European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards (2024)
544-Education, Training and Skills 3. Education, Training & Skills

Serfenta. The Crafts Revitalisation Model.

XRLbPpbx

Entry details

General information

Main country of application	Poland
Registration number	HA2024-PL-09

Brief description of the project

> The Crafts Revitalisation Model through combining the elements of tradition and modernity, draws from the resources of European intangible heritage, is an innovative educational proposal for the revitalization of the crafts in general. The organization's team developed it thanks to 15 years of their constant work based on the basketry. The main idea is: less products, more experience, understood as accessiblility for everyone in getting the experience of the craft work as the project is about maximum social inclusion. This project aims to make handicraft skills accessible and common. It is a comprehensive model for crafts education, skills and training.

Start date of the project	2008-10-01
Completion date of the project/initiative	30.09.2023
Website(s) of the project/nominee	https://serfenta.pl/
Facebook page of the project, if any	https://www.facebook.com/Serfenta
Instagram page of the project, if any	https://www.instagram.com/serfenta/
Any other relevant social media	https://www.youtube.com/@serfenta
Does the site or heritage in question have national/regional/local cultural heritage designation or protection status in its country?	No

Is the site or heritage in question included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, either as a single World Heritage Site or as part of one larger site?	No
If relevant, is the site/heritage accessible to the public?	Yes

If relevant, is the site/heritage accessible to people with disabilities?

> Whole project, as well as our workshop offer, is avaliable for all.
> Our workshop space is located on the ground floor in the center of the town and is accessible.

Contact details

Name of the entrant	Ms. Paulina Adamska
Entrant's position	the President of the Association
Organisation of the entrant	the Serfenta Association
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Telephone of the entrant (fixed line)	+48507933191
Telephone of the entrant (mobile number)	+48507933191
Website of the entrant	https://serfenta.pl/
Organisation of the owner	the Serfenta Association
Name of the project leader	Ms. Paulina Adamska
Project leader's position	the President of the Association; project coordiantor and co-author of the application
Organisation of the project leader	the Serfenta Association
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Other relevant participants

> Ms. Łucja Cieślar, the Serfenta Association, co-author of the application;
> Ms. Urszula Szwed, the Serfenta Association, co-author of the application.

Concise summary

Concise summary

> The main core of The Crafts Revitalisation Model is a revolutionary approach in the crafts, which is about concentration on the services with the idea of more experience. It is built on the values from the world of craftmanship, European intangible cultural heritage, its beauty and appreciation of manual work, but is also is an attractive and important proposal for a modern man. It was created over 15 years of the work of our team on the example of basketry craft. From 2018 to September 2023, entire cost of the project is 1 200 000 euros.
> We observe that the crafts in Europe needs to be refreshed in order to continue. Thanks to our own research and the longterm experience, we conclude that the basketry in our part of the world, in 2023, is indeed dying. The average age of basketmakers in Poland is 80 years. Only a few have successors. The traditional system of transferring the craft knowledge and skills is currently unattractive and inappropriate and is available only for a few. In the same time, the world of crafts is interesting for modern recipients who would like to benefit from it, but very often, they don't have access to it.
>
> The project consists of 3 parts: research, design thinking and craft experience.
>
> RESEARCH took place in years 2008-16, when we conducted ethnographic interviews with traditional basketmakers in Poland, Norway, Ukraine, Germany, Iceland and the Czech Republic. Our goal was to gather the knowledge and skills connected to techniques of basketry and natural materials which are more and more difficult to encounter.
> In 2016, we've started the process of DESIGN THINKING, which highlights understanding of the user's needs. We started to create services in cooperation with craftsmen, designers, people in every age and situation. We found new ways for this cultural heritage in a modern world.
>
> CRAFT EXPERIENCE part started in 2018, when we connected our knowledge and experience with the people's needs. The main idea derivatives: workshops, craft tours, presence in new media, online shop with products, books, tools, an access to natural, traditional woven materials.
>
> Our team: Paulina Adamska, an educator and cultural anthropologist, Łucja Cieślar, a social media, communication and e-commerce expert. Both lead the Serfenta's workshops, the craft experience, which is the essense of decribed project. Urszula Szwed, a business advisor, who has been working with the social economy sector for 10 years.

