VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY AS A FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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ABSTRACT

The findings of the research reported in this paper are pointing to a discrepancy between high assessments for the significance of volunteering to preserving historical-cultural heritage and low levels of activity in this respect on the part of residents. The findings are illustrating the prevalent perception of volunteer work through the stereotypes of voluntary-compulsory forms of stimulating public activity. Most of the participants in an author-conducted survey listed the following reasons behind low levels of participation on the part of Russians in programs and movements of cultural volunteering: social apathy, lack of time, exorbitant requirements for volunteers and financial costs. The findings have revealed fragmentary interest in volunteer activity, which tends to fade away quickly due to being busy and overwork. Most youth are oriented toward volunteer activity that requires help in organizing mass major activities conducted by federal and regional authorities. The major issues in the development of cultural volunteering in Russia currently are: an information vacuum around volunteer activity at the local level, lack of social demand for volunteering and lack of readymade trilateral models for interaction among local authorities, state-funded organizations and volunteers. Respondents noted considerable gaps in the organization of volunteer work, lack of funding for cultural volunteering and lack of measures for popularizing it among youth.

The primary objective behind the development of this kind of model for organizational interaction is boosting the professional level of volunteers, achieving synergetic effect from the participation of all interested parties in the interests of facilitating the social-economic development of a municipal unit, conserving cultural-historical heritage sites and enhancing the quality of the operation of sites within the cultural sphere. The benefits of employing this model include the possibility of properly preparing youth as potential volunteer movement participants, monitoring the needs of municipal units for volunteer help and making an effective use of and integrating scientific, educational and organizational-personnel resources. The model brings forward the following set of mechanisms for engaging youth in volunteer activity for the purposes of conserving Russia's cultural-historical heritage sites: coordinating the work of volunteers at the local level, providing information support for volunteer activity and training volunteers. The authors propose a model for organizational interaction between local authorities, institutions within the cultural sphere of municipal units and educational organizations. **Keywords:** Youth, Volunteer Movement, Cultural Heritage, Tourism Attractiveness of a Destination.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization and integration trends in societal development have been translating into the growth of the tourism industry as one of the leading and more dynamically developing sectors of the world economy (Veretekhina, Medvedeva, Vinichenko, Demchenko, Karyagina & Makushkin, 2017). In this context, identifying and choosing a promising tourism market and analyzing and forecasting demand for tourism trips is becoming a fundamental basis of the economy of many advanced and developing nations around the world and is crucial to guiding investment into the development of sites forming destination's historical-cultural potential and their infrastructure (Frolova, Rogach, Kabanova & Ryabova, 2016; Larionova, Suslova, Povorina & Vinogradova, 2015). Amongst the wide variety of possible types of tourism, a prominent place is held by cultural tourism, which is aimed at exploring the cultural heritage and traditions of various peoples and nations around the world (Gagartseva & Kaloeva, 2014).

The major dimensions of cultural tourism are visits to historical monuments and memorial places; an interest in longstanding traditional or modern staged cultural activities ("events"); visits to religious buildings and pilgrimage sites; visits to monuments of antiquity and archeological sites; an interest in the sites, objects and phenomena of ethnic culture (Sadokhin & Grushevitskaya, 2000). An area's cultural-historical heritage is the basis which, above all, shapes its market for tourism services (Rogach, Frolova, Ryabova & Kabanova, 2017). Preserving its historical look, protecting and restoring its monuments of culture and architectural complexes and devoting proper attention to its national characteristics, traditions and customs may help cultivate its tourism attractiveness (Kabanova, Frolova, Medvedeva, Vinichenko & Shimanskaya, 2016). Thus, to a known degree, spaces formed by cultural-historical sites determine the localization of tourist flows and excursion route directions (Andreev, 2007).

Due to the increasing significance of developing the tourism industry and conserving the cultural-historical heritage of regions, the governments of various nations are engaging considerable resources (Frolova, Ryabova, Rogach, Kabanova & Vetrova, 2017; Vinogradova, Larionova, Povorina, Suslova & Korsunova, 2015). This primarily involves employing the economic resource to preserve and reproduce cultural-historical heritage sites. However, there are a number of researchers who converge in the opinion that the limitedness and non-renewability of the economic resource may diminish the expected effect, whereas the social resource, which is inexhaustible, may open up new vistas of opportunity for boosting the tourism potential of regions (Logacheva, 2014). In a climate of augmenting globalization trends, special significance is getting attached to such component of the social resource as the volunteer resource (cultural volunteering), which has been seeing wider application as of late.

