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INTERCULTURAL WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS IN ITALY

Case Study of Florence 1 – 8 November 2015 Workshop “Efficient Youth Intercultural Dialogue through Education, the Sciences, Culture, Communication and Information”. The workshop was devoted to 80 anniversary of Roerich Pact, 70 anniversary of UNESCO and 50 anniversary of ICOMOS. The workshop with the motto – Nickolas Roerich’s citation “The awareness of beauty will save the world” was successful and its second edition will be held on 5-12 th March 2017.

EFFICIENT; YOUTH; INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE; COMMUNICATION;
EDUCATION; CULTURE; SCIENCE; INFORMATION

Introduction

Italy has special policy in the sphere of world heritage preservation and works with different countries [1, 2] in various formats. One of the popular formats is an international workshop for students. The “Life Beyond Tourism” International Institute is based in Florence and is closely connected with the Romualdo Del Bianco Foundation [3]. Their basic aim is to promote understanding between cultures and to build a better future to share by people from diverse cultures and various countries.

The Foundation Board invited several universities to take part in an international workshop. The Workshop Coordinator L.Devel was a professor who represented St. Petersburg University of Culture. Students and professors who attended the workshop came from four Russian universities: St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, St. Petersburg University of Culture, Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University and Far Eastern Federal University in Vladivostok as well as one Polish university – Kozminski University from Warsaw and the Florentine University. The title of the international workshop was: “Efficient Youth Intercultural Dialogue through Education, the Sciences, Culture, Communication and Information”. The motto of the Workshop was “The awareness of beauty will save the world” Roerich. The official language of the workshop was English.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the case [4, 5], to present three stages of the work that was done within its framework of the Florentine international workshop in:

- Preparation for the workshop.
- Participation in the workshop.

- Follow-up and further developments.

Since the workshop was focused on the promotion of intercultural dialogue, it needs to be stressed that the participants, both students and professors, contributed greatly to achieving this goal. As a result of a detailed schedule prepared by the Workshop Coordinator and agreed with the Foundation, various forms of activities were undertaken. They included both individual and team work. Additionally, the Foundation arranged visits to all the major tourist attractions in Florence so the participants could admire the historic beauty of the city.

Preparation for the Workshop For about two months before the workshop started, there had been preparations going on in all universities and coordinated by the St. Petersburg University of Culture representative on the basis of the supplied materials and instructions [6, 7, 8]. All academic centres were informed about the tasks and were asked to decide on the character of their contribution. The main two initiatives taken at the preparation stage are detailed below.

A. Multilingual Dictionary of Restoration

Following the initiative of the Workshop Coordinator, three universities: Novosibirsk State University, Kozminski University and St. Petersburg University of Culture prepared a multilingual dictionary of restoration. It was a truly collaborative project done by both professors and students. The work on the project was based on the following methodology. Firstly, the basic English terminology of reconstruction was identified in a corpus of selected literature – monolingual dictionaries and books of transactions [for example: 9, 10]. The decision on the inclusion of specific items into the dictionary was consulted with experts in conservation (both in terms of restoration and reconstruction) from the University of Culture who presented their opinions on the use of a given term and recommended its inclusion in the dictionary.

Then, the Russian equivalents of the terms were identified (by St. Petersburg University of Culture, L.Devel). Sometimes it was the case that two Russian synonyms were used for one English term, sometimes it was even necessary to add a short definition as well. At the next stage, all the dictionary items were translated into Polish (by Kozminsky University, E. Jendrich) and into German (by I. Bakaitis from the Novosibirsk University, see Fig. 3).

This way a multilingual English-Russian-Polish-German dictionary of restoration was created with the aim to popularize the terminology connected with conservation and restoration (many terms overlap), especially among students who study abroad and need this type of dictionary as a tool for learning specialist terminology.

B. Preparation of Presentations of Territories

All student participants in the workshop were encouraged by the Foundation and by the Project Coordinator to use the Foundation website www.lifebeyondtourism.org and upload their individual or group presentations there. Students were expected to present both a description and pictures of the chosen territories.

