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Heritage Education in the Context of European Heritage Days in Slovenia

Never enough opportunities for getting acquainted with heritage

Nataša Gorenc, Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia,
natasa.gorenc@zvkds.si

Milena Antonić, Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia,
milena.antonc@zvkds.si

www.zvkds.si/dekd

www.facebook.com/dnevievrovskekulturnedediscine
www.facebook.com/Spoznaj-Varuj-Ohrani-ZVKDS

CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Conventions, national legislation and regulations generally govern or restrict our behavior. Despite adequate legislation, efficient institutions and excellent programs, the individual alone is able to revive and remember the stories of our past. Heritage belongs to all of us. Awareness of the value of our heritage is essential if people are to take care of it. European Heritage Days represent an excellent opportunity for engaging everyone in the identification, promotion and even restoration of cultural heritage. In that manner, the mission of individuals working in the heritage field should be the education of children, youth and adult non-professionals. Only well-educated and knowledgeable individuals can be sufficiently empowered to deal with the challenges of the 21st century and be able to help create a society of participatory democracy.

Our lesson learned on heritage education in the framework of European Heritage Days in last few years is as follows: the partnership of the education, heritage and culture sectors at the ministry and local level is necessary for successful, continual and systematic heritage education, taking into account an assumption of an already integrated approach to art and culture education. In this way one involved is free to explore and take advantage of every existing opportunity. However, nothing is there for granted, you have to face numerous challenges and problems, so result depends on perseverance, sometimes even stubbornness and inventiveness of individuals involved.

With the purpose of substantiating our very practical findings we tried to select the most diverse examples: Kindergarten Slovenska Bistrica, Drago Kobal Primary School, Construction High School Maribor, Anbot NGO, Slovenian community in Italy and Italian community in Slovenia.

We discuss these examples in terms of the following criteria:

- performance in accordance with the EHD and Heritage Week principles,
- collaboration with heritage or art professionals and NGOs on common project,
- cooperation in local environment.

THEMATIC APPROACH TO SLOVENIAN EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING

The start of European Heritage Days in Slovenia in **1991** was not so easy. In some countries EHDs were immediate success, while in Slovenia, the public and the media did not respond to them as well as we had expected. How to approach the EHD while we knew that cultural heritage was the domain of experts: it was barely included in school programmes or tourist services, and it was not properly represented in the public media. The organization of the first EHD in Slovenia was also interrupted by the war. Due to insufficient knowledge of the importance of this European festival and lack of experience, the decision taken in the first year was to organize the EHDs in buildings intended for protocol uses, where rich art collections were kept. In September of 1991 a free tour of the castle of Brdo and collection was organized. The response of the public was modest, yet good. It confirmed the belief that more attractive events should be organized. Simultaneously, we took part in a Council of Europe project called Baroque Routes. We were aware of the need to establish a starting-point to attract experts and raise their interest in the promotion of cultural heritage and attract the general public, since a knowledge of cultural heritage would also foster an interest in its protection (Batič, 1998).

For the project, run and coordinated by Cultural Heritage Administration at the time, it was decided that it should primarily be communicated through books - guides to cultural monuments, which also presented the annual theme of the EHDs. Up to the year 2014, 18 books were published in the series. Over half of these have been translated into English and some of them also in other languages. This means 750 stories and chapters on Baroque monuments, vernacular architecture, Art Nouveau, medieval, industrial and 20th century architecture, on Jože Plečnik, Primož Trubar, restoration, conservation, archaeology, intangible heritage etc.

