Shared Learning Spaces and Urban Transformation.
Peace Education Dialogues as an Educational Commons
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Abstract

This article explores the potential of peace education as a transformative practice in urban space, through the analysis of the peace education Dialogues experience promoted by the CISV (Children's International Summer Villages) Local Unit Naples and other Italian cities. Drawing on experiential learning and the Mosquito Method, the project reframes conflict as a space for negotiation and collective re-signification. The educational practices engaged youth, local communities, and institutions in the co-creation of temporary commons, revealing how participatory learning can generate new spatial configurations. The study highlights the pedagogical role of urban space and calls for forms of governance that recognize education and conflict as constitutive dimensions of democratic cities.

L'articolo esplora il potenziale dell'educazione alla pace come pratica trasformativa nello spazio urbano, attraverso l'analisi dell'esperienza dei Dialoghi sull'educazione alla pace promossa dalla Unità Locale Napoli del CISV (Children's International Summer Villages) e da altre sezioni italiane. Basato sull'apprendimento esperienziale e sul *Mosquito Method*, il progetto riconfigura il conflitto come spazio di negoziazione e di ri-significazione collettiva. Le pratiche educative hanno coinvolto giovani, comunità locali e istituzioni nella co-creazione di commons temporanei, rivelando come l'apprendimento partecipativo possa generare nuove configurazioni spaziali. Il contributo mette in luce il ruolo pedagogico dello spazio urbano e richiama la necessità di forme di governance che riconoscano l'educazione e il conflitto come dimensioni costitutive delle città democratiche.

Keywords: peace education; commons; conflict transformation.
Parole chiave: educazione alla pace; commons; trasformazione del conflitto.

Introduction

The relationship between conflict, peace, and commons in urban space directly calls into question the forms of coexistence and social negotiation, pushing beyond the traditional dichotomy of conflict and pacification. Conflict cannot be reduced to its potentially destructive dimension, nor can peace be understood merely as the absence of tension: both must be viewed as open-ended and continuously evolving processes, shaped by the collective practices emerging within urban

contexts. From this perspective, the interaction between knowledge, lived experiences, and situated practices becomes essential to building peace as a daily experience of mediation, transformation, and renegotiation of shared space. On the basis of these considerations, this article examines the educational initiative Dialogues on Peace Education, promoted in 2024 by Children's International Summer Villages (CISV) Naples.[1]

CISV International is a secular volunteer-based organization affiliated with UNESCO, operating in seventy countries worldwide. For over sixty years, it has worked in the field of peace education and active citizenship through programs aimed at intercultural dialogue and the constructive management of conflicts. In response to questions raised by the association's junior branch (young people aged sixteen and up), following the Israeli retaliation that ensued after the massacre carried out by Hamas on October 7, 2023, CISV Naples designed the Dialogues on Peace Education by creating learning spaces distributed both inside and outside institutional settings: commons, public parks, research institutes, and association headquarters across the national territory.

The specific aim of this contribution is to explore the Dialogues as a concrete practice of educational commons, where dialogic interaction functions as a key tool for collective knowledge production, shared governance, and social inclusion. Drawing on theories of dialogic education (Freire, 1970; Bakhtin, 1981; Biesta, 2006), dialogue is here understood as a transformative relational practice enabling participation, mutual recognition, and the co-construction of meaning within plural learning communities.

The article investigates how the sharing of knowledge and the development of collective strategies for conflict management can redefine the role of urban space in building peace. It seeks to delve into the dialectical relationship between conflict and commons, highlighting the generative potential of social negotiation in urban settings and reflecting on how educational and participatory practices can effectively function as devices for spatial and political transformation.

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1 The educational program was developed within the framework of the CNR-IRISS project *Land, Practices, and Policies for the Regeneration of Cities and Territories* (Scientific Responsible: Gabriella Esposito).

Dialogues as an educational commons

The term 'educational commons' refers to a pedagogical and social practice grounded in the collective co-production, shared governance, and open access to learning spaces and processes. Unlike general commons theory, which primarily focuses on the shared management of resources, educational commons specifically concern the formative and relational dimensions of education, understood as a situated, horizontal, and transformative practice. In this perspective, education is not merely a service, but a participatory process through which communities learn together, co-produce knowledge, and co-define the spaces and modes of learning.

