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Education for Heritage, Outdoor Education Report on Needs Analysis

I. About ECHOE project

Education for Heritage, Outdoor Education is a European cooperation project that aims at exploring ways to combine education for/about heritage, especially related to historic and archaeological sites, with outdoor education, including ecology, heritage protection, sports, leisure and open air activities, and to relate these fields of various groups of adult learners.

The project is developed and implemented by organizations from six European countries, in relation to the local contexts where these organizations are active: Romania, Italy, Austria, Turkey, Belgium and Norway.

The project is addressing a variety of professionals from education, training and culture, but not only, from both public and private sectors, having a large range of responsibilities and organizational functions. Broadly, they can fall under the following categories:

- Professionals from cultural and heritage organizations;
- Adult educators and trainers working in private and public structures, in associations and NGOs providing educational, cultural and social services or providers of outdoor and leisure activities;
- Representatives of regional administrations responsible for educational and cultural policies;
- Providers and promoters of tourism services;
- Adult learners.

The project started with a needs analysis and with the identification of the difficulties faced by local stakeholders in taking an approach that would combine the experiential learning specific to outdoor education programmes with topics related to cultural and natural heritage. Project partners considered necessary to

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measure the knowledge and perception of future beneficiaries about these subjects, as a preliminary step to the development of a series of educational materials.

II. Scope and Methods of the Needs Analysis

The aim of the needs analysis was to provide a mapping of the local context concerning heritage education and outdoor education, and to create a profile of the local beneficiaries. One objective of the research was to evaluate the degree of knowledge, know-how and interest of the target groups on the subjects of education for heritage and outdoor education. In addition to this, it aimed at identifying the difficulties and obstacles faced by target groups in developing educational programmes in the field of heritage and outdoor education. Last but not least, the research was meant to provide information on the type and form of support needed by beneficiaries. As they expected from the beginning, partners discovered a variety of contexts, practices and attitudes.

Partners used a qualitative approach and organized focus groups in which they tried to involve representatives of all categories of beneficiaries. In Norway, the research was conducted in the form of individual, in-peers or even group interviews. A questionnaire was used to collect identification data about the participants, in two forms: one - addressing professionals from the educational and cultural field, and the other one addressing adult learners. Also, partners used a common guideline for conducting the discussions in the focus groups or/and in interviews.

Mapping of the Local Practice and Profile of Participants in the Research

Romania

Centre for Professional Training in Culture - CPPC organized two consultation sessions, one in Bucharest, with 6 participants, and a second one with 23 participants from Mehedinti County. These sessions provided insight on two very different situations.

Bucharest participants – professionals from museums, cultural centres, NGOs, training providers - declared to have knowledge about heritage education; however, they have less knowledge about outdoor education. The topics of cultural heritage programmes include Romanian traditional folk dances and outfits, architectural heritage of Bucharest, museums and memorial houses and memorial places of Bucharest, aiming at valorising local heritage and at supporting community development. Activities in these programmes take the form of guided tours in museums, art galleries and historical places, development of urban routes and creativity workshops. Used methods include dialogue, discovery, presentations, seminars, workshops, open air games like treasure hunts.

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Outdoor programmes include urban routes in Bucharest, cultural routes in Romania, thematic routes combining arts and architecture. Used methods include field trips, documentation and brainstorming sessions.

A group with a different profile participated in a meeting held in Drobeta Turnu-Severin. The participants in this meeting came only from public institutions – a library, a museum, as well as from the regional administration responsible for environmental protection, and from a Protected Area Natural Park. Their experience with adult education is very limited; some of the participants are not aware that their programmes for the public have an educational part. The participants from Mehedinti county declared to be less familiar with both outdoor education, and heritage education.

Organisations managing cultural and natural heritage develop activities aimed at raising awareness and at informing about the environmental regulations and legislation, the importance of safeguarding and preserving natural habitats and protected species, at introducing local history and knowledge on the region's Roman past to people older than 16 years. Activities take the form of guided tours for seniors, guided tours for people from prison, workshops with children and their parents, and include meetings with local citizens on the occasion of various festivals and local feasts, publication of materials for raising awareness, visits to local administrations. Used methods include discussions, presentations, exhibitions, informing, recognition of known elements, discovery of new elements, restoration/re-construction of certain aspects from the life of pre-historical communities, visiting traditional houses from the region, observation of traditional/rustic technical installations, participation in local customs and traditions, and encounters with traditional craftsmen and traditional singers (rapsozi).