The further decision was taken to organize exhibitions and tours of monuments on the basis of selected annual themes. In **1992**, a renowned expert in the field of Baroque art was invited to write a study and present the Baroque art and way of life to the public. Publication was translated into French, English, German and Italian. Great efforts were made and the cost was high, yet sales were minimal. But the public response was disappointing, and that of the media even more so. The question was how to continue. Should we concentrate on events and additionally prepare publication in less than a year? The concept of EHDs in Slovenia was presented at a meeting of coordinators and met with a very positive response, which made us more confident about continuing, despite the modest beginnings. The next year 1993, we introduced the theme: In the footsteps of Roman Soldiers. The publication was designed to accompany walks through Slovenia and introduce the remnants of the times when the territory was a part of the Roman provinces of Venetia et Histria, Panonia and Noricum. The idea was to emphasize presence of heritage all around us, when we walk through a town, climb a hill, descend to a valley or drive through a landscapes of Slovenia. The books authors provided a guided tour to the monuments en route. The response of the media and the public was still rather poor (Batič, 1998).

In **1994** the initiative was taken to involve all the regional Institutes for the protection of natural and cultural heritage. Ethnologist-conservators prepared the first guidebook relating to their field, introducing the most interesting renovated ethnological monuments. Tours of monuments guided by the authors of the book were organized. The response of schools was relatively good: the presentations of ethnological cultural monuments involved over 600 children all over Slovenia. Recent achievements helped defining our objectives:

- encourage experts to introduce their achievements and findings in a popular way to the general public;
- highlight the pressing issues facing the monument protection service;
- attract school children;
- raise public interest in cultural heritage so as to establish the foundations for non-governmental, private and similar institutions and associations in the field of protection of cultural heritage;
- forge links between cultural heritage and tourism;
- educate the media and through them point out the pressing issues of protection of cultural heritage.

In 1995 the theme was Historical Parks and Gardens. A book under the same title was well received. We invited also school children and teachers to join us as individuals or groups to join us. The popular magazine for young people, Gea, organized a competition on the theme The Gardens of My Dreams, The Park of My Dreams. Because of the relevance of the theme at the time, an international symposium under the title Restoration of Historical Parks met to select papers for a publication. The theme attracted national television which prepared a series of eight programmes on the basis of our publication.

We could say that, in **1998**, the EHD crossed the threshold of anonymity: that year, the events illustrating life in medieval cities attracted 10 thousand visitors. After the initial not so extensive cooperation with the national TV, an idea was born to follow and honor the EHD through a special show; last year we had the 18th edition of the show titled Image of an

Image. Image of an image for us is more than a broadcast. It has educational character and the archive of the show is a truly interesting, valuable, thoroughly professional and compelling TV record of the EHDs in Slovenia. An overall and complete presentation of annual theme: both, substantively, territorially and in terms of different stakeholders involved. It shows relevant objectives and achievements.

Initially, the EHD concept in Slovenia was shaped by institutions with primary activities in the preservation, restoration and promotion of cultural heritage. However, having been convinced that heritage can only be protected by the people, because it belongs to the people, we started to expand our network of participants to encourage NGOs and other organizations, which were not so closely related with the heritage field. We were particularly successful in **2005**, when we tried to use the topic of bringing the EHDs closer to the general public with the concept of intangible cultural heritage. This was a bit more than a year after the adoption of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and two years before Slovenia ratified the Convention. In addition to various events, which were largely shaped by different NGOs and other associations, we published a book *Intangible Cultural Heritage* and these were the first steps towards the protection and popularization of such a heritage in Slovenia.

Castles, fortresses and city walls was the focus of **2006**. There are more than 300 castles around the country, but only in two of them the original interior and equipment have been preserved. Others were destroyed and looted after the second world war. Situation has a bit improved from that time by renovation of some castles, but the challenge of management still exists.

In framework of the events of the EHD 2009, Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia organized in a joint action of Council of Europe and European Commission the 2nd European Heritage Forum focused on creativity and innovation, exploring the input to the process of networking experiences and creating the right conditions for innovation and creativity in the heritage sector. The goal was to encourage people to take a new look at heritage in the sense of *new images of heritage – new audience!*

In the years **2009, 2010, 2011** and **2012** Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia very literally followed European Year proclaimed by the European Union. A Century of Benefiting Heritage was the title of **2013** and marking a century of organized heritage protection service in Slovenia.