Education has sometimes been defined as an 'impure public good', insofar as it shares certain features with usual public goods – such as non-excludability and non-rivalry – but is also subject to institutional constraints, and, above all, market dynamics and unequal access mechanisms (Hess and Ostrom, 2007). Building on this reflection, and in response to ongoing processes of privatization and fragmentation in education systems, a perspective has emerged that conceives education as a commons, in which learning communities actively participate in defining educational content, spaces, and practices through shared governance.

Over the past decades, the concept of education as a 'common good' has gained growing relevance in international discourse, notably since the UNESCO Delors Report (1996), and in later theoretical elaborations that conceive education not simply as a service, but as a collective process of democratic knowledge-building and social cohesion (Biesta, 2006). In this view, the common good is not a resource to be owned, but a social practice rooted in cooperation, participation, and mutual care.

The debate on commons has developed along different theoretical trajectories. Elinor Ostrom (1990) made a decisive contribution to understanding the shared governance of common-pool resources, focusing on locally-based institutions and self-organized rules. On the other side, Dardot and Laval (2014) proposed a more radical and political conception of *commoning*, seen as a collective praxis that produces subjectivities and institutions, challenging the public/private dichotomy. In this view, commons are not merely goods to be managed, but social processes that ground new forms of democratic coexistence and institutionality. According to the

latter two authors:

«The praxis that establishes the commons is the self-production of a collective subject through the continuous co-production of legal norms. [...] Every established institution tends – once constituted – to become autonomous from the act that created it. [...] Thus, the praxis of the commons is both the activity that founds a new normative system and the ongoing effort to renew that institution, in order to prevent it from becoming entrenched in what has already been established.» (Dardot and Laval, 2014: 445)

This is an instance of "generative democracy" (Dardot and Laval, 2014), in which, on the one hand, the *commons* define an innovative grammar of practices and a new normative instance, and, on the other, reconfigure the social space as a place where the entire range of social services are defined and practised in public form. As Roberto Morea has pointed out:

«Let us be clear that this not about ending public services and replacing them by commons. It is a matter of democratising public services so that they emanate from the social needs of the citizenry and of making sure they cannot be privatised. [...] In the struggle for economic democracy, [...] employees and users of the products have control of the company, thus replacing the shareholders. [...] All issues of productive relocations can contribute to a system harmonising economic and social needs» (Morea, 2018).

In the sphere of social relations, educational commons can be understood as a transformative practice acting on at least three dimensions. First, they enable a renegotiation of the relationship between communities and the environment, through relational and ecological approaches (Mattei, 2011; Bollier and Helfrich, 2012). Second, they foster equity in gender relations by promoting inclusive and horizontal educational models (hooks, 2022; Corsi, 2024). Third, they encourage the communitization and open circulation of the results of creative and cultural work, through shared knowledge production practices (Bauwens *et al.*, 2019; Federici, 2012). Culture, therefore, should be understood as a constitutive part of the social environment and a progressive force capable of expressing and contextualising words and orientations in order to "socialise" in any field, to act the transformation (Gramsci, 1975).

As confirmed in a different context by Michel Bauwens, Vasilis Kostakis and Alex Pazaitis:

«In commons-based peer production, cooperating actors create shared value through open systems of contribution, govern labour through participatory practices, and create shared resources that can, in turn, be utilised in new iterations. [...] At this stage, commons-based peer production is a prefigurative prototype of what could become an entirely new mode of production and a new form of society» (Bauwens, Kostakis and Pazaitis, 2019: 6).

The concept of educational commons can be understood as a shared learning space, not predetermined by rigid hierarchies, but open to the co-creation of knowledge and collective transformation. As suggested by theorists such as Hill (2010) and Biesta (2006), education as a common good entails a participatory process engaging a plurality of actors, both within and beyond formal schooling. In this perspective, the notion of the *educating community* becomes particularly relevant, as it highlights the transformative role played by all components of the urban fabric – public institutions, civil society organizations, families, and cultural actors – in co-producing inclusive and informal educational environments. Education, as a learning practice and social function, is not only a (fundamental) service provided by the State, but also a (interactive) horizontal, networked co-creation process involving schools and associations, local authorities and citizens.