Italy

Centro Universitario Europeo per I Beni Culturali - CUEBC involved from the province of Salerno, Campania region (South-West of Italy), 21 participants with a balanced participation from all target groups. In terms of self-declared knowledge about heritage education and outdoor education, participants were proportionally distributed between those with advanced expertise and those having no knowledge at all.

Cultural heritage programmes have to do with tangible and intangible heritage, history, art history and literature linked to territory, proto-industrial activities, cultural landscape, local historic knowledge, plants and fauna. It comprises training on the restoration and preservation of cultural heritage, training on landscape conservation, guided tours to museums and cultural sites and landscapes, study meetings, conferences and publications, guided sightseeing and tours, lessons before and after sightseeing, workshops at schools and at professional associations, publications, coast tours by boat, drama and historical re-enactment, drawing and shooting photos and video material, surveys, action-research and restoration of artworks.

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Outdoor education programmes include also field visits and trips, in which adults visit, take pictures and describe artistic and natural routes; intangible heritage understood as community memory and people life stories, nature tours and guided sightseeing and fire prevention activities. Used methods include research-action, elaboration of a work plan involving adults, share-out in different action steps, carrying out, monitoring, virtual routes, and laboratory methods.

One powerful idea coming from participants is the necessity to raise the awareness of local communities about the urgency of preservation and valorisation of cultural and landscape heritage. Involving adult population in the preservation of cultural and landscape heritage can be more effective than imposing compulsory instruments of preservation, and adult education can contribute to it.

Turkey

The Turkish partner, Menderes Educational Town Directorate, involved in the research 14 participants from Izmir province (Aegean Region), with a balanced participation from all targeted groups. Half of the professionals participating in the focus group declared to be familiar with outdoor education methods, topics and activities, as well as with heritage education, since their organization is providing services in these fields.

Cultural heritage programmes for adults in Izmir area have the form of archaeological and cultural trips and tours to museums and cultural heritage places, university level education in the field of archaeology, folk games, handcrafts and touches on topics like introduction to historical places, protection of cultural heritage, environmental protection and intercultural communication. The methods used in these programmes include drama, team building, audio and visual narration, role playing, presentation, games, and field visits, including music, oral expression.

Outdoor activities include excavation and research, completed by documentation on the pieces discovered during excavations.

Norway

In Norway, the research took the form of interviews conducted individually, in peers or in small groups. The 18 persons contacted by Moderno AS were from Oslo and from Stavanger, and 2 thirds of these persons were adult learners.

Cultural heritage programmes conducted or attended by participants relate to museum, agriculture, food, traditional art and have the form of short courses, staff training. Used methods included theatre-acting, showing old craftsmanship, letting or getting people actively participate.

Outdoor educational programmes include also theatre, folk-music and dance, sightseeing from the horse-drawn carriage, hunting practices and use as methods: demonstration of tools and activities, dialogue and conversation, involving people in activities.

Belgium

Alden Biesen Landcommanderij worked with a group of 11 participants, most persons acting as tourist guides in Limburg. From their perspective and experience, cultural programmes take place outdoors or have a strong outdoor component. The standard form for such programme is the guided tour offered to organized groups. Results of the Analysis:

Profile of Adult Learners Participating in Heritage Education Programmes

Using a mixture of criteria, adult learners from the six countries who are participating in heritage programme include:

- tourist groups and individuals;
- families and/or parents with children;
- teachers accompanying pupils;
- representatives of local administration;
- retired people and housewives;
- young students;
- elderly people (+55) retired or not
- residents of villages where excavation work is conducted;
- people who work only during the summertime or people with a lot of spare time after the job;
- people who are already involved in other cultural and educational activities such as: language courses, IT courses and cookery courses;

Also, various associations and companies are beneficiaries of such programmes.

Not all the groups are to be found in all regions/countries participating in the project, so this list can be seen by organizations as a source of inspiration for the definition of new audiences and target groups.

