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INFLUENCE OF PUBLIC ASSOCIATIONS ON IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITY RESOURCES

INFLUENCIA DE LAS ASOCIACIONES PÚBLICAS EN LA MEJORA DE LA CALIDAD DE LOS RECURSOS DE LA ACTIVIDAD EDUCATIVA Y CULTURAL

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Suggested citation (APA, seventh edition)

Kamenets, A., Urmina, I., Alekseeva, M., Apanasyuk, L., & Grigorieva, E. (2022). Influence of public associations on improving the quality of educational and cultural activity resources. *Revista Conrado*, 18(87), 93-99.

ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the potential of socio-cultural activity as a system of economic, personnel, information, material, technical, and human resources. The authors closely examine the interrelations between these resources based on the proposed systemic and functional research model. The main resource of socio-cultural activity is the socio-cultural activity of different groups of the population whose cultural demands and initiatives have to constitute the basis for the development of strategies of the formation and use of socio-cultural activity resource base. The authors argue that the new paradigm of socio-cultural activity organization is changing the system of professional requirements for the specialists in the area, which now focuses on the objectives of social engineering and socio-cultural design. The study examines trends and perspectives in the communication of socio-cultural sphere specialists with various voluntary societies in identifying and using all possible resources for the development of the population's socio-cultural activity.

Keywords:

Socio-cultural activity, voluntary societies, cultural requests, fundraising.

RESUMEN

El artículo está dedicado al potencial de la actividad sociocultural como sistema de recursos económicos, personales, de información, materiales, técnicos y humanos. Los autores examinan de cerca las interrelaciones entre estos recursos basándose en el modelo de investigación sistémico y funcional propuesto. El principal recurso de la actividad sociocultural es la actividad sociocultural de los diferentes grupos de población cuyas demandas e iniciativas culturales han de constituir la base para el desarrollo de estrategias de formación y utilización de la base de recursos de la actividad sociocultural. Los autores argumentan que el nuevo paradigma de organización de la actividad sociocultural está modificando el sistema de requisitos profesionales de los especialistas del área, que ahora se centra en los objetivos de la ingeniería social y el diseño sociocultural. El estudio examina las tendencias y perspectivas en la comunicación de los especialistas del ámbito sociocultural con diversas sociedades de voluntariado en la identificación y utilización de todos los recursos posibles para el desarrollo de la actividad sociocultural de la población.

Palabras clave:

Actividad sociocultural, sociedades de voluntariado, peticiones culturales, captación de fondos.

INTRODUCTION

In the conditions of the development of Russian society, socio-cultural activity (SCA) is one of the most demanded, since it ensures the mastery of cultural achievements by various groups of the population in need of recognition and fulfillment of their cultural needs based on a free choice of various socially significant types of cultural activities. SCA can only be effective in the presence of a complete resource base necessary to solve its own problems (Ignateva, 2009; Sidorova, 2009). This base includes economic, personnel, material, technical, information, and human (cultural activity of the population itself) resources.

The leading role in the development of SCA is played by SCA specialists, the importance of which under all of their varying titles (“Kulturträger”, “animators”, “social participation specialists”, etc.) is steadily rising in different countries. Yet, while fulfilling the corresponding order of a certain cultural institution, SCA specialists must to a certain extent carry out an independent search for resources to solve their professional tasks while also considering the specificity and profile of the given socio-cultural institution (Fokina, 2010).

This specification, in turn, is possible if SCA subjects have a clear professional understanding of the potential resources required for this activity to be effective. This has to be the basis for the search for and use of the necessary resources that the socio-cultural institution has or should have at its disposal. The identification of these basic resources is an important research, scientific, and methodological objective.

The concept of SCA is still interpreted differently by various specialists (Table 1).

Table 1. Definition of the concept of SCA.

