



COLLECTIVE MEMORIES FOR DEMOCRATIC VALUES

ERASMUS+ KA2 CAPACITY BUILDING

MUSEUM EDUCATION PROGRAM GUIDE



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About the CoMeDeVa project

The project aims to promote intercultural dialogue, international relations and human rights; civic engagement, active citizenship and democratic values; enhanced cooperation among NGOs from post-soviet and partner countries (Central Asia and Central Eastern Europe) as well as strengthened mechanisms of contact and coordination among NGOs and stakeholders; peer learning activities, non-formal education, out of school experiences and learning by doing methods; opening to state of the art ICT tools to preserve memories.

Over 30 years have passed since the breakdown of the Soviet Union which means post-soviet countries became “adults”, furthermore, a new generation grew up outside of the socialist era. Some of the Eastern bloc countries joined the European Union in 2004 and Eastern European and Caucasian countries show rapid development as well. Despite of the improving economy and rising living conditions, many young people are exposed to the risk of radicalisation or just turn away from active political participation.

Memories of the socialist era are more or less history living with us, surrounding us. We can easily find socialist buildings, squares, roads, and people who have experienced of the longest-standing totalitarian system of the 20th century. Every day people and objects keep memories of this age, as well as historical institutes and museums. Nevertheless, professional cultural institutions face the challenge of raising youth’s interest and involve them in preserving lessons learned.

We believe that post-socialist countries from Central Europe to Central Asia have a collective memory of the socialist era. Elections, legislation, government, policing etc. meant something very different than nowadays but meant the same for the citizens of the Soviet Union member and partner countries. Preservation and usage as an educational resource of this collective memory is able to strengthen political participation and awareness of democratic values among young people both on national and international levels.

The CoMeDeVa project is a cooperation between Europe (Hungary, Slovakia and Lithuania) and Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia) aiming

to raise civic awareness and political participation of young people especially in the post-soviet and partner countries but in a broader sense all over the world. To achieve these goals partners will use non-formal education methods and learning by doing activities in order to bring social and civic issues closer to youth by giving them an 'out of school' learning experience.

Our main aim with this project to raise young people's interest in active political participation and engage them in democratic values by actively involving them in museum education activities and the process of preserving memories. We will develop two intellectual outputs: a Museum Education Program Guide for civic education will be able to be integrated into the curriculum in history-related classes of high schools and universities as well as address youngsters be either locals or tourists; and a Virtual Museum Platform that will give an interactive experience for youth through artistic and scientific activities.

Partners

Hungary: Institute for Cultural Relations Policy

Kazakhstan: Association of Shymkent ACCESS Alumni ASAA

Kyrgyzstan: International Debate Education Association in Central Asia

Lithuania: Asociacija "Aktyvus jaunimas"

Mongolia: Mongolian Center for Book Culture

Slovakia: ADEL Slovakia

Uzbekistan: Nizomiy Nomidagi Toshkent Davlat Pedagogika Universiteti

The Training course and Museum Guide Creation

The "Learned from the Past, Looked to the Future" Museum Education Training Course took place in the historical town of Trnava, Slovakia, from 27.6 to 3.7. 2022.

Theme: "**Learn from the Past, Look to the Future**"

Participants: A total of 28 participants were welcomed, with representation from four individuals from each participating country. Additionally, guidance and facilitation were provided by two experienced trainers. This course was open to participants of all ages, without any age limits.

Aim: The primary goal of the training course was to equip youth workers with museum educational knowledge while fostering an enriching exchange of ideas about the integration of non-formal education methods within museum contexts. The *CoMeDeVA Museum Education Program and Guide* were intended to be collaboratively created.

Methodologies:

Throughout the training course, a diverse range of methodologies was employed to ensure an engaging and interactive learning experience for all participants. These included:

1. Ice-Breaking Games: Activities that helped participants get to know each other were initiated.
2. Team Building Activities: Teamwork, cooperation, and communication skills were fostered through specially designed activities.
3. Roundtables: Open discussions where participants could share their experiences and insights on museum education were facilitated.
4. Simulations: Hands-on experiences through simulations were provided, allowing participants to delve into real-life museum education scenarios.
5. Thematic Workshops: Specific themes related to museum education were explored, delving into best practices and innovative approaches.
6. Evaluation Sessions: Reflection on the learning process, gathering feedback, and continuous improvement of the training course were emphasized.

