

Strategies for Culture. Culture for Development

Strategic Management of a Cultural Institution

wydawnictwo mik

Editor:
Martyna Śliwa

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Conversation is Action

The state functions on the basis of the social contract. We forget about it too often. State structures, systems of administration, social principles, hierarchies of values are neither imposed from above nor granted forever. We consent to follow them because they are good for us. That is why we can criticise them, undermine or exchange them. At the same time we take risks, both when we introduce change (because it may be a change for the worse) and when we refrain from change (as the sin of omission may be more harmful than actually committing a mistake).

Willy-nilly, all of us participate in the social contract. Some of us do so actively, others passively, some by supporting it, others by contesting it, some by claiming large pieces of change as their own, others ploughing their own little fields. One thing is certain: the greater store of vital data we have at our disposal and the more often we get the chance to exchange it with one another, the closer we get to sharing the terms of the contract. How does it relate to culture?

According to the current legislature in Poland, the state undertakes to foster participation in culture because it is one of the behaviours which positively influence social development. It is reflected in the law on organisation and implementation of cultural activity which obliges local authorities to provide residents with access to cultural services. As a society, we agree that it is favourable if talents have the opportunity to develop and bear fruit, if instruments for their critical reception are formed, if those who do not create works of art themselves are provided with active access to them. In a nutshell, if various cultural texts (be they musical, visual, dramatic or literary) first have the chance to come into being, then they may become social events, subject to individual reflection, topics for meetings and conversation.

Hence cultural competences are a desirable value under the terms of the social contract. Their distribution is a responsibility of cultural institutions. These, as real entities, embedded in their own environments, depend on many factors. The key ones are resources. A resource is the institution's budget. A resource is competent and dedicated staff who understand their tasks. A resource is infrastructure, which provides space for activities and communicates the style of work in the institution. A resource are the relations between the institution and the community it addresses, their mutual interest and mutual understanding. A resource is membership in institutional networks of cooperation, based on common interests and mutual

support. A priceless resource is the cultural policy agreed on jointly with a founder, the accepted system of priorities and ensuing long-term objectives.

Resources which exist on their own, in isolation from others, are no guarantee for success. A big budget institution will fail if it cannot spend its funds purposefully and efficiently. A competent and close-knit team will fail if it cannot get on well with a founder. A magnificent building will fail if it is not filled with an audience. An institution's failure is the society's failure, which, unless given a chance of active, qualitative participation in culture, will waste a chance to develop. Such failure can easily happen. All the above mentioned resources are closely connected with interest. Each of the particular interests may be in conflict with the others. Residents may not be interested in satisfying their cultural needs. Staff may care more to hold on to their jobs than implement the mission. A director may force his or her interests without considering those of others. And a founder may be rather more interested in election results than building social capital.

That is why we need discussion – within culture and for culture. We need to agree on our approaches, agree on visions, agree on interests, agree on the directions of development. We need to listen and understand. To talk on many levels. In many circles. The less we talk, the more there are temporary, scattered, reckless activities doomed to fail. The more we talk, the greater the chance of a real and feasible strategy for cultural development.

In practice, such a solution may be a culture council. Not only a national congress, which is held with momentum albeit too seldom, but a practical instrument, a local council of cultural entities that would serve to reconcile the needs and visions. An instrument that stems directly from the concept of the social contract. An instrument that would take into consideration the voices of all stakeholders: the needs and visions of residents, the needs and visions of the staff of cultural institutions, the needs and visions of local cultural activists, the needs and visions of the authorities. At the regional level, since we are talking about the management of a regional cultural institution, it might be a series of meetings of directors of regional cultural institutions with the authorities and representatives of the Marshal's Office. It would be a platform where each party could voice their visions of cultural development in the region, and the ensuing report of convergences and divergences would form a basis to plan the regional cultural policy.

To the managers of cultural institutions a clearly defined mission and ensuing objectives, which result from the social contract, are the necessary condition for effective operations. It is only on condition of reaching agreement on what cultural institutions are to be and how they should operate, both in the field of

general definitions (including the statutory ones) and within local policies, that cultural institutions will fulfil the expectations vested in them – that they will become a platform for artistic development, an instrument for promotion of cultural competences, and finally – aggregates of social change.

That is why, wherever possible, wherever there is a will and ability to listen to one another and to draw conclusions, we enter into a discussion on the shape of culture in Poland.

Finally, I wish to thank the president and personnel of the Information Society Development Foundation for the invitation to participate in the project and for the trust in the team of the Malopolska Institute of Culture, which they showed in entrusting us the preparation of the present publication.

Joanna Orlik, Director of the Malopolska Institute of Culture

March 2011

Strategic Management in an Organisation

It is perhaps impossible to discuss issues connected with the management of organisations without reference to the concept of strategy. Also in the public sector organisations it has become common for their members to use the strategic management discourse. While discussions on strategy seem to be ubiquitous in contemporary organisations, it is important to realise that it has not always been so and that the assumptions of the mainstream strategic management do not necessarily correspond to the situation in all organisational contexts.

In order to understand the essence of and the problems involved in strategic management as a field of research and a domain of organisational practice, it is important to bear in mind its historical and geographical determinants. The discipline has military roots and originated as a result of economic development of the United States. Owing to it, at the end of the 19th century American organisations became so large that it was expedient to develop new approaches and new management techniques. The new techniques were borrowed from military science, and the influence of a military approach to strategy on strategic management of commercial organisations lasted for many years. In the 1950s managers of American corporations, who were in many cases persons with experience of military command acquired during World War II, began to widely apply military long-term planning methods in their organisations.

No wonder, then, that in discussions on strategy it is difficult to avoid using military vocabulary and metaphors. The rhetorics of strategic management is characterised by terms like battle, competition, rivalry, advantage, dominance etc. Why do we mention it in the introduction to this handbook? Because our book is not about war but about culture, about how to manage it in practice, how it should not be managed and how it may be managed 'so that people are happier'¹. It might seem then that the language of strategic management would not have much to do with the language of a cultural institution and that the idea of inviting managers of such institutions to share their reflections on strategic management would show how much the logic of the management of cultural institutions in Poland at the beginning of the

¹ A. Bartosz, M. Karlińska, K. Markiel, *Żeby ludzie byli szczęśliwsi. Zarządzanie usługami w zakresie kultury przez jednostki samorządu terytorialnego*, Warszawa 2008.

second decade of the 21st century differs from military strategies used by armies fighting wars throughout centuries. However, as the Readers of the respective chapters of this publication will discover, the vision that emerges from the accounts of managers of Polish cultural institutions resembles reports from a battlefield, telling about a battle that requires perseverance, a battle whose result is unsure but where determination is heroic. It is also possible to note some influence of military metaphors and analogies, for example of commanding a battle ship, on the approach to strategy. Yet there is much more to them. Our Authors' descriptions and interpretations of various aspects of strategic management contain elements of all theoretical perspectives and conceptions present in the literature on strategic management. They are intertwined with personal reflections, and that is, in our opinion, what makes the way they share their knowledge of strategy much more appealing to imagination than that contained in academic textbooks or management manuals written by consultants. Since in our handbook, which was mostly contributed to by practitioners, we intended to avoid, where possible, the theoretical language and models of strategic management, we decided to limit the discussion on the theoretical foundations of strategic management to the introductory chapter. Below is a brief overview of the most significant theories and models of strategic management that may be found in the literature on this subject.

Strategic planning and the decision making process

The word 'strategy' derives from two Old Greek words, *stratos* (army) and *agein* (command). In publications about management there are many definitions of strategy. On the basis of existing definitions Carter, Clegg and Kornberger² distinguish between four common features that recur and are emphasised in all of them. Firstly, strategy refers to the future and to the objectives that an organisation intends to achieve. Secondly, strategy also involves the way in which these aims are to be achieved, for example by allocation of resources necessary to fulfil them. Moreover, the concept of strategy is always associated with the existence of competition, following the premise that if an organisation does not need to face competition, it does not need to develop strategy. Fourthly, dealing with strategy is a task for the people in top management positions.

The definitions of strategy that are given in literature help to understand strategic management as a subject but do not cover all aspects of management, such as the role of relations in strategic management. As each respective chapter of our handbook shows, relations given by organisational strategists

²C. Carter, S. Clegg,
M. Kornberger, *A Very
Short, Fairly Interesting
and Reasonably Cheap
Book about Studying
Strategy*, London 2008.

are crucial: on their basis it is possible to learn about the organisation's history, find out what vital strategic decisions have been taken in the past and what dilemmas the organisation and its managers have had to face.

A traditional approach to strategic management stresses the importance of planning as the main factor in strategy formulation. The need for planning stems from changes in the organisation's external environment. According to the traditional approach to strategic management, in order to adjust to the conditions in the external environment, the organisation must develop an appropriate strategy. The rest of the organisation will adjust to the new strategy, for example by changing the organisational structure or building a team of employees who will be able to implement the strategy that has been formulated on the basis of external environment analysis. Many examples given by the Authors of the successive chapters of our handbook indicate the approach to strategy whereby the organisation is the reacting unit because strategy is formulated in response to changes in the external environment, while changes within the organisation itself result from the need to adjust to the adopted strategy.

However, the Authors also point out that cultural institutions in Poland do not necessarily adjust their strategies to changes in the external environment. Since such changes tend to be unpredictable (e.g. it is not certain if the organisation will receive funds for particular activities), managers of cultural institutions plan their activities not in connection with emerging opportunities but despite their uncertainty if such opportunities will occur or not. It does not mean that strategic plans are useless. On the contrary: to managers, planning is an important mechanism to hold control over the organisation and coordinate its operations. Through planning, managers attempt to decrease the degree of uncertainty about the external environment, which is difficult to examine and which changes constantly, even though they are unable to control the environment itself.

A classical model of strategic management is the model of rational planning. The development and popularisation of this concept is attributed to Igor Ansoff, who first put it forward in his 1965 book *Corporate Strategy*³. Ansoff distinguished between three levels of organisational activity: administrative, operational and strategic. According to him, management on the strategic level is the task for the top management of the organisation since they are the only ones who can comprehend the complexity of the factors that affect the organisation and steer it in the chosen direction. The task of lower level management is to implement the objectives that have been set for them by the organisational elites.

3 I. Ansoff, *Corporate Strategy: An Analytic Approach to Business Policy for Growth and Expansion*, New York 1965.

The model of strategic management that is based on rational planning is connected with a special model of strategic decision making. It involves the concept of the decision process as logical, rational and taking place in several consecutive stages: outlining the problem, gathering information that is necessary to take decisions, the choice, by the organisation's managers, of a solution that is considered optimal, and its implementation by employees, supervised and controlled by managers.

The contributors to our handbook are, in the majority of cases, directors of cultural institutions who largely shape the strategies of the institutions they manage. Their reflections show that strategic decisions are made not only at the top of the organisation's hierarchy. Moreover, from a management practitioner's perspective, each element of the rational decision making model may be problematic. The dilemmas facing an organisation are not always easy to clearly define, and managers of cultural institutions in many cases do not have all the information they need at their disposal in order to take the optimal decision. It is also difficult to establish the criteria of which option is superior to the others, and there are often differences of opinion among the decision makers themselves. Besides, the rational model of strategic decision making does not cover the issues that in practice greatly restrict the possibility for managers to focus on each level of the decision making process. One of such issues is a shortage of time, which considerably hinders monitoring of issues of strategic importance to the organisation.

The problems of decision makers' cognitive and temporal limitations were already observed in the 1940s by American scholar and future Nobel Prize winner, Herbert Simon, who argued that decision makers were people with '*bounded rationality*'⁴. In conditions of uncertain information and complexity of the situation that go beyond decision makers' cognitive and temporal possibilities, the decisions they take are not optimal but those available to them in given circumstances. In other words, decisions taken in organisations, including those of strategic importance, may partly result from rational analysis and partly from improvisation, a phenomenon which the Authors of our handbook very interestingly describe.

The issue of strategic decision making turns out to be further complicated if we take into account William Starbuck's⁵ observation that organisations focus not so much on problem solving as on adjusting problems to earlier solutions. This mode of operation is well known to managers of cultural institutions. There occur situations when recipients of culture are offered a programme which, instead of answering the question of what original ideas they might like, is in fact based on what has been presented to them before. This is an

⁴ H. Simon, *Administrative Behavior*, New York 1945.

⁵ W. Starbuck, *Organizations as action generators*, "American Sociological Review" 1983, Vol. 48, pp. 91–102.

easy solution that does not require detailed knowledge or analysis, or a great effort to implement – but, from the perspective of those cultural institutions that care to shape recipients' tastes, it is deeply frustrating.

Differences between the concept of the decision making process in the rational model of decision making and organisational practice made researchers focus on a description of decision making processes in a more realistic organisational model. For example, based on extensive empirical research, Hickson et al.⁶ reached the conclusion that in decisions of considerable political importance for the organisation, which strategic decisions clearly represent, engagement of different groups of the organisation's stakeholders is extremely important and in the case of complex problems, decision making processes are highly fluid and dynamic. As the Authors of our handbook show, cultural institutions are no exception in this respect. For instance, the description of changes in the approach to guiding services in Wawel castle, presented in one of the chapters, is a perfect illustration of Hickson's argument concerning the necessity of engaging stakeholders in strategic dialogue and the fluidity and graduality involved in decision making in complex situations and regarding problems of strategic importance which are controversial from the stakeholders' point of view. Practice shows that in strategic management success cannot be achieved through implementation of the successive stages of the rational decision making process but through attempts to muddle through⁷, which often entails painstaking elaboration of a solution that is acceptable to different groups of stakeholders and that takes into account the relations of power in the organisation.

The importance of the organisational environment

Apart from planning and decision making, the traditional approach to strategic management lays emphasis on analysing the organisational environment, aimed at an assessment of its potential in relation to other organisations that operate in the same industry and in the same market conditions. The importance of the organisational environment for strategy formulation was first recognised by Professor Michael Porter of Harvard University. His name is associated with the currently widespread conviction that the main function of strategic management is understanding and using the organisation's opportunities and challenges, stemming from its operations in a given industry. According to Porter, the essence of competitive strategy is for the company to take offensive or defensive moves to maintain its position in the given industry, to effectively cope with five competitive forces and to gain a higher profit margin⁸. Porter lists 'five competitive forces': rivalry in the sector, the threat of new entrants, customers' bargaining power, suppliers'

⁶ D. Hickson, R. Butler, D. Cray, G. Mallory, D. Wilson, *Top Decisions: Strategic Decision-Making in Organizations*, San Francisco 1986.

⁷ C. Lindblom, *The science of 'muddling through'*, "Public Administration Review", No. 19(2), pp. 79–88.

⁸ M. Porter, *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors*, Free Press 1980.

bargaining power and threat of substitutes. Having analysed the situation in the external environment with regard to each of the five forces listed by Porter, depending on the environmental determinants, organisations have to choose one basic strategy: differentiation (variation, regarding the quality, make etc., of the product/service provided by the competition), cost leadership (enabling them to offer their products and services at lower prices than the products or services of the competition) and concentration on one market segment (so as to specialise in satisfying the needs of a clearly described target group of customers/clients). Michael Porter's model of 'five forces' and the typology of the basic competitive strategies can be found in all recommended reading lists of MBA students throughout the world. Obviously, since its publication in 1980 the model has been critically reviewed, if only due to the fact that it artificially forces organisational strategists to separately analyse the influence of factors whose effects may be related to one another. Yet it is worth noting that regardless of whether or not the division of the organisational environment into five forces that are decisive for the competitive situation in the given sector is adopted for analytical purposes or not, our Authors' reflections on the relations between organisations and other organisations in their environment show that Porter's main idea is still valid: in order to formulate organisational strategy, it is necessary to understand the organisation's external environment.

Five years after the publication of *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors*, Michael Porter published another book which is now considered part of the canon of strategic management, namely *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*⁹. In it, he puts forward the model of the value chain, which describes the activities of the organisation that contribute to the creation of its added value. The chain contains the primary activities, such as receiving raw materials, materials and components; production, sales and servicing; as well as the so-called support activities, i.e. research and development, marketing, human resources management and information management. Analysing the internal organisational environment through the value chain is intended to help the persons responsible for strategic management to answer the question to what extent various functional areas of the organisation participate in the creation of added value. The analysis of the value chain is connected with another issue that needs to be considered from the point of view of organisational strategy: to what extent the performance of the various activities will take place inside the organisation, and how much of it will be outsourced. [The situation in which certain aspects of the added value created by the organisation are actually created

⁹ M. Porter, *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*, Free Press 1985.

outside that company is called outsourcing.] Our Authors often emphasise the great importance of cooperation between cultural institutions, which employ a core of personnel who are indispensable for the proper performance of the institution, and external partners, for instance culture animators, trainers or artists, in the realisation of many projects and in the supply of services to culture recipients.

Despite many obvious advantages of Michael Porter's models, resulting from their focus on analysing the organisational environment for the purposes of strategy formulation, it is notable that the classical approach to strategic management has a serious weak point: it does not pay sufficient attention to the role of the state in determining the organisation's strategy. In the case of the cultural institution, it is easy to notice the mistake in overlooking the role of the state in shaping organisational strategy. As the Authors of our handbook point out, cultural institutions by principle have a social mission to fulfil, and as such are, at least partly, funded from the state budget. As a result, their operations are strongly affected by the interests and political decisions taken by the state authorities at the local, regional and central levels.

The role of resources and competences in strategic management

Formulated and advocated by Michael Porter and his followers, Porter's approach to strategic management as a set of activities aimed to analyse the organisational environment becomes difficult to implement if the organisation's external environment undergoes frequent and unpredictable changes. It is easy to imagine that, since market conditions are constantly changing, attempts to adjust strategy to the market imperatives may end in a fiasco because the moment it is implemented, the strategy developed by the organisation on the basis of an in-depth analysis of the environment may already be out of date.

A different view of strategy formulation is held by the resource-based view of strategy. Krzysztof Obłój¹⁰ writes that for the strategy formulation process, the store of knowledge and competences which the organisation has at its disposal is much more important than the situation in its environment. According to the conception of resources and competences, which derives from economics and was first introduced into literature by Edith Penrose¹¹ – organisations should build strategies based on their internal strengths because the organisation's survival in the long run depends on them. Specialists in strategic management, including Barney¹², Hamel and Prahalad¹³, distinguish between four types of organisational resources and competences: financial resources (e.g. capital), physical resources (e.g. buildings or devices),

¹⁰ K. Obłój, *Strategia organizacji*, Warszawa 2007.

¹¹ E. Penrose, *The Theory of the Growth of the Firm*, Oxford 1959.

¹² J. Barney, *Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage*, "Journal of Management" 1991, 17 (1), pp. 99–120.

13 G. Hamel, C. Prahalad,
*The core competence of
the corporation*, "Har-
vard Business Review"
1990, 68 (3), pp. 79–91.

human resources (e.g. employees' qualifications and experience) and organisational resources (e.g. trust). In order to gain the rank of resources that will be valuable for organisational strategy and may contribute to its having competitive advantage, the given resources or competences have to fulfil several conditions. Firstly, they have to enable the organisation to use all the opportunities available and cope with threats from the external environment. Secondly, they should be rare and difficult to copy by the competition and also difficult to replace. The persons responsible for strategic management have to face the double task of discovering sources of competitive advantage inside the organisation and building it through gradual development of the resources it already has. According to the resources and competences based conception of strategy, it is only due to thus gained competitive advantage that such an organisation will, in the long run, be able to launch innovative products and services into the market, and so respond to the changing environmental conditions in a way that is beneficial to it.

While the resources and competences based view of strategy convincingly supplements the approach to strategic management aimed at analysing the external environment, this school is also characterised by a considerable (from the perspective of management practitioners) weakness. It does not give an answer to the question of which activities the organisation should actually focus on – how to determine which of its resources will contribute to gaining competitive advantage? How to describe such valuable resources and competences? How to build them? The Authors of the texts in our handbook have to face such dilemmas, and their experience shows that analysis by itself, either of the external environment of the cultural institution or of its internal environment, does not guarantee the organisation strategic success. It is, however, a useful starting point for the strategic process, the result of which is the emergence of organisational strategy.

The emerging strategy

14 See C. Carter, S. Clegg,
M. Kornberger,
*A Very Short, Fairly
Interesting...*, op.cit.

15 J. Liedtka, *In defense
of strategy as design*,
"California Manage-
ment Review" 2000,
42 (3), pp. 8–30.

Carter, Clegg and Kornberger¹⁴ point out that military metaphors are not the only ones that exist in the literature on strategic management. Another stance on strategy is expressed by metaphors borrowed from architecture. For example, Jeanne Liedtka¹⁵ claims that the aim of strategy is to create space for all sorts of activities, relations and behaviours. This approach to strategy puts the stress on the need to design a system in which various elements will form a harmonious whole. Using the analogy between strategy formulation and space design gives rise to important questions concerning the strategic process: does it make sense to differentiate between the planned goals and emerging outcomes? Is it possible to separate the implementation

process from the planning process, or does the experience of strategy implementation form a basis for future plans? To what extent is strategy formulated only by persons in top managerial positions, and what is its employees' contribution? It is easy to imagine that – when confronted with observation of organisational practice – any deeper reflection on the assumptions and conclusions resulting from the approach to strategy based on rational planning would have evoked many critical reactions from researchers in strategic management.

16 See e.g. M. Cohen, J. March, J. Olsen, *The garbage model of organizational choice*, "Administrative Science Quarterly" 1972, 17 (1), pp. 1–25; K. Weick, *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, Thousand Oaks 1979.

17 H. Mintzberg, *The design school: reconsidering the basic premises of strategic management*, "Strategic Management Journal" 1990, No. 11, pp. 171–195.

It was already back in the 1970s that specialists in management¹⁶ started to describe strategy and strategic decisions as processes emerging within broader social and human dynamics in organisations. In this dynamic understanding of strategy, the main subject of interest is the way a given organisation shapes its orientation, for instance how strategic decisions are made by groups or how the direction of development and operations is established. Viewing strategy from a dynamic perspective, rather than a static one, constitutes a radical theoretical and empirical departure from the traditional conception of a top-down, rational strategic plan and its multi-step implementation by the organisation's members. According to Henry Mintzberg¹⁷, if an organisation operates in a complex and changeable environment, adopting the emerging strategy approach is much more suitable for the organisation than attempts to formulate its strategy following the precepts of the traditional school of strategic management. As the examples described by the Authors of our handbook clearly show, practitioners' experiences confirm that the process-based approach to strategy is in keeping with the realities of a cultural institution in Poland. Obviously, adopting the premise that strategy is an emerging, changeable process does not signify that a strategy becomes expendable to the organisation. This point of view, however, influences the perception of the role and importance of strategy for the organisation. The documents which refer to organisational strategy, such as the strategic plan or its mission and vision statement, cease to be treated as the rules that have to be implemented. They are of assistance, in that they lend confidence to the managers and their teams in organisational activities and are a frame of reference for them. In addition, they make the organisation's members jointly consider the current situation of their organisation and in what direction they would like to develop it, what opportunities and threats lie in store, or what they wish to achieve as an organisation. In other words, having a strategy motivates people to think and act, which in itself is an extremely important function of strategic management, even if in practice the answer to what strategy the organisation follows can only be

given in retrospect, through reflection on how the strategic process emerged over a given period of time in the past.

Strategy as practice

The above overview of the evolution of strategic management as a discipline – since its beginnings connected with the use of military methods and techniques in American corporations in the 1950s up to the more recent approach to strategy as an emerging process – shows that it is not straightforward to explain what strategy is and how it contributes to the development and survival of the organisation. When confronted with the complex and ever-changing conditions in which contemporary organisations operate, the assumptions of the rational planning school seem to be overly simplified, and hence impractical. Moreover, the concept of strategy aimed at rivalry and victory over competitors, whose principles are reflected in the military language it uses, may not correspond to the real circumstances of the organisation for whose survival it is important to cooperate with other organisations. Over the last decades it has been possible to observe the formation of a new perspective on strategy, which claims that strategy may be best understood while observing activities of persons responsible for strategic management. In order to examine strategy thus defined, one must also be aware that, as we have already mentioned, strategic management in organisations is not the sole domain of high level managers because lower level employees also have an influence on strategy development and on strategic decisions. Our previous reflections on the discrepancies between the traditional approach to strategic management and its practice in contemporary organisations, including cultural institutions, may be summed up in the following way. Strategy formulation goes beyond the small group of managers, and it does not happen solely through rational planning, a result of external and internal organisational environment analysis. Managers often act without sufficient information, they do not have enough time to analyse all the knowledge they have accumulated, and their own cognitive limitations do not allow them to notice and consider all aspects of the organisation's situation. Moreover, changes in the external organisational environment, and resources and competences inside the organisation are difficult to determine and shape in the direction that is desirable from the point of view of the market conditions and the situation in the industry in which where the organisation operates.

Such considerations are at the core of the relatively new approach to strategic management which looks at strategy as practice. Authors such as Balogun

18 J. Balogun, G. Johnson, *Organizational restructuring and middle manager sensemaking*, "Academy of Management Journal" 2004, 47 (4), pp. 523–549.

19 P. Jarzabkowski, *Strategic practices: an activity theory perspective on continuity and change*, "Journal of Management Studies" 2003, 40 (1), pp. 23–55; also by the same author, *Strategy as practice: recursiveness, adaptation and practices-in-use*, "Organization Studies" 2004, 25 (4), pp. 529–560.

20 R. Whittington, *The work of strategizing and organizing: for a practice perspective*, "Strategic Organization" 2003, 1 (1), pp. 119–127; also by the same author, *Strategy practice and strategy process: family differentiation and the sociological eye*, "Organization Studies" 2007, 28 (10), pp. 1575–1586.

21 B. Czarniawska, *Trochę inna teoria organizacji. Organizowanie jako konstrukcja sieci działań*, Warszawa 2010, p. 16.

and Johnson¹⁸, Jarzabkowski¹⁹ or Whittington²⁰ stress the necessity to examine actions of strategic management practitioners, for example by focusing on what happens at the meetings whose agendas comprise organisational strategy, and by analysing broadly understood 'strategising' processes in organisations. To the proponents of the 'strategy as practice' approach, such analyses should result not only in acquiring knowledge to better understand strategic management processes but also developing more aware and more efficient organisational strategists. The vision of strategy as practice and its programme aiming at improving organisational practices and developing more aware practitioners of strategic management is of particular importance in the case of cultural institutions because the quality of the strategies adopted by organisations in this sector not only influences whether the given institution is going to develop and, if so, in which direction but it also affects the whole community where the cultural institution operates.

Unlike the traditional school of strategic management, the concept of strategy as practice gives the interested persons the possibility to bridge the gap between the theoretical models and empirical experience. Instead of being instructed how they should formulate their strategy and being persuaded to apply decision making models that do not correspond to reality, practitioners are encouraged to become more interested in their work and to build their knowledge based on what is happening in their organisations and what role they are playing in these processes. In this respect, the assumptions underlying our handbook converge with the programme of the 'strategy as practice' approach. They stem from the constructivist approach to organisations and define them in a performative way, characterised by Barbara Czarniawska as follows:

The definition of a given organisation is the outcome of social perceptions that change together with the context.

Actors constantly construct the organisation through their activities and interpretation of their own and others' behaviour.

Knowledge about the organisation belongs mainly to actors; observers may describe it differently but not from a privileged point of view.

One and the same organisation may be described in many different ways, which are comparable from the point of view of practical, political or aesthetical criteria.

The aim of scientific research is to grasp and describe organisational practices²¹. Our Authors, mostly practitioners of strategic management, have consented to tell us and our Readers about different aspects of strategic management in their organisations; about their successes and the problems they encounter

in everyday 'strategising'; how they succeed in effectively managing organisations that operate in the ever-changing culture sector in Poland, which is difficult to rationally analyse; how they deal with the development of organisational potential, especially with regard to their employees, inside the cultural institutions they manage; and from where they derive the enthusiasm to continue with their efforts. We hope that their reflections will contribute not only to the extension of knowledge of strategic management in cultural institutions but also to the improvement of strategic practices and processes in those organisations.

What this book is (and is not) about

The collection of texts compiled in the present publication focuses on the practice of strategic management in cultural institutions in Poland. The majority of the chapters in it were written by management practitioners – persons who hold official positions of organisational strategists. Issues of strategic importance for those institutions and the whole culture sector in Poland, described by the Authors, are presented from the perspective of their experience. Their reflections show what kind of issues they deal with in their work, what challenges they and their organisations face, what problems they have to cope with and what dilemmas they face in order to ensure that their institutions survive and develop in the difficult situation for cultural institutions in Poland.

Reading the chapters offers considerable insight into the external and internal environment of cultural institutions and into how individual institutions respond to strategic challenges resulting from changes, mostly social and technological, in that environment. The texts show both a wealth of experiences and issues in strategy, about which our Authors write, and a variety of solutions and methods that they use to come up to the challenge of managing a cultural institution. In our handbook the Readers will find a wealth of information about cultural institutions in Poland: what they focus on in their operations, how they are financed and what is the dominant approach to management in them. The Authors' observations show that management styles preferred by managers are varied: just as they adopt different strategies towards the external environment of the organisation, their approaches to management inside the institution are not uniform.

In the discussion on the relations between cultural institutions in Poland and their environment, the Authors consider as extremely important cooperation between the cultural institutions that they manage and other institutions of a similar profile or organisations supervised by the local

government or local communities, as well as collaboration within the broadly understood culture sector in Poland. Their plans and frustrations signal the need for closer integration of the culture sector in Poland, so that there emerges a better understanding of the qualities and aims of the internal and external stakeholders of cultural institutions, and so that each respective group of stakeholders act for the benefit of their organisations and for the whole sector. The tone of the chapters is not only reflexive but also aspirational, both as regards concrete cultural institutions and the broadly understood system, and it shows readiness to support the culture sector in its development.

In the introduction to our handbook, it is also necessary to outline what, due to its character, the Readers will not find in it. For instance, we deliberately did not contain here any precepts or advice on how to manage cultural institutions because such publications, whether they focus on strategic management in general or management in culture, abound in the Polish market. We give references to some of them in the bibliography list. For similar reasons we have decided not to dwell on the administrative or legal context of cultural institutions operating in Poland; instead we recommend some further reading. We also feel we should point out that our handbook is addressed above all to all sorts of cultural development support institutions, and so it will probably be less useful to arts institutions. Naturally, the persons connected with such institutions, similarly to policy makers who influence cultural institutions operations or the employees of cultural institutions in non-managerial positions, may be interested in it as long as the content will show the image of how Polish directors of cultural institutions perceive themselves as strategists and where they position their organisations as strategy management units within the system of cultural organisation in Poland.

The structure of the handbook

The present chapter is an introduction to strategic management in the general sense and outlines the ways it is approached in our handbook. Immediately after it, there are three texts by Marek Krajewski, Karol Wittels and Tomasz Kasprzak on contemporary changes in the understanding of culture, participation in culture and the conception of the cultural institutions operating in Poland. Based on selected case studies, their Authors examine how Polish cultural institutions respond to changes in the culture sector.

The next part of the handbook contains five texts by Antoni Bartosz, Mariusz Wróbel, Marek Sztark, Andrzej Tyws and Ewa Gołębiowska, dealing with the practical dimensions of strategic management in cultural institutions. The

narratives of strategic management practitioners describe strategy emerging processes and show what strategy, understood as daily practice of strategic management in organisations, consists in within Polish cultural institutions. The next two texts, by Ryszard Stocki and Jan Hartman, focus on concrete aspects of strategic management: the concept of the leader/team cooperation and ethical issues involved in management of cultural institutions in Poland. Tone Moseid, Magdalena Kubecka and Marzena Szewczyk give examples of strategic processes in the context of strategy building in cultural institutions through strategic documents and by describing the whole system of cultural institutions. In addition, we feature photo-reportages showing employees of Polish cultural institutions at work. The Readers will see people who are passionate, dynamic, who invest their talent in the realisation of their organisation's potential. The photo-reportages were prepared by Michał Łuczak. The closing chapter contains reflections on the image, which emerges from the Authors' descriptions, of the persons involved in strategic management in Polish cultural institutions and of strategy and strategic management in these organisations.

Strategic management – the practitioners' perspective

Below we present the table that sums up the main issues recurring in different chapters of the handbook. We have taken the liberty to introduce a division between how practitioners describe their understanding of strategy and what they consider as elements of strategic management, and what they actually say about their activities as practitioners of strategic management. As is shown in the table, there is little difference between the two domains since in the practitioners' understanding of strategy there occur elements of both the traditional approach to strategic management and some more contemporary concepts that regard strategy as an emerging process.

Aspects of strategic management covered in the handbook	
UNDERSTANDING OF STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT BY PRACTITIONERS	ACTIVITIES OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PRACTITIONERS
Analysis of organisational external and internal environment	Conducting analysis of the organisation's situation in its sector
Setting goals and plans	Building strategy through management of organisational operations
Strategic decision making	Transforming strategic goals into concrete organisational activities
Strategy implementation	Building organisational strategy
Team management	Team building and creating opportunities for its development
Collaboration on the development of the culture sector	Shaping the leader's position in the organisation
Formation of relations with stakeholders	Building relations with other cultural actors

Participation in processes of transformation and integration in the culture sector	Strengthening the position of the organisation in the network of relations of power within which it operates
Role in emerging organisational strategy in the network of inter-organisational relations and interdependencies	Finding solutions in crisis situations

Enjoy your reading.

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Cultural Institutions versus Participants in Culture.

New Relations

Example: MS2 in Lodz

MS2 in Łódź is a new branch of a very venerable institution, the first museum of contemporary art in the world. Although this institution has a long tradition and is distinguished in the field, it does not safeguard the canon and the conventional lines of thinking about the history of art, but 'puts' works from its collection 'to some purpose'. The museum does not dig in and defend the accepted methods of interpretation or reading of the works of art but encourages viewers to participate in their co-creation. The first thing that the institution did after its branch was opened in Manufaktura was to 'move' local residents. They were provided with a room, and they were in contact with artists and curators with whom they could collaborate on their own creations, and so find their own way of expression. One of the forms of collaboration with the viewers was the following: copies had been made of artefacts from the Museum of Art collection that had been lost during World War II, and owners of the local shops and establishments were asked to hang one of the reproductions in their establishments and be its curators for a month. The task of those of them who agreed to participate in the project was to tell their customers what the artefact was, who painted it, what the circumstances in which it disappeared were, and also – to add their own interpretations and share them with others. In this case, the important thing is that the Museum of Art is a distinguished and globally recognised institution but it still perceives the need to build its public, through giving it an opportunity to co-create, to participate. The Museum does not preach to the visitors but treats them as partners in its operations.

¹ Cf. the text *Uczestnictwo w kulturze: nowe zjawiska, „przeterminowane” kategorie* by Michał Danielewicz, Mirosław Filiciak and Alek Tarkowski, on: www.nck.pl/uploads/files/uczestnictwo_w_kulturze__nowe_zjawiska_przeterminowane_kategorie.pdf (ed. note).

Participation in culture – a new interpretation of the old term

Currently, 'participation in culture'¹ is not an important category in Poland, but it should be. It is a problem of the majority of cultural insti-

tutions that they have very limited knowledge of who their clients are and who uses their services. There are two reasons for it.

Firstly, few institutions do any research in Poland. There are precious few of them who carry out such analyses out of their own free will. Obviously, the majority of institutions are obliged by those who finance them to report on their performance but these documents contain rather limited information, mostly about the number of tickets sold, or about attendance at events or attendance at group workshops, but there is no in-depth characteristic of the public, no information about its needs, expectations, no assessment of the institution's operations – all those things which are indispensable for the organisations that work on creation and dissemination of culture.

The second problem is that the forms of participation in culture that are employed by cultural institutions are not able to recreate the mechanism itself, the essence of the process, although such knowledge would be crucial to these places' proper performance. By this, I mean knowledge about how the viewers find out about an event and what happens to the event after it has been seen by them. Does the event held in the cultural institution make individuals more or less alienated in the society? Does the cultural event provoke individuals to produce their own textual output or to create their own communications, cultural goods or expression?

The definition of participation in culture should be a springboard for developing a substantive programme of the

Analysis of external environment by the cultural institution

The cultural institution may use the category of participation in culture as an operational concept for research and analysis of its recipients. Recipients are a community that is characterised by cultural practices and creation processes of the so-called cultural scenes (environments, platforms of cooperation, organisations, informal associations, etc.). Observing the community in 'cultural action' (on the garden plot, in the cafe, in the hot spot, on the ski slope, in the shopping centre, in the courtyard, in the gym, etc.), the cultural institution may conduct its own operational analysis of the external environment, which will then serve as a source of concepts (and inspiration) for the substantive operation of the institution. As inspiration, we recommend the publication *Zrób to sam. Jak zostać badaczem społeczności lokalnej? Poradnik dla domów kultury*. [Do it yourself. How to become a local community researcher? A handbook for community centres.]

cultural institution's operations. The concept of the cultural institution's offer should emerge from the way the process is approached.

The cultural institution makes sense only when it has its public, and the public is not forced to visit it. It often happens that the public is condemned to a cultural institution because it is the only place in town, for example when its activities are combined with school curricula. Recognising the viewers' needs, determining what they do with the experiences acquired through the cultural institution, determining how they use culture is indispensable for the cultural institution to become the view-

ers' partner, an option that they willingly use, rather than a necessity. We must know what the public do with culture: what they read, what they watch, what they do with it in the social sense. If the institution relates to the recipients' habits of using cultural goods, if it gives them access to them and teaches how to use them, but also allows them to express themselves through cultural goods, then it is indeed indispensable. It is an obvious cliché that nowadays cultural institutions compete with other media that make cultural goods available, of which the major one is the internet, and that, in order to survive, they have to correspond to people's habits that the new cultural situation has created. The new situation comprises the 'networkisation' of culture, enormous egalitarianism of access to its resources, the possibility to use them at home, free of charge. What follows is that it is necessary to change the mechanism of relations between a cultural institution and the viewers. Cultural institutions should not be places where something is offered to the viewers, but places which enable them to use those specific ways of benefitting from culture which they practise daily, to which they are accustomed, which come naturally to them.

Culture – an open thinking process

The whole contemporary cultural context adapts to completely different forms of benefitting from culture than the offer of traditional institutions. In the new context, culture is not something readymade, finished, something which I can use, but something I can transform, reassemble into a new whole, where I can contribute some text of my own. Yet the logic of cultural institutions operations is completely reverse. They focus on offering a ready product, which I should see, hear and go home.

Naturally, the cultural institution should offer something to the viewer, express a preference for some systems of values, but it is important that it does not do so in a bossy way, from the position of someone who knows, understands and shares its knowledge with others who have yet to learn. Nowadays we are experiencing a radical cultural change, which makes people use culture in a different way. That is why we need to change the logic of institutional operations, not at the level of what they offer to the viewers but at the level of the relations with the viewers, ways of defining who they are and how they benefit from culture. A great many cultural heritage institutions have already changed their methods of communicating these ideas to the public. They have introduced a completely different mode of operation: it is not a celebration in commemoration or calling of a roll of honour but activity involving the viewers in a kind of interactive game, to

which they can always contribute, can significantly modify the situation in which they are participating, and can construct their own communication

The cultural institution creates cultural scenes

First and foremost, the cultural institution creates opportunities for the recipients to actively participate in culture. It designs certain scenes (workshop scenarios, animation projects, cultural events, educational activities, performances and concerts) when something should happen – it models 'creative situations' using its own and external resources. Marek Krajewski points out that the priority is designing scenes that foster the participants' expression and are open to change, i.e. are developed with regard to the interaction between recipients and culture animators.

on the basis of the elements supplied by the institution.

