

ON DIFFERENT BOATS WE SAIL THE SAME SEA

I'd like to start this article about the theme of this year's Festival, from this beautiful picture and the short dialogue by the great American cartoonist, Charles M. Schulz, known throughout the world for having created the Peanuts strips.

Great cartoonist, deeply poetic in his characters and in his stories.

Browsing the Internet, I came across this nice composition by a Facebook user that I wanted to "steal" and share.

Diversity as an opportunity for encounter and not a reason for confrontation, Diversity as the richness of Humanity, Diversity of the other that helps us to know ourselves better.

In other editions of the Gerione and Erasmus projects we highlighted and treated these aspects, but never as now, in this contemporary society studded with misunderstandings and conflicts at all levels, the meaning, importance and respect of the Diversity are of vital importance to Humanity.

And now this year's theme: **ON DIFFERENT BOATS WE SAIL THE SAME SEA.**

First of all, the Organizing Committee of the Gerione chose it because it is strongly evocative and full of meanings, which the Groups participating in our Festival will be able to deepen and put on stage in their own theater workshops. So, I also try to "play" with this interesting topic.

BOAT: means, route, road, journey, crossroads, dates with fate, adventure, shipwreck, rescue, emigration, immigration, departure, path, arrival, etc.

DIVERSITY: gender equality rights, diversity and specificity of one's being, inclusion, integration, disability, interculturalism, race, religion, specificity of knowledge and skills, status social...

SAIL: not me, or you, but we, together, mutual listening and listening, but also renunciation and mediation...

SEA: planet, Humanity, existence, shared project or goal, problem, solution...

ON DIFFERENT BOATS WE SAIL THE SAME SEA.

And when different boats drift, do they lose their course and the cognition that we sail the same sea? Then conflict arises, between kids, adults and populations. Hard to build, easy to destroy, easy to create problems, hard to find solutions.

From small realities comes the great war, from the individual comes the great conflict. But what is the conflict? Should we always consider it negative?

CONFLICT: First, we should overcome the generalized negative conception of conflict.

It is related to diversity, and not only cultural diversity; diversity is inherent in all interpersonal relationships.

In today's complex society, encountering diversity becomes an emotional and cognitive challenge that requires continuous encounters and confrontations with different viewpoints, ideas, opinions and ways of conceiving life differently. We are often afraid of conflict and prefer to avoid, eliminate or deny it, rather than face it, not realizing, instead, that by acting in this way we only create the conditions for conflicts to increase and lead only and exclusively to outcomes that are destructive.

Therefore usually conflict is negatively connoted and, in everyday language, is equated with war and violence.

But if conflict is handled competently, it reveals all its positive value, predisposing individuals to confront the Other (different from me) and becoming an opportunity for constructive mutual exchange. Without it, relationships would be superficial and distorted because the encounter with the Other would be limited to the encounter with stuff that the Other has in common with me, one could say that it would be the encounter with an alter ego and not the encounter with the Other meant as a unique and unrepeatable person different from me.

Understanding conflict means understanding ourselves and our need to be with each other,

around conflict we can build the personal and social well-being of the individual. We must, therefore, give centrality to conflict because it is an integral part of life. It should not be avoided, dodged or trivialized because one would deprive oneself of the infinite resources it can offer. Instead, it must be exploited to identify new relational ways of transforming conflict into opportunities for growth.

We need to educate in the formative management of conflict so that we can approach confrontation with diversity not as a confrontation, but as an experience that, while destabilizing, frightening and disorienting, makes one experience authentic relationships in which one does not only talk about what is common, but in which we dwell on diversity in order to become aware of it and thus be able to confront it. This allows both to establish authentic relationships with others and to be authentic with oneself.

An additional aid for positive conflict management is Emotional Intelligence.

Daniel Goleman defined it as "the ability to motivate oneself, to persist in pursuing a goal despite frustrations, to control impulses and postpone gratification, to modulate one's moods by preventing suffering from preventing us from thinking, to be empathic and hopeful." It is essential that we acquire the ability to use emotional intelligence to be able to adopt towards the Other an attitude of open, empathic, deep and neutral listening.

Thinking about our children, there then emerges the need for preventive educational intervention that can educate them in the acceptance of others' diversity and the positive management of conflict in order to be able to establish authentic and meaningful interpersonal relationships. Conflicts cannot be avoided and therefore, one must learn to recognize and manage them. It is essential to interpret them as a manifestation of diversity, as an opportunity for growth, and as an opportunity to improve interpersonal relationships.

One of the basic rules is that conflict resolution should result in neither losers nor winners, but only individuals satisfied that they have found common ground.

(I have taken the topics related to conflict from DIVERSITY AND CONFLICT IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS by Karin Bagnato, researcher of General Social Pedagogy at the Faculty of educational sciences of the University of Messina)

Also this year, the Gerione Review wants to offer, through the shows that will be presented, its own contribution to our Society.

We are waiting for you to sail Our Sea together!