



## KYIV LIBRARY HUBS (UKRAINE): FIRST EXPERIENCE AND FORMATION CHALLENGES

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### ABSTRACT

This study highlights the innovative activities of library institutions in Ukraine, aimed at transforming their socio-cultural and information space. It is emphasized that the library hub is a fairly new phenomenon in the Ukrainian cultural environment. Of the 16,000 libraries, only a small number have become modern libraries. The creation of library hubs in Ukraine began only in 2016. Their implementation and operation is an insufficiently studied academic issue that needs deeper analysis. The article reveals the differences in the use of the term "library hub" in the scientific literature and library practice. The article highlights the changes that are taking place in the organization of the library space for children in Kyiv in accordance with global trends, regulations of Ukraine, decisions of local governments. In the early 2000s the socio-cultural activities of libraries were limited to leisure and educational activities; today the communications of library institutions are considered much more broadly, since they are an integral part of the socio-cultural and information system of Ukraine. Their special mission is to socialize the individual, develop public relations, and organize access to cultural values. The authors' interpretation of the concept of "library hub" was formulated on the basis of analysis of research results and study of practices. Research of open sources of information, monitoring of library websites, direct study of the public space of Kyiv library hubs for children allowed to summarize the experience of creating a modern cultural and information space and identify the factors of their growing popularity among the population. The study outlined problems that slow down the development and effective functioning of library hubs. It is argued that library hubs are modernized open multilevel and multifunctional information and communication systems, which allowed to diversify and modernize the activities of library institutions by zoning the library space and using innovative forms of work with users and visitors.

**Keywords:** Library Institutions of Ukraine, Library Innovations, Library Hub, Library Space

## KİEV KÜTÜPHANE MERKEZLERİ (UKRAYNA): İLK DENEYİM VE BİÇİMSEL ZORLUKLAR

### ÖZ

Çalışma, Ukrayna'daki kütüphanelerin sosyo-kültürel ve bilgi alanlarını dönüştürmeyi amaçlayan yenilikçi faaliyetlerini vurguluyor. Kütüphane merkezinin Ukrayna kültür ortamında oldukça yeni bir olgu olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. 16.000 kütüphaneden sadece küçük bir kısmı modern kütüphaneler haline geldi. Ukrayna'da kütüphane merkezlerinin oluşturulması ancak 2016'da başladı. Bunların uygulanması ve işleyişi, daha derin analiz gerektiren, yeterince araştırılmamış bilimsel bir sorundur. Makale, "kütüphane merkezi" teriminin bilimsel literatürde ve kütüphane uygulamalarında kullanımındaki farklılıkları ortaya koymaktadır. Makale, küresel eğilimler, Ukrayna yönetmelikleri, yerel yönetimlerin kararları doğrultusunda Kiev'deki çocuklar için kütüphane alanının düzenlenmesinde meydana gelen değişiklikleri vurgulamaktadır. 2000'lerin başında kütüphanelerin sosyo-kültürel faaliyetleri boş zaman ve eğitim

*faaliyetleriyle sınırlıydı; Günümüzde kütüphane kurumlarının iletişimleri, Ukrayna'nın sosyo-kültürel ve bilgi sisteminin ayrılmaz bir parçası oldukları için çok daha geniş bir şekilde ele alınmaktadır. Özel görevleri bireyi sosyalleştirmek, halkla ilişkiler geliştirmek ve kültürel değerlere erişimi organize etmektir. Yazarların "kütüphane merkezi" kavramına ilişkin yorumu, araştırma sonuçlarının analizi ve uygulamaların incelenmesi temelinde formüle edilmiştir. Açık bilgi kaynaklarının araştırılması, kütüphane web sitelerinin izlenmesi, çocuklar için Kiev kütüphane merkezlerinin kamusal alanlarının doğrudan incelenmesi, modern bir kültür ve bilgi alanı yaratma deneyimini özetlemeye ve nüfus arasında artan popülerlik faktörlerini belirlemeye izin verdi. Çalışma, kütüphane merkezlerinin gelişimini ve etkin işleyişini yavaşlatan sorunları özetledi. Kütüphane merkezlerinin, kütüphane alanını bölgelere ayırarak ve kullanıcı ve ziyaretçilerle yenilikçi çalışma biçimleri kullanarak kütüphane kurumlarının faaliyetlerini çeşitlendirmeye ve modernize etmeye olanak tanıyan, modernize edilmiş açık çok düzeyli ve çok işlevli bilgi ve iletişim sistemleri olduğu tespit edilmiştir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Ukrayna Kütüphane Kurumları, Kütüphane Yenilikleri, Kütüphane Merkezi, Kütüphane Alanı*

## INTRODUCTION

Cultural space is a clear indicator of the degree of development of society, ensuring personal rights and freedoms, creative self-expression, social and spiritual development. The basic element of culture is the institutions of social memory, whose mission is to form a thinking, creative generation. They are responsible for the socialization of the individual, for the preservation and use of historical and cultural memory, for the development of dialogue with society.

