 on the idea of a further publication from the network. After Kurantowicz (2008), Evans (2009, 2010), Lucio-Villegas (2010), Ünlühisarcikli et al. (2011, 2013), Guimaraes et al. (2014), Evans, Kurantowicz and Lucio-Villegas (2016), Evans and Kurantowicz (2018) and Evans (2019) the consensus was that it was a good time to look back in order to know where to look forward. The Call for the book was distributed widely in our networks and was taken up by an interesting mix of

researchers who in different ways reflect the 15-year history of the network. As a network that wrote global and local on its sails, we came from the 'margins' of EU Europe – Poland, Spain and Portugal – and have constantly welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from far beyond the EU club of states. The European reality of the network remained from the start porous to a much larger global community where fundamental experiences in research and action are grounded, springing as they do from knowledge of the field in a wide variety of local contexts of adult learning as well as of the social movements that have arisen to fight for social justice and equality and that lead individuals and communities to access new forms of knowledge, acquire new types of social capital and, in the process, change the life worlds of people. Thus, we are encouraged to keep on going on by the response to the Call from a mix of younger and more senior researchers, from individuals and teams, from voices and research hitherto unknown in the network to old friends of the road, from seven EU countries as well as from Canada and India.

The single chapters of this volume reflect the research in the field of adult education and learning in and with communities and represent the important consensus of direction, purpose and conviction that characterises the activity of the network and its participants. The individual contributions give proof of the range of practice, the varieties in methodology and theory as well as the scope of research experience they demonstrate in their papers.

3   Part 1: Popular Education Looking Back, Looking Forward

The first part of the book concentrates on the central concern of this volume: a pause to look back and forward reflexively to take stock of the powerful contribution to adult learning and community development played by forms of participatory research in diverse communities, that start from a post-colonial, egalitarian, dialogic approach to the making and remaking of community and society.

The first three authors in this first part – Licínio Lima (Braga), Emilio Lucio-Villegas (Seville), and Davide Zoletto (Udine) employ re-readings of seminal texts (Freire, Illich, Fals Borda, Gelpi, Zanier) in order to reassess the developing discourses around lifelong education/lifelong learning and the stark choice between instrumentalistic and democratic, participatory forms of learning and living together. The fourth chapter by Monika Noworolnik-Mastalska (Roskilde) takes up the theme of 'useful knowledge' as proffered by EU programmes and considers the difficulties facing citizenship education in a European project.

Licínio Lima: "Adult Learning and Mainstream Education Discourse"

The importance of a critical reflection on the sources of the mainstream discourses governing not only the market economies but more importantly, also the fora of global educational policy discussion and formulation, is the rationale for the finely calibrated analysis offered us by Licínio Lima of positions taken up on the one hand by successive official documents produced, for example, by the EU or UNESCO, while on the other hand he traces Paolo Freire's thought to trace a trenchant critique of neo-liberal skills regimes and 'qualificationism'.

Lima's critique of neo-liberal and liberal social thinking is grounded in a re-appraisal of the concept of dialogue. For him, dialogue and dialogic learning are tools of enormous value in combatting the hegemonies of misinformation and manipulation which confront us in the oppressive pedagogism demanding the need for the honing of individual skills as the main solution for economic competitiveness. Dialogical action, on the contrary, aims to create and strengthen cultures of openness, democracy, and participation, favouring sustainable development over instrumental, expansionist modernisation.

Arguing from the perspective of Freire's major work Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire, 2020), Lima points out that adult learning and education take place in diverse communities, where difference – cultural, linguistic, religious, gender, ethnical, class or economic – can be lived as causes of discrimination or 'cultural invasion'. Difference, however, can also be the foundation of democratic dialogue and conviviality, 'dialogical action' for liberation and for adult learning and education environments grounded in active citizenship, solidarity, and cooperation.

