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Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in the content of the events of ethnographic open-air museums and attraction of participants to the events

Niematerialne dziedzictwo kulturowe jako treść wydarzeń etnograficznych na przykładzie działalności wybranych łotewskich muzeów plenerowych w ocenie ich uczestników

Abstrakt: Niematerialne dziedzictwo kulturowe cechuje się różnorodnością i może być wyrażane w wielu formach. Treści zamieszczone w artykule dotyczą wyłącznie jednej z jego części – tradycyjnych, zwyczajowych uroczystości i wydarzeń organizowanych w łotewskich skansenach. Eventy te są bardzo popularne i gromadzą wielu odbiorców. Autorzy dokonali analizy dokumentacji dotyczących organizacji i przebiegu tradycyjnych imprez plenerowych w czterech największych łotewskich skansenach: Etnograficznym Łotewskim Muzeum Rybołówstwa, Ventspils Open-Air Museum (Ventspils), Skansenie Jurmala (Jurmala) i Skansenie Jekabpils „Selonian Yard” (Jekabpils). W procesie badawczym wykorzystano także sformalizowane wywiady pogłębione, które przeprowadzono z dyrektorami poszczególnych muzeów, oraz ankietyzację wśród uczestników wydarzeń. W końcowej części artykułu, w oparciu o analizę materiału badawczego, opracowano zalecenia dla pracowników muzeów plenerowych, głównie w celu ciągłego doskonalenia programów imprez, wzbudzenia większego zainteresowania wśród ich potencjalnych uczestników i zachęcania organizatorów do aktywności w tym zakresie.

Słowa kluczowe: niematerialne dziedzictwo kulturowe, etnograficzne muzea plenerowe, rekreacja, imprezy plenerowe

Abstract: The intangible cultural heritage has different forms and expressions. This research deals with one part of the intangible cultural heritage, such as traditional customary festivities, and other events organised in the open-air museums of Latvia. Such festivities are popular and widely attended in Latvia. The research has examined the documents for organisation of the events and analysed the content of the events at the 4 largest Latvian Open-Air museums situated in different locations in Latvia: the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia (Riga), the Ventspils Open-Air Museum

(Ventspils), the Jurmala Open-Air Museum (Jurmala) and the Jekabpils “Selonian Yard” Open-Air Museum (Jekabpils). During the research, literature analysis and content analysis of documents was carried out and partly structured interviews were undertaken for the museum managers, as well as survey was performed of attendees to the museum events. At the end of the research, according to the survey of attendees and the content analysis of the events, recommendations were elaborated to staff of the Open-Air Museums in order to improve the content of the events, to rouse interest of the attendees of events and to encourage increase in the number of events.

Keywords: intangible cultural heritage, Ethnographic Open-Air Museums, recreation, events

INTRODUCTION

The way we talk about our people’s values is what determines whether our words are being heard or ignored. Today, a contradiction arises in preservation of the intangible cultural heritage. On the one hand, we are aware that cultural heritage is at the core of multifaceted culturalism of humanity. On the other hand, precisely nowadays, during the globalisation era, preservation of the intangible cultural heritage is becoming increasingly vulnerable due to decrease in its functional need (Cibule 2009). In Latvia, creation of the cultural heritage policy was launched immediately after establishment of the Latvian State – in 1918. At the same time, exploration of the cultural heritage values has been commenced and research into the cultural heritage has started (Vaivade 2015).

Latvia is the eleventh smallest European country (in terms of its surface area), but notwithstanding this fact, we are rich in our intangible cultural heritage – the annual customs and the family traditions, folk songs and the traditional craftsmanship skills. Maintaining the ICH is becoming increasingly vulnerable nowadays due to the fact that its functional need is reduced. Preservation and use of the intangible cultural heritage has a positive impact in many areas of our lives. The intangible cultural heritage has an impact not only on strengthening the national identity of society, but it has an impact also on the social and economic environment of the community.

Nowadays, when people from rural areas are more searching for life and job opportunities in urban centres, the issue of preserving and authenticity of the intangible cultural heritage is becoming aggravated. Professor Vitalija Rudzkienė and Reda Skrodenytė from the Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius (Mykolas Romeris Universitetas) in their report of the Chair of Economics and Business “National Heritage and Development of Traditional Craftsmanship Centres” place emphasis on the problems in Lithuania, in the intangible cultural heritage area. The authors note that migration of the population from rural to urban areas has a negative impact not only on the national economy but also on traditions and lifestyles of the population (Rudzkienė, Skrodenytė 2012).

