

# Project Culture in Design as a Key Factor of Human Development in the Region

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**Abstract**—The article considers the issues of fostering project culture in design as a key factor of human development in Zauralye. These include a set of cultural programs and projects focused on creation of comfortable authentic environment, as well as favourable educational environment and pedagogical conditions to foster project culture of future designers as part of professional training at the university. Relevance of the research is to justify the importance of project culture in design and its impact on human development as a way of creative personal fulfillment. The article describes the content of project culture in design. Immersion of design students in active project activities aimed at promotion of a positive image of Zauralye, development of harmonious landscape in the city of Kurgan and in the Kurgan Region. Information on design projects implemented in Kurgan and the Kurgan Region is included.

**Keywords**—project culture in design, human potential, regional policy, pedagogical conditions for project culture fostering, design education.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Complex array of socio-cultural and economic tasks currently facing the country is associated with the political changes occurred in the country on the threshold of the third millennium, the isolation of the Russian Federation, market reorganization, post-industrial challenges and demographic problems. Nowadays, industrial production and many other areas of the economy are underdeveloped, and a way out of the current crisis is contingent only on economic growth [1].

All this requires a search for hidden reserves and new ways to increase the efficiency of the economy. Therefore, in recent years, there is an intense discussion and perception of the problem in scientific and business communities and in government agencies.

The result of such discussion is the consolidated public awareness of the key role of sectors related to human development (human capital, human potential). Thus, the Strategies for Socio-economic Development of Russia until 2020 and the Strategy for Innovative Development of the Russian Federation for the period until 2020, adopted by the Government of Russia, focus on fostering (reproduction and accumulation) of human capital and its effective use as a prerequisite of social and economic sustainability of the country [2].

A related concept to human capital is the concept of human potential (the terms are used as synonyms). The works of Amartya Sen, an Indian economist, contributed a

lot to such concepts as human development and human development index (in 1998, A. Sen was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics for contribution to Welfare Economic Theory) [3].

According to A. Sen, human development implies fostering human abilities, expanding the possibility to implement them and, thereby, broadening the prospects of personal fulfillment [4]. Concurrently, human potential characterizes the quality of national society as a subject of social reproduction and development. Its level has a decisive impact on society viability and dynamics. Human potential integrates the factors of national viability, ensuring the integrity of this phenomenon [5].

Therefore, of all the organizational resources, it is precisely “human potential” that provides tremendous opportunities for solving an array of national tasks, serves as the main driving force of economic growth, and it is currently becoming the main component of national wealth. Consequently, a person today is considered as an investment option, and special attention is paid to development, protection and empowerment of human potential. The prominence belongs to factors that determine the conditions of human life and the quality of life. Human potential is developed by education, mass communications and culture. Modern culture in the era of scientific and technological progress is constructed in material and intellectual spheres in an industrial way.

Design is a powerful cultural phenomenon of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a method of harmonization, design penetrates into all spheres of activity, it plays an integrative and connecting role, being both an indicator of the general level of cultural development and the main means of designing modern material culture. Material environment that is designed to be comfortable and functional, while being saturated with a lot of things, technology and information media, largely determines the spiritual culture. Spiritual culture and material basis of society (economy, science and technology) determine the social being of a society, its well-being, lifestyle and development prospects [6].

A designer always focuses on a person as the “center of meaning” (Maurice Merleau-Ponty) with specific spiritual demands and material needs [7]. The same idea was expressed by Aurelio Peccei, co-founder of the Club of Rome. In his book “The Human Quality” he wrote: “Nothing matters more than human personality, it is more important than any deeds and any ideas, because all of them mean nothing without people.” [8]

Designer's aim, through creativity, is to open channels in the objects of the material world to introduce people to the spiritual meaning of their existence. Carl Cantor, in his essay "Projectivity of Russian Culture", wrote about projectivity of culture as "a way of asserting its impulses for excellence, striving for universal happiness." [9]

Project culture of design appears to be a conductor of higher meaning, spiritual and moral principles, it involves attention not only to the production, but to the consumer and communicative aspects of the created reality. Thus, the aim of design activity appears as a specific form of culture being and contributes to improving the quality of life, enhancing socio-cultural relations through creation of harmonious object environment and its components in all spheres of society life and, as a result, broadening the prospects of personal fulfillment.