Objectives and work undertaken

Aims and objectives of the project/initiative

> The key objectives of our project are understood in terms of sustainability, quality of experience and social inclusion.
>
> Sustainable development means for us long-term thinking. We work with a a group of elders craftsman (around 80-ties). This situation was a motivation to discover that not the products are the core, but the knowledge and skills, which we share through the generations. This is a long-term solution – well designed services connected with recipients' needs.
>
> The quality of experience can be understood through design, positive emotions and cultural benefits. We focus on the experience of creation. The creative process is not for the selected, exceptionally talented or especially interested in ICH, but for everyone. The need of hand-making is primal. In the craft experience we create, we touch natural materials, we use tools,

finally we smell, feel – all this give us special, atavistic pleasure. It's a about connection with something lost in life, a missing but still important part. When the hands are working – the head is resting. It's a clue to build good mental health and well-being.

Our very important role in the inclusion process is that we try to undertake activities for representatives of completely different social groups: corporate employees, seniors, children, youth, students, people with disabilities and traditional audience like craftsmen. This very wide group gains practical skills thanks to our approach. Another aim is to make the society aware of the value of manual work. Number of direct participants who took part in our activities: more than 10000.

Any historical and technical research undertaken for the project/initiative

The Serfenta research team in the years 2009-2016 traveled thousands of kilometers for 7 years to acquire the widest possible knowledge and skills, acquired directly from traditional basketmakers. In 2008, was no current research on these crafts in Poland. Therefore, the research included a review of ethnographic literature, field interviews and hours of film documentation, which allowed for gaining and then teaching the crafts covering all available basketry materials and techniques in Poland.

Another part of the research was desigin thinking process, which allowed the team to combine the acquired craft knowledge with the people's needs and searching whether the crafts is attractive to modern recipients, and, if so, how to best make it available. Through the next years, we tested our services by offering various types of workshops and skills transfer. We have verified that the world needs the crafts, and the need to create and work manually is strong (own research, Viva Basket! project 2014). Then we checked what is interesting in the world of craftsmanship for modern recipients and how to bring it closer to them. This is where the concept of crafts for all was born, what was the base for developing our next activites.

Activities carried out and stages of implementation of the project/initiative

The educational approach, described in this project, is a well-thought-out and proven consequence of undertaken Crafts Revitalisation Model.

In all our activities we follow the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which focuses on the skills of traditional craftsmanship. The Serfenta Association is one of 3 Polish UNESCO accredited ngos.

The educational concept covers:

1. Long-term training of unique manual basketry skills, which are part of ICH – intangible cultural heritage - directly from the traditional basketmakers by the craft instructors, members of Serfenta team.
2. Designing the process of sharing traditional skills further in a modern and attractive way as accessible and common for everyone.
3. A model of knowledge and skills transfer in the form of a craft experience, which is a program of learning basic basketry techniques available for all without any special or previous experience. Until September 2023, Serfenta Team led 510 workshops for more than 3500 participants.
4. Concept of the School of Crafts (realised in 2023 in Cieszyn) – designed process of teaching 6 different crafts together with economic lessons about the market, calculations nad economy through the whole year as a solution for the lack of the vocational craft education in Poland.
5. Educational program of teaching mathematics in primary schools through the calculation of the handwork.
6. Special educational proposal – craft tour – bases on the contact with nature and gaining the knowledge about the natural materials and meetings with the craftspeople.
7. System of teaching the basketmakers, but also young artisans and designers, about the values of the heritage and helping them to find the way of sharing their knowledge and skills.
8. Placing emphasis on the transmission of the values of intangible heritage to other European countries: Germany, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Spain, France, UK, Italy, Ukraine, Scandinavia.

Challenges or problems encountered and solutions found to overcome them

The average age of master basket makers in most European countries is 80 years. The lack of continuators due to the low market value of crafts products creates a risk that the young generation will not be able to appreciate and draw from this precious European intangible cultural heritage. Our approach in Serfenta is a proposal of solution to prevent this problem on a large scale.

The next challenge: financial stability. For many years our organization were applying for the public grants. However, with the development and establishment the mission planned in the long term, the Serfenta needed certainty of financial stability. This meant entering the path to financial stabilization. Now, the Serfenta holds a stable position as one of the few Polish organisations which have undergone the economisation process and is on the way sustainable economic functioning.

Results and impact

Summary of the main results achieved and knowledge that has been gained. List the ways that the project/initiative contributes to the preservation and/or enhancement of the historical, cultural, environmental, educational and/or social values of the heritage in question. Mention the project's impact on conservation policy and practice, if any.