According to Spanish researchers, the only way to protect these intangible things is to document the same, to watch their manifestation, and the way they change. This, according to their thoughts, is the only form in which we can pass it to other generations. Interest is presented by thesis of the Spanish researchers that authenticity is not sought in the intangible heritage, unlike the tangible cultural heritage – artworks, monuments. The intangible cultural heritage is sought for historical continuity, respected for changes and these changes are documented periodically (Gonzalez, Angeles 2014). We would indeed like to agree to this thesis, because currently in Latvia and in other European countries, as regards different traditions of customs, then the authenticity is quite often lost. Continuity is lost, festivity dates and traditional rituals are changed.

The intangible cultural heritage has different forms and expressions. This research looks at one part of the intangible cultural heritage, such as traditional customary festivities that are organised in the Latvian open-door museums. Such festivities are popular and widely attended in Latvia. The events are taking place in nature and in the environment close to the authentic environment for the course of these festivities. The nature of environment of the public events has a significant impact on the emotional state and the existence of society. Open-air museums, as a place where traditional folk festivities are organized, are very suitable locations for this purpose. As researchers acknowledge, human being needs open and public spaces, serving as a central factor for the life symbol of a populated place where people meet and social life and activities develop (Thompson 2002).

The rapid processes of urbanisation and technological development affect a daily reality of the human being and their experienced need for nature and its presence (Healey 2006). Habits and conditions for use of the environment change, but some values do not change, and the people are looking for the opportunity to spend time in the green space. Each part and age group of the society requires links with nature and the Open-Air Museums, with the organisation of such events, provide an opportunity for citizens and tourists to spend their leisure time usefully and meaningfully. Researchers note that the lack of nature permanently affects the people and particularly the children (Louv 2005).

While being in nature, a human being may experience improvement in health, get economic, social, aesthetic and spiritual benefits. Each of these processes has a positive impact on human beings. Water is particularly important: rivers, lakes and seas, because it has a huge impact in stabilizing internal harmony, creating comfort and feelings of balance for human being. There is much talk about this subject and it is respected when creating landscapes in different countries of the world (Zhang *et al.* 2013).

There are several ethnographic museums in Latvia. Locations of the museums have been carefully selected near populated areas, on the outskirts of towns or cities, so that the museum area is easy accessible for the population and at the same time it is located closer to the green zone. Consequently, attendance of different events in the open-air museums provide the public with both emotional and physical recreation. The museums organise a variety of activities inviting local residents and tourists for the purpose to show, to promote and to preserve the cultural heritage, work and household traditions of the Latvian people and other peoples historically residing in Latvia.

For a traditional celebration, are often organized within the framework, when craftsmen and national food industry meet together. The activities long-term cooperation enables companies to gain access to a broader knowledge base, new markets, external resources and capital. Cluster development is an important factor in the development of a place or region and in the development of competitiveness (Bojar 2007).

The research is aimed at development of recommendations for perfection of the content of events and for involvement of the participants to organisers of the events in the Open-Air Museums in Latvia.

In order to achieve the research aim the following research objectives have been set: to explore and to analyse the supply of ICH-related events in the Open-Air Museums in Latvia; to explore the engagement and the expected benefits for participation in the event of those attending the events; to develop recommendations for the organisers of events in the Open-Air Museums in Latvia.

The research has examined the documents for organisation of the events and analysed the content of the events at the 4 largest Latvian Open-Air museums located in various locations in Latvia: the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia (Riga), the Ventspils Open-Air Museum (Ventspils), the Jurmala Open-Air Museum (Jurmala) and the Jekabpils "Selonian Yard" Open-Air Museum (Jekabpils). During the research, literature analysis and content analysis of documents was carried out and 4 partly structured interviews for the museum managers were undertaken. Museum managers have told in their interviews about the events organized by museums and target audiences of the events, as well as about the work of museums in information to the public about the progress and the content of the events.

Thus 181 respondents were surveyed (questioned) in the events organised by museums. All the respondents were participants of the annual customary events organised by the open-air museums. Average respondent age was 42 years. From the surveyed visitors to the events 20% were men and 80% were women.

