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**Adaptation of cultural institutions in the new economic conditions:
Aspects of the Greek case, 2010-11
An On-Going Research.**

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1. Mapping in brief the cultural sector in Greece

Cultural sector in Greece, according to disposable data,¹ contributes to the Gross Domestic Product approximately in average percentage from 0,8% to 1,1% for the years 1985-1991.²

Cultural sector contents the activities and agencies in two major spheres, although cultural goods are for public use and have public value, according to their source of finance and the institutional frame in which they function: private and public. In recent years many semi-public organizations appeared following the general effort to minimize public sector. The central organization authorized by the state for the management of the cultural sector is the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which in fact is responsible for tourism, culture and sports.

Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism consists of the previous Ministries of Culture and Touristic Development. The two different ministries united according to the Presidential Decree 186/2009. The new Ministry is divided to four General Secretaries (G.S.): the G. S. of Tourism, the G.S. of Sports, the G.S. of Culture and the G.S. for the Olympic Utilization.³

The General Secretary of Culture is divided into four General Directorates (G.D.): the G.D. for the Antiquities and the Cultural Heritage, the G.D. of

¹ There isn't an efficient system of measurement the cultural sector in Greece automatically in total yet.

² Center for Programming and Financial Researches (2000):120.

³ www.yppo.gr/1/e10.jsp: 28.5.2011

Restoration, Museums and Technical Works, the G.D. of Contemporary Culture and the G.D. of Administrative Support.

The first G.D. is divided to dependent central services, to dependent regional services and to dependent special regional services. The second G.D. is divided to dependent central and regional services. The third G.D. is divided to dependent central services and the fourth G.D. also is divided to dependent central services.

Under the auspices of the Ministry there are supervised organizations which are legal persons under private or public law and also some semi-independent public services such as the Athens State Orchestra, the Museum of Greek Folk Art and the Thessaloniki State Orchestra.

Greece has made a lot of investments in decentralization of cultural activities, specially after 1980's⁴. The Local/Regional Theaters⁵ were founded analogous to the regional division of the country. The principle idea was each region to develop its own theater and audience, thus the capital of the region was the base of each theatrical entity. The institution covered by great success and offered a great boosting to theatrical culture in the provinces. Lately, the Regional Theaters face a lot of problems mainly due to the world-wide economic decline. Local government authorities have founded and developed cultural infrastructures and function specific cultural programmes according to the local needs. Many local festivals have developed in the recent years in the management of which the local authorities participate or they are fully responsible.

After 1990s, the National Cultural Network of Cities⁶ was founded; in its framework were created regional centres in order each one of those to cultivate a special domain of culture according to local needs and tradition. Under this programme were founded local organisations which undertook a lot of cultural activities concerning their special participation in the network. Funding was based on special agreements with the Ministry of Culture according to annual report.

In 1997 the city of Thessaloniki was the European Cultural Capital of the Year. This gave a major opportunity for developing a wide expansion of cultural infrastructure. Another national programme named "The Domain of Culture", has developed the idea to gather all the thematic networks which functioned all

⁴ Daraki,P., Konsola,D., Tsakirides, O., E.E.T.A.A. (A.E.), Bitsani,E., Venizelou,E. and Thanopoulou,M.

⁵ Armaos,N.:67-69 and Hajakis,S. : 79-83.

⁶ Sinadinos,P. :43-47.

over the country. The networks were on theatre, music, dance, cinema, popular culture, book and literature, architect, visual arts and photography⁷.

All over Greece there are also many local cultural associations providing local identity, supporting local creation, organising popular festivities and participating in the configuration of cultural image. The recording and the knowledge about the precise number of cultural associations throughout the country is not yet known. Prof.Konsola refers the number of 581 associations in 1982⁸. In 2003 were found 392 associations only in two counties: Cyclades and Samos Islands. 252 of those associations functioned in the islands and 140 functioned mainly in Athens, having their official base in the capital city.⁹

2. The current challenges faced by cultural organisations and the need for adaptation

Globalization, new technologies in communication, advances in computers and the global economic inflation imposing different economic conditions and create a new landscape for cultural organisations.

In the European Union, however, progress is being made on the development of cultural institutions on the field of management and on the introduction of innovative digital methods in production and in promotion of cultural goods.

Globalisation has resulted in culture creating trends of homogenization and differentiation¹⁰. These trends were evident in Greece more on the cultural programs of municipalities, which on one hand followed innovative projects, introducing new technologies in production and communications, on the other hand, however, pay particular attention to the preservation and promotion of local cultural identity.

