



‘Museum Adventure’, Educational program of the National Museum of History in Sofia, Bulgaria (NMH)

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1. Concept

‘Museum Adventure’ Program concept: introduction of children and adolescents to Bulgarian cultural and historical heritage as part of the European culture, nature and history, make efforts to enhance children’s interest to preserve it and to multi-faceted interpretation. *Objectives:* communication and team skills development, social competence and commitment, elaboration of ‘Toolkits’ for exploration, reporting and encouraging children interests to the Museum and make efforts to convert the Museum in a real cultural necessity for them. *Methods:* education and training in an informal atmosphere that allows to have fun, to discover and to create. *Activities:* animation, role and sports games, interactive and logical games, practical activities, temporary exhibitions, bazaars, concerts, etc.

This educational program is *all year round*. It takes place in the halls of the Museum, in its surrounding environment and in special workshops. It consists of flexible thematic modules that are adapted according to the age of the participants and the natural seasonal.

‘Museum Adventure’ Program *is open* to enrichment, upgrading and modify Some modules may drop out of the program, new ones may be added, inspired by young people’s aspirations.

Weaving Fairy Tales' Module. Children from the same school may participate herein.



Photos courtesy National Museum of History, Sofia

Against a background of rich collection of artifacts, weaving instruments, traditional textiles and clothing of the National Museum of History, children are introduced to history of craft, to Bulgarian decorative art, during workshops, they study the traditional techniques of raw materials preparation as well as the art of weaving and they prepare various items: each participant shall design and implement an own textile work, and all together children shall weave a traditional rug (cherga). This module ends with an exhibition, with a brochure and catalog. After completion of so-called 'Museum stage', the weaving workshop and exhibition are transferred to the school where module's participants come from (Museum comes out of its building).

'Clay in my hands' Module



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Photos courtesy National Museum of History, Sofia

This module includes activities such as *education* (participants learn how to recognize chronological, cultural and functional pottery from Ancient Times to the Renaissance), *collection* (participants are looking for fairy tales, songs, proverbs related to clay in Bulgarian and European folklore) and *creative activities* (pots molding and decoration). Training is based on National Museum of History exhibition and it is led by Museum's experts. Practical sessions are held in ceramic workshops led by master potter and Museum's experts. Children's works are arranged in a special exhibition.



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Module Interactive archaeological exhibition 'Archeology behind the scenes' (3 months).



Photo courtesy National Museum of History, Sofia

Educational interactive games presented different archaeological survey stages and some archaeological methods (stratigraphic survey and profile), and they provided the opportunity of young children together with their parents to find 'archaeological remains' in 'real excavations'. During the weekends a lot of workshops were organized such as: prehistoric home building, Thracian sanctuaries building of clay and stones, a range of bio-games for the animal world and humans evolution; elaboration of prehistoric animals models.



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I restore' Module

This module introduces to the work of restorers. During practical exercises children and their parents restore damaged 'artifacts', they glue pottery fragments, 'jewelry' pieces, metal, paper, textile.

Program's Natural history modules are held in the Museum park area:

'*Antarctica - Bulgarian ice fairy tale*' module. This exhibition is dedicated to Bulgaria's participation in the Antarctica study and mastery. Collections are presented of rock samples and minerals, lichens, geological and topographic maps, alpine equipment, measuring devices, books, jubilee stamps, photos, model of the Bulgarian Antarctic Base 'St. Kliment Ohridski' and a three-dimensional model of the Bulgarian Orthodox chapel 'St. Ivan Rilski'. A geological field camp was restored with the original tent.

Following modules '*Biodiversity*', '*Funny meteorology*', '*The Man and the Mountain*', '*Find your way and discover*', '*Water in the beliefs of Bulgarians*', '*Earth Hour*' focused on ecology, flora and fauna issues. In addition to the training modules there are many role playing and sports games.

2. Reception

Main target groups of the project are children, adolescents and their parents. Some of the modules are specifically designed for children with special needs ('Clay in my hands', 'Weaving Fairy Tales') with a main partner: 'Prof. Dr. Decho Denev' - Special school for children with hearing loss, in Sofia. Other modules ('Interactive archaeological exhibition 'Archeology behind the scenes', 'I restore') are very suitable for children and students and their parents. Time they spend in common activities, in search of answers, discover mysteries and other common activities, contributes to the enhancement of parent-child relation. Special attention is paid to the disadvantaged children's involvement (children with a Roma background, orphans). Partnership contracts have been signed with SOS Children's Villages Bulgaria and other foundations.



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Photo courtesy National Museum of History, Sofia

3. Program Design

Program implementation includes various historical monuments from all eras. Special workshops have been opened - textile, ceramic, restoration. Participants are working with traditional materials and techniques. A special 'archaeological excavations' area is configured. Temporary exhibitions are held, which include giant photos, layouts, models etc. This creates an information environment that enables understanding and deeper interpretation of the original exhibits in historical and cultural context.



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4. Visitors Approach - Activation/Participation

This program combines by unconstrained way education with practice, contributing to the creation of multi-layered information value of the items / exhibits. Modules allow the young person to experiment, to stimulate his creativity. An innovative way to use museum resources and the natural environment it occupies, as a means of school supplement education and beyond. In purely practical way, the project encourages young people to participate in activities such as museum assistants, trainees and volunteers.

5. Conclusion: the program 'Museum Adventure' in respect to the COP1 and COP2

Toolkit 1: This program is a good example of understanding, interpretation and reinterpretation of historical and cultural heritage through practical reproduction of ancient and traditional manufacturing and creative activities - COP1

Toolkit 2: It enables young people to activate their role and thus learn more about national cultural heritage and its regional and European dimensions - COP1

Toolkit 3: This program presents in an attractive way to youth audiences the work of museum experts, archeology and restoration profession - COP2

Toolkit 4: Museum became a familiar place for young people - COP2



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