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ESTABLISHING FOREIGN BOOKSHELVES IN LIBRARIES AROUND THE WORLD: A SOCIO-CULTURAL COMPONENT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The purpose of the article is to examine the strategic initiative of establishing special bookshelves for foreign literature in libraries around the world, emphasizing their sociocultural impact as an element of international cooperation. **The research methodology** is based on a systematic approach, methods of logical and structural-functional analysis, generalization, and content analysis. **Scientific novelty.** An analysis of the "Ukrainian Bookshelves" project has been conducted, aimed at promoting Ukrainian literature worldwide and fostering global cultural understanding. Additionally, the study highlights the experience of organizing bookshelves for foreign literature at V. I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine, illustrated by the recent "Polish Bookshelf in Ukraine" project (2023), as well as the "Liechtenstein Bookshelf" (2004) and the "Switzerland Bookshelf" (2014), which operate within the Department of International Information and Foreign Relations at V. I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine. The research has found that such projects are effective tools of cultural diplomacy that significantly enhance global cultural understanding. **Conclusions.** In the current geopolitical and cultural context, a pressing issue for Ukraine is the preservation of the identity of the Ukrainian nation and its cultural heritage for future generations. It is necessary to increase the visibility of Ukrainian culture and literature on the international stage and to promote the development of mutually beneficial international relations through the launch of similar initiatives. The strategic implementation of these endeavors underscores the importance of libraries in fostering global understanding and maintaining meaningful international relations, significantly contributing to

the preservation and promotion of national identity in an international context. The potential of such library projects in building bridges between cultures, promoting deeper mutual respect and cooperation is emphasized.

Keywords: International library cooperation, cultural diplomacy, cultural exchange, Ukrainian bookshelves, intercultural dialogue, literary heritage.

Relevance of the research theme. Cultural diplomacy, through sociocultural activities such as the establishment of bookshelves dedicated to the literatures of various countries, serves as an instrumental tool for promoting international cooperation and enhancing cultural exchanges. The initiative to create Ukrainian bookshelves in foreign libraries is especially significant in light of ongoing geopolitical tensions, notably the Russian aggression that began on February 24, 2022. Considering these circumstances, this project not only increases the visibility of Ukrainian culture and literature globally but also acts as a symbol of resilience and solidarity.

The opening of bookshelves dedicated to the literatures of foreign countries within libraries, exemplified by projects such as the Ukrainian bookshelves abroad, plays a crucial role in fostering international dialogue and understanding. Such efforts are pivotal in transmitting the rich literary and cultural narratives of different nations, thereby enhancing global cultural landscapes and strengthening international relations.

Current research underscores the importance of such initiatives in promoting library collections, enhancing international cooperation, and fostering effective academic studies through the visibility of Ukrainian literature abroad and the presentation of foreign publications to domestic researchers. By investigating these aspects, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the strategic role libraries play in advancing cultural understanding and diplomatic engagement in contemporary society. Overall, the scientific exploration of these bookshelf initiatives offers crucial insights into how libraries can leverage cultural diplomacy to not only enrich their local contexts but also contribute to a broader global dialogue, making it a pertinent area of study in the current international landscape. The analytical framework provided a comprehensive insight of the practices and outcomes associated with such initiatives, contributing significantly to the development of recommendations for further enhancing this tradition of interlibrary cooperation.

The analysis of research and publications. The research presented is based on an in-depth analysis of the establishment of Ukrainian

bookshelves in international locations. This study utilizes a comprehensive array of sources including data from the official website of the Office of the President of Ukraine, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine (MCIP), and the Ukrainian Book Institute. These materials provide detailed insights into the strategic objectives, implementation processes, and the cultural impact of the Ukrainian bookshelves project. By examining this initiative through official channels, the research aims to underscore the role of cultural diplomacy in enhancing Ukraine's global presence and promoting its literary heritage worldwide. Additionally, publications from V. I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine were utilized, providing insights into the library's activities in this area and highlighting the outcomes of similar implemented projects. This integration of resources offers a nuanced understanding of how cultural initiatives like these contribute to Ukraine's cultural diplomacy efforts.

