



**Digitization of Natural and Cultural Heritage
in Conditions of COVID-19 Pandemic
Interregional Webinar
State-of-Art
Harghita County, Romania**

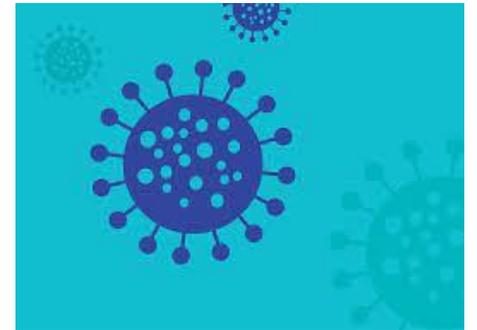
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State-of-Art in digitization of cultural institutions of Harghita County during COVID-19 Pandemic



1. Presentation of the survey about the effects of the epidemic period on the work of artists in Harghita County
2. The Cultural Center of Harghita County
3. The Center of Tradition Conservation and Cultural Promotion of Harghita County
4. The „Kájoni János” County Library
5. The Cultural and Art Center of Lăzarea
6. The „Hargita Népe” Publishing House



1. Presentation of the survey about the effects of the epidemic period on the work of artists in Harghita County

In Harghita County, we have conducted an **on-line survey**. The questionnaire was available on the main online communication channels of the institution for 10 days in November 2020, and received 100 usable responses. During the survey, we were interested in the opinions of all persons who earn their income, or part of it by operating in the cultural sector.



Conclusions of the questionnaire survey:

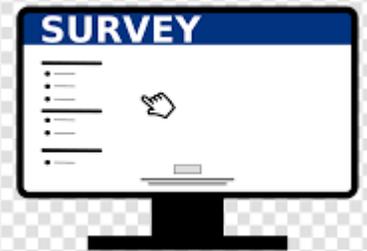
- Artists in Harghita County have also been put in a difficult position by restrictions imposed by the epidemic. Unfortunately, this period made it completely impossible to work for almost half of the respondents and made it very difficult for another 40%. Only 2% claim that he benefited from epidemic situation at work.
- The main problem is the disintegration of communities due to the epidemic situation, and also the lack of performances / cultural events.
- Nearly 40% of respondents could not indicate any online interface to transfer their activities to cyberspace. Those who have created online programs / presentations have used the Facebook social site the most, the Zoom app is slightly less popular. Other interfaces were rarely mentioned by respondents, such as the Google Meet app or the Youtube channel.

1. Presentation of the survey about the effects of the epidemic period on the work of artists in Harghita County

- 60% of respondents think that broadcasting on online interfaces their programs are not useful, a quarter say they have both advantages and disadvantages, and 15% think they are more useful.

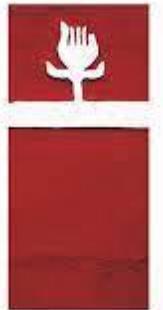
Suggestions from the participants in the questionnaire survey:

- Use of alternative solutions for cultural events:
 - Events organized in smaller groups or for persons who are vaccinated / have already suffered from the disease, and /or
 - Online held events
- Increasing and modifying the calls for proposals, taking into account the needs and possibilities of the epidemic situation:
 - The reporting period should be after the end of the epidemic situation,
 - It should be possible to apply for assets and goods that are in need in the epidemic situation, such as the development of digital technology, etc.



2. The Cultural Center of Harghita County

- Despite the pandemic situation, which generated a very sharp lock-down in all areas, especially in the cultural field, the institution **managed to meet its proposed program schedule**, displacing in the virtual space most programs that so far were organized in physical space.
- The institution developed an **online communication methodology**: how to use Facebook, how to create covers and events, how to work with the cross post method, how to use the Visitharghita online platform, etc. This methodology was sent by email to all cultural partners of the organization.
- Due to the regulations and measures taken by authorities related to the pandemic situation, the programs and events were **offline, online or hybrid**.
- In 2020, the Early Music Festival turned 40 years old and took place between July 11-19, 2020, both **online and offline in several locations**. The special edition of the show was broadcasted online in the Hungarian emission of the national television channel TVR1.



Harghita Megyei Kulturális Központ
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Cultural Center of Harghita County

2. The Cultural Center of Harghita County

- The Cultural Center of Harghita County have organized, with collaboration with the Spectrum Education Center an **online workshop for cultural animators from rural areas**, themed: Organizing cultural events in the virtual space.
- In order to communicate our cultural values in English, the institution organized a **communication course in English**, addressed to managers and organizers in the cultural field, using the ZoomMeeting platform.
- The **update of the Cultural Strategy of Harghita County for the period 2021 - 2030** took place after the organization of 18 online meetings using the zoom platform, with approximately 20 participants each. Online public consultations also were held regularly by the institution (eg. Google Form, SurveyMonkey).



