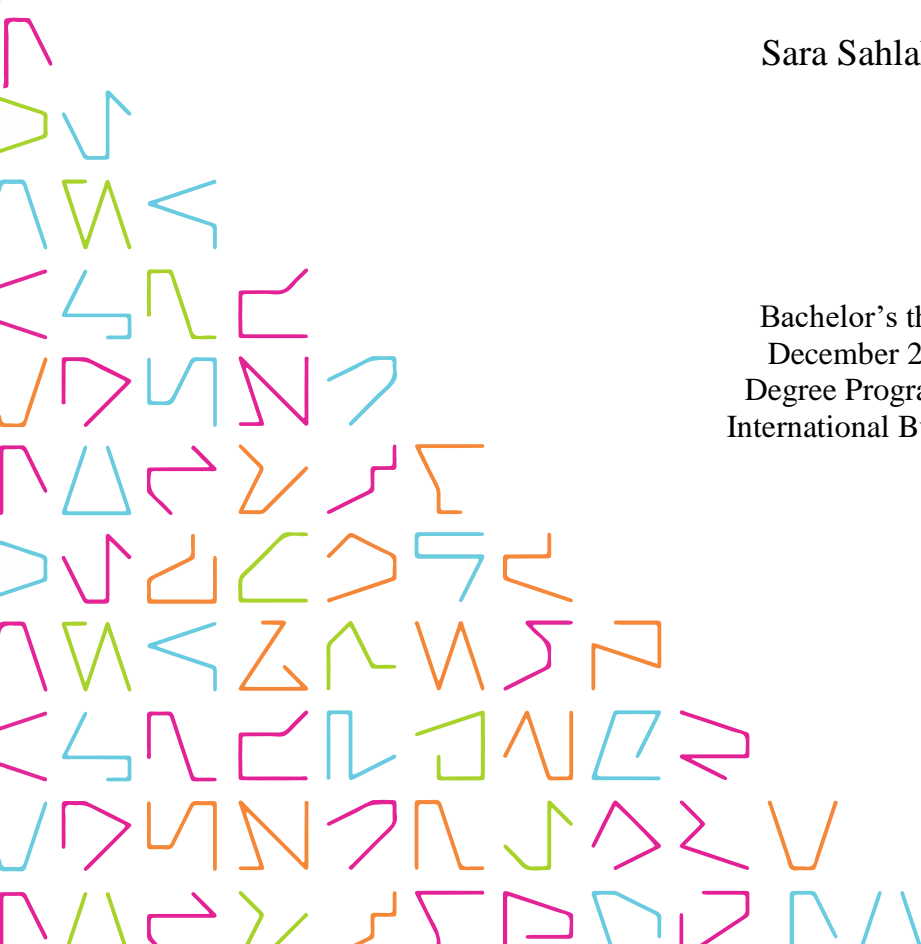


NEW EVENT PLAN FOR THE AN- NUAL FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

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ABSTRACT

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This study was done in autumn 2017 for a Finnish organisation called Benalmedenan Suomalaiset Ry that operates in Benalmadena, Spain. Therefore, it was necessary for the thesis work to be carried out in Benalmadena. The organisation offers various activities and services to its Finnish members as well as organises events. Thus, the main objective of this study was to improve and develop one of the events the organisation takes part in, called the annual festival of Christmas traditions. Another objective was to document the new and improved event plan as that did not exist before. The purpose of this study was to collect information on the new ideas and improvements for the annual festival and to have a detailed and clearly structured event plan documented for the organisation. In addition, the purpose was to have real practical benefit for the forthcoming years.

This study was carried out as a practice-based research. The data were collected from literature, online publications and four professionals of different fields. The data collected from literature and online publications were to gather theoretical background information to form a comprehensive and detailed event plan. The theoretical section introduces different essential steps in the event planning. The data collected from four professionals were to gather primary data. The data collection methods used were in-depth interviews and conversational interviews as well as observation and benchmarking.

Using the different data collection methods resulted in great number of new ideas for the festival. The research results were obtained without any difficulty and the interaction between the interviewer and interviewees was effortless. Some examples of the many new improvements for the festival were; better planning started more in advance, renewing the appearance of the stand, finding a performer for the festival and marketing the event in several different mediums.

The main conclusion of the study is the importance of the new documented event plan. The research results indicate how there was a great need for documented instructions for the event. Also, the addition of the event plan written in Finnish is of great benefit for the commissioner. The commissioner is very glad how the objectives and purpose were carefully considered and resulted in a great way. There is practical use for the study for many years to come. Further modifications can be done for the event plan as the event concept or the venue location might change as the festival keeps growing more popular. One idea for further study could be to research how the event went, for example by making a questionnaire to gather feedback of the event. This way the successfulness of the event planning and implementation could be researched.

Key words: event planning, event management, event marketing

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
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SAHLAKARI SARA:

Uusi tapahtumasuunnitelma vuotuiselle jouluperinnefestivaalille

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Tämä tutkimus tehtiin syksyllä 2017 suomalaiselle yhditykselle nimeltä Benalmadenan Suomalaiset Ry, joka sijaitsee Benalmadenassa, Espanjassa. Organisaatio tarjoaa monenlaista toimintaa jäsenilleen ja järjestää myös tapahtumia. Tämän työn päätavoite onkin uudistaa ja kehittää vuotuista jouluperinnefestivaalia, johon organisaatio myös osallistuu. Toinen tavoite on myös dokumentoida tämä uusi tapahtumasuunnitelma, nimittäin sitä ei ennen ollut olemassa. Työn tarkoitus on kerätä tietoa uusista ideoista ja uudistuksista, jotta lopputuloksena olisi uudistunut ja helposti luettava dokumentoitu tapahtumasuunnitelma. Lisäksi työn tarkoitus on olla hyödyllinen organisaatiolle vielä monia vuosia.

Tämä työ on toiminnallinen tutkimus. Tieto on kerätty kirjallisuudesta, julkaisuista ja neljältä eri alojen ammattilaisilta. Tiedonkeräysmenetelmät ovat haastattelu, tarkkailu ja benchmarking (vertaileminen).

Erialaisten tietojenkeräysmenetelmien käytöstä saatiin monta uutta ideaa festivaaliin. Tutkimustulokset saatiin mutkattomasti ja työskentely haastateltavien kanssa oli helppoa. Muutamia esimerkkejä uusista uudistuksista ovat; parempi suunnittelu hyvissäajoin, pöydän ulkoasun uudistaminen, esiintyjän löytäminen festivaaleille ja tapahtuman markkinointi monissa eri kanavoissa.

Tutkimuksen pääjohtopäätös on uuden tapahtumasuunnitelman dokumentoinnin tärkeys. Tutkimustulokset osoittivat kuinka dokumentoiduille ohjeille olisi oikeasti paljon käyttöä. Lisäksi työstä on paljon hyötyä toimeksiantajalle. Toimeksiantaja on myös hyvin tyytyväinen lopputuloksiin. Muutoksia tapahtumaan voidaan tehdä lisää ensi vuonna jos tapahtuman sijainti tai koko muuttuu, nimittäin festivaalin suosio on ollut kasvussa viime vuosina. Yksi idea, miten tutkimusta voitaisiin jatkaa olisi tehdä kysely, jotta saataisiin palautetta tapahtumasta. Tällä tavoin tapahtuman suunnittelun onnistumista ja itse toteuttamista voitaisiin tutkia.

Asiasanat: tapahtumasuunnittelu, tapahtumaorganisointi, tapahtumamarkkinointi

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	6
1.1	Objectives and purposes	7
1.2	Research methodology	8
1.2.1	Research method	8
1.2.2	Data collection	8
1.3	Thesis structure	9
2	THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS	11
2.1	Description of the event	11
2.2	The event plan of 2016	12
3	EVENT PLANNING	15
3.1	Definition and steps	15
3.2	Characteristics of an event manager	16
3.3	Initial planning process	17
3.4	Event feasibility	18
3.5	Budget	19
3.6	Time management	21
3.7	Risk management	22
3.8	Event marketing	24
3.9	Practical issues	26
3.10	Summary of data collected from literature	26
4	RESEARCH RESULTS	28
4.1	Interviews	28
4.2	Observation	30
4.3	Summary of the research results	31
5	EVENT PLAN FOR THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS OF 2017	33
5.1	About the event	33
5.2	Before the event	33
5.2.1	Meetings	33
5.2.2	Staff	35
5.2.3	Budget	35
5.2.4	Time management	36
5.2.5	Risk management	36
5.2.6	Marketing	37
5.2.7	Food and beverages	40
5.2.8	List of items for the event	40

5.3 At the event	41
5.3.1 Morning.....	41
5.3.2 Afternoon	42
5.3.3 Evening	42
6 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION	43
REFERENCES.....	45
APPENDICES	47
Appendix 1. Interview with Joanna Drozdowska	47
Appendix 2. Normas internas (Drozdowska 2017)	49
Appendix 3. Interview with Lesley Brown	54
Appendix 4. Tapahtumasuunnitelman käytännön asioiden tiivistelmä.....	56
Appendix 5. Tiedote jouluperinnetapahtumasta (Fuengirola.fi 2017)	59
Appendix 6. Programa del encuentro internacional (Drozdowska 2017)	60

1 INTRODUCTION

The thesis is done for a Finnish organisation called Benalmedenan Suomalaiset Ry, which is later referred to as the organisation. The board of the organisation consists of 8 hard-working Finnish people, who are all volunteered to support the wellbeing of its members. The non-profit organisation operates in the south coast of Spain in Benalmadena. The organisation has been operating already for the past 30 years and has gathered 250 members, which are in the most part retired Finns living and enjoying life in the south of Spain. The organisation offers a wide range of activities as well as services and lectures to its members. The activities and services include gym, exercise classes, Spanish classes, health education, library, karaoke to name a few. In addition, even a few longer trips are organised every year.

