



Photo by Ingmar Wein

CITY, COUNTRY

Munich, Germany

DAILY CAPACITY

1.5 million visitors in 60 festival days = Ø25,000/day

SITE

Olympic Park (summer)/
Theresienwiese (winter)

CAMPING

No

NUMBER OF DAYS

2 x 4 weeks

ESTABLISHED IN

1988

GENRE

Everything from Jazz to Rock, Pop
and World music

CHALLENGE & SOLUTION

Creating an organic supply chain by
working closely with restaurateurs



A CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE AND ORGANIC, FAIR-TRADE PRODUCTS

Theatre productions, performances, music, the “Market of Ideas” with international handicrafts and 100% organic food from all over the world as well as a strong commitment to global justice and environmental protection; this is Tollwood Festival.

Access to the festival grounds is free of charge, as are over 80% of the cultural events taking place at the festival. Tollwood funds this through fees for stalls at the “Market of ideas” which has also allowed the festival to remain largely independent.

Tollwood Festival is implementing a sustainability strategy that tackles a lot of areas, says Johanna Kämper, project manager for “People and Environment”: The festival runs on 100% green electricity. The food sold at the festival comes entirely from organic cultivation and, if it comes from countries in the Global South, is Fair Trade-certified. The dishes are served on reusable tableware, and plastic is banned

in order to minimize residual waste. The festival has a recycling concept and its own recycling yard: strict waste separation is practiced both in the visitor area and behind the scenes.

The festival encourages its visitors to choose eco-friendly travel, they offer shuttle buses, a bicycle repair shop and admission tickets that include a free ticket for local public transport. “We are happy that around three quarters of our guests get to the festival in an environmentally friendly manner,” Kämper says. As well as this, unavoidable greenhouse gases, caused for instance by the arrival of artists or haulage, are offset.

At Tollwood’s “Market of Ideas”, where up to 200 exhibitors offer handicrafts, textiles and jewellery from across the world, high demands are placed on the products in terms of animal welfare, environmental protection and fair trade.



Photos by Ingmar Wein (above) and Bernd Wackerbauer



BUILDING ORGANIC SUPPLY CHAINS BEFORE CERTIFICATION EXISTED

When it comes to food, Tollwood is known for its international specialities from more than 20 countries. Since the beginning, the organisers have ensured that all basic foodstuffs are sourced from organic farming. “After all, agriculture is a significant contributor to and also affected by the major ecological crises of our time, especially the climate and biodiversity crisis,” Kämper explains. When the festival started, there was no organic certification for major events, and getting organic food was more complicated than nowadays. Building organic supply chains, getting food businesses on board with their vision, charging higher prices for

organic food, and a lack of organic beer were major challenges for Tollwood.

In Kämper’s experience, the biggest issue is another, though: “The biggest challenge, regardless of which sustainability issue you tackle, is not the challenge itself, but a negative mindset: ‘It can’t work, it won’t work, it’s impossible!’ We got this reaction when we tackled our catering system, but you can’t let that unsettle you. Sustainability is a question of values and attitude – everything else is craftsmanship.”



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WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

Changes are only sustainable if you do them in the best way for everyone; that goes for the food traders, the guests and the organisers, Kämper says. “Is the supply chain not working yet? Then let’s build one together. Are prices getting too high? Then we work together on the costing. There’s no Munich brewery that offers organic beer? Then we keep talking until an organic beer is brewed for Tollwood.” The team sat down with restaurateurs, built supplier relationships, worked together on recipes, reduced the number of meat dishes and promoted vegetarian/vegan dishes.

This approach means the Tollwood team has taken on the role of building a bridge between their food traders and wholesalers and producers. “We have communicated a clear objective and brought everyone’s needs together: ‘Tollwood is becoming organic and will remain so.’ This means the producers had a clear and reliable incentive to convert to organic or expand their range of products,” the project manager elaborates. Tollwood helps with supplier negotiations and has also supported food traders in adapting their own dishes and ingredients, which means regional,

seasonal, less meat and throwing away as little as possible.

The festival has its own gastro-expert on the team. “He knows the market, he knows how to budget, what works and what doesn’t,” Kämper explains. In other areas, e. g., on the “Market of Ideas”, the festival hires external experts to check that their sustainability criteria are met.

Since 2003, all of the festival catering has been organically certified according to the directives of the EU-organic production-regulation while remaining comparable in price to conventional major events in Munich, Kämper summarises.

According to a study of the consulting agency “Ernährungsökologie”, Tollwood’s approach to food saves 20% or 116 tonnes of CO₂ emissions each year. “Challenging and encouraging, setting clear goals and continuously pursuing and reviewing the sustainability criteria with staying power – that’s crucial,” Kämper emphasises.

THE SOLUTION



“MARKET OF IDEAS” KEEPS TOLLWOOD OCCUPIED

The “Market of Ideas” with its countless products will present sufficient challenges for the coming years, Kämper is sure. For many non-food raw materials and products there is no sustainability certification available yet, so this is where pioneering work is needed.

The second major concern for the festival is to help make the world a better place, even outside the festival grounds. For example: the ‘Bio for Children’ project that focuses on healthy food in childcare facilities, which was previously restricted to Munich, is now being rolled out nationwide.



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