This critical reflection leads us to question – as was done under different circumstances, from a radical position, 50–60 years ago as countries began moving away from their colonial pasts – the purposes of education and learning, above all learning for all and for lives together, living together. Lucio-Villegas and Zoletto draw out for us the critical heritage of radical movements promoting learning for change.

Emilio Lucio-Villegas: "Resisting Mainstream Lifelong Learning"

Emilio Lucio-Villegas cites three major areas that have shaped popular education and have grounded its critique of mainstream discourses within lifelong learning. These are Paulo Freire's work and, overall, his notion of dialogue as the main methodology to organise educational processes, then theories of deschooling as a revolt against the colonised school, and finally participatory research as a way of creating knowledge from people's experiences. The author proposes to focus on the second and third aspects and concentrates on the fertile ground offered by the social laboratory of middle and southern America

in the second half of the 20th century, drawing into the discussion the work of that close fellow-traveller of Freire, Ivan Illich. Lucio-Villegas is interested in Illich and others' notion of deschooling as it challenges discourses of "endless progress and unlimited growth" as well as the utility of knowledge provided by a (global) school system that continues to represent colonial and hegemonic interpretations of society.

In similar vein, Lucio-Villegas presents participatory research not only as a methodology for working with adult learners but as an instrument to decolonise knowledge and create new knowledge. Citing Orlando Fals Borda, he proposes participatory research as an engine of new knowledge – 'popular science'. While the enduring dependence on positivistic notions of science can be heard here, Lucio-Villegas' point is that such knowledge is "practical, empirical and common-sense knowledge, the ancestral possession of common people, that enabled them to create, work and understand mainly with the resources that nature gave to people" (Fals Borda, 1990, p. 70, author's translation).

Emphasising that popular education sees the group as a space for learning, while communities and people remain the ultimate resource for learning, the author presents two experiences which he considers exemplary of popular education.

Davide Zoletto: "Lifelong Education in Diverse Communities"

Zoletto also offers us a review of a well-known figure of adult education, Ettore Gelpi, and sketches in Gelpi's prescience in seeing the centrality of notions of diversity in a plural society. Zoletto looks at Gelpi's understanding of the element of multi-diversity as a central factor of change emerging particularly within urban environments. Attention is directed towards the 'new cultural values' that are seen as emerging in these contexts and he links Gelpi's understanding of popular and social culture with Raymond Williams' definition that 'culture' is a whole way of life, that is, a way to interpret everyday experiences (Williams, 1958). Zoletto shows that the close collaboration of Gelpi with the Friulian poet and educator Leonardo Zanier in the 1970s must be seen in this approach to lifelong education. Both Gelpi and Zanier worked to build on the histories, expectations, and resources (including the linguistic resources) of people – in this concrete case, the Italian emigrants in Switzerland and Germany in the 1960s and 70s – in favour of a perspective embracing the whole community in which diverse communities live together.

Monika Noworolnik-Mastalska: "Is Active Citizenship a Forgotten Idea in Europe?"

Monika Noworolnik-Mastalska discusses the difficulties within neo-liberal discourses of resurrecting and filling with new meaning the notion of being

a citizen, with all the trappings of life experience, knowledge, and desires. Describing educational programmes implemented in 5 EU countries in an EU-funded project employing participatory teaching methods which focused on the learning of civic competencies by disadvantaged young learners, the author finds that economic roll-backs in educational funding, markedly conservative discourses of lifelong learning in some countries, and a general incomprehension of the global context of active citizenship and learning were serious brakes on the achievement of the project's modest goals.

Despite the accumulation of experience and achievements in the broadening of inclusive practices in democratic societies, the real practice of inclusion and participation remains to be realised everywhere. Such practice would entail the respect for the rights of the socially vulnerable, the readiness of society to engage in a fundamental manner with otherness through the opening towards other epistemologies, which would mean learning to embrace a re-drawing of histories and a real remaking of knowledge in order to remake communities of people and whole societies. The next part looks more closely at these questions.