Benalmedenan Suomalaiset Ry has been part of an annual festival of Christmas traditions in Benalmadena for seven years now. It consists of sections from different countries making it a very international event. The organisation wishes to renew the event and to document the whole plan for the event. Thus, some improvements for the event and a clearly structured event plan are the main wishes the organisation has. The topic is relevant to the commissioner and answers practical needs. In the end, the outcome of the thesis is very beneficial for the commissioner, and has great value for the years to come.

The following chapters refer to development or improvements in the event, which means the part of Finland at the event, that is organised by Benalmedenan Suomalaiset Ry. It does not refer to the whole event, as the commissioner organisation is not in charge of the whole event. Therefore, improvements cannot be done in a bigger scale. It was also decided that sustainable aspect of event planning as well as juridical are excluded for the same reason as mentioned above.

Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK) has worked together with the organisation for many years now and that way has established good relations. Every semester a few students from TAMK go to Benalmadena to conduct their work placement in the organisation helping them with their numerous activities and services. This year the organisation needed a business student to plan and document their annual Christmas festival. With my experience working in events and with tourism both abroad and in Finland

as well as knowing Spanish, I am a good fit for this project. In addition to writing my thesis, I am part of the organisation helping them with whatever they need from marketing communications to translation help. It is necessary for me to move to Benalmadena in order to be fully committed to the project and to be part of the organisation. As there are meetings, press conference, radio visits among other things that make my presence there compulsory.

1.1 Objectives and purposes

How could the event be developed for better and how could the event be organised more effectively? As one of the main objectives of the work is to develop the annual Christmas event, these few above-mentioned questions are thoroughly discussed and answered in the thesis. Another main objective of the thesis is to document the whole event plan as the commissioner does not have anything documented from the previous events. To achieve the wishes of the commissioner to develop the event and to have everything documented, several fresh ideas are needed and clearly documented in every step of the way.

In addition, an important objective is the contentment of the commissioner and especially the event implementation group. Some objectives for the actual even are to promote cultural exchange, attract more visitors, development of the event and introduce Finland to the locals in a way that there will be above all a positive image of Finland.

The purpose, intended outcome, in the planning of the event is a clearly structured and detailed plan for the annual Christmas event. The new ideas and improvements should be clearly seen. Also with a fresh event plan, the event implementation should not only be easy to carry out but it should also make it successful and be easier to implement in the future by different event managers. Moreover, the new event plan should have real practical benefit for the commissioner, and be feasible for the years to come.

1.2 Research methodology

1.2.1 Research method

As the purpose of the thesis is to have a detailed, functioning and an attractive plan for the Christmas event, the central focus is very much practice-driving. Therefore, the research method of the thesis is practice-based. According to Professor Linda Candy (2006), a practice-based research method is used to gain new knowledge by means of practice. In the case of the thesis, in the practice of planning the event and researching for ideas, new knowledge is gained.

In the practice-based research, claims of originality and contribution to knowledge should be presented through creative outcomes. A practice-based research differs from a conventional research because creative outcomes from the research process can be included in the final submission and the claim for an original contribution to the field is demonstrated through the original creative work. (Candy 2006.) The creativity part of the research is presented through the innovation and generating new ideas to put in practice. In the end, the creative outcomes are demonstrated in the event held.

1.2.2 Data collection

There are two types of data collected in this thesis: Primary and secondary data. Hox and Boeije (2005, 593) define primary data as original data collected for a specific research problem and secondary data as data originally collected for a different purpose and reused for another research.

As primary data are data collected for a specific research goal, on every occasion that primary data are collected, new data are added to the existing store of knowledge. The most important advantage of collecting one's new, own data is that the research design and data collection strategy can be modified to the research problem completely. This ensures that the study is coherent and the information indeed helps to resolve the problem. (Hox & Boeije 2005, 593-594.)

The primary data collection methods used in this thesis are interviews and observation. Interviews are conducted face-to-face and via email with four professionals from different fields of expertise. According to Dr. Rita S. Y. Berry (1999), interviewing is a key method of data collection, and there are various types of interviews. Unstructured interviews as well as conversational interviews are utilised in the thesis. An unstructured interview, which is also referred to as an in-depth interview, involves asking open-ended questions and that way probing however necessary to get the data. Whereas a conversational interview resembles a chat in a way that the person being interviewed might forget they are in an interview situation. (Berry 1999.)

As secondary data are already collected and ready to be reused, utilising this type of data are less time-consuming and costly. Thus, the biggest advantage of using secondary data is the fast access to relevant information. (Hox & Boeije 2005, 594-596.)

The secondary data are collected from books and online publications to gather theoretical background information to form a comprehensive and detailed event plan. Benchmarking is also utilised as a data collection method to acquire more data for the thesis. One country participating the event, Jamaica, is chosen for benchmarking for the study. According to Sekhar (2010), benchmarking is a technique for assessing one's performance against the performance of other ones. This technique is used to find the best practices and then act accordingly to improve one's own practices.

1.3 Thesis structure

The nature of the thesis is a development project; therefore, it consists of so-called tasks how to plan the event. An important step in the beginning of the planning is to explain how the event has been organised in the previous years. This is crucial for the development of the whole event as it is first seen what things need improving and what is lacking at the event. The more detailed description of the commissioner is also included in this section.

The next step is about the theory collected from literature to give more theoretical background to how to plan an event and what needs to be taken into consideration. As the theory supports the planning of the event, it also gives ideas on how to develop the event.

How to generate ideas and how should time management and marketing be handled, are examples of the topics discussed in this step. Then the data collected are analysed thoroughly and the results are listed. It is explained how the data were obtained and from where. Thus, the new ideas and improvements for the event are discussed.

The final task involves the actual practical part of the plan of the event, which gives the necessary and detailed information for the event organisers for the forthcoming years. Detailed steps of how the event is planned and should be carried out is described in detail. Clear lists are included of items to be bought and taken to the event as well as quantities of food and beverages to be prepared and bought.

2 THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

The concept of the annual festival of Christmas traditions is explained as well as how the event was planned and implemented last year, in 2016. The importance of introducing these two matters, is to give a clear idea what this thesis is all about and what are the matters that are intended to improve.

2.1 Description of the event

The annual festival of Christmas traditions, has been organised for eight years now and this year is the ninth time. The event is always organised in the beginning of December in Benalmadena, Spain. It is generally held at the Plaza de la Mezquita in Arroyo de la Miel. It is for the whole day till almost midnight and it is meant for people from all ages, although the main guests tend to be families with young children. The festival has grown to a very successful and popular event over the years, reaching to nearly 5000 visitors during the whole day last year, according to Joanna Drozdowska (2017). (Appendix 1.)

According to Drozdowska (2017), 35% of the population of Benalmadena are foreigners from 123 nationalities. The expats living in Benalmadena can take part in this event and present their Christmas traditions to everyone. That is how the festival was made very international, consisting of sections from different countries. The event started with only five countries but in the recent years there has been as many as 20 something countries involved. In the past years at least these countries have been participating: Finland, Spain, Russia, Philippines, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina, Chile, Jamaica etc. (Appendix 1.)

All the countries have their own stands approximately 3x3 square metres, thus about 3 tables can fit in the stand. The countries present their own Christmas traditions in the stalls. It can be decorated with lights and pictures of the certain country or whatever traditional ornaments the country possesses. Typically, each country sells their traditional Christmas food and drinks as well. The prices are kept moderately low according to the little portions as it is more of a tasting of these new flavours. There is also a chair for

Santa Claus, where he can give out sweets to kids for an hour and after that he strolls around the crowd giving out more sweets and greeting the visitors.

There is a big stage at the venue, where the introductions and shows are held. When the event starts there is a speech and presentation of the countries on the stage. Each country comes to the stage normally dressed in their national outfit and carrying their flag. It is a short presentation with only greetings and smiles to the crowd. The rest of the day till late in the evening the stage is occupied with different countries' performances. The shows typically vary from different kind of singing spectaculars to dancing with the obvious happy Christmas theme.

As seen in the appendix 1. Drozdowska says how the event might change in the next years. As the popularity of the event grows every year, there is a possibility it may be held in a different and bigger location next year. There is also a chance the event could be for two days, which would allow the festival to have a lot changes and improvements.

2.2 The event plan of 2016

The organisation, Benalmadenan Suomalaiset Ry, has been part of this annual Christmas festival for seven years now. Hilikka Nuutila, member of the board at Benalmadenan Suomalaiset Ry, has been part of the project team and the project leader since the first time Finland took part in the event. The importance of this chapter is to give an idea how crucial it is to improve the planning and to document everything from the beginning phases till the implementation, that is the actual event day.

There is next to no documenting of the event from previous years. However, Hilikka Nuutila, has been very helpful and has remembered some facts from the planning phase and from the event day. The following chapters explain broadly how the planning was handled and what kind of feedback was given after the event. Thus, the whole chapter is based on the interviews or chats with Nuutila (2017). The interviews are explained more in detail in the chapter 4.

As seen from the picture 1 below, in 2016 the event took place on Saturday 10th of December at the Plaza de la Mezquita in Arroyo de la Miel, Benalmadena. Nuutila was the

project leader as always and she had a few of her co-workers to help her throughout the whole project till the closing of the event.



PICTURE 1. The poster of the festival of Christmas traditions in 2016. (Drozdowska 2017)

The event planning started about a month before the event by ordering some necessary products to sell at the event. There was no budget, but the prices were carefully checked and only the necessary things were bought. However, most of the work regarding the event was done in the last two weeks before the event. Such as advertising the event on Facebook and on the homepage of Benalmadenan Suomalaiset Ry. That was all the marketing that was done, other mediums were not used to promote the event more. Also, there was no effort to try to find performers for the event. That explains how marketing needs some closer consideration. (Nuutila 2017.)