7. Study Visits: Practical insights were gained by participants through visits to local museums and educational institutions, observing effective practices in action.
8. Team-Work: Collaboration on the development of the CoMeDeVA Museum Education Program and Guide was encouraged through group projects and discussions.

Over the course of the week, participants engaged persistently in the conceptualization and construction of their individual "virtual museums." This iterative process involved the aggregation of experiences and feedback from their peers, culminating in the conclusive phase of the week marked by practical learning workshops. The overarching objective of these workshops was to impart substantive educational experiences concerning the socialist past within their respective countries, achieved through the interactive medium of workshops and digital museums.

Virtual Museum Step-by-Step Guide

Creating a virtual museum involves several steps, and the process can be customized based on your goals, resources, and the type of museum you want to build. The following steps aim to provide guidance for any kind of general virtual museum creation:

Step 1: Define Your Goals and Content, Target Audience

Define the Theme:

- Decide on the type of museum you want to create (e.g., art, history, science).
- Determine the main theme or focus of your virtual museum.

Collect Content:

- Gather high-quality digital versions of your exhibits (images, videos, audio, text).
- Obtain necessary permissions for copyrighted materials.

Content Quality:

- Ensure high-quality images, videos, and text for exhibits.
- Provide accurate and reliable information with proper citations.

Interactive Elements:

- Incorporate interactive features to engage visitors (e.g., virtual tours, clickable objects, quizzes).
- Balance interactivity with user-friendly navigation.

Clear Objectives and Theme:

- Define the purpose and goals of your virtual museum.
- Establish a clear theme or focus that guides the content and presentation.

Target Audience:

- Identify your target audience and tailor the content and design to their preferences and needs.
- Consider age groups, educational backgrounds, and cultural diversity.

TIP: Think outside of the box. Museums are not only collections of objects. They could be also buildings, physical spaces and also missing monuments/buildings which tell the story about the historical experience of the given place. Maps, virtual walking tours and virtual lists of places are also types of virtual museums.

Step 2: Choose a Platform

Website Builders:

- Use website builders like WordPress, Wix, or Squarespace for a simple solution.
- Explore specialized platforms like Omeka for digital collections.
- Get creative with the tools you already know how to use and are easy to use for those, who need to focus on cost-efficient solutions (e.g. Padlet, Trello)

Virtual Reality (VR):

- Consider VR platforms like Unity or A-Frame for a more immersive experience.
- Note that VR might require more technical expertise and resources.

Step 3: Design and Development

User Interface (UI) Design:

- Create an intuitive and user-friendly interface for visitors.
- Ensure easy navigation and accessibility.

Website Development:

- Develop the website or VR environment based on your chosen platform.
- Implement features like search, filters, and interactive elements.

Step 4: Integration of Multimedia

Image Galleries:

- Implement galleries to showcase images of exhibits.
- Consider using sliders, lightboxes, or other interactive features.

Video and Audio Integration:

- Embed videos or audio clips related to exhibits.

- Ensure proper formatting and compatibility.

TIP: Copyright and Permissions

- Obtain the necessary permissions for copyrighted materials.
- Respect intellectual property rights and give proper credit for borrowed content.

Step 5: Interactivity and Engagement, Promotion

Virtual Tours:

- Offer virtual tours to simulate a physical visit.
- Include interactive elements like clickable objects for additional information.

Educational Content:

- Provide educational materials, such as articles, quizzes, or interactive games.

Step 6: Accessibility and Responsiveness

Accessibility:

- Ensure that your virtual museum is accessible to users with disabilities.
- Follow accessibility standards and guidelines.

Responsiveness:

- Optimize your virtual museum for various devices (desktops, tablets, smartphones).

