

A Participatory Approach in Enhancing Accessibility at a Film Festival: A Case Study

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Abstract

This paper explores the potential of a participatory approach in enhancing accessibility at film festivals, with a primary focus on engaging deaf and blind audiences. The investigation utilises a case study¹ conducted over the last four years of the international documentary film festival One World – the largest and oldest documentary festival in Slovakia, and at the same time, the first Slovak film festival addressing the access needs of visually and hearing-impaired audience. Having the opportunity to continuously observe access strategies at the festival from their inception, the study aims to provide insight into why and how a creative and organising team transitions from traditional, add-on access strategies towards a more integrated, inclusive, participatory approach – and what the benefits of such a development can be. It analyses findings gathered from participatory observation, direct access to the festival organisation, and semi-structured interviews with the festival management, access professionals and participating communities, providing an analysis of an applied strategies, their planning and implementation. Key findings offer valuable insights into practical applications of the more integrated, inclusive, participatory approach in the context of film festivals, demonstrating its effectiveness in creating a more inclusive environment for festival attendees.

Keywords

Film festivals, organisation, accessibility, inclusion, participation