

Museum and gallery education and its application in the context of pre-primary education

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Museum and gallery education and its application in the context of pre-primary education

The presented article deals with the issue of cooperation among museum and gallery institutions and pre-primary education. Its content is structured into a theoretical and a research part that are closely

connected. In the theoretical part, there is an analysis of the curriculum of pre-primary education and an analysis of the possibility of a cooperation among the pre-primary schools and the museum institutions with regard to the (educational) needs and interests of the child visitor. This connection is then specified in the chapter devoted to the phenomenon of the children's museum, set especially in the European context. In the theoretical part, we also checked the offer of Slovak museums and galleries intended for pre-school children (performances, workshops, interactive exhibitions). The research part of the article, based on interviews with teachers and directors of nursery schools, examines not only the possibilities of cooperation between the pre-primary school and museums and galleries, but also the specific needs and requirements of pre-primary practice towards these institutions in order to fulfill their educational potential to the fullest possible extent.

Keywords: museum, children's museum, pre-primary education curriculum, museum practice, child visitor

Specifics of pre-school age in relation to museum education

Pre-primary education implemented by kindergartens is a specific educational system in the Slovak context. Its function in relation to the child is not only educational but also socialization-adaptive. The kindergarten is therefore not an environment that primarily and exclusively educates, its role and function in the education system is understood more comprehensively. It is a full-featured integration of the child into the social environment, in which his mental and value attitudes will be formed lifelong. Within this range, the targeting of pre-school education also defines the State Educational Program for Pre-primary Education (hereinafter referred to as SEP), according to which: *“the main goal of education in kindergarten is to achieve optimal cognitive, sensomotoric and socio-emotional levels as a basis for primary school education at primary school and for life in society.”*¹ A child in preschool age (defined from 3 to 6 years of age) is primarily an object of education, understood as *„an activity that ensures the transfer of ‘spiritual property’ of society from generation to generation. It is about mediation of norms and formulas, communication rituals, hygiene habits, etc., which takes place through family education from the earliest age of children. In this sense, pedagogical education is mainly a component of socialization, which is explored in other sciences“*²

In the pre-school age, a child except upbringing, also goes through the process of learning, acquiring new knowledge about the world that surrounds him. However, due to his developmental ability, this process should be informal, be done primarily through games and direct (physical) contact of the child with the object of knowledge. The „palpable“ way of communicating the world is also important because, from a developmental point of view pre-school age is characterized by a period of enthusiastic discovery, creativity and as increasing motor activity (movement need). A child of this age *„is very proactive, his thinking is egocentric, self-centered.“*³ Curiosity, creativity and the desire to discover and understand the world - the mental world of a pre-schooler could be simply described.

Museum education and its possibilities in relation to a pre-school child

By linking the educational function of a museum and a gallery and the presence of a child visitor in this institution, we come into the sphere of museum pedagogy. One of its basic definitions characterizes it as a pedagogical discipline, *“examining all aspects of the use of museums and their collections for educational activities, for example didactic and methodological problems by creating*

¹ State educational program for pre-primary education in kindergartens. Bratislava: Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, 2016, p. 6. Available at: http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/nove_dokumenty/statny-vzdelavaci-program/svp_materske_skoly_2016-17780_27322_1-10a0_6jul2016.pdf. [cit. 28.11.2018].

² PRŮCHA, Jan. *Přehled pedagogiky*. Praha : Portál, 2000, p. 14.

³ VÁGNEROVÁ, Marie. *Vývojová psychologie: dětství a dospívání*. Praha : Karolinum, 2012, p. 177.

