

Unesco nomination for Cursive Handwriting as Intangible World Heritage. (Latin alphabets).

Cursive handwriting represents a skill resulting from the evolution of the human species of which over time it has become an essential anthropological trait. The progressive weakening of his teaching - internationally known for its aesthetic and artistic value also as calligraphy - in the schools of the countries with the highest technological level and the contemporary competition with the increasingly widespread digital writing, are jeopardizing both the learning and the practice.

At the same time, scientific and pedagogical research is demonstrating that this replacement of cursive handwriting with digital writing is a phenomenon that damages the cognitive development of children since it does not favor the development of fine psychomotor skills and the combined reading-writing ability. These risks are connected with an alarming growth of specific learning disorders (SLDs) during the developmental age such as dysgraphia, dyslexia and dyscalculia which require re-educational, compensatory and dispensatory actions towards students with special educational needs (SEN); and this generates also additional costs to the education systems. Furthermore, the phenomenon is part of an impoverishment of basic skills (deskilling) which is caused by the massive use of digital and telematic teaching in a way that is often not complementary but rather substitutive of a multisensory approach to teaching; therefore, in spite of a current opinion, this pre-digital teaching is erroneously considered pedagogically obsolete whereas instead it appears in line with the most recent developments in cognitive psychology and, in particular, with the theory known as "embodied cognition". A holistic vision which places the individual in his inseparable totality of mind and body at the center of the learning process.

Therefore, it is deemed urgent to put in place adequate safeguard measures for "cursive

handwritings" derived from latin alphabet[1] on a global scale which, involving a broad transnational partnership, will lead to its candidacy as an intangible heritage of humanity recognized and protected by Unesco.

An educational, cultural and economic project that has the following objectives:

- to defend and promote this type of writing, starting from its teaching, relaunching its role in education systems with the support of teaching methodologies that are adequate from a scientific and pedagogical point of view .
- prevent, through its punctual practice in the critical stages of the developmental age, the onset of forms of cognitive disability.
- promote the lifelong practice of handwriting in adults to keep this skill alive and active over time by counteracting any phenomena of cultural regression that can lead to the so-called "functional illiteracy".
- enhance, by promoting access to and knowledge of, the documentary heritage codified through handwriting for its inestimable historical, cultural and artistic value.
- protect a materially "poor" and low-cost communication technology that is perpetuated thanks to a production chain of writing instruments whose recycling and reuse is widely practicable with a more sustainable impact on the eco-system compared to hi-tech tools and devices with a higher environmental impact.

This “Manifesto”, already endorsed by the Italian National Coordinating Board of Unesco Learning Cities, draws inspiration from the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** (1989), **from the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** *(with particular reference to Goal No. 4: “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”)* and by the 2020 **United Nations Resolution** which proclaimed the decade 2021-2030 as **the Decade for Healthy Aging** ; concept translated in terms of "maintenance of all functional capacities", namely not only physical but also intellectual.

Therefore, the bodies and personalities who have undersigned this document are appealing to the Italian National Commission for UNESCO and to the Italian government authorities to support this candidacy project and to foster the birth of an international partnership in the frame of the **Unesco Programme for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage** adopted by UNESCO in 2003 and ratified by Italy in 2007.

Edited by the founding members of the Promoting Committee to candidate cursive handwriting (latin alphabets) as an intangible heritage of humanity protected by Unesco.

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[1] According to this Programme of Unesco it is not possible to candidate “handwriting” in general as a human skill but only forms of writing belonging to definite linguistic communities. For the time being, the following handwritings have been recognized by Unesco under this programme: Chinese (2009), Mongolian (2013), Georgian (2016), Armenian (2019), Arabic (2021).