In the questionnaire, respondents could mark several answers. The research has taken place from September 2016 to April 2018.

RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS

The documents analysed and the results of the interviews have resulted in a table reflecting all the events organised by the museums on an annual basis. The table created was thematically divided into several tables. The annual customary events, the family celebrations and the events, in which the intangible cultural heritage is used, organised in the open-door museums are reflected in Table 1.

As we see in the table mentioned above, in all the Open-Door Museums surveyed there are events organised which content includes ICH.

As one of the first questions, the museum managers were asked about the diversity of the events offered by the museums. The interview resulted in collecting data and creation of several tables demonstrating the organised events. The first table demonstrates the events in which the intangible cultural heritage is used. These are the Latvian folk customary festivities, such as the summer and the winter solstice, Mārtiņi and Meteņi. In the table of the offered events we can also see the family celebrations (baptisms and weddings), as well as the events related to old games and promotion of craftsmanship skills. As we see in the table, the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum in Riga has the most extensive offer for the events with intangible cultural heritage (13 events). The Ventspils Seaside Open-Air Museum has far less proposed measures in this field (6 events), while the managers of the Jekabpils “Selonian Yard” Open-Air Museum and the Jurmala Open-Air Museum referred only to 3 events in which content the intangible cultural heritage is used. An interesting fact is that the Ventspils Seaside Open-Air Museum is celebrating both Meteņi (Latvian folk customary festivity) and “Maslenitsa”, which is a customary festivity of the Slavic peoples, and marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring.

In addition to the range of events listed in the table, we would like to note the annual Crafts Fair in the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia, which has become a tradition already for forty-five years. Every year in the first Saturday and Sunday of June, craftsmen from all the municipalities of Latvia are gathering and offering their products (clay, wooden, metal and textile products) in the museum. In recent years, the museum arranges also a crafts festival taking place in the first week of August. The Old Games day, which takes place at the beginning of September, is also broadly attended in the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum. Mr. Aldonis Baldiņš, the old games master, works in the museum and

Tab. 1. Annual customary events, family celebrations and events in which content the intangible cultural heritage is used as organised by the Open-Air Museums

Tab. 1. Tradycyjne, zwyczajowe uroczystości i wydarzenia oparte na niematerialnym dziedzictwie organizowane przez skanseny

Serial No.	Annual customary events	Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia	Ventspils Seaside Open-Air Museum	Jekabpils "Selonian Yard" Open-Air Museum	Jurmala Open-Air Museum
1	Metēņi	x	x		
2	"Maslenitsa"		x		
3	Lielā diena (Easter)	x	x		x
4	Summer solstice/Līgo night	x	x	x	x
5	Miķeļdiena				x
6	Mārtiņdiena	x	x		
7	Winter solstice/bluķa vakars (Log Night)	x			
8	The May Song Festival	x			
9	Veļu vakars (Halloween)	x			
10	Baptisms, wedding			x	
11	The day of old crafts "See Your Master"	x x	x	x	
12	Games, play days	x			
13	Folklore festival "Baltica"	x			
14	Latvian Folk Song and Dance Festival, Folklore Day	x			
15	Crafts Fair	x			

Source: author's own research.

Źródło: opracowanie własne.

teaches and demonstrates the old games. Aldonis Baldiņš himself also makes wood equipment for various old games and plays. In view of collaboration between LASE and the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum, Aldonis Baldiņš, when meeting with the Recreation Qualification students, shares his knowledge and experience with regard to creation and application of old games and plays in practice today, as well as the LASE Residence Qualification students provide assistance to the museum staff in organizing and developing the events.



Photo 1. Aldonis Baldiņš with the LASE fourth-year students within the framework of study course “Non-Traditional Recreation Activities,” in the autumn of 2014 (photo: I. Smuka)

Fot. 1. Aldonis Baldiņš ze studentami czwartego roku LASE w ramach kursu „Nietradycyjne zajęcia rekreacyjne” jesienią 2014 r. (fot. I. Smuka)

Another table was created after an interview with the museum staff. In Table 2, we see the events organised by the open-air museums related to harvesting and closing of agricultural works. ‘Apjumības’ or the closing of harvesting in the list of Latvian annual customary festivities means Miķeļdiena. It is a time when the Sun turns towards the winter, and all the most important works of the year are completed, the activities on the field subsides. Fairs were organised during Miķeļi. Miķelis in Latvian folklore was described as a rich man, a father of bread connected with the autumn harvesting (Grīns, Grīna 1992).

