Challenges of public-civic partnership in Cambodia's cultural policy development

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ABSTRACT

Partnering with citizens and civil society in public services provision has emerged today as an alternative approach to innovate public service delivery. Engaging different partners (citizens, service users and professionals from all three sectors) allows for more prosperous, fair and inclusive societies. In Cambodia the rationale to take these developments into consideration is different. The central cultural policy issue is not how to modernise and make more efficient public system but how government could take some of the cultural responsibilities regarding culture as public interest which today are undertaken by Cambodian NGOs (with sporadic foreign aid). Namely, Cambodia is a post genocid¬¬e society that went through 4 years of civil war and 12 years of foreign occupation which resulted in a complete destruction of institutional public structures relevant for the wellbeing of the people (health, education, culture). Many of the tasks have been taken by emerging civil society and not by public administration (lacking specialised knowledge and expertise). In the moment when the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MOCFA) of the Kingdom of Cambodia in close cooperation with UNESCO has adopted ambitious national cultural policy document, the question of its implementation becomes the central and the need to find feasible organisational model explicit. The research questions address possibilities of public-civic partnership, collaboration between public authorities and NGOs in Cambodia (as strategy of cultural development), exploring possibilities and obstacles for the establishment of complex cultural organizational context which would balance public responsibility, private entrepreneurialism and civil society visions and needs. How to "unite" Cambodian "agents of change" in an effort to create Cambodia-specific model for democratic policy-making and its implementation? Are the National Arts Forum and the Cultural Task Force, exchange platforms between ministries, public institutions and civil society cultural organizations for the promotion of the contemporary creativity, the answer to this question?

Keywords:

Cambodia

Cultural policy

Public-civic partnership

Culture and development

Professionalism in the cultural sector

Cultural management

Introduction

Partnering with citizens and civil society in public services provision has lately emerged as an innovative approach to the delivery of public services. In search for more efficient, effective and responsive public sector, the Western society has exchanged several organisational models of public services delivery. The main motive behind continuous search for better performance of the public sector are fiscal pressures as tight budgetary environments and growing public needs placing unprecedented constraints on governments' innovative capacity. The imperative to re-think traditional model of public service delivery makes governments eager to re-define the boundaries between state and market and the relation between state and civil society. Engagement of different partners in the production and delivery of public services allows for more prosperous, fair and inclusive societies.

In Cambodia, where public cultural system is being restored, the rationale to take these developments into consideration is different. The central cultural policy issue is how the government could take over some of cultural responsibilities which are now carried by NGOs.

Cambodia is a post-genocid¬¬e society that went through civil war (1970-1975), 3 years of Khmer rouge regime (2.5 million people killed between 1975 and 1978) and 12 years of foreign, Vietnamese occupation (1978-1992). That contributed to the complete destruction of institutional structures (health, education, culture…). Instead of their re- establishment, military demobilisation resulted in the over-sizing of public sector (the power base of Cambodia's ruling party) creating not competent public administration. Existing cultural administration is lacking professional knowledge and expertise in governance.

During the last 20 years, the United Nations and other foreign aid agencies, in cooperation with the Cambodian NGOs, realized numerous projects raising their capacities. Thus, collaboration between public authorities and NGOs seems to be the most realistic option for development of future cultural services and its governance. The key factor in cooperation of state and civil society is not support to NGOs but partnership with them. Delays in creation of such partnership are directly putting at risk the sustainability of hard-earned gains in the cultural field that resulted from the long-term international funding of the NGOs. That is why the UNESCO tried, through its technical assistance mission, to introduce a new type of policy knowledge-transfer that would enable public-civic partnership for the Cambodian cultural development.

Starting from the premise that the establishment of public-civic partnership is crucial in making the Cambodian cultural policy intentions realistic, we examined the roles of civil society and models of their work in providing public goods. Such a (Western) theoretical framework has been further considered in the Southeast Asian circumstances[1] in order to discover the challenges of public-civic partnership in culture in Cambodia.

Methodology

This research was designed under the UNESCO's technical assistance mission: "Expert facility to strengthen the system of governance for culture in developing countries – Cambodia"[2]. It was comprised of:

a) desk research aimed to identify and analyse the underlying theories and conceptual frameworks relevant for public services provision in the field of culture;

b) empirical research (field research with interviews, case studies, critical ethnography, focus groups, documents analysis), which provided qualitative and quantitative information on cultural policy and governance, production and dissemination of cultural goods;

c) analysis and interpretations (qualitative and quantitative) regarding existing and possible new models of cultural governance, and

d) the action research resulted in the creation of two platforms for the cooperation between public, private and civil sectors (started to operate in 2016) – the National Arts Forum and the Cultural Task Force.