specialized exhibitions (children's museums, youth museums), preparing special tours for schools, lessons and „workshops“ in the museum, etc.“⁴ Naturally, we also understand it as an integrative discipline that combines pedagogical, psychological and vocational knowledge.⁵ Galleries, as specialized museums focused on the visual arts, develop gallery pedagogy focused on the visual culture and the reception of works of art. That the museum and the gallery also have educational potential for the child visitor is unquestionable. It is most often implemented in cooperation with elementary schools or kindergartens in the process of non-formal education. The basic task, which is in cooperation among the museum and educational institutions, is to link the educational and upbringing goals of the primary (in our case pre-primary) school and museum. The museum's educational activities (programs) are informal in nature and such a form of education is more popular with pupils than formal education that is carried out in the school environment. This, of course, is possible and desirable from both institutions, with regards to specific conditions and with respect to the child as a „recipient of knowledge“. In many developed countries, museums are used as effective educational facilities and have become very important organizations in the field of children's education. The environments that museums provide allow visitors - children and adults to explore and learn in this environment. Learning and exploring in museums are updated by the interaction of objects displayed in museums. The fact that learning in museums is not limited to books or school premises, museums have strengthened their importance as an educational institution. Although visiting the museums and galleries is not binding in the curriculum, but only recommended, thanks to changing the environment and other forms of learning, pupils' broadening and confirmation of knowledge is improved. The museums are gaining a significant segment of visitors that has the potential to develop in the future. Many museums are aware of this and prepare special museum programs for individual categories of visitors. There is a mutual interaction and symbiosis among museums and schools. Working with a child visitor is not a new phenomenon in Slovak museums; even before 1989, this area developed within the framework of cultural and educational activities. After stagnation, respectively in the 1990s⁶, new trends have been developing since the beginning of this century through museum pedagogy, as part of a broader education of visitors to the cultural-historical heritage. Museum pedagogy as a social science deals with museum education and it contributes to school education. As a sub-discipline of museum pedagogy, it deals with educational process in the museum, especially to the specific forms and methods of working with the public and with aspect of stimulating learning of museum audience.

Art Education is based on the mutual respect of the individuality of the child, the teacher and the artist. It is based on the psychologist Howard Gardner's suggestion that a wider set of skills is needed to develop intelligence.⁷ Gardner's theory contributed to education reform based on the development of the natural but diverse abilities of each child. From this theory museums and galleries are also based on the preparation of their programs, that not only by visually visitors can receive and absorb knowledge through exhibitions and expositions. Upbringing by art in museums should, on the one hand, promote fantasy and curiosity and on

⁴ PRŮCHA, Jan – WALTEROVÁ, Eliška – MAREŠ, Jiří. *Pedagogický slovník*. Praha : Portál, 2003, p. 101-107.

⁵ ŠOBÁŇOVÁ, Petra. *Edukační potenciál muzea*. Olomouc : Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2012, p. 44.

⁶ Due to the economic transformation of the society after 1989 and the reduction of funds by the founder of the museum, the departments of cultural and educational activities lapsed, or functions were accumulated.

⁷ It includes eight different types of intelligence (linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical, movement, interpersonal, intrapersonal and natural). Engaging a specific type of intelligence creates a specific type of creativity.

the other a desire for knowledge. Its basis is the use of collection items, respectively knowledge found in the museum. All art-based projects emphasize the active involvement of the visitor in communicating with the artwork. The museum supports opportunities for children to discover objects in the museum, imagine stories about objects, establish relationships with them, study in a safe and comfortable environment and develop problem solving skills.⁸ Children usually meet objects that were made in the past, try to perceive them and compare past and present, helping them to create historical awareness. Because of their age group and character, they are curious and willing to learn and explore, so they have a clear memory and creative thinking. Therefore, anything they encounter becomes a tool for their learning. In this way, museums are becoming the ideal learning environment in pre-school education, as they enable children to acquire historical awareness and perceive events and phenomena in causality. Children's museums play an important role in this area. They were formed from initial collections to practical, multi-sensory learning institutions with a focus on interactivity, while increasingly impacting sensory perception compared to traditional museums. The attractiveness and success of today's children's museums in attracting children and families and engaging them in the emergence of new discoveries are a major success in innovative pedagogical approaches. Young children often comment how special the „real thing“ was seen. When they were asked to talk about what they liked the most, they often listed places in the museum where they could see things close and if they could touch objects and artifacts and had a multi-sensory interaction, the experience was even more memorable. However the question remains to what extent teachers can mediate, work, cooperate with museums. The specificity of children's museums goes beyond the traditional behaviorist model of education, where the child is in the position of a passive recipient of information. It was very well presented by Black, who said that museums should treat small children „not as passive observers, but as participants with active engagement; direct and immediate experience of objects, people and event“.⁹ Whether these processes are interactive-experiential or not, the museum can act as an „activating-educative“ element in cooperation with kindergartens. For example, guided tours for children, animation programs, children's workshops and creative workshops can fulfill this function. The intersection between non-formal and formal education is to include a visit of a museum (as a non-formal education facilitator) in the implementation of individual kindergarten education activities.

