

## Marketing Campaigns for Armenian Museums During Last decades

The post-soviet difficulties and social - economic changes in our reality fostered museum's to face new difficulties and opportunities which in early 90's, made Armenian museums' system to preserve themselves as it was founded and operated in the framework of the Soviet cultural policy. Furthermore in some museums the ethos of public service and customer care which the new market economy now demanded had yet to be understood by front-line staff. In the absence of additional funding, museums will have to look to retraining staff for different duties or making some more radical changes in order to recruit staff with the new specialist public-orientated skills that are now required.

Even during those years museum specialists started to share some "futuristic" ideas that culture is not a permanent field for investments and sponsorship from the state only but a key resource to economic and social problems.

Either museums with their different opportunities, collections, professional staff and the field of activity or the transformation process are very different in regions and countries. The new information technologies and means of communication have changed our life substantially and active development of market relationship gives us an opportunity to have a broaden outlook, perception and vision to the constant changes in the world. Modern approaches of market relationship made the managerial staff to reconsider the traditional methods of museum management thus making museum more interesting place for public engagement. To realize above

mentioned issues and to be more relevant in this changing world trainings should be conducted for museum sector in order to think "outside of the box".

Large scale of activities took place to localize the international experience and to train local specialists and to bring the best of museum management and marketing into Armenian practice. Starting from 2003 Association of Museum Workers and Friends NGO and ICOM Armenia (since 2008) in cooperation with governmental support from Ministry of Culture, local and international organizations (All Armenian Fund, DVV International branch office in Armenia) and museums started to propose and implement exchange programs, workshops, master classes, conferences, surveys. As a result of those activities by the efforts of the Association of Museum Workers and Friends and ICOM National Committee of Armenia, a book has been published on museum management and marketing. That was the first publication on Armenian dedicated to museum work. One of the important achievements of our organizations is **the Methodological Journal "Museum"**. This publication became possible again thank to all above mentioned partners which cover all the important events, activities as well as researches concerning museum sector in Armenia.

In this regard ICOM Armenia and Association of Museum Workers and Friends are playing an important role of mediator supporting young professionals from different museums to participate in various short and long term international training programs in different countries (Japan, UK, USA, Germany). Thanks to these activities the situation in museums changed to better side and museums started to expand the programs with public organizing socio-cultural activities with new approaches of museum management and involve more and more audience. According to the survey made by my colleague and me the annual visits in museums starting from 5000 up to 1 million visitors. This became possible due to the new generation of museum directors in Armenia who will be "expected" to:

- **define and represent the museum's identity or story**
- **establish credibility based on relevant experience and scholarship**
- **communicate successfully with a wide range and level of stakeholders**
- **create an organizational culture that encourages staff creativity**
- **establish and maintain personal connections**
- **create a vision based on a realistic assessment of current and predicted requirements**
- **develop a business plan and manage financial affairs including revenue development**

According to our observations the authority of the museum director should be reconsidered as a component of spiritual marketing. We have a quite good example in Armenia where due to the efforts of the museum director social projects have been launched thus transforming the museum into a creative educational and innovative center. Due to fundraising and revenue development strategies the museum succeed to establish 3D animation room based on works of the poet. The interesting part of this innovation is that the museum visitor becoming a part of social and humanitarian activity. All the revenue from the tickets goes to the Children Fund Suffering from Cancer.

Direct response to one of the social problems was one the first and long term projects to develop learning strategies and innovative cultural services in targeted museums based on a Lifelong Learning launched in Armenia in late 2008's involved 11 regional museums from "disaster region" thus trying to help the region revive with its cultural institutions. The project became possible in cooperation with DVV International, ICOM Armenia, Association of Museum Workers and Friends funded by BMZ.

These are challenging requirements that will demand significant change in the nature of the leadership of museums in contemporary Armenia.

