

# Online solutions and sustainability in festival tourism

## Online megoldások és fenntarthatóság a fesztiválturizmusban

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The article describes the activities of the Arts for Rural Development Foundation and the Hungarian Tourism Programme Foundation (MTPA) and details how they support online solutions for festival tourism and sustainability. By means of examples, the Arts for Rural Development Foundation shows how festivals can be a tool for rural development. The Valley of Arts Festival and the Kerekdomb Festival are outstanding examples of cultural events which have had a long-term impact on the region's economy and community. The Foundation's mission is to boost the economy of rural areas and to preserve and promote local cultural and built heritage. Involving volunteers and partners, excellent communication and sustainable methods, the events actively support rural development. The MTPA focuses on the development and competitiveness of the domestic events sector by providing professional materials, conferences and international contacts. RaKÉTa supports the professional development of event organisers and the coordination of events through a scholarship programme and a unique calendar of events. The Valley of Arts Festival's sustainability strategy reduces its environmental footprint through a range of environmentally friendly solutions, supporting public transport and making progress on waste management. The MTPA also focuses on training event organisers and increasing their international visibility, helping the Hungarian events sector to grow and become more competitive.

A tanulmány bemutatja a Művészetek a Vidékfejlesztésért Alapítvány és a Magyar Turisztikai Program Alapítvány (MTPA) tevékenységét, részletezi, hogyan támogatják a fesztiválturizmus online megoldásait és a fenntarthatóságot. Az Művészetek a Vidékfejlesztésért Alapítvány példái azt szemléltetik, hogyan lehetnek a fesztiválok a vidékfejlesztés eszközei. A Művészetek Völgye Fesztivál és a Kerekdomb Fesztivál olyan kulturális események, amelyek hosszú távú hatást gyakoroltak térségük gazdaságára és közösségére. Az Alapítvány missziója a vidéki területek gazdasági fellendítése és a helyi kulturális és épített értékek megőrzése, megismertetése. Az önkéntesek és partnerek becsatlakozásával, kiváló kommunikációval és fenntartható módszerekkel a rendezvények aktív résztvevői a vidékfejlesztésnek. Az MTPA a hazai rendezvényszektor fejlesztésére, versenyképességének növelésére fókuszál, szakmai anyagokkal, konferenciákkal és nemzetközi kapcsolatokkal segíti a szektor fejlődését. A RaKÉTa ösztöndíjprogrammal és egyedülálló eseménynaptárral támogatja a rendezvényszervezők szakmai fejlődését és az események összehangolását. A Művészetek Völgye fesztivál fenntarthatósági stratégiája számos környezetbarát megoldást alkalmazva csökkenti környezeti lábnyomát, támogatja a tömegközlekedést, és a hulladékkezelés terén is eredményeket ért el. Az MTPA pedig a rendezvényszervezők képzésére és nemzetközi láthatóságuk növelésére helyezi a hangsúlyt, segítve ezzel a magyar rendezvényszektor növekedését és versenyképességét.

**Keywords:** Valley of Arts Festival, sustainability, data-driven online marketing, event industry knowledge sharing organisation.

**Kulcsszavak:** Művészetek Völgye Fesztivál, fenntarthatóság, adat alapú online marketing, rendezvényipari tudásmegosztó szervezet.

### 1. Introduction

This research article aims to delve into and elucidate the nuanced landscape of online and sustainability best practices within the milieu of festival tourism, underscoring the pivotal role played by the Arts for

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Rural Development Foundation in spearheading transformative paradigms. By delineating the intricate organizational dynamics governing the renowned Valley of Arts Festival, this study endeavours to unravel the strategic methodologies underpinning its successful execution. Furthermore, through a comparative lens, it seeks to distil invaluable insights gleaned from the operational blueprint of the Kerekdomb Festival, thereby furnishing stakeholders with a benchmark for excellence.

