

Zsombor Galánthay

Local History Collection Work and Photo Exhibition in Coltau (Koltó)

1. Best practice selection criteria

The collection and presentation of the local history memorabilia launched real community work and the documentation of traditions reinforced local Hungarian identity. Through the successful photo exhibition several generations in the village have become proactive participants of the cultural activity at the Petőfi memorial site in Coltau (Koltó).

2. Organization(s) / person(s) the best practice can be related to

Local Authority of the Village of Coltau, Mara-Agro Association (Coltau), Petőfi-Teleki Memorial Museum (Coltau), as well as the curators of the exhibition Helén Kádár and dr. Zsombor Galánthay.

3. Stakeholders and beneficiaries of the best practice

The over 50 former and current residents of the village primarily, who put their cherished photos and memorabilia at our disposal for digitalisation. The collection work was performed by the Reformed Parish of Catalina (Koltó-Katalin) and the teachers and students of Petőfi Sándor Primary School of Coltau. Pre-press preparation was made by Big Studio Srl in Baia Mare. The exhibition was supported by the Hungarian Government via Bethlen Gábor Fund as well as by the Transylvanian Hungarian National Council; its media partner was the county paper Bányavidéki Új Szó. The primary target audience of the exhibition established as a result of the project was Hungarians living in the surroundings of Baia Mare and Maramures.

4. Objectives and activities of the best practice

Making a collection of family memorabilia of interest for the village community and arranging into a photographic collection historic documents and newspaper articles presenting the major events of the Petőfi cult on the occasion of the 170th anniversary of the honeymoon of Júlia Szendrey and Sándor Petőfi spent in Colteau; arranging a temporary exhibition.

The pictures selected on the basis of the community collection work as well as the data related to these have been entered into a digital database and, as a temporary exhibition, the past 100 years' history of the village has been presented on thematic tableaus.

5. Area(s) affected by the best practice

Through the identity reinforcing effect of processing local history and preserving the local heritage, the project fosters community development and a closer connection of the cooperating young people to their traditions and roots.

6. Territorial scope of the best practice

The local historical database was established with the involvement of the inhabitants of two settlements (Colteau and the neighbouring Catalina) primarily. The majority of the visitors of the temporary exhibitions are Hungarians from Maramures County, while tourist groups arriving from Hungary also had the chance to familiarize with the exhibition presenting village life in earlier times.

7. The conditions (human, financial, technical) required for the best practice

Data collection can be cost efficiently implemented by involving voluntaries (e.g. students) and the database can be compiled using average office tools (e.g. at a local public institution). The exhibition can be housed by the cultural institution of the settlement and its implementation can be adapted to local conditions (using digital printing, projection or an interactive board), so the project costs can be financed with local authority and/or tender resources.

8. Results and short-, mid- and long-term impact of the best practice

For the local community, active participation in “exploring” the past and presenting local – maybe family – history from a broader perspective, especially considering minority existence, are experience that strengthen belonging in the short run.

For young people, the practical experience and local history knowledge obtained in the course of the collection work is of help in career orientation decisions in the medium run.

In the longer run, the continuous enlargement of the database may enrich the programme opportunities of any local cultural institutions (heritage house museums, museum exhibitions, local “Hungarian houses” in the case of Hungarian communities outside Hungary, etc.).

9. Sustainability of the best practice

The established database, presentation material and exhibition collection can be sustained within the existing institutional framework, without considerable expenditure. In the case of continuous collection work, the manager of the database can perform other arising administrative tasks as well.

10. Adaptability of the best practice

In case the suitable community cooperation and the basic technical background are available - considering the minimum conditions described under 7 – the project can be implemented in settlements, town districts or small regions with a population of a few thousand, within the framework of establishing a local value repository or as the enlargement of an already existing value repository or local cultural collection.