



**40 years:
Reggio Emilia
one city
many children**

reggio emilia 2004

This experience and my account of it have no leave-taking.
If at the end any message is still needed, it is a message of reflection.
I do not know how adult the world of adults really is. I know that the rich, adult world hides many things, while the poor one knows neither how nor what to hide.
One of the things that it hides with the most rigor and callousness is the condition of children. I will refrain from detailing the data about death and desperation.
I know that my account is a luxury. It is a privilege because the children of whom I speak live in the rich world.
But also in this world, deception continues, at times cynical and violent, at times more subtle and sophisticated, laced with hypocrisy and illiberal theories. Deception infiltrates even the institutions of early education.
The continuing motivation for our work has in fact been an attempt to oppose, albeit with modest means, this deception and to liberate hopes for a new human culture of childhood. It is a motive that finds its origin in a powerful nostalgia for the future and for mankind.

Loris Malaguzzi,
from "The Hundred Languages of Children"
Ablex Publishing Co., 1993



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reggio emilia 2004

A lovely Italian story: the municipal early childhood centres celebrate their fortieth birthday.

The wide-reaching and qualified network of services for early childhood saw its development from the 1960's onward, and took shape following the experience of social management which sprang up immediately after the war on the initiative of men and women who championed the right of children to an education and to a future.

From the fortuitous meeting between children, parents, women's movements, municipal institutions and **Loris Malaguzzi** - the educational thinker who guided and inspired the schools from their birth to 1994 - the passionate dialogue between schools, families and the city was built up in the years that followed.

A unique form of organisation putting the rights of the child at its centre and constantly seeking to highlight **potential**; the modernity of the **theoretical thinking**; the long term commitment to experimentation and enquiry in an educational project aiming to enhance **expression in all languages**; the **parents and an entire city heavily involved**. These are some of the features of the educational experience in Reggio Emilia which for years has been a point of reference and interest for study and exchange by teachers, pedagogues, researchers, institutes and universities all over the world as well as an important element in the cultural life of the city.

"For now, the Reggio Schools remain more an existence proof, than a harbinger of things that will gel around the world in the near future. But they are far more than simply an existence proof; they stand as a shining testament to human possibilities" (Howard Gardner – Harvard University)



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PROMOTORS

Municipality of Reggio Emilia

Istituzione Preschools and Infant-toddler Centres

Reggio Children

International Association Friends of Reggio Children

-October 1963: the first preschool created and managed by the municipality of Reggio Emilia is inaugurated.

September 2003: forty years after the opening of the first school, the Institution of Municipal Infant-toddler Centres and Preschools in Reggio Emilia is created to support and develop the municipal school experience. The city administration of Reggio Emilia requires the dedicated Institute to manage the significant educational network in the city made up of 13 infant-toddler centres, 10 affiliated centres and 23 preschools, educating a total of around 3,000 children from 0 – 6 years and employing 575 staff (teachers and non-teachers).

- In 1994 a new organisation is created to meet the increasing demand for cultural exchanges; Reggio Children – International Center for the Defence and Promotion of the Rights and Potential of Children. From an idea by Loris Malaguzzi and on the request of a citizen's committee, the public/private company is set up with the aim of investing in and making available the resources of knowledge developed in the municipal infant-toddler centres and preschools. Earnings will be reinvested in the further development of schools and educational research. Today Reggio Children is a meeting place for countless teachers and researchers working on childhood around the world and together with them it carries out work on research projects in collaboration with universities, foundations and ministries, and organises seminars and study meetings in Italy and overseas.

Reggio Children also participates in research projects with companies from various sectors interested in qualifying children-oriented knowledge and/or production in new directions. Amongst these companies are Lego, Sony, Ikea, Isaff and Alessi.

Reggio Children is also a publishing house overseeing the production of books and films translated into several languages. For its publishing activities Reggio Children has come to an agreement with Librerie Feltrinelli (Feltrinelli Bookshops) which includes book presentations for their publications, meetings with writers and authors for exchange on childhood-related themes and exhibitions curated by Reggio Children in bookshop spaces. The common aim is to give visibility and strength to a new culture of childhood.

- The International Association Friends of Reggio Children is a non-profit organisation with more than 900 Italian and overseas members. It is sustained through the voluntary work of members and by donations from supporters. Together with Reggio Children and the Municipality of Reggio Emilia the Association shares a commitment to promoting the thoughts and works of Loris Malaguzzi, and collaborates with planning and organisation of numerous educational and cultural events. The Association also runs the Remida Centre for the creative recycling of discarded materials supplied by local businesses and companies, and made available to infant-toddler centres, preschools, primary schools and play centres.