As the discourse unfolds, a meticulous scrutiny of these seminal festival cases sets the stage for a comprehensive analysis of the Hungarian Tourism Programme Foundation's operational ethos and programmatic initiatives. This critical evaluation is poised to engender a symbiotic exchange of knowledge and best practices, galvanizing sector-wide advancements and fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration. With a prophetic gaze towards the year 2024, this exposition aspires to serve as a roadmap for industry aspirants, with the caveat that the successful emulation of these strategies necessitates bespoke adaptations aligned with context-specific exigencies and continual rejuvenation.

Drawing from a repertoire of scholarly insights and industry precedents, this study endeavors to instigate a paradigm shift in the festival tourism domain, underpinned by empirical evidence and theoretical underpinnings. By synthesizing empirical data and theoretical frameworks, this article seeks to augment the academic discourse surrounding sustainable event management practices within the festival tourism domain. Through a judicious amalgamation of empirical findings and strategic foresight, it aspires to carve a trajectory towards sustainable and socially responsible festival tourism practices, predicated on a foundation of empirical rigor and scholarly acumen.

## 2. Arts for Rural Development Foundation

The foundation of Arts for Rural Development, situated in Vigántpetend, stands as a beacon of transformative change within the cultural tapestry of the Valley of Arts Festival – a triumvirate of municipalities consisting of Kapolcs, Taliándörögd, and Vigántpetend. Central to the elucidation of this foundation's ethos is the articulation of its overarching mission, underpinned by a visionary impetus to catalyse a regional renaissance through the facilitation, organization, and enduring stewardship of all-encompassing artistic galas and festivals in rural hamlets and villages (Figure 1).

Figure 1

### The Arts for Rural Development Foundation's logo



Source: Arts for Rural Development Foundation

The cornerstone of the foundation's strategic compass lies in nurturing and amplifying indigenous creative endeavours and local heritage, spotlighting the preservation and propagation of cultural quintessence and architectural legacies at a grassroots level (CSAPODY 2024). By orchestrating a kaleidoscope of festivities that invigorate the senses and spark intergenerational camaraderie, the foundation engenders a ripple effect that cascades into the fortification of local infrastructure and the amplification of tourism prospects. At the heart of this mandate is the resonance of the Valley of Arts Festival's catalytic impact over three decades, where symbiotic growth between the festival and ancillary establishments such as hotels, eateries, and artisanal enclaves has acted as a lodestar for communal progress. A young team gradually infiltrated the life of the Valley of Arts Festival and sensed that a cultural event could trigger other processes in the long term, so in 2014 a hypothesis was born, based on a hunch, and the foundation itself was born. Of course, it was not possible to see at that time whether the example of a festival that had been running since 1989 was merely the result of a good initial market situation or the hypothesis could be confirmed by general reasoning.

The foundation's discernment of regional idiosyncrasies and the intrinsic symbiosis between environmental stewardship and community empowerment, underscoring the non-transferable essence of the Valley of Arts Festival to its geographical cradle are noteworthy. While notions of emulation are contemplated, the recalibration of thought processes and adaptation to local ethos are deemed imperative for sustained viability, premised on the belief that indigenous values epitomize the linchpin of triumphant endeavours. The foundation's collaborative ethos, characterized by a convergence of values amongst partners, underscores a narrative of holistic community

stewardship, wherein the amalgamation of artistry, social responsibility, and reverence for local provenance converges to proffer a pantheon of value propositions.