Volunteer activity in the sphere of culture is associated with voluntary help made possible through the active personal participation of volunteers for the purposes of supporting cultural projects and activities aimed at attracting residents to top works of world art (Gorlova, 2016).

The activity and efficiency of volunteer movements may facilitate improvements in the quality of life and ensure the balanced social-economic development of regions. In Western countries, it is often volunteer activity that helps lay the groundwork for one's future professional career (McAllum, 2014). Based on estimates from Russian experts, volunteer activity in the area of culture implies active personal participation and assistance on the part of

volunteers for the purposes of helping support representations of historical-cultural heritage (Shekova, 2009). In this context of interpreting cultural volunteering, the highest priority objectives are conserving and promoting the cultural assets of Russian civilization and fostering in Russians a sense of cultural identity. Active engagement of youth in volunteer programs helps not just popularize the cultural sphere among the "new generation", but also preserve the nation's "historical memory" and cultural assets, including via the cultivation of a sense of civic responsibility. Yet, at the same, one should keep in mind that, despite being a powerful auxiliary component in the development of the tourism attractiveness of regions, volunteering ought not to serve as a substitute for activity that falls within the state's area of responsibility.

Based on the findings of a monitoring evaluation conducted by independent experts, almost all regions across Russia are home to nongovernmental organizations engaged in the development of volunteer programs (Arseneva, 2010). Apart from officially registered associations for volunteer activity, there are also numerous unregistered organizations operating at the local territorial level, which tend to have only few members though. Volunteers engaged in cultural activities help actively develop interregional and interstate ties with the historical homeland, participate in social-humanitarian events and programs and conduct research in the area of regional studies and history.

Yet, at the same time, as a social resource for the development of tourism cultural volunteering has yet to be put to worthy use in Russia. Right now, volunteering in the area of culture is mostly viewed only as a promising measure for boosting in Russians a sense of civic responsibility for conserving their historical and cultural heritage. Under the new conditions governing the development of the tourism industry, like the wholesale commercialization of culture, devaluation of sociocultural forms of behavior and suppression of some of the positive images of the "historical memory" of Russian citizens, it is crucial to know why cultural volunteering does not have wide public support.

ANALYSIS OF THE LATEST PUBLICATIONS ON THE ISSUE

Issues of a theoretical-methodological nature dealing with the significance of the potential of the volunteer movement to the sustainable development of regions and cultivation of the tourism attractiveness of destinations have been examined by (Gorlova, 2016; Logacheva, 2014). Arseneva (2010) has explored the psychological-pedagogical foundations of developing and implementing innovative projects related to youth volunteering. Youth's motives for participation in the volunteer movement have been investigated by (Sundeen & Raskoff, 1995; Ishizawa, 2014). Tang (2006) has provided a rationale for the significance of developing relevant resources for lifelong volunteering. The effect of the social context of volunteer work on the satisfaction and commitment of volunteers has been examined by (Wilson, 2012; Fajardo, Lott & Contreras, 2014). Additionally, (Milligan & Fyfe, 2005; Law, Shek & Ma, 2013) have provided a rationale for the conclusion about the social system-family, school and peers-having considerable influence on adolescents in the context of their participation in volunteering. Issues related to organizing volunteer tourism and intercultural exchanges have been explored by scholars (Koleth, 2014; Wright, 2014; Miller & Mair, 2015). Issues in conserving cultural heritage have been investigated by (Alberini & Longo, 2009; Pavlidis et al., 2007). The role of cultural tourism in the development of cities and "gentrification" of the city's inner districts has been examined by scholar Wickens (2017).

Despite the considerable empirical evidence on the subject, a whole range of issues revealing the causes and factors that ensure a high level of involvement of youth in volunteer movements in the field of cultural tourism remains unexamined. The issues of cooperation between government bodies, volunteers and public organizations to preserve the objects of cultural and historical heritage, along with development of the tourist attractiveness of territories require further examination.

The purpose of this study is to analyze Russian practices in organizing cultural volunteering, as well as establish the reasons behind the low degree of engagement among youth in volunteer projects related to conserving the cultural heritage of regions and enhancing the tourism attractiveness of destinations.

METHODS

The study employs both a set of general theoretical methods, like analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction, generalization, theoretical modeling and a set of empirical methods, like document analysis, sociological surveys of residents and experts. With support from the All-Russian Council of Local Government, a survey of experts (officials in the local authorities of municipal units across the Russian Federation) was conducted to analyze trends in the development of the tourism and cultural potential of Russia's municipal units and identify some of the limiting factors in the activity of local authorities.