Some other observations coming from cultural and educational professionals that are worth mentioning:

- heritage education is often combined with other educational activities;
- participants feel a strong need for social cohesion (meetings, guided tours, cultural exchanges) and for moments of social interaction;
- there is a sort of “closed circle” of participation in cultural heritage education: there is no new demand for heritage education programmes in addition to people who are previously involved or interested;
- adults are more oriented towards heritage than towards contemporary creation, which sometimes challenges their perceptions, they feel safer in this field;
- in the case of certain peculiar programmes, there are two types of motivation: people who participate in order to earn an income and people who participate as a hobby.

Benefits for Adults Participating in Heritage Education Programmes

According to cultural professionals and educators participating in the research, there are two kinds of estimated benefits brought to adult learners by their

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participation in heritage education programmes. An immediate, contingent benefit: the emotion, and a permanent one: the acquisition of new information and a global cultural enrichment. These benefits include:

- the acquisition of knowledge on traditions and habits, meaning for locals a greater awareness of the heritage of their place, and meaning for tourists the discovery of such local heritage;
- the development of creativity, resulting in both the creation of a new cultural heritage and a stronger attitude and commitment for heritage conservation;
- the social interaction bringing a broader enhancement (not limited to the cultural field), and the creation of connections between people in programmes involving active participation;
- for communities, the recovery of their collective memory, as the history is being told for future generations;
- a new sense of pride in their heritage for locals who often take it for granted, a strengthening of their sense of belonging and of their critical thinking;
- the discovery of all the elements of the cultural landscape experienced by learners;
- new motivations to return to the place they visit;
- the development of life skills coming from the acquisition of new information about our culture or about others' culture, cultural exchange, understanding mechanisms underlying social life, self-awareness and perception as a community, communication within the group, raising curiosity, change in perspective about the place/object, getting in touch with the community, not only with the heritage, learning about the history and significance of identity values and many more.

Profile of Adult Learners Participating in Outdoor Education Programmes:

There are many more categories of adults participating in outdoor education programmes, and between the one nominated by cultural and educational professionals are to be counted:

- tourist groups and other kinds of groups organized for the purpose of spending time together or involved in social activities and other activities such as teambuilding (increasing group cohesion), when outdoor activities are requested by companies;
- adults interested in architecture and nature;
- parents accompanying their children;
- young people and students;
- teachers accompanying school groups;
- elderly people (+55);
- cyclists, walkers/hikers from the neighbourhood or from more remote areas.

One characteristic of participation in such programmes is that the perception of the environment becomes more important than the transfer of knowledge, and the guide or the programme educator is seen more as an animator. The

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experiential approach attracts adults, who look for a more direct and profound contact with the place and with nature; they are interested in the presentation of the way in which life was before and how it looked like.

Still, in some places, adults' participation is limited to groups of tourists, while the lack of locals' participation is deplored.

Benefits for Adults Participating in Outdoor Education Programmes

Participation in outdoor education programmes involves also a series of benefits for learners, including:

- a deeper discovery of the environment, landscape and nature, by experiencing elements which are not perceivable during more traditional visits;
- the entertainment and recreational aspect;
- a contribution to health improvement;
- the socialization and communication it brings with it;
- the use of all senses and the generation of emotions related to the place;
- an increased consciousness about the environment and its long lasting effect.

Outdoor programmes in urban environment were appreciated as providing non-formal learning, more related with real life, giving participants a possibility to learn about the history and traditions of a place or building; to walk and explore buildings and listen to stories about their history; to learn about ancient construction techniques, about the history of the city. They can be used also as an instrument for promoting civil responsibility and environmental awareness.

ECHOE Approach Perception

One reason for conducting this research was to assess the degree of openness of the professionals from the target-groups towards the approach proposed by the project, the blending of methods and topics for the purpose of a better learning experience provided to adult learners. The perception was generally positive and several ideas and associations were made by the participants:

- the recreational side of the experience is very attractive;
- a very interesting effect produced by the contact with the heritage and values of other groups and communities is the increased positive perception of heritage from one's own community, a re-appropriation of such heritage (Italy);
- the educational approach through these programmes also gives a possibility to involve a range of users who are normally reluctant to start a classic learning programme (classic teaching activity) due to their age and individual education;

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- programmes involving both adults and children represent a way of attracting adults to learn and improve their communication with children (Romania);
- outdoor activities change both the attention span and learners' emotional involvement; the self-image and perception of a learner is also modified;
- not only does the freedom of movement enable adults to observe the place, but it also develops their curiosity, brings fun and enjoyment in the process and it can also produce long-lasting learning outcomes (Turkey);
- outdoor education provides learners with a better understanding of the context, offering a sensorial experience; from an organizational perspective, it can attract new target groups (Belgium).