This concerted initiative to celebrate local producers, year-round purveyors, and natural endowments aligns with a narrative of communal upliftment and sustainability, substantiated by a paradigm of shared prosperity and cultural resurgence. By forging partnerships predicated on a shared commitment to community valorisation and artistic edification, the foundation surges forth as a vanguard of localized empowerment and resource optimization, exemplifying a conduit for catalysing socio-cultural enrichment and rejuvenation. *The foundation's mission is to create a regional boom by supporting, organising and maintaining all-round artistic events and festivals in rural areas and small villages.* In this context, the preservation and promotion of local creative activities and local values at local level will play an important role. The focus will be on the preservation of local cultural and architectural values and the cultivation of spiritual traditions in a new guise and formulation. The festivals organised by the Foundation and its partners provide active and meaningful recreation for visitors and families across generations. The impact of the events in turn contributes to stimulating the development of local infrastructure and tourism. The Foundation is often approached to bring a Little Valley of Arts to each of its partners, but when contacting the partners it is important to understand first, that although the Valley of Arts has had a rural development impact for more than thirty years as hotels, catering units and artisanal producers have grown up alongside the festival, these processes are not visible within a few years. Of course, it also needs to be understood that the Valley of Arts festival can only be held in this location, that the environmental and local community factor is an integral part of it and that, although some elements of the concept can be transposed, a new way of thinking adapted to the place must be initiated in order to remain viable in the long term – because building on local values is the key to success. By bringing in partners, the Foundation aims to find a community of values with organisers who see giving back to the community as a value in addition to the artistic value, who are not just working to organise the event itself, but who want to trigger other processes and create value for communities. It is a way to showcase local producers and local year-round providers and natural assets and resources (CSAPODY 2024).

## 2.1. SMALL SETTLEMENTS AND THE ARTS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

Small settlements (with a population of 100-1000) are among the most vulnerable ones in Hungary. If there is no industrial area in their surroundings that would create jobs, or natural or built heritage that would attract visitors and thus generate tourism revenue and jobs, there is very little development potential for them. These settlements, if left to their own devices, will go on a slow and inevitable decline and degradation. The stages of decline in small settlements are broadly similar. The reduction or lack of job opportunities, or the inability of a settlement to offer a vision of the future that is capable of retaining its inhabitants, triggers depopulation and emigration (JÁSZBERÉNYI 2016).

The outward migration of the population, especially of young people, brings with it the degradation of infrastructure, i.e. the closure of nurseries and schools, the relocation of certain services and tangible signs of a process of decay. An increase in the number of abandoned, crumbling empty houses. For the population, this type of degradation is also associated with a loss of wealth, i. e. the property value of the municipality is becoming increasingly devalued due to a lack of demand, accelerating the process of urban decay. The final stage in the process of degradation described above is the disintegration and atomisation of the municipal community.

Unfortunately, this degradation is accelerating at different stages. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the skills needed to manage such settlements are not available to the people living there, or even to the leaders of the settlements. Neither do they have the right information about the potential for outbreaks, nor the know-how. Of course, this could also include a lack of financial resources, but if a municipality does not have the expertise to identify the most effective development projects to keep a municipality alive, the aid it receives will not have the necessary impact on population retention.

Thus, the Arts for Rural Development Foundation also aims to provide small settlements with access to expertise and projects that are truly suitable for providing the inhabitants of a small settlement with development opportunities and a long-term vision for the future, stopping emigration and reversing the processes of depopulation. This expertise is also a way of ensuring that the aid available to municipalities is used more effectively in the future.

The above discussed factors make a municipality suitable for being a long-term living and growing

one. Although the need for a particular worker to work in a particular place is becoming less and less necessary with the advent of digitalisation, the experience of the present era is that the number and quality of jobs in the vicinity of a settlement is a key determinant of its population and its image. In other words, the creation of new jobs must be one of the objectives of any urban development project. If there is no such possibility, but the municipality has built on natural assets, only these assets can significantly increase the retention capacity of a municipality. In other words, a settlement on the shore of Lake Balaton – due to the presence of tourism and the service industry based on it – will never have as serious problems as a small settlement in Borsod county. Nevertheless, it is still important to ensure that these assets are properly exploited and that projects built on them are suitable for preserving natural and cultural assets and for maximising their stimulating effect on the settlement. The third and least used tool by municipalities is community building with cultural space occupation. A good example of this is Kapolcs and the Valley of Arts Festival, which has become intertwined with the municipality over the last thirty years and is no longer just a festival, but a long-term cooperation with the local people, a process that has generated significant development, job creation and community building. What makes the experience of Kapolcs particularly valuable and worthy of processing is that the events of more than thirty years can be followed there and although both bad and good decisions have been made, finally a regional success story is beginning to unfold which should serve as an example for other municipalities to follow.