Today in Ukraine the information society has penetrated all spheres of public life, the digital environment is actively developing. Along with expanding communication through social networks, creating digital libraries and exhibitions, and providing fast online access to cultural heritage, libraries are actively developing new forms of communication with communities through the formation of innovative cultural and information space. In fact, institutions of social memory are becoming an active and equal subject of social processes, and not a performer, as before, of an auxiliary role in society. Libraries are especially important for small towns and rural settlements, where they remain almost the only centers of culture, able to bring to the monotonous, slow-moving life of the community a breath of creativity, confidence in ensuring full access of children and adults to information resources and cultural values. One way to encourage the public of all ages to use cultural heritage is to create an innovative environment different from the traditional library. Such structural and spatial transformations are important for children's libraries because they are an effective means of developing the younger generation's interest in cultural treasures, quality books, and they are also a place for leisure activities. In fact, the hub is a modern cultural, informational and educational multifunctional space that can meet the needs of young people. Libraries in Ukraine and Kyiv are just beginning their innovative "hub-based" transformations. Library hubs are still few in number. In Kyiv, for example, from 2017 to 2020 only eight library hubs were created in 7 out of 10 districts of the city (the population of the city was 2,962,881 as of October 1, 2020) (Main Department of Statistics in Kyiv, 2020).

Architectural and renovation works are still underway in three of the eight libraries. Thus, the five existing library hubs were selected for research to reveal the impact of modern library space on visitors.

## METHODOLOGY

The study is based on several methods. The method of system analysis allowed to consider the library hub as a system with its structure and elements and made it possible to define the "hub" as a multifunctional and multi-level system with its own zoning space and functions. Kyiv library hubs were taken as the basis for the analysis since the creation of this type of libraries is not a common phenomenon in Ukraine. The creation of Kyiv library hubs is taking place within the framework of a municipal project, which gave an impetus to their appearance in the library space of the city. The authors collected a significant amount of empirical material in the Taras Shevchenko Central Library for Children, the Central District Library of the Svichado library system and the Valia Kotyk

Children's Library. In these library hubs, the authors interviewed employees, surveyed the library space, and searched for information about the activities of library hubs on Internet resources. The observation method was applied both offline and online between February and September 2020. Given quarantine restrictions, the websites of the Tychyna Central Library and Library 115 for Children in Kyiv were also examined in detail. Monitoring of websites and pages of library hubs in social networks allowed to determine the representation of library hubs in the information space. The terminological method was used in the study of scientific views in the Ukrainian scientific environment and library practice on the concept of "library hub" and the presentation of the authors' view on its essence. The comparative analysis method was used to determine the popularity of libraries among users and visitors before and after the transformation changes. The method of generalization allowed to define and characterize the first experience in the organization and use of the transformed space by libraries for children.

The study of the experience of Kyiv library hubs, which began to be created in 2017 as a result of the Kyiv City State Administration project "Modern Library Space - BiblioHUB", set the goal of the study, which is to establish the impact of the transformed library space on the number of visitors and users, to find out the problematic issues that slow down their further development, and to outline ways to overcome difficulties.

For the purposes of the study, the following issues were addressed:

- to study the state of research of library hubs in the scientific literature to determine the authors' interpretation of the concept of "library hub;"
- to analyze the laws and regulations governing the activities of library hubs;
- to explore the transformed library spaces, monitor the websites of library hubs and their pages in social networks in order to structure information on the organization of their innovative information and cultural space;
- to consider the impact of the transformed space of library hubs on the number of visitors and users;
- to study the best practices for creating a modern cultural and information space and the factors of growing popularity of modernized libraries among the population;
- to identify problems that hinder the development of library hubs and outline ways to further develop modernized libraries.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The problems of modernization of libraries, the search for ways of their innovative development and new forms of communication with society are reflected in the works of a large number of scientists. The analysis was based on works that, to a greater or lesser extent, dealt with paradigm shifts in the activities of libraries related to their innovative development. In particular, theoretical issues concerning the definition of "information space," "communication space," "information and communication space," "integrated library space" are covered in the works of K. Lobuzina (Lobuzina, 2012) and O. Dubas (Dubas, 2010); a generalized view of library innovation was revealed in the pages of the Ukrainian Library Encyclopedia by T. Vylegzhanina (Vylegzhanina, 2017); "information and library environment" and its components were studied by K. Berezhna (Berezhna, 2017).

