

Conviviality: a choice of civilization

My presentation is relevant only to an audience who share the idea that our world has been enduring for long an unbalanced evolution where the bright sides can no longer hide the darkest ones that are leading to the worst in social and environmental fields, jeopardizing the whole mankind itself. Thus, it is relevant to an audience who is searching for an alternative to the present “business as usual”.

The starting point is the same diagnosis as the one already posed by Ivan Illich in 1973: “The crisis I have described confronts people with a choice between convivial tools and being crushed by machines” (Tools for conviviality, p. 107). If the decision is not made for conviviality “Freedom and dignity will continue to dissolve into an unprecedented enslavement of man to his tools” (Ibid. p.12). The move supposes “the shared insight of people that they would be happier if they could *work* together and *care* for each other” (P.50).

The convivialist manifesto proposed a few basic ethical and political principles, on which we must organize our societies in order to achieve what is in line with Illich’s argument: “the only response to this crisis is a full recognition of its depth and an acceptance of inevitable self-limitations” (Ibid., p.107), or, said differently, to accept a universal interdependence.

There are four principles to share universally and on which we may build an infinite array of different societies; as a matter of fact these principles have borrowed to doctrines and philosophies what make possible a sustainable life altogether (*cum-vivere*); and to ensure a progress in the quality of life for everyone, for every society, for humanity and the future generations. I will present and discuss with the audience these four principles.

To a certain extent they are (i) a plea against any discrimination as we are all in the same boat, (ii) an affirmation that any individual cannot be built, without a society to welcome her/him, (iii) a will to provide any individual with all the autonomy necessary to get a fulfilling life and, last but not least, (iv) an acknowledgement that harmony on earth is not the rule and that subsequently we must acknowledge conflicts but organize for each a process leading to a compromise so that conflicts be creative and not destructive.