Within this perspective, peace education, conceived as an educational practice 'for' peace and 'with' peace, conveys, in turn, a pedagogical function and a social value, as an educational practice (a form and instance of learning, training and sharing a set of knowledge, acquisitions and practices) and a peace carrier (a field of acquisition of theoretical and practical contents related to peace, a context of experimentation of methodologies and practices inherent to peace, in the widest plurality of its topics and meanings).

The strategic role of education in promoting peace, and, especially, in post-conflict peace-building, has been, for the first time, highlighted in the fundamental UN Secretary-General Report ˝An Agenda for Peace˝ (1992), according to which:

«In the aftermath of international war, post-conflict peace-building may take the form of concrete cooperative projects [...]. I have in mind, for example, [...] joint programmes through which barriers between nations are brought down by means of [...] mutually beneficial youth and educational projects. Reducing hostile perceptions through educational exchanges and curriculum reform may be essential to forestall a re-emergence of cultural and national tensions which could spark renewed hostilities» (Boutros-Ghali, 1992: 32).

The core of such perspective lies in the overcoming of the traditional dichotomous conception of the link between conflict and peace: having conceived conflict, particularly social conflict, as a *datum* of social relations and a generative factor of positioning and transformation, peace comes to be not simply the absence or latency of conflicts ('negative' peace), but a continuous generative process of creation and affirmation ('positive' peace) of equitable and inclusive relations, marked by the recognition and protection of human rights and the construction and expansion of social justice (Galtung, 2000). The educational setting and goals issued by the educational commons can offer a proper space to promote 'positive' peace (supporting equity and promoting harmony, also through empowerment measures, in the society) and overcome a mere 'negative' peace (helping contrasting trauma and positively solving conflicts, normally existing at societal level, Fig. 1).

$$\text{Peace} = \frac{+\text{ Positive Peace}}{-\text{ Negative Peace}} = \frac{\text{Equity x Harmony}}{\text{Trauma x Conflict}}$$

Fig. 1 The "peace formula" according to J. Galtung (2020).
Source: Gianmarco Pisa.

Differently stated, conflict is here confirmed as a decisive issue in shaping public space through commoning practices. From this perspective, public space is not conceived just as a neutral entity, but as a space co-produced by communities, where social cooperation and shared responsibility redefine access, use, and governance. The commons, therefore, delineate a mode of producing and inhabiting public space that is relational, participatory, and conflictual – anchored in processes of

negotiation, care, and political subjectivation. Within such framework, 'conflict' and 'commons' share the same dialectical relevance: just as conflict represents a subjectivation instance and opens spaces for the advancement and consolidation of participation and democracy, so common goods preserve the places of civic well-being and allow social organisations to exercise their participation and self-organisation.

In such a vision, at the same time holistic and constructivist, the educational process comes to intercept both the space of the generation and sharing of knowledge, acquisitions and practices, and the space of the manifestation and realisation of social and relational dynamics, the fabric of relationships that nourishes and enlivens the general social dynamics.

Taking up Dardot and Laval (2014), it is a mass movement, a succession and connection of multiple and continuous mobilisations and clashes, transcended into creative political forms, which make democracy a constitutive principle and reject any attempt to redefine and re-establish hierarchies:

«The politics of the commons is thus a new key to open up the road to emancipation [...]. It leads to the introduction everywhere, in the most profound and systematic way, of the institutional form of self-government, which we will take care to distinguish from what, in the 20th century history, has been called "self-management", which, if we want to be faithful to what the term means, is limited to the dimension of organisation and only concerns the organisation of things» (Dardot, Laval, 2014: 459).

Educational commons as transformative spaces of co-learning, social justice, democratic participation

Drawing on Gert Biesta's understanding of education as a process of subjectification, educational commons are not simply spaces of shared access, but co-constructed environments in which participants are invited to appear as subjects, through acts of dialogue, dissent, and relational engagement. It is from this perspective that the experience of the Dialogues can be interpreted as an educational commons, not merely because of its horizontal and participatory nature, but because it enabled subjectivation and co-authorship in public space.

