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CITIZEN SCIENCE AS A COMPONENT OF OPEN SCIENCE: THE PLACE AND ROLE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES FOR KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE IN LITHUANIA AND UKRAINE

ABSTRACT. Objective. *To present the exchange of knowledge about citizen science as a component of open science, as well as to show the place and role of academic libraries in Lithuania and Ukraine.* ***Methods.*** *The research is based on the following methods: a) theoretical — generalization, b) empirical — comparison, c) prognostic — informative and d) systematization.* ***Results.*** *The study concerns the analysis of the practice of using citizen science as a component of open science and the formation of the experience of academic libraries in European countries, with the help of knowledge exchange in Lithuania and Ukraine.* ***Conclusions****. The result of the study determined: 1) the role of library of Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania) in the formation of participatory practices as a contribution of citizens (non-scientists) to the creation of knowledge; 2) steps and recommendations for the implementation in Ukraine of the direction of citizen science as a strategy at the state and institutional level, as well as in planning the activities of the academic library through the implementation of international and European experience.*

KEYWORDS: *citizen science; academic libraries; Ukraine; Lithuania; Mykolas Romeris University; Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University.*

INTRODUCTION. Changing the culture of science and focusing on the scientific benefits for society is now a well-established anchoring for open science and give a clear connection to citizen science practice and values. Open science values are perfectly summarized in the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science as: quality and integrity; collective benefit; equality and fairness, and; diversity and inclusion. The culture of open science is about adopting these values in such areas as collaboration, research assessment, people's well-being, and delivering on equality and inclusion (Open Science Meets Citizen Science — A Guide — LIBER Europe, n.d.)

Citizen science, also known as crowd science, crowd-sourced science, civic science, networked science, is the concept of conducting scientific research by amateur volunteers and non-professional scientists using crowdsourcing and crowdfunding. Formally, citizen science is defined as "the systematic collection and analysis of data, the development of technologies, the study of natural phenomena, and the dissemination of these types of research by scientists working on an amateur basis." Citizen science is sometimes called "public participation in scientific research." (Citizen science — Wikipedia (Ukraine), n.d.). Participation in citizen science projects also educates the public about the scientific process and increases awareness about different topics. Some schools incorporate citizen science projects as part of their teaching curricula for this very purpose. More recently, libraries have also emerged as community hubs for citizen science (Citizen science — Wikipedia, n.d.).

The experience of implementing citizen science activities in academic libraries has been studied by scientists from different countries of the world (Mumelaš et al., 2026; Rammutloa, 2026) and the European Union (Kaarsted et al., 2023; Martek et al., 2022; Morriello, 2021), in particular, Poland (Kowalska-

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Chrzanowska, 2025; Gmiterek, 2026), Croatia (Mumelaš & Martek, 2024; Filipeti & Mumelaš, 2025; Čabrić et al., 2023; Mumelaš, 2023), Baltic universities (Birk et al., 2024), Lithuania (Tautkeviciene & Pranckute, 2024) etc.

Citizen science as a component of open science, the role of academic libraries in promoting participatory science (Zasmenco, 2025), the place and role of academic libraries for knowledge exchange, in particular on the example of Lithuania and Ukraine, is of topical importance from the point of view of «growing a strong European citizen science community with access to open and FAIR data with open and FAIR tools, which is key for the EU-funded ECS project» (European Citizen Science | ECS | Project | Fact Sheet | HORIZON | CORDIS | European Commission, 2022).

The aim of this study is to show the methods and steps that are necessary for knowledge exchange when implementing experience in the field of citizen science by academic library staff in Lithuania and Ukraine. The military invasion of the Russian Federation into the territory of Ukraine has added and escalated the problematic issues that academic libraries in Ukraine face in implementing open science (Kulyk, M. M., 2024) and forming the competencies of library staff in advocacy activities (Mazhara, L., 2012), (Libraries in EU Cultural Policy . . ., n.d.) as “knowledge centers for citizen science” (Dolmatova, N. I., 2021).

