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PROBLEMS OF INTEGRATION OF PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS INTO THE MUSEUM ENVIRONMENT: WORLD AND UKRAINIAN PRACTICE

Abstract. *This article considers the process of international cooperation of museums and people with special needs as well as adoption of the experience of cross-border cooperation Poland-Belarus-Ukraine by Ukrainian museums. It analyses implementation of projects relating to cooperation of museums with disabled people in Poland and Ukraine.*

The main features of the development of the exhibition project for blind and visually impaired visitors are highlighted.

Keywords: people with special needs, disabled persons, Ukrainian museums, Lviv museums, Polish museums, Belarus museums, communication, international cooperation.

Formulation of the problem. Any excursion is known to be based on the combination of two main elements, i.e. excursion site display and their presentation. Thus, excursion is a visual process of cognition of the environment by individuals, based on pre-selected sites in natural conditions or located in the premises of museums. During excursions individuals learn to watch and see, observe and learn in a correct way. And that is the task of the display. And if excursion is considered to be a visual way of obtaining information or certain knowledge, the question arises, whether all people, including blind people and people with special needs, have a chance to participate in excursions. In the current world there are about 650 million of people with physical and mental disabilities. If their family members are taken into account, the number of people related to disability may well reach 2 billion, which is almost one third of the world population [14]. Resorting to their own physical and spiritual reserves, overcoming psychological problems, people with limited psycho-physical possibilities are often incapable of living a full-fl edged life due to certain social and physical barriers as well as challenges they face in the everyday life [12] But currently a lot of activities are carried out in the world, which introduce innovations for visually impaired people in the museum environment using advanced museum technologies and which overcome stereotypes claiming that visual art is accessible only for those who can see. In Ukraine museums are also gradually getting involved in the practice of carrying out such activities for people with special needs in the museum environment. Therefore, this paper aims to analyse implementation of programs having to do with cross-border cooperation of museums with their disabled visitors in Poland and Ukraine. The research focuses on the modern development status of Ukrainian museums' cooperation with disabled people as compared to the neighbouring Polish experience and the prospects of work in the given direction.

The main material of the study. On December 3, 1982 the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution No. 37/52 'World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons'. That was the first international legal document dedicated to this complex and important range of problems. And 10 years later, on December 3, 1992, the UN General Assembly proclaimed that day as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities [1]. The goal of proclaiming this day was observance of human rights and more active involvement of persons with disabilities in the life of the society. The International Day of Persons with Disabilities aims to attract attention of the global community to problems of people with special needs, to protect their dignity, rights and wellbeing, as well as to ensure the advantages for the society resulting from involvement of persons with disabilities in the political, social, economic and cultural life.

In Ukraine celebration of this day was established in 1993 by the Presidential Decree. Now some three million Ukrainians are persons with disabilities [1] Creation of adequate conditions of life will enable people with special needs to more fully realize their personal potential as well as get integrated in the society. This is urged by the signing of international documents by Ukraine, under which own legal base is being developed and improved and respective social programs are being elaborated. The first and the main Law of Ukraine On Funda-

mentals of Social Protection of Disabled Persons was adopted in 1991, amended and improved in the following years, and it guarantees equal opportunities for disabled persons and all the other citizens for participation in the economic, political and social domains of the societal life, creation of the necessary conditions which enable this category of people to lead a full-fl edged life [6]. Over the last years a number of legislative and regulatory acts have been passed, ensuring social protection of citizens with disabilities by the state. In 2005 the Law On Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons in Ukraine was approved, as well as On Primary Measures Aimed to Create Favourable Conditions of Life and Activity for Persons with Physical Disabilities, On Approval of the Concept of Early Social Rehabilitation of Disabled Children and the Resolution of the CMU On Improvement of Provision of Some Rehabilitation Means to Visually Impaired Persons [1].

These laws set the basic principles of creating legal, social and economic, organizational conditions for the functioning of the system of supporting physical, mental and social welfare of persons with disabilities.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was signed on December 13, 2006 and took effect for Ukraine on March 6, 2010. The Convention proclaims the principle of full and effective participation and inclusion of people with special needs in society. Article 30 of the Convention proclaims, in particular, that States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services, and, as far as possible, enjoy access to monuments and sites of national cultural importance [11].

