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ETHNOGRAPHY AND FOLKLORE – FUNDAMENT OF CONTEMPORARY TOURIST PRODUCT

Rezumat: Tradițional crește interesul turiștilor pentru etnografie și folclor din fiecare regiune. Muzeul modern devine o instituție din ce în ce mai activă, deschisă publicului larg, care oferă nu numai cunoștințe, și posibilitate pentru recreere cu animații atractiv prezentate. Muzeul de Etnografie din Razgrad se află în cartierul vechi al orașului “Varosha”, care are o arhitectură și o atmosferă tradițională și romantică, ce se sincronizează bine cu evenimentele organizate. În acest sens Muzeul de Etnografie organizează evenimente atractive: Târgul de Iaur, Festival de tradiții și meștesuguri folclorice și Noptile albe în Razgrad.

Traditionally the ethnography and folklore of each region raise the interest of the tourist, especially this one, who looks for the cultural and historical specification of the folklore treasure. The contemporary museum more and more becomes an active institution, open for the wide public, providing not only knowledge, but also opportunity for recreation with attractively presented animations. In this aspect the ethnographic exposition of the Regional Historical Museum is not an exception.

Ethnographic Museum

The Ethnographic Museum in Razgrad is located in “Varosh” Quarter and along with several preserved and restored houses provides romantic atmosphere, reminding for the past of the town. The permanent exhibition is open for visitors in the autumn of 1999. It is dedicated to the traditional culture of the local population – “kapantsi”. The thematic story describes the occupation, the labour habits, seasonal and family holidays and the connected with them popular beliefs and imaginations from the end of 19th and the second quarter of 20th century. Each theme is visualized through a typical situation of the usual ritual complex with the idea to raise the curiosity of the visitors. Traditionally the guide lecture has a significant role in the communication and cognitive process. Nevertheless in the conditions of constant competitiveness, the museum should not depend only on the successful realized attractive themes and well-arranged exhibitions, in order to be

* Regional Historical Museum – Razgrad.

attractive tourist destination. It is necessary new forms for the popularization of each tourist product to be searched. The location, architectural and spatial conditions, original presented exhibition, precious collections and established durable contacts with other cultural institutions in the town (theatres, galleries, library, folklore ensemble, cultural centres, amateur groups, schools and extra-curriculum units), as well as the opportunities for project participation are potential factors for the rousing of the cultural life through establishment of different entertainment programmes with accent on the rich ethnographic and folklore heritage.

Tourist products on ethnographic and folklore base, included in the summer programme of the museum

To achieve some of its main objectives – contemporary combining of entertaining, cognitive and educational functions and attraction of various groups of visitors – the museum permanently enriches its services. The magnetism of summer provides optimal conditions for provision of tourist products, based on ethnographic and folklore fundament, to get in touch with the tangible monuments and spiritual treasures of the region. The ambition is to be organized more and more attractive events, which will transform the ethnographic museum into desired and preferred place to visit. Moreover, the visitor may feel himself as part of the environment and may get impressed of what he has seen and heard, to get not only new knowledge, but also positive emotions to drive him come back impatiently.

The summer programme of the Regional Museum – Razgrad includes two major events with significant influence for the development of tourism.

„Yoghurt Fair. Festival of folk traditions and crafts.”

For eight years every summer during the last week of July is held "Yoghurt Fair. Festival of folk traditions and crafts". The main organizer is Razgrad Municipality. One of the co-hosts is the Regional Museum. The fair is a "trade mark" of the municipality. The museum has a crucial role in this process. As a result of well-realized and original ideas, it finds its place among similar cultural institutions involved in the festival tourist program.

The cognitive and entertainment structure contains eight constant elements associated with organizational activities of the museum: competition and tasting of home made yogurt, milk and traditional dairy dishes, folk animations that provide regional specificity; concert program of the Bulgarian and foreign folk art groups, parade of artistic groups and animation with drawn carts; bazaar of yogurt and dairy products; exhibition - bazaar of traditional crafts; Training "First steps in craft" and drawing competition for children entitled "Yoghurt Fair". Combined in a single package, they give their own style of the destination and are working to attract a broader tourist audience. Each year, the main product is added with new elements, some of which began to be imposed permanently in the traditional program. Of particular interest is the competition for grandmothers, grandfathers and grandchildren "Together we sing, dance and cook". Over the years, a variety of

temporary exhibitions have been organized. The contest "Queen of the Fair" has been affirmed.