Originality of this research is in identification of controversies, ethical dilemmas and models of sharing responsibilities between public and civil sectors in cultural policy making and implementation.

Theoretical framework

The European concepts of cultural policy as public policy and of cultural goods as public goods are mainly based on the tradition and historic relationships between arts and the nation state. At first, the states

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1   During the UNESCO Asia-Pacific workshops (Seoul, 2018) it became obvious that the provision of cultural goods and services in Asia is quite limited to the public sector. Out of 50, participants only five represented civil society and just one was from the private sector. Such relations are kept in the processes of cultural policy making in which civil and private sectors are barely participating.

2 The main task of the mission was to assist the Cambodian authorities to prepare a strategy for cultural development – to identify needs and resources and to suggest instruments for the strengthening of public, private and civil sectors in culture and development of inter-ministerial affairs (education, media, tourism, etc.). (UNESCO, 2013).

needed cultural activities for the sake of their own elucidation and self-consciousness, and later, in the welfare paradigm, cultural participation of citizens became a matter of their wellbeing. In the second half of the 20th century modern state stopped to be an authority and became a service provider. In cultural sector public authorities started to develop and manage a cultural infrastructure (libraries, museums, archives, theatres, cinemas, galleries, etc.). Governmental protectionism meant high level of security for artists and cultural professionals but also total subordination to the traditional relationship between government and the delivery body based on a hierarchy[3].

Due to the economic recession in the beginning of the 1980s, "hierarchical, centralized bureaucracies designed in the 1930s or 1940s simply do not function well in the rapidly changing, information-rich, knowledge-intensive society and economy of the 1990s" (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992: 12). Old model came under severe criticism. Hierarchical decision making (lacking initiative from the cultural field), centralised structures with politicians on top, rigid rules of operation and control were replaced with market mechanisms (contractualism, competition and contestability among cultural producers), target-oriented funding underlining service quality, output orientations (towards cultural production and postproduction, co-productions and exchanges, enlargement of projects and area of operation), and customer-oriented services (enlargement of audience, responsiveness to consumers' expectations and user satisfaction, etc.).

These changes are considered within the concepts such as the New Public Management (Hood, 1991 & 1994), "managerialism" (Politt, 1993), "market-based administration" (Lan & Rosenbloom, 1992), "the hollowing out of the state" (Rhodes, 1994), and "reinventing government" (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). The latest suggests that governments should: only be responsible for delivery of services; empower communities and citizens to exercise self-governance and democratic participation (decentralise authority); encourage competition instead of public monopolies; promote market forces rather than create public programs; and be driven by missions, goals and objectives rather than legitimated by rules.

Entrepreneurial management style and introduction of compulsory competitive tendering for public funds required reorganisation of public establishments which became separate entities outside the public administration. The process was marked with different labels: privatisation, incorporation, decentralisation and others. Withdrawal of the state from daily management of public

institutions and deregulation has enlarged the manoeuvring space but, instead of promoting artistic autonomy, these developments have subordinated it to the market rationale. The political tensions were replaced by the managerial ones.

Few researchers have investigated how public governance affects public cultural organisations. The studies of effects of reforms tend to be process-oriented, describing policy intentions and mechanisms, rather than result-oriented, showing the consequences of changing conditions and demands posed on cultural institutions by public authorities (Lindqvist, 2012). The market-type instruments and mechanisms based on competition (public tendering, contractualism, commercialisation), profit-seeking behaviour and short-term perspective demanded by market practices put forward serious scepticism and fear of putting efficiency before effectiveness.

After 2000 the new form of cooperation between state and private sector – public-private partnership (PPP), was established as a next step closer to the market logic[4]. The sharing of responsibility between non-profit public sector and for profit business sector is possible if cooperation goes along the line of their different interests. However, while New Public Management (NPM) and PPPs can present a number of advantages, the contradiction between public logic (mission-driven) and private logic (profit-driven) has never been resolved. The competition-based public service delivery mechanisms have received strong criticism as evidence of failure to deliver increased value for government and citizens have grown.

The collaborative rather than competitive arrangements have become interesting again and new forms of partnership have been extended towards the collaboration with civil society organisations and citizens. The central idea of the new innovative approach to public service delivery is that "public services work better when designed and delivered in partnership with citizens in order to harness their interest, energies, expertise and ambitions" (equal partnership between professionals and public is referred to as co-production). The OECD report (2011) draws on the results of an exploratory survey of country practices in 22 countries, examined 58 examples of co-production practices covering 10 public service categories.

This concept, opening new ways of collaboration between state and civil society, is relevant for arts and culture. It directly involves individual users and groups of citizens "working with or in the place of professionals" and is only sporadically focused on cooperation with NGOs. Their role refers mainly to the monitoring and evaluation or the provision of information and support to the users. Thus their role

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3 Only in few European countries governments have delegated their executive power to councils and agencies for cultural governance – arm's length principle. Such cultural policy model with strong civic dimension is based of the modernist notion of culture as an autonomous realm.

