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Gorlova, N. I., All-Russian Archival Science and Records Management Research Institute, Moscow, Russia

Archival Volunteering, Review of International Experience in Preserving Historical Memory and

Cultural Heritage

Abstract

The article explores a little-studied topic in Russian research society: archival volunteering. Volunteering, as a social phenomenon and a constantly evolving form of social service, has recently found a new direction for its development: archival work. Volunteers act as transmitters of historical memory and directly participate in the process of reconstructing the past. The specifics of this area of volunteer work are shaped by the specific requirements of volunteer organizers for participants in these unpaid practices, their rights, obligations, responsibilities, and the rules of work within institutions. The study analyzes the implementation of successful public projects and socially significant initiatives to preserve historical memory and strengthen spiritual and moral values in archives in foreign countries (Australia, Great Britain, Germany, Denmark, Norway, and others) with the active participation of concerned citizens – volunteers. The article discusses current formats for cross-sector collaboration between archives in implementing volunteer programs with traditional partners such as regional and local non-profit organizations specializing in the preservation of historical memory and cultural heritage (historical societies, genealogical clubs, associations, and unions), higher and secondary educational institutions, and volunteer centers. Through standards and principles for organizing unpaid work in archives, the specifics of volunteer management are revealed – from the specifics of communication with potential volunteer candidates and information support to training volunteers within their obligations and preventing burnout. The author focuses on the socio-demographic profile of modern volunteers in international archives, as well as on studying the motivations behind socially significant practices in the field of historical memory preservation. The methodological basis for this comprehensive study of archival volunteering is the generally accepted principles of a systems approach and objectivity in historical science, as well as the integrated use of diverse sources. The following methods were used: analysis of statistical data, local archival documents, and generalization and systematization of the results of empirical research by foreign authors. The article is intended for Russian archival specialists involved in project activities and considering the involvement of volunteer resources as a promising means of building productive institutional work.

Keywords

Archive, archival documents, volunteering, volunteer management, sources, historical memory, crowdsourcing projects, motivation, socio-demographic portrait of a volunteer.

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About authors

Gorlova Natalia Ivanovna, Doctor of Historical Sciences, All-Russian Archival Science and Records Management Research Institute, Leading Researcher, Moscow, Russia,
8-919-777-86-72, Gorlovanat@yandex.ru

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