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EUROPEAN MASTER'S DEGREE
IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATISATION

Listening as a first step to real democracy

A case study in two Padua schools

L'ASCOLTO :



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Abstract

This research is a study using qualitative research through focus groups, with the aim of investigating the act of listening as a different process to the act of hearing using a democratic method in two different schools in the city of Padua in Italy.

The aim is to ascertain:

- a.** Whether the children in the study, who are aged between 7 and 12 years, are
 - i. being listened to by parents, teachers friends and others
 - ii. how these children are listening to others and
 - iii. where these conversations take place.

- b.** How they can be prepared to develop their views as participatory citizens and how they can take part in the democratic process.

These two acts of listening and being listened to, are fundamental in the process of human communication, since they are key elements in promoting dialogue and building coexistence. Understanding this information exchange in which human values are constructed is the basis for Democracy as we know it and as they are expressed and protected under the umbrella of Human Rights.

This work assumes that democracy is not only a political system, but a conception of life; a form of human organisation that expresses the values which are necessary for a fair, equal and multicultural society, where the rights of human beings are respected. In light of the results, this study offers some suggestions for first steps towards improving listening to children and young people in schools and their participation in democratic processes.

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