The starting point for the dialogue between a cultural institution and recipients is, firstly, not so much giving the viewers the opportunity to listen to someone's monologue as treating them seriously, as people who are creative, who can contribute something to the way the institution works. It means the necessity to establish a symmetrical relation between the institution and the public, in which both sides contribute something of their own,

neither dominates the other, and both are enriched. Providing such an offer, weaving a network of relations is possible only if we know who the viewers are, how they work, what they need. In order to gain that knowledge, first and foremost we need to observe how our own near and dear ones – our children – use cultural goods. It is also important to conduct more systematic studies of what we are doing to culture. Another thing that may make cultural institutions more important is to pass on to the viewers the instruments which would enable them to create or construct situations in which they can use their instruments. The former way works better in the workshop formula, which is not always rounded off with an exhibition, but it always provides the viewers with creative skills. Moreover, the cultural institution may and should present exhibitions and theatre performances to the public, but the exhibition and performance should be accompanied by some other form of activity, enabling them to do their own variations on what they have seen. Such activities allow the viewers to express themselves more completely than when the only formula of interaction with what they have seen are their reflections, which they cannot share with others. If we were to define the negative reference point for the institutional operations, it is undoubtedly a monologue aimed at the viewer from the position of someone who has dug in and will defend true culture from the flow of *pop*, *rubbish*, present on the internet [junk, kitsch etc], a monologue of someone who is convinced that the cultural institution financed by the state is the only place where the true art, true culture is being created. The very idea of the public cultural institution proceeds

from the idea of enlightenment, education and the ensuing assumption that there should always be someone who speaks, and someone who listens, and that these two roles are essentially non-interchangeable. That idea is difficult to reconcile with the ways the society works nowadays because it is extremely diverse and egalitarian, parents learn from children, the rich from the poor, and less educated people create information which the better educated ones look up on the internet. In the modern society, cultural, spatial and other kinds of obstacles in knowledge acquisition disappear, regardless of who one is.

It would be an exaggeration to suggest that there should be no professional art, that heritage should not be safeguarded – and yet introducing the division into the ‘temples of art’ and ‘after-school clubs’ would be a wrong direction for change. Regardless of their location, cultural institutions should give the public the possibility to participate in culture, understood as broadly as possible, in all its diversity. It is also important for that diversity to manifest in the way the relation with the viewers is established. It does not mean that we should give up on educating the public but that the viewers can also teach something to the institution.

The animator – someone who listens and gives others instruments for expression

The model of a ‘listening’ and ‘open’ cultural institution requires people who not only know about the history of art and culture, who are well-educated, but also – who are able to communicate what they know. They also need knowledge about group functions and dynamics and the ability to chair group discussions. These persons also have social and communicative competences which are essential to activate the viewers and to enable them to find out something new about themselves in the course of discussion. Add to it open-mindedness, openness to others and the ability to use new media and other modern technological applications – and we have an ideal culture animator profile.

Formulation of a programme based on these principles is difficult in a traditional institution because it requires a change of the cultural institution’s employees’ mentality and new principles in culture animators training. An example of this can be what is happening in the Institute of Polish Culture at the University of Warsaw. The programme that is aimed to liven up culture animation shows how the above described approach to animators can be popularised through good practices. It is also possible to provide animators with competence that will turn them, if not exactly into ‘nutters’

who are crazy about their job, but at least into people who act positively and engage in what they do. Cultural development is fostered by animators

who not only do their duties but also invent duties for themselves.

A good manifestation of the change was the conference 'The Community Centre – A New Opening' in Krakow². It was attended by persons who fit the perfect animator's job description, who spoke about their ventures and projects in an extraordinary and unusually interesting way.

Institutions between culture, authorities and community

Cultural institutions in Poland are torn between their aspirations, awareness of how they can operate and the necessity to fulfil their duties, which are imposed on them by those who fund them. From the perspective of a patron, the state or a local government unit, what matters is quantity, momentum, the fact that money was effectively used, i.e. that the cost of participation was low and that the attendance at an event was high. In this sense, there is a kind of gap between what should be and what is possible, but it is notable that if sufficiently many institutions take the risk of change, this must

Competences and development of the cultural institution team. Compare with other authors:

Antoni Bartosz, 'Everything begins with people, and people are the target. Firstly, those who work with me. If work is not a tool for their development, it means I am a poor director.

This is the basic principle. That is why I invest in trips, trainings, and forms of personal development'. More on p. 84.

Mariusz Wróbel, 'If we surround ourselves with people who are professionals in their fields and are passionately involved in their disciplines, the answer seems straightforward. An autocratic approach to management in an institution where the majority of projects are based on creative work usually ends with the best employees quitting, which results in a lower substantive quality of the projects it realises. A democratic approach, however, fosters creativity and motivates employees to perform their duties in the best possible way'. More on p. 103.

Ewa Gołębiowska, 'Any institution needs a good, strong core, a permanent team, and then it can maintain a number of satellites and the fluid mass around it. Owing to EU projects, the core can be formed, strengthened and trained. But it always involves struggle, on the part of the director and on the part of employees, to survive. If they are employed to do individual projects, which are usually short-term, they cannot be sure of their employment'. More on p. 164.

² The conference 'The Community Centre – A New Opening' was organised within the programme of Community Centre+ by the National Cultural Centre, the Malopolska Institute of Culture and the Krakow Festival Office (ed. note).

lead to a transformation of the approach to funding culture. Institutions may (jointly) do much to create new (more effective and efficient) relations with those who fund their operations, and with the public.

It is connected with the issue of improved adjustment of the cultural institution's operations to the needs of the viewers and local communities. Two methods might constitute the instruments of management of such institutions at the local level. The first is 'public consultation'. The basis for assessment of the institution's performance should be an assessment of its activities carried out by the community, at least by the individuals who come to the institution. The other principle, widely known in

various evaluation systems, is *path dependence*. It obliges institutions to learn from their mistakes, and the funding and method of working should depend on what they have achieved to date. If an institution is totally alienated from the local community, it is a certain indicator that something must be changed in its operations and that the change should be effected not depending on the good or bad will of the director, but that it should be forced by the founder who finances the institution's activities. Moreover, the basis for the settlement of the expenditure of the institution should not be solely the settlement of the budget but also evaluation by the community for which it works. We should ask members of the local community if the institution is recognisable, which of the events that it has organised they attended, what they liked and disliked about them, what would be worth changing in its operations. All such comments should be taken into account while planning the institution's operations in the years to come because it gives the institution a chance to become part of the local community.

While developing the mechanisms for social participation in the management of the cultural institution, it must be remembered that the local community is always characterised by a certain degree of diversity, *cliqueness*, a system of relations or circles that may bear on the institution's programme. In such institutions, it sometimes happens that the director who has not got a strong position or the possibility to run a discussion with the 'environment' starts to fulfil only the needs of those few stakeholder groups who have the strongest influence on that cultural institution. If the director is not to become a hostage of one party, s/he should formulate such a model of work in the local community that it would enable the community to influence the institution's operations. It may be done through, for instance, a transparent system of evaluation, which is available to everyone. It is basic to put forward an evaluation system, an assessment instrument, which makes it possible to learn the opinions of those to whom the cultural institution is dedicated, but also one whose results would be publicly accessible. This system of evaluation does not need to be understood as a peculiar *listeners' choice* programme and fulfil all public wishes; that would be absurd. This instrument should give shape to the often vague and unintelligible wishes of the public and assist in the formulation of institutional operations.

The idea of the culture centre and the supermarket

Nowadays cultural institutions rely on two basic concepts. On the one hand, there is the idea of a community (culture) centre, and on the other – the logic of the ‘mall’. Many cultural institutions that are established these days, including the Centre of Contemporary Art in Toruń, are closer to the latter idea because on the premises there are: a cinema, a library, reading rooms, workshop rooms, rooms rented to entrepreneurs etc. On the one hand, this is a continuation of the traditional community centre, and on the other, it is application of the shopping centre model. Some cultural institutions work in this way and, moreover, it is also the viewers’ expectation for them to function in this way, so that they can satisfy diverse cultural needs, also those connected with entertainment, in one place. It also means that the transformation of the cultural institution into a modern one that corresponds to the model described above, is not so difficult, after all. It would suffice to set up a cafe where, once the workshop is over, participants can get together. It would be a substitute for a multiplex.

An ideal situation would be if the cultural institution observed what other forms of operation would be welcome, for example by providing a venue for the viewers’ own activities so they can show what they engage in. If their output turns out to be valuable, the institution should support those creative activities, supply instruments, extend competences. The cultural institution can learn something from the people who are active outside it. An example may be Kontener Art³. It is a private venture, launched by people who act outside institutions and who have developed a certain mode of cooperation with the public – such a model can be used by the cultural institution.

3 Mobile Centre of Culture
KontenerART,
www.kontenerart.pl/
(ed. note).

Libraries as community centres or as knowledge and technology centres

Changes in the cultural institution profile caused by the modern developments may be observed on the example of libraries. It is no coincidence that the modes of library operations are changing under the influence of technological developments. They are seeking new identity, stealing a little from those forms of activity that have traditionally been associated with other cultural institutions. Their primary function, that of book lending, is slowly being phased out, so in order to survive they have to redefine themselves, and that is possible through extending the profile of

their operations – a transformation into internet cafes, exhibition centres, venues for meetings or concerts.

The direction that the changes take depends on where the library is located. There are marked differences between a library in a university city and a library in a small town or in a village. The university library will not forsake its primary function, book lending, as books are indispensable to academics and students, and it will not turn into a venue for exhibitions or concerts. On the other hand, there are institutions such as the Elbląg Library, which satisfies most of the cultural needs in Elbląg. It has taken over the role of other cultural institutions. A library in a small locality in the country should perform the functions of a cultural institution because there is no other option. It is no coincidence that nowadays very many of them transform into something like community centres.

Identity of the cultural institution

First and foremost, the cultural institution should have a clear identity, forged jointly with the stakeholders, i.e. it should know what it wants, how it works, and based on that awareness it should build a network of relations with the public and the local environment. The institution should know how it intends to function and operate, but at the same time it should also notice external phenomena, those in accordance with its identity and those that enable it to develop it creatively. Obviously, if we assumed such a model of the institution where anybody could come and show or do anything, it would quickly turn into a Hyde Park, a good-for-nothing place, where everyone spoke their own language and would not listen to one another. An equally bad situation would be the institution's complete isolation, focus on itself and ignorance of external phenomena. The institution should have a distinctive character, should be identifiable and recognisable as a place of which we know what to expect. Every resident should be aware what they can expect of the institution operating in their place of residence, what its profile is. Is it dedicated to senior citizens or to children, or, conversely, can everyone find something for themselves in it? Does it focus on pop-cultural things, or does it concentrate on academic culture? That is the kind of identity the institution should have. However, the identity should not be something that hinders contacts and relations with the outside world. The cultural institution should not be populist but distinctive, so that its identity could appeal to the public, and the institution itself could be open to suggestions of modification on their part.

Conclusion

Ideally, the cultural institution should both give the sense of rootedness and offer ways of redefining identity, so that it corresponds with changes in the world around us. This is, naturally, a tremendous challenge for the cultural institution. It is not easy to be a safe, familiar place and at the same time to enter into a local conflict over a problem or a challenge, to create something controversial. There are many barriers for the cultural institution to overcome: from personal consideration, through financing and dependence on the commune, to its being treated by employees as a primarily social institution. Perhaps it is necessary to reconstruct the whole system to promote the optimal model that can satisfy the need of security and being up to date.

Basic terms

- **Participation in culture** – a set of social cultural practices; a set of diverse activities connected with exchange and use of cultural content (products of art and culture) in the process of communication between senders and recipients. Participation in culture assumes being in possession of cultural competences that enable exchange and transformation of cultural content.
- **Institutional identity** – in order to perform their functions and achieve the appointed goals, cultural institutions must determine what values and what myths (in the sense of tales that structure the world) will govern the team's operations. Owing to this process (identity is never fixed, it emerges in action), the internal organisational team and external stakeholders will be able to formulate common guiding principles, which will permeate the ethical dimension of their activity. The public institution's identity must be centred on the constituent values of public space (relationality, civic mindedness, transparency, non-denominational nature, etc.)
- **Culture animator** – a person with special communicative competences who serves others as a mediator, educator, consultant etc. Culture animators work drawing on cultural resources in order to develop social networks (society building) and to develop social competences (creation of new opportunities for individuals to participate in culture).
- **Cultural needs** – in conceptions of public management an important function is allocated to community needs diagnosis (a response to the needs should be public services of proper quality and standard). In this sense, community is a client – knowing the client's needs, it is possible

to respond to them with appropriate services or products. In order to recognise the community's needs accurately, it is necessary to use advanced instruments of social research (not in the sense of the methods of data collection but the methods of data analysis) so as not to reduce cultural needs to a 'catalogue' of expected events.

- **Pop-culture** – a challenging word for the cultural institution because it contains an element of normative judgement (pop-culturisation destroys traditional cultural circulation, annihilates hierarchies of values) and connotes awareness of new spaces of culture and a new canon of cultural competences (pop-culture is a global phenomenon consisting of many niches, and also the cultural code of modernity).
- **Local culture** – a key word for cultural institutions. Fostering localness is an end in itself, and as such is rarely analysed. Local culture is often associated with such categories as local homeland, regionalism, folk culture. For cultural institutions, the problem with this term may be summarised in this way: whether it is 'district culture' (hence, cultural phenomena which come from here, often associated with tradition) or 'culture in the district' (hence, cultural phenomena that happen here regardless of their provenience).

Dilemmas in strategic management in culture

- Should cultural institutions forge their identity based on the needs of the local community or based on the concept of development formulated by its substantive team?
- Is participation in culture a set of 'activities' connected with the model of the cultured person or an aspect of all social activities?
- What is more important for a cultural institution: identity building or a sense of security and rootedness; should cultural circulation be 'sped up' by controversial, innovative, transgressive activities?
- Whose should the cultural institution be? Should it belong to the local community or to the local government? To the local artists' circle or to the general public?

Marek Krajewski is a sociologist, UAM Professor of Sociology (Institute of Sociology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań). He has written many articles on popular culture, consumerism and art, and the books *Kultury kultury popularnej* (Poznań 2003, sec. ed. 2005), *POPamiętane* (Gdańsk 2006), *Za fotografię! W stronę radykalnego pro-*

gramu socjologii wizualnej (Warszawa 2010, in collaboration with Rafał Drozdowski). He is the scientific editor and co-editor of the books *W stronę socjologii przedmiotów* (Poznań 2005), *Prywatnie o publicznym. Publicznie o prywatnym* (Poznań 2007), *Wyobrażenia społeczna. Horyzonty – źródła – dynamika* (Poznań 2008). Marek Krajewski held the position of the curator of Zewnętrzna Galeria AMS [AMS External Gallery] (1998–2004) and was the originator of the project ‘Invisible City’.

'Becek' – The Bytom Cultural Centre is a municipal cultural institution of the Town of Bytom.

Its mission is to:

- redefine the role of culture as a creator of Bytom's social and economic development;
- prevent cultural and social exclusion of individuals who have not found a foothold in a new reality without steelworks and mines;
- act as an intermediary presenting the most interesting developments in contemporary culture, focusing mainly on the theatre, music and visual arts, to the local community in the town and region.



Mariusz Wróbel, who stands at the institutional helm.



Katarzyna Lazar, who is responsible for fundraising, accounting for subsidies and the Promotion Department.





Dagmara Gumkowska, who is the manager of the Arts Management Department, author of theatre education projects and head of the 'Teatromania' International Festival.



Martyna Tecl, who is involved in children's cultural education, and is responsible for accounting for educational and exhibition projects in the Kronika gallery.

Anna Papierzańska, who is responsible for the repertoire of the BCKino art house, educational film projects and revival of the Gloria cinema.



Agata Tecl, who is a curator, educationalist and organiser of unconventional international educational projects in CSW Kronika [Centre of Contemporary Art], a branch of Becek.

Towards a Creative Region – a New Role of Regional Cultural Institutions Example: Warsaw Cluster of Cultural Industries and the Creative Sector

1 Pracować za wszelką cenę, rozmowa z Joanną Warszawą, in: *Ekonomia kultury. Przewodnik Krytyki Politycznej*, Warszawa 2010, p. 238.

2 More on the Warsaw website on creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in culture and the creative sector, www.zpragadlapragi.artklaster.pl/. Warszawa 2010, p. 238.

‘Whether it wants it or not, the world of art has to respond to the social conditions in the world of capital, technological development and information’¹.

The idea to establish a cluster of the creative sector organisations occurred in 2008 while works were being carried out on the Programme for the Development of Culture in Warsaw 2009–2020. In Warsaw the creative sector is already relatively well developed, so a natural consequence should be to strengthen the institutions that belong to it through an attempt to concentrate them by location and by trade. According to the approved schedule of works, the Cluster, as a physical entity which gathers many different cultural institutions in the allocated area, is to be established by 2014.

The aim of the founders of the Warsaw cluster² is to concentrate in one area a variety of institutions in the culture sector that are interested in cooperation, and to conduct joint projects and undertakings. It is notable that the Cluster is intended to be open to individual artists. It is a triply innovative undertaking in the Polish context. Firstly, the Cluster is to gather entities belonging to different trades and cultural sectors (including music, film, and also research activity in the field of culture). Secondly, its members will be institutions with different legal statuses, including private businesses and NGOs, and individual creators and artists. Thirdly, in market economy where such activities tend to be profit-oriented, these entities are expected to cooperate rather than compete. Concentration of various institutions is also intended to decrease indirect costs. In addition, exchange

of experience and cooperation in different projects should result in synergy. Added value resulting from joint initiatives will make it possible to strengthen competitiveness of the members of the Cluster and enhance their innovativeness.

All that, however, is still future. Today the Warsaw Cluster of Cultural Industries and the Creative Sector is a web portal established within the project financed by the City of Warsaw Office for Culture. It features a gallery of 'creative projects', portfolios of representatives of the Warsaw creative sector, job advertisements, information about competitions and tenders within the culture sector. There is also a bookmark with information about the theory of the creative sector and cultural industries and a series of articles on the subject. To sum up, the Art Klaster portal is an interesting project but it is still an early stage of integration of the creative sector in Warsaw.

Cultural industries versus creative industries

What is the Warsaw cluster (or rather what is it intended to be)? The very name 'The Warsaw Cluster of Cultural Industries and the Creative Sector' contains three terms that are worth explaining. Let us start from the last one. The term 'creative sector' entered the language in the 1990s. The definition formulated in Great Britain enumerates the following fields of activity in the creative sector: advertising, film and video, architecture, music, art and antiques market, performance arts, computer and video games, the publishing business, craft, software, design, radio and television, fashion design³. David Throsby points out two characteristic features of the sector: the works of art market and the ideas market, and emphasises that the material market determines the economic value of a work of art, while the ideas market determines its cultural value⁴.

Eight years have passed since the publication of *The Rise of the Creative Class* by Richard Florida. To some people the book has become a bible. Initially highly praised, it gradually attracted criticism, especially from the left⁵. Regardless of the political dimension of the book, it is notable that Florida managed to capture and describe a vital aspect of current transformations in the Western society. The basic thesis emerging from his book makes us realise that in Western economies members of the so-called creative class are gaining significance, and an overwhelming majority of its representatives live in cities. Yet not all big cities become centres of creativity. In order that members of the creative class wish to live in a given city and/or that a creative class be formed, certain conditions must be fulfilled, one

³ See A. Etmanowicz, *Co to takiego przemysł kreatywny i przemysł kultury?*, www.kreatywnisamoza-trudnieni.pl/przewodnik.html?artid=2. cf. R. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, 2002.

⁴ D. Throsby, *Economics and Culture*, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

⁵ See the discussion on the creative class in the book published by Krytyka Polityczna: *Ekonomia kultury*, op.cit. [in Polish]

6 See R. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, 2002. op.cit.

of which is diversity. It concerns participation of immigrants, cultural minorities and representatives of the bohème in the community⁶. Moreover, in a creative city there must be different kinds of universities and high schools, and the community should be active and willing to form all sorts of associations. It is only in such an environment that *homo creativus* may choose to live, work and develop skills. It is only in such a city, where the creative class already exists, that creative industries and cultural industries may develop.

The terms 'cultural industries' and 'creative industries' are sometimes used interchangeably. The difference arises from the semantic scope of the concepts of culture and creation, the former of which is associated with an institution, and the latter – with individual ability to create new works of art. The word 'industry' connotes production of certain goods. In the case of cultural industries we have to take a step further. Here are the 'produced' goods – cultural goods – such as music, concerts, theatrical plays or films recorded on all sorts of carriers (analogue records, DVDs, video cassettes, etc.) or published on the internet (to be freely played, for instance on Youtube.com, or downloadable at a charge). The situation is more complicated in the case of more transient cultural products, which are recorded only in our minds (theatrical plays, concerts, performance art, etc.). They also belong to 'cultural industries' due to their market value.

Finally, the cluster. On the website, the authors refer to the definition coined by Michael E. Porter. He defines it as a geographic concentration of interconnected businesses, specialised suppliers, service companies, companies that operate in related sectors and associated institutions in their respective fields, which compete and cooperate with one another⁷.

7 See more on the Warsaw portal on creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in culture and the creative sector, www.artklaster.pl/index.php/informacje-ogolne/80-klastery-definicja-i-historia [in Polish]

Creativity, you fool!

The condition of the Polish sector of creative industries awaits extensive

Clusters – development of entrepreneurship based on cooperation

Competitiveness may be considered not only from the point of view of an individual organisation but also that of a country or region. According to the Authors of our handbook, one of the challenges that Polish cultural institutions need to face is how to achieve such a level of integration at the national and regional level that the activity of some institutions be beneficial for others. In the literature on strategic management the problems of integration of whole sectors of economy are usually considered in the context of national innovative capacity. Carter, Clegg and Kornberger list the following factors that are necessary to achieve a high level of innovativeness on the national level: innovative infrastructure which comprises institutions, resources and an innovation supporting policy; pro-innovative orientation of groups of clusters from various sectors, and the quality of the connections between infrastructure and pro-innovative orientation.

research. It seems that as regards the number and diversity of entities (producer companies, concert agencies, record and film companies, etc.) and generated profits, the cultural industries sector is relatively well developed in Poland. However, there is a shortage of initiatives to integrate these groups and to establish cooperation between entities belonging to different sectors but conducting activities in culture (public institutions, private companies, NGOs). The dominant feeling is mutual distrust and a lack of understanding of the activities performed by entities from other sectors (often stemming from ignorance). NGOs are considered as hardly professional 'cash cows', while private companies are regarded as merely profit-driven. Public entities are universally criticised for bureaucracy, tardiness and a lack of creativity. It is here that an

important role emerges for regional and metropolitan cultural institutions. If cultural entities are to operate efficiently and are to be able to relieve local governments of some activities (e.g. training, research in culture), it is necessary to take the first step towards integration of artistic, academic and business circles. Only their good relationships are able to ensure an environment in which they will be ready to cooperate within a cluster. But if effective cultural clusters are to come into being 'at the beginning of that chain there must be art education which covers both discovery and development of talents and shaping the tastes and preferences of the future recipient of a cultural product'⁸. Unlike many others spheres of life, development of culture is based on continuous exploration, transformation and creation. Culture (and, above all, art) does not bear stagnation. Nothing enhances creativity equally strongly as a free flow of concepts, ideas and experiences, preferably in an interactive way. Hence the need to strengthen and support other cultural entities as well as public entities.

8 *Kultura może się opłacać, rozmowa z prof. Andrzejem Klasi-kiem, 'Śląsk. Miesięcznik społeczno-kulturalny', 2010, No. 9, p. 34.*

9 K. Szreder, *Kultura się z wami policzy*, in: *Ekonomia kultury...*, op.cit., p. 38.

Kuba Szreder's anxiety that propagation of the idea of cultural industries as an alternative to public institutions' activities may undermine independence of culture seems to be justified. The threat becomes real, however, only if the state (and local governments) completely withdraw their financial support for culture. But the suspicion that 'in the currently proposed model of cultural policy the logic of profit has the advantage over autonomous fields of cultural production'⁹ seems groundless. Policymakers in Poland still do not show much interest in that direction of cultural policy reform. An exception may be the fact that private entities have been allowed to participate in (some) subsidy programmes of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Firstly, to participate in it companies are obliged to pay a much higher own contribution than the contribution required from public entities or NGOs. Secondly, we should applaud the move which has resulted in an increased competitiveness in applications for public resources. Participation in competitions (as they are now) may only have positive consequences as it will force public and non-governmental cultural entities to be more innovative in the formulation of their projects.

The idea of cultural clusters remains a distant future. Besides the project of the Warsaw Cluster, two other notable initiatives are the Cultural Industries and Leisure Cluster in Malopolska and the Lublin Cultural Cluster. Is the role of regional cultural institutions to create more and more cultural clusters? It may be so in the long run. But not at all costs. Let us repeat once again: for a creative sector cluster to exist, such entities must already be in existence. If relatively many different entities in the culture sector are to operate in a given region/metropolitan area, there must emerge a creative class. If a creative class is to emerge, there must be favourable conditions for its development. *Ergo*: cultural entities at the regional and metropolitan level should address their activities to broadly defined external and internal stakeholders. These are the staff of institutions and organisations, civil servants who are in charge of cultural affairs in local governments, culture animators, artists and individual creators, as well as researchers in the sector. If there were no people with a creative approach to culture making, no institutions, even the most innovative ones, would be able to radically change the situation in their areas of activity.

At the same time, however, ‘there is no better school of creativity than participation in culture’¹⁰. It involves

Participation in culture. Compare with the text by Marek Krajewski: ‘Cultural institutions should not be places where something is offered to the viewer but those that enable him or her to maintain the particular ways of benefitting from culture that he or she practices, to which he or she is used, which are natural for him or her’. More on p. 26.

both recipients of culture and its creators. Creativity is also fostered by any contact with otherness. Interactions between participants in culture will pay off in future, just like meetings of professional artists with amateurs, culture animators with artists, representatives of the

10 W. Kłosowski, *Kultura jako czynnik sprawczy rozwoju lokalnego*, in: *Kierunek kultura. Promocja regionu przez kulturę*, ed. W. Kłosowski, Warszawa 2009, p. 29. [cf. further *Kierunek kultura*].

third sector with the staff of cultural institutions. In addition, if such ‘meetings’ are grassroots initiatives, mechanisms of the civic society are also strengthened. At the same time, development of creativity fosters development of the creative class and of cultural industries. And that, in turn, enhances economic development of the region, and ultimately – of the whole country.

We like best the songs that we already know – Polish-style innovativeness

If we wish to have a culturally educated society, we must have well educated and professional staff in culture. Banal? Not necessarily. The distinction between ‘lowbrow’ and ‘highbrow’ culture lost sense a long time ago. The situation makes it difficult for the less sensitive and less educated staff of these institutions to choose an ambitious offering that would suit the needs of the local community. Instead of researching actual needs, managers of cultural institutions formulate their offering based on a canon they know all too well (often dating back to the communist times¹¹) and supplement it with television-inspired novelties from the border between culture and entertainment¹². The problem of (a lack of) sensitivity and knowledge of the staff in cultural institutions is also observable in research on aesthetic taste. ‘Representatives of traditional institutions tend to welcome spectacular, loud events starring global celebrities. It is a case of slightly megalomaniac snobbery and self-creation – their aesthetic choices usually focus on those phenomena and cultural products that everybody knows’¹³. Research also shows relatively poor participation of the staff of cultural institutions in culture. The fact that they do not feel like participating in art events results in a low level

11 This should not come as a surprise, given that a vast majority of full-time staff of e.g. community centres are over 50. See *Zoom na domy kultury*, ed. M. Białek-Graczyk, Warszawa 2009, p. 50.

12 For more on this subject, see T. Szlendak, *Aktywność kulturalna*, in: *Kultura miejska w Polsce z perspektywy badań jakościowych*, Warszawa 2010, pp. 115–118.

13 M. Duchowski, E.A. Sekuła, *Gust estetyczny*, in: *ibidem*, p. 82.

of the cultural offering of these institutions. A consequence of a lack of familiarity with cultural events realised

Awareness of the local environment. Compare with the text by Marek Sztark: 'Not everybody can get support [within the programme that a given institution runs – ed. note] but they enter into the range of our »radar«. We know the current tendencies, trends, where to intervene, what to do, which fields of activity to focus on, what issues to raise at the city level, where are deficits of competences. We also know that many of those projects require merely consultation, a good word, an explanation of the rules of effective operation. It often turns out that to realise a project it is not money that is necessary but finding a solution to a problem, and then a discussion suffices'. More on p. 121.

¹⁴ Zoom..., op.cit., p. 34.

¹⁵ See ibid., p. 54.

¹⁶ See. M. Fiternicka-Gorzko, M. Gorzko, T. Czubara, *Co z tą kulturą? Raport z badania eksploracyjnego stanu kultury w Szczecinie*, Szczecin 2010, p. 43.

¹⁷ See ibid., p. 64.

They are institutions that are similar to the social model: they do not conduct business activity, their own activities are traditional, and they rarely cooperate with other entities¹⁵. Yet even in big cities the dominant approach is that work in culture should be institutional and organisational¹⁶. It overlaps with the traditional attitude to the scopes of different institutions' operations: if it is a library, it should mainly loan materials; if it is a community centre, it should deal with cultural education and, to a lesser degree, with dissemination of culture; if it is a museum, it should hold exhibitions. Research into the needs of Szczecin residents shows that recipients of culture approach cultural institutions in a definitely more modern way than their directors. An ideal cultural institution

should first and foremost be multifunctional and combine commercial and non-profit activity. Therefore in a single location there should be a cinema, cafe, pub, computer room and sports facilities, there should be exhibitions and educational activities (for different age groups), and concerts¹⁷. It should be emphasised that in recent years there has been a perceivable change in the awareness of institutions that carry out museum activity. The establishment of the Warsaw Rising Museum

The ideal institution

The concept of 'the ideal institution' refers to a particular model ('a standard' that one strives to achieve), which is not necessarily suitable for other institutions so that accepting such a model may for instance mean that a given institution may cease to exist while attempting to implement a model that is inappropriate for it. Depending on a particular paradigm of understanding the role of a cultural institution, the meaning of 'the ideal institution' will change accordingly. In our handbook a comparison of this chapter with those by Antoni Bartosz (p. 80) or by Mariusz Wróbel (p. 94) illustrates some differences between different managers' interpretation of what 'the ideal institution' is.

was a breakthrough that pointed out the direction for the development of museums. More and more of them combine traditional exhibitions of artefacts with multimedia presentations, sometimes also including interactive components. Unfortunately, there are still many museums in Poland which 'pride themselves' on expositions that have not been altered for decades, whose only part that is not covered with dust is the plaque 'do not touch the exhibits'.

Research into the condition of culture in cities and in the countryside shows that the offering is conservative and lacks creative approach to new cultural undertakings. Unfortunately, many 'administrators of cultural institutions' (for they can hardly be called managers) give the audience what it already knows because they assume that the audience will like the familiar. This approach stems from founders' incompetence and inadequate knowledge. Secondly, people in charge of cultural institutions are often afraid of risk. The principle to 'let good enough alone' lingers in many Polish cultural institutions, especially in small localities, which can easily be verified by looking at their offering.

Research also shows that many managers of (mainly public) cultural institutions are totally unprepared to work in their positions. The problem arises from the fact that they are often persons who hold their jobs by political appointment. As research conducted by 'E' has shown, six out of thirteen directors of community centres were chosen in competitions, while the others were appointed by local authorities. Another, equally frequent career path in local cultural institutions is promotion from the post of a substantive employee, for example an instructor, to the position of the director. Naturally, one may grumble about the existing selection procedures of managers and directors, which make it possible to choose incompetent persons. It is a problem that must be overcome. But that is not enough. We must bear in mind that there is a shortage of well educated and experienced staff to manage culture. In addition, earnings in smaller cultural institutions tend to be low so it is difficult to attract highly qualified persons. Generalisation is not justifiable, either. It is a fact that many managers and directors (regardless of their substantive competences) are keenly interested in developing culture in their localities and in expanding their knowledge and competences. Unfortunately, there are often no opportunities for them to do so. Research carried out in Eastern Mazovia shows that there is considerable demand for training, workshops and information. It is a vast field for regional cultural institutions to operate in.

Political appointment of directors of cultural institutions is just the tip of the iceberg. 'It is a depressing feeling to know that these institutions are treated in an instrumental way by municipal authorities, which use them to service special events and for promotional purposes'¹⁸. Direct financial dependence on local governments often leads to pathological situations. Civil servants treat cultural institutions as extensions of communal or district offices, and directors as their subordinates. Anxious about their jobs and financing, the staff of cultural institutions in turn not only perform the tasks entrusted to them by the civil servants but also adjust the cultural offer to the tastes of their 'patrons', and not to the real needs of the local community. Tastes of civil servants, particularly politicians, are subject of political play. Hence the most popular events are festivities, local feasts, harvest festivals or fairs, graced by the presence of pop stars. Hence, notwithstanding the artists' exorbitant pays, every mayor or commune leader wants to welcome such starlets as Doda, Feel or Ich Troje at least once a year. Organisation of such events is usually entrusted to the staff of local cultural institutions. The outcome is 'complete availability of the institution, also in matters that are unconnected with cultural activity. Institutions come down to the role of »auxiliary personnel« to the office'¹⁹.

18 J. Nowiński, *Działalność i wizerunek instytucji kultury w miastach*, in: *Kultura miejska...*, op. cit., p. 156.

19 J. Nowiński, *Instytucje kultury na wsi i w małych miastach*, in: *Stan i różnicowanie kultury wsi i małych miast. Kanon i rozproszenie*, ed. I. Bukraba-Rylska, W.J. Burszta, Warszawa 2011.

20 J. Głowacki, J. Hausner, K. Jakóbik, K. Markiel, A. Mituś, *Finansowanie kultury i zarządzanie instytucjami kultury*, Kraków 2008.

It is notable that for example the authors of the report on financing culture notice some positive consequences of decentralisation in cultural institutions development. 'Communes and provincial local governments bear the considerable burden of financing them. In the latter case, expenditure on culture and cultural heritage management is perceived as an important factor in the formation of regional identity and regional development'²⁰. The authors of the report take into account only the financial results of institutions, and do not analyse the ways of spending the resources thus obtained. It is also worth noticing that the financing model that functions in Poland is not the only feasible one. French *maisons de la culture* are local institutions but they are independent of resources from the local government, which is to ensure that they function freely. The model adopted in the Czech Republic is based on a 'contract', whereby the community centre is a building with infrastructure. An interested entity (e.g. an NGO) may enter a competition by presenting an offer of cultural activities carried out in the community centre. The winner operates independently of the local authorities and is accountable only for the annual deliverables. In the case of ossified cultural institutions, only NGOs and individual artists may reasonably be expected to provide inno-

vative cultural offer. Funds do not often accompany creativity, however. Organisations are short not only of financial resources (many initiatives are realised through voluntary work) but, more importantly, of a base. It might seem that an ideal solution would be for public institutions to loan space and equipment and receive in turn

Activity for other cultural entities

See the section of the text by Marek Sztark titled **Cultural incubator** on p. 121. It gives information on how and why it is worth cooperating with other cultural entities.

a more extensive offer, while the staff might gain the opportunity to update their knowledge of the latest trends in culture. Unfortunately, many institutions, including 'community centres are

not aware of the benefits of building cooperation through renting their own rooms to local creative groups'²¹. The directors of these institutions do not see it fit to cooperate with NGOs, which they treat as an unnecessary burden and competition for the audience. Even if such willingness to cooperate does occur, 'there is often insufficient coordination of various entities and inadequate exchange of information'²². If there is no active culture animator or an official with a holistic approach to local culture who can also coordinate activities of the different entities in the commune, then the creative potential will be wasted. In such a situation there arises need for an institution at a higher administrative level which would possess effective tools to create local cultural partnerships.

In order to create effective instruments and conduct activities that would be adequate to the situation in any given commune, it is necessary to be aware of its problems. This cannot be achieved without evaluation research and permanent monitoring of the condition of culture in the communes in the region. The problem is that the majority of civil servants do not recognise 'the need to monitor and evaluate institutions and events with view to their substantive offer. The civil servants [who participated in the survey] emphasised that in small localities »one just knows« if something was organised well or badly, and the crucial criterion in the evaluation was the number of viewers at any event'²³. It is not characteristic for small localities only. Officials in some district departments of culture in Warsaw do not recognise the need to constantly monitor and evaluate financial projects from district resources²⁴. The situation is similar in Malopolska. Although 'local politicians see the need for evaluation research, they sometimes provide space for its realisation (for example through allowing the interested students to write bachelor or master theses), in the majority of cases they prefer commonsense activities such as questionnaires, reading internet forums and comments, monitoring

²¹ Zoom..., op. cit., p. 40.

²² *Diagnoza potrzeb szkoleniowych instytucji kulturalnych na Mazowszu – raport z badania*, ed. A. Stępniewska, K. Wittels, Warszawa 2010, www.obserwatorium.org.pl/docs/raport_projekt_mazowsze.pdf.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ See *Warszawa lokalna. Raport z badania*, ed. A. Stępniewska, K. Wittels, Warszawa 2010, www.obserwatorium.org.pl/docs/raport_warszawa_lokalna.pdf [in Polish].

25 See *Sceny kulturowe a polityki kultury w Małopolsce. Raport z badań eksploracyjnych*, Kraków 2010, p. 139.

26 See Zoom..., op. cit., p. 35.

27 See *ibid.*, p. 40.

local media or talking to animators in charge of particular activities'²⁵. Low reliability of evaluation of cultural institutions activities is also typical for them. The majority of community centres examined by 'E' conducted very superficial surveys among the recipients of their offer, if they conducted them at all²⁶. The reasons for this may stem from a traditional approach to the management of cultural institutions. It is notable that project work is hardly ever used²⁷. The results of the research into the condition of culture in the countryside and in small towns show that none of the institutions it involved had a long-term plan of development, a precise mission and set strategic aims.

From a cultural officer to a cultural manager

Studying the discourse about cultural reforms, we can observe two oppos-

Higher and lower order strategies

Cultural institutions are part of the system of public management, and as such in their activities they should refer to broader plans for the culture sector developed by the state and local governments. On the other hand, to enable them to implement, for instance, a part of the regional strategy, it is vital for them to participate in its formulation. It shows that, for the strategic process, cooperation between cultural institutions is desirable not only at the stage of implementation but already at the stage of strategy development.

28 *Inwestycja w kulturę*, rozmowa z Beatą Stasińską, in: *Ekonomia kultury...*, op. cit., p. 188.

ing approaches. Reformers perceive the majority of institutions as relics of communism whose personnel is completely unprepared to carry out cultural operations under the new system. The other side demonises proponents of reform as barbarian liberals who intend to privatise the last vestiges of the public culture sector. Culture cannot and will never be a self-financing sector. Firstly, due to purely economic factors, such as the level of wealth in the society. Secondly, 'culture is (...) a field of seemingly unnecessary services'²⁸. An average recipient is lazy by nature, and mass recipients are extremely lazy, as they are used to being spoon-fed every product, including culture. If culture is to compete with entertainment in any way (although there is a degree of overlap between both), it has to:

- constantly offer some novelty,
- reach the recipient directly.

29 W. Kłosowski, *Kultura jako czynnik sprawczy...*, op. cit., p. 27.

It also has a tremendous social dimension: 'culture remains the last thread of living contact between the mainstream and areas of social seclusion'²⁹. Extensive research carried out in recent years demonstrates that the culture sector is doing well financially. The situation may not be ideal, but it is not tragic. The amount of financial resources has been growing steadily, and they are becoming more accessible. Most importantly, institutions are more and more successful at getting them to finance their operations.

The problem lies somewhere else. The funds for culture should be spent reasonably, effectively and efficiently.

The debate on the condition of culture has lately focused on the question, 'Should culture be profitable?' Obviously, profitability of culture is not only direct and easily measurable through financial indicators, for example the income level from different initiatives, but it is also indirect and concerns cultural capital and civic society. There is no reason why a variety of financing models should not function side by side. There must be favourable conditions, however, to invest the resources well, to the benefit of target groups and appropriately to their needs. Culture is a certain investment, both for creators and recipients. The role of central and regional institutions is to create and partly implement cultural policy. Unfortunately, the current 'cultural policy does not precede evolutionary transformations in the society as a whole, or changes in individual relationships in it. It does not foster these changes, does not aid development of the desired models and solutions. We could say it »lags behind« or at most can hardly »keep up with them«³⁰.

30 *Finansowanie kultury...*, op. cit.

Institutions of this kind are needed both by regions (provinces) and the steadily developing metropolitan centres (Warsaw, Silesia, Tri-City). The first question refers to their legal status. It seems that they should be established based on the existing provincial community centres. It is also worth using the potential of the former provincial institutions, whose importance diminished after the administrative reform. Cultural institutions operating in the former province capitals might become branches of regional institutions or support them at least in their research and training activities.

31 Fortunately, institutions do not have to act in the dark because we have extensive data and good examples. Of particular importance are: the study *Sceny kulturowe a polityki kultury w Małopolsce* by the Małopolska Institute of Culture and the programme of the Mazovia Region Centre of Culture 'Direction Culture'. As to big cities, there is an interesting study on the cultural situation in Szczecin *Co z tą kulturą?*, while 'The Programme of Cultural Development for Warsaw 2009–2020' has been formulated in Warsaw.