In September 2016 the President of Ukraine signed the law aimed to bring legislative norms of non-discriminatory designation of persons with disabilities in conformity with the UN standards. The document introduces changes into the official Ukrainian translation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and optional protocol thereto via replacing the term ‘invalid’ with ‘a person with disabilities’. Further enforcement of the law will ensure bringing the national legislation regulating the issues relating to persons with disabilities into conformity with the global standards of civil and non-discriminatory designation of such persons as ‘persons with disabilities’, and not ‘invalids’. This law will ensure the correspondence of the national version of the above documents to their original English texts. [21]

Besides, art therapy is now considered to be a modern method of social adaptation, which is of particular importance for persons with disabilities, who, normally, for the reasons that do not depend on them, are socially not adapted. People with special needs, staying within the four walls of the room, badly need communication, therefore art therapy does not only heal them, but integrates them in the society. Art therapy predominantly involves means of non-verbal communication, and that is of utmost importance for those who find it difficult to express their ideas in words. The development of the art therapy direction in Europe dates back to the 1960s-1980s of the past century [4] It was back then that the first professional associations in the field were established, teaching experience was being accumulated. In Ukraine art therapy is considered not as a separate activity direction, but as an additional major for psychiatrists and psychotherapists. Its methods are used by teachers, kindergarten teachers, psychologists and museum staff in their work.

For instance, in Poland there have long been in place special conditions for the participation of persons with disabilities in social life, and in practice the world museums introduce various projects aimed at involving this category of people into the cultural environment. Polish museums have long and actively been participating in rehabilitation and social adaptation of persons with disabilities. Below there are some examples of cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and Poland – projects implemented within the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Cross-Border Cooperation Program aimed at cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian museums for persons with special needs.

Most Polish museums have advanced technologies helping people with special needs to get involved in the cultural and social milieu of the area. For instance, in 2012 in Katowice the Silesian Museum opened up its first permanent excursion itinerary for the blind and visually impaired. Its most precious assets include a collection of Polish painting prior to and after 1945, which includes the works by Józef Chełmoński, Artur Grottger, Tadeusz Makowski, Jacek Malczewski, Jan Matejko, Józef Mehoffer, and Stanisław Wyspiański. This museum also has samples of primitivism, Art Brut, folk art, artistic and documentary photography, Polish placard, as well as a large ethnographic collection and a collection of Polish stage plastic arts. [19] In 2013 in the Polish museum the Herbst Palace in the city of Lodz the system ‘Podszepty’ was on display, and thanks to this it became pos-

sible for blind and visually impaired people to get acquainted with the items on display on their own. According to the museum staff, Lodz is the first city in Poland with such system in place. [18]

The regional museum in Stalowa Wola is working at different cross-border programs, for visitors with disabilities to enjoy equal rights with other visitors in the Polish-Ukrainian frontier territories. This museum does not have the slogan 'don't touch', and under the programs of international academies the museum staff members are learning how to make their museum more open to visitors with special needs. Both museum staff members and specially trained volunteers communicate with disabled persons. Since 2008 the Regional Museum in Stalowa Wola started cooperating with local psychologist-teacher consultancy, implementing the program 'Therapy via Art. A Trip to the World of Sounds, Colours, Tastes, and Aromas'. [20]

The practice of implementation of jointly developed inter-museum projects in the Polish-Ukrainian frontier areas proves that life of persons with physical disabilities can be made full-fledged. In spite of the difficulties like absence of any special exhibitions which are not yet a commonplace practice or such spatial factors as transport not adjusted to persons with disabilities, absence of the opportunity for equipping the museum premises with special means, let us say, ramps, Braille type, etc. In the opinion of the staff of Ukrainian museums as well as visitors, it is high time that permanent exhibitions for disabled visitors be created and special conditions for people with special needs be introduced in the already functioning expositions. The fact that in the exhibition hall both disabled and fully able persons feel on equal terms is a step towards the integration of the former into the society. [17]

That is why currently certain achievements can be traced in Ukraine as far as creation of conditions for persons with disabilities to visit cultural institutions are concerned, i.e., persons with locomotor system disorders and people with visual and hearing impairments.