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one city, many children - historical exhibition

San Domenico Cloisters

25 February 2004/

31 March 2004

An exhibition narrating the historical-cultural evolution of services for early childhood in the city of Reggio Emilia from their beginnings to the present day through words and images.

Official opening

Wednesady 25 February, 7 p.m. in the San Domenico Cloisters

If a tank, six horses
and three trucks
"turn into"...
citizens of the world

The infant-toddler centres and preschools of Reggio Emilia have had a long and adventurous history which had its roots in the first years of the 20th century with solid commitment by the municipality, at that time administered by Luigi Roversi, and which was to find new energy and life in the years following the war. "Rumour had it that in **Villa Cella** people had started work on putting up a school for children. They were pulling bricks from houses that had been bombed and using them for school walls. The National Liberation Committee (CLN) invested in this venture with 800.000 lire obtained from the sale of some horses, a tank and three trucks abandoned by the Nazis while retreating" Villa Cella was the first of a series of self-managed schools which, thanks to the determination and intelligence of local **women**, officially became municipal at the at the end of **1963**.



1963 – Women's protests in the city claiming the right to publicly run early childhood centres.

2003 – Theatre Curtain for the Ariosto Theatre, made by the children at the Diana preschool. (A copy is exhibited at the exhibition "Italy and Japan: Design as lifestyle", Yokohama)

Under the direction of Professor **Loris Malaguzzi** the municipal early childhood centres experiences a period of extraordinary cultural growth through continuous reflective thinking, research and national and international meetings on the meaning of education, childhood and pedagogy.

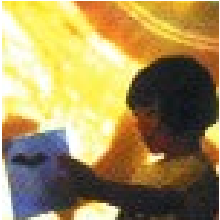
1970 sees the opening of the first infant-toddler centres ahead of national legislation passed in December 1971. The first male educators are employed "illegally". In 1972 **Gianni Rodari** arrives in Reggio Emilia for a series of meetings on the "Fantastical" later to become part of "The Grammar of Fantasy", a book which Rodari symbolically dedicated to the city of Reggio Emilia.

The exhibition "The Hundred Languages of Children" begins to tour Europe, first stop: **Moderna Museet, Stockholm** 1981.

International recognition conferred on Loris Malaguzzi and on the Reggio educational experience include: The Lego Award (Denmark) 1992, The Khol Award (Chicago, USA) 1003, The Andersen Award (Denmark)1994, The Nonino Prize (Italy) 2002. In 1991 the schools of Reggio Emilia are on the cover of **Newsweek**, defined as "the best schools in the world". The "Reggio Approach" becomes an international phenomenon.

In 1994, to meet the constant demand for professional development and exchange opportunities, Reggio Children and the Association Friends of Reggio Children are created. Since then, 13,500 people from 72 countries have participated in professional development, study tours and seminars in Reggio Emilia with visits to the municipal centres.

Reggio becomes a real, concrete representation of an experience which has probably been dreamed of, thought about, longed for.



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events
reggio emilia 2004

the hundred languages of children - exhibition

San Domenico Cloisters

25 February 2004/
31 March 2004

The exhibition "The hundred languages of children" was the idea of Loris Malaguzzi and his closest collaborators and testifies to the originality and to the quality of the journeys of inquiry which have made the infant-toddler centres and preschools of Reggio Emilia such interesting partners in conversation for those people around the world who work in childhood and education. The narrative structure of the exhibition interweaves visual and verbal languages in an original way.

More than 20 years old, the exhibition has various versions which are constantly updated. It has been exhibited in hundreds of venues in countries round the world and visited by hundreds of thousands of people of all nationalities.

Official opening

Wednesady 25 February, 7 p.m. in the San Domenico Cloisters



Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

- Moderna Museet, Stockholm
- Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
- Musée de l'Objet, Blois
- Gallerie Sonnensegel, Brandenburg
- Museo Civiltà Romana, Rome
- Industrial Museum, Bristol
- Tel-Hai College, Tel Aviv
- Centro Cultural Olimpo, Merida
- Melbourne Museum, Melbourne
- Sejong Centre for the Performing Art, Seoul
- Watari Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
- City Hall, Hong Kong
- The Scholastic Gallery, New York
- Rosary College, Chicago
- Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver
- Centro Cultural de Viña del Mar, Valparaiso

"Many people have expressed regret that Professor Malaguzzi wrote very little, and that little has been written about the Reggio experience in general. This regret could be justified if what we mean by "writing" is expressing one's ideas and culture exclusively through the verbal language. But if we broaden our access to the word "writings" to include its etymological meaning of incision, then the exhibit is perhaps one of the most incisive "writings" carried out in the pedagogical and cultural sphere over the last several years."