The starting point to determine the function that regional and metropolitan cultural institutions should perform may be an in-depth diagnosis of problems and needs of employees in the culture sector (public, private and non-governmental institutions), individual artists and creators, and office workers in communes and districts who are in charge of culture. It is indispensable to develop appropriate indicators to measure culture. The next step is to carry out research (preferably combining different methods and techniques: surveys, in-depth interviews, case studies) into the current cultural situation, and in the longer run – sustain continuous monitoring of cultural institutions and events in the region³¹. This should be the basis to formulate a strategy for cultural development in the province, which would form a general framework for programmes and projects.

It is of vital importance that a regional cultural institution should have appropriate reputation and prestige and possess legal instruments to influence policymakers in communes, i.e. a strong position in power relations with other institutions. This would help it to be more efficient in aiding cultural institutions in possible conflicts with the local authorities. This function is indispensable. Directors of local government institutions are dependent on commune leaders and mayors, and if they want to do something that goes beyond the cultural policy in the commune, they have a slim chance of success. NGOs and 'independent' creators do not fare much better. Although apparently they act on their own, they often depend on local government subsidies. Unfortunately, many civil servants fail to understand or do not wish to understand or listen to residents' voices. Experienced culture workers say, 'Civil servants do not understand social significance of public art. They treat curators and artists as peculiar supplicants who force them to think on their own, which is the worst that can happen to a clerk'³². Finding your way through the bureaucratic maze may be a real problem for culture animators: 'In culture a lot of time is wasted on bureaucracy, going from office to office, explaining that it is better if a table has three or four legs rather than two, and they still do not understand so you have to come and show them that if it has two legs it falls over... such simple things'³³. Only intervention by a regional institution can solve this apparently minor problem. The power of paper over a clerk is almost magical³⁴. That is why cultural institutions at the regional level should offer this kind of assistance to local institutions, organisations and culture animators. Such activities should stem not only from grassroots initiatives. Constant monitoring of culture in the region should give the staff of the regional institution the stimulus to intervene on their own initiative, as well.

Another vital issue is connected with coordination of operations and assistance in starting cooperation. The administrative reform made local governments independent in the field of culture. Yet leaving local administrative institutions to their own resources in many cases caused deterioration in the quality of cultural offering. The research into the condition of culture in the countryside or in Eastern Mazovia clearly demonstrates that the staff in local cultural institutions lack a platform to exchange experiences and enter into partnerships. Even in different districts in Warsaw (particularly those far from the centre) there is insufficient coordination of cultural activities and exchange of information

32 *Sztuka w przestrzeni publicznej*, rozmowa z Joanną Rajkowską, in: *Kierunek kultura...*, op. cit., p. 124.

33 An interview with an employee of a cultural organisation in Lower Silesia, in: *Stani i zróżnicowanie...*, op. cit., p. 158.

34 While organising my own cultural projects or conducting research, I often met with civil servants' mistrust. It was only when I took out an official letter issued by a superior institution (ideally, by the provincial office or a central institution in Warsaw) that all doors stood open, as if by magic.

35 See Warszawa
lokalna..., op. cit.

36 More about it on the
website of the Warsaw
Programme of Cultural
Education www.wpek.pl/wpek,1.html?locale=pl_PL [in Polish].

37 *Kultura to wkład w rozwój*, rozmowa z Agatą Etmanowicz, in: *Kierunek kultura...*, op. cit., p. 116.

38 More on the website
Direction culture.
Promoting a region
through culture, www.promocjaprzezktulture.pl/warsztaty.html [in Polish].

on initiatives undertaken in neighbouring districts³⁵. It proved to be a step in a good direction to appoint District Coordinators of Cultural Education (within the Warsaw Programme of Cultural Education)³⁶. Regional cultural institutions have an enormous load of work ahead. Firstly, they should hold regular (though not necessarily very frequent) meetings of managers of public cultural institutions, particularly community centres. These may be used not only to exchange information but also to start cooperation with institutions from outside the region and from abroad. Secondly, it is advisable to initiate inter-sector meetings (at the level of communes and districts) for representatives of public institutions, NGOs, individual creators and local government officials who are in charge of culture and cultural industries (if they exist). The aim should be to, first and foremost, overcome mutual mistrust, show the advantages of cooperation, and ultimately, to initiate joint projects and undertakings. 'The policymakers' gravest sin is a lack of a strategic approach. Treating the culture sector as the necessary evil, a consumer of public funds and overlooking added value created by cultural organisations/institutions, both in the social and economic contexts'. 'On the part of cultural organisations one of the gravest sins is a still lingering demanding attitude'³⁷. An example of good practice may be the programme 'Direction Culture', within which the workshop 'Culture Creates Development' was held. It was attended by three-person teams from Mazovia communes, consisting of employees of public cultural institutions, NGOs and civil servants³⁸.

Thirdly, cultural entities are deficient not only in knowledge as to where to raise additional funds but often also how to raise them. Internet data bases on grants and funds are more and more numerous. It seems, therefore, that a step in a good direction would be a form of mediation between cultural institutions seeking sponsors and private companies that increasingly allocate a part of their budget to sponsorship but it is not effectively spent. Fourthly, regional institutions should act as initiators of public and private partnerships. Not many people are aware that PPPs need not be connected with infrastructural investment only (e.g. the construction of motorways) but that it is also possible to apply the formula in culture. Since it is a virtual terra incognita, it requires pilot investments first.

Owing to tremendous impact of their activities, regional cultural institutions should strive to create a cultural brand (brands) of the region. Tourism strategies should be formulated on the basis of the cultural capital of

communes, not only in the traditional sense of cultural heritage but also in cooperation with the creative sector entities. These strategies should be implemented at the local level. Cultural tourism (e.g. festival, hobby, cultural and ecological tourism) is becoming more and more popular. The contemporary tourist (usually a motorist) expects variety and moves from place to place rapidly, without spending much time in one location. This travelling style results in expectation of an extensive tourist offer covering at least the area of one region. Only holistic and large-scale activities stand a chance of enhancing the cultural capital of the region and increase the level of creativity. Richard Florida believes that creativity has emerged as the single most important source of economic growth, and that the best route to continued prosperity is by investing in our stock of creativity in all its forms. That entails the necessity to increase expenditure on research and development and on raising the level of education – although both these things are important – but first and foremost, it means investment into diverse forms of activity – art, music, culture, design and other related disciplines³⁹.

39 R. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, op. cit., p. 320.

Basic terms

- **Human capital** – the sum total of knowledge and high qualifications. The human capital indicator is measured by the percentage of people in a given regional population who hold at least a bachelor's degree.
- **Cultural capital** – material cultural heritage and intellectual heritage, which comprises ideas, practices, beliefs and values shared by a given group.
- **Creative capital** – the sum total of technology, talent and tolerance.
- **Creative industry** – the field of economy which comprises advertising, film and video, architecture, music, art and antiques market, performance arts, computer and video games, the publishing sector, craft, software, design, radio and television, fashion design.
- **Cultural marketing** – dissemination and popularisation of cultural values and artistic activities and building relations between recipients of art and works of art.

Dilemmas in strategic management in culture

- How to provide a mechanism for collecting cultural data in regions?
- How to effectively involve private entities in financing culture?
- Development of the creative class versus ensuring social integration.

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Regional Cultural Operators – from Dissemination of Culture to Management of Cultural Development? An Analysis of Models of Regional Cultural Centres Example: Community centres – a new opening

1 The Strategy of Social Capital Development is one of nine new integrated strategies which are designed to replace the current system of strategies on the national level, made up of about two hundred documents (ed. note).

2 The Library Development Programme is currently managed by The Information Society Development Foundation (ed. note).

3 In this context the operations of the National Cultural Centre are notable, in particular the programme 'Culture Observatory'.

An (optimistic) observer of cultural institutions in Poland may get the impression that for some time now we have been experiencing something that might be called a new opening. Although The Culture Congress 2009 did not give attention to regional and local cultural institutions, the Minister of Culture Bogdan Zdrojewski, quoting the theses of the report of the Board of Strategic Advisors to the Prime Minister of Poland '2030', announces that 'culture matters' (including the role of social and cultural capital, with special emphasis on the creative capital). Since 2010 programmes under Culture+ have been launched (currently, their scope is limited due to budget cuts). The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage is working on the Strategy of Social Capital Development¹. These are examples of activities of central public administration institutions. On the other hand, a non-governmental organisation (The Information Society Development Foundation) supports libraries throughout Poland, running a nationwide Library Development Programme². In addition, academics and researchers are increasingly paying attention to the subject of cultural institutions³. Therefore, our understanding of the issue should increase, while management of cultural institutions should be evidence based, rather than being founded merely on intuitions and stereotypes of those institutions.

4 The conference 'The Community Centre – a New Opening' was organised within the programme Community Centre+ by the National Cultural Centre, the Malopolska Institute of Culture and the Krakow Festival Office (ed. note).

Research results, strategic documents, opinions expressed at meetings such as the recent conference 'The Community Centre – a New Opening'⁴ clearly show that regional cultural institutions (in some cases changing very slowly, and in others very rapidly) must be redefined. The key seems to be to depart from the model of culture dissemination (moving within narrowly defined culture, formulation and realisation of an institution's 'own' cultural events) towards a model of supporting cultural development (and adopting a broad definition of culture as the foundation for all activities, turning towards various cultural entities and taking on the function of a culture operator). The question emerges whether regional cultural institutions are ready for it and if the current processes enable them to undergo such a transformation.

Regional cultural institutions – similarities and differences

To analyse regional cultural institutions, let us refer to the findings of the survey carried out under the project 'Regional Community and Cultural Centres – an Operational Analysis'. Research was implemented with financial support of the National Cultural Centre under the programme Culture Observatory 2010⁵ and was carried out in the following regional cultural institutions:

5 The partners in the project were the Local Initiatives Association (LIA) and the Union of Polish Architects (UPA). The research team, headed by Tomasz Kasprzak, included: Marta Byrska-Szklarczyk, Dam Van Anh, Jacek Graczyk, Dr Marcin Jewdokimow, Małgorzata Kosiarek, Martyna Obar-ska, Marta Ochmaniec, Dr Bohdan Skrzypczak, Dariusz Śmiechowski, Dr Bartłomiej Walczak, Martyna Woropińska.

- Centre of Education and Cultural Initiatives in Olsztyn,
- Lodz Community Centre,
- Malopolska Institute of Culture in Krakow,
- Mazovia Region Centre of Culture and Arts in Warsaw,
- Baltic Sea Culture Centre in Gdansk,
- Centre of Culture and Arts in Wroclaw,
- Regional Centre of Culture Animation in Zielona Góra,
- Regional Culture Centre in Katowice,
- Provincial Public Library and the Centre of Culture Animation in Poznan,
- Provincial Community Centre in Kielce,
- Provincial Community Centre in Rzeszów,
- Provincial Centre of Culture Animation in Białystok,
- 'Old Orphanage' Provincial Centre of Culture and Arts in Bydgoszcz,
- Provincial Centre of Culture in Lublin,
- Pomeranian Dukes' Castle in Szczecin.

The above list includes regional cultural centres from fifteen provinces.

Due to the absence of an institution that would act as a Regional Cultural

6 At the beginning of the 1990s the Provincial Community Centre was closed down. The information on the website of the provincial office in Opole reads, 'There is no Provincial Community Centre in Opole so the role of the organiser and coordinator of cultural activities in the region has been taken over by the local government'. www.umwo.opole.pl/serwis/index.php?id=271.

Centre (further referred to as RCC) in the Opole province, no survey was carried out there ⁶.

The institutions where survey was conducted have a variety of aims, offers, activities and types of recipients. The variety of the objects is reflected in their very names. Some of them have retained the name of provincial community centres (PCC), while other names refer to running cultural activities (culture animation, centre of culture). The common denominator for all of these institutions (apart from their origin as former community centres) is:

- structural connection with the founder – the Marshal Office,
- focus on operations within a province or region, which determines the direction they take in the shaping of and supporting culture in the region and local cultures.

Such activities as undertaking joint initiatives by RCCs from different provinces are rare, and take place only in the case of cooperation with other former PCCs, which are now located within one province.

Based on an analysis of offers and content programmes of fifteen institutions, it was possible to form a typology of institutions which is a continuum ranging from those that focus mainly on organising cultural events (development and realisation of their 'own' events and projects on cultural education) to those whose activities concentrate on substantive support for other entities that operate in the regional cultural field. The middle types also conduct activities in the area of culture animation. It must be emphasised that being classified in a given category was related to the intensity of such activities.

- **Event organiser type.** These institutions typically concentrate on organising cultural events (they do not tend to run clubs, courses, bands, and they do not offer substantive support to other entities operating in the area of culture, although they do cooperate with some of them while organising events). Examples are the Centre of Culture and Arts in Wrocław and the Baltic Sea Culture Centre in Gdansk.
- **Event organiser and culture animator type.** This type includes the Lodz Community Centre and the Pomeranian Dukes' Castle in Szczecin. The Castle strongly focuses on organisation of cultural events but also runs the Amateur Art Movement (art education workshops and co-organisation of art reviews). Apart from organisation of cultural events, the Lodz Community Centre lays emphasis on culture animation (it runs the Art Initiatives and Socio-Cultural Initiatives Centre). Institutions of this type are characterised by occasional substantive support for entities operating in the area of regional culture.

- **Middle type – ‘between an event and support’.** This is the most numerous category. Institutions of this type engage in the organisation of cultural events, culture animation, running art workshops, bands, clubs and, what is the greatest difference from the above two types, focus on supporting entities operating in the area of regional culture. The definition of the term ‘support’ is vital here. RCCs offer support through consultancy, organisation of trainings and workshops or individual consultation. This type includes the Regional Centre of Culture Animation in Zielona Góra, the Provincial Community Centre in Rzeszów, the Provincial Centre of Culture and Arts in Bydgoszcz, Provincial Community Centre in Kielce, the Centre of Education and Cultural Initiatives in Olsztyn and the Provincial Centre of Culture in Lublin.
- **Support-oriented type.** A distinctive feature of this type of institutions is the emphasis they lay on substantive support for institutions operating in the area of regional culture and co-organisation of cultural events (which is not an aim in itself but a way to support other entities and to promote the region). They are also engaged in culture animation. Similarly to all RCCs, these institutions organise their own events, as well. This category includes the Regional Culture Centre in Katowice, the Provincial Public Library and the Centre of Culture Animation in Poznan, the Mazovia Region Centre of Culture and Arts in Warsaw and the Malopolska Institute of Culture in Krakow. These RCCs support other institutions operating in the area of regional culture through initiating and supporting local partnerships (‘Direction Culture’ implemented by MRCCA in Mazovia), promotion of innovative strategies in culture (the Malopolska Culture Observatory run by MIC), formation of a platform for information exchange (the Wielkopolska Guide to Culture run by PPLCCA in Poznan), and culture monitoring (RCC in Katowice). An exception is an offer of financial support (a grants competition, including RCC in Katowice).

To sum up the typology of RCCs, it must be emphasised that these are not mutually exclusive types but a continuum which shows the dominant elements of each institution’s offer. Moreover, the above typology does not concern the quality of the activities on offer, and reflects only their scale. Another characteristic feature of the operations of the surveyed institutions is a considerable number of events that they organise. All of the above institutions and other organisations that were subjects of the survey are important centres for dissemination of culture in their regions (within the traditional model of cultural distribution).

It is notable that, owing to the legal and organisational situation, there is no formal connection between the institutions and the staff of cultural institutions in the region as to the established forms of cooperation, which was formerly defined as training and methodological support. Representatives of all institutions emphasise that there is no question of imposing an activity profile on community centres. At the same time, many of them believe that supporting activities answer the needs of community centres (further referred to as CCs) and reflect the sense of responsibility of provincial institutions for infrastructure and cultural development in the region. It should be remembered that the context in which RCCs and CCs operate affects their relations: after the administrative reform (when responsibility for cultural institutions was passed over to the appropriate levels of local authorities) regional cultural centres lost their status as coordinators who set up the system of relationships and support for local cultural centres.

- RCCs missions stem directly from their statutes, which tend to be standardised documents. It is notable that statutes are documents which change in time – some of the institutions have reformulated their statutes over the past year in order to formalise the activities and set out new directions for them. Two of them, PCCA in Bydgoszcz and MRCCA in Warsaw, formulated their statutes from scratch in recent years. Changes in statutes reflect the dynamics of institutional transformation, search

'Never-ending' transformation of the cultural sector

Regional cultural institutions are forced to seek functions for the support of cultural development in the region on their own. That role is not defined either by legal acts or regional strategies of cultural development (most regions do not have them), there are no active partnerships of cultural institutions that would coordinate their operations. For this reason regional cultural institutions work based on 'emerging strategies' – they use emerging opportunities for action. That is why in the national scale there are many models of cooperation and coordination of cultural development.

for new directions for their activities and reactions to the changes in their institutional environment. It concerns not only grassroots needs (e.g. focusing on senior citizens and disabled persons) but also the changing concepts of the role of culture (e.g. increasing importance of social capital and resulting attempts to enhance it through cultural activities) and, finally, a redefinition of their own role in the field of culture (symptoms of departing from distribution of highbrow culture towards supporting cultural activities of local residents and cultural entities).

The role of regional cultural institutions for local cultural institutions

Let us now consider how the functions and operational methods of regional cultural centres look from the perspective of their (potential or actual) institutional partners, i.e. local community centres. Research into cooperation between regional cultural centres (RCCs) and local community centres (CCs) was a supplementary element of the general image of RCCs based on monographs of these institutions and interviews with representatives of marshal offices. The aim was to give a general outline of the role of RCCs from the institutional client's point of view, with special focus on the prospects for cooperation, and thus to set out the directions for RCCs development⁷.

7 The survey was conducted by means of the CATI technique (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) with a sample of 136 community centres in October and November 2010. The choice of the institutions to be interviewed was deliberate: the CCs were pointed out by the RCCs that cooperate with them.

8 Financial resources were selected primarily—they are the greatest need for two thirds of CCs. On average, four out of five CCs experience a deficit in human resources. Venue resources were selected by slightly more than one fifth of CCs (21,2%), similarly to fittings. Less than one fifth of CCs (19,1%) indicate gaps in know-how.

The CCs directors who were interviewed point out three key functions that regional cultural institutions should perform from their points of view. It is worth adding that they stem from the needs of external stakeholders. These are:

- offering substantive support, by running (free) trainings in particular,
- coordination of CCs' activities and networking,
- 'loaning' highly qualified staff to support the smaller centres substantively.

Let us now observe to what extent these expectations are fulfilled by RCCs. A comparison between the needs declared by local community centres⁸ and their evaluation of the support they get from RCCs shows that regional cultural institutions offer more in terms of non-material forms of support, including organisation of trainings and knowledge sharing. Interestingly, about 35% CCs which indicate gaps in substantive know-how admit that they receive RCC support. That means that there is a group of CCs to which RCCs are an important channel of knowledge transfer. The remaining 65% CCs are an area on which the future RCC training and mentoring activities should focus. Another type of support may be organisation of conferences, traineeships and study visits (which local community centres declare to be necessary and attractive forms of support).

At the same time, despite such needs and evaluation of support, the influence of RCCs on the operations of local CCs remains marginal. The distribution of answers to the question of the role of RCCs from the perspective of CCs is that to over three fourths of the respondents (75,5% valid answers after the weighting) there is no correlation between RCC and CC operations. Over one third of respondents (35,5%) selected the lowest figure '1', which represents a complete lack of correlation. Hence,

9 At the same time almost 90% of respondents are convinced that they have no influence on the RCCs offer and operations.

10 J. Nowiński, *Działalność i wizerunek instytucji kultury w miastach*, in: W. Burszta, M. Tuchowski, B. Fatyga, A. Hupa, P. Majewski, J. Nowiński, M. Pęczak, E.A. Sekuła, T. Szlendak, *Kultura miejska w Polsce*, Warsaw 2010, p. 182.

if RCCs are to perform a different function than solely that of a big city community centre (they are perceived so by a part of the respondents), they have to set out in the field and cooperate with CCs in the local environment⁹.

On the regional level the assessment of RCC influence is much better. In general, local CCs see the need for such institutions as RCCs on the cultural map of the region (66% positive answers) and the need for an institution to coordinate cultural activities in the region (63% valid answers). The coordination function which the respondents consider so important remains as yet an unfulfilled expectation. From the CCs' perspective, the majority of RCCs do not play the role of coordinators of CCs activities and do not form CCs networks. Other findings also demonstrate deficits in the field of coordination and networking of cultural institutions. In his analysis of cultural institutions operations in cities, Jacek Nowiński emphasises that 'one may get the impression that there are too many cultural institutions in proportion to actual needs. Their competences overlap and they often compete with one another, instead of jointly working for education and culture animation'¹⁰.

However, the above mentioned need for substantive support seems to be realised to a large extent – 58% of respondents pointed out the importance of trainings run by RCC staff, while 44% emphasised trainings organised by RCCs and led by external entities. This shows that RCCs play a significant role in knowledge distribution to individual CCs (with which they cooperate), while the networking activities are limited. Some regional cultural centres run (or plan to run) data collection programmes on local cultural institutions (the Observatory model). From the CCs perspective the direction, i.e. RCCs collecting data about projects and institutional potential, is a good way to promote local CCs activity and to integrate cultural activities in the region. The key factors to achieve success in the CCs and RCCs cooperation may be divided into several categories:

- material resources (adequate financial resources for local cultural institutions to develop),
- human resources (qualified staff in cultural institutions),
- attitudes and mentality (cooperation competences, engagement in change),
- knowledge and competences (adequate knowledge and skills),
- relations and communication (contacts and exchange of experiences among the staff in cultural institutions).

Obviously, community centres are just one type of local cultural institutions. Other key types are libraries, museums, NGOs, or companies in the culture sector which have other actors related to them on the regional cultural scene than the above described regional cultural centres. In the case of communal libraries these are provincial libraries, and further up – the National Library, while for local NGOs a similar role is played by infrastructure organisations (local government offices of cooperation with the third sector, or incubators). A cursory analysis of the operations of those support institutions shows dramatic differences on several levels. Let us have a closer look at local libraries and community centres in the context of relations and support given by higher level cultural institutions¹¹. Simply put, the current situation of community centres and libraries in Poland is an outcome of the territorial reform of 1992. The reform transferred the responsibility for those institutions' operations to appropriate levels of local authorities. In the case of CCs no structure of relations between institutions with different scopes of activity was maintained. Public libraries, in turn, operate in accordance with the Library Act, which gives commune libraries the right to apply to provincial libraries for substantive support¹² (currently, there are 18 provincial libraries). Community centres and cultural centres are not part of any system of support and content control, and they are only subordinate to their founder (the commune or district office etc.). The above findings of quantitative research into CCs confirm the popular belief that the extent of regional (provincial) institutions support for local CCs is limited.

The legal framework in which the institutions operate is vital, as on the strength of the Library Act each commune is obliged to run a library. Maciej Kochanowicz points out that public libraries form the most extensive network of cultural outposts, 'we have a total of over 8,500 public libraries (community centres amount to less than 3,000), including 6,500 libraries in villages and towns. It is one of the most widespread networks of publicly accessible outposts, which is comparable in size to such a network of vital social institutions as the network of parishes or fire stations, or – among commercial outposts – the post office network. Moreover, it is a network that, owing to branch offices, goes down to the smallest localities, where community centres do not exist and one may go

11 An otherwise important analysis of museums and local NGOs operations in the field of culture is beyond the scope of the present study. However, dispersion and differences in individual circumstances and range of local NGOs operations hinder generalisation.

12 L. Kuczmierowska, *Ocena potencjału instytucjonalnego bibliotek wojewódzkich*, The Information Society Development Foundation, www.frsl.pl/images/Files/06_ocena%20potencja%C5%82u%20instytucjonalnego%20bibliotek%20wojew%C3%B3dzkich.pdf.

13 M. Kochanowicz, *Czy da się pogodzić bibliotekę z domem kultury*, in: *Aktywne Domy Kultury*, ed. T. Kasprzak, Warszawa 2011, p. 88.

at best to the rural community hall'¹³. Libraries and community centres should complement one another's activities, and yet they often compete in the same areas of culture.

Cultural institutions of the local government– between national standards and local objectives

It is worth looking at the above described situation of local cultural institutions (libraries and community centres) from the point of view of the present state and the assumed changes. Simply put, the currently dominant operational mode of cultural institutions of the local government may be represented in the following way, with regard to their relations with the founder (territorial authorities) and presence (or absence) of a support system and general standards:

Local government As a founder, it imposes operating plans, fields of intervention, and modes of operation.	Library	Community centre	Community centre Library
	Presence of a nationwide system of institutional support and development (general criteria and operational standards). Structures that enable operations within a network of one institutional type.	A lack of a nationwide system of support and development (general criteria and operational standards). A lack of networks.	Implementation of the model of culture dissemination (stimulating and satisfying residents' cultural needs).

Fig. 1. Cultural institutions of the local government – present state

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It has been put forward during the debate on the reform of management of cultural institutions in

The proposed model¹⁴, in which a vital role is played by generally accepted operational standards and an effective system of support and information exchange, and in which the relations with the local government are redefined, is the following:

Local government As a founder, it imposes operating plans, fields of intervention and modes of operation based on development strategy and contacts with partners.	Library Community centre	Library Community centre	Library and Community centre	Library and Community centre
	Presence of a nationwide system of institutional support and development (general criteria and operational standards).	Operations within a nationwide/ regional network of one institutional type.	Operations within local networks.	Implementation of the model of culture dissemination.

Fig. 2. Cultural institutions of the local government – development directions

Poland. Cf. J. Głowacki, J. Hausner, K. Jakóbiak, K. Markiel, A. Mituś, *Finansowanie kultury i zarządzanie instytucjami kultury*, Krakow 2008, and *Trzy kroki ku zmianom na lepsze w kulturze*, joint publication, Warsaw 2009 (ed. note).

Transformation from the first to the second model requires a change of strategy not only on the cultural institution level but also in the local government which assumes a more prominent role of a coordinator of emerging strategies at the cost of implementation of former plans. In the first model, a key role is played by regional cultural institutions which become cultural operators (engaged in the development of a network of cooperation, building regional cultural policies, substantive support for cultural entities in the region). At this juncture, it is worthwhile to refer to the panel discussion on ‘Regional Cultural Centres’, which was held dur-

15 There were about 40–50 panellists, mostly representatives of local community centres, as well as members of NGOs and regional cultural centres.

ing the conference ‘Community Centres. A New Opening’¹⁵. The discussion revolved around three theses put forward by the panellists concerning development directions of cultural institutions on the regional level:

- A regional cultural centre should operate as a regional cultural laboratory.
- Regional cultural centres should build and propagate data bases of local ‘good practices’.
- Regional cultural centres should act for the development of the culture sector, not only for the development of local community centres.

The panellists extended the theses by adding new objectives for RCCs:

- Cultivation and co-shaping of local cultural identities.
- The necessity for RCCs to set out development directions and operational standards for local cultural institutions (community centres in particular).
- The necessity for RCCs to form a platform for contact and exchange of experiences among cultural entities in the region.

It follows that the above model of regional cultural institutions development corresponds to the proposals of the cultural workers’ community.

Conclusions – do we need regional cultural institutions?

There are about 15–30 cultural institutions of the local government on the regional level in every province (including museums, RCCs, provincial libraries, theatres, operas etc.). Out of the institutions described in the present study, i.e. provincial libraries and regional cultural centres, there are 18 provincial libraries throughout Poland, RCCs operate in every province excluding the Opole province, and in some provinces (Silesia, Malopolska, Wielkopolska) there are several of them. Several possible scenarios as to the founder’s organisational methods and administrative decisions concerning RCCs emerge from the above analysis of the situation and marked trends:

- the Opole scenario, i.e. closure of the provincial cultural centre – the coordinating capacity is entirely taken over by the marshal office;
- the Wielkopolska scenario – minimisation of the role of the provincial cultural centre in Poznan and its merger with the provincial library, with simultaneous strengthening of the role of subregional centres (Konin, Leszno, Kalisz);
- the Silesian scenario – existence of several institutions of an equal status which function as regional cultural institutions.

As regards new functions (in the national scale) that regional institutions may perform, the following operational models emerge:

- **Cultural centre** – it is the closest model to the already existing ones. In this model the centre runs multidirectional cultural activity. It acts to develop and satisfy cultural needs of local residents (in the city or region) and to create favourable conditions for the development of amateur art movements and cultural education. It lays an emphasis on patronage and instructors' local activity.
- **Coordinator of local cultural development – innovator.** In this model the institution acts as a 'cultural operator' promoting innovative thinking in order to use culture for economic and social development of the city (region), and networks cultural entities in the region (without focusing on cultural institutions).
- **Centre of local activity – cultural initiatives support institution.** In this model the institution animates, inspires, promotes and supports social cultural activity. The addressees of the institutional operations are local communities in the region. The key activity is supporting social and cultural capital development, including support for local cultural institutions.

In conclusion, the above analyses of RCCs operations show that some of the institutions are already embracing the 'new' functions or approach the role of a cultural centre in an increasingly innovative way. In this sense the proposed models are not just a future projection but demonstrate growing tendencies. A threat may be the relations between a cultural institution and the local government (cultural institutions are perceived by different level politicians as instruments for furthering their own policy, rather than the policy on the province or commune level), which affects the financing and permanence of cultural institutions (i.e. possibilities of a closure, reorganisation or merger of institutions). Another problem may be the fact that new operational models are implemented by different departments or teams rather than whole institutions, and in extreme cases – even by individuals. Success will depend on the decision making capacities of these persons (teams) and on the institutional ability to learn.

Basic terms

- **'Culture operator' institution** – a cultural institution that operates within the regulator – operator – contractor scheme, in which the regulator are public administration authorities (e.g. the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Marshal Offices); the operator is a Regional Cul-

ture Centre or a provincial library, and the contractor is a community centre, local library or NGO. The authors of the study *Trzy kroki ku zmianie na dobre w polskiej kulturze* (Instytut Teatralny im. Zbigniewa Raszewskiego, Warsaw 2009) quote the example of the Malopolska Institute of Culture which has been acting as an operator for local cultural institutions in the Malopolska province for several years now. According to the writers of the study, programmes launched by operators should involve 'subsidising cultural institutions operations in a given place and time, initiating structural changes, safeguarding selected types of artistic activity (e.g. the theatre collective, latest music, children's theatre, dancing theatre), overseas promotion of Polish art, quality audits, public procurement of art works, cultural education, social partnership programmes, etc.'¹⁶

¹⁶ E. Durka, D. Mieszek,

H. Trzeciak, M. Nowak,

P. Płoski, M. Wojtuś, *Trzy*

kroki ku zmianie na dobre w polskiej kulturze,

Warsaw 2009, p. 24.

- **Regional Cultural Centres** – cultural institutions operating on the provincial level. In the majority of cases they are former provincial community centres that underwent transformation following the last administrative reform.
- **Founder of cultural institutions** – a local government unit (LGU). In the case of the Regional Cultural Centres (similarly to provincial public libraries), the founder is the Marshal Office in the province.
- **A network of a specific type of cultural institutions** – in accordance with the Act on Organisation and Conduct of Cultural Activity, cultural institutions are public establishments whose role it is to disseminate culture. These institutions vary as to their types (e.g. libraries or community centres). Through interaction, they form (more or less formal) networks.

Dilemmas in strategic management in culture

- Is strategic management a starting point for activities undertaken in cultural institutions on the regional level? Is it a standard or are these individual initiatives?
- Do the present shape and current objectives of the Regional Cultural Centres (RCC) require system transformations (adopted on the national level) or should they depend on local or regional needs and conditions?
- Do transformations in regional cultural institutions entail changes in the model of cultural management by local governments?
- Are culture centres (having extensive cultural infrastructure) good places to set up institutions acting as regional cultural operators?

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The Koziołek Matołek European Tale Centre in Pacanów is a local cultural institution, co-founded by the Pacanów commune and the local government of the Świętokrzyskie Province. All its activities are addressed to children, parents and persons working with children. A visit to the European Tale Centre is a trip into a dreamland. It is a unique place which inspires visitors to turn to literature and is intended to foster positive values among children and adults.







Mariusz Maliga, who is responsible for the musical setting of parties and cultural events.



Agnieszka Ślusarczyk-Walasek, who is responsible for running a shop and group reservations service.



Paulina Podogrodzka, who is in charge of the library and the reception desk.



King Matt the First, who is responsible for guiding visiting groups around the exhibition 'Fairy Tale World'.



(from left to right) Wioletta Jędrzejczyk and Agnieszka Kaczocho, who are responsible for organising cultural events and Katarzyna Pluta, who is responsible for promotion and the media.



The Elf from the fairy tale *The Adventures of Peter Pan*, who is responsible for guiding visiting groups around the exhibition 'Fairy Tale World'.



Katarzyna Bryk, who is responsible for coordination of the National Photography Competition 'All the Children of the World' and for theatre and dance workshops.

A Director's Subjective Alphabet

Example: No Certainties

It has been ten years since I started working in the so-called culture management. First I managed the Malopolska Institute of Culture (MIC) for seven years, and for three years now I have been head of the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographical Museum in Krakow (MEK). In both cases, when I took over the institutions were in need of radical reform. In 2001 it was the Malopolska Centre of Culture, whose goals and structure at the time were completely incongruous with the external situation. A major transformation formed an entirely new institution – the Malopolska Institute of Culture. The sense of its existence in the new formula and with new goals has been proved on numerous occasions. Simultaneously, as an innovative organism, it is faced with new challenges.

In January 2008 I became the director of a hundred-year-old museum. Although the potential of its team and the value of the collection were enormous, the museum was like a bird with folded wings. In two years the structure, mission, method of work and image were transformed, and one of the results is that has received a nomination in the 'Kulturalne Odloty' competition, which is currently running in Krakow. It is notable that this change has been achieved by the same team, reinforced with people with new competences. However, it is only the beginning. Will the capital of positive change be used? Paradoxically, today it is anxiety about the future that prevails.

All these experiences are process-based and stage-based, they are change-oriented but channelled. It would seem that a scope of experience spanning ten years justifies generalisation. It is the opposite. These experiences do not give rise to certainty. I fail to comprehend (or rather, I have ceased to comprehend) why enormous, often heroic effort of teams composed of competent people, rapidly

Institutional uncertainty

The impossibility to predict the direction of changes in the external environment may not be the only problem in strategic management of cultural institutions. They are also affected by a lack of certainty as to the vital parameters of their internal environment, such as available funds and the organiser's decisions concerning their internal priorities. In this situation, strategic activities are often realised 'despite and against', and tend to minimise negative influence of operational risk on the performance of the cultural institution.

proving the validity of the changes introduced, does not register support for development from policy makers. What makes the system so inert? After all, there are thinking and dedicated people on both sides, on the side of the people working in culture, and on the side of the policy makers! What leads us to treat one another to nonsense that cannot be overcome? Is poor communication to blame? Is it the inability to look forward? A lack of empathy?

I have no answer to this. Similarly, the persons I know, who hold senior managerial positions 'in culture', also experience situations that boggle the rational mind. If only such situations just happened occasionally! Alas, the irrationality of the circumstances in which one has to manage a cultural institution these days seems to have become almost part and parcel of the system.

What purpose can the reflections of a director with ten years' worth of experience in the 'change' sector fulfil? I confess I do not set great store by the influence that my notes might exert. Perhaps, though, they might make policy makers realise issues that they are not aware of, and will give potential directors some food for thought.

Here is my own private alphabet of change, encapsulating ten years' worth of experience. It is not coherent and it does not have certainties. I do not believe in recipes, I believe in people. I do not trust magic management formulas, I trust human logic.

H for (mental) Health

I am thinking of it more and more. I cannot remember a project over those ten years, that would not involve risk, stress, and ensuing health problems. You might say, 'You get involved too much'. Or, 'Plan ahead of the time, you'll avoid stress'.

I am asking you very kindly (here I am addressing policy makers), please plan a sensible thing in the culture sector. I mean, long-term operations, thorough project which really create something, change something, have positive outcomes. Try to schedule three years of work (which is the minimum for efficiency, a period that yields results). Bah, try to plan the following year in September (I still mean programming a process or a stage of the process). Fine, try to plan one good exhibition (not a show, but a communication, including a well-thought-out concept, and a setting that will be the medium to convey it; finally, the content of publications, media patronage, sponsors – all that is connected with an expanse of time way ahead of the exhibition itself, an outlay of resources, and the

necessity to have funds for direct expenditure). You will not succeed in planning it all because you have no guarantee that the exhibition may be scheduled in the next year's calendar of events. And you have no guarantee because in September you do not know the founder's budget decisions (and they will not take them in advance, they will not even say that they guarantee the present subsidy because the system simply does not allow them to do so). What to do in such a situation? You will say, 'You're playing Hamlet. Good exhibitions are held, somehow!'. Indeed, they are, but you do not know why! The way it is done is that directors who refuse to be passive usually decide to do it on spec, taking on risky commitments. This must not be

Risk and crisis management. Cf. other writers:

Mariusz Wróbel, 'On deciding to take the role of the leader of the team of a cultural institution, one ought to be aware that crisis will come sooner or later. It may be caused by factors that are independent of the manager (disasters, fires, alarms, slander) but it may also result from the mistakes he or she makes'. More on p. 107.

Ewa Gołębiowska, 'Paradoxically, we are particularly aggrieved by the EU projects. Naturally, they teach us discipline, planning, responsibility, evaluation. It is fantastic but, on the other hand, if projects that should begin, say, in April formally start in October and are completed in March, how can we manage them? The problem is that we are always stuck on the red light. It is probably crisis management 300 out of 365 days a year. It is abnormal!'. More on p. 157.

done but this is the only way they can do something. What will you call such working conditions? Would you not list cultural management as a high-risk profession?

(A week ago – it is January now – I met a distinguished artist by chance. She says that she is preparing a major event for May, though she has not been informed as to the funding. She submitted her application in autumn but she has not received a reply. What is she to do then? 'It's all topsy-turvy but if I was to rely on reason...', she concludes.)

I advance the thesis that a wrongly set mechanism of financial decision

making in the culture sector stems, first and foremost, from a lack of... empathy. It would suffice if policy makers responsible for legal acts/directives/budget deadlines just considered that absurd. And the stress I am referring to is non-human, though we consent to bear it. Should we not speak out loud about it? We cannot expect policy makers to work it out. It is about a lack of communication on our part, too. Or perhaps we have ceased to see the pathology ourselves?

A separate question to each of the parties involved is, how can quality be achieved in such circumstances? Does not this way of funding culture (I do not mean the amount of the funds, I mean its inadequacy to the demands of this kind of operations) reduce the cultural sphere to short-term activity only?

M for Management

It is an area of fundamental misunderstandings. I shall refer to the term itself. 'Cultural management' opens a doubtful cognitive perspective since it suggests that culture is a sphere that is easy to order. However, is it possible to order something that by definition contains an element of unpredictability? I know, you will think that I want to be an artist whose work and funding should not be interfered with. That is not what I mean (although I do believe that art equals autonomy). I mean that language, quite rightly, wavers here ('cultural management', 'management in culture' or some other phrase?). We are uneasy about the mindless use of economic language with reference to activities that are intrinsically quite unlike. I am not saying that economics and culture cannot meet. They do meet, and fruitfully! Only they do so in a different way. Financing and work in the cultural sphere should certainly be governed by strong logic, it is just that it cannot be the logic of accountancy, but the **logic of an individual's development, the logic of group and environment development...** This perspective changes the very foundations of thinking of finance in culture and of channelling cultural work. The first question is, 'What leads an individual/people to develop?', and not 'How much does it cost?'. If we pay for our children's foreign language courses, is it an investment or an expense? Obviously, nothing is straightforward here, either, but adopting the logic of development as the fundamental logic for culture, we are in the area of real values, and not artificially imposed criteria of the market culture.

This perspective is equally demanding from people working in culture as it is for the administration and for economists. Some time ago I was asked to write a handbook for local governments 'on optimisation of services in the cultural sphere'. I replied that such a handbook would be worth writing but it should have a different title, 'So That People Are Happier'. Either this title or none at all.