The participants of the portal place information on the promotion of territories. So the portal in this case can be viewed upon as an open multilingual or bilingual (in our case basically English-Russian pair of languages and also English-Polish and English-German) cultural heritage encyclopedia. The instruction to present a territory (where you live, say Leningrad Oblast or other places of the world, *see the following sample on Ivan-Gorod*) is as follows:

- specify the official name of your country and name of the monument/ site tangible or intangible object and its significance (UNESCO – special box for a tick on the website or other level: say federal or regional or specify). Download 2-3 good picture/s or videos
- write 2 mini texts and 2 extension texts (20-50 words each : 2 -in English and 2- in your native language)
- check the location on the website map – you will see the tick (usually automatically)
- write your commentaries – travel recommendations and personal impressions.

Russian Federation, Ivan-Gorod, Federal Level of Cultural Heritage



Fig. 1 General view on the fortress of Ivan-Gorod



Fig 2. Inside the Ivan-Gorod fortress

English mini text 1

The town is the site of the Ivan-Gorod Fortress (Fig.1, 2), a prominent fortification monument of the 15th and the 16th centuries. The fortress was established in 1492 during the reign of Ivan III of Moscow and was named after him. Between 1581–1590 and between 1612–1704, it was controlled by Sweden. The district contains thirty-three cultural heritage monuments of federal significance. All federal monuments are related to the Ivan-gorod Fortress. The fortress functions as a museum.

English extension text 2

Ivangorod or Ivan-Gorod was granted town privileges and administered as a Russian township under the Crown of Sweden (who conquered it in 1612 from boyar Teuvo Aminev) until 1649, when its burghers were ordered to remove to a Narva suburb. In 1617, the Treaty of Stolbovo was signed between Russia and Sweden, which placed the area under the Swedish sovereignty. Russia reconquered it during the Great Northern War in 1704. Despite other changes in territory and sovereignty.

Russian mini text 1

В 1492 году в 12 верстах от берега залива, на реке Нарове, по приказу царя была построена крепость. В честь Ивана III ее называли Ивангородом (в разгар Литовской войны) московским князем Иваном III Васильевичем и назван в его честь — согласно русским летописям: «повелением великого князя Ивана Васильевича заложиша град на немецком рубеже, против Ругодива города немецкого. На Нарове, на Девичьей горе на Слуде, четвероуголен и нарече ему имя Иванград». В районе крепости Иван-город находятся 33 объекта культурного наследия федерального значения.

Russian extension text 2

Первоначальную крепость Иван-город, заложенную в 1492 году, в 1496 году осадили и разрушили шведы. После этого, русские восстановили и расширили её. В немецких документах конца XV века был известен как «контр-Нарва». Крепость Ивангород с мощными каменными стенами и десятью башнями — первое русское оборонительное сооружение с регулярным, прямоугольным планом.

Students were free to decide which territory to present. Most of them, however, chose the places that were a part of their own region and the places which were of great historical value. Most of those places are, quite naturally, important tourist attractions as well. Some of the presentations concentrated on the beauty of nature in a given territory, while others evidenced the conservatory efforts taken to preserve these beautiful places for future generations.

It was an essential component of the workshop preparation stage because it was closely connected with the mission of the Foundation – “Discovering the past

together, building a common future” and the motto of the |Workshop: “The awareness of beauty will save the world”. The rationale for presenting places of interest to foreigners is based on the assumption that our civilization is interconnected by the principle of respecting your own nation’s contribution into culture, traditions and history expressed, among others, by great pieces of architecture. No matter which country you come from, you understand and share this principle.

It can be said that everyone is proud of the culture and civilization created by our predecessors. The question, however, how to promote cross-cultural understanding by promoting the beauty and cultural values of your country is open for every new generation.

