

Workshop Paper

Towards A Humanist Education. To Know Cultural Heritage to Redesign the Future

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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 generalise the definition for the five continents. In fact, for a long time, only Monuments and Art have been considered “Heritage” in 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 recognise, revalue, analyse, and put at the centre of our research route. This creativity is a peculiar feature of childhood, in the natural, carefree, and spontaneous way children observe the world and analyse what surrounds them, from the involvement of their community within their daily landscape. It is precisely this creativity that constitutes the main cultural heritage, and it is essential to start over to identify the correct definition of each cultural heritage. Within this concept of creativity, many elements find their roots in ancestral traditions that we cannot and should not forget or belittle.

For this reason, the concept of Cultural Heritage is much broader than what is generally understood by these words. Understanding cultural heritage means approaching the knowledge and valuation of communities, their history, traditions, and then each nation’s symbolic, territorial, ancestral, landscape, and cultural heritage. 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. From the communities, we must start researching our heritage. Moreover, one of the ways in which creativity clearly manifests itself is in how 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.

In the last few decades, the concept of Cultural Heritage has evolved from approaches focused mainly on individual enjoyment. It highlights the need to open a new reflection on the current concept of Heritage, which is much broader and more complex than 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 natures. It has another dimension whose main value is social: the ability to express different cultural identities and have a significant practical, educational, and economic function (Cambil Hernández and Tudela Sancho, 2017). In a world 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 training and development processes of the individual and society. It is remarkable to illustrate what has been stated here, to appreciate that 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

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or psycho-emotional impacts that generate them. Undoubtedly, the theme of the COVID-19 pandemic has stopped the world, but it has also 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 centre. Surely the fragility that all countries have expressed in the cultural and educational sectors 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-looking perspectives capable of proposing and consolidating shared and participatory policies that are no longer guided by increasing individualization.

Analysing 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 essential 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 good fruit and a good harvest in the near future, with children and young people today being the key pieces to generating real change. Therefore, we must be able to design educational programmes 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 understanding the social collective as a primary source of knowledge in the cultural and heritage field.

In the current context that humanity lived in 2020, there have been positions open to actual 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 humanity itself. In order to bring about real change, it is crucial to understand who is responsible for making way for it to consolidate and who will be the people who will live the change and forge this new path. A fundamental change is born in youth and children. Today's young people will be in charge of leading the cities and nations of tomorrow. They must understand that the true pillars of life are capable of consolidating a sustainable future and facing hidden difficulties in the future.

Based on these premises, in July 2020, the international pedagogical method “*Reconnecting with your culture*” was started. The method was promoted by the EdA Esemipi di Architettura International Research Centre in collaboration with the Forum University and UNESCO Heritage. This pedagogical method targeted students between the ages of 5 and 17 at elementary and high schools worldwide. Children, assisted by their teachers, are invited to take an exploratory journey within the cultural heritage of their community, city, and country to draw on and share their own knowledge and experience in contact with historical, artistic, and cultural heritage. The international project aims to analyse the different cultural approaches and methods of analysis prepared in the different communities around 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 to studying history and cultural heritage, two fundamental themes for achieving an ethically better world. The project is based on the UN-issued 2030 Agenda, a programme to generate sustainable development. For this initiative, a particular emphasis is placed on Sustainable Development Goal point number 4 on

“Quality Education”, supplemented by the principles of inclusion and equity (UN, no date). 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” aims at all school students worldwide and aims to generate personalised activities requiring special support.

The cultural element must go hand in hand with inclusive and equitable education quality. It should be recognised that culture, within the pillars of human life, must always be present as an essential element from which a future is projected where tolerance, utility, and 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 for a coherent development between the past, the present, and the future.

The proposed methodology is based on drawing as a tool of learning and a universal language capable of overcoming any cultural or language barrier. A further quality of the drawing to be considered in this proposal is that it is an inter-disciplinary instrument capable of generating connections and unions between various disciplines, or in the case of participants, the school's subjects. Young students can thus be given the opportunity to comprehend that the concept of heritage is not limited to architecture and art; with faculty support, they can develop their own definition of heritage that enables them to identify heritage values within the interdisciplinary educational content they receive.

The international project *Reconnecting with Your Culture* pursues its central value as 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 the development of this topic in multiple countries.

References

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