The Dialogues process is configured as an *educational common* experience, where knowledge and peace-building practices are

developed in an open and collaborative way, creating a shared and transformative learning space. Conflict is not treated as an event to be avoided or repressed, as a 'negative issue' in itself, but as an inescapable component of social coexistence and a generative learning opportunity. Building on the lesson of Johan Galtung (2000), the factors of the conflict dynamics are highlighted, not only in relation to its visible, direct manifestations, e.g. direct (physical) violence, but also in its non-visible, latent motivations, e.g. the structural (basic contradictions at economic and/or institutional level) and cultural (topics and issues pertaining to attitudes, perceptions, narratives) factors of violence (Fig. 2).
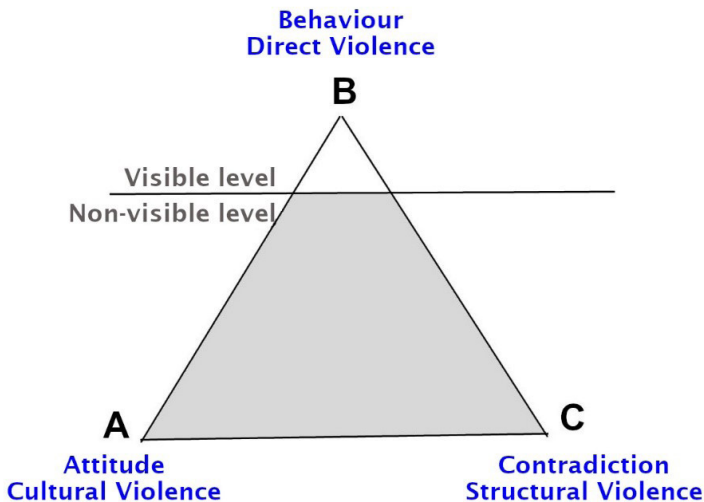

Fig. 2 The triangle of violence according to J. Galtung (2020).
Source: : Gianmarco Pisa.

Recalling the methodological guidelines proposed by L'Abate and Porta, the essential elements (among them, the operators' training and peace education) for the prevention of violent conflict has clearly been identified (L'Abate and Porta, 2008). Following Danilo Dolci's perspective, which sees conflict as a tool for development and transformation, the process has implemented practices to understand its dynamics and transform them into opportunities for negotiation and co-construction (Dolci, 2020). In a circular process of such nature,

the reciprocal maieutic process, through the socio-educational practices of co-learning and action-research (or 'education-intervention'), opens spaces for the subject's empowerment and personal and social strengthening and promotes well-being and inclusion, thus activating the 'promise' of the person's integral development, in his/her personal, creative, intellectual, moral and, ultimately, social potential (Fig. 3).
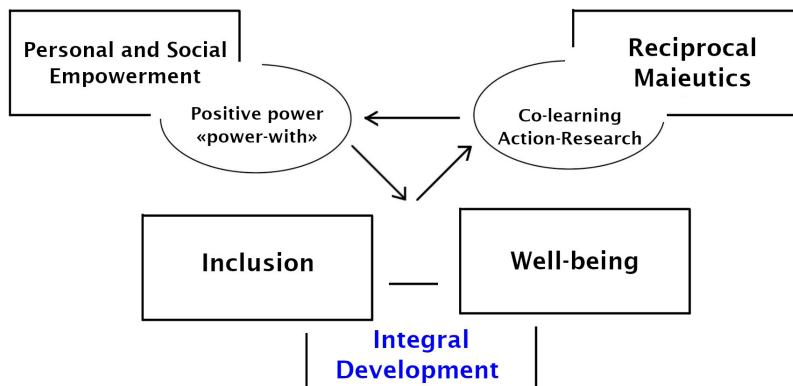

Fig. 3 The RMA (Reciprocal Maieutic Approach) scheme according to Danilo Dolci (2020). Source: Gianmarco Pisa.

The interaction between the *educational commons* – as a social practice capable of offering additional opportunities beyond traditional educational models – and the *urban commons* – as a shared social space enabling experimentation with cultural and social practices – reveals an unexpected potential. This intersection also carries a strong political dimension, as it reclaims public space as a site for conflicts and negotiations, collective agency, participation, and democratic coexistence.
This dynamics contributes, moreover, to defining the theoretical framework and the comprehensive structure within which, among others, the methodology developed and put into practice through the CISV Dialogues takes on consistency. It aims, first of all, to activate the 'common space of fruition' by inhabiting it and crossing it with educational practices of strong social value, insofar as they generate potentially transformative processes and build different views on places and the broader social and relational context.

