

CONSTRUCCIÓN DEL CONOCIMIENTO EDUCATIVO: ESTUDIOS EMPÍRICOS, EXPERIENCIAS Y ANÁLISIS TEÓRICO

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EDITORIAL
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Construcción del conocimiento educativo: estudios empíricos, experiencias y análisis teórico

María Soledad Villarrubia Zúñiga, Paula González García,
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Learning environments and inclusion: a case study of transposition of the Reggio Emilia approach in Swedish schools

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Abstract: The Reggio Emilia Approach is a child-centered educational approach, originally from the city of Reggio Emilia, Italy. This study explores the introduction of Reggio Emilia Approach in Sweden in the 1960s and its current application in the Stockholm region. Based on interviews and observations with staff members from the Reggio Emilia Institutet and professionals in preschools, schools and Reuse Creative Centers inspired by this approach, supported by photos and thematic analysis, the research highlights three main conclusions: (1) the historical and cultural factors that facilitated the adoption of Reggio Emilia Approach in Sweden; (2) the Swedish interpretation of learning environments aligned with Reggio Emilia Approach principles, emphasizing consistency, attention, and support for learning; and (3) inclusive practices shaped by both continuity with Reggio Emilia Approach ideals and local adaptations. The study shows how elements of Reggio Emilia Approach are reinterpreted and integrated into Swedish educational culture through a dynamic and reflective process.

Keywords: reggio emilia approach, inclusive learning, learning spaces, cultural transposition, qualitative research

1. INTRODUCTION

The Reggio Emilia Approach (REA) is an Italian educational approach that originated from Reggio Emilia, in northern Italy, and has spread worldwide over the past three decades in various educational contexts described as "Reggio-inspired" (Emerson & Linder, 2019). Rooted in the history and cultural movements of Reggio Emilia after WWII, women's and citizens' associations created early childhood centers based on the values of resistance and renewal (Edwards et al., 1993). Throughout the 20th century, public authorities, parents, and professionals invested in high-quality services and training for teachers, emphasizing the child as a competent agent, the learning environment as a third educator, and socio-constructivist learning (Cavallini & Giudici, 2009; Edwards et al., 1993). The REA gained international recognition in 1991 thanks to an article published in Newsweek and expanded its network, notably by forging connections with Sweden. Two organisations, Reggio Children s.r.l. (1994) and Reggio Children Foundation (2011), were founded to promote and develop this approach and quality in education locally and globally.

In Sweden, the Reggio Emilia Institutet, an economic association and limited company, opened in 1993, creating the national network with a number of schools, mainly pre-

schools and some primary schools, and some creative recycling centers that have been inspired by the REA since then. A specificity of Sweden, is that the REA is implemented in both public and private sectors, and the Reggio Emilia Institutet offers the same services for both.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted during a one-week study visit in April 2024 at the Reggio Emilia Institutet and several Reggio Emilia Inspired (REI) schools in Stockholm and surroundings (Sweden). The study included on-site visits, interviews, and discussions conducted in one primary school, seven preschools, and two creative recycling and reuse centers. The educational institutions involved are all located in the Stockholm province. Specifically, interviews were conducted with six primary school teachers (five from second-grade and one from sixth-grade), three preschool teachers, two headmasters, two atelieristas from creative centers, and two representatives of the Reggio Emilia Institutet. The participants were selected based on the network of schools affiliated with the Reggio Emilia Institutet that volunteered to participate in the study. This contribution analyses what emerged from the words of teachers and representatives of the Reggio Emilia Institutet.

The aim of the study was to conduct an exploratory analysis to investigate perceptions, experiences, and the distinctive features of being Reggio Emilia inspired, as well as the cultural adaptations and differences compared to their original contexts. Another objective was to uncover beliefs and practices related to the concepts of inclusion and educational environment.

To further explore how the Swedish context associated with the Reggio Emilia Institutet have been inspired by the REA, the following research questions were developed: what are the experiences of cultural exchange that have enabled schools to become Reggio Inspired? How is the REA interpreted and subsequently transposed in Swedish contexts? How do the stakeholders perceive the concepts of learning environment and inclusion?

Interviews were conducted alongside visits to the institutions where the participants work daily, complemented by an exploration of these environments with photographic documentation, additional discussions, and, in some cases, supplementary materials such as organized presentations, written documentation, books, collections, or journals describing specific educational experiences carried out in the schools.