Managing the staff closer to the event was not very well planned, as there were no clear work shifts for anyone during the event. Some of the workers stayed for a few hours and others the whole day. The same thing happened with baking and preparing all the neces-

sary dishes as well as getting everything organised and ready for the event the night before. There was a lot of work for a few people when the tasks could have been clearly organised and divided equally. (Nuutila 2017.)

Nuutila was able to find a piece of paper with a list of necessary kitchen items, food and other necessary things that were taken to the stand in the morning of the event. The following items were listed: Bin bags, prices tags, kitchen roll, sanitary wipes, disposable gloves, serviettes, disposable cups, gas bottle, cooker, pots, ladles, thermos bottles, trays, knives, spoons, servers, scissors, tablecloths (cotton and plastic ones), tape, tables, basket and wire. On top of these items some foods and beverages were listed as well: Sweets, mulled wine, Christmas pies, Karelian pies, gingerbread and egg salad. It is clear there are plenty of items missing, nevertheless the paper ended up being useful. This is an excellent example of the importance of documenting an event. (Nuutila 2017.)

At the event it was noticed, there was not enough food to sell, the staff was tired as there were no shifts dealt and therefore the staff packed up and left earlier than was supposed to. It was also noticed that when everything was packed up and taken back to the office, Nuutila had to carry heavy items all alone and organise everything back to how it was. (Nuutila 2017.)

Some negative feedback was given after the event to the organisers of Finland's stand from the event organisers and from the crowd on Facebook. There was negative feedback concerning the visual and esthetical side of the stand at the event. There should have been put more effort to make the stand look better and more beautiful. Other negative feedback was how the shoes of Santa Claus were the wrong kind, and how the stand was not occupied till the closing time. Moreover, the manager of Bar Buddha complained about the tables that were borrowed from them. The tables were the wrong and more valuable ones that were taken to the event. These issues are good examples of something to be fixed and improved for this year's event. (Nuutila 2017.)

3 EVENT PLANNING

The theory behind a successful event is discussed in this chapter. After reading this, the main idea is to have a clear understanding of a well thought event plan. Important management issues such as time management and risk management are explained, and not to forget the importance of marketing an event. What is the definition of an event? What are the crucial steps to be carefully considered? How to generate ideas? Answers to these above-mentioned questions among others are included in the following chapters.

3.1 Definition and steps

Events can be defined in many ways. The following definitions are examples of how events can be explained by event management professionals:

Events are transient and every event is a unique blending of its duration, setting, management and people, defines Getz (1997, 04).

Dowson and Bassett (2015, 02) define an event in a clear and brilliant way. Their definition is three-piece and it goes: *An event is a planned gathering. An event is memorable. An event is temporary.*

According to Ziakas (2004, 43), the concept of an event can be described as a performative genre encompassing the diverse cultural performance and a mode of exhibition or a presentation that is organised and delivered in this modern world we are living in. This is a definition of an event from an anthropological point of view.

The two most important elements of running a successful event are: paying close attention to detail and being organised, notes Allen (2009, 48). Also checking constantly that things are on schedule and moving forward as planned are crucial at every step of the whole event process. For example, in the planning of this Christmas festival, it is important to remember to order necessary items and food well on time and also check whether they will arrive on time.

Kilkenny (2011, 21) states wisely: *Preparation is the key to any successful event*. Kilkenny also reminds how an event is always a huge responsibility and should not be taken lightly. Event planners are responsible for the education, entertainment, feeding, housing and safety of everyone attending an event. Therefore, as mentioned, proper planning and preparation is in place for this type of festival as well to make it successful.

The annual festival or Christmas traditions event is categorised as a social and special event. These kinds of events are the largest and broadest category of events, explains Kilkenny (2011, 30). They may be open to the public with no admission requirements as this Christmas festival is.

Special events are also characterised to have entertainment or performances included in the programme. Matthews (2016) defines that entertainment in events is all about communication. The successful delivery of a well thought entertainment is meant to evoke strong emotions and later to stay as memories. For this to be able to happen, the communication must be powerful between the performer and the audience. (Matthews 2016.)

There are a number of important steps to take into consideration in the planning of an event. The following chapters explain the crucial steps in the planning of this Christmas festival. The characteristics of an event manager are important to be considered so the right person is selected for the job. Then the idea and the whole concept of the event must be determined as well as the event objectives and the vision of the event. In addition, it has to be tested whether an idea for the event is feasible. It is tested with a screening method with a few important steps. These above-mentioned facts are important phases in the beginning of the planning of a new event. Next step is to list the different event management activities that include the following. Budget is something to be planned as well as taking time to consider time management and risk management, before taking any action on the practical issues. Moreover, marketing for the event is important to plan well before the event.

3.2 Characteristics of an event manager

There are certain characteristics that every event organiser or manager should possess. Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris and McDonnell (2011, 26) note how abilities such as

flexibility, adaptability, a broad perspective on organisation goals, an understanding of the business environment and the ability to communicate are important. Event managers should also have an ability to handle stress and uncertainty, and be comfortable with great responsibility. These abilities are essential when dealing with everything that the event planning phase includes and on top of that implementation goes smoother and the result in the end is good.

In addition to generic management skills, (that are for instance conceptual ability, social skills and technical competence) it is required from event managers to commit to constant learning, and being aware of ethics and values. There is some event-specific knowledge that should be learnt by every event manager. History and meaning of different types of events, trends in demand and supply, roles and impacts of events, and event settings are a few examples of the extensive event-specific knowledge that is required to know. The most important knowledge areas in event management are considered to be: project management, time management, budgeting, business planning and marketing. (Bowdin et al. 2011, 27.)

3.3 Initial planning process

At the beginning of a long process of event planning, the organisers have to come up with several ideas, which will later be tested or in other words filtered to see whether they are feasible and which one is the best one. That is the initial planning process or the general process from an idea to a concept, in which several ideas are generated. Shone and Parry (2013, 105) introduce the progression of a new idea as brainstorming session followed by filtering (screening) the ideas. Brainstorming means, when several ideas are thrown in and tossed around to see which one is the best one to stay.

Therefore, according to Shone and Parry (2013, 107), the general process behind an event plan is as follows:

Idea → the general nature of the event → the purpose of the event → the objectives of the event → how should it operate → what benefits are there to participants? → concept

This is the initial planning process when the purpose as well as the objectives are determined for the event. In this phase, that is the beginning of the whole planning process, clarity is the key. It helps the whole process and gets everyone involved and to pull in the same direction.

As Shone and Parry (2013, 118) state, the objectives must be carefully thought through, and more importantly be precise and clear enough. If this is done right, it ensures that the purpose of the event is obvious to all those involved in planning the event, from the head of the organising committee or clients, down to the staff at the operational level. The objectives should not be very complicated. It would be ideal when consisting of only one or two primary objectives. Then these can be broken down into more detailed aims. (Shone & Parry 2013.)

3.4 Event feasibility

According to Shone and Parry (2013, 107), a series of tests could be applied in the form of screening in order to find out whether one particular idea is feasible. The screening process is very important. Not only does the event have to be possible to implement, it should as well attract sufficient support to be successful. The generic process of event feasibility is as follows:

Various concepts and ideas → first screen: **marketing** → second screen: **operations** → third screen: **financial** → remaining concepts and choices

These three above-mentioned screens or filters can be utilised to put suggestions through. All the filters are intended to sort out less viable ideas and help to identify the idea that would work the best way, when it is tested against the objectives (Shone & Parry 2013, 105). Then in the end of the screening process, there might be several acceptable ideas or none, as all the unsuitable ideas are filtered out.

The marketing screen: This process helps the organisers or clients to sort out what concepts will be the most suited to the target market. A comprehensive knowledge of the target market is implied in this phase. The type of people, their demographic or social profile, age group, familiar activities, past experience of events, size of the target group

etc. must be found out in order to get a better idea of the target market. There are two essential factors that the marketing screen is intended to deal with. One is whether the various ideas will actually work in the target market and the other one is to consider whether the ideas are sufficiently different from successful competing events. (Shone & Parry 2013, 108.)

The operations screen: After filtering possible ideas against the marketing criteria for an event, there will most likely still be several feasible ideas remaining. Every event has various resource needs. The needs vary based on how adventurous or limited the ideas are, what expertise and locations are available and what timescale and technology will be needed. Also issues such as insurances, licences and permits must be considered. There are two operational styles that events fall into, which are volunteer or professional. The level of expertise may be an issue for the operations screen, which indicates what events can be implemented. It should not be assumed that professional organisations know everything and will produce a perfect result. It may as well be that a volunteer based organisation has many skilled and ambitious volunteers and the end result will be as good as the event carried out by professionals. Therefore, the operations screen is all about what can be achieved. (Shone & Parry 2013, 109-110.)

The financial screen: Almost all special events will have a budget of some sort, even if the budget is only an approximate figure of what can be afford, based perhaps on similar kind of events. There are so called cost-only events and events that have a financial reason for organising an event, such as fundraising or economic regeneration. There are events that are expected to make a certain amount to cover cost and break-even or to make a small surplus. (Break-even is the point at which an event's costs equal the revenue received for it.) This is often the case with local volunteer events such as an annual town carnival. Assuming the event has to make money, for example for fundraising purposes, then the financial screen is all about identifying which possible sort of events could achieve it. (Shone & Parry 2013, 110-111.)

3.5 Budget

A budget is a written document forecasting the potential costs and income of the event, defines Kilkenny (2011, 61).

