1. Intro & Summary

Safe And Fair cultural Events: imProvement of voLunteers' skills in communicAtion for inClusion Enhancement

Music is a fundamental part of our wellbeing, and going to concerts and festivals is an important element of our society's culture and socialisation. Indeed, the music ecosystem cannot be imagined without its vast number of very diverse festivals. Mostly, it is the small, 'boutique' events that contribute significantly by creating cultural and social impact by introducing new talent and shaping tastes, involving local communities, translating social values from theory to reality, and finally by creating unforgettable moments on and off the stage.

Festivals offer a first insight into a potential professional career through volunteering, provide alternatives to the daily routine by doing something unusual, and – maybe most importantly – they serve as playgrounds for applied social cohesion. Festivals can foster diversity by including everyone, especially the most fragile members of our societies, in a joint creative endeavour where the sum is much greater than its parts.

Through specifically developed capacity-building activities, SAFEPLACE gathers best practices and experiences in this innovative pilot programme, designed to subsequently share the outcomes with the community of event organisers. SAFEPLACE engages with the next generation of European festival organisers and professionals, discussing values, empowerment, inclusivity, accessibility, and last but not least the positive craziness needed to create extraordinary spaces that are as safe as possible.

PURPOSE:

SAFEPLACE has developed and proven a potential methodology blueprint for training and education activities, along with their validation and certification processes. These outputs, presented in the following pages and chapters, are now being shared with the community of festival and cultural event organisers. They are invited to utilise and adapt the methodology to their specific needs.

BUILDING CAPACITY:

Capacity building lies at the heart of SAFEPLACE. The project offers an exclusive training programme on various levels for the next generation of live-events professionals, mostly derived from present or future volunteers for the participating partners' events.

SAFEPLACE addresses a series of crucial topics. In addition to the professional aspects related to music festivals, especially those taking place in so-called peripheral areas (e.g., logistics, human resources, communication, production, administration, booking and the live music sector in general), the project heavily focuses on what are often referred to as "soft skills," which are nonetheless equally important – and which set apart commercial events. This includes improving diversity in all its forms, promoting social and ethnic inclusion, fostering a love for diverse content, and nurturing a sense of community and appreciation for the arts. These aspects truly represent the heart and soul of the partners' events and must be thoroughly understood, elaborated upon and shared by the volunteers and professionals involved.

FOR WHOM?

Therefore, SAFEPLACE developed a bespoke training programme for three different, partially overlapping, groups:

1. **Selected volunteers**, identified through an open call, underwent preparatory online courses, followed by an in-depth, 5-day in-person training course. Subsequently, they engaged in integrative online courses and gained professional experience with the partners' organisations.

1. **Festival volunteers from the most diverse background** participated in a 3-hour crash course. This course not only provided insights into festival organisation and the role and context of volunteering but also emphasised the project's objective of creating safer spaces.

2. **Festival organisers and project partners' teams** engaged in informal exchange and collaboration. This interaction was not merely a byproduct but rather an integral part of the training process, facilitating the sharing of best and worst practices.

THE PROGRAMME:

Preparatory online courses were held in April and May 2023. These courses introduced the project partners and their specific roles, providing selected volunteers with more context. The sessions aimed to balance the knowledge levels of the applicants and partners while covering technical questions, terminology and introductions to the different topics mentioned above. The courses were facilitated by the project partners, leveraging their diverse specialisations and skills, and also featured insights from external experts.

The initial pilot sessions covered the following topics:

- An introduction to the music ecosystem and its primary stakeholders, with a specific focus on festival production.

- Strategies for activating local communities and engaging volunteers.
- Promoting inclusion and diversity.

A 5-day, in-person training course took place in Tallinn, Estonia, from 9-13 May. It involved almost 40 participants, including both attendees and partners' teams. The course featured exclusive frontal teaching lessons, panels and keynotes conducted by project partners and invited specialised experts. Following these sessions, interactive workgroups were managed by the partners to delve deeper into the project's specific topics and develop interesting and innovative applications.

The training sessions covered various festival-related topics, such as area building and logistics, booking and environmental sustainability. These sessions built upon the introductory session.

Interactive learning, with a focus on multi-country team building, was facilitated through a workshop role-play simulation. Groups were tasked to develop their own interpretation of a festival based on predefined parameters. The final presentations of these interpretations were made to the entire audience of volunteers and a few guests.

The training course was strategically aligned with Tallinn Music Week 2023, and all volunteers received full delegate passes to participate in panels, workshops, networking sessions and, of course, the musical programme.

Integrative online courses: After the Tallinn sessions, which were the heart and soul of SAFEPLACE, integrative online courses were offered to the volunteers. Over the course of the five days, tutoring, analysing the volunteers' work and having informal personal discussions allowed us to gain a better understanding of their personae, existing skills, needs and interests.

