

## საქართველოს მუზეუმები 21-ე საუკუნის მიჯნაზე – პრობლემები და განვითარების პერსპექტივები

ქარაია ინგა (კლარა)

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ივანე ჯავახიშვილის თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი,  
თბილისის სახელმწიფო სამხატვრო აკადემია

საბჭოთა კავშირის დაშლის შემდეგ, საქართველო აღმოჩნდა იმ რადიკალურ გამოწვევათა პირისპირ, რაც უკავშირდება სახელმწიფოებრივ დამოუკიდებლობას, ახალ ეკონომიკურ ურთიერთობებსა და რეგიონში მიმდინარე ეთნოკონფლიქტებს. ბუნებრივია, ეს ფაქტორები თავის კვალს აჩნევს ქვეყნის მუზეუმების რენოვაციისა და შემდგომი განვითარების პროცესსაც.

“საქართველოს მუზეუმების პასპორტიზაციის პროექტის” მონაცემებით, ქვეყანაში ამჟამად სხვადასხვა პროფილისა და დაქვემდებარების (საქართველოს კულტურისა და ძეგლთა დაცვის სამინისტრო, ადგილობრივი თვითმმართველობა, მუნიციპალიტეტები, სხვადასხვა დაწესებულებებთან არსებული მუზეუმები, კერძო მუზეუმები და სხვ.) 238 მუზეუმია. მათი 99% ფინანსდება სახელმწიფო ბიუჯეტიდან, მაგრამ დღეისათვის გამოყოფილი სუბსიდია გათვლილია ძირითადად მუზეუმების პერსონალის სახელფასო ანაზღაურებაზე და კომუნალური ხარჯების ნაწილობრივ დასაფარავად, ხოლო მატერიალურ-ტექნიკური ბაზის მოწესრიგებისა და ბევრი სხვა, არანაკლებ სასიცოცხლო მნიშვნელობის პრობლემა, სამწუხაროდ, კვლავ ღიად რჩება.

საქართველოს კულტურისა და ძეგლთა დაცვის სამინისტროს მუზეუმების სამმართველოსა და საქართველოს მუზეუმების ასოციაციის მიერ 2003-2004 წლებში ჩატარებულმა მოკვლევებმა კიდევ ერთხელ ცხადჰყო, რომ პრობლემების სპექტრი მართლაც ძალზე დიდი იყო და ქვეყანაში სამუზეუმო საქმე ითხოვდა რადიკალურ რეფორმას, სრულ რეორგანიზაციას და მართვის იმგვარი მექანიზმების შემუშავებას, რასაც ხელი უნდა შეეწყო მოძველებულ სისტემათა განახლებისა და საქართველოს მუზეუმების მოდერნიზაციისათვის. შესაბამისად, 2004 წლიდან ქვეყნის სამუზეუმო სივრცეში დაიგეგმა სამუზეუმო რეფორმა, რომლის განხორციელების აუცილებლობა განაპირობა ბევრმა უაღრესად ყურადსაღებმა ფაქტორმა: მუზეუმთა უმეტესობის მატერიალურ-ტექნიკური ბაზის სავალალო მდგომარეობამ, საკანონმდებლო ბაზის მოუქნელობამ, თანამედროვე სამუზეუმო მენეჯმენტისა და მარკეტინგის, კოლექციების დაცვისა და

ექსპონირების დაბალმა დონემ, სამუზეუმო ფონდების აღრიცხვიანობის მოუწესრიგებლობამ, საზოგადოებასთან კომუნიკაციის არარსებობამ და მთელმა რიგმა სხვა მიზეზებმა, რამაც კატასტროფულად შეამცირა მუზეუმის ვიზიტორთა რაოდენობა.

ზემოაღნიშნულ პრობლემათა დაძლევის მიზნით, საქართველოს კულტურისა და ძეგლთა დაცვის სამინისტროს მიერ შემუშავებული იქნა სამუზეუმო რეფორმის პროგრამის სტრატეგიული მიმართულებები, რომელთა გათვალისწინებით გადაიდგა ძალზე მნიშვნელოვანი და წარმატებული ნაბიჯებიც; მაგრამ, საბოლოო ჯამში, ეკონომიკური კრიზისისა და სხვადასხვა მიზეზთა გამო, რეფორმის პროცესი დღემდე საკმაოდ ნელა მიმდინარეობს, რაც ძალზე აფერხებს ქვეყნის მუზეუმების განვითარებას და მათ მიახლოებას თანამედროვე საერთაშორისო სტანდარტებსა და 21-ე საუკუნის მოთხოვნებთან.