2015 was the anniversary of EHD in Slovenia. It's 25th edition called for a Celebrations. In the context of European theme Heritage and Communities in **2016** we have chosen a title of the theme, Heritage Around Us. The theme addressed heritage communities: just as we create heritage at home when we decide to conserve a valuable object, story, knowledge or piece of wisdom for our descendants. One can easily see that the decision and agreement of a community on what is worth conserving for those to come after us are important factors in any environment. The duty of all of us involved in heritage is to draw the attention of the young and the not so young to the fact that heritage is not just big, important buildings but can also be something small, something that is overlooked or seemingly insignificant. This year's topic gave us the opportunity to call attention to heritage that is at risk, to heritage that is disappearing – rural and industrial heritage and also a part of heritage that is still not recognized as such in the general public consciousness: the architecture of the twentieth century.

This year's logo for the European Heritage Days spoke for itself. The shape of the square was chosen because of its contradiction with the circle. Symbolically, the circle encompasses the infinity of nature and the square allows for human intervention and inclusion of specific motifs and forms. There was also a play of words in action: »DedlŠČIna

OKoli nas« translates to »Heritage Around Us«. In the Slovenian we found the words »išči« which means »to search« and a word »oko«, meaning »an eye«. With this word play we encouraged the public to search for the heritage not only with a watchful eye, but also with all of our senses in order to create a specific form of sensitization of heritage. We had 4 hundred events in 148 towns.

EHD'S ON WINGS OF HERITAGE - OPENINGS ARE A BIG STUFF SOMETIMES

We have exercised the same concept of planning and executing of opening events since 2005, sometimes with more, sometimes with less success. We usually start in winter when we choose a location for the opening event, we connect to the municipality and try to inspire the entire local community, institutions and NGOs from the fields of cultural and natural heritage, education, tourism and so on to cooperate and encourage everyone to add a piece of stone to the mosaic. Sometimes it is not easy to cooperate at the local level, even with such a project as the EHD, where the interests of different parties are not so opposite. We have to point out that organization and performance of opening events usually mark the places where they're held with extremely positive experiences of community and pride regarding our common past, and with the realization that our individual efforts become much more meaningful when they're tied together in common activities.

REGIONAL MEETINGS – FRESH WIND TO SLOVENIAN EHD'S

We think that direct contact with people is of utmost importance. We should invest more time and money to educate people. Web and social media is a necessity of today, but we use too much time and money on that. We should dedicate more of our resources into direct communication with people. With the intention of educating target groups and for enabling more direct contact with event organizers, we took another approach in 2013, which has proved to be extremely useful and effective.

The aims of our regional meetings include development and engagement of audiences and potential participants. In this regard, we have defined some objectives and principles:

- we encourage the cooperation of the specialist and non-specialist public in identifying, promoting and renovating cultural heritage;
- we take a holistic approach both from the point of view of heritage as an indivisible idea and with regard to the activity of people who develop their creativity in multiple spheres in order to approach heritage;
- we are committed to the integration of the Slovene cultural sphere even outside the borders of Slovenia;
- we include the various ethnic communities living in Slovenia;
- we attempt to fill the gaps created by the frameworks of institutional functioning through inter-institutional and cross-sectoral cooperation.

The feedback is very encouraging. The statistics show that more than half of the overall events held in Slovenia since the first EHD (25 years ago) have taken place in the last three years.

These conferences represent a non-formal expression of adult education. Attended by more than 500 participants from a wide range of organisations, from museums and non-governmental organizations to schools, in 2016 they indicated that panel discussions offer an excellent opportunity for local-level networking.

We do not like to be very formal, preferring a relaxed and creative atmosphere in which participants can easily establish contacts and exchange ideas. We therefore call those half - day training sessions meetings. In the first part of the meeting we engage different types of experts to present the EHD theme, different aspects of heritage protection, heritage teaching methods, etc. The second part is devoted to sharing examples of good EHD practices. We look closely to evaluation reports and pick the best ones out, which provide valuable sharing of experience for EHD veterans and great encouragement for the newcomers. All together there were more than 50 speakers. We have 12 regions, so we make a few thousand kilometers around a country in winter and early spring even though Slovenia is a small country. In 2016 we organized one of them even in Italy.

