

# Features of good practice for safeguarding and valorising intangible cultural heritage: the Tocati International Festival of Street Games<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

**Purpose of the paper:** *The aim of this paper is to analyse the extent to which the uniquely successful Tocati International Festival of Street Games, which has been promoted by the Associazione Giochi Antichi (Traditional Games Association) since 2003, can be considered an example of good practice for safeguarding an intangible cultural heritage, and the factors underlying its success.*

**Methodology:** *The qualitative approach of this paper is based on a case study. The data were collected by conducting in-depth interviews of the organizers of the Tocati International Festival.*

**Results:** *The results confirmed the working hypothesis and highlighted the determinants of the success of the Festival in safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of traditional games.*

**Limitations:** *The case analysis only considers the perspective of the promoter of the event. Future research should be extended it to include the perspectives of other stakeholders.*

**Practical implications:** *Although the findings indicate that the event cannot be standardised or easily reproduced, they do identify a number of factors that can favour the success of a cultural festival.*

**Originality of the paper:** *As there are no published models for evaluating cultural events as good practices, the findings of this study can contribute to the open debate on this topic.*

*Key words: Intangible cultural heritage; traditional games; cultural events management; successful events; good practice*

## 1. Introduction

Safeguarding and promoting an intangible cultural heritage is an ongoing challenge for organisations which, by definition, are facing increasing problems concerning the availability and optimal use of economic resources (Baumol and Bowen, 1965).

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<sup>1</sup> While this paper is the result of reflections made jointly by the authors, in terms of its final drawing up, paragraphs 1, 3, 5.1, 6 are attributed to Francesca Simeoni, paragraph 4.1 is attributed to Francesca Simeoni and Giuseppe Giacon, paragraphs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 5.2 are attributed to Paola Castellani and paragraph 4.2 is attributed to Paola Castellani and Giuseppe Giacon.

In addition to theatres, opera companies, libraries, archives, museums and archaeological sites, cultural products include festivals, which Wagner defined as extraordinary happenings in an extraordinary place at an extraordinary time (Solima, 2006, p. 237). Festivals are intended to offer visitors a significant and memorable experience that transmits cultural content by offering a variety of activities in different languages (D'Astous *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, they not only contribute to developing the culture they promote, but also add to the distinctive characteristics of the geographical area in which they are held. All of these features indicate that they are complex products and inevitably need to be supported by an equally complex system of event planning and management.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the Tocati International Festival of Street Games, which is promoted by the Associazione Giochi Antichi (AGA) and has become a unique event in Italy. Its success is demonstrated by the fact that the 13th Festival in 2015 was attended by 300,000 people, covered a surface area of 220,000 m<sup>2</sup>, developed six thematic areas, and had nine patrons and 99 “stakeholders”. The research hypothesis was “the Tocati Festival can be considered an example of good practice for safeguarding and valorising an intangible cultural heritage” and, after confirming this hypothesis, the paper continues by answering the question “What makes the Tocati Festival successful?”

## **2. Analytical review of the literature**

### *2.1 Reflections on the concepts of excellent, best and good practices*

The literature and experiences of Italian and international observers have provided many definitions of the concept of “good practice”, the heterogeneity of which is substantially due to differences in its use and context of reference.

The three terms *excellent practices*, *best practice* and *good practice* are often used interchangeably, but each of them actually has its own precise significance (Eige, 2013, p. 10).

In some cases, the experimentation of innovative projects aimed, for example, at promoting social, cultural or environmental interventions or initiatives that can give rise to excellent practices that are unique in their kind. Subsequently, there may arise a need to make the most effective of these cases more organic, which involves identifying the elements that have allowed a certain qualitative level to be reached in order to create a “package” of good practices to be spread throughout the territory in a capillary manner and guarantee their continuity (Palumbo, 2001). Consequently, “a ‘good practice’ can be broadly defined as a practice that, upon evaluation, demonstrates success at producing an impact which is reputed as good, and can be replicated” (Eige, 2013, p. 10). In addition, a good practice can be subject to a *process of mainstreaming* by means of which the most effective innovations tested in pilot projects in circumscribed social, economic and/or institutional environments can be translated into local, national and community policies and regulations

(Carrà Mittini, 2009, p. 16). In other words, excellent practices are unique and unrepeatable, while good practices are reproducible and transferable.

On the other hand, the originally American term *best practice* introduces “a comparative element that seems to exclude, even if not intentionally avoid, the use of a less challenging good practice” (Carrà Mittini, 2009, p. 15).

A further acceptance used to indicate a good practice, for example in the context of the Anglo-Saxon concept of social work, is *evidence based practice*: i.e. a practice based on empirical evidence that is considered the best by the involved stakeholders (Ferguson, 2004; Marsh and Fisher, 2005). In addition, there is the concept of a *promising practice*, which is used to indicate something that has the potential of becoming recognised as a good practice (<http://eige.europa.eu/>).

