

Folk Art and Culture in the Historical and Educational Context

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Folk art is the expression of artistic activity of the inhabitants of rural areas. It encompasses visual arts, music, and oral traditions. They are indivisible from each other as well as from the lives of villages and their inhabitants. Folk art is an element of the peasant culture which changes rapidly with the development of civilisation and it is unfortunately more and more frequently displaced by modern forms of life and the resulting different needs of rural and urban populations. It is, however, the heritage of our ancestors which we are obliged to preserve. One of the ways of preserving folk art is school education. Thanks to diverse forms of education used by teachers it is possible to get the students acquainted with all the areas of folk art in a compelling and inspiring way.

Key words: folk art; types of folk art; folk culture; folklore; education in folk art; forms of working with students

Folk art is an expression of the artistic activity of rural communities. It encompasses visual arts, music, oral traditions, and rituals. The aforementioned areas are indivisibly connected with each other as well as the life of villages and their inhabitants and they all together constitute folk art. Folk art is an element of rural life dependent on beliefs, system of values, social relations, and the natural environment which arises from the sense of rhythm, harmony, and symmetry inherent to human beings.¹ Folklore is an element of folk art. The term was coined in 1846 by W. G. Thoms.² Rural folklore includes, therefore, the works of rural oral and intellectual art, that is, stories, proverbs, spells, songs, etc., expressed in the everyday language of the inhabitants of a given village or region. The works of folk art did not use to be considered genuine works of art. However, they would always serve certain roles in the life of the village.

¹ Jackowski, A. (2007). *Polska sztuka ludowa*, Warsaw, p.14.

² *Słownik folkloru polskiego* (1965), ed. Krzyżanowski, J., Warszawa, p. 104.

From the point of view of aesthetics folk art and folklore were meant to make one sensitive to beauty, to develop one's imagination and to shape artistic tastes typical of a region. The educational role of art was also crucial, because it was often that folklore, especially oral-musical, served to transfer knowledge and experience as well as ethical and moral norms, examples of proper behaviour, and disapprobation of improper attitudes and actions.

Folk art has become "almost entirely independent in the course of the 19th century which, according to Ksawery Piwocki, was the result of the awakening of the class identity among peasants, their manumission, and the increasing stratification of village communities. (...) Ksawery Piwocki, when analysing folk motifs in the particular branches of 17th and 18th century art, places the origins of Polish folk art in the 16th century. However, independent folk art only appeared in the 19th century".³ As it was correctly emphasised by Aleksander Jackowski, "folk art created the artistic landscape of villages",⁴ preserving in its form the elements of ancient Slavic traditions. In the times of the Partitions of Poland it was an element of national identity used to form patriotic stances. The highest development of Polish folk art began with the second half of the 19th century, that is, after the manumission of peasants, when the economy in the Polish lands was revitalised and the material situation of the inhabitants of villages was improved. Researchers and artists found folk art fascinating, which facilitated its dissemination and it became a source of creative inspiration. In the 1930s folk art also started to serve a representative role in, among others, interior decorations (in e.g. government offices). The increased interest in and inspiration by folk art lasted until the onset of World War II which "accelerated the progressing downfall of the traditional rural culture. The destruction, the displacement, which deprived people of their homes, and subsequently the fight against illiteracy, development of schooling, industrialisation, damage to the structure of the villages, presenting the city as an ideal, all of this contributed to the decline of old forms of the existence of folk creative effort".⁵ When attempting to protect folk art from decline and oblivion focus was placed on its documentation (research centres, museums) and promotion (the Centre of Folk Industry and Art Cepelia). However, the original sources of inspiration and authenticity were lost. The fascination with urban models marginalised rural creative efforts which were perceived as "relics". Contemporarily, folk art and traditions are

³ Krzysztofowicz, S. (1972). *O sztuce ludowej w Polsce*, Warszawa, pp. 12–13.

⁴ Jackowski, A. (2007). op. cit., p. 10.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 10.

experiencing their revival because of the “folk trend” popular among young people which presents a chance of to get to know and promote them.

