

## Characteristics of a really alternative school (RAS)

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"I'm always afraid that what makes me wrong is right"  
Umberto Eco, *The strategy of illusion*

This article presents the minimum essential characteristics of a school which considers itself as really alternative. These range from understanding learning as a result of the direct interaction between parenting and education, but also extends to a critical questioning of the common characteristics of the education system such as compulsory attendance, segregation by age and gender, the existence of subjects, homework and assessments as well of the use of digital technologies. We also question the conventional notions of joy, learning and production as separate goals; our current societal understandings of community and culture, the lack of attention to the life histories and affective relationships of the individuals and the impacts of power dynamics and vertical decision making processes on learning environments. We emphasize that there are no real alternative schools. This paper propose a comprehensive re-evaluation of the school itself. We call for a deeper questioning of the “whys” and “what for” of education, and emphasize the role of two key elements into this discussion: family and community.

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## **Introduction**

Like any pyramidal structure, modern Western education system is sustained by its base: millions of children that are voluntarily handed by their parents to be assimilated to the system in a relationship based in mutual hopes. In one hand, the school institution receives and invests lots of money in the hopes to produce human beings tailored to the needs of production of consumer capitalism; in the other hand, parents hope that their children will fit into a highly controlled system in which human effort to produce capital is rewarded with money. The premise is that education is an investment, and what was paid for it will return multiplied as future wages, and profitability. This system has become an speculative business made of promises. In fact, its profits rely on the fact that these who sell education do not have to fulfill the promise of delivering a “better life” to their customers.

A critical reflection about learning and school, requires to be increasingly willing be confronted to deep and inescapable questions about our prevailing education paradigms. These include not only the formal education system, but also new forms of school who claim to be "alternative" but use the name without a thoughtful analysis or questioning of the real extent of what an *alternative school* can be. We propose that a critical reflection about an alternative school requires not only to break from traditional concepts, but also to lay out new approaches and understandings applicable to the traditional school system. This reflection should be oriented towards a deeper analysis of the direct relationship between education and the human being as a whole. When we talk about the need to transgress paradigms, we are reflecting about the need to redefine even what is currently known as “alternative school” and to frame it in to a new reflection, a more conscious reflection about what a really alternative model of education can tackle, encompass, recognize, embody and even reproduce. In this vein, we propose that the reflection and analysis on the characteristics of a really alternative school is a valid and relevant task.

## **What should be the characteristics of a really alternative school?**

We propose that for a school to consider itself as really alternative, and to contribute towards a transformative education that seeks to incorporate learning processes and strategies that respond to the current needs of our society, and create individuals with human quality it should have at least the following characteristics:

### **1. Attendance should not be mandatory**

A really alternative school (hereinafter RAS) does not require mandatory daily attendance whether in person or virtual. It is understood that learning occurs freely, so it can not be based on the obligation to attend, meet fixed schedules or school days. In other words, a RAS should encourage training for self-direction, self organization and self-discipline; and not for externally mediated direction and organization and discipline, the latter understood as the willingness to obey orders, even if they are given with apparent affection.

Enough studies show that learning occurs when self-motivated and voluntary interest, joy and satisfaction are present. Albert Bandura's (1982) social learning and Lev Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theories, indicate learning occurs in spaces that facilitate a dynamic interaction between the learner and its socio-cultural environment or context. Learning shouldn't be conditioned to any obligation, on the contrary the learner should be able to exercise its own autonomy not in a passive but in a very proactive way. The learner is not considered as an empty recipient that must be filled with information, but an individual with inherent internal learning capabilities. Their ability to learn goes beyond instruction and it can not be constrained to the classroom.

Fichte (1985), a German philosopher attributed to compulsory schooling the task of teaching everyone to obey orders and respect an organization, without considering human's permanent need to relate to learning. Due to formal schooling inclination towards control, human's inherent need to learn has been poorly considered and incorporated in our formal education system. Instead, the complexities of learning are constrained and presented outside time and space. However learning occurs naturally in the daily interactions with the immediate

environment and one of its main characteristics is its the ability to move between multiple and various scenarios (Noro, 2013).