A good practice can inspire the formulation and introduction of a norm or rule, and increase the awareness of administrators and public and private operators of the variety and qualitative differences of possible interventions aimed at satisfying particular community needs and sharing knowledge: but what empirical criteria can be used to define it?

Unesco identifies its distinctive characteristics as the *novelty*, *creativity*, *sustainability* and *reproducibility* (in different contexts) of solutions aimed at improving people's conditions of life (Unesco/Council of Europe, 2001) and, in relation to the actions described in the framework of the National Employment and Inclusion Plan, ISFOL (2004) identified the following requirements:

- the innovativeness of the employed processes (organisational structure, managerial methods, active participation, trans-nationality, transferability and mainstreaming), the made products, the achieved results, the context in general;
- the effectiveness of the adopted strategy in reaching objectives/measurable and explicitly explainable results;
- the efficiency of the used resources in reaching objectives/predefined results;
- sustainability, i.e. the capacity to produce lasting benefits in favour of the target(s) of the initiative and the community as a whole;
- potential reproducibility in similar contexts and circumstances;
- potential transferability to different contexts;
- the political relevance of its contribution to the implementation of the priorities of the National Employment and Inclusion Plan in line with national, regional and local political priorities.

Other studies in the social field point out that good practices cannot be standardised because they are made up of distinctive elements that are declined in concretely specific situations (Carrà, 2009), and are often characterised by originality, non-reproducibility, special relational qualities, and a high degree of service personalisation that requires particular flexibility, professionalism and empathy towards their target public (Folgheraiter, 1998; 2001).

The criteria of innovativeness and sustainability have respectively contributed to the spreading of new forms of social creativity and led to the awareness that survival cannot be guaranteed by public financing alone, which has underlined the need to make every effort in order to acquire the

necessary local resources and pursue the common good as effectively and efficiently as possible (Rossi and Boccacin, 2007).

The particular traits of good practice can therefore be summarised as follows (Carrà, 2009; Donati, 2007):

- the co-presence of institutional, private and tertiary sector entities;
- the pursuit of a public benefit;
- the formulation of a shared, multi-dimensional project requiring the presence of various parties;
- the activation of a participative decision-making process;
- the presence of collaborative relationships;
- the pursuit of a benefit that is common to the parties involved and the community of reference.

## *2.2 Intangible cultural heritage: definition and specific traits*

An important definition of intangible cultural heritage can be found in Art. 2 of the “Convention for safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage” adopted by Unesco on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003: “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith - that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity”. In the same document, it is specified that cultural heritage is not limited to monuments and collections of objects, but also includes the traditions and expressions of life inherited from our forebears and transmitted to our descendants, such as “oral traditions and expressions, including language; the performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; traditional craftsmanship” (Unesco, 2003).

Understanding the intangible cultural heritage of different communities encourages inter-cultural dialogue and reciprocal respect of lifestyles (Unesco, 2009).

Unesco traces the following characteristics of intangible cultural heritage (<http://www.unesco.org>):

- “*traditional, contemporary and living at the same time*: intangible cultural heritage does not only represent inherited traditions from the past but also contemporary rural and urban practices in which diverse cultural groups take part.
- *inclusive*: we may share expressions of intangible cultural heritage that are similar to those practised by others. Intangible cultural heritage contributes to giving us a sense of identity and continuity, providing a link from our past, through the present, and into our future. It contributes to social cohesion, encouraging a sense of identity and responsibility which helps individuals to feel part of one or different communities and to feel part of society at large.

- *representative*: intangible cultural heritage thrives on its basis in communities and depends on those whose knowledge of traditions, skills and customs are passed on to the rest of the community, from generation to generation, or to other communities;
- *community-based*: intangible cultural heritage can only be heritage when it is recognized as such by the communities, groups or individuals that create, maintain and transmit it - without their recognition, nobody else can decide for them that a given expression or practice is their heritage”.

Safeguarding an intangible cultural heritage implies becoming aware of an inheritance and its value, contributes to social cohesion by encouraging a sense of belonging and social responsibility, and offers the community a means of evolving and being creative and competitive in a sustainable manner.

An intangible cultural heritage remains vital by means of “the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage” (Unesco, 2003).

Every country that signed the Convention is called upon to define the elements of its intangible cultural heritage and take measures aimed at safeguarding it by guaranteeing the widest possible participation of the communities, groups and individuals involved in creating, maintaining and transmitting it (Unesco, 2003).

Such measures include (Unesco, 2014):

- the strengthening of scientific research;
- educational, sensitisation and information programmes aimed at the general public, and particularly young people;
- education for the protection of natural spaces and places of memory whose existence is necessary for expressing intangible cultural heritage.

Other actions include the promotion and organisation of cultural events capable of sensitising the public and stimulating its active participation.