The main results achieved:

- more than 100 craftsmen invited to cooperate (PL + Europe)
- 10 traditional basketry techniques and 11 natural materials for which we have developed a teaching system
- a network built around our Model, consisting of cooperating institutions, partners in the field of culture and business, based on a strong European partnership
- 30 completed projects dedicated to the protection and promotion of basketry, half of them with an international scale
- 4 governmental projects 'Masters of Tradition' 2016-2019 dedicated to connection basketry masters with young students wchich covered systematic practising of the skills throughout the year in each master workshop
- 'Craft experience' special basic program of learning basic skills of basketry available for all without any special experience
- 510 workshops for more than 3500 participants
- educational program of teaching the math in primary schools through the calculation of the handwork
- Special educational proposal – 'Craft Tour – craft experience for all', an answer for modern people needs
- System of teaching the basketmakers and young artisans – how to create the prices and how to sell the products in a modern world

The benefits of the project include: access to the crafts in an attractive and contemporary way for every professional and age group, support for traditional artisans, development of a model of support the crafts and other ICH areas.

Every part is important, but especially our work with children, who will create the future of a intangible cultural heritage. The responsible and conscious society is precious and needed.

Aspects of the project that can be considered innovative within its area or field.

Serfenta's idea of conducting the research is innovative due to combing 2 goals together: getting the knowledge and skills directly from the craftsmens. That was the first impulse to make a CHANGE to get to the heritage closer and deeper. We transfer the knowledge in the nonordinary way of sharing. We prepared the complex system of crafts education in a simple way – which is connected with the people's needs. We make it simple, accessible, understandable and open. People often think that crafts is very hard to learn, closed, connected with the past and only for experts or talented people. We are changing this way of thinking, we make it open for trying and experimenting. Now we explode this project to non-traditional area, as a part of lifestyle presented in e.g Vogue. The final effect comes from the work of our interdisciplinary team which created complexity proposition for contemporary challenges.

Measures to ensure the sustainability/future viability of the project (in terms of future plans and funding).

The Serfenta creates connections between the world of heritage and crafts and sustainable business. Our way to economic stabilization of the association was long – the Serfenta has worked in the field of basketry from 15 years. At the beginning

our work we based on public grants. It has changed and until now, we've been economically independent for 21 months. Without embedding the entire project in an economic framework, its final shape would be impossible to function. Anchored in the foundations of economics and based on basic business analytics, the process is a self-financing, independent of public funds. This fact is a key indicator for us, we really focus of the needs of nowadays people. Adding an economic component to traditional area allowed us to implement Crafts Revitalisation Model into the reality and share this innovative and educational project as 'craft for all' idea of more experience.

Environmental sustainability of the project and contribution to climate action (in terms of results, techniques, materials employed, methodologies etc.), if relevant.

The crafts currently faces many environmental challenges. For the basketry (based on natural materials), one of the most important thing is the climate change (drought). That's why our answer is less products, more experiences and focusing on what the crafts can offer, not what it produces.

We are close to nature, therefore, we consider and choose solutions that will be ecologically responsible and friendly already from the design stage of solutions. Moving away from the products is also caused by market observation, where is the overproduction. Our proposal is based on our experience and on understanding the marketing circle – everyday battle focused on items. Going into the services is the foundation of our CRM. Our answer is the craft experience. This change can be suprising, especially for the craftsmen, but it is the solution for many challenges and problems – in a global scale and in everyone's life example.

Dissemination of the project's results and knowledge gained and any outreach or educational activities.

Through 15 years of our work, we completed a huge amount of educational activities with wide social impact. Our aim is maximum openness for all groups of recipients and a departure from the hermeticity that we have observed in the area of intangible cultural heritage including the crafts so far.
Our Crafts Revitalisation Model wishes to make handicraft skills accessible and common.
Serfenta's team travells a lot in Europe, Asia and Africa, to exchange and compare the ideas connected to work with ICH and its eductaion. During last years we visited f.e. Germany, Norway, the Czech Republic, Belgium, France, Morocco, Japan and South Korea, where we were organizing the events, panel disscusions, workshops, conferences dedicated to the international audience. We cooperate with many Partners, public and private institutions like: Unesco, Ministry of Culture in Poland, National Institute of Heritage, Norwegian Crafts Institute, Slovakian Centre for Folk Art Production ULUV etc.

Participation in the initiative (number of participants/audience/users per year and/or, in the case of websites and digital platforms, information regarding visitor numbers and online interaction).

We promote Serfenta educational activities during important events with wide audience like: Expo 2021 Dubai, UNESCO Symposium Morocco 2022, JIAPICH 2022 Award Finalists in South Korea, New European Bauhaus Finalist Ceremony 2022, European Exhibition All hands on Basketry MEK Berlin 2022-4, Polish Science Festival 2022, Lichtenfels Basketry Festival 2015-22, Local Economies &Future Markets Finland 2022.

