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## EXAMINING THE ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF CHIAYI CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT (TAIWAN) IN THE COMMUNITIES

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### ABSTRACT

*Arts and cultural organizations are seeking for their roles and values of the communities in the 21st century. Most arts and cultural organizations expect to become an important asset of the community, to bring economic benefits for the communities and to play a leading role in urban development. The idea not only changes missions and programs of arts organizations, but also provides the fundamentals of developing creative economics.*

*This paper will focus on bureaus/departments of cultural affairs in Taiwan, examining their roles and impacts in community development and constructing community culture. Researching of details will analyze missions and programs of bureaus/departments, scan their internal and external management, and emerge a model for bureaus of cultural affairs. Literature review will define "community" and "community development."*

*Theories of "internal management" and "external management" are applied in order to construct a theoretical framework. Internal management is focused on improving both the efficiency and effectiveness of arts and cultural organizations. External management includes stakeholder theory, social objective of arts programs, and network system. The major research approach is case studies, which will review 23 bureaus/departments of cultural affairs in Taiwan as the participants. The methods of data collection will be content (web page) analysis, observation, and interviews.*

*The roles and values of arts and cultural organizations holding in communities have been highlighted for many countries; however, there are only few studies in such areas in Taiwan. Thus, this study attempts to emphasize the roles and functions of cultural affair bureaus in the communities; it expects to find the active influence in communities, in order to sustain the development of the communities.*

**Keywords:** *bureaus/departments of cultural affairs, community development, internal management, external management, strategic alliance, external stakeholder*

The social objectives of arts and cultural organizations are emphasized since last century (Gilhespy, 2001). Arts and cultural organizations are seeking for their roles and values in their communities. Most arts and cultural organizations expect to become an important asset of the community, to bring economic benefits for the communities and to play a leading role in urban development. The idea: arts organizations as a core of communities, not only change missions and programs of arts organizations, but also provide the communities' fundamentals of developing creative economics.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM**

Reviewing the history of Taiwan, the emphasis on the community development began in 1960's. At that time, there were 14 well-developed communities as models for other communities (United Daily News, 1995). In 1977, Taiwanese government initiated the 12 National Construction Projects. The 12th construction was called "cultural (facility) construction," which established cultural centers including libraries, museums, and performing halls (Chen, 2001). The Social Education Act established in 1980 by the Ministry of Education emphasized that cities/local governments should use cultural centers to host various social and cultural activities. In 1983, the Council of Cultural Affairs (CCA) announced "the Working Principles of Cultural Centers," addressed that the mission of cultural centers should be the hub of promoting cultural activities and enhancing the quality of people's life. After that, the CCA announced the most important policy related to community development, which is "Community Building" in 1994. The main idea was hoping that citizens know the resources of their communities, to build awareness of their communities, to integrate their ideas, to develop community's culture, and to persist the building of the communities (Council of Cultural Affairs, 2008).

However, when the central government/CCA devoted itself into local development, it found that cultural centers of counties were only accumulation of several facilities. They were not empowered to execute public duties. Therefore, the central government encouraged city/local governments to establish their own cultural affair bureaus/departments. Since 1999, local governments began to establish cultural affair bureaus/departments to implement their cultural policies in local level. Most cultural affair bureaus/departments were restructured from the former cultural centers.

The purpose of this paper focuses on local bureaus/departments of cultural affairs in Taiwan, examining their roles and impacts on community development and how the bureaus/departments assist communities to construct their identity. Researching of details will analyze missions and programs of bureaus/departments, scan their external and internal environment, and emerge future suggestions for bureaus/departments of cultural affairs.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY**

Theories of "internal management" and "external management" are applied in order to construct a theoretical framework (Carter, Prosperi, Nerenhausen and Hude, 2005). Internal management is focused on improving both the efficiency and effectiveness of arts and cultural organizations. Major elements include: resources, management, and capacity elements (Lee, 2005). External management discusses the influence of environmental factors on organizations. Attention is paid to stakeholders, strategic alliance, and economic development of communities (Carter, Prosperi, Nerenhausen and Hude, 2005). Meanwhile, two key words "community" and "community development" are defined. In here, communities mean a place gathering people with similar cultural, ethnic, or religious background, with common interests, work together to solve their common problems, and form a living network. "Community development" includes constructing facilities/infrastructure, and also concerns the development of social, cultural, political, and economic development in communities (Tsai, 1985). Factors to cause the change of communities, such as natural disasters, demographic change, technological change, and policy change also are discussed in this paper. Table 1 shows the steps of this research.