The purpose of the article is to examine the strategic initiative of establishing special bookshelves for foreign literature in libraries around the world, emphasizing their sociocultural impact as an element of international cooperation.

Presentation of the main research material. Sociocultural activities play a pivotal role in the promotion of national cultures and the enhancement of their global presence. Such endeavours are instrumental in showcasing a country's unique cultural identity and fostering international appreciation and understanding. This is particularly evident in the efforts made by nations to disseminate their cultural and literary heritage through global initiatives and collaborations.

Currently, the sociocultural activity of libraries is considered an important factor in the implementation of cultural policy, a means of adapting individuals to their environment, and a mechanism for communication, regulation, and transmission of national and universal culture in its various manifestations. The role of libraries, as key institutions in this socio-cultural framework, is profound. Libraries act as custodians and disseminators of cultural, scientific, and historical knowledge. They undertake a variety of purposefully organized actions and events aimed at promoting the intellectual, material, aesthetic, and spiritual development of society.

In the Ukrainian Library Encyclopedia, it is defined that the sociocultural activity of libraries is a purposeful and specially organized system of actions and events by the library as a social institution. The aim of these activities

is to promote the improvement of the intellectual, material, and aesthetic-spiritual state of society. This is achieved by making various social groups and specific users aware of scientific knowledge, empirical facts, aesthetic and moral-ethical values accumulated in library documentary collections across various media. The organization of various exhibitions and creative meetings with writers, artists, politicians, and others is also integral to this activity. Sociocultural activities of libraries can be considered a well-thought-out process of engaging individuals with the diverse cultural achievements of humanity, a component of the sociocultural system of Ukrainian society, and one of the important elements of the implementation of state policy in the field of culture. The sociocultural activities of libraries encompass a wide range of functions, reflecting their role not just as repositories of knowledge, but as vibrant, dynamic centers of community life [6].

At the contemporary stage, the sociocultural activities of libraries are distinguished by their variety in forms and means of application. In practice, these activities primarily include individual and mass engagement with users, such as organizing exhibitions, thematic evenings, and meetings with cultural figures. This multifaceted approach not only enhances the library's role as a community center but also reinforces its function as a crucial institution for cultural dissemination and civic engagement.

By involving different social groups and bringing to their attention the empirical facts, aesthetic values, and moral principles encapsulated in their collections, libraries facilitate a comprehensive and well-thought-out process of cultural exchange. This not only includes the organization of exhibitions and creative meetings with authors but also extends to the strategic establishment of dedicated bookshelves that focus on foreign literature. One should emphasize that opening of bookshelves of individual countries in libraries worldwide has emerged as a significant cultural tradition in contemporary times. This practice not only celebrates the diversity of global literature but also fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation among readers for the rich tapestry of cultures and histories that shape our world. By curating collections that spotlight the literary and intellectual heritage of different nations, libraries play a pivotal role in promoting cross-cultural dialogue and building bridges between communities.

A noteworthy example of this practice is the "Ukrainian Bookshelves" initiative, launched under the patronage of the First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska. Initiated prior to the full-scale Russian invasion, this project

represents a strategic move in cultural diplomacy and literary exchange, aimed at showcasing the richness of Ukrainian literature on a global stage. The initiative is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, the Ukrainian Book Institute, and Ukrainian embassies worldwide. These entities work together to disseminate Ukrainian literary works, both in their original language and in translations, across prominent libraries around the globe.

As of May 2024, according to the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, the Ukrainian bookshelf initiative has successfully established sections dedicated to Ukrainian literature in over 200 bookshelves across 47 countries, featuring approximately 50,000 Ukrainian publications. Countries where Ukrainian bookshelves are set up include: Austria, Turkey, Lithuania, Slovakia, Sweden, the Czech Republic, France, the Netherlands, Greece, Latvia, Finland, Jordan, Croatia, Lebanon, Japan, Belgium, Albania, South Korea, Poland, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Norway, Moldova, Qatar, Slovenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Portugal, South Africa, Cyprus, UAE, Namibia, North Macedonia, Hungary, Indonesia, Armenia, United Kingdom, Serbia, USA, Romania, Singapore, Mexico, Denmark, Argentina, Canada, and at the headquarters of the international organization UNESCO [2]. Each bookshelf serves as a symbol of Ukraine's rich culture and resilience, contributing to a global appreciation of its literary, historical, and cultural diversity. This effort not only facilitates a broader introduction of the international community to Ukrainian historical, literary, and cultural narratives but also significantly contributes to the global discourse on Ukraine's cultural heritage. Such initiatives underscore the role of libraries as essential platforms for cultural exchange and the promotion of mutual understanding among nations.