For example, in the Museum of Folk Architecture and Daily Life in Lviv the category of people with locomotor system disorder, in wheelchairs, can freely move across the territory of the museum. Besides that, museum staff members hold mobile exhibitions for such category of people. [12]

One of the first projects not just in Lviv, but in Ukraine, was the project 'I touch and see', which helped make the museum more accessible for blind and visually impaired people. Students of the Lviv National Academy of Arts made copies of twelve artistic portraits from the exposition of the B. Voznytsky Lviv National Art Gallery. These were unconventional copies, since every image was reproduced in the form of sculpture. Thanks to that project each visitor of the gallery, in particular, blind and visually impaired excursion participants, can touch the sculpture and thus imagine what the person depicted in the picture-portrait looked like. But that is still not everything: besides portrait likeness, the artistic technique applied by the author of the picture is also reproduced, and through every touch you may come to know about the nature of the portrait as a piece of art. Sculptural portraits done by the students are exhibited side by side with their artistic originals, for every visitor with good sight to also be able to compare both 'versions' of the portrait.

The problems of accessing museum and cultural values of Ukraine by people with special needs are still far from being solved, therefore one of the first attempts of doing this is cooperation of Polish and Ukrainian museums in professional servicing of visitors with disabilities. Thanks to the project 'Museums without barriers' implemented within the Poland – Belarus – Ukraine Cross-Border Cooperation Program in 2007 – 2013, aimed at the development of new teaching and educational solutions in the field of access of persons with special physical needs to culture, the best was done to minimize the barriers on the way to accessing cultural assets by visually impaired persons, people with hearing impairments or movement disorders. In Poland there is an international program 'Museum without barriers' supported by the EU, it containing three blocks, in particular, on working with blind and visually impaired people, deaf people and people with hearing impairments as well as children with mental disorders. In fact, the staff of Lviv museums got acquainted with all the three directions in a very detailed way, adopting the best practice [6].

Lviv museums, which include the Museum of History of Religion, the National Museum in Lviv and the Lviv Museum of History, take part in the innovative program of international cooperation between museums, the goal of which is to expand access to art and national heritage for people with special physical needs. Lviv museums have signed the Agreement of Cooperation Intent within the project 'Museums without barriers' in the regional museum of Stalowa Wola, Poland. [24] This enabled to prepare the museum staff of Lviv for servicing persons with disabilities.

Over 2014 museum staff members of Lviv region had a chance to participate in the project 'Museums without barriers. The coalition of Polish and Ukrainian museums towards professional servicing of disabled visitors'. That was a cycle of workshops held in Poland in the premises of the Regional Museum in Stalowa Wola, in Lviv in the Museum of History of Religion and the final conference – in the Lviv Potocki Palace. During the workshop the participants had a chance to listen to the lectures delivered by professional experts from Poland, working with people with a certain type of disability: Olgierd Kosiba, Robert Więckowski, Anna Bombińska-Domzał, Marta Walewska, Marcin Szelong, Tomasz Wasilewski, Lucyna Mizera, Edyta Lisek-Lubaś, and others. Also, people with special needs were invited to participate in the workshops, this enabling the museum staff to apply the skills obtained in practice.

On the basis of the knowledge and skills obtained, the staff of the Solomiya Krushelnytska Museum conducted the analysis of current museum opportunities which appeared to be not that wide. We cannot work with people with locomotor system disorders due to absolutely objective reasons since the Museum is located on the second floor of the building constructed in 1884, belonging to the historical and cultural heritage and having no designed lift. Most exposition rooms are small, with narrow passages and thresholds, and the exhibits are located at some height, which does not enable wheel-chaired persons to have a look at them.

Also, certain things were traced by us while working with non-hearing people, as it is indicated by the scientific employee of the museum Halyna Ohorchak, since the museum of the singer Solomiya Krushelnytska is a musical museum, most of our events are based on stories about music and musical figures. And though sign interpretation is not a problem, there still arises an ethical question – how do we talk about music to people who have had hearing impairments since their birth? Thus, cooperation with visually impaired and blind people seems to be most likely and fruitful for us.