Children's museum and its forms in Slovakia

The concept of a children's museum as a cultural-museum institution dedicated exclusively to children is based on the museological background of collecting and preserving artifacts and objects, but last but not least, it adheres to the basic pedagogical principles of clarity, activity, appropriateness and emotionalism of knowledge. These, in museum practice, are applied to access to child visitors, depending on their age and needs. The range of objects of knowledge that such a type of museum can provide to children is diverse. *“Children's museums offer a wide range of activities to children and youth based on collaboration in planning, designing and implementing exhibitions, programs and projects for these facilities. Children can create artistically (paint, play theater, dance, write, play on musical instruments and sing, weave, do-it-yourself), do more or less scientific studies (for example observe various natural phenomena), or take part in various excursions in them.”*¹⁰ Institutional form of

⁸ BELLAMY, Kate – OPPENHEIM, Carey. *Learning to live: museums, young people and education*. London : Institute for Public Policy Research, 2009. p. 10.

⁹ BLACK, Graham. *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement*. London : Routledge, 2005. p. 68.

¹⁰ JÚVA, Vladimír. *Dětské muzeum. Edukační fenomén pro 21. století*. Praha : Paido, 2004, sp. 121.

children's museums can also be varied; the most common are two basic types:

- children's museum as an autonomous institution with its own places and equipment;
- children's museum as part (department) of a museum institution that organizes exhibitions, expositions and creative programs designed exclusively for children.

Bratislava's *BIBIANA - International House of Art for Children* is the oldest, self-operating institution that probably best meets the profile of the children's museum in Slovakia (in this case, a children's gallery would be more appropriate).. It presents the institutionalized connection of the children's gallery and the center of the children's book culture, in which the reflection of creation in the first years after its foundation (1987) was mainly of a theoretical character¹¹. However, its current program profile is more varied, in addition to exhibitions and expositions, we can find a wide range of accompanying events realized in an experiential and interactive way. If we stay in the target group of pre-school visitors, we can find mainly creative theaters, dramatic reading of fairy tales, or so-called „reading workshops“ in which the dramatization of a fairy tale is intertwined with the child's psychomotoric activity (for example puppet creation). Interestingly, *BIBIANA* prepares such activities for children since 18 months of age, when they have basically sensoric character (performance *The Glove*¹²). Later in pre-school age, it focuses on the development of reading abilities of children, get known with a book (as an artifact) and literature as a specific type of art, respectively with a fairy tale as a literary story, especially in the form of dramatization (performances *Baby-Snowman* and *Pictures from the Forest*).¹³ There are several galleries in Slovakia that prepare programs for children's visitors. They are primarily based on the discipline of art education. Let's mention the *Slovak National Gallery* in the first place. Activities for children in this area are part of the gallery pedagogy, while a separate program for kindergartens is currently quite varied. We can choose from it, for example, the creative cycle *Colors, Shapes, Things*¹⁴, which by its focus on exploring the visuality of phenomena directly corresponds with the content of the SEP. For example, it focuses on examining the colors and colors of things that a child comes into contact with (part *A white is color!*), recognizing geometrical objects and their basic shape characteristics, or the issue of the child's constructional play (section *Shape creation*). We can see from the focus of the offered activities on the basis of which criteria the activities for this age group are conceived. Here belong:

- emphasis on game as a basic method of working with a child within educational activities;
- emphasis on the visual and concretized perception of the world as a whole and in details (this way of conveying the reality to the child is natural in view of the age, assuming that he cannot read yet, thus decoding the world through images);
- emphasis on motor-construction activity related to material (concrete) perception of objects and their sensory properties.

¹¹ However, BIBIANA is not the only children visitor-oriented institution. Since the autumn of 2018, the Severka Children's Museum has been operating in Nitra, which operates on the principle of a community museum and its aim is to develop a method of experientially acquiring information and knowledge, using the „hands on“ method - hence direct contact with exhibits and expositions.

¹² Available on: http://www.bibiana.sk/sites/default/files/programpdf/bibiana_december_2018.pdf. [cit. 28.11.2018].

¹³ Available on: http://www.bibiana.sk/sites/default/files/programpdf/bibiana_december_2018.pdf. [cit. 28.11.2018].

