

Kid's Festival Unveils a Multi-Platform Expansion

The 12th Kid's Festival is slated for June 12-16, 2015

"We do our best to maintain size and quality, but success seems to make things more complicated rather than easier - financially, because all donors and sponsors (wrongly) assume that success by default means also floods of financial income. The opposite is the case - as the fundraising headache is the same as for the very first edition," says Susanne Prahel, the director of Kid's Festival, an annual event for children organized in Sarajevo.

"On the other side, success, a million smiles produced by Kid's festival in eleven years are a self-speaking history: no need for publicity, no need to call for program inputs, no need to inform schools, partners, NGOs or even Embassies - people reach out to us," says Prahel.

This year, the Festival saw expansion - similar events were organized in Banja Luka and Tunisia.

Banja Luka and BiH

"Throughout the year we discover lots of nice surprises all these motivated people prepared for Kid's Festival. We met our goal to create a Synergy event, a Kid's Fest Family, in global. A funny anecdote: last Friday late afternoon I went swimming, and I was called over by a good friend, one of Ambassadors appointed in BiH who introduces me to his newly appointed colleague, also ambassador, right there in the pool. No need for extreme formalities, ties or office appointments, Kid's Fest is made by spontaneous people with wishes, dreams, visions, ideas and lots of energy for kids," says Prahel.

The second edition of Kid's Fest Banja Luka is scheduled for 19 June, 2015. The 2014 event was mainly self-organized by the City Council of Banja Luka as part of their effort to obtain the label of "Child-Friendly City". Banja Luka's City Council made it a point to become part of the growing family of "Kid's Fests" in the world.

"Kid's Fest is an international brand - not just one of many children's events - and this label is what we want," said Jasna Brkic, Deputy Mayor of Banja Luka.

ViaKult Office, the organizer of Kid's Festival, looks for such municipalities that recognize the opportunity Kid's Fest offers to their social-political-cultural development.



The original idea of Kid's Festival Sarajevo was started in 2004 to address the root causes of ethnic division by bringing tens of thousands of children from all parts of the country together. Kid's Festival generates a vision of a pluralistic world where every single person plays a role. Children too. Over a decade, the socio-political aspects of Kid's Festival have grown into a powerful tool. ViaKult Office decided to make Kid's festival international, develop a world-wide label that contributes to world peace and tolerance with its contagious spirit. A new global concept was developed.

Kid's Fest international represents a lightweight version. A new flexible format for different Kid's Fests in the world under one international label. Standing for quality and universal values, fostering political focus on children and serve civil society in countries of transition, with important political changes and challenges. Some with a traumatic history like Bosnia and Herzegovina, some non-violent, like in Tunisia. Everywhere in the world, people have uncertainty about the future. The political discussion is out of reach for children. Kid's Fest fills a gap.

"Kid's Fest is a team, a movement, a world of vision to become the real world in the future. It is about inclusion, going cross-borders, different people, religions, handicapped persons, minorities. All different - all equal. Including children in the democratic process, exposing their vision to the public. Kid's Fest involves numerous partners, local and international, talents, artists, NGOs, schools... its federative character appeals to

all building a vision of a world together," says Prahel.

"The "European idea" as a model of tolerance, prosperity, co-existence, equality of chances, opportunities, universal values, human rights... becomes real for children. Kids Fest turns ideas into life experience. The microcosm of Kid's Festival is the equivalent of a "future world" including young people in the building process - making children responsible. Children are the backbone of Kids Fest, not consumers, but makers - Every single participant produces a significant creative effort (outfit, costume, performance, artworks, etc.) As reward the world within KidsFest becomes a magic place full of colors, laughter and different ideas. Symbolic world of today, reality of tomorrow."

Tunisia

The first edition of Kid's Fest Tunisia was held on the 19 October, 2014, exactly one year after the first visit of Kid's Festival director Susanne Prahel to Tunis.

"I met an incredible number of school principals, representatives of NGOs, ministries, artists, parents, children ... a country made of motivated people, generosity and full engagement of civil society on all levels. Unforgettable moments. But also political stress. We invented the motto "We also vote - the future" and designed the Kids Fest Tunis very ambitiously to promote the democratic, secular process of the elections. In the end, due to security reasons our Kids Parade the children's "defile" on the main

Avenue Habib Bourguiba was cancelled by the Ministry of Interior, so overnight we had to re-think our concept," says Prah.

"In Tunisia, no problem: Kids Fest Tunis turned into a fabulous Mansion-Party at Casa De Espana, all redecorated and colored with materials from Benetton Tunisia and volunteers, working all night. The next morning saw the most poetic Kids Fest ever, with a Patio of light full of books, with modern sportive Beach flair right next the patrimony-loaded site of historic Carthage. Newspapers titling later - "A small step for kids, a great step for elections". The Italian Ambassador in Tunisia Raimondo de Cardona, formerly in BiH, who had initiated this Tunisian outreach summarized after the event: "Kids Fest Tunisia is a brilliant initiative, as its big brother in Sarajevo. This new lightweight concept is totally flexible and adaptable anywhere, it will go around the world" - What a true forecast: The day after Kids Fest Tunis, the Mayor of the Tunisian prestigious touristic jewel, Sidi Boussaid offered a contract for Kids Fest Sidi Boussaid, in April 2015! Kids Fest is meant to be a lighthouse. Facebook postings of Kids Fest Tunisia travel fast. Returning to Sarajevo I found a new surprise: a Facebook message with an invitation to come to Sofia, Bulgaria. Do what? Talk about possibilities to create the first Kids Fest Sofia. What an Adventure!" says Prah

Future Perspectives

"Kids Fest International is re-inventing spaces, filling sites with a new spirit - the visions of children. The famous artist Christo once wrapped up the German Reichstag - as piece of art, our spirit goes further: fill emblematic spaces with visions, voices, faces, laughter, thoughts, wishes - of children. Finally people everywhere understand that ViaKult Office invented a totally new type of event - for people - placing children in the first rank, wiping off layers of adulthood in grown-ups, empower children by involving them in the making-process so they become more "adult like", says Prah.

"The grand idea" said Prah "is to populate UN Security Council with children and their positive energy - filling a place gone grey with colors again in order to produce ultimate symbol of world unification and to have geopolitical issues taken off the agenda for a day. Maybe the next day this contagious positive spirit of Kids Fest children might actually settle in the delegates?!"

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