

THE ROLE OF FOREIGN CULTURAL CENTERS IN DEVELOPING MODERN INTERCULTURAL COOPERATION

Fayziyev Turabek Raufovich

The Uzbekistan State Institute of Arts and Culture associate professor of the department "Culture and Art Management"

candidate of technical sciences

Abstract: The article is devoted to the analysis of the activities of foreign cultural centers. The authors introduce the concept of a foreign cultural center into scientific circulation, identify the importance of these organizations for the development of cultural cooperation, and consider various areas and forms of their activities. Special attention is paid to the role of foreign cultural centers in modern cultural exchange, foreign cultural policy, cultural and public diplomacy of modern states.

Keywords and phrases: foreign cultural centers; directions and forms of work of cultural centers; the role of cultural centers in the foreign cultural policy of modern states.

Modern cultural cooperation is characterized by various directions and forms. One of the most important trends in international cooperation at the present time can be called the institutionalization of cooperation, which is associated with strengthening the role of various non-governmental structures that not only organize and implement various projects that bring together participants from different countries, but also actively interact with museums, libraries, theaters. Today, the most important organizations aimed at developing cultural cooperation are foreign cultural centers, the activities of which are of scientific and practical interest, since they reflect the current trends in modern cultural cooperation. The increased attention to the work of these specific organizations is primarily due to their versatility. Cultural centers are institutions that combine many types of activities: implementing various cultural projects, teaching languages, preparing lectures and seminars, organizing dance and national art courses, meetings with representatives of national culture, providing visitors with an extensive library base, etc. Today, there is a wide network of foreign cultural centers in the world that are actively engaged in the development of intercultural dialogue. Such organizations are usually called foreign cultural centers.

A number of foreign cultural centers also operate in Uzbekistan. These centers are usually established to strengthen bilateral cultural ties, teach languages, organize educational programs, and develop cooperation between countries. Below is a list of some popular foreign cultural centers:

1. Goethe-Institut (Germany) - Located in Tashkent, this center is engaged in teaching the German language, promoting German culture, and organizing cultural events.
2. Russky Dom (Russia) - Formerly known as "Rossotrudnichestvo", this center is aimed at developing the Russian language and culture.

3. Alliance Française - is a cultural center of France, providing information on French language courses, cultural events, and opportunities to study in France.
4. British Council - a center promoting British culture and the English language. There are opportunities for everything from primary education to preparation for international exams such as IELTS.
5. Korean Cultural Center – established by the Republic of Korea, provides Korean language courses, film screenings, K-pop and national art.
6. Chinese Cultural Center – promotes Chinese culture, language and traditional arts. Often also known as the “Confucius Institute”.

Cultural centers operating abroad are the most convenient practical basis for cultural exchange between countries. Similar institutions exist in Russia, Germany, France and Spain, as well as in many other countries around the world.

It is not without reason that they are given a central place in the practice of international information and cultural communication. Cultural centers are a unique structure that allows for the most consistent and practical implementation of intercultural cooperation in the long term, as well as the most effective way to achieve various goals of cultural exchange. Many countries also consider cultural centers as objects that influence public opinion in the host country. Their advantage is that they can independently build their activities, taking into account both the goals of their state's foreign cultural policy and the specific characteristics of the audience of the country in which they operate. Despite the fact that the concept of a foreign cultural center is still being scientifically developed, organizations such as independent participants in international cultural cooperation have appeared much earlier. The first institutions of this type appeared in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1883, the French Union was created in France, which, in our opinion, can be considered a prototype of modern foreign cultural centers. Then, in their activities, they began to create other similar organizations: the Dante Society (1889), the French Institute (1907), the Goethe Institute (1925), the British Council (1934), the Cervantes Institute (1991), the Confucius Institute (2004), and others [1, p. 89].