### 2.3 Cultural events aimed at valorising an intangible cultural heritage

The word “event” comes the Latin *evenire* (to come out, to come into the light), an etymology that encompasses the idea of becoming and the dynamism of a concept that cannot be unequivocally defined. According to Getz (1997, p. 4), “a special event is a one-time or infrequently occurring event outside the normal programs or activities of sponsoring or organizing body” and, from the point of view of the public, “an opportunity for a leisure, social or cultural experience outside the normal range of choices or beyond everyday experience”. The main characteristics of an event (Allen *et al.*, 2005) include the specific purpose of its creation, its limited duration, its uniqueness (even if it is periodical or repeated in time), and its ‘celebratory’ setting (Goldblatt, 1997). These characteristics (particularly the last one) contribute to its attractiveness by giving it the connotation of a non-routine “once in lifetime” experience (Getz, 1997; Van Der Wagen, 2001). Events often arise within a community as a celebration of a holiday or ritual (Bauman, 1992; Handelman, 1988; Waterman, 1998) designed to develop

and reinforce a certain local identity and culture, and subsequently tend to transform themselves into highly spectacular manifestations (Richards, 2007). They can be classified on the basis of many variables: type (Getz, 1997), periodicity, duration, catchment area, reference target, number of visitors, method of access, level of media coverage, offered services, purpose, involved subjects, spatial localisation, size, and subject (Ferrari, 2012).

In relation to size, there is a continuum running from small events to hallmark and mega-events (Ritchie, 1984; Roche, 1992; Hall, 1992; Getz, 1997) such as the Olympics or Catholic Jubilees. The subjects can range from sports to politics, religion, business and culture, but cultural events themselves can include exhibitions, concerts and other musical events, plays, ballets and other performative dances, film festivals, religious, historical and folk theatre, all-night arts festivals (Cherubini and Iasevoli, 2007), and various other festivals, some of which may be highly specialised (Ferrari, 2012).

The word “festival” has been used for hundreds of years, and may refer to a multiplicity of events (Bowdin *et al.*, 2011). The Policy Studies Institute (PSI, 1992, p. 1) points out that “a festival was traditionally a time of celebration, relaxation and recuperation which often followed a period of hard physical labour, sowing or harvesting of crops, for example. The essential feature of these festivals was the celebration or reaffirmation of community or culture. The artistic content of such events was variable and many had a religious or ritualistic aspect, but music, dance and drama were important features of the celebration”.

Getz (2005, p. 2) proposes a succinct definition of festivals as “a public, themed celebration”, and Smith (1990, p. 128) identifies them as “a celebration of a theme or special event for a limited period of time, held annually or less frequently (including one-time only events) to which the public is invited”.

The wide range of modern festivals and the scarcity of studies concerning them do not allow a single definition, and this particularly applies to the expanding use of “art festival”, regarding which the British Arts Festival Association suggests that “arts festivals can be grouped into several categories, including high profile general celebrations of the arts, festivals that celebrate a particular location, art form festivals, celebration of work by a community of interest, calendar (including cultural or religious festivals), amateur festivals and commercial music festivals. It could be summarized that arts festivals involve the celebration of a theme or event, of human creative skill in areas such as poetry, painting and music and may involve the celebration of an individual artist, artists or historical art event” (Robertson and Elspeth, 2008).

The continuous growth of cultural events has contributed to the democratisation of culture, making what were once considered elite forms of art and knowledge accessible to a wider public (Bracalente and Ferrucci, 2009). One of their purposes may be the “creative management” of the intangible heritage of a community, the fruit of traditions and the sedimentation of identity, and they can prove to be a useful means of creating “a pulsating atmosphere” (Bracalente and Ferrucci, 2009)

that is capable of capturing the imagination of users/visitors/tourists and increasing the distinctiveness of a place. Many academics have analysed cultural events as a means of territorial and tourist marketing aimed at being attractive, increasing the average length of tourist stays, de-seasonalising presences, segmenting demand in order to motivate visitors and stimulate the production and distribution of goods and services (including those of satellite suppliers) to the benefit of the local economy (Hall, 1992; Getz, 1997; Strauss and Lord, 2001; Dall'Ara, 2009; Ferrari, 2012).

Cultural events encourage urban redevelopment by favouring improvements in infrastructures and services that also benefit the local community, and by generating opportunities for preserving or recovering its cultural and environmental heritage (Hughes, 1999), for example by regenerating declining industrial sites with the aim of supporting the transition to a tertiary economy (Bianchini, 1999; Richards, 2007).

They can also improve the local community's quality of life by offering residents the opportunity to engage in cultural and recreational leisure activities that contribute to reinforcing local identity, the sense of belonging to a community, and civic pride, all of which has positive effects in terms of social cohesion and aggregation (Herrero *et al.*, 2007; Gursoy *et al.*, 2004), innovation and creativity (Bracalente and Ferrucci, 2009). Culture is a driver of the development of human capital insofar as it can be transformed into knowledge, innovation, creativity and, therefore, value for the local production system, thus also attracting new and highly cultured professional communities (Rullani, 2004), unless it is subject to counter-productive manipulation.

