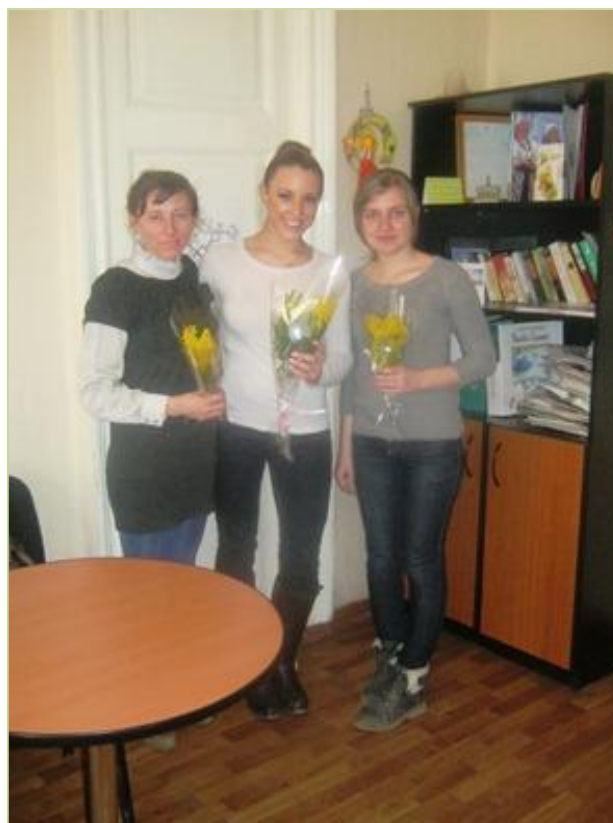


ProjectsAbroad

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Salutare Moldova



8 March, Day of Women

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Inside and Out

The 1st of March- the Mărțișor Holiday

**By Ana Zaiat, student at the State University of
Moldova and collaborator of Projects Abroad**

The Holiday of Mărțișor (Romanian pronunciation: [mərtsiʃor]) is celebrated on the 1st of March and signifies the arrival of spring. “Mărțișor” is a symbolic calendar represented by a two knitted red and white ropes. People say that this bicolour rope mascot arranges all the days, weeks and months of the year into two seasons, and namely into winter and summer. It is given on the 1st of March, on Dochia’s day, the day which is considered the ancient beginning of the agricultural year. Generalized today in villages and towns Mărțișor is made of twisted white and red ropes, to which a handicraft object is stuck; at the beginning was given to girls and women, who wear them, for a day or more, pinned to their blouses. Today Mărțișor has a more widely spread and we give one to another Mărțișori like a simbol of respect and love for the arrival of spring. Welcome spring and life, nature. Although, it is not known when the custom has appeared, but it is clearly stated that the first day of spring has been celebrated about 8000 years ago and the “Mărțișor” talisman has its origin in agricultural beliefs and practices of that era. The Romans celebrated spring arrival on March the 1st, the month was named after the god Mars, considered the chthonic god (earth-god) and the god who symbolized the rebirth of nature. Although, the holiday has his name, it has no martial connotation. People say that “mărțișor” symbolizes luck and happiness. Regarding to other sources, in the past these mascots were made of white and black threads to which different coins were stuck. The choice of the coin, either made of gold, silver or bronze, stands for the social status of the person. Dacians believed that these amulets brought fertility and beauty and prevented sunburns. These were worn as long as trees began to blossom; after they were hung up in the tree branches. According to some traditions, the thread of the “mărțișor”, a 365 or 366 days rope, was spinning by Baba Dochia while climbing up the mountain with her sheep. Like “Ursitoarelor” (fate) who spin the thread of life at the birth of a child, in spring Baba Dochia spins the thread of a new agricultural year.



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Nowadays, lucky coins practically disappeared, being replaced by various cartoons' characters, by plastic or glass animals, by hearts, smiling girls, by colourful pebbles or anything else which could attract customers or those who didn't have any ideas what to buy. In this period, for ambulant vendors, who have no idea about the legend of "Mărțișor", the 1st of March is a great deal. March the 1st has a high payload, which exceeds the traditional one. Although...passing over the commercial aspect of the holiday we can mention that today the custom stipulates that every woman should be given a "mărțișor". Usually on this day men tend to give to their colleagues, to their best friends of opposite sex as well as to their wives and daughters flowers and traditional mascots, "mărțișor". According to the traditions the "mărțișor" is worn pinned to collar as long as roses and cherry trees began to blossom. Then the red thread is hung up on a rose or a cherry tree branch. People say that if the tree bears fruits, the person will be lucky. If the person throws the mascot after a bird, s/he will be as free as a bird.