All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by the researchers through thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), combining a theory-driven approach with a data-driven approach.

The interviews were semi-structured (Mantovani, 2000) to ensure a formal yet flexible approach to data collection.. The interviews were conducted by three researchers, had an average duration of approximately 40 minutes To answer the research questions above, they revolved around three main themes: their experiences connecting them to the REA; changes brought about by adopting the REA, its strengths, and the potential challenges faced in practice, and inclusion, learning spaces, the participants' relationship with these aspects.

While the first two sets of questions aimed to reconstruct how the Reggio Emilia Institutet network created its culturally inspired approach based on the educational culture of Reggio Emilia, the third set investigated significant aspects directly related to educational practices implemented in classrooms.

3. TRACING INSPIRATIONS: THE CULTURAL TRANSPOSITION OF THE REA IN SWEDEN

The following section delineates the path that emerged from our investigation about how the REA was known by Swedish educators and how they got inspired by it in their pedagogical and educational acting and design, always with the understanding that “there is no essential ‘true’ Reggio Emilia; all narrations are built on interpretations, choices, and interests” (Gothson, 2010, p. 320).

Based on interviews conducted with staff members of the Reggio Emilia Institutet and educational professionals from Swedish schools inspired by REA, this section aims to explore the process of cultural transposition of REA in Sweden (Landi & Pintus, 2022). On the basis of the suggested recommendation:

“the international adjustment framework stresses the relationships between the before and after of Reggio transplantation, inspiration and outcomes in addition to the study of the implementation itself.” (Emerson & Linder, 2019, p. 13)

The cultural, historical, and institutional context that shaped the transposition of REA in Sweden are thus highlighted, as result of its correlation with multiple factors.

3.1. Development of the REA in Sweden: a historical perspective

The story of the connection between the REA and Sweden is primarily based on a Swedish context that was conducive to welcoming the REA. A fertile ground and a combination of features in which the approach has taken root, while respecting and highlighting Sweden's cultural specificities: “it has always been clear to us that we have to start from where we are in Sweden, from our own traditions and culture” (Dahlberg et al., 2007, p. 128).

Sweden has a long tradition of childcare dating back to the late 19th century, initially intended to help parents working in industry and agriculture. Rooted in the vision of *Folkhemmet* (“the people's home”), childcare institutions were seen as extensions of the family home (Dahlberg et al., 2007). The 1970s marked the professionalization of childcare through specialized training and policy reforms that encouraged women's participation in the labor market by adjusting the tax system. This expansion of childcare services coincided with Sweden's economic prosperity and the support of the socialist government, particularly Prime Minister Olof Palme, who promoted gender equality and the rights of workers and children (O'Dowd, 2013; interview 2). This also aligns with what a participant mentioned regarding the favorable political context for introducing the REA:

“so for me, it's not surprising at all that the Reggio Emilia inspiration is really big in Sweden, because if you look at Sweden's history after the WWII with the Social Democratic Party [...] with also the social equality and all of that, I think it sort of goes very well together with Reggio Emilia inspiration” (interview 9).

Individual efforts played a crucial role in the integration of the REA in Sweden. Key figures recognized its potential and launched projects to implement it. One of these pioneers was Anna Barsotti, a psychologist and translator, who discovered Reggio Emilia in the 1980s and organized the first study trips for Swedish teachers. Another influential figure is Professor Gunilla Dahlberg of Stockholm University, who supported the introduction of REA and contributed to the 1998 Curriculum for preschools (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Sweden, 1998). Although the Curriculum doesn't explicitly refer to REA, its influence is evident. Indeed, the emphasis of this approach on project work, the theory of the 100 languages (Cagliari & Giudici, 2020; Edwards et al., 1993), documentation, and democratic education closely matches Swedish educational values. Ministerial

documents, such as *Preschool in Politics* (Korpi, 2015), emphasize that REA is a major source of inspiration that enriches Swedish preschool traditions as mentioned by a participant: “most Swedish preschools are inspired by RE in some way, actually, because our curriculum is very inspired. And, democracy is a very well used word in that curriculum, and it talks a lot about values and soft values” (interview 9) .