During these sessions, we identified several topics that required further detailed study, including:

- Accessibility (with Attitude is Everything UK)
- The future of small festivals (with Alf Olifsson/Berkeley ES)
- International festival promotion (with Anastasia Connor / Noise Unit UK)
- Mental health applied to sustainable team management and inclusivity in work environments (with Flavia Guarino / Restart IT)
- Body language and public speaking (with Ana Vrbaski RS)
- Interculturality and civic empathy (with Amadou Diallo and Bandiougou Diawara / Giocherenda IT).

These topics were covered in the integrative online courses; experts in each respective area provided valuable insights to the participants.

Professional experiences: After the training sessions, the volunteers had the opportunity to gain professional experiences within the festivals, partner organisations or events in their network. Some of these experiences started before and during the training, allowing the volunteers to apply their new knowledge in various fields of festival organisation or engage in activities that aligned with the partners' objectives.

Volunteer crash course: Based on the feedback and interaction with the volunteers throughout the previous activities, a crash course was developed. This course serves as a blueprint that can be utilised by even the busiest festivals leading up to their events. It is designed to address the widest group of volunteers involved in a festival, covering a diverse range of topics.

The crash course addresses various issues, such as understanding the roles and responsibilities of individuals within the festival organisation, providing dos and don'ts for volunteers, and prominently focusing on inclusivity matters. It emphasises language and

cultural approaches, particularly in festival environments, with the aim of creating events that are as safe as possible.

Multiplier events were organised in Estonia, North Macedonia, Germany and Italy, addressing a wider community of stakeholders and volunteers. These events were held by the project partners between late May and the first half of June 2023. During these events, the experience gained in the courses was shared and discussed during specifically designed public panels and workshops, leading to increased consciousness and interest among the volunteers.

Each event had a unique nature:

- The Estonian event took the form of a reception and a public panel held within the framework of the Tallinn Music Week. It featured partners of SAFEPLACE and other stakeholders, along with a reception attended by a large number of participants.
- In Germany, the event hosted a series of panels on festival-related topics, including the role of festivals, and the Haldern Pop Bar, which is one of the festival's venues (but not owned by the festival).
- The North Macedonian event consisted of a workshop conducted with and for additional volunteers.
- The Italian closing event of SAFEPLACE was organised in partnership with the Sicilia Queer Film Festival. It included a panel, a reception and a closing concert.

STAKEHOLDERS:

The involvement of stakeholders has been at the heart of the dissemination process. Given the specific nature of the educational programme and validation, engaging stakeholders often involved personal contacts, calls, conversations, emails, panels, workshops and more.

The primary groups of music festivals that have been identified include:

- The organisational team, including the events' volunteers
- The audience
- The artists and their teams
- Media representatives
- The locals, which include citizens and their institutions
- Institutions involved in capacity-building processes
- Public partners and commercial partners

Special attention has been given to the music ecosystem, particularly the live music and events sector (festivals) and its media outlets, capacity-building professionals and specific media outlets. Personal exchanges have significantly contributed to aligning the programme's development and have generated lots of positive interest in continuing discussions about the project even after its official ending.

Here are a few examples of individuals and organisations involved:

Ypsigrock - Glenn Gould:
Institutions: Centro di Servizio per il Volontariato Regione Lazio, Museo Civico Castelbuono, Prof. Dr. Carsten Winter (Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover);
Associations: Associazione Culturale SICILIA QUEER, COORDINAMENTO PALERMO PRIDE, Farm Cultural Park, Italian Music Festivals, Lunaria - Associazione di Promozione Sociale (Volontariato internazionale), LiveDMA, LivEurope, Yourope;

Festival and Conference organizers: amongst many others Robert Meijering (Eurosonic Noorderslag), Detlef Schwarte (Reeperbahn Festival), Dino Lupelli (Music Innovation Hub / Music Meeting & Festival), Ruggero Pietromarchi (Terraforma), Bob van Heur (Le Guess Who).

Haldern - Raum 3:

- Festival volunteers (about 450 people) and festival staff (Raum 3 GmbH and all the partners from its 39th edition),
- festival audience and fans via social media (10.8k followers)
- Local residents and politicians in and around Haldern (via local bar),
- Stakeholder of the live music industry via Multiplier - Event such as German festival hosts (like Immergut, Orange Blossom, Wacken, Static Roots, Yourope), Music-Journalists & media (Höme, Sinclair- Podcast) and the local press, as well as the audience at the MPE (festival volunteers, guests and audience for the band).
- Another important communication point was word-of-mouth promotion in the village but also in the music industry, as it is an exciting story that raises interest among other festival hosts like Bad Bonn Kilbi or Eurosonic and a lot of agents and artists who play at the festival / the bar.

