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THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CREATIVITY OF THE LOCAL SOCIETY (BUDZHAK REGION)

-Abstract-

The article investigates the processes of modeling social and cultural policy in a separate region of Ukraine (Budzhak region), in which the university plays a decisive role. The humanitarization of society is considered to be one of the qualitative characteristics of the reality created by the individual, where culture is that systemic peculiarity which reflects the natural, spiritual, activity-related, objective and social nature of the individual. The article presents a range of innovative projects of recent years, which allowed to model the cultural policy of the region. It is proved that the self-reflection of our experience in involving future specialists in social and project activities, the development of the volunteer movement among students and teachers, significantly contribute to the formation of the culture of social responsibility as the most important personal and professional quality. The activity of the university in this direction implements the mechanism of forming a positive image of the borderline region of the south of Odessa region on the basis of studying its spiritual and material values. The effective image of Budzhak is a strategic resource for creating its investment attractiveness and avoiding the traditional status of a “transit region”.

Keywords: social and cultural creativity, local society, region, university, project.

Under modern conditions, the full spectrum of problematic issues related to the humanitarization of our society – the most important prerequisite for the development of the civil society as a form of expression of the collective manifestation of the cultural development of civilizational processes – is being actualized.

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The analysis of modern philosophical and cultural literature (V. Andrushchenko, L. Gubersky, V. Kremen, M. Mikhalchenko, L. Tsyganenko, T. Shevchuk) testifies to the extension of the scientific understanding of the phenomenon of “culture”, in the context of those results that contribute to the development of his/her creative potential, to the interpretation of culture as a way of self-realization and self-development of the individual. In this sense, the understanding of the “personal and creative nature of culture” is quite obvious, distinguishing such concepts as “culture”, “anticulture”, “counterculture”¹.

For the modern scientific concepts concerning the social and cultural creativity of society, the point of view of the “personification of society” with an emphasis on the personality is representative. The humanitarization of society is one of the qualitative characteristics of the reality created by the individual. It is culture that is the systemic peculiarity reflecting the natural, spiritual, activity-related, objective and social nature of the individual².

It is universally accepted to understand man both as a subject and as an object of culture. Culture is treated as a universal phenomenon, the revival of spirituality is the basis for the revival of culture. Within the context of the foregoing, the role of education and educational structures is important, both in shaping the culture of the individual and in influencing the formation and development of the social medium culture. For improving the intellectual and spiritual sphere of man and, accordingly, of society, social and humanistic knowledge is being developed.

For the successful development of culture and a of complex of socio-humanistic knowledge, it is very important to involve an effective tool of social partnership. Social partnership is understood by us as a means of solving the contradictions that arise in society, as a source of social and educational potential of the region as a whole; moreover, we take into account the existing point of view among the researchers (L. Chernyshov), regarding the characteristics of the social partnership as a systemic organization, in particular, the performance of its functions (integrative, regulatory, developmental, protective, compensatory, correctional, rehabilitational). Social partnership can be viewed as a social and cultural resource of an educational institution that facilitates the integration of the innovative and educational activities of the partners. It is one of the mechanisms of the development of social and innovative processes in the university itself (M. Chvanova).

¹ Kichuk, Iaroslav, *Higher School as the Activating Factor of Inter-Cultural Collaboration: European Context*, “European Integration: Realities and Perspectives”, Vol. 11 (2016), p. 452.

² Tsyganenko, Lilia, *The Ways to Optimize the History Education in Ukrainian Danube Region*, “Journal of Danubian Studies and Research”, Vol. 4, Issue No 2, 2014, p 137. Access Mode: <http://journals.univ-danubius.ro/index.php/research/article/view/2650>.

Regional studios, an integral part of which is the issue of culture and ethico-aesthetic education, represent one of the most demanded scientific problems in modern world practice. The recent decades have witnessed the creation of studios of culture of certain regions in the post-Soviet area for discussing the questions of the social and cultural creativity of the local community of certain regions of the country in the context of scientific integration experience, in particular, the social and cultural problems.

