



POHODA FESTIVAL

Pohoda Festival is an open-air summer festival and the biggest in Slovakia. The festival is located at Trenčín Airport and had its inaugural year in 1997. Each year the festival welcomes approx. 30,000 festival-goers and presents them to various musical genres, including rock, pop, alternative, dance, roots, techno and more. But also discussions, theatre, dance, and literature workshops. The festival collaborates with various non-profit organisations.

CASE: NOTA BENE LUGGAGE PORTERS

In socialist Slovakia, homelessness was officially not a problem; the authorities removed people without homes. In post-socialist Slovakia, the issue became visible and apparent with widespread negative perception and stigmatisation of people experiencing homelessness. Proti prúdu is an NGO producing the Nota bene street magazine, providing people experiencing homelessness with a steady income. The project is a success, but many associate it with begging. Therefore, Proti prúdu developed the luggage porters project to improve perception through relations.



PHOTO BY MARCEL PAZMAN

EMPLOYMENT AND RESPECTFUL INTERACTION

The project is an innovative way of bringing people from the margins into the hustle and bustle of the festival community. The luggage porters are selected vendors of the *Nota bene* street paper, who are employed by *Proti prádu* to help festival participants with their luggage. The porters earn money and mingle – conspicuously – with people.

THE FESTIVAL PROVIDES A CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE

Both festival guests and the porters are situated in a setting out of the ordinary. Having a tête-à-tête with a porter, who also happens to be living without a home, creates a rare chance to interact with a person behind a societal category and hopefully creates a lasting change in perception. The changed perspective is used to emphasise a significant societal problem that most people in their everyday life either ignore or silently accept.



AN ALL-YEAR-ROUND STRUGGLE

Pohoda Festival also addresses the issue of homelessness through other activities. In the NGO Passage at the festival, Housing First principles are promoted. Every winter – the coldest and toughest time of the year – Pohoda organises a festival at a homeless shelter to create much-needed awareness of the harsh and often lethal living conditions of homeless people.

“This is one of the best projects of inclusion I have seen. It creates a lot of beautiful, strong, and funny moments. These memories of a personal encounter with a person without a home will increase your willingness to acknowledge the seriousness of the issue.”

– Michal Kaščák, CEO, Pohoda Festival

Name: *Pohoda Festival*

City & country: *Trenčín, Slovakia*

Capacity: *30,000*

Site: *Trenčín Airport*

Camping: *Yes*

Number of days: *3*

Established in: *1997*

