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Il presente volume è pubblicato con scopi scientifici e di ricerca. Pertanto le illustrazioni, le immagini e i fotogrammi presenti all'interno del volume sono utilizzati esclusivamente a tale scopo.

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Harnessing the Power of a “Cultural Heritage – Communities – Education” Relationship in Times of Crisis

Abstract: Cultural heritage has become widely acknowledged in European policies as a useful tool for providing benefits on both social and economic levels. We are beginning to explore a new transdisciplinary role for cultural heritage, capable of delivering advantages beyond the cultural sector. This convergence between the cultural sector and other sectors is promising since it provides innovative solutions to problems by combining knowledge and skills from various fields. In this contribution, we will consider the role of cultural heritage in the education sector. We recognize that cultural heritage and education are codependent; cultural heritage is crucial for the enhancement of the education sector, and conversely, education is vital for the safeguarding, awareness, and enjoyment of cultural heritage. For this reason, we notice the promotion of cultural heritage education and training in European and international policies. Today, the European education sector is subject to various challenges, one of which is the outdated education system. Another challenge is that inflicted by the pandemic, where the education system witnessed a disruption of its existing model. Therefore, this contribution will showcase good practices where cultural heritage has been appraised and acknowledged for overcoming the challenges of the education sector.

Keywords: cultural heritage; education; crisis; communities; heritage as resource.

1. Background Statement

Cultural heritage has gained momentum as a valuable tool for providing social and economic benefits. Thus, it can generate cultural identity, improve life quality, and foster social cohesion,

while engaging and strengthening local communities (Ferrilli, Sacco, Blessi, and Forbici, 2017, p. 241). The European Union, according to the Lisbon Treaty (2007, art. 3.3), tends to safeguard, enhance, and promote the cultural heritage of Europe (European Commission, 2007).

In this contribution, we will identify the cultural heritage policies developed in the European Union. The Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society recognizes the relationship between cultural heritage and societies. It highlights the role of individuals and communities in associating meanings and values for cultural heritage. It also recognizes the role of cultural heritage in the development of societies (Council of Europe, 2005). The New European Agenda for Culture acknowledges the power of culture in developing societies, improving economies, supporting innovation, and strengthening international cultural relationships. It also discusses the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, which is made up of ten distinct initiatives that attempt to celebrate Europe's cultural heritage, and groups them under the four pillars of engagement, sustainability, protection, and innovation (European Commission, 2018).

Since 'cultural heritage', 'education' and 'local communities' have a positive effect on each other, we will attempt to harness the power of this 'cultural heritage – communities – education' relationship. In order to address the issues of the education sector, this contribution suggests informal learning, based on cultural heritage education, as a feasible solution. It will also rely on a selection of best practices in a European context to justify this proposition.

2. Building the Future of Education

In this contribution, we acknowledge that cultural heritage and education are correlated. As stated in the Teaching and Learning with Living Heritage document by UNESCO (2021, p. 3), the relationship between cultural heritage and education is one of 'mutual reinforcement' (UNESCO, 2021). This means that cultu-

ral heritage is crucial for the enrichment of the education sector, and conversely, education is vital for the safeguarding, awareness, and enjoyment of the values of cultural heritage (Petraroia, 2014, p. 46).

Hence, the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage has become a responsibility of the education sector. It has also become a subject of interest in European and international context. We begin to notice the promotion of cultural heritage education and training in policies. For example, the 2030 Agenda on Indicators for Culture focuses on the empowerment of cultural values through education and the integration of cultural knowledge in curricula (UNESCO, 2019). Additionally, the Engaging Youth for an Inclusive and Sustainable Europe project, launched by UNESCO and the European Commission, inspires young generations to safeguard and transmit their cultural heritage. Through a variety of formal and non-formal educational activities, this project encourages the active participation of youth in cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2021).

The strength of cultural heritage is emphasized by its capability of developing innovative and forward-looking ideas to inspire and shape the future of education. Starting from the Sustainable Development Goals, we notice that the approach towards education has changed from that in the Millennium Development Goals. There is a shift from making sure everyone has access to education towards what we refer to today as 'quality education', where the main goal is to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and to promote lifelong learning. In addition, the New European Agenda initiative provides a broader purpose for cultural heritage and its relationship to the education sector. It considers the integration of culture in education as an attempt to improve accessibility, raise awareness, encourage participation, and foster creativity and innovation in the field of cultural heritage (European Commission, 2018).