The study of the social functions of culture is especially relevant in the post-Soviet region, since in the time of strict centralization of power their development was limited and the content was politically biased, as it is evidenced by the emergence of the works of Russian researchers such as D. Zamiatin, L. Kryvtsova, I. Mankevych, I. Polynska, V. Semenova, etc. A powerful achievement has been made by the publication of a collective monograph of the researchers of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS): *Culture and Space: Historical and Cultural Brands and Images of Territories, Regions and Places* (2012), in which the authors have presented the methodological and empirical experience of creating positive images of certain areas as one of the most important resources of innovative development of their country³.

Region-centricity of modern Ukrainian culturological studios is the result of actualization of the processes of decentralization of power, which are reflected in the improvement of the national education system via the introduction of regionality, which emphasizes the specifics of the Ukrainian society, demonstrates the diversity in the social and economic development of the regions, differences in their natural, cultural and historical peculiarities.

The publication of several collective monographs has become a valuable achievement in this sphere, in particular, *Art in the Development of Personality* (2006), in which the influence of art education on the formation of “man of culture” is considered⁴; *The Peculiarities of the Bukovyna Borderland: the History of a Cultural Polylogue* (2010), where the dynamic interaction of historical processes, multiculturalism, confessional liberalism and local monumental art in the formation of a successful cultural polylogue in the region, that contributed to the establishment of the Bukovyna regional identity, is brilliantly revealed⁵.

³ *Art in the development of personality*, Мистецтво у розвитку особистості: Монографія / За ред., передмова та післямова Н.Г. Ничкало. Чернівці: Зелена Буковина, 2006, р. 225.

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ Антошкіна, Лідія, *Особливості буковинського пограниччя: історія культурного полілогу* / Лідія Антошкіна, Олександр Гадинко, Гелена Красовська, Петро Сигеда, Олексій Сухомлинов. Донецьк: ТОВ «Юго-Восток, Лтд», 2010, р. 238.

An important milestone has been presented by L.P. Nagorna, with her monograph *Social and Cultural Identity: Traps of Value Distinctions* (2011), in which the author raises the issue of regional features of the mentality, multiculturalism of the Ukrainian society, reflects on the risks and threats caused by traumatic historical memory, the antinomy of political orientations and the diversification of public consciousness developed on this basis.⁶

The state of research of the scientific problem of “culture and society” testifies to its powerful potential; determines the ways of solving problematic issues, taking a specific region as an example; accentuates the study of the problems of the humanitarianization of society as a means of harmonization and stabilization of interethnic relations in the multiethnic region of Budzhak, located in the south of Odessa region, which is the object of our investigation.

This studio aims at exploring the processes of modelling social and cultural policy in a separate region of Ukraine (Budzhak region), in which the decisive role is assigned to the university. Geographically it is the area between the Dniester and the Danube Lowland. The population of the region is more than half a million inhabitants. The historical names of the region are: *Budzhak* (from Turkish) or *Southern Bessarabia* (from Romanian). During its history Budzhak was constantly in the focus of the political interests of great empires due to the strategic location in the Danube Delta that opened the way to Europe. The cities of Kiliya and Izmail were the major ports-fortresses on the Danube till the end of the XVIIIth century. According to the Paris Peace Agreement from 1856, both fortresses were destroyed. Now it is mostly an agrarian territory, non-industrialized provincial part of Ukraine.

Budzhak has great potential to be developed precisely in the cultural sphere. We are convinced that the main potential of Budzhak is the people of the region. In the XIXth century, the territory was provided for settlement and cultivation of land to colonists from different countries: Bulgarians (centered in the city of Bolgrad), Germans (Artsyz, Tarutino, etc.), Swiss (Shabo) and others. Another category of residents are the ethnic Ukrainians, Russians, the Romanian population, the Gagauz, the Armenians, the Polish populations, the Jews, the Greek, the Albanians and so on. Therefore, multiculturalism is the leading feature of the social development of the region, which laid the foundations of its new collective identity. Multiculturalism was reflected in Budzhak artistic traditions enriched by the achievements of different cultures.

