



Involving public in the work of the
MKVM: working for or with
communities?

Work in the MKVM

- issues of collecting activity: being a museum of the everyday life it is a big challenge to determine the groups of objects we collect
- the museum was founded in 1966 by organizations of trade and catering industry
- representatives of these avocations developed the basis of our collections
- my colleagues regularly inserted advertisements, that the museum is searching for and collecting memories, objects and documents of trade and catering industry



- At those times a large amount of objects got into our collections together with memoirs
- Interviews were taken with the donators
- Without these personal approaches these objects would be dead, and history would be confined only to dry facts
- We aim to reuse these interviews preserving in our databases

Terms of artefacts and cultural heritage are relative



MKVM is depent on the public, we need the stories, we need the knowledge of the people who used these items for the sake of authentically presenting them



Involving public

- The museum in the last few years put together some exhibitions dealing with the second half of the 20th century, which period in Hungary is roughly concurrent with the socialistic regime
- These exhibitions were about history of different state companies
- Three examples: we followed the same way for the sake of finding relevant people

National Railway Catering Company

- we put together an exhibition for the 60th anniversary of the company
- The company was founded in the early years of the socialistic period for the operation of the restaurants and buffets operating in the cars and at the stations
- It was a huge national company with lot of employees, kitchens and confectioneries all around the country



H A R M A T I G Á B O R

UTASELLÁTÓ

60

MIRELITE

- The exhibition was created for its 70th anniversary
- It was a frozen food producing state company in the past, now it is private
- It had several factories in different Hungarian cities.
- The main office and the engineering department was in Budapest.



IBUSZ

- IBUSZ was a travel agency, it was founded in 1902 and in 1948 was nationalized
- It was the only travel agency in the country, included not only trips organizing, but passport application and selling of international and airplane tickets as well



Az IBUSZ rendszeresen szervezett falusi hagyományörző bemutatókat külföldi turisták számára. Az 1950-es években Galgarnácsán tartották húsvéti népszokásokról bemutatót, az 1980-as években Buzsákon lakodalmasra, a '90-es évektől pedig az ecsédi hagyományörző báira invitálták a turistákat. A képen egy ecsédi asszony figyeli a néptáncgyűttes helyi szokásokat felelevenítő műsorát 1990. április 29-én.
FOTÓ: MTI / Szabó Sándor

Common points of these projects

- 1. Socialistic period: it resulted some unexpected outcomes
- 2. Researching methods: in case of each project we tried to involve in work former employees and other citizens, who are engaged in these companies in different ways



- How did it happen?
 - Snowball method
 - Finding a keynote person is a significant part
 - In the case of the MIRELITE and the IBUSZ companies we organised a meeting for former employees
 - We posted also on FB, that we are collecting objects of these companies and searching for participants
 - On the meeting we took short interview with everybody, and chose the actors, who we wanted to take an in-depth interview with

- 3. The mechanism of these projects:
 - these communities were reviving at the first meeting, where they met people who they haven't seen for long years
 - the network immediately started to work like a machine, they give over the informations to others who weren't present at the meeting
 - Started to collect objects from each other and brought to us
 - they rebuilt their community: the opening ceremony were similar to a private party
 - They came to visit exhibition usually in small groups, which were gathered by a keynote person in every city
 - Employees of the IBUSZ held a guiding for themself in the exhibition

- Participants are emotionally deeply engaged in their company
- Meanwhile this period is often considered very negatively by younger people and history writing, what to these people causes a lot of frustration, because the time what means their youth and obviously they are very nostalgic about, is constantly evaluated as a bad thing
- a project like this for them has a huge meaning, they feel that we appreciate and legitimize their efforts in rebuilding the country. And legitimize the period which for them means a significant part of thier life.



Outcomes

- exhibitions enriched with all those informations which were collected from the participants: objects, documents, interviews. Usually these interviews were presented together with the objects
- book: we published books containing interviews as well
- collection development and knowledge enrichment: these people have a fond of their company, they give us their objects which they have been preserving for 40 years, sometimes they wished to get it back after the closing, beacuse they are attached to them











Why is this participatory approach good for us?

- it provides a possibility to show beside the facts the personal, emotional approaches as well
- helps us in history writing to get a diverse impression about the past
- helps us to get a lot of inside information, which would disappear after the death of these people
- and last but not least we can get mosaics telling us a lot about the mentality of the people living at those times

Working for or with communities?

Together for the future

Thank you!

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