On the surface, it appears to be the language of a pretentious aesthete, a misty, ethereal form of expression. But in reality it conveys the experience accumulated over years of working with local government officials¹, in the course of which mayors, borough leaders, accountants, prefects, clerks had the opportunity to come face to face with...music by Musorgski, theatre by Kantor, poetry by Szyborska... Initially, they were astounded that we were beginning our workshops on 'services in culture' with that. After two hours, however, they declared they were dreaming that the residents in their communes should have the same

¹ The author of the article has led workshops on cultural services management for the Experience Exchange Group of the Association of Polish Cities (ed. note).

experience. After which they listed the benefits, quite notable benefits, for their communes. The remaining part of the workshop, dedicated to finances, was held under the motto 'Culture – Undervalued Capital'. Hence, when we say 'management' and 'culture', we should determine exactly what these terms refer to. Let us not take them for granted. Let us not accuse the other side of being superficial or not understanding. Let us rather enter into a dispute, a good dispute. Let us realise that such a dispute should take place at all. It is true that it is already going on in many forums nationwide, and was reinforced by the Congress of Culture in Krakow. Great. To me, however, the dispute with my founder comes first, and here the main difficulty is a lack of a simple instrument/formula/place to carry out our conversation. This is where I see the basic management flaw in what the administration does towards culture, but also vice versa! It is absurd that we produce (because we are obliged to) hundreds of sheets of paper, of which nothing comes out because you can hardly expect policy makers to read them, and they take their decisions based on...Well, what exactly? Would not an hour-long conversation be more profitable (and economical) than days spent staining paper with ink? A well-prepared conversation, to be sure, but conversation nevertheless, and not a deaf dialogue via... paper. All support that the founder gave us in the making of, and then in the changes in the Ethnographical Museum in Krakow resulted from his knowledge and conversations on the subject, which were few but fruitful. And the other way round, the sources of problems, for example in sustaining positive dynamics of change, lie, from my point of view, in ignorance and lack of conversation about them. And the stakes are high in this game in the public sphere. It says much about the economic dimension of communication (or its lack). Communication in general is perhaps the first instrument in management (see *C for Communication*).

P for People

Everything begins with people, and people are the target. Firstly, those who work with me. If work is not an instrument for their development, it means I am a poor director. This is the basic principle. That is why I invest in trips, trainings, and forms of personal development. Working for others, my colleagues draw on their own minds, imaginations and bodies. Their performance will be worse if they do not acquire new competences, read, learn, experience new situations, take care of their physical condition. These are the things we must not economise on.

Economy would signify meanness. A wise investment is economy, in this case – an investment in staff development. The mean one pays twice. The economical one gains the interest.

The next aim is the development of those for whom we work. If this is not my greatest motivation, I can give it all up. I have just spoken to a 'Gazeta Wyborcza' journalist, who asked, 'If, as you claim, it is not publicity and show, what is it that people find so appealing about your museum? Because the results of our poll show, there is a lot of appeal.' (The journalist was genuinely surprised or wanted to be). The answer is very simple (let me quote), 'We try to communicate with people at a different level than just showing them attractions. We persuade them that this is a place they need. If a museum offers them an opportunity to experience something worthwhile, they will start to attend sophisticated exhibitions, which they did not use to see. Attendance at exhibitions has increased mainly because we have built many bridgeheads for diverse environments. An example may be the Case Study: empty walls, several items taken out of the storeroom, a floor pillow, a pencil, a piece of paper. We offer an academic piece of paper to the participants and invite them to spend some time there, to think and, if they feel like it, to write their ideas down, and we publish them on our website. And so they come! And they write! But there is no show involved. It is an ordinary situation, some space for themselves. And our respect for other people's ideas'².

² The quotation [in Polish] comes from the interview with Antoni Bartosz Kolekcja to czyjaś myśl, którą otrzymujemy w spadku, 'Gazety Wyborczej', www.krakow.gazeta.pl/krakow/1,44425,8983031,Kolekcja_to_czyjas_mysl__ktora_otrymujemy_w_spadku.htm.

While building the Malopolska Institute of Culture, we were deeply convinced that 'Culture is like oxygen'. In order to breathe, you have to be innovative, look for new oxygen resources. You need to find these ways on your own, practice them, collaborate with others. To shape new paths for thoughts and imagination. What seems a standard these days ('Community Centre plus...', 'Library plus...') was invented by MIC ten years ago. At present MIC has to face new challenges, perhaps with a new range and momentum. But the concept of it as a laboratory for extracting oxygen from culture will probably remain the *constants* of that institution.

I joined the team of the Ethnographical Museum in Krakow with the same basic vision in mind, although the museum is a radically different institution than MIC. Another scope of duties (the collection), another cultural code (a hundred years' worth of history), other basic obligations. But here also the thinking must focus on the human being, while the collection should be interpreted as an intellectual legacy, which we are

developing/extending. For whom? It is enough to ask this question to get a logical answer. Hence the motto, 'My Museum, A Museum About Me'. Then we go beyond the fixed stereotype, we create a space for thinking, experiencing yourself and Other, and this requirement opens up new territories.

C for Communication

The guarantee for success in any venture. 90% of my failures result from a lack of good communication. Example one. An employee is dead tired, and I notice it only when s/he is almost 'dead'. Communication was obviously flawed. In a nutshell, I did not introduce a flexible enough communication system which would enable the employee to send a signal and me to notice what was happening. Example two. An employee understands an issue contrary to the way I meant it when I informed him/her about it. Why? Because I did not check how s/he understood it. It happens mostly when I am in a hurry. But also when I am not prudent enough, and assume there is only one way of understanding an issue. Or I do not anticipate what may be misunderstood in the message. It is an illusion to count on another person to be assertive and ask for clarification. Anyway, the other person is not even aware that s/he understands it differently... Example three. Communication with a bigger team. This is an endless problem of mine. Not that I do not appreciate this kind of communication but I am rushed off my feet and I do not anticipate the risk that arises from a deficit of communication. Losses due to poor communication are considerable. Temporal, emotional, financial. (See also *M for Management* about the losses generated by a lack of communication with policy makers).

C for Competences

‘It is enough for a director to be a good manager’. It is hard to agree with it. The director is responsible for the institution’s mission, formulates

The leader as a negotiator

Issues in strategic management are closely connected with the problems of leadership at the strategic level. As we pointed out in the introduction, theories described in literature emphasise the role of the leader of an organisation as the crucial person for the formulation of organisational strategy. At the same time, especially in the context of organisations that employ persons with high qualifications and competences, which cultural institutions clearly are, the role of the team is equally vital in strategy development. However, it does not diminish the leader’s responsibility. On the contrary, besides tasks connected with the formulation of the strategic vision, it becomes necessary to negotiate the aims of the organisation on the basis of potentially contradictory aims of internal stakeholders and to build understanding concerning their choice and method of realisation.

the programme of work, sets the methods and scope of individual realisations.

The director is responsible for the spirit of the institution, in a manner of speaking, s/he generates that spirit. Can such a responsibility be taken on by a manager? I do not exclude such an option but I question the ease with which it happens. On the other hand, does a director have to be professionally qualified in the discipline in which he holds his managerial position? I do not know. It is possible for one not to have the qualification and yet perform the duties well. Perhaps even better. After all, in each case the personality and horizons of the individual should be decisive.

Twice have I found myself in a situation that, had strict professional parameters

been applied, I should not have been appointed to hold the functions I had and still have. I started to work for the Malopolska Institute of Culture having graduated from French Studies at the Jagiellonian University (I am a French medievalist by education). A management diploma? I did not have it and I still do not have it (I do not mean it is unimportant; I simply have not had the time to enrol on a management degree). When I took over my duties at the Ethnographical Museum in Krakow, my professional qualification was formally nil: I am not a museologist or ethnographer by education. In both cases my directorial duties were committed to me as a result of competitions. I simply presented my vision of the institution, the rationale for its operation, the management method. Just that. But that cannot have been too little if the two programmes, both of them rather radical, were recommended to the founder. But the risk involved was considerable. Was it worth taking? There is no rule. All I can say is the nominee has to balance daring and humility, learning them in a hurry, of course.

I am more confident on the score of the competences of the teams working in the field of culture. The first feature is interdisciplinarity. Also in museum work. An ethnographer-museologist should have extensive competences. Museum studies in general should introduce him/her to many disciplines that seemingly have little to do with museum work, but are connected with civilisation. The museologist should be brilliant in his/her basic competence, and should have considerable knowledge of other disciplines. Finally, there is something called the competences of the institution itself. It acquires them, among other ways, through collaboration with diverse environments, through osmosis. Although being open to other disciplines is not easy, it has many advantages and pays off in the future.

E for Efficiency

A nightmare for cultural managers. Time and time again we have to demonstrate efficiency of the institution we are in charge of. I do not waver in the face of the question of the validity of the institution's operations; on the contrary, I agree that a public institution should justify what it does and be transparent. The trouble is that the ground on which the condition of the institution is assessed should be changed.

At present, the founder receives information on the basis of such indicators as IK or CSO³, which do not explain much, or rather – blur the picture. What to say about audits, which may be inspirational in themselves, but lead to airy-fairy conclusions? For example, a weak point of the operations of the Ethnographical Museum in Krakow, which an audit indicated, is 'not reaching out to new public'. Whence the conclusion? As it is, the attendance of new environments rose by 100% in the period examined. And, conversely, I do not trust the high position that EMK occupies in the ranking of institutions, which was an outcome of the above mentioned audit, because I am fully aware of the scope of arrears and work to do (practice contradicts the figures in their respective slots and 'it is not so good' at all). On the other hand, it is difficult for me to accept the audit parameters of 'work efficiency' for real because I declare empirically that the scope of the work done in EMK (suffice it to quote the number of borrowings from our collection) goes well beyond the audit results, so 'it is not so bad' in this respect.

The present, indicator-based picture of the institution's operations is dangerous because it does not correspond to the reality. The results of the examination are not very informative, and yet I would like to have

3 These indicators, introduced by the Central Statistical Office [GUS], concern the number of recipients and standardised forms of institutional operations (permanent groups, events, exhibitions, cinema screenings, amateur art movement, etc.). Their connection with the real forms of cultural institutions' work is highly problematic (ed. note).

solid knowledge of the museum I am managing. So, also in this field, we should enter into a good dispute with the founder over how to conduct the assessment, how to combine the quantitative and qualitative approaches. It is not sufficient to ask, how much? It is also necessary to ask, what? Then, 'i' will have a different value than 'I'. And in the audits I know they do not. Can a new soiree for the public be compared to a new European project? It is absurd, but it happens. Or, is one participant in the Case Study, a separate, demanding form, not dissimilar to one participant of the Museum Night? They are both important in the assessment of the museum's operations but both describe two different aspects of its operations. Niche activities, addressed to a limited number of participants but resulting in their future creativity, cannot be valued in the same way as participation in mass events... Above all, should they be assessed numerically? We touch upon many dilemmas here. We should formulate the audit parameters ourselves (for our internal use), based on the institution's mission. We should also develop the methods of qualitative assessment of our work so that we have an increasingly clear view of its situation.

F for European Funds

Thinking about how prudent the original aims of the EU support funds were, and how we spoil the ideas just makes me angry. Not that we cannot use them. The problem lies in their processing. The scale of bureaucratic overregulation in this respect is unimaginable. Six years ago, when, as the head of MIC, I reported on its realisations to the European Commission (accounting for the expenses at the exchange rate of the euro for a given day and writing my reports in a foreign language), it seemed tiresome but the proportion of the effort to the effect was reasonable.

Today, when, as the director of EMK, I settle the funds not with the European Commission but with the local structures, there are weeks when processing it takes the time of several persons. And what if we counted the weekends? It is not a matter of an inefficient team. We know our job. The trouble is that the rules are unclear, the procedures are not adapted to settle soft projects, there is inequality in the rights and duties of the office and the beneficiary. Commonsensically, emergency situations should take up 20 % of the time. There are periods, however, when we are practically excluded from conducting regular activities by such 'emergencies'.

For two years now the Ethnographical Museum has been running two European projects. In that period four new applications have been drafted. We are now at the onset of the first of the new ones. The second is waiting for implementation. The third is currently in administrative court (as a result of a protest we lodged). The fourth is being settled these days. However, I approach these essentially good prospects with dread – due to the overwhelming bureaucracy. Does it really have to be so that the more you achieve, the more trouble you bring onto yourself?

We have mislaid the aims of the first European support funds long ago. We waste time, money and energy in an unparalleled way. Which of the policy makers will realise the scale of overregulation, and when will it be? I know civil servants who want to change the state of affairs. Will they manage to do so before the new distribution period (2013–2020) and can we help them in it by pointing out the problems?

T for (hard-pressed) Time

Time is slowly becoming a disease entity for directors trying to do something worthwhile in culture. It is transforming into a structural crisis. I also know something about the time management of persons in the administration who care for change and who try to withstand the daily pressure.

It results in many phenomena which negatively impact our immune systems and the quality of our work like a malicious virus. I will mention two. The first phenomenon is the practical inability to take directional decisions (see also *H for Health* above). We begin to live in a reality of variants, which is less and less real. Daily life is suspended, turns into a possibility that something may happen or not. It is endless. Time for reflection on professional issues is shrinking. Or we have to steal it for ourselves. From our personal life. From our family life (if there is still anything to steal from). The other phenomenon, equally ruinous, is the atrophy of relations among those who want/would like to collaborate. They simply have no time to meet. Burdened with the provisional state of things, we resolve series of crises in a hurry (most of which stem from nonsense), and the relations with others, one of the fundamental features of culture, are getting blurred and waning, imperceptibly. The French say, 'To want is to be able to' – 'where there is a will, there is a way'. Here, however, it does not work. Here it is not enough to have a will, it is also necessary to have a way.

B for (programming) Budget

While planning the budget, the director draws it from the institution's mission. In the case of the Ethnographical Museum in Krakow, it is necessary to start from the logic of ethnography. The logic tells him to view the ethnographical museum as a space for interpreting and creating meanings, and the subject of operations thus understood should be both the historical collection and people's lifestyles in the modern world. The ethnographer considers the collection and contemporary testimonies as cultural signs. It means that he is also engaged in a dialogue with them and encourages recipients to a similar dialogue.

As a consequence, the logic falls into three major areas of activity: **research, management of the collection, work with the public**⁴. It also defines the organisational structure of the museum (it should be simple and should allow the formation of horizontal structures). The three major areas determine long-term operational activities. These are multiple, they have different time scales and different priorities. They are accurately considered, so as to know equally accurately why and what resources are necessary for them. Why make these connections so important? Because **a similar budget is the programme budget**, so it cannot be evaded. It is an instrument for the conversation with the policy makers and the basis for planning. Recently, at the workshop on public finance, the President of the Regional Accounting Chamber in Krakow provoked us, saying, 'Own up, budgets are made by your accountants, aren't they?'. Out of over ninety persons present only three protested.

⁴ The author means the main areas of activity of the Ethnographical Museum in Krakow (ed. note).

B as in 'But we don't give up!'

Contrary to what it seems, it is not a call for heroism! The opposite. It is the longing for normality. (Though perhaps normality demands heroism these days?) 'We must take the system in hand,' I have recently heard an influential person say, a person who does not wish to let matters take their own, blind course. She is not the only one. We should count our ranks on both sides, we should learn to talk anew, we should create support groups. It is worth believing in yourself and in one another. And (always) trust human logic.

Basic terms

- **Change management** – effecting desired changes in the institutional organisation is a multi-strand and multi-aspect process, which demands special competences from the organisation's leader; from the perspective of the team, it involves 're-evaluation' of the logic to date, and involves questioning the former direction, which may be difficult for the middle level managers.
- **Efficiency and effectiveness of the cultural institution** – two key categories to measure the institution's achievements in terms of its performance and influence. Their determination depends on defining the institution's aims and mission.
- **Institutional assessment indicators** – numerical indicators of the cultural institution's efficiency. Their aim should not be maximisation. The indicators should function within the system – their correlations are informative, and not a high value of one of them.
- **Budget cycle** – cultural institutions are forced to operate within a limited temporal framework of one year; long-term planning is burdened with the risk of a lack of funds.
- **Risk assessment** – ability to plan and implement activities in the situation of incomplete data or a lack of vital resources. Risks should be analysed in order to determine and eliminate (minimise) them in the future. It is an important aspect of competence building in strategic management.

Dilemmas in strategic management in culture

- What real competences are required to run a cultural institution today?
- Does risk taking against the system do credit to innovativeness, efficiency, the leader's courage, or discredit the management system as pathological?
- Should we strive against the system which allows unclear management situations or should we 'evade' it, creating two realities, practical and official?

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Poker Player and Strategist – the Director as Leader of a Cultural Institution Example: The cultural institution as a submarine warship

A scene in *U-571*, a famous war film by Jonathan Mostow, features a young officer: contrary to his expectations, he is not put in charge of a submarine, and his superior briefly explains why he was denied promotion. The young man is an excellent team leader and the crew adores him. Unfortunately, the feeling is mutual; so much so that the officer is likely to put the good of the crew above the command of his superiors. This is precisely why, in the end, his expected promotion was blocked. The veteran officer thought that the proof of a commander's maturity lay in his readiness to carry out a command even if one of his beloved soldiers needed to be sacrificed in the process, despite all the pain and scruples he might experience. At the end of the film, the young officer goes through a painful rite of passage as he sends his favourite sailor to death in an attempt to fulfil the mission placed in his hands.

The above scene can serve as a springboard to serious reflection on the management of a cultural institution and the role of the manager, who, metaphorically speaking, has it under his command. The management of a cultural institution, which has a certain mission to fulfil, is in many ways similar to the management of a submarine, even if the manager is rarely constrained to take decisions quite as dramatic as those faced by military commanders in active combat. When we disregard the creative aspect of the manager's involvement in the institution, however, the difference no longer seems so clear cut.

Indeed, more often than not, the manager needs to lay workers off when they stand in the way of the mission. Sometimes he has to decimate his ranks for the institution not to hit rock bottom. He needs to decide when to take over the steering wheel, set the course, plan out actions, fight in line formation, and oversee every single detail from the bridge to the engine room. No matter who formulates the mission, it might not be fulfilled if the role of the team leader is not adequately appreciated. Hard work alone does not guarantee success; in equal measure, success depends on the daily choices made by the leader and the dilemmas he needs to resolve before the programme of the organisation can be defined and implemented.

Organisational leader – a front commander?

Just as the fish is said to rot from the head down, so is the head of an institution – the leader-manager – responsible for its success or failure. His or her is the first head to roll when irregularities are discovered or when the institution falls short of its mission; his or her is the head in which the global mission is conceived.

The leader bears a great responsibility and therefore works under considerable pressure. When a new manager is appointed to office and sets about defining and realising the new mission of the institution, the local community expects changes. The greater the expectations of the organiser or the community, the greater the pressure s/he must face.

The leader should be equipped with the tools necessary to introduce changes and to create a new quality. The most significant role here is played by individual personality factors, such as education, interests, experience, and social sensitivity, as well as views on culture, its management, promotion and development.

The present article does not propose to give an easy recipe for successful management. Nor does it dispense advice on how to become a team leader in a cultural institution. This is rather a collection of the insights I have gained from managing a complex institution in a difficult environment of post-industrial poverty¹ (especially mental poverty) and the experiences of other leaders I have encountered throughout my career as a coach. I will attempt to discuss how leadership factors and the drive towards constant qualification improvement may influence the development of a cultural institution, and in particular the fulfilment of its mission, understood in much broader terms than those formulated by the local government that organised it.

1 The author is the director of 'Becek' – the Bytom Cultural Centre in the Silesian Province.

In order to shape and create needs rather than simply satisfy them, in order to counteract social exclusion, to build not just an audience, but a community, and in order to intervene rather than observe, the leader needs a vision and the skills to implement it. Even the smartest plan will fall through if the manager fails to confront the dilemmas of management, team building and restructuring, and does not address both the institutional problems left over from twenty years ago and the current dangers.

Speaking of dangers: in institutional management, success requires not only the skill of avoidance, but first and foremost the ability to seize opportunities and plan ahead so that there are as many of them as possible to seize.

Leadership dilemmas

Dilemma no. 1. Lack of charisma – a drawback or an asset?

If we believe that the manager of a cultural institution should be a crowd-puller who will lead the team towards victory, then a lack of charisma will naturally disqualify him or her in our eyes. The official power to delegate tasks to subordinate staff is not enough to call oneself a team leader. However, charisma deficits need not disqualify a manager if s/he meets a certain number of conditions.

I am anything but a charismatic pack leader myself. I do not consider it to be a drawback. On the contrary, my employees are spared from the agony of working in the shadow of an egocentric leader, and as I delegate to them part of the social responsibility for the work done in the institution, they are able to take personal credit for the successful projects in which they are involved. As a result, they feel encouraged to take initiative rather than remain merely anonymous cogs in the wheel of culture. This is one of the best incentives, well-appreciated especially by creative, highly committed individuals.

A lone wolf by nature, I decided in favour of a personality-based organizational model, built around a group of people with strong leadership qualities. This means that the team of employees is recruited from people who are immersed on a daily basis in the disciplines which belong to their professional duties. Their qualifications in the field should go well beyond the competence of the director of the institution. As a result, the core of the team consists of creative and committed individuals, sometimes independent to the point of unruliness. This is likely to give rise to tensions and conflicts, which can be skilfully used by the insti-

tutional leader. It will be discussed in the following sections. In fact, these conflicts must be harnessed for a better purpose; otherwise, the institution is likely to descend into chaos and soon become thoroughly self-preoccupied.

Dilemma no. 2. Viceroy or commander-in-chief?

Contrary to what may seem, most directors of cultural institutions need to confront this dilemma. The problem can also be defined in broader terms: creator or administrator, originator or executor, tsar or boyar? It is important for a leader to define himself clearly if the team is to receive a clear message about his or her role in the development of the organisation.

In my opinion, the manager of a cultural institution should not act as a viceroy at the service of district authorities. This would diminish his or her power to introduce reforms and take unconventional, original actions, not to mention the ability to find a place for the institution in a changed reality, where universal access to instant communication tools has created new forms of cultural participation for all generations. We can disregard here the occasional instances in which local authorities include knowledgeable people who are well aware of cultural management and its influence on the growth of human capital. If that is not the case, the decision to accept the role of viceroy simply gives the manager the comfort to shake off responsibility for some of his or her decisions, especially the more difficult ones, which should be the domain of the ship's commander. When it comes to taking decisions on fundamental issues, submissiveness disqualifies one as a team leader. It also engenders pathologies within the team and often forces valuable staff to leave the institution.

In my personal work, I have chosen one of the most risky and uncomfortable variants of the creator-commander relationship. This model makes it possible to rebuild the team with a view to new challenges, and to formulate a programme which is consistent not only with the needs assessment but also with the leader's convictions. It makes the team see their boss as an actual originator of events, and as a person who takes responsibility for his or her own decisions. As a result, a new type of relationship with the staff is forged. Through their cooperation with the leader, employees have a strong sense of being close to the decision centre. This closeness often takes on a special dimension when the deci-

sions are meant to approve a solution or to choose from among several ideas proposed by the team or by individual employees.

However, the drive towards independence, the search for the freedom to take decisions and create new programmes according to the needs assessment and the management and financing reform rather than at the bidding of local government officials, makes it difficult for an institution to build partner relationships with local authorities. This can cause tensions, especially if the relationship is dominated by a paternalistic/clientelistic model of power on the part of the local government, and may have a negative impact on the establishment of new management principles in the institution. If the tensions between the director and the local government are made public, team integration will suffer. In addition, distrust in the future of the director, and consequently in the stability of the institutional framework and the fate of long-term projects, is also likely to arise. From the vantage point of the local government, the situation looks different. However, a willingness to look for a solution and to know each other can make it easier to reach an agreement. It is important to be open and to have a sense mission towards the beneficiaries of the institution. The attitude of openness towards the local government, and the readiness to hear out the arguments of the

opponent instead of putting up obstinate resistance, can really work wonders.

Diverse models of reality

The cultural institution usually functions in extremely complex networks of relations and dependencies (on policy-makers, on various groups of internal and external stakeholders, on certain historically approved visions and methods of operation). At the same time, it tends to be an organisation with decades of experience and contact making. For that reason it is crucial for the leader of the organisation to recognise and understand diverse expectations about that institution. He or she has to be able to manage these expectations and use the opportunities that enable him or her to 'correlate' them with his or her own plans. The leader manages public good and it often happens that another entity determines what the good consists in or how it is positioned in relation to broader visions of public management. The cultural institution participates in a vast spectrum of clashing visions of local or regional development and must respect new arrangements (another issue is how it happens).

My personal experience has taught me that some problems in an institution are a direct result of other serious problems which are hidden from public view. This is why I decided to intervene only in really clear-cut instances which I thought called for decisive actions. The authorities soon noticed the change. The subsequent improvement in our relationship was not dramatic, but the municipal government did take a more partner-like attitude towards the process of institutional management. Over time, although the priorities of the local government did not change, our rela-

tionship gradually improved, despite occasional heated disputes about certain decisions.

However, throughout my career as a coach and trainer, I have also encountered situations where the manager did not have enough time to establish his or her independence. He was reduced to the role of viceroy, removed once the term ran out, or simply dismissed after a short time in office. This is why I think this dilemma in particular needs to be resolved before one decides to get involved in the management of an institution whose founder intended it to be at the service of the local government, and designed it as politically submissive to the current local authorities.

Dilemma no. 3. Strategy or strategic thinking?

The activities of an institution, inspired by the original project of its leader, are based on a certain vision of content, financing and organisation. If the vision is stated in a document which also lays down the mission, the goals, the methods, and efficiency indicators etc., we can speak of a strategic plan. Should the plan be meticulous down to the smallest detail or can it serve as a signpost which merely indicates the general direction for future development? It goes without saying that a strategic plan is necessary. However, the leader should also be prepared to introduce numerous modifications and corrections as s/he proceeds with its implementation. It does not matter whether s/he was appointed through free competition or recommended by the organiser. Only after initial reconnaissance in the institution will s/he be able to estimate the probability with which the strategy can be realized and to define the time frame of its implementation. Despite the ideal of transparency, the internal situation in an institution is still largely hidden from public view. This applies to the sources of funding, management of entrusted property (especially real estate), as well as the relationships within the team of staff and partners. It is one thing to create a new entity, where the leader has an absolute freedom to shape the team and choose co-workers, and it is quite another to take up a management position in an existing institution. When the leader enters a fixed organisational structure and is about to change it, the first thing s/he needs to do is select individuals who will be important for the (new) mission, some of whom, for example, may have been previously marginalised due to the internal social dynamics of the institution. This applies equally to all institutions. It does not matter whether the organisation is well developed or requires the new leader to clean up the proverbial mess first.

Strategy as a plan and action

Strategic management is both a planning process and an implementation process. The former is connected with the delineation of activities, and the latter – with testing them in real life and creating real results, using the available resources in the organisational reality. Both processes are intertwined because life corrects plans; a situation should not be allowed in which a plan veers further and further away from actual activities because then neither will the plan act as a signpost nor will it be possible to assess the effects of activities (because there will be nothing to compare them to). The leader's vital competence is the ability to correct plans and yet keep to the chosen direction. The team should understand and be aware of the 'tactical' redefinitions of plans. Many leaders' frequent mistake is either persisting in implementing unrealistic plans or changing them without collaboration with the team, which is perceived by them as a lack of appreciation of their efforts. It is challenging for the leaders to preserve their image as ones who know what they are doing, where they are heading and that they are in control of the situation and not vice versa.

With that in mind, the overall vision of the institution can be a mere outline, which determines its mission, and occasionally lays down certain strategic goals and methods. It is vital that the leader should be able to think strategically in order to arrive at the final vision, identify the milestones of its implementation, set out directions for future development, perform SWOT analysis, establish a good rapport with the local government, motivate the team, and, if necessary, modify its membership or reorganise it altogether.

Dilemma no. 4. Trade unions: cooperation or elimination?

When creating the development strategy for an institution, the leader should definitely pay particular attention to the staff. Human capital is the motor of institutional development, but it may just as well stand in the way of statutory goals and cause the institution to lose the respect of its target groups. In many conversations, be they private or public, trade unions are often said to be a brake on progress. This is why I decided to make them the subject of a separate section.

In general, Polish legislation makes it impossible to introduce desired changes to the team, or to implement an incentive wage system in the absence of an agreement with the unions. This raises questions about the role of the leader of the cultural institution.

In public, the leader cannot afford to speak about the unions in less than neutral tones, while his or her very fate and the fate of changes s/he

wishes to introduce often depend on their cooperation. My experience suggests that trade unions in cultural institutions focus primarily on defending the *status quo* of their members and activists, who are protected by a number of additional legal regulations. Whether or not statutory goals will be achieved is of no particular interest to them. In most cases (which is not to say there are no exceptions), the employees organised in trade unions have only mediocre qualifications, adopt a passive attitude towards change, never take initiative, and can only thrive in inefficient institutional structures.

Although I also know of cases where trade unions were a strong centre of opposition against an incompetent management (often appointed by mere social or political cronyism), my aim is to discuss the role they play in the process managed by a competent leader.

Sounding out trade unions is an important element of strategy building in local cultural institutions. The ability to reach an agreement with the unions will decide the fate of the leader and the fate of the goals s/he wishes to accomplish. It will likewise have a substantial impact on the atmosphere at work, which, in turn, can affect the performance of key creative individuals in the team. Negotiation skills, a conciliatory attitude and mutual respect should make it possible to introduce changes in a given time frame, so that the team does not need to be radically reorganised and there is still time to raise the qualifications of those who, according to the leader, could be part of the new team.

What if agreement is not an option? There are several possible solutions, but each involves a long, solitary struggle and demands great psychological stamina on the part of the leader. If the relationship with local government is good, it is possible to liquidate the institution and to create a new entity based on its material assets and a new vision. This is the easiest and the best way out, but at the same time the most radical, likely to spark a hostile backlash against the leader and the new organisation among influential people affiliated with the previous entity. Polish laws make it almost impossible to lay off a trade unionist except if s/he violates the law in a flagrant way. Ironically, even then s/he is not always easy to dismiss. This has a corrupting influence on the team. If the leader seems powerless in the process, he is likely to lose his or her grip on the institution and, consequently, his or her leadership role and the ability to shape the program may be reduced by internal conflicts which diminish his or her authority.

Since, as the proverb says, there can only be one leader, I recommend that all possible measures should be taken to reach an agreement with the unions, if there are any, and where agreement is not possible, decisive actions should follow to eliminate them from the institution altogether. Although this approach may be questioned (the law protects the freedom to form unions), it is also necessary to recognize the constitutional right of the leader to carry out his duties despite, or maybe especially in the face of, the parasitic attitude of trade unionists, who indirectly contribute to the squandering of public funds and hinder efficient functioning of the institution.

In my career, I have had to deal with a similar problem. I worked to reach an agreement with most individual members, and engaged in open conflict with those activists who were sure their position could not be unchallenged. Fortunately for me, and unfortunately for them, the conflict was resolved in favour of the institution.

Dilemma 5. Financing the institution – begging or fundraising?

This issue is deliberately discussed last, in order to emphasise that the preceding dilemmas are much more important. Assuming that the founder endows the institution with chattels and real estate, as well as an earmarked subsidy which ensures their maintenance and covers a portion of personnel costs, financing needs to be treated as an important component of the economic efficiency of the institution. Strategic management, the team, the projects, the leader's ability to secure grants and sponsorship funds, and the profits all determine the success of an institution. Whether it will be used for the purposes of the province or district, or supported with additional local government resources facilitating the absorption of already acquired funds, is a different matter altogether. Therefore, the dilemma is easily resolved: we should definitely fundraise, if only to be able to apply for additional funding from the local government with a clear conscience and a sense of certainty that our effort and efficiency will be rewarded. In reality, however, the result is usually the opposite. Subsidies for successful institutions are often reduced on the grounds that they 'fare well anyway, while other applicants don't'.

Tactics

Dilemma no. 1. Autocracy or democracy?

If we work with professionals who are passionate about their discipline, the answer seems clear. In an institution where most projects require creative insight, autocratic management is likely to result in an outflow of the best staff and a deterioration of the quality of implemented projects. A democratic approach, on the other hand, encourages creativity and motivates the staff to work at the top of their potential. It helps the team come together and identify with the institution. One disadvantage of the democratic management model, however, is that after a while an informal hierarchy develops in the team, which lacks a strong middle management level. This is the main cause of internal conflicts.

My experience in managing a cultural institution has taught me that team discipline suffered when, in order to deal with the institution's catastrophic debt and its messy documentation, I focused on administrative tasks and restricted myself to taking final decisions in key, mainly financial, matters only. Even though certain decisions, especially those concerning the work of individual departments, were delegated to the middle management level, numerous instances of conflicts, lawlessness, and self-contradicting actions occurred, which had an adverse effect on the quality of realised projects.

Only after I had dealt with the most important administrative issues, defined the mission of the institution, and temporarily took over decision making at all management levels, was quality restored. It was necessary to make the process more efficient, reconsider the division of labour, introduce staff changes (including difficult decisions to lay off well-liked but underqualified employees), and firmly intervene whenever rules were broken. All these measures allowed to enhance the motivation of staff and creative individuals affiliated with the institution. In the space of just three years, the quality and quantity of projects increased more than twofold.

The leader as a strategic administrator

It is extremely important for the leader of a cultural institution to stand at the helm of its daily operation. He or she cannot be someone unconnected to the currently realised projects, but at the same time – should not paralyse the team by continually encroaching on their fields of responsibility (usually, the leader is not able to control all processes). A solution may be, for instance (a strategy adopted by Mariusz Wróbel), to control decisions concerning project launches (and monitoring their realisation without personal involvement in operational decisions), or adopting the model of managing the institution through an operations director (who controls the main leader's visions, and acts as an interpreter for both parties). It is extremely difficult to perform administrative duties and think strategically. It is extremely difficult to take decisions concerning projects and teams in whose operations one actively participates and is emotionally involved.

In this case, the key to improvement lay in an autocratic choice to take over decision making at the final project approval stage. At the same time, a democratic model at the level of creation allowed ample leeway in the realisation of projects already approved.

I must mention here the role of the Program Board at my institution. Appointed by the city mayor, members of the board include all the people I recommended for the post, along with competent representatives delegated by the mayor himself. This is why the Board is not merely an advisory body. It is also instrumental in communicating my vision to the local government. Communicated in a polite way, a variety of opinions can make board disputes extremely constructive. In a way, Program Board sessions are a cathartic experience for me, replenishing my energy and confirming me on my chosen path.

Dilemma no. 2. A classical or an avant-garde image?

Cultural institutions often come off as relics from the previous era; while 'culture' itself retains a certain aura of elitism, they are usually considered to be ossified and sluggish. This applies to both district and provincial institutions involved in the promotion of culture. It must be said, however, that they often work for years to earn this image. Even if they introduce changes for the better, they are not adequately advertised, and leaders frequently underestimate the power of negative stereotyping. Communicating the changes both to the target groups and to the wider local community is an exceptional field of activity for the leader. The process should include both pre-planned long-term communicative actions and a whole array of spontaneous measures derived from the image-building vision of the institution.

My own institution at first carried the stigma of debt and insolvency. I decided to take radical steps to advertise the impending changes through

a new and controversial looking visual identification system, as well as to organise and promote, a series of public discussions on the new role of culture in urban development, in which the institution I managed, naturally, was to be a key actor.

We decided to take on a pioneering role with regard to the involvement of culture in economic development and the prevention of social pathologies in the post-industrial city. This defined our choice of communication style and increased our readiness to undertake non-conventional promotional projects. As we departed from the classical image of a cultural institution, the interest in our activities increased, especially among younger people, independent-thinkers in search of cultural novelty. It also proved beneficial to be open to hiring staff with physical and mental disabilities. At one point, the institution even 'employed' a dog.

The leader's role is to create new projects, react to interesting events that could be harnessed for promotional purposes, and to inspire the team to draw up projects which combine quality content with a promotional value. The approach helped to maintain ongoing communication with project participants (not just while projects last but also after their completion); as a result, special communities developed around the institution and around certain projects.

Because our promotion priorities were in agreement with the priorities of the institution as a whole, the image of the institution was easily made to correspond to its perception by its beneficiaries. The same applies to our offer. In order to maintain a positive image in the long run, however, the institution must continue to enrich its offer, generate new projects and develop existing ones, surprise the public, engage the audiences in a game, and extend the space of interaction both through the internet and through direct contact.

Dilemma no. 3. Stagnation or dynamic development?

In order to meet the expectations of modern target groups, who in accordance with the new trends in cultural participation increasingly wish to co-create events, the leader must keep close track of all new tendencies and social developments, work to acquire funds for new projects, and optimise the spending on existing ones.

No doubt, new projects, inspired by team effort or by a direct assignment from the leader, are closely linked to the development of an institution. While 'development' sounds tempting, in order to maintain its dynamics, it is often necessary to employ more staff, face increased technical

service costs, and expand the office space. In extreme cases, the growth of a cultural institution can have the effect of corporatisation and multi-level hierarchisation. As tasks multiply and new staff is hired, team integration is threatened. The small informal cooperation groups, which emerge as a result, are more susceptible to internal conflicts; these can come to dominate over the natural conflict between the two centres of every institution: the impulsive, creative and 'crazy' centre, and the more accurate and well-organised one. As it expands its institutional base, the organisation is likely to become more cumbersome and less dynamic. This can take a serious toll on its ability to influence reality and its efficiency in taking up new projects. In extreme cases, the institution becomes a kind of Moloch.

The manager needs to ensure that the organisation will take on new initiatives and broaden its reach without the need to grow and expand institutionally. The development of my institution was based on two pillars: team initiative and openness towards external initiatives. My team often joins in external initiatives, providing technical assistance and helping external partners to enrich their projects in terms of content. This allows me to control the content and organisation of each individual project, and at the same time enhances the promotional and marketing message. Since many people involved feel passionate about the project, it is simply in their interest to recruit as many participants and sponsors as possible. My role consists in creating individual cycles or projects, which after some time are devised by the team.

The above approach, however, requires good negotiation skills, as the leader often needs to act as an arbitrator between partners and the staff. Participation in external projects frequently involves conflicts between the team and external partners, resulting from the differences in the basic understanding of work standards. The system of project management within an institution is based on internal directives, staff experience, education and accepted norms (introduced or approved by the leader). When an external partner enters the project, the confrontation between the professional and the amateur approaches towards management is imminent. Success in such cases depends on the involvement of both parties, as well as on successful mediation. The leader must weigh up the interests of different parties and solve the conflict to the satisfaction of both the organisers and the target group.

In conclusion, when planning the strategy for a cultural institution with a local or regional scope, the leader should be aware that one day its devel-

opment will reach a limit. Therefore, already at this stage, it is necessary to think about the future need to reorganise the institution and delegate some tasks to co-organisers. It is also worthwhile to consider the creation of a cooperative network of institutional and individual actors.

Stagnation does not necessarily mean that the institution is stuck in a rut. When it abandons new ventures and chooses to focus on perfecting flagship projects, or series of projects, instead, it can also expect positive results; turnouts are likely to increase and the quality of experience on the part of project participants is likely to rise. It is up to the manager to ensure that the activities of the institution translate into a growth in quality; otherwise the institution may get stuck in a rut and lose touch with the needs of its target groups. Paradoxically, it is sometimes more stimulating to work on entirely new projects than to enhance the quality of existing ones.

Dilemma no. 4. Crisis – should we wait it out or take action?

An institutional crisis may deliver a fatal blow to the leader's mission. Whether this happens or not depends largely on the manager. I am not going to deal here with the crises sparked by dishonesty or incompetence on his or her part. Becoming a leader, one must be aware that sooner or later a crisis is simply bound to occur. It may be caused by factors beyond the manager's control (natural disasters, fires, alarms, or slander) or result from his or her own mistakes. When a strategy is drawn up for the institution, it is advisable to lay down the basic principles of communication in the event of crisis. These will help to prevent identified dangers, to counteract them whenever necessary, and to defuse their impact once they occur.

In my career, I have had an opportunity to deal with a slander-related media crisis caused by an ex-employee. Since the issue came up shortly after I had taken office, it threatened to take away the social vote of confidence I needed to run the institution; the mission would be placed in someone else's hands. I also ran the risk of losing the trust of important staff as a team leader. Fortunately, thanks to my strategy of openness and the fact that I refrained from acts of retribution, the crisis was eventually resolved².

² The case is extensively described in the book by Urszula Podraza *Kryzysowe public relations*, Warszawa 2009.

Dilemma no. 5. Independently or in a network?

It goes without saying that independent and dynamic activity, especially when rival institutions take a more passive role, helps to build a new image and to promote the institution, recruit new customers, and strengthen the loyalty of existing ones. This unique quality enables the institution, as well as its manager, to enter the wider public consciousness.

However, in the current economic climate, as social pressure on institutions to develop and take up new initiatives increases, it is necessary to build a cooperative network with other similar entities. It is helpful to form a support alliance in order to raise funds and to strengthen the impact of the institution beyond the local level, and even to force through legislative changes to eliminate legal stumbling blocks which stand in the way of statutory goals.