Source	Definition
(Murashko, 2011)	specific human activity for the formation of personality and society, in a more narrow sense – a certain area of social activity focused on the adaptation (involvement) of a person to culture
(Suslova, 1998)	a social phenomenon characterized as a set of relations and activities carried out through specific forms, methods, and means based on the interests manifested by the individual in cultural life and people’s interaction and communication in their free time
(Sidorova, 2009)	the activities of socio-cultural institutions and associations and the formation of social strata, groups, and individuals interacting on their basis, which meet the socio-cultural needs of the population in the dynamics of their specific activities, considering the social, national, and regional characteristics in the process of qualitative, continuous change, passing through certain stages of development
(Frese, 2015)	cultural activities of social actors (professional and non-professional social groups) to create cultural values, develop the abilities of individuals, and support their creative activities; communications aimed at the dissemination, preservation, and public use of all kinds of cultural values
(Daniel et al., 2012)	sphere of social activity focused on attracting people to culture, an independent component of the overall system of socialization of personality, social upbringing, and education
(Turie, 2012)	a fusion of relatively independent types of activity, in the context of which cultural activity is associated with the world of a person’s consciousness and its formation, and social activity is aimed at the development of human relationships and the organization of social life in general

Among the works of specialists exploring the resources of the socio-economic sphere, the following can be noted as significant for SCA specialists (Ignateva, 2009; Kotova, 2012; Frese, 2015). Of no less importance in this regard is the adaptation of certain general patterns recognized by economic theory to the peculiarities of SCA (Murashko, 2011; Pröbstl-Haider, 2015). It is also worth noting the results of the study of the content of SCA (Suslova, 1998; Fokina, 2010), the study of SCA in the context of the state cultural policy (Frese, 2015), and the study of amateur art and activities as a resource for the development of the creative potential of the population (Anufrieva et al., 2016).

The hypothesis put forward in the study is that if the principles of formation and use of SCA resources are observed, non-profit organizations (NPOs) in the field of culture and art become its main actors.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main research method was theoretical modeling of the systemic use of resources in SCA. The developed systemic model of such use is as follows (Figure 1).

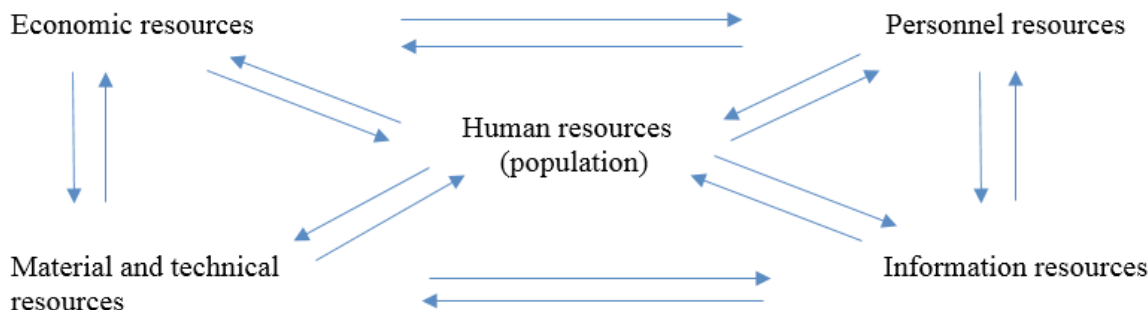


Figure 1. A systemic model of the use of resources in SCA.

The resource characteristics of the model are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Resource characteristics of the systemic model of the use of resources in SCA.

No.	Type of resources	Characteristic and content of the resources
1	Economic	financial resources needed for the implementation of SCA, as well as the time the institution visitors require to consume the products of SCA
2	Personnel	primarily the presence of specialists who ensure the involvement of the population in a certain SCA and the development of people's cultural and learning activity, have mastery of social and cultural technologies for attracting new visitors to the socio-cultural institution and ensuring free access to cultural activities for various population groups
3	Material and technical	buildings, rooms, and equipment for SCA; the availability of musical instruments, costumes, materials for decoration, props, etc.
4	Information	the availability and volume of these resources largely determines the advertising technologies, the study of cultural demands, and the cultural and educational content of the events, as well as the coverage of the population by SCA, which is increasingly organized remotely
5	Human (population)	are central to the model and determine the content, amount, and use of other resources.