Step 2 begins to scan the external environment of a bureau/department, such as natural, demographic, social, economic, cultural, technical, educational, political, legal, and international environment. Step 3 is to review a bureau's internal environment. Three managerial elements: resources, management, and capacity will be discussed. Step 4 is to discover stakeholders of the bureau/department, strategic alliance of the bureau/department, and how the bureau/department assists economic development of the community. In here, a strategic alliance is a formal relationship formed between two or more parties to pursue a set of agreed upon goals or to meet a critical business need while remaining independent organizations

Table 1. Steps of Research

Step 1. Introduction of each Cultural Bureau/Department				
Step 2. External Scan				
natural environment	demographic environment	social environment	economic environment	cultural technical environment
technical environment	educational environment	political environment	legal environment	international environment
Step 3. Internal Scan				
resources (1) human resources (2) budget (3) facilities	management (1) decision-making (2) organizational culture	capacity (1) marketing (2) research ability		
Step 4. Relationship between an Organization and Communities				
external stakeholders (1) audiences (2) volunteers (3) sponsors (4) artistic providers (5) governments (6) competitor	strategic alliance (1) vertical alliance (2) horizontal alliance (3) nonsymmetric alliance	economic development and the community (1) commoditization (2) construction and projection of a new territorial identity to the "outside" (3) Selling itself internally		
Step 5. Defining the Change Factors				
Step 6. Conclusions and Suggestions				

(Wikipedia, 2008). Shu (1995) according to the division of labor, divides a strategic alliance into three types: vertical, horizontal, and nonsymmetric alliance. Considering the relationship between economic development and communities, Ray's (1998) models has been modified as three categories: commoditization of local/regional culture, the construction and projection of a new territorial identity to the "outside," and selling itself to itself. The fifth step is to identify which factors force the change of communities and organizations. Finally, the researcher will give the bureaus'/departments' suggestions for the future.

The major research approach is case studies. Stake (1997) states that case studies can help researchers understand complex problems, explain the content of events, and to know how problems are formed. The methods of data collection are content (web page) analysis, field trip/observation, and interviews. The researcher used information from different websites analyzing 23 cities' cultural affairs bureaus/departments in Taiwan, and chose 5 bureaus/departments of cultural affairs as the participants for indepth interviewers. The data is still in the collection stage. The researcher will use only Chiayi County's data as an example for this presentation.

### CASE STUDY: CHIAYI COUNTY CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Chiayi County Cultural Center was established in 1996 and reorganized in 1999, which became Chiayi County Cultural Affairs Bureau. In 2008, due to the restructure of Chiayi County Government, Chiayi County Cultural Affairs Bureau became Chiayi County Cultural Affairs Department. The department consists of seven sections, library information section, exhibiting and performing arts section, arts promotion section, cultural heritage section, administrative section, accounting section, and personnel section. It sets Director-general one person, Deputy Director-general one person, and 45 staff members. One of its missions is to promote Chiayi's culture and become the fundamentals of developing creative economics (Chiayi County Cultural Affairs Department, 2006).