In this context, success of the mission depends on the leader. It is important to enter partnerships and to maintain them on a long-term basis for the alliances to strengthen the impact of the institution. A creative approach and the ability to provide initiative and direction can raise the standing of a manager among his colleagues and elevate him to the rank of a leader of an entire movement.

Instead of a conclusion

It is just a step from here to cultural policy, a step into the abyss which yawns between the politician and the manager-leader of an organisation. A fleet of ships is managed differently than the complex system of an individual submarine, whose commander acts as a role model and authority figure for the crew and keeps an eye on all sailors at the same time. The same applies to cultural policy and cultural institutions.

Basic terms

- **Crisis management** – the steps undertaken by an organisation in a crisis situation (in its internal or external environment). It is important to pre-design a course of action to be followed in the event of crisis, and to spread a coherent message inside and outside the institution to explain what measures will be taken to end it (it is necessary to observe how the message is received and whether it fulfils its task, thus preventing a ‘snow-ball effect’).

- **Internal stakeholders** – employees and close collaborators of the organisation need to be seen as co-partners in its activities; they form a community/team, but they also express their individual opinions and goals. As stakeholders, they should be treated as equal partners in all decisions concerning the development of the organisation.
- **Organisational leader** – this position is based on the power hierarchy on the one hand, and on the appreciation of the leader's individual skills and competences on the other. The leader bears exclusive 'political' responsibility for the functioning of the organisation.
- **Internal power relations within the organisation** – are based on the official power hierarchy but also on the non-formal networks created on an ongoing basis. The team includes opinion leaders, advisors, players; cliques and informal alliances emerge. The ability to recognise them and harness them for a good purpose is the key to successful leadership.
- **Management style** – is the soft counterpart of the power style (if the power style is democratic, the management style should match it). The organisational power structure needs to be translated into an appropriate style of management, so that the team does not see a dissonance between the theory and practice of decision-making and the style of management. In a sense, the management style adopted reveals what lies beneath, it defines the leader's actual skills and the methods of running the team.

Dilemmas in strategic management in culture

- What management style does an organisation need depending on its organisational culture and internal structure?
- Is it possible to create a list of features defining a successful and effective leader of a cultural institution?
- What are the benefits and dangers of multiple decision centres in an institution (such as the director, the programme board, and trade unions)?

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The Cieszyn Castle, an institution of the Town of Cieszyn, hereby enacts the following statutory objectives:

- to initiate research into the material culture in Silesia, entrepreneurship and design,
- to facilitate access to the scientific and research potential,
- to promote and assist in the implementation of design and new technologies,
- to support development of entrepreneurship, including assistance in the establishment and development of innovative enterprises,
- to safeguard and popularise arts and crafts and dying jobs,
- to develop tourism,
- to conduct cultural activity.







Lubomira Trojan, who is in charge of the Design Department and the Design Silesia project.



Katarzyna Petka, who is a designer and exhibition curator.

An Institution that Builds Capital for Cultural Development Example: European Cultural Capital Szczecin 2016

1 The author of the
article is the director
of Cultural Institution
Szczecin 2016 (ed. note).

The impulse to establish a new cultural institution in Szczecin, with new competences and networking potential, was prompted by the application for the title of European Capital of Culture 2016¹. Present day trends in city culture call for a new perspective, a new approach and a new method of management. We have decided that an institution was needed to act as a catalyst between public policies of an office or offices (including both the municipal and provincial local government) and a whole lot of other phenomena in culture. The institution was established as a result of pressure from NGOs. Today culture in the city relies on cooperation between various entities and cultural actors, and its management requires different activities than those offered by institutions which 'propagate culture'. The first task that it assumed (with expectant approval of the office) was to analyse Szczecin's cultural and social situation in the context of its application for the title of ECC. Based on that analysis, we started to promote the view that culture in the city is created not only in public institutions, as there are also numerous other entities and operators in culture that make cultural artefacts and attach symbolic significance to culture while conducting their cultural policies. We counted about two thousand of such entities and operators in Szczecin, out of the population of four hundred thousand.

Szczecin's efforts to be granted the title of ECC sprang from a grassroots initiative. Encouraged by a Szczecin-based culture animator, NGOs and universities got together to persuade the mayor to take the decision. Why did public institutions not take up that initiative? Perhaps they believed that Szczecin did not deserve the title and that it should not even apply for it because it was bound to fail. That is probably why common citizens

2 Szczecin did not pass Stage 1 of the selection process for the title of European Capital of Culture 2016; Cultural Institution Szczecin 2016 was responsible for the formulation of the application (ed. note).

got down to it, as they are not aware of all obstacles and so obstacles do not exist to them. It happens that if we are aware of obstacles, we try to overcome them, but if we are not, then we seek simple, straightforward solutions which are easier to achieve. The efforts to get the title resulted in a widespread debate on the condition and role of culture in Szczecin, while we were looking for motifs that might ensure us a victory in the competition². Hence we can say that Institution Szczecin 2016 is an outcome of cooperation between citizens who successfully exerted pressure on the authorities, but there was not a partner on the 'city' side to jointly create new cultural policies and support a new style of operations in culture.

Cultural actors and entities – creators of cultural policies in action

In Szczecin, we first wanted to identify 'cultural actors', their role, potential, human and social capital. They cannot be stood in a line because each of these entities should be discussed individually, and their roles and functions should be interpreted without *a priori* assumptions. In the city, culture must be managed in a broader context than that which is supported by public funding. There are phenomena here which have their place and have not been fully accounted for, and which are certainly not reflected in the daily management practice of the office. For instance, there are about six hundred music bands in Szczecin from various backgrounds, performing mainly light and youth music. Only between ten and twenty bands use the facilities provided by public institutions and rely on public support, like venues for rehearsals, support of a musical instructor, or the possibility to hire an instrument. The others have to manage in the market on their own. A similar situation is in the case of dance. In Szczecin there are about forty dancing schools. There are about one hundred ensembles, teams and centres of dancing, and yet only a few are recognised by the city policy, which means the art of dancing is virtually overlooked by it.

The majority of Szczecin dwellers' needs concerning leisure time and creative activities are fulfilled outside of the official cultural policy and outside any plans. It results from the fact that public cultural infrastructure (i.e. not only buildings but also substantive programmes of institutions, plans of action and forms of work) is static, while modern cultural phenomena are extremely dynamic. Thus defined, cultural infrastructure is financed based on 'historical budgets', i.e. copying last year's data.

Non-institutional culture, however, is not only the third sector – organisations, associations and foundations. It also comprises non-formal groups, cooperatives, artists, independent animators, social activists and enthusiasts, both professionals and amateurs. The institutional assumption that in the non-institutional sphere there are solely specialised cultural operators with certain competences and extensive knowledge of the rules and rights of operating in the public sector is a misconception. It is assumed that non-institutional entities enjoy complete financial and organisational autonomy, that they are fully operational and can do anything. It is with such entities that offices wish to cooperate and prepare cooperation documentation for. However, in non-institutional culture there are entities that need strong support, also due to the dynamic development of the legal and economic situation because there is less and less money for culture. A difference of standards is perceivable in this area. The standards formulated by the public side have very rigid boundaries. Non-institutional entities need soft, dynamic solutions that may be customised depending on the situation and its context, the issue or phenomenon at hand. The standards resulting from procedures and regulations do not follow the needs. Hence all sorts of clashes, frustration, social conflicts and differences in the interpretation of the role of citizens in culture.

A non-formal group that is active in a housing estate, a courtyard or school will not seek support from an office. It should find it in a cultural institution. A non-formal group has no chance to receive support from an office that already supports NGOs in accordance with the public benefit and voluntary work law, for example from open tender contests. The scale of its activities and needs is often much smaller than the procedures provide for. If a group of young people need to raise 500 PLN to finance the printing of a poster or material for a project, supporting their activities is not economically viable due to the procedures involved, because the labour of the people who will distribute the money will cost more than the amount of the support. It is a major problem because cultural activity often takes place at that kind of micro scale. That activity includes actions connected with cultural animation and education both on the amateur level and on the professional level, including professional creation. It often happens that an artist who was invited to an exhibition in another city has to buy the ticket or pay for transport there, and often cannot afford it. The artist might do it, represent the city, do something worthwhile for the city – but is unable to. We have decided that a new instrumentarium

Defining cultural space in which an institution operates

It is vital for a cultural institution to determine for whom and how it will operate. Cultural phenomena do not have clear-cut and well-defined borders or scope. There are no general guidelines on how to 'use' culture and to what ends. In Szczecin, for example, an important task is to revitalise selected areas in the city (city tissue composed of local communities, social relations, opportunities for development); in that case, a cultural institution may become a catalyst and coordinator of activities of local social and cultural animators (both persons and cultural entities) in order to support their revitalisation efforts. It will be a different cultural space than that in which Cieszyn Castle works (see the text by Ewa Gołębiowska, p. 146), as it focuses on development of entrepreneurship through design. Antoni Bartosz believes that the Ethnographical Museum in Krakow should inspire visitors to interpret their own identities based on historical methods of collecting 'life', so as to give a modern sense to the ethnographical collection (more in the text by Bartosz from p. 80). Differently defined space requires different tools of the trade and competences of the team. Taking up concrete challenges results in concrete strategic decisions and defines the identity of the institution.

(methods, resources, competences) for cooperation between the public sphere and the non-institutional sphere was necessary. An instrumentarium that would render it possible to offer support at the micro scale, and help create the cultural climate of the city, a unique wealth of active citizens and environments. In future it might become the domain of each cultural institution, and moreover, of other public institutions with public property at their disposal.

We have assumed that such an instrumentarium responds to the needs of the surroundings based on a reliable diagnosis resulting from the institution's own research, and also using the preliminary conclusions of research commissioned by the city, other institutions or academic centres. If the research conclusions imply that there are spaces in the city that require an intervention, for example in the formation of social relations, raising civic awareness and motivation to live, then culture can and should react to those needs. But it must have the means to do so.

Such instruments of cooperation at the micro scale are a perfect tool to establish lasting connections and a network of partners, which react to the jointly defined problems and aims. The institution is to coordinate the network, be its leader and animator.

Absence of a cultural institution

Our analysis of prior contacts between public cultural institutions and various social and private entities, including private persons such as culture animators and independent artists, shows that institutions are closed bastions which protect their property (i.e. public property) and are not willing to cooperate with external entities. The reasons are manifold: differences in competences, personal animosities, inability to establish

good relationships, fear of competition or lack of knowledge of the existence of active citizens who have something to say on the subject of...

That attitude results in situations such as that in which an association which intends to hold a meeting on the premises of the institution has to pay the same fee to rent a room as a bank that plans a reception there. The social nature of the entity does not matter here. What is more, fearing a breach of its monopoly on knowledge, the institution may create obstacles for non-institutional cultural entities. The institution monopolises knowledge or infrastructure in its field of interest. We can imagine the cause. It is a simple case of market competition. In competitive markets all entities have equal rights, while in the market of cultural activity, as we can see, independent entities do not enjoy equal rights.

Cultural institutions should be open to social activity in a given field so we believe that there should exist a clear, transparent and socialised model or procedure to make public resources available to all. Ideally, it should be binding in all institutions in the whole city; since not all institutions are intended to do so or have the necessary facilities, they should be able to choose fields of cooperation on their own. The founder should see to it that institutions engage partners from similar fields in their operations.

Dynamic development of cultural phenomena outside public institutions, including those that happen on the internet, in public space, in the social and private sectors, may in the space of a few years enhance the quality of non-institutional activities beyond those conducted by public institutions. If circulations of culture are not mixed, it may lead to a degradation of culture managed from public funds. We can already observe it. The best culture animators run their own companies rather than work for public institutions because they have no place there. Existing institutions do not use outsourcing in culture animation so top specialists are forced to escape outside local markets. Yet nowadays animators and cultural educationalists should set up their own companies, and cultural institutions should buy their services. It is so in developed countries where, for example, curator services are a specialised external service for museums which do not employ full-time curators. Our institutions are bastions of full-time animators and curators, and are closed to outsiders.

Szczecin 2016 method of networking culture and supporting (micro) enterprises:

Culture Incubator

The institution had developed two instruments to support cultural enterprises. Both are part of the operational programme Culture Incubator. The first one is 'the procedure to make property available'. We have formulated the rules and regulations of lending public property at our disposal. They specify who can use it, for what purpose, in which cases it may be lent free of charge and when a fee is obligatory, what are the mutual obligations of the lending and the borrowing parties, and a simplified, clear procedure of availability of the property in question. We rent our rooms for events, just as we lend our multimedia projectors or easels.

The other instrument is the micro-support fund. It is a special part of our budget allocated to support small cultural initiatives in accordance with the statutory goals of the institution. In 2009 and 2010 our goal was to be awarded the title of European Capital of Culture. The entities that may benefit from the support may be associations, non-formal groups (represented by an adult) and physical persons: artists and animators. It involves undertakings and projects whose aims converge with our mission. It is partner support in which the institution finances some activities but does not transfer financial resources there but takes on the role of a partner, co-organiser or contractor of a given undertaking. Our contribution is the purchase of services, materials or products. The support ranges from 500 PLN to 2500 PLN. One entity can receive support not exceeding 5000 PLN within one fiscal year. In exceptional circumstances the lump sum (5000 PLN) may be used in a single project instead of several projects. Projects are qualified in a competition based on a simple application that may be submitted and followed on the internet. Beneficiaries of support may take part in the assessment of the submitted projects (excluding those submitted by themselves). Applications are invited on a monthly basis throughout the year. Depending on the needs and the schedule, projects are realised in collaboration with the institution's staff.

In this way we bridge the gap in the financing of culture. The City Council also holds a competition for so-called small projects on a regular basis. Yet to the children in the courtyard its importance is inhibiting. Children will not turn to an office to apply for support. They need an animator to do it for them. They need a person that they can meet, who will counsel them

and give advice on how to act in a partnership with an institution that is receptive to their needs.

In the fiscal year there are approximately two hundred potential partners who apply for micro-support. Not all of them can get it but they enter into the range of our 'radar'. We know the tendencies, trends, where to intervene, what to do, which fields of activity to focus on, which issues to raise on the city level, where shortages of competences are. We also see that many of those projects require counselling, a good word, or an explanation of the principles of successful operation. It often happens that to realise a project money is not as necessary as finding a solution to any problem, and in that case conversation suffices.

Another very important instrument is a continuous public debate, carried out on a platform for the exchange of information on needs, current projects and undertakings, which we call 'the Information Monday'. Every Monday at 12:00 or 5 p.m. the whole institution is put at the disposal of active citizens so all those interested may come, put forward and present their ideas and initiatives, and publicly receive information about what to do next with them, or hear opinions of their colleagues who come to discuss such projects. In this way we learn about the issues that are currently the most topical to culture animators and artists in the city. Owing to 'the Information Monday' we are slowly getting used to considering and

holding a public debate on culture.

Inspiration from outside, strong identity inside

A cultural institution should operate in wide social circulation, using inspirations that are important for its external interest holders. At the same time, in order to have the potential to act, it should employ a close-knit team that develops the strategy previously agreed on. Many Authors of this publication reflect on the question of openness (to colleagues, to external initiatives, to citizens of culture) and the necessity to stick to the chosen direction and retain the importance of the institution as a separate unit with its own goals and identity. Balancing the former and the latter is a dilemma and a challenge to the leader of the organisation.

The meeting lasts between one and three hours and comprises three parts: a thematic part (speeches, presentations delivered by the invitees or the staff of the institution), an open part (speeches, presentations delivered by the participants from outside) and a discussion (moderated).

The programme of the thematic parts of subsequent 'Mondays' is planned three months in advance and published on the WWW website and in the newsletter. Suggestions for topics may be submitted to the front desk. Open speeches must

be submitted at least a week before the next 'Monday'. The arrangement operates on a first come, first served basis and depends on the relevance of the material to the current main theme.

Partnerships and networking

At the greater scale we follow the formula of serious inter-sector partnerships and strategic partnerships which are based on the principle of long-term cooperation agreements. Our fields of interest stem from an in-depth analysis of the diagnosis of the city. Firstly, it is necessary to build social capital (we realise this goal through the activities described above). Secondly, we work for the creation of a new quality of the Polish-German borderland because we are a trans-border city. Thirdly, we find it necessary to focus on revitalisation of public space. We have defined several areas in the city which are threatened by complete degradation so all public and private institutions should cooperate in their revitalisation. The fourth field are activities for the development of creative industries, building brand awareness, its importance for the development of the city and for culture. Safeguarding these four fields is part of our mission.

One of the projects for the borderland is 'Transculture', which aims to establish a strong, lasting partnership network comprising the Polish and German part of the area under Szczecin's influence. The programme was previously financed from Interreg IVa, and now it runs independently. It involves regular meetings of over thirty cultural entities, both institutional and non-institutional, on the Polish and German sides that together develop joint models and patterns of behaviour. Their main aim is to do away with barriers in accessibility of culture in the borderland. We define the barriers together and immediately start seeking ways to overcome them. We have arranged to publish bilingual materials, to inform each other of projects and events, to exchange audiences and events that may have a Polish and German version and may be held on both sides of the border, etc. It is still a young partnership which began to operate independently only three months ago but it has a future.

As regards creative industries, we form a section together with the North-

ern Chamber of Commerce, and in the future we will form a cluster of creative industries in Szczecin. It is intended as a partnership of tens of Szczecin-based companies in the creative industries sector. We hold conferences together and prepare the major festival 'Creative Startup', which will include a competi-

Strategic partnership with another type of institution

It is an interesting solution for a cultural institution to enter into a long-term partnership with another institution of a different profile and functions (e.g. a social welfare centre, chamber of commerce, enterprise, NGO, high school) in order to conduct joint activities. Owing to it, it is possible to exchange competences, apply different views of reality, conduct multidisciplinary projects, create new spaces of influence. Such a consortium can enable a cultural institution to develop without the necessity to increase the budget and to extend existing infrastructure.

tion with an annual award to the most promising company that has been launched in that market.

The activities described above are beginning to network the main actors of change in the culture sector; the main aim is to revitalise Szczecin and its citizens through culture. An institution with thus defined scope of activity should, first and foremost, research the situation in the region and the relations between the city and its surroundings. It should coordinate activities in its fields of interest, regardless of administrative boundaries.

Instead of a conclusion

Following the ECC 2016 competition, the vision of the role of culture in the development of Szczecin was formulated, and the institution intends to fulfil it:

‘The top priority is »Sewing Europe together«. We will demonstrate the bonding potential of culture through the establishment of Common Cultural Space in a special place in Europe: at the border between Poland and Germany. We will also launch an artistic debate on migration and multiculturalism. The second priority is »Szczecin: redefinition«. To give Europe an inspiring example of bonding through culture, Szczecin must first see to its own unity. Let us redefine our city, connect the present with the past, integrate the excluded with the community, and bring together politics and citizens. We call the third priority metaphorically: » Flows, waves, currents «. We wish to open our city to cultural flows, waves of inspiration, art currents emerging at the junction of water and the city’.³

³ The quotation comes from the Szczecin application in the competition ECC 2016.

Basic terms

- **Cultural actors and entities** – each cultural institution must define the external environment in which it operates, and it must find and define the persons and organisations (i.e. cultural actors and entities) with which it is connected and has relations. These are usually individuals from many levels of culture management and animation: artists, policy makers, NGOs, firms and enterprises, counsellors and grant giving organisations. Together they form a network of interrelated persons and organisations that effect change. Another such collective cultural entity is local community consisting of various groups and associations.
- **Culture incubator** – it is usually an organisation (possibly a cultural institution) which supports the establishment of enterprises in the culture sector or non-governmental organisations and their subsequent efforts to be independent cultural entities. A cultural institution does not

need to achieve goals alone, by appropriating culture ‘for itself’; a much more interesting solution is building space for active cultural actors who will take over a niche or start new activities.

- **Citizens of culture** – as a public institution, a cultural institution must treat the recipients of its operations as citizens of culture, i.e. interest holders with their own ideas and with the power to influence the programme of the institution, rather than merely as beneficiaries of its activities.

Dilemmas in strategic management in culture

- How to transform cultural institutions into spaces open to citizens?
- Can the city’s cultural policy involve microscale activities?
- How to create a common space for cooperation between cultural entities: authorities, cultural institutions, NGOs, companies in the culture sector, non-formal groups and environments?

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The Cultural Institution in Networks and Partnerships Example: Computerisation into a network

Experiences of pioneering computerisation attempts in public libraries in Poland do not give many grounds for optimism. None of the attempts to solve the problem on the national level have succeeded, but the market has been flooded with a variety of software programs that often do not follow the accepted format of library recording systems. In this situation Polish public libraries started to get computerised individually, locally, as the possibilities and competences allowed. They updated their tools of trade but they lacked added value generated by an extended computerised network. In order to remove the limitations imposed by such practices, the Public Library in Wrocław implemented two regional projects, which aim to create a broad organisational and financial platform for the realisation of the task and to make use of technology as a tool for library integration.

Lower Silesian Library Collection

The Lower Silesian Library Collection (LSLC) was the first attempt in Poland to establish a consortium of public libraries with view to integrating their collections and services based on an automatized library system. The project dates back to 2002, when an initiative group consisting of representatives of the major and most active libraries in the province was set up. It is notable that members of the group shared enthusiasm for joint operations, ideas for a modern library, and no obligations resulting from the hierarchy or formal structures. Principles of cooperation were formulated and an outline of the system was drawn. Two years later, in April 2004, directors of the interested libraries, authorised by the appropriate local authorities, signed an agreement whereby the Lower Silesian Public Library, the leader of the group, obliged itself to obtain funds (from the resources of the provincial government, from the Ministry of

Culture and National Heritage operational programmes, and its own resources), to purchase computer facilities and the ALEPH automatized library system, to install it and train the staff, while the participating libraries obliged themselves to prepare internal network and information infrastructure and to purchase supplementary computer facilities, as well as to bear the cost of licence use.

The effects are conspicuous. In the project there are 37 public libraries, which register almost 100,000 readers. The network is served by powerful central servers, which host a catalogue of the collections of all participating libraries (2,5 million units), a central database of publications in the region (280,000 records), and a central database of periodicals (40,000 records). Libraries make use of over 230 system licences, which ensures convenient communication and allows access to the collections. Each reader can browse the collection of a selected library or of the whole network on his/her computer, can order and reserve books, set up the dates of loan returns (renewals), keep up e-communication with each library in LSLR, and enquire about additional services (photocopying, scanning, borrowing books from another library etc.).

The project cannot be evaluated simply on the basis of its cultural benefits, although these are obvious. It has become an intellectual and mental challenge. Participation in it is voluntary and consists in joint creation of certain goods, which are consumed at a dizzying pace. It requires knowledge of the system language, standards of communication, new technologies, and an ability to work in a team. Transparency of the system makes it easy to identify the author of an incorrectly entered record, determine efficiency of libraries and their staff, examine so-called 'frequency streams', check the degree to which the library uses the potential of the system. In this way the system provides a wealth of information to build institutional profiles and conduct comparative studies.

Finally, the LSLR consortium has become a sort of skeleton construction which supports successive integration processes. The interested librarians have formed a working team in order to jointly solve problems and agree on the rules of conduct for the preparation of an inventory of the collections, provision of services and other aspects of the system's operations. LSLR conferences, which are held on an annual basis, are attended by IT specialists, system librarians, and representatives of ALEPH Polska.

Most importantly, the 'step by step, year by year' method contributes to overcoming material and mental isolation of individual libraries, to be replaced

by awareness of the benefits of collective potential, partner cooperation and system thinking.

Library. Everything must be changed so that nothing changes

It is not easy to be a librarian today, and even less so to manage a library. It is not because of a ubiquitous shortage of resources, mundaneness or excess of administrative procedures. The problem has deeper roots and touches upon the very nature of that form of cultural activity. Although for decades the mission of the public library was gathering collections, the rationale behind it now being challenged by the popular stereotype of the twilight of 'the Gutenberg era' and of ongoing disappearance of a cultural formation that considered paper to be the foundation of individual and social development. Selected by character, trained in the spirit of restraint, modesty, concentration on the collection, preparing its inventory and making it available to the public, librarians were suddenly cast into the cultural market, or rather – cultural bazaar. Those from big cities are trying to gain a foothold in the spotlight of media publicity, while those from rural communities are trying to promote a different model of culture than the ludic nature of harvest festivals. Results vary, also because public libraries are intrinsically less spectacular and less mediagenic.

It is worth looking at the last unquestionable advantage of the library: widespread availability, free services and thematic versatility of library collections. Yet even this stronghold is accused of being conservative and stagnant, of lacking a vivid public image and offering uninteresting programmes. Nowadays struggle for a modern public library must be carried out simultaneously on two fronts: on the more tangible one, connected with material, organisational and programme restructuring, and on the opinion making plane, which is ruled by stereotypes, fashions, tastes, snobbery – a whole world of values recognised by cultural sociologists.

When the classical library, with its noble mission, tasks and forms of work that had been formulated over a hundred years, lost its status of a 'complete' model, the quest itself became a value. Libraries began to break successive taboos concerning library collections. Shelves were stocked with new media and new carriers such as films, musical compositions, computer games; libraries also started to loan musical instruments and works of visual art. The urge to experiment influenced the size (a mega library or club library), profile (popular library or elitist library), programme, addressees. Now,

after years of exploring new possibilities and subjecting them to pragmatic verification, two conclusions are emerging, both of them encouraging:

- there is nothing in the nature of the library which could restrict the possibilities of its modelling, and the world of values recorded in library collections is becoming an unlimited pool of ideas and concepts, a test of inventiveness and resourcefulness,
- the borderline between the library and its socio-cultural environment has become symbolic and fluid. It is set by general mechanisms of cultural

change, librarians' creativity, and interests of the community.

Fluid borders of an institution. Compare with the text by Marek Krajewski: 'It is no coincidence that under the influence of technological changes, the mode of operation of library units is changing accordingly. Nowadays they are seeking a new identity, stealing a little from those forms of activity that have so far been associated with other cultural institutions. Their original function, which consisted in book lending, is slowly phasing out, so, in order to survive, they have to redefine themselves'. More on p. 33.

In our pursuit of modernity the most important element seems to be the social context, the method of integration with the community in which the library operates. Permanent and occasional users, participants in educational programmes and cultural events, sponsors, business partners, local councillors, representatives of the organisers, public opinion

leaders, institutional or organisational representatives etc. form a broad network of formal and informal connections and social opinion-making relationships that subtly entwines the library and either fosters its development or condemns it to social alienation. The sentence may be severe but is usually just.

External partners play a major role in the difficult process of setting the library in the social context. In extreme concepts of socialising libraries, it is assumed that, as centres of local life, they must be able to gain and win over all major organisations and groups, and must reflect the social microstructure of the community in which they operate.

The process of establishing external relationships is difficult and complex. It requires understanding of social engineering, knowledge about the partners and their abilities, aspirations and needs, an ability to present one's own institution in a favourable light, and a clear and convincing vision of cooperation. Activities in culture are, by prior assumption, original so besides facts and arguments a special role is played by factors such as personality and the ability to compromise, being cultured and persuasive, the climate in which conversations are held, and further cooperation.

Partnerships in one type of cultural institution. An example of networking libraries

To a library, another library is a particularly valuable among external partners. It is notable that libraries seem to have been made for cooperation. They make inventories of their collections following established rules, they provide basic services in accordance with standards that have been developed for years, and new communications technologies exempt them from the need to be omniscient.

Polish regulations concerning operations of public libraries in an extended network (communal, district and provincial libraries) impose certain formal relationships among them. Yet they have never become a foundation for effective substantive cooperation that all parties would find satisfying. In the past an obstacle was excessive centralisation of the network, which limited independence of different libraries, while nowadays, paradoxically, the direction of the administrative reform of the state, which aims at extreme institutional decentralisation, exaggerates the local character of cultural institutions and their dependence on their local founder, particularly in the first stage.

Awareness of low efficiency of cooperation bonds forged within the formal network made us revise our views and create an alternative model of cooperation. Here are its main assumptions:

- 'the benefits package' as the basis for making decisions about the establishment of inter-library partnerships,
- participation on a voluntary basis,
- accepting the scope of tasks and responsibilities, approval of partnership rules.

The early years of implementation of new inter-library partnerships enabled us to determine the main problem areas within this kind of library cooperation, and in particular:

- joint participation in the realisation of projects of trans-local importance, often financed from external resources (European Union, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage operational programmes, designated subsidies from the self-government of the Lower Silesia province),
- artistic patronage, and organisation of major events in which libraries in the network are present (e.g. Lower Silesian Meetings of Writers and Young Readers 'Setting Out with a Book in Hand'),

- implementation of new technologies and standardised rules of computerisation of libraries,
- joint editing and publication of a Lower Silesian librarians' periodical ('Książka i Czytelnik') [A Book and a Reader]

There are various internal mechanisms of cooperation: libraries most often follow the complementary system (proportional division of duties into parts), and also divide duties by specialisation, offer, exchange scheme etc.

Their decision to participate in the project is always taken independently based on the profit and loss account. They assume total responsibility for organisational, financial and content-related consequences that it entails, which is formally stated in the declaration of participation, agreement, contract or another document.

Strategic partnerships. Inter-organisational structures

A particularly valuable form of cooperation with external partners is building permanent inter-organisational structures composed of individual organisational units. Such undertakings necessitate closer integration. They require a material base, qualified staff who can meet the partners' expectations, longstanding financial guarantees, and a precise legal formula that is in accordance with the financial and organisational rules and regulations binding for partners.

Currently, there are four such individual organisational units in the Lower Silesian Public Library (external partners are listed in brackets):

- The German Library, The *Mediothec* of the German Language (The Goethe-Institut in Munich),
- 'American Corner' – The Information and Culture Center (The US Embassy and consulate),
- The Information and Cultural Centre Centrum – Romanian Library (Alliance Française and The Italian Culture Institute),
- 'Window on Korea' (The National Library in Seoul and The Korean Cultural Institute).

All these centres cooperate with diplomatic outposts, organisations and institutions that promote knowledge and culture of other countries. Why were they selected? Was it mere coincidence? Not really. To the library, it is an appealing way to put in practice the idea of multiculturalism which has set the direction for the development of their programmes in recent

years, and has become one of the major elements of the library strategy. Partners' motivations, though highly individualised, were also quite clear. They may be described as a need to carry out efficient, continuous, interesting and diverse activity, popularising culture, literature and knowledge of many aspects of life in those countries. Even most incidental activities cannot achieve it. It is necessary to have institutional support, a permanent site, a staff base and technical conditions to realise the programme. Now however, in time of crisis and budget cuts, foreign diplomatic outposts and cultural institutions, which have been established mainly in Warsaw and Krakow, have no chance to set up new branches in other attractive locations in Poland. To them, a well-situated library that offers extensive facilities and has a reliable programme of activities seems to be a particularly desirable partner for cooperation.

Our experience shows that a necessary condition to carry out such joint *quasi-institutional* undertakings is both partners' determination. Fortunately, the legal, organisational and technical complexity that it involves is reflected in the quality of the outcome. Each partner gains much more than their verifiable own contribution. It may be illustrated by the history of cooperation with an American partner.

Example: Information and Culture Center 'American Corner'

The American Information and Culture Center 'American Corner' was founded in June 2006, following a series of discussions and negotiations. It is a long-lasting inter-organisational structure within the library, and an element of the American Corners¹ network. It operates in accordance with the agreement to establish and jointly run the 'American Corner' – The American Information and Culture Center in Wrocław, which lays the organisational, financial and programme foundations of the centre and describes the division and scope of duties of both sides. According to the agreement, the library contributes the venue, basic facilities, properly qualified staff, specialised inventory of the collection and makes it accessible to the public, while the American partner supplies audio and electronic equipment, printed publications and multimedia, and provides a specialist training for the staff and access to thematic databases on aspects of living in the USA. The partners jointly organise and finance educational and cultural activities.

Soon after opening 'The American Corner' it turned out that the customised partnership formula of a permanent inter-organisational structure provided favourable conditions for its development. Today 'The Ameri-

1 A network of three hundred partnerships between American embassies and other institutions that host those activities (ed. note).

can Corner' boasts an extensive collection of multimedia and printed materials shipped from the US, a unique collection of American films, prestigious periodicals and specialist data bases. Its guests are artists, scientists (including astronauts) and sportspeople. There are numerous exhibitions, film screenings, lectures, book launches, series of events focusing on the idea of freedom, competitions etc. Owing to the access to American information resources and immediate communication with information centres of the US Embassy and Consulate it replies to even most sophisticated queries on a wide range of issues, including information on studying in America, scholarship schemes, social care, travel regulations, etc.

It is a nice surprise for the founders that the centre is increasingly more popular with Americans staying in Wrocław. 'The American Corner' has become a 'Little America' to them: they come here in large numbers, work as volunteers, contribute to the programme, give the place a unique American aura, and thus spontaneously put the idea of multiculturalism in practice, and implement the concept of the library as a meeting place. The source of the success of 'The American Corner' is certainly the accumulation of resources and abilities of both partners in one location, following the precept 'together we can do more'. On the other hand, the commonly felt need to retain a symmetry stimulates positive competition, which includes not only material contribution of both sides but also intellectual activity, creativity, originality of ideas, which gives it particular developmental dynamics and social impact.

Partnerships with organisations supporting cultural institutions

The relatively most popular form of cooperation is securing material support for various aspects of a cultural institution's operations. It involves various problem areas, mechanisms and forms of support: co-financing, donations, contribution-in-kind, free services etc.

Public libraries, especially smaller ones, which operate in low-earning and often squalid communities, have devised a number of specific and efficient methods of gaining support from external partners. Making skilful use of the popular image of the library as an impecunious institution that has less than a modest budget at its disposal and referring to its charity work for the community, public libraries are able to set up a chain of people and institutions of good will among local shopkeepers, craftsmen, small industrialists, wealthier people, etc. Although their individual material contribution may seem trifling, its social value is enormous.

It triggers integration mechanisms based on emotions, moral values, and sensitivity to the needs of the people in their immediate environment.

Support for the institution

Since the cultural institution supports cultural development and other cultural entities, it is crucial for it to build a network of support for itself. Many persons and entities look for the opportunities to use their resources (not only financial but also such as competences) for the common good. It demands from institutions to prepare to cooperate with such benefactors. They are interested in offering assistance but usually based on a good idea about how to use the funds and competences and the possibility to enter into a partnership. For the institution, it is a chance to develop a relation with a partner who is not seeking support but, above all, it is an opportunity to undertake operations in public space (so as to show its social responsibility or to realise its ideas in a different field). Through having such partnerships, the institution indicates that its strategy and ideas are appreciated by entrepreneurs and specialists, which means that it has successfully passed an 'audit' by independent 'experts'. It may use their resources, which opens new opportunities for action.

Relationships with big capital, big wealthy institutions, industrial concerns and corporations are radically different. To keep up the image of their large scale activities and the potential they have, these organisations tend to prefer such forms of sponsorship that further enhance both. These include major cultural events, sports events, festivals, and at times – initiatives that are vital to national culture. Engaged in routine, commonplace and altogether unspectacular services, libraries have little chance to reach the world of big capital and big money. Yet it is not impossible. What boosts their chances of success? Here are some general reflections and observations resulting from experience of cooperation with a big Korean concern:

- One should aim high – the greater (in proportion to the partner's potential), the more distinctive, socially popular, appealing an idea is, the greater the chance of attracting a business partner; the costs and financial issues must not, at this stage, moderate the role of the idea, as there will be ample time for it later.
- Being partner oriented – the application should not overly focus on the merits of the idea in itself but, first and foremost, on all possible benefits that its realisation may bring to the partner; a good instrument to work out that valuation and argumentative perspective is a partner profile, formulated prior to the application, based on all available sources of information.
- Originality of the idea – the world of big capital is based on competition, which also includes ways of engaging in extra-production activities; a surplus of ideas in proportion to their feasibility or a will to realise them gives a competitive edge to fresh, original and appealing concepts.

In many developed countries the idea of corporate social responsibility has led to the development of many noble practices, ranging from charity through patronage and sponsoring to co-financing of public institutions. These concepts are slowly coming to Poland with big international corporations and are becoming more and more common in native Polish companies.

Example: ‘The Seven Continents Library’

A certain well-known Korean industrial conglomerate (a complex of enterprises interconnected by law and cooperation) decided to make considerable investments in Wrocław to establish an empire specialised in consumer electronic goods. The amount and scope of investment has led to the building of a large modern industrial plant, still under construction, which is intended to employ 12,000 people, mainly technicians, engineers and managers from Poland, the Far East and other countries. The presence of the giant enterprise has resulted in much more than merely industrial activity. In the city there have sprung up numerous restaurants and bars serving Asian cuisine, schools with educational offer in Polish, English and languages of the Eastern countries, shops and stands with specialist food. A stroll around the Market Square, especially on holidays, clearly demonstrates the prominence of the Korean community within the international community in the city.

The new and inspiring situation has become an unusual challenge to the library for at least two reasons:

- due to the formation of a new social context, new needs and new user groups have emerged,
- the emergence of a new institutional partner who may be difficult and exotic but has the potential to realise objectives on a larger scale.

The library set about making an outline of the partner’s profile. An analysis of the mission of the concern, its production and social objectives, followed by consultations with the staff, an analysis of publicity, rumour, stereotypes, and official and unofficial opinions enabled the library to build a partial profile of the concern as a potential partner. It was partial because it covered only those problem areas that were related to the library expectations and might be of interest in possible cooperation.

Based on the analysis, an offer of cooperation was formulated and presented to the partner. Its name, ‘The Seven Continents Library’, was chosen deliberately because the core objective was to establish a library for children and youngsters that was based on the idea of travelling across continents and oceans, in time and space, in the real, virtual and literary worlds, using

state-of-the-art facilities, interior design and conceptual framework. The goal was to be achieved by extensive modernisation of the rooms selected for this purpose inside the existing library. The spatial arrangement was designed to provide a visual and material context for multidimensional meetings of children of different nationalities who are increasingly numerous in the city. The project was to be multimedia, multicultural and interactive.

The adopted mode of operation, and the idea of the library itself, turned out to be a hit. After that, matters developed at an indeed Asian pace: a letter of intent was signed within weeks, followed by an agreement stating the object of cooperation, then the concern donated the declared 80% of resources to realise the project, but reserved for itself the counselling and consultation rights as to furnishing the library with new facilities and technologies and the form of media and advertising presentation of the conglomerate's contribution to the project.

It was owing to rigorous adherence to deadlines and obligations, trust-based cooperation and minimisation of the number of administrative procedures that only nine months elapsed since the project's presentation to the opening of the new outpost. Regardless of the ultimate outcome – an originally designed library that is frequently visited by throngs of young users – cooperation with a radically different partner was not only inspiring but also beneficial in that it allowed us to review our methods of work, hierarchies and behaviours from a wider perspective.

Implementation of the project forged extremely strong bonds between the concern and 'The Seven Continents Library' – through organisation, a joint image and emotional involvement – so it is only natural that the conglomerate has become a strategic sponsor who willingly engages in supporting cultural events and educational programmes which put into effect the idea of multiculturalism and multimediality.

Programme partnerships. Supplementing one another's potential and competences

The most popular form of cooperation with external partners is joint preparation and organisation of cultural events and educational programmes, which may be individual or serial. There are different modes of the division of duties. The most frequent elements of each partner's 'dowry' are: a venue, financial resources, teaching aids and materials, lecturers, artists, animators and audience managers. There are particularly close relations with those partners who represent the social groups whose

cooperation we intend to enlist (schools and nursery schools, senior citizens' associations, hobbyists, regionalists, etc.) and those communities with whom we wish to devise programmes (creative and professional associations, foundations and public benefit institutions). These relationships may be long-term or short-lived, and their content and social effects vary. However, their objectives and interests are so closely connected with the operations of the library or its individual departments that they have become an almost permanent, indispensable element of the institutional internal structure.

Example: Polish Association of Educationalists and Animators 'Klanza' in 'The Seven Continents Library'

Changes in the social structure and in lifestyles affect all residents in the region, including the youngest ones. Differences in wealth accumulation between families, inadequate family or social patterns of upbringing, increasing pathologies and alienation result in a radical mental, intellectual and moral diversification among the young people who are associated with the library. The city's social tissue is increasingly augmented by an influx of foreigners: legal and illegal immigrants, engineering and technical staff in international conglomerates and corporations, students, academics, volunteers, scholarship holders, representatives of social

organisations etc. Raised in different cultures and in different circumstances, their children often experience difficulties in adaptation.