All events must have a budget of some kind. The budget is an essential monitoring tool to be utilised in the event planning for many reasons. It can also be referred to as a money guide. It is useful from the beginning phase on as a realistic budget will already determine whether to take on the event or not. Moreover, a well-created budget allows one to supervise income and expenses, track cash flow, and verify how well everything is going at any time as well as to facilitate the decision-making process from the start on. (Kilkenny 2011, 61.)

The budget helps with making educated decisions and keeps one from making mistakes. Determining the defined vision for the event and taking it into consideration when creating line items for the budget, is crucial. It should be determined who has the authority for spending, and who is the person responsible to maintain and update the budget. In addition, the source of the money must be found out. There are four typical sources of the money: one's own savings, sponsorship, participants, or a combination of these. (Kilkenny 2011, 62.)

When the expenses and income are determined in the budget, it is time to find out the break-even point and decide what sort of accounting style is good for the event. Break-even point means when the costs and the revenue received for it equals at the event. It is good to remember that every event does not necessarily generate income, but the bills must be paid regardless with a revenue stream. (Kilkenny 2011, 62-63.)

Revenue can come from a variety of ways such as contributions, sponsorship, or sales. Whereas costs can be divided into fixed costs, variable costs and indirect costs. Fixed costs are unchangeable regardless of sales or profits nor are they changed in the event of participant numbers changing. Fixed costs can turn into variable costs and the other way around. Variable costs fluctuate based on the number of visitors. Indirect costs are related to an organisation's administration such as office equipment and salaries. (Kilkenny 2011, 63-68.)

3.6 Time management

Time management is a very important issue to take into consideration from the beginning stages of event planning. Many events may have serious problems because of lack of time to organise them properly. Also, many project management texts argue whether a poor level of planning in the early stages, due to shortage of time, creates problems that surface later and are difficult to fix afterwards (Shone & Parry 2013, 106).

Allen (2009, 48) emphasises the importance of the critical path when planning time management for an event. Critical path means the sequence of stages determining the minimum time needed for an operation. In order to create your critical path, take out your calendar and work backwards from the starting date of your event, checking what should be done and when exactly. It often comes as a surprise how apparently small things can have huge impacts along the way of planning.

The first activity to be done, considering time management, is about the lead time for the event, which means whether there is enough time to get the event booked and organised state Shone and Parry (2013, 105).

Checklists and timelines are two very essential and handy tools to be used to help with time management and to ensure everything is covered in the planning of an event. Checklists guarantee that important and essential tasks are handled in a timely matter. Using a checklist gives one an opportunity to double check everything, leaving questions answered and tasks done on time. Timelines are reminders for what needs to be done and when to do them. The complexity or simplicity of a timeline is determined by the size and length of an event. (Kilkenny 2011, 26-27.)

This is an example of a broad checklist for the Christmas festival. It can always be modified as in when issues pop into one's head it is easy to add more bullet points to a list. Or it can be done very specifically as well.

- Register for the event
- Appoint the organiser team
- Divide tasks
- Take care of marketing; utilise different mediums

- Organise a performer for the event
- Attend meetings, press conference e.g.
- Practical issues; food and beverages e.g.
- Preparing the food just before the event

3.7 Risk management

Kilkenny (2011, 20) refers to Murphy's Law that says: *If something can go wrong, it will.* It is pretty safety to say that something will always go wrong at an event, big or small things. Something might go missing, things might change the last minute or something completely unexpected happens. However, a good planner will always find the solution and create an illusion that the people attending the event will not have any idea of something going wrong. (Kilkenny 2011, 20.)

According to Shone and Parry (2013, 222), risks are really things that are not expected, they are things that turned out to go very differently than planned. For instance, if more visitors arrived to an event than expected, can be just as damaging than as attracting too few visitors. However quite often risk management tends to be described as mechanism by which we plan to be aware of possible things that could go wrong, which is slightly misleading.

Risk management issues should be taken into consideration early on in the planning as well as other management issues. The event coordinator together with the rest of the organisation committee usually comes up with a long list of potential risks for simple activities in the event. However, there are well established ways of putting risks into context and evaluating them in the best way possible. Shone and Parry (2013, 223), consider that the purpose of risk management is to help the event organisers through the critical parts of the event, by means of a policy of risk awareness, risk assessment, risk evaluation, moderation and recording.

These abovementioned linked stages of risk management (awareness, assessment, evaluation, moderation and recording) are crucial to be thoroughly thought. However, in the end even though all the reasonable efforts to manage risks have been taken, it is important

to be watchful for something that might surprise everyone. It is the tendency of minor things to trigger a series of events that can lead to huge problems. (Shone & Parry 2013, 228.)

It can be considered that the level of risk varies according to what activities are involved as well as the type and size of the event. There are low risk, medium risk and high risk level events. Low risk events are normally indoor events such as banquets and dinners. Medium risk events include large-scale sporting competitions, public shows and street festivals. High risk events may be large-scale complicated open-air events taking place for the first time or high-speed racing events. (Shone & Parry 2013, 228.)

Risks can be categorised in four broad groups and then again in smaller more detailed categories. The four main groups are:

- **Economic risks:** such as financial losses or lack of sponsorship.
- **Performance risk:** such as the failure of an event to take place due to booked entertainers not turning up.
- **Psychological risks:** such as location, venue or previous similar event having a poor reputation.
- **Physical risks:** that is danger to the public; health and safety problems; or crime and security difficulties.

(Shone & Parry 2013, 222.)

The other more detailed risk categories are as follows:

- Risks to staff and others, can be due to confused organisation and poor safety practice.
- Risks in marketing an event, can be due to natural enthusiasm and optimism and the risk of media making a negative story of the event.
- Risks in health and safety especially for the public and outdoor events.
- Risks in catering provision especially for food stalls, in hygiene and sanitation provision.

- Risks in transport of items to and from the venue.

(Shone & Parry 2013, 224.)

3.8 Event marketing

According to Preston (2012, 02), events are all about excitement, creativity, and enthusiasm, and the generation of experiences and memories. These things are regarded as prerequisites to a successfully planned event.

Without an event having any creative flair, it is difficult to imagine a functioning, well planned and successful event. Event marketing is not merely about creativity and enthusiasm, as those factors are not enough in themselves to deliver a professionally planned event. Simply defined marketing requires creative minds to come up with brilliant and interesting things. Not forgetting that at its heart it is all about making sure that the event will attract sufficient attendance and involvement as well as that what is on offer there is going to be wanted in numbers sufficient enough to make the event worthwhile. In addition, it is good to remember that even if an event seems perfect to the organisers, that does not guarantee it will seem that great to someone else. (Preston 2012, 02.)

Reducing the risk of a negative outcome through the application of marketing methods, is called strategic event marketing, defines Preston (2012, 03). This event marketing strategy can also be stated as using market intelligence to position an event in a competitive market and also using appropriate communications methods to promote an event to the target audiences that have been identified.

What comes to marketing communications in events is that the purpose of it is to provide information to a target audience in a way that encourages a positive response. Raj, Walters and Rashid (2013, 220) explain that the marketing communications which relate to events can be defined as: The management process of engagement between an event and its audience and how the audience responds to the marketing communications.

An essential and simple fact to remember when thinking of the promotion and marketing for an event is to *get the message out*, as Kilkenny (2011) explains. The message varies

from a very simple message with only facts such as location and date to multipage brochures, of course depending on the event to be promoted. The message can be delivered via the telephone, a small ad in the local newspaper, a big ad in a national newspaper or a brochure. The message can also be shared in the social media, which is getting bigger and bigger nowadays. (Kilkenny 2011.)

As Kilkenny (2011) explains how it is important to get visibility to your message, Dowson and Bassett (2015) add to this how important methods or tools are needed to achieve this. There are five main promotional tools to choose from (Dowson & Bassett 2015): Advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, publicity and direct marketing.

Advertising is any paid form of communication made to influence the target audience. In the end, the purpose of an advertising campaign is to have a positive response. Advertisements for events can be found for instance from the newspaper, magazines, radio, television or social media.

Sales promotion is the most versatile form of publicity. It works particularly well when it is combined with advertising with the offer providing the main message for the advertisement. This tool may be used to tempt new customers (getting a good deal), reward loyal customers (special priced tickets for existing customers) and giving a boost to the ticket sales (last minute ticket offers).

Personal selling means person-to-person contact, which can be face to face contact or a telephone conversation. In all its simplicity, person-to-person contact is what all the promotional activity leads up to, without any fancy brochures, competitions or publicity stories.

Publicity is someone else promoting an event. Having a third party such as television, radio or a newspaper publicise the event, gives it more credibility. All this adds the perceived value to the event attendees without the event organisers spending any money.

Direct marketing is also referred to as direct mail, including email. Direct mail campaigns play a big role in many events' promotional campaigns, especially in the corporate events sector.

3.9 Practical issues

The idea of the event is clear and objectives are set. Moreover, the budget, time management, risk management and marketing are well thought. Then it is time for the more practical issues of the planning process. Shone and Parry (2013, 118) state how planning is the process by which the organiser looks towards the event to discover what various courses of actions are available to arrange it and which course of action would suit best.

As Shone and Parry (2013, 222) say, the planning of an event must consider all the aspects of management, which bear upon our legal duties. These aspects include official licenses and permissions, general and specific health and safety issues and insurance matters. Other practical issues to be carefully considered are transportation, location, venue requirements, waste management, food and beverages.

The above-mentioned practical issues should be carefully planned. There are a few questions that need answers when thinking about the transportation and location: Who has a car? Is it big enough to fit the necessary things? Are there people to unload and load the items? Where is the venue exactly and how big is it? Some venue requirements and waste management issues include the facilities the venue has, whether the venue provides everything that is needed and how waste management is handled, if recycling is an option for instance. In addition, having sufficient amount of food and beverages are important facts not to forget to consider, as well as keeping in mind the importance of hygiene when handling food and beverages.

