

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL POLICIES IN MOLDOVA SINCE 2007: SOME OBSERVATIONS

DEZVOLTAREA POLITICILOR CULTURALE ÎN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA DIN 2007: UNELE OBSERVAȚII

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The present article written by Victoria Tcacenco is aimed to analyze some trends in cultural policies elaboration and implementation in the Republic of Moldova. Having theoretical and practical experience in cultural policies and artistic management issues, the author determinates some key players in the national cultural field (the Soros Foundation of Moldova and the European Cultural Foundation, the Netherlands), some changes in knowledge and practical tools dissemination, some important projects and program implementation and their impact upon the actual cultural policies.

Keywords: cultural policy, cultural management, cultural sector, lobbying, strategic planning

Articolul de față semnat de Victoria Tcacenco este dedicat analizei unor tendințe în elaborarea și implementarea politicilor culturale din Republica Moldova. Având o experiență atât teoretică cât și practică în domeniul politicilor culturale și managementului artistic, autoarea determină niște factori principali în câmpul național cultural (Fundația Soros Moldova și Fundația Culturală Europeană, Regatul de Jos), unele schimbări legate de diseminarea unor cunoștințe și aptitudini, unele proiecte și programe importante ale căror implementare a avut impact asupra politicilor culturale actuale.

Cuvinte-cheie: politica culturală, managementul cultural, sectorul cultural, lobbying, planificarea strategică

It is common knowledge that any society in transition (as the Republic of Moldova during the last two decades), needs to introduce changes to its strategies of development, its basic institutions and cultural practices. The actual article is aimed to collect and to analyse some data regarding the *cultural policies evolution* in the Republic of Moldova. Our tasks are to identify the role of key players in this field, to detect both problems and achievements. It's important to underline that the author makes just the first step in this problematic investigation., incl. the monitoring of this process, the analyses of its similarities and particularities [1].

The cultural policies development in the Republic of Moldova is closely connected with the *Soros Foundation of Moldova* activities and initiatives. In terms of cultural policies, during the 1990s the Soros Foundation of Moldova was focused on *direct support* for the arts in the *Arts and Culture Program* framework (program director being Victoria Miron), offering grants for artistic projects, artists' scholarships and awards, trainings in art-management and professional development.

In the 2000s the Soros Foundation of Moldova's priorities were changed. The *Cultural Policy Program* (program director being Victoria Miron) is focused on *indirect support* of the cultural sector aimed to influence cultural policies elaboration, legislation reform, using the mechanisms of advocacy, establishing networks, facilitating partnerships etc.

The mission of the *Cultural Policies Program* at the Soros Foundation Moldova is formulated in the following way: „the program organizes, facilitates, supports and finances activities intended to strengthen the cultural sector and cultural policies in the Republic of Moldova“ [2]. As it's indicated on the foundation's web page, the program's activities are focused on: „strengthening the Moldovan non-governmental, private and public sectors by reinforcing the strategic planning and development of management capacities in the field; promoting of the participative spirit, cooperating with the civil society in drafting cultural development plans at national and local levels“ [2].

Since 2007 until 2012 the stable partner of the Soros Foundation Moldova has been *the European Cultural Foundation* (ECF), the Netherlands. This NGO was very active especially in collaboration with Eastern European countries within the *European Neighborhood Program* [3]. As it's indicated in these organization official documents, the European Cultural Foundation is aimed to „promote capacity building, knowledge exchange and cultural policy development throughout wider Europe“ [3]. Since 2006 this NGO has made efforts to create a long-term strategy to assist the development of a cultural Moldovan network as an instrument for social and political transformation.

Among the organization's aims are the following: „strengthening a coalition of cultural institutions, NGOs and local public administrations; supporting national advocacy actions for cultural policy reform; continuing to connect both creative work and policy development in Moldova with the rest of Europe and beyond“ [3]. The project which has become an important step in monitoring of cultural policies situation at the Republic of Moldova, in capacity building process within the national cultural sector was *Visions on Cultural Policy of Moldova: from changes to sustainability*.

Five round tables have been organized gathering representatives of performing arts, literature, visual art, cultural industries, houses of culture; cultural administrators both from cities and regions leaders of state cultural organizations, the private sector, the third sector, executives at different decision-making levels in culture [4].

As an addition, the international conference *Visions on cultural development in the Republic of Moldova* gathered representatives of the cultural sector, public administrations, policy-makers, local and international experts, business people and other relevant stakeholders. The conference included public debates, lectures held by experts and practitioners, workshops, drafting of concrete proposals and presentation of platforms for innovative ideas on cultural policy in the Republic of Moldova.

The participants' opinions, critical issues, proposals have been reflected in the book *Vision on Cultural policy of Moldova: from changes to sustainability* published in 2009 [4]. This edition's content reflects different topics such as: legal framework and actual situation in culture of the Republic of Mol-

dova, decentralization, equal access of population to cultural values, reforming of relationship state versus culture, the role of culture in community problems solving, diversification of funding sources in culture, recommendations and solutions.

A large-scale project named *Reinforcing Moldova's Development Capacities by Strengthening its Cultural Sector* had been initiated and implemented by the Soros Foundation of Moldova and the European Cultural Foundation between 2007—2010. This project has been supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' *Matra programme*.