Last year we recorded a total of 500 participating organisations, a third of which were schools or kindergartens. Many schools dedicated an entire week in September to Celebrations – last year's main theme alongside Industrial Heritage. This represents a remarkable success.

HERITAGE GOES TO SCHOOLS AND KINDERGARTENS – PARTNERSHIP IS A KEY TO SYSTEMATIC, CONTINUAL AND SUCCESSFUL HERITAGE EDUCATION

As we accomplished better cooperation with NGOs, we started to cope with another challenge. We started to work on a new project Cultural Heritage Week, the aims was to stimulate interest for heritage education in the wider social space, especially among children and young people, to foster continuously and properly integrated heritage content into educational processes, and to establish partnerships among education and heritage institutions. Visits are not enough. The thing is that we saw this network which already existed as EHD network which could be of more use for educational purposes. How does it work? The theme and the dates are the same as for EHDs. Our partners help us to address teachers to include heritage in the learning process. In this context, we train teachers on teaching methods, as the open space learning method, share good practices, provide opportunities for networking, etc. In the context of EHD's organizers prepare programmes and activities for schools free of charge. Heritage goes to schools was EHD theme in 2014 and this theme helped promoting heritage education very much. We started with 15 schools in 2012, last year we had 170 school and kindergartens cooperating. Many of them devoted the all week to heritage.

Art and culture education policy and projects

The role of arts and culture education¹ in forming competence for young people in the 21st century has been widely recognized by international organizations in recent years, resulting in policy developments. With the adoption of Road Map of Education (UNESCO, 2006) international community recognized arts and culture education: as basic human right, as basis for development of individual's capabilities and as basis for generating culturally aware and creative society.

On the European level, the Council of Europe and European Union both recognize importance of arts and culture education. The Agenda for Culture (endorsed by Council of the European Union in 2007) acknowledges the value of arts education in developing creativity, strategic framework for European cooperation in education emphasizes the importance of transversal key competences, including cultural awareness and creativity. European Year of Creativity and Innovations addressed themes like fostering artistic and other forms of creativity through all levels and forms of education. A Resolution on Artistic Studies put forward key recommendations for development of artistic education and called

¹ Heritage education is regarded as a part of arts and culture education.

for greater coordination of arts education at European level. A very important study on art and culture education (Eurydice, 2009) within the curricula of 30 European countries clearly shows that the participation of professional artists and other external professionals is quite limited. The study also draws attention on importance of collaboration among the various actors in arts education.

The Faro Convention (Council of Europe, 2005), in Article 13, acknowledges the important place of cultural heritage within arts education, while recommending developing linkages between courses in different fields of study. White Paper on intercultural dialogue (Council of Europe, 2008) offered an intercultural approach to managing cultural diversity. The paper identified educational organizations, like museums, heritage sites, kindergartens and schools as having potential to support intercultural exchange, learning and dialogue through arts and cultural education.

The first steps towards an integrated approach in the field of arts and cultural education in Slovenia was outlined in governmental strategic document - the National Programme for Culture 2008-2011 (hereinafter referred to as NPC 2008-2011). Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education together defined the arts and cultural education as a long-term objective of Slovenian cultural policy and set their common objectives and measures at the national level. The definitions were also based on international and European documents and results of conference and meetings in this field. Important point is that includes culture for children and youth – when an individual is the user of culture and plays the role of a viewer, reader, listener, visitor, etc. Moreover, it also includes culture created by children and youth or culture with children and youth – when they are actively involved in cultural activities.

Cultural Heritage Week step by step

Our first insight to educational system was a start up our own pedagogical program Recognize Protect Preserve (*Spoznaj, varuj, ohrani*) in 2009.

With the project *Recognize Protect Preserve* we improve the constant, continuous and planned education of youth and we popularize the mission of Institute for Cultural Heritage among this targeted population. Young people are eager to learn, to create, and they are also critical and without bias which is so important in the implementation of the idea and the need to preserve cultural heritage. Through this project, young people recognize our mission and vision, our expertise, our goals, and are able to meet a variety of specialists, working in the field. We teach the young people how to observe and to recognize cultural heritage and its value, encouraging them to protect it for the future. There are many ways to shape well-rounded individuals; we are flexible according to the needs of various groups while at the same time true to the educational process.