It is, at the same time, a potential extension of the approach issued by the Faro Convention (Council of Europe, 2005) in relation to heritage places as a whole, animated by heritage communities (art. 2) and oriented to «reinforce social cohesion by fostering a sense of shared responsibility towards the places in which people live» (art. 8).

Secondly, it envisages the possibility of acting the participatory dynamics as a transformative practice, i.e. capable of triggering formative and self-formative processes, nourishing reflection and dialogue about the self-perception in relation to the surrounding space and the system of 'proximity relations', but also soliciting questions and proposals on the regeneration of public space: from the social rediscovery of previously abandoned or disused spaces up to the elaboration of ideas and proposals for urban transformation.

The experience of the city of Naples, as the urban context of such experimentation, offers a scenario of noticeable interest and innovation. Here, in fact, the social practice of the Naples Laboratory for a Commons Constitution has taken shape, aimed at stimulating the elaboration of proposals and projects 'from below' for the management and valorization of commons. The emergent topic of such experimentation is to stimulate the participation of citizens and channel it towards a process of social regeneration, also through forms of urban civic communities, capable of adopting regulations useful for the shared and open management and for the planning of quality and innovative activities.

So, coming back to the opening reflection:

«A creative peer process could lead to a model in which society becomes productive through the citizens' participation in the cooperative co-creation of value through the commons. In this pluralistic commons, multiple forms of value creation and distribution would coexist, but most likely around the universal attractor that is the commons. We do not advocate a kind of «totalitarianism» of the commons, but rather to make the commons a fundamental institution orienting all other social forms, including the state and the market, towards the attainment of the larger common good and autonomy» (Bauwens, Kostakis and Pazaitis, 2019: 8).

Mosquito Methods and Commons: Educating Through Conflict

The concept of educational commons goes beyond the mere application of commoning principles to the educational field. It entails the collective constitution of learning environments where educational agency is shared, negotiated, and continuously redefined. Drawing on Gert Biesta's theory of education as a process of subjectification – not simply qualification or socialization – educational commons are understood as spaces in which individuals are not reduced to roles (students, citizens, beneficiaries), but are invited to appear as subjects through acts of speech, dissent, and encounter (Biesta, 2006; 2010; 2021). In this sense, commoning becomes a pedagogical act: a way of practicing education that resists instrumental logics and embraces uncertainty, plurality, and relationality. Educational commons are thus political in nature, not because they promote a specific ideology, but because they constitute shared spaces where the question of «what we are doing here together» remains open, negotiated, and meaningful.

This theoretical framing finds a situated expression in the CISV Dialogues on Peace Education, which represent a significant empirical practice to explore the intersection between knowledge, conflict, and the transformation of public space.

The initiative took shape through an educational methodology aimed at creating a learning environment conducive to critical reflection on conflict and its transformative potential. The adopted practice was configured as a space of continuous negotiation between languages, disciplines, and forms of knowledge, moving beyond hierarchical models of learning towards a horizontal and dialogical dimension (Dolci, 2020). An educational process can only be effective if it goes beyond the vertical transmission of content and creates instead conditions for encounter and interaction: it must be 'resonant' (Rosa, 2020; 2023).

The educational practice was grounded in experiential learning, structured through participatory activities that allowed participants to explore conflict dynamics and develop peaceful resolution strategies. Nonviolence was proposed as an active and intentional method, also including forms of civil disobedience inspired by historically significant experiences, such as those of Gandhi, Rosa Parks, and Martin Luther King. Group dynamics, analyzed through Tuckman's model (forming, storming, norming,

performing, adjourning), highlight how group development follows identifiable phases and requires adequate facilitation (Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman and Jensen, 1977). In this framework, the model was applied to foster awareness of collective processes, prevent discrimination and constructively manage inner tensions. The aim was to understand how awareness of group dynamics can help prevent discrimination and manage personal conflicts.