However, the integration of REA in Sweden, initially driven by individuals, has evolved thanks to a dual dynamic involving a collective bottom-up process. Early childhood professionals have played a proactive role in its development and ongoing adaptation. Interviews reveal sustained and sincere interest on the part of teachers, atelierista, pedagogista, and headmasters, who played a decisive role in the transposition of REA, recognizing its potential from the outset and became deeply committed to this approach (Aydemir & Inan, 2021).

The introduction of the REA in Sweden was marked by key events, including the exhibition *A Child Has 100 languages*, Modern Museum, 1981, which participants identified as their first encounter with this REA as illustrated below about the initial interest in the REA and the challenges associated.

“The exhibition also started a lot of thinking. What is it that they do? and how do they do that in Reggio Emilia? So what we started with was a lot of people, uh, mimicking what they were doing in Italy... Can we mimic exactly what they do? Can we have the same results?” (interview 13)

“So, there was a lot of time to understand these key things from Reggio, like the classroom environment as a Third teacher. How do they do that? How do we do that? But also, the 100 languages, all of these key things from the Reggio Emilia was starting to... well we struggled with them. You could say onwards and backwards to see where we landed” (interview 13)

The concretization of a cultural concept, in this case a pedagogical approach, is a complex process, this transformation of a philosophy and pedagogy implemented in educational environments was born out of a need for “something more”, both driven by the initiative of a group of individuals and passionate professionals united by shared values and a vision of development that could potentially diverge depending on the project and the time.

3.2. Overview of the Reggio Emilia Institutet's current structure and responsibilities

In 1993, Social Minister Bengt Westerberg visited the Arcobaleno preschool in Reggio Emilia (Korpi, 2015). The Reggio Emilia Institutet was founded a year before the Reggio Children Foundation, following Loris Malaguzzi advice about the creation of an organization that would be more sustainable than a project.

This section gathers valuable testimonials from a witness to the origins and development of the Institutet: “they started to have a program, and the program was lectures, like Veia coming to Sweden, having a lecture, but they also started to pick up from the project, they asked me, early to talk about the environment because that was the first thing me and my colleagues started to change” (interview 16)

The Institutet promotes REA by supporting the professional development of teachers, educators, and workshop leaders, emphasizing that “teachers and administrators have an important role to play in creating a Reggio-inspired experience” (Emerson & Linder, 2019, p. 7). Active in Sweden and the Nordic region (Dahlberg et al., 2007), it offers training (Fenu Foerchl & Iuspa, 2016), publishes *Modern Childhood*, and coordinates annual study trips to Reggio Emilia. Interviews revealed a strong alignment between the

Institute's objectives and the needs of educators. In one school, the support helped to overcome doubts about the compatibility of REA with the national curriculum (interview 16).

Indeed, the art of explaining the REA by experts, who also have practical experience of its application requires a balance between providing sufficiently clear and detailed explanations with the necessary elements, while simultaneously allowing practitioners to make their own path of discovery regarding the approach, following different stages (Aydemir & Inan, 2021). This approach fosters a culture of reflection, the learning continues, there is no conclusion, only process according to Loris Malaguzzi. The book *Lyssnandets pedagogik*, by Swedish teachers Ann Åberg and Hillevi Lenz Taguchi, illustrates how the REA was learned, with a focus on their understanding of listening, as Carla Rinaldi said: “we think that the concept can be the source of exchanges and reflections [...] Together we can try to share values which are universal, but at the local level, all the different actors - in Sweden [...] - will have to try to develop these values for themselves”, (Rinaldi, 2009, p. 122) which Swedish professionals are actually doing by proposing their own interpretation of the REA.

4. HOW IS INCLUSION UNDERSTOOD AND PURSUED IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL VISITED?

As explained in the previous paragraph, REA is intertwined with the pedagogy of listening, which values multiple perspectives, and the ongoing search for meaning within lived experiences, which fosters inclusion as well (Rinaldi, 2009). The theory of the 100 languages (Cagliari & Giudici, 2020; Edwards et al., 1993) recognizes each child as a unique individual, emphasizing respect as the foundation for fostering each one's potential. Inclusion in the REA transcends special rights or socio-cultural backgrounds, embracing the complexity of every person's identity.

Italy and Sweden differ structurally in inclusive education models (OECD, 2023). In Sweden, only children with mild diagnoses attend mainstream classes, while others are placed in special schools from preschool. In contrast, Italy integrates all children in public classrooms, regardless of diagnosis. The REA advocates for values that are historically rooted in a cultural and legislative context distinct from that of many other European countries (i.e. the Italian law to eliminate special schools 1.517, Italy, 1977). It embodies a broad, inclusive vision, which may be more or less explicitly expressed by teachers working in REI schools around the world.