4 It is based on a long-term contract under which a public body allows a private-sector enterprise to participate in designing, constructing and operating a public work. The private side provides additional capital, management and implementation skills, better identification of needs and optimal use of resources (EU, 2003).

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is not regarded primarily as a professional alternative to public institutions. Public-civic partnership became an alternative to public-private partnership drawing on comparative advantage of the third sector. Its advantage is that NGOs *are better partners because they are not driven by profit but by mission*.

The mentioned study developed the checklist with the set of questions that could be used to guide governments' efforts in planning and organising delivery process using co-production.
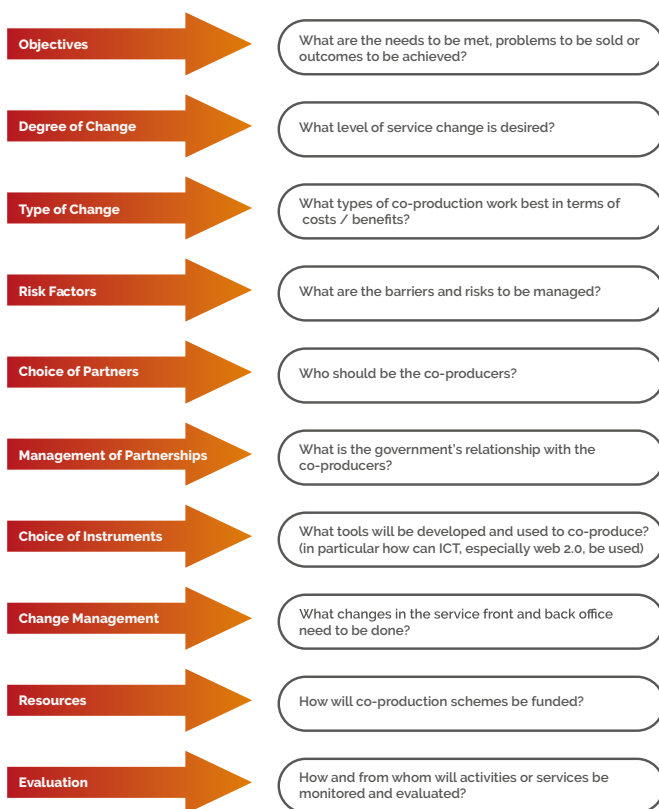

Objectives	What are the needs to be met, problems to be sold or outcomes to be achieved?
Degree of Change	What level of service change is desired?
Type of Change	What types of co-production work best in terms of costs / benefits?
Risk Factors	What are the barriers and risks to be managed?
Choice of Partners	Who should be the co-producers?
Management of Partnerships	What is the government's relationship with the co-producers?
Choice of Instruments	What tools will be developed and used to co-produce? (in particular how can ICT, especially web 2.0, be used)
Change Management	What changes in the service front and back office need to be done?
Resources	How will co-production schemes be funded?
Evaluation	How and from whom will activities or services be monitored and evaluated?

FIGURE 1. CHECKLIST FOR CO-PRODUCTION

State of the art in cultural policy research in Southeast Asia

Ten countries belong to the geographically and economically varied region of Southeast Asia: Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Lao, Myanmar and Cambodia. They have different political and economic systems (kingdoms and republics; democracies and autocracies; capitalism and socialism), different major religions (Buddhism, Islam, Christianity) and numerous minor ones (Hinduism, animism, etc.), and different visions of development in the global world. Such diversity is causing a lack of academic research that would encompass the region together with an uneven development of university education, especially in social sciences and humanities.

Most of the studies in cultural policy, cultural management, cultural tourism, heritage management, etc. have been nationally bound or related to few countries that are sharing certain common problem. Scholars coming from universities and art schools in Singapore and Thailand have written a body of literature that is dealing with cultural policy issues from perspectives and standpoints of their respective countries. On the other side, the cultural situation in Lao or Myanmar has been tackled only by rare foreign researchers that usually lacked knowledge of the language and access to resources for more comprehensive research.

Most of the existing texts deal with the issue of policy transfer. Political scientists have investigated the impact of Western knowledge in creation of local policies in Southeast Asia and other regions of the world (Stone, 2012; Park et al, 2014; Benson & Jordan, 2011; Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). Oher texts deal with the influence of globalization on class division, consumption patterns and civil society development in Southeast Asian cities (Clammer, 2003), or the issue of Singapore hegemony within the ASEAN countries (Kawasaki, 2004), or on cultural diplomacy (Wong, 2016).