## Georgian Museums at the Boundary of 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Problems and Development Perspectives

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After the collapse of the Soviet Union such challenges turned out for Georgia, what are concerned to the state independence, new economic relations and ethno-conflicts in the region. Naturally, these factors have left their marks on of the process of renovation and further development of the country's museums.

According the statistic dates of the project of “The Georgian Museums inventory” it became clear that nowadays in Georgia there are 238 museums of different profiles (history, art, memory etc.) and of judicial status. Among them the most (99%) are financed by governmental budget (32 museums - by Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia, 12 museums - by Tbilisi Municipality and other museums – by local municipality)<sup>1</sup>. Regrettably these subsidies are regarded only to museum's staff wages and to cover the elementary public utility fees, whilst logistic improvement and solution of many other vital problems quite are out of the question.

After researches and analyses of the issues made by Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia and Georgian Museum Association (GMA) in recent years (2003-2004) it cleared up that the spectrum of problems is far from being small. Obviously the museums business of the country

is in need of complete reorganization, in instant and radical reforms and generation of flexible management mechanisms so as to help bring the museums of Georgia closer to the present-day international standards. Accordingly there was planned and declared the programme of Museum Reform in 2004 what was conditioned by many very significant problems:

- < Serious logistic problems of material-technical bases in the most museums;
- < Inflexible legislative base of museums;
- < Poor condition of the modern museum management level;
- < Extremely deplorable condition of museum collections and outdated exhibitions;
- < Undeveloped museum marketing and fundraising strategies;
- < Poor quality of educational programmes and communication with public which are causes for reducing of visitor number and community interest;
- < Undeveloped practice of training of personnel and non-attraction of young specialists;
- < Undeveloped practice of effective popularization of museums and their collections.

Taking the above-mentioned factors into account and recognizing the crucial role that museum play in fostering, safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage and identity, in 2004 the Ministry by collaboration of GMA developed and arranged the strategic directions of Museum Reform in Georgia:

- < Support to improve material and technical basis of museums;
- < Regulation of legal base of museums;
- < Reorganization of museums with international standards;
- < Diagnostics, restoration and preventive conservation of museum collections with international standards;
- < Systematization of museum collections with international standards of registration;
- < Renovation of Museum expositions and arranging of temporary exhibitions;
- < Creation and introduction of Educational programmes in museums;
- < Arrange of trainings/workshops of museum personnel and publishing of museum methodology, recommendations and instructions with partnership of International Museum Institutions;
- < Collaboration with international museum and other institutions (ICOM, ICOM International UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS etc.) by developing joint projects;
- < Support to cultural tourism development by creation of attractive environment;
- < Popularization of Georgian museums and museum-reserves for protection, developing and integration of Georgian cultural heritage in international space.

Regarding these priorities were made some activities: reorganization of about 40 museums (ongoing), publishing methodology manuals (*The Manual of Museums Management* and *The Manual of Museum Exhibitions* by Barry & Gail D. Lord, *Guide of Georgian Museums, Instruction of Museum's Collections records and protection*, collection of articles *About Museums* - ICOM

Code of Ethics, ICOM Statute, other ICOM documents, as well as Museum legislation etc.), creation of Data-Base and web-site of Georgian museums ([www.georgianmuseums.ge](http://www.georgianmuseums.ge)), financed by Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia with collaboration of GMA and ICOM National Committee in Georgia. There are some museums in Georgia, which meet the standards of modern museums and it is important that such first museum is situated not in capital of Georgia, but in Kakheti region. Signagi museum (unified at the structure of Georgian National Museum) is completely renovated (with new expositions and developed infrastructure - café, museum shop, tour-rout Tbilisi-Signagi-Tbilisi) as well as National Gallery and Simon Janashia Museum (Tbilisi) which are unified in GNM too. These museums are just opened (2011) and present modern and contemporary Georgian art and more than 600 pieces of Georgian goldsmith works.

