

THE NON FORMAL EDUCATION IN MUSEUM

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The National Museum of Art of Romania organised in the first three months of 2009 the first training in non formal education in museum for teachers. This training program was created in partnership with The Teacher Training Centre and it is accredited by The Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation for a period of two years.

The main purpose of this training is the increased utilization of the museum as a teaching resource. The course targets the primary school and secondary school teachers and its goals are the assimilation of the a transdisciplinary teaching practice, the accommodation with the concept of museum education, with the basic techniques used during an educational program and with the methods of investigation and encouragement of the students' interest for art.

The necessity of this kind of training has many reasons: The first is the adaptation of the institutional teaching methods to the current needs of the students. The great amount of information and the diversification of the activity fields have lead to the need of changing the structure of the school curriculum in the last years modifying the way of learning especially focused on a transdisciplinary and interactive approach.

A second reason that led to the idea of this training it was the need of the teachers and educators for using other types of spaces as teaching resources beside the school itself. The National Museum of Art of Romania is one of the most active Romanian institutions regarding the creation and encouragement of alternative types of education in its permanent and temporary exhibitions and in its branch museums (The museum of art collections, Zambaccian Museum, Pallady Museum).

Even since the year 2000 the Department of Education, Communication and Cultural Projects of the NMAR has been organizing a variety of educational programmes for all ages. With times passing by, despite the increasing number of the museum educators, the possibilities of organization and realization remained insufficient for satisfying the requests from the schools and kindergartens. Thus the idea of transmitting this type of education through training for teachers appeared.

The course presented here has some precedents. The first is the Summer School for parents and teachers organised in the summer of 2003. For five days 30 parents and teachers have participated in an interactive presentations and workshops held by psychologists and education curator from abroad and from other organizations from Romania. The goals of this summer school were the accommodation of the adults with communication techniques through image, the finding of connexions between art and daily life of each participant, the recognition and understanding of the values of the work of art. The purpose of this program was presenting of the educational role of the museum as an interactive and ceative space. After this summer school the participants became frequent and active participants of the programmes offered by the museum and contributed to its popularization.

The second event preceding the 2009 training was the first pilot teacher training made in 2006. This programme didn't fully accomplish all its goals because it was a small project in its educational offer and time dimension. However it permitted the identification of aspects that could be developed in the future for the benefit of the participants and of the museum.

The present training programs proposed for 2009-2010 are already successful because of their complexity and because they are accredited by The Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation.

Before presenting the training's development at the beginning of 2009 I would like to give some conceptual explanation of the term "non formal" used in the field of museum education.

Education is classified in pedagogical theory resources into three main types: formal education (practiced in institutions like kindergartens, schools, high-schools, universities etc.), informal education (education seen rather as a medium's influence than a voluntary educative action). The third form of education holds the ideal solution when confronting with the deficiencies of an incoherent educational system or with individual lacks of knowledge and skills. Non formal education, understood as a compensatory method of school education in Romania, refers to a relatively narrow range of possibilities that include institutions, associations, and foundations with educative activities for different age groups especially in big cities and mainly in Bucharest. Thus the number of participants to this kind of programs is very small reported to the children's real needs. Unfortunately, the school manages to be fully satisfying only in a few cases, using its usual educative programs, methods and means. The answer we propose is that the teachers use different methods and working spaces.

Museum education has its basis on the educational potential of the patrimony object and on the latter's extraordinary capacity to stimulate both sensibility and intellect. The training program held by the National Museum of Art of Romania is wished to be a way of encouraging educators to use an educational alternative, thus contributing to the enhancement

of the pupils' knowledge. Judging by the experience we already have in working with schools and kindergartens, education through the work of art creates a good relationship between school and museum, both institutions collaborating to achieve the same educative purpose. Museums' role in providing an efficient stimulating medium for the learning process has been greatly emphasized in the past few years. Museum education, through pupils' direct contact with the objects of patrimony, facilitates the assimilation of new knowledge and the completion of information received within the school.

The training program we proposed is composed of 42 hours of theory and practice and it includes courses in museum education, non formal education, art history and ludic educative methods. The trainers are education specialists from NMAR and from other training organizations: the Institute for Educational Sciences, the CREATIV Association and the Bucharest School Inspectorate. The notions and techniques of museum education are applied to NMAR patrimony, but the training program's goal is to create the necessary abilities in order to be utilized in the teachers' educational activities regardless of the types of museums or cultural institutions. After finalizing the training, the participants receive 11 transferable professional credits.

The program was initiated this January and about 60 school teachers came from all the capital's districts, being divided in two groups. The courses were held depending on the teachers' schedule, thus one of the groups met during weekends and the other – during one the working days' afternoons. The training's theoretical presentations included interactive stages, thus involving the teachers' active participation, while the practical ones intended to familiarize the participants with the museum's space and with the actual work within the museum.

Therefore we organized guided tours in all three art galleries and carried out two demonstrative lessons with two school classes loyal to our educative programs. Likewise, the participants were given educational resources, among which educators' guides made by our educational staff on some of our most frequent program themes: *Animals and Plants; Objects from Daily Space; Public Space, Private Space; Fashion and Styles*. Although during the training we've come across organization or communication problems, at the end of the program the teachers achieved the necessary training to hold some lessons within the museum, regardless of the field they specialized in.

Even though some of the educators initially only had the gain of professional credits as a motivation, most of the participants proved a real interest for the type of approach we put forward, fact confirmed by their interventions during the courses, but especially by their final projects. Thus, many of these projects were made in an interdisciplinary and creative manner, at the same time keeping in mind the curricular requirements. The preferred themes chosen in these projects are related to social education or to the connections between mathematics and sciences. Romanian language specific themes or semestrial evaluation themes were also approached. We only wish that these projects be put to practice within the museum by as many teachers as possible. During the training period, some teachers undertook the responsibility of coordinating a program in the museum, a highly specialized medium. While in the beginning they perceived their lack of a specific background and knowledge, in the end they gained a much greater confidence in their own professional abilities. Children's better school results and the parents' appreciation were other consequences of working within the museum.

As for the course's continuation, it will carry on for two more years, depending on the teachers' demand. Because this training is also addressed to gymnasium teachers, we hope to soon be able to organize a working group of this kind. The teachers are invited to participate regardless of the field they teach. The next training groups of teachers or educators will be organized on demand by registering at the museum's headquarter, or at Bucharest's Teachers' Training Centre.