In June 2024, Costa Rica became the 50th country to join the Ukrainian First Lady's project, "Ukrainian Bookshelf". This milestone will bring the first Ukrainian bookshelf to Central America, with approximately 20 books from various Ukrainian authors being donated to the National Library in San José. These books will be available in Ukrainian, Spanish, and English, expanding the project's linguistic and cultural reach. The "Ukrainian Bookshelf" initiative now encompasses over 50 000 books across 200 shelves distributed in libraries across Europe, Asia, Africa, and both Americas. The First Lady emphasized the project's dual role: it serves as a bridge connecting Ukrainians abroad with their homeland, and as a

voice for Ukraine's cultural and historical narrative, countering Russian aggression by informing the global community about Ukraine.

Furthermore, new bookshelves are continually being established, with the latest additions including the 10th Ukrainian bookshelf in Slovakia located at the regional library in Žilina, the Raczyński Library in Poznań, Poland, the University of Donja Gorica in Montenegro, and the National Library of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Bulgaria. Additionally, the library in Bern, Switzerland, has recently enhanced its collection with Ukrainian children's literature, further demonstrating the project's expansive influence and the ongoing commitment to cultural diplomacy [5].

It is relevant to remark that V. I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine has cultivated a tradition of presenting and making accessible the book collections of foreign nations to its readers. Furthermore, VNLU is the only depository library for the United Nations in Ukraine, having received this designation in May 1960 (registration number DL-155). Since then, it has developed a substantial library and information resource, including UN publications dating back to 1945. This role enables VNLU to significantly support international research and cultural exchange, further emphasizing its importance as a central hub for global information and cultural heritage [7].

VNLU boasts significant collections in foreign languages within its main collection and the Department of International Information and Foreign Relations. Notably, it includes the Austrian Library, operational since 1992, which holds a collection of 16,700 storage units. Additionally, the "Orientalia" collection of Eastern literature, currently being compiled, features publications in Chinese, Persian, and Turkish languages.

Specifically, within the Austrian Library section, two bookshelves, the «Liechtenstein bookshelf» and the "Switzerland bookshelf", are showcased to visitors. The Liechtenstein bookshelf, initiated in 2004 with 38 storage units, was provided by the Principality of Liechtenstein, facilitated by the Embassy of the Swiss Confederation. Continuing this tradition, the Switzerland bookshelf was launched in 2014, comprising 194 units that comprehensively represent Swiss literary culture. Both bookshelves are supported annually by the embassies of Liechtenstein and Switzerland, reflecting a continuous dedication to cultural exchange. Collectively, these collections form a cultural bridge, effectively connecting the literary legacies of Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and Ukraine.

In April 2023, VNLU submitted an application to participate in the "Polish Bookshelf in Ukraine" pilot project. This cultural initiative, launched by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of Poland in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, is funded by the Polish Ministry and implemented by the Polish Book Institute, in partnership with the Ukrainian Institute of the Book. Its goal is to enhance intercultural exchange and cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian institutions, promoting intercultural dialogue and amplifying the presence and appreciation of Polish literature in Ukraine [3; 4].

Prioritizing the promotion of foreign publications, the library strives to satisfy the varied interests of its readers and enhance the quality of its services. Through these initiatives, VNLU makes its own contribution to enriching international cultural dialogue and maintains its role as a key center for the exchange of knowledge and culture worldwide. Already in May 2024, Jerzy Wozniakiewicz, the director of the Voivodeship Public Library in Krakow (Poland), visited VNLU and had the opportunity to get acquainted with the library, the history and present of the main book treasury of Ukraine, as well as its information and scientific activities. The guest's professional interest was aroused by the specialized foreign literature rooms and the UN publications depository section, as well as the recently opened Polish Bookshelf in VNLU, which Jerzy Wozniakiewicz highly appreciated [1].

