

Maria Vittoria Nodari, Giuseppe Dal Ferro

Istituto Rezzara Vicenza

Italy

Research - third age university's mature fruit

Socio cultural research qualifies Third Age Universities and is at the same time a cultural and essential contribution to our territory, intending the environment where different generations meet and live together.

Anthropological culture, normally passed on orally as not suitable for analytical scientific or linguistic studies, uses its own local language, dialects, and uses empiric arguments rather than rational ones, as one discovers studying traditions, customs and folklore.

Still more, this becomes evident in past people's lives, who have, with their style of life, expressed in word and deed the values they believed in. To investigate and learn about these well structured but simple lives, does not merely coincide with the study of local history, marked by great events: it's the construction of culture's and civilisation's history which explains the continuance of a people's identity even where circumstances of life have changed. It is a work of research in which our Universities have been solicited to take interest because of their peculiarity. Besides the mentioned research concerning anthropological culture, other forms of research can be realized in order to document the past: collections of documentary material and photographs, collections of objects and tools to expose in museums, reconstructions of historical facts.

Furthermore our Universities could apply themselves to sociological analysis of the present, in accordance with the methodology of social science, in order to underline problems and stimulate priority in social intervention. Between various researches, however, the mentioned local socio-cultural research seems to occupy a privileged position, because of its congeniality, as we said, to the role of transmitting a civilisation typical of adults and elderly.

If anthropological culture is to be considered as a vivid reality that can be transmitted or modified in course of time (yet holding on to some of its standards), it is at the same time an objective and a subjective reality that also refers to a frame of values. Socio-cultural research, therefore, has to keep in mind the globality of its research and it has to concern itself with the objectivity deriving from the analysis of its documents and articles; with the comparison of various memories in order to eliminate possible subjective deviations and to discover recurring standards, referring to underlying values of different behaviours.

Today recovering this cultural identity seems to be urgent considering the globalizing technological progress of the economical process, with its tendency to standardize; and mass media insinuating constantly a life style which tends to reduce people to mere consumers.

It is even more required for social mobility, due to immigration, which has brought different cultural models into our territory. If the indispensable future prospect isn't that of conflict and isolationism but of integration, then a better knowledge of

one's own culture and socio-cultural identity is wanted. In the opposite case conflicts, insecurity and standardization would be the inevitable result.

We'll speak about a concrete experience carried out by our university during the conference.