Recent theories such as the theory of Swarm Intelligence are providing experimental evidence from a new and non human field of study which contribute to understand different aspects of the social dimensions of learning and support the idea that it is in the interactions between individuals where intelligence appears. According to Kennedy and Eberhart (2001) thinking processes are transformed by social interactions as in social environments exchange includes not only information but different sets of rules, non verbal messages and beliefs.

## **2. Day-to-day learning is intergenerational**

A RAS should be a space that facilitates a permanent day-to-day intergenerational encounter with no age or gender segregation. The age and gender differences between students and teachers provided by formal schools are not enough to provide the opportunity to interact with the diverse experiences that can be encountered in a non-segregated environment. We should strive for an education system that recognizes that there are multiple dimensions in a human being which are built through the acceptance and legitimacy of the other in our daily interactions; through the stimulation of spaces for living and sharing framed on mutual respect and collaboration (Dávila & Maturana 2006). When considering the sphere of being, it is unfounded and simplistic to appeal to controlled relationships between pairs, characterized by age or sex separation to further students social and relational skills since individuals live and learn in a relational multidimensionality.

Daily interaction between children of different ages allows for more complex and dynamic relationships, advancing the development of cognitive and leadership skills (Gray, 2013). It is only in the context of formal education where children are age segregated, contrary to what they experience in other daily contexts, this segregation curtails their innate ability of to learn, teach, share, live together and cooperate with each other (Laiz, 2012).

### **3. There are no subjects**

A RAS should have no subjects. School should be a permanent and daily transdisciplinary encounter with knowledge. Being a transdisciplinary encounter, one must understand school as a space in which knowledge is not organized into subjects or islands of knowledge, it shouldn't support division and fragmentation, or the existence of disciplines isolated from each other, on the contrary, it should have a truly transdisciplinary perspective of knowledge without breaking it up into subjects. The quest for transdisciplinarity should also be reflected in the diverse capabilities inherent to the faculty, which in no way is formed by professionals specialized in one field but in the contrary by individuals capable of seeing beyond the specific competencies categorized in specific areas of study.

Real life is a bountiful source of knowledge. The challenge is to erase the current boundaries between disciplines. Biology, anthropology, sociology, mathematics, science, all start from the real, everyday life of human beings. Life itself is the explicit possibility of disciplinary construction of knowledge.

The degree of development of a human being, can not be determined by the subjects in a curriculum, on the contrary, it is the degree of development, enthusiasm and motivations of an individual the one who determines the aspects of knowledge in which it wants to be engaged. It is not the subjects as domains of knowledge the ones who build it; it is the innate human need to know and understand the one who builds these domains and thus builds knowledge, which is itself fluid, transdisciplinary, based on human experience and inextricably linked to it.

The concept of transdisciplinarity can be better understood as an expression of a complex network of interactions, visible and hidden, acting concurrently and instantaneously on the social construction of reality, which is composed of multiple and pluriform events, defined but at the same time changing (Rubio, 2015). Considering the complexity of reality, Morin and Nicolescu (1994) and Nicolescu (1996), understand transdisciplinarity as a transversal way of relating to reality, a way on integrating the knowledge embedded into the disciplines in a way that makes possible to reach the capacity and competence to take into account all sides of a problem under examination. According to Humberto Maturana's (2001), *Biology of Education*, this is the basis

of the evolution of our species, the ability to configure various and different relationships in a continuously changing environment.

#### **4. Joy, lifelong learning and work**

A RAS should be able to encourage programs in which joy, learning and work are intertwined in everyday activities. Most people are accustomed to the idea that there is a specific place for learning, a different one for work, which are different to the places where we seek joy, happiness and pleasure. A RAS strives to stop fragmentation of these essential aspects of life.

