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a MANIFESTO for INCLUSION

University of Padova

are still very far from guaranteeing fair and decent life conditions to everybody. Indeed, in several places on our planet there are still barriers and walls, and threats to peace and civil coexistence seem to be on the increase. In this manifesto the word inclusion is used with caution, as it refers to a particularly complex and multidimensional construct which, albeit including others (acceptance, placement and integration), goes beyond them and differentiates from them because it refers essentially to those context characteristics that help people experience a satisfactory and high-quality life.

Although the future of inclusion is difficult to predict accurately, the signatories of this manifesto are confident and hopeful because they believe the representation of the future, of what will happen but also of what they wish, can significantly influence the present by stimulating new analyses and starting a search for original and innovative solutions to experiment, evaluate and share.

The signatories think of themselves as 'agents of change' who are not satisfied with simply describing, diagnosing and classifying people, problems and discomforts, nor with addressing some restricted 'private' difficult situations. They consider appropriate and morally correct to indicate underlying causes and responsibilities, at the same time clearly manifesting their indignation for the way things go sometimes and how the rights of people are trampled on.

* For a Manifesto in favor of Inclusion. Concerns, ideas, intents and passwords for inclusion. Hogrefe, 2017.

Introduction
This manifesto concerns inclusion and quality of life.

It aims to promote and defend them until the discomfort and the uneasiness caused by how people's life contexts are organized and run will no longer exist.

It is the result of a series of analyses carried out on the thoughts, concerns, and hopes of over 600 people – scholars, professionals, citizens from different parts of the world.*

It is articulated over three sections:

- the first contains some important indicators that should characterize an inclusive context;
- the second presents a set of activities, actions and initiatives considered necessary to favor and monitor inclusion;
- the third includes proposals and commitments that the signatories of this manifesto intend to personally fulfill to increasingly promote inclusion in their life and work contexts, to remove barriers and obstacles, to seek alliances and collaborations, etc.

This manifesto collects above all the denunciations, thoughts, concerns, and recommendations of a group of scholars and professionals interested in inclusion. However, it aims to obtain the support also of other stakeholders, those that have at heart people's wellbeing, equity, decent work for all, and the dissemination of an authentic culture of inclusion.

Those who share the content of this manifesto ask for commitments and investments in favor of a present and a future permeated by inclusion, as at present we

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Section one

INCLUSIVE CONTEXTS

The authors and the signatories of this manifesto believe that:

1. The idea of inclusion should be defended from those who tend to use this term superficially, wrongly and instrumentally by almost exclusively associating it with some individuals (with impairments and disabilities, migrants, women, minorities, and so on) and contexts (work, health care, education).

2. It is a duty to remind policymakers, and especially public administrators, of the need to realize specific and efficacious interventions on participation, accessibility, political actions that safeguard the environment, the common goods (air and water first of all) and defend biodiversity which, also with the future in mind, should be considered as fundamental indices of wellbeing and development for every country.

3. The construct of inclusion requires multidimensional analyses and interventions together with multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary visions. Inclusion is an important issue to everyone and nobody, whether professionals, services, researchers, can claim exclusive right to it or ascribe it solely to their own field of research or application.

4. It is essential to put people's wellbeing, self-determination and empowerment before the managerial and organizational needs of contexts and the 'market laws'.

5. A context is inclusive when it gives emphasis and importance to sense of belonging, participation, active citizenship and to the voices of those who live in it, and takes all of that into account to generate change and innovation.

6. Inclusion focuses on the wellbeing of living creatures, promoting forms of respect for the environment, wildlife and habitats, and supports a development that takes all of that into account.

7. In an inclusive context research and practice talk to each other, collaborate and are interdependent. The efforts of research must be directed to improving applications and the latter must make more reference to scientific parameters.

8. In case of 'contrast' between the needs of individuals and the organizational and managerial needs of the educational, work, and social contexts, they have no hesitation about 'which side to be on', because respecting universal human rights and the values of sharing, of solidarity, of commitment must never be subjected to the laws of economics and of 'free competition and competitiveness'.

9. A context is inclusive inasmuch as it promotes collective conscience and prosocial sensitivity: any form of individualism and marked nationalism is deemed as an obstacle and a barrier, which cannot be tolerated by an inclusive context.

