

Value Created by the Activities of Cultural Organisations for Communities and the State

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ABSTRACT

Cultural organisations are an inseparable part of creative industries. These organisations are particular of artistic management, professional solutions, informal small focus groups, informal working relationships and dynamic environment. The presentation shall present an analysis of research that was carried out in non-profit cultural organisations, i.e. cultural centres. The value for communities that is created by cultural centres supported by municipalities shall be analysed. In order to reveal the concept of value of a cultural good, efforts to find out how a consumer perceives value (benefit) of that good (service) were made. The presentation shall analyse economic, cultural and social values.

Keywords: value, cultural centres, non-profit cultural organization, cultural product.

1. Introduction

Culture is an extremely important factor in the post-industrial society. Companies and institutions whose products are based on various types of creativity are increasingly being established. They have a tremendous amount of impact on global culture and economy. Culture becomes an axis of activities and an important factor of economy (International Cultural Programme Centre, 2009). During the post-industrial period, companies that create cultural products are as important as cultural institutions that in their turn influence education and improvement of human capital and add to the social cohesion, encouragement of international, cross-border and inter-regional cooperation (Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, 2012). Culture and art form an environment favourable for creativity, development of creativity and knowledge economy based on intellectual property; it promotes

citizenship, tolerance and good social relations. Cultural organisations are becoming more and more multifunctional and are getting further away from ‘pure’ and specialised institutions that are limited to narrow functions. This shows that experience of the EU and other countries when self-government-based cultural politics is related to the needs of residents, the needs of a community form the supply of cultural services, mixed organisations that have a limited amount of especially specialised goals prevail in comparison with, for instance national-level cultural institutions (BGI Consulting et al., 2012).

The aim of the article is to reveal the value generated by a cultural organisation to a community and country.

Methods: Qualitative interview with heads and experts of cultural centres.

2. The concept of cultural organisation

Cultural and/or art institution is a public legal entity that carry out cultural and art (libraries, museums, cultural centres, theatres, concert halls, art galleries, etc.) activities as defined in specific legal acts (Law on Approval of Regional Culture Development for 2012 - 2020 by The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, 2011). The article includes an analysis of cultural centres whose activities are directly related with community, i.e. they as a cultural organisation is closest to the community and has been operating since the Soviet period in Lithuania; however, in 1993, a law on the order of reorganisation and liquidation of cultural institutions was issued, a reform of cultural centres was carried out, and their network was optimised. The activities of cultural centres is regulated by the law of the Republic of Lithuania.

Establishment and activities of cultural centres of the Republic of Lithuania are provided for by the law. The law states that a legal entity established by the law and acknowledged by this law that nurtures ethnic culture, armature art by means of its activities, creates art programmes, develops educational, entertainment activities, satisfies cultural needs of the community and organises distribution of professional art (Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, 2004). According to the resolution of the Lithuanian Government on Regional Culture Development, cultural centres are attributed to art institutions.

Based on founders, cultural centres are divided into the following: state cultural centres that are established by the chief of a ministry or region; municipal cultural centres that are established by municipalities; other cultural centres that are established by private or public legal entities.

According to the type of activities, they are divided into the following types:

- a) Specialised – an institution that specialises in one area of culture.
- b) Multifunctional - an institution that encompasses many areas of culture and functions.

The concept of community in Lithuanian scientific space is not fully formed. I Seliukaitė claims that community in the general sense is defined by local (village, town, eldership) residents. *According to her, current legal acts define a deviated concept of community.* Their ‘legalisation’ by registering them as non-government organisations (5 members constitute a community) has created a situation when one town may include several communities (Jurėnienė V, Urbonienė A, Poškuvienė R, 2013).

Meanwhile, I. Leliūgienė and I. Sadauskas provides “the following definition of community: - a group of families or people united by certain common values who have unified councils, institutions, interests or geographical proximity” (Leliūgienė, I., Sadauskas, J, 2011). I. Seliukaitė criticises this concept of community and says that the correct concept has thus been distorted.

According to V. Senkus, generalising on the opinions presented by many researchers allows distinguishing the following main features of a local community (Senkus V, 2004): 1. Territory; 2. Social interaction; 3. Strong relations among its members.