3.10 Summary of data collected from literature

Data from literature were collected from various books and online publications. In this chapter, useful theory was gathered and good new ideas were collected. The ideas from the theory are later combined with the festival and put in practise. There are plenty of improvement ideas especially for time management, risk management and event marketing for the festival.

New ideas collected are for example using tools, such as timelines and checklists that support the time management in the event planning phase. Other ideas include how to plan and act in case something goes differently than planned at the event, which is carefully considered to be aware of unplanned incidents happening. Lastly, a good example of how the theory of event marketing is very useful, is the different promotional tools to help with event marketing. For instance, the ideas of sending an email to different magazines to see which one could write about the festival and that way advertise it. Finally, two magazines called *Fuengirola.fi* and *SE-sanomalehti* agreed gladly for co-operation.

4 RESEARCH RESULTS

Data were collected from various sources to generate new ideas for the event. Data collected from literature, as seen in the chapter 3 above, were utilised to support the generation of new ideas and improvements for the event. Interviews were conducted with three different people, of which two were conversational interviews with brainstorming and one is an in-depth interview. Benchmarking technique was also used together with interviewing. Observation as data collection method was utilised throughout the whole process of event planning.

4.1 Interviews

Interview with Hilikka Nuutila: The interview with Hilikka Nuutila was conducted face-to-face and is defined as a conversational interview. The interview was more like a chat and a brainstorming session together, that were conducted various times. Hilikka Nuutila is the project manager of the event and for that reason chosen for the various brainstorming sessions. The chats were conducted on Tuesdays at the office of the organisation on the following dates: the 24th of October, the 31st of October, the 7th of November and the 14th of November.

There are several issues from the event of last year, as seen in the chapter 2, that need to be improved for this year. Nuutila listed matters such as dividing shifts equally for the staff for the event day, making sure Santa Claus has the right clothes that are in good condition, preparing more food and beverages that there is still food to sell late in the evening and not to forget staying at the stand till the closing time, as there has been negative feedback about that before, and it is said at a meeting and can be found from the official rules of the event handout, see appendix 2.

Nuutila has ordered beautiful landscape posters of Finland as well as small promotional magazines of Finland all from Visit Finland. These were ordered to improve the appearance of the stand as that is one of the main wishes of the organisation. It was also decided what kind of new decorations are bought to make the stand more beautiful. The decision was that Christmas lights and Finnish flag decorations are put up.

Interview with Heli Touru: The interview with Heli Touru was conducted face-to-face and is defined as a conversational interview just like the one above. The interview could be described better as a chat or a brainstorming session together. Touru is a radio host at Radio Finlandia. She was chosen for the interview as generally all the students from the organisation visit the Radio Finlandia and chat live on radio with Touru about their studies and tasks at the organisation.

Sara Sahlakari visited the radio for the first time the 31st of October, a was live on radio chatting with Touru about her studies, the organisation and finally the festival as well. After the live chat, talking continued with Touru about the festival. Plenty of new ideas were thrown in the air, therefore the talk can be described as brainstorming. There was mostly talk about a performer for the festival. Some contacts such as choirs called Örisevät and Aurinkorannikon kuoro were given by Touru. Later, in November, after a lot of research was done on Internet and social media as well as talking with many possible performers, eventually a good performer was found. The performer, Finnish church choir from Fuengirola, was found on Facebook by searching different pages.

On the first visit at the radio, some pictures of the event from previous years were glanced at and that is how the idea came up about a promoter for the stand, and the obvious fact of photos to be taken. The promoter, which would be Sahlakari, could stay in front of the stand, talk with the visitors and tell about Finland, sell the goods, help with translation and take pictures during the whole event.

On the first radio visit, it was decided that an advertisement clip could be recorded to promote the event even more closer to the time of the event. Therefore, on the second time at the radio, the 1st of December, the advertisement clip was recorded at Radio Finlandia. Then it was played several times till the event day to gain more visibility.

Interview with Lesley Brown: The interview with Lesley Brown was conducted via email and it is an in-depth interview that can also be considered as an unstructured interview, see the appendix 3. Benchmarking technique based on the interview was used to analyse and utilise the answers of the interview. According to Sekhar (2010), organisations can benefit by learning from similar organisations in the industry. In this case our so-called team was able to learn from another country team. Thus, Brown is chosen for

the interview as she is the organiser for Jamaica at the Christmas festival. She has also experience of the event from many years, which gives more credibility to the results.

Brown explains (appendix 3.) how she mainly promotes the event on Facebook. There the idea was obtained to also share the event on Facebook on many different pages and by many individual users too to gain as much visibility as possible. Brown explains how she varies the way she displays the food and adapts what she sells so the visitor who return to the event every year always get to try something new. Thereby, the appearance of the stand is changed a lot this year as well as the display of the stand. Some new products are also sold. Unfortunately, no pictures were obtained from Brown, despite the efforts, to demonstrate the Facebook page or the stand. (appendix 3.)

4.2 Observation

Observation is done throughout the whole event planning process. As I am new at the organisation, I have the advantage of bringing new and refreshing observations to the event that the other event organisers cannot see. For instance, spending time at the office of the organisation, I noticed that not everyone there knows English nor Spanish. Thus, I got the idea to be the person to help with translations at the event and attend the official meetings and a press conference about the event, that are held in Spanish. Later I also realised the great benefits of writing some parts of the practical part of the event plan (Chapter 5.) in short in Finnish for the commissioner, see appendix 4. Thereby, the non-English speaking workers at the organisation also get the benefit of the documented event plan.

Another improvement I realised through observing is that I could go to the stage to greet the crowd with Santa Claus dressed in the national costume of Finland. As the organisation already has the costume, why not use it more and promote Finland more in that way. Santa Claus has also always been sitting alone at the chair giving sweets to kids, but I realised there could be a helper, as in a brownie girl, helping Santa with translations and taking photos of the kids. This would make Santa's job easier and there would be more visibility to the whole concept.

A few other practical new ideas are to print professionally a Finland 100-year Happy Birthday sign in Finnish, English and Spanish as it is Finland's 100-year birthday this year, why not tell that to all the visitors. Also, a sign for the prices is printed professionally as it is clearer to have a nice-looking sign up to see the prices.

4.3 Summary of the research results

All the improvements and new ideas for the event are listed and explained below. Firstly, new ideas for marketing include the importance of using many different mediums. Therefore, the new ideas were to advertise the event on Radio Finlandia, on local magazines called *Fuengirola.fi* and *SE-sanomalehti*, on Facebook, on the homepage of the organisation and taking posters around Benalmadena and Fuengirola, The improvements to promote Finland at the festival include Sahlakari as a promoter in front of the stand of Finland, the performance from the Finnish church choir, Santa Claus wearing proper clothing meant for him and giving sweets to kids with a brownie girl, as well as Sahlakari going up on the stage with Santa Claus to greet the crowd dressed in the national costume of Finland.

The appearance of the stand is improved with new Christmas light decorations and Finnish flag decorations. There are also beautiful landscape posters from Visit Finland, that cover the walls of the stand. In addition, a Finland 100-years Happy Birthday -sign and a sign showing the prices are printed professionally to put up. On the table, there are small magazines from Visit Finland that are free to take or just to look at the stand.

More food and beverages are bought and prepared, as at the event last year 2016, there were not enough of everything, especially mulled wine. The practical part of the event plan (Chapter 5), including a clear list of the items to be taken to the event as well as the lists of food and beverages, was also written in short for the commissioner in Finnish, as not everyone at the organisation knows English (appendix 4.).

The improvements of time management were better planning and with more time. Meaning the planning of the event was started earlier, for instance the shifts and tasks for the staff of the event organiser team were decided early, well before the event, as well as the clothes for the staff and Santa Claus. Good tools such as timelines and checklists were

also utilised. One more important improvement is to stay at the stand till the closing time. Some risk management matters that have not been considered before and should be thought about include how to prepare for things that might turn up to go differently and whether there is too much or too little of food for instance.

5 EVENT PLAN FOR THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS OF 2017

This chapter introduces the new improved event plan for the annual festival. There is a brief introduction about the event of this year, 2017, then the necessary matters to be done and planned carefully before the event and eventually how the event day is meant to go. The event plan is detailed and clearly structured as the commissioner organisation wished it to be.

5.1 About the event

The Festival of Christmas traditions event takes place on Saturday 9th of December 2017 at the Plaza de la Mezquita in Arroyo de la Miel. It starts at 11 am and goes until 11 pm. It is the ninth time the event is held in Benalmadena.

At the event, there are 22 participant countries with stands and additional six countries representing themselves only at the stage. The countries are: Spain, France, Finland, Philippines, Argentina, Venezuela, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Mexico, Poland, Colombia, India, Cuba, Jamaica, Algeria, Tanzania, Chile, Brazil, Russia, Israel and Iran. The additional six countries are: USA, Denmark, Germany, Senegal, Japan and Norway. (Drozdowska 2017. appendix 1.)

5.2 Before the event

5.2.1 Meetings

There was a meeting at Innova the 24th of October, at 1 pm. All the representatives from each participant country gathered here to show their interest and to let know they are participating. The rules of the whole event were explained as well as other practical issues. A handout of the meeting and event rules were dealt to everyone. It can be found on the appendix 2.



PICTURE 2. Press conference at Innova 21.11.2017. (PHOTO: Anna Sahlakari 2017)

There was a press conference at Innova the 21st of November, at 12 noon. Some of the participant countries gathered here to present their countries and their flags dressed in their national costumes, as seen in the picture 2 above. Pictures were taken to the local newspapers to market the event.