4   Part 2: Knowledge Democracy, New Pedagogies, Creative Inclusion

Thus, in the second part of the book, the focus shifts to pedagogies of possibility and change. Each of the chapters discusses a different aspect of knowledge creation and the transformation of pedagogies of inclusion. The notion of "pedagogies of possibility" (Manicom & Walters, 2012) seems particularly relevant to the three following discussions of different but connected "ways of understanding 'the world' and self that identify, demystify, and challenge prevailing relations of domination to open up new possibilities for engagement and incite collective action for change" (p. 3).

Walter Lepore, Yashvi Sharma, Budd Hall & Rajesh Tandon:
"Co-Constructing Knowledge and Communities"
The authors state at the outset that community and belief in community as a fundamental source of transformation and change is under attack as the role of the individual and their function in globalised supply chains comes more and more to replace the notion of society and the social good. The challenge to the idea and practice of community goes hand in hand with structural inequality and social injustice and these have, in turn, come under greater pressure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors see the attack on community

and its knowledge driven by depredation of the environment, genocide of vulnerable Indigenous peoples, and justified by Euro-centric epistemicide of alternative knowledge.

Lepore, Sharma, Hall and Tandon report on the findings of two surveys used in studies which provide a global overview of how higher education institutions and civil society organisations contribute to engaged research processes and knowledge democracy through the creation of Community-University Research Partnerships or CURPs. They show that change has taken place in the approach to, and practice of, knowledge production, reflected in the idea of 'engaged research'. This must be taken up, especially as a response to the siren songs of 'build back better' in the pandemic. The authors call, instead, for 'build back equal', as a start.

Darlene Clover: "Women's and Gender Museums"

The feminist pedagogies moving the creation and development of women's and gender museums which are actively questioning presences and absences in mainstream pedagogies of lifelong learning around the world – currently in 96 countries – are the subject of Darlene Clover's contribution. Women's and gender museums, she argues, have the responsibility to present, to see and to know the world differently. They confront in their physical or virtual forms xenophobia and religious intolerance, they explore issues critically from feminism to food insecurity, fascism to fashion.

Operating as spaces of feminist adult education, working to (re)historicise (herstory), (re)represent, (re)imagine and (re)educate the past and the present, women's and gender museums share an epistemological mandate to disrupt the problematic gendered representations and narratives that proliferate in most of the world's museums and art galleries, as well as across society. Clover argues forcibly and with the confidence her recognised authority in this field lends her arguments, that the pedagogical contributions women's and gender museums are making to the struggle for socio-gender justice and change makes them valuable resources for feminist adult educators around the world. As vital and vibrant sources of an historical feminist imaginary, these institutions look back to move forward, wielding the powers of imagination and representation through animation, theatre, artefacts and artefiction as pedagogies of epistemic responsibility, the responsibility to present, to see and to know the world differently, in ways that can change the imagination of change.

Jocey Quinn: "Living and Learning with Dementia"

People living with dementia have been largely absent in debates on adult learning and positioned on the margins of communities. This chapter presents an

alternative vision of people living with dementia. People namely who are open to the possibilities of learning, as vital parts of communities and, as Quinn emphasises, as avant-garde agents of change.

In terms of andragogy, both as adult education theory and didactics, research with people living with dementia helps to illustrate that bodies are an active part of learning, not just as shells for the mind but fundamentally imbricated in the process. Thus, Quinn argues for what she terms 'the corporeality of learning' stressing that we must understand learning as an embodied process. The pleasures and pains of the body help to shape what is learnt and how that happens, not just when considering disability issues. but for everyone. Researching with people with dementia highlights and accentuates this.

The chapter wishes to generate the following discussions: the extent to which people living with dementia are already active community members; how they free up non-humanistic ontologies and generate visions of 'more than human and more than social mutuality', which contribute to moves towards decolonisation; and finally, how they help to highlight hopes for the future, not nostalgia for the past, and help to further an andragogy of inclusion that is both more corporeal and creative.

