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Svitlana Babushko (Kyiv)

Head of Tourism Department, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor National University of Ukraine on Physical Education and Sports e-mail: <u>babushko64sr@gmail.com;</u> ORCID <u>https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8348-5936</u>

Ruslana Mankovska (Kyiv)

Leading Scientific Researcher Institute of History of Ukraine, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine e-mail: <u>ruslana_man@ukr.net</u>; ORCID: <u>https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4581-2128</u>

Myroslav Solovei (Kyiv)

Vice-rector of Educational Work, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor Kyiv National Linguistic University e-mail: <u>mir.solovei@gmail.com;</u> ORCID: <u>https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8380-3674</u>

Liudmyla Solovei (Kyiv)

Associate Professor of the English Language and Communication Department, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University e-mail: <u>l.solovei@kubg.edu.ua</u> ORCID: <u>https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5876-3532</u>

Humanitarian Mission of Local History Museums in the Society:

Ukraine's Experience

Abstract. Local history museums play an important role in modern society. The purpose of the article is to investigate how local history museums in Ukraine perform their mission of humanitarian development of local communities. The article emphasizes the impact of the museum on society's development. The authors investigated the sites of 160 local history museums in Ukraine and conducted interviews with museum staff. The interview questions included the peculiarities of forming local history museum exposition content, directions of their collaboration and cooperation with local community and effective means of communication with it and the public. As a result, it has been found that the traditional approach is not enough to make the content of the museum exposition a powerful educational and cultural tool where a human is a central figure. Its importance lies in creating favorable sociocultural environments that shape and develop the personality. New approaches are required based on considering the needs and interests of the visitors. Hence, these new ways of creating humanistic content that can develop a friendly socio-cultural environment were identified. Their main features were outlined and described in the examples. Also, possible disproportions in forming local history museum content in Ukraine were determined. Their elimination will significantly enhance the sociohumanitarian mission of local history museums in society. It was concluded that local history museums actively influence the formation of the socio-humanitarian space of the region, act as intellectual, educational, cultural and communication centers of the community, an effective mechanism of its socio-cultural transformations. Local history museums have the multifunctional potential: scientific-research, educational, cultural-aesthetic, economic. By applying it, the community is capable of socio-humanitarian transformations and productive development.

Keywords: local history museums, Ukraine, humanitarian mission, museum exposition, approaches.

Бабушко Світлана (м. Київ)

зав. кафедри туризму, доктор педагогічних наук, професор, Національний університет фізичного виховання і спорту України e-mail: <u>babushko64sr@gmail.com</u> ORCID: https://orcid.org//0000-0001-8348-5936

Маньковська Руслана (м. Київ)

провідний науковий співробітник Інститут історії НАН України e-mail: <u>ruslana_man@ukr.net</u> ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4581-2128

Соловей Мирослав (м. Київ) проректор з навчально-виховної роботи, кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент Київський національний лінгвістичний університет e-mail: <u>mir.solovei@gmail.com;</u> ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8380-3674

Соловей Людмила (м. Київ)

кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент, доцент кафедри англійської мови та комунікації Київський університет імені Бориса Грінченка, м. Київ e-mail: <u>l.solovei@kubg.edu.ua</u> ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5876-3532

ГУМАНІТАРНА МІСІЯ КРАЄЗНАВЧИХ МУЗЕЇВ У СУСПІЛЬСТВІ ДОСВІД УКРАЇНИ

Анотація. Краєзнавчі музеї відіграють надзвичайно важливу роль у сучасному суспільстві. Метою статті є дослідження того, як краєзнавчі музеї в Україні реалізують функцію гуманітарного розвитку місцевих громад. У статті наголошується на ролі музею у всебічному розвитку суспільства. Автори дослідили сайти 160 краєзнавчих музеїв України та провели бесіди з музейними працівниками щодо особливостей формування експозиційного наповнення краєзнавчих музеїв, напрямів їх співпраці з місцевою громадою та ефективних форм комунікації з нею. У результаті виявилося, що традиційного підходу недостатньо для того, щоб зробити зміст музейної експозиції потужним освітнім і культурним інструментом, де людина є центральною фігурою. Сучасна музейна експозиція потребує інноваційного підходу, з врахуванням потреб та

зацікавленостей відвідувачів. Таким чином, були визначені нові шляхи створення гуманістичного контенту, який може розвивати дружнє соціокультурне середовище. На прикладах викладено та описано їхні основні особливості. Також визначено можливі диспропорції у формуванні краєзнавчого музейного контенту в Україні. Їх ліквідація розглядається як шлях значного соціогуманітарної краєзнавчих суспільстві. посилення місії музеїв y Узагальнено, що краєзнавчі формування музеї активно впливають на соціогуманітарного інтелектуальнопростору регіону, виступають просвітницькими та культурно-комунікаційними центрами громади, дієвим механізмом її соціокультурних перетворень. Застосовуючи поліфункціональний краєзнавчого музейного науково-дослідницький, потенијал закладу: просвітницький, культурно-естетичний, економічний, громада спроможна до соціально-гуманітарних трансформацій та продуктивно розвиватися.