3500 - the craft experience workshop's number of participants, over 12 000 of participants in conferences and discussions. Every year we are developing our work - 410 people in 2022 and 320 in 2023 (January - September) – the number is growing. Out team's core and the management of Serfenta are Paulina Adamska and Łucja Cieślar with the group of craft instructors and the masters of tradition (90% women). It means these numbers of activities are managing by two women.

SM community – followers: 5500 Facebook, 4370 Instagram, YouTube – 68 publications, 1300 subscribers, 150000 viewers, 400000 the scope.

Involvement of youth, community and/or non-traditional audiences.

Our huge amount of work is dedicated to the needs of modern people and the best impact we have by the scale of our promotion in the new media. We are guests of TV programs like TVP or TVNSTYLE – the biggest Polish lifestyle channels or international ARTE TV, where the audience is huge. We join many interviews in Radio (all main Polish Stations) and magazines

of lifestyle and fashion (Vogue 2023). It's the way to connect with youth and with non-traditional audience from all areas of life. We make the impact with our Facebook, Instagram, Youtube channels, cooperation with bloggers, influencers and lifestyle commenters, this is the way to spread the idea widely.

Important for the social inclusion is our educational craft experience proposition which we lead for years. The results – many participants and audiences are children, youth and young adults, which is special and create the connections between generations.

Contribution to intercultural dialogue and to the protection of cultural diversity.

Serfenta's activities, including this application, are in line with international intercultural dialogue and the protection of cultural diversity. Thinking about the main goal, achieving lasting peace in the world - our application is universal, addressed to everyone, aimed at the widest possible sharing and inclusion, regardless of race, nation or religion.

One of the latest examples from this year. Serfenta will start a long-term cooperation with the Art for Refugees in Transition from NYC. This organization helps rebuild individual and community identity for refugees worldwide. Together we will design and run a program to benefit Ukrainian refugees living in Poland, using basketry skills together with storytelling. This will help to strengthen the community's knowledge of their culture and identity and help improve the well-being of the refugees and their host community's mental health. Developing the program, we will include the materials coming from UNESCO's 'Teaching and Learning with Living Heritage'.

Transferability of the initiative to other contexts and its scalability potential.

We created a proposal that could be used in any other crafts and transmitted to any other part of the world. That's why we designed Crafts Revitalisation Model. It's possible to extract particular elements from it and easily apply it to other areas. Having the Model which can be divided into parts and described processes was our goal. CRM is easily replicable, scalable and repeatable. Depending on the situation and the challenge of someone who would like to use it, it's possible to use either our formula for the research part or use the design thinking practice we have tested. The third part of the Model includes the results of our approach, and they may vary depending on the situation. In our case, the result is a crafts experience, but in other parts of Europe and other ICH domains this answer may be different.

Any related work that still needs to be completed, if applicable.

We are just starting work on developing a business model for the continuation of the School of Crafts (taking place in our town, Cieszyn) in the future, in a commercial version. The project so far has turned out to be a huge success, showing how the activities and ideas related to ICH, including crafts, are needed by modern recipients. Some students even come from other countries to take classes at the School of Crafts. We will check, together with current students, how such learning could be even better prepared and organized.

We also plan to develop educational activities for children - f.e. those described in the application, such as teaching mathematics through the calculation of the handwork. Together with our recipients and the audience, we want to talk about the crafts not only in ICH context, but also in the context of a living, vibrant and future-oriented element of the economy.

European and international dimension

European significance of the project/initiative/nominee.

Our scope of operation is international, because Europe is getting older as well as the craftsmen are getting older too. We are in constant contact with master basketmakers from all over the continent. We know that the problem of loosing the skills is a topic in many European countries. Some places have already missed their time and irrevocably lost access to their intangible heritage. This is a very big loss for the identity of people and regions, cultural diversity and the pride of small homelands. Many look with envy and admiration at how many young people and children enthusiastically engage and

weave during our workshops. That's why we believe that our work is of great importance for the safeguarding of intangible heritage across Europe.

We feel that maintaining the continuity of crafts skills is extremely important for building a sense of identity, peace and belonging in every corner of Europe.

Costs of the project/initiative

Costs of the project (in euro), financial and management arrangements, funding partners and/or the type of funding.

The Serfenta is an association that runs a business and is managed by a democratically acting board of 3 people. All key decisions regarding strategy, mission and vision for the future, and financial management are made by the management board in cooperation with organization's business advisor.

From 2018 to September 2023, entire cost of the project is 1 200 000 euros. In years (2009-2020) the Serfenta relied on funding from national and local government sources, as well as on international support including EEA Grants. It was necessary when carrying out ethnographic research, preparing documentation, books and exhibitions.