In recent years the preservation and promotion of local cultural identities, combined with the promotion of traditional products, found a fertile ground to the tourism industry since forms a product with special “label”, attracts tourists and creates tourism services of highest quality in a particular area.

The modern tourist perception is that a tourist becomes a visitor seeking for experiences beyond hosting services of high quality, regarding the enrichment of his knowledge about local culture, taste traditional-natural products and

⁷ Bitsani,E. : 129.

⁸ Konsola: 74.

⁹ National Center for Social Research: 10.

¹⁰ McQuail,D.:154-156, Vrisas,K.: 125-167,Tsakiridi,O.,2000: 237-250.

participate in cultural events. Through tourism further exploitation of cultural resources, higher quality products and broadening of knowledge can be achieved¹¹.

Digital revolution changed the behaviour of the cultural organisations, because now have more opportunities to reach their audience, publicize their production but also create digital platforms. These changes are obvious in the arts, which now in the era of digital globalisation co-exist in two different spheres: in reality and online¹². The online art and other cultural services could be described as multimedia, hyper-text and interactive. The existence of on-line galleries or websites of museums and other cultural organisations guide the users of the internet with a simple click, sitting at their sofa, on their web site, viewing digital pictures or videos, enrich their knowledge about the world heritage and the treasures, reading and studying poems, react and even participate.

In cultural organisations world wide for example have developed new information systems services¹³, on line museum, web and social technologies¹⁴, families and communities experiences and knowledge management¹⁵.

Concerning the info-communication society and the digital revolution the data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority at a reduced rate show a continuity of the increase using PC at 2,3% for access in the internet respectively and one in two households have access to the internet from domestic infrastructure (46,4%)¹⁶, 53,4% of households posses a computer, of any type, at home and 88,9% of households with Internet access at home and 41,2% of total households have Broadband connection.

About the activities in the internet we know that in Greece individuals use the internet as following (data regarding 1st quarter of 2009): 93,1% for information search and on-line services (including listening to web radio, watching web t.v., uploading music, videos, photos etc. downloading films, music, games etc.), 78,2% for communication, 13,2% for banking and selling

¹¹ See the speech of the Minister of Culture and Tourism Mr. Geroulanos, P. in 17.10.2009, www.yppo.gr/2/g22.jsp?obj_id=33792: 25.5.2011.

¹² Gantzias, G.:65

¹³ See for example the Organisational Chart of Victoria and Albert Museum: www.vam.ac.uk

¹⁴ See for example the Organisational Chart of Powerhouse Museum: www.powerhousemuseum.com

¹⁵ See for example the Organisational Chart of the Glenbow Museum: www.glenbow.org

¹⁶ Hellenic Statistical Authority, Survey on the use of information and communication technologies by households, 2010:
www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/A1901/PressReleases/A1901_SFA20_DT_AN00_201001_F_EN.pdf

goods or services, 61,3% for education and training and 28,3% for interaction with public services.

According to disposable data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority (year 2008) is recorded a decrease in the upward tendency of consumption expenditure¹⁷The average monthly household expenditure (purchases) on Recreation and Culture in 2004 was 5,0% and in 2008 was 4,8%, distribution 13,3% with decreasing tendencies. Poor people spend only 0,8% of their monthly income for Recreation and Culture (2004-5) and non-poor spend 6,1% for the same category. Meaning that approximately the 19% of the total population has no way out... This tendency unfortunately increases and the reasons are very obvious and widely known.

A significant decrease is recorded in the receipts of museums (Table I) from 2001 to 2011. Also there is a decrease in the receipts of archaeological sites from 2009 (39,058,077,00 euros') to 2010 (35.612.517,00 euros').

Table I: Receipts of Museums in Greece, 2001-2010.

Years	Receipts of Museums in euros'
2001	7,060,794,13
2002	7,574,993,12
2003	4,458,686,50
2004	6,304,409,00
2005	8,277,065,00
2006	8,819,315,00
2007	8,484,616,00
2008	7,884,679,00
2009	8,001,471,00
2010	4,516,423,00

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, *Movement of Museums*, various years.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism also diminished its expenses and its income from the State Budget. In 2009 the expenditures are 734,516,649,94 euros', in 2010 are 729,146,708,00 and in 2011 525,252,000,00. This fact has an impact to all the expenditures of the agency almost in the half. Thus, the Ministry is no longer able to support all cultural organisations, while in others have made necessary drastic cuts.

3. The preliminary research and its findings.

a. Methodology

¹⁷ Hellenic Statistical Authority, Household Budget Survey 2008:
www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/A0801/PressReleases/A0801_SFA05_DT_AN_0_0_2008_01_F_EN.pdf

Bearing in mind the changes that have occurred in the environment of cultural institutions , we decided to investigate the necessary adjustments they make in order to continue to produce (sometimes only to survive) and develop.

