

ARTICLES

Ethnic Aspects of Contemporary Education of Children and Youth in Podhale

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The formation of ethnic identity is one of the many tasks of modern education. It is the way to educate an aware and creative human being capable of taking care of their ancestral heritage and multiply the cultural assets of the region where they come from and live. Not all regions can boast a well-preserved ethnic culture so it is worth drawing on the experience of those that have their own heritage and take numerous measures to pass it on to future generations. In Poland, models and inspiration can be sought in Podhale where the tradition and culture of the region is still alive. It is obviously the family home that is essential in the process of passing it on. However, effective regional education must also be carried out outside the home, which is why this paper presents a broad spectrum of activities of various institutions, organisations and communities involved in the transmission of Podhale culture to children and young people. The various forms of culture-oriented education present in Podhale that are analysed in the article below were sourced by way of websites and social media posts concerning the subject.

Keywords: regional education, ethnic culture, forms of cultural transmission, Podhale, regional cultural and educational institutions

Introduction

In order for contemporary education to preserve the cultural heritage of the specific regional and national groups, it should include many ethnic characteristics and aspects. This is particularly important in the era of widespread globalisation for ethnic culture is an extremely important component of national culture. Although not all regions have preserved their specific cultural heritage, there appears to be a positive development in a growing interest in ethnic values in many regions across Europe and the world. Also, in Poland considerable attention has been given in recent

years to the nurturing and transmission of ethnic culture. Of course, on the map of our country there are both regions with a strongly obscured tradition and those vividly nurturing their own local past. The group of regions that are renowned for not only transmitting but also popularising native ethnic culture also includes Podhale. Located at the northern foot of the Tatra Mountains not only it a geographical and historical region but it also boasts a very distinct culture. A variety of forms and methods of transmitting cultural heritage are developing there.

The Various Forms and Environments in which Ethnic Education for the Youth Takes Place in the Modern Day:

Family Home

The first place where a child comes into contact with the culture of the region from an early age is the family home. Podhale families take great care to preserve the centuries old traditions and customs present in the region. In spite of the development of civilisation and the changing conditions of everyday life, great importance is attached to maintaining certain characteristics of the way of life typical for the region as well as the old social relations. Respect for the culture of the ancestors is most often manifested through the preservation of the dialect, faith, dress, music, dance, customs and rituals. A child that is surrounded by ethnic culture in the family home can readily accept it without too much difficulty and then begin to identify with it more and more over the years.

School

The activities undertaken by families are usually pursued and continued in schools, especially in rural areas, but also in towns, such as Zakopane or Nowy Targ, where elements of the regional culture can be found in the curricula and in broadly-defined educational projects. The introduction thereof in urban schools means that the process of identification with ethnic culture involves both children and young people living in the Podhale region and those that come from elsewhere. It should be noted that these two towns in the region are now home to a large immigrant population, mainly from the areas around Warsaw, Poznan and Krakow. Pupils attending schools in the Podhale region are introduced to the cultural heritage of the region, including its dress, dialect, dance, singing, music, arts, crafts, etc. during so-called regional lessons. This is particularly important for those pupils whose families do not keep traditions alive as well as those who come from families with no roots in the region. Teachers from schools in the Podhale region often come up with their own

original curricula for learning about and assimilating the culture of Podhale. One author of such a curriculum for the teaching of regional education in Forms 1 to 4 is Anna Jakubiec, a teacher and headmistress of the Primary School in Ciche. The said curriculum has been introduced in many schools in the Czarny Dunajec commune since 2002.

Curricular education is not the only source that allows ethnic culture to be assimilated in schools. Regional education is also fostered by school extracurricular activities. Also in this case, teachers who come from the region have a significant impact on shaping the cultural identity of pupils. They often instil in them a love and passion for music, singing, dancing and discovering traditions, customs and rituals. Thanks to their skills and commitment, there are e.g. children's and youth school folklore ensembles. It is the teachers who become their initiators and instructors. This is a particularly important form of regional education for younger children living in higher villages, far from communal cultural centres, such as Gliczarów Dolny (the 'Zowierucha' ensemble) and Sierockie (the 'Mali Holni' ensemble).¹ Pupils who are members of the highland ensembles become acquainted with authentic folklore, singing, music, dance, dialect, and occasionally also with old traditions, rituals and games that are becoming a thing of the past. By cultivating the native tradition, they save many of its components from complete oblivion. Teachers provide encouragement and motivation for work and for rehearsals, which are often tedious, especially for younger children; they also prepare pupils for competitions (in dialects, dance and singing) and festivals, organised not only in the Podhale region, but also in Poland and abroad. Work with children from an early age when they start school education, or even they are in a pre-school playgroup, is in many cases the beginning of young people's long-lasting links with the local folklore and activities for its promotion and cultivation in adult life.