¹⁴ Available on: <https://www.sng.sk/sk/bratislava/programy/skolske-programy/Materske-skoly>. [cit. 28.11.2018].

The Slovak National Museum is also systematically dedicated to work with a child visitor, respectively its specialized museums. However, it is more focused on child visitors who have already reached school age.¹⁵

Educational potential of cooperation between pre-primary school and museum

We perceive the museum and the gallery as institutions whose main educational potential lies in the experience and interactivity of the world that they can offer to child. Of course, these attributes are being integrated by kindergarten teachers into educational activities realized directly in the interior of kindergartens, however, museums have a much wider range of (specific) objects in their collections, with which children cannot meet in their natural environment (and in kindergarten). Moreover, in the museum, their position in the process of learning is changing in comparison to the kindergarten - they become researchers, detectives, often (in the form of games) solving a particular problem. This interactive dimension of cognition is even more pronounced compared to the kindergarten, because „*information interpreted in the school environment is often limited to the possibility of a visual experience (in the image, map, projection, other visual media). Museums and their forms of education allow to use more senses (except visual, also the ability to touch the original or copy).*“¹⁶ The sensory, coherent and symbolic perception of reality is the most appropriate form of knowledge for pre-school age. However, in our opinion, why has the museum an irreplaceable function in its educational aspect, is the correction of childish naive concepts and theories. Especially in correcting pre-concepts through informal education in a museum through game a child can get a real picture of the empirical nature of the things and phenomena that surround him, their patterns and characteristics. In addition to the positive co-operation with school institutions, museum educators also provide specific recommendations that can improve school and museum collaboration. They are primarily formulated as recommendations for primary school teachers, but we can also apply them to kindergarten practice. To improve cooperation, it needs to:

- the school discovers and recognizes the educational and upbringing value of the museum for its educational purposes;
- there were activities in the museum that the school cannot offer or provide;
- the museum visit was included in the curriculum of each school (so far it is usually in the category of school trips);
- the museum visit, in collaboration with the museum, was conceptually prepared to be used in the most effective way;
- the school helped to select an adequate part of the exhibition or exposition (visiting the whole museum or too large exposition would be nonproductive).¹⁷

¹⁵ As far as events for preschoolers are concerned, the Slovak National Museum is currently holding two exhibitions for this age group - *Maria Theresa* and *Asterix and Obelix*. These are interactive events where visitors are directly involved - they can, for example, try historical clothing or creation craft items.

¹⁶ LEŠKOVÁ, Agáta – DOBIASOVÁ, Zuzana – SZABŔOVÁ, Silvia – HUTŤANOVÁ, Jana. *Na spoločnej ceste. Kolokvium a metodika pre komunikáciu medzi múzejnými a školskými pedagógmi*. Bratislava : Zväz múzeí na Slovensku, 2017, p. 37.

¹⁷ BRABCOVÁ, Alexandra. Veřejné muzeum. In: BRABCOVÁ, Alexandra. (ed.) *Brána muzea otevřená*. Náchod : Nakladatelství JUKO, 2003. p. 24-39.

Museum practice and official curriculum of pre-primary education

As mentioned above, the mandatory curriculum for educational practice in kindergarten is State educational program for Pre-primary Education. The skills and competences of the child to cope before compulsory school attendance are differentiated into seven educational areas: Language and Communication, Mathematics and work with information, Human and nature, Human and society, Human and the world of work, Arts and culture, Health and movement. Our opinion is that, in principle, museums can “intervene” in them thematically and didactically (in case the principles of experiential or object pedagogy are adhered). More important than the theme of the exhibition, exposition, or even a creative workshop is the methodology of work, but also age adequate knowledge, the highest possible proportion of clarity and unambiguous explication of the phenomena and processes explained (without using exact terminology). Both museum educators and kindergarten teachers are aware that if a child should learn something at this age, learning must be through play. In principle, this means either to manipulate with an object of interest or engage in a creative process that results in a concrete tangible product. In our opinion, the possibilities of manipulation and construction play can be very well connected with the knowledge of the properties of materials (natural and synthetic), as stated in the content, performance standards and evaluation questions by the SEP. Several pedagogical approaches (mainly Montessori pedagogy) are based on authentic work with materials, but the added value of the museum lies in the interactivity and “otherness” of the environment. Museum exhibits have an irreplaceable value where a kindergarten cannot saturate contact with an authentic environment, not even in the exterior. This applies, for example, to the exploration of the universe as part of the natural system, which is unattainable under empirical conditions, but it is the museum that has the opportunity to mediate it experientially, using appropriate didactic procedures. In spite of some differences between the basic curriculum of kindergartens and the current offer of museum and gallery activities for children, we can see quite significant conjunction of both spheres and hence a certain similarity in the model of child visitor on the museum and gallery side and the child as an object of education and upbringing from point of view of kindergarten.