In particular, the Mosquito Methods – a methodology developed by CISV Sweden (CISV Sweden, 2009) – offered practical tools to approach conflict not as an obstacle, but as a space for collective transformation, where tensions and divergences become grounds for negotiation, citizenship, and cooperation.

The Mosquito methodology is structured around four iterative phases (do, reflect, generalize, and apply) and makes use of tools such as the «communication triangle» (ivi, 33) (actions, intentions, implicit assumptions). It identifies three primary conflict response modes: Hit (attack), Run (flee), and Stand (consciously engage), suggesting that conflicts become fruitful if people engage in the third mode. Through the repetition of the four phases, conflict can be recognized both as a structural component of human coexistence and as an opportunity to generate new forms of citizenship and cooperation.

What emerges is a critical and situated educational perspective, capable of promoting direct interventions in real urban contexts and enabling genuine processes of social transformation.

Fig. 4 CISV Educational Approach.
Source: CISV International, *Big Education Guide (Big Ed)*, Chapter 1, 2023.

From Places to Processes: The Journey of the CISV Dialogues

In each setting, urban space was not merely the physical backdrop for educational action, but functioned as a dynamic device through

which conflicts, negotiations, and transformative possibilities could emerge.

A pivotal episode occurred during the first meeting, hosted at the Ex Asilo Filangieri, a well-known laboratory of commons-based practices in Naples. During the Stand Up. Conflict & Resolution workshop – an activity engaging adolescents and adults in a participatory simulation of conflict dynamics – an unanticipated intrusion disrupted the event: a group of local youths entered the space unannounced, moving through it chaotically, with no apparent constructive intent and a clear desire to disturb the ongoing activity.

Some of the Asilo residents, who personally knew the newcomers, attempted to engage with them, explaining the purpose of the session and requesting respect for the shared space. Similarly, some of the adult CISV facilitators tried to involve them, describing the activity and inviting them to participate. The response was a firm refusal: the youths claimed they were «neither students nor teachers», rejecting any form of inclusion. They continued to move through the space in a disordered and indifferent manner, eventually shouting provocative remarks and throwing small objects, heightening the tension in the room. At that point, the atmosphere became untenable: the younger participants felt frightened, and it was no longer possible either to integrate the newcomers into the activity or to ask them to relocate to another part of the space. Even the option of remaining as silent observers was declined. As a result, the activity was suspended, and the CISV youth were escorted out of the venue to ensure their safety. Some adult facilitators, together with Asilo residents, chose to remain and safeguard the space, attempting to de-escalate the situation without relinquishing it entirely.

The incident had a strong emotional impact on the group. The adolescents involved in the workshop expressed surprise, discomfort, and frustration at not being able to complete the activity. Some voiced a desire to better understand the motivations of the other youths, while others reported a sense of helplessness in the face of such unpredictability. The moment was experienced by many as a rupture – a tear in the paper sky of the stage (Pirandello, 1988) to borrow an image evoked by one participant, referencing Pirandello – that challenged everyone to confront a real conflict within an educational space designed to simulate one.

Fig. 5 CISV Workshop at Ex Asilo Filangieri, Naples, 16 March 2024.
Source: CISV Naples.

This experience required deeper reflection, for which the Mosquito Method proved a valuable analytical tool. Its iterative structure – do, reflect, generalize, apply – enabled participants to process the event as a dynamic sequence, questioning both the emergent dynamics and the available responses. Particular attention was given to the three proposed reactions to conflict named in the previous paragraph: *Hit*, *Run*, and *Stand*. The decision to interrupt the activity – a posture of withdrawal – was collectively reframed not as the only possible response but as a situated choice. In a subsequent facilitated discussion, participants explored how it might have been possible to *Stand*, embracing the rupture as an integral part of the educational process while still upholding safety and mutual respect. This reflection unfolded during two follow-up meetings organized at CNR-IRISS, bringing together researchers, peace practitioners, and members of the involved communities.

Fig. 6 CISV Workshop at Villa Floridiana Park, Naples, 21 April 2024.
Source: CISV Naples.

The first session focused on a collective analysis of the event, guided by the 'communication triangle' framework (actions, intentions, implicit assumptions), investigating both the motivations of the intruding group and the reactions of facilitators and adults. The exercise proved crucial in uncovering the cultural and structural roots of the conflict, highlighting latent fractures between different communities and the importance of rooted mediation practices.

