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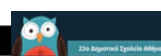
Newsletter

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# The Role of Cultural Heritage in Education



YoungArchers



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# Disclaimer

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# Young Archers Project

The Young Archers project is a European program promoting the protection of heritage buildings in partner cities (Paris, Nicosia, Athens, and Barcelona), by developing educational materials and tools for primary schools. The project aims to raise awareness on accessibility and inclusion in educational contexts. It also outlines common values for the protection of architectural heritage and guides primary teachers to enhance the cognitive and soft skills of their students (9-12y/o) through accessible team activities and experiential learning.

To achieve this, Young Archers focuses on providing primary school teachers with an accessible digital educational manifold game to be used both by teachers in classrooms and in field activities to facilitate assimilation of the new knowledge and trigger creativity among their students, and by independent users. Furthermore, the game will help familiarise the players with the architectural heritage outside their own urban environment and at the European level.

## **The Role of Cultural Heritage in Education: Nurturing Understanding and Appreciation**

Cultural heritage in its tangible and intangible form can be a remarkable tool in the hands of an educator, providing a dynamic platform in which students can connect the dots between history, sciences, architecture and many other subjects. Educating young children can serve as a bridge between the past, present, and future. In this article, we will briefly explain what cultural heritage is and how it is interlinked with education.

Cultural heritage is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions, and values. According to UNESCO (2009) "Cultural heritage includes artifacts, monuments, a group of buildings and sites, museums that have a diversity of values including symbolic, historic, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific, and social significance".

Cultural Heritage is often expressed as either Intangible or Tangible Cultural Heritage (ICOMOS, 2002).

Cultural Heritage can be distinguished in:

- Built Environment (Buildings, Townscapes, Archaeological remains)
- Natural Environment (Rural landscapes, Coasts and shorelines, Agricultural heritage)
- Artifacts (Books & Documents, Objects, Pictures)

Education plays a crucial role in understanding, valuing, caring and enjoying our cultural heritage. It provides opportunities to learn the history and culture of one's own and other societies, which will cultivate the understanding and appreciation of other societies, cultures and religions. Particularly for young people, education provides the opportunity to create values of respect and appreciation of diversity. At the same time, education can empower those who are marginalized or excluded from participating in discussions and make them participate. Learning about cultural heritage will allow students to understand how they and others have been affected by socially inclusive or exclusive policies, which ultimately influences the values, choices and judgments of individuals.

Historical buildings and architecture are like exciting treasures that help us learn about many interesting topics, cutting across almost all curriculum subjects. When we look at them, we can travel back in time to discover how people used to make art and design things. In exploring the history of art, and built heritage allows students to analyze design

styles, understand artistic movements, and appreciate the aesthetic choices made by societies. The study of architecture extends beyond the artistic style, offering a practical application for mathematical concepts such as symmetry, proportion, and geometry. Moreover, these structures can teach children a lot about environmental science, and sustainable or unsustainable practices. Additionally, the historical significance embedded in these buildings enriches history education, providing students with immersive experiences that connect them to the past.

In conclusion, the role of cultural heritage in education is multifaceted and indispensable. By recognizing both tangible and intangible aspects, education becomes a transformative tool for nurturing understanding, appreciation, and empowerment of children and teachers alike.



Figure 1: One of the stops of the Nicosia tour by the children of Morningside Montessori. The children listened to the guided audio tour and we discussed the architectural style and the interlinked with the history of the island.

# A Journey Through Audio-Guided Tours

## Beyond-Class Ideas in Schools of Nicosia and Athens

In the heart of the Young Archers project lies something quite special – Accessible Audio Guides. These audio guides are thoughtfully designed to complement selected architectural paths in partner cities, including Paris, Nicosia, Athens, and Barcelona. The overarching goal is to facilitate the assimilation of new knowledge while sparking creativity among students. A significant aspect of this initiative is the commitment to accessibility, ensuring that all project materials, including the audio guides, are readily available to as many children as possible, including those with disabilities.



