

Towards a Humanist Education: Understanding Cultural Heritage to Redesign the Future

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Introduction What is meant today by Cultural Heritage? There are many laws dictated by different countries and many conventions, treaties, declarations, recommendations, and many international documents, generated mainly by or within the framework of UNESCO activities, which help us understand this definition; however, the route is much more complex than we can imagine, because this concept has a close relationship with local cultures, and it is not possible to generalize the definition with respect to the five continents. In fact, for a long time, only Monuments and Art have been considered “Heritage” with capital letters. However, the material results of monuments and works of art are the product of human creativity, which is undoubtedly the first heritage we must recognize, revalue, analyze and put at the center of our research route. This creativity is a peculiar feature of childhood, in the natural, carefree, and spontaneous way with which children observe the world and analyze what surrounds them, from the involvement of their community within their daily landscape. It is precisely this creativity that constitutes the main cultural heritage of which it is essential to start over, in order to identify a correct definition of each cultural heritage. Within this concept of creativity there are many elements that find their roots throughout ancestral traditions that we cannot and should not forget or belittle. For this reason, the concept of Cultural Heritage is much broader with respect to what is generally understood by these words. Understanding cultural heritage means approaching the knowledge and valuation of communities, their history, traditions and then, the symbolic, territorial, ancestral, landscape and cultural heritage of each nation. Thus, the new way of conceiving and interpreting Cultural Heritage encompasses the social sectors because it is from there that the process of creativity begins and from the communities, we must start research on our heritage. And obviously, one of the ways in which that creativity clearly manifests itself, is in the ways in which human intervention affects natural elements,

modifying the territory according to its worldviews and then generating different landscapes, which are the result of the concreteness of cultural diversity.

Education and Cultural Heritage

In these last decades the concept of Cultural Heritage has evolved from approaches focused mainly on individual enjoyment. It puts the need to open a new reflection on the current concept of Heritage, much broader and more complex compared to the literature developed in this field until now. In the contemporary dimension the concept of Cultural Heritage has something different from the sum of objects of different nature, has another dimension and whose main value is social, that is, the ability to be the expression of different cultural identities, in addition to having a significant practical, educational and economic function (Cambil Hernández, Tudela Sancho, 2017). In a world that is undergoing profound changes, advances in science and technology have changed human sensitivity to history, nature and social relationships in recent years. Cultural Heritage education and the subject of culture itself have been isolated and in many cases have not been considered essential or relevant within the process of training and development of the individual and society. It is remarkable to illustrate what has been stated here, to appreciate as something so sensitively present in the daily life of the person, of the child, as is his immediate environment, his landscape of every day, is ignored, and this despite the benefits or psycho-emotional impacts that generate them. There is no doubt that the theme of the COVID-19 pandemic has stopped the world, but it has allowed communities to reflect on the important values of life. Thus, in a historical phase of great complexity, where capitalist priorities strongly questioned ethical values and human relationships, there was a need to put the person and his creativity back at the center. Surely the fragility that all countries have expressed in the cultural and educational sector has enabled fundamental reflections to be developed to give a “new centrality” to the role of Culture, in the sustainable development of humanity. Indeed, without Culture, it becomes incredibly difficult to develop forward-going perspectives capable of proposing and consolidating shared and participatory policies that are no longer guided by increasing individualization.

Analyzing the realities of the different countries of the world, from the Far East to the Far West, we feel the need to activate a new “humanism” and that is why it is necessary for Culture to participate in its entirety in all the planning and projection of the new, of the innovation on which it is important to focus from now on. However, to do all this, it is necessary to start with the younger generation and then plant seeds to obtain a good fruit and with it, a good harvest in the near future, with children and young people today being the key piece to generate real change. Therefore, we must be able to design educational programs that can build a better world, an educational environment in which children feel not only as mere deposits of knowledge, but take on a creative role, being the architects of their own educational

processes and understand the social collective as a primary source of knowledge in the cultural and heritage field.

Reconnecting with your culture

In the current context that humanity lives in 2020, there have been positions open to true change, where humanity has the opportunity to adjust factors of life that were not working in the best way in sync with nature, living beings and among humanity itself. To bring about real change, it is important to understand who is responsible for giving way for it to consolidate and who will be the people who will live the change and forge this new path. A real change is born from youth and children, today's young people will be in charge of leading the cities and nations of the world of tomorrow. It is they who must understand what the true pillars of life are capable of consolidating a true sustainable future capable of facing hidden difficulties in the future.

Based on these premises, in July 2020 the international pedagogical method “*Reconnecting with your culture*” started; it was promoted by the EdA Esempi di Architettura International Research Centre in collaboration with the Forum University and UNESCO Heritage. This pedagogical method is aimed at elementary and high schools around the world and students between the ages of 5 and 17. Children, assisted by their teachers, are invited to take an exploratory journey within the cultural heritage of their community, city and country, to draw and share their own experience of knowledge in contact with historical, artistic and cultural heritage. The international project aims to analyze the different cultural approaches and methods of analysis prepared in the different communities of the world in order to create a network and allow the exchange of experiences and initiatives. This project is also intended to apply a new educational method to introduce schools, colleges and universities, the study of history and cultural heritage, two fundamental themes to achieve an ethically better world. The project is based on the UN-issued 2030 Agenda, a program to generate sustainable development. For this initiative, a particular emphasis is placed on point number 4 on “Quality education”, supplemented by the principles of inclusion and equity. This item of the 2030 Agenda aims to achieve important and equitable quality education, promoting the opportunity for lifelong learning for all. That is why the project “Reconnecting with your Culture” is aimed at all school students around the world and aims to generate personalized activities, which require special supports.

The quality of education, inclusive and equitable, must be accompanied by the cultural factor, understand that within the pillars of human life culture must always be present as an essential element from which a future is projected where tolerance, utility, respect, among others, are key pieces for proper growth as humanity. For this proposal, it is necessary to understand the culture accompanied by the Heritage as the unique and unwavering root that

allows to generate a coherent development between the past, the present and the future.

Conclusion

The proposed methodology is designed from drawing as a tool of learning and universal language capable of overcoming any cultural and language barrier. Another quality of the drawing to be considered within this proposal, is to be an interdisciplinary tool capable of generating links and unions between different disciplines, or in the case of participants, the subjects of the school. So, it is possible to create in young students the opportunity to understand that the concept of heritage is not only reserved for architecture and art, but, with the support of the faculty, it is possible to build their own definition of heritage that allows them to find heritage values within the interdisciplinary educational content they receive.

The international project *Reconnecting with your Culture* pursues as its central value the construction of a universal network that facilitates or promotes the exchange of experiences worldwide in the field of education methodology, specifically about cultural heritage which also serves as a thermometer to measure the forms of attention and development of this topic in the multiple countries.

References

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