

## The Montessori theory in the “No Schoolbag” model. Formativity of materials and of the educational environment

**Adriana Schiedi**

University of Bari “Aldo Moro”

### Abstract

The aim of this contribution is to show the “outdated” relevance of Montessori pedagogy in the “No Schoolbag” (*Senza Zaino*, or “SZ”) model. Adopting some fundamental elements of Montessori’s activism, this model advocates a school in the fullest meaning of *Scholè*, as a place for dialogue, development and work, *otium* and *negotium*, commitment to study and the pleasure of knowledge, where the discipline of freedom, as applied to experience and filtered by emotions, is indispensable. In doing so, it rejects the idea of school being based on educational intellectualism. Rather it is an indirect educational path in which the experience of reality, rather than empty words, shapes the child’s mind, developing an inner order that originates from its external counterpart, with the result that the child feels like an active participant, belonging to a welcoming, hospitable and motivating community. Drawing on the Montessori theory, the “No Schoolbag” model positions itself as a pedagogy of our time, but endowed with an ancient, rigorous, inclusive, and supportive heart.

Obiettivo del presente contributo è mostrare l’inattuale attualità della pedagogia montessoriana nel modello “Senza Zaino”. Riprendendo alcuni elementi fondamentali dell’attivismo montessoriano, questo modello auspica un ritorno a una scuola intesa nel suo significato più pieno di *Scholè*, come spazio dialogico di formazione e lavoro, *otium* e *negotium*, impegno nello studio e piacere della conoscenza, in cui indispensabile è la disciplina della libertà applicata all’esperienza e filtrata dalle emozioni. Così facendo esso rifiuta un’idea di scuola fondata sull’intellettualismo educativo: è la via indiretta dell’educazione che passa attraverso l’esperienza della realtà e non la parola vuota a dare forma alla mente del bambino, a sviluppare un ordine interiore partendo da quello esteriore, a farlo sentire soggetto agente, parte di una comunità accogliente, ospitale, motivante. Facendo tesoro della teoria montessoriana, il modello Senza Zaino si pone come pedagogia del nostro tempo ma con un cuore antico, rigoroso, inclusivo, solidale.

**Keywords:** pedagogy; innovation; school; educational environment

**Parole chiave:** pedagogia; innovazione; scuola; ambiente educativo

Adriana Schiedi – *The Montessori theory in the “No Schoolbag” model. Formativity of materials and of the educational environment*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1970-2221/12199>

## 1. The SZ model: genesis and epistemological aspects

Born in Italy in 1998 from an intuition of Marco Orsi the SZ model officially saw the light in 2006, when a renewed educational model emerged in primary and nursery schools. In this new perspective, schools must become more welcoming and inclusive, while preserving strong links with tradition. Such tradition is however revisited through a dialectic relationship with theories and models that are apparently distant in the epistemological system but can be rethought according to a pedagogical *koinè* in which it is possible to trace lines of continuity with Montessori's activism.

The SZ model was developed through a series of initiatives, the first of which was the “Day of Responsibility” organized in Lucca in 1998 at the Primary School Teaching District n. 7 of which Orsi was Head. The purpose of this initiative, which involved other Institutes of the Lucca Province, was to launch an experiment in which schools were run by the learners, in order to show that children, in appropriately structured space and with suitable materials, were able to organize themselves responsibly, without the teachers' intervention.

The proposal received a warm welcome and as early as in 2000 it was followed by another project called “An Open Window”, involving five primary schools in the province of Lucca. These two initiatives marked the beginning of a phase of renewal which has involved an increasing number of Institutes since then.