Figure 2: Connecting the dots between the architecture and the history of Nicosia

The audio guides play an important role in shaping educational walks for students and educators. As participants walk the designated architectural routes, they engage with the narration provided by the audio guides. These narrations offer a rich exploration of specific buildings interconnected along the route, with the path itself expertly crafted by the project's specialists. Students, accompanied by their teachers, have the unique opportunity to absorb information about the architectural style, historical and cultural contexts, as well as the past and present uses of each building. This immersive and informative experience not only broadens the students' understanding of the architectural heritage of these cities but also cultivates a sense of appreciation for the diverse stories embedded within their built environments.

## **Morningside Guided Tour Through Nicosia's Heritage Buildings**

The Morningside guided tour in Nicosia took the children through the historic old part of the city. The teachers opted for a strategic approach, guiding the students to listen to audio guides at various buildings along the route. Additionally, they selected two specific buildings, the Municipality of Nicosia and NiMac, for the children to spend more time exploring, collecting information, and immersing themselves in the details.





Figure 3: Discussing the role and authority of the Municipal Council in the decision-making process regarding architectural heritage

Upon visiting the Municipality of Nicosia, the students conducted an interview with the civil engineer. Each child played a unique role, such as a journalist, cameraman, note-taker, and more. They raised insightful questions about architecture, cultural heritage maintenance, and traditional architecture. Discussions included the criteria for deciding whether a building should be preserved or demolished, measures taken by the Municipality to safeguard architectural heritage, decision-making authority within the Municipality, the role of the Municipal council members, and the responsibilities of the Mayor. To everyone's delight, the children were unexpectedly invited into the Mayor's office, where they had the chance to pose numerous questions about his role in decision-making and his influence over the council.

The tour continued with a visit to NiMac, also known as the Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre or Nicosia Old Powerhouse. Originally housing the first electrical power station in Cyprus during the British colonial period, the children interviewed the Director of NiMac. Their questions explored the architectural style, construction materials, historical industrial uses, and its present-day role as a contemporary art center. This building served as an ideal case study for the children to comprehend that a building's purpose

evolves over time, challenging them to reconsider their perceptions and approaches to architecture.



Figure 4: Conducting an interview with the civil engineer of the Municipality of Nicosia

## **The 22nd Primary School of Athens Explores the Historic Streets with Athens Walks**

The 22nd Primary School of Athens had an amazing tour with Athens Walks, wandering through the beautiful streets of Athens following a carefully planned route made by the Young Archers project. They went through the main part of the city, checking out buildings with important architectural value. These buildings, which included styles like neoclassical and eclectic to modern constructions, were from the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. Famous architects designed them, and each building had connections to important historical events in the city. Using audio guides, the children got to explore the different architectural styles, talk about what the buildings were used for in the past, and find out what they're used for now. As they wandered around, the students also pointed out buildings in danger, sparking conversations about why it's so important to save them.



Figure 5: Exploring Athens' architectural heritage

Through their engagement with the Young Archers project and the collection of information, particularly on endangered buildings, children gain valuable insights into their local architectural heritage. This hands-on experience fosters a sense of civic responsibility as they become aware of the importance of preserving historical landmarks. Equipped with this knowledge, these children are poised to be informed and active citizens in the future, advocating for the protection of their community's cultural legacy and contributing to the sustainable development of their surroundings.

## The end of an inspiring project

While the Young Archers project may have officially concluded, its impact continues to resonate, particularly in the hearts and minds of educators. The project has served as a catalyst, planting seeds of inspiration that are set to flourish in classrooms. Educators are now equipped with a wealth of ideas and knowledge garnered from the project and a series of valuable resources available to be used. As they carry forward the innovative concepts cultivated by the Young Archers initiative, these educators are poised to

transform traditional teaching approaches, fostering a more engaging and enriched learning experience for their students.