In order to understand the relationship between Chiayi County Cultural Affairs Department and its community, reviewing the external environment such as natural, demographic, social, economic, cultural, technical, educational, political, legal, and international environment is

necessary. Chiayi County is located in the southwestern part of Taiwan. It has many mountains and is the only one county that has three national scenic areas, Alishan National Scenic Area, Silaya National Scenic Area, and Southwest Coast National Scenic Area. The total area of Chiayi County is 1902 square kilometers, accounting for 5.35% of Taiwan area. The population is 559329 and the density is 294/ square kilometers. Administrative divisions are 2 cities, 2 towns, and 14 villages. The 14th Magistrate of Chiayi County is Mingwen Chen who belongs to the Democratic Progressive Party. The revenue of the county was 14562957NT in 2006. Chiayi is an agricultural county. Rice is major product (Chiayi County Government, 2006).

The Tropic of Cancer runs through Chiayi, creating a landscape that is different from other places also having the Tropic of Cancer running through them. In those places, most of them have either deserts or semi-deserts, while Taiwan has forests as a result of the abundant rainfall brought by the trade wind and airstreams (Chiayi County Government, 2006).

Taiwan's indigenous people are considered Austronesians. Indigenous people residing in modern-day region of Chiayi County belonged to the Pepo Tribe of Hoanya and the Highland Tribe of Tsou. In the 23rd year of Emperor Kanhsi (1684), there were 1 state and 3 counties: Taiwan State, Taiwan County, Jhuluo County and Fongshan County. The administrative region of Chiayi County today was under the rule of Jhuluo County, which governed 4 boroughs and 34 settlements. Taoism is the most important religion in Chiayi. Mazu Birthday- Festival is on the twenty-third day of the third lunar month of the Chinese calendar, which is a very important day for Chiayi County. In terms of historic interests, Chiayi has 8 historic sites. Amongst which is one rated first-class, one rated second-class, six third-class, each scattered in Zhong Pu, Pan Lu, Liu Jiao, Ming Xiong and Hsin Gang. Chiayi is also rich in historical structures. Thus, it is a city of culture. These historical interests not only reflect the lifestyle and attitude of the early days, but to the present day, an important resource of the life. Cochin Ceramic is famous in Chiayi. With completion of the High-Speed Rail, Chiayi is easily accessible. It will take a mere one-hour to travel to Taipei and half an hour to Kaohsiung (Chiayi County Government, 2006). The percentage of higher education (over 15 years old) is 17.6%. Literate rate (over 15 years old) is 94.69% in 2006 (National Statistics, 2008). International exchange is getting popular recently, including hosting of some international festivals (Chiayi County Government, 2006).

After scanning the external environment, the next step is reviewing the internal environment of Chiayi County Cultural Affairs Department. Three managerial elements: resources, management, and capacity are discussed. Resource element: budget for the department is 97858000NT. Facilities include Chiayi Performing Arts Center (PAC), public libraries, Meiling Fine Arts Museums, and several local museums. PAC occupies 6.6 hectares in area, including the center and the cultural park. It is a special performing arts center that combines functions in performance, education, exhibition and recreation (Chiayi County Cultural Affairs Department, 2006).

Considering about managerial elements, the process of decision-making is mostly from top-down. The degree of delegation is high and the cooperation between each section is high. The department can finish most of their tasks. Mostly the Director-general Yong-Feng Zhong establishes the value and culture of organization. He encourages staff members to challenge his ideas and to enrich his ideas. Director-general Zhong (Zhong, 2008) emphasizes more interaction between staff members. Most staff members need to pass the National Examination in order to become full-time staff members. However, the organization still hires many part-time staff. The average working hours for staff members is 9.5 hours per day.

In 2005, the department held almost 600 activities and attracted 1180000 people to attend. The promotional channels are mostly the ERA Ticket System, the National Theater/Concert Hall Ticketing System and free tickets directly send out from the department. The job of developing new policies and activities are the responsibilities of the exhibiting and performing arts section, arts promotion section and cultural heritage section. The department is proud of its "Artist Resident Program." In 2006, the department recruited 16 artists and brought them to 10 communities. Those artists work with communities and created several arts projects according to residents' needs. The most challenge for the department is to face staff turnover. Because Chiayi County is an agricultural county, young people get bored easily and leave the organization very soon (Zhong, 2008).