Undoubtedly, before the Industrial Revolution of the XIX century which brought the institutionalization of schools and their recognition by the state, people learned activities or occupations by practicing and doing, without the necessary mediation of qualified teachers and outside the rigidity of a classroom. The educational experiences of this kind, which have a long historical background, are an example of the relationship between instruction learning and action. Our current education system has overshadowed the alternatives that lie away from officially recognized organizational structures, thus their positive potential in the formation of subjects and social transformation has been made invisible. The deliberate omission of these matters has produced a conceptual and theoretical lag, and as a result a critical analysis regarding the roots of traditional school systems and a thoughtful reflection about the possibilities for its transformation and alternative approaches and meanings has been marginalized and delayed (Chomsky, 2009).

A RAS should be able to demonstrate to the individuals that are part of its community that there are better ways to get the resources for their subsistence. It should strive to promote diverse forms of solidarity and community economy that do not reproduce common practices of market economy in which the sale of work and time is seen by families and communities as the only way to obtain resources. For this to happen, it must be clear that a RAS, in first instance, should stay away from the logic of profit that has historically served private interests, and has instrumentalized the discourse of alternative education for individual benefit; and secondly, it

should remain as an open space that builds up from collective, collaborative and communal efforts and away from privatization.

## **5. The fallacy of digital technologies**

A RAS that strives to human quality is not reproducing the deception that computational machines play an important part in solving human learning problems. Digital technologies with interactive communication, as non-interactive broadcast such as radio and television, are spaces or tools that can support learning, but they can not be prioritized over other spaces like trees, parks, mountains or the streets. Any conventional or unconventional context, mechanized or not, digital, virtual, wild or urban can be an important space for learning.

In a RAS digital technologies are not seen as the main contributors to solve the issue of quality of education and learning. As Ernesto Sabato, points out, technology and technique usefulness should be evaluated from human senses (Garcia & Jaramillo, 2012). One should ask to what extent technology is in service to external interests of submission and to what extent is being used as a tool to building autonomy and freedom? Is the use of technology supported and accompanied a more critical analysis in such a way that it can help build a sense of identity as well as knowledge?

It is necessary to question how far technology is helping us to be better human beings and to better understand who we are and our place in the world. In a direct and simple analysis we can say that information without context or without proper interpretation ends up confusing our understanding of the world, rather than enriching it (Prieto, 2011). Such 'proper interpretation' can only be measured by the philosophical, political and ethical scales that strengthen the human evolutionary process.

It is very curious that even though a little more than two centuries have passed since the French Revolution we are again at the same point, defining human rights. The reason may lie in the new changes in the modes of production which in turn have completely changed our social and cultural structures. While at the time of the first industrial revolution the machine needed the man, in the age of information, man's role should be redefined (Leopold, Ratcheva and Zahidi, 2016).

## **6. Free Validation of knowledge**

Human beings engaged in learning spaces of XXI century can travel freely through different forms of certification or validation of their knowledge: no curriculum, no grades, no homework needed. Anyone who considers himself knowledgeable in something, should be able to be certified in the subject, any one who believes that may be able to meet the requirements of any curricular structure should be able validate its knowledge. Learning processes are not linear and the school should not reproduce the idea that in order to know something it is necessary to comply with a linear sequence of tasks or exposure to certain contents.

Evaluation in a RAS can not be based on memorization, should be qualitative, and take into account the formative process in such a way that allows each individual involved to determine when is ready to validate its knowledge and to validate in front of the community its capacity, motivation and its appropriation of knowledge. This is not an exercise regulated by a standardized and predetermined curriculum.