Cultural and Educational Institutions, Organizations, Societies

Extracurricular education plays an extremely important role in spreading ethnic culture outside the home and school. This education is carried out by regional cultural and educational institutions as well as regionally based organisations and associations. It is cultural and community centres that definitely led the way in this field. Most of them are very active and the scope of their work depends primarily on the size of the locality as well as their staffing and financial capabilities. The basic tasks of community and village centres are the dissemination and development of the culture of the region. They carry out a wide range of educational activities, support the development of local folk artists, and promote their products and native traditions at home and abroad. Most of their initiatives are primarily aimed at promoting culture-oriented,

¹ <http://www.zlgvgdx.gokbialydunajec.pl/zespoly-regionalne/blog> [2.01.2021]

the primary function of which is to pass on the cultural heritage and shape a sense of regional identity among the younger generation.²

The group of the oldest and most active centres in Podhale includes the Bukowina Cultural Centre 'Dom Ludowy' (Folk House) in Bukowina Tatrzańska (hereinafter: BCK DL). This institution has a long tradition and rich experience in upholding and popularising regional culture. It is definitely true to say that 'The Folk House in Bukowina Tatrzańska is a unique place and a unique atmosphere. Everyone can feel here the breath of history, of highland culture and the still living tradition of the Rocky Podhale.'³ The BCK DL hosts numerous regional ensembles representing Bukowina Tatrzańska and the surrounding villages.⁴ Since the 1950s, there has also been a Highland Music School there where people can improve their violin playing skills at all levels, from beginners to proficient musicians.⁵ The BCK DL also provides support for community cultural centres, e.g. the Spisz Cultural Centre in Jurgów, the Village House of Culture Walusiówka in Leśnica-Gronia and others.⁶ Thanks to the support of the BCK DL, regional events and competitions are also organised in these smaller villages, such as the story-telling, recitation, singing and highland-dancing competitions as well as the contest for instrumentalists at the Walusiówka cultural centre in which mainly children and young people take part.

Equally intense activity can be boasted by the Commune Centre of Regional Culture in Kościelisko under whose auspices many cultural and educational activities are implemented in Kościelisko and the villages belonging to the municipality, e.g. in Witów, Chochołów and Dzianisz.⁷ The events organised there, cherishing the highland tradition in a special way, include, among others: Przednówek w Polanach (The Hungry Gap in Polany), i.e. a festival of shepherds' songs and music played on shepherds' instruments, the Polaniarski Osod, symbolically referring to the ending of the grazing of sheep and the return home of the shepherds in the Tatra Mountains, the Parada Gazdowska (Highland Farmers' Parade) and the Ferie z Folklorem (Winter Break with Folklore) which in winter introduces the community and holidaymakers to the still living culture of the Podhale region.

² <https://www.gminakoscielisko.pl/pl/dla-mieszkanca/instytucje-gminne/gminny-osrodek-kultury-regionalnej> [10.01.2021]

³ <https://domludowy.pl/dzialalnosc-bck/szkola-ginacych-zawodow/oferta-dla-grup> [5.01.2021]

⁴ <https://domludowy.pl/dzialalnosc-bck/zespoły-regionalne/lista-zespolow> [5.01.2021]

⁵ <https://domludowy.pl/dzialalnosc-bck/szkolka-g-ralskiego-muzykowania/aktualnosc> [5.01.2021]

⁶ Zespół Cepelia – Podhale, grupa spiska z Jurgowa, <http://zespol.jurgow.pl/>; Dom Ludowy Walusiówka w Leśnicy – Groniu, <https://domludowy.pl/dzialalnosc-bck/walusiowka/aktualnosc/558.html> [5.01.2021]

⁷ <https://www.gminakoscielisko.pl/pl/dla-turysty/atracje/kulturalnie/wydarzenia> [10.01.2021]

Among the actively involved institutions are the Community Cultural Centre in Biały Dunajec and the Culture and Promotion Centre of the Czarny Dunajec Commune.⁸ There, children and young people are offered classes in glass painting and large-format drawing, ceramics, pottery, mosaics, graphics (linocut), wood carving as well as fiddle and basolia playing. For children from villages farther away from the communal centres, such as Gliczarów Dolny or Sierockie, additional classes are held in primary schools. Similar workshop classes are organised for visitors during tourist seasons. Children and young people spending their winter breaks or holidays in the local area are offered lectures on the music, costume, dance and culture of the Podhale region, e.g. at the Białodunajec Cultural Centre.