This study adopts a broad view of inclusion, focusing on removing barriers to learning and participation and enhancing the potential of every child (Booth & Ainscow, 2002) and explores how teachers in a Stockholm REI primary school perceive inclusion. Through interviews with second- and sixth-grade teachers, the study investigates how they define inclusion, the role of collaboration, and inclusive strategies they apply.

When asked to define inclusion, some teachers offered broad definitions, emphasizing the importance of welcoming every student's voice: “inclusion should be that everybody is welcome to the class and he or she'll get the right to express himself.”(teacher 1)

Others emphasized cultural diversity: “I also thought about something else when you said inclusion, we work a lot with highlighting different cultures, not just special needs.” (teacher 4)

When asked about how they collaborate to foster inclusion, teachers expressed a strong sense of professional responsibility, often turning to peers for problem-solving: “we talk a lot to each other: ‘How can we do to have this problem solved?’, ‘This is my group, I

am wondering about this student, how can I help her or him?', and you share experience [...] and dig in your backpackers of experience.” (teacher 4)

Collaboration among teachers is thus perceived as a fundamental reference point—both practical and pedagogical—and aligns with research in the educational field (Bertolini et al., 2022; Capelli & Damiani, 2025). However, collaborative opportunities depend on staffing and resources, as the school, a state institution, has only recently begun adopting the REA approach. The Swedish public primary school system appears to be more aligned with the Italian primary school model than with the Italian 0–6 municipal early childhood services. Peer dialogue and shared professional reflection support inclusive practices, consistent with the notion of reflective practice as a cornerstone of professional development (Cavallini & Giudici, 2009). Inclusive collaboration extends to families, promoting communication, listening, and mutual respect (Rinaldi, 2009). The importance of establishing a shared educational foundation is emphasized, based on the idea of competent parents (Cavallini & Giudici, 2009): “we want them to be with us [...] we ask them ‘How do you think? How can we help the children and your children?’”(teacher 1)

Teachers encourage inclusive classroom climates through small group work and discussion, building on students’ knowledge: “we often start small groups [...] everyone has to write ‘what I think’ and then they talk together and then we talk to the whole class.” (teacher 5)

These group activities are often accompanied by the use of mind maps and thematic projects as narrative frameworks to facilitate dialogue. Some teachers explicitly emphasise that children themselves can contribute new insights to the learning process—consistent with the REA’s image of the competent child (Cavallini & Giudici, 2009; Edwards et al., 1993). The child is “a producer of change, of dynamic movements within systems... a producer of culture, values, and rights, and competent to live and learn” (Rinaldi, 2009, p. 107): “and in some way and sometimes they know a lot more than you do. So that's much fun as well, because you can take their construct knowledge.” (teacher 3)

Through the group, collective learning exceeds the sum of individual achievements—consistent with socio-constructivist theories (Giudici et al., 2009). Knowing children’s strengths becomes essential for building learning relationships, especially for children with special rights. Peer collaboration is a key element that allows students not only to work together but to learn as a group: what they can reach together will be higher than if you have them individually. (teacher 5)
“this child is working and struggling with this thing, but another child has a really high competence in this area, then I will put them together and they will benefit from each other.” (teacher 2)

Project-based learning supports inclusion and interdisciplinary teaching, developed in collaboration with colleagues and enabling multiple languages. These projects start from students’ existing representation: “Mathematics, Swedish, English sometimes, and the Music and Art... we have a lot of subjects in the project. For example, we have to write a text about something, then they have to read... But also look at movies and they have to build with clay.” (teacher 5)

Children’s knowledge is valued and socialized in accordance with REA pedagogy (Giudici et al., 2009).

Space is also linked to inclusion, playing a pedagogical role, reflecting teachers’ views on children and learning (Bertolini et al., 2022; Capelli & Damiani, 2025; Rinaldi, 2009):

co-teaching and flexible learning environments—particularly in second grade—support a shared educational vision and children multimodal learning (Bertolini et al., 2022). Teachers collaborate to engage with the environment, which is seen as the "third teacher," playing a key role in inclusion: "I mean, the use of spaces can have an inclusive function. You use spaces like, for example, organising groups, dividing and also to have a more inclusive environment." (teacher 2); "we use all five and that's a big difference between others. And it's not her room and my room: it's our space." (teacher 5)

To conclude, some key themes have come to light through the interviews conducted: the image of competent families and children, the presence of active pedagogy that builds on students' knowledge and competences, and small-group learning and transdisciplinary projects as contexts for the co-construction of knowledge and skills. Learning spaces are further explored in the next paragraph.

5. LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS LINKED TO THE REGGIO APPROACH

In the municipal nurseries and preschools of Reggio Emilia, inspired by the educational philosophy of Loris Malaguzzi, originated in the 1960s, the environment became an essential and central element of the educational project (Reggio Children & Domus Academy Research Center, 1998), a place in which the founding principles on which learning is based are reflected and made visible. In the municipal schools of Reggio Emilia, two places that express two of the pivotal concepts of the Reggio Approach can be found: the *piazza* (square) and the *atelier*. The concept of the square is understood as the heart of the school, a place of encounters, exchanges, dialogue, socialization and passage. The space of the square in the school connects and relates all other places because they all flow into it and open onto it. The atelier, on the other hand, is the place of research, invention and empathy that is expressed through the 100 languages, a place where the conditions for learning are built. Of no less importance is considered the natural element, plants and the plant world that must be part of the environment and coexist with the subjects that inhabit that environment. In the Reggio experience it is possible to trace elements of well-being and comfort including principles of aesthetics, transparency, active learning, flexibility, collaboration and relationship (Biondi, et al. 2016). The environment "speaks to us" (Wilson-Strong, & Ellis, 2007) and offers multiple opportunities, richness of common materials, multiple contexts of research to allow each individual who acts and inhabits it the freedom to grow and learn as a group without giving up their subjectivity. In fact, the widest possible choice of tools and materials allows the child to further develop skills he or she already possesses but also to experiment with and grow new ones (The 100 Languages of Children). All tools can thus be used, without any homogenization or standardization (principle of equity). The environment is thus the place where freedom of expression and choice can be guaranteed in the different learning contexts that schools offer, so that each child is enabled to fully utilize his or her intelligences to enhance well-being both individually and in group situations. Only in this way can schools succeed, as Carla Rinaldi states, in "giving each person the chance to be himself or herself, in his or her rich originality and fullness" (Rinaldi, 2000). The REA enhances design practices: construction of multiple learning contexts, reflection with respect to educational research practices and documentation of cognitive triggers represented by individual-environment interaction. Educational paths, the architecture of training environments and modes of social interaction, would be able to influence cognitive processes by supporting them through the reflexive forms of tutoring, scaffolding and communicative facilitation thus enhancing their functions and attitudes (Bobbio, 2008).

This paragraph highlights how the Swedish educational context interprets the REA's focus on and value of the environment as a “third educator.” The educational contexts visited are Hammarby Elementary School, Reggio Emilia Institute, Katarina Västra Förskola, Mariekällskolan Atelier, Trångsunds Förskola, Creative Reuse Center, Emilia Öst, Fågelsångens Förskola e Rönnvägen.

During the visits to the listed schools in addition to making observations and collecting photographic material, interviews were held with teachers, pedagogists, school directors, to the staff members of the Reggio Emilia Institutet. Educational professionals answered a number of questions about the educational approach used, which is closely related to the Reggio Approach, from which it is inspired and from which each school declines its own interpretations and specificities. These specific characteristics are particularly found in the settings of the contexts, in the choices of materials and in the organizations of the spaces of the various schools, which are different but at the same time united by the same guiding principles. The staff members of the Reggio Institutet, on the other hand, were the narrators of the origins of the Institutet, which grew out of its relationship with Reggio Emilia and its strong inspiration towards the REA, and the Swedish political and cultural context. During the interview, one of the members of the Institutet talked about how it was a priority for him and his colleagues to work on the environment in order to change school realities in Sweden after their first encounters with the REA. Preschool teachers would ask him to organize a conference on what he had learned and observed in Reggio Emilia to design preschools in Sweden as well that no longer resembled “children's homes” but where there was an atelier with many different materials in each section. It was, the responsible explained, a desire to adhere to the Reggio Emilia idea of conceiving of the environment as a third pedagogy, to understand the importance of pedagogical documentation, atelier culture and the 100 languages.