The real problem about certification is that approaches knowledge in a memoristic way, privileging the answer to the detriment of the innate curiosity and eagerness to understand. Michio Kaku, a renowned American theoretical physicist reveals how practice oriented on mnemonics, answers and results, significantly affects curiosity and exploration (Kaku, 2011). With the introduction of scores and ratings, exploration of knowledge becomes a perpetual quest for short term magic formulas that summarize a path considered hard, defintory and static. Furthermore, Socratic thought -which favors a subjective and constructivist approach to knowledge- is undermined by a pervasive sophist praxis that gives a preeminent place to the “unique truths” as the ultimate foundation of learning and the traditional school system. In contrast to this, the construction of modern thought since Descartes, privileges doubt which is considered as the great foundation of learning, knowledge and wisdom (Bootes, Destito, Soria, Sztajnszrajber, & Wolfensohn, 2016). In other words we should not continue to privilege the answer over the question.

In a RAS there are no standardized assessments nor mandatory evaluations. Standardized assessments do not become a parameter to organize learning. There are assessments, but they are

voluntary and the individuals only apply to them whenever they want. There are no standardized, homogeneous or imposed tests. On the contrary, learning environments are intrinsically linked with assessments and certifications according to personal tastes, motivations and interests of each children. They are not homogenised in order to relate to those tests whether they are internal or required by education offices. Certifications and qualifications are configured as alienating element, as a badge of what is “right learning” regarding rhythm method and superficiality (Ornelas, 2000); moreover, they are designed with the direct intent to detect and sort out (according to the standards set by the guarantors of the order) those who are good, from those who are doing fair or poor, legitimizing a kind of social Darwinism decanting human beings in groups of first and second category (Rivas & Ruíz, 2003).

The encoded logic of this system is organized to generate perverse incentives to homogenization and standardization of trainees. Furthermore, it does not requires a free being, but someone obedient, submissive, and alienated, which reproduces social standards that emphasize what in name of social order is transformed into barbarism (Bourdieu & Passerno, 1998). It is accepted without giving rise to doubt, the premise of Hobbes, “man is a wolf to man” and needs to be educated, stilled and inserted in a servile society under the power of those who without being able to recognize his life story are quite interested to continue reproducing inequality, homogenization and neutering of culture as a way to subordination (Esposito, 2003).

It should be noted that although may not be desirable, in countries like Finland and Norway, the curriculum is being transformed into a series of general rules, and objectives, allowing schools to become increasingly autonomous in the way they are organizing teaching. We don't consider this entirely desirable because they don't question paradigms of success and achievement, related to what could be called labor slavery. A RAS is not geared to train people to supply jobs or more precisely, to train people with the aim of inserting them into the corporate business world and perform as creative slaves (García Olivo, 2016a).

Conventional schools, including universities, are threatening and destroying creativity. What we can take from the Finnish phenomenon is how easily we can fall into the trap of creating more flexible schools in order to produce more creative individuals that will also be obedient and indoctrinated humans, who will follow and wish a slave job in the capitalist

corporate or capitalist state world -referring to the language used by Ivan Illich in *Energy and Equity* (2007). In contrast, a RAS should worry about building alternatives to both state and corporate capitalism. Education must have the power to be really critical in order to be transformative. A RAS has the conditions to accompany individuals that simultaneously integrate joy, learning and collective work with cooperation and solidarity, to detriment of the individualistic and servile logic of wage labor.

## **7. Learning is self-organized**

Children, as human beings, learn from the interaction with their environment, but such interaction needs to be free, spontaneous, and passionate to provide them with strength and to reinforce their sense of place in the world. Free play, and a really free relationship with the learning environment encourages them to be more clever, insightful, strong, happy and secure in their relationship with the other it gives them a sense of otherness and empathy (Lacayo & Coello, 1992).

Several scholars see play as a learning engine, namely, Sutton-Smith (1978), Flinchun (1988), Zapata (1990), Hetzer (1992) and Meneses & Monge (2001), among others. They associate learning with autonomy, recreation and knowledge appropriation. Thus a RAS recognizes and value children's need for autonomous learning, their self-taught abilities and innate curiosity to approach knowledge. A RAS questions the counselor-director role of the teacher and lays out the possibility of raising quality guidelines that bring children closer to knowledge, education and wisdom as opposite to the traditional notions that consider children as passive recipients of information lacking the capacity to contribute in their own training.