Research methodology

In our research we decided to apply exclusively qualitative methodology. The aim of the research is to understand the how our research subjects (teachers and headmasters) look at research phenomenon. In the following section we describe the research methodology and offer basic information about the research.

Research objectives and research questions

The main aim of the research was to analyze the opinions of pre-primary education teachers on the current situation of museum and gallery education and on the use of services offered by these institutions. Our intention was:

- Identify specific forms of cooperation between pre-primary education teachers and cultural institutions.
- Identify the needs of pre-primary education teachers related to museum and gallery education.
- Analyze the views and recommendations of pre-primary education teachers for museum and gallery institutions.

Research questions were formulated from the above research objectives, which are at the heart of each research project.¹⁸ The issue of museum and gallery education and its application has been elaborated by several experts, as we mentioned above, especially in the field of primary education. For this reason, the research focuses on the less explored area, the current situation of museum and gallery education in pre-primary education, which we consider to be a major research problem. Based on the formulated research problem, we are looking for answers to these research questions:

Q_1_a. What is the focus of the museums and galleries which are visited by kindergarten educators with children?

Q_1_b. Which museum educational programs are most preferred by kindergarten teachers?

Q_2. How is the cooperation between kindergarten teachers and museum teachers?

Q_3. What is the potential of museums and galleries in the context of museum education of pre-primary education children from the perspective of kindergarten teachers?

Q_4. Which aspects do pre-primary education teachers consider as insufficient in the context of museum education?

Research methods

We used the in-depth individual semi-structured interview method to collect qualitative data. As part of the data collection, 11 interviews with teachers of pre-primary education were conducted. Each interview was semi-structured with pre-defined themes, and we changed the order of themes to fit the specific situation.

Research group

The selection of our sample was made by deliberate qualified selection, which can be understood as selection having some characteristics relevant for research. One of the features was the specific experience of teachers of pre-primary education with visits of museums or gallery institutions. The subjects of research were 11 teachers of pre-primary education (including heads of kindergartens) within the Bratislava region visiting museum and gallery institutions. In the article, in keeping with anonymity, we do not mention the names of kindergartens or the real names of the participants. Individual participants of our research are called pseudonym Participant A - Participant K. The data related to the research file are summarized in Table 1.

Methods of data processing and analysis

We used an open coding technique to process and evaluate the qualitative data obtained from the interviews. We used the procedure described by Švaříček (et al., 2007). We first numbered each line of text and then assigned a code to each unit. We then moved on to systematic categorization. We chose the category names in the way recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1999)¹⁹. We named the categories to be thematically related to the data they represent. The analysis of qualitative data resulted in the creation of meaning categories closely related to the cooperation of kindergartens with museum and gallery institutions. After realizing open

¹⁸ ŠVAŘÍČEK, Roman – ŠEĎOVÁ, Klára et al. *Kvalitativní výzkum v pedagogických vědách*. Praha : Portál, 2007, 384 p.

¹⁹ STRAUSS, Anselm – CORBIN, Juliet. *Základy kvalitativního výzkumu: postupy a techniky metody zakotvené teorie*. Boskovice : Albert, 1999, s 196.

coding, we used another analytical technique called the „open cards“ technique, which is an extension of open coding.²⁰

Interpretation of results

By analyzing the obtained qualitative data, we came to the findings that specify the course of cooperation between kindergartens and museum and gallery institutions. In the next section, we summarize the findings based on the identification of categories that have proven to be significant.

