

SMA!

STUDY VISIT REPORT

Ypisgrock festival, Italy

4-7 August 2022

DISCLAIMER

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Introduction

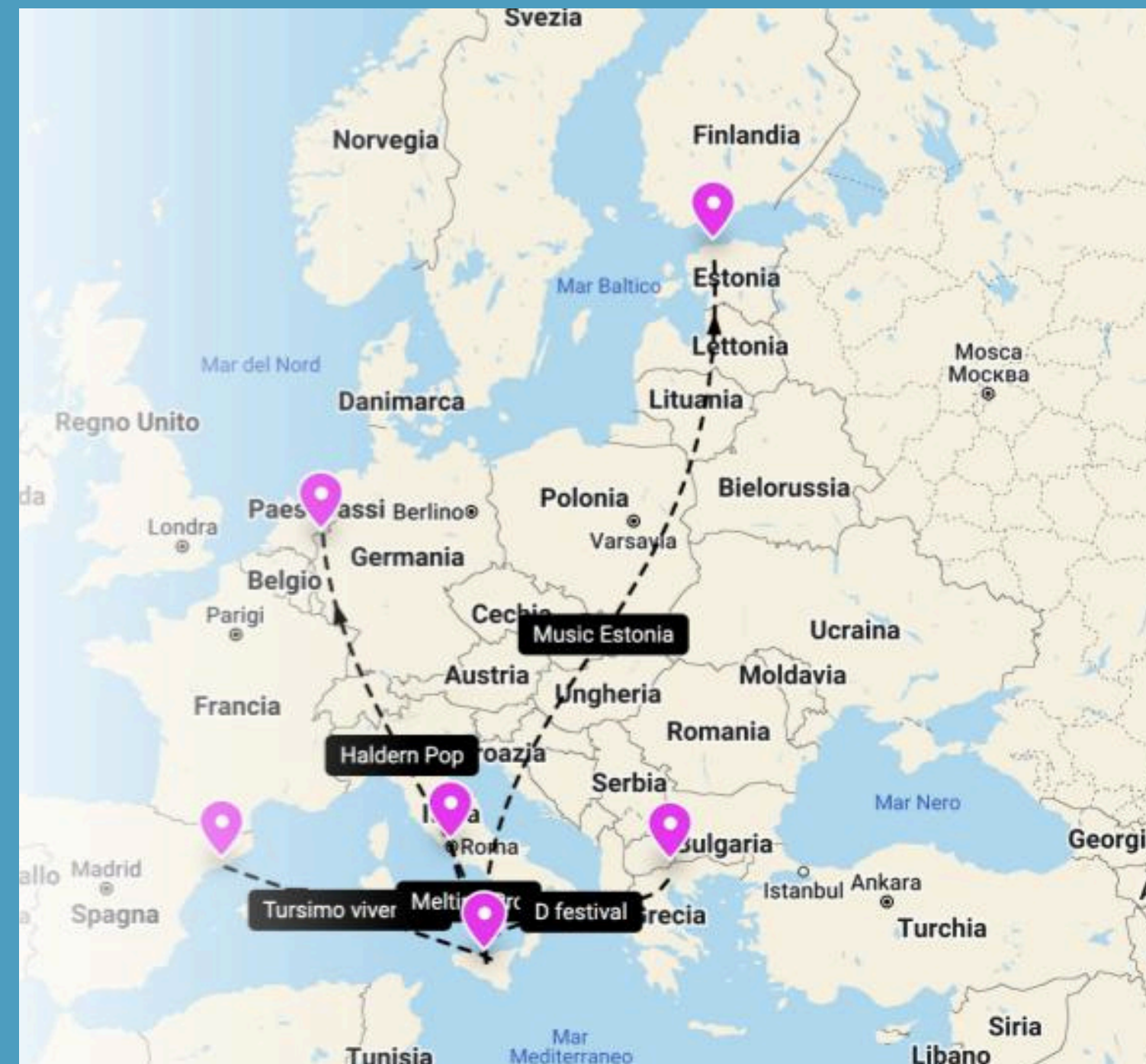
The SMA! (Small Festivals Accelerator) project aims to create a sustainable development model for small and medium-sized festivals in peripheral Europe. In 2022, the consortium conducted three study visits to the festivals, partner of the project, in Germany, North Macedonia, and Italy to identify best practices and challenges.

These visits provided insights into innovative strategies for community engagement, environmental sustainability, and enhancing local identity.

The findings contribute to a transferable business model that supports festivals and fosters socio-economic growth in their regions, as summarized in this report.

Ypsigrock Festival: Overview and Context

Ypsigrock Festival, established in 1997 in Castelbuono, Sicily, is Italy's first boutique festival and a leader in the European small festival scene. Nestled in the Madonie Mountains, this multi-genre indie music event takes place in a medieval village, blending cultural heritage with innovative artistic programming. The festival attracts a diverse audience, including 15% international attendees, and has been nominated multiple times for the Best Small European Festival award.



Ypsigrock: Unique Value proposition

Ypsigrock Festival distinguishes itself by prioritising community involvement, inclusivity, and sustainability. Its unique value proposition lies in the festival's deep connection to the local community and commitment to accessibility.

The festival is deeply rooted in the local community of Castelbuono and coexists harmoniously with the event. Storytelling promotes the unique local identity of Castelbuono, contributing to the festival's appeal and promoting tourist attractiveness.