Not only villages in Podhale have their own cultural and educational institutions. Regional out-of-school education is also provided in towns and cities an example of which is the Tatra Cultural and Sports Centre Jutrzenka in Zakopane bringing together over 460 participants in the 48 theme clubs operating there. Children and young people are offered classes in wood and clay sculpture, bas-relief, painting and glass painting, folk art techniques, graphics (linocut), ceramics, weaving, textile and fibre arts, music, playing the fiddle, bagpipes and shepherds' instruments, etc.⁹

Whatever the location, the vast majority of regional (rural and urban) cultural centres organise classes teaching how to play the fiddle, which is the basic instrument of highland bands, as well as handicrafts typical of the Podhale region. An analysis of the offers of cultural centres operating in the Podhale region shows that the most common opportunities for initiatives aimed at promoting regional education include arts and crafts workshops during which participants learn about traditional handicrafts, such as wood carving, glass painting, and tissue paper craft together with relevant techniques.¹⁰ Workshops held at the centres also allow participants to learn about the general characteristics of the region determining the nature of the ethnic culture (e.g. the workshop *Dojrzyć swoją Małą Ojczyznę* (Recognising your Little Homeland) organised at the Cultural Centre in Czarny Dunajec).¹¹

Cultural Centres and Folk Houses play an important role in the organisation of leisure time, especially for younger children during school holiday periods, e.g. during winter breaks. As an enormously interesting solution, such offers are aimed at both children living permanently in the municipality

⁸ <http://www.gokbialydunajec.pl/dzialalnosc/dzialalnosc-gminnego-osrodka-kultury> [11.01.2021]; <http://www.ckip.org/> [2.01.2021]

⁹ Data from 2020; <https://www.facebook.com/TCKiS-Jutrzenka-131912446869711/> [15.01.2021]

¹⁰ http://ckip.org/t,770,nabor_na_cykl_warsztatow_dla_dzieci_i_mlodziarzy.html, http://ckip.org/t,715,zajecia_artystyczne_w_centrum_kultury_i_promocji_gminy_czarny_dunajec_.html [2.01.2021]

¹¹ http://ckip.org/home,104,harmonogram_stalych_zajec_na_sali_widowiskowej_ckip.html [2.01.2021]

and the immediate vicinity and at the youngest tourists who enjoy leisure activities in the region. Thanks to such an initiative, they can not only enjoy tourist and recreational attractions, but also learn about the tradition, art and folklore of Podhale. Classes are conducted by the best specialists, i.e. local artists, folklorists and regionalists. In addition to theoretical knowledge, embellished with extremely interesting stories, participants have the opportunity to test their skills in practice, which makes the information they acquire much easier to comprehend and keep in mind. In the case of art workshops, they also have the opportunity to keep the works they created as a souvenir and specific evidence of their contact with regional art. The interest in this type of workshops means that adults are often also involved, and in fact they are there to accompany and supervise the participants. Engaging parents and guardians during the activities is a valuable experience for the children and fosters intergenerational and intercultural integration.

An extremely interesting initiative and form of regional education has been created by the BCK DL. It is the School of Vanishing Occupations, Folklore and Folk Art, which has been operating since 1998. 'The aim of this undertaking is to save the vanishing occupations, show the young generation the diminishing beauty and teach them how to create it. Classes at the Bukowina School of Vanishing Occupations are conducted by local folk artists, self-made artists, who teach mainly young people about old handicraft techniques, ornamentation, and a specific sense of beauty and aesthetics. In the main, regular workshops are organised for regular pupils. Works made by them take part in numerous competitions organised in Podhale and across Poland. They are also presented at national exhibitions of folk art, which take place on the occasion of the Highland Carnival and the Sabałowe Bajania storytelling festival.'¹² In addition to classes at the Folk House, pupils take part in study trips, visit regional museums, including open-air museums, and visit folk artists' studios. The School also organises activities for organised groups from all over the country. The School of Vanishing Occupations, Folklore and Folk Art mainly serves children and young people, but its offer is also available to adults who wish to learn the secrets of the vanishing occupations. All classes are based on the traditions of the Podhale region, thanks to which 'the School teaches how to recognise the disappearing beauty and the techniques of folk art. Participants learn about the art of glass painting, sculpture, woodcarving, ceramics, embroidery, singing, dancing, and playing shepherds' instruments; they also improve their knowledge of the region. The school is an elementary and primary way of getting young people interested in the vanishing beauty. It is a place where modernity and contemporary technology meet tradition and native culture.'¹³ It is noteworthy that the School's activities continue