The goals of the project are:

- to communicate to the elementary students the importance of the recognition, protection and preservation of cultural heritage;
- to teach them where and how to get the information about the cultural heritage
- to train the pupils how to recognize and value of the cultural heritage, since the knowledge of it will in the long run positively impact the individual as well as the whole society;
- the education in the field of cultural heritage should become the life-long learning process and the acquired knowledge can always be upgraded according to the specific views;
- accessibility of the cultural heritage and its enjoyment in the present and well into the future;
- to collaborate with adults through varied adult-education programs.

The project is active throughout the school year and constantly adapting to pupil's needs and their progress. The work is systematically, gradually and incrementally upgraded yearly. The elementary knowledge achieved and later upgraded on the local level: getting to know the surroundings and their monuments. With our project, we regularly upgrade the acquired knowledge and hopefully the pupils able to recognize the values beyond the prescribed curricular programs. Higher levels of education tackle the wider scope and beyond the local surroundings, it emphasize the important cultural heritage on the state level. Cultural Heritage is an irreplaceable value and broken or damaged element is unfortunately forever lost. Therefore, the need to incorporate the preservation of cultural heritage into our daily life is extremely important. We are all aware that the care for the cultural heritage is up to each individual. Our goal is to encourage the youth to become aware of the importance of the preservation of cultural heritage, and later in life as adults they will be able to continue to care, to respect and to preserve. This is all possible only with carefully planned and continued educational process.

Second step toward better understanding of unrealized potential of EHD in manner of heritage education was organizing Heritage experience opening event in 2012.

Cultural Heritage Week in national document

The idea of cooperation of educational and heritage field was very well accepted on a state level. The reason was in well-defined integrated approach in national policy quoted above (page 11).

Cultural Heritage Week was defined in the National Programme for Culture 2013-2017 (hereinafter referred as NPC 2013-2017) as one of the objectives in cultural heritage field. The objective foreseen one third of total number of kindergarten, primary and secondary organizations will participate in the project. Leading partner is Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia. Other partners are Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, National Institute for Education, UNESCO Slovenia and Community of Kindergartens of Slovenia.

NPC 2013-2017 outlines connection of EHD and Cultural Heritage Week in sense of thematic approach and timing of the project. It sets following objectives for Cultural Heritage Week:

- establishment of cross-sectorial committee in charge of guidance and implementation of the project;
- heritage education as a cross-curricular content and dimension;
- foster open learning methods.

Action undertaken

Heritage goes to schools – the theme gave wings to our cause/dream

Selection of the theme Heritage Goes to Schools was intended to attract teachers in schools and kindergartens who were interested in heritage.

Our experience led us to believe we have to change our main target group from headmasters to teachers. Decision was made to motivate and educate as much teachers as we can give them knowledge and confidence not just to lecture on heritage but more important to inspire pupils for exploring heritage.

Even Study published a report on arts and cultural education in schools (Eurydice, 2009), pointing out many educational systems rely on generalist teachers to teach arts and cultural

subjects, especially to youngest children. We may add to this point that this especially applies to kindergartens. Therefore teachers not only lack knowledge but also confidence to teach arts and cultural subjects.

Action undertaken:

- thematic regional meetings and workshops on sensitization of heritage;
- Institute for Education study groups of history teachers;
- conference of Community of Kindergartens of Slovenia;
- conference of high-school headmasters;
- conference organized with CHW partners under the title How Culture Can Improve Everyday Life of Children and Youth;
- Cultural Bazaar: lecture and workshop;
- Yearly conference of UNESCO school coordinators.

The enormous commitment, enthusiasm and belief in the EHD and CHW projects and the positive attitude of the majority of participants from the various institutions are an assurance that EHDs and CHW will continue to grow in Slovenia.

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