Attendance and services of museums and galleries for kindergartens

Kindergartens have planned several activities throughout the year, either directly in the kindergarten or outside their complex. They are visited by theaters, magicians or kindergartens visits various institutions. Teachers and directors' statements showed that they would like to visit museums and galleries more often, than they do so far, but for various reasons they do not. One of the determining factors was the age of children. For this reason, kindergarten teachers prefer to visit museums with children of the last year of pre-primary education. The reason may be, according to Participant E, the level of children's cognitive development: *"They can't take so much from that, those little children. They remember two things and done."* The development of memory strategies, a way to better remembering and preserve information, is still very limited in this period, but under the guidance of an adult (teacher, museum educator), a five-year-old child is able to use basic strategies such as pointing, naming and repeating.²¹ In terms of the focus of the museums, the most visited by the participants was the Slovak National Museum - mainly the Natural History Museum and its related exhibition at the Bratislava Castle. Other institutions, offering educational programs for preschool children, included the Slovak National Gallery and its part the Schaubmar Mill or the regularly visited International House of Arts Bibiana. Participants also visited many other museums such as Bratislava City Gallery, Museum of Transport, Military History Museum, Museum of Clocks, Museum of Weapons, Bojnice Castle, Devin Castle and Red Stone Castle. The kindergarten was interested in guided tours with qualified lecturers - museum educators. The preference of guided tours is also confirmed by the results of research carried out in the Czech Republic in 2007-2009, as up to 63% of teachers would prefer guided tours with accompanying program and museum educator.²² We emphasize that the effectiveness of the educational program is conditioned by the presence of a qualified lecturer - a museum educator, who should take into account the age of children as stated by Participant B: *"Lecturers should understand young children, what is very important, because not everybody can work with small children."* The benefit of guided tours from the perspective of kindergarten teachers is that the educational program is run by a specialist who also represents a new authority for children. If teachers are not interested in guided tours, they can use self-service programs during which teachers use the educational potential of the museum. Teachers for some time become tutors and accompany children on the path of art in an understandable way, being responsible not only for the educational process but also for the safety of children. The self-service program is preceded by a thorough preparation of teachers in the form of self-study of professional literature (book publications, encyclopaedias, internet resources).

²⁰ ŠVARÍČEK, Roman - ŠEĎOVÁ, Klára et al, ref. 20, s. 226.

²¹ VÁGNEROVÁ, Marie. *Vývojová psychologie I. Dětství a dospívání*. Praha : Karolinum, 2008, p. 174.

²² ŠOBÁŇOVÁ, ref. 5, p. 242.

Kindergarten teachers are not only involved in their vocational preparation, but also they try to prepare children for visit of the museum by explaining to them the purpose of the visit and familiarizing them with the basic rules of good behavior.

Cooperation of kindergartens with museums and galleries

An optimal relationship between a museum and a kindergarten is considered a prerequisite for successful cooperation between these institutions, which is also beneficial for both parties. On the one hand, the school provides incentives for museum education and on the other hand, school groups represent a significant part of the museum visitors.²³ Similarly, further research showed that up to 81% of visitors are pre-school age groups.²⁴ It is this age category that is considered to be the key, as school groups make a significant contribution to increasing museum attendance, so it is necessary to pay sufficient attention to mutual communication.

Kindergarten teachers communicated with museums and galleries in a various ways - most often preferring an electronic form of communication via e-mail or the website of a concrete cultural institution over personal contact. The present is characterized by a significant development of communication technologies that make it possible to obtain the necessary information relatively quickly and easily. The Internet has become an excellent tool for communication between museums and school institutions. As part of in-depth individual interviews, teachers and directors of the kindergartens explained to us the process of cooperation with museums and galleries. As director F states: *“Usually the museum contact us. They send us a calendar of events and we choose from that, depending on the area we’re interested in. Then I call there, book the date, time, number of seats. They send us offers by e-mail.”* For mutual cooperation it is necessary to know each other’s goals and tasks in fulfilling the educational activity. We agree that the impression that a teacher and children get after visiting a museum is crucial, as he/she will remember a good experience and a pleasant lecturer, as well as a bad experience or inappropriate program. We assume that in the case of a positive experience, kindergarten teachers will regularly seek out various educational programs at museum institutions.²⁵

The potential of museum and gallery education for kindergartens

This category defines the positive aspects of museum and gallery education for kindergartens from the perspective of pre-primary education teachers. Teachers mentioned a number of positive aspects related to visits to museums and galleries. They consider the contribution of individual forms of mediation of works as experiential learning through creative workshops. Participant G said, *“Kids are excited from these visits, they enjoy it, they like to engage in interactive activities, they try to explore everything, as it is said, better see and experience as to hear for 100 times.”* The potential of museums can be seen in live interactive learning. Experiential learning, which is based on discovery, research, play and sensory perception, is more accepted by children, in case the information provided in the kindergarten environment is limited to the possibility of a visual experience (for example picture, map). Various forms of museum education allow involvement of multiple senses (except the visual one, children have the opportunity to touch the original), thereby acquiring lasting knowledge and values that they will be able to apply later in their lives. The museum is an environment that educates by experience, object-based method, while

²³ ŠOBÁŇOVÁ, ref. 5, p. 232.