Despite the initial enthusiasm, however, the project had to overcome several difficulties: first, the definition of a theoretical framework and of a teacher training methodology, in addition to economic problems. It was only when the Regional Institute for Educational Research of Tuscany (IRRE Toscana) and the Municipality of Lucca decided to support it that the program began to have greater success. In 2002 Orsi published *Educate for responsibility in globalisation* in which he set out some of the principles of the SZ model, which he would describe more fully in a subsequent work. As highlighted by its founder, the SZ model arises from the need to modernize the work environment, the school organization and especially the classroom space. On closer inspection, this does not mean simply that greater attention is paid to the external environment, since the external environment itself becomes a tool to deeply change the notion of education and of the teaching-learning processes from the inside, by promoting an increasingly participatory role for the learners. The very definition of the model is the clearest evidence of a paradigm shift. It takes its name from a symbolic gesture, which consists in eliminating the schoolbag from the pupils' materials. According to Orsi, the schoolbag is a heavy and unnecessary burden, which evokes difficulties and obstacles for the learners and their families. The school bag immediately evokes the idea of carrying heavy books, separate exercise-books for different school subjects, heaps of often useless paper and reflects the idea of a rigidly structured, old-fashioned, merely factual education which, as it stands, is immediately inhospitable. He says:

«We took a simple and obvious object like the schoolbag and we tried to ask ourselves: why is it used to go to school? Why does a bank employee only carry a lightweight briefcase? Why, on the other hand, is the schoolbag so heavy that it worries parents and doctors? Is the fact that schools are the only organizations that use this tool meaningful per se, or is this such a marginal aspect that it does not deserve our attention?» (Orsi, 2016, p. 29).

These considerations lead him to believe that the implicit message of inhospitality of the schoolbag should be replaced with the image of an inclusive, global school-community, which should be based on responsibility. In 2002 the educational innovation project of a school with no schoolbag was officially launched. But the most significant historical and epistemological moment came in 2006 with the publication of *To school with no schoolbag* (Orsi, 2016) in which the theoretical framework of the SZ model was outlined and the Global Curriculum Approach was theorized. The model is based on four pedagogical principles: the global character (the entirety) of the person, the global character of knowledge, global integration of differences and the global character of the environment, where “global” means all-inclusive and comprehensive in nature.

At the epistemological level, the Global Approach emphasizes the value of experience and learning through the senses: the stimuli coming from the outside world provide interdisciplinary learning opportunities that the teacher should use with the awareness that each child has his or her own needs, interests, modalities and pace of learning.

In the Montessori way, the SZ educational proposal is child-centred and focuses on the child's independence and autonomy (Orsi, 2017). The respect for the person's individuality in the SZ model is always combined with a drive towards others, so that the individual can develop solidarity values (Oliverio, 2005), a sense of belonging and learn to feel a member of a community. To this end, everything, not only the teaching activities, methodology and curricula, but also the organization of the classroom environment must reflect a school that is a hospitable and yet responsible community. Not surprisingly, hospitality, responsibility and community are the three fundamental pillars of Orsi's educational approach, which includes not only teaching and learning, but also exploration and investigation. By doing so, the teacher supports the children's personal growth and guides them in the creation of objects that will be shown outside. A sense of community is acquired through action and experience, but also by sharing common goals during the implementation of projects. Each project is based on the activities that children carry out both individually and together, to offer their contribution at a higher level. Furthermore, the community is a social and organizational structure with stable bonds that arise from emotional involvement and shared experience. Working side by side boys and girls experience enthusiasm, joy, hope, fatigue, suffering and this brings about a transition in the class - from a mere aggregation of individuals who have not chosen to belong to that particular group, to a community in which single individuals no longer work individually to achieve a subjective result, but to pursue a shared purpose. In the SZ class everyone takes care of themselves and of others, they accept each other unconditionally with their own limitations and strengths. Recognizing others is equivalent to rehabilitating diversity as a way to accept that everyone has equal rights and opportunities. The sense of belonging is developed through empathic listening and supportive help. The latter is achieved not through empty rhetoric, but through a realistic education, which, as Montessori herself (1950) highlighted, has the advantage of allowing children to observe the phenomena of exclusion, respect, tolerance, integration, inclusion, with their causes and effects, leaving them as free as possible to decide how to behave, what attitude to take towards reality, or how to embrace responsible learning and develop a mature and responsible personality, not banal or predictable, but true and empathetic. If the learner is to feel part of a whole (a class), such class should not be too large. It has been shown that in large classes learners struggle to see themselves

as part of a community. The feeling of belonging promotes a sense of responsibility. This does not arise from a model of dependence, based on control and fear and perpetrated by the traditional classroom arrangement. Instead, in the responsibility model, learning is the direct consequence of the learners' autonomous activity, and of their ability to understand by themselves the meaning of what is presented to them, by using their best cognitive and affective skills. Responsibility is also promoted by assigning tasks, including class management ones, to the children, and by letting them decide which activity to carry out and how.