As we see it, the list of events offered by the museums consists predominantly of the events related to the autumn harvesting (apples, potatoes, pumpkins). As we see it, such events are not organized at the Jurmala Open-Air Museum. This can be explained by the fact that the Jurmala Open-Air Museum is designed for the purpose to promote and to study the development of the oldest type of occupation in Jurmala - fishery. The seaside land is not fertile and there are less farming activities in the region. Fishery has been the main occupation of the population in this region. However, Zane Kukelberga, employee of the Ventspils Seaside Museum, in her interview particularly highlighted the great work done by the museum directly with the young generation, with the children and the young people. The museum has developed programs for the children and the young people by including information about all the customary festivities for pupils, and the museum employees are conducting classes at the museum (Kukelberga 2017).

In Table 3, we see the events offered in the open-air museums that are not linked to the intangible cultural heritage. Two of the Open-Air Museums surveyed participate in the International Museum Day events. In order to attract

more attendees during Christmas, the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum arranges the “Light Games” event.

During this event, visitors can see special artist-made light installations in the museum area. Natural objects and farmhouses of the museum are illuminated.

Tab. 2. The events organised in the open-air museums related to agricultural works

Tab. 2. Wydarzenia organizowane przez muzea plenerowe/skanseny, których tematyka nawiązuje do prac rolnych

Serial No.	Annual customary events	Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia	Ventspils Seaside Open-Air Museum	Jekabpils “Selonian Yard” Open-Air Museum	Jurmala Open-Air Museum
1	Porridge Day/ Miķeļdiena	x	x		
2	Potato Day	x			
3	Autumn harvest festival	x			
4	Apple Day			x	
5	Pumpkin Festival			x	
6	Educational programme for children (Buttermaking)			x	

Source: author’s own research.

Źródło: opracowanie własne.

Tab. 3. Other events organised in the open-air museums

Tab. 3. Inne wydarzenia organizowane w skansenach

Serial No.	Annual customary events	Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia	Ventspils Seaside Open-Air Museum	Jekabpils “Selonian Yard” Open-Air Museum	Jurmala Open-Air Museum
1	Museum Night	x			x
2	“Light Games” during Christmas	x			
3	Concerts	x			
4	Events ordered by local government			x	
5	Creative workshops for pupils			x	x
6	Theatre performances	x		x	

Source: author’s own research.

Źródło: opracowanie własne.

The Jekabpils Open-Air Museum manager noted that during the year they are organising and ensuring the conduct of several municipal events (Leja 2017). Theatre performances are also organised by two of the museums.

The events named in the tables are very diverse, however, as it could be understood from negotiations with the staff responsible for the museum, emphasis is being put on the children and the families and children. Mr. Igors Ziemelis from the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum explained that: “We are focused on 3 target audiences. First these are the families with children due to the fact that the museum is a good place to walk and to relax. Therefore we are making games, playing so it would be interesting for the kids. Families like to spend time together. Since the museum doesn’t have only an entertainment function but an educational one as well, the museum teaching curricula are organized for school-age children. Third – foreign tourists for whom tours are organized in English and in Russian” (Ziemelis 2016).

In order to inquire into the views of attendees to the museum events regarding the reasons encouraging the attendees to come to the customary festivity events organised by the open-air museums and the benefits gained by participants from the content of the event during the event, a survey (questioning) of participants of the events was carried out. The results of questioning are displayed in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1 describes the most important reasons (motivators) for participants in the events, which encourage them to attend the annual customary festivity events organised by the museums: 1 – Interesting and fascinating content of the event; 2 – Easy-to-reach location of the event; 3 – Acceptable time of the course of event; 4 – Satisfactory weather conditions; 5 – Meeting relatives and friends; 6 – Learning what’s new; 8 – Maintenance and preservation of the Latvian folk tradition and one’s Latvian identity; 9 – Teaching one’s children to maintain and to apply the Latvian traditions in life.