To help, LIBER (European Association of Research Libraries) has prepared a Citizen Science guide for research libraries, Open Science Meets Citizen Science. This guide is intended as a practical resource for research libraries looking to support their research communities in developing their citizen science project. In the guide, users will find contributions from leading practitioners and reports on the lessons learned from well established projects. Open science brings an expanding field of new practices, methods, and frameworks for use in citizen science — many of which are often already situated in the research library — for example: Open Education Resources (OER), FAIR Data with research data management, and Open Access services and support. The guide covers questions of how to implement open science practices in general in a citizen science project, the ethical considerations for data and citizen’s personal data as is now commonplace from health and fitness wearable devices, an in-depth exploration of the area of open hardware for instruments to use in citizen projects, and a look how the Wikimedia Foundation platforms and programmes intersects with citizen science (Open Science Meets Citizen Science — A Guide — LIBER Europe, 2024).

METHODS. In the research process, the following methods were used: a) theoretical — generalization, b) empirical — comparison, c) prognostic — informational, and d) systematization.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION. Citizen science in Ukrainian university libraries (Citizen Science. Sumy State University n.d.; Citizen Science — G. I. Denysenko Scientific and Technical Library, n.d.; Citizen Science — Library of Berdyansk State Pedagogical University, n.d.; Citizen Science: When Everyone Can Be a Researcher — Yaroslav Mudryi National Library of Ukraine, n.d.) is still presented fragmentarily, without existing strategies for its implementation when planning library work. There is no experience in developing methodological recommendations for implementing citizen science in curricula and preparing training courses or developing projects (Kozak et al., 2024) involving representatives of the public, in particular involving schoolchildren, students, community representatives who could assist in research projects, etc.

The Library of Yaroslav Mudriy National Law University holds events that are directions of involvement in citizen science. The library community has undergone advanced training in an important direction of citizen science as Wikipedia, joining the international campaign #1Lib1Ref in Wikipedia, in the Ukrainian Wikipedia (19.02 — 10.03.2024). The event is aimed at librarians around the world with the aim of actively adding links to verified sources to facts and statements in Wikipedia articles, because today, more than ever, the world needs reliable information. #1Lib1Ref is an opportunity to enrich Wikipedia and make it better: it takes just one librarian or employee (1Lib) to change one link (1Ref)! Wikipedia often becomes the first stop for researchers, especially for those who want to find citations. As part of the campaign,

a training session on editing Wikipedia was hold. The participants of the training deepened their knowledge of the basic rules of Wikipedia and received useful tips that will be useful in working with information. They learned how to master wiki markup, use editing panels, revealed the secrets of wiki technologies for creating new and editing existing articles or their sections, and also substantiated the criteria of significance by which information content for Wikipedia should be created. They got acquainted with the presentation "Methodology of placing materials in Wikipedia in the Personalities Category" presented at the training. The specialists of the University library intend to make their contribution to the development of the free encyclopedia and supplement information about prominent scientists of our university (To the international campaign #1Lib1Ref on Wikipedia — Yaroslav Mudryi Library of the New Law University, n.d.). Among the projects involving the student community, work is being carried out on digitizing rare editions in the Department of Storage of Funds and Resources. The director of the library, Pasmor Nadiya, noted that in this department you can join in scanning rare editions, thereby contributing to the formation of the digital Library of Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University (Information about the Department of Storage of Funds and Resources. Library of Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University. Facebook, n.d.).

