



UNIVERSITY
of **DERBY**

Faculty of Arts, Design & Technology

School of Humanities

Subject Group – Literary, Historical & Cultural Studies

Module: Work Based Learning in the Creative and Cultural Industries

Module Code: 5MR010

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CW1: Explore the Activities of Cultural Centre (KOK) in Terms of Its Role in the Community

EXPLORE THE ACTIVITIES OF CULTURAL CENTRE IN TERMS OF ITS ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY



Krotoszynski Osrodek Kultury (KOK) – Cultural Centre of Krotoszyn is an organisation providing the town and surrounding villages with cultural events of different kinds. The total number of recipients of culture is thought to be 40.000 of town and villages' residents; however residents of smaller towns belonging to the same district willingly use the KOK's facilities and are welcomed to do so. Cultural Centre and all its parts belong to the town. The cinema owned by the town may be surprising to the Western Society; however this structure of organisation and ownership originates in the communist system and is common in post-communist Poland. The Cultural Centre is divided into three main sections: the cinema called *Przedwiosnie*, local art gallery – *Refektarz*, and the Cultural Centre itself with its main building – the house of local recording studio, ballet room, art and photography studios, etc.

KOK is the main provider of entertainment in the town. It plays huge role in the life of local community. It provides the citizens of Krotoszyn with widely understood culture. The offering is diverse, starting with the low culture (Hollywood commercial cinema, popular music concerts) finishing with events which can be with no doubt considered as high culture for example classical music concerts, theatre performances. It can be suggested that the cultural life of the citizens of the town is shaped by the activities offered by Cultural Centre.

The main responsibilities of KOK are: promotion of culture, especially high culture; cultural and artistic education; promotion and support of local artists, their work and activities; animation

activities; support of existence of society actively participating in culture, and the delivery of entertainment. It is responsible for: the logistics of mass events, the technical aspect of those events, the knowledge not only of culture and art but also of regulations and the law, the professional management of the events, raising of funds, etc. The area of Culture Centre responsibilities is wide; therefore few of KOK's employees are expected to work in different areas and to be flexible. Accountant, webmaster, projector operator, cinema manager, acoustic – these are some of the jobs that need to be performed on the daily basis. Despite there is a person responsible for a particular area, every employee has to be able to perform every kind of work to guarantee an efficient work of Culture Centre.

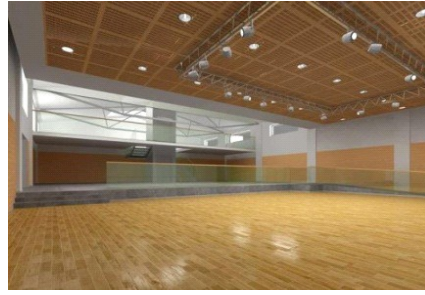


KOK participates in Culture House+ programme that is a programme of development and promotion of cultural institutions in relatively small societies. Participation in this project is a great opportunity as only fifty of thousands of cultural institutions were invited to take part. Institutions participating in this project are thought to be the most creative and ready for change; participation in Culture House+ also helps with the raising of funds which is very important in the case of KOK and its leading project – JAK.

Currently the leading project of the Cultural Centre is JAK – *The Activity Unit – Krotoszyn*.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XuhnLL1qBjs>)

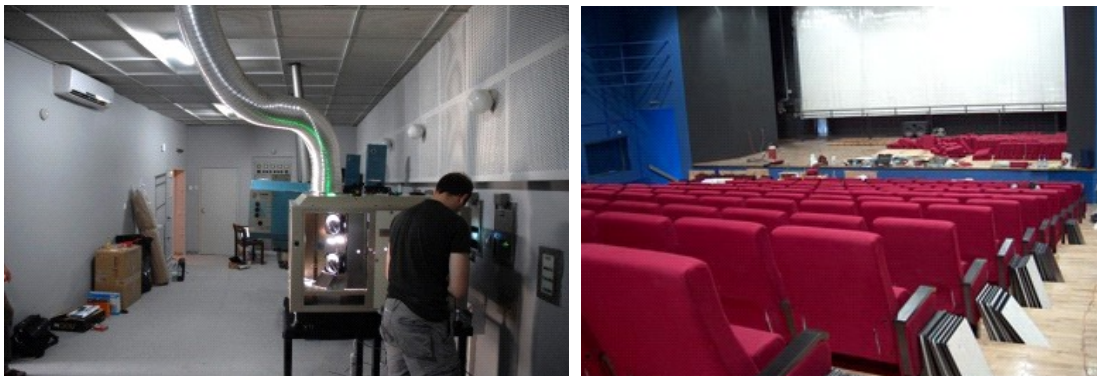
Project concentrates on the modernisation of rooms of a former military club into a multifunctional room where every cultural activity can take place: theatre, dance, rock concerts, symphony concerts but also trainings, balls, exhibitions, markets. JAK is thought to be a house of wide range of events created by employees of KOK but also co-created by town residents, as in this project town residents are expected to be as much creative co-creators as audience.