The study also uses the method of an expert survey in the form of a free interview. The experts had the following tasks: to give free-form characteristics of the functional relationships (FR) within the systemic model of resource use in SCA presented for their consideration.

to indicate possible principles of the formation and use of resources derived from this model and the probable problems in their implementation.

to outline the place of public (non-profit) organizations in the implementation of SCA and their influence on improving the quality of SCA resources.

The criterion for the selection of experts (22 people) was having at least 10 years of experience in the socio-cultural institutions of Moscow (Russia).

The study uses numerical methods of calculation with the help of Microsoft Excel software product used to calculate the percentage of expert mentions of the principles of SCA resources formation and use.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Focusing the main attention (as the initial) on human resources entails the actualization of FR of SCA resource provision for many socio-cultural institutions. The systemic model of resource use presented for expert consideration allows describing the FR arising in it as the basis for the corresponding SCA development strategy (Table 3).

Table 3. FR characteristic.

No.	FR type	FR characteristic
1	Human resources (population) – Economic resources	Is determined by the nature of the population's demands in the socio-cultural sphere according to the economic criterion (solvency, readiness to financial expenditures for cultural services, the presence of leisure budget). On the other hand, the greater the economic resources, the more opportunities for the diversity of cultural services to the population and the higher their quality and attractiveness for the population
2	Human resources (population) – Personnel resources	The cultural demands of the population make the corresponding specialists popular as well. Of no less importance is the population's own active participation in SCA in various directions. The most efficient is the SCA that involves the maximum involvement of the population not as an object of influence but as a rightful participant in the interaction with SCA specialists. Accordingly, the proper personnel resource for SCA is that which, first and foremost, provides for such activity
3	Human resources (population) – Material and technical resources	The activity and intensity of cultural demands of the population in the sphere of leisure can serve as a basis for the formation and improvement of the corresponding material and technical base of a socio-cultural institution. In this case, of special importance is the efficiency of the utilization of this base, which ensures the corresponding efficiency of the institution's work
4	Human resources (population) — Information resources	The indiscriminate consumption of information by many users has led to an identity crisis, which can be overcome in many ways with the help of the information resources of socio-cultural institutions
5	Economic resources — Material and technical resources	If demand for a specific type of SCA arises, it shapes both the formation and actualization of the corresponding economic SCA resources tied to the respective material and technical resources. On the other hand, the activity of the population as the subject of SCA can also give rise to the need for the corresponding material and technical base for this activity, which stimulates the development of the respective economic resources
6	Economic resources — Personnel resources	This relationship is shaped by the decisive role of the population in the organization and conduct of SCA. The greater this role, the less paid personnel resources are required due to the public activity of the population participating in socio-cultural programs and projects. Accordingly, the amount of funding for personnel depends on the public activity

Note: compiled based on the expert survey

The experts argued that the mediated influence of “human resources (population)” persists in other pairs of functional relations given the leading importance of visitors’ participation in SCA.

In the pairs “material and technical resources – information resources” and “personnel resources – information resources”, the FR are predetermined by the nature of the influence exerted on them by the population itself, its requests and activity in the process of organization and participation in the SCA.

In the course of the free interview, the experts noted that the new paradigm of cultural service organization system, the essence of which, according to one of the respondents, “lies in the orientation primarily on the cultural demands of the population and the opportunities for people’s diverse socially significant cultural self-realization”, generates several principles of the formation and use of SCA resources (Table 4).

Table 4. Principles of the formation and use of SCA resources.

No.	Principle	%*	Rank
1	Emphasis on socio-cultural objectives	82%	1
2	Consideration of the peculiarities of socio-cultural needs of different population groups	73%	2
3	Effective formation and use of the SCA resource base	68%	3
4	Involving visitors of socio-cultural institutions in the process of creating certain cultural services	55%	4

Note: compiled based on the expert survey; * – percentage of expert mentions.

In discussing the principles of the formation and use of SCA resources (Table 3), the experts indicated that many forms of SCA organization can follow the so-called “null economy” principle and do not imply any financial costs if the population’s SCA prevails (for instance, many types of public activity in the sphere of leisure).

Several experts emphasized that human resources are not being utilized in full in the present practice of SCA organization. This results in the lack of a strategy for an optimal ratio of paid and free cultural services and a constant deficit of some SCA resources, which is largely artificial due to the bureaucratization of the work of many socio-cultural institutions.

