BRIDGING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SOCIAL INNOVATION THROUGH COLLABORATIVE SPACES: THE CASE OF LACE MAKERS

HELGA MARIA COSTA FREITAS POMPEU[1], GISLENE FEITEN HAUBRICH[2]

Resumo | Abstract

The article examines the relevance of collaborative spaces for preserving and revitalizing cultural heritage, by exploring living cultural practices (UNESCO 2003) of lace makers in Vila do Conde. Cultural heritage embodies solidarity and shared practices, and its significance lies in the social bonds it generates. Innovation reframes heritage as dynamic relationships within communities, where meaning emerges from social interactions and sustains collective identity. It allows for incremental technology and new ways of connecting knowledge. Collaborative spaces in handmade lace production function as social ecosystems of learning and knowledge preservation, where intergenerational practices strengthen community bonds, foster innovation, and support sustainable cultural and economic development.

Based on the case study of this community, the research reflects on cultural values of artisanal practice and its role in fostering community meaning and social innovation. It combines interviews, observations and documents, and the analysis developed through dialogical discourse with emphasis on polyphony (Bakhtin). Following a narrative approach shifted focus from the object to the cultural references in their locus of production and reproduction, contributing to sustainability.

Collaborative environments created by lace makers allowed them to develop essential competencies (World Economic Forum), such as creative thinking; resilience, flexibility, and agility; curiosity and continuous learning; leadership and social influence; and talent management. In this scenario, craftsmanship fosters self-knowledge, cohesion, and well-being, reinforcing belonging and sense of place. Integrating traditional practices into creative industries emerged as a strategy to prevent extinction, transforming craftsmanship into a driver of social and economic innovation aligned with the United Nations' eighth Sustainable Development Goal reinforcing inclusive growth and decent work.

Palavras-chave | Keywords

Cultural heritage; collaborative spaces; social innovation; craftsmanship; sustainability.

[1] UFMG, Brasil.
[2] Stockholm School of Economics.

Resumo biográfico | Short biography

Helga earned her PhD in Built Environment and Sustainable Heritage from the School of Architecture at UFMG, with a doctoral exchange at the University of Porto and technical collaboration with CITCEM – the Transdisciplinary Research Centre for Culture, Space and Memory. Her Master's degree in the Built Environment program at UFMG focused on Heritage Management, and current research explores cultural heritage through the interaction between the natural environment, the built environment, and society. As coordinator of Dáhlia Creative Studio, she designs and develops projects dedicated to living and dwelling spaces. Professional experience includes architecture and urbanism, visual arts, product design, and arts education, complemented by teaching roles in both basic and higher education. A former member of the Environmental Design Research Group at the School of Architecture, UFMG, Helga contributed to advancing the appreciation and preservation of cultural heritage in its multiple dimensions.