The museum's cooperation with the blind started with a visit paid to the Lviv Centre of UTOS (Ukrainian Society of the Blind) and acquaintance with its head – Mrs. Lyuba Kukuruzza. A joint activity was planned, where we tried to use the knowledge obtained during the workshops within the 'Museum without barriers' project to the full. The museum staff developed classes consisting of three small parts differing in content. The first one presupposed a story about the singer Solomiya Krushelnytska, listening to a recording with her voice as well as tactile familiarization with a blouse and female hats of the 1920s-1930s of the 20th century. These were not museum items, but the things belonging to the employees of the Museum 'From the Grandmother's Chest', and that allowed us to touch them with no caution, without applying special gloves, which generally change the senses. The second part of the class consisted in listening to the musical fragments and reproducing the impression from the things heard in plastic arts. The third and the most successful part was acquaintance with musical instruments. Our guests were fascinated about and interested in touching those instruments and producing some sounds. These were reed pipe, gusli, and bell lyre.

All in all, the prospects of the Solomiya Krushelnytska Museum for working with visually impaired visitors are rather wide. Music and rhythmic constitute an important part of both aesthetic and physical upbringing of visually impaired children. Specialized schools have such disciplines as logo-rhythmic, fairy-tale-therapy, theatre. That is a favourable soil for our musical museum. For our adult guests we may offer lectures about Ukrainian musicians and the possibility to listen to audio records, thematic concerts and meetings with our contemporaries – famous figures in the musical culture. [30]

The 'Green Cross' Society jointly with the Integration Society 'Magnum Bonum' (Poland) have completed the project 'Crossing the borders without any barriers – integration of disabled persons via tourism and culture'. The project has become an important step towards integration of disabled persons, since it has enabled to create conditions for them not just in the museum, but in the tourist and cultural domains of Lviv region, and has contributed to similar processes in the neighbouring Poland. The head of the 'Green Cross' society Oleksandr Voloshynsky has told that within the project implementation, in particular, there have been held four training courses in the topics of accessibility and removal of architectural barriers for disabled persons in the museums of Lviv region, embracing one hundred people, with 8 study tours to Poland after the training sessions. The participants visited the rehabilitation centre in Krasnystaw and other museums in Polish cities to gain experience of working with visitors having special needs. An interactive map with a guide for tourist sites in Lviv region that are accessible for disabled persons has been developed. The coordinator of the program 'Ukraine without barriers' Yaroslav Hrybalsky stressed that implementation of the project 'Crossing the borders without any barriers'

has enabled its participants, persons with disabilities, to feel on equal terms with those having no disabilities. The head of Lviv Regional Division of the Ukrainian Society of the Blind Lyubov Kukuruzha has pointed out that thanks to the project ‘Crossing the borders without any barriers’ more and more museums of Lviv region got interested in the opportunity of cooperating with the society in the issues of refurbishment of their premises and expositions with due account of the requirements set for visually impaired people to visit them [2].

Thus, there are already some achievements in museums. For example, in Lviv Museum of History of Religion excursions for blind, deaf children and children with mental disorders are conducted. Several adapted excursions for children with special needs, who study in specialized Lviv boarding schools, have already been conducted here. This project aims to integrate disabled persons into the social and art space of Lviv. For example, interactive meeting with children having hearing impairments was conducted in two phases — a theoretical and a practical one. At first they had a familiarization excursion of the museum. The guide’s story was accompanied by sign interpretation done by their teacher. And then deaf children and children with hearing impairments were taught to paint icons on glass [4].