In SZ classes action plays a key role as a way for the children to understand and internalize contents and concepts, which they will be able to use in new and broader contexts. In this perspective one of Montessori's lessons is clear: the refusal of an educational model in which words take the place of things and, in particular, one in which the teacher's words take the place of the child's actions. Such a school suffers from "didactic dematerialization" and from an intellectualism that produces only passive listening. According to Montessori, only practical work and experience help young people develop a mature personality (Montessori, 2017; Regni, 2006). The child has an instinct to play but also to work, and the tasks assigned by the teacher are commitments for the children to complete with obedience, industriousness, dedication and fidelity to instructions. A sensory education "expands" the child's discriminative skills, heightens perception, and fosters the ability to understand the world and its various moral, aesthetic, social and spiritual aspects (Montessori, 1993; Cives, 2008; De Giorgi, 2013). What the child experiences in the Montessori environment, in other words, creates the conditions for "emotional intelligence" and empathic competence, in essence, for the construction of a rich personality, on an emotional and spiritual levels (Montessori, 1996, p. 6). Life at school thus becomes an opportunity to cultivate an inner discipline. It makes one sensitive, tolerant and responsible for the common good. This system of responsibility is connected to the "Instructions for use" method, i.e. the definition of behaviours that help the learner understand the roles of individuals, both in class and at school.

Finally, responsibility finds two faithful allies in freedom and autonomy. The first allows children to express their personality. For this reason SZ classrooms are designed and equipped in a child-centred fashion, so as to satisfy children's needs to express themselves in different ways and with different materials. Autonomy, on the other hand, is the freedom to act and the ability to manage oneself. Last, but not least, is the value of hospitality, which is closely linked to care. It manifests itself both through the organization of the environment and through a variety of teaching approaches and strategies, based on the interests and predispositions of the children, so that various types of intelligence can be valued. Making the classroom hospitable serves to create a welcoming atmosphere for all participants, so that they can feel accepted in the community regardless of their cultural, linguistic and personality differences.

Another fundamental feature of the SZ model is *cooperative learning*, a teaching strategy of working in groups to carry out various activities in turn, so as to develop a sense of collaboration and solidarity, based on mutual help and responsibility towards others. Each work proposed by the teacher will always be part of a broader project that involves single individuals within a common horizon.

The formalization of the method of the Global Curriculum Approach allowed Orsi and the educators involved in the SZ project to launch the first actions to disseminate the project activities. In 2006 the first conferences

and training courses were also organized. Among various initiatives, a meeting organized in Lucca on 3-4 March entitled “The school we’ve always dreamed of” was especially important. Driven by enthusiasm, the interest in the SZ model began to grow exponentially, with supporters of the network increasing every year. The Promoting Group, led by the National Head of the SZ Schools Network, Daniela Pampaloni, expanded to become the National Directorate, i.e., the body that developed the Network of the SZ Movement, which today includes 286 institutes scattered throughout Italy.

Another significant step in the dissemination of this model came in 2009 with a study conducted by the University of Florence on the results of the SZ model in Tuscany. The study results were presented in a book by Menesini, Pinto and Nocentini (2014) entitled *Learning and social skills in school. A psychological approach to evaluation and experimentation* and published by Carocci. This was an important event for primary school educators and university researchers to meet and exchange opinions.

In addition, the SZ model benefited from a European and international exchange, involving managers and teachers, and visits to special Italian schools, such as Steiner and Montessori schools. The educational approach proposed by Orsi, after all, bears many of the suggestions coming from these educational theories in its DNA. In addition, “The Global Curriculum Approach” was published in 2013 in order to provide indications and help schools to keep faith with the principles and practices of SZ. It stressed that formative planning is a key aspect in the teaching method. It is not just the teachers, but also the pupils that must contribute to designing the community, by establishing the rules, procedures and activities that are needed to work together. By reversing the old Gentile approach (where knowledge was under the exclusive control of the teacher), Orsi postulates that instead of belonging solely to the individual teacher, innovation must become shared knowledge, which has to be consolidated through appropriate documentation activities.