Communal activity motifs are also important as well as the discussed problem of the concept of community. Therefore, the main motif of communal activities is the belief that communities can solve not only the problems arising, but also satisfy the arising needs. R. Dambrauskienė claims that a community that cooperates with the local government and joins all the activities that take place within it together can expect to achieve the best results (Dambrauskienė R, 2002). Communities cooperate with all non-governmental organisations that operate within their territory. This way, they actively cooperate and act together with cultural centres that can add to satisfaction of cultural and educational needs.

L. R. Warren distinguishes functions of community; these functions are the main task and activity for community depending on the aims of establishment of that community (Warren L. R., 40). They are illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Activities/functions carried out by communities according to L. R. Warren (Warren, L. R. A Community Model)

Along with political and legal similarities, communities have a strong social basis which can sustain their existence. According to G. Kirkpatrick, "if the society is chained with negative unity chains, the unity of the community is personal and positive. The fear of self and other is overcome in a community, and the opportunity of freedom is opened up to others" (Kirkpatrick G, 2001). What is meant by 'personal and positive' is that it arises from the internal desire of an individual to join a community; thus, it releases one from the forced and negative shade.

Expert I. Seliukaitė point out another important yet unnamed activity of communities: communities would carry out their mission if they become preservers and successors of ethnic culture traditions. In there is priority educational activity in this area (Jurėnienė V, Urbonienė A, Poškuvienė R, 2013).

Thus, in the post-industrial society, communal activities depend on the level of society's maturity, its organisation, activeness and creativity.

As I. Seliukaitė maintains, cultural centres and communities are interconnected parts that interact with each other. A cultural centre works for its community. Activeness of a cultural centre and success of its activities depend on the activeness of the community. In those towns or villages that do

not have cultural institutions, a community takes on implementation of cultural activities thus taking on a part of cultural centre functions (Jurėnienė V, Urbonienė A, Poškuvienė R, 2013).

According to G. Mažeikis (2007), the need for communities is especially evident when local residents face strong racial and ethnic segregation or exploitation, when a need for civil solidarity arises, when there is a decrease of social guarantees for certain groups of society – all this encourages to aim for consolidation of communities.

R. Matulis points out that a cultural centre in local communities, especially regions, is the most important focal point of culture, art, meaningful leisure, cultural education. Finally, a cultural centre is a place where members of community may come to communicate, meet one another, make friends and satisfy their socio-cultural needs (Jurėnienė V, Urbonienė A, Poškuvienė R, 2013).

3. Communication between a cultural organisation and community

In order to evaluate cooperation between studies cultural centres and Lithuanian communities in border guard territories in Kaliningrad and Belarus with educational institutions and local communities as well as peculiarities of intercultural communication, informants were asked four related open questions. The answers helped to provide a detailed description of the type and scope of cooperation in the aforementioned cultural organisations.

The informants defined *cooperation with local communities* similarly pointing out organisation of general events and project activities (“We work closely with the community. It helps us organise events and helps us when necessary. We work together as one” or “We organise celebrations, events and projects with other communities) and mentioning educational benefit of such cooperation: “Such cooperation is very beneficial for people because it expands their outlook”. It is important to note that the position of the cultural centres who participated in the study is to see local communities as partners due to limited human resources (for instance, “We cooperate with the local community, we help each other because the town is very small”) rather than competitors; however, this kind of interconnection of activities and human resources appears problematic as well, especially in Pagėgiai cultural centre: “Communities are not competitors of cultural centres. We usually cooperate, I voluntarily give my experience” or “Our employees in communities do everything without money, and this is, of course, bad; however, this is momentary culture because there is no continuity. We cooperate very much; 3 community chairmen are my employees, and we are all members of community council. We often include both organisations when we organise events. Or representatives of the community come to us to discuss organising events. Sometimes we disagree when our people work as community chairmen because they do primary work there and do not come to work for 3 days. However, it is good because our provisions say ‘advisors’. We are usually called friends, acquaintances”.

The informants from Švenčionys cultural centre were different from other cultural centres by their broad scope of cooperation: they mentioned cooperation with other cultural clubs, local museum, library, Youth centre, residential care home, limited liability company *Svirka*. Therefore, this cultural centre is evidently distinguished because of its network and activeness in the society. Also, only the employees of Švenčionys and Lazdijai cultural centres mentioned cooperation with local government: “We have good relationship with local government and our municipality. Together, we organise events and we cooperate” (informant from Lazdijai cultural centre) or “We cooperate with the eldership and Švenčionys municipality...” (informant from Švenčionys cultural centre). It is possible that all of the cultural centres had more partners that were not mentioned during the interviews.