Regional policy is an integral part of the national development strategies. Future progress in the socio-economic transformation of the country is largely determined by the level of development of its regions, and, as an important condition, by development and effective use of human potential. From this perspective, the regional development strategy is considered as a system of measures aimed at improving the quality of life, enhancing social and cultural relations in society, and developing social infrastructure [10].

Targets and the corresponding directions of transition to the innovative socially-oriented type of economic development are also priorities for the Kurgan Region. At the same time, taking into account the specifics of the region when implementing socio-economic tasks seems to be a necessary condition for maintaining its cultural identity [11].

At the moment, the residents of the region do not know enough about the history of the region, which means they do not feel pride in their territory and do not identify themselves with it. The consequence of this situation is the outflow of the working-age population from the region and the slowdown of economic growth. The essential measure to overcome this circumstance is the development of the territory and human potential.

Formation of human potential, as the basis for the evolutionary development of Zauralye, is facilitated by a set of cultural programs and projects to create a comfortable authentic environment for the residents. The environment, which includes a whole complex of objects for various purposes (parks, sports grounds, social and cultural facilities, bus stops, public facilities, signs, signboards, billboards), is a multi-level complex object. Here, both the need for a holistic approach to creation of a complex object and attention to the features of a particular place, its landscape, cultural, historical and social contexts and its emotional perception are obvious [12].

Emotional perception of the area at an intuitive sensual level is composed of the combination of properties and qualities of the natural and material environment responsible for the individuality of the territory. It means that a person should be surrounded by an environment with a vivid imagery, which reflects the spiritual world of a person. Such mindset can be considered as one of the targets of designing vibrant environment. This target is determined by the designer as the exponent of certain values, i.e. moral, aesthetic, cultural, national, historical, political; and the human meaning of the

goal is revealed and realized only within the wide cultural context - with its values, ideals, patterns and meanings.

Therefore, modeling the conceptual context of culture is the aim of design activity. However, the designer's project activities are associated not only with the satisfaction of the spiritual and material needs of society, but also with their active development. Thus, project activity acts as a means of humanization of the objective world, its culture, the environment for fostering and developing the individuals.

Project culture of design is also defined as a way of creative personal fulfillment, in the process of which the objective world is created and acts as the exponent of the ideals and values of the spiritual world. It requires the harmonious development of intellectual, physical and spiritual potentials of a person, technological and aesthetic culture, as well as education in the field of design [13].

In this regard, the quality of design education, its humanistic attitude, its focus on students' awareness of the enormous cultural significance of the profession, social responsibility, and development of the desire for the maximum possible realization of the design potential in the interests of the whole society are of particular importance. Today it is education that is responsible for the reproduction of new exponents of the profession that determines the state of the entire project culture [14].

Project activity training is the core of design education. This is due to the fact that the designer's abilities and knowledge result only in the process of activity. Mastering the activity skills most effectively occurs in the course of solving real problems, in the process of highlighting the connections and sides of the real object of designing. Therefore, one of the important objectives in training is the implementation of real projects during preparation for the term papers and projects, graduation projects, participation in various programs and contests.

With the students' main task of mastering professional ideas about design activities and project work skills, from the very beginning of the educational process, the goals of attitude development are important, the achievement of which helps to shape the students' personality, their creative potential, their abilities: imagination, fantasy, associative and spatial thinking, creative use of knowledge, independent search and assimilation of learning activities. Therefore, in all educational programs it is essential to focus on students' personality, to educate them as creative individuals. As the analysis of learning situations demonstrates, the knowledge and skills learned by the students convey professional culture qualities and play an important role in fostering creative vision of the world, the worldview and understanding of a person's ability to influence the global processes actively.

Thus, the project culture of design is a way of designer's creative fulfillment, during which the objective world is created. This world, convenient, functional, filled with spiritual meanings, contributes to personal fulfillment of each member of society and to the development of their potential. Therefore, the project culture of design should be considered as a key factor of human development as well as social and economic progress of the region.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is based on the image of modern project culture as an integrated modeling system that has an

active influence on design education. In order to implement it, we use the following approaches:

1) *General scientific pedagogical approaches:*

- human development (cultural approach: connection of a person with culture as a system of values; acquisition of culture represents the personal development and becoming a creative personality);
- self-development (personality approach: reliance on self-development and a person's creative potential, creation of appropriate pedagogical conditions);
- project culture (activity approach: activity as the basis, means and factor of personality and creative potential development).