Step 7: Testing

User Testing:

- Conduct testing with a diverse group of users to identify and fix issues.
- Gather feedback on usability and user experience.

Step 8: Launch and Promotion

Launch:

- Publish your virtual museum and make it publicly accessible.
- Ensure that all features are working correctly.

Promotion:

- Develop a strategy for promoting your virtual museum.

- Utilize social media, partnerships, and other channels to increase visibility.
- Use social media, email newsletters, and other channels to promote your virtual museum.
- Collaborate with influencers or organisations in your field.

Step 9: Maintenance and Updates

Regular Updates:

- Keep the content and technology of your virtual museum up to date.
- Add new exhibits, update information, and fix any issues.

Feedback Collection:

- Continue to gather user feedback and make improvements based on suggestions.

Creating a virtual museum requires a combination of creativity, technical skills, and dedication. Tailor these steps to fit your specific vision and audience!

Practical education in the virtual museum - Workshops and activities for the “visitors”

Museums, in their educational mission, must transcend the mere presentation of objects or places. To effectively cater to target groups and facilitate meaningful learning experiences, it becomes imperative for museums to provide visitors with engaging activities. These activities serve as conduits through which visitors can delve deeper into specific historical periods or the objects on display.

In the context of our training course, participants dedicated their efforts to crafting workshops designed to enhance understanding of the socialist past. Specifically, these workshops sought to shed light on distinct historical events and periods within the participants' respective countries. Presented below are illustrative examples of these educational initiatives.

Workshop: December Events in Almaty (1986)

Region explored through the workshop: Kazakhstan

Objectives: To raise awareness of December Events in Almaty among youth using innovative teaching methods.

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Duration: 45 minutes

Group size: 8 – 15 participants

Participants age: 16 – 25 years (or above)

Materials: laptop, 8 – 15 stickers, 2 paper of A4 format, 2 Whatman paper, 4 markers

What?	Why?	How?	Time
Introduction	To greet and introduce the audience to the topic	To tell a piece of general information about the topic in 5 sentences, which includes the key moments of the event.	3 min
Ice-Breaking Activity	To engage participants in the topic	<p>The hall/room is divided into two sides, where participants are capable of choosing (agree/disagree).</p> <p>The moderator reads the statements and the participants can move to the sides, according to their choices.</p> <p>Afterwards, the moderator asked a few participants about their choices.</p> <p>Then, the moderator reads the next statement and the participants move to the sides again with further explanations.</p>	5 min

Group Work	To conduct research using methodology and primary resources	<p>The participants are divided into two groups to choose the given topics in a random way:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. December events in people's view. 2. Government's perspective on the event. <p>Duration of research: 15 min</p> <p>Presentation: 3 min</p> <p>Q&A: 2 min</p>	20 min
Video	Visual demonstration of the December event	The material will be prepared from digital sources.	2 min
Activity	To step into the atmosphere of uprisings	<p>Every single participant will be given a role, that they cannot show or tell to no one until the game is over.</p> <p>The participants stand in one line starting from the wall. The moderator reads the statement, while participants silently step forward in order to agree with the statement relative to the role, and if the role is not related to the statement, the participant can stay.</p> <p>The moderator reads the next statement. The participants continue moving forward or stop as the statements are being read.</p> <p>At the end of the activity, the questions will be asked.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What did you feel when you were moving forward, whereas others stood? 2. What did you feel when other participants were moving, while you stood? 	12 min
Conclusion-REFLECTION	To sum up the importance of such movements	2– 3 sentences and Q&A.	3 min

January the 13th: One night that united the Nation

Region explored through the workshop: Lithuania

Objectives:

- To discuss the spontaneous resistance movement, its importance, cause and circumstances
- To teach people more about the oppression of Russia in Lithuania

Preparation time: 2h

Duration: 45 min

Group size: max 20 people

Participants age: teenagers and above

Materials: Me, myself and I (And the video, prepared questions)

What?	Why?	How?	Time
Energizer	To wake people up get more energised for the workshop	Optional energizer (whatever facilitator finds suitable for their group)	10min
Starting questions	To get people more involved in the following topic	Ask questions: “What in your opinion are the most important structures/institutions which should stay safe in the country, so that the country could properly function?”	10min