It is very important to note that the marketing and audiovisual channels which are set up to support sales during a festival, be it a popular music, a cultural or an all-round arts event, usually broadcast less content until the next event is organised. In the case of the Valley of Arts, for example, a Facebook page with almost 100 000 and an Instagram page of almost 20 000 followers are very valuable marketing platforms for the visibility of large companies, bands and media.

## 2.2. FESTIVALS OF THE ARTS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

### 2.2.1. The Kerekdomb Festival

The valuable experience gained from the Valley of Arts Festival has been further used by the Arts for Rural Development Foundation team first in 2016 to organise the Kerekdomb Festival, where local

communities and winemakers were involved in the organisation and running of the events and still have been counting on the Festival's beneficial impact on their communities and businesses year after year. In 2018, the team launched a further project to create the Örvényeshegy Picnic in Zalacsány, which was taken over by the local community from 2022. This event gives the producers and the community of Zala Open Ports the opportunity to present themselves. It can therefore be said that the festivals and artistic programmes in all the municipalities concerned so far have contributed to the development of the municipality and the local communities living there.

The Kerekdomb Festival takes place in Tállya, Tokaj-Hegyalja, and offers a wide range of valuable programmes. 2024 featured 150 programmes at 20 venues, 21 wineries with 15 active and vineyard tours. The festival's social media pages however, do not only feature upcoming events and speakers, but throughout the year they also showcase the local vineyards, national parks and natural beauties of other seasons. Therefore, the basic communication message supporting the rural development and tourism objectives is: *"Of course we are happy when our festivals are visited by many people, but the area is a fascinating place in itself, regardless of the festivals!"* The Arts for Rural Development Foundation's basic aim is to highlight local artistic activities and producers, and to use the festivals to promote these municipalities and their participants, contributing to rural development.

Tállya was once a large settlement of 4500 inhabitants. It was mentioned in Sándor Weöres' "Psyché" and according to a rumour, Kálmán Mikszáth wrote his "Strange Marriage" here. Lajos Kossuth was baptised here and Ferenc Rákóczi II was educated here. At present the population is just over a thousand, and the main occupation is winemaking. The overall artistic content brought by the Arts for Rural Development Foundation team, showcasing the local wineries and cultural, traditional and natural values, has received a significant response, with many people now knowing the name Tállya in connection with the Kerekdomb Festival.

Between 2018 and 2021, the Foundation's team organised the Örvényeshegy Picnic in Zalacsány, where Al Di Meola and Mario Biondi also appeared. This was a small jazz event organised as part of a cautious relaunch after the pandemic period, offering literary and jazz programmes in a beautiful location. After 2022, this event was taken over by the local community. Based on experience in independent festival organisation, the Foundation's team has grown into a cultural consultancy and

developed extensive partnerships, for example with the *Ördögkatlan Arts Festival* (Nagyharsány) and the *Bor, mámor Bénye Festival* (Erdőbénye). Among others, the Foundation has jointly applied for grants, created voluntary programmes and legal administrative methodology, we also provided economic assistance (e.g. budget advice) and helped them set up ticketing mechanisms. In addition, assistance has been provided in creating the image and the renewal of the *Héترétország Festival* (Őrség), the *Palkonya Hangja Festival* (Palkonya) and the newly launched *Ókofeszt* (Szombathely). In 2020, experiences have also been gained abroad when the team helped to create the model, the operational process and the programme structure of the *EgyFeszt* (Gyergyó Basin, Transylvania) on the example of the Valley of Arts (JÁSZBERÉNYI et al. 2022).