²⁴ PAVLIKÁNOVÁ, Martina. Vzdelávanie v múzeách a galériách na Slovensku. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 3, 2015, Is. 2, p. 29-38.

²⁵ LEŠKOVÁ – DOBLASOVÁ – SZABÓOVÁ – HUTŤANOVÁ, ref. 16, p. 54.

education becomes illustrative as it is based on theoretical knowledge, mediates or complements it with experiential form, sensory perception and authenticity²⁶, pointed out by participant C: „*When you learn about castle in the kindergarten, it does not have the same effect as when you are in the castle. This is the same as when you learn about cars and engines and you go to the transportation museum and there you have the engine disassembled and you can see it all moving. That's what they see directly. You simply can't replace that.*” The museum is an institution that provides not only formal but also informal education through museum-pedagogical activities under the guidance of a teacher or other specialist in the museum, thereby deliberate learning processes. A positive aspect is the expansion of knowledge and the interconnection of theoretical knowledge with the real world. The benefits of cooperation between museums and kindergartens include the development of emotional intelligence and multi-sensory interaction, which contributes to the development of sensory perception of children. A visit of museums and galleries contributes to the development of social skills or compliance with the rules of social life. Based on our research findings we also include the development and formation of personality and the development of communication skills as benefits. A change of environment and free admission (or a symbolic fee) to galleries and museums are other positive aspects. The educational potential of the museum lies not only in diversification of the current day, but also helps teachers to achieve predetermined educational goals. Despite these advantages, kindergarten teachers also see problems or obstacles that limit their activities in the museum. The problematic areas are presented in the following part of the article.

Negatives of museum and gallery education in the context of pre-primary education

The issue of cooperation between the museum and the kindergarten and their mutual relations is one of the current problems in museum education, which according to foreign research stems from the effort to reconcile the goals of both institutions - the school and the museum.²⁷ Participants of the research talked openly about the negative aspects directly or indirectly related to the issue of museum and gallery education in the context of kindergartens. Kindergarten teachers pointed out the problems, obstacles, or shortcomings they encounter when visiting museums and galleries. Negative aspects from kindergarten teachers' point of view include the limited capacity of the museum and the poor readiness of some museum and gallery educators to work with preschool children, which entails an overly professional and unattractive approach. This problem may be due to the ignorance of the museum lecturers about the educational or cognitive level of preschool children. In case that the instructor's approach is disproportionate to the age of the children, teachers intervene in this process. The monotonous, eventful and overly professional approach of the museum lecturer, who was unable to approach the children's vocabulary, described Participant B: “*We were at one castle during the Nature School and it was very professional in 1248 after the fall of the Tatars ... and the kids didn't care. Because they wanted to see the sword. That is all for the older children where they specifically focus on that area of history or natural history.*” The participants of our research agreed that the offer of museum and gallery programs is mainly oriented for the age category of elementary or secondary school children. Insufficient offer of educational programs for preschool children thus proved to be another problematic area, which limits pre-primary education teachers in connection with

²⁶ Ibidem, p 32.

²⁷ ŠOBÁŇOVÁ, ref. 5, p. 231.