A contemporary library for children and youngsters must not only notice and diagnose such processes but also develop adequate working methods and devise a programme offer that will attract the varied community and bring it closer together in the spirit of tolerance and acceptance of otherness. The scale of the variety, uniqueness of individual circumstances, and a lack of experience show that struggling with the problems alone will not resolve them. A suitable partner must be found.

An intercultural institution

An increasingly important role of the cultural institution is to form a meeting platform for people who are otherwise isolated in their own worlds (generational, class, environmental, ethnic etc.) due to the shrinking of public space. Cultural institutions as spaces that are (nominally or practically) open, and managed so as to form space for active participation in culture, possess instruments to build bridges between people with different experience, backgrounds, income etc. In the contemporary world they may be centres for newcomers to visit in order to get help in adjustment and establishment of new relations. Owing to such assumptions, institutions may also contribute to the formation of an environment that is friendly to the creative class (read more in the text by Karol Wittels on p. 44).

'The Seven Continents Library' was lucky to find and attract such a partner. The Polish Association of Educationalists and Animators 'Klanza', which applies the principles of learning through play, has put forward a variety of methods and techniques of working with groups of children from mixed cultural and social backgrounds. The Association has been granted optimal working conditions: a modern library with facilities to carry out animation activities, and an extremely inspiring multicultural children's community, while the librarians have obtained methodological support and specialist assistance in organising cultural and educational activities, and the qualifications of the 'Klanza' Association coaches and animators.

In no time collaboration was elevated to a higher level and included specialist workshops, organisation of model events and trainings for the children's library staff and for educationalists from all over the province. The offer of joint activities was supplemented with new major events: 'Library – Worldary', 'Klantzobus' and 'Art Encounters', and participation in the children's variation of The Brave Festival (The Dying Cultures Festival) called Brave Kids, which shows the creative potential of children, their culturally conditioned personality, the need to be together and the quality of team work.

The borderline between 'The Seven Continents Library' and its organisational background is increasingly fluid, and levels of integration with external partners are so strong and multidimensional that, in the words of 'The Seven Continents Library' staff, 'it is not important where you come from but what you can do'.

Conclusion

The idea of partnership permeates all levels of the library operations. We implement major investment and renovations projects with our business partners, and we enter into relationships with programme partners in order to realise a rich and varied cultural programme in accordance with the community's needs and the library's operational strategy. Within the body of the library there are as many as four departments that function as autonomous, inter-organisational sections managed jointly with foreign partners. In the region there are several library partner teams which are involved in joint activities (computerisation, digitalisation, etc.) They are not only an alternative but effective competition to the formal network which reflects Poland's administrative division. Today objectives are not reduced by the existing limitations and possibilities. The perspective has

been reversed: these days the objectives that are considered particularly valuable and important decide about the organisational configurations and sources of financing. Meetings with partners, concerning finance, legal and programme issues, require patience, humbleness and determination, but are extremely inspiring.

Is it challenging to put into practice the model of a library with an extensive network of external partnerships? Very much so. Is it worth making the effort to manage a library following this organisational and legal formula? It is, very much so.

Basic terms

- **Partner relationships** – a model of cooperation whose core assumption is equivalence of each organisation's contribution, with simultaneous generic variation of that contribution (financial, material, organisational, substantive etc.).
- **Partnership in the inter-organisational model** – equivalence based, joint realisation of a form of activity described in a contract, agreement, or declaration of participation, which determine each side's performance, rights and obligations.
- **Co-management of an institution** – a unique model of an institution manager by two or more organisers whose rights, obligations and scopes of responsibility are described in the documentation which is the legal basis for its operations.
- **Benefits package** – a set of positive outcomes of cooperation with external partners, which are difficult or impossible to obtain as a result of operating on one's own.
- **Selective partner profile** – a collection of information about an organisation, obtained by studying its mission, programmes of activity, publicly stated opinions, stereotypes, conversations with the staff etc., selected with regard to strengthening one's own negotiating leverage and increasing chances to persuade a partner to cooperate.

Dilemmas in strategic management in culture

- How to reinforce relationships between an institution and its social environment? What organisations can help in it? How to persuade them to cooperate? What arguments are of top importance?
- Are we able to evaluate flexibility of our institutional programme? Can we find the optimal organisational and financial formula for our ideas

and initiatives? What is the role of cooperative relationships with external partners in this respect?

- How are we using new technologies as a basis for various forms of cooperation with other organisations?

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The aim of **The Staszów Cultural Centre** (a cultural institution of the Staszów Commune) is to conduct multidirectional activity to enhance development and to satisfy cultural needs of local residents, and to disseminate and promote local culture in Poland and abroad. The basic objectives of the Centre are:

- organisation of diverse forms of cultural education and education through art,
- creation of favourable conditions for the amateur art movement, societies and special interest clubs, units and bands, etc.,
- organisation of theatrical performances, concerts, festivals, lectures, artistic and tourist events, and entertainment;
- educational and methodological activity,
- running an educational and methodological library,
- publishing and promotional activities,
- running foreign languages courses,
- coordination of cultural events in the Staszów Town and Commune,
- cooperation with other institutions and social organisations to better satisfy cultural needs of local residents,
- supervision and organisation of entertainment and recreational activities,
- cooperation with foreign institutions, particularly with partner towns.









Krystyna Bednarska, who is a senior instructor
in event organisation.



Katarzyna Ciepiela, who is a senior instructor in art
and cultural education.



Krzysztof Laskowski, who is a senior instructor
in musical education.

Between Culture and Entrepreneurship, Tradition and Innovation Example: Cieszyn Castle – a design centre, and a cultural institution promoting entrepreneurship

1 Cieszyn Castle, which currently acts as the Centre for Research and Documentation of Material Culture and Design, was established in 2004 as a budget unit of the City of Cieszyn (it was then called The Castle of Art and Entrepreneurship in Cieszyn). Ewa Gołębiowska has managed the Castle ever since its foundation. On 1 January 2011 the Castle was formally transformed into a municipal cultural institution, although its activities go well beyond those of a mere 'cultural institution'.

In Cieszyn Castle¹ we focus on design, which in Poland all too often tends to be perceived as an element of culture, and not often enough as an element of business. We want to connect these two worlds, fostering more than just economic development based on designers' potential. Over the first years we had to build institutional credibility with designers, which was perhaps the easiest to achieve, and with entrepreneurs with whom we need to cooperate. We have now reached the stage that in 2010 we realised five EU projects (Design Silesia and Revita Silesia with the Marshal Office, Regional Promotion and Technology Transfer Network, Academy of Traditional Crafts, SEE. Sharing Experience Europe) and three minor regional projects, which involved over twenty business, research and project partners. Cieszyn Castle is a small unit, with a small budget and a small team. On the one hand, we pursue objectives connected with development and fostering entrepreneurship, technology transfer, revitalisation and design. On the other hand, our seat is in the castle in Cieszyn, in a unique place that is connected with Cieszyn's past so we also deal with tourism management, organisation of events and festivals. We work seven days a week in five venues of different functionality: from an 11th century rotund to a state-of-the-art bungalow housing offices of design agencies. But the subsidy we get from the founder is smaller than that of a local community centre. All this is so arduous I can hear the

sound of breaking ice, I have a feeling that floe is growing. This situation may be likened to an icebreaker's work. There are ups and downs, different layers of ice, but I still cannot say that we are sailing without obstacles. New definitions of design (we keep a close eye on the global developments in the sector), which emphasise cooperation and user-friendliness, must be followed and priorities must be changed accordingly. It is not a field where you can make plans three years in advance and never alter them. This is the course of any process in whose implementation people are involved from beginning to end. Despite problems in cooperation with new partners, we constantly run new projects and activities in which we engage all possible parties: designers, entrepreneurs, social organisations, and also users. We cannot shut ourselves in our own worlds because our task is to mix ingredients: space or public services design with development of entrepreneurship, promoting Cieszyn's brand with events in design, safeguarding traditional crafts with making modern designs based on these traditions. Naturally, it is challenging but crucial, both due to people's expectations and with regard to Cieszyn's development. In December we opened The Michał Ozmin Institute of Design for All. We take care of the EIDA archives (European Institute of Design for All), and invite everybody to our reading room. We want to promote the Design for All Europe movement whose methodology converges with *design thinking*. The most interesting element in design is using real-life experiences of users of streets, offices, health centres and schools, and not just 'clients'. In this way it is possible to design products that are better suited to real needs. By products, I mean not only 'things' but also designing services or information.

When Cieszyn Castle was established, we emphasised that it would focus on design. Some local creators were indignant, so much so that one of the renowned Cieszyn artists asked, 'How is that? Are you going to put vacuum cleaners on display?' I replied, 'Yes, that's exactly what we mean to do'. In Poland we still fail to understand that design does not mean 'decorating' objects, that it is complex knowledge which is directly related to economic competitiveness. And competitiveness is sustained by designers who, again, are not just individual visual artists-aesthetes but have unique knowledge that enables entrepreneurs, cultural institutions and local governments to reach their recipients. By cooperating with designers, they will be able to better communicate with recipients.

One of the most concise definitions of design says that design is communication, including communication on the level of values, so it is symbolic and multidimensional. It is a complex process. It is true that ever since the

launch of Cieszyn Castle we have never focused solely on industrial design but have also spoken about graphic design in building organisational identity, and not only in building the brand. As extensively as we could, we have dealt with the modern media and typography, which have since become much more popular in Poland. We organise many workshops on designing communication or information. Time and time again we repeat that design helps and we believe so. It helps not because people will come and see a nice exhibition but because it helps to make life easier, safer, more accessible, and not only more pleasant and nicer.

Having been flooded with mass produced and increasingly cheaper products, we are now flooded with information. A designer may design, file or position information. It is also a matter of our functioning in the world. Designers are progressively entering such spaces where they have never been present before. They are entering the social care sector, the health sector, where it has turned out that cooperation with a designer may reduce service costs by simplifying procedures. It is very difficult to talk of one definition of design because designers who have been designing material goods are increasingly designing services, systems and information. Cieszyn Castle must introduce these changes to its operational programme.

Developing activities, survival dilemmas

Design is fast becoming the key process in the making of new goods and services so our objective is, as far as possible, to transfer these ideas and operational methods to Silesia, to Poland, to local governments, businesses, public institutions etc. We organise trainings in how to cooperate with designers and in financing innovative cooperation, we assist in establishing relationships with particular designers, help to obtain sources of financing, and aid in the promotion of new products or services. Let us take a closer look at 'The Silesian Thing' Competition, which is the only regional competition in design. About sixty participants, businesses and organisations from all over Silesia take part in two categories: Product and Graphic Design. A bilingual catalogue is sent out all over the world, and the outcome of the competition is exhibited in at least three places in Poland and sometimes also abroad. This is obvious help. The Kafti Design company, which first entered the competition five years ago, is flourishing and is well known not only among Polish designers. Similarly, Bogdan Kosak, winner of 'The Silesian Thing' Competition 2006 has developed his business rapidly

over the last years and...moved to Cieszyn with his family. Thus, we have instruments of support, which are effective both in Cieszyn and in the region. Local governments from all over the country use our expertise or that of the experts we invite. Regional design centres are currently established in a quick succession, the next ones will be opened in Poznan and in Kielce. That means that there are local governments who want to develop through design, and wish to invest in design. They ask designers to work on the town's attractiveness, spatial information and public services.

In order to have a good reputation in this sector, it is necessary to cooperate with the best, be close to the best agencies and designers, be up to date, keep abreast of the changes, and, ideally, contribute to them. We keep up that relationship through partner and networking projects, and owing to it we can develop. Projects enable us to be more mobile and operate in

such a way that we prove to be credible

Online projects – a solution for living partnerships

It is becoming more and more important for cultural institutions to operate within transnational partnership projects. They receive particular support from the European Union, which treats them as undertakings that disseminate good practices and develop inter-institutional contacts resulting in innovations. For smaller centres, situated away from urban centres, it is also a chance to find their own niche and participate in European enterprises. Regional cultural institutions may search for interesting initiatives in the region (whose potential may contribute to their development) so as to launch them into the wider market within these partnerships. Owing to such activities, it is possible to reduce the (mental) distance between the centre and the periphery.

partners. Projects, since they involve networking, keep our partnerships alive. After all, it is possible to collect partnerships like stamps in a stamp album but the important thing is to keep them alive. That requires time and money. Projects provide us with these but they involve another problem as they never start as scheduled. They may last less than a year; the maximum is three years. As for the persons who are to manage projects, we need experienced, highly competent and specialised individuals to whom we cannot guarantee any safety or stability. It turns out that the central,

basic operations of Cieszyn Castle as an institution largely depend on financial resources for projects, which causes discomfort and irregularity. Every year an activity that is as vital for the region, and indeed for the whole of Poland, as 'Design in Public Space' involves dramatic attempts to find a financing source. It has happened that the prestigious competition 'The Silesian Thing' received a subsidy of 10,000 PLN while it needed 50,000 PLN. And yet we took the risk and accepted obligations, being fully aware that it might all collapse for financial reasons. Yet so far we have always been successful.

All this causes anxiety that in fact we are unable to plan financial stability, even for the major, regularly held, renowned events. To uphold high standards, it is necessary to have permanent staff and financial stability. And the situation is such that so far we have failed to win policymakers over to our vision of Cieszyn as a centre promoting development of design in Poland and in Silesia. I simply do not know if we have been using the wrong language and arguments, or if policymakers and officials do not want to take important decisions. What matters is that time and time again we have to rack our brains where to find money for our primary, priority objectives.

A multidimensional organisation

Finance

The operations of Cieszyn Castle and financing its activities were theoretically well designed. I call it a 'plait' made up of culture, entrepreneurship and design (innovativeness). We want to follow the 'business plan' (its original version was drawn up when the institution was founded), which described the way to achieve financial independence. The feasibility study of 2000 was intended to enable us to diversify our sources of income. One thing at a time. We are on Castle Hill. We are a castle. An important source of our budget are the proceeds from ticket sales to the Piast Tower, so we are vitally interested to promote Castle Hill, make it tourist-friendly, accessible and attractive. We encourage people to come here, see the sights and also see something surprising, and that is because we are no ordinary castle, so instead of showing castle chambers, we exhibit contemporary design and architecture, a different public space. Our activity in knowledge transfer, technology and organisation is less conspicuous. Nowadays it is mostly connected with European projects but we are increasingly commissioned to do market research, surveys for companies, business-related entities or regions. It is still a margin of our activity but it is vital for our budget because it brings in concrete profits. Apart from the financing, we must add another type of Cieszyn Castle's entrepreneurial activity: renting rooms, conference and workshop facilities and tourism management centres. Cieszyn Castle also houses a tearoom, a café, and guest rooms. For six years we were the only budget unit in town so we could not undertake any business activity. What we could do was to enable other companies to carry out business operations in our buildings and generate profit through rental. That was another

important item on our budget. And another, relatively smaller and not very regular financing stream is the income from trainings for business people or designers. Such diversification of statutory activity is reflected in the diversification of sources of income, and so far we have been successful at it.

The team

To a large extent, employees collaborate, in changing task teams. The team is relatively young. We have a very flat structure. It is not hierarchical. Naturally, there are project managers but there is no distance and wall building between departments. People live together and perform their duties in contact with other people. Knowledge of organisational and financing methods, of legal formulation of decisions is freely exchanged by employees and departments. Obviously, it has good and bad points but it enables the employee who is involved in a project and has to account for it aided by the accounts department to actually write the project. The employee is able to write its continuation because s/he is aware what results from what. S/he experiences all mistakes of wrong planning on himself or herself and is able to analyse them.

We have developed a model of work organisation in a hurry but it still works. The reason is that we have many projects which are externally financed so we must be both accurate and flexible. Substantive staff should understand their project budgets. Sometimes they draw them up by themselves. If they do it, they are more involved and more aware of expenditure. They also draw up contracts on their own and know the basics of accounting. I think that a substantive worker who did not understand basic mathematical operations would not stay long in Cieszyn Castle. Employees are responsible for the decisions they take, and always know that the same one thousand zloties can buy much more or much less. It is their business to find such suppliers and such goods that they are able to do more. I cannot imagine that we might form a separate organisational unit to deal with administration and logistics. We do not live in such times. Each project coordinator and project worker must be aware of the whole process, although obviously there are issues that require cooperation with specialists in law, competitive tendering etc.

We often hold meetings with all our staff, whenever possible – usually once a fortnight. These are two- or three-hour-long assemblies where we try to see and sum up all that we have done and set new objectives and new changing task teams. We have implemented a quality system so that twice

a year, based on the selected indicators, we are able to see from a perspective if we have achieved the objectives formerly established. We monitor the number of visitors, media publicity, hits on our website. Efficiency is measured and studied by means of various quantitative indicators, but we do not undergo external audits. These audits are carried out within some EU projects and I find it a pity that there are no such holistic audits of institutions. Such audits might teach us much, particularly if they were carried out on a regular basis.

Evaluation in strategic management

Evaluation is assessment of performance intended to improve it, and not only merely to control their administrative adequacy. Nowadays the latter model is still dominant, and results in the cultural institutions indicating 'success' rather than 'knowledge' it gained in its successful or unsuccessful operations. Therefore, institutions do not learn from one another through sharing experiences and exchanging evaluation results. And, as Ewa Gołębiowska points out, well designed evaluation may be a source of vital feedback for assessment of the institution's strategy. All authors point out the enormous dynamics of change in culture and a lack of certainty about what to do and how to do it. That is why every activity should be evaluated in order to gain reference points for future activities.

We also cooperate with a considerable number of external collaborators. We establish increasingly better contacts with Cieszyn residents, use the services of progressively more competent persons associated with the region, and also the expertise of persons from afar, from outside Poland. They come to Cieszyn because they find it a recognisable, trustworthy and meaningful place. They lead workshops for Cieszyn residents, people from Katowice or Gdansk. Since we are based in a small town, away from big cities, more people get interested in starting temporary cooperation with us. However, people with extensive

experience rarely wish to move to Cieszyn. We have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that we look for promising young people with potential and skills in order to offer professional prospects to them. Cieszyn is a good place to embark on one's career. How fortunate that some of the people eventually return to Cieszyn, even if they temporarily live and work in big cities.

An institution needs a good, strong core, a permanent team and it is only then that it can maintain a number of satellites and the fluid mass around them that certainly makes its contribution felt, but it is only occasional. Owing to EU projects, we have been able to form, strengthen and train the core. But all the time it involves struggle, on the part of the director and on the part of employees, to survive. If they are engaged in project work, which is usually short-term, they cannot be sure of employment. It is not easy to live a normal life like that, get married or take out a loan. The staff of Cieszyn Castle are mostly female. It so happened. Women are good at

crisis management. They are good in positions that require flexibility and good communication skills. But it also means that we have on average of 25% of staff on maternity leave, extended maternity leave or pregnant. How to manage career development if the conditions are so changeable? It is not easy. Sometimes we can meet our future employees in advance, for example during their graduate trainings which support us owing to the employment office. 60% of trainees stay in Cieszyn Castle or find jobs in associated companies. They are also people who learned to work hard

An innovative and creative team. Compare with the text by Mariusz Wróbel: 'If we surround ourselves with people who are professionals in their fields and are passionately involved in their disciplines, the answer seems straightforward. An autocratic approach to management in an institution where the majority of projects are based on creative work usually ends with the best employees quitting, which results in a lower substantive quality of the projects it realises. A democratic approach, however, fosters creativity and motivates employees to perform their duties in the best possible way. A democratic approach fosters integration of the team and its identification with the institution'. More on p. 103.

over a year and understand how Cieszyn Castle works. Project-based organisation makes the organisational, structural tissue extremely changeable. Working this way requires a certain skill. You have to be ready to take up various tasks and to work in different groups. If people prove themselves, they have a chance to stay. We also see the need to create new space for the development of Cieszyn Castle. For many years I was against the establishment of an association or a company because in such exotic space as design there are already about six foundations and associations that promote modern

design. It is true that it would be advisable to safeguard Cieszyn Castle's unique activities and strengthen them by setting up an association or a company. We operate using municipal property. Isolating even a part of the property and founding a public company would need consensus and political calm. I think there will be a time that this proposal may be put forward. It is certainly a way for Cieszyn Castle to become more independent, and that will entail financial independence. Otherwise we will not be able to sustain our operations at the expected level.

The Castle is in Cieszyn

Cieszyn Castle is suspended between localness, local expectations, local needs and activity on the regional and higher level. We design our own activities so as to effectively foster regional development, which involves promoting the town and supporting local businesses. We do not divide our operations into local and regional. Firstly, because the majority of our trainings connected with niche activity is open and accepted by local

architects and designers, students and entrepreneurs. Secondly, it is vital for Cieszyn's strong points, including history and tradition, to be recognised by foreign visitors from completely different realities. It is only in this context that the potential of the castle is comprehensible. We are not foreign. We come from here and the longer we have been continuing our activity, the more we see that our activity is rooted in this land. Our greatest mistake would be to divide culture into highbrow and lowbrow culture, native and cosmopolitan, always doing traditional things for Cieszyn, and very modern things for outsiders. The reality is the opposite. Often, it is Cieszyn that needs modernity, while outsiders need to be aware of our realities and identity.

We regard our mission as transfer, we always want to be three steps ahead in the field we focus on. The problem is that there is nothing we could refer to in Cieszyn, many companies are not in contact with Cieszyn Castle and its activities, and are not even aware of its existence. Poles like the songs they know so we find it extremely bothersome that there is nothing to rely on or to refer to, and that we cannot reassure local residents that this concept of a cultural institution has already proved viable somewhere else and may be beneficial to the town. That is my general estimation of the situation. In the local environment, we have formed our own community which not only knows what is going on here but, I would say, contributes their own ideas on a regular basis. These are persons with different educational backgrounds, professional status, of different age, including both young people or university students and elderly persons, entrepreneurs and NGOs. Everybody makes their own contribution. They are the permanent partners of Cieszyn Castle. It is significant that they come to Cieszyn Castle many times and want to boast of the place, which shows that even if they do not turn up regularly, they are aware if there is something interesting going on, that it is nice to come here with friends, that there is a café, tearoom, tasty ice-cream, exhibitions. All this is also important. In this context it is our top priority to reach new people, especially the unconvinced ones, who express negative opinions or show no interest, mainly because they are not aware of what we do, or merely repeat certain stereotypes. Yet if there is something we can do to attract people who may never come back again – we do it.

Designing the town

We want to have more influence on the way the town is functioning, and we have considerable potential which the town may use. We have just realised that we must present our activities, our potential and how we can be used to

improve the residents' standard of living to the Town Council and the new Mayor because, to our great regret and disappointment, this knowledge is not taken advantage of. Our recent success is the completion of a project in spatial information in a part of Cieszyn and Czech Cieszyn, which was realised within the Polish-Czech project Revital Park. The project, which was originally designed as plaques on walls, developed into a workable, clear, modern, accessible, anti-vandal safe and generally well-thought-out system of information. It gives us grounds for optimism but we have to bear in mind that the process of persuading the town to adopt new solutions must take time. The problem is not so much the authorities' unwillingness to accept solutions that have been put forward by us but the system of competitive tendering in Poland and in Europe at large. It involves fear of a tender whose overall shape is not known. For several years now, through conferences and exhibitions among other activities, we have been realising the mission to promote good quality design of public spaces and I sincerely hope it will improve the situation in Cieszyn, just as it is improving in other places in Poland. We must simply abandon the view that a designer gives aesthetic quality, and instead we should emphasise the importance of accessibility, functionality, safety and a sense of identity in design.

Cieszyn has still not embraced the opportunity to become a model centre of design owing to its favourable size. It might become an ideal pilot town, testing various solutions. There are several projects pending, and their completion may alter the situation. In any case, local government and institutions from all over Poland are coming here more and more often, not only to get basic information or meet designers, since this has become much easier than it was six years ago. Clearly, local governments are beginning to articulate their long-term design-based development policy. It shows that local governments increasingly perceive design as an element which contributes to the unique image of a commune and raises its attractiveness to residents and tourists but also realise that it is vital for economic development. Local governments in Katowice, Bielsko-Biała, Kielce, Poznan and Szczecin respectively wish to develop, using the potential of design.

The founder – a difficult but crucial partner

Ever since the beginning, the decision to establish Cieszyn Castle was connected with the opportunity to gain investment resources to solve the acute problem of dilapidated ruins of Cieszyn castle. If there is an idea which does not involve high costs at the start, but may yield, for example, 2 million euros, then municipal authorities say it is worth trying. If

it brings profit, it should be attempted. And quite soon there emerged a desire that we should be doing something that nobody else has ever done in Poland on the level of a small commune. There was such expectation and such ambition. Then, when Cieszyn Castle started to function as a regional centre of design, mayors simply knew that this is a good advertisement for the town and contributes to its brand. But I still cannot say that the town uses our knowledge the way we would expect and wish. It seems the authorities are satisfied that we promote the town well and that we are an interesting place which attracts young people. Young people (i.e. filling their leisure with worthwhile activities) are always a problem of sorts for a town so it is always emphasised that this is a spot well-liked by young people. And it is good that they come because they are not always willing to go to the community centre or to the theatre. We are a place that also attracts universities, which is also acknowledged with satisfaction. However, we are still not perceived as a bridge or conveyor belt, let alone a partner or advisor. Neither are we perceived as an institution that may improve the standard of public services or the quality of public spaces. I think it is a simple psychological problem. I will use a business metaphor to illustrate it. A strong, developing, successful, award-winning company that is well-established in the market decides to cooperate with designers so that they help to design packaging for a new product. Experienced designers come and say, 'OK, we can make the packaging but in fact there is more to do: the logo and whole brand awareness must be enhanced, and we could do that'. It is professional ethics: they do not have a narrow specialisation but take a broader view. The owner, who was initially enthusiastic about the cooperation, suddenly says, indignantly, 'It cannot be that designers come and tell me that they know better. After all, I am the owner of the company. I have been working for it all my life and now they say that they know better'. Cooperation with designers often reveals problems in communication, trust, openness to change. In the case of that particular company owner, it turned out that it was he who had planned the solutions which the designers unwisely, albeit politely, criticised. We do not want to say in town (and we do everything in our power not to do so because it is not the way) that we could do something better, that we know how to do it better. We have the competences to propose new innovative solutions but the other side should be willing to cooperate, and also to experiment because there are no fast lanes to salvation, as there are problems galore to cope with again and again. Generally, everybody likes the *status quo*, of course

as long as all goes well. The majority of people do not welcome changes until a crisis comes. And sometimes perhaps we follow models which are too ambitious, have too much momentum, which causes apprehension in a small and after all traditional town. And here comes another problem: how to change, without criticising, how to counsel change, without becoming an enemy, even on the subconscious level, because we should 'leave good enough alone'? These are powerful mental patterns, especially in conservative towns. The traditional approach to areas of responsibility is that the Castle is to hold exhibitions, the theatre should stage plays, the authorities are to rule. There is still no will to learn from one another and put each other's competences to use. All this is changing very slowly. Policymakers prefer to notice that Cieszyn Castle brings in European funds rather than it can solve concrete problems. Unfortunately, the majority of institutions operate in some sort of a political vacuum. If we do not know what is expected of us (policymakers often find it difficult to determine the role of culture), we often cannot fulfil it. Even the very opportunity to formulate such expectations would be invigorating.

Local residents often ask what are the real benefits of Cieszyn Castle's activities, and then we can point out various results, which are scattered across many fields. Residents are usually very practically minded. Cieszyn Castle has been in existence for six years and it does not have such an obvious status as a theatre, cinema or nursery school. Everybody knows what the purpose of a nursery school is, but not everybody may know the purpose of The Castle of Art and Entrepreneurship. As long as a single hole remains in the pavement, they will always demand that the authorities pay for its reparation rather than finance 'nobody knows what'. We need something more than an image of Cieszyn Castle as the town's nice, pink visiting card. And so far we have failed to go beyond that pink visiting card, but there is a new opening so we will see. The image and importance of an institution are formed by different pictures: one proposed by Cieszyn Castle and one created by local policymakers. And to them, we are still guardians of the castle hill that eat up EU funds.

Crisis management

Many problems take a lot of time and energy that we have to invest into the basic needs and the core of our activities. When we begin a new undertaking, we always devote to it all our determination, using a combination of limited resources and a small team in order to achieve something of sufficient quality. I think this is our problem: being overactive.

Our determination, consistence and perseverance allow the authorities to rest assured that we will succeed, no matter what. Perhaps it would be advisable to do... nothing. Perhaps that is the way. For now, we are a local institution that performs tasks on many levels – on the local, regional, national levels, without permanent, certain sources of financing. We complete the major tasks regardless of whether or not we have an adequate base. That may be our mistake. Paradoxically, we are particularly aggrieved by the EU projects. Naturally, they teach us discipline, planning, responsibility, evaluation. It is fantastic but, on the other hand, if projects that should begin, say, in April formally start in October and are completed in March, how can we manage them? The problem is that we are always stuck on the red light. It is probably crisis management 300 out of 365 days a year. It is abnormal.

Strategy and manoeuvres

It frequently happens that we set too many goals for ourselves. To us, it is crucial that the projects we run show design as a new quality building instrument as clearly as possible. It is an enormous organisational and conceptual challenge. We should bear in mind that we are a unique cultural institution. Currently, the majority of our substantive staff are project workers. We can say that there would not be any technology transfer or revitalisation activities, and particularly design, if it were not for projects. We would not have enough full-time positions. Projects are our to be or not to be. Projects enable us to invite better experts, run better trainings, offer better pay to people, stay in the network. Yet projects also entail the risk of scattering, and conducting such activities for which funding is available rather than those that are important. A few years ago I was aware that we should reach that stage: transform into a research centre. Certainly, I did not quite know how it could be formally done but I did know that we should reach the field of science and research because it is essential. I knew we would need a stronger legal position. That we have achieved. I knew that the strength of the Castle should be to entwine history, tradition, identity with design and new technologies, with a bias towards public services. This is what we have been involved in over the last couple of years. Nobody in Poland has done it on such a scale. Yet if the majority of our workers are employed in temporary projects, it is in fact impossible to create a strong, task-oriented core involved in the statutory activity of Cieszyn Castle. What we are doing is actually absurd. The amount of undertakings, exhibitions, trainings

without curators, and without full-time specialists causes that, even if I were to work here round the clock, I would still be unable to do what is necessary, especially because on top of all that I am also engaged in crisis management. I still hope that the situation will change in a year or two, and yet it repeats every year, again and again...

There are no ideal solutions in life – there are only possible solutions. We must love the possible ones for being there at all. We are a place where young, gifted people with enormous potential begin their careers, and after several years they sometimes leave us for better positions. They take such decisions in the given moments in their lives. These are persons who have left for London or Warsaw, and they sometimes come back from Warsaw. We are a place that is gradually stabilising and building its team. People gain experience and take up additional post-graduate studies. This way, through organic development, we expand the skills base of our team. We are associated with about a hundred persons: experts and permanent collaborators who operate throughout Poland. They help us to find new persons, new companies and organisations with whom we enter into cooperation.

Conclusion

As a director of an institution, I am sometimes under the impression that I am managing crisis, chaos, but that is part and parcel of managing an innovative institution. Surprisingly, we are heading in the right direction. The system resembles driving:

sometimes we drive along a motorway, sometimes in side streets, but the direction is maintained, even if there are slowdowns, and it is sometimes necessary to change cars. With each passing year there are more participants in our workshops and conferences. More and more often it turns out that we have to supply more folding chairs because there are no empty seats left.

Emerging strategy

Ewa Gołębiowska points out the importance of 'backwards' analysis. It is one of the methods for leaders to control the directions of the institution's development (change) and to safeguard against drift development. With the privilege of experience, familiarity with the meanders of change and plan correction, it is possible to better understand strategic management in practice and develop more rational scenarios of future action. For this reason, it is of crucial importance for the cultural institution to analyse 'emerging' opportunities for development and to discuss them in the team. Working in this way (and relying on practical experience), it is possible to build in practice the strategic potential of the institution.

Basic terms

- **Long-term partnerships and satellites** – a cultural institution realises (or may realise) many projects through participation in partnerships and networking (particularly in EU projects). It is vital to plan how to sustain these relationships which are crucial for institutional development and how to shape contacts with potential partners for short-term cooperation projects. Projects realised in partnerships are the surest method of learning and observing good practices of others, and a way to build the cultural institution's importance in the formation of European cultural policy.
- **Design as an instrument of social change** – an important field of a cultural institution's operations is using 'tools' from the broadly understood field of culture (design, theatre, photography, social surveys, cultural heritage, etc.) to enhance the standard of living or the conditions for economic and social development. As an innovative and creative form of activity that 'improves' daily life, design may be used to promote culture as a space for social change and economic development.
- **Project method work** – it is a method of cultural institution management that brings multiple profits (time, use of competences, budget control, flexibility) but requires high competences of the team and the leader in work coordination and short-term planning. Permanent structures may be built as competence or area teams which cooperate with other internal or external teams in project realisation. Employees who work in different projects and perform different functions in them have the opportunity to learn about the whole institution but their project tasks should be compatible with one another and with institutional mission and identity.

Dilemmas of strategic management in culture

- How to set aims and directions for the development of untypical and innovative institutions?
- How to evaluate the justifiability (effectiveness, legitimacy) of the activities we have embarked on?
- How to daily reconcile local traditional reality of a small town with the open, innovative nature of design?

Ewa Gołębiowska is the author of the concept of Cieszyn Castle and has been its director since 2005 (until 31 December 2010 known as the Silesian Centre of Art and Entrepreneurship in Cieszyn). Cieszyn Castle is as yet

the only regional design centre in Poland. In 2005–2007 she coordinated the implementation of the project The Silesian Design Network, the first integrated programme of design promotion and implementation in Poland. Considered to be a perfect model of implementation of regional innovation strategies, the project has brought visible improvement to the use of design among entrepreneurs and local governments in Silesia and beyond. It has been awarded in the Ministry of Regional Development competitions ‘The Best Investment in People’, ‘Poland Is Growing Beautiful – 7 Wonders of European Funds’ and the Polish Agency for Regional Development competition ‘Leader of Implementation of Regional Innovation Strategies’. She is the coordinator of the projects ‘Regional Network of Promotion and Technology Transfer’ (2005–2007 and 2009–2011) and ‘Revita Silesia’ (2009–2011).

Strategic Dialogue in a Cultural Institution

Example: the Wawel castle vs. the tour guides

The wild flights of fancy that often made tour guides depart from historical truth were always a problem at the Wawel Castle. Rather than draw from the wealth of actual anecdotes, some guides, for reasons known only to themselves, chose to make up their own stories. Their speeches were routinely taken down and their errors pointed out; in extreme cases, they were barred from the museum. The responsibility for how the collection is made available to the public lay with the Department of Education, headed by the Director of the Castle, and this is where the efforts to enhance the quality of guiding services were once undertaken. During the Martial Law in Poland, however, staff from all departments of the National Art Collection at the Wawel Castle were charged with the duty to look after the exhibitions; at this point, everyone heard all the breathtaking stories with their own ears. What was once a problem of a single department suddenly became a problem of the entire institution. The situation called for strategic decision making. The problem of the Education Department was now everybody's business and immediate action was needed. Unfortunately, tour guides were neither related to the National Art Collection at the Wawel Castle on the level of organisation, nor answerable to it for their activities. They belonged, as we would say in our management lingo, to external interest groups or stakeholders. The quality of guiding services in Krakow has always been supervised by multiple institutions: long before WWII, the responsibility lay with the Polish Tatra Society and the Polish Sightseeing Society, which, after the war, merged to become the PTTK (the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society). Today numerous institutions across the city offer tour guide courses, and exams are regularly held at the local Marshal Office. It seems that this is still not enough – not all tour guides possess adequate skills.

Now that the problem had become a strategic issue, the entire institution lent its unanimous support to Bożena Meissner, the Director of the Castle. Efforts invested in tour guide courses and trainings were intensified. It was important to take tour guides around the exposition and to show them that historical anecdotes could be just as riveting as their own made-up stories. Other actions followed suit. Historical publications were brought out and special examinations authorising tour guides to take tours around the Wawel Castle were introduced. Since Wawel is an attraction that very few tourists on a visit to Krakow ever skip, tour guides were hard pressed to ignore the demands of the Castle. It must be noted that the actions were not restrictive. Access to the museum was denied only to the few tour guides who, despite repeated admonitions, persisted in their ways and continued to deceive tourists. At first, the museum, whose name was now changed to the Wawel Royal Castle, focused on assisting others with its expertise; the first exams were only organised several years later. Finally, in 1995, the 'Royal Castle in Krakow' Association was formed and soon took over the management of guiding services on Wawel Hill. Interestingly, the Association first shared its Wawel experience with other educational institutions; today, it offers its own courses for prospective tour guides from Krakow and the region. Thus, the high quality of services at one site now extends to all sites throughout the city. The story of the relationship between the Wawel Castle and the tour guides could serve as a good model for other institutions on how to conduct strategic dialogue with external stakeholders.

The first step in the process was to perform a conscientious situation analysis. The Education Department kept a record of all mistakes that the tour guides made and was well-prepared to take action. The goals of both the institution and the interest group were then examined. They turned out to be contradictory: tour guides wanted their tours to be engaging and tip-worthy, even though they considered the Castle rather uninteresting. This helped to reveal their perceptions of Wawel. Accordingly, the first remedial measures were aimed to change the mentality of the tour guides rather than the institution itself, which also provides a model worthy of emulation. The institutionalisation of these changes, expressed in the Association, was the final coping stone. The Wawel Castle needed a partner institution with which to collaborate, and the cooperation between them survives to this day. Some employees of the Wawel Castle, such as Bożena Meissner, remained active in the Association even after their retirement, which helped improve communication with the Castle and enhanced the

quality of the Association's work. The aims of both institutions are still convergent. The six elements of organisational dialogue, which I briefly discussed above – diagnosis, study of aims and objectives, mentality change, institutionalisation, relationship maintenance, and communication will be the subject of detailed discussion in this chapter.

Diagnosis

Like any other dialogue, strategic dialogue needs two partners. This is why situation diagnosis must take both external and internal stakeholders into consideration. Let me use an example to illustrate what happens when this is neglected. A certain musical theatre in Poland commissioned a study of customer satisfaction among its audiences. Respondents were dissatisfied with short intermissions and complained that the cafeterias worked too slowly. As a result, they had to spend long minutes queuing, and many did not manage to get their coffee before the end of the intermission. The solution seemed clear. Intermissions should be prolonged, cafeterias should be better staffed and the menu should be diversified. The solution was designed to serve the interest of the audience and of the theatre, which would gain additional resources from an increase in sales. Unfortunately, it was met with a rather cold reaction by the actors and the staff. It meant they would need to work longer hours and return home even later than before, which threatened to take a further toll on their family life. The proposal was therefore held back and never put into practice. What was lacking here was a prior diagnosis, not just of customer needs, but also of the needs of the employees. Both sides had a legitimate case and their needs should have been reconciled. The question is how to perform such analyses in large institutions, which often employ people with varying levels of education, from carpenters to extremely well-paid actors.

Team

What I recommend in such cases is to set up a diagnostic team within the institution, which would then, under the supervision of an external moderator, resolve the basic issues related to its operation. The team should include representatives from all internal interest groups: content staff, technical staff and administrative staff. Every representative should be responsible for reporting on the work of the team back to the rest of his interest group. It is advisable that the team include outside persons, who can bring in their points of view, their experience from other organisa-

tions and their awareness of how similar institutions function across the world. Once they have learned the ropes and understood the aims of the diagnosis, the team can proceed to prepare its main diagnostic tool: the questionnaire.

Mapping the ideal organisation

The first step in building a questionnaire is to brainstorm and record on post-its the particular features we think our ideal institution should have. Post-its are then attached to several sheets of grey paper on the wall. After about 150 features have been listed on 150 slips of paper, doubles are removed, and the remaining features are put into clearly defined categories, such as: Vision, Strategies, Internal Relations, External Relations, Management Systems, etc. This can be compared to charting out a map of an 'ideal theater', 'ideal choir', 'ideal museum', or 'ideal library'. People have their dreams and the important thing is to try to reconcile them all. This is why classification alone is not enough; an overall model composed of sentences describing the ideal institution is needed. Once the sentences are listed in one column, and comments added in the other, an initial working diagnosis can be made. The number of individual responses will indicate how far our institution is from the ideal. Results, however, should be further interpreted by the diagnostic team.