National cultural policies got more attention, specifically in Singapore (Kong, 2000), Philippines (UNESCO, 1973), Vietnam (Elliott, 2014; Do, 2012), Indonesia (Soebadio, 1985) and Thailand (Connors, 2018) but it has to be said that, besides Singapore, most of the other studies have been done within Western framework – at Australian, British, American and other world universities which can give grants to their master or doctoral students from this region to do research with Western affiliation.

However, even in those studies of the ASEAN countries (urban social movements, circulation of cultural commodities, etc.), the case of Cambodia has

not been considered (Lindsay, 1995; Kawasaki, 2004)[5]. Postcolonial critique dealt mostly with Singapore (Chun, 2012), while creative industries and cultural tourism analysis focused on Thailand and some other countries outside of the region (Taiwan, South Korea) that have the capacity for massive circulation of cultural commodities and the gain of soft power through culture (Lindsay, 1995).

Therefore, existing scholarship on cultural policies in Southeast Asia seems to be irrelevant for researching and interpreting the case of Cambodia that, due to authoritarian regime and media censorship (O'Regan, 1994), stays quite isolated from the cultural processes that pervade the region. The only exception is related to the Cambodia's ratification of the UNESCO 2005 Convention which has enabled the UNESCO to try to introduce new cultural policy models in relations towards civil society.

Challenges for the democratization of cultural policy in Cambodia

Although Cambodia started in 1992 with its cultural restoration and reinstitution of the public system almost from scratch, effects of the past are still visible today. In 1975 Khmer rouge proclaimed Zero year for Cambodia. All symbols of statehood have been destroyed, from national bank and monetary system, over the parliament and all democratic structures, to urbanity and village life. The rule of Khmer rouge is usually represented through exodus from cities to rural areas, but villagers also had to leave their homes and inhabit collective premises where children were separated from parents and even siblings. Complete cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, had to be destroyed, including innocent lullabies and basic crafts.

The Khmer rouge period was marked by the mass deportation of both urban and rural population and the killing of all professionals (lawyers, doctors, traditional village wedding and funeral musicians; teachers, photographers, artisans...). Society has been organized within the systems of two classes – soldiers and peasants – and of one party that ruled everything. Most of the party members were illiterate peasants recruited in remote villages during the civil war. The party has completely destroyed educational system; all cultural institutions (museums, archives, libraries, cinemas, cinema laboratories); all festivals, both artistic and religious, even those linked to natural phenomena such as traditional Water festival.

During the last 20 years, the government and the MOCFA have made many efforts to re-establish the public cultural system – to preserve and revive tangible and intangible heritage, recreate institutions and revitalize art education. That has been done in close cooperation with different foreign governments and international organizations.

At the moment Cambodian society is at the crossroad between tradition and modernization. Strategic dilemma of cultural development (cultural policy) does not questions which of these extremes should be chosen, but how to find a good balance in between these two processes. Another strategic dilemma is related to financial sustainability of the cultural system since there are no policy measures that would enable mixed funding. Both are necessary for the transformation of cultural officials "from service managers to service providers" and the introduction of strategic approach to the management of public cultural institutions.

The process of creation of the document *Cultural Policy for Cambodia*, which lasted from 2011 until 2014, was a positive sign of the Cambodia's strategic orientation towards its cultural development. Participation of all three sectors in this process has been valuable for mutual understanding, identification

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5 Studies deal with urban development, globalization, consumption behavior of the middle class, and other processes of the Global South in which Cambodia rarely participate. Even political protests in Cambodia today are led by peasants (peasants are 80% of population) and middle class and urban youth do not join them (street art in Phnom Penh is more part of Western creative industries than of civil rebellion). Therefore, Cambodia do not belong to processes that are of academic interest at the moment.

of issues of development and enabling synergies. Unfortunately, this document was created without previous research and analysis of current situation. It lacks concrete outcomes and strategies, measures, evaluation criteria and funds for the implementation of defined priorities. Therefore, this document is more a declaration of a political will than a strategy.

The most positive element of this document is its national and strategic orientation. It considers culture as a transversal field which influences other sectors and, therefore, requires horizontal government cooperation (education, health, tourism, trade, etc.). However, other ministries have not participated in the creation of this document.

After studying policy documents and researching cultural practices we have identified the following seven issues which could be better managed within the public-civic partnership:

1. Cultural policy scope: a major challenge for cultural policy today is to make a step forward, from culture seen as a tradition which should be respected and repeated, towards culture as a contemporary creation and innovation, as a truly transversal field.