Works such as the one of José Rafael Toro (2004) and Garcia, Jaramillo & Ramirez (2012) have advocated in favor of alternative processes and autonomous learning. Paraphrasing García (2010, p. 14) any initiative of alternative education should consider learning as the guiding concept of educational processes. For him, learning and education can be developed without the institution, without the legitimization of any type of organized schooling, and no directive instruction. It can be based on various and multiple climates, places, contexts,

incentives, space-time possibilities and relationships of real affection which ignite interests and individual's own ways of approaching knowledge and knowing.

In a RAS there is no directive action, no teaching, no instruction. Learning processes are generated through the individual's own initiative which joins other particular initiatives and produce unique collaborative learning experiences. This means that the traditional role of the teacher disappears. A RAS is not interested in reproducing new modern pedagogies or what Garcia Olivo (2016b) calls "white pedagogies", which pretend to stimulate children autonomy and creativity, but continue to support structures based on obedience and domination in order to create creative but obedient workers.

In a RAS there is no guide. The teacher -to use a name that can be understood- is not a teacher in the traditional way, its role is to try to accompany and encourage the need, the desire and interest in learning of each children. Contrary to what is reproduced by the traditional school system, people learn without the need for instruction as long as they are surrounded by learning environments in which affection is created, exchanged and shared affective. This type of learning is inextricably linked to autonomy and freedom (Farenga, 2016).

## **8. Involvement of family members**

In a RAS moms, dads -moms especially, considering the work of Rodrigañes (1995) on maternal accompaniment during childhood- as well as family and community caregivers, should be actively involved in daily activities. The purpose of this is to build a real and solid emotional bond. Rather than conditioning the child to depend on the mother or father their presence and practice of respectful parenting ensures a relationship of interdependence, trust and affection that gives children, elements that allow them to be autonomous (García, 2014). A RAS strives to constantly cohere not to split or rift parenting and upbringing from education. It should be understood that mothers and fathers play an important role in the education of their children and to address their needs and rights should be a priority for them (Miller, 1997).

In a RAS, besides to those who professionally guide learning processes and experiences, people who are part of the family, emotional or social context of children are involved in daily activities. Mothers, fathers or other adults who are interested in participating in learning, are part

of the exchange of real, everyday experiences with them. Every day, the school gates are open for those adults, so they can safely observe and act in the daily learning process. Beyond the family involvement in school, the principle that family is the first learning environment of children and thus should be key guides in teaching and learning processes, should be applied permanently.

## **9. Relationship with the territory**

In a RAS children will have permanent and daily relations with the territorial reality of their neighborhood or community; and spaces and opportunities to reflect and discuss on the explicit needs of the territory or the geographic place in which is located. A RAS is concerned about physical proximity to the family, about reducing the distance of the displacements between the school and the family. There is a constant and intense interaction, that brings closer this type of school both to the community and to the legitimate notions of a collective state. Education should have an expanded spirit of the social environment (Maclaren, 2010).

Present-day currents of institutionalism, such as the works of Nobel laureate in economics in 2009, Elinor Ostrom, as well as political science, history (Evans, Rueschemeyer, & Skocpol, 1986), sociology (March & Olsen, 1987) and the public economy (Ostrom, 1990), highlight the role of self-organization and collective self-management in community settings to further individual autonomy.

The work of Luis Fernando Ramírez Barrero former program director of Community Action of Bogotá district between 1995 and 1998, shows how supporting community work and organization in local contexts can transform individuals and communities. Projects like these are a good example of how communities can create initiatives that are more cooperative, inclusive, participatory, legitimate, democratic and cost effective when compared with traditional operating mechanisms for local development Roth (2014). The article "Stairways to Heaven" by Francisco Celis (1997) shows how the community organizations promoted by Ramirez although operating in marginal contexts, were able to manage resources even better than those from formal contractors hired with public budget and administered by government officials.