Multistage sampling was used to select the respondents among the population. The first step was to select the municipalities of the Moscow region (N=21), providing a quota representation of small, medium and large cities in the region. Rural settlements were excluded from the sample due to their low representation. In the second step of selection, the authors used a random sample of respondents (N=315), which provided representation of 47% of men and 53% of women in the age category 16-55 years. Online survey has become the leading method of public opinion research. However, the limitations of this method included: a sample bias due to incomplete access to the Internet, technical difficulties in filling the questionnaire and communication problems (incorrect interpretation of certain questionnaire questions by the respondents, inadequate response, omission of certain questions).

RESULTS

The findings of this research study have revealed diverse evaluation of respondents regarding the content-related portion of the historical-cultural potential of Russian cities (Figure 1). More specifically, on the one hand, it is worth noting the fact that most respondents acknowledged the historical-cultural value of Russian cities. Here, 54.6% stated Russian civilization has a "vast" historical-cultural heritage, with 45.9% saying there are positive images of Russians' collective historical memory, 32.8% noting the historical-cultural originality of Russian people, 21.4% speaking of the integrational and civilizational significance of Russian cultural assets, etc.

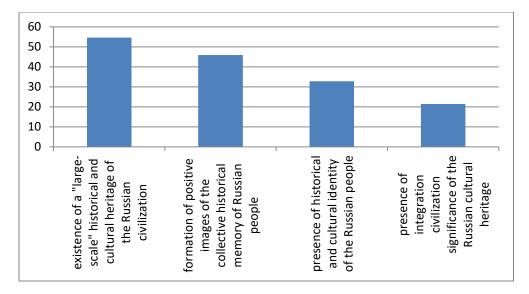


Figure 1 ASSESSMENT OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL VALUE OF THE RUSSIAN CITIES BY THE RESPONDENTS

On the other hand, with the exception of Russia's traditional "cultural" places and commonly known sights of high historical significance (e.g. the Kremlin, the Golden Ring, Petergof, etc.), more than half of the respondents were unable to properly bring to light the value-based content of the historical-cultural heritage of Russian cities (historical-cultural sights, folk arts and crafts, event activities, etc.). Only 9.1% of the respondents preferred tours providing deep penetration into the culture and life of various peoples of Russia.

The study revealed the following correlation: the smaller the respondent age threshold, the greater the share of respondents with low levels of knowledge of the historical-cultural potential of Russian cities. This circumstance imparts special relevance to the process of engaging youth in the development of cultural tourism, including as volunteers.

According to official data of the Public Opinion Foundation (POF), a significant percentage of Russians have gaps in the knowledge of their cultural and historical heritage. Whereas, most of them were convinced that under today's conditions preserving Russia's historical-cultural heritage is becoming a necessary condition for the development of the tourism industry. In view of the above, we believe that special attention in ensuring this process ought to be devoted to neutralizing the negative impact of today's global challenges, like the falsification of world history, amplification of the propaganda of lifestyles predicated on the cult of violence and national and religious intolerance. Some respondents voiced the opinion that the commercialization of historical-cultural heritage we are witnessing today may further facilitate declines in demand for cultural tourism among Russians. 49.6% stated that the situation is compounded by the fact that the overwhelming majority of Russians are characterized by low levels of responsibility for preserving their cultural-historical heritage, while 61.3% noted low levels of civil activity with respect to issues of cultural volunteering (61.3%).

Based on the study's findings, over $\frac{2}{3}$ of the respondents were convinced that cultural volunteering is one of the key resources for the development of Russian tourism (Figure 2). Most respondents suggested that volunteer movements should play a leading role in preserving cultural-historical heritage. Some attached special significance to the need to engage youth in

helping promote the cultural assets of Russian civilization and preserve the "historical memory" of the Russian people. However, acknowledging the importance of volunteer activity has yet to be "backed" by relevant deeds on the part of respondents, with 87.2% confessing to have never been part of volunteer movements in the area of culture and helping improve the tourism attractiveness of Russian cities. The majority of respondents lacked proper knowledge of the content and specificity of cultural volunteering in Russia. When it came to specifying their primary source of information about cultural volunteering, most of the respondents listed private contacts (57.1%). About $\frac{2}{3}$ of the respondents said they knew someone who was part of volunteer movements, although just 13.7% of these movements were concerned with the development of the tourism sector.