2. Information and documentation support for cultural policy: without a clear picture of the actual state of the arts in Cambodian society, it is extremely difficult to create the appropriate policies for cultural development (including synergies with other sectors). Databases and information systems in culture are lacking although the UNESCO has included Cambodia in its project *Culture for development indicator suite*[6] as one of the 12 "test countries". Information is now still mosaic-like because the cultural administration all over the country has produced multitude of "databases". The MOCFA and its branches collect information but without coherent framework. Many of these (administrative) data are unrelated, without a proper methodology of collection and processing, what takes away their credibility and legitimacy[7]. An information system (interconnected networks of databases) is needed as a base for shared cultural policy making, and a resource for advocating for culture in public-civic partnership.

3. Audience development: although the *Cultural Policy for Cambodia* document do not contain this term (the word "audience" was never mentioned), the phrase: "improvement of arts promotion and dissemination in order to create art market" exists[8]. *The Cultural Policy for Cambodia* and ongoing cultural policy are not developing art practices of population, and there are no measures for the audience development and creation of art market. The lack of cultural supply, lack of cultural demand (low interest) and lack of adequate venues throughout the country[9] make the dissemination of rare existing "products" almost impossible. Research offers two important cases: 1) around 20 performing art groups of the MOCFA (from Royal Ballet to different folk orchestras) performed only 50 times in 2012 during ceremonies and festivities; 2) in the same year, Amrita, an independent performing art troupe, prepared six projects and each was presented only once in a capital city in front of two 200 persons. Both cases are showing that cultural offer is scarce and irregular and that, even in the case of free access, there are no audiences. At the four performances that we attended, the audience was mostly comprised of tourists and ex-pats, even in the case of *Shadow Theatre* which could easily gather large domestic audience.

4. Funding culture: the two most important factors in the development of entrepreneurial, innovative cultural projects are identification of new funding sources and introduction of the specific program budget within the MOCFA. Since new financial resources are indispensable in further cultural development, the ultimate need is to create a national cultural fund which would have its own income (i.e. from APSARA Authority in Siem Reap[10], lottery, tobacco or other types of levies). Besides specific budget for programs, cultural policy model should enable mixed funding of public cultural institutions. By giving the public institutions manoeuvring space for more flexible operation, the main task of the *Cultural Policy for Cambodia* – to raise capacities of existing cultural sector to generate its own income and to develop fundraising – would become feasible. That would be the first

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6 For more information, see http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/diversity-of-cultural-expressions/programmes/culture-for-development-indicators/country-tests/ [accessed 10 May 2014].

7 In addition, the statistical institute is in charge of collecting data through a statistical business register, structural business statistics, short-term statistics, population censuses and surveys. Official data are gathered by various institutions for their own purposes (institute for employment, health and pension insurance, tax administration offices). Those sources rarely have data relevant for the cultural field.

8 All unmarked quotations are from Cultural Policy for Cambodia document.

9 Venues, even in Phnom Penh, are mostly places for conferences, although they use the term "theatre" (Theater of Kratie Province, Chaktomuk Theater, etc.).

10 APSARA Authority in Siem Reap is a specific body created to govern Angkor Wat temples. It keeps all its revenues, thus it is disconnected from the national public cultural authorities. That causes incoherence of cultural policy and creates a situation in which a major cultural revenue cannot be used for the development of contemporary cultural production or other heritage institutions.

step towards the new model of cultural policy in which the public funding would provide stability, while earned income would enable the development of new products and services for existing and new audiences.

5. Indigenous cultures development represents one of the most difficult cultural policy tasks. "Groups of indigenous peoples in remote parts of the country are holders of rich intangible heritage but face the dual challenges of physical and linguistic isolation, struggling at the same time to defend their environment and traditions facing development" (p. 5). Further up, *Cultural Policy for Cambodia* is aiming to: "Involve all in an inclusive and welcoming way, taking into special consideration the needs and diversity of indigenous peoples" (p. 7) but it doesn't say how that will be done. In the regions where minorities live there is a huge lack of human and other resources, and inclusion of minorities in public administration is minimal. Thus, partnering with civil society organisations is necessary.

6. Education and training: in the *Cultural Policy for Cambodia* education is only the 10th basic principle of cultural policy: "Education in all its forms is fundamental to cultural development and appreciation". Empirical research has not identified links between the MOCFA and the Ministry of Education. Along with the official international rankings of the quality of education and the capacity of human resources[11], the rector of the Royal University of Fine Arts' report confirmed that the educational level in arts and culture is very low. For instance, among the MOCFA's 24 employees in the Rattanakiri region, none has a university diploma, four have finished secondary school while the others have only primary education or not even that. Except for the heritage professionals, other employees are not stimulated to pursue further education and training, thus skills of civil society are more adapted to modern world.

7. Financial sustainability and entrepreneurship. Management of cultural system in Cambodia is based on the cameralistic administrative model, unsuitable for the development of modern public cultural system and the development of self-sustainable civil sector. There are no cultural policy measures for the development of entrepreneurialism, no program budget of the Ministry (or other levels of government) and, consequently, no calls for project proposals, no tax incentives, etc. Such system has a negative motivational influence on public institutions.

