



## Making Museums as Places for Intercultural Dialogue and Learning

### Report on the Training Course Bonn, 14-20 June 2009

Since December 2008, *dvv international* and its eight partner organizations from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the Russian Federation are implementing the project A-MUSE-ALL, which is funded by the EU. The main goal of the project is to support intercultural understanding and to implement lifelong learning strategies in local museums.

In the framework of this project, *dvv international* organized a training course in Bonn from June 14 to June 20 2009 for the representatives of the above-mentioned countries. Attendees of this course were museum professionals and specialist from organizations for adult education. In total, ten people participated in this program. The aim of this event was to familiarize the participants with the best practices of museum education in Europe. In future, the project will support the implementation of suitable programs in the home countries of the program participants.

The training course was planned four months ahead. As soon as the program participants had been selected, they received a questionnaire that helped the organizers to learn more about particular interests of all the applicants. The training course was prepared based on the information collected through this survey. The agenda was designed to meet the interest of all attendees.

The program included in-class activities as well as tours at various museums. Speakers who conducted in-class sessions were invited from the following museums and cultural-educational institutions: the British Museum, Ruhr2010, Museum Koenig, Cologne Museums Service, Hamburg Museum of Applied Arts, the German Emigration Center at Bremerhaven, Lifelong Learning Center at University of Oldenburg. The experts from these institutions shared their experiences and expertise with the course participants, and in doing so presented detailed demonstration material and provided the participants with comprehensive handouts.

Besides this the program included tours at various museums in Bonn and Cologne. The participants had the privilege to attend special guided tours by museum directors, senior curators and educators, who were also available for subsequent



First workshop day



Guided tour and discussion at the Museum of German History with Gundula Klein

in-depth discussions. In order for the participants to familiarize themselves with the different services and facilities that are not be ignored in view of their potential to attract audiences, they also had time to explore the museums' shops and cafes. The group visited the following museums: the Museum Koenig, the Museum of German History, the Rheinisches Landesmuseum in Bonn and the Kolumba, the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud as well as the Chocolate Museum in Cologne. Scale, working and presentation strategies of all the museums selected for the program are different, and thus the attendees of the program were able to gain a multifaceted insight into the various forms and presentation formats of museums. To conclude this, as the attendees had expressed, curriculum was very impressive and educating. The participants developed their individual action plans for future training programs on country level on the basis of the information and experience gained in Bonn and Cologne. They will conduct training for the local museum staff to strengthen their institution's educational role. It is planned that over sixty persons in each country will attend these courses.

This will be a great possibility to communicate the knowledge gained and the experiences made, to lay the first foundations for innovative educational programs, and apply European best practice strategies in the museum sector of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the Russian Federation. Additionally, simultaneous joint projects have been planned. One of the promising tools to continue regional cooperation and constant flow of information is a web portal that will be developed in the framework of the project.

Finally, below are given some of the impressions of the project participants as they were expressed in the concluding evaluation questionnaire on the training course.

"I was impressed when I saw that museums in Germany are so active and lively. It was great to see in the exhibition halls kids, teenagers, middle-aged visitors and the older generation, people with walkers and wheel chairs. Our countries as well as our museums are currently in a phase of transformation. I hope soon we will have dynamic museums like in Germany where people of all ages, different social and ethnic backgrounds can come together, enjoy, learn more about culture and heritage, and spend time meaningfully."  
Participant from Armenia

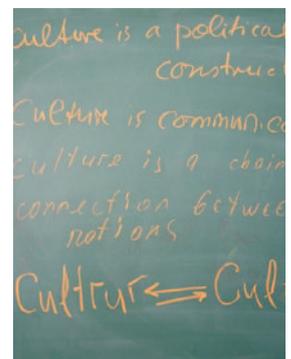
"I liked the broad range of the program. All speakers told us about their programs, their own approaches that were in most cases very special and different from each other. But all of them were interesting and successful. The museums that we visited in Bonn and Cologne were also so diverse.



Kids in the Museum of German History



Behind the Scene: Museum Koenig



What is culture?  
Some statements



Discussion with Thomas Schneeberg from Center for Lifelong Learning, University Oldenburg

In all of them we felt that high-level professionals are running these houses and all of them had their unique styles, their special concepts. The similarity they shared was that they all worked for the community. They all try to maintain close links with society, involve people in museum life, and offer them an assortment of educative programs that are well thought out, very well prepared, and designed for particular interests. The main thing is to be innovative and creative.”

Participant from the Russian Federation

“I learned that we have to segment our visitors and the groups that we have to reach out. We have to work very seriously to design public programs for each of these groups. Tastes are different, needs are different..., we all are different... The museum is a place for everyone; it is an ideal place to present cultural richness and carry out intercultural dialogue.”

Participant from Azerbaijan

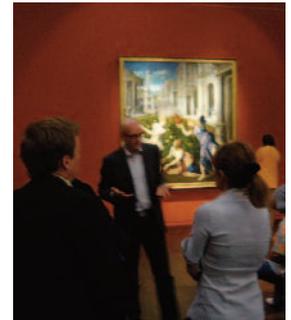
“We spent an unforgettable week in Bonn. Besides the useful training sessions and museum tours, I would like to emphasize the great atmosphere in the group. Our hosts, guest speakers, and program participants created such a comfortable ambience. It was a great pleasure to be and work in this lovely company. Five countries are involved in the project and two “couples” have serious political problems between each others. But here we discovered that we can work very well with each other. I would like to thank my colleagues for their kind and warm attitude. I hope we will remain in contact and that we can jointly proceed to work on positive changes in our societies.”

Participant from Georgia

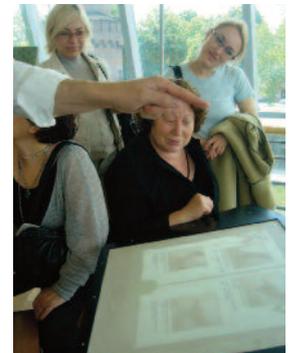
Irina Arefieva (Petrozavodsk State University, Russian Federation), Nino Gedevanishvili (Georgian National Museum), Alvard Grigoryan (Museum of History, Armenia), Lika Katsitadze (*dvv international*, Georgia), Anahit Minassyan (National Gallery of Armenia), Hayk Mkrtchyan (History Museum, Armenia), Yalchin Salimov (ICOM, Azerbaijan), Ludmila Smirnova (Center for Womens, Tosno, Russian Federation), Roya Tahiyeva (Azerbaijan Carpet & Applied Art Museum), Mikheil Tsereteli (Georgian National Museum)



Discussion with Ulrike Surmann at the Kolumba



Tour and discussion with Andreas Blühm at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud



At the Chocolate Museum