The increasing offer of cultural events for tourist marketing favours planning at a territorial level in order to avoid the risk of standardisation and the consequent loss of distinctiveness. This requires coordinating the various players in the tourist and cultural systems in such a way as to make the most of local resources and guarantee not only effective and efficient planning and implementation, but also sustainable management (Argano, 2004; Getz, 2005).

Over the last few years, a large number of papers have been published concerning the effectiveness of cultural events (particularly festivals) in relation to tourist policies. Many of them have evaluated the organisational efficiency, degree of public satisfaction, the factors motivating visitors and the dimensions underlying them, and the economic (Kim *et al.*, 1998; Uysal and Gitelson, 1994), social (Delamere *et al.*, 2001; Small, 2008) and cultural impact of such events (Cherubini *et al.*, 2009), but there are no national or international studies specifically evaluating them as good practices for safeguarding an intangible cultural heritage.

### 3. Methodology

The aim of this case study (Bonoma, 1985) is to make a detailed analysis of the Tocati International Festival of Street Games. The data were collected by consulting secondary sources and conducting in-depth interviews of the organisers of the Festival.

The collected information and qualitative and quantitative data (particularly the data concerning the results obtained by the event) were reprocessed on the basis of utility (Yin, 1994). This is a detailed analysis of a single event (Gephart, 2004) proposed here as a good practice (Siggelkow, 2007), a theory that will be first applied in order to highlight the elements that make the Tocati Festival a “good practice” and then in order to validate the research hypothesis (Johnston *et al.*, 1999). To this end, the various activities of the *Associazione Giochi Antichi* (AGA) will also be described with the aim of showing that the festival is the one that best safeguards and increases the value of the intangible cultural heritage represented by traditional games.

The success of the Tocati festival will be demonstrated by presenting data concerning the performance of the first thirteen festivals and, in particular the effectiveness and efficiency with which it has reached its pre-established objectives.

The research question will be answered by analysing the main considerations that are made when planning the Tocati festival: objectives, content, localisation, and the involved stakeholders.

These analyses will provide the necessary elements to outline the features characterising the good practice of the festival and reflect upon the factors of success that have supported its innovative development and strong territorial roots.

#### **4. Case study analysis: the AGA and the Tocati International Festival of Street Games**

##### *4.1 The Associazione Giochi Antichi*

The *Associazione Giochi Antichi* (AGA) is a cultural association that was founded in 2002. It consists of 62 members (seven of whom serve on the Managing Board), two employees and about 500 players/volunteers.

“AGA is a cultural project focused on games, the communities that play them, and the territory in which they live. The Association is interested in traditional games that have often been passed down for centuries, have close ties with specific cultural areas, and are deeply rooted in the local territory”.

It researches Italian traditional game playing communities, is committed to safeguarding their activities in the areas and places in which the games are played, and works to preserve and encourage the playing of traditional games. In pursuing these objectives, it has censused about 800 game playing communities in Italy and collected many personal accounts that are useful for preserving and developing them. On the basis of its view that game playing communities keep “the historic memory, the environmental peculiarities, and the social creativity of their territories” alive, the AGA has drawn up a manifesto in which it defines the communities on the basis of the following criteria: connections with the territory, craftsmanship, game playing, the risk of extinction, a sense of

belonging to the game playing community, freedom from commercial ties, players, and gaming quality.

It is important to underline the fact that the games that are identified and promoted by the AGA are usually practised by adults and, as they are deeply rooted in the places in which they are played, preserving them is synonymous with safeguarding the heritage of territorial traditions and the territory itself.

In addition to the 13 Tocati festivals, the AGA has:

- opened a traditional games documentation centre;
- drawn up a Manifesto defining traditional game playing communities;
- established and maintained relations with about 200 of the estimated 800 Italian game playing communities;
- created and maintained contacts with local, national and international bodies and institutions, including the *Association Européenne de Jeux et Sports Traditionnels* (AEJST); the *Società Italiana per la Museografia e i Beni Demo Etno-Antropologici* (SIMBDEA); *Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche*; the universities of Verona, Sassari, and La Sapienza, Rome; almost 300 ethnographic museums; and about 40 local authorities;
- submitted a bill to the Veneto Regional Council in favour of “promoting and supporting traditional games and sports associations”;
- intervened on an urban level (e.g. a street dedicated to playing games);
- undertaken other initiatives aimed at creating close ties with the territory and its cultural origins;
- undertaken various educational activities;
- designed a traditional games theme park;
- promoted and organised the City of Verona’s S-cianco Tournament and Provincial Championship;
- devised the International Lippa Tournament;
- published a number of books, including *Un Paese che gioca* [A country that plays], *Siamo qui per la bellezza del gioco* [We are here for the beauty of the game], *Giro d’Italia in 150 giochi* [Touring Italy in 150 games], and *Giochi tradizionali d’Italia. Viaggio nel Paese che gioca* [Traditional Italian games. A journey in a country that plays].

It is particularly worth mentioning that the Tocati Festival has been recognised as good practice for the valorisation of intangible cultural heritage by the European project “Cultural Capital Counts”.