Ypsigrock Details

Interviewee: Vincenzo Barreca & Gianfranco Raimondo, Founders and Directors, Marcella Campo, Brand Manager and Head of communication Location: Medieval Castle, in Castelbuono, Palermo, Sicily, Italy

Duration: 3-4 days

Nearest Airport: Palermo, 120 km

Main Transport: bus /car/ carpooling/sharing train station in Cefalù

Ticket capacity 2150 and facilities: camping area

First edition: 1997 Website:

<http://www.ypsigrock.it/en/> Organised by:

Glenn Gould



Best practices observed: Community-Centered Approach

Community Engagement:
The festival has fostered strong ties with the local community by hiring 90% of its staff locally and creating a safe space for dialogue through its Facebook group.

Community forums allow residents to voice suggestions, creating a collaborative environment that strengthens local identity



Best practices observed: Community-Centered Approach

Partners recognized Ypsigrock's success in embedding itself within the local community of Castelbuono. They highlighted the festival's ability to foster a strong bond between the event and the town, which generates a sense of shared ownership and pride.



Best practices observed

Initiatives promoting inclusivity and environmental awareness were specifically noted as examples of how Ypsigrock engages its local audience and builds its cultural significance year-round.

The "Tutti Inclusi" project enhances inclusivity by improving festival infrastructure for people with disabilities. This includes accessible viewing platforms, accommodations, and transportation



Best practices observed Cultural Identity and Local Impact:

Ypsigrock's integration of Castelbuono's medieval architecture into its programming was highlighted as a unique feature. The main stage is in the castle, a smaller stage is in two churches, and it is on the camping site. Partners admired how the festival merges historical heritage with modern artistic expression, creating a distinctive identity that attracts both local and international audiences



Best practices observed

Artists and attendees alike praise the festival for its ability to create profound emotional moments. Performances in historic locations like Piazza Castello and the Chiostro di San Francesco are imbued with the charm and history of Castelbuono, making each show a memorable experience.

A key highlight of the festival is its ability to merge the natural and cultural beauty of the region with cutting-edge musical performances, described as "a crescendo of harmonic emotions."



Best practices observed

Partners acknowledged the festival's focus on reducing its environmental impact through practical measures, such as eliminating paper tickets and promoting car-sharing. They noted these efforts as valuable examples of how festivals can contribute to broader sustainability goals



Best practices observed

Innovative Programming and Local Identity:

The festival's unique selling point lies in its integration with Castelbuono's historic sites, including performances in the medieval castle and town square.

Its storytelling emphasizes the unique characteristics of the region, blending tourism with cultural promotion



Challenges

Partners observed that Ypsigrock faces challenges related to its remote location, including logistical difficulties in attracting larger audiences and accessing resources.

Despite progress, logistical limitations in waste management and the broader adoption of green energy solutions persist



Financial sustainability was also noted as an ongoing concern, with partners emphasizing the importance of diversifying funding sources and strengthening sponsorship strategies

Voices from the Field

Festival Organizers: Highlighted their efforts to break down traditional stereotypes of "rock festivals" by incorporating diverse artistic expressions and social inclusivity into their branding.

The importance of creating a safe space (like in Ypsigrock)

Community Members: Praised the festival for its ability to attract tourism while preserving local culture, noting how the event revitalizes the town during and beyond the festival season

Volunteers: Shared stories of personal growth and community pride fostered through their participation in the event



Voices from the Field

MOLINARI

EXTRA MOMENTS

THURSDAY
4 AUG 2022



CYCAS

18:30 - 20:00

Welcome Aperitif
w/ Hello Again djset (Fabio Nirta)

FREE ENTRY



FRIDAY
5 AUG 2022



GIARDINO DI VENERE

11:30

TALK:

"Sustainable independence"
(in Italian)

Pt1. The artists' rights (in Italian)
Pt2. 25 years of Bella Union (in English)

FEATURING

Emanuela Russo

Note Legali / NuovolMAIE (Italy)

Martina Neglia

L'indiependente (Italy)

Roisin O'Connor

The Independent (UK)

Simon & Abbey Raymonde

Bella Union (UK)

FREE ENTRY

SUNDAY
7 AUG 2022



GIARDINO DI VENERE

12:00 (noon)

TALK:

"Accelerating small festivals,
developing remote areas"
(in English)

Presented by SMA

FEATURING

Antonia Silvaggi

Melting Pro (Italy)

Arturo Di Bella

University of Catania (Italy)

Guadalupe Fili

Turismo Vivencial (Spain)

Ingrid Stroom

Music Estonia (Estonia)

Login Kochinski

Password Production (Macedonia)

Robert Baumann

Haldern Pop Festival (Germany)

Vincenzo Vigneri

University of Siena (Italy)

FREE ENTRY

Conclusion

The Ypsigrock Festival exemplifies the resilience and creativity of boutique festivals in peripheral areas. By embedding itself within the local community, investing in accessibility, and promoting sustainable practices, it has created a model that balances artistic excellence with social responsibility. Key lessons from the study visit include:

Strengthening Local Ties: Collaborating with local stakeholders ensures the festival's cultural and economic integration.

Balancing Growth and Intimacy: Maintaining its boutique charm while scaling operations will require innovative strategies and partnerships.

Investing in Sustainability: Continued focus on eco-friendly practices will enhance the festival's long-term viability.

Leveraging its Brand: Ypsigrock's strong local identity offers a blueprint for festivals seeking to connect deeply with their regions



LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Antonia Silvaggi - Melting
Pro, Italy

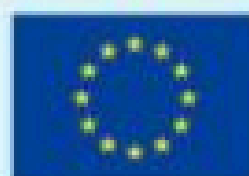
Guadalupe Fili - Turismo
Vivencial, Spain

Ingrid Stroom - Music
Estonia, Estonia

Login Kochishki - Password
production

Ypsigrock festival team





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PARTNERS



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