3. The Center of Tradition Conservation and Cultural Promotion of Harghita County

Between March and December 2020 the institution had to move the activity to online environment, as the epidemiological restrictions did not allow to meet the audience in person.

Difficulties: The technical background as well as the lack of a specialist made their work even more difficult, but tried to get the available free online programs and to learn to use them in the shortest time.

Advantages: During this period, the institution have benefited greatly from the digital materials that have been created in recent years.

Good practices during the COVID-19 period:

1. Creating **the YouTube channel** of the institution, in which have published 66 videos so far, most of which were documentaries created between 2015 and 2020.
2. The documentaries were uploaded twice a week on the Youtube channel, and they were shared on social media and the website of the institution. The **shared videos** were very popular, some were watched by thousands of people.
3. The institution also moved the previously planned concerts, folk music and folk dance performances to the **online space**.

3. The Center of Tradition Conservation and Cultural Promotion of Harghita County

Good practices during the COVID-19 period:

4. A number of annually held programs have been organized **online**: eg. the XI. Szeklerland days, the Day of the Hungarian Language, the amateur theater meeting, etc.
5. Adapted the art exhibitions in such a way that they would also be available in the **open space**. Thus, on several occasions they had exhibitions in several settlements of Harghita County, as well as in neighboring counties.
6. The institution gave the audience the opportunity to view **virtual exhibitions** on the online interfaces.
7. The range of online programs was also enriched by music-photo compilations as well as quiz games.
8. The experience of meeting the audience directly cannot be replaced by the programs held in the online space, but it certainly provides an opportunity **to show our traditions and culture to the wide world**.



4. The Kájoni János County Library

- Their biggest **challenges** were caused by the different new decisions of the national authorities that appear very frequently, and by their compulsory application.
- The institution during the pandemic period **rethought their activity, their services**. They have introduced the mandatory quarantine of library documents in order to avoid transmitting the virus on objects.
- The library has introduced the **online pre-ordering** of books, so users only had to stay at the institution for a short time.
- **Online events** and online activities came to the fore, with gradually expanding their toolkit for online events.
- Over the past year and a half, the library stepped up the efforts to create digital contents, continuously expanding the library's two databases, they are present daily on social media with book recommendations, and at the same time some of their colleagues are working on the **digitizing lab** through job transformation.
- An online interface is in the process of creating, in order to make available all the digitized documents by the library.
- The institution has an agreement with the **Arcanum digital database** so that the full Arcanum database is available to anyone in our library.
- Several **online competitions, quizzes** have been announced and run by the library.
- They are in the process of acquiring a **Bibliobox** that will simplify the return of books.



5. The Cultural and Art Center of Lăzarea

The institution had to discover and use **new methods of activity** in order to continue their cultural mission and to **keep the connections with the audience**.

The following procedures were successful during the COVID-19 period:

- The content of the institution's **website** has been significantly expanded.
- The **digitization of their art collections have been accelerated**, enriching the digital archive and the virtual gallery.
- The **Facebook** page of the institution became the main communication channel: hundreds of posts (about 540) of 114 video content were shared.
- The **Youtube channel** of the institution was created, on which were uploaded 22 films, mainly with fine art content.
- The institution have organized **exhibitions in new locations** - such as near busy spaces, in parks, in the inner courtyards of churches, in the interiors of shopping malls - in the form of outdoor exhibitions.
- Various **on-line competitions** were organized.
- Concerts, performances and other cultural programs were performed in the form of **Facebook live** or in **hybrid solution** (partly on-line and partly in the traditional way), usually recorded by local TV channels.
- Have created and shared their own **digital content**, such as virtual exhibitions, digital audio-visual materials.



6. The "Hargita Népe" Publishing House

This **cultural public institution** publishes the **county level daily newspaper "Hargita Népe"** which represents the most prestigious traditional mean of communication of Harghita county with 305.000 inhabitants.

It runs also the "**Hargita Studio**", which deals with the edition of the weekly public interest programs for the **local televisions**.

The institution has also an **up-to-date webpage** (hargitanepe.ro), which became more and more emphasized through the social media.

The **COVID-19 pandemic brought the following changes in the activity of the Publishing House:**

1. It was not possible to increase the number of newspaper subscribers, only to slightly keep the their number, because the paper was considered to be a carrier of viruses.
2. Book presentations could not be organized.
3. The use of Zoom and Discord applications appeared in the activity of the Publishing House.
4. An **online store** was opened (aruhaz.hargitanepe.ro) to serve the clients.
5. **Digital subscriptions** to the publications became available.



Thank you for your kind attention!

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