Ключові слова: краєзнавчі музеї, Україна, гуманітарна місія, музейна експозиція, інноваційні підходи.

Introduction. The development of museums in the world during the 20th and 21st centuries identified their important place and socio-cultural role in modern society. Recognition by the international community, including the UN and UNESCO, of the influence of museums on social processes, led to a change in the format of museum activities, expansion, and strengthening of their social and communicative functions. New trends caused by the social weight of the museum are characterized by a gradual departure in museum practice from classical forms and aimed at solving the main tasks of expanding the audience of museum fans and establishing a meaningful dialogue between the museum and the visitor.

During the years of Ukraine's independence, there has been a marked increase in public attention to museums, which are becoming more involved in community life. Museums are turning into multifunctional institutions. Thanks to current challenges and the devoted work of museum staff, museums are able to adapt and show their inherent capabilities in a new way. They are endowed with a rich potential to influence social processes and are able to respond effectively to the realities of today. There are more than 500 museums of state subordination in Ukraine, including more than 160 local history museums. They have almost 12 million museum objects of which only 3-5% are exhibited, unique works of material and spiritual culture of the Ukrainian people, and evidence of its socio-political, scientific, technical, and cultural development. They are an integral part of universal values, reflect the spiritual ideals of previous generations, describe different periods of history, prominent figures of state, science, and culture, actively influence the formation of public consciousness, and national dignity, and are closely involved in creating the socio-cultural environment. Currently, their role in the humanitarian development of society has increased significantly due to the ongoing war on Ukraine's territory.

Literature Review. Recently, the attention of scientists has been drawn to studies of such categories as "space", "social space", "environment", "living environment", "ecological environment", and "socio-cultural environment". Developing the ideas of Ukrainian and international philosophers, sociologists, and culturologists of the 20th–21st centuries, in particular Schutz and Lukman¹ (Шюц, Лукман, 2004), Pereveziy² (Перевезій, 2013), Litvinov³ (Літвінов, 2004), Kononov⁴ (Кононов, 2004), Lefebvre⁵ (1991), Loew⁶ (2008), scientific thought forms the vision of the environment as a set of conditions for the coexistence of a man and society. For instance, Sorokin⁷ (Сорокін, 1992) emphasized the holistic integrity of three aspects: society, culture, and personality. Acknowledging the importance of the natural factor

² Див.: *Перевезій О*. Поняття 'простору' у контексті аналізу феномена етнічного бізнесу // Міжнародний науковий форму: соціологія, психологія, педагогіка, менеджмент. 2013. Т. 13. – С. 92-101.

³ Див.: *Літвінов С.* До перспективи соціології простору // Методологія, теорія та практика соціологічного аналізу сучасного суспільства, 2004. Вип.10. – С. 97-104.

⁴ Див.: *Кононов I.* Соціологія і проблеми просторової організації суспільства // Соціологія: теорія, методи, маркетинг, 2004. Вип. 4. – С. 45-49.

⁵ Див.: *Lefebvre H.* The Production of Space. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

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⁷ Див.: *Сорокин П*. Человек, цивилизация, общество. Москва: Политиздат, 1992.

¹ Див.: Шюц А., Лукман Т. Структури життєсвіту. – Київ: Український Центр духовної культури., 2004. – 234 с.

in human existence, the researchers consider the living environment in which society meets human material needs through natural and anthropogenic objects, as well as the socio-cultural environment that unites the spiritual needs of mankind. Thus, cultural values acquired by people can be seen as a manifestation of their worldview, and at the same time as a means of influencing its formation. The socio-cultural environment is created by a person who, being in it, changes oneself too. Kosovets⁸ (KocoBeILE, 2009) considers the socio-cultural environment as a cultural phenomenon in which social and cultural processes are not only closely connected and interdependent but also affect people through their assimilation of spiritual values and social landmarks. Socio-cultural environment, which is constantly changing in space and time, performs the functions of forming and providing human needs and interests, creating conditions for the reproduction of socio-cultural potential.