But in other case and generally by different reasons and economic crisis the museum reform is slowly going what hindered the development of countries museums and their close approach to modern international standards.

For improved realization of museum reform first of all there is necessary to make changes in "law of Museums of Georgia" passed in 2001 and is outdated in order to transform Georgian museums (as that one can't meet and in some cases, is opposite to even modern requirements and related laws) and need to be regulated:

- < To define clearly museum terminology;
- < To improve the issue of museum's statutes which is not included in the law in force;
- < To define issues of establishment of museum-reserves and criteria of their protective zones;
- < To define copyright issues of museums;
- < To prepare legislative changes what will give possibility to produce activities (partially) in museum's business;
- < Non-improved issues about buildings under the state possession and museums exhibits alienation (including sale) and other issues of law in force.

According to museum reform the country's 38 museums and museum-reserves were established as the Legal Public Entities in 2004-2008, but this kind of museums number is only 24 today, because 11 museum-reserves and 3 museums are unified in the structure of new institution – The Georgian National Agency of Cultural Heritage (established in 2008). After this unification automatically was revoked their independent judicial status. In fact, museums with their richest collections have been transformed into one of the structural units of the institution. It should also be noted that according to opinion of museum experts, probably correctly will be to give the judicial status of Legal Public Entities at least to 70 museums (concerning to country's government system), which will be support to set higher standards of quality for the independent museums and streamline for interaction with the state bodies and with other institutions, including the legislative ones, which is very important and actual, because that one with current chaotic privatization process might put museums or reserves in the sights of busi-

ness interest. Also, in our opinion, in order to really implement the decentralization process desirable would be to give the National Museum status to ten region's largest museums (with most important collections), as well as museums have to be transformed into some of the more meaningful cultural - educational centres of local regions - with international experience of museum management and with innovative models of administrative system.

Unfortunately the distinct state museum policy is neglected and in addition the museum reform doesn't cover region museums whereas it must reflect the resource locations and the potential of each museum what wasn't faced in "The State Programme of Protection of Cultural Heritage" at Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia. Moreover it is significant that the average rate of salary of museum staff was 35 GEL and the minimum was 21 GEL (sometimes even less) until January of 2008. Since 2008 according to the edict of the President of Georgia, the average rate of salaries medially increased to 240 GEL, but Georgian museums budget is primarily intended for staff's salaries and the institutions still don't have a minimum necessary fund to carry out their activities and for proper operations (appropriate level of collections protection and security, utilities and other expenses). Despite the State programme of financing pretended "The Programme of Museum Reform", unfortunately during last year this programme hadn't appropriated finances for region museums development and for their specific activities. The situation isn't better even at present though new leaders of the Ministry allocated minimum resources (237 000 GEL) for museums in 2009 but obviously that wasn't enough for changing the situation moreover the funding of the programme three times decreased last year.

In spite of economic crisis it will be advisable to increase State programme funding several times and announcing of competition by Ministry according of Museum Reform's general priorities in order to modernize and to develop Georgian museums. Has to be taken into account that the issue about projects financing must be selected by public commission of museum experts, the creation of which (despite of repeated requests and recommendations of Georgian museum community) up today is ignored because of some reason. This public commission must closely work with different government and non-government structure, as well as with international organizations, with private sector and hereby must take the function of monitoring and evaluations of Museum Politic with clearly defined criteria and not by private interests.

Certainly the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia largely is responsible for the museum reforms implementation and in integration of museum policy through state policy of culture but obviously only State can't completely solve numerous problems of museums. It is necessary that for sustainable development and implementation of its mission museum must intensively collaborate with different institutions: State, Maecenas-philanthropy; with Museum Friends Organizations and charitable funds of the

county. Besides main partners of museum space must be: primary and higher schools, universities, tourism agencies, publishing and other industrial producers of museum products, professional international institutions and funds<sup>2</sup>.

