

„The conservation and revitalization of the Benedek Manor House in the city of Gheorgheni”

– *Keeping and cultivating traditional and cultural values* –

In the past decade, the Benedek Manor House from Gheorgheni has become a centre of ethnographic activities, hosting several programs such as courses, permanent and periodic exhibitions organized by the Ethnographia Gyergoyiensis Foundation.

The Pomegranate Association has demerged from the foundation, being founded in 2003 with a clearly stated purpose – to collect and practise royal embroidery techniques. These two NGOs have been working in a strong and continuous collaboration to accentuate the importance of transmitting the cultural content inherited from the ancestors.

Their special attention for the transmission of traditions is materialized in courses organized for both children and adults on materials, textiles, traditional sewing techniques, not

only on local but on a regional level also.

In the present year, the prentices already become third year students. At the same time, the course awaits new learners, who are interested in picking up traditional sewing methods from those times when each and every housewife still created household-textiles with her own hands.

The location which serves as an optimal set for these courses is the manor house itself, almost two centuries old, in which there can be found traditional textiles, motives and symbols collected and analyzed by Irina Kis, leader of the foundation.

However, the building has got in a strongly decayed condition during the centuries. The B cat. monument has starkly been affected by the permanent humidity resulting from storm-waters. In this way, beams, bars, joists and other wooden elements, brick cambers, plinths, the loft and the roof as well have all been damaged; moreover, inside the house several improvised interventions have been put through in order to extend the life span of



the monument even without sufficient financial resources.

The project launched this year focuses on the conservation and revitalization of the manor house, naming the professional rehabilitation of the building as a primary goal.

During the implementation, however, the municipality of Gheorgheni, as beneficiary



and project promoter, in partnership with the Ethnographia Gyergyoiensis Foundation pays special attention to the involvement of the local community on the highest level possible, since the conservation of one of the significant elements of the local cultural and architectural heritage is under discussion.

Since the building has already been emptied and prepared for the start of actual recovery, the Meeting of Talented Women has had to take place in the courtyard. On this occasion, women from the Giurgeu-Basin, who have already learned several embroidery techniques at the Popular School of Arts Harghita and the ones who are members of the Pomegranate Association, dedicated especially to the cultivation of traditional sewing techniques have

met and shared their opinions and experiences, but also their handmade textiles. At the meeting there took part prentices from Joseni, Remetea and Gheorgheni.

Irina Kis, ethnographer, and hostess of the meetig presented the relationship of the used symbols on different textiles, sewed with different techniques. These have the same



message no matter the textile, realized either on tandem or on silk with golden and silver scofium.

In the courtyard there were exposed the spreads made recently by the talented women

of the association and the traditional overlays realized with more than fifty different sewing methods, learned by the first year students of the Popular School of Arts.

At the same time, the manor house itself and the recovery project supported by a grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway have been presented.

The event was open for every age group. Fortunately, many presented to take a titbit from the ethnocultural heritage of the region, starting from the youngest, ending up with the older participants.

Another manifest goal of the event was to wake up the interest of all those who have not been brave enough to join the existing courses, groups until now. It is hightime for them to sign up for the next course starting in September

The hostess of the event expressed her true hopes that among the participants who took part at the Meeting of Talented Women, would join the activities of the organizations next year.

Once the actual recovery started, the manor house will be open on several occasions so that the public can pay a visit. The monument is going to wait its adult visitors on the Open Days, and younger visitors on special, guided tours.



You too have the possibility to take part at the revival of the Benedek Manor House!

For details follow our news at www.conacbenedek.ro.

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