In the previous centuries folk creative efforts were hardly ever considered works of art. Regarding these works focus was placed upon the techniques with which the items were made, the materials and tools used, their practicality or employment in rituals, etc. Their artistic value was ignored. Its unique character and the resulting value arose from folk art's inherent simple artistry typical of human psyche and the unbreakable bond with local traditions. Folk art is an art “which originates directly in the simple, basic laws of artistic creation, inherent to human psyche, it holds on only to them and the local habits, i.e., tradition. They have formed it and in it they are fully expressed”.⁶

Experts in and researchers of art tend to point to the primitivism of folk art. According to J. Grabowski folk art “is primitive art, with its own style shaped in folk culture and compatible with it, it is art in which the folk is the creator, and certainly the recipient”.⁷ Primitivism is not negative and it springs from two sources: “the pure, simple, and instinctively sensed laws of artistic creation, and what is more, the folk culture, primitive in its form – especially from the perspective of knowledge – and limited in its developmental opportunities”.⁸ This art is created spontaneously, from the primal human aesthetic needs and the direct instinctive expression of emotions. Because folk art arises also from environmental conditions it can be stated that it integrates its creators and recipients with their environment. Learning of the particular elements of folk art becomes an excellent form of regional education and the resulting identification with a region. “What is crucial for folk art is the close connection with the life of rural communities with which it forms a number of bonds. Tradition is vital, because it assigns each type of art its place and meaning in the life of the folk. It sometimes assigns a task”.⁹ Folk songs and fairy tales “often employ magical elements in the forms of a word – a spell, and, first and foremost, they directly connect people with nature, especially with animals. They participate directly in human affairs, they communicate with people, they help them or hurt them, they are frequently equipped with special powers”.¹⁰ For the inhabitants of the villages their creations were not art, and the term folk art, as Aleksander

⁶ Grabowski, J. (1967). *Sztuka ludowa – formy i regiony w Polsce*, Warszawa, p. 17.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 22.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 18.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 21.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 148.

Jackowski claims, was coined by the urban population who were discovering its meaning.¹¹

Because in the centuries of the past folk art was not held in high esteem and the artists of the folk were typically illiterate the authors of most of the works are and will for the future generations remain anonymous. It ought to be emphasised, however, that within the limits of a particular region, village, or parish the recipient of the art recognised the works thanks to their individual features typical of each of the authors. Citing the opinion of Wanda Schreiberówna S. Krzysztofowicz states that “folk artists need not be educated in schools for instructors or vocational courses. Certainly, they ought not to be provided with any mechanical devices or facilitations in their work”.¹² That is because such changes would result in the loss of the authenticity of the works of folk art.

Folk creativity encompasses a number of areas that are a proof of its artistic richness. When analysing the works of villagers ethnographers have defined the following types of folk art: architecture – especially sacral in the form of wooden churches and tserkovs, paper flowers, paper cut-outs, colourful plates (placed behind a lath below the ceiling), furniture (tables, chairs, benches, chests, spoon holders), decorative cloth, folk garment design, ornaments on garments (patterns on white canvas, sewed-on colourful strings, ribbons, buttons, sequins, beads, embroidery, lace), jewellery (highlander studs, belt and shoe buckles, works in amber), decorations on tools (e.g. spinning wheels, yokes, colters, barrels, beehives, fishing tools), pottery, objects of worship (paintings, sculptures, drawings), Nativities, dance, music, playing and making of musical instruments, singing, songs, stories and legends, ritual “performances” (singing carols, harvest festivals, weddings, summer solstice festivals) that is – folklore, painted Easter eggs, Easter palms, masks, ritual breads, toys (rattles, birds, animals).¹³

When analysing the particular departments of folk art a clear division between female and male areas is presented. “The male domain is, e.g., sculpture, painting, pottery, works in metal, wattles – and, of course, construction works, as well as music. Women would busy themselves with weaving, embroidery, lace works, paper cut-outs, and painting houses. In ritual items the roles are divided as follows: women paint Easter eggs, bake ritual cakes, and make Easter palms while men

¹¹ Jackowski, A. (2007), op. cit., p. 12.

¹² Krzysztofowicz, S. (1972), op. cit., p. 10.

¹³ According to classification in Grabowski J. (1967), *Sztuka ludowa – formy i regiony w Polsce*, Warszawa.

construct Nativities and other accessories connected with carol singing performances".¹⁴ Certainly, in the past as well as nowadays exceptions are seen, however, it can be stated that it is much more often that men take up female tasks (e.g. embroidery, painting Easter eggs, weaving) than vice versa. That is most probably because of the fact that craftsmanship requires physical strength.