The construction of this “school-community” model, as stated in the Guidelines (Barghini, 2013), is based on five fundamental steps, which should not be seen as consecutive phases, but rather as integrated ones:

1. organize classroom space, acquiring suitable teaching tools and technologies;
2. organize the class as a community;
3. plan, evaluate and organize teaching activities;
4. manage the “school-community” within the institute/community network;
5. involve parents, open up at a local level.

The path starts from the first step and then moves on to the next, while recognizing the interconnections between each step and the others. The principles of hospitality and responsibility lay the basis for another type of learning: participating in and being part of a community.

## **2. The theoretical underpinning of the SZ model in the history of pedagogical thinking and in Montessori pedagogy**

What inspired Orsi in developing his SZ model was undoubtedly the virtuous example of the Finnish school, which has earned it a leading position in the OECD-PISA surveys for years. It was also, however, a wealth of pedagogical experiences attributable to the theories of great authors of the past, such as Bruner, Vygotskij,

Gardner, Sternberg, Pestalozzi, Rousseau, Dewey, Freinet, Cousinet, Steiner and especially Montessori, whose contribution today is often not fully recognized in Italy. Orsi wrote:

«It is very easy to agree with the theories of the great authors of psychology and pedagogy, often mentioned in the Educational Offer Plans of today's schools, but putting them into practice is another matter. The No Schoolbag model was created with the ambition to turn what is often simply declaimed [that is to say, change] into a reality» (Orsi, 2013, p. 55),

In the debate on the renewal of Italian school, authors such as Montessori and Pizzigoni are often mentioned, as they contributed to show the central role of practical experience and sensory education in cognitive development with their reflections and experiments. The importance of learning through practice was re-affirmed by other scholars, such as Kerschensteiner and Pestalozzi, who theorized the “school of work”, in which manual skills have a twofold purpose: making learning more effective and preparing the child for a profession. The principles and categories identified in the pedagogies of these authors underpin Orsi's work on not a new, but a renewed idea of school.

Many similarities can be found between the educational model proposed and tested by Montessori in the first half of the twentieth century and the Global Curriculum Approach, community dynamics and the principle of experientiality of the SZ approach.

In contrast with a traditional, mechanical, individualistic, and highly regimented school model, Montessori proposed an innovative pedagogy, in which learning was created through practice and experience and above all, through free initiative, shared commitment, and motivation. The SZ model draws on Montessori's *lectio* to relaunch the idea of a school in the fullest meaning of *Scholè*: a place for dialogue, training and work, *otium* and *negotium*, commitment to study and the pleasure of knowledge, interest in art, discovery, play, nature, and relationships.

The innovative character of the No Schoolbag model lies precisely in its attempt to revitalize the “outdated” idea of a school that provides a “world of life”, a place where significant needs and opportunities exist for those who experience it from within; not closed and final, but open to an on-going dialogue with formative opportunities outside of it.

Like the Montessori school, the No Schoolbag model calls for a restructuring not only of the educational environment, but also of the practices to be implemented in it. Practices and methods are no longer designed to serve an empty and abstract verbalism, but used to favour experience, learning through observation, and allowing the children to assess the world by themselves: because only those who experiment are able to transform knowledge into authentic knowledge. The attention to these principles and the desire to involve families in the planning of the school community show Orsi's desire to recover Montessori's but also Pizzigoni's pedagogical lessons.

«For me, a new school is one that has as much space as the world; it has limits, just like life ... And since life is analysis and construction, a new school is one that experiments and works. For me, a new school is,



fundamentally, concerned with the hygiene of the body and the hygiene of the spirit; one that honours the book and the broom, the pen and the spade. Sky, earth, water: everything and everywhere is school! » (Pizzigoni, 1956, p. 293).

