

## How Mongolian arts and culture survive?

By Delgermaa Ganbat

Cut-off budget, less production, no creativity and lowest salary. That's the general situation the arts and culture organizations are in. How should the arts and cultural organizations operate in the future? Should this sector still continue being a burden for the state budget? A headache for anyone who concerns on the future development of the country as arts and culture plays important role in national 'immunity' and welfare.

The answer is to do reformation or privatization in the sector for better management, operation and sustainability in the market economy, but almost every attempts to privatize arts and culture institutions haven't been successful.

The Open Society Forum conducted a case study on privatization of cultural organizations, particularly the Mongolian Youth & Children's Theater in order to increase public awareness of privatized cultural organizations and to discuss and explore the learning experiences and conflicts caused by the privatization process. As a result of the study, OSF identified that there's a need to develop policy recommendation on arts and culture sector privatization. ACM has started facilitating the survey on arts and culture sector reformation and privatization in order to develop policy recommendation to policy makers for further positive changes. Within the framework of the survey, ACM team made a trip to 5 provinces and held meetings with arts and cultural organizations in rural areas, in order to discuss on social sector privatization policy and to exchange opinions.

The common atmosphere of the meetings was distrust to the government to privatize by bribery, the fear to lose social security and hope to get more income. All these issues haven't come from the air; it's from past experiences with government. Ts.Lombo of Orkhon province said "The state policy to develop arts and culture is lost as the governors change their policy every 4 years in accordance with election. We do need to have the regional development policy. The reformation and privatization of the sector is highly needed, but the selection criteria and monitoring shall be open, transparent and fair." Ch.Badamtsetseg of Darkhan-Uul province said "The privatization of museums and libraries needs particular consideration. The invaluable funds shall remain as a state property in the state protection." Many other voices shared their thoughts on privatization with important ideas, recommendations and suggestions to care on further development.

N.Bayandai, social sector privatization expert of the State Property Committee says "There are many ways to privatize arts and culture organizations. The government considers this sector as special case to privatize; thus, we have certain alleviations as well as accepting copyright and intellectual property as pledge instead of cash or agreeing the management team to have one fifth of the team as part-time members" says. J.Dolgorsuren, senior researcher of the Arts and Culture Research Institute says "The situation in the rural areas are quite difficult as they have small audience, few staff and less competition, but the main issue is they lack information and opportunity to develop themselves. Capacity building is the biggest challenge in the countryside and without skilled personnel, they can't sustain in the market economy."

ACM team will conduct further a study among the arts and culture organizations in UB and will undertake a detailed analysis of the cultural sector privatization experiences in Mongolia, including review of relevant policy documents, case studies by OSF and international best models of arts and culture sector privatization, especially of post-socialist countries. As a result of the study, the research team will develop a policy recommendation addressed to the Mongolian government and policy makers of the cultural sector with options for the development of cultural sector privatization in alliance with current country cultural development policies.

ACM will facilitate effective advocacy effort basing on the study results and plan to hold capacity building training for arts and culture organizations in the rural areas in order to enhance the capacity, provide them with up-to-date information and skills; and to build close collaboration for further collaboration.