



CITY, COUNTRY

Roskilde, Denmark

DAILY CAPACITY

130,000

SITE

Countryside south of the city

CAMPING

Yes

NUMBER OF DAYS

8 (4 camping, 4 music)

ESTABLISHED IN

1971

GENRE

Rock, Pop, Indie, Electronic;
upcoming artists, arts and activism

CHALLENGE & SOLUTION

Avoiding/cleaning up huge amounts
of waste by involving the audience



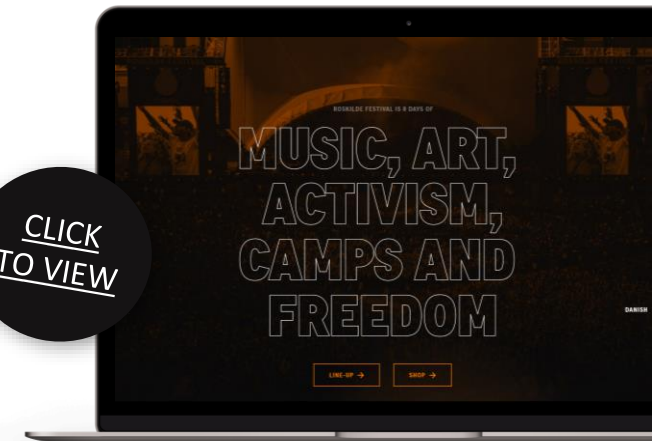
VOLUNTEERS, PHILANTHROPY AND A CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Around 30,000 volunteers help create Roskilde each year. This combined with 80,000 full tickets and thousands of single-day tickets, means Roskilde becomes a temporary city of 130,000 people every year. Sanne Stephansen, head of sustainability at Roskilde Festival, describes it as a celebration of life, community and everything that's unique. It is organised by the non-profit Roskilde Festival Charity Society, which donates the festivals revenue to support humanitarian and cultural work.

The festival is known for finding new artists and delivering surprising musical experiences. Visitors also appreciate the festival for the four days of camping, music and arts before the festival site opens. "There are more than 90 different program features at the camp site, but a lot of content is also created by the participants

themselves. I guess that's why there are rumours that some people stay put on the campsites and don't watch the concerts," says Stephansen.

Festivals can be a window to the future: They are a bit different each edition and show that change is possible and necessary. The structures and systems that festivals tap into are dictated by their surroundings, meaning festivals have the same systemic problems as society as a whole. It is interesting to see which behavioural differences festivals can create and what kind of behaviour certain systems do or do not support. This idea is investigated at Roskilde Festival every year.





FESTIVAL SITES VS CAMPING EQUIPMENT

Stephansen knows that “Denmark is the biggest producer of municipal waste per capita in the European Union”. According to [Statista](#), each inhabitant generated an average of 844 kilograms of waste in 2019. One of the biggest challenges for Roskilde is how much waste the festival creates and how much waste and equipment participants leave behind at the campsites. Roskilde wants to solve its problems in an innovative way; that’s why they draw upon municipal waste management and waste prevention processes, but at the same time, giving them a new, creative touch.

“It’s the same challenges that we face in society, as a country, as a world in general,” states Stephansen. One example for this is waste; a lot of Roskilde’s waste is created by festival goers leaving their tents and camping gear behind. There are many factors outside the festival’s control, e. g. cheap, poor-quality tents sold at discounters, so festivals need to offer better solutions to their visitors.

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CREATING CAMPSITE COMMUNITIES

The fields full of tents left behind indicate that they are not needed throughout the rest of the year. To combat this, Roskilde is about to establish renting out tents, mattresses and gazebos to festivalgoers, starting in 2022 with 4000 units – these will be set up carefully in order to demonstrate the behaviour that Roskilde wants to see from its audience, whilst also creating new business opportunities for the festival.

Another solution is in the community camping areas project where the festival communicates what kind of behaviour they expect from their participants, e. g., “Leave No Trace Camp”, “Clean Out Loud Camp” and, starting in 2022, “Common Ground”. For this project, they teamed up with different kinds of organisations and communities who wanted to support areas of the campsite. The project started in 2011 with 1200 participants. In 2019, the number went up to 28,000! “It is about supporting sustainable behaviour, creating dialogue with participants and making a social contract so that everyone on the site knows what we expect from them and what to expect from us,” explains Stephansen.

Roskilde’s approach is making it easy to do the right thing for the audience through implementing helpful guidance like signage for waste management systems that can easily be decoded and followed.

The festival intensified their work in 2019, when they created a [detailed plan](#) for a circular festival that would focus on waste and resource management. In 2022, for the first time, there will be deposits on areas on the campsite so participants will only get their money back after they have cleaned up after themselves.

To be able to tap into new ideas, Roskilde partners with young start-ups (mainly within the “Circular Lab” project) to give them the opportunity to test their sustainable solutions in the temporary festival environment. The hope is that, in the long run, wider society can use some of these solutions.

THE SOLUTION



FOSSIL-FREE TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

Roskilde wants to do more with travel and transportation and is investigating, how to introduce fossil-free travel and transport. This might require them to cut costs in other areas, but Stephansen is sure it will pay off because they use fewer natural resources – which in their opinion, is the true currency.

“The way that we talk about sustainability as something that doesn’t have an end point can be exhausting; when are you done? when is it enough? I guess you have to come to the conclusion that it never is and there’s always going to be a better solution being developed, so, I guess coming to terms with the fact that it’s an ongoing process is something that we’re always going to be working on.”



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