In this dimension of learning and education, study and work, freedom is fundamental, as a necessary condition for the teacher to promote the physiological and psychic development of the child through guided education. This school model starts from overcoming any prejudice on the child and develops into an analysis of the child's most intimate needs, which have to be matched with adequate intervention. The child should not be forced into but guided towards the development or maturation of new skills, such as reading writing, and counting. Instead of being burdened with the theoretical and mnemonic work that is typical of a methodology without practice, the children act in a simple and free manner, and acquire not only new concepts but also the underlying meaning of things.

The background to this didactic approach is an educational anthropology and an idea of the child very close to that outlined by Montessori with the concept of “absorbing mind”. The child learns in an individualized and multidisciplinary way: what interests one child does not necessarily interest another child; learning involves different levels and multiple dimensions (cognitive, spiritual, sensorial). The child's unschooled mind is an intuitive mind that must be nourished and strengthened by showing the child the progress of science, through experimentation. Experience is the category that allows the child to access knowledge without prejudice, abstractions or false beliefs, but only with the curiosity to observe and obtain evidence from the analysis of reality. In experiencing objects and activities, the child, according to Montessori, and to Orsi as well, develops not the greed to possess but the desire to learn, love and serve. The latter being the «sublimation of the will into obedience, [...] which Montessori calls the “discipline of freedom”. An impressive discipline, that comes not from servitude but from lordship, the proud obedience of those who have a sense of respect for what they are doing: order and discipline combined with spontaneity» (Regni, 2007, p. 220).

How can the child activate this learning process? According to the procedure described by Montessori and also found in Orsi, this can be done by means of:

«an indirect way that includes setting up a structured environment, where the child is offered materials and activities aimed not only to offer stimuli to the child but also to respond to the child's needs. [...] However, this is possible only if the adults act not as the builders, but as the child's collaborators. Such indirect way must be based upon experience, not words: culture is not acquired by listening to words, but by virtue of experience in the environment» (Ivi, p. 179).

Through the exercise of reason, experience will shape the child's mind and will promote reflection, self-reflection, and the idea of an inner order, understood «as an act of the mind and will that are being formed [...] also thanks to the order of the environment. Order is structure, made up of distinctions, relations, and relationships, which make it possible to recognize the interdependence between the elements in a given reality» (Ivi, p. 126). Hence, the teacher's educational task, which consists in helping the child to structure him or herself and develop an internal order by starting from the external one.

### 3. The current outdatedness of Montessori pedagogy in the "SZ" model

While Montessori pedagogy has been successfully adopted in Holland and in Anglo-Saxon countries, in Italy it has gone through mixed fortunes: from Gentile to Bottai, to Lombardo Radice, the history of education has been marked by wavering feelings towards Montessori and the scientific approach of her method: love, passion, infatuation and even hostility. Only in 1997, several years after her death, did Mauro Laeng (1997) call for a return to an attentive, rigorous and rational pedagogy, the expression of a "cosmic" education, harmonious and intuitive like Montessori's. Formally, this has never happened; however, we cannot underestimate Montessori's influence on the pedagogy of Italian schools.

The strength of the SZ model consists, in fact, in its ability to harmoniously link two realities, the past and the present, as well as to make the outdated up-to-date and re-establish the relevance of a message that has lost momentum over time, not so much theoretically as from the point of view of its feasibility. Pedagogy has an unavoidable historical dimension, on which the scientific validity and relevance of its educational proposal depend. In the pedagogical debate of recent years, the relevance of Montessori education to the current times and our inability to fully understand its depth, rigor and greatness have been stressed several times, as if to underline its universality and its imperishable nature, beyond fashions, eras, and history.

As regards the contemporaneity of the Montessori proposal, in a different perspective, R. Regni (2007) wrote:

«Rather than questioning the relevance of Montessori's works today, I would speak more properly of a particular "non-relevance" of her ideas. In relation to Montessori, we are the ones who belong to our times. In other words, it is the current educational culture that can no longer bear the depth and rigour, the brightness and evidence of a radicalism that has become unsustainable. [...] Montessori belongs to our times without being fashionable. Following Montessori is fulfilling Schiller's invitation: live with your century but don't be its creature; do for your contemporaries what they need, not what they praise. Great authors make us attentive to our times and inattentive to fashions. This is the case with Montessori. She is present in our time without being conditioned by it, looking at reality from the top of a great theory, in the heart of the current times without losing an unyielding originality. Montessori is capable of restoring the education of our time to the time that is ours» (p. 10).