As we see in the figure, the most important reason referred to by 95% of attendees to the events is “Maintenance and preservation of the Latvian folk tradition and one’s Latvian identity”. This could be linked to the modern globalisation trends and the willingness of people to resist the same and to maintain their own special national identity “code”. As we see in the figure, the contents of the event is important for 87% of attendees of the events. As much as 87% of attendees of the events have referred, as to an important reason for attending the event, to the place of the event venue. Due to the fact that many participants arrive at the event with children, then we can see that 76% of the attendees arrive in order to maintain, to teach and to demonstrate to the children the Latvian traditions and their expressions. The least number

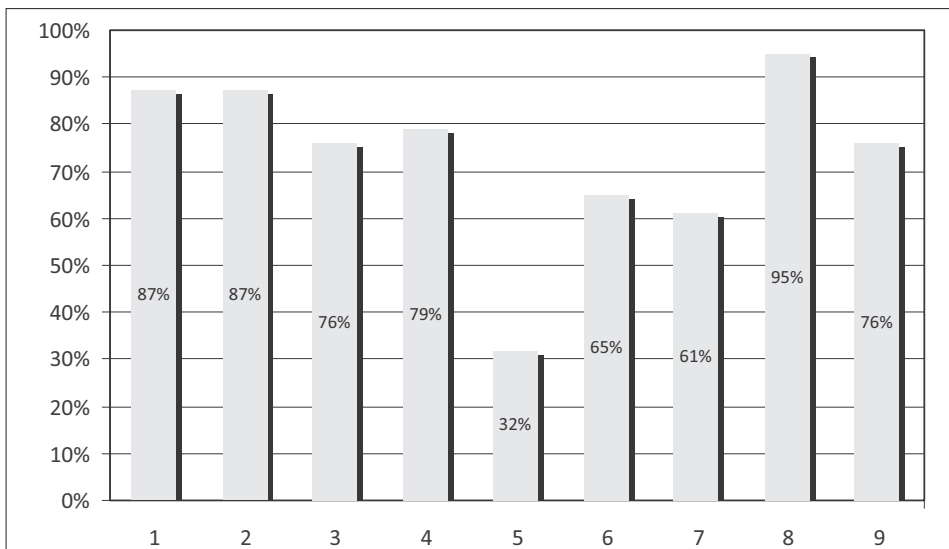


Fig. 1. Reasons for attending the folk traditional festivity events organised by the open-air museums (views of participants)

Source: author's own research.

Ryc. 1. Powody uczestnictwa w tradycyjnych festynach ludowych organizowanych przez skanseny (opinie uczestników)

Źródło: opracowanie własne.

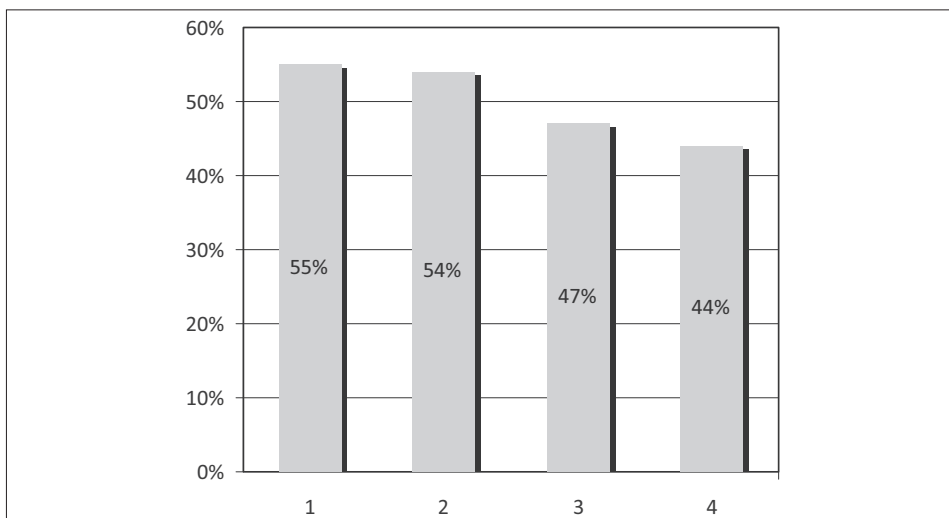


Fig. 2. The expected benefits for the participants from attending a folk tradition festivity event

Source: author's own research.

Ryc. 2. Oczekiwania respondentów związane z uczestnictwem w festynie ludowym (święcie ludowym)

Źródło: opracowanie własne.

of attendees of such events (32%) come to the event for the purpose to meet their friends, relatives and acquaintances.