A number of academic studies offer effective forms of organizing library space. In particular, Guo, Y., Chan, C.H., & Yip P.S.F. (Guo, Y., Chan, CH, & Yip PSF, 2017) in order to create equal conditions for providing unlimited access to information, determine the effectiveness of two strategies (community libraries and mobile libraries), as well as the impact of spatial, demographic and socio-economic characteristics on the quality of library support. The influence of environmental design on the quality of user assessment was investigated by C. Cortes-Villalba, I. Gil-Leiva & MA Artacho-Ramirez (Cortes-Villalba, C., Gil-Leiva, I., & Artacho-Ramirez, M.A., 2017). The use of the theory of information horizons to determine the spatial model of information retrieval with

reference to the place of everyday life was studied by A.N. Gibson & S. Kaplan (Gibson, A.N. & Kaplan S., 2017).

The issues of creating a comfortable information and communication space by applying the principles of the emotional design model of Donald Norman to the premises of public libraries of Ukraine were studied by K. Berezhna (Berezhna, 2017). The experience of introducing innovative forms of activity in children's libraries was considered by I. Tiurmenko, L. Khaletska & T. Klynina (Tiurmenko, Khaletska & Klynina, 2018). Integration models for the inclusion of youth in public life by means of communication mechanisms of social interaction are considered in the publication of I. Tiurmenko, L. Bozhuk, L. Khaletska, I. Struk & V. Buriachok (Tiurmenko, Bozhuk, Khaletska, Struk & Buriachok, 2019).

In Ukraine, the term "library hub" is used quite selectively and carefully. The problem of its interpretation is still debatable in academic literature. Thus, K. Berezhna uses the term "library hub" to denote one of the types of modernized information and communication environment of the library (Berezhna, 2017, p. 144). A. Makarova applies the concept of "library hub" to highlight the development trends of modern libraries in foreign countries (Makarova, 2018). In contrast to the scientific literature, these concepts are widely used in journalism, in particular, news media. They are also found in the documents of central and local authorities.

Modern media follow global trends in the interpretation of the term "library hub," considering it as an integrated and strategic model of the library, the necessary elements of which are urbanism, architecture, design, services, staff, PR and branding. The library hub is an architectural and design project that can be applied primarily to libraries under construction or reconstruction. In addition, the activities of such a library hub should be based on the needs of a particular micro-society, the local community (Stremousov, 2017).

Employees of library institutions ambiguously perceive the term "library hub." In particular, in the course of collecting empirical material and conducting interviews with library hub staff, it was found that the traditional library community, working in an innovative environment, does not always accept such new terminology. For most of them, the transformation of the library space has only improved the status of the librarian, working conditions, but has not changed the functions of the library, and therefore there is no reason to change the name "library."

It should be noted that there is no established term for a modernized library institution. In the literature, both the Ukrainian and English names are used.

World experience shapes the view of a modern library as a community center; combination and interaction of knowledge, modern technologies, aesthetic design, communications between people; comfortable high-tech public space with coworking functions, focused on the needs of the individual. The characteristic features of a modern library are multifunctionality and spatial zoning (combination of conference halls, training centers, offices, cafes, auditoriums, retail space, etc.); the possibility of combining the functions of a public library, a place for research, literature archives, state archives, etc.; availability of premises and technical facilities for events, workshops, performances; performing coworking functions (internet access, additional technical equipment, comfortable working conditions); modern ergonomic design; quite a large area; convenient location for visitors (Yarlykova, 2018).

Thus, the analysis of scientific research on the organization and use of the information space of library hubs has not been widely covered in the publications of both scholars and librarians-practitioners. There is no definition of the essence of the concept of "library hub" in modern Ukrainian historiography. In our opinion, the library hub is an integrated cultural and information space that harmoniously combines functional architectural solutions and modern design for ergonomic use of space, modernization changes in the provision of library services, innovative restructuring of library activities to encourage users to intellectual self-development in various fields and the organization of active leisure. Thus, the library hub is not only a "modern renovation" in the library, but a transformational change in its activities. Therefore, it is important to generalize the first

steps in the organization of innovative library space, to identify problematic issues that slow down the introduction of new forms and methods of libraries, not related to the traditional idea of their activities. One cannot disagree with the opinion of scientists that the library hub is a component of innovative activities of libraries.

## **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK OF LIBRARY HUBS IN UKRAINE**

Today in Ukraine there are 16,000 libraries, which have different forms of subordination, but are based on the same principles of organization and functioning and are part of a single library system of Ukraine (Law of Ukraine "On Libraries", Section III). Transformation of library institutions in accordance with modern requirements and expectations, first of all, of users of cultural and information products is a necessary condition for the successful functioning of this industry.