Building autonomous human beings who are really able to determine their degree of participation and its role in society, is contrary to the current proposals of the traditional school system. A RAS should offer children every opportunity to freely decide the kind of society which they desire to be involved and how to participate. That is, the process of inculturation should be modulated by the individual and its interdependent relationships with the community and not by the hegemonic paradigms of society.

## **10. Diversity**

A RAS is able to integrate a students coming from very diverse backgrounds. Money can not be the filter, can not be the mechanism of exclusion of people who could contribute to learning environments by bringing more wealth in terms of cultural diversity and eagerness for knowledge. A multicultural school, should be understood as the sum of different people with diverse historic, socioeconomic and cultural characteristics; which allows for an intercultural dialogue and education. This type of approach recognizes that the close interaction with individuals with different cultural values facilitates deep encounters and builds up an inclusive culture that recognizes the importance of diversity (Leiva, 2013). Furthermore, intentional efforts for multiculturalism, are not only important because they bring new possibilities but contribute to advance intercultural education and create spaces for acceptance and openness, facilitating collective integration within the community and for the community (Banks, 2008).

## **11. Consciousness and Self Awareness**

A key factor in a real educational and learning encounter, an encounter of quality is that the adults that guide children's learning process should be human beings who have worked with themselves in a conscious intense and thoughtful way. They should also be individuals who have a good level of mental, physical, emotional and economic health. They should not obliged to comply with a work schedule as this reproduces the perpetuated tradition of buying the time and energy of a human being that in principle should be free. This is important because allows to unveiled in detail the mental, emotional and physical health of the teachers. A thoughtful

consideration of the wellbeing of school teachers could potentially help us to better understand many of the weakness in terms of quality of education in our countries (Esteve, 2005).

A RAS should be attentive and willing to permanently review the life stories of the people involved, to understand their qualities and strengths but also their unmet needs, particularly the ones of the adults involved. Following the psychotherapist Alice Miller (1990), in order to understand life stories it is necessary to be willing to look deeply into childhood experiences and lost memories, to track the roots of the of unhealthy emotional patterns and their consequences on the self. Unfortunately, the girl and the boy, whose needs are invisibilized for decades, will become an adult who feels unseen and relegated to patterns of obedience, submission and emptiness in the theatricality of fatherhood and motherhood. Inside the longing for affection, the girl or boy can draw a world of colors that hides the darkness of the repression or abandonment to which may have been exposed. To be a mother, father or a teacher one should have to be willing to also confront and repair the past, and to understand that without recognizing the imperfections of our own upbringing we can not provide a healthy one to children. When abandonment and neglect are justified and children are obligated to forgive and forget they become adults that have nothing to deliver but heartbreak and emotional deprivation to infants and children who are thus loved superficially.

It is complex and difficult to accept that we must question our own parenting , in order to start to build a better relationship with our daughters and sons. The task when approaching the personal stories of adults who interact and engage emotionally with children and youth is to also face their own personal stories, which may include abandonment, neglect, abuse, guilt or lack of affection in different gradualidades. These stories configure the present way mothers and fathers behave and influence their role as a caregivers, who ideally should allow the learner to approach knowledge in a free, autonomous and self-organized way.

We must recognize that adult's fears shape the way it relates to its environment and it is predominantly regulated by the treatment received during childhood, even if is not consciously recalled (possibly by trauma). This awareness is essential so mothers, fathers, teachers and adults who interact with learners can reinvent a healthy, sensible, courageous and wise ways to understand the difference and diversity inherent to children, who otherwise would become

helpless victims of who mostly forget their past in order to survive. To look at the past without contempt and work with emotional awareness is a permanent invitation to see children as free, without sin, without the seed of evil. We should ask ourselves about the ontological roots of our society's sickening need for control, obedience, and order and the way it is reproduced upon the smaller and more fragile individuals. This would force us to recognize a past that is hidden and painful, but is also a source of wealth in terms of life lessons that have the potential to make us better a versions of ourselves.