#### 4.2 Tocati International Festival of Street Games

The first Tocati International Festival of Street Games took place in 2003 with the aim of valorising traditional games and transmitting the millenary cultures and customs of peoples.

Conceived and promoted by the AGA in collaboration with the Verona Council’s Department of Culture, the 13<sup>th</sup> Festival was held in 2015 and attended by 300,000 people. Its original format, which has been distinctively refined and enriched over the years by an increasing number of proposals and initiatives, has made it an international point of reference for traditional games enthusiasts and contributed to spreading the traditions of game playing as part of the ever-changing territorial culture.

The close collaboration established with the AEJST in 2007 allowed the Tocati festival and the AGA to develop relationships with various international organisations and to participate in a constructive debate concerning the good practices in safeguarding and promoting game playing traditions.

The Festival enjoys the patronage of important European, Italian, regional and local public and private institutions and bodies: the European Parliament, the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage and Activities (MIBACT), the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies (MIPAAF), UNICEF, the *Touring Club Italiano*, the Veneto Region, the Province of Verona, the First Administrative District of Verona, the Verona Chamber of Commerce, the Schools Department of Verona, the Diocese of Verona, the Verona Order of Architects, the Dall'Abaco Conservatoire, the Verona Academy of Fine Arts, Local Health Authority No. 20, the Veronatuttintorno Consortium, and the University of Verona. It also has about 100 territorial sponsors, partners and collaborators.

The annual event takes place in the historical centre of Verona and occupies a national record surface area of 220,000 square metres. By reclaiming less well-known places, the Tocati Festival opens up new perspectives on the use of urban spaces and its relationship with the city and its surroundings, thus giving added impulse to the re-evaluation of cultural traditions and local economic development.

The public, the organisational staff, guests and journalists can move unusually freely throughout the city centre, which is closed to motor vehicles for the occasion: it is possible to move on foot, by bicycle or in a rubber dinghy on the Adige River. In this way, it is possible to establish freer, closer and more profound contact with the environment, which stimulates curiosity and the imagination.

During the four September days of the Festival, colourful wooden statues of playing children (the symbol of the Festival) peek out at every crossroads to show visitors how to reach the mainly open-air areas that are equipped for every game and display, immersed in an atmosphere of joyful festivity that is made even more cheerful by the presence of musicians and dancers from Italy and abroad. Adults and children of all ages, families, city residents and tourists are all taken on a journey that will allow them to rediscover games, sounds and flavours.

Curiosity, interest, the pleasure of playing, the desire for experimentation and entertainment and a desire for escapism, relaxation, knowledge and socialisation spontaneously drive thousands of people to attend the Festival and abandon themselves in its wealth of culture and enjoyment.

A further particular characteristic of the Festival is that a foreign country is invited as the guest of honour every year to illustrate its diversity by means of games, characteristic dances, costumes and traditional gastronomic specialties. Since 2006, Tocati has introduced game playing communities from Spain (2006), Croatia (2007), Scotland (2008), Greece (2009), Switzerland (2010), Hungary (2013), Mexico (2014), and Catalonia (2015). Their participation gives the Festival added value and increases the city's attractiveness and its cultural and tourist promotion.

The Festival covers various areas designed to promote specific initiatives (games, events, meetings, the International Forum of Gaming Culture, exhibitions, installations, sounds and flavours, side projects, and cinema/theatre), all of which offer visitors experiential itineraries that are appropriately supported by information points scattered throughout the city centre, on-line notices on the Festival's website and social media, and off-line communication in the form of widely distributed posters, brochures, flyers and pocket-sized maps. The Festival's programme, which contains details on the games' area, typology, place, date and times, and is available in Italian, English and German, is made more user-friendly by the fact that each area is identified by a different colour, and each place is numbered.

The *Games* area proposes about 40 traditional Italian and international games superintended by people who know and uphold their traditions, enjoy playing them and find pleasure in transmitting their traditional rituals. The public can watch them compete or try playing themselves with the help of experts free of charge. There are also board games, urban games and workshops. The table below shows the increasing numbers of Italian and non-Italian players.

Tab. 1: The number of games and players at the first 13 Tocati Festivals

Festival	Italian games	Italian players	Guest country games	Guest country players	Representatives at the International Lippa Tournament	Players at the International Lippa Tournament
2003	8	8	0	0	4	20
2004	28	80	0	24	6	30
2005	35	100	6	24	6	30
2006	32	104	18	93	9	45
2007	44	160	14	83	8	40
2008	30	116	15	49	12	60
2009	41	160	12	77	12	60
2010	38	148	9	51	8	40
2011	44	176	6	72	8	40
2012	40	210	7	70	6	30
2013	37	220	8	60	6	30
2014	37	230	23	96	6	30
2015	20	85	14	150	8	40

Source: Internal documentation of the Tocati Organisational Secretariat

The *Events* area hosts some unique happenings during the Festival, beginning with the opening parade of traditional masks from the guest country. There are matches of the most spectacular games, whereas the *ToCasa* and *ToBottega* initiatives are designed to transmit knowledge and relations: the former involves the opening of the houses of some city residents who are willing to welcome small groups of visitors to share their activities; and the latter the opening of artisan workshops in various parts of the city in order to allow visitors to discover some of the secrets of Veronese craftsmanship.