It is important for the Foundation to provide a high level of service at partner festivals and to work with local stakeholders to develop events in a sustainable way. As part of the greening efforts, the Foundation's team also try to implement social sustainability themes through the partners. The Valley of Arts Festival is organised with around 160-170 providers and merchants, all following strict quality criteria. It is also important to diversify the food and beverage offer year by year. Most of the staff comes from the area and the tasks include graphic design, photo and animation content design. More than 200 staff are needed to organise these festivals, as well as hundreds of external crew members, like security guards and volunteers. In 2024 nearly 3 000 programmes were advertised over 10 days and the right staff and security personnel ensured the smooth running of the festival.

### 2.2.2. The Valley of Arts Festival

The Valley of Arts is a major cultural festival in Hungary, held annually in Kapolcs, Taliándörögd and Vigántpetend. It is an extremely diverse, multi-disciplinary, multi-arts festival and one of the most important cultural events in the country. The aim of the Valley of Arts Festival is to offer visitors a colourful and rich cultural experience through a wide range of arts, while enriching and stimulating the life of the local communities (KÖKÉNY-JÁSZBERÉNYI 2022). The Valley of Arts Festival programme includes light music and new circus performances. There are a number of world music concerts and contemporary dance performances. Jazz and folk music lovers can enjoy a wide range of events as well, while green programmes, classical music concerts and theatre

performances are also organized. Visitors can enjoy exhibitions and take part in workshops, guided tours or literary programmes. Participants has the opportunity to discover traditional and modern products at the craft fair. Furthermore, among the offers sports programmes and film screenings also appear.

In 2024, the Festival was held from 19 to 28 July. The team has been renewed in 2013 compared to its 1989 launch and the number of ticket holders increased from 3 000 (2013) to 100 000 in 2021 and in 2023 the number of visitors further increased to 148 000. The marketing channels mentioned above have been developed over the years by building different databases, which have been extracted from data collected in newsletter or gamified form and from Facebook, Instagram and Google Ads databases, later backfilled and those with similar characteristics set up. By nurturing databases and data clouds, it was possible to make ads more targeted and effective (IVÁNYI 2022).

The team had started preparing the programmes in September and had the first draft programmes ready by November. The key to organising the festival is planning and security, so the programmes were available to browse online in March and finalised by the Festival's press conference in early May. Many people work for free for the Valley of Arts, one third of the budget is spent on honoraria and two thirds on infrastructure. The team has managed to restructure and diversify the income from 100% public financing in 2013 to 20% in 2024 with an increase in ticketing, sponsorship and commercial income and a good use of public funds as an investment.

Figure 2

### Visitors of the Valley of Arts Festival



Source: Arts for Rural Development Foundation (staff working documents)

In addition to the above structured operations and data-driven approach to marketing to make sales more efficient, the database will be increased and

programme ideas collected through the November wish list game (IVÁNYI 2020). Most important, however, is the research of visitor feedback using a mixed research methodology approach (HINEK 2021). In a 2023 research, the visitors' opinion was asked by recording a questionnaire during the festival on-site and online, and later, after the festival online (Figure 2 and 3). The results were used not only for advertising but also to identify *ValleyBuyer personas* and create sponsorship materials.

Figure 3

### Target groups of the Valley of Arts Festival

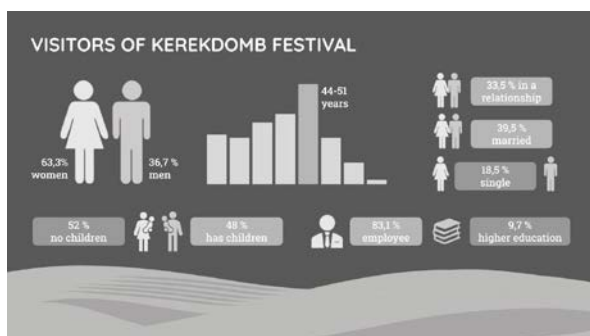


Source: Arts for Rural Development Foundation (staff working documents)

The audience there also contributes to the unrepeatable Valley of Arts experience which, combined with conscious program design and data-driven audience drawn in by similar characteristics, can maintain its community characteristics as it grows (KOVÁCS-BOROS 2023). The above mentioned data and *ValleyBuyer personas* form a coherent picture for years. In a similar research at the Kerekdomb Festival an older age group that appreciates quality wine jumped out, confirming the goal to be achieved there (Figure 4).