During the academic year the problems were identified and the preliminary research was made which leads in creating a questionnaire for further research. The preliminary research involves:

- ✚ Collecting data from the Internet
- ✚ Interviews with executives who have the complete picture of each organisation

The brief case studies carried out in ten different entities in the wider area of the capital city. This was an obligatory choice, since the research has no financial support, so the access to these organisations is easier. Our aim is to broaden the research in other cities .

Five organisations of our sample function as public and five as private. According to findings a questionnaire will be built for collecting the elements in more systematic way.

The research focus on the management of cultural organisations and specially in:

- ✚ Strategy
- ✚ Organisation
- ✚ Human Resources (education, training)

b. The cultural organisations

The case studies carried out in the following cultural organisations:

Public, semi-public

1. The National Opera House
2. Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Helliniko-Argiroupoli
3. The National Gallery in Athens
4. The Museum of Folk Art
5. The Byzantine and Christian Museum

Private

1. The Theatre “Technis-Karolos Kun”
2. Benaki Museum
3. Foundation of the Hellenic World
4. Emotions Museum of Childhood

5. Odeon S.A.multiplex cinemas-10 in Athens (representative of 20th Century Fox, MGM and others in Greece and Cyprus)

c. The results

The results at a glance:

- ✚ All the institutions decrease their expenditures
- ✚ All the institutions try to find the most economic solution among several choices almost for all actions
- ✚ Change their attitude to the people, try to reach as many audiences they can using modern marketing know-how
- ✚ Develop new ideas for exploitation of their products
- ✚ Re-organise the staff although sometimes there is a climate of “fear” for losing the job (mostly in public enterprises)
- ✚ Re-organise the internal structure in order to add special services that support info-communication and digital performance of the organisation
- ✚ Invest on new technologies
- ✚ Find out the meaning of Strategic Plan and start building one
- ✚ Realised that management and effectiveness are very useful to overcome the crisis, thus they have turned their attention in modern management practices.
- ✚ Local Authorities cannot function in full power yet due to the establishment of the new Law named “Kallikratis”, but include in their activities Strategic Plan, Organisation Charts and try to find funds for the re-training of their staff on cultural management items
- ✚ All institutions search ways to attract private funding
- ✚ There is a big shift to exploit the institution of sponsoring

The results in more details:

Concerning **Strategy**:

- ✚ Some years ago if someone said to the executives of cultural organizations (in Greece)¹⁸ that need Strategy, Planning, Policies, Program

¹⁸ During my Ph.D. research (in 1986), when I asked questions regarding “Management” in cultural organizations , they looked at me like I was an “alien”. I kept trying, I insisted that “management makes all things easier and better” but still had as a feedback “we know what we are doing”. They knew, indeed, in an “old fashioned way” based to instinct, to friendships, to chances, to scattered proposals...But nowadays nobody can stand on this basis for a long time.

Implementation and Timetables, Gantt diagrams, Organisational Charts, it would be “in another planet”. But today, at least the larger organizations, adopt techniques such as S.W.O.T. and P.E.R.T. analysis, create strategic / operational plan, which they insist to follow.

✚ All institutions realised that without strategy it is almost impossible to survive under the crisis. In order to continue to produce aim at early planning, good management of resources, opening the institution to as many people as possible, to the implementation of new technologies, to invest in quality and innovation and to encourage the expression of new ideas.

Concerning **Organisation:**

✚ The above cultural organisations have organisational charts, which occasionally publish online at their websites.

✚ In order to face the crisis and follow their strategic plan introduce new services, primarily to support new technologies, public relations, cultural management and research. Particular attention is given to the participation in networks at European and international level.

Concerning the **management of human resources:**

✚ To address the crisis, governments try to maintain a climate of stability, although this is not easy. Many executives said “go to work okay and leave a mess.” In addition, organizations running parallel administrative and artistic divisions, there is a strong effort to achieve a climate of cooperation avoiding conflicts with the proper selection of administrative and artistic directors (eg the National Opera House).

The cultural institutions now pay particular attention to hire staff with special non-artistic knowledge such as management, accounting, statistics, law, economics and computers. For this reason in recent years the sector of cultural management shows a continuous rise. According to Jocelyn Harvey an effective management “...can contribute to the survival of a non profit cultural organization in crisis...”¹⁹

Further research

The above results are useful to continue the research in a wider sample inside and outside of Athens. The preliminary research gave the evidence in order to design the questionnaire.

¹⁹ As outlined in Economou,M.p.91.

Resources

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