

## **Current State of Child and Youth Tourism Development in Ukraine (Case Study of Kharkiv Region)**

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### **Abstract**

Tourism in Ukraine has been legally proclaimed a priority area for the development of national culture and economy. Child and youth tourism focused on a socially important category of the population, namely, the younger generation, occupies a special place in tourism activities. First of all, it is intended to educate the younger generation through tourism and local studies, to form an all-round personality. The development of the system of youth tourism can become an important tool for spiritual revival, national and patriotic education, the formation of ecological thinking, and the mentality of the Ukrainian society as a whole. The medical and biological function of child and youth tourism is very important. Its aim is to improve the health of young people. In recent years, there has been an increased interest to the history of the native land in all spheres of public life. Child and youth tourism is supported by the state. The relevance of the study of child and youth tourism in Ukraine and its oblasts is conditioned by the modern complicated epidemiological, economic and geopolitical situation in the state.

This work aims to determine the characteristics and current state of the development of child and youth tourism in Ukraine (in general and in particular in the Kharkiv oblast). The tasks based on the aim of the work are the following: to analyse scientific sources, to study the experience of Ukraine as a whole, to reveal the social essence of child and youth tourism, to analyse the current state of the development of child and youth tourism in Ukraine and the Kharkiv oblast, to identify

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problems and substantiate ways of improving child and youth tourism activities. As a result of the research, the authors have reviewed the general features and peculiarities of the content of *child and youth tourism*. The features of the modern development of youth tourism in Ukraine and the Kharkiv oblast are analysed. The main problems of the development of child and youth tourism are determined and the ways of their solution are proposed.

**Keywords:** child and youth tourism, centres for child and youth tourism and local studies, Kharkiv oblast, oblasts, Ukraine.

## Relevance of the Research

In recent years, tourism in general, and especially child and youth tourism, has acquired signs of local studies, as more and more people are paying attention to active recreation in their native area. The youth, represented by students, fosters the development of local tourism most of all. Health tourism for children and young people is one of the directions of organizing leisure activities for the younger generation, focused on the leisure and health improvement for children and adolescents aged from 6 to 17, as well as on educating a sense of patriotism of young people, love for their native land; forming a comprehensively developed personality, toughening the body, its physical and mental condition.

The young generation has the greatest social significance and requires special attention from the government because they are a future for our country. The best personality traits are formed with the help of local studies and tourism, especially sport tourism and recreation and health tourism, where one unites with nature, understands its vulnerability and importance for human life. In Ukraine, the main functions of health tourism for child and youth are laid mainly on the network of extracurricular education institutions, specialized recreation, and health improvement establishments, as well as on the secondary school.

## Analysis of recent research and publications

The analysis of scientific and educational literature on tourism has shown that the terminological apparatus of the research is developed widely, but is not consistent and accepted. Mostly in their research, scientists consider child and youth tourism as a recreational or tourist activity aimed at meeting the health, sports, and cognitive needs of children and youth outside the place of permanent residence and study. The main areas of child and youth tourism are sports tourism and health tourism [25]. Even though, some articles are devoted to health tourism for children and youth, there are still no monographs and the theoretical apparatus is not developed.

The study of separate aspects of tourism development is widely covered in the scientific literature, in particular, it was discussed at previous international conferences of IBIMA. This concerns the consideration of trends in the development of various types of tourism, the consequences of the impact on the development of territories and on the particular regions economy and countries. Features and trends of tourism development in Ukraine are considered in [12, 13]. The analysis of the development of tourism in its individual regions is carried out [21]. Many domestic scientists have been involved in the study of child and youth tourism. A particularly large group of scholars was engaged in the general issues of the functioning of extracurricular education and the place of tourism in it. Some of the researchers focused their attention on the organization of health tourism for children and youth: A. V. Kolotukha substantiated the current condition and problems of child and youth tourism development in Ukraine and in the Kirovohrad oblast in particular [4, 5], V. V. Oboznyi, M. Yu. Kostritsia investigated the development of the local studies through child and youth tourism [6], L. V. Maltseva and G. A. Sorokina provided the research of children's tourism in general [10], N. Pankiv dwelt on the current state of youth tourism [17], K. V. Mezentseva, L. M. Nemets, I. A. Skryl explored the development of tourism and recreation in the Kharkiv oblast, as well as the spatial analysis of child and youth tourism and health improvement was considered [11].