We detail the successful practice of social and project activity as an effective form of social partnership, implemented on the basis of Izmail State University of Humanities. It is the only state educational institution in Budzhak with the wide

⁶ Нагорна, Л.П., *Соціокультурна ідентичність: пастки ціннісних розмежувань*. Київ. ІПіЕНД ім. І.Ф. Кураса НАН України, 2011, р. 272.

network of international contacts and the stable reputation of the internal and foreign scientific and cultural establishment, the leading center of education, science and culture of the Ukrainian Danube region⁷. It has a 75-years history and a huge scientific potential. Peripheral location of the region dictates the University to focus on implementing the needs of the national minorities. Students are trained in four faculties (Pedagogical; Foreign Languages; Ukrainian Philology, History and Social Sciences; Administration, Management and Computer Science). The main directions of training are “Teacher Education (Social Worker, Fine Arts, Music, Physical Culture)”, “Philology”, “Economics and Entrepreneurship”, “Tourism”. The border region of Izmail University opens the opportunities for the productive cooperation with educational institutions of the Danube basin countries (Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria, Germany).

On the basis of our university, the Volunteer Movement Center has been created, and relevant socially important projects are being implemented. Within the framework of the Center's activities, the efforts of the educational institutions of the south of Odessa region to form the culture of volunteering among students are unified. The phenomenon of volunteering is also understood by us in the context of leadership, Leadership Training School is organized at the university, in particular, the leadership of volunteer project teams, and in terms of the relationship with such categories as “culture of volunteering”, “freedom of will”, “public service”, “responsibility” (O. Ivanik).

In the scientific view, the idea of volunteering has been established with respect to such parameters:

1) “personality” (manifestation of will, altruism, the need for social ties, manifestation of spirituality, self-improvement, acceptance of volunteer movement as prestigious in society);

2) “society” (the desire to unite like-minded people for the sake of attaining pro-social goals, awareness of social responsibility, manifestation of civic maturity, and

3) “value” (the need for establishing such terminal values as solidarity, freedom, beliefs that the ultimate goal of one's own existence is worth striving for it (M. Rokich).

On the basis of our university was created the “SOUP” Center – a self-organizing learning space, the activities of which are aimed at providing high-quality educational services, introducing innovative approaches of self-organizing mixed instruction based on the combination of online and offline learning.

⁷ ISHU site: Izmail State University for Humanities site. Access mode: <http://idgu.edu.ua/>.

As an example of successful social partnership practices, we present the experience of some cultural projects that have been implemented this year on the basis of the University.

In 2016 Izmail State University of Humanities became the member of the Danube Academic Consortium (DAC), the activities of which are aligned with the objectives of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). The University representative in DAC proves: “This important partnership of Universities and Corporate partners with different expertise profiles form the unique Euro-regional integrated ecosystem in the area of the Danube Delta for integral innovation in the business and academic world. Two main DAC activity directions are focused on Applied Arts and technologies in dynamically interacting network of academic institutions, which take into account both single markers and cultural diversity of “Lower Danube” Euro-region”.⁸

According to the decision of the Academic Council of ISUH, the Center for Civic Education and the Center for National Cultures of the Ukrainian Danube Region have been created on the basis of the University. The Center hosts the Museum of Cultures of the Peoples of Bessarabia. In the framework of the activities of these Centers in order to harmonize interethnic, intercultural relations, cultural and information centers of Bulgaria and Romania have been opened at ISUH. The opening of these centers at ISUH with the support of the governments of Bulgaria and Romania demonstrates the importance of developing the national and cultural initiatives of Odessa region, establishing a dialogue of cultures, culturological bridges in the framework of cross-border partnership cooperation.

Among the numerous newest scientific and culturological researches implemented by Izmail State University of Humanities, the cultural project “Description and Cartography of the Dniester and Danube Interfluvial Area – a New European Model of Non-Conflict Interaction of Heterogeneous Languages and Dialects” deserves special attention. One of the main results of this work is the publication of the Atlas of Ukrainian Dialects between the rivers of the Dniester and the Danube, the dialectal material of different language levels from 75 settlements in the south of Odessa region is systematized. The innovation of this research is the use of bi-component mapping, which made it possible to reflect on the linguistic maps not only the modern, but also the current condition of the Ukrainian dialects of the region.

The vibrant cultural festival at the University was the Parade of Ethnoses of the Danube. Students and teachers developed historical and cultural mini-projects

⁸ Shevchuk, Tetyana, “Leading Strategies of the “DAC People” Program in Budjak”, *European Integration: Realities and Perspectives*, vol. 1, Editura Universitara Danubius, Galati, 2016, pp.458-461.

and created a cultural atmosphere for traveling in the Bessarabian spaces, which introduces the customs, traditions and rites of the peoples of the Danube.