¹² Szkoła Ginących Zawodów, Folkloru i Sztuki Ludowej, <https://domludowy.pl/dzialalnosc-bck/szkola-ginacych-zawodow/historia> [5.01.2021]

¹³ <https://domludowy.pl/dzialalnosc-bck/szkola-ginacych-zawodow/historia> [5.01.2021]

uninterrupted despite the current coronavirus pandemic. Instructor-led classes have been moved online, allowing students to continue learning and developing their passions at home.¹⁴

Associations and organisations, such as the Podhale Highlanders' Union (Związek Podhalań) also play a part in popularising the culture, traditions and heritage of the region, thus contributing to ethnic education. Regional ensembles operate under their auspices, and classes are held for children and young people in dancing, singing and playing folk instruments, thanks to which the activity and artistic sensitivity of the younger generations is being developed while respect for tradition and local cultural heritage is being shaped. The involvement of the members of the branches of the Podhale Highlanders' Union means that young inhabitants can take an active part in cultural events, actively get to know the culture and traditions of the region and the region itself during excursions and similar activities. The knowledge and skills thus acquired are presented by the young performers at competitions as well as regional and even national celebrations. The instructors and driving forces are mainly local artists, who share their passions and skills, often altruistically, with representatives of the younger generation.¹⁵ This approach to promoting culture teaches above all that not every value that a person identifies with should be commercialised. Ethnic culture is first and foremost the inner, spiritual wealth of the inhabitants of a particular region and does not always have to be profitable in the material sense. It ennobles people, allows them to develop their own identity, and these are priceless values that are not acquired through purchase, but through upbringing, teaching and respect for what generations of ancestors created.

Folk Ensembles

Regional education in Podhale is carried out in various forms. The most popular ones undoubtedly include children's and youth folk ensembles, operating both under the auspices of the local cultural centres and branches of the Podhale Highlanders' Union.¹⁶ The basic tasks of the highland ensembles include

¹⁴ Gdzie nasi uczniowie - tam Szkoła Ginących Zawodów, <https://domludowy.pl/dzialalnosc-bck/szkola-ginacych-zawodow/aktualnosci/615.html> [5.01.2021]

¹⁵ Oddział Związku Podhalań w Cichem, http://ckip.org/home,44,zp_ciche.html; Oddział Związku Podhalań w Starem Bystrem, http://ckip.org/home,52,zp_stare_bystre.html [2.01.2021]

¹⁶ The children's and youth ensembles include e.g. Mali Dunajczanie of Czarny Dunajec, Siumni of Chochółów, Tatry of Ratułów, Bachledówka of Czerwienne, Odrowążanie z Odrowąża Podhalańskiego, Krzesany of Ciche, Mali Wróblowianie of Wróblówka, Mali Miętusianie of Miętustwo, Serdocki of Podszkle, Turnie of Stare Bystre, Młodzieżowy Zespół Watra of Czarny Dunajec, <http://ckip.org/home> [2.01.2021]; Młodzieżowy Zespół Folklorystyczny Polaniorze im. Stanisława Nędzy – Chotarskiego of Kościelisko, <https://www.koscieliska.pl/dlud.html>; Mali Dzianiszanie of Dzianisz, Polany of

regional education and teaching respect for ethnic, Christian and national/patriotic values. The instructors working with the children therefore focus on passing on highland traditions, customs and rituals, music and regional costumes to the younger generations. Thanks to these ensembles, children and young people have the opportunity to learn singing, dancing, dialect, storytelling, playing traditional instruments, as well as to present their achievements during performances, competitions and festivals. In addition to dance and singing performances, the young performers also prepare artistic programmes in which they recreate the life, rituals and traditions of their localities. Apart from festivals and competitions,¹⁷ the ensembles often take part in numerous performances in the region and across the country; they honour various regional, church and state celebrations and official gatherings, take part in special events and, as part of their voluntary work, perform for residents of care homes. The young artists derive joy and satisfaction particularly from having the opportunity to present their native ethnic culture at competitions and festivals outside Podhale and Poland.