Aliyeva Zh. N., Abdreeva Sh. T., Akhay E. in their scientific works consider the problems and prospects of the development of child and youth tourism in Kazakhstan [1]. Palade, Alexandra; Brătucu, Gabriel; Demeter, Timea; Opreș, Madălina-Adina (Stănilă) reveal the features of the development of youth tourism in Romania [15]. Sardarov Osman and his colleagues in their researches reveal a very relevant topic of our time, namely the criteria and features of training for the development of child and youth tourism [16].

## Setting Goals and Objectives

This publication embodies an attempt to determine the features and the current state of the development of child and youth tourism in Ukraine (on the example of the Kharkiv oblast). To achieve this goal, the following tasks have been identified: to analyse previous studies on this topic, to consider the legislative framework for the development of youth tourism in Ukraine, to reveal the social essence of child and youth tourism, and also to analyse the current state of development of child and youth tourism in Ukraine and the Kharkiv oblast, to identify problems and substantiate ways to improve child and youth tourism.

## Information basis and research methods

The information basis for the analysis of the current state of development of child and youth tourism in Ukraine and in the Kharkiv oblast was the data of official statistics: the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, the Main Department of Statistics in the Kharkiv oblast, materials of the Kharkiv Oblast Station of Young Tourists, the materials of the Ukrainian State Center for Tourism and local studies of Students, data of the Federation of sports tourism of the Kharkiv oblast, as well as analytical reviews, reports, records, scientific articles and the results of the authors' own research [13, 14, 22].

In the process of the study, methods of analysis and synthesis were used to determine the content, to highlight the components and factors of the formation of child youth tourism in Ukraine and the Kharkiv oblast; mathematical and statistical methods were used to process the data of official statistics of Ukraine and the Kharkiv oblast), as well as methods of comparison, systematization, generalization and others.

## Presentation of the Material

Nowadays, in Ukraine, the development of child and youth tourism is carried out by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, which is responsible for both school and extracurricular activities. As part of extracurricular activities in Ukraine, there are regional and district integrated extracurricular institutions, technical creativity establishments for children and youth, a significant number of clubs of various orientation. One of the sections are specialized institutions of local studies and tourism work with students (regional, district, local stations for young tourists, centres for child and youth tourism and local studies, centres for child and youth tourism and excursions, tourism centres etc.) and ecological and naturalistic as well as local studies clubs. This section fosters active development of child and youth tourism. Commercial enterprises that provide excursion services should also be mentioned in this respect, but excursions alongside with tourism are known to be an integral part of recreational activities, not tourism.

The above-mentioned institutions are directly subordinate to the Ukrainian State Centre for Tourism and Local Studies under the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Local studies and tourism clubs also work at complex extracurricular educational institutions. In recent years, there has been a tendency towards stabilization in this area, and individual indicators for some territorial units of Ukraine point out to some revival in the process of development of child and youth tourism.

The main directions of work in the popularization and development of child and youth tourism are route tourism (passing a pre-planned route with certain physical activity, like hiking, cycling, skiing, swimming, and speleotourism) and competitive tourism (training and participation of young people in competitions in sport and tourism all-around).

In the Law of Ukraine On Tourism, other legislative acts and regulatory documents, along with topical problematic issues of domestic and international tourism, a significant place is occupied by the problems of mass development of health and sport types of tourism and ways to solve them [3, 25].

The definition of tourism is enshrined in the Law of Ukraine "On Tourism" [3]. Besides, a number of scientific works are devoted to the explanation of this concept from the standpoint of such areas as geography, economy, sociology, philosophy etc. Summarizing the existing opinions, tourism can be interpreted as:

- travel, a temporary departure from a permanent place of residence for the purpose of health improvement, recreation, participation in business, cultural meetings;
- the type of sports activity aimed at hardening the human body;
- a type of human activity that affects the social, cultural, economic, ecological spheres of society and satisfies various needs of both an individual and society as a whole.

As it has been mentioned, one of the most widespread types of tourism is child and youth tourism. "Child and youth tourism is a mass movement of the younger generation with the aim of knowing the world around them and themselves by means of tourism and local studies activities. Tourism and local studies activity is a complex means of all-round development of the younger generation in active learning and accessible improvement of the world around and themselves within tourist and local studies travels" [2, p. 85].

According to A. Kolotukha, child and youth tourism is a recreational activity for children and youth, aimed at meeting the health, sport and intellectual needs of a person outside the place of permanent residence and study [5].