The status, legal and organizational principles of libraries and librarianship in Ukraine are determined by the Law of Ukraine "On Libraries and Library Affairs". It was adopted in 1995, and the last revision took place on October 16, 2017 (Law of Ukraine "On Libraries and Library Affairs"). The editorial changes introduced to the Law during the 2000s were aimed at improving the traditional model of library functioning, taking into account the requirements of the information society. In particular, the objectives of the state policy in the field of librarianship were the introduction of an effective system of electronic book use and circulation of electronic books through libraries; formation and arrangement of e-books, catalogs, databases; creation of conditions for the functioning of electronic libraries, including in a special digital format for people with disabilities (Law of Ukraine "On Libraries and Library Affairs" Section II).

At the same time, innovative changes in the activities of libraries are identifiable quite indirectly, and the creation and management of a new information and library space, to which the library hub belongs, is not mentioned at all. Even with some innovations, the Law does not take into account the administrative and territorial changes associated with the introduction of decentralization policy in Ukraine. The creation of united territorial communities has led to the subordination of a significant part of libraries to local authorities, and thus to the dependence on the capabilities and awareness of the regional elite and local authorities in creating an innovative library space.

Some transformational changes in library activities have been outlined in regulations and state strategic long-term plans.

In particular, the "long-term strategy for the development of Ukrainian culture - a strategy for reform" outlined "the creation of a new architectonics of an integrated library network to provide public access; intensive development and updating of library information resources on electronic media and providing access to them"; modernization of the material and technical base and information and technical infrastructure of libraries" (Long-term strategy, 2016).

The "library development strategy until 2025 "Qualitative changes in libraries to ensure sustainable development of Ukraine"" somewhat specifies the task of library system development. (Library development strategy, 2016). In particular, the Development Strategy focuses on addressing such pressing issues as the creation of a new integrated library system that takes into account the varied models of library networks, integration of library networks and other institutions, ensuring unimpeded access to libraries for people with special needs, etc.; modernization of the material and technical base and information and technological infrastructure of libraries for a "library-friendly space"; updating documentary and information resources of libraries on traditional and electronic media and providing access to them; development of reading through a system of social partnership through the development and implementation of innovative forms of reading support, dissemination of information and technological literacy; development of effective communications for the transformation of the library into a communication platform of society and the promotion of common values.

It should be noted that the processes of library modernization preceded the decisions of the authorities. The transformation of libraries into library hubs or the creation of an innovative space in the library premises in the style of "hub" began in 2016. Local authorities, responding to such innovations, in turn, adopted appropriate programs for cultural development. In particular, the decision of the Kyiv City Council approved a new version of the Kyiv Development Strategy until 2025 (Kyiv Development Strategy, 2017), one of the strategic goals of which is to preserve the historical identity and cultural development in the city of Kyiv. The operational goals in the "Culture" sector are the provision of the cultural industry and creative industries with modern infrastructure, as well as the modernization of libraries and their transformation into modern library spaces - library hubs, etc. (Comprehensive City Target Program, 2019); updating and promoting their cultural and information offer.

These long-term plans were embodied in the Comprehensive City Target Program "Capital Culture: 2019-2021" (hereafter - the Comprehensive Program) (Comprehensive City Target Program, 2019), which was approved at the plenary session of the Kyiv City Council on December 18, 2018.). The Comprehensive Program encouraged local authorities and self-government bodies to turn libraries into open multi-purpose centers of culture, science, education, and multifunctional institutions of social information; to improve the material and technical base, to introduce modern information technologies; to develop new library functions; to adapt the library infrastructure for people with special needs, etc.