The opinions of stakeholders can be diagnosed in a similar fashion. The diagnostic team, however, must be recruited from outside the institution. The more renowned the organisation, the easier it will be to recruit representatives of the wider community to join the team. I know of a publishing house which calls its 'advisory board' together every month to comment on books and titles it intends to publish. Every now and then, a writer is invited; this ensures that certain benefits can be gained from being part of the board, even if no money is earned. Members of the board feel they have a real influence on how the organisation operates, while the publishing house can be sure that the books it decides to publish will not draw negative reactions from the readers. The board is composed of over one hundred members. Each monthly meeting is attended by about twenty; the more interesting the meeting and the guests invited, the higher the turnout. When it comes to the ideal vision and the mapping workshop, people are needed who will get themselves deeply involved in our project. Obviously, diagnostic techniques are much greater in number. It is important to secure the services of an able moderator to chair the discussions.

Goals

Already at the stage of mapping the ideal vision, differences of opinion, caused by disagreements over goals and values, are likely to come to light among the participants of the workshop. They are bound to appear given their varied backgrounds. A student who continues to receive financial support from his parents will have different goals than a person with a stable professional and family life. People involved with the institution on a short-term basis will see things differently than those for whom the institution is the main source of income. In addition, the workshop is often attended by an outstanding individual who has a vision of his own, but is not always able to get it across to others. It is no wonder, then, that the discussion over goals is more challenging in the field of culture than it is in business, where many controversies are easily solved by economic criteria. A cultural institution is supposed to change people and their understanding of the world; it cannot just pander to everyone's tastes. When it questions them, however, it is bound to incur the dissatisfaction of the team or the customers. Some differences in values and goals can be reconciled over time. Others cannot be reconciled at all. If the latter is the case, the institution must be divided or some people must leave. Not all conflicts are positive. Some can annihilate the institution.

The most natural way to solve a conflict is to find a person who will become a crowd-puller of sorts. Certain people attract others not just by virtue of their views and visions, but because their life is always in agreement with the ideas they profess. Full of kindness, they take a positive attitude towards everyone regardless of their differences; they are modest people and good listeners. Such individuals, however, are usually difficult to spot. They rarely demand credit for their ideas; rather than win recognition, they just want to put their vision into practice. If such people are on the team, it is much easier for the group to agree on common goals; if not, other team members have no choice but to take their place. Real change in the world comes from a change in individuals, and external success must be preceded by inner victory.

Sometimes, the management or one of the powerful interest groups force through a solution which is not accepted by everyone. It soon turns out to be a failure. Life is the acid test of goals, ideas and solutions; it is only a matter of time before the wrong ones are exposed. However, some differences of opinion can be quite easily reconciled. These are discussed in the next section.

Changes in mentality

The mentality of the cultural institution employees

On his analysis of the progress that civilisation has made over the ages, Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski draws a very interesting conclusion. Apparently, development occurred in those countries and nations where individuals who understood the laws and mechanisms governing the world proportionally outnumbered those who were naïve or ignorant. This rule can equally well be extended to the life of organisations. A good employee needs to think like a manager. It is only then that he can take personal responsibility for the entire institution. This is why all staff, regardless of their position, need to be notified of everything that happens inside and outside the institution. It is no longer sufficient to send out circulars or monthly newsletters, which no one ever reads. Information should be passed on in such a way as to make everyone understand the influence it will have on their lives. Therefore, it is not enough just to say that the Parliament has recently passed a new bill; it is vital to spell out clearly how the bill is likely to affect the everyday running of the institution. The entire team should come together at least once a month to discuss the current issues facing the organisation, to meet new employees, and to see presentations of new and completed projects. In order to make the meetings more attractive and draw a larger turnout, it is always a good idea to invite an interesting person to join the discussion. Preferably, this should be a surprise; after a while, it will serve to ensure a large turnout at other meetings as well.

Besides regular notifications, it is also necessary to provide staff with regular trainings, and not just in occupational health and safety. A several-month-long crash course teaching rudimentary facts about the institution is needed, and participation should be obligatory for all employees. The course should cover the history of the institution, legal, financial and organisational aspects of its operation, factual information, methodologies employed by similar institutions in other countries and regions of Poland, and, above all, issues concerning media mechanisms and the promotion of culture. If possible, it would also be helpful to visit other institutions or teams working in a similar field.

The mentality of target groups and sponsors

In order to shape their future audiences, many institutions, such as libraries, concert halls, museums, or theatres choose to draw up special educational programs for schools. Despite great efforts and investments,

these often fall short of the desired result. One reason might be that television has now become an attractive source of entertainment that many find difficult to resist. There is only one institution still capable of threatening it – the Internet, and especially YouTube. YouTube, however, is governed by its own laws, different from those of traditional marketing. A very effective advertising technique on the net is ‘viral video’, i.e. a clip which is considered so interesting and attractive that users begin to pass it on among themselves. One such viral video, which has recently become popular, is *Hallelujah* from the *Messiah* oratorio by Haendel, performed at a bar by the Niagara Choir conducted by Robert Cooper. The performance was watched live by only a few dozen people, but as these words are written, the YouTube video has already been played over 27.5 million times all over the world. People interested in the performance have visited the website of the sponsor, and even that of the choir itself.

The art of communication with sponsors is to a large extent still in its infancy. We continue to employ traditional strategies to recruit sponsors for cultural projects. Audiences and sponsors should be as well-informed about what goes on in an institution as its staff. But how to reach potential targets? For this purpose, it is necessary to strengthen various ancillary functions, and simply give recognition to those responsible for marketing, advertising, image building and fundraising. In commercial projects, the costs of promotion, advertising and marketing can be several times as great as production costs. In order to make a splash, culture needs to have access to comparable resources; otherwise, the commercial advertisement, which passes – and passes itself – for art, will always prevail. This proposal, however, encounters much resistance from the creators of culture. They find it difficult to accept that the budget set aside for promotion should be higher than the fees paid to artists and performers, and hold on to the belief that true art will prevail no matter what. Unfortunately, there is ample evidence to the contrary. Culture also requires the support of actions and ancillary processes which at first glance seem totally alien to its nature.

Institutionalisation

The tendency nowadays is not to sponsor institutions but individual culture-related projects, with the aim to enhance quality and reduce administrative costs. The phenomenon is particularly common with regard to the funds made available to Poland after its accession to the EU. While it is true that great works of culture were sponsored by

their patrons as 'projects', it should also be noted that many great artists worked as music teachers, court painters or, at least, guild members, to earn their living. The fate of those without stable jobs was often sad, if not tragic. Project management is well-justified and should be supported but, on the other hand, it is also essential to build institutions which could give artists a basic sense of security on a long-term basis and enable them to take part in social life. However, here, too, as in the case of welfare, the government increasingly attempts to relegate its constitutional obligations to the non-profit sector, which is able to provide many services at a lower cost than government agencies would owing to the work of volunteers. Sponsored by district authorities, though still underfinanced, institutions slowly lose their fundraising skills and become entirely dependent on the poor but permanent sponsor. They may seem independent but in fact the bulk of their budget comes from local government funds. Looking for external sponsors, on the other hand, is not as easy as it may seem. With a few exceptions, Polish companies and entrepreneurs do not possess adequate resources to pay an honest wage to their own employees, let alone to become sponsors. To boot, Polish tax laws hardly encourage sponsorship. The only positive development in this respect has been the increase in the number of people who donate the permitted 1% of their income tax to non-profit organisations. However, cultural institutions must still compete in this category with numerous charitable enterprises, clinics, shelters, and hospices.

To be effective, institutionalisation must be motivated not only by the search for funding, as it often is, but by a common mission which brings together members, staffs and artists alike. It is possible that the mission and its objectives will not fit in with the EU priorities. If so, the institution may either adapt its aims to the EU guidelines or stand by its own vision and learn to acquire funds elsewhere, building an extensive community base for its activities. Judging from the budget difficulties increasingly experienced by the European Union itself, subsidies can be expected to decrease gradually, and it is the organisations which are able to survive without them that will eventually lead the field. The effort we invest in identity-building and stakeholder relations today is sure to pay dividends tomorrow. The EU funds and local government sponsorship are like doping drugs in sport. While they work wonders in the short run, their long-term use destroys organisational structures and damages the interests of sponsors, spectators and customers. They cause the atrophy of structures and func-

tions, such as fundraising, promotion and reputation-building, which are vital to the functioning of all cultural institutions.

On the other hand, effective information, competence, and the commitment of leaders, act as a magnet for sponsors, artists and staff. All measures, however, will fail if our institution is among ten others the artist must work for in order to make a living. The only solution is to build long-lasting relationships, and this is discussed in the following section.

Long-term relationships

The most frequent long-term relationship is that between a given cultural institution and its sponsor, most typically the local government. Institutions that receive funding directly from the state budget are few and far between. Until recently, long-term relationships were associated with the search for a single, wealthy sponsor, such as the local government. However, it is clear that financial dependence also entails dependence on other levels, which may damage the quality of the institution's work. Local governments come and go following all new elections, and the institution can be subject to similar changes. It is better to opt for long-term relationships, but of a smaller calibre. A small institution can build a dozen such relationships, and a big one as many as several hundred. The actual number should depend on the permanent budget needed to secure the survival of the organisation and to support its basic 'life functions'. What these relationships will be depends on the particular context of any given institution.

If the organisation owns real estate, it can enter into long-term relationships with tenants of commercial space in the building. If it has a large room, it can maintain long-term relationships with companies who rent it for their conventions or Christmas get-togethers for the staff. Permanent cooperation with schools may involve regular creative workshops for students, with advertising agencies – orders for compositions and music recordings. It is also possible to form an alliance with other non-profit organisations and combine the cultural mission with charity, as in charity auctions of paintings and benefit concerts. A well-planned and well-advertised charity concert can prove beneficial for both institutions. The bigger the institution, the higher its permanent costs, and accordingly, the number of such alliances must also be greater. A small jazz band can afford to perform in two or three night clubs only, but a symphony orchestra needs to look for permanent contracts with record labels, plan annual shows and tour the most important festivals. It sometimes boggles the mind that many folk

bands playing Latin American music in the street sell records, while a large renowned choir performing original music often has nothing to offer to spectators as they leave the concert hall.

Last but not least, permanent partners can be recruited from the communities formed around cultural institutions. An example would be the fan community which gathered around a blog written by Piotr Rubik. The composer crisscrossed Poland to meet with his fan base at special get-togethers; no other artist has ever taken as many photographs with his fans. And it all started with an unfortunate motorbike accident; bed-ridden, Rubik decided to start a blog. However, it is not common for an artist or institution to have enough time to engage in similar activities. In addition, institutions frequently underestimate 'the law of large numbers'. Fan-based communities can be so large that even small donations by members add up to sizeable sums. Communities can directly support an institution if it knows how to communicate with them. This brings us to the last section.

Mass communication

The problems experienced by cultural institutions are civilisational and systemic. As a result of the enormous progress in the sciences and impressive technological advancement, people began to believe that science had an answer to everything. It is now commonly held that it is the address to turn to for an answer to humanity's fundamental questions. Interestingly, despite the progress in technology, the sense of happiness in people has not increased for many years now, and many other social indicators, such as divorce rates, diseases of civilisation, and juvenile delinquency have been steadily deteriorating. People are slowly waking up to the fact that besides (1) scientific knowledge based on scientific hypotheses, other types of knowledge are also important: (2) knowledge which grows out of personal experience, (3) knowledge which presents the experience of others, as in art, music, ballet or literature, (4) knowledge based on faith. Importantly, all these make perfect sense if they can alter the fate of a person and make her or him a better human being. (5) Practical knowledge, in turn, is the summit of all the other types. As Mahatma Gandhi once memorably put it, the seven deadly sins of today are "politics without principle, wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity, and worship without sacrifice."

Culture gives people their full humanity back, it restores the plenitude they long for. In this sense its mission is simple. The question is: are the representatives of culture able to define their goals clearly and then to communicate them to others? Can they distance themselves from the achievements of civilisation, while using them to convey their message? Another serious issue facing cultural institutions is time. The founder of Southwest Airlines, one of the leading airlines in the world, used to say that while you could quickly purchase planes, open ticket windows and recruit staff, organisational culture is not built in a day. This holds equally well for culture at large; culture likewise needs processes which take years, while civilisation promises to deliver it all in a split second. The time pressure is fatal to culture and its institutions. This is yet another challenge to face. To sum up, I wish to propose a short list of guiding principles which should be followed by organisations for maximum communicative success. Chip and Dan Heath, two American scholars, explained why some messages attract our attention, while others pass unnoticed. The following rules are inspired by their findings. Cultural institutions should always bear them in mind when communicating with internal and external stakeholders.

Simplicity

The message we wish to convey to wide masses of people should be simple and easy to comprehend. This is not to say literature should be reduced to a comic book; the goal is to make sure that the title of the book, exhibition or a music performance is simple but engaging enough to encourage the audience to look for depth and complexity. The same applies to every event we want to describe to other people. Once we succeed in achieving simplicity, it is time to look at yet another feature.

Unpredictability

Psychologists speak of an orientation reflex. If anyone saw the Niagara Choir performance, it was unpredictability that attracted their attention. Unpredictability captivated people gathered at the bar and internet users who continue to forward the video recording to one another. However, unpredictable actions must still make sense. They cannot simply try to attract attention at all costs, which is sometimes the case with certain young artists.

Concreteness

People need facts, events, things they can relate to their own lives; they look for the concrete and the tangible. Let us imagine a film director who seeks sponsors and decides to approach a businessman. The conversation has already been going on for half an hour, but the businessman still doesn't know the most important thing: how much? The sponsor usually wants to know exactly what the money is going to be spent on, how much this and that costs, and why. If he hears a straightforward answer, the sponsorship will probably continue; if, on the other hand, she has doubts as to where her money goes, she is likely to withdraw her support altogether.

Credibility

It is impossible to check everything first-hand. Instead, we often need to rely on trust. It stands to reason that an organisation will profit if it recruits a trusted authority figure to its information campaign. However, credibility can also be a feature of a particular message or a particular communication style which inspires trust in what is being said.

Emotional appeal

It is time to abandon the belief that people are only influenced by reasoned argumentation. Older, well-established institutions may just as well appeal to memories and nostalgia. They may attempt to bring back emotions from the past. This, in fact, is the style preferred by the Warsaw Rising Museum. Emotions come up when our words appeal to the one we address on a personal level, be it through associations, imagined benefits, or through identification with the subject or the speaker. Messages should bring these elements forward. For this purpose, it is necessary to know the addressee really well. And yet artists and institutions tend to focus so much on themselves, and on their own problems, that they hardly acknowledge the audiences at all.

Stories

Our cognitive system loves to hear stories. Stories often convey truths and values but do so in an attractive way. Our messages should include stories. And yet cultural institutions tend to avoid them. The most spectacular case in point is the statement by Jeffrey Archer; in an interview, he said that he did not stand a chance of winning a Nobel Prize in literature since the Nobel committee clearly favours artistic prose. Let us not, then, be afraid

to tell our stories when we speak to stakeholders, this may be the only way to make sure they will hear us.

Conclusion

The article aimed to discuss the relationships with different sorts of stakeholders, both internal, such as employees, artists, promotion staff, administrative and technical staff, and external, such as sponsors, local governments, state authorities, spectators, readers, etc. These relationships should be built through organisational dialogue. The process is not governed by chance; it should follow a strictly defined order. At the first stage, a situation diagnosis is performed and goals are agreed upon in a narrow team of organisation representatives. Only once this precondition has been met can other individuals be invited to join the dialogue. It is important to bear in mind that dialogue more often than not requires an inner change designed to adjust our worldview to the reality. When this change is complete, institutionalisation and the building of stable long-term relationship networks can follow in order to ensure that the institution will realise its mission effectively. The art of communication with modern time-focused media requires thorough preparation. In the final section of the article, I proposed a list of guiding principles designed to help formulate such successful messages.

Basic terms

- **Diagnosis** – an assessment of how far the organisation is from the ideal as we imagine it
- **Goals** – what members, employers, audiences and other stakeholders wish to achieve with the help of the organisation
- **Mentality** – the image of the organisation and its mission in the minds of its stakeholders
- **Institutionalisation** – giving a legal or institutional form to informal relations
- **Long-term relationships** – relationships with people and institutions which go beyond participation in immediate projects and last for many years
- **Effective mass communication** – formulating the message so that it becomes a permanent, recognisable and eagerly repeated element of organisational development

Dilemmas of strategic management in culture

- When the aims of the institution are discussed, should the personal goals of people involved in the organisation be taken into account?
- How can we ensure that the institution survives and how to increase the sense of security of those who committed to it?
- How should we inform the public about the institution and its activities? How can we make these messages memorable?

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The oldest and largest library in the Silesia region, **The Silesian Library** is a scientific provincial public library which:

- caters for the needs of the academic community of Silesian universities,
- offers materials related to the scope and directions in academic research conducted in Silesian research centres,
- provides instruction and methodological support for municipal public libraries.

The Library catalogues its collections following the policies adopted by the predecessors of The Silesian Library: The Silesian Parliament Library (1922–1936) and the Józef Piłsudski Silesian Public Library (1936–1945). The Silesian Library collection includes documents in all scientific disciplines, with special focus on Juridical Sciences, Economics, Social Sciences, Humanities and regional literature (*silesiaca*), i.e. writings on historical and present day Silesia and Dąbrowski Basin, covering administrative changes in the region.





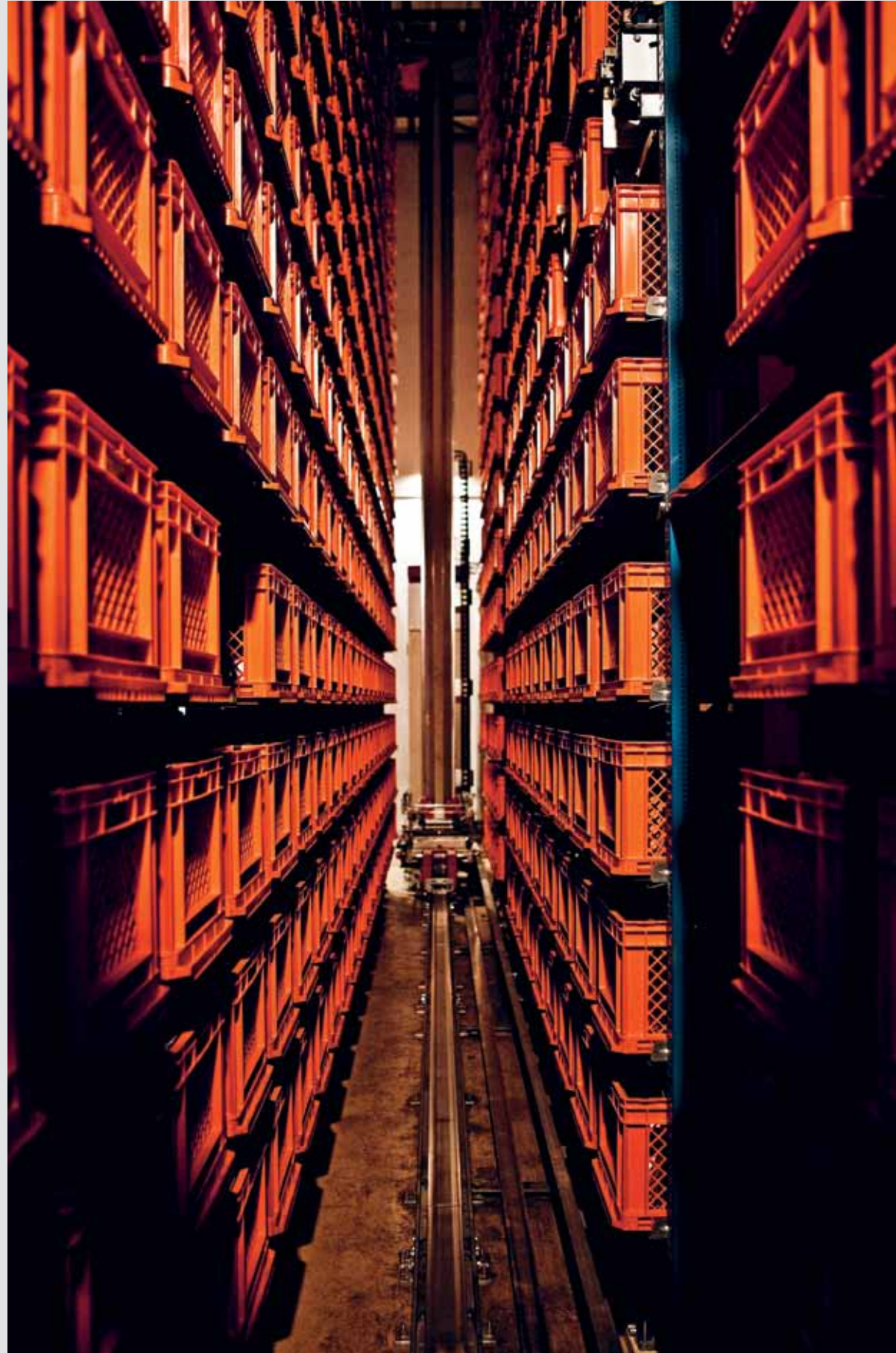
Mateusz Ściążko, who is responsible for organising an inventory of old prints.



Adam Grycner, who is responsible for digitalisation and scans correction for the Silesian Digital Library.







Work Ethics in a Cultural Institution

Example: Loose morals – strict ethics at the start

The lifestyle in some artistic circles, and also the lifestyle at their bureaucratic base, is marked with a certain ‘ease of manner’, corresponding to the popular image of the artist as an eccentric who walks his own paths. Are artists and artists’ friends really allowed to do more? Perhaps so – strong personalities may sometimes secure the right to unconventional behaviour. Naturally, on condition that it is a likely context for undeniably valuable works of art that they create. It is unseemly for an ordinary philistine to get drunk in the restaurant, but is it so for an artist? And for a cultural department official, accompanying the artist in the feast? Probably all the more so. Contrary to appearances, we do not have to answer the question whether ‘people of culture are allowed to do more or not while discussing the ethics of the world of art and culture. Even if such a ‘dispensation’ be granted, it can only happen in the sphere of social conventions, not in ethics. As regards an honest, just and responsible attitude, and virtues such as honour, generosity or civic commitment, artists and people of culture, like the whole intelligentsia, have no lesser, and in fact greater, responsibilities than others. Cultural institutions should also be, so to say, ‘cultural ethics institutions’, and may be expected to practise the highest ethical standards. Loose social conventions in some (but definitely not all) cultural circles may be a source of temptation to allow oneself to do more, when honesty, justice and other moral demands are at stake. Overly strict social conventions corrupt morality, for example by fostering hypocrisy, but loose morals also harm our morale, by fostering carelessness, and even pride, expressed in the supposition that, since (as artists) we are unique, we are allowed to do more. Actually, it should be less rather than more, and let us hold on to that.

Each professional environment has its own specificity, and some flaws that are its upshots. The ethical problems of each environment are typical and

characteristic of it, although there are also ordinary failings which mar the moral appearance of almost all social groups. We can come across liars, opportunists, career makers, and envious, lazy and good-for-nothing people everywhere. There is no need here to elaborate on the need to do one's duties conscientiously, to be truthful and reliable. Everyone is aware of it and understands it. I intend to focus on what is truly unique for the world of cultural institutions. These will not be groundbreaking discoveries – after all, those who work for such institutions understand, better than I do, how they operate or what happens in them.

I am not concerned here with discovering new things or passing moral judgments, which is easy in the case of overt misdeeds, and extremely difficult in the case of conflicting, complex moral arguments, but with the approach towards and consideration of embarrassing and often omitted issues. Omit-

Strategy – what is left unsaid

In order to understand strategic management in a cultural institution, it is vital to take notice not only of what its managers say but also – of what is left unsaid. Those glossed over issues are often problems with the institution's identity, its entanglement in power relations and 'unethical' relations – issues that everybody knows about but 'nothing can be done about'. It is more effective to deal with 'substantive' issues, evading a fundamental discussion. Thus a problem that is difficult to cope with is evaded. Depending on organisational culture, such spheres either turn into taboo topics (addressed in backstage conversation, if at all) or into jokes that relieve tension and ensuing understatements.

ting moral issues sustains the pretence that they do not exist, and consequently fosters reprehensible practices. If we want to reduce their amount, we must learn to call them by their name and overcome the embarrassment it evokes in public discourse. This is the essence of the present chapter. It is supposed to help the staff of cultural institutions to consider moral issues in their professional life. It is not true that awareness of the existence of these problems, or even talking about them, solves them but it definitely renders them less poignant.

Opportunism and moonlighting, or culture in the embrace of politics

The issue of the uniqueness of art and culture is closely connected with the question of the relation between freedom in art and the demands posed to artists and staff of cultural institutions by the law, bureaucracy and socio-political conditions. Inevitably, artists work in the society and for the society, even if they whip it with criticism or turn their backs on it in revolt or voluntary alienation. In this sense, every artist is an opportunist – if s/he wants to have an audience, s/he must adulate them in some way. The very same dissonance between freedom and opportunism refers indirectly to cultural activists, including clerks and full-time

employees of cultural institutions. On the one hand, they are morally obliged to support the freedom of art, to safeguard the artists' right to a certain eccentricity and alienation and respect for non-conformist or even 'transgressive' acts, but on the other hand they must remain loyal to the institution for which they work, realise its goals (including economic objectives), and, above all, follow the regulations. Reconciling these demands may be extremely difficult, particularly if we collaborate with artists who are socially engaged or politically controversial.

As a rule, cultural institutions have their statutes, which determine the aims of their operations and state their distinctive mission. The mission is almost always democratic and republican. It means that cultural institutions usually have to work for the benefit of the whole community, or the whole society, and not only for a distinguished or privileged part, and moreover – they should work not for the good of individuals but the whole community of those organisational units, i.e. for the good of the 'society' and even 'state'. The concept of culture as 'pro-state' activity is morally suspicious, and yet it is still dominant, particularly in public institutions that foster and disseminate culture. We can hardly expect the state to engage in something that is not 'pro-state'. Moreover, in view of the current democratic conditions based on the premise of equality of all citizens, any cultural activity that might antagonise a part of the society, for example through criticism of some of its sections, seems, at least at the first glance, to be inappropriate and appears not to deserve support, even if it is outstanding in terms of artistic merit. In this way, it is easy to favour such political aims as fostering patriotism or moral reinforce-

Dangerous issues that do not follow the consensus over 'what is allowed'. Compare with the text by Marek Krajewski:

'Ideally, the cultural institution should both give the sense of rootedness and offer ways of redefining identity, so that it corresponds with the changes in the world around us.

This is, naturally, a tremendous challenge for the cultural institution. It is not easy to be a safe, familiar place and at the same time to enter into a local conflict over a problem or a challenge, to create something controversial'. More on p. 35.

ment and unification of the society, and to depreciate activities which are at odds with republican values, for instance pluralism, criticism, non-conformism, not to mention derisive or accusatory attitudes expressed through extraordinary artistic forms. We all know the case of Dorota Nieznalska's work which has been dragging on for a decade now.¹ Regardless of our opinion of it, we must admit that exhibiting a work of art,

which we know in advance will cause violent backlash among defenders of religion and morals, on the premises of a cultural institution is an act of courage. I suspect that few employees of cultural institutions would

1 In 2001 Dorota Nieznańska publicly displayed her work 'The Passion', which featured a representation of the Crucifixion combined with an image of male genitals. It caused a scandal, and she was sued for causing religious offence (trans. note).

find the courage in themselves. If you are Anda Rottenberg, in other words a person in an established professional position and an authority, you can probably allow yourself to do more – if you are an ordinary employee, who depends on his/her superior, each controversial cultural project may turn into your professional 'to be or not to be'.

The temptation of political opportunism grows the stronger the less liberal the society is. In a country that has had as little experience of democracy as Poland, a country that is so poorly versed in pluralism and multiculturalism, it is particularly difficult to act in the cultural sphere in a politically courageous way, for example by launching ventures which contain an element of criticism towards the publicly established traditions and habits, not to mention religious relations. Naturally, we cannot find ourselves obliged to be heroic and to shelter eccentricity. A cultural activist, however, should take into account the risk of some institutional consequences, such as criticism from the authorities or the proverbial 'subsidy cuts', if it is necessary to defend artistic freedom and the whole space of art, in which artists and recipients have the right to freely communicate with one another without inquisitorial supervision of moral or political entities. There is no clear demarcation line between a cultural activist's opportunism and moral courage on the one hand, and moral courage and heroism on the other. Everybody should bear in mind, however, that there is a spectrum of possibilities here, in which an honest and discerning professional must find a place.

Opportunism paves the way to mediocrity and misleading hypocrisy in cultural activities, and even to hyped propaganda, which derides art and insults its true values. The way leads through cliché and fiction, or pretended cultural activity, which is in fact merely routine moonlighting. You must remember the opening scene in the comedy series *Alternatywy 4*. The hero is the manager of the cultural department in Pułtusk. The scene shows how a poet is commissioned to hold three fictitious poetry reading evenings and how dissatisfied he is with the fee. In the PRL culture fared relatively well, but political opportunism corrupted its official circulation in a disgraceful and discreditable way. In a democracy, the threat is obviously smaller, but it should not be underestimated. Winds always blow and currents always flow, and it is worth floating with them. I shall return to this issue in a different context. And as far as the political dimension of opportunism is concerned, we should also mention the phenomenon for which Gombrowicz coined the term 'upupianie' in his *Ferdydurke*. This amusing expression²

2 In Polish 'pupa' denotes someone's 'bottom'; 'upupianie' sounds like 'making someone sit on their bottom' (transl. note).

refers to manipulation by ridiculing someone's aspirations to be free and independent through patronising behaviour (in the book, it refers to pupils; here, by analogy, to artists). Patting 'independent artists' on the shoulder, and especially paying and rewarding them is a sure way to compromise their 'underground' or avantgarde image. Although an artist who is lured by commercialism and agrees to cooperate with event organisers, who meets producers' expectations, and, above all, fulfils those of the 'wide audience', spoils his or her own image – employees of cultural institutions may also be partly to blame here. Spoiling and deriding artists should not be allowed, just as it should not be allowed to lower the standards of institutional activity in order to boost popularity of the events organised by the institution, to improve economic conditions and gain the favour of the offices that allocate funds for cultural activity. Certainly, a compromise is needed here, as well – dissemination of culture is, after all, a statutory duty of budget institutions, so to some degree it should be guided by mass popularity, i.e. follow the tastes of less discerning recipients. All the more reason, then, to know the limits and guard against the temptation to moonlight under the pretence of alleged cultural policy. Cultural policy is important but if it is conducted in the spirit of 'instilling the (only valid) values', 'spreading knowledge of the nation's culture and tradition', as the communist lingo put it, then it is a straight way to propaganda rubbish; if it is to be a policy aimed to 'raise the rate of social participation in culture', there looms the spectre of eclectic identification of sophisticated culture with mass culture. It is not a subject we should discuss at length in a chapter on ethics, yet it is always important to bear in mind that everything that concerns cultural policy, on the scale of the country, region or even a single city, has an ethical dimension.

Partiality and prejudice, or pretentious culture

Political opportunism and pandering to inferior tastes is one thing, and opportunism towards artistic trends is another. If the former may be called political servilism, the latter can be referred to as snobbery. Snobbery is not bad when it is kept in hand. Even a cultural institution activist or a civil servant working in the field of culture has the right to be satisfied and excited when in contact with celebrities, has the right to show off familiarity with the art world, and even try to emulate artists' behaviour. These are trifles, without any moral import. It is much worse in the case of imaginary pretensions to being knowledgeable and

transferring one's own likings into the area of planning cultural activities. It is true that expressing some preferences is unavoidable, and sterile impartiality would be false and unbelievable, yet forcing one's own tastes on a cultural institution and its beneficiaries, i.e. participants of cultural events, and satisfying one's own snobbery and self-interest while planning the programme is highly reprehensible. There is nothing worse than a director of a cultural institution who enters into contracts with 'the best' who only happen to be 'the best' because they are his acquaintances, while the director thinks the reverse, that he or she knows them because it is worth knowing the best. We shall elaborate on relationships later. Here the thing in question is vanity. Opinionated employees of cultural institutions imagine that they expertly know a certain field of art, for instance music and painting, and their taste is an appropriate measure of quality. They do not seek advice or consult their colleagues and experts, but know everything best by themselves. Interestingly, instead of leading to whimsical, and hence somewhat original, judgements, vanity gives only an illusion of originality and independence of opinions that a buffoon claims to possess, while in reality the desire to be acknowledged is stronger so their whole alleged independence turns into snobbery and imitation. A vain person's whims and pretensions are ultimately obsequious to those who are popular at the time. Obviously, trendy, 'newfangled', top artists may actually be very good but more often than not they owe their success to skilful promotion or coincidence, while in reality their output is merely passable, if not mediocre. Keeping on a lead of fashion and one's own snobbery results in the fact that many artists whose output is equally good as that of the recognised and overestimated ones are unjustly passed over.

A seemingly minor vice – it's just snobbery, after all – may bring forth injustice and destroy many artists' careers. In some sensitive disciplines, passing over certain phenomena and certain persons may result in irretrievable and irrecoverable cultural loss. Cultural institutions are morally obliged to hold artistic patronage, on their own scale, that goes beyond what is best and stretches further into what is possible, what is artistically valuable. The idea to 'leave good enough alone' may be true in major national or international institutions. However, by principle the overwhelming majority of cultural institutions work 'for people', i.e. for the general rather than just elitist public, and for artists who perform or exhibit their works there. The tastes, artistic beliefs and interests of the managers of those institutions, especially if they are public organisations,

cannot decide about everything. If it so happens, it means they are driven by arrogance and injustice, in a nutshell – by self-interest.

Snobbery has yet another face. When we do not have an opportunity to move in the higher artistic circles, among celebrities, we can only artificially create a circle of artists who praise one another and form a regular ‘clientele’ of a cultural institution, which may even be established to serve that purpose. In colloquial language it is called ‘a mutual appreciation society’. In some branches of art, especially in visual art, this kind of snobbery sometimes acquires catastrophic proportions. Coalitions of mediocre creators with mediocre reviewers and mediocre managers build whole artistic ‘microworlds’, where colleagues visit colleagues’ previews and exhibitions only to welcome their return visits. Cultural parasitism is flourishing, not infrequently sponsored from public funds. Conducted in this way, promotion of mediocrity and worthlessness leads not only to wastage but exposes contemporary art to ridicule. There is a car commercial featuring a couple who steal a coat that is an element of an ‘installation’ being watched by bamboozled snobs reading the catalogue and looking reverently at a coat rack and at the thieves whom they apparently take for ‘performers’. Art is derided in such a vulgar manner for that very reason. Snobbery and vanity go hand in hand with worthlessness and cunning. All too rarely do cultural institutions make a stand against these, ultimately ethical rather than artistic, occurrences. I would venture to say that if we used more common sense and simple honesty, half of our ‘postmodernist’ dilemmas as to the ‘limits of art’ would disappear. The majority of ‘border cases’ would simply end up in the dustbin, and others would not emerge. Such is a marriage of aesthetics and ethics...

‘Connections’ and rivalry, or culture in the clutches of bureaucrats

At the beginning I mentioned a hypothetical ‘cultural department official’ who revels with artists. It might have aroused justified opposition. After all, officials should keep away from clients so that there is no suspicion of bias or corruption. A peculiarity of ‘cultural bureaucracy’ is a curious dispensation from the principle of self-restraint that applies to bureaucrats. Cultural managers, also at the office level, must be familiar, as best they can, with works of art, their creators, critics and reviewers, and disputes in these circles. In addition, they are entitled, and in some cases even obligated, to hold opinions on artistic, literary and cultural issues in general. Unlike the majority of official procedures, which state objective and legally binding criteria of official proceedings and hold

all citizens to be equal, in culture aesthetic assessment also matters, so the infamous 'discretionary element' has its legal hotbed here. Unfortunately, that peculiarity and ensuing privilege for bureaucrats to 'rub shoulders' with artists must also bear bad fruit: old-boyism, coterie and other 'connections' which are detrimental to transparency and fairness of procedures. Evil is tempting not only to civil servants. Artists and employees of cultural institutions who have fingers in two pies, in the world of art and the world of bureaucracy, play a double game. They are the most interesting to us, though the link between 'artist', 'artist-manager of a cultural institution' and 'cultural official' may in many cases be direct and logical. It is not so bad if unfairness stems from being biased. But when partiality is strengthened by common dishonesty and self-interest, it is hell, or at least a taste of it. Naturally, the degree of exposure of people in culture to the temptations of broadly understood corruption and, as it were, daily immersion in the murky water of relationships and activities on the border of lawfulness is extremely uneven because it depends on the branch and position. The situation of a librarian, museologist or publisher is radically different from that of a music band manager, TV producer or theatre director. They may have one basic thing in their professional lives in common, though: all of them may be clients of the culture budget and apply for subsidies from public funds, thus becoming more or less dependent on central and local offices. In many cases, it is mutual dependence because one never becomes a policymaker by accident and never for life. If we add non-public institutions supporting culture, such as scholarship foundations, patronage institutions, sponsors and the media to the budget sphere, we will get a complex picture of a system of mutual dependencies, or ready-made 'connections'. They become 'connections' in the negative sense because they are governed by dishonest, non-transparent rules and private interest. Unfortunately, in every redistribution system in which every sphere of activity is financed in part from the state budget or other public funds such 'connections' do get established. It is impossible to do away with them, but much may be done to prevent their emergence. It must be said that 'at the beginning' there is always law: rules and procedures. They tend to be deficient, however, and do not keep abreast of reality. The worse they are, the less we respect them and the easier it becomes to break them or simply to 'evade' them. It usually consists in creating bureaucratic fiction, involving white and serious lies 'at the entrance', while applying for funds, and 'at the exit', in accounts and

reports. I would not venture to say that all veracity-breaking devices used in applications and cost estimates to ensure subsidies, and ploys used to account for the awarded resources, despite being spent otherwise than in the cost estimate, deserve to be morally condemned. Impractical regulations must sometimes be broken in order to be applied at all. It is a pathology and hypocrisy but the blame must fall on those who pass unrealistic and impractical regulations, unwise application forms etc. rather than on those who try to use them at the cost of minor offences. Let me repeat the adjective 'minor'. It is not a precise category but it is in fact quite clear. The game of 'blind man's bluff', played by officials, is intended to cover slight variations from the actual state of affairs which are well known to both sides: to officials and applicants who ask for subsidies and who account for them. Fortunately, it is still clear what it means that someone has organised an event in a decent way, and who has not, but has illegally profited from it.

In bureaucratic systems some people have 'connections' and others do not. These 'connections' usually mean social relationships or corruption, although in the sphere of culture they may also be upshots of fame and prestige. Renowned, recognised artists have 'connections' everywhere – and nowhere. The explanation is simple: they usually (but not always) get what they want, and often pick and choose among offers without soliciting for anything. This principle is to a certain extent true for cultural institutions with which such artists wish to cooperate. Their importance grows if they 'attend to' distinguished artists. Moreover, a cultural institution may acquire such a strong political position in the city that potential dissatisfaction of its managers with cooperation with local authorities may affect the officials in power. There is nothing wrong in the fact that cultural institutions participate in politics and negotiate their interests in the local political arena. What is reprehensible, however, is the formation of social coteries in which statutory activity, i.e. culture, is subjected to material interests and egoistic ambitions of a certain group of people who are interconnected by joint business. In this context it must be firmly stated that stigmatisation and overt criticism of such behaviours deserve applause and support. In Poland there still lingers the conviction that, for the sake of cultural workers' reputation and out of moral disgust with all forms of informing on others, we should bear gross injustice and corruption in one's own professional environment. It is partly a vestige of communism, and partly – a justification of one's own opportunism and inactivity. Defending justice, and especially upholding

freedom in culture, borders on heroism. There is always hope, however, that courage will be rewarded with social recognition.

Conclusion

Moral virtue probably does not pay off. A cultural institution that toes the political line and panders to popular tastes will fare better. The high ethos of elitist and truly free culture is accessible to few. And yet everyone should answer the question of what exactly they can do, and set a moral standard for themselves. A minimum of decency that we should strive to uphold at all costs consists in renouncing what is morally reprehensible: corruption, foul play based on rivalry and animosity, discrimination, lack of kindness. All these sins are no more common in cultural institutions than they are in other environments. But because they are so relentless and common, we all face the danger of indifference in this respect. Sometimes overcoming little injustices may be more difficult than stigmatising the major ones, which cause public outrage and indignation. The moral condition of cultural environment depends on everyone, and everyone has a lot to do to improve the current situation. Certainly, one should start with oneself, but let us remember that we do not need to be saintly to point out other people's sins. Any occasion is good to do good and fight against injustice. And all pairs of hands are welcome, even those of sinners.