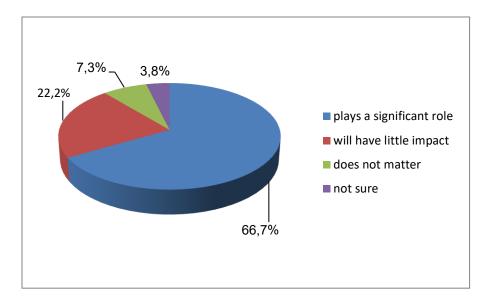


Figure 2 ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF CULTURAL VOLUNTEERING IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT BY THE RESPONDENTS

Thus, the authors have identified a discrepancy between high assessments for the significance of volunteering to preserving historical-cultural heritage and low levels of civil activity in this respect on the part of residents. This aspect points, on the one hand, to gaps in the area of attracting volunteers to the cause of conserving cultural heritage and, on the other hand, to significant potential for social activity in the development of Russia's tourism industry. Right now, as is evidenced by the study's findings, Russia is lagging considerably behind other nations in terms of the development of cultural volunteering programs.

Due to the above situation, it appears to be worth establishing the causes of the low degree of engagement in volunteer movements among Russians. Based on the study's findings, it can be concluded that leading the way among the reasons behind the low degree of participation among Russians in programs and movements related to cultural volunteering are the following: social apathy (77.4%), lack of time (78.4%), exorbitant requirements for volunteers (56.5%) and financial costs (50.3%). Over half of the respondents within the older age group were found to have a fragmentary interest in volunteer activity, which tends to fade away quickly due to being busy and overwork (Figure 3).

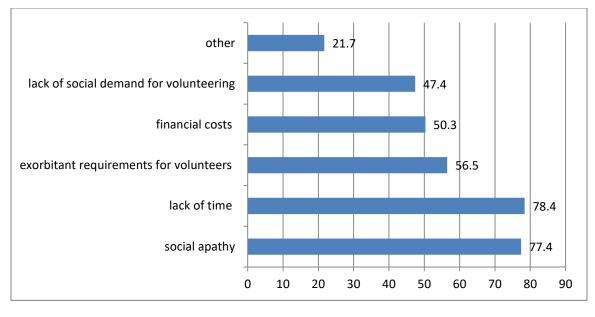


Figure 3 REASONS BEHIND LOW LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMS AND MOVEMENTS AMONG RUSSIANS (%)

The study is paying particular attention to the answers of respondents under the age of 20 as potential representatives of volunteer movements. Respondents from the middle and senior age groups demonstrate stable employment, which implies an absence or a low level of inclusion in voluntary associations. Nevertheless, their opinion is important for assessing the prospects and directions for development of voluntary activities in the field of cultural tourism.

Respondents aged under 20 years old were characterized by the following notion of cultural volunteering: "the role of a person whose job is to welcome/see you off during mass activities of a sociocultural nature" (34.6%); "trendy, promising and symbolic" (41.1%); "an association of fellow-thinkers based on a positive attitude toward life" (37.2%); "the right thing to do which is important in society"-12.9 %.

Members of this age group appeared to express more than others the desire to take part in mass activities aimed at the development of the tourism industry (up to 23% of respondents). Among the reasons they listed were the following: "I myself am a consumer of these services" (24.8%), "I want to have some experience working in tourism" (31.9%), "I'm in search of new friends and fellow-thinkers" (20.2%); "I like doing it" (21.3%). Based on the research data, it could be concluded that the dominant reasons for the young people to participate in volunteer activity were personal interest, inclusion in the circle of like-minded people, desire to expand the range of knowledge and skills for future work.

Russians, also, do not tend, save for a few exceptions, to view cultural volunteering as a possible path for their professional activity. Existing practices related to participation in volunteer activity are characteristic of students with culturological and tourism training backgrounds. Based on the study's findings, the youth environment is characterized by a lack of humanistic motivation of volunteering, which signals the need to diversify efforts aimed at galvanizing volunteer labor in terms of both interaction and symbols. The author-conducted survey identified substantial transformation of Russians' motives for in volunteer programs. In the past, the highest priority was altruistic labor for the benefit of the state, whereas the image of

the present-day volunteer is mostly associated with the aspiration to gain relevant experience and special skills and get connected. For the most part, cultural volunteering is represented by young people who are studying, for which reason a high priority for them is acquiring new knowledge and skills, with volunteer activity being viewed by them as a direct path to a well-paid job.