## **TRANSFORMATION CHANGES OF LIBRARY SPACE: RESEARCH RESULTS**

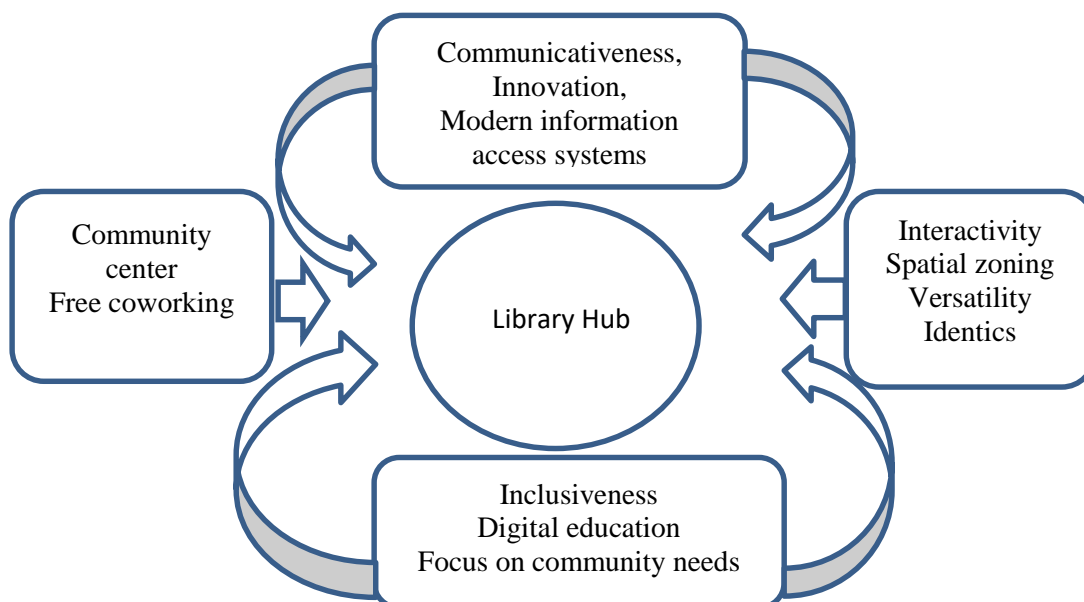
The creation of library hubs in Kyiv and in other cities of Ukraine has shown that such projects are implemented at the expense of local public budgets. This emphasizes the orientation of library hubs to the needs of the local community. The analysis of the projects submitted for consideration to the communities allowed to obtain information about the organization, forms of activity of library hubs and their characteristics. In particular, the following projects were analyzed: "Library Hub: modern space in the Central Library of Zhovti Vody" ("Library Hub", 2018), "Creation in the First Zanasyp: BiblioHub in the Library No. 8" (Kremenichuk) ("Creation in the First Zanasyp", 2017), "BiblioHub: modern space in the central library of the city" (Khmelnitsky) ("BiblioHub: modern space", 2016), "BIBLIO HUB" on the basis of the library №123 (Kyiv) ("BIBLIO HUB", 2017).

The data obtained during the study make it possible to define the library hub as an integrated, open, multifunctional information and cultural space, characterized by multimedia, free access of community members to information, comfort, a combination of traditional library services and e-library services. Thus, the "Library Hub" project of the Central Library of the city of Zhovti Vody is focused on serving civic activists, youth, poets, writers, training participants, city guests, internally displaced persons, war veterans and their families, unemployed, lonely, elderly people, people with disabilities, children from large families or those who are not cared for by their parents ("Library Hub", 2018). The spatial structures of library hubs and the concept of their functioning contribute to the organization of public organizations, the gathering of people united by a common activity or life situation.

Some libraries view the library hub as a free library service. For this purpose, a separate room is allocated for the hub ("Library Hub", 2018). The organization of such a space involves the Internet, the purchase of furniture, the installation of technical equipment, and informing about the work of the library hub. Thus, "Library Hub" ("Library Hub", 2018) provides free services for city residents to learn a foreign language; computer literacy training; organizes leisure and cultural events, art-time, scrapbooking, master classes, trainings, meetings with famous people; provides visitors with information on European integration; conducts free consultations with lawyers via Skype. A library hub can be a modernized space of the entire library, or part of it - a separate room with modern equipment for joint activities, trainings, workshops, thematic meetings, and the like.

Generalized features of Ukrainian library hubs, and in particular of the city of Kyiv, are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows the presence of common features in the modernized library spaces, which turn them into library hubs. The analysis of their activity showed that the transformation of information and cultural space on the basis of its significant modernization makes it possible to use new forms of work, make the space more convenient, comfortable and attractive for visitors, especially young people, and is an innovative channel for attracting citizens to cultural values.



**Figure 1.** Characteristic Features of Ukrainian Library Hubs

Space zoning is also a hallmark of an innovative library in Kyiv. An example is the Svichado Library in the Sviatoshynskiy district of Kyiv, which has been transformed into a modern public space. Its opening took place on December 27, 2019 ("An updated library hub was opened in Kyiv," 2020). Its notable features are the installation of tactile lines for the visually impaired people and zoning of the premises, which makes it possible to provide services in accordance with the needs of users. There is a common public space with an interactive hall for 60 seats, information-intellectual and lounge areas, a mini-library for children, a meeting room, places for individual work with a personal computer and study, workplaces for people with special needs, the library printing center ("The updated Svichado library was opened," 2020). Spatial structure analysis showed that food zones are becoming elements of zoning. Thus, in the Valia Kotyk Children's Library in Kyiv, which was transformed into a library hub, a separate kitchen with a refrigerator, a microwave oven and utensils was created (Hrebin, 2018).

