Chapter 9

The Heritage and Education Research Network: Place Value on Cultural Heritage in Europe

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ABSTRACT

Heritage education secures such processes of social empowerment as enabling us to competently preserve a commonly shared past and our own cultural heritage as European citizens. The challenge, therefore, consists in setting up communication channels between key stakeholders involved in heritage management and promoting the engagement of society, since it is the society that constitutes the main recipient and legatee of heritage itself. In order to achieve this objective, the authors suggest generate an interdisciplinary, multi-agent network which focuses on researching the treatment of heritage education in different European countries from the conceptual level to that of practice and implementation, taking account of the treatment it has received in the design of policies and implementation tools. This chapter contains the innovation in tackling the challenge; the relation to existing efforts at a European and/or international level; the expected impact; the potential for innovation versus risk level; and the work plan.

INTRODUCTION

Education occupies a very important place in the global development agenda and within the United Nations’ sustainable development objectives. The essence of these aspirations and goals in the field of education is encapsulated in the Objective of Sustainable Development, which intends to guarantee an inclusive and equitable high-quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for everyone (UNESCO, 2016). At the World Education Forum in 2015 the Incheon Declaration1 was approved,
which entrusted to UNESCO the direction and coordination of the Education Agenda 2030, within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. All this resulted in the Education for All Framework 2030, which regards education as a mechanism for responding to the challenges currently facing mankind. Furthermore, education also occupies a position of fundamental importance within the World Bank’s 2018 report on global development, which analyses expert opinions on development and concludes that education is perceived to be an essential, necessary, and fundamental aspect of development, and in order to face the challenges of the 21st century (Marope, Griffin, & Gallagher, 2017; Wahlström, 2016). Without education, there is no heritage because consciousness of identity cannot exist and, therefore, links are not created between cultural goods and people, groups, and societies (Fontal, 2013; Mun, 2018).

Education is the activity which ensures that heritage is known, understood, valued, and enjoyed. We become aware of it, enjoy it through learning, and transmit it. If we are not educated – within a formal, non-formal, or informal framework – about these issues, heritage will mean nothing to us; we do not feel part of it. As a result of this, education is for heritage much more than just necessary, it is absolutely essential (Garner, Kaplan, & Pugh, 2016; Islamoglu, 2018).

European Union countries, in addition to all the assets declared to be part of heritage by their own legislations, have 388 assets which appear on the World Heritage List. This figure represents 36.8% of the total of 1052 assets (814 are cultural assets, 203 natural assets and 35 mixed assets), located in 165 member states. The 28 countries that comprise the European Union have acknowledged heritage goods. Italy (51), Spain (44), France (42) and Germany (42) are those which have received the most acknowledgements. For its part, Italy is the country with the world’s largest number of acknowledged goods, followed by China and Spain. Education about all this cultural legacy has featured in the main international doctrinal documents since the Athens Charter of 1931 (UNESCO, 1931) and has been consolidated – very clearly since 1972 – (UNESCO, 1972), as an essential discipline in the management of cultural heritage, capable of addressing issues which are very important for the European context, such as identity and cultural belonging (Cuenca, Molina-Puche, & Martin-Caceres, 2018; Lobovikov-Katz, 2009; Scalise, 2015; Rivero, Fontal, García-Ceballos, & Martínez, 2018); the European Heritage Label and its educational dimension is a significant example of this because of its promotional and educational value.

The European Union is highly committed in its effort to increase and place value on knowledge of cultural heritage by means of the Europe, a common heritage programme, within which it has developed a comprehensive programme for the dissemination of and access to European Heritage. The Parliament and the Council of Europe have very clearly lent their support to encouraging the cultural and educational uses of heritage (Jagielska-Burdul & Piotr, 2019; Cerri 2007), publishing in 2014 two key documents which define the policy on heritage education over the next decade: Towards an integrated approach to Cultural Heritage for Europe (European Comission, 2014) and Mapping of Cultural Heritage Actions in European Union Policies, Programmes and Activities (European Comission, 2017). In both texts, deficiencies and needs regarding the treatment of cultural heritage are recognised. They point directly to education as a means of overcoming them, regarding it as a key discipline in the management of cultural heritage and, by extension, of achieving sustainable economic growth and social cohesion (Copeland, 2007; Koutrelakos, 2013). Within the Horizon 2020 programme, one initiative stands out: the Joint Programming Initiative in Cultural Heritage and Global Change, which urges the Member States to develop strategic lines of research relating to the preservation and use of cultural heritage in the context of global change, striving for interdisciplinary cooperation between the sciences, arts, and humanities for the benefit of citizens. Another component of Horizon 2020 where cultural heritage and education have special importance is the Social Challenge “Europe in a changing world, inclusive, innovative, and