The future functioning of both: KOK and JAK are thought to be based on the integration of local government, residents, local business, schools and Culture Centre employees. The cultural Centre is trying to create in the district the mode of society actively participating in culture; town residents are encouraged to have an idea of cultural event they want to take part in and to share their thoughts with KOK's employees who are supposed to help with organisation or raising funds. An interesting example is an Amateur Film Festival *Dekodencje* which took place in the town. The idea of a festival originally came from one of residents, Szymon Mizera, who was also co-creator with his friends and KOK's employees. The Cultural Centre made available all the facilities where the festival took place and helped to raise funds. Due to the initiator's creativity and resourcefulness and the help provided by KOK, the Festival was supported by one of the top Polish directors, Jan Jakub Kolski, who was also interviewed by Szymon for the purpose of the *Dekodencje* festival. The interview was recorded and screened during the day of festival dedicated to Kolski's work.



The JAK project is very important as currently the concert hall is based in the cinema building, every concert or show takes place instead of film projection. This situation cannot be accepted on the long term basis by film distributors as well as the audience. Sharing a building can only be temporarily accepted and this situation needs to change as soon as possible. The success of JAK project is highly dependent on raising funds; the project is thought to be funded by The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and by local council.



The Cultural Centre of Krotoszyn is divided into three main sections: the cinema, gallery and the Cultural Centre itself. One of the most important achievements of the centre is the purchase of a digital projector, which makes it possible to screen the newest films as soon as they are released. Although the cinema owns only one screen, it offers the citizens of Krotoszyn not only Hollywood mass produced hits, but also makes it possible to get acquainted with the arts cinema. Every Thursday evening the film club, DKF, takes place where the viewer has the unique opportunity to watch and discuss experimental and art films. Similarly, another film club is dedicated to pensioner viewers. Here, mature viewers watch old, classical films which remind them of the times of their youth. The attractiveness of this offer increases the fact that tickets for these screenings are 50% less the tickets for regular screenings.



One of the Cultural Centre facilities is a local art gallery called *Refektarz*. It shares what was once a monastery building with the local museum. *Refektarz* popularises local artists as well as the region itself. The art gallery annually opens numerous exhibitions by local artists, but also those from different regions whose art work was created in Krotoszyn. In the summer period, KOK co-organises an outdoor art workshop, where invited artists have an opportunity to create their work in interesting locations, to use techniques previously unknown to them, etc. Every workshop finishes with a new exhibition in the art gallery. *Refektarz* is also a place where local Digital Photography Group *Blenda* shows the work of its members.



The Cultural Centre offers every artist, every musician, every band the opportunity to practice in the professional studio equipped with a sound system, microphones and a recording system. There is also a professional acoustician available – who is also an experienced musician. He advises and helps the young musicians when it comes to recording their very first singles. Moreover, local bands are promoted by the centre. The Cultural Centre makes a concert hall and the sound system available if they want to play a concert. Those bands are also offered the opportunity to perform during the local events, such as *The Days of Krotoszyn*. The artists coming from Krotoszyn who graduated from the most prestigious universities such as The Academy of Music in Katowice come back willingly to their home town with their recitals. For example, Jan Malecha – a graduate of the jazz department of The Academy of Music in Katowice performed in Krotoszyn with his band. Also Martyna Klups, currently studying in the Transverse Flute Department of The Academy of Music in Cracow, performed recently in Krotoszyn. Huge attractions to town residents provided by KOK are performances by top Polish artists, well known to everyone. Recently a jazz singer, Anna Maria Jopek, performed in the concert hall.