The museum is actively participating in the preparation and presentation of almost all elements of the tourism program (from the participation status of craftsmen to determination of the nature of the prizes for the competition "Queen of the Fair"). Visitors of the Ethnographic Museum know that every day here they will find something interesting and attractive. The free entries allowing visit of expositions and temporary exhibitions are only part of the supply. Every day during the fair are prepared different theme for the visitors.

Traditionally the first day in the courtyard of the museum is held concert program of folk groups from the region and guests of the festival.

On the second day the Ethnographic Museum becomes host of the contest of tasting yogurt and dairy products which are accompanied by diverse folkloric entertainment program involving mainly local groups. The provided show can capture the senses of the tourist. He can taste the traditional dishes, to immerse in the beauty of local folklore and to touch long forgotten customs and ritual practices. All guests and participants in the programs get involved in the cart attractions and the parade of folk groups, which passes through the central part of town.

Under initiative of the Regional advisory and information center "Cultural centers" - Razgrad during the last day of the Fair at the Ethnographic Museum for three years have been gathering different generations to show how we preserve the traditional culture. Competition "Together we sing, dance or cook" brings together musical performances, singing, theater folk stories with miniatures, demonstration of craft skills, and tasting of delicious culinary delights.

Part of the commitment of the museum specialists are associated with tourist products offered in the central part of town. Traditionally Independence Square gather craftsmen from all over the country. 16 craftsmen participated during the first edition of the festival in 2002. In the recent years, they are already over 80 and foreign participants join the exhibition - Bazaar, mainly from the twin towns of Razgrad. In an effort to create compelling and attractive atmosphere, the organizers are seeking to turn the square into "acting crafts center on open air". Of course only part of the displayed crafts allow demonstrations and opportunities to obtain final product. Thus so far some crafts have been popularized, such as: weaving, woodcarving, icon painting, stained glass, basketry and more, as well as individual types of pottery and wrought copper. Experience of combining cognitive and educational interest with attractive recreational feeling provides the education of children of different age groups in the programme "First steps in craft". It comprises of master trainers who present their products in the exhibition and bazaar. Immediate touch between the craftsman and students are made. The public appearance remains open to a wider circle of people willing to learn and often spontaneously for a short while is joined by individual citizens and guests of the festival.

At the end of the last day of the program the museum organizes temporary exhibition "First Steps in the craft". After its closure the manufactured objects and fragments are given as gifts to the trained people. All craftsmen and their students receive special certificates of participation.

The organized by the museum exhibitions related to ethno-cultural traditions and innovative processes have their audience. The majority are exposed outside the museum building and turn into a good opportunity for inter-institutional contacts, which in turn expands the possibilities for mobility and accessibility to a wide range of visitors. Each year the exhibition has a different, powerful and visually specified topic. Museum exhibits, photos, icons, educational and promotional literature, children's drawings are subject of exhibition themes of Bulgarian cultural identity.

"Yoghurt Fair. Festival of folk traditions and crafts" has already serious place in the tourist calendar of the city, it gets more popular and gather guests nationwide and abroad. Creating a rich work program, open for the public and its successful implementation are prerequisites for transforming the museum into a modern cultural center, a modern object of tourism.

„White nights of Razgrad”

The enrichment of the summer tourist calendar requires looking for different occasions and forms for creating attractive products, based on traditional folk culture. This opportunity is provided by **"White Nights of Razgrad"** - an event that awakens the interest of local people and guests of the city. Searching for original and unusual ways to attract audiences the museums open their doors for the night. Three consecutive years in the Ethnographic Museum has been organized thematic dinners, which pledged the attractive and not popular of folk traditions. The proposed programme includes two levels of performance. The first reflects the wealth of local folklore, and the second one reveals unfamiliar customs and rituals of the region.