Experts are of a similar opinion. Expert No. 1 pointed out that “An active and meaningful cultural centre that is able to provide professional services is the modeller of local community life, cultural trends, attitudes, etc. In regions, these centres stand for national philharmonics, theatres, etc. Thanks to them, distribution of professional art is accessible which becomes activist, gatherer for common activities, local tradition preserver, seller and creator for community members. Finally, cultural centre is a place where community members may come to communicate, meet each other, make friends and satisfy socio-cultural needs”.

Expert No. 2 added that “in a different case, the activities of cultural centres would lose meaning, and communities without cultural centres could not carry out complete and quality cultural activities. However, the concept of community needs to be specified. Community in the general sense is defined by local (village, town, eldership) residents. According to her, current legal acts define a deviated concept of community. Their ‘legalisation’ by registering them as non-government organisations (5 members constitute a community) has created a situation when one town may include several communities.

The interaction between cultural centres and community centres has various aspects. According to M. Smith and M. Beazley, the nature of involvement of a community manifests through the concepts of government, participation and partnership (Smith M, Beazley M, 2000). I. Seliukaitė points out that common activities of cultural and community centres may be divided **into long-term and short-term activities depending** on the duration of cooperation, its aims and nature. Long-term cooperation of centres includes annual events and long-term projects or one-time projects; however, they must have long-lasting value, for instance, opening a new leisure occupation hall (Jurėnienė V, Urbonienė A, Poškuvienė R, 2013).

4. Concept of value

“Ecology of Culture” by J. Holden published in 2015 is an especially important article where the author formulates an assumption that current evaluation of culture in economic terms and distribution of creativity into forms of art according to different means of expression is incorrect and inaccurate. The scholar points out that if culture was evaluated in ecological rather than economic terms, then the most important point of reference would be value of culture. That is, culture would regain its main meaning, social importance and moral weight. The society would start seeing the importance of the cultural system’s health, its creative capacity, ability to generate new meaning, provide social and public goods without, obviously, ignoring its self-contained economic return (Jerry C Y Liu, 2016). As Holden states, everything has to be measured and everything creates added value in the postmodern society.

The concept of value may be explained following either a subjective or an objective approach. Supporters of subjective value claim that value stands for the evaluator’s approach to the object being evaluated, and that value exists in the consciousness of the evaluator rather than that object. Supporters of objective value state that value is determined by the properties of an object, its benefit, use possibilities or the amount of work put into creating this object. This article talks about the subjective value theory. This theory points out the subjective aspect of value, and it depends solely on individual evaluation and cannot be measured objectively. Cultural organisations carry out various activities-services such as educational, recreational, social and other, thus creating value. The values of services generated by cultural organisations are economic, and they can be measured by investment projects, amount of sold tickets to events, charity, support, acknowledgement nights, etc. The economic value of culture reflects in regional development politics guidelines of Lithuania and

European Union. The cultural sector, like other sectors, includes consumers. A. Payne and S. Holt (2001) claim that the main idea of the concept of value for consumer is the value received by the consumer when consuming a good or (and) service. Meanwhile, R. B. Woodruff (1997) maintains that value for consumer reflects what the consumer wants and what s/he receives by purchasing and consuming a good or (and) service. J. C. F. Roig et al. (2006) and Y. Wang et al. (2004) present value as a synthesis of three dimensions, i. e. functional, social and emotional, that reflects value for consumer. **Functional value** expresses a tangible benefit for consumer; **emotional value** relates to the feelings that arise in the process of consumption; **social value** deals with the value that is relevant within the consumer's social environment. Every consumer perceives the value received subjectively. According to the aforementioned concept of value for consumer, it can be said that generated value may be divided into value that the consumer receives from the main product/service, and value received from maintenance of long-term relations with an organisation (Vaitkienė R, Pilibaitytė V, 2008).

J. Azmier claims that there is a sufficient number of studies that show that arts and culture in communities can be employed as the main strategy to attract visitors and improve urban life quality (Azmier J, 2002). It is important to note that arts and artistic activities have a two-fold impact on the society, i. e. *directly* and indirectly.

Direct economic value is obtained by creating workplaces in the sector of culture and arts, whereas indirect economic impact manifests through tourism (export), investment and by attracting new residents or businesses (Cwi D, 1980; Costello D J 1998).