When coming to an event, every attendee has some wishes or expected benefits from this event. You can see in Figure 2 what the attendees expect from the events organised by the open-air museums: 1 – Benefits for their children (knowledge, practices in preservation and maintenance of the folk traditions, coming due to their children); 2 – New information regarding the traditions of celebrating annual customary festivities; 3 – An opportunity to participate actively in the course of festive event and in the realisation of content; 4 – New practical skills.

As one of the most important benefits for participation in the course of popular customary festivity events, 55% attendees of the events consider to be benefit for their children. Children in the events are learning about the customary festivities, the conduct and the traditions of the festivities. When the open-air museums are arranging the customary festivity events, they are including also a variety of creative workshops in the course of festivities, in which the participants themselves are creating the symbols corresponding to particular customary festivity events. For example, the “Log Night” offers a creative workshop in the creation of *puzuri* (straw mobiles), where participants are taught to create *puzuri* and application and symbolic importance thereof is also explained. During *Mārtiņi* the participants are invited to form their own *ķekatas* (mummery) mask. The symbolic meaning of personages in *ķekatas* is also explained.

As to the next most important benefit, 54% of participants refer to “Getting new information regarding the traditions of celebrating annual customary festivities”. The traditions of the Winter solstice and the Summer solstice festivals have always been very popular in Latvia. In particular, the Summer Solstice Festival, which was celebrated in Latvia also during the Soviet power. In the open-air museums, for development of the Summer solstice tradition, cheesemaking workshops are often offered in which housekeepers share their special cheesemaking recipes, because the central symbol of these festivities is a cheese wheel that symbolises the Sun, and 47% of attendees to the event refer as a benefit exactly to the practical skills learned during attendance of the event.

As Philip Kotler writes, the main problem today is not the lack of services but the lack of consumers (Kotler 2007). Many folk festivals are organized by many institutions therefore, at the end of the work, recommendations for customer attraction were developed.

CONCLUSIONS

The research examined and analysed the contents of 27 events organised in four Open-Air Museums. Conclusion can be drawn from the research results that 15 events are organised by the Open-Air Museums in Latvia, including the intangible cultural heritage in the content of the events. These are annual customary events, family celebrations and other events which content uses the intangible cultural heritage. In addition to that, the museums are arranging 6 events related to agricultural works and harvesting and 6 events, which content has partly included the Intangible Cultural Heritage. It can be said that educating the young generation have an important role to play in all the museums and in the content of the events developed by the museums. In all the museums, managers have emphasized that special programs for pupils are being created.

At the end of the research, according to the survey of attendees and the content analysis of the events, recommendations were elaborated to staff of the Open-Air Museums in order to improve the content of the events, to rouse interest of attendees of the events and to encourage increase in the number of attendees of the events.

– In order to preserve the Latvian traditions and to explain the same to the public by organising the Latvian folk annual customary festivals, it is desirable to include in their content traditional activities (games, plays, performances) specific for particular customary festivals, as well as explanation of the said activities, since 95% of the participants come to the events in order to maintain and to preserve the Latvian folk traditions and their Latvian identity;

– In order to encourage the willingness of cognition for different annual customary festival traditions and to promote practical activities among participants of the event, include in the content of the events learning of various craftsmen skills and musical skills, as well as preparation of traditional meals, since the participants appreciate benefits of the events such as: To find out something new (65%) and to learn something new (61%).

– In order to raise awareness of the Latvian traditions for children, to organise activities directly to this target audience, including both entertaining and recreational activities, such as games and plays, as well as practical workshops corresponding to the annual customary festivals, where children can make their own festive symbols, since 76% of the attendees come to the events in order to teach their children how to maintain and to apply the Latvian traditions in their lives;

– When planning the activities to be included in the event, to offer physically active steps (games, plays, competitions, contests) to the children audience;

– When planning activities to be included in the event, activities have to be offered to an adult audience that require not only active participation, but

also those providing information about the traditions of celebrations of festivities (performances, concerts, demonstrations);

– In order to attract more attendees to the events, during the course of events to create opportunities for the young people and other stakeholders to obtain information or to take advantage of modern technologies (such as orientation and the performance of specific tasks in the museum territory) for performance of the activities.

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