At the same time, studies of the zoning of the library space showed the lack of a unified approach to its organization. Usually, the spatial structure of libraries was decided within the competence of state and local authorities, taking into account the size of the premises, the proposals of librarians and design solutions. The first step towards the unification of the spatial zoning of libraries was made by the independent all-Ukrainian public organization Ukrainian Library Association. In partnership with the Daryna Zholdak Foundation, the project "Four Library Spaces: An Innovative Model of Activity" was developed, which won in 2020 in the grant program of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation. Its implementation is aimed at creating fundamentally new public library spaces and filling them with innovative library and cultural services. The project offers a library model as a combination of four spaces: a learning space, an inspiration space, a meeting place and an event space. The model is considered as a basis for libraries to create their own models of library space functioning (Four Library Spaces, 2020).

The study of the functional purpose of Kyiv library hubs showed that they are primarily public centers, places for development, communication, creativity, work. Along with the organization of access to the book, the means of obtaining knowledge and information are expanding due to new approaches and modern technologies ("A children's library was turned into a modern library hub in Kyiv", 2018). Thus, the library hub is positioned with a comfortable place to work, free coworking, communication, holding or participating in various events. Meetings, presentations, film screenings, openings, festivals, photo exhibitions can be held here, and consultations of teachers, psychologists, medical workers can also be provided (Hristoforov, 2018). A variety of educational programs are offered. For example, the renovated Valia Kotyk Children's Library offers reading of foreign literature from "Bukmal" (a public organization whose purpose is to conduct educational and cultural activities, popularize reading among children and adolescents and disseminate the world's best literary heritage in Ukraine) (Official site: BOKMÅL, 2020), an astronomy course, programming for children and adolescents, a folklore program in conjunction with the Ivan Honchar Museum, an evening lecture program for both adolescents and adults (Boiarynova, 2019).

Since not all library hubs have informational sites due to insufficient funding and staffing, the age and social composition of users and visitors was studied by analyzing projects for the creation and operation of library hubs. Along with adult and young readers who are members of the local community, groups of people united by a common activity or life situation are sometimes singled out. Thus, the "Library Hub" project of the Central Library of the city of Zhovti Vody is focused on serving civic activists, youth, poets, writers, training participants, city guests, internally displaced persons, war veterans and their families, unemployed, lonely, elderly people, people with disabilities, children from large families or those who are not cared for by their parents ("Library Hub", 2018).

The transformation of libraries into modern hubs involves the elimination of the distinction between children and adults. For example, such modernized libraries in Kyiv as the Svichado, the Valia Kotyk Children's Library, the Children's Library No. 115, and the Shevchenko Central Library for Children in Kyiv focus on providing services to both children and adults.

In addition, it was found that an integral element of the activities of library hubs is to provide access to library resources to citizens with special needs. In particular, a public project "BIBLIO HUB for the visually impaired" was implemented in Kyiv on the basis of the Pavlo Tychyna Central District Library of the Dniprovsky District of Kyiv. The library is open to all, but it is especially friendly for the visually impaired, promotes the socialization of blind or partially sighted people in society. For this purpose, special equipment has been installed ("Public Project Presentation," 2018): JAWS for Windows Pro screen access program, which allows blind and partially sighted people to use the Internet, work with electronic Microsoft Office documents, and other software. This program is compatible with the vast majority of specialized software and electronic equipment for the blind and partially sighted, for example, Braille displays and reading machines ("Screen Access Program", 2020); hardware-software computer complex complete with Microsoft Windows 10 Pro software and Microsoft Office software package: "Office H & Business 2016"; stationary electronic video magnifiers TOPAZ XL HD 24 and TOPAZ HD 24 complete with screen magnification software "MAGic Pro" and uninterruptible power supplies.

The Svichado Kyiv Library, which is equipped with tactile lines for the visually impaired, also joined the project "BIBLIO HUB for the visually impaired," as mentioned above (see Figure 2). It is also equipped with appropriate equipment. The Valia Kotyk Children's Library in Kyiv also has special equipment for the visually impaired; a person in a wheelchair can move in all its premises (Boiarynova, 2019), and the library funds contain books in Braille.