Now, while recognizing the extraordinary character of the Montessori pedagogy, made even more unique in the history of pedagogical thinking by the direct experience of its founder, one cannot fail to note the limits of its total and, therefore, ahistoricized acceptance. While Montessori's proposal should be preserved and used as a source of inspiration in today's debate on education to promote good practices in schools, it is necessary to compare past and present and update its originality by historicizing it, rather than merely re-proposing it or perpetuating it *sic et simpliciter* (*Ibidem*). Acone, paraphrasing Hegel, argues that pedagogical reflection is «time learned with thinking *sub specie educationis*» (Acone, 2014, p. 34). However, if the value of Montessori thinking is to be recognised and accepted as a bet on man's educability, it must be nourished by history. Therefore, in addition to being scientifically founded, Montessori's thinking will have to start from the historical perspective of the learners, or rather from the historical reality in which they live, in order to develop relevant educational



theories and practices. There will therefore be a pedagogy for each historical period (Pagano, 2018, p. 37). The one proposed by the SZ model is among those that intend to preserve the richness of Montessori's research heritage, overcoming the limits that have hindered its success in her country and putting it at the service of our school system and our childhood. This must be done while keeping into account that today both school models and childhood are different from those that inspired Montessori's method.

So, what remains in the SZ model when these conditions vary? Probably the positive idea of childhood, the method seen as a lens to observe the child and to experience education but, above all, the idea of a welcoming, hospitable and motivating school environment.

The organization of the SZ classroom with horizontal space (tables, agora, workstations for mini laboratories) broken down into activities, and vertical space dedicated to the use of posters and the creation of equipped walls bears testimony to a model, the Montessori one, which has certainly changed in some respects, but continues to show its effectiveness today as a way to design a hospitable, inclusive and child-centred school space, capable of educating the learner-person by nourishing autonomy and taking care of various types of intelligence, cognitive styles, cultural, social and religious differences, which make up today's multicultural society.

The environment of the SZ model, just like the Montessori one, is a refined, stimulating environment, but it is above all a place of scientific exploration and discovery. Attention to the environment also means taking care of school equipment and materials so that they will always be beautiful, shiny and in perfect conditions (Montessori, 2017); they should be refined, sophisticated, tailored to the child's cognitive ability; full of stimuli for sensory education, designed with practical life in mind and to promote the child's linguistic, mathematical, scientific, and artistic education.

The Montessori teacher encourages the child's independence and intervenes only if strictly necessary, limiting him or herself to preparing the environment and teaching material, to guiding psychic activities and their physiological development (*Ibidem*). Rather than learning to teach from books, the teachers must learn the art of "self-preparation", that is they must learn to train themselves, observe, capture signals, promote the child's concentration and catalyse it on objects, as the object, for Montessori, has a symbolic value, both at the cognitive and affective levels, and is a mediator of knowledge between the inside and the outside.

The No Schoolbag model, like the Montessori one, is a school of "autonomy" or "self-education", inextricably linked to the concept of the child's freedom, which, in turn, is connected with that of independence.

The reference method is the "Global Curriculum Approach", in which the overall planning involves not only training but also the training environment, in an interweaving of internal and external environments, materials and intangible artifacts. The architectural spaces, the furniture, the didactic equipment, archive documentation and technological components merge and become one with the teaching methodologies, with the strategies of participation, collaboration, and design. The Global Curriculum Approach, incorporating Montessori's *lectio*, capitalizes on the relationship between the individual and the community, the body and the mind, reasons and emotions, individuality and diversity. This approach recognizes the group diversity, as well as the child's individuality and uniqueness, his or her personal, special dimension and individual characteristics, and combines collective activities with individualized and personalised ones.