Carla Rinaldi from the Catalogue of the exhibition "The Hundred Languages of Children"

"Qualcuno ha scritto che l'ambiente deve essere una specie di acquario dove si rispecchiano le idee, la moralità, gli atteggiamenti, le culture delle persone che ci vivono. Noi abbiamo cercato di andare in questa direzione."

Loris Malaguzzi from the Catalogue of the exhibition "The Hundred Languages of Children"





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events
reggio emilia 2004

the expressive languages of children, the artistic language of Alberto Burri - exhibition

San Domenico Cloisters

25 February 2004/
31 March 2004

The exhibition is intended as a homage to the encounters possible between children and poetic languages.

From November 2001 to January 2002 a retrospective exhibition of the works of Alberto Burri was shown in Reggio Emilia. The exhibition became an opportunity for exploring some of the possible encounters between children of various ages and works of art; encounters of an enlivening nature which managed to betray neither children, or artists.

"Expressive languages by reason of their intrinsic structure are able to strongly bind together rationality and imagination, reasoning and sensitivity, so becoming the most effective of all antibodies against violence and the most responsive when listening to others and to the world. Visual language, like other languages, is a "gift" which belongs to men and women from birth.

It evolves if it is nourished by favourable cultural contexts. The works of artists are food for the mind and the imagination, but the main subjects are, and must always be, children with their strategies for thinking, their knowledge processes, their connections."

Veà Vecchi from the book "Children Art Artists", Reggio Children publishers, 2004



Francesco, 4 yrs. - Sculpture made of wire and clay - Diana Preschool.

Official opening of the exhibition and presentation of the book "Children Art Artists"
Wednesady 25 February, 7 p.m. in the San Domenico Cloisters

places of knowing: the city in transformation - exhibition

Spazio Mostra Città (City Exhibition Space)

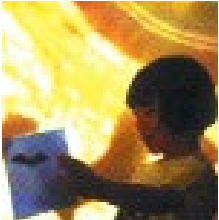
Piazza
Prampolini, 5
25 February 2004/
24 March 2004

The exhibition proposes an overview of transformation in the city of Reggio Emilia by presenting the most important work carried out in the building sector for educational and school services, from infant-toddler centres to the university.



Project for the new International Centre for Childhood
- ExStabilimento Locatelli

Official opening of the exhibition
Wednesady 25 February, 7 p.m. in the Spazio Mostra Città (City Exhibition Space)



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events
reggio emilia 2004

crossing boundaries

Ideas and experiences in dialogue for a new culture of education for children and adults

Valli Theatre
Ariosto Theatre
25-28 February
2004

“Crossing boundaries” is the title of the international conference dedicated to Loris Malaguzzi.

An opportunity for encounter between people from different cultures and experiences, the conference will also seek to affirm and to highlight the “real potential” expressed by children in their processes of knowledge and growth. Dialogue and sharing experiences around the themes of rights and potentials in children and adults, of learning and the strategic role of schools in relation to signs and implications from the contemporary and future worlds.

Under the High Patronage of the presidency of the Italian Republic

Main sponsors:



2004
crossing boundaries -
conference logo

Speakers include, amongst others, Peter Moss (University of London), Barnabas Otaala (University of Namibia), Agatha Thapa (Seto Guarans National Child Development Services Nepal) Tullia Musatti (National Research Centre, Italy) Suzanna Mantovani (Università degli Studi, Milano-Bicocca)

and in video conference Jerome Bruner (New York University) and Howard Gardner (Harvard University)

The conference will be organised into plenary and dialogue sessions in various locations in the city, visits to schools and public events.

Wednesday, 25 February 2004

Morning
Ariosto Theatre
Participant enrolment

Afternoon
Valli Municipal Theatre
3 p.m.
opening the conference – plenary session
Children's rights
National and international speakers

Thursday, 26 february 2004

Morning
Valli Municipal Theatre – plenary session
Dedicated to Loris Malaguzzi
The city of Reggio Emilia and its Schools
National and international speakers

Afternoon and evening:
Visits to infant-toddler centres, preschools and cooperatives in Reggio Emilia

Friday, 27 February 2004

Morning and afternoon
Dialogue sessions with people involved in the experience of Reggio Emilia and other national and international experiences. Talks, presentations, debate and exchange on the following themes:
The city inwaiting
Between writing and signs. An approach to written codes
Children art artists
Music of the body
Children, spaces and relations
Science; between emotion and beauty
Making learning visible, the languages of evaluation
A difference of ethics or an ethic of difference?
Digital poetics
Participatory democracy during change; educational experiences from the public to the private
Children with special rights

Saturday, 28 February 2004

Morning
Valli Municipal Theatre
Round Table
The role of education and knowledge in human life
Conversations with personalities from the world of politics, culture.....

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