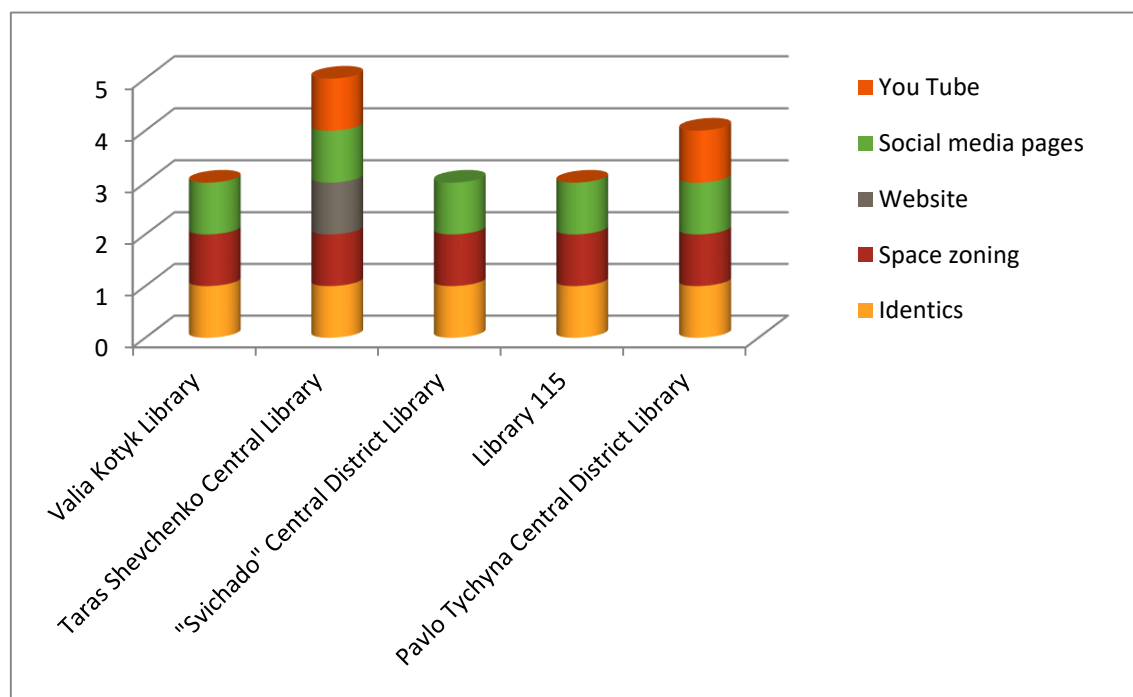




**Figure 2.** Tactile Lines for the Visually Impaired and Space Zoning of the Central District Library "Svichado"

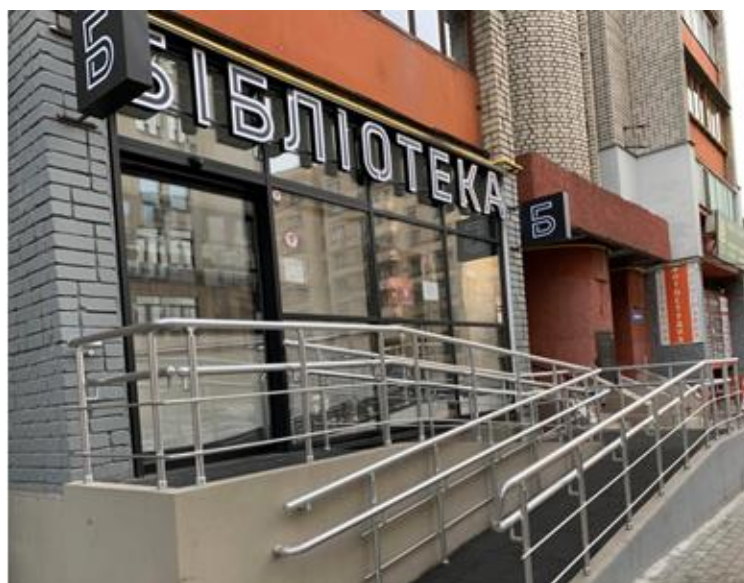
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/svichado.kiev.library/photos/a.212721722674098/212721726007431>

Library hubs actively use the Internet to popularize their activities. The representation of Kyiv library hubs in the information space is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Structure of the information and cultural library space

The analysis of the transformed library spaces in Kyiv reveals common features and differences of the studied objects. All library hubs received new identics - a logo, a special color palette, a single style of external and internal communication (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Identities of the Valia Kotyk Children's Library  
Source: <https://cbspodil.org.ua/biblioteky-tsbs/dlya-ditej/vali-kotyka/>

A common feature is also the internal zoning of the library space. Thus, the internal space of the Central District Library "Svichado" consists of reference and information, communication and information, interactive, information and intellectual zones and a "minibib" for younger users (game area). The learning space of the Taras Shevchenko Central Library for Children is shown in Figure 5.



**Figure 5.** Learning space of the Taras Shevchenko Central Library for Children  
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/shevkiylib/photos/a.116624345156423/1621836937968482>

Zoning and updated identities of the library space makes it more understandable, easy to use, and attractive to users and visitors of different age groups. This is reflected in the relevant statistics on the number of users and visitors of library hubs.

The offline space is complemented by the online space of library hubs. One of the researched library hubs has its own website. The rest of the library hubs do not have separate websites, information about them and their activities is presented on the sites of the centralized library systems of the relevant districts of Kyiv. Four library hubs have pages on the social network "Facebook". The Taras Shevchenko Central Children's Library also has an Instagram page, which, however, turned out to be inaccessible. The Pavlo Tychyna Central District Library also has an Instagram page. Two of the

researched library hubs have a channel on YouTube. The availability of online space expands, diversifies the channels of communication of library hubs with users, creates a promotion of the activities of transformed libraries, and contributes to the growth of their popularity.