Museums are aimed at creating socio-cultural environments that shape and develop the personality. A special place among the types of socio-cultural environments (educational, cultural, family, work, management) belongs to the cultural and educational. Moreover, museums "house the cultural soul of the nation" ⁹(Yasmin et al., 2017, p.3), especially those of local history. That is why they play an important role in creating conditions for intellectual, educational, artistic, and aesthetic education of the individual, and are an influential and relevant component of the socio-cultural environment.

The object collections of local history museums have their own specifics, they reveal the nature, and history of the region, and talk about events and people closely related to the past and present of the region. The originality of the museum's theme and its proximity to the local community create an additional attraction of the

⁸ Див.: *Косовець В. І.* Розвиток соціальної активності молоді в умовах соціокультурного середовища села // Дисертація на ... ступеня канд. наук. Київ: Нац. пед. ун-т ім. М. П. Драгоманова. 2009.

⁹ Див.: *Yasmin A., Hanan A., Zizo M.* Museum: historical importance // International Network Organization for Scientific Research Arts and Management, 2017. – Vol.3(1), P. 1-5.

institution, which has an effective mechanism for socio-cultural transformation in a particular village or town. In this way, they perform a humanitarian mission in society.

Taking it into consideration, **the purpose of the research** is to investigate how local history museums in Ukraine perform their mission of humanitarian development of local communities.

Research Methods. To achieve the purpose, the authors of the article made an overview of 160 local history museum sites in Ukraine and studied their ways of creating museum expositions. As a result, there have been selected and analyzed the best practices in performing humanitarian missions in society through the museum expositions. Within the framework of the research, the staff from the selected local history museums have been interviewed to identify and examine the uniqueness of the exposition-creating approach. On this basis (thorough investigation of expositions and their content together with interviews) the authors defined the ways how local history museums create a socio-cultural environment friendly for an individual's and community's development.

Research Results. Today, local history museums face a number of complex and pressing issues related to reconstruction. Among the most challenging ones, there is the thematic formation of the exhibition, reproduction of banned or little-studied pages of Ukrainian history, development of modern forms of dialogues with visitors, and finding ways to further develop and realize their wide potential. They carry out significant research aimed at studying the collections, developing concepts for the presentation of museum collections in the exhibition, conducting archaeological, and ethnographic research expeditions, publish scientific and popular science literature. Scientific readings and conferences are held on the basis of local history museums, the materials of which are published in museum collections. Local history centers are actively working to preserve historical and cultural monuments, and support public associations whose activities are aimed at studying the historical and cultural heritage, involving the general public in the study and protection of national heritage. Their multifaceted activities as centers of local history in the regions contribute to a comprehensive study of its history and culture, preservation and promotion of the

national heritage, uniting efforts of scientists and the public in shaping the spiritual foundations of modern society.

The museum's priority means of communication with visitors is the exposition, where the museum object, as an artifact of natural phenomena or a witness to historical events, not only speaks to the viewer, performing cognitive and educational purposes but through conceptually built exposition can evoke a certain emotional state and excite, resent, change the mind of the visitor¹⁰.

Pabst et al.¹¹ (2016, p. 8) argue that museums have transformed from an ordinary collection of objects into expositions that raise critical questions about the established history and address current social problems. In this way, they are becoming able to contribute to positive societal and individual development.

Undoubtedly, each local history museum in Ukraine chooses its own way to display its exhibitions, taking into account the originality of the region and the peculiarities of the collections. The expositional work of museum staff is preceded by rather laborious and systematic *research activities based on the study of the source base of the museum collection, scientific works by scientists, and specialists*. These works form the basis of the concept of museum collections presentation and the structure of the exhibition. This way of forming the scientific concept of the exposition is inherent in all museums and is considered traditional. Ukraine's local history museums have constantly been in search of new ways of creating their expositions. They are described below and illustrated by examples.

The traditional approach has been transformed by the Fastiv State Museum of Local History. The museum staff opened the exposition "Fastiv region: pages of history from ancient times to the early 20th century" in 1995. Before its opening museum employees had carried out significant research work, collected rarities in the history of the Fastiv region, and researched the history of prominent families of the region, its

¹⁰ Див.: *Велика Л. П.* Музейне експозиційне мистецтво. Харків: Харк. держ. акад. культури ХДАК., 2000.