There is no space for any initiative of employees (intrapreneurship) while the administrative management is taking huge time and energy (even purchasing of regular hygiene material must be approved "from above").

Depending on their own income, NGOs are trying to use modern marketing techniques but since they haven't sufficient skills, the results are modest. With more or less success, NGOs have developed fundraising skills but there is still a lot to be learned, especially about fundraising through international cooperation (coproduction, networking, etc.). The art ensembles have started to tour, mostly within a region, which is more important culturally than financially. Public institutions do not have fundraising and marketing and that is why several existing public-civic partnerships are indicative and important (three workshops and an exhibition with Java gallery were held in the National museum). Motivated by professional reasons and needs, these partnership projects have led to the development of new conservation departments.

Entrepreneurialism lives among craftsman. Several craft NGOs have been successfully transformed into enterprises (i.e. Artisan Angkor) and many members of the Association of Artisans of Cambodia are running their own shops. That is showing the potentials of craftsman to enlarge their operations and become companies offering contribution to employment. However, innovative solutions in product development are rare and usually initiated by foreign designers. Without possibilities for high professional education in different domains of design and crafts, the Cambodian cultural entrepreneurs are staying on folklore which can be sold only cheaply (as souvenir).

Management of cultural organisations resulting from cultural policy

By visiting cultural institutions and organizations and regional branches of the MOCFA, we got an insight into the major issues about the cultural governance, organization of the state cultural system and division of competences. It was stressed at different occasions that several ministries are dealing with culture from their own standpoints and without collaboration (i.e. for crafts ministries of education, tourism and commerce are implementing different policies without informing the MOCFA about the funds that they are giving for the development of crafts or other actions taken in this regard).

In the provinces of Siem Reap and Rattanakiri numerous data about artisans and their workshops

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11 Out of 179 countries ranked according to the World education index, Cambodia is on the 132nd place. As for the Human Development Index, out of 188 ranked countries, Cambodia is at 139th place.

exist[12]. Now is needed a more comprehensive information and documentation centre on the central level which would systematically develop directories, inventories and data basis with an accurate and comparable data for evidence-based cultural policies. As the cultural administration has more than 2,500 employees at different governmental levels (1,500 on central level) the work force is not lacking but it has to be trained for information and documentation tasks.

Management of the state cultural institutions (National museum, Tuol Sleng museum, Angkor conservation, RUFA, etc.) depend on the "administrative" way of governance (cameralism). It lacks entrepreneurialism, marketing skills, audience development programs, etc. In the civil sector[13], management was more entrepreneurial while the funds were coming mostly from foreign donors (French Institute, Goethe Institute, Japanese foundation, etc.) or through American philanthropic organizations (CLA).

Today, NGOs' management differs according to their size. The most vibrant organizations such as Sa Sa Bassac or Meta House are finding their way on international and domestic cultural scenes, developing strong relations with artists and promoting their work abroad. Meta House is offering support for development and production of documentaries while Bophana is doing the same for short feature films. Since the local market is not sufficiently developed to enable sustainability of artists who opt for artistic career, NGOs have to make their efforts to enter international scene without state support.

Compared to the frequent, strong and fruitful relations between NGOs, there are only few examples of official public-civic partnerships: Cambodian Film Commission (NGO using space of the MOCFA), and the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Ministry of education and the Meta House which is introducing methods of theatre in education. Similar partnerships could be developed in the tribal region where, within the Creative Industries Support Programme (CISP, 2008-2011), two important projects were funded: the Mondulkiri resource and documentation centre and the Ratanakiri centre. These centres could be educational, cultural, social and even economic centres of the tribal populations but are in permanent crises as their foreign funding had expired and there are no local public budgets to further support their work. NGOs that are operating in those cities should use these centres' premises for free (which they are now paying for) as they have services in public interest.

Public-civic dialogue: National Arts Forum and Cultural Task Force

During the UNESCO's technical assistance mission, a lot of efforts have been made in order to advocate for the public-civic dialogue, based on the demands of the 2005 Convention. Although the project started in 2012, it was only four years later that the first Cambodian Arts Forum on the promotion of creative industries was held (as part of the process of QPR[14]). It has resulted with important recommendations regarding methods and content of public-civic dialogue. The parties agreed that the MOCFA should create a focal point (a one-window public service for creative industries) and that the Cultural Task Force (consisting of representatives of all three sectors) should meet monthly to discuss priority issues. Among them are the promotion and marketing of arts in Cambodia and abroad; the assurance of artists' rights (to limit the misuses by the private sector); and the new fiscal policy measures (specific tax rates and awards supporting creativity). Establishment of The National Creativity Fund, since the Ministry does not dispose with an adequate budget, is debated.