The experts indicate that despite the obviousness of the principle of accounting for the socio-cultural demands of various population groups, SCA specialists tend to fund and search for SCA resources based on planning “from above” without well-thought-out targeting of organized cultural events and services.

Nevertheless, the principle of SCA resource base formation and use that continues to prove relevant is the one that consists in supplying a certain cultural service to the population in advance of the demand for it in cases when a certain socially significant problem is being solved by means of culture (for example, the improvement of leisure culture of different social and age groups, the development of social and cultural activity of the population, the formation of aesthetic tastes, preservation of cultural heritage, etc.).

The experts pointed out that the ultimate social effectiveness is often overlooked by SCA specialists. The intensification of the social orientation of SCA opens up new opportunities for the improvement and development of the resource base for this activity in the form of the corresponding social projects and programs (for example, the involvement of socially disadvantaged groups in the SCA), the coordination of cultural services with social service agencies, law enforcement, health care, etc.

According to the experts, the implementation of the principle of involving the visitors of socio-cultural institutions in the process of creating certain cultural services is most often inhibited by the established stereotypical perception of the population by SCA specialists and administrative bodies in the socio-cultural sphere mostly as the object of socio-cultural influence and not the equal partner in interaction in the creation of cultural services. This vital process of further democratization of SCA and the use of its resources is productive when the work of socio-cultural institutions involves their visitors as participants in councils, boards, trustees, etc., who influence the strategy and planning of a particular SCA (Sidorova, 2009; Kotova, 2012; Frese, 2015).

The consideration of the real and potential demand for certain cultural goods and services in SCA implies the presence of the well-established flexible production of the respective cultural products. However, the implementation of appropriate marketing research and technology has not yet become a common practice in the SCA organization.

In this regard, the termination of various kinds of applied sociological research in the sphere of cultural services to the population, such as the sociology of clubs, museums, theater, music, etc., is not coincidental (Suslova, 1998; Ionin, 2004). In this case, the practice of SCA being

planned predominantly “from above” also gives rise to voluntaristic planning of the resources necessary for certain cultural events, concert and performance activities, and education. The question also arises: “Where are the limits to the growth in the number of these activities and programs?” The lack of a clear answer to this question by many SCA specialists leads to an endless lack of resources for these activities and the irrational use of the resource potential already at hand.

What has to be noted especially is the time resource for planning and the formation of the resource base for SCAs, which is often underestimated. The demand for many cultural goods and services is often inconsistent, which manifests in the fluctuation of this demand depending on the time of day and season. Therefore, the use of the personnel resource of SCA has to consider this inconsistency through using the potential of temporary workers, part-time workers, and invited specialists.

Moreover, there is a considerable time interval between the use of a certain cultural service by the population and the actual socio-cultural influence of this consumption, which typically comes into effect later (Kirillova, 2019). This effect is the more considerable the more systematic and prolonged is the provision of the cultural service in question. The claims of it being impossible to empirically determine such an effect can be considered unconvincing given that the results of research and observations of the practice of SCA organization show the contrary.

Currently, we can conclude on the presence of two predominant trends in the formation and use of SCA resources – the resources provided by the state and the resources of private businesses. Whereas in the case of state-provided resources, there is a chronic lack of their replenishment, the use of private business resources is limited for large groups of the population due to the lack of financial capacities.

In the meantime, SCA is predominantly public. If SCA result primarily from the efforts of government officials, they lose their public nature and tend to degenerate or imitate the real SCA of the population (for example, the planned programs of mass “holiday rejoicing” in connection with a certain calendar date). When SCA is commercialized, it is more often than not reduced to serving solvent clients in the field of contentless recreation and entertainment. The main orientation of SCA should consist in attracting public initiatives in the sphere of culture and art with the corresponding special resource base.

In this case, the main subjects of SCA become NPOs in the sphere of culture and art, the main goal of which is not profit but public and civil service. Among the corresponding

objectives of such NPOs can be charity, cultural work, educational and scientific research activities, ensuring citizens' mental health, and other objectives, which are not achieved to a sufficient degree in business and the institutional sphere.