## **12. Co-government**

A RAS is obliged to transgress the usual hierarchical forms of school government, including the ones of the so called alternative schools. That is, a RAS should strive for and reach real rather than vague processes of co-government. It should move away from legitimizing the figure of a founder or a director, privileging subtle vertical hierarchical decisions which conceal the authoritarianism of directors or founders of school.

This has to do with the evidence of recurrent failures in terms of addressing inequality and facing ethical concerns, in the way political participation is organized in our society and its roots on unequal power structures. We are witnessing an era of post-democracy (Crouch, 2004) in which the democratic values of participation and equality have deteriorated. It has become a system of participation designed to make believe minorities that their voice has a value, when decisions are actually managed by a powerful minority (Moscovici, 1996). School governance in a RAS should be built on permanent assembly without compulsory attendance, giving voice to those who want to be heard and included in decisions taken collectively in permanent and concerted dialogue without a rush for results or a programmed deliberation time. In the same way such a school also seeks to include everyone in decision making, strives to propose and implement scenarios of conversation which bring individuals closer in order to learn collectively, consolidate efforts to improve inclusion and to understand the invaluable wealth found in the difference and diverse ways of thinking.

### **13. The relationship of human beings involved**

A very important issue that needs to be considered when we think about education quality is the nature of the relations between individuals who share learning spaces. Alain Touraine in his book, *Critique of Modernity* (1994) indicates that one of the main problems, perhaps the main problem of traditional schools is that they are not able to produce or move affection.

For a positive learning environment to develop, these relationships need to be healthy and caring relationships. A relationship that doesn't reproduce practices of domination-submission. People involved must be really interested and willing to respect and promote the autonomy of each human being. In A RAS no adult would end up imposing its intention in the shared space-time to others through sophisticated and restricted forms of domination. In a RAS is understood that these perversions that seek the homogenization of the school project severe and sterilize individual autonomy of human beings who want to learn something different or at a different pace from what the majority wants.

### **14. Parenting and education can not be separated**

A RAS does not legitimate the abandonment made by parents to their children. On the contrary, a RAS recognizes that parenting and education cannot be split from one another, or put into a different place inside home dynamics. On behalf of the desire of money and discipline (rigid, neurotic and psychotic) too many barbarisms and abuses are committed against children and youth. It is important to be able to recognize, integrate and modify these behaviors in order to think about real education. Otherwise it is hypocritical to say that we want to educate and rather accept that what we crave is to train and indoctrinate.

A RAS is seriously concerned with recognizing the humiliations experienced by the adults who are involved in children education. Adult understood as mother, father, teacher or institutional staff that relates to the education of children and youth. These adult must be able overcome their own experiences and explore the fears, traumas, and pain they suffered in their childhood and have become a pattern in their lives. This is a huge task, and it can take years to recognize oneself as victim of abuse or neglect, or recognize that a gloomy or fearful child is merely product of the treatment and the example of mother and father. A clear intention to accept

and understanding emotions without suppressing them is necessary to start to admit the inherent mistakes and flaws in our parenting style and its relationship with our own upbringing and education. By doing this we may be able to relate to each other with all the openness generosity and honesty possible.

### **Conclusion: can there be a really alternative school?**

No educational system that pretends to be coherent with basic human principles can rule out any of the above mentioned points. In a sense, this exercise is a minimum inventory of humanity. One of the key points to highlight as a conclusion is that the search for a really alternative school reveals a scenario in which the old institutions try to hide the truth of the present situation of humanity. A humanity economically tied to consumption, lovingly attached to family and economic structures that perpetuate ideas of property and domination and intellectually stranded on ideologies. On the left as on the right, the current hypocrisy lies in justifying the inability to generate change from the same forms and rules that need to be changed. One needs to be skeptical, not pessimistic, when confronted with the current organizational form of schools that call themselves alternative. As long as this hypocrisy is maintained it is impossible for all these features to be present in a school. Not even the most alternative, revolutionary and innovative of the schools ceases to be that: a school.

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