The *Meetings* area is in constant development (Tab. 2), and promotes meetings on teaching and playing games at school, round tables, congresses, conferences, and narrations aimed at enriching reflections on the subject of games thanks to the contributions of numerous representatives of the world of culture.

The *International Forum of Gaming Culture* takes place in the courtyard of the Old Market, a historical piazza in the city centre that hosts an auditorium in which players from Italy and other parts of the world, teachers, experts in the history of traditions and traditional sports, and authors of books on subjects related to games follow one another. It is an environment that offers an unending range of opportunities, from exhibitions to specialised book stands, to learn more in the presence of games associations, European centres of gaming culture, and Italian ethnographic museums.

The *Exhibitions* area includes exhibitions on game playing traditions, and the myths and rites of guest countries, which offer food for thought and activities that are also suitable for schools. The main exhibitions that have been held so far include: “A small exhibition of traditional street games” (2003), “Around the world in 80 spinning tops” (2005), “We are here for the beauty of the game” (2008), “A country that plays” (2010), “The Paul Street Boys (2013), “Mexico: a games playing tradition” (2014).

The *Installations* area has superintended two innovative projects:

- the 250 m<sup>2</sup> Labyrinth in 2009
- the 102-metre Postumio Bridge over the Adige River in the 2006-2010 period.

*Tab. 2: The number of meetings, side projects, exhibitions/installations and speakers at the first 13 Tocati Festivals*

Festival	Meetings at the Gaming Culture Forum	Meetings and conferences	Speakers	Side projects	Exhibitions/ installations
2003	0	0	0	0	1
2004	0	5	10	0	1
2005	0	6	17	0	1
2006	0	10	14	0	4
2007	0	7	22	0	5
2008	0	13	39	0	3
2009	0	12	25	0	4
2010	11	15	42	0	2
2011	17	14	29	2	3
2012	15	18	29	12	1
2013	19	15	38	15	1
2014	24	22	74	20	4
2015	12	15	62	15	3

Source: Internal documentation of the Tocati Organisational Secretariat

In *Sound and Flavours* area, it is possible to taste the wines and gastronomic specialties of Verona and guest countries at the Festival

Kitchen, while the Games Tavern offers local wines and a “zero-kilometre” menu with dishes provided by small local producers: both places also serve excellent water from the city aqueduct, thus avoiding any pollution (no bottles, no transportation using internal combustion engines, etc.).

The *Side Projects*, which were first introduced in 2011, are the fruit of collaborations with various public or private bodies that were already present in the territory and propose workshops related to games, sustainability or tradition (Tab. 3).

The *Cinema/Theatre* area came into being at the twelfth Festival and featured the pacifist game/story “The war of the buttons”, in memory of the hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the First World War.

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Tab. 3: Some of the side projects promoted at the various Festivals

Project	Partner	Activities
Train game	Deutsche Bahn	Music and games offered on the Munich-Innsbruck and Munich-Verona railroad lines
Carpentry game	The maestros of Confartigianato	Making of wood and leather toys to be painted and personalised at will
Tree game	Corpo Forestale dello Stato	Inspired by the game of the goose, it illustrated the Italian Forestry Corps' activities in safeguarding the environment
ABC Printshop	Officine Fabriano	Exploring the expressive variety of letters shapes and colours by using paper, stencils and inks
Train stations at play	Train stations of Verona, Roma Tiburtina, Venice	Train stations are no longer seen as mere places of transit, but rather as places in which travellers and others can meet and enjoy cultural activities

Source: Internal documentation of the Tocati Organisational Secretariat

Moreover, there is always the possibility of going to the *Games Atelier* to admire traditional toys made of wood from certified forests and treated with non-toxic paints, including spinning tops, peashooters, skipping ropes, marbles and board games. It also displays other items created by the Rio Terà dei Pensieri Cooperative that combine their artistic, social and ecological intents with a healthy touch of irony.

The Festival enjoys the support of companies and other public and private institutions, which help in creating a concrete example of “slow” urban life at least for four days, during which people can meet up and the streets become something more than just a means of getting from one place to another. For example, all the energy that is provided during the Festival comes from certified and guaranteed renewable sources, there are areas equipped for recycling and dividing waste, and recycled materials are used whenever possible.

In 2015, the Festival could count on 410 volunteers and 16 suitably trained university interns, who coordinated and managed 20 Italian games with 85 players; 14 Spanish games with 150 players; eight representatives taking part in the International Lippa Tournament with 40 players; 12 meetings at the Auditorium of the Gaming Culture Forum; 15 meetings and conferences with 62 speakers; 15 side projects; 3 exhibitions; 4 ecology workshops; 2 international museums; 11 groups with 65 musicians and dancers.