2) *Specific scientific (specific pedagogical) methods:*

- theoretical: analysis of basic concepts of project culture of design and its impact on human development in the region; forecasting the results of project activities in implementation practice;
- empirical: observation and study of products of students' project activities aimed at regional issues, self-assessment of the proposed design projects.

In the framework of the cultural approach, many personality traits, including ethnic identity, are developed in the process of mastering the elements of the students' own culture, where the most important elements are values and norms of life, activity and behavior.

From the point of view of pedagogical practice, this is an understanding of education as a cultural process taking place in educational environment, all the components of which are filled with human meanings and serve a person able to express individuality, capable of cultural self-development and self-determination in the world of cultural values.

As part of the problem-based learning approach, the student develops cognitive independence, creative activity and the ability to solve problems independently based on inclusion to the culture of the society by adaptation of values that unite the society.

### III. RESULTS

In recent economic environment, human resources with the required level of professional knowledge and skills play a decisive role in achieving competitive advantages and ensuring qualitative indicators of economic growth of the Kurgan Region and the territory as a whole.

Project culture of future designers is developed during professional training at the university and becomes the leading task that meets modern requirements specified for professionals in this field of activity.

As part of the research work, the following pedagogical conditions required to foster project culture of future designers were identified:

- material and technical support of educational process;
- development of interpersonal and business relationships that are adequate to the given pedagogical conditions;

- organization of active developing environment and educational space;
- project preparation covering the entire training period;
- extensive use of problem-solving and information-retrieving tasks in the educational process;
- interaction of educational and production processes.

A key factor in fostering project culture of design students is creation of active educational environment through project activities. As part of the educational process, students training in 54.03.01 Design (Graphic Design) and 44.03.01 Professional Training (Arts, Crafts and Design) take an active part in cultural programs and projects aimed at developing a positive image of Zauralye and creating a harmonious landscape of the city. Most of the completed projects are of implementational type. These are such large-scale projects as:

- design project created for a book of unpublished poems by L.I. Kulikov (2014);
- brand identity and promotion campaign developed for SLADIAN pastry produced by Kurgan Bakery No. 1 (2015);
- design project created for the book "Tales of South Zauralye" (2016);
- identity and promotion campaign for the Museum of History in the city of Kurgan (2017);
- landscape design project for the Botanical Garden of Kurgan State University (2018);
- design development for the official website of the regional news channel GTRK Kurgan. (2019).

Within the framework of the BELOVED CITY Program (2016-2019), aimed at comprehensive solution of the problems associated with the preservation of cultural heritage objects and their effective use, revitalization of cultural life and development of image for the city of Kurgan, students of Graphic Design Department presented design projects of books on the history of the native region, which were distinguished by the project organizers. The designed books were printed and sent to the libraries of the city of Kurgan. In 2018-2019, students of Arts, Crafts and Design Department participated actively in implementation of the program on improvement of building surrounding grounds. At the request of the residents of the Zaozerny District, the students developed design concepts for the improvement of territories adjacent to residential buildings, prepared design documentation and master plans.

As a result of active participation in the above mentioned projects and programs, the students were ready for independent professional project activities that contribute to the development of project culture and human potential.

Figure 1 shows dynamics of implementation of design projects aimed at the cultural identity of the region, prepared as a part of final and course projects by students of Vocational Training, Technology and Design Department at Kurgan State University, training in 54.03.01 Design (Graphic Design) and in 44.03.01 Vocational Training (Arts, Crafts and Design).