At Italian level, the Ministry of Culture, Directorate General for Education, Research and Cultural Institutes, encourages and prioritizes cultural heritage education (Achille and Fiorillo, 2022,

p. 2565). Included in the First National Plan for Cultural Heritage Education (*Piano Nazionale per l'Educazione al Patrimonio Culturale – PNE*) is the 'Good School' program (*La Buona Scuola*), which promotes cultural heritage in education by highlighting its role in local development processes and referring to a collection of best practices. Thus, cultural heritage education enriches the local development processes by strengthening community participation, enhancing knowledge and skills, and increasing collaboration between cultural heritage, education sector, and territories (Achille and Fiorillo, 2022, p. 2566). Meanwhile, the Third National Plan for Heritage Education, an updated version of the first PNE, consists of strategies encouraging the involvement of stakeholders at various levels. It also includes finding innovative solutions for problems of the education sector and promoting the use of digital tools (MiBACT, 2018).

Thus, some of the benefits derived from integrating cultural heritage in education include:

- Safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
- Achieving quality education.
- Improving learning experiences.
- Encouraging a multidisciplinary approach to learning (UNESCO, 2021).

In this part, we will realize the several challenges facing the education sector of today. The field of education has been subject to various disruptions over time; firstly, we are dealing with an outdated educational system that does not meet the requirements of the 21st century (Hannon, Thomas, Ward, and Beresford, 2019, p. 6), and secondly, we are coping with the aftermath of the COVID pandemic that has underlined the existing weaknesses of the education system. However, the COVID pandemic must be considered as an opportunity for us to rethink the traditional methods and materials of the education sector. Thus, the future of education lies in the answers to the following questions: "What are we learning? And what are we teaching?"

Given that the aim of cultural heritage education is to achieve lifelong learning, then we must shift to the formation of new educational pathways, which are flexible and of interdisciplinary nature (Achille and Fiorillo, 2022, p. 2566). Here, collective creativity and innovation are at the center of the approach towards the future of education. We suggest the facilitation of a new relationship between cultural heritage, communities, and education, where communities have a great responsibility in promoting cultural heritage in education. Thus, this ‘cultural heritage–communities–education’ relationship can lead to the improvement of learning processes by designing and utilizing new theoretical, practical, as well as digital materials.

3. Power to the People

As we enter the era of what we call ‘Power to the People’, we are becoming more aware of the significance of empowering communities to define solutions for their own problems. For this reason, the potential of community participation must be exploited, in both the field of cultural heritage and education, to generate effective transformation.

Since local communities have strong connections to their cultural heritage, they take great responsibility in ensuring its safeguarding. Therefore, local communities are motivated to actively participate in designing, realizing, and evaluating projects and policies related to cultural heritage (Rifkin and Kangere, 2001, p. 39). This has prompted UNESCO to assess how well cultural heritage can encourage local communities to participate (UNESCO, 2019). Similarly, the PNE is dependent on the level of community participation and decision-making that cultural heritage can generate, allowing it to become a widespread and evolving source of benefit (Achille and Fiorillo, 2022, p. 2566).

Community participation is a process through which local communities give meaning to and support the safeguarding of cultural heritage. In return, cultural heritage plays a crucial role in local communities by influencing their development at cultu-

ral, social, and economic levels (Court and Wijesuriya, 2015, pp. 3-5). Thus, community participation can produce a shared cultural identity and sense of belonging, it can ensure social cohesion and capacity building (Sacco, Ferilli, and Blessi, 2018, p. 8), and it can contribute to achieving sustainable development.

In the last few years, we have witnessed the shift in interest from traditional education that takes place in classrooms to untraditional learning that occurs outside schools, and local communities play a key role in contributing to this transformation. Thus, local communities can contribute to cultural heritage education by:

- Encouraging schools to find local solutions for the problems of cultural heritage education.
- Relying on knowledge and skills found in local communities and utilizing it as a source of cultural heritage education.
- Promoting young people's sense of belonging and strengthening their cultural identity.
- Encouraging intergenerational dialogue between young people and members of their communities.

Through intergenerational dialogue, education can become a more fruitful experience where learners and community members interact and contribute to the learning process. Since culture-based knowledge and skills are traditionally passed down from generation to generation, then relying on intergenerational dialogue as a resource for cultural heritage education is inevitable. Through intergenerational communication, young people will be able to identify and share the values of cultural heritage. Once the link between the youth and cultural heritage is established, they will feel obligated to ensure its continuity and safeguarding (UNESCO, 2021).

4. *Learning from Experience*

Local communities can support development of schools by relying on informal education that takes place in informal learning structures such as museums, libraries, recreational centers, theatres, etc. Museums, for example, are considered the institutions through which local communities can cooperate with schools and contribute to the enhancement of the education sector. This is aligned with the alternative definition of museums announced by ICOM (2019, p. 1), which defines them as spaces that encourage the participation of communities in the collection, preservation, investigation, interpretation, exhibition, and enhancement of their cultural heritage (ICOM, 2019). Thus, according to the Guide for Local Governments, Communities and Museums, museums are acknowledged for training and educating young people about cultural heritage (OECD and ICOM, 2019).