All regional ensembles, regardless of whether they bring together children, young people or adults, care about preserving folklore, traditions, authentic costumes, dialects, children's games of the past as well as the customs and rituals that are specific to their localities. Membership in the ensembles is often a family tradition cultivated from generation to generation. This testifies to the inseparable collaboration between the family home and regional cultural institutions in ethnic education and to the consistent formation, by both sides, of the regional and ethnic identity of successive young generations. The activity of highland folk ensembles often brings generations together and integrates the local community by involving older inhabitants of Podhale towns in the process of regional education in which they pass on to the young the melodies, ditties, dialects and customs that are sometimes already forgotten, thus helping to save them from oblivion.

Kościelisko, Mali Witowanie of Witow, <https://www.gminakoscielisko.pl/pl/dla-mieszkanca/instytucje-gminne/gminny-osrodek-kultury-regionalnej> [10.01.2021]; Biłodunajec (children's and youth groups) of Biały Dunajec, Wierchy of Gliczarów Górny, <http://www.zlgvgdx.gokbialydunajec.pl/zespoly-regionalne/blog> [11.01.2021]; Mali Białanie of Białka Tatrzańska, Mali Wyrchowianie of Bukowina Tatrzańska, Dziecięcy Zespół Góralski Orlynta im. Anny Koszarek of Bukowina Tatrzańska, Małe Podhale of Jurgów, Ciardasie of Czarna Góra – Zagóra, Koce Łapki of Czarna Góra, Trzy Potoki of Rzepiska, Mali Brzegowianie of Brzegi, Zawatarnik of Leśnica – Gronie, <https://domludowy.pl/dzialalnosc-bck/zespoly-regionalne/lista-zespolow> [5.01.2021]

¹⁷ The most popular festivals and competitions include Sabałowe Bajania, Przednówek w Polanach, Muzykowanie na Duchową Nutę, Tatra Festival of Children's Regional Ensembles Złote Kierpce, Święto Dzieci Gór (Children of the Mountains Feast), Festiwal Karpacki, Przegląd Jasełek i Grup Kolędniczych, Przegląd Teatrów Obrzędowych and foreign festivals in Italy, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, etc.

Competitions

Regional education and the cultivation of traditions is also fostered by the organisation of competitions the themes of which focus on issues related to the region, its past, culture and values. The most popular among the audiences include competitions in highland dancing and singing, playing folk instruments, nativity plays and carol singing groups, which consolidate and popularise the customs and rituals of the Christmas period, which are not only a part of the traditional Polish culture, but are also very characteristic of the culture of the Carpathian highlanders. In addition to popularising traditions among children and young people, these competitions provide an opportunity to present their achievements not only to regional ensembles, but also to theatre groups which operate both in schools, community centres, local associations and parishes. The diary of competitions in Podhale is exceptionally rich and the organisation of so many competitions, festivals and events for young performers is a deliberate action the aim of which is primarily to educate and shape future mature artists and creators of the culture of Podhale.¹⁸

The main task of the festivals for dancers, singers, bands and folk instrumentalists is to popularise traditional dancing, singing, playing, preserving traditional forms of particular dances, notes and songs of Podhale and showing how varied they are across the region of Podhale. The contests provide an opportunity for young people to present their dancing, singing and musical skills, to compare styles of dancing, singing and playing, and to consult specialists in these fields. Participation in the competition shows is open not only to members of regional ensembles and highland folk bands, but also to non-members, dancers cultivating solo and brigand dances, singing groups and solo singers, bands and lead instrumentalists in highland bands of all ages. The jury, made up of the best regional dancers, singers and instrumentalists, pay particular attention to the faithful application of the rules of the dances, songs and musical pieces, the correctness of the performance, as well as the costumes and overall presentation of the young performers. Apart from assessing and selecting the best performers, the contests provide an opportunity to exchange experiences in traditional and contemporary highland music and to recall old, sometimes already forgotten notes, songs and highlanders'