Basic terms:

opportunism, vanity, snobbery, self-interest, freedom, non-conformism.

Dilemmas in strategic management in culture

- Are artists allowed to more than others?
- Can unwise regulations be disobeyed?
- Is mediocrity a sin?
- Is 'commerciality' unethical?
- Can the interests of the public institution be put in jeopardy by its employees, in the name of justice and freedom of artistic expression?

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Norwegian Experiences of Strategies Creation and Implementation. Library Reform 2014

Introduction

When the report to the Norwegian Storting on the development of Norwegian libraries was presented by the Minister of Culture and Church affairs in 2009, it was the result of an ongoing process over several years. Several political documents had already addressed issues like the cooperation between archives, libraries and museums, and a new culture policy. The new Norwegian coalition government had in 2005 founded a political platform, stating that it would lead an active policy to strengthen public libraries all over the country. The process of drawing up the outlines of a library reform was an important effort in following up all this, involving not only the library professionals and the governmental body The Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority, but also representatives from other professions, as well as specialists on analysis and society development. This article will describe what triggered the initiative, the political framework and the process itself, as well as the outcomes and final results.

Although the Norwegian Library Reform addresses the whole library sector, both public and research libraries, this article will focus mainly on the public libraries.

The need for a library reform

Since 2000, the Norwegian government has presented political documents that also point out a direction for the public library sector. The most important of these have been:

- 1999 – “Report to the Storting” about archives, libraries and museums in the digital age¹. The report focused on the challenges the three sectors had in common, due to entering the digital age. One of the outcomes of this report, was the establishing of the Norwegian Archive, Library

¹ St.meld. nr. 22 (1999–2000)

Kjelder til kunnskap og oppleving. Om arkiv, bibliotek og museum i ei IKT-tid og om bygningsmessige rammevilkår på kulturområdet.

and Museum Authority in the beginning of 2003, to coordinate and develop the cooperation between archives, libraries and museums. The responsibility for developing the library sector as a whole was handed over to this governmental body by the Norwegian ministry of culture and church affairs, as the two former library authorities on public and research libraries were merged into this new body.

- 2003 – “Report to the Storting” about Cultural policy up to 2014, where libraries were among the institutions that were to be strengthened and developed.² “The aim is to create a national library network bridging all the different systems in order that public resources can be utilised regardless of system, time and place.”, the report stated.
- 2005 – “Soria Moria”³, the declaration of a political platform for the new majority coalition government placed a strong focus on culture and education. It stated among other issues that 1 % of the National budget should go to cultural tasks within 2014. Among the goals that the government set, was: “The government will lead an active policy to strengthen the public libraries all over the country” and also to “guard the principle of free library services and see to that all citizens have access to well developed and progressive library services.”

These political documents, along with the driving forces recognised within the society at this time, led to the initiative of drawing up a policy document for library development. These challenges were described and presented as three major issues in the report *The Norwegian Library Reform 2014*.

Globalisation

Libraries offer access to global, national and local knowledge and culture. Digital innovation makes library collections even more widely available and the flow of information recognizes no national borders. The digitization and Internet publication of conventional library collections are necessary prerequisites to making contents easily accessible. At the same time as globalization increases and brings its influence to bear on many areas of society, including education and language, so too will there be a greater need among people for a sense of cultural belonging, for cultural identity and for a dialogue with other cultures.

The knowledge society

Norway aims to become a leading knowledge society. Knowledge is a basic prerequisite for the development of business and industry, for innova-

² St.meld. nr. 48

(2002–2003) Kulturpolitik fram mot 2014.

³ Politisk plattform for en flertallsregjering utgått av Arbeiderpartiet, Sosialistisk Venstreparti og Senterpartiet.

tion, for competitive strength and also a vital factor in the ability of the individual to participate in the community. Research is necessary in order to become a leading knowledge society and the new knowledge obtained by research will be made accessible through the library system.

Media explosion and individualization

Technological advances and media developments are closely linked. In the course of a few years the media situation has changed dramatically. Cultural and information channels have multiplied, while access to information has exploded by reason of the Internet. People spend more time with the mass media, young people in particular being avid and wide-ranging users. Broadcasting, the Internet and mobile telephony integrate and converge into new digital media offering access to knowledge, information, culture and entertainment everywhere.

The process

In 2006, the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority was given the task to draw up a library policy document. The Authority (ABM) was assigned to both supervise and co-ordinate the work involved with this. The mandate was given by both ministries involved – the Ministry of Culture and Church affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research – and the mandate was both comprehensive and still rather detailed in some matters. It was emphasized that the report should deal with all aspects of the library sector, including public, academic and school libraries. Among the issues that were to be addressed in the report, were digital library services, the structure of the library landscape, the need for renewed library legislation – all based on the vision of joint library services. Among the more detailed issues were library services for young immigrant girls and specialized library services, like prison libraries and hospital libraries.

Collection of data, reports and background material

When approaching a task like this, the need for both collecting facts and producing background material arises as one of the first challenges. ABM was responsible for collecting the national library statistics, and of course used this material in the process to describe the national library landscape and present the status of the libraries collections, resources, services and the use of the libraries on a national level. It was also used to show changes over time, mainly the last ten years. In addition to this, it

- 4 Bruk av bibliotek (2006). Oslo, Statistisk sentralbyrå.
- 5 Vaagan, R. (2005) Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge. Oslo, ABM-utvikling. ABM-skrift #22.
- 6 Tveit, Å. K. (2006) Rom for lek og læring: bibliotek-tilbud til barn og unge Oslo, ABM-utvikling. ABM-skrift #27.
- 7 Danser med ulver: bibliotekene, utgiverne og de elektroniske kunnskapskildene (2006) Oslo, ABM-utvikling. ABM-skrift #24.
- 8 Bibliotekene i 2020: rapport fra en scenariobasert strategiprosess (2005) Oslo, ABM-utvikling. ABM-skrift #20.
- 9 Bibliotekene i 2020: rapport fra en scenariobasert strategiprosess (2005) Oslo, ABM-utvikling. ABM-skrift #20.
- 10 Holmesland, H. (2006) De nasjonale minoritetene: jødene, kvenene, rom, romani-folket, skogfinnene. Oslo, ABM-utvikling.
- 11 Kristine Abelsnes, K. (2006) Opphavsrettslige problemstillinger for bibliotekene: en oversikt. Oslo, ABM-utvikling.
- 12 Audunson, R., Nordlie, R. og Aabø, S: (2006) Finansiering og organisering av digitale tjenester. Oslo, HiO.

was necessary to provide a more detailed material on the use of libraries and their services, and a survey on the use of the libraries was made on our request by Statistics Norway in 2006.⁴ Background material, based on the collected data and surveys, was produced by ABM to support the strategies presented in the final report, and of course as a part of drawing up a status of the Norwegian library landscape.

Other printed reports were:

- “The libraries and the multicultural Norway”⁵, about the challenges libraries were facing in a multicultural society, presenting the national policies on this topic, best practices in the library sector, and concluding with a proposal for actions to develop the libraries.
- “Space for play and learning”⁶, about library services to children and young adults.
- “Dances with wolves”⁷, about libraries, publishers and electronic knowledge databases – and the future challenges of consortiums for digital content.
- The scenario process “The libraries in 2020”⁸, presented in a separate chapter in this article.
- In addition to these printed reports, some other documents were published electronically:
- “The libraries’ services to the immigrant population”⁹, a survey made for the printed report.
- “The national minorities”¹⁰, about the Norwegian national minorities and the libraries
- “Copyright legislative challenges for the libraries”¹¹
- “Financing and organization of digital services”¹²
- “Library services for the Sami population”¹³

A few surveys on the county libraries and interlibrary cooperation between lesser populated municipalities were also produced.

The scenario process

A scenario analysis was an important part of the process. Scenarios are widely used by organisations of all types to understand different ways that future events may unfold. Scenario development is used in policy planning, organisational development and generally, when organisations wish to test strategies against uncertain future developments. In this case, the working group relied upon the competence of a consulting firm (ECON Analysis) with knowledge of interaction between markets, technology and policies, and with knowledge on scenario processes.

13 Lindi, L. I. (2006) Samisk bibliotekstjeneste. Oslo, ABM-utvikling

14 Bibliotekene i 2020: rapport fra en scenariobasert strategiprosess (2005) Oslo, ABM-utvikling. ABM-skrift #20.

The results of this process were published as a printed report¹⁴, which first drew up some of the major challenges that libraries were facing at that time, and then presented three different scenarios for the libraries in 2020.

The major challenges were described as:

- Digital

The technological development will have a great impact on society. When “everything” is digitalised, how will this influence on the library as a physical place? How can digital illiterates survive in the future? Will the printed media disappear – and will the libraries turn into download hubs? Will the web kill the library as a provider of information?

- Growing private market – decreasing public sector?

The globalization of the market empowers multinational companies, and challenges the national, democratic institutions. Will there be less need for a national library policy in the future? When individuals can afford to access information and literature in a growing market, how can libraries offer an attractive experience for the public? How can libraries maintain sufficient public financing to provide their services? How do we defend the libraries’ role in a new market?

- A changing society

We are likely to have an ageing population in the future to come, and because of immigration, the population will have a different profile, where a larger part of it will have a multicultural background. People will move from the districts into towns and cities. What will happen to Norwegian language and literature? Will there be need for arenas to bridge the gap between different cultural sections of society? Will the well educated live in the cities, and the lesser educated remain in the districts?

The scenario process resulted in three different scenarios, presented in a vivid way in the final report. The outlines of the three scenarios are:

- “The spiritual library house”, where the libraries offer physical meeting places for creative knowledge and experience. The government supports arenas for non-commercial cultural exploration and knowledge based creativity.
- “Library fair” – also in this scenario, people search for and use physical meeting places, but it is driven by the market, and the government has no outspoken policy for developing these meeting places.
- “Threadless” – in this scenario, the government prioritises a fast, direct and flexible access to knowledge and information, and the meeting place is less emphasised.

The organisation and outcomes of the process

At ABM, a working group functioned as a secretariat for the process, but could also draw support from the whole staff in different matters, whether this was statistical analysis, knowledge about matters concerning indigenous people and a multicultural society, specialised library services, library legislation and copyright matters, or simply administrative resources.

A reference group was established, with representatives from a wide range of cultural institutions and sectors – they were pointed out by the Ministry, and there were a handful of meetings with the reference group during the process, where this melting pot of competence and skills contributed to running the process in a dynamic way. The final products were nevertheless the responsibility of ABM. Reports and surveys were produced, and the final report was presented as two documents – part 1 presented a brief summary of the main strategies and measures proposed. Part 2 gave a more comprehensive description of the library sector and was intended especially for those who wished to put the proposals into practice and for those desiring a more thorough introduction to the sector.

The final results

The conclusion of the report

Part 2 of the report is a document that presents both the status of the Norwegian library landscape, and the challenges the sector is facing – and it also discusses a wide range of issues, not least to answer some of the more detailed parts of the mandate. The most important document, though, is Part 1, where the strategies and main objectives are presented. The report concludes with a statement that is the basis of the recommendations presented in both documents:

“Norway has many small libraries with limited resources. Library users in the smaller municipalities have interests and requirements no less varied than elsewhere but it is difficult to provide them with services to match those available in the larger municipalities. The circumstances under which libraries fulfill their community responsibilities have changed so radically that a new approach is now required if they are to meet future demands and challenges and thereby play a significant role as a partner in tomorrow’s knowledge society.

In order to face these challenges, a reform is needed. There must be investment in collective services and a common digital infrastructure. There is

also a need for a special program of library construction, new net-based learning facilities for the public and an organisational reform. The overriding task for library reform will be to abandon the traditional collection-oriented library with its emphasis on internal systems and move forward to a genuine focus on the user, a stronger library network and joint digital services.”

The strategies and the main objectives

The principal initiatives cover three main areas comprising library content and services, library structure and organisation, together with competence and research.

Target area 1: Content and services

In this area two principal initiatives are proposed. The first is to develop and to offer digital content and net-based services. The aim is to create a digital library providing the general public with easy access to knowledge and culture. Co-operation between libraries, together with national co-ordination and funding, will produce a nationwide service freely available to everybody. The second initiative is to promote libraries as resources for learning and for the spreading of culture and literature. Libraries shall also be strengthened in the contribution they make towards integration and cultural diversity. Library services shall be of the required standard and easily available to the population as a whole.

Target area 2: Structure and organisation

The principal objective in this area is to carry out a reform of library structure, the ultimate aim being to create stronger library environments with the expertise and the ability necessary to develop wider and improved services for the benefit of users. Stronger libraries will result from the amalgamation of several units in a particular geographical area to create a new library. Inhabitants must be made better aware of the contents and services available to them. Organisational reform will need to be followed up by a programme to develop the physical structure of libraries, the objective being to ensure that they become attractive meeting-places for the local community and the education sector.

Target area 3: Competence and research

The main effort in this area will be directed at strengthening and renewing library sector skills. Library research will furnish the practical ele-

ment with new knowledge and there should be interplay between these two fields. The aim is for libraries to possess broad, up-to-date expertise, thus enabling them to provide better library services. The proposed strategies anticipate a library reform being carried out in the period up to 2014. This reform is conditional upon a national library network, a concept referred to as the Norwegian Nationwide Library.

a national library network

«The aim is to create a national library network bridging all the different systems in order that public resources can be utilised regardless of system, time and place.»

Government White Paper No.48 (2002–2003) Cultural Policy up to 2014 (p. 171).

How the report was presented to the public, and the responses

The report was delivered to the two ministries in September 2006. The Minister of Culture himself commented that it was an ambitious plan for a reform, but he also added that it was a good thing to have great ambitions. The library sector itself took of course great interest in the report, and ABM presented the outcome of the process and the initiatives in meetings and seminars all over Norway. While some strategies and initiatives were welcomed, and some hardly debated at all, others were met with less acclamation.

The Ministry chose to send the report out on a wide consultancy round, and in 2007, ABM could sum up the results of this round in a new report. While the library sector acclaimed the need for a reform, and most of the proposed initiatives, the proposed consolidation of the public library sector was less positively received.

The report to the Storting on Libraries

The proposed additional funding needed, listed at the end of Part 1 of the Library Reform, created great expectations in the Norwegian library sector, hoping to see an increase in the funding for the libraries. In general, the public library sector saw little of this expected increase. There has been an increase in the funding for prison libraries up to 2010, and the National Library has received sustainable additions to their budget, for their digitalisation project and automated deposit system. There has also been an increase in budgets for the governmental run libraries at the universities and university colleges, mainly to cover the grow-

ing expenses in the costs of digital content and databases. The national level has increased the economical input into the library sector in these fields, but to understand why the rest of the proposed initiatives have not received financial support, it is necessary to take a look at how the Library Report has been followed up since 2007 and up until today.

In the consultancy round, it came up that there was a strong wish that the report should be followed up by a white paper from the ministry to the Parliament, a “Report to the Storting”. This would then be a document, stating the political level’s ambitions for the libraries. Such a report was presented as late as June 2009, and drew up the outlines of what now are the main initiatives for the library development in Norway.

The Report to the Storting about libraries said:

“Libraries are meeting places and arenas that can help to attain the overriding objectives of the Government’s cultural and knowledge policy. Libraries help to strengthen democracy and freedom of expression by

- guaranteeing knowledge and information to all
- mediating and managing Norwegian literature and literary culture
- mediating knowledge about culture and various social conditions
- contributing to a love of reading and reading proficiency
- providing access to technology
- being a meeting place and social arena for many different groups

The main purpose of this report is to develop robust and adaptable libraries that can offer all inhabitants better library services. This is an important task that in particular involves strengthening and refining a public meeting place for mediating culture and knowledge, founded on democracy and freedom of expression.”

The Government will achieve this by:

- accelerating the collaboration between libraries and encouraging coordination and joint operation of library services locally and regionally
- developing national coordination of the archive, library and museum sector
- cultivating new skills at libraries
- enhancing digital shared services for libraries and developing the libraries’ competencies in providing services in the digital knowledge commons
- developing public libraries as a meeting place, cultural arena and social actor
- promoting the public libraries as arenas of learning and in particular developing the libraries as arenas for the love of reading and reading proficiency

- improving and developing school libraries
- developing library services for particular groups.

There is now a stronger emphasis on libraries as meeting places, and also the active role the public libraries have in disseminating culture and knowledge. It was stated that changes will be made in the library legislation, there will be competence development, and there will be voluntary collaboration agreements.

The national budget for 2010 has provided governmental funding for:

- The National Year of Reading 2010
- Competence building in public libraries
- A model library scheme, along with a joint cooperation to make regional library development plans

These strategies has been followed up for the budget year of 2011, as well, creating a certain optimism and enthusiasm in the public library sector

One of the strategic measures the Norwegian government has introduced to strengthen the task of developing the library sector, is to re-allocate the national responsibility for library development from the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority to the Norwegian National Library. This political decision was made in the spring of 2010, and put into action by summer of the same year. Staff, resources and the whole portfolio of tasks connected to libraries were transferred, with the exception of the team dealing with consortia for the research libraries.

Tone Moseid, senior advisor at the Norwegian National Library, has been working at the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority (ABM) since its start in 2003, first as a senior advisor, and then as the director for library development for 2 years. She was part of the working group drawing up the report *The Norwegian Library Reform 2014*, and later coordinating the following up of this report by the ABM. She has a wide experience within the public library sector, and is also active in the international library world, serving on IFLA Governing Board since 2009.

Michał Łuczak was born in 1983 in Silesia. In 2002 he started studying at the Institute of Creative Photography in Opava (Czech Republic), and graduated from it in 2010 with a degree of Master of Arts. He was simultaneously doing Spanish Studies at the Silesian University in Katowice, which he completed with a Bachelor's degree. He focuses on documentary photography and runs long-term projects, including *Nikisz*, which was shown at the Photofestival in Łódź in 2007 and is dedicated to Nikiszowiec, a mining district in Katowice. He has participated in collective exhibitions in Poland and abroad, including Berlin. His documentary *Biały dom* [The white house] was displayed at an individual exhibition during last year's edition of Photomonth in Kraków. It also won the Grand Prix in the Mio Photo Award, a competition organised by the MIO Museum in Osaka, Japan. In 2008 and 2009 he collaborated with Andrzej Kramarz (IMAGO MUNDI) in the projects *Stefania Gurdowa. Klisze przechowuję się*. [Stefania Gurdowa. Photo plates have been preserved] and *Stefania Gurdowa. Czas niewinności*. [Stefania Gurdowa. Age of innocence.] In 2009 he received the Italian Alexandra Boulat Scholarship, which enabled him to participate in photography workshops with Anders Petersen. His latest project, 'Young Miners', won the award of distinction in the prestigious Magnum Expression Award competition, organised by the MAGNUM PHOTOS photography agency.

The Józef Piłsudski Provincial Community Centre in Kielce is a local cultural unit which specialises in diverse forms of cultural activity in the area of Kielce and the Świętokrzyskie Province. Over 55 years of its operations, the Centre has been visited by several generations of visitors, has achieved numerous successes in Poland and abroad, while its everyday operations focus on finding such methods of work that best satisfy the needs of residents of Kielce and the whole Świętokrzyskie Province. The PCC's statutory objectives include:

- cultural education and education through art,
- compilation, provision of relevant documentation and creation of cultural assets that are representative for the Świętokrzyskie Province,
- fostering development of amateur art movement in the region,
- fostering development of folklore, folk art and crafts,
- identification, stimulation and fulfilment of cultural needs of residents in the region.





Marcin Marszałek, who is the cinema operator in the PCC cinema.



Hubert Guza, who is an instructor in theatre popularisation.





Karolina Opałko, who is an instructor in cultural heritage dissemination.

Libraries in a Knowledge-based Society – Strategies for the Future

In Poland...

There are eighteen of them. They operate in the biggest cities, where each employs 60 to 230 people, and are counted among the most important and stable regional cultural institutions in the country. Their influence extends over 8,500 other organisations across Poland. What are they? Provincial public libraries. Within a joint project, they have all taken up the unprecedented task of building their activity and development strategies.

In Norway...

There are nineteen of them. They operate in key areas of Norway, where each employs 2 to 20 people. Their influence extends over 800 other institutions across the country. What are they? Norwegian regional libraries. They have vast experience in strategic planning processes, but wish to improve and develop their activities still further.

Provincial libraries – new development trends

How can we ensure that libraries are modern centres of knowledge, information and culture, which not only provide traditional services, but also implement state-of-the-art solutions that address the particular needs and expectations of local residents? How can provincial libraries become trend setters for other institutions in their region? How can we build a strong library network? These were the questions we asked at the Information Society Development Foundation when the initiative to modernise the network of local public libraries was first launched.

From the very start of the Library Development Program, our goal was to enhance the potential of provincial public libraries and to strengthen their ability to coordinate and inspire. Prior research showed that provincial libraries have an important role to play. For one thing, they are vibrant cultural institutions, increasingly challenged by factors such as the advancement of new technologies; for another, they constitute a vital link in the overall library network. More importantly, developing knowledge-based

societies requires libraries to give equal opportunities to all members of the society, providing open access to information, knowledge and education. The development of social capital in our country in large measure depends on their condition. 'We have assumed that it is up to the leaders, in communication with their employees and the wider circles, to set development goals for the institution. In order to do that, it is first necessary to initiate the process of self-diagnosis and to develop strategies for the future', says Jacek Wojnarowski, President of the Information Society Development Foundation and Director of the Library Development Programme.

In 2006, the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority (ABM) published a brochure entitled 'Library Reform 2014'¹. The document proposed a thorough reform of the library sector in order to transform Norwegian libraries into vibrant centres of culture, education and social life based on state-of-the-art technologies, geared towards constant development, and affiliated with one another in a nationwide network. What makes the document particularly interesting is the suggested lead-up process and attendant strategic thinking. 'It is difficult to say how many cultural institutions in Norway draw up their own strategic plans; no law requires them to do so. However, in order to develop, an institution needs to adapt to the cultural policies of its city or region. To do so, it requires a strategy of its own', explains Arne Gundersen from the National Library of Norway.

The Polish reform project was the starting point of the cooperation with Norwegian partners, and particularly with the Department of Libraries, now part of the National Library of Norway. The planning phase, which took several months, demonstrated that both parties considered joint activity to be of mutual benefit.

Financial support from the Cultural Exchange Fund at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage finally made cooperation feasible, and the project 'Libraries in a Knowledge-based Society – Strategies for the Future' was launched. The objective was to foster the exchange of experiences and good practices in the field of culture management and strategy building among cultural institutions at the regional level. It was only natural that the Malopolska Institute of Culture, with its unique experience in building long-term development programs, should join the ranks of its participants. Of course, success was in large measure predicated on the active involvement of libraries themselves. All provincial libraries agreed to join the experiment and undertook the difficult task of strategy building. The choice of Norwegian partner libraries was not random; the libraries of Akershus,

¹ See footnote 4 in the previous article.

Buskerud and Vestfold represent three different types of institutions, which operate on the regional level, but differ in fields of activity and management styles.

‘Norwegian libraries joined the project for different reasons and with different expectations. We joined in because we had valuable experience in library modernisation, which we could share with others, and at the same time we wanted to learn something new’, says Unni Minsås, Director of the Vestfold library. All representatives admit that they were also driven by curiosity. ‘From the very start, the project promised to be a challenge. We were looking to test our knowledge on strategy building and implementation methodologies’, explains Torbjørn Navelsaker, Director of the Akershus library.

Polish libraries, on the other hand, wished to formulate good and ambitious development plans in order to strengthen their standing on the local and regional level. ‘A good strategy will enable us to create a reader-friendly library, a nice place where one goes for leisure, to read or borrow a book’, one participant explained. The strategic process was also important for employees. ‘We decided on broad cooperation and enabled every member of the library team to participate in strategy building. An intensive exchange of ideas, opinions and judgments followed. The upshot was that everyone felt personally responsible for strategy analysis and willingly volunteered for team work’, says Hanna Jamry from the Provincial Public Library in Opole.

Strategy preparation process

In order for the strategy planning process to succeed, several elements had to be taken care of:

- **Support throughout the process.** We organised a series of four three-day workshops over seventeen months. Three trainers from the LEM Projekt company were invited to guide our teams through this intensive process. Consultations with trainers, as well as Polish and Norwegian experts in various fields, provided additional support. As many as 90% of the participants seized the opportunities provided.
- **Space for the exchange of ideas. Inspiration.** Part of the programme was devoted to meetings with experts in various fields: management practitioners, politicians and cultural institution leaders. Representatives of Norwegian partner libraries were in attendance at all workshop sessions; the experience proved valuable for participants from both countries. In addition, thirty-six Polish librarians were sent for a week-long study visit

to Norway, where they learned about strategy implementation methods, cooperation with local governments, customer needs assessment, building an attractive cultural offer, activity promotion and evaluation.

- **Involvement of library teams and directors.** Each provincial library delegated three representatives to the workshop; we also encouraged participants to work in larger groups between the meetings and to consult their ideas and solutions with colleagues and library users.
- **Enhancing opportunities for strategy implementation.** Our aim was to lay the groundwork for broader cooperation between libraries and provincial authorities. Meetings were attended by representatives from Marshal Offices, provincial authorities, and the central government. It was essential to keep decision makers abreast of the progress at each stage and to invite them to the final conference at the end of the project.
- **Involvement of experts and authority figures.** We appointed a Project Board composed of authority figures from the fields of librarianship, science, culture management, and new technologies. The team drew up recommendations concerning the most important areas in which provincial libraries should specialise.
- **Sharing.** The need to share conclusions and experiences gave rise to a publication on strategic planning: an inspiring booklet prepared by the Malopolska Institute of Culture, which was published in Polish, English and Norwegian.
- **Observation.** Continuous assessment allowed participants to shape the project on an as-you-go basis. Thanks to the extensive evaluation phase over the last few months of the programme, we were able to draw interesting conclusions for the future and to enhance opportunities for strategy implementation.

A word which often came up in conversations with project participants was 'exchange'. The parallel effort of numerous teams from similar institutions and the participation of overseas partners resulted in a powerful synergy effect. Anna Hejda, Piotr Szczesny and Szymon Apacki, the trainers, comment, 'Before the launch of the project, strategy building was carried out in cooperation with local governments. The difference lay, primarily, in working methods: in the case of local governments, work was done in a homogeneous group bringing together members of one and only one local government, whereas in the case of provincial libraries, teams from several different institutions worked side by side in one room. A great advantage of the latter was the ability to compare and to draw inspiration from one another.'

‘The project revealed a great need and willingness to learn from others’, Buskerud library representatives say. ‘We really appreciate the open formula of the workshops, the opportunity to work in groups, exchange ideas and opinions, consult with one another. It was priceless to be able to confront our vision and ideas with librarians from other institutions, including Norwegian libraries’, says Bożena Janda from the Provincial and Municipal Public Library in Rzeszów.

What next?

Libraries have already drawn up their strategies. Strategic documents have acquired their final shape. Ahead of them lies the next, much more difficult stage: implementation. ‘The most important challenge for project participants is to implement the strategy, so that it does not become a dead letter. There are institutions which prepare strategies but never really put them into practice’, the trainers explain, ‘Another challenge is to involve as many employees as possible in the process.’

‘It is possible, but difficult, to change the mindset of decision makers, politicians, and councillors, to influence their views on the role that libraries and culture play in the building of a civic society, and the place they deserve in the municipal budget’, says Andrzej Marcinkiewicz, Director of The Provincial Public Library in Olsztyn. Organisers of regional cultural institutions, however, have already begun to voice declarations of future dialogue. Mieczysław Struk, the Marshal of the Pomerania Province, says, ‘The development strategy of the Provincial and Municipal Public Library in Gdańsk for the years 2011–2020 is a very important document for the development of culture in Pomerania. It will allow to set out the main goals and objectives for the development of the Library, which is one of the largest cultural institutions in the province. A long-term strategy is a significant step towards the modernisation of management in the institution and a golden opportunity to develop it in a planned and effective way. It will no doubt facilitate implementation of new quality management methodologies and help define future tasks and needs. It is these tasks and the needs assessment that seem particularly important at this time. A long-term strategy for the Library is a vital part of the cultural policy of the Pomeranian Provincial Authority for the entire region. This is why we attempt to support the institution. It can count on our support at every stage of strategy implementation. An important step towards the future has been taken recently. The library began to issue a single so-called »Culture Card« which gives the holder easy access to the programmes of

multiple cultural institutions. Several more steps still lie ahead.' Let us hope that the Marshal is not alone in his conviction.

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¹ C. Carter, S. Clegg, M. Kornberger, *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book about Studying Strategy*, London 2008.

² Ibid.

We hope that our Readers have read the successive chapters of our handbook with interest. By way of conclusion, we would like to attempt a reflection on the image of strategic management practitioners in Polish cultural institutions that emerges from the texts, and to consider the strategy and strategic management of such organisations as discussed by them. We assume that the Readers' own experience will allow them to draw conclusions about those aspects of strategic management that have not been raised here. As Carter et al.¹ point out, a profound understanding of the strategy emergence process requires an awareness of the existence of both those dialogues and activities that actually take place as well as those issues that are not spoken about and are not taken into account in organisational practice.

In their texts, the Authors have shared with us their experience of strategic management in cultural institutions in Poland, their views about their institutions and the environment in which they operate, and also about their employees, dilemmas and achievements. What have we learnt about the practitioners of strategic management themselves? As our Readers have certainly observed, the majority of the texts in this publication have been written by men. It was not our intention. The composition of the Authors' team, which initially had a higher representation of women, gradually 'evolved' towards a more male-dominated make-up. A low proportion of women Authors of the chapters in the handbook reflects the reality of the Polish cultural environment: *homo strategicus*² in cultural institutions is in the majority of cases a man. Moreover, the narratives of the practitioners we invited to contribute to our handbook show that the persons who are responsible for strategic management are, as a rule, humanists both by education and by conviction. This influences their perception of their own role and the aspirations they have towards their institutions and the whole system of culture.

Their professional practice is characterised by a strong sense of mission, both personal and that expressed at the level of the institution and the culture sector development. Their attitude combines high awareness of the leader's role and her or his limitations, which is reflected in the

ability of practitioners of strategic management to flexibly use the opportunities which the system offers – to their advantage. The sense of mission also results in a readiness to sacrifice for the good of the organisation, at the cost of a lack of free time, being stressed, damage to health or insufficient focus on the private life, particularly on relationships with family and friends. Despite those negative consequences of being deeply engaged in the operations of their institutions, Polish leaders-humanists assure us that their work is worth doing, and that they derive satisfaction from building their teams of co-workers. In other words, managers take care of their employees³ and create for them spaces to develop creativity and innovativeness. What features may be distinguished as to the styles and methods of organisational management of Polish managers of cultural institutions? The Authors' narratives reflect a diversity of approaches to management: from the traditional perspective, whereby the leader takes the majority of decisions and manages the team so that it implements her or his strategic vision, to the style that is open to the formulation of the organisational strategic vision through dialogue with the staff and leaves the team a vast scope for creative activities. Strategic management practice corresponds to the concept of 'emergent leadership'⁴, whereby the role of the leader is formed depending on the arising situations. To all persons in charge of cultural institutions, their colleagues are particularly important as it is them who do the crucial, creative part of the organisation's work, while the leaders perceive their own role as that of directing the employees' activities and maintaining the balance between the team of employees permanently employed in the organisation and a group of external collaborators who are entrusted with particular tasks or are commissioned to contribute to individual projects. Reading the consecutive chapters of our handbook, one cannot help the impression that Polish cultural institutions are not easy to manage. The culture sector is undergoing continual transformation, and the changing situation evokes fears as to the potential deterioration of the conditions in which the organisations operate. Practitioners of strategic management constantly strive with the unpredictable dynamics of the external environment and with many factors that influence their institutions, which are beyond their control. Strategic management always has a political dimension⁵, because actors' interests tend to be at odds, and each actor tries to strengthen her or his position within the existing network of power, which involves a high risk of conflict. It is not surprising, therefore, that while talking about their professional experiences, the Authors make references to the analogy of commanding a military submarine or ice-breaker or quote examples which imply that management at the strategic and operational levels often happens against and despite the existing conditions,

³ H. Mintzberg, *The design school: reconsidering the basic premises of strategic management*, "Strategic Management Journal" 1990, No. 11, pp. 171–195.

⁴ M.P. Follett, *Leader and expert*, in: *Dynamic administration: The collected papers of Mary Parker Follett*, New York 1941.

⁵ S. Clegg, C. Carter, M. Kornberger, J. Schweitzer, *Strategy. Theory and practice*, London 2011.

and not in harmony with them. Although managers of cultural institutions frequently have to face chaotic or crisis situations, their own reforming intentions are extremely positive. It manifests itself in their concentration on shaping institutional strategy in such a way that it contributes to the enhancement of a sense of community, combines tradition and modernity, and builds dialogue with the recipient, whose tastes may of course be influenced but must be taken into account by the organisation.

As regards strategy formulation in Polish cultural institutions, the results of the analyses presented in the handbook show that there is no single, general strategy employed by many organisations. Each of them builds its own strategy in the context of its internal and external environment. The influence of the external environment on the institution may be positive – in situations where the organisation receives support and confirmation of the validity of the chosen direction from outside – and negative, when due to external influences organisational operations are rendered difficult, and there is greater uncertainty as to its operations. The uniqueness of each organisation's strategy also stems from its external environment, which influences its goals and approaches to implementation, and also affects, in the words of Barbara Czarniawska⁶, the image of the external environment constructed within the organisation. Despite the fact that there are as many strategies as organisations, risk factors and barriers for strategic management, which are connected with strategy formulation and implementation, are usually the same for cultural institutions. A crucial role is played by the temporal factor: all Authors stress that their institutions lack time to effectively plan and implement their strategies, and the same refers to managers who strive to pay attention to all aspects of their demanding jobs. Another element of risk may be potential misunderstandings and conflicts resulting from differences in thinking and actions of various actors in the cultural environment, and also due to a shortage of positive mechanisms of actors' collaboration and mutual influence on the strategies that they realise. Cultural institutions operate within networks of relations with multiple stakeholders, and forging good relations with them is the task of strategic management experts in the organisation. To the directors of cultural institutions, the relation between the fundholder on the regional level and the institutions operating in the region is crucial. From our Authors' point of view, the fundholder often turns out to be a difficult partner who does not always have clearly defined expectations of the subordinate cultural institutions and does not necessarily maintain strategic dialogue with them. It is a partner who expects them to be flexible but, due to the political interests he represents, pursues other priorities than those of cultural institutions, for instance in

⁶ B. Czarniawska, *Trochę inna teoria organizacji. Organizowanie jako konstrukcja sieci działań*, Warszawa 2010.

relation to shaping the recipients' tastes. That is why many of our Authors stress the need to transform the relationship between regional authorities and cultural institutions from a model of administration through administrative instruments to a model oriented towards the formulation of common priorities and based on a stronger correlation of strategies at different levels of the cultural institutions environment in Poland. Owing to this, the regional network of cultural actors might function more coherently and harmoniously. At the level of individual organisations, it would create the conditions for a more effective solution to another problem that often occurs in the practice of strategic management of institutions: a lack of a clear connection between the institution's strategic plan and its everyday operations.

Regardless of the difficulties that the practitioners of strategic management encounter in managing their institutions and in relations with actors in the external environment, their hopes and aspirations are reason for optimism. The examples included in the chapters show that Polish cultural institutions define their fields of activity both at the level of local community and in relation to the region, to the whole country and the international arena. Practitioners of strategic management see the position of the institutions they manage in the broad context of contemporary changes: by supporting culture, institutions contribute not only to promotion of participation in culture and to extension of knowledge but also to the creation of civic society and economic development. That is why we hope that in our handbook we have succeeded in presenting valuable ideas and encouraging Readers to reflect on the problems of strategic management in cultural institutions in Poland in a way that will prove useful to persons involved in the culture sector in the performance of their challenging and necessary work.

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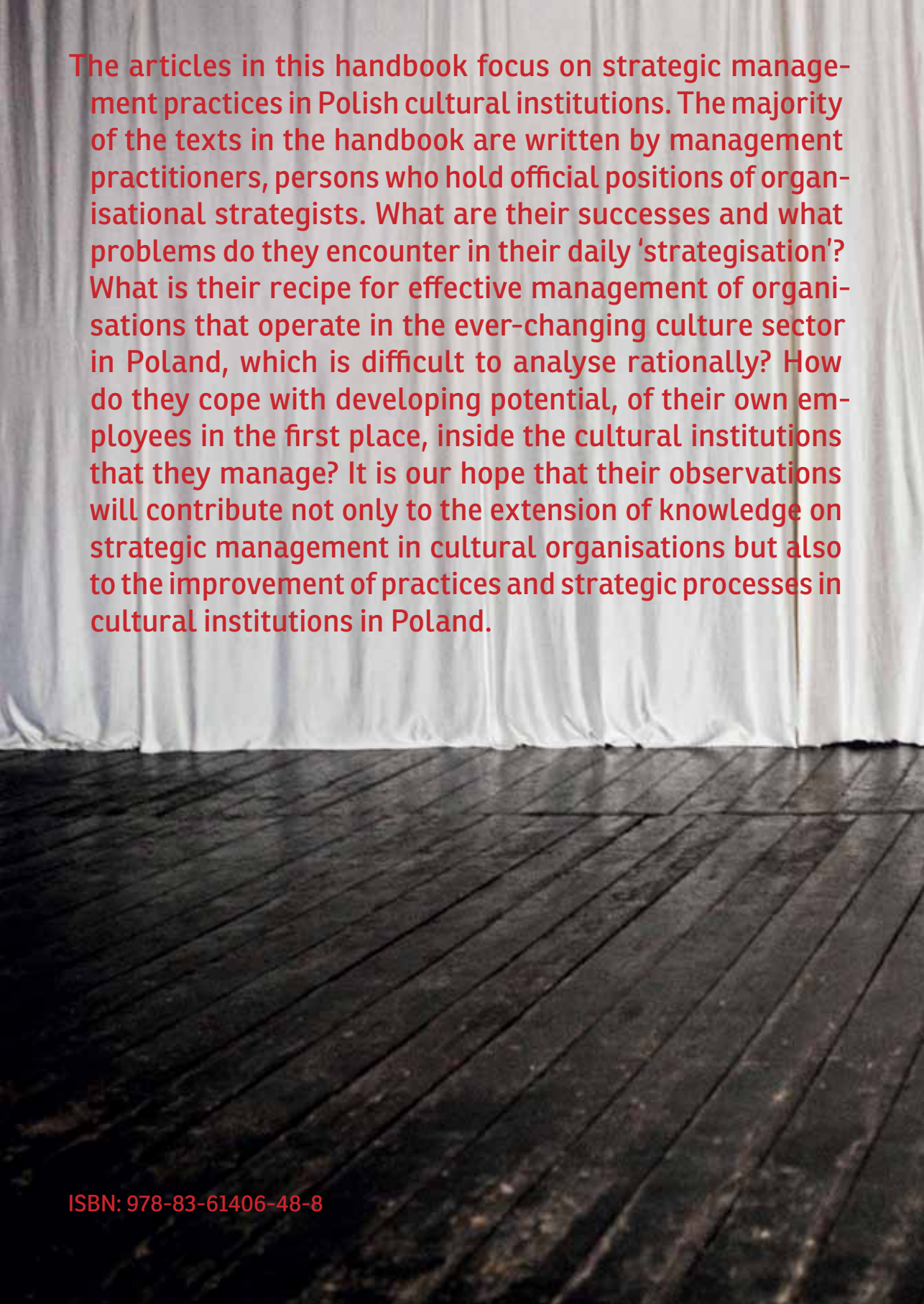
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The background of the page is a photograph of a stage. A white, slightly wrinkled curtain hangs across the top half of the image. Below the curtain is a dark, polished wooden floor with visible planks running diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right. The lighting is soft, creating a professional and clean aesthetic.

The articles in this handbook focus on strategic management practices in Polish cultural institutions. The majority of the texts in the handbook are written by management practitioners, persons who hold official positions of organisational strategists. What are their successes and what problems do they encounter in their daily 'strategisation'? What is their recipe for effective management of organisations that operate in the ever-changing culture sector in Poland, which is difficult to analyse rationally? How do they cope with developing potential, of their own employees in the first place, inside the cultural institutions that they manage? It is our hope that their observations will contribute not only to the extension of knowledge on strategic management in cultural organisations but also to the improvement of practices and strategic processes in cultural institutions in Poland.