

A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE VALLETTA 2018 CULTURAL PROGRAMME

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Objectives

The study's main objective is to analyse the programme in three specific areas, namely the cultural offer, audience participation and European collaboration as experienced on the ground by programmers and producers. The study analyses the Cultural Programme experience including objectives set, problems faced and results achieved throughout the implementation phase.

The previous studies (2015-2017) focused on the planning and development stages while this report concentrates on the actualisation of the programme throughout the European Capital of Culture year.

Methodology

This study takes a qualitative approach, using primary data gathered through interviews and consultation meetings with key informants responsible for programming and relevant stakeholders. The participants' knowledge and experiences were used to gain an in-depth understanding of how the programme unfolded throughout the year.

An online survey was conducted with coordinators, producers and creators leading individual projects or programme strands. Monthly project visits and observations were carried out to gain an overall understanding of particular performances and workshops. The information gathered was transcribed and coded according to the main themes being analysed.

Secondary data sources which include the event's programme, marketing materials, the Valletta 2018 website, and the working documents as supplied by the Foundation, were also used to understand the programme range and content.

Results

The study examines the Cultural Programme strategies and processes through an analysis of Valletta 2018 documentation, over 10 interviews with programmers and an online survey with participants involved in a range of 2018 projects.

On the cultural offer, the study finds that the development of programme content was characterised by ongoing changes and reworking of themes and projects. The programme included activities across main art forms with music and visual arts being the most represented genres. Overall, the programme included a varied cultural offer and mixture of projects ranging from mass events to niche community-based projects with different and often contrasting objectives.

The study also looks at the diverse forms of engagement varying from mere attendance to co-creation and active collaboration with specific target groups. Mixed methods were used to promote projects but the extensive range of events meant that projects were also competing for limited resources and audiences.

About the European dimension, generally, respondents felt that their project themes were relevant to international audiences and that their projects had export potential. The island theme and Malta's geographical position was interpreted as an opportunity to create meaningful international connections. Local producers working with the Foundation experienced certain difficulties when collaborating with a minority of international practitioners.

Way Forward

This analysis has been completed just before the end of the ECoC, such that the overall reflection by programmers and producers may not yet be fully apparent and articulated. A further update in 2019 is recommended to allow the main programme contributors to have more detachment and time for hindsight reflection.

Moreover, this report focuses on the perspectives of those directly involved in programme delivery. Further studies may also explore the attitudes of local creative practitioners who did not participate in the Cultural Programme. Such perspectives could provide information on why creatives may be alienated and what barriers to participation they perceive.