¹¹ Див.: *Pabst K., Johansen E., Ipsen M.* Towards new relations between the museum and society // ICOM Norway, 2016, P. 7-17.

folk traditions, and crafts. All these activities are usually carried out. Transforming the traditional approach, the museum staff addressed the famous Ukrainian archaeologist Nadezhda Kravchenko and with her support, they launched a permanent archaeological expedition, which is currently led by Candidate of Historical Sciences Serhiy Lysenko. In addition to the archeological finds, the museum presents a unique natural collection and develops local history topics about the stay of the Directory of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR) in Fastiv, Holodomor of 1933, and others. The museum's funds have grown to almost 34.5 thousand museum items. Besides, the museum has been publishing the periodical scientific information bulletin "Press Museum since 1993. It highlights the numerous activities of the museum team: local history conferences, round tables, and lectures for schoolchildren and students, thematic seminars, discussion clubs, archeological "workshops". The museum has become an authoritative center of research and the cultural life of the region. Thus, *the traditional approach has been complemented with innovation – the support of a celebrity*.

Establishing museum communication is a kind of conversation between artifacts and visitors that requires special attention. In the Ivano-Frankivsk Local History Museum, such a dialogue has been established through the use of "museum propaedeutics". It means attracting visitors to a specific space of the museum exhibition, designed for an unusual journey through time and the effect of presence. In particular, the open way of showing ceramics, utensils, and iron tools in combination with photographs and dioramas gives the visitors the opportunity to imagine ancient times, and to feel a distant era. Visitors are always interested in ethnographic collections, which clearly show the uniqueness of the traditions and rites of the region and the originality of industrial goods and handicrafts by the local masters. The Kremenchuk Local History Museum has housed an ethnographic collection in the interior of a Ukrainian khata (house) with a fragment of a peasant's courtyard, which presents works by folk craftsmen in their everyday life. To sum up, the traditional way of forming the exposition was accompanied by *the pedagogical method of using visual aids* to better learn the local history.

Certainly, the main purpose of the local history museums is to show the visitors the history, culture of the region, and the activities of its prominent personalities. For instance, to achieve the purpose the Chernivtsi Local History Museum staff apply new approaches to presenting materials on modern history. For northern Bukovyna, the period between the world wars was the time when this Ukrainian land was a part of royal Romania. So an important task for museum employees has become a need in balanced coverage of the February Revolution of 1917, the Bukovyna People's Viche (chamber) of 1918, and the Khotyn Uprising of 1919. The historical component closely connects the activities of ethnographic, historical, and local history museums; thus, *the integration of scientific, ethnographic, and historical activities helps create a holistic exposition*.

D. Yavornytskyi Historical Museum in Dnipro proposed its own structure of the exhibition complex "City", where much attention is paid not only to the history of the city, its spiritual, political, and economic life but to a wide range of its historical figures, special, unique events that took place on this territory.

The vision of Katerynoslav region history in the second half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries was embodied in exhibition hall № 4 by an experienced museum worker, the head of the department Valentyna Lazebnyk. Taking into account the exposition possibilities of stock materials, and availability of museum equipment, the exposition creator touched upon the history of the city public administration, municipal households, certain social strata, and honorary citizens and placed thematic blocks in the following sequence: economy, ethnography, national revival, politics. The exposition presents the development of industry, and agriculture in the region; focuses on the impact of the industrial revolution and industrialization that unfolded in Europe and in the Ukrainian region; describes the urban population, and focuses on the development of Ukrainian lands in the 19th century. Despite the lack of unity of the Ukrainian territories, as they had been divided between the two empires, the absence of the Ukrainian state, and the prohibition of everything Ukrainian, this period is defined as the Ukrainian national revival. In the exposition, a unique collection of Ukrainian studies was placed in accordance with the periodization of the national revival: folklore and ethnography, literary, artistic and political periods. The visual range is substantially supplemented by audio and video equipment: documentary chronicles, recordings of speeches and memoirs about prominent personalities of the

region, and ethnographic descriptions of customs and rituals. Valentyna Lazebnyk's approach to the exposition of the theme through iconic figures of the Katerynoslav region is noteworthy. She revealed the theme through the life and activity of a businessman, philanthropist, and public figure Oleksandr Pol, an honorary citizen of Katerynoslav Georgy Aleksieiev, a historian, archeologist, ethnographer, folklorist, lexicographer, writer, researcher of the Ukrainian history Dmytro Yavornytskyi. In this case, the local history museum staff applied *the thematic rubrics of the local history that were revealed through the life of famous local people*.

