

THE ROLE OF CULTURAL CENTERS IN PROVIDING CULTURAL SERVICES TO THE POPULATION

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Abstract

This article analyzes the role and significance of cultural centers in providing cultural services to the population. It examines the role of cultural centers in the spiritual development of society and their system of serving different age and social groups. In addition, the article highlights the organizational and managerial structure of cultural centers.

Keywords

providing cultural services to the population, amateur art, circle, national values, management of cultural centers.

In the context of Uzbekistan's ongoing development, the significance of culture and art is immense and well understood by the intellectual community, especially future cultural workers. As the head of our state noted, if culture and art do not develop in a country, society itself cannot progress. All cultural and educational institutions operating in our country play an important role in shaping the public consciousness and instilling national culture in the minds of the younger generation. This involves extensive use of theaters, cultural institutions, art palaces, cultural and recreational parks, museums, and other institutions, as well as the development and implementation of measures that enhance public awareness, elevate consciousness, and provide moral and spiritual nourishment to people.

To achieve this, it is essential to work based on the spiritual needs of the population. Historically, spiritual needs developed after material needs, but it would be incorrect to conclude that spiritual needs arise solely from material needs. As society develops, direct and indirect relationships are established between material and spiritual life. Language, literature, ethics, art, and creativity increasingly enter social life, and the demand for them grows. Considering the ever-growing demands and needs of Uzbekistan's population today, cultural centers being established in the country pay special attention to supporting the socio-cultural activities of the population and ensuring meaningful leisure.

In particular, circles organized in cultural centers play a significant role in effectively using free time, especially for young people, and in fostering interest in various types of art. The main purpose of establishing circles, studios, and groups in cultural centers is to organize meaningful leisure for children and youth outside of school and work, purposefully develop their abilities and aspirations, consolidate theoretical knowledge and practical skills, enhance professional expertise, and strengthen their readiness for future professional activities.

Currently, 837 cultural centers operate under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Preserving these cultural centers, fundamentally improving their activities, and organizing comprehensive services for the population have been ensured through the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-4038 dated November 28, 2018, as well as four decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers (No. 178 dated June 25, 2013; Nos. 263 and 264 dated March 30, 2019; and No. 30 dated January 20, 2021). At present, a total of 7,143 creative staff members work in these centers, including 3,942 circle leaders, 210 artistic directors, 210 directors, 840 sound directors, 210 specialists supervising the activities of circles, and 210 specialists working with youth.

Out of all the staff working in cultural centers, 1,855 are engaged in organizing activities for young people under the age of 30. In 2023, a total of 31,340 cultural and educational events were organized in Uzbekistan, including 20,580 concert and performance programs. Additionally, 3,873 clubs were established across 837 cultural centers, engaging a total of 50,197 people, of which 43,919 were young participants. The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan provided cultural centers with 5,000 national musical instruments of 7 types, 10,664 educational and methodological manuals and recommendations in 5 categories, as well as 5 instructional videos.

Libraries and reading halls were established in 112 cultural centers, with book collections worth 674 million UZS created. To enhance the professional skills of cultural center directors, training courses were organized at the Skill Improvement Center under the Uzbekistan State Institute of Arts and Culture, and certificates were issued to each director. Furthermore, approximately 4,000 creative staff from regional cultural centers participated in mobile practical seminars. To support the activities of cultural centers, the Ministry of Culture developed and implemented all relevant regulatory and legal documents. Job descriptions for cultural center staff were prepared in coordination with the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction and distributed to all institutions. New journals were introduced for documenting the activities of cultural centers and club sessions, which were also distributed to all institutions. Programs and annual work plans for training

amateur performers on national musical instruments were developed and shared with regional centers.

Additionally, a new procedure was introduced for organizing folklore and ethnographic groups and managing their repertoires in cultural centers. As a result of decrees issued by the President of Uzbekistan and the Cabinet of Ministers, 400 cultural centers have been renovated and equipped in recent years. Specifically, based on the Cabinet of Ministers' resolution No. 178 dated June 25, 2013, between 2013 and 2018, 266 cultural centers were renovated using 160 billion UZS from local budgets. According to Presidential Decree PQ-4038 dated November 28, 2018, 61 cultural centers were renovated between 2019 and 2022 with 183 billion UZS from the state budget. Furthermore, within the framework of the "Obod Qishloq," "Obod Mahalla," "Obod Markaz," and district/city socio-economic development programs, 73 cultural centers were fully renovated with nearly 292 billion UZS between 2018 and 2023, strengthening their material and technical base and enriching their creative activities. In 2023, 12 cultural centers were renovated and resumed operations, creating 32 new creative clubs, engaging a total of 576 regular students, and establishing 5 folklore-ethnographic groups. Currently, 437 cultural centers are under renovation; of these, 160 centers operate in buildings that are either non-existent or in an emergency state, and 277 centers require reconstruction or major repairs. At present, the need for musical instruments in cultural centers is 7,764 units, and for computer and office equipment, it is 2,374 units. Additionally, 599 creative groups with the title "Folk Ensemble" require 11,400 stage costumes and 455 professional musical instruments of 14 types.