Meanwhile, the National Association of Proprietors do not focus on mere economic impact; they relate it with the general strategic improvement and restructuring of the country and separate localities. The association distinguishes 4 areas where culture plays an important role thus contributing to the generation of economic profit for communities and the country. The report states the following: Art programmes, with help from the country or local government, act as a component for highly influential economic development programmes:

- By diverging human capital and cultural resources, to create economic viability in unattractive regions by including tourism, crafts and cultural goods.
- By recreating and refreshing communities, emphasising restructuring of the main part of a city and restoration of culture.
- By creating viable public spaces and integrating them into the natural environment of a locality. This improves urban life quality, develops business and the tax base, creates a positive image of a region and a community.

Contributing to regional introduction of innovations thus improving regional life quality, making it much more attractive to employable, educated employees and providing permits for promotion of producing new, knowledge-requiring products (NGA Center, 2001).

These are the criteria determined by the objective value theory. However, cultural organisations create and provide services for the community whose value cannot be measured or it can be observed only in the long-term perspective, which means that it cannot be measured objectively. This article analyses the values created by cultural organisations for the community and country that cannot be measured.

4.1. Value created by cultural organisations for communities

The social value created by cooperation reveals in two aspects, i.e. concentration of communities and involvement of people having social separation into the community.

The importance of sociocultural impact created by art activities was first distinguished in 1982 in the Declaration of Mexico that was dedicated to the global culture politics conference. The declaration states that such goals as involvement in participation, support, personal and social development, cohesion, that were raised in the last decades by global development organisations may be achieved only when all the involved organisations perceive the role of culture as the main role in this process (Jurėnienė V, Stonytė A A, 2016). Taking on art programmes and community events, culture creates measures that help to create social capital. For instance, community events help to maintain close relations among community members and encourage relations that consolidate the community.

According to D. Kulienė (2005), cooperation is mutual work that involves a common goal, and communication is a form of human psychological mutual interaction which is unavoidable to carry out any organised work and achieve cooperation.

It is important to communicate due to various reasons: it creates opportunity to share ideas, information and good experience; results can be achieved that could not be achieved separately; it creates opportunity to use common resources by collective actions in order to solve various problems; it creates a basis for new ideas and initiatives that have not been discussed before; it provides confidence and motivation to take action in a specific area of activity.

Therefore, implementation of changes should include all the institutions and organisations in the locality. The stage of activity or impact encompasses all the activities, results and impact in the process of community concentration.

Speaking of the context of interinstitutional cooperation, leadership manifests through persons or organisations that formally or informally manage by concentrating community for various events, activities and projects. The leader of this process is usually the cultural centre whose main aim is to develop personal and organisational trust and tolerance in order to achieve successful process results. Work is the most successful when people try to understand each other, are able to express their abilities and create mutual trust. Therefore, it is important to exchange information, share and communicate. This is a continuous and endless process that sustains a system under development.

Another important aspect of communication is the fact that people meeting in informal environment find it easier to solve difficult issues because problems are seen from ‘another angle’, and optimal solutions are usually found (Leliūgienė, I, 2012). Interpersonal competence, responsibility and organisation are the qualities that help to create and sustain more effective relations, encourage initiative and activity in solving various questions and help to share ideas and find respectful agreements.

When concentrating a community, people need to get used to being together, sharing ideas and communicating in informal environment. Concentration starts the process of enabling because this is the only way for the member of community to get more confidence and feeling that they can change something. In the project “Educational Activities of Cultural Centres from International Community Mobility Aspect”, enabling is designated as sharing experience which is important for community members (Jurėnienė, Urbonienė, Poškuvienė, 2013).

Art programmes for communities often include people who find themselves in an unfavourable condition and do not feel complete members of the society (ethnic minorities, people of poor financial state, youth that belong to a risk group, pensioners) (Jureniene V, Stonytė A A, 2016). Solidarity for a

common goal, for instance, embellishment of the neighbourhood (usually aesthetic) or education and teaching based on different personal artistic experiences (e. g., folk dance, graffiti, playing an instrument) helps members of social risk groups to integrate into the society and replaces their negative attitudes and feelings with positive ones (BOP consulting, 2013).

4.2. Emotional value is generated.

In the project, it reveals through intercultural cooperation and preservation and nurture of national culture.

Speaking of communities, it was determined that culture encouraged social unity and emphasised the identity of a community in a multicultural environment. By taking up cultural festivals, art presentations and exhibitions, one can show and recognise different historical and cultural bases as well as social differences (Azmir J, 2002). Arts and culture are also evaluated as a means to preserve local specific identity within the global culture that prevails in mass media. People use culture as a means to identify themselves and protect local values (WCCD, 1997).