It was in this museum that the master class ‘Touch the exhibition’ for students of the boarding school for visually impaired children was conducted. In the exposition rooms the guides described the exhibits in a detailed way, and blind children had a chance to hold in their hands items made of clay, back from the period of Trypillia culture, embroidered towels and many other things from the museum’s stock collection. The museum has exhibits from different storage groups — ceramics, fabric, icons, sculpture, painting, old print [24]. Thus, a peculiarity of the excursion for blind children was that they were allowed to touch some items of the exposition. The museum staff selected the items in the way for students to get the best tactile senses where it had been possible before — to sense the weight of a stone axe, the size of rock used by the primeval people to grind cereals into flour, to touch the Pentateuch, wooden icons, priest’s clothes, chalices. The visit to the museum for disabled children limited in free movement became a real event in itself, and the fact that they could touch the things all the others are not allowed to touch, but for the museum staff, was of great satisfaction for them [4].

On November 1, 2015 an interactive social and art project ‘Touching, I see: great Ukrainians’ was presented in Lviv in the Palace of Arts. Thanks to this unique project children and people with special needs may get involved in art. Among the main goals of the project – to disclaim that visual art is accessible only for people who can see. The exhibition enables blind persons and visually impaired persons to get acquainted with 12 sculptural portraits of outstanding Ukrainians, which include portraits of Ivan Franko, Lesya Ukrainka, Serhiy Nihoyan, Andriy Sheptytsky, Georgiy Gongadze, and others. Each portrait sculpture is accompanied by a table with the necessary information in Braille type about each well-known person and with an audio record. Also, the exhibition provides literary pieces in relief and dot font printed in 2016 [8].

Ensuring of a full-fledged access of persons with hearing impairments to museums requires creation of adequate conditions. Adaptation of the museum space can take place in several ways: through improvement of the permanent exposition, creation of separate permanent or interim exhibitions taking into account special needs, as well as organization of mobile excursions to boarding schools and companies. The best is done for the museum of be as interesting and dynamic an institution as possible. Within this process one should pay attention to the problems of ensuring access to the exposition for people with special needs. Recently they have become more interested in the museum collections, while most Ukrainian museums have not got adequate conditions to host such visitors. Of particular discomfort it all is for visually impaired people due to exposition of items behind display windows, which makes it impossible to get acquainted with them [16]. Thanks to creation of special conditions for this category of excursion goers, the museum may well become not just a cultural and educational, but a rehabilitation institution as well, this expanding the area of its functioning greatly.

It would be most expedient to start museum work with visually impaired visitors with organizing a temporary exhibition, since there it would be easy to identify the drawbacks and improve. During the direct implementation of the exhibition project the organizers are faced with a number of technical problems, i.e. production of replicas and models, development of summaries in Braille type, exhibition space arrangement. It is important that during the exhibition originals that cannot be damaged in any way while they are touched be used. Such items are articles made of stone, for example, stone instruments of labour, mealing stones, grindstones and small stone plastic works. Metal household items, blunt weapons, ceramic fragments, etc. are also not damaged when touched. For fragile and sharp items it is necessary to produce copies or replicas. One should address local craftsmen to do this. Copies of outfit and clothes can be ordered in reconstructing workshops.

In order to ensure the illustrative, part relief images, maps, pictures, portraits are used. Such images should be ordered in art workshops, where they are produced of gypsum. Now the reliefs are created via such advanced technologies as 3D printing and 3D cutting. Such images are best to be perceived by touching and are more accurate, since they are based on a computer model. If we speak about such services in Ukraine, they currently exist, but, unfortunately, are provided in small amounts and are rather expensive. Therefore, replicas made of gypsum are more popular in Ukrainian museums [16]

To explain spatial links and life organization of ancient people, models of dwellings, premises are produced, as well as relief plans of streets are made. Different advertising organizations currently offer spatial structures and produce stands with respective marking, i.e. in bright colours for visually impaired persons. Local centre of the Ukrainian Society of the Blind helps produce inscriptions in Braille type. They are printed on special cardboard with a Braille printer, but due to brown colour of cardboard such method can be used only for organizing some special exhibitions. For permanent exhibitions inscriptions made on a thick transparent plastic are produced. Both methods are not very costly, therefore they are widely used in Ukraine. A more complicated and more expensive method is to produce metal tables. Arrangement of the museum space in expositions for visually impaired persons requires taking many details into account. For instance, walls and the floor should be marked with contrast bright colours for visually impaired visitors to get oriented in space [16].