Alicja Mironiuk Nikolska has defined two basic functions of folk art. The first is presentation, the second decoration.¹⁵ The art of presentation was connected with the religious practices of a given community (images of God, Jesus, Mother of God, the saints), and the art of decoration was aimed to make people's immediate environment more beautiful and pleasant, "it made the immediate environment more beautiful and rich in colours and forms, it made rural life uniquely beautiful".¹⁶ Decorating handicraft and craft items that were in everyday use was a proof of the aesthetic needs of their makers as well as users. The tools of old are no longer used, substituted for by modern technology and production. It needs to be admitted, however, that thanks to its fans folk art is now experiencing moments of revival. The returning fashion for the "folk" and the "ethno" leads to the preservation of old items and the techniques and materials used to make them, at least to a certain extent.

Elements of the art of presentation – paintings, sculptures, drawings, which had religious functions were to be found in every house. They were usually decorated with flowers and they served the roles of altars that would remind even the youngest of the need to respect the sacred and to remember their Christian duties. The home sacrum was the first place in which the children would begin their religious education typically supervised by their parents and grandparents. Paintings and sculptures were also located by the side of the road and also in shrines near houses where the local religious communities used to meet to pray. The inspiration to create these works of folk art were the paintings and sculptures found in churches and places of worship that were visited by the faithful because of the dynamic development of the pilgrimage movement in Polish lands.

Sculpture is one of the oldest areas in folk art and it dates back to the 16th century. Sculptures were usually of the sacral usage and they were a frequent feature of the landscape of the countryside because they were

¹⁴ Grabowski, J. (1967). op. cit., p. 30.

¹⁵ Mironiuk Nikolska, A. (2010). *Ocalić od zapomnienia. Polska sztuka ludowa*, Warszawa, p. 5.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

placed in wayside shrines. "They have been one of the most beautiful elements of the cultural landscape of Polish villages. They can be found among houses, farms, churches, and tserkovs. They are a proof of the faith of our ancestors, their belonging to the Roman Catholic Church".¹⁷ Wayside shrines and crosses built by the villagers became not only places of religious education and the shaping of the worldview of the young generations, but they also played an important role apart from the religious one, because they used to teach history and form identities, since they would often commemorate important historical events (located in places of historical battles and graves of fighters in uprisings) as well as disasters and misfortunes afflicting the locals (e.g. epidemics, natural disasters). Shrines and crosses also defined "the borders of the world of their founders and builders: the familiar, tame, close world, in which people used to feel safe".¹⁸ The tradition of building thanksgiving and commemorative shrines is preserved even today although it is not as widespread as it was in the 19th or the beginning of the 20th century. What is common now, however, is placing wayside crosses in places of traffic accidents.

In the realm of decoration one of the most popular graphic techniques was wood engraving. "Paper, black and white or occasionally coloured pictures, typically unframed, were glued or nailed to the walls of rooms and chambers. They were glued inside dowry chests, travel chests, so that the care of God and His representatives would always accompany people".¹⁹

The folk would paint on wood or glass. The first type of paintings on wood were those created in specialised workshops which were typically located in the vicinity of places of worship. These paintings had religious subjects. Images of saints were frequently painted on glass, with the exception of brigand and shepherd scenes found in the regions of the Tatry mountains, and even love scenes (dances and courtships between brigands and girls, portraits of "frajerki" – brigands' girlfriends). Therefore, apart from their religious functions paintings would communicate traditions and legends. Paintings of this type were rather schematic and simplified, however, the paintings were quite decorative because they were shiny and they had "clearly outlined colourful surfaces or fancy decorative elements in the form of flowers or other flowery motifs".²⁰

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 10.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 12.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 76.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 154.

Placed usually behind a lath running at the wall near to the ceiling the paintings used to brighten the dark rooms.