After all, what relationships can an organization and a community establish? Three aspects are discussed: external stakeholders of the department, strategic alliance of the department, and how the department assists economic development of the community. External stakeholders include audiences, volunteers, sponsors, artistic providers, governments, and competitors. For the department, most audiences are local citizens; only special events will attract visitors. The department organized volunteers in 1999, and there are two groups. Most volunteers work for the department, and seldom directly work with communities. The major funding of the Chiayi County Cultural Affairs Department is from Chiayi County government, the Council of Cultural Affairs, and sometime sponsors from Chiayi County Finance Taxation Bureau. Most arts and culture programs are provided by the national artists and artistic groups; the percentage of local groups is around 2% and foreign groups occupy 5%. The main competitor of the department is Hsin Kang Foundation of Culture and Education, a private and nonprofit organization. It has a long history and a strong influence in the community. Therefore, sometimes the department finds it hard to approach the foundation, and the foundation also attracts many volunteers more than the Chiayi County Cultural Affairs Department.

A vertical alliance in here can be categorized as the cooperation between the department and different communities. For example, a community can submit a community-building application form to the department, and the department can give funding to the project and also provide professional assistance. A horizontal alliance happened mostly in big events, such as, Alishan Sunrise Concerns and Mazu's Cultural Festival. Those activities will normally need to have cooperation of cross-sectors or cross-departments. An example of nonsymmetric alliance will be the agreement of promoting arts and cultural activities between the Nice Plaza/Corporation and the department. Cochin Ceramic can be viewed as commoditization of local culture. Arts festivals are a kind of construction and projection of a new territorial identity to the "outside." The policy of the artistic residence can be a kind of strategy for "Selling itself internally."

The fifth step is to identify which factors force the change of organization and the communities. According to the Director-general Zhong's observation, he believed that political, demographic and geographic issues are major reasons to force the change of communities and to influence the transition of the department. Political issues include the CCA's community development policies and political party alternation in power. Due to the transition of political parties from the central to local government, the identity issue has been emphasized since 2000. Therefore, it is important how to discover the specialty of the communities and use these characteristics to attract visitors. On the other hand, because Chiayi County's population is sparse, each village is far away from each other. Therefore, artist residence, to bring artists to the communities, is the major task for the department recently. Finally, the major population of Chiayi County is elders and children. The dependency ratios are high, 46.03% in 2005. Thus, how to attract elders and children to attend the activities is also an important task (Zhong, 2008).

## **CONCLUSION**

After reviewing documents and interviewing the Director-general, the Deputy Director-general, staff members who work with communities, and field trips to the communities, the researcher can make several conclusions:

1. After the CCA announced the policy of "Community Building" in 1994, the Chiayi County Cultural Affairs Department has been trying very hard to meet its mission: developing its community.
2. Chiayi County's communities have higher expectation of the department, and hope the department can assist them to build an identity of their communities and bring some economic benefits to the communities.
3. The role of the Department is a facilitator to the communities, but not a leader, especially to the communities that they have already had experiences in the community development.
4. Because of the limited budget of the department, the department does not like other counties, which spend much money on festivals and use big events to attract visitors.
5. Leaders, such as the Director-general, will strongly influence the organizational behavior. Sometimes he/she would also regenerate the strategy, restructure the organization, and reengineer the task process.

The suggestions for the Chiayi County Cultural Affairs Department are as follows:

1. The policy of "Community Building" should continue to be carried out whatever the political party's rotation.
2. The policy should focus on the sustainability of the communities, not only emphasizing the economic benefits of the community.
3. The training of the department should continue to provide advance courses; therefore, new and old staff members can maintain their energy.

The roles and values of arts and cultural organizations holding in communities have been highlighted for many countries; however, there are only a few studies in this area in Taiwan. Thus, this study attempts to emphasize the roles and functions of cultural affair bureaus/departments in the communities, expects to find the active influence in communities, and sustains the development of the communities.

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