The primary objective of a cultural center is to further develop national culture in the Republic of Uzbekistan, improve the quality of cultural services for the population, meet citizens' cultural needs, ensure the meaningful use of leisure time, and create exemplary programs that embody national values, customs, and traditions. Cultural centers aim to preserve and promote folk art and amateur creative activities, organize various clubs, studios, courses, hobby groups, and artistic collectives, and provide favorable conditions for their operations.

The core functions of a cultural center include improving the quality of cultural services, satisfying cultural needs, ensuring constructive leisure activities, and forming exemplary programs reflecting national values, traditions, and customs. Additionally, cultural centers seek to preserve and promote folk art and amateur creativity, establish artistic and practical creative groups, hobbyist collectives, and create favorable conditions for their systematic creative development.

Cultural centers engage children in clubs, provide courses in foreign languages and public speaking, promote all genres and directions of folk creativity and amateur arts, and ensure the transmission of intangible cultural heritage to future generations in its authentic form.

They also organize educational and cultural events involving literary and artistic figures, professional creative groups, and the public, especially youth, through direct artistic meetings and roundtable discussions. Cultural centers coordinate district and city festivals showcasing folk creativity and performing arts, identify talented youth, and support young artists. They also organize mass celebrations, performances, and community events, and provide paid services in the socio-cultural sector according to agreements with legal and physical entities. Various clubs, studios, courses, hobby groups, and artistic collectives are organized to ensure broad community participation in cultural activities.

Management of a cultural center is conducted by a director appointed by the head of the organization to which the center directly reports. Directors of centers in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regions, and Tashkent city report to the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regional cultural departments, and the Tashkent City Department of Culture. Directors of district and city centers are appointed in coordination with the relevant local authorities, and directors of rural and township centers are appointed by district or city cultural departments. The charter of the cultural center is approved by the head of the supervising organization. Ministers of Culture in Karakalpakstan, heads of regional cultural departments, and directors of Tashkent city's Department of Culture supervise the activities of centers under their jurisdiction to ensure compliance with legal documents, regulations, and the objectives and functions outlined in the center's charter. The center's director manages day-to-day operations, issues mandatory instructions to staff, and is accountable for the center's activities. Employment contracts between the director and the center are formalized by the supervising organization. Cultural centers may establish advisory bodies on a community basis, including artistic councils and methodological councils, to guide their activities. District and city cultural centers provide methodological support to rural and township centers by:

- Organizing public, cultural, educational, and promotional activities within their service area and offering methodological and practical assistance;
- Providing methodological guidance, new repertoires, and instructional materials to organize cultural and other services based on local population needs, particularly youth;

- Coordinating with rural and township centers to preserve and promote intangible cultural heritage, develop annual event plans, and implement them effectively.

The composition of community councils within a cultural center is approved by the head of the supervising organization. Depending on the type of activity, community-based artistic and methodological councils are formed to enhance the planning, management, and development of creative processes within the center.

An artistic council, formed on a community basis, reviews and approves cultural and educational events organized by the center, theatrical concert programs, and repertoire plans of amateur artistic collectives entitled "Folk Amateur Ensemble" and "Children's Exemplary Ensemble." The council ensures that the activities of these groups align with the cultural and educational objectives of the center.

A methodological council examines and approves the training plans and program activities of the center's structures. Based on the center's ongoing activities, the council makes decisions on the establishment of new clubs and ensembles, discusses measures to further improve the center's operations, and submits relevant conclusions and recommendations to the center director. The financial activities of cultural centers are supported by the following sources:

1. Funds allocated from the State Budget of the Republic of Uzbekistan;
2. Revenue generated from paid cultural and educational activities, clubs, various services, and other activities organized by the center in accordance with the main objectives defined in the present Standard Regulation;
3. Sponsorships and charitable contributions from legal entities and individuals;
4. Other sources not prohibited by law.

Revenue generated from paid clubs is allocated as follows: 50% is used to strengthen the material and technical base of the center, while the remaining 50% is spent on the salaries and incentives of club leaders. The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan has developed a model work plan to guide the operations of cultural centers. Cultural centers play a strategic role in providing cultural services to the population. Their activities enrich the spiritual and moral environment of society, develop the creative potential of new generations, and contribute to the preservation and promotion of national culture. Furthermore, cultural centers serve as a key instrument for strengthening cultural relations at both local and international levels, implementing creative projects, and establishing effective communication with various segments of society. For these reasons, improving the system of cultural services for the population and creating

conditions for cultural centers to operate more efficiently should be among the priority directions of state policy.

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