During the Festival, there were more than 30 million contacts due to the visibility of the Tocati festival on local, national and even international television and radio, in the printed press and online dailies and magazines. In particular, the Festival's events were covered by 60 local and regional newspapers and attended by 50 accredited journalists.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Features of the good practice of the Tocati International Festival of Street Games

Over the years, the Festival has managed to construct and consolidate relationships with a large number of local, Italian and international organisations, thus creating a virtuous network of territorial ties based on a high level of trust and cooperation, which have allowed the recognition of a range of competences and specificities.

The design of the event attributes particular value to transmitting knowledge and promoting human relations among peoples and places that are distinguished by their cultural diversity. The project boasts a complex organisation that involves a wide range of integrated initiatives aimed at drawing attention to the need to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage represented by millenary games playing traditions.

One important aspect of the originality, credibility and consistency of the current format, with its underlying orientation and behaviour, is the concept of community. The Festival is a community whose actions are founded on shared ideals and contents, respect, dialogue, and the promotion of inter-generational and inter-cultural contacts. The sense of community can be seen within the organisation and in the collaborative relationships that are established with the many partners involved in preparing and putting on the event.

The Tocati Festival proposes the discovery of traditions from which its visitors can learn, and offers them different ways of getting to know and understand each other. During the Festival, the city changes its face and expression, is transformed and experiences the enthusiasm and spontaneity that accompanies the relational and cultural exchanges between game playing communities of Italian and international origin, including the particularly numerous and highly varied visitors attending the event. The spirit of community pervades not only the streets, but also homes (*ToCasa*), craftsmen's shops (*ToBottega*), official buildings and the other places in which the Festival chooses to express itself.

All of these factors indicate that the Tocati festival can be considered an example of good practice for safeguarding and promoting intangible cultural heritage. On the basis of the criteria emerging from our analysis of the literature, this view is supported by the following elements:

1. there is the *co-presence of public, private and tertiary organisations* supporting the event as (public and private) patrons, sponsors, partners and collaborators which, along with 500 volunteers, make up the extended and consolidated network of players distinguishing the Festival;

2. the *purpose of the event as a contribution to public utility* is made clear by the philosophy and activities of the AGA and the initiatives characterising the Festival itself, which have the aim of valorising the traditional Italian (and international) game playing heritage by offering the community an opportunity for cultural growth;
3. the *sharing of the project among different contributors* can especially be seen in the strategic and operative cooperation between the Festival's organisers and the guest country that is hosted at each Festival. The increasing number and quality of the side projects, meetings, exhibitions and installations promoted during the event is also worth noting; this could not have been achieved without the coordinated efforts of the stakeholders to reach common objectives;
4. *the decision-making process is participatory*, and its effectiveness is *founded on values shared by all of the involved players*. The desire to safeguard the different expressions of game playing traditions to be handed down to future generations is supported by the constructive dialogue and relational approach of the Festival's organisers and the people that are responsible for the Italian and international game playing community regardless of any differences there may be between their respective cultures;
5. *the Festival is characterised by collaborative relationships* marked by a certain temporal stability and reciprocal valorisation. This is demonstrated by the annual increase in the number of stakeholders, from partners to sponsors, volunteers, interns, Italian and non-Italian players, and players taking part in the International Lippa Tournament, as well as the number of speakers, meetings and conferences aimed at enriching reflections on game playing themes;
6. finally, *the pursuit of a common benefit for the target community and the players involved in the Festival's network of partnerships and collaborations* is confirmed by the growing number of "stakeholders" and the increasing visibility of the Tocati Festival in the Italian and international media, which has a positive impact on its attractiveness and ability to promote the culture of the local territory. Furthermore, the attention given to the environment and the sustainability of the Festival's organisational structure and everyday activities underline its intent on improving the quality of urban life.

All of these features identify a good practice but, in order to consider a (new) festival a proposal of *promising practices*, it is necessary to invest in each of them. What distinguishes a good practice such as the Tocati Festival from a *promising practice* is that the latter requires a lower level of quantitative and qualitative involvement in terms of its involved players, pursued ends, shared projects, participatory decision-making processes, relationships, and targeted common benefits.

## 5.2 *The deterrents of the success of the Tocati International Festival of Street Games*

The elements underlying the success of the Festival include the entrepreneurial capacities of identifying opportunities offered by changes

in the scenario, assessing the needs of users, determining appropriate times of action, and selecting and pursuing a mission. The event is guided by a leadership capable of managing stakeholder relations, equipped with negotiating ability and capable of motivating the available human resources.

The Festival is scrupulously planned, from the definition of its objectives and reference target to the articulation of its contents, and from the management of its partnerships and collaborations to the way in which the event is promoted. Every year, there are product and process innovations, so its organisation still requires advance planning of at least a year despite the fact that it has already reached its thirteenth edition.