Another original approach is representing the community's local history through the stories about people who were innocently affected by the totalitarian regime. In May 1990, the Zhytomyr Regional Museum of Local History reopened an ethnographic department, which was founded in 1920 by a prominent ethnographer, museologist V. Kravchenko, who was repressed during Stalin's rule. At that time, under his leadership, a whole network of groups was created. It united teachers, students, and local historians in the study of the spiritual and material history of the region, and prepared several series of lectures on local lore. The modern funds of the museum preserve the personal archive of V. Kravchenko, his letters, documents, photographs, and books, including the journal "Kraieznavstvo. Etnografiia"¹² with his publications about the Zhytomyr region (Краєзнавство, 1924-1925). His opinions on the development and methods of ethnographic research remain relevant today. Hence, contemporary museum specialists restore the scientific views and opinions of prominent personalities of local communities nowadays. In this way, they reveal the local history, honor the memory of prominent local people, and motivate the museum visitors to their further personal development.

In general, analyzing the exposition content, the authors noted *a tendency of prevailing the personal factor in the expositional concepts*. In the local history museums, there has been a shift from general political history to a person in history, his/her social activities, and cultural achievements. The peculiar process of "humanization" of the history of the country or region has brought to the forefront a

¹² Див.: Краєзнавство. Етнографія. 1924-1925, 14, 1-8.

personality with his/her own victories and defeats. Thanks to it the visitors learn not only the achievements but also become worried about their failures in the search for truth.

In view of this, getting acquainted with the exhibition halls of the Donetsk Regional History Museum in the early 2000s, a *certain disproportion* came to light. Despite the richness and diversity of the museum's collections, and the overload of some halls with exhibits, little-known pages of the region: the national democratic revolution of 1917-1921, political repression in the 1930s, and the Holodomor of 1933 were displayed insufficiently. The same could be said about the presentation of the outstanding singer, Hero of Ukraine Anatoliy Solovianenko, a native-born from the Donetsk region. The exposition was limited to one modest stand with few exhibits. At the same time, the local Shakhtar football team had a separate hall. It is clear that the sponsorship provided an opportunity to present not only the history of the famous club but also to display their T-shirts and sneakers among the personal belongings of the team members.

Such cases are not uncommon, and the reason here lies not only in the lack of exhibits or lack of exhibition space. Modern museum exhibitions lack new original approaches to reading museum collections. The local history museum staff do not deny this either. In the interviews with them about the perspective vision of their local history museum, there has been emphasized the necessity to overcome such disproportions by revealing the originality of the region, the history of its formation as a mining center, and exposing the multinational composition of the population. They agreed that the upto-date presentation of the region should present the Ukrainian culture of the locals as the leading one and its interconnection with other national cultures of the local community. However, aggressive and total zombies and propaganda of the neighboring state together with werewolf officials have surpassed the leading role of Ukrainian culture so far. Unfortunately, the same trends can be traced in the Luhansk region and its local history museums as well.

Conclusion. To sum up, it is necessary to admit that museum expositions and their content demonstrate the ongoing cultural process in Ukrainian territories from ancient times to the present. Their educational activities are diversified and are in

demand. However, in the war and postwar times, their humanitarian role in community life should be increased. To achieve it, it is desirable to widely involve students through various museum practices, seminars, students' preparation of thematic excursions, individual studies of museum collections, and artistic, and socio-cultural events in the educational process. The use of museum collections in schools and universities of various specialties will contribute to the humanization of the educational process and the implementation of the urgent problem of educating young people with a broad outlook and a rich spiritual world.

The museum will always remain a treasure trove of historical and cultural heritage. However, changes in public life, development of scientific knowledge, and improvement of means and methods of museum display pose new challenges for modern museum workers. They should be able to use the scientific, educational, aesthetic, moral, and economic potential of the museum, and comprehensively open its wide possibilities. Currently, the museum is gradually becoming the center of the socio-cultural life in the region and public communication, through which the community not only connects its past with the future but under the influence of which is able to change and develop itself productively. When considering a museum as an important branch of science and culture, it is necessary to take into account the specifics of local history museums, which are based on authentic landmarks and historical rarities. Modern approaches to museum activities are based on an in-depth analysis of the educational, cultural, aesthetic, and devoted work of museum staff. Museums play an important socio-humanitarian role in shaping the cultural environment of the region, increasing the interest of visitors to the past of their small homeland, and preserving the historical and cultural heritage of Ukraine.

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