Participation in the Workshop

A. Welcome Addresses

On the first day of the workshop the Secretary General of the Foundation and The Workshop Coordinator gave opening speeches in which they welcomed the participants in a historic place built in Renaissance – Palazzo Coppini, which is the seat of the Foundation in the heart of Florence. They presented the key ideas, scope and aims of the workshop. They stressed the need for cross-cultural cooperation and understanding and the unique opportunities the workshop gives to the participants from Russia, Poland and Italy, both students and professors. These two opening addresses, given by representatives of two different cultures showed how much these cultures have in common: they share the same values regarding history of civilization in their respective countries. They also showed the speakers' firm belief in the intercultural dialogue, which was the best way to build bridges of trust and understanding between nations.



Fig. 3. Igor Bakaitis from Novosibirsk University presenting in Palazzo Coppini

B. Students’ Presentations of Territories

Later on, the representatives of all the universities participating in the workshop as foreigners delivered their power point presentations about the chosen territories in their countries. The presentations were professionally prepared and delivered by students. Each group has a limited time slot to present.

It is important to stress the variety of territories presented by students – from those located in Europe to those in Asia – Novosibirsk and Far East Asia – Vladivostok (the latter, by the way, is more than 10,000 kilometers away from Florence).

It is also worth noting that the students represented various study specializations. Some of them were linguists, some were art historians and some were restorers. This fact contributed to the multifaceted character of their presentations. It enriched the experience of all participants – they could look at the presented territories from different perspectives and learn about different aspects of restoration and renovation of places and buildings that are historically, architecturally and culturally important.

The presentations depicted historic places such as famous palaces, churches and old buildings. Some presenters concentrated on renovation and restoration processes, while others were focused on documenting how important their territories were for tourists, for the local people and for the whole country. It was strongly indicative that students are proud of their places of residence and have positive emotions and feelings towards the history and culture of their country. What seems to be most valuable, however, is the core idea of the workshop: sharing knowledge and experience in order to add value to our lives and to contribute to better understanding between different cultures and traditions.

C. Presentation of Life Beyond Tourism New Project

A Board Member of the International Institute Life Beyond Tourism gave an extensive presentation on a new project recently started by the Life Beyond Tourism Institute. Its title is ‘Travel for Dialogue’ and it is directed at specialist courses that can be run in various countries. The presenter concentrated on several key things connected with the idea of ‘travelling for dialogue’:

- The importance of cross-cultural understanding
- Respect for other cultures
- Gaining first-hand experience of other cultures
- Tourism as an arena for sharing
- Learning cross-cultural competences by representatives of different cultures

She also gave a detailed description of a course that she run in a school in Japan. Japanese students were exposed to European culture in a number of practical ways, i.e. by doing various tasks, either individually or in groups. The task of delivering presentations was used as an example of teaching Japanese students the European principles of public speaking, presenting personal opinions and encouraging feedback. Owing to cultural differences, Japanese students may find it difficult to follow these principles but most probably they could learn how these rules differ from their own ones. And that experience helped them understand the diversity of values and norms which are rooted in various cultures and which impact our behavioral patterns.

The presenter also showed very impressive photographs symbolizing the inflow of tourists from all over the world to two historic cities of Florence and

Venice. According to her, those tourists come to see interesting places. They are in the same place at the same time with thousands of other tourists coming from diverse cultures as well as with the local residents. However, they miss the chance of using this unique opportunity to speak to them in order to share their experiences and to create bridges between cultures. Tourism understood as a purely commercial activity is a prime example of consumerism and does not contribute to intercultural dialogue and understanding. This commercial approach to tourism is not consistent with the Manifesto of the Romualdo Del Bianco Foundation and with the principles and mission of the Life Beyond Tourism Institute.

D. Meeting with Professor Gennaro Tampone

Students and professors working at the Multinational Dictionary of Restoration were honoured to meet Prof. Tampone and discuss some possible improvements in the dictionary content and form. Prof. Tampone, a restorer and engineer, is a world-renowned expert in restoration and the President of the ICOMOS International Wood Committee. He is the author of many publications on restoration of art.

He gave some valuable guidelines to the students on how to avoid mistakes when preparing entries for the dictionary. He also voiced an opinion that the dictionary may be expanded by adding some more entries that can be suggested by students. His suggestions were most valuable for the multilingual dictionary authors, It was also recommended that in the future the dictionary may be uploaded on the Life Beyond Tourism portal and new languages, especially Italian, French and Spanish, may be added to it to make it more universal.