General meetings were held at the office of Benalmedenan Suomalaiset Ry on Tuesdays at 10 am with the project manager, Hilikka Nuutila, and Sara Sahlakari. The first meeting was the 24th of October and the next ones were the 31st of October, the 7th of November and the 14th of November. All the necessary issues to be dealt with were talked through on these meetings. Moreover, phone calls were exchanged with some important and urgent matters especially closer to the event time.

The last official meeting about the planning of the festival with the whole board of the organisation was at their office the 21st of November, at 18 pm. The meeting was about the practical issues of the Christmas festival. Work shifts were dealt, baking of goods was planned and the outfits of the day were decided.

5.2.2 Staff

The project manager of the event is Hilikka Nuutila, who has organised the event the previous years as well. Therefore, she has the experience to handle it. She is also excellent with pressure and uncertainty, flexible and certainly has the ability to communicate well with people. As explained in the chapter 3.2, these characteristics amongst others make a brilliant event manager. Sara Sahlakari is closely working with Nuutila from the beginning till the event day, thus she would be called the right-hand woman of the project manager.

As mentioned above, in the last meeting the 21st of November, the tasks and shifts were dealt equally. It was decided who are working a few nights before at the office of the organisation preparing all the necessary kitchen equipment ready and baking Christmas pies, rice porridge for the Karelian pies and eventually Karelian pies as well as the egg salad.

On Thursday 7th of December the Christmas pies and rice porridge are made. Sara Sahlakari and two other people are assigned for that task. The next day, on Friday 8th of December there are three other helpers in addition to Sahlakari and Nuutila, making the Karelian pies and the egg salad. At the event, the 9th of December, there are two of the same people taking everything by car to the event at 8:30 am and taking things back to the office at 11 pm. In addition to them, there are four helpers and Nuutila and Sahlakari working at the event, not to forget Santa Claus. There are three people in the morning shift from 8 am till 4 pm and then again three in the evening shift from 4 pm till 11 pm. Santa Claus is there from 11:30 am till 6 pm.

5.2.3 Budget

There is no specific budget set for the festival. The festival has pretty much always just broke even, that is explained in the chapter 3.5, or lost some money in the end. It has never made profit, however at the same time it is not the purpose of the event. The lost money has never been in that great amounts that it has shaken the financial situation of the organisation Benalmadenan Suomalaiset Ry.

Only the necessary new products and items were bought. They were all calculated carefully, especially food that will go bad. Some items such as serviettes or disposable cups can be used later in other Christmas events organised by the organisation, therefore those can be bought in great quantities. As prices vary in different stores, price comparison was done in some of the local shops such as Mercadona, Lidl and Ikea to see which one offers the best value for money products.

5.2.4 Time management

The first meeting, 24th of October, with the event manager Nuutila, as mentioned above, is the beginning of the planning. Although some items are ordered before that to be able to be delivered from Finland to Spain in time. Thus, the whole process starts more or less seven weeks before the event.

Tools such as checklists and timelines are used throughout the whole planning phase to facilitate the time management. As explained in the chapter 3.6, timelines are perfect for remembering what needs to be done and when, whereas checklists give the opportunity to double check everything. Checklists are used more in the last week before the event, but timeline is taken to use from the beginning on.

Marketing and organising a performer for the festival is planned well in advance, in the end of October already, whereas things like what to buy and what kind of food to prepare are things that are planned three weeks before the event. Deciding about the staff for the event as well as decoration goes to the same category. In the last two days before the event food and beverages are bought and some food is prepared. Also, all the items are double checked from the checklist so in case there is somethings still missing there is time to buy or fix it before the event.

5.2.5 Risk management

As stated in the chapter 3.7, risk management is very important in the event planning but sadly it is often taken very lightly and not considered that much in detail. This Christmas festival is a medium risk event as it is an outdoor festival. There is a performance risk, if

the booked performer does not show up and some physical risks, which covers the health and safety problems or crime and security difficulties, that are more like risks for the organisers of the whole festival and not the Finnish organisation.

Some detailed risks that were thought about are risks to staff, that can be due to the confused organisation and safety, risks in marketing, risks in catering and risks in transportation. In the scenario, of a member of the staff feeling poorly and in need to go home, there are enough staff members planned for the day to cover and just work a longer shift. A marketing risk could be delivering wrong information by mistake with a wrong time or date for instance, which might result in smaller visitor numbers. However, all the other countries also promote the event, which gives the marketing risk a little less meaning as the marketing would be covered from other countries anyway. Risks in catering could be bad hygiene or serving spoiled food, which could end up having bad consequences. To avoid this risk is to double check everything in the kitchen and not to serve anything that can go bad if not kept cold. For example, a cooler is taken to the egg salad which is served together with Karelian pies. Risks in transportation could be that the car meant for transportation brakes done. There is a quick fix as there are a few members of the staff that have cars and can be used if that is the case. These above-mentioned scenarios are only some examples how to act in these risk situation. (Chapter 3.7.)

5.2.6 Marketing

As reminded in the chapter 3.8, it is important get visibility and to get the message out there. Marketing for the festival was done utilising several different mediums. There was a lot of publicity from third parties for the event, as Radio Finlandia and two local magazines were advertising the festival. In addition, the festival was also advertised on social media and by putting big posters around Benalmadena and Fuengirola.

Local magazines called Fuengirola.fi and SE-sanomalehti published releases advertising the festival a week before the event. The releases were written by Sara Sahlakari and the release from Fuengirola.fi magazine can be seen in the appendix 5. Both magazines are in Finnish and read by Finns living on the sunny coast called Costa del Sol in Spain.



PICTURE 3. The poster for the festival of Christmas traditions. (Drozdowska 2017)

The poster in picture 3 above was shared on Facebook by individual users on many different pages and on the page of Benalmadenan Suomalaiset Ry. It was also shared on the homepage of the organisation. The poster versions were taken to various places around Benalmadena and Fuengirola. Some examples of the places are: Radio Finlandia, Prison island in Puerto Marina, Bar Buddha and the public library in Arroyo de la Miel.

Sara Sahlakari had a chance to visit the radio studio, Radio Finlandia, the 31st of October, when the picture 4 was taken, and another time the 1st of December closer to the festival time. The festival was advertised and described in detail on the first time live on radio. On the second time at the radio, a short advertisement clip was made that is played on the radio the last week before the event. as well as talked about the festival and advertised the Finnish choir coming to the event.



PICTURE 4. Sara Sahlakari at Radio Finlandia 31.10.2017. (PHOTO: Heli Touru 2017)



PICTURE 5. Sara Sahlakari dressed in one of the national costumes of Finland 21.11.2017. (PHOTO: Anna Sahlakari 2017)

The picture 5 was taken to advertise the festival on the homepage as well as the Facebook page of the organisation. Sara Sahlakari was dressed in the national costume of Finland for the press conference that is seen in the picture 6. The pictures taken at the press conference were taken to the local newspapers to advertise the festival.



PICTURE 6. Different countries participating the festival gathered together at the press conference for photos 21.11.2017. (PHOTO: Anna Sahlakari 2017)

5.2.7 Food and beverages

There is food that is prepared for the event, and food and beverages that are bought either from the local shops or ordered. Food that is prepared is: 150 Christmas pies, 250 Karelian pies and egg salad of 20 eggs. Food and beverages that are bought includes: 20 boxes of Gingerbread, 10 kg of sweets, collection of cheese for the 150 little rye crisps that are donated by Linkosuo, 50 litres of mulled wine, 24 litres of Koskenkorva liquor and three boxes of long drinks (72 in total).

5.2.8 List of items for the event

There are necessary items that need to be taken to the event from the office of Benalmádenan Suomalaiset Ry. The above-mentioned food and beverages have to be taken to the event in addition to the following kitchen items:

- 300 disposable cups
- 200 disposable spoons

- 250 disposable plates
- 500 serviettes
- A packet of kitchen roll
- A packet of sanitary wipes
- A packet of disposable gloves
- A gas bottle
- A cooker
- 3 servers
- 3 ladles
- 2 pots
- 5 thermos bottles
- 6 trays
- Scissors
- 2 knives
- 5 spoons
- Wax paper
- Plastic paper

Other items that are taken to the event are: 4 big bin bags, price tags, tablecloths (cotton and plastic ones), 4 tables from Bar Buddha, 2 chairs, 2 baskets, some wire, tape and safety pins for the posters, clothes for Santa Claus, the national costume of Finland, Christmas lights, Finnish flag decorations, Christmas cards, Finland 100-years Happy Birthday sign, winter posters and Visit Finland magazines.

5.3 At the event

5.3.1 Morning

Before the event starts at 11 am, everything must be ready at the stand, as seen in the appendix 2. Thus, at 8 am mulled wine is started to heat up at the office of the organisation. 8:30 am everything is transported to the stand. There are a few trips to get everything carried to the venue. At the stand tables and table cloths are set, decorations, posters and signs are put up and food, beverages, Christmas cards are set nicely ready to be sold. By 11 am the stand is ready and the festival opens.

5.3.2 Afternoon

At 12:30 pm there is a presentation of all the countries, as stated in the appendix 6. Santa Claus and Sahlakari, dressed in the national costume of Finland, will go to the stage to greet the audience. After that Santa Claus has one hour from 1 pm till 2 pm to sit in a chair specially brought for him to greet kids and photos to be taken. Sahlakari is also there, after changing her clothes to more traditional Christmas clothing, as a “brownie girl” with Santa Claus to help with translating and taking photos for the families. After 2 pm Santa Claus and Sahlakari walk around the crowd giving out sweets and greeting the visitors.

At the stand food is sold and made more in the back as it gets sold. Also mulled wine is being heated up as it goes. Sahlakari will also help at the stand as much as she can. Shifts are changed at 4 pm but Sahlakari will stay till later to help around to take photos, help with translating to Spanish or English and promote the stand.