The team responsible pursues its predefined objectives efficiently in a consistent, credible and professional manner and, in the course of the Festival, can count on the availability of 500 experienced volunteers to manage and coordinate its various organisational processes.

Its location in Verona's historical centre (a national record in terms of surface area) gives the Festival a uniquely fascinating nature and completely transforms the face of the city. The public, which is particularly attracted by the initiative, is actively involved by taking part in the traditional games and side projects, thus becoming an integral part of the event itself. This creates a relational dimension that promoters feel is missing in other festivals.

The local network strategy developed in collaboration with public and private organisations by means of the participatory, highly relational and empowered manner with which the event is planned and implemented has contributed to increasing the social capital of the city's residents and the Festival's identification with the place in which it is held. The relationships activated at national and international levels allow dialogue and exchange concerning good practices for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage through the AGA, which maintains its commitment to discovering and interacting with game playing communities, and promoting activities aimed at educating people about traditional game playing, and sensitising local communities to the importance of safeguarding such a practice. As part of this commitment, it supports the multidimensional nature of the Festival on the grounds that effective relations can also be constructed and developed by means of subjects that may seem distant from the game playing world.

Although this case presents aspects that cannot be standardised and are not easy to reproduce, it can offer cues that are useful in identifying the factors that can favour the success of a cultural festival. These include:

- an entrepreneurial vision;
- networking;
- managerial capacity;
- an organisational culture of service and spirit of community;
- a careful choice of location;
- public engagement.

*An entrepreneurial vision* refers to the ability to "see something that goes beyond existing reality, something that justifies the journey" (Baccarani and Brunetti, 2003) and contributes to giving the organisation

a *sense of direction* by promoting unanimity of intent in conceiving the activity at all internal levels and allowing management to *concentrate more* on the organisation's purpose and ensure *greater consistency* with it when formulating strategy and long-term planning (Rossato, 2008; Wheelen and Hunger, 1998).

A second important element underlying the success of a cultural festival is the *ability to network* at local, national and international levels, sustained by the shared values within the event system of its promoters, supporters and participants, who have a cooperative orientation and are interconnected by means of a series of channels and architectures that have an impact on the dynamics of the network's development and performance. This ability involves proposing projects that are capable of involving all of the players so as to catalyse their commitment by leveraging on the resources and specific competences of each, and activates processes of creating territorial value that not only have wide-ranging effects on local economic, environmental and social development (Izzo and Masiello, 2009), but also favour multi-dimensional relationships that can be interwoven with themes that may seem distant from the initial concept of the event itself but actually promote processes of innovation.

In relation to the organisational dimension, it is necessary to underline the need for efficient and effective *management skills* in order to be able to implement a project that requires scrupulous planning that is clearly focused on predetermined objectives and attentively considers the environment and issues of sustainability. It must also lead to consistent and credible actions, including the selection and training of collaborators (especially volunteers and interns) in such a way that they can knowingly contribute to the success of the event because they have understood its value for its stakeholders.

The event system should express *an organisational culture of service* (Castellani, 2004) *and spirit of community*. A winning team consists of trained and experienced members who are enthusiastic and motivated to the point of offering their spontaneous, closely knit and disciplined collaboration without coercion and guided by a leadership capable of generating emotional resonances (Goleman *et al.*, 2002) by tapping into the various components of emotional intelligence (Bonfanti and Castellani, 2015).

A further aspect to consider is a *careful evaluation of the choice of location*: its spatial characteristics, functionality, capacity, accessibility; its environmental, economic, social and cultural impact; and its consistency with the type, theme, prestige, philosophy, style and image of the event all represent elements of differentiation.

Given the multiplicity of possible conventional and unconventional places and scenes, it is important to be able to interpret the chosen location and change the way in which it is seen and perceived by creating an unexpected transformation that is capable of creating a sense of wonder and generating new signs, perspectives and horizons.

Finally, it is essential to *engage the public* in such a way that it becomes an integral part of the event itself.

## 6. Conclusions

Our analysis shows that the Tocati Festival can be considered a model of good practice for the planning, development, management and promotion of other cultural festivals. The distinctive elements and specific material situations of each festival are necessarily different, but the Tocati model is both theoretically and practically interesting.

The Festival also represents a good practice for valorising intangible cultural heritage insofar as it stimulates other initiatives of a similar type, thus promoting the developing and growth of the culture itself.

In particular, the valorisation of the game playing community as an intangible cultural heritage would not have obtained the same results if the Festival had not been organised as a community itself.

The limitations of this analysis are simultaneously indications for future research. It would be worth examining the aspects of communication in greater detail, and at least some of its economic aspects. Furthermore, rather than just the local organisers, it could be interesting to interview the representatives of the guest countries and all of the Festival's patrons and partners and/or sponsors.

However, at this stage of the analysis, this study describes the features of originality arising from the singular nature of the Tocati Festival and the proposal that it can be seen as an example of good practice for the valorisation of intangible cultural heritage.

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