E. Lecture at Florentine University

Students and professors of the Florentine University invited the participants of the workshop coming from other countries to visit the University and to take part in a special lecture. The lecture was given by Prof. Marcello Garzaniti from the Department of Foreign Languages. He presented the issues related to his research area and newly developed material for the encyclopedia of Florence. What followed was a lively discussion, by both students and professors, on the problems pertaining to his presentation.

Dr Natalia Zhukova presented a group of Italian students from the Florentine University, the Department of Slavic Languages, who specialize in studying Russian. Both Prof. Garzaniti and the Italian students spoke Russian during that lecture, which was a nice surprise for all other participants. It also showed that Italian students who participated in the workshop were eager to contribute to cross-cultural dialogue by sharing their experiences and were eager to practice their language and communication skills.

F. Special Invitation to ‘Unity in Diversity’ International Conference of City Mayors

All the participants of the Workshop were invited along with the Romualdo Del Bianco Foundation – one of the hosts of the important global forum – to the opening ceremony in Palazzo Vecchio. It was an unforgettable experience for everyone. First of all as it took place in the place famous across the world for its

Salon with outstanding art masterpieces and secondly because of the speeches of Nobel prize winners. The conference signed Florentine Charter and supported UNESCO initiatives to preserve cultural heritage [11]. It was also useful experience for students to see how interpreters work in booths doing simultaneous translation, how big cross-cultural issues were discussed in the format of roundtables by representatives of different continents (see Fig. 4).

The Romualdo Del Bianco Foundation at the *Unity in Diversity*:

Florence, November 10, 2015 – The City of Florence invited the Romualdo Del Bianco Foundation to collaborate with its international network of contacts in the scheduled forum "**Unity in Diversity**", an event that brought together at the **Palazzo Vecchio, from 5 to 8 November**, the mayors of 56 cities from all the world under the sign of dialogue on peace. The key line of "Unity in diversity" was the crucial role that cultural heritage and education play in peace-building and development processes.

Fig. 4. Florentine newspaper clipping of 10th November, 2015.

G. Closing Presentation of the Italian Students

Six Italian students from the Florentine University made the final concluding presentation which was devoted to the Duomo, Santa Maria del Fiore – the main church of Florence. They split it into several parts so that each of them spoke about certain aspect of this architectural monument. In the end they wrote in big block letters in three languages ‘Many thanks!’ to the participants and to the organizers for the workshop

Follow-up and Further Developments

During the workshop the participants raised some initiatives and ideas for wrap-up and further development of the project. It was agreed that the multilingual dictionary will be uploaded on the portal of the Life Beyond Tourism Institute. The Workshop Coordinator will be the editor of the dictionary. This way restoration terminology can be popularized among restorers from different countries. The dictionary maybe extended by new languages in the future.

Students from Russia, Kazakhstan and Poland uploaded their presentations of territories either as text and pictures or as articles presented in the form of power point presentations. Some of the presented territories are listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, some are not that famous but still worth visiting. It can be hoped that these presentations will be useful for tourists who use the portal and want to read first-hand accounts written by locals rather than stereotype descriptions in guidebooks.

The Project Leader presented the newly developed instruction on the website presentation of territories.

Discussion

The final session on the last day of the workshop was devoted to the discussion of the results. The students were happy about the participation in the workshop. They said that it was interesting to prepare home presentations about the world significant monuments and sites as they learned much from this and their work could be useful to other students, guides and tourists from different countries. They developed their translation skills, developed and improved vocabularies, cross-cultural skills, multicultural education. Now they can submit international certificates at the universities.

Professors were happy to have international certificates as well, it was useful to visit the world famous museums and architectural ensembles, to be present at the global event “Unity in Diversity”, to get special experience to be disseminated to their students and colleagues.

The perception of cultural dialogue and understanding really transformed after the Florentine experience. Here is one of the master-students sharing.