In recent years many museums of former Soviet Union became aware that the museums community must say goodbye to all expectations that only government has instruments and power for solution their financial problems and for other vitally important tasks. Naturally, Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia has coordinating function and exactly with its support has to be realized eumorphic strategy of national museums development and these museums on the basic principles of adequate legislation can play the leading role not only in process of museum policy's renovation and carry out reforms but in formation of public opinion. This is necessary to revalue attitude to museums as to only "storages of treasure" and must be active the most goal of museums – communication with public, with its vitally interests and spiritual or social demands<sup>3</sup>.

First of all, for this is necessary to renovate outdated and basically dangerous structure of museum buildings, which is very critical issue and needs big financing charge. But it is obvious that today's economical situation in Georgia isn't able to give possibility and guaranty for solving this problem in nearest future. Naturally other issues - restoration and conservation of museums won't finally be solved at all because of sufficiently big finances but at present possible arrangements what can change situations in our museums is that each museum has to orient to people as without visitors museum "doesn't live, it only exists" and (maybe it categorically sounds, but) predestined to an death<sup>4</sup>.

Exactly the intensive integration of museums into the society is one of the priorities of Museum reforms. Only this process can move museums to release from outdated elitist concept of the last century to acceptability. This is essential to develop new methods of museum materials appreciation and to create non-traditional educational programmes for visitors of all ages and for social groups in response to the challenges of new museum practice and the definition of museums read as follows: "a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment"<sup>5</sup> (ICOM Code of Museum Ethics).

The main principal activity of 21<sup>st</sup> museums mission is to become accessible and cultural-educational centre for all class of society and this can be realized through different expositions but that isn't enough for museum's renovation and for substantial increasing of museum auditorium. Museum's modernization as living and efficient organism itself needs differential approaches creation of specific effective museum infrastructure (informational centres, museum shops, cafes, spaces for educational programmes and other

public spots etc.). Today such museums are as additional intellectual resources for public where people can get through various cultures as a richness to be shared with others (People generally enjoy with each other in non-work-related activities)<sup>6</sup>.

Certainly such approaches can't be set as slap but necessary is to organize some educational workshops, trainings or seminars. ICOM National Committee in Georgia and Georgian Museum Association (GMA) were implementing several training programmes for Georgian museums managers (since 2009 five national trainings in Zugdidi, Signagi and Tbilisi by leading Georgian experts and author of methodological handbooks-Barry Lord, president of *Lord Cultural Resource*) and for South Caucasus Region museums as well. Since 2004 there were arranged 8 trainings<sup>7</sup>, two international conferences (*Social Role of Museums, Museums and Cultural Tourism* with participation of European and Caucasus countries museum experts, Tbilisi, 2009; Batumi, 2010)<sup>8</sup> by support and collaboration of Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia and international organizations (UNESCO, ICOM, INTERCOM, CECA, ICTOP etc.).

These trainings and workshops had provoked big interest of museum workers and they were had big importance in order to reach the modern international standards and its adaptation to the Georgian reality. Taking into account the experience of world museum community and its developmental adaptation in Georgian museums is very useful for creation of attractive environment, where people always enjoy and love the space – museum they can continually visit. In the environment where a lot of people of different ages and interests are gathered automatically can arise interests of business peoples and accordingly of sponsors, what in result will support to implement museums activities and obviously additional finances will arise, will appear possibility of interaction with public, solid researches and museum's reformation into efficient cultural and educational centre.

Surely many issues of implementing museums reform will be difficult. The museums don't have to advise only the government about their deals and get its support, but also have to shape public opinion (discussions, debates, press-conferences, target actions and involvement of mass media to cover museum business problems), to attract investments and to ensure high activity of the relevant non-governmental organizations or of the civil and private sector (these can address and handle such issues that might arise scepticism in the officialdom circles).

It is necessary to adjust interrelation between state and private sector. Without these interrelations and analogous partnership with private sector hard is to obtain new mechanisms of encouragement to improve protection of cultural heritage and cultural tourism in museums. Here can be noted that under circumstances of inflexible legislation basis, similar process makes a lot of problem and needs usual consideration and diverse approaches. Besides process of transferring the monument of cultural heritage to the pos-

session or under lease from public ownership to private ownership provoked many different opinions in foreign countries and cannot be resolved without open discussions. Moreover, this process must be carried out only in those cases, if the monument's condition is under deterioration because of state funding reduction and private financing can improve the situation. According to opinion of European experts "the privatisation of cultural heritage must lead neither to a reduction in its protection, nor to absolving the state from its responsibilities nor to a limited public access to cultural property. At the same time, it recognises the importance of a balanced partnership between the private and the public sectors – i.e. the realistic sharing of the risks and responsibilities – in order to provide appropriate protection for cultural heritage"<sup>9</sup>.