This section of this paper discusses development of citizen science in Lithuania, especially Mykolas Romeris University (MRU), and discusses the role academic libraries can play in supporting knowledge exchange. As such, academic libraries in Lithuania have started experimenting with citizen-science services and institutional support structures. Of particular relevance here is transformation of science to a more transparent and socially responsible model. Since, citizen science allows persons to be involved at various stages of a study such as formulating questions for research problems; collecting information; analyzing results. It may also improve relationships between science and society and increase its social impact. For this reason, the importance of citizen participation is explicitly recognized in the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science (UNESCO, 2021). Because of this, it creates new opportunities and responsibilities of academic library. Traditionally, libraries have been a source of scholarly information. Considering that, they provide bibliographic services with opportunity to offer open access, as well as to support research data management and preservation. The most convincing recent evidence of the development of the participation of academic libraries in civil science in the Baltic region is the Erasmus+ LibOCS project, University Libraries strengthen the connection between the academy and society through civil science in the Baltic countries. The project was implemented from 2022 to 2024 and included five Baltic universities: Tallinn University of Technology, University of Tartu, University of Latvia, Kaunas University of Technology and Vytautas Magnus University (Birk et al., 2024). From the point of view of Lithuanian universities, this expansion of open science means that these functions now extend beyond the academic community in Lithuania, so citizen science received institutional support here after its adoption. As a result, Citizen Science Association was founded in 2020, its website *Piliečių mokslo projektai Lietuvoje* is an online directory of citizen science projects related to Lithuania, classifying them as national and international projects involving universities'collaborations (Piliečių mokslo asociacija, n.d.). According to the official information of the association, the organization was founded by Dr. Mačiulienė, who currently serves as its director (Piliečių mokslo asociacija, n.d.). Of particular relevance to Mykolas Romeris University (MRU), since Dr. Monika Mačiulienė, a Senior Researcher at the Social Innovation Laboratories Network, Lifelong Learning Laboratory, is actively involved in research on citizen science, social innovation, and public participation in scientific processes. The direct evidence of this citizen science collaboration of universities can be seen in activities related to the Horizon Europe project CLIMAS, the results of which were presented during the international SOCIN'24 conference hosted at MRU (Piliečių mokslo asociacija, 2024). In practical terms, more detailed descriptions of the Lithuanian citizen science network include Mykolas Romeris University among those universities that are members of the Lithuanian Citizen Science Association. Thus, MRU is involved with more citizen science projects by participating as part of Lithuania's development of its own citizen science community. This perspective of MRU is especially useful for understanding since a significant contribution to the discussion of citizen science is made by the rector of

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MRU, Professor Žalėnienė, according to her, scientific knowledge should be considered as a public good and an accessible resource for society (Žalėnienė, 2022).