Answering the question on how folk culture was nurtured in their organisations, some of the informants emphasised the *importance of folk culture* to the modern human being. According to one informant, “ethnoculture comprises our roots; I cannot imagine myself or my children without it. It is essential for every person, even small children... It is essential in large amounts. We are people, not aborigines”. Another example: “Folk culture is especially important for the modern human being because it stands for our roots, our past; it must be important. Except everyone sees it differently. We must know our songs, our roots”.

Therefore, these statements show that folk culture comprises a basis for most of the artistic cultural events and activities carried out in cultural centres. According to the informant, folk culture heritage is spread and promoted by not only the activities of art societies, but also in the form of events and celebrations for local residents. Another way to promote folk culture is to teach people Lithuanian folklore, traditional crafts, and provide knowledge about traditions and customs, share experience accumulated by older generations and carry out different types of educational activities. It is important to that cultural centre activities that promote folk culture have impact on local community, i. e., it stimulates social activity of local residents and promotes teaching/education of values.

Culture and arts decrease xenophobic attitude; therefore, intercultural cooperation carried out by cultural centres is especially important.

In order to achieve effective intercultural cooperation among cultural centres, intercultural communication and competence are very important. Intercultural competence, according to E. W. Taylor, is the ability to adapt that is based on inclusive and integrated outlook that allows participants to effectively adapt to the cultural life needs of the target country (Taylor E W, 1994). It encompasses the following approaches: curiosity and openness, readiness to stop wrong beliefs in terms of other cultures and beliefs about one’s own culture. It also expresses the wish to get to know one’s own values, beliefs and behaviour rather than accept them as they are and as naturally appropriate. This is the ability to see them from a different person’s perspective, i. e. someone’s who has a certain set of values, behaviour and beliefs (Byram M, Nichols A, Stevens D, 2001).

Cultural centres usually analyse intercultural social and knowledge competences that manifest through tolerance, empathy, organisational abilities and problem solving.

4.3. Democratic values

In the activities of cultural centres, cultural competence is of extreme importance, which stands for the ability to absorb new knowledge and attitudes on values that is specific of cultural communication environment. It reveals communicators' cultural literacy that can either coincide or not. In case of high inconsistency, communicative efficiency becomes worse, and partners feel certain uneasiness. In that case, the lack of cultural competence is usually attempted to compensate by communicative skills. On the other hand, the requirement of tolerance in the context of globalisation is an objective must because nations and cultures can only coexist if they keep to this principle. A tolerant approach to intercultural communication means that certain cultural features of an individual or a group are ones of many, and they cannot be made absolute and too important. This is relevant in not only intercultural, international communication, but also local communities if they are multicultural. Existence of tolerant attitudes towards other cultures in intercultural communication shows an individual's maturity of competences. The intercultural communication model includes the following (Yoshikawa M J, 1987): Cultural self-awareness; Cultural assumptions; Positions of experiences; Points of cultural setting.

Cultural self-awareness is very important in intercultural communication. These are the ways in which an actor expresses community with which s/he identifies. Cultural self-awareness is closely related with cultural assumptions because we construct narratives about ourselves through constructs of others. Its possession helps personalities to communicate and cooperate with other nations easier. Expert I. Seliukaitė claims that if intercultural communication is understood here as cooperation of different cultures, then cultural centres carry it out. "Such cooperation has been expanded by opened borders. Many international events, socio-cultural projects with foreign partners are implemented, etc." There is no doubt that such activities have a positive impact on the development of tolerance and democracy (Jurėnienė V, Urbonienė A, Poškuvienė R, 2013).

4.4. Educational value

Education can be described as a life-long process that conditions human improvement, professional, spiritual or intellectual development on the basis of new knowledge and practical skills in certain social or physical environment. This is often motivated and conscious activity when aiming for personal improvement and self-realisation and deepening knowledge or developing skills in a chosen area of activity. Likewise, education is carried out in family and various public locations or professional environment by organising activities oriented towards personal development. Everyone has an inherent need to actively improve, find ways for self-realisation and expression of personal creative powers; therefore, suitable conditions and educational environments created for this may allow encouraging productive societal development, especially based on culture. Precisely culture is an invaluable treasury and a potential of educational activity organisation that contains self-realisation opportunities for everyone from small to old according to everyone's needs and interests. Cultural organisations carry out informal education.