Essentially is revaluation of the attitude in society and in the government towards museums, from perception of museums as objects of spending budgetary funds, to perceive them as a resource of social and economic development of territories and as an active participant in this activity. It is necessary to adapt and to integrate the museum policy in state policy - the instrumental approach for development of museums must be connected with strategic direction of the country and must be one of the important instruments to analyse and to solve state's goal problems (development of regions, employment of population, development of cultural tourism, etc.).

Governmental bodies must support Georgian museums in activate process of intermediate increment to develop cultural tourism with implementation of competitive ability in their area (museum markets, studies, souvenirs production etc.). Georgian Museums must research the demand of market and manage the external environment to change their activities according to the terms of market economies. Georgian Museums can and should be:

- < Catalysts in developing territories;
- < Active participants in the process of developing territories along with authorities and businesses;
- < Serve as moral and public guarantors that transformations on the territory carry socially oriented character;
- < Serve as basis of educational processes on the territory;
- < Should develop and implement cultural-cognitive and ecological tourism on the territory.

We recognize that museums are powerful agencies in promoting and protecting the cultural heritage of Georgia but certain conditions must be fulfilled to realize this potential. The following are some recommendations relevant to museums:

**The first** is the continued commitment from the government to fund the infrastructures of museums, heritage preservation projects and training for museum professionals. With adequate funding and support, development projects for museums throughout the country, especially in the provinces



and localities can be carried out. Sustainable collaborations between the government, museums and various groups interested to preserve and to develop heritage sites will also enhance.

**The second** recommendation is to look into a more integrated approach for state museum policy planning among various agencies and ministries - policies of urban development, modernization of museums, tourism and conservation of heritage sites or monuments should be complemented to achieve greater sustainability<sup>10</sup>.

Certainly, the situation can't be sharply changed but it is urgent necessity for the changes in "law of Museums of Georgia" and the issue about appropriating needful finance for "The Programme of Museum Reform" in order to transform Georgian museums and to obtain new mechanisms of encouragement to improve protection of cultural heritage with demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Without these changes Georgian museums risk losing their appeal to the public, as well as the ability to maintain collections for future generations.

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> *Data Base of Georgian Museums*, Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia (renovated statistic), 2011

<sup>2</sup> Barry & Gail D. Lord, *The Manual of Museums Management* (in Georgian), p. 44, Tbilisi, 2006

<sup>3</sup> Inga Karaia, *General Approach to Museum Activities Development*, proceedings of the International Conference "Innovative Policies for Heritage Safeguarding and Cultural Tourism Development", ISBN 5-7598-0384-0, p. 81, UNESCO office, Moscow (Russia), 2005

<sup>4</sup> Inga Karaia, *Georgian museums – problems and prospects*, in the same place, p. 88

<sup>5</sup> *ICOM Code of Ethics*, Rules of International Committee of Museums (ICOM), <http://icom.museum>

<sup>6</sup> Gary Edson & David Dean, *The handbook for museums*, p. 176, New York, 2003

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO *Training Programme for Modern Museum Capacity-building in the South Caucasus New Horizons for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, brochure, Tbilisi, Georgia, 2004, *Workshops for South Caucasus Region Museums*, brochures, Tbilisi, Georgia, 2008-2010

<sup>8</sup> Web-site of Georgian Museums: [http://www.georgianmuseums.ge/?lang=eng&id=2&sec\\_id=13](http://www.georgianmuseums.ge/?lang=eng&id=2&sec_id=13)

<sup>9</sup> *The private management of cultural property*, EC Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1730 (2005), 2006

<sup>10</sup> Inga Karaia, *The Role of ICOM National Committees in the protection of the Cultural Heritage*, proceedings II of the World Universities Congress 2010, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, ISBN 978-605-4222-02-7, Turkey, 2010