Three main target groups have been attracted: representatives of the third sector (15 NGOs and cultural organizations' members); leaders of public institutions in the field of culture, including culture houses of different regions (15); representatives of 32 cultural departments of local and regional administration, representatives of the Ministry of Culture. Among overall objectives were the following: to increase the professionalism of persons involved in strategic planning and internal management in the public and private sectors; to improve institutional management and strategic development capacities (incl. policy planning) of the local cultural public administrations; to ensure an open dialogue and debates between the civil society and decision makers in the cultural field regarding issues pertaining to legislation and strategic development; to promote participatory development by initiating the elaboration of multi-stakeholder development plans on local level, in cooperation with the civil society.

A wide range of actions has been used to reach the goal: *trainings*, an intensive 3-year training program (about 10 4-day workshops), *and the elaboration of* about 35 *strategic* plans for own organizations (NGOs, local cultural administrations, houses of culture etc.) for the next 3-year period.

Another direction of project' activity was *lobbying and advocacy campaign*. On the 12th of December 2009, at the Republic Palace, the First Cultural Congress of the Republic of Moldova took place, gathering about 1000 people (including the president of the Republic of Moldova, Parliament Commission for Culture members, Ministry of Culture representatives, Creative Unions members, different cultural actors). This event sought to give voice to the needs of Moldova's cultural sector. In 2010 over 30 public debates were carried out all around the country (in Briceni, Basarabeasca, Cantemir, Edinet, Leova, Ungheni, Criuleni, Glodeni, Riscani, Cahul, Calarasi, Donduseni, Hincesti, Sigerei, Dubasari, Ialoveni, Straseni districts).

The following editions appeared within the project framework: Lidia Varbanova's book *Strategic Planning for Learning Organizations in the Cultural Sector* [5]. Based on a system approach to strategic planning, this source was used by participants in strategic plans elaboration. The manual covers: vision, mission, aim, strategic planning, cultural organization and media, technological and production plan, people and creativity, money and creativity, risks management and other topics. It is important to underline that this edition is highly solicited by cultural and educational organizations. This edition has been appreciated by the international teachers in cultural policies and cultural management. For instance, Corina Șuteu, director of the *Romanian Cultural Institute* in New York, has mentioned: „after the first chapters comprehensively addressed to the generic definitions of certain concepts and ideas related to the strategic planning of cultural organizations, this book provides a perspective (both synthetic and clear) upon some complex areas, such as cultural policies, cultural industries, establishing the mission statement, the risks implied by cultural processes and models of evaluation...the complex mechanism of arts and culture management through planning in a global environment“ [5, p.6].

The collection of articles *Elaboration of local cultural policy as a catalist of changes* written by international (C. Răceanu, M.Lavanga, A.P.Russo) and local (C.Craciun, I.Grabovan, V. Reabcinschi, V. Tcacenco) experts has been prepared and published. These authors were have been engaged in a project realization. As Diane Dodd noted, „the second manual has a different structure and another type of challenges. The book presents a collection of essays that investigates critically culture policy and cultural management issues. The manual offers a wide variety of opinions, reflecting different challenges of cultural management and cultural policies elaboration. The manual includes essays of well-known

Moldovan practitioners as well as of international experts in order to accumulate opinions and provoke discussions regarding Moldova's realities. The manual purpose is to inform, support and share their ideas in the field of culture with decision makers in Moldova" [6, p.13].

A new initiative of these two organizations appeared in 2011. This is a two-year *Cultural Managers Exchange Program Tandem* (2011—2012), an initiative for partnership development across the European Union and the European Neighborhood. The general idea is the following: cultural managers from the European Union's countries teaming up with cultural managers from Moldova. One of the most successful examples was the collaboration of Tatiana Popa, founder and leader of *Casa Parinteasca* NGO, Palanca, a small village in the central part of Moldova, who made a tandem with young fashion designer from Berlin Isabell de Hillerin. They created and presented a fashion collection inspired by traditional costume elements hand made by Palanca's women. Probably the main impact of this project for the local people from Palanca was not the participation in the Berlin Fashion Week, but the discovery that their local tradition, cultural heritage might create new labor places, might vitalize the economical life of a small village. [7].

The recent project has been implemented by the same organizers, the *Troika (Trio)* project (2011—2013), which uses resource mapping and planning by local operators in order to support the existing underutilized cultural infrastructure. The trio members are: the mayor, the director of the house of culture and the representative of the local NGO or a business unit. This team's task was to make a cultural resources mapping of the village, to design project ideas which might transform local cultural resources into an efficient tool for human, social, economical development of the village.

How can we describe the impact of these activities? In our opinion, these activities have contributed to some systems changes within the Moldovan cultural policies landscape:

1. A new layer of cultural managers and public administrators have got knowledge in cultural management, marketing, lobbying,
2. Many good practices have been demonstrated, especially at the local and regional level
3. They applied this knowledge in elaboration 3-year strategic plans,
4. They have obtained some experience and practical tools in cultural advocacy, influencing both public opinion and decision-makers at the local, regional, national level
5. They created an informal national network of cultural managers initiating common projects, programs, activities
6. They influenced the civil society and decision makers to put on the agenda cultural policy issues, incl. the national legislation modification
7. Conditions for long-term partnership have been created for some organizations and cultural actors
8. The idea that culture assets might be an alternative resource for sustainable development of the country, region, village becomes more and more popular.

Bibliographic references

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