The main tendencies are the following: growth in the number and extent of informal education initiatives, disappearance of limits between formal and informal education, high attention to programming and socio-political localisation of informal education in the wide context of formal education (Ruškus J. et al, 2009). As G. Kvieskienė (2000) points out, during informal education, an individual collects knowledge, forms his/her attitude, anchors his/her values, abilities on the basis of the impact of the surrounding environment and experience. This form of education is important in that even without special improvement goals, education still happens because an individual is influenced

by the entire socio-cultural environment, i. e. moreover, informal education promotes the development of democracy, educates critical thinking and tolerance, enable both individual human beings and groups or communities to solve economic, social and political problems. With its help, there are more opportunities for people to improve, change and act in a more and more complex and ever-changing world.

In Lithuania, multifunctional cultural centres implement many various cultural and educational activities for children, young people and adults. A part of these activities are oriented towards pre-school education for children as well as informal education, devoting one's services for various age groups. By including education into different age groups, cultural centres organise meaningful leisure for them, help to carry out socialisation and integration into community, create cooperation and partnership networks.

Even though these unique cultural organisations and have very few equivalents in the world create, spread and promote ethnic, popular and classical culture, along this function there is an equally important educational function that is closely related to other activities, i. e. cultural, recreational or entertainment (Jurėnienė V, Urbonienė A, 2014:98).

Educational activities in cultural centres is an important part of their activities because there are art societies, various cultural events, exhibitions and projects; also, specific education and information activities are implemented, sometimes - seminars, courses or conferences. Such activities help to deepen self-awareness, improve aesthetic taste of the community members, develop a wider outlook and sense of art. When developing educational activities, it is especially important to pay attention to not only the prevailing needs and interests of community members, but also to existing resources. Cultural centres educate personal, social, cognitive, cultural, communication, teamwork and creative abilities (Lithuania folk center, 2015).

A prominent feature of education in cultural centres is inclusion of the society into the activities of a cultural centre; larger-scale events become education for not only that part of the society that takes part in art society activities, but also for the remaining members of the society. The relation between a cultural centre and society appears while carrying out continuous and attractive educational processes. In order to creatively present relevant information for the society, communication is used as a means to create culturally competent society that transfers its knowledge to future generations and values its country's history and ethnic heritage.

A part of the informants emphasised the importance of *educating the values of the young generation* in order to instil the sense of national culture as a basis for national identity from a young age. For instance, according to one of the informants, “the amount we put in is the amount they have and find important. What can a young person know about ethnoculture? If you tell them from a young age that is important and that it is our tradition, our costumes, dances, customs, they will have that”. The informants mentioned learning folk songs and dance, practice of traditional crafts, knowledge about calendar celebrations: “We taught not only schoolchildren, but also nursery-school children to spin wool. They found it very interesting...”.

The main cultural centre activity guidelines as defined in the law on cultural centres of the Republic of Lithuania (2004) are to nurture and promote ethnic culture, develop amateur artistic activities, promote professional art, organise significant leisure, entertainment events, take care of the viability, continuity of the most valuable local culture traditions, diversity of cultural forms by satisfying cultural needs of community. Even though this does not clearly emphasise the educational activity importance of cultural centres, education becomes the main assumption for the development of cultural activities.

After all, it must be noted that cultural centres often face financial problems when carrying out educational activities. According to expert Saliukaitė, almost all cultural centres operate in municipalities. And education of the general culture of population is a self-contained municipal function; therefore, it is the last in the general queue of all municipal functions. According to her, as long as politicians that have the power to make decisions do not believe that culture is not a freeloader, that quality regional development cannot exist without it, none of the solutions will be effective. Innovations need qualified and creative specialists (Jurėnienė V, Urbonienė A, Poškuvienė R, 2013).

