

CONNECTION BETWEEN THE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE WATER

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The Museum of Macedonia¹ is the main and largest museum institution in the country. Its basic activity consists of protection of Macedonia immovable cultural heritage, through researching, collecting, preserving and presenting, and through educational activities. Museum of Macedonia functions through various forms of work (specialised lectures and practical work) in museum workshops. Participants are pre-school children, primary school and high school children, and general public. These projects are related to archaeology, history, history of art, and ethnology.

The project we have chosen to speak about aimed the involvement of the Romany minority in the educational activities at the museums. The subject was *Connection between the cultural heritage and water*.

In a society where there are marginalized groups with ethnic intolerance and social injustice, cultural heritage emerges as a means of fight against these occurrences. With its content, museum education has inexhaustive possibilities for implementation of contemporary dimension in the education of every generation. In this way, people are being prepared for active involvement in the social and the political life in the community where they live, as active subjects in the further building up the principles of the democratic society, like human rights, tolerance and solidarity. With the involvement of the Romany minority in the educational activities of the museums, we strive to point out and to participate in the process of their socialization.

The target group was a group of twenty students from the Romany ethnic affiliation taken from the primary school *Jane Sandanski* in Skopje from the V to the VII grade and their families. The aims of the project were the introduction of the Romany with the Museum, as place for learning and socialising; the Romany education regarding the cultural heritage via educational presentations and workshops on the subject *Connection of the cultural heritage with the water*; the Romany urge for promoting and cherishing the cultural heritage and establishing methodology for successful realisation of the museum education and organisation of the museum workshops.

The project activities were divided in three phases. The First Phase of the project activities was directed towards the preparation of the Project; making contacts with the management team at the primary school *Jane Sandanski* and forming a group composed of twenty students between the V and the VII grade. After providing the finances specialised texts were prepared, the needed materials were supplied for making panels, photos, maps of the Republic of Macedonia, etc. The Second Phase of the project was directed towards researching of the common connection and relation between the cultural heritage and the water, as a means of existence and the publishing of a bulletin and of a flyer. The Third Phase aimed the analysis and evaluation of the project activities.

¹The author refers to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

We will focus on our project presentation here on the dynamics of the activities from the Second Phase of the project. One of these activities was the interactive lecturing on various themes. On the theme **Archaeological sites and the water, water to the ancient settlements-aqueducts and Roman baths**, the students were motivated individually to explore and find these structures on the map of the Republic of Macedonia. On the theme **Fortifications and the water-old bridges and Turkish baths**, using the system of comparison with other similar monuments, students were noticing the characteristics of the monuments that make theme interesting for research. On the theme **Water in the rural environments, fountains, wells**, using the system of comparison with other similar monuments, students were encourage to notice the characteristics of the monuments that make them interesting for research.

In the museum workshops for each theme, the students were encouraged to build creatively a reproduction of the selected monument, connected with the three

themes. The results of the accomplished museum workshops, visualised through art reproductions and interpretations made by the students, were displayed in a small exhibition in the Museum of Macedonia. On this occasion, diplomas were awarded to all students-participants. Parents and other guests guided by the mediator were invited to share stories, memories and events connected with the water. Everyone, depending of the age, has memories that are testimonies of a certain time, or documents which can complement a part of museum collection.

The results expected were reaching a continuous, sustainable cultural development of the Romany community, as a prerequisite overall social integration of the Romany in the contemporary Macedonian society; raising the awareness within the Romany population for promoting and cherishing cultural heritage and establishing a methodology toward the realisation of the museum education and actualisation of the methodical tools during the museum education.