Music Estonia: Tallinn Music Week, Alex Stevens (Dour Festival), Elisa Phamgia (LivEurope), Berlin Music Commission, Võnge festival, Intsikurmu festival, Jazzkaar, Viljandi Folk Music Festival, Viljandi Guitar Festival, Sveta bar, Tallinn School of Music and Ballet, Henrik Ehte (Funk Embassy), Roman Demtšenko (Damn.Loud Agency).

BJCEM: ARCI Nazionale, Arci Ferrara, Ferrara Sotto le Stelle, Arci Torino (Jazz is Dead! festival), Ministry of Culture Montenegro, SKUC Association (Slovenia), FLUKS (Norway), UKNA (Nottingham, UK), GAI (Giovani Artistii Italiani); CPAI (Portugal); SHAMS (Lebanon);

Interarts (Barcelona), MA*GA Museum, Gallarate, Centrale FIES, Sardegna Film Commission.

APS Nous: Disintegrati APS, #CUOREDINAPOLI, Accademia delle Belle Arti di Napoli (ABANA), corso di Nuove Tecnologie dell'Arte, Europiamo ETS, Global Shapers Napoli, Pessoa Luna Park, APG Campania, AEGEE-Naples, MiQ - Movimentiamo il Quartiere.

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CERTIFICATION:

A certificate for volunteers at cultural events was developed in tandem with the development of the capacity-building programme and later tested and implemented by the project partners. This development marks an innovation within the events and cultural industry, offering a new certificate that can be adapted and issued for this specific course, as well as for similar programmes, and can be utilised by other festivals.

Throughout the project, the main question was how to validate and certify volunteering and for what purpose.

One of the principal findings of SAFEPLACE is that the main factors for successful certification and validation are rather informal and do not necessarily require official (public or academic) acknowledgment. The skills learned, the contacts made, the ability to concretely apply methods and the prestige of the event or organisation hold the main value.

LANGUAGE USED:

Despite the fact that not all languages permit the easy use of gender-inclusive wordings, we placed special attention on social inclusion and diversity. Therefore, in all languages, we opted for the use of wording and phrasing that is as gender-neutral as possible. In cases where gender-neutral language wasn't feasible, we acknowledged and accepted the status quo of officially approved grammar, which often relies on male forms to indicate an undisclosed group of people. We recognise that this practice is still prevalent.

The motivation behind using a more traditional rather than innovative gender-neutral language (e.g. schwa, *, :, or similar alternatives) was primarily for easy readability and accessibility, including machine interpretation, where technology might not be ready yet and no official standards have been set.

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT AND OUTLOOK:

The concept of the capacity-building programme, centred around a transnational in-person activity connected to an international conference, with advanced and subsequent propaedeutic and integrative blended courses, has proven successful. One of the programme's strengths was the personal encounters that truly embodied the European spirit, embracing diversity in all its forms and interculturality, which would not have been possible with only online interactions. The mix of blended, hybrid, frontal and informal learning was a positive integration. However, the manifold content presented challenges, as trying to cover many topics in a limited time risked overwhelming the participants.

Several external threats, particularly the long shadow of Covid19 and the war in Ukraine, created some weaknesses. Our own or partner events were up in the air and frequently rescheduled, venues changed and travel costs rose due to last-minute decisions in

response to the unpredictable situation. At times, the partners' core business absorbed exponentially large amounts of energy and time.

Among the many findings, two principal revelations emerged:

1. Informality is key, particularly in small festivals and the cultural and creative industry in general. Personal relationships, stories, understanding and curiosity prevailed over business-oriented hard facts. School-like exams and certification were not the determining factor; instead, presenting ideas, concepts, and practical and social theories, followed by their application in a non-competitive environment, where diversity and ideas were respected more than performance and numbers, made the difference. Positive evaluations and feedback from festivals, promoters and industry professionals hold the greatest value.

2. Volunteering at music festivals is an underdeveloped topic that deserves more attention considering its importance. Events rely heavily on volunteers, yet the music industry lacks a structured approach to address this issue. Questions arise about what else festivals can offer volunteers beyond a fun experience and free passes. The project also raised concerns about future pension funds, social security coverage and legal implications related to hosting volunteers for private, for-profit companies. It highlights the need to address legislative differences in various countries. The project's presence and the input given during the Music Moves Europe Dialogues on Music session in Tallinn underscored the importance of discussing access for young people to the music industry and volunteering on a European level.

Looking ahead, the focus is on optimising, personalising and replicating the training and individual, tailor-made validation processes for other events. Additionally, the project aims to elevate the discussion on volunteering in the music ecosystem, engaging its actors,

stakeholders and institutions. SAFEPLACE serves as a significant stepping stone in this endeavour.

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Following Documents:

2. Management Guidebook for the SAFEPLACE in-person training programme

3. Festival Volunteer Crash Course

4. Guidelines Validation Skills

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