When planning sustainable development, we decided to be more active on the market. We started to sell the products (baskets, bags, hats from master basket makers) and the services wich we offer as the crafts instructors: basketry workshops and crafts for all proposals and as the experts in the field of crafts: the consultations and advices on developing businesses based on crafts, and on cooperation with our Partner's countries, for example Norway, Iceland or Japan. Thanks to that, we resigned from public funding and have been operating economically independently for 21 months.

Funding provided by the European Union or the EEA/Norway Grants (including programme, year and amount of the Grant), if any.

2014-2015 The Serfenta Association was a coordiantor of the international project Viva Basket! Basket weaving as a living tradition in the context of The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritagefinanced from EEA/Norway Grants. Total amount of funding was 6000 000 pln / 140 000 euros. The programme was called 'Promoting cultural and artistic diversity within the European cultural heritage' under the EEA 2009 – 2014.

Within the years 2017-2020 we realised several study visits from the EEA Grants (programmes: 'Promoting cultural and artistic diversity within the European cultural heritage' and "Culture') with the particiapants from Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein. The cost of one study visit is 22 000 pln / 5 250,00 euros. All of the visits were dedicated to the basketry crafts including meetings the masters, exchanging the ideas, organizing the workshops, lectures, sharing the best practices.

Additional information

How would winning the European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award benefit you, your project and/or your organisation?

We have been operating in the craft for 15 years and every year we try to expand our field of activities and influence. Such an award will allow us to strengthen our position in the world of crafts, reach new destinantions, make the message of craft experience more visible. Financial support will allow us to develop even more stably and take further bold steps. Thanks to this award, we will be stronger.

In case this submission is the winner of the Grand Prix, what will the monetary award be used for?

We will organize Craft Experience Day&Night - a large, fully open festival of basketry and craft experience, where everyone will be able to touch, try and see how the contact with crafts and natural materials can be positive and relax. The festival will take place in our headquarters in Cieszyn.

In case this submission is the winner of the Grand Prix, who will be the recipient of the monetary award?

> The award will go to the Serfenta Association, an organization that has been responsible for implementing projects in the field of crafts for 15 years. The management board will be responsible for its management.

How did you find out about the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards?	Creative Europe website
Is this the first time that this entry has been submitted to the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards?	Yes
On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with this online submission form?	✓ 10

Do you have any comments on the application form or suggestions that you would like to share with us?

> The form works easy and is clear. Thank you!

By submitting your data, photographs and other material to the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards you agree to the processing and sharing of your data in accordance with Europa Nostra's Privacy Policy. Please check the box to indicate you agree with the Privacy Policy.	✓

Log in to european-heritage.awardsplatform.com to see complete entry attachments.



Paulina Adasmk... 245 KiB



School of Crafts ... 333 KiB



Serfenta (Łucja C... 184 KiB



Serfenta as a fin... 206 KiB



Serfenta as a par... 252 KiB



Serfenta awarde... 440 KiB



Serfenta craft ex... 2.7 MiB



Serfenta for you... 293 KiB



Serfenta in Osak... 153 KiB



Serfenta in TVP ... 375 KiB



Serfenta with th... 2.2 MiB



basic cattail wor... 151 KiB



Basketry researc... 237 KiB



Cattail, unique P... 3.0 MiB



Connections wit... 3.7 MiB



Craft experience ... 274 KiB



Craft experience ... 3.1 MiB



Craft experience,... 320 KiB



Craft is fun work... 57 KiB



Ethnographic re... 310 KiB



fot. Rafał Soliński... 819 KiB



Heritage transmi... 130 KiB



Math lesson for ... 1.9 MiB



Educational mee... 370 KiB



Sharing, eductai... 113 KiB



Serfenta and its ... 1.4 MiB



Ethnographic re... 1.0 MiB



Craft experience... 314 KiB



Fashion magazin... 246 KiB



Serfenta basic cr... 319 KiB

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Serfentas's Phot... 580 KiB

PDF

Recommendatio... 17.5 MiB

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Serfenta - Europ... 13.0 MiB

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Serfenta_Viva Ba... 10.0 MiB

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Social Face of Ba... 1.8 MiB



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Attachment name
More experience / Serfen...

https://www.youtube.co...

Attachment name
Join the world of Serfenta

https://www.youtube.co...

Attachment name
Transmission is future. S...

https://www.youtube.co...

Attachment name
Viva Basket! exhibition / ...

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Attachment name
Viva Basket! Conference ...

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