During the interview and describing educational activities carried out in cultural centres, R. Matulis states the following: "The scope of educational activities in cultural centres is very wide. Their extents and types usually depend on the extent of the general activities of a cultural centre, its professional employees, financial resources, material base, etc. However, today, both small and large cultural centres organise various types of training, cycles of seminars, cognitive projects in various areas of art, camps, creative workshops, cycles of lectures, expeditions, etc. Most of the participants of cultural centres publish educational publications, organise continuing traditional craft workshop, labs of getting to know various musical instruments, expositions of national costume history, courses, educational-cognitive trips, expeditions, etc." Also, the president of the Lithuanian Association of Cultural Centres states that cultural centres are ones of the most prominent organisers of informal education. Informal education for various age groups is actively carried out in art societies, the number of which currently exceeds 4 thousand, and the number of their members reaches over 65,000 people. According to R. Matulis, majority of the country's cultural centres work in an active and interesting way, and their services shed light on and give meaning to leisure of community members. Artistic societies of all areas of art that operate in cultural centres, or continuous projects carried out by them ensure not only meaningful leisure, but also cultural education processes and acquisition of required newest skills for various age groups (Jurėnienė V, Urbonienė A, Poškuvienė R, 2013).

While stressing the role of cultural centres in the context of informal education, expert Saliukaitė during the interview stated that cultural centres educate the consumer of culture - theatre, cinema, music, dance - in amateur art collectives, creative labs, societies, fine arts, ceramics, traditional crafts and other studios, and help to sustain viable traditions of ethnic culture by ensuring access to them. Communities would carry out their mission if they became preservers and successors of ethnic culture traditions. This area includes priority educational activities (Jurėnienė V, Urbonienė A, Poškuvienė R, 2013).

Majority of specialists and managers that work in cultural centres see that education is a natural part of their cultural activities; it encompasses all the aforementioned aspects of the concept of education, i. e., learning, broadening of the outlook, education, improvement of values that is closely related to self-realisation. An important part of educational activities in cultural centres is organisation of traditional events beginning from state and calendar celebration and ending with thematic and entertainment events, for instance, feast of autumn, honey production festival, farewell to summer festival or modern poetry reading night, ballad night.

5. Culture as a means of soft power ensures safety of a country

Culture, values and political practice are the soft power sources that are referred to the most in international politics; also, international institutions that enable a country to promote its culture and values to other countries and legitimise its policies. In general, soft power resources is a slower, more spread and complex in comparison with hard power (Isoda V, 2010).

According to J. Nye, when a country's culture encompasses and government policy promotes universal values that are acknowledged by other countries, it has better opportunities to achieve the desired results in foreign politics, i. e. it operates higher soft power (Isoda V, 2010).

Despite the fact that soft power and its operation are complex, every nation that has unique culture may use it as non-military social action that ensures that country's security.

The study revealed that all the related cultural centres carried out close intercultural communication with other countries. Art societies of cultural centres participate in international festivals, traineeships and celebrations this spreading the national culture it nurtures. On the other hand, performers get to know culture and values of other nations. This may be of help in solving arising problems among countries because it increases respect and understanding of other cultural values and traditions. President of the Lithuanian Association of Cultural Centres Romas Matulis maintains that "cultural centres carry out active international cooperation thanks to which representatives of various countries and cultures visit Lithuania. Furthermore, art societies in cultural centres of the country, independent creators, artists often take their exhibitions to international projects organised in other countries where they present Lithuania's cultural peculiarities and traditions. E. g., Plunge cultural centre cooperates, exchanges art groups, etc. with partners in 20 countries, like Hungary, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Macedonia, etc. This international and intercultural communication and cooperation is one of the most prominent factors of tolerance and democracy development".

It can be stated that cultural organisations create various values for communities and the country that manifest as material while others cannot be measured, appear only in the long-term perspective and are mostly indirect, for instance, when culture creates democratic values and is a means of soft power.

6. Conclusions

Social and emotional value is created through education and is an important part of the activities of cultural centres in Lithuania because they organise many events that include various educational elements that related to teaching/learning and educational processes and are intended for various age groups. Such important activities of cultural centres as intercultural cooperation also include educational elements. It is obvious that organisation of educational activities lacks attention to education of values of a community, i. e. national identity, tolerance, respect to otherness that are especially important for the processes of social integration and communal concentration.

Emotional, social value is created in order to identify oneself with national culture. Activities of art societies in cultural centres spread and promote national culture heritage. It is also promoted by events and festivals organised for local residents. Social value is generated by including the youth into various activities carried out by cultural centres. This increases occupation rate, decreases crime rates and generates social capital. It also decreases social separation because activities help to integrate persons of all social status including those in the margin.

Economical value is created by cultural organisations (cultural centres) by implementing projects that bring direct benefit for communities and the country. This value is easy to measure because consumers and the country incur expenses. However, it is important that functional value may also be indirect, which means that its project may have a side effect such as development of democracy through intercultural communication carried out by cultural centres.

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