Subsequent workshops took place in two symbolic urban spaces – the Floridiana Park and Capodimonte Park – public areas rich in historical and social meaning. In these settings, the activities centred on recognizing conflict as a collective social dynamics, distinct from individual reactions, and on developing listening skills, negotiation strategies, and the capacity to coexist across differences.

The final workshop of the project's first phase – jointly promoted by CISV, CNR-IRISS, and CNR-DSU – served as a moment of synthesis and systematization. The interdisciplinary approach adopted allowed for the construction of a shared vocabulary along three thematic axes: peace education, spatial justice, and participatory governance of public space.

In this framework, *peace education* was defined as a process of cultivating positive relationships, critical reflection, and mutual recognition across differences. *Spatial justice* was understood as the right of individuals and communities to inhabit and transform space in equitable and inclusive ways. *Participatory governance* referred to the capacity of diverse actors – particularly marginalized groups – to actively shape decisions concerning the management and use of public space. This framework laid the foundations for a theoretical and operational agenda for future action. In this context, the idea of an itinerant workshop was born – a tool to consolidate the trans-local dimension of the process, connect different practices and contexts, and strengthen collective competencies in nonviolent conflict management.

Fig. 7 CISV Workshop at CNR-IRISS, Naples, 19 October 2024.
Source: CISV Naples.

The itinerant workshop is now traveling through various Italian cities, hosted by local CISV branches, fostering dialogue among territories and communities, and confirming the transformative

value of a place-based participatory methodology. A particularly significant step occurred in Florence on December 1st, 2024, where a delegation of researchers and youth from CISV Naples met with the Junior Branch of the Florence section.

This encounter served as a moment of restitution and transmission, during which the outcomes of the activities conducted in Naples were shared, and methods, tools, and reflections were presented to deepen collective understanding of conflict. A symbolic handover took place between the two sections, reinforcing the continuity of the educational process and disseminating a commitment to a culture of peace grounded in participation, co-responsibility, and nonviolent mediation.

Following this step, the Florence section initiated a collaboration with Rondine Cittadella della Pace, an organization that fosters creative conflict transformation through the cohabitation of young people from conflicting countries. Rondine's involvement enriched the Dialogues initiative, offering new perspectives and tools for approaching conflict in constructive ways.

The same trajectory continues with Horizon Naples 2025, an intensive summer camp that will take place in the Spanish Quarters of Naples from July 22nd to August 3rd. The camp will involve twenty-two young people aged sixteen to seventeen from the fourteen Italian CISV chapters, along with approximately five staff members. The initiative aims to generate a tangible local impact by strengthening the connections between CISV communities and Like-Minded Organizations (LMOs), which share similar values and practices.

The project is being developed in collaboration with three key institutions: FOQUS – Fondazione Quartieri Spagnoli, active in Naples since 2013 in the field of socio-educational regeneration; Fondazione Pistoletto – Cittadellarte, a contemporary art foundation promoting the work of Michelangelo Pistoletto and currently focused on the topics of peace; and Castello di Rivoli – Museum of Contemporary Art, which hosts an active education department and promotes art as a tool for education and intercultural dialogue.

Horizon Naples 2025 builds on the CISV Dialogues experience. The Naples Local Group has chosen to collaborate with partner organizations engaged in peace education through different languages and methodologies. Together with participants from

various CISV Italian chapters, the camp will explore topics – such as conflict transformation, citizenship, and intercultural dialogue – continuing the themes addressed in the Dialogues. In this perspective, the involvement of institutions like the Pistoletto Foundation – whose founder was recently nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize – will contribute to reinforcing the conceptual continuity between the two experiences, particularly in relation to the role of art in promoting peace and social transformation.