On the basis of ISUH the project “Strengthening Academic Integrity in the Ukraine Project – SAIUP” is being successfully realized. It is implemented by the American Councils for International Education, jointly with the Ministry of Education and Science and with the support of the United States Embassy in Ukraine. Within the framework of this project the Center for Academic Writing has been created. It promotes the culture of academic integrity, academic writing, contributes to the development of students' critical thinking, activates socio-cultural and educational initiatives at ISUH.

The main goal of the German-Ukrainian cultural youth project “Origin and the Motherland. Historical Memory – the Future of Europe” is the creation of conditions for long-lasting, stable cultural contacts between educational institutions and public organizations of Odessa region and the southern lands of Germany, their further development and strengthening of international cooperation between the two European countries. The Ukrainian stage of the international student exchange project was held on the basis of the German Cultural Center. The German project phase took place in the capital of Baden-Wurttemberg, Stuttgart, in the central building of the Union of the Bessarabian Germans.

The project “Ukraine – Moldova: Common Historical Memory, Lessons, Prospects” is devoted to comprehensive research on the issues of the historical past of the peoples living in Ukraine and Moldova. In developing the project, we set ourselves the task of overcoming the distorted stereotypes and obvious falsifications of the common history of our countries through the establishment of cultural dialogue against the background of the idea of the uniqueness of each of the ethnic cultures of the Ukrainian – Moldavian borderland.

On the basis of ISUH, a session of the 10th International Scientific and Cultural Symposium “Portraits of Teachers” (with the support of AGIRo), a session on the development of the culture of the European Youth Parliament were held. As part of the Danube Academic Consortium, professors at ISUH work on innovative projects in the Lower Danube.

We perceive the serious potential of our university in the further humanitarization of the Ukrainian Danube society. One of the promising interstate projects is “Strategy for the Development of the Ancient Roman Trail – Traianovi Valy: Cultural Resources for Cooperation and Sustainable Cross-Border Development”, which is being implemented by the efforts of three countries – Romania, Moldova and Ukraine.

Based on the modern methodological base, where the idea of openness to innovation and the dialogue of cultures is twofold, ISUH initiates other strategies.

In particular, the professors of the University have developed such scientific and cultural projects: “Regional Features of Education in a Multicultural Society”, “Historical and Ethno-Cultural Development of Southern Bessarabia”, “Prospects for Cross-Border Development in the Sphere of Culture and Tourism: Cluster Strategy”, “Ethno-Cultural Processes in the Ukrainian Danube Region: Transformation, Mutual Influence, Preservation of Monuments in the Conditions of the Frontier Region”, “Budzhak Fine Art as a Factor of Intercultural Communication”, “Budzhak Region as Civilization Frontier in Antique and Medieval Sources”.

The self-reflection of our experience in involving future specialists in social and project activities, the development of a volunteer movement among students and teachers, substantially contribute to the formation of a culture of social responsibility as an essential personal and professional quality. It forms the basis for future productive professional activities, strengthening the civic aspect of their social responsibility, where it is advisable to distinguish between the interaction of both external (social) and internal cultural standpoints of the individual.

The results of successfully implemented projects have proved that education of the inhabitants of the region to have a sense of collective identity, the ability to navigate in different types of cultures, compare and draw conclusions about the general and specific in the system of cultural values of minority communities, to proceed from the difficult situations in the process of intercultural communication is the essence of socio-cultural education by means of humanitarization of the society.

The socio-cultural component of this study had direct access to the cultural policy and the socio-cultural construction of the state. The University's activity in this direction implements the mechanism of forming a positive image of the border region of the south of Odessa region on the basis of studying its spiritual and material values; it allows to stimulate the cultural policy of the region. An effective image of Budzhak is a strategic resource for creating its investment attractiveness, leaving the traditional status of a “transit region”. The discovery of the unique socio-cultural features of Budzhak, the principles of intercultural communication of the peoples living here will serve as the basis for the development of recreational and tourist activities in the region, the revitalization of its unique ethno-cultural traditions, support and development of folk crafts, creation of new workplaces, successful interstate cooperation in the field of culture on the European level.