Thus, child and youth tourism is subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, and at the regional level – to the Main Department of Education and Science of the Kharkiv Regional State Administration. The functional organizational system of tourism and local studies work covers general educational establishments which include both complex (centres of child and youth creativity, centres of extracurricular education, centres for schoolchildren) and

specialized institutions (stations for young naturalists, stations for young technicians, stations for young tourists, centres for tourism and local studies for students, club for young sailors). All these establishments, in varying degrees, attract children to tourism and local studies work, but the basis of such activities is formed by specialized tourist and local studies institutions – stations for young tourists, tourism and local studies centres for students that use different means to attract children to tourism and local studies.

The development of tourism among children and youth is one of the main directions of the work of tourism and local studies centres for youth, stations for young tourists and national and patriotic institutions of Ukraine. As of 01.01.2019, there are 83 extracurricular education institutions of the tourism and local studies in Ukraine (4.8% of the total number of all types of extracurricular educational institutions) [14], due to which child and youth tourism and local studies remain one of the most popular types of activities for children and adolescents within afterschool activities. They include: Ukrainian State Center for National and Patriotic Education, Local Studies and Tourism of Students (oblast - 21, city - 29, district – 19, communal - 3, district in the cities – 10, branches – 15, centres of national and patriotic education - 12, Plast centres - 2 [14].

The following oblasts are characterized by the largest amount of tourism and local studies institutions: Poltava - 8, Dnipropetrovsk - 7, Khmelnytsky, Volyn - 6, Lviv, Cherkasy – 5. Ivano-Frankivsk oblast has a network of 9 oblast state centre branches of tourism and local studies for schoolchildren. Branches of tourism centres are also open in such oblasts like Zaporizhzhia - 4, Lviv - 2, which actually serve as oblast centres of tourism and local studies [14].

Clubs of tourist and local studies, tourist and sport, military and patriotic profiles function in every Ukrainian oblast. As of 2019, there are a total of 15 335 clubs in Ukraine with 248 855 students. Most clubs are open in Ivano-Frankivsk (1292), Vinnytsia (1036), Lviv (883), Dnipropetrovsk (836), Kharkiv (829) oblasts [14].

In recent 30 years child and youth tourism and local studies are characterized by progressive development in the Kharkiv oblast. There are all prerequisites for this, in particular the existing tourist and recreational potential, the system of extracurricular education institutions. The municipal Kharkiv Oblast Station of Young Tourists institution of the Kharkiv Oblast Council is the centre of organizational, methodological, mass tourist and local studies work with students. According to the order # 166 of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine dated 30.08.1991, Kharkiv Oblast station for young tourists is the largest among existing extracurricular institutions of this type. The priority areas of the institution's activities are the development of types of tourism, improvement of forms of local studies work, environmental education, health improvement of children, excursion activities, work with talented children, training of tourist personnel to work with student youth, career guidance activities.

In the Kharkiv oblast, the network of specialized tourist and local studies institutions, in addition to the municipal Kharkiv oblast station for young tourists, includes the Chuhuiv Center for Tourism and Local Studies of Chuhuiv City Council, Chuhuiv District Center for Tourism, Local Studies and Excursions of Chuhuiv District Council, Valkiv District Center for Tourism, Local Studies and Excursions of Student Youth of Valkiv District Council. Besides, youth tourism is an integral part of the system of complex extracurricular education institutions like centres of child and youth's creativity. To attract students to tourism and local studies activities, various organizational forms are used, namely, work in clubs, camping, expeditions, mass tourism and local studies events, in particular competitions, contests based on interaction with nature, research in the process of tourism and local studies work, excursions, etc. [22].

According to statistical data in 2019, 683 clubs worked in the Kharkiv oblast, 320 of which were of tourist and local studies, 175 were of a tourist and sports, 149 were of a military and patriotic directions [13].

There is a disproportion in the distribution of clubs of tourism and sport (35%) and local studies (65%) directions [13]. In our opinion, this is due to the insufficient material and technical support, in particular, the lack of special equipment for training clubs for young tourists (like tents, sleeping bags, backpacks, carbines, ropes, etc.), the acquisition of which is provided for by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine No. 5 dated 08.01.2002 "On the approval of the Model lists of teaching aids and technical teaching aids for artistic and aesthetic, ecological and naturalistic, tourism, local history and scientific and technical educational institutions of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine" [3].

According to the municipal Kharkiv oblast station of young tourists institution, in 2019, 175 tourist and sports clubs worked in the educational institutions of the Kharkiv oblast (2010 – 325 clubs), in which 3275 students studied (in 2010 there were 5422 students). The most popular among students of the oblast are hiking clubs - 58 (in 2010 – 141), security school - 43, young tourists - 39 (2010 – 57), cyclists – 25 (in 2010 – 29), orienteering – 21 (in 2010 - 19), sports tourism - 13 (2010 - 17). The fewest clubs are swimming clubs - 6, rock climbing, skiing - 4, hiking – 1 [13, 22].