Furthermore, as has been seen, in the SZ school the child not only acquires the concepts of hospitality, responsibility and community, but also internalizes them by experiencing them first-hand, in a daily exercise and an embodied education that becomes an apprenticeship of civic virtues. Finally, the No Schoolbag School is a community, a place of construction, relationships, mind and heart, memory and practices. It is above all a place in which the human potential is cultivated and nourished and where children are prepared for life (Montessori, 2017). In reviving the notion of "society by cohesion" proposed by Montessori, the SZ model adopts the antinomies of authority and freedom, order and disorder, uniqueness and diversity, individual rights and equality, belonging and tolerance as prerequisites for a school that can «chart the way towards a new humanism» (Orsi, 2015, p. 168). Inspired by Montessori, Orsi's school is a "voluntary community" of "values" and "of destiny", in which the need for belonging is satisfied, the feeling of alienation and loneliness avoided - from the I to the us, from integration to inclusion, where socialization becomes a way to ennoble man, to grow from childhood to adulthood with dignity and responsibility, and one with the "cosmic task" of helping humanity to grow. In conclusions, it should be noted that this article is only a first attempt to compare Montessori's and Orsi's pedagogies. While it has been an opportunity to revive the message of this great 20th-century educator and to rescue it from oblivion and the erosion of time, it has also contributed, in line with the SZ model, to rediscover the relevance and originality of the scientific method (Montessori, 2000), and to rethink childhood as a fragment of the infinite, and education as a real challenge for spiritual and social medicine (De Giorgi, 2020). In the disenchantment of our time and in its restlessness and existential bewilderment (Cambi, 2006, p. 11) the No Schoolbag School, in the spirit of Montessori pedagogy, is a school of spirituality, attentive to the child's need for the sacred (Montessori, 1949, p. 131), aiming to instil faith in life, in others and in Heaven. By overcoming all forms of conflict and going beyond any social, cultural and religious belonging it will contribute to making the child a better person and a member of a more supportive, democratic and peaceful community.

## References

- AA.VV. (2013). Dossier Senza zaino. *Sim*, 10.
- Acone, G. (2004). *La paideia introvabile*. Brescia: La Scuola.
- Andreoli, V. (24 novembre 2010). La perdita dei sensi della *digital generation*. Cresce la vista, ma senza il tatto scompare la vita. *Corriere della Sera*, 42-43.
- Barghini, I. et al. (2013). *Un approccio globale al curriculum. Linee-guida per le scuole*. Naples: Tecnodid.
- Cambi, F. (2006). *Abitare il disincanto. Una pedagogia per il postmoderno*. Turin: Utet.
- Cives, G. (2008). *“L’educazione dilatatrice” di Maria Montessori*. Rome: Anicia.
- De Giorgi, F. (2020). *Montessori. Dio e il bambino e altri scritti inediti*. Brescia: La Scuola.
- Laeng, M. (1997). *Proposta di un Manifesto per una pedagogia strutturalista neomontessoriana*. Rome: Edizioni Opera Nazionale Montessori.
- Menesini, E., Pinto, G., Nocentini, A. (Ed.). (2014). *Apprendimento e competenza sociale nella scuola. Un approccio psicologico alla valutazione e alla sperimentazione*. Rome: Carocci.
- Montessori, M. (1950). *La capacità creatrice della prima infanzia. Conferenza all’VIII Congresso internazionale Montessori di S. Remo. La formazione dell’uomo nella ricostruzione mondiale*. Rome: Ente Opera Montessori.
- Montessori, M. (1991). “Educazione cosmica”: un inedito di Maria Montessori e l’esperienza di Kodaikanal nel racconto di Iena Wilkramaratne e di Mario Montessori Senior. *Il Quaderno Montessori*, 29, 61-110.
- Montessori, M. (1993). *Formazione dell’uomo*. Milan: Garzanti.
- Montessori, M. (1996). Gli incastri solidi un esercizio totale. *Vita dell’infanzia*, 10, 3-8.
- Montessori, M. (2000). *Il Metodo della Pedagogia Scientifica applicato all’educazione infantile nelle Case dei Bambini*. Edizione critica. P. Trabalzini (ed.). Rome: Edizioni Opera Nazionale Montessori.
- Montessori, M. (2013). *Come educare il potenziale umano*. Milan: Garzanti.
- Montessori, M. (2017). *La mente del bambino*. Milan: Garzanti.
- Oliverio, A. (2005). Sviluppo della mente infantile e valori solidali. *Vita dell’infanzia*, 1-2, 24-33.
- Orsi, M. (2002). *Educare alla responsabilità nella globalizzazione. Società della conoscenza e sfide per la scuola*. Bologna: EMI.
- Orsi, M. (2015). *L’ora di lezione non basta. La visione e le pratiche dell’ideatore delle scuole Senza Zaino*. Santarcangelo di Romagna (RM): Maggioli Editore.
- Orsi, M. (2016). *A scuola senza zaino*. Trento: Erickson.
- Orsi, M. (2017). *Dire bravo non serve. Un approccio nuovo alla scuola e ai compiti*. Milan: Mondadori.