Since the exhibits are available only for touching them, interactive classes should be conducted, during which all the items can be tried in action. For example, an exhibition-game can be organized, and during it the excursion participants may try on the copies of suits of the medieval epoch or any other epoch. Practice shows that such exhibitions are of interest not just for visually impaired persons, but for children as well. Also, one may arrange a special exhibition for visually impaired visitors. For tourists with all types of visual impairments to be able to get acquainted with famous pictures of the best artists via tactile senses, the exhibition should consist of copies of pictures created using a special technology, where each reproduction would be done with due account of all the peculiarities of the relief texture of the canvas and paint strokes, to clearly reproduce the texture of the original. Pictures selected for such exhibition should belong to different genres and art styles: from religious painting and mythology up to portraiture and landscapes. It would be ideal if such exhibits in the exhibition for visually impaired persons had information stands and tables made in Braille type, as well as if a special audio guide with the text in different languages was developed specially for this excursion for visually impaired persons [26].

The experience of cross-border cooperation Poland-Ukraine is brought into life by the Lviv Museum of History, the staff members of which establish contacts with public organizations taking care of people with special needs. As Ihor Zinchuk from Lviv organization 'Open Hearts' states, visitors with locomotor system disorders, thanks to assistance provided by volunteers and the director of the Lviv Museum of History Roman Chmelyk, had a chance to feel like 'armour-bearers', because their meeting took place in the 'Arsenal Museum' department. Here we were greeted, we had an interesting excursion, a lot of little known facts about the history of weapons from different parts of the world were told. Besides that, the organizer-excursion guide Taras Prot-sak conducted an interesting competition-quest in which the participants, by pictures, were trying to guess what country this or that type of weapons was from, and the most quick-witted won. And we were also told about the details of the process of restoring a picture with the depiction of the Battle of Grunwald and shown a video on the tedious work of the restorers who had worked with enthusiasm in order to save the art canvas from the destructive influence of merciless time [9].

Official opening of the Resource Centre of Information Technologies for Persons with Disabilities in Lviv in 2012 provided guidance in further introduction of information technologies for visually impaired people. The directions of scientific and practical activity of the centre are determined by its head Oksana Potymko. At the same time, thanks to the workshops for museum staff of Lviv and Ukraine, the staff members of the museum domain gain some skills of working with visually impaired people [28] In Lviv there has been a presentation of copies of museum exhibits that can be touched. Such novelty has been introduced by the 'Arsenal Museum' department of the Lviv Museum of History, for the museum to be accessible for visually impaired people as well. As it is well-known, old artifacts cannot be touched, but for visually impaired people an oral excursion will not be a full-fl edged one. Therefore, the Museum of History, namely its Arsenal department is among the first museums of Lviv that provide replicas that are safe to touch. A sword, shield, flanged mace and other replicas

have blunt blades and ends, and are therefore safe. For better interaction the Lviv Museum of History intends to open a separate room for educational programs, in particular, the ones for visitors with special needs [26].

Conclusions and prospects for further research in this direction. As we can see, one of the promising directions of cross-border cooperation for museum activity in Ukraine is gradual implementation of projects for people with special needs. In spite of the barriers and difficulties in the organization of museum exhibitions for visitors with disabilities, their organization and holding must become priority directions in the development of the museum business in Ukraine. Such projects are in demand now, which fact is proven by the experience of taking such measures in the world, in particular, in the neighbouring Poland. The social role of such work lies in the need for overcoming the barriers people with disabilities are faced with, as well as the barriers for the rest of the society. Special attention should be paid to adjustment of the museum space to visually impaired people. Besides development of special exhibitions for them, of great importance is introduction of tactile elements in permanent expositions, as well as writing of summaries in Braille font and educational activity. Ukrainian museums are now on their way towards integration of disabled persons into the cultural milieu by adopting the best experience of cross-border cooperation in the museum domain. Polish-Ukrainian cooperation, cross-border experience eliminates obstacles on the way to development of rehabilitation museum projects, implementation of which is of great importance for the integration of persons with disabilities into the life of the society.

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