Figure 4

### Visitors of Kerekdomb Festival



Source: Arts for Rural Development Foundation (staff working documents)

The three pillars of sustainability are environmental sustainability (environment), economic sustainability (economy) and social sustainability (society). These pillars are not independent of each other but interact and influence each other. This relationship is best illustrated by a set of three overlapping circles (SAFDIE 2024). Environmental sustainability (E) refers to the preservation of natural ecosystems, the protection of biodiversity and the sustainable management of natural resources. Economic sustainability (G) includes economic growth, income generation and the long-term preservation of financial stability. Social sustainability (S) guarantees social equity, improved quality of life, access to education, health and basic needs.

Environmental sustainability (E) can be represented as a circle, which includes activities and policies related to environmental aspects. Economic sustainability (G) can be depicted as another circle, covering business practices, economic strategies and financial policies. Social sustainability (T), the third circle covers social justice, community development and human well-being. The implications of the overlap of these three circles are extremely important. The overlap between environmental and economic sustainability is sustainable management, which ensures that economic activities are carried out in an environmentally friendly way, for example by using green technologies and conserving natural resources. The intersection of economic and social sustainability promotes equitable economic development, ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are equitably distributed to all sections of society, fostering social cohesion. The social and environmental sustainability overlap results in environmental justice, where social well-being and environmental protection are balanced, ensuring that everyone has access to the goods they need while protecting natural resources.

Long-term sustainability, which lies at the heart of the three circles, means that economic development, environmental protection and social well-being are balanced to enable long-term sustainability. Achieving lasting sustainability therefore requires an integrated approach to all three pillars, taking into account all overlaps and applying a holistic, mutually beneficial approach.

The use of sustainable solutions is at the heart of the Valley of Arts Festival's *economic sustainability pillar*. In recent years, several environmentally friendly solutions have been implemented in a financially sustainable way, contributing to the long-term viability of the Festival. The financial stability achieved by increasing ticket revenue is central to achieving economic sustainability. The

resulting extra profit can be used for further environmentally friendly initiatives, such as the introduction of re-cups, biodegradable cups, plates and utensils. To achieve this, agreements with nearly 200 partners/providers had to be reached, ensuring collaboration and long-term thinking.

Support for public transport is also a priority. Free festival buses, snail buses and free parking outside are provided. Furthermore, festival ticket holders get a 50% discount on all MÁV and VOLÁN service in Hungary. This not only promotes visitor convenience but also environmentally friendly transport.

For energy supply, the event relies exclusively on the electricity grid, with 42 installed points. This will minimise energy waste and reduce the carbon footprint. The Festival's focus on green programmes, including workshops and talks, is also a key factor. These programmes encourage participants to lead more conscious and sustainable lifestyles. Furthermore, the collaboration with the University of Pannonia in the field of sustainability research will contribute to the Festival's continued use of innovative and science-based solutions, thus strengthening its economic sustainability pillar. These steps will not only reduce the environmental footprint of the festival, but also provide a financially sound basis for future sustainable operations.

The Valley of Arts Festival's actions to improve *its environmental sustainability* are showing remarkable results. In 2018, 49 tonnes of waste was generated, 18% of which was recycled. In 2019, although waste decreased to 39 tonnes, the recycling rate increased to 35%. In 2021, despite a 15% increase in attendance, waste decreased to 36 tonnes, while the recycling rate increased to 42%.

Measures introduced to reduce car use at the festival will also have a significant impact. A 50% discount on tickets for visitors on MÁV and VOLÁN service will encourage the use of public transport, thus reducing road traffic and its environmental impact. To ensure the sustainability of the supply chain, the transport of service providers has also been organised in a sustainable way, minimising the ecological footprint. To increase energy efficiency, the Festival uses only energy from the electricity grid, which helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Overall, the Valley of Arts Festival has taken significant steps towards environmental sustainability, particularly in the areas of waste management, transport management and energy use, which will contribute to sustainable operations and environmental impact reduction in the long term.