The 8th of March - Mother's Day

International Women's Day is celebrated in many countries around the world. It is the day when women's achievements are recognized in spite of their national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political differences. This day is an opportunity to look to the past, to remember the struggle for women's emancipation and their achievements; more important is that it is an occasion to look forward to the potential and opportunities of future women's generations. Firstly, the international women's day was celebrated in Germany, Austria, Denmark and other several European countries on May 19th 1911. This date was chosen by German women because on the same date in 1848 King of Prussia had to face an armed uprising and promised to make a series of reforms, including women's suffrage. In 1923, on February the 23rd this reformist spirit ruled in Russia as well. The replacement of the 23rd of February with the 8th of March was performed naturally by adopting the Julian calendar. Although, the international women's day (IWD) was recognized officially much later; in 1975 it was recognized by UN and adopted by many other governments which had no idea of its existence. Until December 1989 in Romania was celebrated Mother's Day, but after the revolution of 1989 it was replaced by Women's Day.



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Since that time, the 8th of March celebrates women. The 8th of March gives us the opportunity to show our gratitude, appreciation and the huge love to those who have given us life and who devote their entire life to make our one more beautiful. It is the day when men spoil women with gifts and flowers their wives, their girlfriends or even their best friends of the opposite sex. The 8th of March is the biggest one-day sales event for flowers. It is the moment when every tear of sadness is replaced by that of excitement and joy. Every woman should be happy with herself and to feel good about herself, even if it is just for a day, a queen among queens.



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Care project

Things to know about Care Projects

By Iana Baltă, Social Assistant.

We are very happy when volunteers chose to help and make a difference in our country. Usually before coming, volunteers ask what materials they should bring, clothes or do they need to prepare any activities and games. By my practice I can say that first thing a volunteer needs is the MOTIVATION to help children, to understand their difficult life and try to make them feel loved and teach them to survive in the big world. Also, very useful would be to bring some materials like puzzles, crayons and colouring books, dolls, intellectual games are loved by kids, also hand made things.



Children usually like to learn how to make things by themselves, origami and other activities like this would capture all their attention. At the orphanage, or even at the daily centre, volunteers have to know that s/h e is expected to take care of children, to look after them and their behavior, to teach them simple rules of polite, and to be sever when is needed. It would be to your benefit to make a plan for the week of the activities, games, helping with homework when is needed, or even teach some English lessons. Sports games are plausible but only with permission of supervising teacher and when the weather is good for that. You must understand that the kids you will have to work with are from unfavorable families, and many times they may steal or break things, even from you, as for them it's normal, nobody taught them what is good and what is bad. That is why take only necessary things with you, and if you have a bag it would be better to leave it in staff room, which is usually locked and the key is at one of the personal. Also, when volunteer brings any materials, it would be better not to give to children everything at once, because in this way kids will break them or just not give back again. So because of that all the materials that volunteers bring should be spread for all the period of working at the orphanage. Coming to spend all day with the children who are always full of energy, it would be smart to dress properly, some comfortable jeans or a long skirt would be good, a simple t-shirt with covered shoulders or a sweater for colder weather. I hope that the time spent here by volunteers who came to Moldova would become a great memory and find a place in their hearts.



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Miscellaneous page

Customs and traditions in Republic of Moldova

Moldavian folk costume- a representative item of our Cultural Heritage

By Eugenia Doros, supervisor of Projects Abroad Moldova.



Living in a small country situated in the South – East of the European continent, besides of the eventful and even “stormy” history, being for about 300 years under the Ottoman Suzerainty, and then for almost a half of a century under the Soviet domination, the Moldovan population had always loved their country. They have bravely fought for their freedom, and have never forgotten about their duty of keeping the national traditions that they have learned from their parents, and transmitted to their own children. This way ensuring the continuity of the Romanian nation between the 2 rivers: the Prut and Nistru (Dniester). Our culture is a very colourful one, full of interesting traditions, the people being friendly and hospitable, lots of attention is paid to the national and regional holidays, when Moldovans meet their guests with bread and salt, necessarily dressed with the best clothes, as we know that “the coat makes the man” (for the first impression at least). Scientifically speaking, “Clothing,” as André Leroi-Gourhan states, “has, before all, an ethnic value. Group membership is firstly determined due to the garment”. So insignificant at the first sight, the clothing is in fact a synthesis of lifestyle, history and worldview, consisting of a set of pieces and rules, and the art of combining them. To summarize the key features of Moldovan folk dress, we can say that the main principle of its creation consists whether in assembly of several rectangles, in a single cloth (shirts, underpants, old style coats), or its sewing from a single rectangle (skirts, belt, strap, kerchief, veil). Parts covering skin are white, woven mainly from vegetable fibres (hemp, linen, cotton). Above them are worn clothes made of wool tissue or animal skins. For the handmade clothes are usually used the traditional technologies, such as: spinning, twirling, natural dyeing with plants etc. Moldovan costume's decor is based on the harmony of natural colours (white, beige, gray, black, brown, yellow), of geometric and stylized vegetal ornaments. Finishing technique is represented by embroidery with one, two or three different colours: simple cross, embroidery “full” or “hub” on the counted wires.