Museums have always been recognized as cultural institutions capable of supporting education. However, their use as a source of knowledge has not been fully established (OECD and ICOM, 2019). In this case, it is important to strengthen the relationship between museums and schools by transforming museums into incubators where various actors can collaborate to enhance the learning experiences. We will consider ‘active learning’ as a method in which students are able to contribute to the learning process by deciding what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. When integrated in the museum structure, active learning allows students and other visitors to be physically and mentally involved in the thinking, processing, and unraveling of information (Monteagudo-Fernández, Gómez-Carrasco, and Chaparro-Sainz, 2021, p. 3). Here, Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) play a significant role in the enhancement of the educational experience of museums. Today, ICTs, in their various forms, have reshaped how we experience cultural heritage. They can support research on the conservation and valorization of cultural heritage, as well as the archiving and sharing of information. For this reason, it can affect the ap-

proach to teaching and learning in cultural heritage education, particularly that takes place within museums. ICTs can allow greater access to information, making the learning experience a 'discovered' one rather than a 'taught' one. They can support an active, experiential, and personalized approach to learning.



Fig. 1 - MUSE (n.a.) Digital Tools for Enhancing Museum Experience. Available at: <https://www.archeomatica.it/ict-beni-culturali/go-muse-la-nuova-app-in-realta-aumentata-che-riporta-in-vita-rettili-preistorici-e-dinosauri> (Accessed: 3 October 2022) ©MUSE



Fig. 2 - European Commission (n.a.) Students Interacting with Digital Cultural Heritage. Available at: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-heritage/cultural-heritage-in-eu-policies/european-digital-heritage> (Accessed: 3 October 2022) ©European Commission

Being an adaptable process, informal education can also occur as a result of collaborations between various other cultural and social entities present in communities and their territories. As an attempt to extract the potentials of such collaborations, we will examine two projects where this ‘cultural heritage – communities – education’ relationship was also embraced. The EDUCACIÓ360 Project, also known as the ‘full-time learning’ project, was launched in Catalonia, Spain to provide and enhance out-of-school learning and activities. In this initiative, out-of-school learning is considered just as important as in-school education. Therefore, the aim of this project is to ensure that out-of-school learning is integrated within the curriculum as a high-quality, didactic, and dynamic process, capable of delivering valuable learning outcomes (Hannon, Thomas, Ward, and Beresford, 2019, p. 31). As one of its pilot projects, the Etcètera de Tallers Educatius project connects the cultural facilities and cultural life of the city to its youth, providing them with alternative learning spaces. This project is capable of improving the cultural fabric of the city while also enhancing the skills of the youth by creating workshops that include experts from various institutions. Another pilot project is L’Hospitalet, which turns the city into an educational ecosystem by utilizing outdoor spaces, organizing afterschool activities, and creating partnerships among schools, cultural organizations, and local authorities (Hannon, Thomas, Ward, and Beresford, 2019, p. 30).



Fig. 3 – Educació360 (n.a.) Educació360 Project Website. Available at: <https://www.educacio360.cat/> (Accessed: 3 October 2022) ©Educació360

The Kuopio Cultural Pathways program was intended to familiarize the youth of Kuopio, Finland with the cultural life around their city. By making sure that all students have access to Kuopio's cultural services, this project aims at enhancing students' well-being through arts and culture. This project included the realization of tools through which teachers can facilitate cultural heritage education, schools and cultural institutions can collaborate, and schools and cultural communities can develop (Hannon, Thomas, Ward, and Beresford, 2019, p. 38). These pathways bring the youth closer to their arts and culture by including cultural and social structures such as museums, libraries, galleries, theatres, exhibitions, etc. Among its various outcomes, this program produced creative and innovative learning methods and materials for improving cultural heritage education in schools (Hannon, Thomas, Ward, and Beresford, 2019, p. 39). This has established a new teaching environment where teachers, artists, and cultural experts can join their efforts.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, cultural heritage, communities, and education are powerful assets in their own right; however, when combined, they can be unrivaled. This combination allows us to shift away from traditional approaches towards more contemporary methods for problem-solving, especially when responding to a crisis. Since cultural heritage is capable of providing benefits far beyond the cultural sector, its consideration for the education sector is inevitable. Local communities are the sources of creativity and innovation; therefore, they can play a vital role in the advancement of both cultural heritage and education. When considering the future of education, informal learning is recognized as a process through which new and improved learning methods and materials can be produced. As an end note, if we consider cultural heritage as the 'core', education as the 'engine' of change, and local communities as the 'binding' force between these elements, it is only then that we can ensure effective transformation.

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