

Museums and Communities Collaborations Abroad (MCCA)
Application Checklist/Template

Post:

Kazakhstan, Almaty Branch Office

Host Country Cultural Institution:

The Shymkent Museum of History of the people of Kazakhstan. This is a new museum, which opened in December 2005.

American Counterpart Cultural Institution Proposed

(optional): We will defer to ECA on choosing the counterpart cultural institution.

Theme of Project:

"Introduction of the Ancient History of the People of Kazakhstan to Children and Young Audiences in the South of the Country".

Estimated In-country Cost of Project:

USD 20,000

Proposed Start Date of Project:

August 2007 - August 2008

Community Outreach Strategy (included outreach to marginalized populations):

The majority of the population in Kazakhstan possesses very scarce knowledge of the ancient history of Kazakhstan and heritage of the peoples who lived on the territory of the country for many centuries. Ancient cultures of Kazakhstan were neglected during Soviet times. The museum is planning to arrange an expo-bus that will travel in the southern region of Kazakhstan, traditionally a Muslim concentrated area.

The Expo-bus will travel to remote rural areas of the south, reaching those young audiences who normally do not have regular access to information and materials. Special exhibitions on the people and culture of the Andronian époque and subsequent Asian Scythian cultures will be

presented to children in innovative ways. The exhibitions will help develop national identity and national pride among young people of Kazakhstan and emphasize the importance of ethnic history in the contemporary perspective. The exhibition contains anthropological and ethnographic interest as well since it presents the way people of those times were dressed and their day to day way of life. Religious traditions and beliefs, social and kinship structures of those societies are also shown in the displays.

Proposed Educational Programs and Project Description:

Educational programs are very appealing to targeted young audiences, since they offer a visual demonstration of the history of the peoples. Children will be allowed to touch the displays and create their own stories around the exhibition.

Funds would be used to prepare diorama and other exhibits that could travel the country and be displayed at other exhibition halls throughout Kazakhstan. Special educational materials will be prepared to attract young audiences to the expositions.

Special workshops will be organized for children and young audiences who wish to learn to make the displays themselves (i.e. human figures, ancient dwellings).

Statement of Commitment of Local Museums:

The museum in Shymkent is a very new institution that has chosen an innovative approach to presenting history of the peoples of Kazakhstan to children and young audiences. The museum is committed to introducing young, marginalized people to the history of their country, the one that was for a very long time neglected by Soviet history books. The museum presents an alternative way to take in historical heritage, which is not conserved in the glass of a regular museum but is open to observation, discussion, and an interactive way of learning. The museum director is very much interested in enlarging the collection to cover the entire history of Kazakhstan. The project is the first of this kind of scope, reflecting new approaches to the museum's educational outreach.

Statement of Capacity of Local Museums:

There are currently nine people working at the museum, including historians, artists, and administrative staff.

How this project will promote U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives/MPP goals:

A key goal of U.S. foreign policy in Kazakhstan is to encourage the development of a Kazakhstani national identity that embraces the multi-ethnic, multi-religious character of the country's population that existed for many centuries. The exhibition presenting ancient history of Kazakhstan is a potential source of national pride and resources with respect to reinforcing national identity among younger audiences of the country. The whole approach of the museum will inspire and encourage children and marginalized young people to identify themselves with their country.

Please attach an outline or highlights of the existing public programming for the last six months for the local museum.

Since its opening in December 2005, the museum has been able to demonstrate its collection to all the schools of the city of Shymkent. About a thousand visitors a day (schoolchildren) came to see and hear about the history of peoples of Kazakhstan during the summer school break of 2006.