The analysis presented herein confirms that nowadays international cooperation between library institutions is crucial, with all participating countries benefiting significantly from this collaboration. In the context of Russian aggression and the full-scale invasion, the substantial support we have received from the library community highlights the ongoing need for the development of international library cooperation. A central component of this cooperation involves promoting culture through literature, particularly through the creation of bookshelves dedicated to the literature of various countries. This endeavor not only fosters cultural exchange and mutual understanding but also serves as a symbol of resilience and solidarity. By showcasing the literary heritage of different nations, libraries play a pivotal role in promoting peace, tolerance, and dialogue - elements that are crucial in these challenging times. The establishment of such bookshelves underscores the evolving role of libraries as centers of information, culture, and international collaboration, contributing to the global dissemination of knowledge and strengthening cultural ties between nations.

Conclusions. This study highlights the crucial role of book initiatives in libraries worldwide as socio-cultural mechanisms for fostering international cooperation. In the current geopolitical and cultural context, it is imperative for Ukraine to safeguard its national identity and cultural heritage for future generations. The analysis of the "Ukrainian Bookshelves" project, aimed at promoting Ukrainian literature globally and enhancing global cultural understanding, confirms the initiative's substantial impact on increasing the international visibility of Ukrainian culture and strengthening cultural diplomacy. The efforts of V. I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine in creating and hosting these initiatives for foreign literature not only demonstrate the library's dedication to international scholarly interaction but also underscore its commitment to cultural diplomacy. This supports the library's role as a pivotal entity in the global cultural and informational exchange network.

It is determined that libraries serve as dynamic platforms for cultural diplomacy, facilitating the exchange of cultural and intellectual traditions across borders. The establishment of foreign bookshelves exemplifies the libraries' role in the socio-cultural system and as a vital element of national cultural policy.

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СТВОРЕННЯ КНИЖКОВИХ ПОЛИЦЬ У БІБЛІОТЕКАХ СВІТУ: СОЦІОКУЛЬТУРНИЙ СКЛАДНИК МІЖНАРОДНОЇ СПІВПРАЦІ

Мета статті – розглянути стратегічну ініціативу створення спеціальних книжкових полиць іноземної літератури у бібліотеках світу, акцентуючи на їхньому соціокультурному впливі як елементі міжнародної співпраці. **Методи дослідження.** Використано системний підхід, методи логічного та структурно-функціонального аналізу, узагальнення та наукової об'єктивності. **Наукова новизна.** Здійснено аналіз проєкту «Українські книжкові полиці», метою якого є популяризація української літератури у світі та сприяння глобальному культурному взаєморозумінню. Висвітлено досвід організації книжкових полиць літератури іноземних держав у Національній бібліотеці України імені В. І. Вернадського на прикладі проєкту «Польська книжкова полиця в Україні» (2023), а також «Книжкової полиці Ліхтенштейну» (2004) та «Книжкової полиці Швейцарії» (2014), що функціонують у рамках Австрійської бібліотеки при Національній бібліотеці України імені В. І. Вернадського. Дослідження виявило, що такі проєкти є дієвими інструментами культурної дипломатії, які суттєво покращують глобальне культурне взаєморозуміння. **Висновки.** У сучасному геополітичному та культурному контексті актуальним питанням

для України є збереження ідентичності української нації та її культурної спадщини для майбутніх поколінь. Необхідно підвищувати видимість української культури та літератури на міжнародній арені та сприяти розвитку взаємовигідних міжнародних відносин шляхом реалізації подібних ініціатив. Стратегічна реалізація таких ініціатив підкреслює важливість бібліотек у сприянні глобальному взаєморозумінню та налагодженню міжнародних відносин, що значною мірою сприяє збереженню та популяризації національної ідентичності в міжнародному контексті. Наголошено на потенціалі таких бібліотечних проєктів у встановленні мостів між культурами, сприяючи глибшому взаєморозумінню та співпраці.

Ключові слова: міжнародна бібліотечна співпраця, культурна дипломатія, культурний обмін, українські книжкові полиці, міжкультурний діалог, літературна спадщина.

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