¹⁸ Some of the most popular competitions and festivals include: Przeziyracka Młodych Toniecników i Śpiwowków Góralskich, Muzykowanie na Duchową Nutę, Gminny Konkurs Jasełek i Grup Kolędniczych w Czarnym Dunajcu, Małe Bajania Przegląd Gminnych Zespołów Regionalnych, Gminny Przegląd Dorobku Artystycznego Dzieci i Młodzieży, Sabałowe Bajania w Bukowinie Tatrzańskiej, Konkurs Śpiwowków i Toniecników i Przegląd Młodych Recytatorów i Gawędziarzy im. Andrzeja Skupnia-Florka w Białym Dunajcu, Konkurs Gawędy, Recytacji, Śpiewu, Tańca Góralskiego, Instrumentalistów oraz Gminny Konkurs Tańca Góralskiego Tatrzański Zwyrty w Leśnicy – Groniu, Gminny Konkurs Gawędy i Recytacji im. Hanki Nowobielskiej w Białce Tatrzańskiej, Tatrzański Przegląd Zespołów Regionalnych w Zakopanem, etc.

ditties.¹⁹ The huge interest in events of this type is evidenced by the numerous applications from performers whose number often exceeds several hundred in each contest.²⁰

In the case of the competitions devoted to nativity plays and Christmas carols, the rules state that nativity plays can be presented in a dialect or literary language and even a group of up to 30 performers can take part. Stricter rules apply to carol singing programmes which must refer to the old traditions in terms of the band members (up to 8 people, boys only) and the nature of the ritual. The jury pay particular attention to and favours carol programmes that most faithfully reproduce the carol singing traditions, presenting old folk carols and pastorellas, costumes, props and using folk instruments characteristic of the region or even the particular locality for accompaniment.²¹ The nativity scene competition, which is based on the theme of Christmas, not only cultivates the traditions and rituals of the holiday season, but also deliberately seeks to preserve the custom of building nativity cribs using both old and contemporary artistic techniques.²²

Considering the education of the whole society regardless of age, it is impossible not to mention the perhaps biggest competition organised during the Christmas and carnival period, the Highland Carnival in Bukowina Tatrzańska. The festival features mainly traditional male carol singing groups and their efforts to faithfully recreate traditions and customs constitute an important educational component for all age groups. The carol singers' performances are accompanied by competitions of brigand dances and dance couples, the Gazda Parade (of traditional horse-drawn vehicles), Kumoterka races (races of sledges typical of the region), skijouring competitions, handicraft exhibitions and performances by highland bands. Another occasion to organise competitions is around Easter. By way of example, the annual Easter Palm Festival is held on Palm Sunday in the Bukowina Folk House, with palms

¹⁹ XXXII Przeziyracka Młodych Toniecników i Śpiwowków Góralskich – regulations and application form,

http://ckip.org/t,644,xxxii_przeziyracka_mlodych_toniecnikow_i_spiwowkow_goralskich_regu.html; XXXIV Muzykowanie na Duchową Nutę,

http://ckip.org/t,581,xxxiv_muzykowanie_na_duchowa_nute.html [2.01.2021]

²⁰ Protokół z posiedzenie Komisji Artystycznej oceniającej XXXV Muzykowanie na Duchową Nutę,

http://ckip.org/t,586,protokol_z_posiedzenia_komisji_artystycznej_oceniajacej_xxxv_muzykowania.html; Protokół z XXXII Przeziyracki młodych toniecników i śpiwowków góralskich w Ratułowie,

http://ckip.org/t,651,protokol_z_xxxii_przeziyracki_mlodych_toniecnikow_i_spiwowkow_goralskich.html [2.01.2021]

²¹ Regulamin XXI Gminnego Konkursu jasełek i grup kolędniczych,

http://ckip.org/hosting_plikow/Regulamin,karta%20zgloszenia-jaselka%202020_5dfb7a06512c4.pdf [2.01.2021]

²² VI Transgraniczny Konkurs Szopek Bożonarodzeniowych,

http://ckip.org/t,668,vi_transgraniczny_konkurs_szopek_bozonarodzeniowych_chocholow.html, [2.01.2021]

prepared by children with their parents and/or grandparents, using traditional components, such as willow branches with basil, myrtle, boxwood, fir, tissue paper flowers and ribbons.²³