At 4:45 pm it is time for the performance of Finland. The Finnish church choir from Fuengirola performs with three traditional Finnish Christmas songs called: Kello löi jo viisi, Jouluyö juhlayö and Tulloon joulu.

5.3.3 Evening

The evening shift crew works at the festival enjoying the performances, selling the food and Christmas cards and promotes Finland with a positive service. After 10 pm, as seen from the appendix 2., it is allowed to finish selling goods and start packing up the stand. Everything is packed up in the same car as used in the morning and things are taken back to the office and organised in the right places.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The main conclusion of the event project is the importance of the new documented event plan, as in the chapter 5. It is very important that the proper event plan is now documented in a detailed matter. Feedback received about this thesis and the writer Sara Sahlakari from various members of the board of the organisation has been very positive. They are happy to have a proper and clearly structured event plan at hand and the fact that it is the first time ever the event plan is documented properly, makes it even more special. The writer of the thesis received positive feedback for instance about her overall good attitude and the language skills she possesses.

There is one good example of the importance of a documented event plan, which is stated in the chapter 2. It is explained in the chapter how only one piece of paper listing necessary items to be taken to the event can be helpful, even though it was missing several essential things. Thus, the change has been significant; from one piece of paper, one list, to a whole report of lists, a timeline etc.

The new event plan helps the organisation in the years to come. It saves time from the organisers as a clear timeline is set out and all the necessary information to plan and implement the event is already there. In the case of the organisers from previous years quit or are not able to organise the event because of some other reasons, the new organisers would not be in trouble as the event plan is documented.

The event plan has all the details from the starting phases of the planning till the implementation plan. The plan has clear lists of necessary items to be taken to the event. It has numbers of things to be bought, what to order and how much of everything. It helps to find ways to market the event and to gain visibility. It helps with planning of the time management as well. These abovementioned facts are all great benefits for the commissioner and will be very useful.

What it comes to the things that were not able to be changed or improved. There is always a chance to improve certain things next year. As mentioned in the chapter 2, there is a possibility the event could be for two days next year. The venue might also be different and bigger. This would allow more countries to participate and therefore the event would

be more international. It would also allow the countries to have bigger stands and more room. This could give countries like Finland to have more different food on show as well as decoration etc. In addition, in the case the venue would be that much bigger, Finland could play their own Christmas songs to promote the traditional Christmas feeling even better.

One idea how to conduct further research is to make, for example, a questionnaire after the event. The questionnaire could be about the successfulness of the event, essentially to receive feedback of the event. Later the results would be analysed and this way important information would be gathered from a large group of visitors in order to improve the event even more. Another thing to be done after the event, would be to keep score of the budget. Whether the event broke even or there were big financial loses. This documenting of the budget after the event would greatly help the organisers in the forthcoming years to avoid the loses.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview with Joanna Drozdowska

1. What is your part at the event? What is your job title? - *Organiser, working in the foreign residence department.*
2. How many years have you been organising the event? And how many years has the event been organised? - *It has been organised for nine years and I have been organising all of them.*
3. How did you come up with the concept? - *Well the population is very international in Benalmadena. 35% of Benalmadena's population are foreigners from 123 nationalities. This gave us an idea to make an international festival and Christmas time seemed like a good time considering all the other many festivals there are around here.*
4. Has there been a lot of changes throughout the years? - *The event was very small in the beginning, with only 5 countries. Everything was in smaller scale. It was also organised in the port.*
5. Is there anything you would like to change at the event? - *It is getting so popular that I would like to change the venue for bigger. Also, the event might be 2 days next year. That way we can fit more countries and make the event bigger.*
6. Has the popularity of the event changed in the past years? - *Nowadays it is very popular and more and more countries would like to be part of it. The event started small but now it is big.*
7. What are the visitor numbers approximately? - *4000-5000 people according to the press.*

8. How many countries have there been in the previous years? - *First year five countries and then gradually every year more and more. This year there will be 22 countries with stands and six countries more representing themselves at the stage.*

9. Can you name all the countries of this year's event? - *Spain, France, Finland, Philippines, Argentina, Venezuela, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Mexico, Poland, Colombia, India, Cuba, Jamaica, Algeria, Tanzania, Chile, Brazil, Russia, Israel and Iran. The additional six countries are: USA, Denmark, Germany, Senegal, Japan and Norway.*



Ayuntamiento de Benalmádena
Delegación de Extranjeros

NORMAS INTERNAS

IX Encuentro Navideño Internacional

9 de diciembre de 2017

Plaza de la Mezquita

Arroyo de la Miel

1. Objetivo:

El objetivo del evento es hacer conocer las costumbres y tradiciones navideñas de cada colectivo participante en el evento.

2. Fecha y Hora del evento:

Los Encuentros Navideños Internacionales tendrán lugar el día 9 de diciembre de 2017 desde las 11:00 hasta las 23:00 horas.

3. Normas de admisión:

Se deberá presentar una solicitud por escrito (puede ser por e-mail) en el Departamento de Residentes Extranjeros del Ayuntamiento de Benalmadena con un breve proyecto de la explotación que se pretende. La admisión de solicitudes de cada colectivo o asociación será de competencia exclusiva del Ayuntamiento de Benalmadena, que podrá rechazar aquellas que no coincidan con la finalidad del evento.

4. Condiciones generales de decoración de las jaimas**4.1.- Horarios de montaje**

La decoración de las jaimas tiene que ser terminada para las 11.00 horas, pudiendo realizar los trabajos a partir de las 8:00 horas. El Ayuntamiento de Benalmadena, realizara durante el tiempo de montaje, las inspecciones necesarias, con el propósito de que el decorado corresponda al presentado en el proyecto.

El Ayuntamiento de Benalmadena, se reserva la posibilidad de imponer un decorado que todos los participantes deberán de aceptar.

4.2.- Acceso de vehículos, cargas y descargas de mercancías.

Los vehículos podrán entrar a la plaza para efectuar carga y descarga de mercancías hasta media hora antes del comienzo de evento (hasta las 10:30) y media hora después de fin del evento (termina a las 23.00).

4.3. – Imagen y diseño de las jaimas

Todos los diseños habrán de mantener un aspecto estético que dignifique la imagen del evento, tanto en decoración de las jaimas como en aquellas barras que se instalen y que deberán contar con protección precisa si van provistas de barbacoa. Igualmente debería tenerse en cuenta la estética de las listas de precios expuestos. El personal de atención al público tendrá que ser vestido con la ropa típica del país que representa.

4.4.- Horario de desmontaje / Retirada de materiales

La feria termina a las 23:00 horas. Todas las jaimas tienen que estar ocupadas como mínimo hasta las 22:00 horas.

4.5.- La Mercancía

Se puede vender productos típicos de cada país a precios populares 1 €, 2€, 3€. Preferimos pequeñas tapas y degustaciones, así como la venta de productos típicos de cada país. Se puede vender bebida típicas de cada país. En caso de las bebidas (coca-cola, cerveza, agua) se establecería un precio único que todos los concesionarios deberán respetar. Agua, refrescos, cerveza nacional 1 €.

Queda autorizada la venta de todos los productos que tengan directa relación con el país representado (alimentación, artesanía...). Los participantes no podrán exhibir en las jaimas, mercancías y servicios distintos a los que se refiere en la solicitud original.

5. Otras Normas

5.1.- Actuaciones, representación musicales

Se establece la participación obligatoria de cada país de forma activa y profesional en la inauguración oficial del evento y como mínimo una representación artística en el escenario procurando que su presencia sea la mejor posible, cuidando sus trajes típicos, sus instrumentos musicales. Etc.

5.2.- Limpieza

La organización llevará a cabo labores de limpieza en las zonas comunes, siendo responsabilidad de cada país tener la jaima limpia en cada momento

5.3.- Prensa y reuniones

Se establece la obligatoriedad de asistencia a las reuniones propias a la realización del evento que convoque la Organización.

5.4.- Banderas

Cada país deberá tener por lo menos una bandera de tamaño institucional para decorar su stand y otra para dejarla en el escenario durante el evento si es necesario.

5.5.- Material

El material que se entrega se devuelve en las mismas condiciones.

5.6.- Consumiciones gratuitas

Cada país dará 5 consumiciones gratuitas para los técnicos municipales, protección civil, etc que trabajan durante el evento.

6. Normativa de seguridad y requisitos de la Inspectoría Sanitaria

Todos los participantes están obligados a respetar las normas de seguridad. Se prohíbe cualquier actividad que suponga peligro de accidente. Tienen que cumplirse las normas de Prevención de Riesgos Laborales y las normas sanitarias adjuntas.

La Organización no se hace responsable del robo, hurto de los materiales y objetos depositados en cada jaima, ni de los daños que puedan ocasionarse en objetos, muestras, efectos personales, ni antes, ni después de la celebración de los encuentros Navideños.

7. Disposiciones adicionales

7.1 – Reclamaciones

Cualquier reclamación habrá de presentarse por escrito ante la Organización, a ser posible el mismo día en que se hubiera producido el incidente.

7.2 – Protección de datos de carácter personal

Los participantes tienen derecho a acceder, rectificar y cancelar sus datos personales, así como a oponerse a la comunicación de los mismos a los terceros.