Although the changes in cultural policy are not yet evident, the fact that the Cultural Task Force has had 15 meetings since its establishment in December 2016 proves the willingness of both sides to enhance public-civic dialogue. Majority of participants are coming from civil associations and international organizations (UNESCO, Goethe Institut, PNH and BKK) with only one representative of the Ministry of culture (Focal Point). They organised the Arts Forum in September 2017 and discussed ways of how they could attract other ministries and agents of cultural change[15]. During their meetings the Task Force devoted time and attention to the discussion about inter-ministerial cooperation between tourism, entertainment and culture. Unfortunately, that was happening without participation of those ministries' representatives. This is showing that there is a huge discrepancy in competencies of civil society members and of public sector employees; the second were never exposed to the international programmes and schemes that could enable them to participate on an equal footing with civil society representatives in cultural development.

The Cultural Task Force is preparing the next National Arts Forum (due in autumn 2018) but the mentioned challenges will remain the same because the public sector does not yet see the civil society as its privileged partner in achieving the public interest. The lack of interest and participation of the Ministry of education, other relevant ministries,

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12 Stone and wood carving, leather masks for theatre, silk workshops, applied sculptures, painting ateliers, etc.
13 Cambodian Living Arts (CLA), Artisans Angkor, Film Commission and Association of Artisans of Cambodia, Meta House, Amrita, CANDO (Banlung), Bophana, etc.
14 However, during the process of creation of the Cultural Policy for Cambodia, few representatives of civil society were invited to the gatherings called the Arts Forum (small scale consultative meetings).
15 In June 2016 the MOCFA and the UNESCO prepared the "Sub-Decree No: 133 SNKr.LK on the creation, administration and management of the National Arts Support & Development Fund (NASDF)", not yet implemented due to a lack of funds.

"THE LACK OF INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, OTHER RELEVANT MINISTRIES, DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND AN ABSENCE OF PRIVATE SECTOR, PREVENTS THE COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC-CIVIC DIALOGUE IN THE ARTS FORUM AND THE TASK FORCE FROM HAVING MORE SUBSTANTIAL RESULTS"

directors of public cultural institutions and an absence of private sector, prevents the comprehensive public-civic dialogue in the Arts Forum and the Task Force from having more substantial results. .

Conclusions

According to the OECD checklist, major objectives of cultural policy should meet crucial needs and resolve problems that were identified as lacking of a system of cultural governance, lacking of cultural funds, social dialogue and the use of all potential resources in society. Public-civic partnership first task should be raising awareness about systemic issues and about educational needs that exist throughout the cultural sector. Thus, "a new type of partnership model should be introduced with NGOs as key players in a cultural sector, leading its development". It shows that public authorities in Cambodia are aware that transferring certain functions to NGOs they transfer its accountability for these functions as it concerns public interest. Transfer of functions requires long term vision of the roles of each partner and needs to be legally binding (explicitly stated in a sub-decree). During the last 20 years when the United Nations, other aid agencies and donors were helping Cambodia to recover from the effects of civil war and foreign occupation, culture (arts, industries and heritage) relied heavily on foreign aid. As a result of such periodic project funding, the Cambodian NGOs have gained knowledge and skills of cultural governance and established a sort of a system parallel to the MOCFA. Such system cannot turn into a stable model of cultural governance because the roles and responsibilities of public authorities for culture as a public good are lacking. Future cultural development should be based on the existing and growing capacities of the NGOs

which could be deployed, nourished and shared in a public-civic partnership (the case of Cambodia Film Commission[16]).

The second question (in the checklist) is about the degree of change which should be achieved by a proposed service (in this case education, training, coaching, etc.). It is obvious that in the present circumstances there is no organization which is offering educational services to artists and cultural professionals. A centre with such orientation would bring a crucial social change which cannot be resolved otherwise. The fifth question – the choice of partners for the centre for artistic and professional development should include organizations which already provide some educational services. In the public sector there are the RUFA (educates artists but has only bachelor studies), the Training Department of the Ministry of Culture (offers only two trainings per year for fifty to sixty provincial public administrators), and the Heritage Centre (runs vocational training in restoration and conservation but accepts only sixteen students from four ASEAN countries). In the civil sector there are the Cambodia Living Arts (sporadically providing training for their own employees and volunteers) and the Bophana and the Meta House (providing training in film-making).