Culturally Significant Events

Another contribution to regional education are widely understood ethnic open-air events, e.g. Commune Dozhynki Harvest Festival called Hołdymas in Czarny Dunajec,²⁴ Góralskie Śpasy (regional games and feasts with highlanders) in Podczerwone,²⁵ Gazda Parade, Wielkanocna Kosołecka (Easter Kosołecka, traditional food blessing), Dunajeckie Granie (music festival by the River Dunajec) in Biały Dunajec, and Gliczarowski Festivities in Gliczarów.²⁶ The performances, competitions, shows and games organised during these events are an excellent form of integration of families and local communities. They are also available to tourists and holidaymakers resting in Podhale. Young participants in the events have the opportunity to improve their skills and become better acquainted with their native culture while the older ones present its richness, with which they have identified themselves from an early age, and thus become excellent educators and popularisers of their cultural heritage. Of course, the ethnic components are complemented by fairs, games and competitions providing entertainment, but also bringing material benefits to the local institutions (e.g. fairs to raise funds for schools, voluntary fire brigades, etc.) and providing necessary knowledge and skills, such as a course in first aid techniques, which is particularly useful in any tourist region.

Modern Forms of Regional Education

Podhale is a border region where the traditional culture of the Polish highlanders blends naturally with that of the Slovak highlanders living on the southern side of the Tatra Mountains. The proximity of these cultures encourages mutual collaboration as well as care for the traditions and for the present day of the Polish and Slovak borderlands. Such activities are now supported by the project 'Cross-border Culture Organisers – modern forms of specialised education in the Polish-Slovak borderland.' It was implemented on the Polish side by the Culture and Promotion Centre of the Czarny Dunajec Commune and on the Slovak side by the Základná umelecká škola Trstená. Free

²³ Przegląd Palm Wielkanocnych, <https://domludowy.pl/wydarzenia/wydarzenia-cykliczne/172.html> [5.01.2021]

²⁴ <https://goral.info.pl/xxix-gminne-dozyunki-w-czarnym-dunajcu-holdymas-2019> [3.01.2021]

²⁵ Udane Góralskie Śpasy w Podczerwonym, http://ckip.org/t,614,udane_goralskie_spasy_w_podczerwonym.html [3.01.2021]

²⁶ <http://www.gokbialydunajec.pl/dzialalnosc/dzialalnosc-gminnego-osrodka-kultury> [11.01.2021]

training sessions, courses and workshops were offered mainly to professionally active instructors of regional ensembles, teachers, employees of cultural institutions, as well as to students planning to become organisers of cultural activities in the near future.²⁷

The pandemic that everyone was forced to face from 2020 onwards has presented employees of cultural institutions responsible for the education of the cultural heritage of the region with the extremely difficult task of spreading this valuable knowledge using new methods. The use of modern media as well as the Internet and social media allows not only the inhabitants of the region, but also the wider public to discover and explore places and the people who cultivate traditional art and folk crafts, and maintain the rituals and customs associated with the region to this day. The numerous projects carried out by cultural centres across Podhale resulted in a series of educational documentaries, showing e.g. regional folk artists and craftsmen, customs and rituals in the culture of Podhale and local traditions. The effect of the efforts of the employees of the Culture and Promotion Centre in Czarny Dunajec is a series of films entitled 'Encounters with live crafts' and presented on the website. Over several episodes the viewer can learn e.g. how potato harvesting baskets were woven, how regional clothes and footwear were sewn and decorated, how highland cottages were built, wood carvings were made, how clay pots and dishes and textiles were made, how bells and chimes were cast, and shepherding was conducted with full respect for tradition.²⁸ A series of educational films entitled 'Retained in memory...' as part of the project 'Customs & habits passed down to us by our grandparents...' has been prepared and made available on Facebook by the Commune Centre of Regional Culture in Kościelisko.²⁹ Education with the use of films is also carried out by the Bukowina Folk House Cultural Centre in Bukowina Tatrzańska. The series of films entitled My Small Homeland – Places, People, Events, completed with funding from the National Centre for Culture Poland as part of the programme Culture in the Net, introduces the cultural heritage of the region, including the history of Bukowina and Spisz, activities of the Bukowina Folk House, traditional shepherds' instruments, the music and multi-ethnicity of the commune, the regional artists, monuments of sacred architecture in the Bukowina Tatrzańska commune, the history and activities of the Józef Pitorak Regional Theatre Ensemble from Bukowina Tatrzańska.³⁰

²⁷ Projekt Transgraniczni Animatorzy Kultury – nowoczesne formy edukacji specjalistycznej na polsko-słowackim pograniczu, http://ckip.org/t,754,projekt_%E2%80%9Etransgraniczni_animatorzy_kultury_%E2%80%93_nowoczesne_formy_eduk.html [2.01.2021]

