



CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

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Cultural Diplomacy

The general strategies to be followed in the field of cultural diplomacy in order for Turkey to convey its rich cultural and artistic accumulation to international platforms have been summarised below.

Overall Objectives:

- Accentuating the young, contemporary and creative aspect of Turkey, which is nourished by its rooted cultural heritage and the strong influences of its geography. To this end, realising cultural and artistic projects that challenges the traditional perspective especially in Europe, and creating a new threshold of thought.
- Emphasising Turkey's potential contribution to the universal culture of the future through comprehensive activity programmes to be prepared with a view to reflect Turkey's cultural diversity and richness.
- Creating a strong coordination and communication network among the parties of the projects that will be carried out, and ensuring that this network constitutes an example for the long-lasting cooperation that is anticipated to be built between the countries' cultural and artistic institutions and non-governmental organisations.
- Reflecting modern Turkey's energy, creativity, diversity and dynamism in culture and the arts through activities in various disciplines ranging from performing arts to cinema, design to contemporary and traditional arts.
- Strengthening and perpetuating mutual communication in scientific and academic areas along with collaborations in the fields of commerce, tourism and gastronomy by encouraging transnational dialogue at every level.
- Encouraging cultural tourism and therefore cross-cultural interactions.

Strategy Proposal:

- In order for international large-scale cultural and artistic projects to be successful, the two collaborating states as well as their local governments, private sector, cultural and educational institutions, and non-governmental organisations should consolidate their powers. By this means, those institutions which pursue the mission of Turkey's better promotion and believe that it can be accomplished via culture will come together through collaborations and create a multiplier effect beyond expectations.
- A mixed financing model can be adopted in developing the budget for these initiatives. It is possible to assert that the financial and physical means and commitment of the local actors to host the programmes about Turkey will play a fundamental role in the ultimate success of the projects.

Preparation Process / Philosophy of the Programme:

The characteristics that will diversify the general line of international promotion activities Turkey has conducted to date and enable the success of the projects can be enumerated as follows:

- Determining the programmes through democratic processes of dialogue in which all pertinent actors will take part,
- Including projects that the institutions will incorporate in their own programmes and carry out with dedication, instead of top-down activities,
- Prioritising joint productions that reflect the entire diversity of Turkey and not only a selected and sanitised showcase,
- Designing projects that can mobilise the relevant actors not only in the metropolises but also in smaller cities,
- In parallel with culture and arts activities, developing cooperative projects, discussions, scientific meetings, etc. in the field of youth education and on the future of bilateral relations between countries.

Project Distribution:

- In the preparatory process of the program, the officials of cultural institutions in the country where the activities will be realised can be invited to Turkey; thereby enabling them to personally observe the dynamism in the country. Moreover, experts from Turkey can get in contact with all the prominent cultural actors of the host country and gain insight about their programmes.
- Through the contacts of Yunus Emre Institutes located in various countries, the network of local governments, associations and cultural, academic and financial institutions can be mobilised.
- Having cultural institutions and organisations, artists, curators, art critics, the press, non-governmental organisations, academic circles, intellectuals, opinion leaders, institutions of education and students, Turkish associations, diplomatic missions (embassies, consulates, cultural attaches), local governments, politicians, the private sector, tourism sector, and relevant international organisations such as UNESCO and OECD among the actors contributing to the project will enable the programmes to be developed through a democratic process and be more widely embraced.

Communication:

- The international projects to be carried out should aim to underscore the clues as to how the present day, and more importantly, the “Turkey of tomorrow” will be; what sort of dynamics it will be shaped by, and what kind of a country will be created through the developing thought and discussion environment.

- The communications philosophy to be adopted should not trigger prejudices; to the contrary, it should encourage commonalities in the field of culture and entail messages that the citizens of the collaborating country embrace as their own.
- In all the activities to be featured in the communication efforts, subjects such as “cultural diversity,” “entrepreneurship,” “openness to change” and even “a society seeking change” should be brought to the agenda in case the relationships from the past cannot avert the clichés in the minds or the element of “threat” created by the giant population and disputed EU membership of Turkey.
- As the spokespeople of cultural diplomacy, the artists and cultural actors should be evaluated as the most effective means of communication.
- Another key factor in the long-term success of communications is the strategic target groups that can produce projects and contribute to the promotion of Turkey, such as the opinion leaders of the artistic, literary and intellectual circles, NGOs, foreign exchange students in Turkey, and Turkish students studying abroad.
- Activity based communications should be conducted, avoiding propaganda and advertisement-focused promotion. International publications, broadcasts and TV channels catering to large masses to feature Turkey via artistic productions and activities will greatly contribute to promotion.

Conclusion:

- In order for the positive results generated by the culture and arts projects conducted abroad to reach a level where they can have a permanent effect on the long-term bilateral relationships, the efforts to this end should be continued.
- There is a felt lack of a mediating institution that provides information and consultancy to the relevant persons and institutions in the field, runs the coordination, helps secure funding, and assembles the efforts on a common ground. The Yunus Emre Foundation and Institutes, which is a public foundation established with the Law no. 5653 dated May 5, 2007, may fulfill an important function in closing this gap.
- A good example of cultural diplomacy is the project titled “Season of Turkey in France” which brought different social circles in France and Turkey together around a common project and proved that the perception of Turkey abroad can be changed not with advertising activities but through long-term fieldwork, open and constructive dialogue, and investment in culture, arts and education. It is of vital importance for the relevant ministries and institutions of the state, local governments, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, artists and intellectuals to come together and embark on forming a new platform to develop and reinstitute this model in different countries.