Needs of Project Beneficiaries

“What does it take to have programmes in which heritage and outdoor learning is integrated?”, this was the question addressed to participants. The answers tackled several areas, covering both an organizational and individual perspective.

Concept:

- a better definition of the meaning of heritage education in relation to outdoor education, and a clear perspective on what can be done in relation to various forms of heritage;
- the connection between topics and various groups of learners needs also to be more rigorously traced;
- the approach requires a multidisciplinary perspective, which has to be better shaped and conveyed to the concerned professionals.

Programme content and design:

- a more flexible approach in relation to the pre-defined formats of programmes proposed by some providers of educational and cultural services;
- a focus on the qualitative aspects of the process (the type of experience and how it is to be delivered) and less on the quantity (how many activities took place, how many places/objects were presented);

Human resources:

- more education facilitators trained both in the use of outdoor methods and heritage education, with a focus on the development of their capacity to create and convey emotion, as this is an essential element of ECHOE approach;
- at the same time, there is a need for more specialists on specific subjects that could be approached or integrated in this type of programmes;
- a more open and flexible attitude on the part of education and culture professionals, the willingness to improve and change the practices.

Market research and demand:

- in some cases, particularly when clients are represented by companies, the programmes involving culture and heritage are harder to “sell”, so more promotion is necessary to make the approach more attractive;
- social research is also necessary at the community level of the community, particularly when the community is also the beneficiary of the programme.

Financial support:

- for groups and individuals having access to education and culture limited by their financial means, it is necessary to find additional financial resources to support their participation.

Partnership and cooperation:

- working in partnership can bring the necessary resources to the programmes;
- cooperation with the authorities is necessary, although it is not always easy.

Topics Associated to Heritage and Outdoor Education

An open list of topics was presented to measure the professionals’ interest towards various areas.

While **preservation of natural and cultural heritage** proved to be a topic of interest for participants from all countries, on other subjects the reactions were different. **Knowledge about natural and build environment** is another topic considered to be relevant by all groups.

Communication and social integration was considered also very attractive by participants from Romania, Italy and Turkey. **Sustainable development** received positive comments from participants from Romania, Italy, Norway and Turkey.

Contribution to **vocational training and higher education** was considered of interest by participants in Turkey and Italy, while Romanian and Norwegian participants were attracted by the possibility to **promote healthy lifestyles**.

Other Aspects Relevant for the Project

In the discussions with cultural and educational professionals, several aspects came to the fore, even if they weren’t particularly followed-up in the research. Many of them are related to the understanding and perception these professionals have on education, heritage and outdoor learning.

- Cultural heritage is understood sometimes in a limited way, only as archaeological and tangible heritage;
- Outdoor education is not very familiar in terms of its methodology; there is a limited knowledge of it and of what outdoor training and education can offer to the learner;

- Cultural heritage education is perceived as important, but it is not easy to make it attractive to the public. Sometimes, heritage education is perceived as targeting only people with higher education;
- In some countries, this type of education is not integrated with and supported by the policies from the field of education, and this is considered to be a hindrance in terms of attractiveness and resources;
- Heritage education, outdoor education and their combination get easily associated (and sometimes limited) to a tourist itinerary. This gives rise to the risk of considering this type of programmes only as tourist services;
- *Vice versa*, the educational dimension and potential of some programmes and services from both the public and private sectors are not fully perceived, because providers are too focused on the informational or recreational aspects they have to deliver;
- Programmes with volunteers have a double educational dimension: one targeting the volunteers, and the other one targeting the final beneficiaries of the programme. Involving volunteers in heritage programmes is a practice very much related to raising awareness on heritage aspects. This is a practice which should be encouraged and supported.

Final Conclusions and Remarks

The report provides us with an overview on the various contexts of project implementation in the countries participating in the project. As expected, the picture is diverse and helps us understand and relate to the different needs and expectations of cultural and educational professionals from the countries involved. The report makes proof of the necessity and usefulness of an initiative such as the ECHOE project, and indicates directions to follow both for the educational methodology and for the activities aimed at raising awareness and promoting the approach.

Report elaborated by CPPC.