The study was limited by the lack of the necessary open statistical information on both the websites of the libraries themselves and the authorities to which these libraries are subordinated. Only the Central District Library "Svichado" provided an opportunity to study the reports and statistics in full, which allowed us to trace the change in the dynamics of its attendance by different categories of the population during 2017-2020. The generalized results of the obtained data are shown in Table 1.

The data presented in the table indicate an increase in the number of users after the reorganization of the library "Svichado" into a library hub - the number of registered users in the first half of 2020 is approaching the number of registered users during the full 2019. It should be noted that the activities of the studied library hub took place mainly under quarantine restrictions in the period from March 12 to June 12, 2020 in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. This explains the decrease in direct user visits to the library and at the same time the significant increase in visits to its website

**Table 1. Dynamics of Library Visits (Current Archive)**

| №  | Indicator   | 2017  | 2018       | 2019       | 1 <sup>st</sup> Half of 2020 |
|----|---|-------|------------|------------|------------------------------|
| 1. | Number of users registered in the single registration file, persons | 4779  | 5212       | 5786       | 5331                         |
| 2. | Of these, under the age of 18, persons                              | 1134  | 1161       | 1290       | No data available            |
| 3. | Number of library visits, persons                                   | 88489 | 37919      | 36965      | 13533                        |
| 4. | Number of visits to the library website, persons                    | 3509  | 0 (Repair) | 0 (Repair) | 80000                        |

## **DISCUSSION: IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS AND PROPOSING SOLUTIONS**

The study identified three groups of problems that complicate the functioning of library hubs. The first group includes financial problems. The residual principle of financing the library sphere does not allow attracting young people and giving impetus to the process of innovative restructuring of libraries, especially in rural areas and newly formed united territorial communities. At present, the percentage of modern libraries or hubs in the premises of untransformed libraries in comparison with their rather significant number remains insignificant. The management of many library hubs is forced to look for investments to create a modern library environment.

The second group of problems concerns the introduction of radical changes in the legal framework relating to librarianship. Despite the editorial changes made to the Law of Ukraine "On Library and Library Affairs", the evaluation of library activities and stimulating the work of librarians is carried out according to the old principles. The conducted research has revealed the existence of an unreformed system for assessing the quality of libraries according to the old indicators, traditional for the transition to market relations system. In particular, serving more users than required by state regulations remains unprofitable, as the legislation does not provide any additional incentives or support. State and local authorities outline in regulatory documents the ways of library development and financing. The legislation does not clearly define the criteria for encouraging librarians, but only emphasizes the possibility of setting allowances and surcharges within the approved payment fund (Law of Ukraine on Libraries and Library Affairs, Article 30), leaving it to the discretion of the authorities and local governments. Given the fact of innovative transformation, the lack of decent pay is a significant reason that in a renewed library environment does not encourage librarians to use new forms and methods of providing library services.

The third group of problems is related to the "personnel shortage". The collection of empirical material revealed an urgent need for young specialists in the library field, and especially in the IT sphere. This affected the level and quality of representation of library hubs on the Internet and the

lack of independent websites in some of the already updated libraries (Valia Kotyk Children's Library) and their lack of information content.

Thus, the ways of further development of library hubs depend on the solution of the outlined problems. The priority is to update the legal framework, in particular, to amend the Law of Ukraine "On Libraries and Library Affairs". It should be noted that the Law of Ukraine "On Libraries and Library Affairs" has undergone only editorial changes that have not significantly changed the forms of library activities and their evaluation. Therefore, the provisions of the Law must be brought in line with modern needs and requirements of IFLA. Expanding online communications by creating informative, easy-to-use and accessible websites for various categories of users, as well as presenting the innovative activities of library hubs on pages of popular social networks and video hosting, remains relevant for library hubs. Given the limited experience of Ukraine in organizing an innovative library environment, there is a need for expert study of the experience of library hubs and the creation on this basis of an innovative model of Ukrainian libraries to organize their spatial structure.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study summarizes the first experience of organizing library hubs in Kyiv and to some extent in Ukraine. It testifies to the effective use of innovative forms of activity to attract users and visitors to cultural, educational and information resources. Library hubs are becoming more popular among various categories of the population. The Ukrainian experience of library hubs also testifies to the greater involvement of transformed libraries in the surrounding micro-society and greater opportunities for the community to influence the creation of modern libraries.

At the same time, the lack of well-organized online communications in the library hubs, in particular, their own websites, blogs, pages in social networks, limits the access of users to information resources. The legislative base of library hubs as one of the models of a modern library also needs to be improved.

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