The chapter provides positive answers to these questions and hopeful examples of how people living with dementia are remaking communities and understandings of what learning might be. The role of adult learning as a site of resistance is an ever more urgent one, but the terms need to be rewritten to move beyond limited humanistic visions of what humans are and what they can do. Moreover, as this chapter illustrates, thinking through their role in remaking community life opens some key debates and visions.

5   Part 3: Social Learning and Activism for Change

The third part, on activism and change turns its attention to the motivations for activism and their forms of expression and how they are lived, by individuals, political groups, and whole communities. The scope of the part is wide, stretching from intergenerational knowledge in Polish communities 'with migratory background' (with all the contradictions and lived experiences sealed into this easy phrase), to communities struggling to stand up in dignity and solidarity after (another) natural disaster, to different generations of social activism and their diverse or not so diverse pedagogies of action. Alongside the case study from the Mexican reality of Juchitán, we have here three contributions from Polish authors, who reflect in different ways on the transition of Polish communities since World War II across the fault-lines of ethnic, geo-political and

ideological-systemic spaces into post-national and global activism. All four contributions are based on field research employing biographical narrative methods and two (Pilch Ortega and Gontarska et al.) employ a mix of data alongside the qualitative interview.

Rozalia Ligus: "Regaining Lost Community Knowledge"

Rozalia Ligus offers us an example of capillary community knowledge retrieval and re-evaluation. In connection with a community of families of former emigrants from Polish Galizia to Bosnia who were resettled in Poland, she shows how the post-1989 political transformation in Poland strongly influenced the current shape of local communities, some of which, like the formerly named 'Western and Northern Territories' which only became part of Poland after 1945, were themselves the result of profound experiences of war and resettlement. The shaping of post-war Poland had an enduring impact on local/regional images of localism and collective memories, identities and learning processes within communities. In this context, the process of individual and collective identity formation in intergenerational transmission is constantly reinterpreted, providing a rich source of knowledge, often recovered in the process of social dialogue and informal learning.

As part of an ongoing project (*Migrating biographies'*) Ligus interviewed members of the Polish-Yugoslavian community. A particular feature of Ligus' work is, in fact, her close attention to her interviewees' words. Rather than allowing the all-too-often employed brief authored summary of the interview talk, she delves into the modes of expression of individual authors, and this brings the speakers to the fore in their individuality and their authority and dignity as representatives of an important example of popular knowledge.

Ligus' chapter demonstrates the durability of intergenerational transmission. Changes in attitudes take place generationally, she observes, in which different forms of memory are activated – nostalgic, mnemonic experience and historical memory, to the experiences of the youngest community members who draw on cultural and communicative memory with an awareness of their origin and orientation towards the future.

Angela Pilch Ortega: "Social Learning and Building Solidarity"

Angela Pilch Ortega has contributed a number of stimulating papers around her Mexican fieldwork to the publications of this network in the last decade and more, and this chapter continues to unfold the fruits and insights of her very particular research undertaking. Here she discusses opportunities for social learning in a context characterised by distribution conflicts, social vulnerability and solidarity building after a natural disaster in the Istmo de

Tehuantepec region of Mexico. The paper draws on an empirical study conducted in Juchitán, six months after a strong earthquake affected the region. The study explores the impacts of a natural disaster on community life and the transformative potential that lies in such a social crisis. Alongside biographical interviews, initiatives of regional artist groups and video documentaries related to the earthquake were analysed. The research findings reveal the way people structure and frame the experience of the natural disaster and the consequences that such crises bear for their social lives.

Pilch Ortega finds that people's socio-cultural heritage becomes a useful potential resource in order to overcome the conditions of vulnerability in which the people find themselves. Processes of solidarity building as well as waves of social disintegration and an erosion of solidarity were observed. Collaborative social practises observed show, however, that the disruption of community and society led people to question social rules and power relationships in their locality. Social reflexivity, despite a situation of acute vulnerability and need can enable people to analyse social structures and create new forms of social solidarity.