The youth workshop “**Efficient Youth Intercultural Dialogue**” organized by the Romualdo Del Bianco Foundation is especially relevant today. Especially at the time of one of the events within the framework of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO – the 9th youth forum in Paris devoted to the anniversary of UNESCO bringing together young women and men from across the world to discuss youth issues and find solutions, to allow discussion of sustainable development challenges in the post-2015 context.

I think Nicholas Roerich was right. Nicholas Roerich’s motto “The awareness of beauty will save the world” is timeless and is quite applicable in the situation of youth intercultural dialogue. What is beauty? Do we see it as Dostoevsky saw it motto “Beauty will save the world”? Can beauty secure sustainable peace across the world? The awareness of the world cultural heritage will save the world. The whole idea of UNESCO or ICOMOS is very much the same: to save the world via building peace in the minds of men and women. Beauty is a complex concept which we can be better aware of in Florence – a significant place – the city of the geniuses, the Renaissance capital. Beauty notion implies harmony, proportion, the beauty of nature, the beauty of art and the human soul beauty.

In brief, the moral education of human being is done through art, science and religion. The humanity receives knowledge of previous generations through the cultural heritage of previous generations. In other words, beauty like a light in the life of mankind illuminates a human way in settling conflicts.

We teach children to love and understand the beauty of the environment since childhood. We introduce them to the world of nature, showing the beauty of their native land; show them how to appreciate every unique sunset and sunrise. We take them to museums, cultivating love to the immortal paintings and statues. We help them to see not only the appearance of other people, but also the beauty and purity of the human soul. When a human fully understands what the beauty is, he or she becomes capable of distinguishing the good and the bad. I am

glad to have the opportunity to participate in this workshop. To tell the truth, doing my homework I was glad to find out that much is going on in terms of protection of the World Heritage at a local level of my hometown of Saint Petersburg, Russia. Historic buildings in the city and its suburbs are actively being restored and parks (the Park Shuvalovsky, the Park of the Town of Pavlovsk, etc.) that are the objects of UNESCO are being reconstructed. The most important thing is that all these places are visited by parents with children. So the tradition to appreciate beauty never stops. It is still transmitted from generation to generation.

Awareness of beauty helps humans in saving the world from hatred, violence, wars, filling it with love and peace. I tend to believe that people today are losing the awareness of what a real beauty is and how precious it is. For example, many popular songs on the radio do not carry any meaning; moreover, obscene words are often used in them. Is this beautiful music? It is time for everyone to answer this question.

Today the observance of the Roerich Pact, support of the UNESCO, ICOMOS efficient work is more significant. The main goal of humanity is the protection of objects of cultural value.

The most striking example today is Palmyra recognized by UNESCO as the World Heritage site being at stake as a result of the events in Iraq and Syria. The world is shocked by the ISIS deliberate destruction of sites and monuments, objects of cultural, historical and religious value. Besides many mosques, temples, tombs ruins of ancient cities – Nimrud, Hatra, Dur-Sharrukin were wiped out from the face of the earth. Thousands of ancient manuscripts and books from the library of the city of Mosul have been burnt.

The intercultural youth dialogue on the current issues helps to find new ways of solving problems related to the conservation and protection of World Heritage sites and monuments.

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СТУДЕНЧЕСКИЙ СЕМИНАР ПО МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОММУНИКАЦИИ В ИТАЛИИ

Основы организации международных студенческих семинаров – анализ примера семинара во Флоренции 1-8 ноября 2015 «Эффективный международный диалог молодежи через образование, просвещение, науку, культуру, коммуникацию и информацию». Он был посвящен 80-летию Пакта Рериха, 70-летию ЮНЕСКО, 50-летию ИКОМОС с девизом - высказыванием Н.Рериха «Осознание красоты спасет мир» - прошел успешно и в продолжение серии назначен очередной семинар на 5-12 марта 2017 года.

МОЛОДЕЖЬ; ЭФФЕКТИВНЫЙ, МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНЫЙ ДИАЛОГ;
КОММУНИКАЦИЯ; ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ; КУЛЬТУРА; НАУКА; ИНФОРМАЦИЯ