The active connection between the concept of Citizen Science and the MRU University is highlighted by the MRU library, which also contributes to the development of joint research practice and wider adoption of the principles of open science in Lithuania. Of particular relevance to this study is the MRU Library, which is already an important component related to programs for citizen participation in research and scientific communication. In practical terms, there is a variety of citizen-science approaches that offer chances to participate at various levels, including basic data gathering tasks and advanced forms of collaboration and community-based research projects. For instance, MRU library has developed an extensive digital research infrastructure via its Current Research Information System (CRIS), which includes publications, datasets, projects, researchers, departments, and electronic theses all under one unified platform. It is based on DSpace-CRIS technology support and also focuses on integrated research information management, which is registered in international catalogs such as OpenDOAR and ROAR. Moreover, MRU researchers have contributed directly to the analysis of citizen science in Lithuania. One of the most relevant recent research projects is the article by Skaržauskienė and Mačiulienė, examined citizen science from the perspective of sustainability and explored the perceptions and experiences of Lithuanian quadruple-helix stakeholders (Skaržauskienė & Mačiulienė, 2021). The research showed that there is a requirement to have supportive environment where various stakeholders can start and carry out activities. As a result, citizen science needs facilities to for discovering, evaluating, organizing, preserving, and sharing information (Skaržauskienė & Mačiulienė, 2021). In this reason, the MRU Library offers research consultations, as well as assistance with publication registration, citation management, access to foreign databases, thesis submission services. From a citizen science perspective, this also includes resolving requests from library guests and visitors, providing all the information of interest. Notably, the institutional evidence of MRU’s involvement in citizen science is its participation in the Horizon 2020 project (EU-Citizen) “The Platform for Sharing, Initiating, and Learning Citizen Science in Europe” and MRU records the project period as September 2019-December 2022 (Mykolas Romeris University, n.d.). This initiative aimed at creating an eco-friendly infrastructure for knowledge sharing, including toolkits with case studies of successful practices; scientific findings that can be accessed by people and researchers alike (Mykolas Romeris University, n.d.). The significance of this project for the present study is in its emphasis on knowledge exchange. Since the project sought to establish a sustainable platform and mutual-learning space in which tools, good-practice examples and scientific results were collected, curated and made accessible to citizens, scientific institutions It is similar with a new function for library of education: collecting, organizing, cataloguing and knowledge dissemination is an integral part of library work. Thus, involvement with citizen science infrastructure is an example of how university knowledge and information infrastructure contribute to open science. Another example is a citizen-science project called “Looking for Cowslips” (European Citizen Science Association, 2021). Looking for Cowslips was a citizen science project that aimed at studying patterns among populations of Primula veris (cowslip) throughout Europe through data gathering by volunteers. Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) was a participant of this project and contributed to the larger European citizen science community that supports biodiversity research and public engagement with science (European Citizen Science Association, 2021). Through citizen-generated observations, the project collected extensive data on floral morph frequencies and habitat conditions, allowing researchers to assess the effects of landscape change and biodiversity conservation. Citizens interested in this project had the opportunity to use smartphones and write out observations directly. Another aspect is the recorded participation tasks included data entry, identification and observation that is unique to citizen science, where people can collect data on their own. At the same time, this activity generates data which needs to be collected, recorded, quality controlled, stored and distributed. This is an opportunity for a library to be involved: the MRU library assists researchers and citizens to find relevant information; understand data management practices; link research outputs with repositories; and preserve materials for later use.

A more recent MRU example is the Interreg VI-A Latvia-Lithuania project "LAKES GO DIGITAL" running from March 2025 to February 2027. The Environmental Management Laboratory of MRU is involved with this project, which is headed by Prof. Dr. Paulo Alexandre da Silva Pereira (Mykolas Romeris University, 2025). Smart monitoring technology is integrated to stakeholder engagement and citizen science is also used for this project with educational seminars, ecosystem service mapping and public access to selected data through QR codes and online platforms. The project aims at providing data to municipalities, NGOs, citizens and scientists and to provide information in Lithuanian and Latvian. It's also very relevant for knowledge transfer, since the data should be converted for easy access by various stakeholders. Here, the MRU library is an intermediary between research information and various user groups, as it can always provide the necessary information for both researchers and citizens, with the help of its subject librarians. The current development of the project also demonstrates the continuity of citizen-science activity at MRU.

CONCLUSIONS. MRU library is one of the libraries of universities that are members of Lithuania's Citizen Science Since, the citizen science in MRU library identifies open engagement of societal persons as an important dimension of open science and recognizes citizen science, scientific volunteering, and other participatory approaches as a possibility through which society can contribute to knowledge generation. It is worth noting that Mikolas Romeris University is an important institutional example of the development of citizen science in Lithuania, as it emphasizes the role of libraries in curating, standardizing, preserving and ensuring the reuse of research results created by citizens.

Summarizing the research on the place and role of academic libraries for knowledge exchange in Lithuania and Ukraine in the implementation of citizen science in Ukraine as a component of open science, the following steps, promising areas of communication and cooperation at the state and institutional levels, as well as in the formation of a university library strategy, can be formulated:

1. At the state level, "it is important to have a single accessible website that combines information about citizen science opportunities in different regions of the country. It should contain information for citizens: interesting descriptions of existing projects, rewards for participation, results of competitions among participants (something similar to the "Wiki Loves the Earth" project), photos, examples of publications where active citizens are co-authors. The general website should also have a section for scientists with lists of grants, examples of projects, applications and online platforms available for use. Similar resources are available in many European countries and the USA (Kozak. et al., 2024).