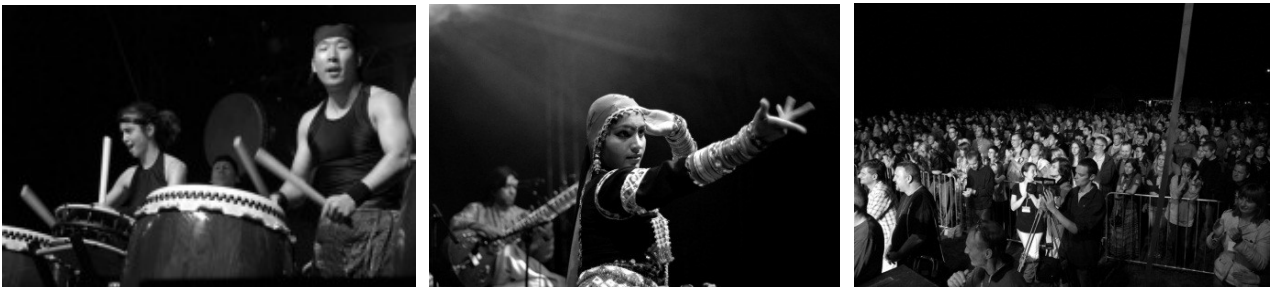
Moreover, the Cultural Centre encourages many interest groups. You can join The Digital Photography Group *Blenda* where you learn the secrets of photography. If you are interested in chemistry, you can join the 'club of a young chemist'. There is also the opportunity to take part in the workshops where the enthusiasts can learn to play African drums. If anyone is particularly interested in dance or music, they can join the group *Krotoszanie* – whose name comes from that of the town itself 'Krotoszyn' and, as it suggests, this group is interested in popularizing regional folk music. The group members use traditional, often forgotten instruments and most importantly wear traditional, regional clothes. Their activities are particularly important because they contribute to the popularization of traditional dance and music, which has often been forgotten (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hpq8pXB5zZU>).

If folk dance and music is not exactly what you like – you can join the ballroom dance group or hip-hop dance group. The opportunity is given to all women who wants to stay fit – a range of fitness, aerobic, zumba, yoga classes take place in the dance studio in the Cultural Centre. It is worth of highlighting that if any dance group has no place to practice – it is likely to find it in the Cultural Centre, free of charge.



An important role in promotion of the town is an event called *The Days of Krotoszyn*. This event is organized every year by the Cultural Centre and the town council and it lasts for three days. It is the occasion for the residents of Krotoszyn to integrate and have lots of fun. For local musical bands and dance groups it is the chance to perform and to promote them. It is the tradition that

next to the local groups Polish best known artists are invited to perform. This year's main attraction will be the finalist of Polish edition of famous worldwide television show - *X Factor*, Michal Szpak, plus well-known singers from the top positions of the Polish charts, the group Golec uOrkiestra. In the previous years, main attractions of The Days of Krotoszyn were Dzem, Maryla Rodowicz, and Doda with group Virgin – the most popular performers of Polish music.



It was a tradition in Krotoszyn that every year in the summer that the Cultural Centre organized a music festival. The festival called *Folk Festival* (festival was previously called *Folk-Fest*) made Krotoszyn a well-known town in the whole of Poland and attracted young people from all over the country to come to Krotoszyn. Unfortunately, for the last two years the festival has been cancelled due to the lack of funding. A decision to forward all the funds to the JAK project has been made, as the Activity Unit – Krotoszyn –JAK is thought to be long-term investment with perspective. It is has been considered to be more useful to district residents, rather than a festival appreciated more by visitors than residents, so JAK became the lead project.

‘Most communities produce a host of festivals and events that are targeted mainly at local audiences and staged primarily for their social, fun, and entertainment value. These events often produce a range of benefits, including engendering pride in the community, strengthening a feeling of belonging and creating a sense of place. They can also help to expose people to new ideas and experiences, encourage participation in sports and arts activities, and encourage tolerance and diversity’

The role of local events and also local culture introduced in *Events Management* is somehow visualisation of Cultural Centre of Krotoszyn activities; it perfectly describes what KOK does on daily basis.

Bibliography:

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Cultural Centre of Krotoszyn – Strategy of Development