Anna Bilon-Piórko: "The 'Pulsating' Activism of Polish Activists"

Anna Bilon-Piórko's investigation with the aid of biographical-narrative interviews with long-term and lifelong Polish activists spans the history of Polish society in the last 70 years. She argues that the complexity of social engagement and activism has important implications for adult learning and work in and with communities. Issues of learning and education surfaced in the activists' narratives as significant factors both in becoming engaged in social activity and in withdrawing from it. In fact, it is this 'oscillation' between periods of extreme activism and periods of withdrawal into private life that is central to Bilon-Piórko's analysis. The subjects of her research demonstrate a 'pulsating' rhythm of engagement and disengagement and this in turn determines identity and participation in civil society.

The wish to re-make society has its costs, of course. The role and significance of negative emotions and frustrations need to be understood, she argues, and both the detail of these very extensive in-depth interviews and the space given to the individual narratives of two very different protagonists, who are very much products of their generations, genders and educations, demonstrate the author's conviction that the study of individual meanings and lifetime trajectories is essential to understand better the members of community action groups and to know the individual motivations for social engagement. Positive and negative experiences acquired in the course of a life of political commitment to remaking society are worked through with the biographical resources

that activists acquire in the course of the shifts demanded of them in a pulsating career of social activism.

>   *Marta Gontarska, Paweł Rudnicki & Piotr Zańko: "Learning (for) Civil*
>   *Disobedience in Poland"*

This chapter looks at the significance of individual and collective counter-hegemonic practices of the Extinction Rebellion (XR) movement in Poland. Founded on the idea of civil disobedience, the practice of XR is seen by the authors as contesting the passive attitude of political decision-makers vis-à-vis the dramatic threats posed by the global climate crisis. The three authors explore the dimensions of learning (for) civil disobedience in the recruitment and educational activities inside the local groups of XR and show the relevance of this commitment to collective learning for the civic awareness of XR activists and as a differentiator for the movement as a whole.

Gontarska, Rudnicki and Zańko's research is based on narrative interviews with selected XR activists from Warsaw and Wrocław and serves as a critical exploratory study. Importantly, the authors also see their work as a tool of pedagogical intervention which aims to demonstrate and strengthen the voice of young people concerned about the fate of the planet in the real context of the hegemony of the neoliberal, neoconservative, populist state.

The pedagogical strengths of the XR movement in Poland, whose significance they rightly see in contrast both to the prevailing reactionary government of the PiS party but more importantly as an important addition to the political landscape of post-Solidarnosc EU Poland, are found in XR's principled bottom-up process of creating and learning democracy in action, which, the authors argue, allows them to see XR as a new social movement with a glocal orientation, creating a new quality of social participation that through mass action fights for the survival of our planet.

6   Part 4: Remaking Society

The final part of the volume is to do with the move to re-make society and community with particular relevance, of course, to the consequences to date of the COVID-19 pandemic. Marjorie Mayo writes with the confidence of her long experience and tallies the damages done particularly in the UK to society and civil society by the obvious alliance of Far Right populism and neoliberal globalisation. Her conclusions are nonetheless hopeful. Rob Evans examines the motivations of social mediators to work in vulnerable communities, and Spanish researchers José Caride, Rita Gradaílle and Laura Varela Crespo

consider the fertile link between social pedagogy and the many initiatives experimented in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Marjorie Mayo: "Changes in Community Life"

The impact of neoliberal globalisation has resulted in increasing polarisation in societies everywhere, and this, coupled with austerity policies, notably in the years after the world financial crisis of 2008, leading to cuts in social services or the running-down of health services, is the world which was confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayo sets popular education against polarisation and exclusion as it works with communities to explore in their own right their real anxieties and concerns. This approach can permit strategies for social change to emerge. Community-based learning and mutual support networks, developing shared strategies for responding to the challenges of COVID-19 are more important than ever in the contemporary context, Mayo argues.