²⁸ These videos can be viewed at <https://www.facebook.com/ckipgminyczarnydunajec/videos/ckip-czarny-dunajec-spotkania-z-%C5%BCwym-rzemios%C5%82em> [6.01.2021]

²⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/212259792238193/videos/> [10.01.2021]

³⁰ <https://domludowy.pl/multimedia/filmy/moja-mala-ojczyzna> [6.01.2021]

Conclusion

The moving of the cultural and educational activities online has become a necessity in the era of pandemics, but at the same time it demonstrated the potential of the Internet and showed how modern techniques can be used in ethnic education which is largely based on tradition. Innovative technical solutions of the 21st century turned out to be extremely useful and even irreplaceable in the cultivation of cultural heritage created by generations of inhabitants of Podhale.

It is also worth emphasising that despite obstacles and constraints, the enthusiasm to take on further challenges and initiatives does not die down, and young people strive to develop and persevere in the culture in which they grow up. On the one hand, the formation and activity of regional youth ensembles is a tangible proof of the positive impact of earlier ethnic education in families, schools or cultural centres, and on the other hand, it is an example of ongoing regional education thanks to which both the young members of the ensembles and their listeners and supporters continue to develop. There is no shortage of such youth initiatives in Podhale, an excellent example of which is the activity of the youth band 9 Siył, made up of nine young and talented inhabitants of Podhale who were brought together by culture instilled in them from childhood, first by their grandparents and parents, and then by the school and folk bands. Thanks to their shared interests and passion, they create extremely valuable projects which help preserve regional traditions. They combine their passion for music with learning, recreating and preserving annual customs and rituals. The result of these activities is, among other things, the collection and recording of highland carols and pastorellas (*Przy betlejenskik horak*, double CD, 2016), eagerly sung at home during the Christmas season, but today already somewhat forgotten today. With their next project, entitled *Nowyj wiesny przysel cas*, the members of the ensemble preserve customs, songs and dances associated with carnival, Easter and the spring period. It is extremely important for the development of representatives of the younger generation to get closer to and create a special bond with the older generations who are a source of knowledge and inspiration for their children and grandchildren. In this way, young people not only gain the opportunity to perfect their artistic craftsmanship and to contribute to the continuity of multi-generational traditions. The activities undertaken in the following projects also contribute to the formation of cultural identity. As Anna Mlekodaj wrote in the foreword to the release of the album in the second project, *‘They will not renounce it, because they not only read in Orkan that “tradition is your dignity, your pride, your nobility,” but also saw with their own eyes and understood that it is one of the truths on which you can build a dignified human life at any time and in any conditions.*’³¹ The young artists are probably also encouraged to continue working by the awards they

³¹ Mlekodaj, A. (2017). Słowo wstępne do płyty CD 9 Siył „Nowyj wiesny przysel cas”.

receive at numerous prestigious competitions and festivals of traditional folk music.

It should be stressed that the key to the continuity and sustainability of ethnic culture is its intergenerational transmission, the strength of which depends on the involvement of the family home, the school and the extracurricular cultural and educational institutions as well as the regional ensembles. Contact with the culture of a particular region from an early age has in the vast majority of cases an impact on the development of a passion and love for cultivating native traditions. Searching for old songs and customs provides the younger generation with opportunities to find out about the old style of singing and playing instruments typical of the region. Growing into the traditions of the region of Podhale from an early age, the everyday presence of folklore in the home, school, extracurricular institutions and the local environment means that ethnic culture becomes a passion, and the dialect, singing, dancing and music shape the character and sensibility of new generations, giving them joy, entertainment and variety in their everyday lives. From the ranks of these young highlanders emerge new generations of instructors and teachers as well as parents who with full awareness bring up their own children in the culture of Podhale.

When analysing the ethnic education in the region of Podhale, it is clear that activities aimed at preserving and passing on the ethnic character and specific features of the region are carried out there on a very large scale. There are many institutions and many forms of fostering regional culture outside schools and family homes. The Regional Cultural Centres in the communes work together with local branches of the Podhale Highlanders' Union and other organisations and associations, provide a rich educational and cultural offer in practically every village. This offer allows local people to cultivate traditions, customs and rituals, dance and singing, and makes it possible for tourists visiting the region of Podhale in large numbers to discover the ethnic specificity of the region.

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