A broad range of decorative folk art includes also paper cut-outs, folk fabric, decorations on pottery, wood, and metal, as well as decorations made of paper or straw such as flowers, spiders, etc. Polish folk cut-outs that enjoyed the peak of its development at the turn of the 19th and the 20th century and served the function of interior decorations is perceived as one of the most original areas of folk art. It developed mainly in central and eastern Poland (the regions of Kurpie, Łowicz, Opoczyńskie, Sieradzkie, Rawskie) in poorer communities. The authors of these decorations (called "ozdoby", "cacka") were female, and the skills were passed down from generation to generation and learned from early childhood from mothers and grandmothers. "Shiny colourful pieces of paper attracted children's attention. With time they would themselves begin to make cut-outs; from the simplest forms to the decorations resembling those produced by their mothers and grandmothers".²¹ The interiors of the houses were decorated before religious holidays and family celebrations, and efforts were taken to create as interesting, colourful, and original decorations as possible to attract the attention of guests. Those farmers who were less talented but more wealthy ordered and bought the works of the most talented women in the area. Men would infrequently busy themselves with this type of decoration because cut-outs required not only imagination and skill, but also finesse, since one careless move could result in the destruction of all of the work. What is more, such work brought one no respect, and according to the traditional division of social roles men were to work the fields, and women to take care of the house and decoration of rooms. It ought to be mentioned that working together on paper cut-outs fostered interpersonal relations and unified the female community of a village, because in order to save light, among others, the women would work together in one house, singing and telling stories.

One of the youngest forms of decoration in folk art are paper flowers that only appeared in Polish villages at the beginning of the 20th century. This art has been the mostly highly developed and perfected in the regions of Kurpie, Opoczno, Łowicz, and Żywiec. "Flowery decorations were made for the most important holidays and family celebrations. They were placed in girls' hair, they were given to people of fondness. The simple flowers could be made by any girl, as it was a purely female

²¹ Ibidem, p. 186.

²² Ibidem, p. 234.

activity, however, to produce fancier decorations certain skills and a natural sense of beauty were required".²² The results of the work of the women who produced paper flowers confirmed not only their skill and talent but also their perceptiveness and sensitivity to beauty of nature because the natural environment served as an inspiration. An interesting form of the decoration of houses were the light spiders made of paper and straw hung from the ceiling joist.²³

Earthenware pots would play a practical as well as decorative roles in villages. "Because of their different shapes, colours, and patterns they were also decorative items. On shelves and in cupboards there was a place for decorative bowls, jugs, and pots".²⁴ Their decorative and artistic value was expressed in the quality of production, colours, and design. Because of the technique of production of the earthenware pots it was the domain of pottery workshops and the men working there. Learning to create earthenware items took place out of home, therefore, it was just like typical craftsman training. However, the need to surround oneself and use decorated dishes was shaped at home through everyday contact with items of a certain quality. So was the case with the education in metal works (iron). Production of iron farming tools, iron fittings on doors, wagons, and chests, as well as locks, bars, and even kitchen utensils and crosses was the job of blacksmiths. The demand for these products was high, which is why in every village there was a smithy and a blacksmith who would teach the trade to all those who wanted to learn. Decorating iron items was popularised starting with the second half of the 19th century and it became a synonym of wealth and served the role of advertising.

Decorated wooden items were much easier to produce at home. The material was easy to get, easy to dress, which is why it was popular among the rural population. Neither did it require specialist tools to be dressed and it allowed for the development of artistic imagination. What encouraged the decoration of wooden items was the fact that the necessary skills could be learned by observing fathers, grandfathers, and uncles, and making first attempts oneself. "Every man can dress wood, no specialist skills are needed, one does not need to learn for years on end to make a salt cellar, a basket, or a laundry mangle. This soft material can be easily cut to one's taste and carved with patterns".²⁵ An interesting remark of ethnographers is the fact that men would

²³ Ibidem, p. 240.

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 206.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 220.

typically decorate wooden tools used by women. Perhaps it was the grace and subtlety and the will to appeal to and to please their closest women that awakened artistry in men? The exception were Carpathian shepherds who expressed their artistic abilities also by decorating the items that they themselves worked with, such as, among others, cheese making forms and some of the tools used when working in a shepherd bothy. It needs to be admitted, as well, that when analysing the wooden items in various regions of Poland those made in Podhale and Beskidy appear the best. There the wood-carving craft was definitely at its peak. It was also in Podhale that learning wood-carving was moved from home to school when in 1876 a wood-carving school was established, one and only of its kind. "Chałubiński noticed in the highlanders a natural ability in carpentry and wood-carving and an original taste in decorating furniture and tools. He presented his insight in the Tatrzzańskie Society which, following his suggestions, started their efforts towards the establishment of a vocational school. Such a school, open to all the highlander youth, could be an important factor in the struggle to raise the living standard in Podhale".²⁶