Based on the data collected as part of this study, it may be concluded that most of Russia's small and medium-sized cities are currently lacking the proper conditions for the development of volunteer movements. Officials in local authorities are overloaded with routine work and focused on resolving short-term current issues (Frolova, 2016). In a climate where there is a need to adopt a "patch and mend" approach and take care of top-priority lines of activity in the area of transportation, housing-communal and social infrastructure, issues related to organizing volunteer activity are not of a high priority. Respondents noted considerable gaps in the organization of volunteer work, lack of funding for cultural volunteering and lack of measures for popularizing it among youth. To make things worse, there is an information vacuum around volunteer activity at the local level. Heads of local authorities (73%) noted the problem of low-level information support of volunteer activity. According to experts, such information resources as local authorities' media and websites were underused. Moreover, more than half of the experts (56%) were displeased with the quality of communication on volunteer issues with representatives of the local community.

Compared with large cities, as well as those with generally recognized samples of the historical-cultural heritage of Russian civilization, small and medium-sized settlements do not create demand for volunteer activity. Low levels of trust in local authorities among residents (76.5%) are facilitative of low levels of their preparedness to participate in volunteer activity initiated by the former. 25% of respondents, that have negative experience of participating in volunteer activity, characterize it as "voluntary-forced labor", "free labor force", etc. It is also a certain degree of wariness felt, based on the survey results, by Russians about volunteer activity that is reducing today the chances of making practical use of cultural volunteering in Russia's tourism industry.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study have helped establish that volunteer activity, which is traditionally perceived as socially significant in advanced countries, is closely intertwined in Russia with a number of other reasons, like having a personal interest in it, being able to resolve the issue of loneliness, or being keen to expand one's range of knowledge and skills. The findings are illustrating the prevalent perception of volunteer work through the stereotypes of voluntary-compulsory forms of stimulating public activity.

Based on the results of the authors' survey, many respondents see promise in the use of innovative programs for educating youth in schools. These, above all, are programs that should help ensure the historical-cultural orientation of Russian youth and foster in young people a sustainable interest in national culture and historical heritage. According to most of the respondents, educational institutions need to organize elective courses, hobby groups and clubs on tourism, which could be set up as a structural unit or a public association, factoring in local characteristics and learners' interests. Tourism school organizations could, above all, act as consulting centers, where one could hold theoretical and practical classes on arranging and conducting trips, tourist rallies and local-lore and environmental expeditions. These types of tourism activity offer substantive leisure opportunities, could help expand one's knowledge in the area of ecology, geography and biology, as well as help foster an active civil stance in the

younger generation. Cultivating in students a sense of responsibility for conserving their culturalhistorical heritage is becoming the first step in the development of cultural volunteering in Russia.

Nearly half of the respondents believe that motivating residents to engage in volunteer activity is not something that is to be done in background mode. The development of cultural volunteering in Russia requires popularizing it among various social groups and public associations. The lack of readymade trilateral models for interaction among local authorities, state-funded organizations and volunteers is becoming a substantial limitation impeding the development of volunteer movements in the area of culture. Right now, there is some experience of engaging youth as part of organizing various event activities, like one-off special events aimed at helping veterans, retired citizens and orphanages. However, when it comes to regular volunteer activity in the area of preserving and foregrounding cultural-historical heritage, there are considerable gaps and more work is needed with regard to issues related to interacting with volunteers, creating a favorable environment for their activity and providing proper information support for the volunteer movement.

The following could be used as possible mechanisms for engaging youth in volunteer activity for the purposes of conserving Russia's cultural-historical heritage sites: coordinating the work of volunteers at the local level, providing information support for volunteer activity, putting in place an educational environment for preparing volunteers and developing volunteer activity based on a model for organizational interaction.

Coordinating the Work of Volunteers at the Local Level Comprises the Following Strands of Activity

- 1. Planning volunteer work on the more salient and significant issues in the culture of municipal units; establishing relevant goals and objectives;
- 2. Conducting activities on attracting and training volunteers, enhancing their qualifications and supervising them; ensuring the motivation of participants;
- 3. Ensuring the interaction of volunteers with one another, work coordinators, municipal administration staff and personnel at relevant state-funded organizations regarding all relevant strands of activity (assisting museums, helping conserve architectural monuments, helping foreground cultural heritage, etc.); organizing work factoring in the individual needs and interests of volunteers;
- 4. Assessing the performance of volunteers.