- Pagano, R. (2018). *Educazione e interpretazione. Profili e categorie di una pedagogia ermeneutica*. Brescia: Els-La Scuola.
- Pironi, T. (2007). L'insegnante secondo Maria Montessori. *Ricerche di Pedagogia e Didattica*, 2, 7-13.
- Pironi, T. (2010). La progettazione di nuovi spazi educativi per l'infanzia: da Ellen Key a Maria Montessori. *Studi sulla Formazione*, 1, 81-89.
- Pizzigoni, G. (1956). *Linee fondamentali e programmi e altri scritti*. Brescia: La Scuola Editrice.
- Regni, R. (2006). *Educare con il lavoro: la vita attiva oltre il produttivismo e il consumismo*. Rome: Armando.
- Regni, R. (2007). *Infanzia e società in Maria Montessori. Il bambino padre dell'uomo*. Rome: Armando.
- Rinaldi, R. (1954). *La scuola rinnovata della Pizzigoni*. Bologna: I.P.E.A.
- Seveso, G. (2018). Il valore sociale e culturale della proposta montessoriana nel "Discorso inaugurale in occasione dell'apertura di una Casa dei Bambini nel 1907". In E. Nigris, M. Piscozzo (Eds.). *Scuola pubblica e approccio Montessori: quali possibili contaminazioni? Un'esperienza italiana* (pp. 13-25). Reggio Emilia: Edizioni Junior.
- Seveso, G. (2018). Non solo seggioline e tavolini. Il valore sociale della proposta di Maria Montessori. *Educação*, XLIII, 4, 641-654.
- Tornar, C. (2007). *La pedagogia di Maria Montessori tra teoria e azione*. Rome: FrancoAngeli.
- Trabalzini, P. (2003). *Maria Montessori da Il Metodo a la scoperta del bambino*. Rome: Aracne.

**Adriana Schiedi** is Researcher in General and Social Pedagogy at the University of Bari "Aldo Moro" – Ionian Department in Legal and Economic Systems of the Mediterranean Area, Society, environment, cultures. Professor of General and Intercultural Education in the Course of Legal Sciences for Immigration, Human Rights and Interculturality – University of Bari Aldo Moro. She is the author of numerous essays and articles in qualified national and international journals and magazines. She carries out research mainly on epistemology and on the methodology of pedagogical research. As for the latter, she privileged to focus her attention on the phenomenological style of investigation and on the narrative approach (ethnographic, self-ethnographic and autobiographical) applied to educational matters and issues. As for phenomenology, she has been able to grasp, in several contributions, the strong pedagogical value that she intended to highlight starting from a careful examination of the Bildung theory by Edith Stein. Her volumes include: *Narrare la Bildung. L'itinerario pedagogico di Edith Stein*. [Narrate the Bildung. The pedagogical itinerary of Edith Stein] (2017); *Pensare, sentire ed agire pedagogicamente* [Thinking, feeling and acting pedagogically] (2013); *La pratica di insegnamento. Nuovi percorsi di lettura* [The teaching practice. New reading paths] (2010).

**Contact:** [adriana.schiedi@uniba.it](mailto:adriana.schiedi@uniba.it)