2. At the institutional level, develop communication plans for each citizen science project, identifying target audiences and reaching out to specific schools, and choosing the right tactics for effective citizen science communication (Veeckman et al., 2019, p. 4).

3. When forming a strategy for the work of a university library in Ukraine, taking into account the challenges of library work in wartime (Pasmor & Pokusai, 2023; Pasmor, 2023) to carry out the specified activity: 1) to allocate a division in the library structure, in particular, a "department of integrated learning and community engagement to support public scientific activities" (Rammutloa, 2026); 2) to contribute to the formation of library policy in accordance with the recommendations that LIBER formulated in its Open Science Roadmap for research libraries regarding citizen science: a) development of infrastructure; b) support for good scientific practice; c) development of methodological recommendations and d) training (skilling). Based on these recommendations, a specialized LIBER working group has been operating since 2019, and individual university libraries — in particular, the consortium of Baltic university libraries — are already transforming into "citizen science hubs" that combine methodological, infrastructural and educational functions (DataSteward@LibraryKPI); 3) citizen science has the potential to empower young people. Libraries, with their extensive experience in building bridges, have the potential to support such projects and facilitate connections between researchers and schools (Building bridges between research and schools — Libraries as facilitators — LIBER Europe, n.d.).

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The LIBER Strategy (2023-2027) identifies research libraries as engaged and trusted hubs. By 2027, research libraries will become engaged and trusted hubs for their user communities, collaborating with each other and with local, national and international stakeholders as change agents and facilitators, and taking on the challenge of engaging the public in research. Priorities — to support research libraries as active and reliable centers: 1) strengthening communication. Stimulating communication and collaboration, which involves: a) strengthening the position of research libraries in the networked environment and leveraging their collective power by: telling the “story” of the unique values, services and spaces of research libraries, as well as their current and future roles; b) helping libraries to establish connections and collaboration with their stakeholders by sharing practices and organizing actions; c) continuing LIBER advocacy efforts; 2) development of open knowledge. Development of an open knowledge society, which involves: a) stimulating research libraries to build a bridge to society; b) strengthening public engagement (with citizen science as a key element). And also helping academic institutions rethink their public role in creating and sharing knowledge (Strategy 2023-2027, n.d.), LIBER Europe. Research Libraries as Engaged and Trusted Hubs, (LIBER Europe, n.d.).

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ГРОМАДЯНСЬКА НАУКА ЯК СКЛАДОВА ВІДКРИТОЇ НАУКИ: МІСЦЕ ТА РОЛЬ АКАДЕМІЧНИХ БІБЛІОТЕК ДЛЯ ОБМІНУ ЗНАННЯМИ В ЛИТВІ ТА УКРАЇНІ

АНОТАЦІЯ. Мета. *Представити обмін знаннями про громадянську науку як складову відкритої науки, а також показати місце та роль академічних бібліотек в Литві та Україні.* ***Методи.*** *Дослідження отрунтовано за допомогою таких методів: а) теоретичний — узагальнення, б) емперічний — порівняння, в) прогностичний — інформаційний та г) систематизація.* ***Результати.*** *Дослідження стосується аналізу практики використання громадянської науки як складової відкритої науки та формування досвіду роботи академічних бібліотек в європейських країнах, за допомогою обміну знаннями в Литві та Україні.* ***Висновки.*** *Підсумком дослідження визначена: 1) стала роль бібліотеки університета Миколаса Ромеріса (Литва) в формування партисипативних практик як внеску громадян (ненауковців) у створення знань; 2) кроки та рекомендації з впровадження в Україні напрямку громадянської науки як стратегії на державному та інституційному рівні, а також в плануванні діяльності академічної бібліотеки шляхом імплементації міжнародного та європейського досвіду.*

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: *громадянська наука; академічні бібліотеки; Україна; Литва; Університет Миколаса Ромеріса; Національний юридичний університет імені Ярослава Мудрого.*