The willingness to surround oneself with beauty was also expressed in the decorations of everyday fabrics and clothes. The decorations were influenced by the technique of the production of fabrics, the selection of colours, and the composition of patterns. The colourful, patterned fabrics were used to cover beds, benches, seats in carts and sleighs, and the image of such a fabric gave one an air of splendour and elegance. The aforementioned fabrics were typically handmade by women. Almost in every house from autumn to the end of winter housewives would sit at weaving workshops making fabrics for their families as well as for sale. Weaving was a common skill and it was passed down from mother to daughter in all the regions of Poland, although among the wealthiest women in the second half of the 19th century handmade fabrics were more and more often substituted with those manufactured in factories.

In education the material and immaterial works of folk art can be divided into two basic groups. The first one includes those learned at home by observing parents, imitating them, as well as having children help in some of the tasks performed by adults. The second includes the crafts that were learned in workshops and under the supervision of an artist, e.g., playing musical instruments. In both the groups one can find such forms of folk art which were initially acquired on one's own and the

²⁶ *Tradycje i współczesność. Stulecie szkoły zawodowej w Zakopanem 1876–1976* (no date), Zakopane, p. 19.

will to create them and to master techniques used to produce them arose from the need to keep oneself busy in leisure time and to surround oneself with beauty. The main role in communicating folk art and folklore was played by mothers, grandparents, babysitters, and seniors whose “memory substituted books”, as it was beautifully stated by A. Jackowski. The knowledge and technical skills were passed down from generation to generation and seniors were the “depositories of tradition” because in them wisdom was combined with experience.²⁷

Contemporarily school and well as out of school education guarantee the preservation of the heritage of folk culture. The variety of the forms of out of school education makes it possible for everyone to explore folk art, regardless of age and education. Apart from participation in festivals and celebrations with traditional performances typical of a particular ethnographic region what has become an excellent place of education are the meetings with folk artists in their handicraft workshops or at folk art fairs, where the artists not only sell their works, but also share their knowledge about them and their traditions. Popularising knowledge about folk art is done through regional workshops where one may not only be educated from the practical side by contact with folk artists, but also from the theoretical side thanks to the lectures given by researchers in various academic disciplines connected with the problems of folk art. Music, singing, dance, ritual performances, traditions, as well as language, garments, and folk musical instruments allow extensive social groups to become acquainted with folk festivals organised regularly throughout all of Poland. The main aim of these festivals is to foster and protect the immaterial cultural heritage.²⁸ The performances of folk bands are accompanied by academic panels, folk workshops, folk art fairs, presentations of rituals, dances, garments, playing musical instruments, and singing.

Education in folk art is conducted in schools, as well, which allows inhabitants of cities to become familiar with the heritage of the rural areas.

In primary school the education is based on the current Ordinance of the Minister of Education of December 23, 2008 on the basic curriculum in pre-school education and comprehensive education in the particular types of schools.²⁹ Analysis of the act leads one to the conclusion that the

²⁷ Jackowski, A. (2007). op. cit., p.14–15.

²⁸ *Mój festiwal. Historia we wspomnieniach jego twórców i uczestników* (2013), Zakopane, p. 7.

²⁹ *Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji z dnia 23 grudnia 2008 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz kształcenia ogólnego w poszczególnych typach szkół* (2009), Journal of Laws Issue 4, pos. 17.

greatest content on the subject of regional education including folk culture and art can be realised in the first educational stage: grades 1–3, that is, the early comprehensive education in the form of integrated learning. For example, during music lessons students of grades 1–3 ought to, according to the basic curriculum, learn the steps and figures of the Polish folk dance “krakowiak”, a polka, and one more folk dance.³⁰ In art classes the students are to become acquainted with selected forms of artistic craft and folk art.³¹ In the forms of artistic expression the students ought to be engaged in the making of items typical of the folk art of their regions.³² The basic curriculum makes it possible to conduct classes in ethnic languages and a regional language – Kashubian.

At the second educational stage, that is, in grades 4–6 the contents in the area of folk culture and art are a part of the classes in Polish, history, art, and music.