At Fagelsångens Forskola (kindergarten), a focus on the natural plant element characterizes the school environment as a differentiation of spaces so that children can choose to work in small groups in separate, more intimate and collected settings settings (as shown in Figure 1). Teachers explain that being surrounded by plants, being able to coexist with the natural element creates well-being and increased serenity in both children and adults. They also often bring tables and countertops outside to work in the school grounds or eat breakfast outdoors.

Figure 1. Fagelsångens Forskola <https://acortar.link/VRz1Ct>

At Hammarby Elementary School, teachers explained that one of their strategies is to let the school become a flexible space and let the classroom flow into the hallways in a fluid continuity (as shown in Figure 2). Teachers work together with students, put everyone's ideas into circulation to continually vary and transform contexts to fit the instructional designs of the moment, and call learning “fun” for students because of the instructional approach used heavily inspired by the REA.

Figure 2. Hammarby Elementary School <https://acortar.link/m9En6u>

At Mariekällskolan Atelier and Creative Reuse Center in the environments one can find many different materials and a rich variety of expressive languages (as shown in Figure 3). Creative Reuse Centers talked about how they continuously transform and reorganize the spaces according to educational needs.

Figure 3. Mariekällskolan Atelier and Creative Reuse Center <https://acortar.link/qlFqCu>

At Katarina Västra Förskola (preschool), the environment changes according to how children and adults use and organize it. Several attempts have also been made to use the

outdoor space as a meeting and exchange square by following the children's movements in the spaces they seem to prefer. The teachers are convinced that the environment should be a support for learning and that children should have the opportunity to explore, to experiment through the materials available to them present in the school settings.

6. CONCLUSION

The transposition of the REA beyond its origins reveals diverse interpretations that enrich both understanding and practice. Based on interviews and observation, this study highlights how professionals adapt the REA to their context, confirming its nature as a flexible pedagogical and philosophical approach. Rather than a fixed method, it evolves through those who adopt and reinterpret it, thereby contributing to the international dialogue on REI schools.

As already suggested by Landi and Pintus (2022), the concept of cultural transposition seems to respond well to that dynamic process, indefinable once and for all, that characterises the encounter of Reggio's pedagogical lines with other educational cultures, as a process to decentralise educational practices typical of one culture through the encounter with practices of other cultures. What distinguishes this process is the preservation of "the difference between cultural contexts, without any attempt to "translate" elements from one culture to another, but rather with the intention of continually and carefully reviewing/deconstructing different meaning processes in order to become more aware of one's own" (Mellone et al., 2018, p. 3), as transpires from the words of the participants.

Taking into consideration learning environments, from the data collected the authors could gather a correct adherence to the qualities and fundamental importance that the REA attributes to the environment as a "third educator" and a valid, albeit personal, interpretation of the principles that guide it. Each school appears to have internalized and applied the values of the REA in a subjective way by declining them with respect to its own social and territorial context, its own users, its own educational needs, and Swedish culture.

Furthermore, the exploratory analysis on inclusion sheds light on how key elements of the REA have been translated and reinterpreted within the pedagogical, educational, and relational culture of a group of teachers working in two primary school's classes, which expressly started their path to be REI three years ago. In the paragraph about inclusion emerges how the teachers define inclusive education, how collaboration is linked to inclusion, and how their educational work is permeated by inclusive strategies. Key themes emerging from the interviews include the image of competent families and children, the presence of active pedagogy that builds on students' knowledge and competences, and the use of small-group learning and transdisciplinary projects as contexts for the co-construction of knowledge and skills. Some differences are also shown due to the constraints and peculiarities of the countries in which REI schools are embedded, which enrich the complexity of the contexts analyzed. Future research could expand the sample or focus on how documentation supports educational practices in REI schools.

To conclude, while grounded in the same theoretical foundations, the Swedish interpretation of the REA reveals a distinctive empirical understanding, shaped by its specific cultural context. Although Sweden and Italy share an European framework, the Swedish interpretation reflects nuanced differences as an emphasis on the relationship with nature. Overall, the teachers' words report an adaptation of the REA that draws

inspiration from and embodies its core pedagogical principles, while tailoring them to the institutional and organizational characteristics of their own educational context. Nowadays, the Reggio Emilia Institutet plays a central role as a hub for training, dialogue and the dissemination of the REA with their own understanding.

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