She points to how the lockdown – an experience unknown for generations in many societies that have been free of war or civil war and therefore unprepared for physically and psychologically – has caused adult educators to respond in innovative ways, reaching out to communities, to the vulnerable and those without advocates or voice, and that this has potentially significant implications for post pandemic times. The value of dialogue and critical thinking so central to Freirian approaches, are tools that can facilitate the mobilisation of communities to question the global significance of what they are coping with locally, and what is valid for the pandemic is valid, too, Mayo underlines, for climate change, arguments for sustainability, human-nature relations, and so on. Indeed, citing Veronique Tadjo's tales from the Ebola outbreak in West Africa (Tadjo, 2021), Mayo echoes Jocey Quinn's concerns (see Chapter 7) that our pedagogies should embrace the post-human and more than human if they are to overcome the limits of historically fuelled colonial epistemologies. Ultimately, Mayo sees in the efforts of people at the grassroots to overcome the pandemic experiences of "prefigurative forms, sketching out alternative ways of living and relating to each other in more mutually supportive ways". There *are* other, more hopeful – and more sustainable – possibilities ahead of us.

Rob Evans: "Learning to Make (and Remake) Society"

In this chapter, Rob Evans looks at the life histories driving the professional and personal development of social mediators and proposes that there is a clear link between these personal trajectories and the role many social mediators played around Europe during the pandemic, and that this has importance for the role of mediation in remaking society.

Social mediation and the culture associated with it, characterised by the respect towards the other, focusing on dialogue, the enhancement of citizenship, the importance given to individuals and to the development of their skills in the process of change, would seem to constitute an important factor in any process of 're-sewing' social ties under threat of rupture or loss. The research is based on biographical-narrative interviews with social mediators in a European Erasmus+ project. The detail of the interview talk, Evans maintains, documents significantly how professional trajectories are defined, and how this is affected by group belonging, ethnic or cultural discourses, as well as gender, age, professional and educational relationships. The biographical narratives show that the creation of a common space of experience – a space of learning in diversity – can be heard as it emerges in talk.

In their respective narratives, the social mediators heard in this chapter map out this space of learning in diversity – a space where, in the words of one mediator, "*everyone can be a friend to everyone else*", a space from it is argued they make their contribution to the making and remaking of solidarity and inclusivity in communities.

José Caride, Rita Gradaílle & Laura Varela Crespo: "Social Pedagogy and Community Networks"

José Caride, Rita Gradaílle and Laura Varela Crespo of the University of Santiago de Compostela start from the principal tensions between the global and the local, the universal, and the particular identified in the now distant 1996 report prepared by Jacques Delors for UNESCO "*The Treasure Within*" (Delors, 1996). In its proposals, 'learning to live together' was one of the four basic pillars of contemporary education along with 'learning to be', 'learning to do', and 'learning to learn'. Learning to live together has been an area thrown very much into question in recent years by the growth of xenophobic populism, but also by increasing economic and social inequalities globally. Ironically, it is the COVID-19 pandemic that has galvanised people's efforts to find new ways of making communities and the authors see how it has revitalised experiences that already had a long history of collaboration in local communities. Given their importance, they argue, it is important to recognise the community networks created in neighbourhoods and districts, which emerged in strength during the lockdowns, and also the virtual communities whose role in generating and maintaining social ties beyond physical boundaries was fundamental. Seen in this way, they suggest that the response to the pandemic has attempted in many places to raise up a system of shared obligations and responsibilities, put at the service of the common good.

The authors are of the opinion that a return to community solidarities acquires news meanings for knowledge and social action-intervention. Adverse situations, such as those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, require a social pedagogy that criticises inequalities and is committed to development that is more just and more inclusive and which is able to create alliances for the common good, promoting dialogue and a community focus when tackling the social challenges that it has posed.

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