Turning to *the pillar of social sustainability*, it is important to note that significant investments have

been made in the Valley of Arts Festival and other rural development projects, such as in Kapolcs, where community and cultural programmes are offered in a renovated building. Since its opening in 2020, the *MűvészVölgy Kúria* in Kapolcs has become a major regional cultural hub, offering an average of 4 programmes per week from September to June, in addition to regular bike tours at the associated BalatonBike365 centre. The building and its surroundings have been renovated to host a variety of cultural and community programmes throughout the year. Since 2020, the *MűvészVölgy Kúria* in Kapolcs has been offering a wide range of cultural and community programmes. These include concerts, which cover a wide musical spectrum, including classical music, jazz, world music and popular music. Those interested in theatre can enjoy performances by local and international companies, which enrich the cultural programme.

For film lovers, the *MűvészVölgy Kúria* organises various film screenings, including national and international feature films, short films and documentaries. These programmes are organised in cooperation with partners such as the National Film Institute and the Film Archive. For those interested in the visual arts, there are art exhibitions featuring works by local and national artists. Creative workshops and workshops are also included in the programme, in different artistic disciplines such as crafts, painting, sculpture and digital art. Literature lovers will enjoy writer-reader meetings, readings and literary talks to enrich the audience's cultural knowledge. Education and community building will also be a priority at the *MűvészVölgy Kúria*. Instrumental music sessions, children's activities and local cultural programmes aim to promote and transmit cultural values. For dance lovers, folk dance evenings and other dance nights are available, where different dance styles are demonstrated and taught. Gastronomic experiences are also offered, with local food and wine presentations, gastronomic workshops and tastings.

The community-building events aim to strengthen local community cohesion and enrich the cultural life of the local community, while the rocking and children's programmes focus on music and arts education for the youngest generation. Finally, the Science Café talks enrich the programme with scientific and educational presentations, promoting scientific. Since 2020, the *MűvészVölgy Kúria* has been offering a varied and rich programme of events not only during the festival, but also throughout the rest of the year. Thanks to this, the centre plays an important role in the development and enrichment of local culture and community life, and the Valley of Arts Festival can be held all year round.

### 3. Hungarian Tourism Programme Foundation

The Hungarian events industry is outstanding in terms of professional knowledge, technical skills and infrastructure, but is often at a competitive disadvantage in the European market. The Hungarian Tourism Programme Foundation (MTPA) was set up in 2021 to help the covid-affected events industry to find solutions to the sector's overall problems (Figure 5). Following the pandemic, the domestic events industry faced a severe labour shortage. To help alleviate this, the organisation set up the RaKÉTa scholarship programme. To date, nearly 60 scholarship holders have attended or are currently attending training courses in the events industry with 5 different educational partners, such as Werk Academy, Almost Famous Rock School, A38 Academy, MOE Events Academy and St. George's Sound and Film Arts Institute. The main aim of their research is to get a realistic picture of the labour market situation in the sector.

Figure 5

#### The Hungarian Tourism Programme Foundation's logo



Source: Hungarian Tourism Programme Foundation

A constantly updated calendar of events has been created, bringing together cultural, sporting, business and community events in Hungary in a single searchable interface, helping to coordinate the different types of events. The annual ReStart Conference – which has already attracted nearly 2000 participants – and the regular MeetUp events provide an opportunity for professionals involved in the organisation of cultural, business and sporting events to meet, exchange experiences and find common solutions to the challenges facing the sector. Through it, users can connect with relevant players in the industry, find new partners, obtain information directly on services and business opportunities offered by registered users.