		“What would you think could happen if those institutions were under attack?”	
Video	To introduce the event of 13 th of January, 1991	By showing the video (through computer or projector) (If there is no possibility to show it, can be skipped)	3min
Information about the event	Present the crucial material of the given event	By telling more about the historical situation in a country, giving the background of the story	5 min
Personal attachment to the events	To engage the audience more	By telling stories from a personal perspective and experience.	5 min
Story about the same-age person from the event	To get the audience involved through the emotional perspective	By making them emotionally attached to the person who is very similar to them and understand the situation better.	5min
Discussion	To get the full picture of the whole history of the events, answer questions	Answer the questions given by the public, discuss various circumstances, why and how it happened	7min

1956 Hungarian Uprising

Region explored through the workshop: Hungary

Objectives: To teach people about the major event in the history of Hungary. To share our teaching methods.

Preparation time: 2 hours

Duration: 30- 45

Group size: min. 3

Participants age: teenagers

Materials: Laptop/smartphone, internet connection

What?	Why?	How?	Time
Simon Says	Energizer	It's an interactive game where you give a command to which people to act.	10 min
Brief intro/ explanation of the topic	To get to know the participants through conversation.	A fun guessing game with keywords.	15 min
Questions of the topic	To explain the task that will be required	Quick presentations / provide the necessary links, materials, and posters.	10 min
Kahoot	Tiny quiz	Through a website. Kahoo.com	5 min

Conclusion

The Erasmus+ KA2 Capacity Building project, "CoMeDeVA: Collective Memories for Democratic Values," stands as a multifaceted initiative at the intersection of intercultural dialogue, international relations, and human rights. Operating within the realms of civic engagement, active citizenship, and democratic values, this collaborative effort aims to fortify cooperation among NGOs in post-Soviet and partner countries within Central Asia and Central Eastern Europe.

The temporal landscape since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, now spanning over three decades, has witnessed the maturation of post-Soviet countries and the emergence of a new generation unfamiliar with the socialist era. The resonance of socialist memories persists in tangible elements such as buildings, squares, roads, and, most importantly, in the narratives of individuals who experienced the longest-standing totalitarian system of the 20th century. By preserving and utilizing this collective memory as an educational resource, the project seeks to fortify political participation and foster awareness of democratic values among young people at both national and international levels.

At the heart of the project is the aspiration to kindle the interest of young people in active political participation and engage them in democratic values through active involvement in museum education activities. The development of two intellectual outputs, a Museum Education Program Guide and a Virtual Museum Platform, underscores the commitment to providing interactive and informative experiences for the youth.

The "Learned from the Past, Looked to the Future" Museum Education Training Course held in Trnava, Slovakia, represents a pivotal chapter in this endeavor. The culmination of the week witnessed the participants fervently developing their individual "virtual museums," thereby contributing to the broader goal of imparting substantive educational experiences related to the socialist past.

The workshops, exemplified by those exploring the December Events in Almaty (1986), January the 13th in Lithuania, and the 1956 Hungarian Uprising, served as poignant illustrations of the commitment to fostering a deep understanding of historical events and periods within the participants' respective

countries. These workshops encapsulated a collective effort to engage the audience emotionally, intellectually, and reflectively.


As we progress, the Virtual Museum Step-by-Step Guide underscores the commitment to empowering individuals and institutions interested in creating their own virtual museums. This comprehensive guide offers practical steps, methodologies, and considerations for building virtual museums tailored to specific visions and audiences.



Acknowledgments:

Collective Memories for Democratic Values (CoMeDeVa) is a cross-continental initiative uniting Europe and Asia in a shared goal to amplify civic awareness and fostering political participation among the youth.

The partnership is led ICRP (Hungary) with partner organisations from Slovakia (ADEL Slovakia), Lithuania (AYA), Kyrgyzstan (IDEA CA), Mongolia (MCBC), Kazakhstan (ASAA), and Uzbekistan (TDPU).

 www.virtualmuseum.education

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