The basic curriculum at the second stage in Polish includes analysis and interpretation of such texts of culture as legends, fairy tales, and proverbs.³³ According to Anna Józefowicz, “we can assume that when these are investigated modern and contemporary texts connected with various countries and cultures will be discussed, some of them also, perhaps, with origins close to the students. Texts on regional subjects can also appear during the analysis of the works of culture from the perspective of the values and value systems contained therein. The selection of such texts depends on the teacher of Polish and the authors of the course book that is used (...)”.³⁴

The curriculum in history includes the description of “little motherlands” with regard to historical and cultural tradition, showing on the map and describing the main regions of Poland, expressing opinions on the subject of fostering traditions and collecting family souvenirs.³⁵

The basic curriculum in art is the definition of belonging to a culture through contact with selected works of art, historical monuments, and tradition in the local and regional communities.³⁶

As part of music classes raising musical awareness is included, as well as listening to folk music in its original and stylised form. Once again,

³⁰ Ibidem, Attachment no. 2/2008, p. 216.

³¹ Ibidem, p. 217.

³² Ibidem, p. 217.

³³ Ibidem, pos.11, p. 228.

³⁴ Józefowicz, A. (2013). *Region oraz edukacja regionalna w podstawach programowych wychowania przedszkolnego i szkoły podstawowej*. In *Ars Culturas*, Issue 2, p. 113.

³⁵ *Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji...*, op. cit., Attachment no. 2/2008, pos. 1–3, p. 236.

³⁶ Ibidem, pos.1.1, p. 234.

a return is made to folk dances, including krakowiak, however, it is also pointed out that students ought to learn first and foremost the dances typical of “their particular regions”.³⁷

The paper of the aforementioned A. Józefowicz provides a detailed analysis of the problems connected with regional subjects. The author of the article states that at the second educational stage the problems concerning the region and folk art are considered secondary, or even tertiary. They are few in Polish classes, however, there is more of them in history lessons. Nevertheless, the teachers who are aware of their role teach even the youngest children about that which is closest to them, form their identity, and cultivate regional and folk traditions.³⁸

In the case of the pre-schools and schools in Lower Silesia the problem of “broken history” appeared in regional and folk education caused by the post-war border changes and new population in this area. As a result of historical events cultural and ethnic diversity appeared in the area of Wrocław. On the one hand, this situation led to the detachment of the displaced population from their regional and ethnic roots, and on the other, it provided an opportunity for the contemporary inhabitants to get to know a broader spectrum of the phenomena connected with folk culture and art. The people settling in Lower Silesia with their luggage brought their traditions, food, songs, dances, works of folk craft and art. In the Lower Silesian melting pot they would co-exist or mutually permeate.

The students, when receiving knowledge defined in the curriculum, realise most of the subjects in the traditional way, that is, in class and with the use of a course book and a notebook. It is a positive sign that currently first course books were published which contain specifically selected and tailored contents in regional education. However, they are limited in number and subject matter. The examples of such books are *The Tatry mountains and their vicinity. Monograph for schools*,³⁹ and *Highlander reader. Notes*,⁴⁰ developed by Anna Mlekodaj. Available on the market are also publications supporting the work of the teachers which include word puzzles, colouring books, folk riddles, etc.: *My first atlas of Poland*,⁴¹ *Little travellers club. Travels around Poland*,⁴²

³⁷ Ibidem, posw. 2–5, p. 233.

³⁸ Józefowicz A. (2013), op. cit., p. 115.

³⁹ Skupień, W. (Ed.) (2004). *Tatry i Podtatrze. Monografia dla szkół*. Zakopane.

⁴⁰ Mlekodaj, A. (2013). *Górska Czytanka. Wypisy. Rabka Zdrój*.

⁴¹ Wiśniewska, A. (2015). *Mój pierwszy atlas Polski*. Firma Księgarska Olesiejuk.

⁴² Myjak, J. (2016). *Klub małych podróżników. Podróże dookoła Polski*. Firma Księgarska Olesiejuk.

Colouring Poland. With crayons around Poland,⁴³ Polish folk garments.⁴⁴

When wishing to go beyond the traditional teaching methods teachers try to introduce out of school forms of education that make it possible to realise the basic curriculum. The examples of such alternative forms of lessons including subjects connected with folk culture and art of the regions of Poland are the activities in the work with students in Primary School No. 82 in Wrocław. In order to creatively and competently transfer knowledge to students the teachers undertake various forms of improving their skills. One of the most fruitful and effective meetings was the participation in the "Good practice in preserving immaterial cultural heritage" conference organised by the National Institute of Immaterial National Heritage in Zakopane in 2016. Which was particularly valuable were the workshops which allowed for the exchange of experiences and ideas as well as preparing lesson plans for children and youth.