The organisation is also fighting for tax cuts at government level, producing professional lobby

materials and sector impact studies to make the Hungarian events market internationally competitive. MTPA's Visibility programme helps to increase the international visibility of Hungarian operators, providing opportunities for Hungarian event professionals to present themselves abroad, thus supporting the development of partnerships and business opportunities. The Hungarian Tourism Programme Foundation, established three years ago, aims to create a European-level ecosystem in the Hungarian events sector, bringing together organisers and service providers of different types of events - cultural, sport, tourism, business. MTPA occupies a pivotal international role by assuming the mantle of Hungary's emissary on the global stage, a testament to its strategic positioning as a torchbearer for the nation's cultural and innovative landscape. Through its affiliations with prestigious bodies such as the European Festivals Association EFFE Hub and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) Culture & Creativity, the Foundation serves as a veritable ambassador for Hungary's rich tapestry of heritage, creativity, and visionary initiatives.

As a member of the European Festivals Association EFFE Hub, endows the Hungarian Tourism Program Foundation with a unique platform to engage with a network of esteemed European festivals, cultural entities, and stakeholders. By connecting Hungary's cultural tapestry with the broader European landscape, the Foundation not only amplifies the visibility of Hungarian festivals but also underscores the nation's dedication to cultural exchange, artistic collaboration, and mutual understanding across borders. This affiliation propels Hungary onto the European cultural map, positioning it as a vibrant hub for creativity, cultural expression, and interdisciplinary dialogue within the broader context of the European cultural landscape. This alliance not only amplifies the Foundation's reach and influence within the European festival ecosystem but also underscores Hungary's commitment to fostering intercultural dialogue and artistic excellence on a global platform. By virtue of its membership, the Foundation assumes a pivotal role in curating and disseminating best practices, avant-garde methodologies, and transformative paradigms that transcend geographical confines, thereby fortifying Hungary's standing as a beacon of cultural prowess and festival dynamism.

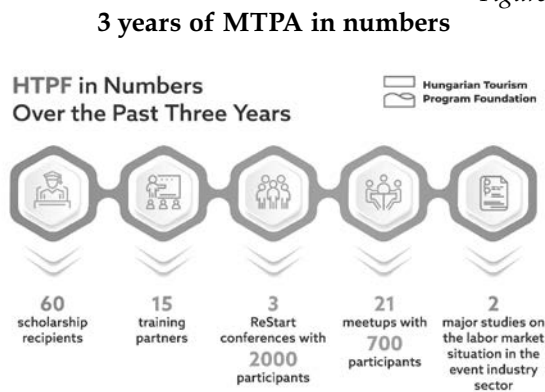
Furthermore, the Foundation's affiliation with the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) Culture & Creativity solidifies its foothold within the realm of cultural innovation and creative entrepreneurship at a transcontinental



level. By interfacing with a consortium dedicated to propelling cultural and creative industries to the vanguard of regional and global development agendas, the Foundation aligns itself with a cohort of visionaries committed to harnessing cultural capital as a catalyst for societal transformation, economic stimulation, and sustainable growth. This symbiotic interplay not only reinforces Hungary's professional's stature as a crucible of innovation and artistic ingenuity but also accentuates its role as a linchpin for fostering synergistic alliances, forging networks of excellence, and advancing the frontiers of cultural diplomacy on an international canvas (IRIMIÁS et al. 2019).

In essence, the Hungarian Tourism Program Foundation's international affiliations within the European Festivals Association EFFE Hub and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) Culture & Creativity epitomize Hungary's commitment to harnessing the power of culture, creativity, and innovation as conduits for global engagement, socio-economic advancement, and ideological exchange. Through these strategic alliances, the Foundation plays an instrumental role in propelling Hungary into the vanguard of cultural diplomacy, artistic innovation, and entrepreneurial dynamism on the international stage, thereby engendering a narrative of cross-cultural harmony, creative synergy, and sustainable progress (Figure 6).

Figure 6



Source: Hungarian Tourism Programme Foundation (staff working documents)

## 4. Conclusion

Numerous organisations may help our understanding of the theories of sustainability thus knowledge sharing and a deeper understanding should be supported by best practices. The above two organisations would lead you through these examples that may help understanding and implementation.

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