The camp will be organized into three integrated phases, engaging participants daily in educational and artistic activities with local children and residents. The first phase focuses on community education and engagement through workshops on the Charter of Rights with FOQUS. The second phase involves urban regeneration through art via performative actions co-designed and delivered in tandem by the Pistoletto Foundation and the Educational Department of the Castello di Rivoli, combining their respective approaches to art, education, and peacebuilding. The third phase is dedicated to communication and outreach, culminating in a public final event to share the experience and strengthen local networks. Each day will be structured with morning activities conducted by LMOs, afternoon educational labs led by CISV, and evening moments of community building and sharing. Two urban explorations will help participants reflect on their experiences in relation to the local context. Horizon Naples 2025 thus stands as a frontier educational lab, blending knowledge and practice in a transformative perspective. The experience aims to leave a lasting impact both on participants and on the local community, contributing to the creation of a widespread educational community based on listening, cooperation, and collective creativity.

The final stage of the Dialogues cycle is scheduled for 2025 in Gorizia–Nova Gorica, a city symbolic of both conflict and reconciliation. It will provide an opportunity for critical reflection and forward-looking projection. The event aims to consolidate the path taken, enhancing the situated approach, the activated trans-local networks, and the educational methodologies tested. In this emblematic context for European history, the values referring to peace as a territorial practice, the city as a political space to inhabit, and the education as a tool for spatial justice and collective transformation will be reaffirmed.

Open Conclusions

The CISV Dialogues experience has provided a privileged ground to explore, through situated educational practices, the transformative potential of peace education in contemporary urban contexts. Far from conceiving peace as the mere absence of conflict, the pathway developed through the Dialogues has demonstrated how conflict can become a vital material for learning, coexistence, and the re-signification of space. In this perspective, peace is not an outcome but a relational socio-educational process, capable of shaping ways of inhabiting and modes of governing public space.

By using methodological tools rooted in experiential learning – particularly the Mosquito Method, which promotes a transformative reading of conflict dynamics – it was possible to activate individual and collective awareness, to defuse reactive mechanisms, and to open up spaces of constructive engagement among diverse actors. The method not only guided the educational practices but also made visible the pedagogical potential of space, turning it into a site for democratic and inclusive experimentation. The places crossed by the Dialogues – from the Ex Asilo Filangieri to public parks, from the neighborhood contexts like the Spanish Quarters to the networks activated in Florence with Rondine – have revealed the capacity of participatory education to prefigure new spatial and social configurations, which can be observed in the reclaiming of neglected urban spaces, the activation of intergenerational dialogue, and the emergence of new forms of civic responsibility among participants – especially young people – who began to reinterpret their role within their communities. In these settings, the interaction among young people, local communities, and cultural institutions has fostered symbolic and material reappropriation of space, nurturing a sense of belonging, active citizenship, and micro-transformations in the young participants that can counteract marginalization and exclusion.

However, several critical questions remain open: to what extent can the processes activated be embedded in the practices of urban governance? How can we avoid the risk that meaningful, yet still fragile, experiences remain isolated instead of evolving into lasting frameworks of political and territorial intervention? In cities marked by fragmentation, inequality, and systemic vulnerabilities, participatory educational practices – such as

those activated through the CISV Dialogues – can act as powerful tools for nurturing belonging, co-responsibility, and micro-transformations. However, these practices alone are not enough: without public policies capable of institutionalizing conflict as a resource and care as a governance principle, even the most meaningful experiences risk remaining fragile and isolated, rather than evolving into enduring frameworks of democratic transformation.

In this light, the Horizon Naples 2025 initiative stands as a meaningful testbed for deepening the relationship between education, participatory art, and urban regeneration. The involvement of local communities, cultural institutions, and allied networks contributes to consolidating alliances, activating shared knowledge, and building more durable forms of transformation. The upcoming stages – culminating in the final meeting in Gorizia–Nova Gorica – can reveal not only opportunities for evaluation and renewal, but also critical spaces for questioning the educational devices and material conditions enabling democratic transformation of inhabited spaces.

The challenge remains that of imagining and practicing a form of urban governance that does not avoid conflict, but embraces it as a constitutive condition of cohabitation in cities – a governance that recognizes education not as an accessory function, but as a foundational device, for building a more just, pluralistic city capable of producing peace through difference.

Author Contributions

This article is the result of joint research and presents reflections shared by both authors. While the contribution is unified in its structure and argumentation, Luisa Fatigati developed the conceptual framework and authored Sections 1, 4, and 5; Gianmarco Pisa authored Sections 2 and 3. The open conclusions (Section 6) were co-authored by both.

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