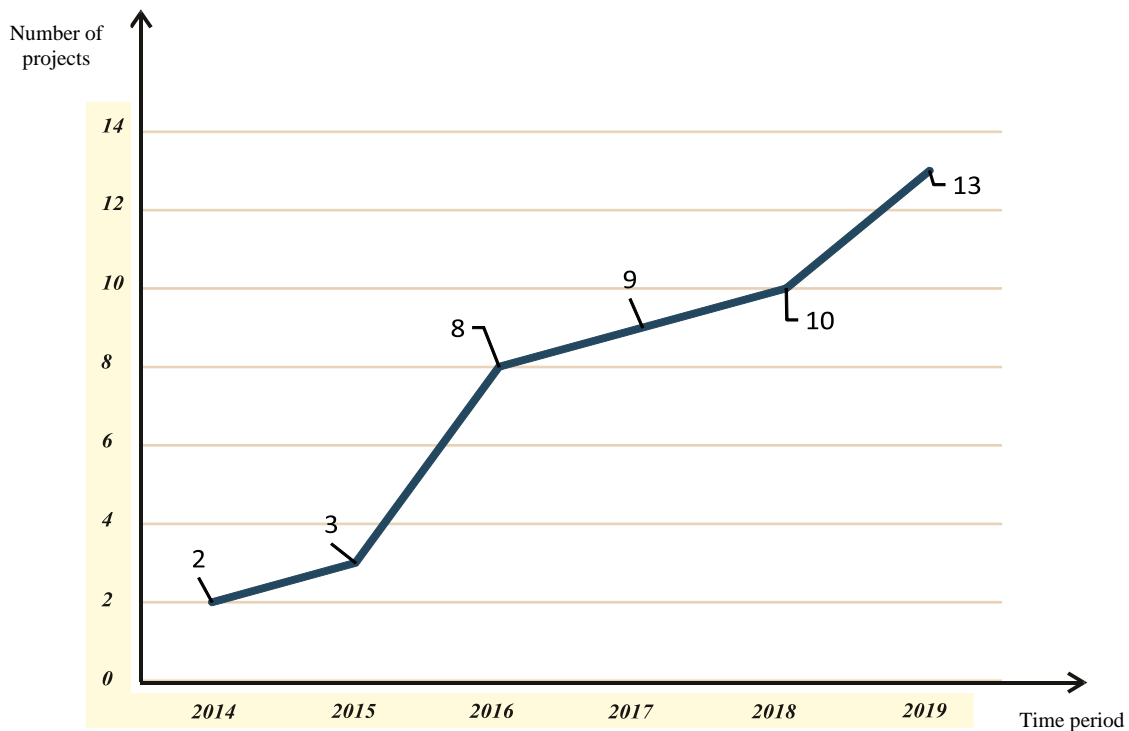


Fig. 1. Dynamics of implementation of design projects aimed at the cultural identity of the region, prepared by students of Vocational Training, Technology and Design Department.

#### IV. RESULTS

Practical evaluation, relevance of the research results and their significance were presented in scientific reports on development of comfortable environment during round table conferences of the BELOVED CITY Program. The proposed design projects of bus stops, art objects for the urban environment, unique regional souvenirs and urban navigation systems are currently widely used and implemented. It should also be noted that as a part of preparation for the term papers, projects and graduation projects, design students implement projects aimed at solving the issues of regional identity not only for specific events and companies, but also for the city of Kurgan and the Kurgan Region.

Thus, created pedagogical environment and quality of training of design students, their level of project culture represent the crucial component of project culture development in the region, its cultural, socio-economic progress and human development.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

Complex array of socio-cultural and economic problems currently facing the country can be solved only subject to the development of people and their potential. Human potential is developed by education, mass communications and culture.

Design, as a powerful cultural phenomenon and a method of harmonization, is the main means of designing modern material culture. Designer is always focused on human personalities with their material and spiritual needs.

Designer's aim, through creativity, is to open channels in the objects of the material world to introduce people to the spiritual meaning of their existence. Therefore, project culture of design acts as an exponent of higher meaning, spiritual and moral principles, covering all areas of human life. Thus, the goal of design activity is to contribute to improving the quality

of life, enhancing socio-cultural relations through creation of harmonious object environment and broadening the prospects of personal fulfillment.

Progress in the socio-economic development of the country is largely determined by the level of development of the regions and the effectiveness of the human potential development.

Regional development strategy is considered as a system of measures aimed at improving the quality of life, enhancing social and cultural relations in society, and developing social infrastructure. In particular, the region evolutionary development is facilitated by a range of cultural programs and projects to create a comfortable, authentic environment for the residents.

Emotional perception of the territory on an intuitively sensual level contributes to the self-identification of the residents with their region, forms patriotic feelings. Such attitude can be considered as one of the goals of designing a vibrant environment, where the designer acts as an exponent of certain values — moral, aesthetic, cultural, national, historical, political.

Of particular importance today is the quality of design education, development of professional and project culture, education and social responsibility among future designers.

Thus, project culture in design is, on the one hand, a way of creative personal fulfillment, in the process of which the objective world is created; and, on the other hand, it represents a harmonious object environment and its components in all spheres of society, created by the designer and contributing to personal fulfillment and human development. Therefore, the project culture of design should be considered as a key factor of human development as well as social and economic progress of the region.

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