Child and youth tourism in Ukraine requires systematically trained pedagogical personnel who know the methodology for conducting tourist trips, namely, specialist teachers in certain types of sports tourism that may interest students, ensure their safety, perform educational functions, etc.

The authorities should provide material and technical assistance for tourist and sports clubs. In the Kharkiv oblast close cooperation with tourism and local studies extracurricular education institutions is an important component of the development of children and youth tourism in the districts of the oblast.

The system of child and youth tourism in general can be considered established both in Ukraine, in general, and in the Kharkiv oblast in particular.

Negative phenomena in the development of types of youth tourism are associated with the following factors:

- the lack of a sufficient number of organizers of child and youth tourism among students;
- insufficient legislative support for sports and tourism activities of student youth, the absence of the Law of Ukraine "On child and youth tourism";
- weak material and technical support of the tourist and sports clubs.

These problems relate to the legislative regulation of youth tourism and local studies issues. This is because tourist services for student youth depend on the age characteristics of tourists, their needs, they are connected with educational, cognitive, teaching, and educational aspects. All these issues should be resolved at the legislative level, as well as standardized at all levels.

It is quite important to adopt the following measures in Ukraine on government support for the development of child and youth tourism:

- to develop and adopt of a separate the Law of Ukraine "On Child and Youth Tourism", which should serve the basis for the elaboration of the Program for the Development of Child and Youth Tourism in the oblasts;
- to expand the network of specialized tourist extracurricular educational institutions in each district of the oblast and cities of oblast subordination. The closure of complex extracurricular educational institutions, where tourist and local history clubs work, should not be allowed.
- to improve of the system of training and advanced training of pedagogical staff of specialized and complex educational institutions;
- to provide the benefits and free institutions, working in the field of youth education from land taxation;
- based on the experience of foreign countries to create a network of youth residences, hostels, tourist centres to support youth and student tourism;
- to create a modern information base for child and youth tourism, to develop and implement information sites for the Ukrainian State Centre for Tourism and Local Studies for Students, the Kharkiv Oblast Station for Young Tourists, oblast (city) centres of tourism and local studies for students. To inform about the available tourism and local studies clubs in the oblast, hiking routes, expeditions, excursion programs in the most interesting corners of Slobozhanshchina and neighbouring oblasts;
- to improve the methodological support of tourism and local history work by creating programs for the work of clubs of corresponding profiles, taking into account modern realities, methodological developments in various areas of tourism and local history;
- to promote excursion activities with students and student youth, to develop excursion routes in accordance with certain age categories of tourists, to introduce excursion activities into student educational and industrial practices. For this purpose, it is important to define a thematic list of excursions with pupils and students, in particular, historical, military-historical, archaeological, religious, memorial, architectural, natural, industrial, geological.

## **Conclusions of the study**

A detailed analysis of child and youth tourism in Ukraine and its oblasts, in particular, in the Kharkiv oblast, has shown its importance, relevance, and progressive development. In all districts of the oblast, there are tourist and local studies clubs. In two districts of the oblast - Chuhuiv, Valkiv and in Chuhuiv town, there are tourism and local studies centers for students. Besides, child and youth tourism is an integral part of the system of complex educational institutions and has many different organizational forms. Club work covers 8% [22] of students in the Kharkiv oblast, mass tourism, and local studies – 15% [22]. Child and youth tourism performs important functions such as health-improving, cognitive, communicative, educational, environmental.

Most of the tourist and sports clubs function in Kharkiv, and such districts as Chuhuiv, Vovchansk, Derhachiv, Valkiv, Zolochiv, Iziium, and in Kupiansk town. The most popular clubs in the oblast among students are hiking, cycling, a safety school, and orienteering. Young tourists from Derhachiv, Pervomaisky, Kehychiv, Zolochiv, Kharkiv districts are most actively involved in sports trips.

To solve the problems of child and youth tourism, it is necessary to carry out a number of measures, the main of which is to develop and adopt a separate Law of Ukraine "On child youth tourism", based on which it is necessary to elaborate a program for the development of child youth tourism in the Kharkiv oblast for a certain period; to expand a network of specialized tourist extracurricular educational institutions in each district of oblast and cities of oblast subordination, to prevent the closure of complex extracurricular educational institutions, where the tourist and local studies clubs work; to improve the system of training and advanced training of pedagogical staff of specialized and complex educational institutions. Further research by the authors will be aimed at studying this topic in other Ukrainian oblasts and generalizing better experience.

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