In the future, the activities of cultural centers changed depending on various external and internal factors and the international situation. During the Second World War, cultural centers paid great attention to promoting the political principles and ideas of their country. However, after the end of the Second World War, the activities of cultural centers expanded steadily. At that time, politicians in Europe were aware of the need to unite European countries. In this regard, the tasks of cultural centers include holding events, exhibitions and festivals in order to bring the people of Europe closer together after the long painful years of war. Today, the range of activities of cultural centers includes educational programs, language courses, the creation of libraries, media libraries, the organization of concerts, exhibitions, competitions, festivals, conferences, lectures, seminars. Summarizing the experience of such centers around the world, we can identify several main forms of their activities: organizing seminars, conferences, colloquiums, organizing tours of musicians and dancers, holding “culture days” of their country, organizing language courses, implementing joint educational programs between higher state institutions, giving lectures on the history and culture of their country, screening films, publishing books, organizing meetings and evenings with famous cultural figures, etc.

In general, four important components can be distinguished in their work: cultural, informational, educational and linguistic. Foreign cultural centers have unique experience and rich traditions. Today, among the largest cultural centers with a wide representation in the world, one can single out the Goethe Institute, the British Council, the French Institute, the Cervantes Institute, the Confucius Institute, the Camoyens Institute, the Dutch Institute, the Swedish Institute, the Finnish Institute, and others. [2, pp. 30–35].

The status of such organizations varies, but most often they operate as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of their country or as a structure subordinate to it. As a rule, many cultural centers are non-governmental organizations similar to them, but at the same time they enjoy significant financial support from the state, primarily as intermediaries in ensuring state interests and representing the country abroad. Usually, the goals of such centers are clearly related to the goals of the foreign cultural policy of the country they represent. Despite the different areas and forms of their activities, they are united by the desire to create an objective and positive image of their country in the country where they are located. The main goal of these cultural centers is to create and maintain a positive foreign policy image of the state by implementing the main directions of the country's foreign cultural policy and presenting its culture abroad. When developing strategies and specific programs, foreign cultural centers, of course, take into account both the national characteristics of their partners and their own interests. Only a harmonious combination of these factors can ensure the success of events. [3, pp. 27-29].

To create a single definition for this type of organization, it is necessary to take into account their institutional and functional characteristics, as well as the goals and tasks they implement. Thus, a foreign cultural center is an organization that represents its country and its culture abroad, is engaged in the development of cultural relations, the formation of a positive image of the country beyond its borders, and implements the political direction of its country using educational, scientific, cultural projects. [including pp. 212-213].

The activities of foreign cultural centers are in practice the main form of international cultural cooperation, recognizing the important role of culture in ensuring the policy and national interests of the state in foreign countries. Such state-state entities are organized at the national level, coordinating the state's efforts in the field of international cultural relations. They are important elements of the country's cultural and public diplomacy, which determines a fundamentally different situation in the system of modern international relations and intercultural interaction, in which only state or interstate structures cease to be subjects. Cooperation through foreign cultural centers, that is, organizations that represent the country's culture abroad, is one of the most successful and promising means of implementing the state's foreign cultural policy. Cultural centers have become an important and vivid example of the institutionalization of international cultural cooperation today. In addition to cultural centers, the number of public organizations that do not receive subsidies from the state budget is increasing, which is associated with an increased interest in studying the culture and traditions of partner countries. At the beginning of the 21st century, the expansion of the participation of foreign governments and non-governmental organizations, cultural centers and various foundations has become not only a trend, but also a key feature of international cultural cooperation. The main goal of the activities of foreign cultural institutions in any country is to form a positive image of the culture and traditions of their state, the peoples living in it. The most striking examples of this are the activities of the British Council, the Goethe Institute, the French Institute, and the French Union. These

structures, as a rule, have a well-thought-out program of action, relatively stable funding and a wide range of implemented programs.

They actively participate in international cultural exchange, strengthening bilateral ties and implementing the foreign cultural policy of their states. The emergence of more and more cultural centers in different countries, the search for modern forms of cultural cooperation convincingly proves the effectiveness of such organizations, which have become a significant phenomenon of modern cultural relations. Cultural centers are an important tool for promoting the culture and language of their country abroad, forming its positive image and strengthening its reputation. Studying the positive experience of foreign cultural centers in other countries will be very useful in planning the further work of organizations promoting the culture of Uzbekistan abroad.

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