

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP FOR CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS

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Abstract

Culture and cultural heritage governance is undergoing a process of change related both to the role of the public and private sector and the perception of culture and cultural heritage seen as tools to achieve other aims such as social, cultural and economic development (Council of Europe, 2005). These changes have also characterised the Italian institutional framework where the law introduced a series of norms allowing different degrees of involvement of the private sector in the management of heritage sites and museums and/or of the ‘ancillary’ services necessary for their enhancement (ticket sales, bookshop, cafeteria). The changes in the law facilitated the possibility of introducing Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the heritage sphere, and examples of these are becoming more common. This paper considers one of these cases, where a private organisation, specifically a non-profit association – Officine Culturali – cooperates with a public institution – the University of Catania – to realise the activities necessary to enhance a heritage site which hosts one of the university’s departments and is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The association stands out for its focus on participation that is clearly set in its mission. The analysis illustrates the institutional arrangements that made possible the involvement of a private association in the enhancement of a publicly owned cultural heritage site through the creation of a partnership between the association and the university of Catania. The analysis intend to contribute to the debate about new business models in the governance of culture that has become particularly intense especially after the financial crisis and the reduction of public funds for culture.

Keywords: Public-private-partnership, Governance, business models, funding, social impact.