



Swapmuseum

A young perspective on museums



PUGLIA



4,000,000



Recovery and resilience;
Governance and financing



Challenge

In Save the Children's 2018 report "Swimming Against the Current. Educational Poverty and Resilience in Italy", Puglia is identified as a region in southern Italy facing high rates of educational poverty and therefore very low rates of youth participation in cultural activities. Of the children interviewed for the report, 70.8% do not go to the theatre, 69.8% do not visit museums or exhibitions, 79.4% do not attend concerts and 59.9% do not read books. Small, local cultural institutions in Puglia also experience low visitor numbers and rates of engagement and are often unknown within their communities.



Solution

Swapmuseum is a cultural participation project, based on a mutual exchange among young people defined as "swappers" (16 - 29 years). 65 small museums and small companies who provide financial support, as well as vouchers for the purchase of books, cinema, theatre and concert tickets. The value of the vouchers is equal to the hours spent by the swappers in the museums during practical activities. The project aims to involve young people in museum life, in order to realise non-specialist voluntary activities, co-defined with the scientific management of the museum. The project is integrated into the regional cultural context of Puglia.



How ?

- 1 60 small, local museums were identified as having low visitor numbers and visibility in their communities.
- 2 The museums identified activities suitable to their context, such as communication activities, promotion or new and engaging visitor activities.
- 3 The organisation coordinating the project reaches out to young volunteers who can choose activities according to their interests. This is also facilitated by the online platform, swapmuseum.com. Swapmuseum organised many high schools career projects and has been included in different university curricula as an internship opportunity. In collaboration with Sprar (Protection system for asylum seekers and refugees) it was also possible to reach out to groups of migrant children.
- 4 The swappers undertake activities like creating playlists for the museums, recording vlogs or designing social media posts.
- 5 The project provided benefits to the young people based on the number of hours they spent doing the activities: gift vouchers for partner cultural services, school credits, etc.

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Budget/Financing

€ 145,000 (2016-2022)

- 64% came from the private sponsors including Fondazione Accenture, Fondazione Con il Sud and Chiesa Valdese.
- 24% came from the Puglia Region and another 5% from the national administration.



Management

- The management team from the small NGO 34° Fuso Aps is composed of young female professionals with backgrounds in cultural heritage, archaeology, information technology, communication, project management and fundraising. The organisation runs several projects in the region to enhance cultural heritage and they initiated and now coordinate the Swapmuseum project.
- All the activities are planned according to the scientific direction of each participating museum. The staff members of the museums are directly involved, as directors, curators, managers, tour guides, education officers. Some Public institutions, such as the Puglia Region administration, are partners of the project and they provide services, spaces, tools and funding.



Transferability

- Involve the target audience directly in the decision-making process by asking them what they would like to do and undertaking evaluations via surveys after each activity.
- Generate a collective transmedia way of storytelling by using a range of innovative digital tools and consolidated engagement strategies.
- Never give up if at the beginning the process seems to be too slow. Get feedback from external people, evaluate and come back to the project richer than before!



Impact

- Since 2016, Swapmuseum has involved 61 museums across the region. 548 young people have participated in the process spending 22,000 hours in the museums and they now consider them as accessible and central places in their everyday life.
- In addition, this process has fostered the rejuvenation of the museums through a stronger involvement of digital media.
- Thanks to Swapmuseum, a new awareness of belonging and cultural participation is born.
- After each activity, an evaluation survey was completed by the swappers: 80% of the participants reported that, as a result of taking part in the project, they learned a new skill which they will use in other contexts.



(c) Elena Carluccio



Links

- www.swapmuseum.com
- www.facebook.com/Swapmuseum
- www.instagram.com/swapmuseum/
- www.europeanheritageawards.eu/winners/swapmuseum/



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