NPOs vary in their forms. Among them are public and religious organizations, non-profit partnerships, autonomous NPOs, social and charity funds, associations, unions, etc. NPOs should be the main resource of the SCA providing it with the necessary personnel, information, economic, material, and technical resources. This does not imply a complete rejection of state resource support of SCA, especially when a given NPO, being socially demanded, does not have sufficient resources to implement SCAs. Yet even in this case, the main role is still played by human resources – the members of associations that are mostly able to allocate the minimum amount of resources to carry out their own activities.

A variety of voluntary socially and culturally significant associations of citizens can organically combine private, public, and state interests, and the resource provision for this combination is one of the priority tasks of SCA specialists. As soon as various NPOs begin to be dominated by commercial interests, they factually transform into business structures with the formal amateur status. On the other hand, in the absence of individual and private initiatives, such associations are bureaucratized, losing their amateur nature (Semenova, 2019).

Socio-culturally oriented NPOs are especially demanded in resolving such tasks as organizing leisure for the socially unprotected groups of the population (representatives of the older age group, children, low-income families, orphans, disabled people, "difficult" teenagers, etc.). At the same time, there is no well-thought-out system for training SCA specialists who can work with these population groups.

The potential of NPOs as the main resource of SCA is not fully utilized. The study of this potential reveals that these unions can also make a considerable contribution to such vital areas of work with the population as enlightenment, additional education, spiritual and moral upbringing, improving the environmental culture of the population, and many others.

In this case, SCA specialists use this resource for the development of the social, cultural, and civil activity of the population in a positive direction, especially in the areas of the socio-cultural sphere where the government structures are not effective (Kapitonova, 2012).

Better utilization of the potential of public organizations as a resource of SCA requires further development of the fundraising strategy as one of the most promising in expanding the resource base of the socio-cultural sphere.

The aforementioned strategy implies the mobilization and accumulation of resources from a variety of sources for socio-cultural programs, projects, and initiatives, but not for the accumulation of the organization's fixed assets.

The attracted funds, in this case, are not channeled to solving commercial tasks. At the same time, fundraising promotes the interest of businesses and state structures in supporting various socio-cultural projects and programs (Kamenets, 2016).

There are certain differences between project and operational fundraising. The latter focuses on resolving the ongoing issues in the socio-cultural sphere (salaries of employees, replenishment of material, technical, and economic resources necessary to maintain the functioning of the organizations of culture and art). The former type of fundraising (Anisina, 2009; Oleinik, 2010) is aimed at the strategic development of SCA, the leading role in which is played by the initiatives and creative activity of the population involved in fundraising, which has social and civil significance.

CONCLUSIONS

The examination of the resource potential of SCA shows that in the conditions of the new paradigm of its organization as the focus on the cultural demands and initiatives of the population itself, the significance of the "third (civil) sector" in the cultural services system increases.

Thus, the proposed hypothesis that if the principles of the formation and use of SCA resources are observed, NPOs in the field of culture and art become its main actors is confirmed.

What now has to constitute the foundation of the profile of an SCA specialist is the skills and abilities in working with this sector as the initiator, coordinator, and organizer able to effectively utilize human resources as the basis for resolving the professional tasks. This attitude presupposes mastery of specific social technologies for the formation of a variety of voluntary communities in the sphere of leisure as part of solving urgent social problems by means of the SCA.

We can state the fact of the shortage of such specialists, which is not sufficiently recognized in the system of vocational education in the SCA profile. The ability to work with people toward the development of their social and cultural activity can be developed both through appropriate

theoretical training and educational and production internships. This calls for further research on the main directions of SCA in modern conditions with the leading role being reserved for the study of the problem of SCA resource base and the effectiveness of its use.

Nevertheless, the present study has certain limitations concerning the specifics of the formation and use of SCA resources in Russia and the expert sample size. Due to the limitations on the part of researchers, the experts are not grouped by professional status (managers, specialists). This does not allow to compare the opinions of experts of different statuses, which could have affected the study results, but, overall, would not change the main conclusions of the study. These limitations have to be considered by researchers and specialists when applying the results of the study in practice.

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