10. In an inclusive context wellbeing, education and training, and work do not

concern only health, learning or 'doing' something, transmitting knowledge, techniques or automatisms; rather, they are essentially communication, exchanges of knowledge, of life styles, opportunities for reflection and conviviality, and participation in constructing the common good.

11. An inclusive context encourages processes of progress measurement that have two essential components: the first, strictly cultural and political, concerns the content and definition of development and wellbeing; the second, technical and scientific, concerns the choice of shared systems of measurement and evaluation.

Section Two

INITIATIVES, ACTIVITIES AND ACTIONS IN FAVOR OF INCLUSION

The authors and the signatories of this manifesto believe that it is not enough to advocate and speak about inclusion. Contexts that aim to promote inclusion should:

12. Program, indicate and make clear to everyone the facilitated conditions for everybody to access education and training, wellbeing, work, cultural heritage, leisure, and community life

13. With regard to local policies, explicitly refer to inclusion and willingness to support all initiatives taking inspiration from the values of solidarity, cooperation, pluralism and interculturalism; provide opportunities for frequent meetings, exchanges, and knowledge development, and encourage the active participation of citizens, institutions, social enterprises, and the world of associationism.

14. Provide citizens and communities with all technologically advanced supports necessary and useful to the development of efficacious and efficient communication networks.

15. Through shared rules and initiatives, promote only decent working conditions for all; denounce any form of illegal exploitation and employment; support the social economy and make available to all citizens, also from a preventive perspective, services in support of choice and professional planning so that work will really be 'decent' for everybody.

16. Implement programs aimed to remove relational, bureaucratic, administrative, physical and environmental barriers.

17. Design and build beautiful, welcoming, accessible and eco-friendly schools, professional and service environments, work and leisure places.

18. Systematically use tools promoting culture, values and advocacy.

19. Emphasize, also in the areas of education, health, work and social participation, the personalization of relationships, the possibility to allow and encourage choice of treatments, cures and services.

20. Resort to job descriptions, 'protocols' and 'practices' that fit the stories of individuals, of groups and of contexts, and not vice versa, without drafting special rules specifically designed for this or that kind of people or difficulties.



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Section Three COMMITMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The signatories of this manifesto, as scholars and professionals, commit themselves to:

21. Reporting manifestly, and if necessary denouncing to the appropriate authorities, the presence of physical, ideological, cultural and administrative barriers that restrict access to and usability of services and contexts.

22. Finding allies (professionals, agencies, services, groups, and citizens) to continue to act with in favor of an increasingly widespread and high-quality inclusion.

23. Proposing and collaborating in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research projects; supporting the experimentation of innovative practices that can increase wellbeing and inclusion.

24. Permanently taking care of their training and continuing professional development in order to have increasingly sophisticated tools available and maintain high levels of professional motivation.

25. Making various contexts aware of their personal commitments to inclusion and the professional skills they are willing to make available to the community.

26. Publicly supporting any initiative aimed to foster solidarity, reciprocity, the presence of ethical and civic forms of economies, fair distribution of wealth, gift economy, green economy, altruism, generosity, inexpensiveness, and so on.

27. Safeguarding nature and the environment, promoting eco-friendly forms of development, also to the advantage of future generations.

28. Supporting with courage and determination the hopes and wishes of those who seek to increase their own self-determination and their desire to actively participate in community life.

29. Acting in favor of people and communities by reducing any type of barrier.

30. Promoting collective and community actions to enhance improvement, growth and innovation.

31. Instilling hope, resilience, prospects for the future in people and contexts.

32. Paying close attention to the stories and narratives of others, being aware that listening with empathy to them can generate new and co-constructed stories and narratives in favor of increasingly inclusive life contexts.

33. Becoming a 'sentinel' of inclusion, being vigilant... vigorously asserting that they are no longer prepared to accept those that tolerate intolerance, those that pit individuals one against the other maybe in name of the 'law of the strongest', of 'meritocracy', of abilities and skills they have, or of an unlikely and hardly sustainable unlimited development.

...and the way is open to 34... 35... 36... because reflection on inclusion does not end here, it is continually in the making!