

Fest Spanning Generations

The question why KidsFest lasts only one day is easily answered:
KidsFest doesn't last a day, but a lifetime

By Susanne Prah

This 14th year, we have baby visitors grown up to volunteers, and volunteers grown into parents... it is impressive to walk through a city and been stopped at every corner by youngsters telling me they were at KidsFest ever since... A few days after the event, still under emotion, answering floods of congratulations, we zap through sparkling outbursts of happiness on Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber, Snapchat... the social media offer to us the real retrospective of what people feel. People experience a one-and-only Real-Time connection at KidsFest... and share it over and over again via the web. Yes, Facebook is all vibes about KidsFest.

Contagious Inspiration

A community, wide spread, spreading, overlapping in fact building new communities: For hundreds of thousands people on this planet our motto applies: "KidsFest, C'est la Vie" - life, lifestyle, spirit, future, the thing to do, the place to be, a universal momentum. We do represent what people want, everywhere: an anchor of identification to which they can contribute simply by Positivism. This is why our Fanpages are boiling with likes, loves, smiles, comments from all over the world, - not limited to the participants of KidsFest. What do our Nigerian fans know about Bosnia, or Sarajevo? Close to nothing, but they feel this extraordinary thing "KidsFest" was born here and they want to make it their own. KidsFest Initiatives born through enthusiasm, some successful, like KidsFest Caccuri (2nd edition June 25), others still pending. The Brazilian Ambassador to BiH, H.E. Manoel Gomes Pereira said "we have a children's day in Brazil, in October, but nothing like this really happens. I should like to initiate a KidsFest in Brazil for this Day and connect our countries"... The Beauty resides in the Idea itself and makes its realization a secondary issue. Therefore, the magic success of KidsFest 2017 is the memories we have engendered, the ideas that were born, the inspiration that is contagious. This 14th year groups coming from BiH province outnumbered by far the Sarajevo visitors. How welcome are they here in reality? No officials to greet them, and the citizens of this city setting their priority to their own week-end leisure and BBQ in the green hills, posting likes on Facebook, whilst their children play

games on mobile phones. Pointless to cogitate about this, I thought, looking at the children around me: the kids don't mind who is not there, they enjoy those who are there! Good point. It is a



noticeable worldwide tendency that parents take less and less efforts to take their kids to cultural/socializing events, which sets a higher challenge to match attractiveness. Seeing the drone video of the longest Kids Parade of all times (!) coloring the entire Obala, from Vjecnica to Sarajevo museum, we need no evaluation team to prove: KidsFest succeeds through diversity and quality to attract record numbers of enthusiasts. Zenica, Tuzla, Zivinice, Vogosca, Kakanje, Brcko, Bihac, Pale, Zvornik, Stupari, Maglaj, Sokolac, Lukavica, Ljubinje, Mostar... here we go. In fact, it does not matter from where they come, but what our visitors take back. Having invited the Italian Ambassador, H.E. Nicola Minasi, as a "new-comer" to Sarajevo, to accompany me through the KidsFest, it was a fascinating experience to discover it through a stranger's eyes, witness a "fresh" visitor's reactions, and see an adult person immersing totally into the KidsFest spirit, bringing his wife and family, making jokes with Kids here, feeling the vibes on the Kids Stage there, together with the BiH Special Olympics team dedicating symbolically their medals to their Bosnian peers. The Ambassador strolling from the Italian booth to meet motivated Art students at National Gallery implementing our new "From Selfie to Auto-Portrait" workshop. The Ambassador being deeply moved by the USAID inclusion corner - which in fact now occupied the entire ground-

floor of the Army House with hundreds and hundreds visitors of all ages, of all conditions, happily mingling for a great moment of togetherness. My "VIP companion" then took to enjoy the shades and calm of the Quiet Zone for a dominical family snack prepared with kids by Courtyard Marriott's creative team, giving me the unique occasion to discuss KidsFest Caccuri with "Papa" from Calabria, as well as reflecting together on the symbolic message of passing the Obala inside the replica of Franz Ferdinand's car. KidsFest is an acknowledgement to History, but lays out the way for the children's own History to be, a new image, a lighthouse of future with crowds of singing kids at Sarajevo's saddest spot. Connecting History to the patrimony of tomorrow, is one anchor of KidsFest's thematic leitmotiv: one extraordinary creative outlet was offered thanks to Emira Hajdar, Teacher of Obala Gymnasium, using Bosnian patrimony, the "Bosanski Cilim" to create with the children a strong common message "the path of future" designed from the ancient symbol "Future" we find in those cilims. All booths of the Embassies and NGOs, Aladin's magic show, and Lego's creative yard were packed with visitors - much assisted by our volunteers who applied this year in record numbers. KidsFest has provided them with a wide set of briefing-training-team-building sessions before and after, with the support of UNFPA and UNV. Again, synergy plays the trick. The UNDP and Professor Atom were this year's stronghold of KidsFest's environment approach.

Everything Is Possible

Summa summarum: serious issues, play and fun... at the outcome there are as many KidsFests as there are visitors. Some of them being alive - maybe - thanks to the BiH Armed Forces Mine awareness booth in fourteen years of engagement to the cause. "Noblesse oblige" - we see the UNESCO patronage not as a gratification but a mission: build peace in the minds of girls and boys. The one question I cannot answer is: will KidsFest see its 15th edition? Having been aware of our financial crash all during the year, making #14 happen was walking on a sword's blade with a smile on my face. Wonders do happen, everything is possible, maybe even KidsFest #15.