Other services that have to raise substantial degree of change should include areas from audience development to the culture of memory that is probably the most challenging issue for the public-civic partnership (no consensus about the representation of civil war in all of its cruel aspects)[17]. The government has created only two sites – the *Tuol Sleng* (the former prison in Phnom Penh) and the *Killing fields* in its surroundings – while the rest of the work on collecting individual memories and creating collective ones is carried out mostly by Bophana[18] and Sleuk Rith Institute[19]. Important contribution to the culture of memory is being made by the Cambodian Living Arts

16 The Cambodia Film Commission, NGO initiated and led by Rithy Panh, acknowledged Cambodian film director (who also runs the Bophana), helps foreign film companies to shoot in Cambodia. Although the CFC uses the MOCFA's space, it is under constant threat of relocation.

17 History of contemporary Cambodia is still unwritten. American and French historians disagree while Khmer academics are not prepared to grapple with dissonant memories about the recent past.

18 Bophana, audio-visual resource centre, collects and safeguards audio-visual documents related to history, art and traditions that survived destruction by the Khmer Rouge regime.

19 Sleuk Rith Institute has the Genocide museum, the Research Centre, the School of Genocide, the Conflicts and Human rights studies (Zaha Hadid's building). "With 70% of the country born after the Khmer Rouge era, Cambodians run a real risk of losing the opportunity of understanding, memorializing and ultimately learning from their difficult history". More information at: http://www.cambodiasri.org/ [accessed 12 May 2014].

"EDUCATION IS THE KEY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF CAMBODIA. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE ABOUT THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT IN A SOCIETY OF UNSKILLED ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PROFESSIONALS. IT MEANS THAT PRIOR TO THE NEW CULTURAL POLICY PRACTICE A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND REALIZED"

whose director Arn Chorn-Pond, the Khmer Rouge child-soldier, created the CLA to revive traditional arts by discovering the "living treasures", forgotten and surviving in poverty throughout Cambodia. The international community helped the government to re-create only one art form – Royal Ballet, while other forms, urban or folkloric, have been revived only due to the efforts of civil society. The government recognised only 17 artists as Cambodian "living treasures" (keeping knowledge and skills related to music, performance arts, etc.) by giving them pensions. Culture of memory needs serious debate to be introduced systematically in educational and cultural policies, especially through public institutions.

Type of change should relate to both cultural policy making and cultural practices, through participative policy making (Arts Forum and Task Force) and through development of educational system. Education is the key for development of Cambodia. It is not possible to establish an effective dialogue about the creative industries development (demanded by the EU, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency [SIDA] and the UNESCO) in a society of unskilled artists and cultural professionals. It means that prior to the new cultural policy practice a comprehensive educational program should be developed and realized.

The major risk in implementation of public-civic partnership stems from the hierarchical system of governance: lower level of administrators cannot respond to demands and questions of cultural operators, without direct approval from the superiors. Rarely civil society, amateur groups and artists can meet public sector. This non-established link is one of the major risks of the sustainability of public-civic partnership.

Another risk for the sustainability of public-civic partnership might come from the lack of a sense of local ownership[20]. Numerous projects financed by international donors, after the initial launching, were abandoned and closed in spite of huge investments and previous verbal commitment of the MOCFA. They were supposed to be managed by the national and local stakeholders[21]. In addition to the irresponsible behaviour of the politicians, the government employees are also lacking motivation and commitment. They are low paid, have several jobs, not coming every day to a job, etc. Here, the involvement of civic organisations could offer the solution for sustainability of those venues.

The strength of the public-civic partnership as the cultural policy instrument cannot be greater than the reputation of the cultural sector and the MOCFA in the Cambodian society. The MOCFA is not among the first ranked ministries such as: The Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy, etc. Domains of culture and education are not in the centre of Cambodian political agenda and, as far as the media coverage is concerned, are quite marginalized. Thus, activities of the Task Force and the Arts Forum are of crucial importance for advocating for culture.

In a very centralised and hierarchically organised state such as Cambodia, where public sphere is extremely limited and the elite is gathered around its executive political level without public interaction on its own, the idea to develop policy instrument supporting public-civic society relations is highly challenging. Such partnership, although very much needed and legitimate, bears many risks and considerations which should be taken into account. In a post-conflict, weak state, even if all stakeholders would fully participate in its realization, this idea represents only the very beginning of the long emancipatory process of the Cambodia's cultural policy's democratization.

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20 In Cambodian Ministry one can hear that: "It is UNESCO's, ILO's, FAO's project", thus administrators are showing distance from those internationally funded projects. At the same time, those projects are named differently by international organisations that are funding them, as "Banlung project", "Rattanakiri project", etc. while the UNESCO Phnom Penh would precise: "It would be the Government's role to make this centre operational. We just gave building (…)" (from the interviews that we did from 2012 to 2016).

21 The German government gave money for the exhibition hall in Phnom Penh but, after a brief attempt to continue with its program, was closed. Same happened with the Cultural centre for minorities in Banlung.

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