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Actually, the use of wool as the main raw material for the confection of our traditional clothes is explained by the practice of sheep breeding in some villages as one of the major occupations along with agriculture. Being a part of the impressive Romanian culture, the traditional garment in Republic of Moldova has its specific features still, and we should mention that



nowadays it is even widely promoted, many young singers preferring the popular style, something that by definition supposes the wearing of national costumes. Besides that, many festivals are organized in different villages annually (e. g.: The Festival “Sînzienele”, Palanca , the village of Palanca, Calarași district) and different exhibitions in the Museums (especially the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History) all these having one single purpose: promotion of our cultural heritage and national traditions. The main pieces of the national male costume are: shirt and trousers, the girdle and hats. They wear different kinds of shoes, in accordance with the weather, season, occasion: flip flops, boots, and sandals. The dominant colour has always been white, in summer, while dark colours during winter, simply because they were woven from wool or made of animal skins. The tunic type shirt is always tied in the middle with a girdle of 18 to 20 cm width, and three meters in length surrounding the waistline three times. But there are different kinds of belts: chiuga, frânghia, and bârnețul, the main difference being their width, the last mentioned being narrower. Usually the girdles are of a red colour, and just sometimes green or white, woven from sheep wool, decorated in stripes or having geometric ornaments. Pants are narrow, tight around the waist with a string called “brăcinari” (waistband). Woven in two threads of hemp, flax or cotton yarns can be worn either plugged into the boots, or over footwear. The outer garments consist of: breastplate (embroidered with wool yarn and having leather applications), in summer, or jackets and waistcoats, made of sheep hides and skins, in winter. Certainly the male traditional garment is completed by the headwear: lamb hats in winter and straw hats in summer. The lamb hats are of different ways: grey and black, low (20- 25 cm) and high (30- 35 cm). Moldovan female costume has three basic components: the shirt, skirt (called “catrința”) and the belt.

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Canvas woven of thread with a rich decoration, Moldovan shirts in general are made with pastel colours, rarely contrasting. Traditionally, embroidery is located on the shirt sleeves, chest and very little or even missing on the back and bottom. The embroidery disposed at the top of sleeves called “altița”, contains a certain theme, separated by a yellow, or sometimes- white cuff called wrinkled, from which starts down different rows of geometric or vegetal ornaments, called rivers. Rivers usually are straight lines, on the sleeves, chest. Traditional embroidery is stitch on the line or the one called “in little cross”. It is also practiced the smooth embroidery. “Catrința”, the skirt, it’s a rectangular piece of fabric with a length of 1 to 1.7 m and width of 0.6-1m, which wraps the lower body. Aprons for each day are woven in a simple way, while the ornament for holidays is more complicated. Traditional skirts are woven in two to three colours (usually red and green). The girdles are essential parts for the female folk costumes too. There are different kinds of belts, but most common is that made of wool, worn over the shirt, 18- 20 cm in width, tissue in four threads, having the natural colour of wool. The can also wear an outer garment in the cold season called a “bondița”, a kind of waistcoat, sewn of two lamb hides, with the fur inside and leather buttons. Coloured beads can be attached on the embroidery. And certainly, we simply cannot forget about the headwear. The hair is braided in tin, with a flower put in it. The head is covered with a shawl or a red fez (according to the researchers the red fez is borrowed from Turkish tradition). However, typical for Moldavian tradition is the shawl, especially the towel-type: elongated rectangle-shaped, white cloth woven on the horizontal loom. And if all Moldovan women are beautiful and coquettish, of course that accessories are an essential part that truly complete the beauty of our traditional clothing design. Earrings, beads, necklaces, rings, bracelets, buckles, pins all together are accessories that adorned the Moldavian women from the earliest times. The beauty and uniqueness of Moldovan traditions can be talked about forever, but by mere words cannot be felt the real emotions like when you are in this environment and have the opportunity to see it for yourself. Certainly, the traditional folk garment represents just a part of our rich heritage, but we are sure it is an important and rather attractive one, which deserves to be seen, appreciated and promoted girls.

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Photos page

Volunteers' Happy Moments