Teachers are provided with enormous support from museums and open-air museums. In Primary School No. 82 the teaching staff try to fully use the interesting educational offer of these institutions. A number of trips was planned and carried out, among others to open-air museums in Kudowa-Pstrązna, Bierkowice, and Wdzydze Kiszewskie in the Kashubian region. During the trips the students had the opportunity to see the collected items and participate in workshops in, among others, baking bread and ginger cake, honey harvest, pottery, and weaving.

Inspiration for interesting work as part of the lessons conducted in school is provided by visits in the Ethnographic Museum in Wrocław. The incentive to organise a series of classes on painting on glass was contributed by an exhibition of paintings of this type in the museum. The 650 paintings are of lay or religious subject matter. It is much easier for children to acquire knowledge when it is accompanied by practical exercises. Following this rule, after seeing the exhibition the children made first glass paintings of their own. The lecture given by an employee of the museum and the teacher was supplemented with information about the history of glass painting in Podhale, which is why the works of children presents the legendary brigand Janosik as well as scenes of highland dances. Podhale is a region rich in ideas for classes with students. The painted dance scenes were an introduction to the next lesson which was devoted to music of the Zakopane region. In the subjects, teachers of

⁴³ Wiśniewska, A. – Babuła, J. (2016). Polska do kolorowania. Z kredkami dookola Polski. Firma Księgarska Olesiejuk.

⁴⁴ Stefanow-Wizgird, A. (2013). Polskie stroje ludowe. Warszawa.

Polish, history, music, and art received training at the conference from the Polish-Ukrainian Historical and Pedagogical Days "Culture in Education" series which was held in Zakopane. During the music classes the students became acquainted with a number of melodies from Podhale, and they also learned to play them on untypical instruments such as the so-called "boom-boom pipes". This unconventional instrument activates and motivates even those reluctant to play music. The cycle was supplemented by information about the folk garments of Podhale. The students could also try them on. The students also attempted to learn to tie fringes ("strzępki") on highland shawls. A number of words from the highland dialect (e.g. strzępki, gorset, tybet, parzenica) were provided to broaden the children's knowledge. The following activity was the practice of the word "tybet" which is dialectical for the fabric of a highland shawl or skirt. This was carried out in art classes where the students made holiday cards with the use of the discussed fabric. The cards looked wonderful and the new words were memorised through practical activities.

Another region that the teachers devote greater attention to is Łowicz and its exceptionally rich folk art. In the classes the students, having become acquainted with elements of Łowicz art, design their own fabric and use the decoupage technique to decorate everyday objects with folk motifs. So was the case with art of the Opole region. Beautiful painted Easter eggs from the Opole region from the private collection of Anna Haratyk decorated the school during the "Painted Easter egg – the symbol of Easter or a little work of art. On the types, methods, and techniques of painting eggs" exhibition. Subsequently, regional motives were used in art classes to decorate eggs and cups. Many activities promoting tradition and folk decorating art are realised with children around the time of Christmas and Easter. The students regularly participate in contests in making Nativities which are exhibited in the Ethnographic Museum, they make holiday decorations, they sing and play carols.

One of the most interesting forms of education was the cooperation with children from a school in Dortmund, Germany. Children there are sent tasks, handouts, traditional Polish decorations, regional legends, music, etc. St Andrew's Day, Polish Christmas Eve, regional legends (the dragon of Wawel) are some of the problems realised by German children according to plans developed by the students of Primary School No. 82. What is more, by realising the lesson plans developed by students in Dortmund the Polish students had the opportunity to get to know, among others, German music and Advent traditions. The results of the

cooperation between the students and the pedagogues of schools in the neighbouring countries frequently took part in the International Contest "Begegnung mit Osteuropa" organised by the Ministerium für Familie, Kinder, Jugend, Kultur und Sport des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen getting the highest places among thousands of the submitted works.

The activities described above are only a part of the work with students which serves to illustrate how the subjects of culture and art of the regions of Poland defined in the basic curriculum for primary schools are realised. They show how teachers can broaden school education with original projects and ideas generating in, among others, conferences and trainings to enrich school and inspire the imagination of students through cultivating folk traditions.