Providing Information Support for Volunteer Activity

- 1. Cultivating a fashion for or fostering a trend toward engaging in volunteer activity and creating a positive image for volunteering (general symbols and symbols for particular projects).
- 2. Engaging local mass media to cover planned activities, putting in place a single channel for informing people of volunteer work and engaging the information support of thematic groups on social networks.
- 3. Organizing and holding forums for volunteers; reinforcing and developing the volunteer status.

Putting in Place an Educational Environment for Preparing Volunteers

Determining the individual characteristics of volunteers and unlocking their potential; fostering communication competencies, which involves mastering relevant interpersonal interaction techniques and acquiring skills related to efficient work in a team; fostering the key professional competencies needed in a certain area of volunteer work.

Developing Volunteer Activity Based on a Model for Organizational Interaction

Between the following subjects: local authorities, institutions within the sociocultural sphere of a municipal unit and institutions of higher learning. The primary objective behind the development of this kind of model for organizational interaction is not just to boost the professional level of volunteers but also achieve a synergetic effect from the participation of all interested parties in the interests of facilitating the social-economic development of municipal units, conserve cultural-historical heritage sites, enhance the quality of the operation of sites within the cultural sphere and boost the level of trust in local authorities among residents.

CONCLUSION

The study has revealed a certain contradiction between high estimates of importance of volunteering in preserving historical and cultural heritage (66.7%) and low degree of population activity in this area (87% of respondents have never participated in voluntary movements). During the survey, the following reasons were determined as dominant for non-participation of Russian people in cultural volunteering: social apathy (77.4%), caused, among other things, by the low level of confidence in the actions of the authorities; lack of time due to employment (78.4%); excessive demands to volunteers (56.5%); financial costs (50.3%), etc.

The findings of the research reported in this paper have revealed the following issues in the development of volunteer activity for the purposes of conserving and foregrounding culturalhistorical heritage sites:

- 1. Youth being mainly oriented toward volunteer activity associated with the organization of mass activities. It is this area that appears to be most popular among youth at the moment. Based on the authors' findings, about one-third of the nation's young people (32%) are convinced that volunteer activity is about lending a hand in organizing large mass activities conducted by federal and regional authorities. Most youth (34.6%) feel it is mainly about help in organizing meetings and accommodating guests, coordinating the interaction between participants, etc. Potential volunteers tend to perceive the organization of mass activities as high-status activity (41.1%) that may benefit them in building their career path (31.9%). However, at the local level-in a climate of lack of funding-the most sought-after are volunteer practices aimed at the development, foregrounding and preservation of cultural heritage and the development of cultural tourism.
- 2. Information vacuum around volunteer activity at the local level and a lack of social demand for volunteering in municipal units. This has been mentioned by 73% of experts. Local authority officials are overloaded with routine work and focused on resolving short-term current issues. In a climate where there is a need to adopt a "patch and mend" approach and take care of top-priority lines of activity in the area of transportation, housing-communal and social infrastructure, issues related to organizing volunteer activity are not of a high priority. Officials at corresponding divisions of local authorities are not prepared to employ volunteer labor, which requires intense activity and a great deal of organizational-personnel, information and social resources.
- 3. A lack of readymade trilateral models for interaction among local authorities, state-funded organizations and volunteers. Right now, there is some experience engaging youth as part of organizing various event activities, like one-off special events aimed at helping veterans, retired citizens and orphanages. However, when it comes to regular volunteer activity in the area of preserving and foregrounding cultural-historical heritage, there are considerable gaps and more work is needed with regard to issues related to interacting with volunteers, creating a favorable environment for their activity and providing proper information support for the volunteer movement.
- 4. Low levels of trust in local authorities among residents (76.5%). Residents do not trust local authorities, do not see themselves as subjects of local government and see local government as an extension of state authority. Low levels of trust in local authorities among residents, the information closeness of the system of municipal government and corrupt practices determine the high degree of alienation from local

government among residents and low levels of their readiness to engage in volunteer activity initiated by local authorities.

Possible promising mechanism for engaging youth in volunteer activity for the purposes of conserving cultural and historical heritage sites is the author-proposed model for organized interaction among all interested subjects-local authorities, institutions within the cultural sphere of municipal units and educational organizations capable of active work with young students. This network model is designed to ensure the preparation of students engaged in volunteer activity, monitoring of the needs of a municipal unit for volunteer help, coordination of work, assessment of the efficiency of volunteer projects and efficient employment and integration of scientific, educational and organizational-personnel resources.

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