The museum allows the ensembles and folklore groups from Razgrad to demonstrate new emphasis of their production. A theme, preliminary selected by the museum specialists, unfolds stage show, which through various means of expression carries visitors to the mysterious and magical worlds of the past.

"White Nights" are organized for the first time in the Ethnographic Museum in May 2007. The theme is "Nestinari" ("Fire dancers"). Ritual is spread over the coals in a single area of southeastern Bulgaria. The traditional folk calendar is connected with the cult of the Apostles St. Constantine and Helen (May 21). "Intercepted" by the invisible divine powers, the fire dancers wade barefoot in the coals, stepping finely-chopped with an icon in your hands. The view is impressive and captures the others. A strong impact on young children has the carrying over the fire, which is believed to lead to health. The very first issue for the increasing interest among visitors is the wish to experience the "magic" of "white nights".

Results obtained from this tourist attraction drive the museum specialists to celebrate it each year.

In 2008 the "White nights" in the Ethnographic Museum are dedicated to the theme "Love spells of Ludogorie region". Casting wax, washing with herbs, a charcoal fire, augury from the first bite of bread and presentation of "The Legend of Love" - all these generate one mystical and emotionally intense night. Participating in the animation and magical practice by carrying coal at home, wax figure or a small bag of herbs from "Enyovden" and magical spells, visitor of the museum becomes an active factor. He entered a new stage of knowledge, leaving the boundaries of passivity and the observer becomes "important" actor with his demonstrated respect to particular issues.

The June edition in 2009 introduced new elements. Time coincides with a period of rituals from the longest day ("Enyovden", June 24), increasing the expectations of the audience for something magical and fascinating. This time the theme was "Nymphs and kalushari - a mystical journey between worlds". The idea was to combine the familiar with little known local folk heritage with these of other regional groups. While entering the museum, the visitors pass under flower arch of "Enyovden" and torn part of it for health. Every visitor took a sip of red wormwood wine and got bag with healing herb. The program included songs and dances of various ethnocultural groups that have been reproduced from Kapanski Folk Ensemble and Musical Theatre "Nazim Hikmet" - Razgrad. Folk impression "Samodiva" was presented, featuring Dance Formation "Phoenix" at the Center for work with children, which brought tourists in the close village of Osenets and told about the magical power of the fairies. A guest folk group from the village of Harlets captured all the hearts. The old ceremony of "Kalusha" incited the imagination and provoked curiosity. Part of the audience was involved in the dance. The final program continues in time for those who want to jump over the fire .

Emotional reactions during the stage presentation even after the end of "White nights" give us reason to hope that visitors, leaving the museum, experience intellectual pleasure, which awakens the need for more frequent communication with the museum environment.

Conclusion

"Yoghurt Fair. Festival of folk traditions and crafts" has already achieved part of the planned project objectives - established well functioning system of cultural - entertaining links, based on the ethnography and folklore. Of the overall product have benefit not only residents of the municipality, but also the guests of the city.

"White Nights" has been turned into an active element of the new cultural mission of the museum. They are proven as an event that managed to attract attention and the expectations of more satisfied and overwhelmed with cultural entertainment tourist. Attractively included elements of "living human treasures" of Bulgaria laid the beginning of a lasting trend in the development of the regional tourism.

The presented forms of sustainable tourist products have their place in the museum's summer calendar. The experience shows that expanding the spectrum of the provided animated services, taking into account the interests and preferences of its visitors, the museum can become a place where public appearances, served unobtrusive and attractive, provide pleasure, aesthetic pleasure and good mood. This may be a step towards mastery of new knowledge in the field of ethnography and folklore.

Ethnography and folklore provide unlimited opportunities to create attractive tourist products. They attract many and diverse categories of visitors. There is, however, an opportunity to be moved beyond the permissible limit, while tempted by diverse topics, multi-variety processes of reproduction and the possibilities for "flirting" with the audience. One of the main tasks of museum experts is to precise the extent of the limits between authentic - cognitive and innovation – attractive beginning. On this basis in the future will be continuing the creation and development of new advanced products of tourism.

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