

CHRISTOPH WULF

Intangible Cultural Practices as Part of the Common Heritage of Nature and Culture

There are several UNESCO programs that strive to make as many people as possible in all parts of the world aware of the importance of the common heritage of nature and culture for understanding the past, present, and future of our planet. Their goal is to encourage people to act in a sustainable way. The starting point is the realization that today there are hardly any areas of nature that are not influenced or even shaped by humans. Humans have become a telluric power that determines the future of the planet and whose future is at the same time shaped by the effects of their actions (Wulf, 2013, 2022b). This situation is characteristic of the Anthropocene, and five programs have been developed in UNESCO to respond to this challenge. These programs are an expression of the effort to creatively shape our common heritage in a future-oriented way. All of them are of considerable importance for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, they make a particularly important contribution to education for sustainable development. Education for sustainable development should be inclusive, equitable, high-quality, and lifelong, and contribute to a vibrant and sustainable ‘world community’ through global citizenship education.

Global citizenship refers to belonging to the planetary community and requires us to consider the rights and responsibilities that this entails. Our responsibility refers not only to other people, but also to animals and plants. Education for a global community is at the center of a new view of humanity and the world, which requires social participation and cultural sharing. It obligates the individual to the world community and the world community to the individual. Sustainable global citizenship involves a sense of belonging to a wider human community. It emphasizes political, economic, social and cultural interdependence and interaction between the local, the national, and the global (Bernecker & Grätz, 2018).

Because they embrace both global and local aspects at the same time, the five UNESCO programs for the transmission of natural and cultural heritage make an important contribution to a cultural education for sustainable development and to a way of participating in the global community that involves the senses and emo-

tions (Wulf, 2022a). They develop models that help to reduce violence against nature, against other people and against oneself. They represent important areas of cultural learning. One of its tasks today is to develop a changed understanding of nature not as an object but as a fellow world. This requires further research and development in cultural education.

World heritage

The best known is the World Heritage Program, which began with a convention in 1972 and has since involved 1154 World Heritage Sites in 167 countries around the world. These World Heritage Sites are outstanding testaments to past cultures and unique natural landscapes. They are sensory testimonies to the diversity and dignity of cultures. What they have in common is their universal value, their importance not only to local or national communities but to humanity as a whole. The protection and sustainable conservation of these sites is therefore the responsibility of the entire international community. Examples of World Heritage Sites include the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania, Machu Picchu in Peru, the Acropolis in Greece.

World documentary heritage

Since 1992, the World Documentary Heritage has contained important evidence of cultural turning points in history. More than 400 documents from 21 countries are part of the Memory of the World program. They are of exceptional value, raise awareness of the significance of historical events and developments, and serve as sources of knowledge for shaping present and future societies. They are preserved and made accessible in archives, libraries and museums. These testimonies include the Gutenberg Bible, The Score of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, as well as the colonial archives of Benin, Senegal and Tanzania.

Geoparks

Geoparks are regions with important fossil sites, caves, mines or rock formations. They offer the opportunity to better understand planet Earth and the conditions of life by studying the traces of the past. Currently, 169 geoparks have been designated in 44 countries worldwide. These geoparks are model regions for sustainable development. They work on viable future options for a region's landscape and address global societal challenges such as the finite nature of natural (especially geological) resources and climate change. Examples include the Bergstrasse-Odenwald Geopark, the Swabian Alb, the German-Polish Muskau Faltenbogen/Łuk Mużakowa.

Biosphere reserves

With its 727 biosphere reserves worldwide, UNESCO represents model regions and learning sites for sustainable development. In 131 countries it is made clear how sustainable development can succeed in a concrete landscape and how nature conservation and economic factors can be brought together. More than 275 million people live in these biosphere reserves worldwide. In Argentina, the delta of the Paraná River, in Ethiopia Lake Fana, and in Brazil Central Amazonia are among the bioreserves.

Intangible cultural heritage

Of particular importance for education and socialization is the living intangible cultural heritage (ICH), which is shaped by human knowledge and skills. It is an expression of creativity, conveys continuity and identity, shapes social coexistence, enables experiences of alterity (Wulf 2016), and contributes to sustainable development. More than 500 intangible cultural heritage practices are now listed in the international UNESCO lists, and more than 130 are on the German national list. The 2003 Convention is the basis for the selection. Examples are organ building and organ music in Germany, yoga in India, rumba from Cuba (UNESCO, 2003, 2005). Intangible Cultural Practices play an important role in the formation of sustainable development in the world community. These practices include: (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals, and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO, 2003). Of particular importance are the human body, the performative side of practices, their mimetic appropriation, and their local yet global character (Wulf, 2022a, 2022c). Many millions of children and young people regularly participate in these practices, which are used to create sustainable communities and living cultures. So far, their educational, formative, and socializing effects have received little attention from educational science.

ICH as a challenge for cultural, aesthetic, and arts education

In order to win people over to an appreciation of cultural diversity and the importance of protecting and advancing intangible cultural heritage, inter- and trans-cultural perspectives are required, today more than ever. Today, many people no longer belong to just one culture, but partake of various cultural traditions. Intercultural or transcultural education is a means of supporting them in dealing with the cultural differences inherent within themselves, in their immediate surroundings and in encounters with others. If understanding others relates to understanding oneself and vice versa, then the process of intercultural education is also a process of learning about, of educating oneself.

If successful, it will establish the insight into the fundamental impossibility of understanding the other. Given the disenchantment of the world and the decrease of cultural diversity the danger arises that people may prevalently encounter themselves and their own heritage and practices, and that this lack of otherness will dramatically reduce the richness of experiencing oneself and the world. If the reduction of cultural diversity threatens the richness of human life, however, then fostering cultural diversity must also be a central concern of education. Education today is an intercultural task in all parts of world society (Wulf, 1995, 1998) in which encountering and coming to terms with foreign cultures, with the otherness of one's own culture and with the other inherent in oneself are of central importance.

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