museum education. At present, there are many exhibitions in museums and galleries, but teachers still rated them negatively. We believe that making museum exposures more attractive would contribute to the development of museum education and higher attendance by kindergartens. The issue of funding is another area of negatives, especially with regard to ensuring the transfer of children to the museum. The distance between the kindergarten and the museum is one of the factors influencing whether the kindergarten visits the museum or not. The kindergarten has to provide transportation that is expensive, so teachers do not visit museums as often as they would like. Participant D pointed out the financial demands of providing transport: *“But transport is an alpha omega, as we cannot get there. The transport is the most important. Nothing else discourages us. We would love to visit them. But if we have to pay for a bus for 85 children, it is about 500 euros and that is unrealistic.”* The distance between the kindergarten and the museum is considered a significant obstacle from the teachers’ point of view. Many kindergartens are too far away, which means that teachers can use the museum only exceptionally. In the case that the museum’s educational program is subject to payment and the transport costs appear, the kindergarten does not have enough funds to support the use of these extracurricular forms of education.²⁸ As an alternative, kindergarten teachers choose other means of transport, using public transport, which again entails additional risks related to the safety of children or the carelessness of other passengers in the transport. If the kindergarten has sufficient financial resources, it can afford not only a bus, but also other means of transport such as sightseeing vehicles (Prešporáčik, Blaváčik), or a boat, as Participant B mentioned: *„We visit castle David during summer. We go by nice boat, we have a pirate week, we conquer the castle.”* If the kindergarten is close to a museum or gallery, teachers prefer to move children in the form of a walk. Other obstacles within museum and gallery education include teachers’ lack of interest in the services that museums or galleries provide for kindergartens. The most often subjective obstacles in cooperation are often considered the refusal of the pedagogue to experience forms of learning and lack of interest in the profession of a teacher; who performs it as a necessary activity, he/she does not enjoy working with pupils, he/she does not have deeper interest in using other forms of education in own educational practice.²⁹ The personality of the teacher proved to be crucial, as it is the teacher who decides whether to include in his time-thematic plan a visit to the museum, as evidenced by the statement of Participant D: *„Because there are teachers who have no relation to it and then don’t even go with children.”* The role of the teacher in this process is unquestionable, since the family does not have to do similar activities to a sufficient extent and the children often visit these institutions for the first time in pre-primary education.³⁰

The results of our research pointed to the presence of many difficulties or obstacles in cooperation between kindergartens and museums. That is why it is important to look for ways to improve it, so the educational potential of the museum for pre-school children can be fully exploited. The development of closer cooperation between museums and kindergartens can arise, if the obstacles that burden or restrict such cooperation are removed. Defining the identified opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses related to the research objective and research issues is provided by the following SWOT analysis. We consider the mediation of art in an experiential form as strengths in the SWOT analysis; expanding children’s knowledge and horizons; development of emotional intelligence; development of sensory perception;

²⁸ LEŠKOVÁ – DOBIASOVÁ – SZABÓOVÁ – HUTĚANOVÁ, ref. 16, p. 35.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 33.

³⁰ ŠOBÁŇOVÁ, ref. 5, p. 233.

development of social and communication skills; activities carried out outside the kindergarten; free admission to museum and gallery institutions. Weaknesses in SWOT analysis include weaker readiness of some museum and gallery educators to work with preschool children; overly professional and unattractive approach in museums and galleries; insufficient offer of educational programs for preschool children; problem of financing (costly transport from kindergarten to museums). Among the opportunities that emerged from research, we include the creation of exhibitions for multi-sensory interaction; realizing creative, interactive exhibitions; making exhibitions and expositions more attractive to younger visitors; equipping museums and galleries with didactic aids or materials suitable for a younger age category; self-education of museum educators (for the kindergarten area of interest); addressing the issue of transport (ensuring transport). Among the threats that emerged from research, we include weak, too late promotion of exhibitions; problem of distance between kindergartens and museums; the lack of interest of some teachers in the cooperation and services of museums; limited capacity space; outdated exposures. SWOT analysis helps to create conditions for solving issues related to museum and gallery education and its application in the field of pre-primary education. The form of assistance is to eliminate these weaknesses and eliminate threats and, on the other hand, to establish strengths and use opportunities related to museum and gallery education in the context of pre-primary education.

Conclusion

The contribution of theoretical and empirical character points to the possibilities of museum and gallery education in the context of pre-primary education. Based on our research findings, we would like to propose the following recommendations aimed at streamlining cooperation between kindergartens and museum and gallery institutions:

- make museums and galleries more attractive and adaptable to the age group of preschool children;
 - create appropriate educational programs for preschool children led by a museum educator;
 - to provide material and technical equipment of museums and galleries related to suitable didactic means for the younger age category;
 - education of museum workers in the field of didactics and developmental psychology with an emphasis on pre-school age;
regularly inform kindergartens of current events organized by museums or galleries;
- Provide a means of transport from museums and galleries to transfer children from kindergarten to the museum.

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