En Benalmadena a 15 de Septiembre 2017

Appendix 3. Interview with Lesley Brown

1. How many years have you been organising the event for Jamaica? - *6 years.*
2. How much in advance do you start planning everything for the event? - *The main food I serve is Jamaican Christmas cake. I start soaking the fruits in rum and red wine at the beginning of October. So that is the first part of my preparation. I also sell meat or vegetarian dishes, which I change yearly so that people can try different foods each year. This takes more thinking about because there are limited facilities at the stand. I usually start planning this in November. I cook Jamaican food in my house so I generally have all that I need.*
3. Do you order a lot of the products to sell from somewhere or make it yourself? - *I make all the food myself and usually make enough for 100 people. I bake about 10 large Christmas cakes at home which I divide up and wrap some as presents. People sometimes order these in advance. I prepare the savoury dishes at home and cook or reheat on the day.*
4. How many people are organising everything with you? - *2 = I prepare all the food and organise how the stand will be laid out. I get everything together then my husband and son load and unload the car and set up the stand. My husband and I stay for the whole event. My husband also goes on the stage to represent our stand. We have many friends who pass by during the day and help us out.*
5. How do you market the event? – *I mainly share the event poster on Facebook. We also organise a yearly Jamaican Independence party which I promote through Facebook. In addition, I have my own Facebook pages called Caribbean Kitchen and Malaga Soul and Reggae Revival so I have many old and new Facebook friends who spread the word. The Christmas event is also promoted by the Ayuntamiento (The city of Benalmadena).*
6. Have you improved something in the organising phase every year or has it been the same throughout the years? - *I have adapted what I sell and how I display the*

food over the years. Most people have never tried Jamaican food so I am always busy with the tapas i.e. Jerk chicken, curry Goat but now I also sell whole Christmas cakes as gifts instead of just slices.

Appendix 4. Tapahtumasuunnitelman käytännön asioiden tiivistelmä

Vuosittainen kansainvälinen joulufestivaali 9.12.2017

Tässä tiivistelmässä on tärkeimpiä käytännön asioita kappaleesta 5, jotka ovat lähinnä erilaiset tärkeät listat, joissa näkyy määrät tavaroista, ruoasta ja juomasta.

Ruokaa ja juomaa:

- Piparit (Ikeasta) 20 laatikkoa
- Glögiä 50 litraa
- Joulutortut (150) tehdään itse
- Kossua 24 litran pulloa
- Lonkeroa 3 laatikkoa (3x24)
- Karjalanpiirakoita (250) ja munavoita (20 keitettyä munaa)
- Linkosuo lahjottaa ruisnappeja (iso pahvilaatikollinen), sinihomejuusto yms.
- Joulupukin makeiset, 10 kg (Lidl)

Torille keittiötarvikkeita:

- Kertakäyttökupit 300yht.
- Kertakäyttölusikat 200yht.
- Kertakäyttölautaset 250yht.
- Servettejä (Ikeasta) 10 pakettia (500 yht.)
- Jätesäkit 4kpl
- Talouspaperit
- Kosteuspyyhkeet
- Kertishanskat
- Ottimet 3kpl
- Kaasupullo+hella
- Kattilat 2kpl
- Kauhat 3kpl
- Termospullot 5kpl (ensimmäiset termarit keitetään jo valmiiksi toimistolla)

- Tarjottimet (ruisnapeille, tortuille, piirakoille 3 edessä, takana 3kpl)
- Kakkupaperit
- Veitset 2kpl
- Lusikat 5kpl
- Sakset

Muuta tavaraa:

- Liinat+muoviliinat takapöydille
- Teippi
- Nuppineulat, hakaneulat julisteille
- Bar Buddhasta pöydät 4kpl, apupöytä toimistolta
- Tuolit 2kpl Hilkalta
- Puhtaita pusseja
- Rautalankaa (suomikyltin ripustamiseksi)
- Napeille kori (maistatetaan Linkosuon tuotteita)
- Joulupukille kori
- hintalaput

Koristeet: Visit Finland- julisteet, Visit Finland- lehdet, jouluvalot, Suomenlippukoristeet, joulukortit, Suomi 100- kyltti

Vaatteet: joulupukin vaatteet, staffin omat vaatteet (punaista), joululakit, kansallispuku

Ajanhallinta: Ajanhallintaa pitää alkaa miettimään jo ihan alkuvaiheesta asti. On hyvä käyttää eri työkaluja kuin esimerkiksi aikajanaa tai tarkistuslistaa. Hyvänä esimerkkinä suuriirteisestä tarkistuslistasta on allaoleva lista:

- Rekisteröidy tapahtumaan
- Nimitä työntekijät tapahtumasuunnitteluun
- Jaa tehtävät
- Mieti eri markkinointikanavia
- Hoida esiintyjä tapahtumaan
- Käy kokouksissa
- Käytännön asiat kuten ruoat ja juomat

Riskienhallinta: On hyvä huomioida ja miettiä mahdollisia riskejä koko suunnitteluvaiheen ajan. Riskienhallinnassa pitää ottaa huomioon mahdolliset asiat, jotka saattavat toteutua eri tavalla kuin oli suunniteltu. Tämän tyyppisiä asioita voi olla mm. Jos esiintyjä tai työntekijä sairastuu, jos vieraita saapuu paikalle paljon enemmän tai vähemmän kuin ajateltiin, tai jos erityisen huono sää yllättää.

Markkinointi: Radio Finlandialla mainostamista kaksi kertaa, joista toinen kerta lokakuussa ja toinen joulukuun alussa. Myös lehdet Fuengirola.fi ja SE-sanomalehti kirjoittavat jutut festivaalista. Facebookissa mainostamista tapahtuman julistetta jakamalla eri sivustoilla, sekä organisaation kotisivuilla kuvien ja julisteen jakamista. Tapahtuman julisteen laittamista myös ympäri Benalmedenaa ja Fuengirolaa. Siinä ovat tärkeimmät markkinointitavat tälle festivaalille. Markkinointi on hyvä aloittaa hyvissä ajoin jo lokakuussa.

Työvuorot: Torstaina 7.12. joulutortut ja riisipuuro valmistetaan. Tähän tarvitaan kolme henkilöä. Perjantaina 8.12. karjalanpiirakat ja munavoi valmistetaan viiden henkilön yhteisvoimin. 9.12. tapahtumapäivänä kaksi henkilöä tulee toimistolle 8:30 aamulla hakemaan tarvittavat tavarat autolla ja kускаavat ne tapahtumapaikalle. Samat henkilöt tuovat tavarat takaisin toimistolle 11 illalla. Tapahtumassa muita työntekijöitä tarvitaan yhteensä ainakin kuusi ja lisäksi joulupukki. Aamuvuoro on: 8-16 ja iltavuoro taas 16-23:00. Joulupukin pitää olla paikalla 11:30-18:00.

Appendix 5. Tiedote jouluperinnetapahtumasta (Fuengirola.fi 2017)

Fuengirola.fi Suomi
100

Tapahtumat

Jouluperinnetapahtuma Benalmádenassa 9.12.

Tervetuloa moikkaamaan joulupukkia ja maistamaan herkullisia jouluperinnetruokia ympäri maailmaa! On taas se aika vuodesta, jolloin Benalmádenassa järjestetään vuotuinen jouluperinnetapahtuma. Suosittu perhetapahtuma järjestetään jo yhdeksättä kertaa, ja tänä vuonna tapahtumassa on mukana jo-

pa yli 20 maata eri puolilta maailmaa esittelemässä jouluperinteitään ja myymässä tyypillisiä jouluruokiaan edullisin hinnoin. Luvassa on viihdettä ja hyvää ruokaa koko päiväksi!

Tule Suomen teltalle maistamaan herkullisia joulutorttuja ja glögiä ja paljon muuta. Joulupukki on myös paikalla ilahdutta-

tamassa koko yleisöväkeä jakaen karkkia ja positiivista joulutunnelmaa. Muista myös olla paikalla kuuntelemassa kaunista Suomen seurakunnan nuortenkuoroa klo 16:45.

Saavu siis lauantaina 9.12. Benalmádenan Mezquita -aukiolle jo hyvissä ajoin nauttimaan joulutunnelmasta.



Tämä ylläoleva tiedote on Sara Sahlakarin tekemä teksti Fuengirola.fi lehteen. Sahlakari oli ollut yhteydessä lehteen sähköpostitse marraskuun aikana ja kysynyt mahdollisuudesta mainostaa tapahtumaa. Sitten hän sai itse kirjoittaa tiedotteen tapahtumasta, joka julkaistiin myöhemmin lehdessä 1.12.2017.

Appendix 6. Programa del encuentro internacional (Drozdowska 2017)

IX Encuentro Navideño Internacional – Programa

9 de diciembre, Plaza de la Mezquita, Arroyo de la Miel

- 11:00 Música de Navidad
- 11:30 Coro del Colegio Sunland Internacional
- 12:00 Banana Studios
- 12:30 Presentación de los países / asociaciones
- 13:00 Danzamanía
- 13:30 Musical de Navidad de países ruso parlantes
- 14:00 Cantantes de Gales
- 14:30 Baile folclórico de Filipinas
- 15:00 Grupo “Touch of Class”
- 15:30 Coro parroquial Santo Domingo de Guzman
- 16:00 Música de Colombia
- 16:30 Cuento tradicional Maasai, Tanzania - 15 min
- 16:45 Coro Finlandés
- 17:00 Oswaldo Enrique, Venezuela
- 17:30 Celtic Dancers
- 18:00 Baile del vientre Julia Mendez y sus alumnas
- 18:30 Los Bataneros
- 19:00 Tango de Argentina
- 19:30 Baile folclórico de México
- 20:00 Baile folclórico de India, grupo Bolly Danz
- 20:30 Sud American rockers, Chile - 15 min
- 21:00 Danza Huella de Chile
- 21:30 Espectáculo Cubano
- 22:00 Exhibición de capoeira y batucada de Brasil
- 22:30 Ballet Africain Sunugal de Senegal

IX Festival of Christmas Traditions – Programme

9th December 2017, Mezquita Square, Arroyo de la Miel

- 11:00 Christmas music
- 11:30 Choir form Sunland International Novaschool
- 12:00 Banana Studios

12:30 Presentation of all the countries/associations

13:00 Danzamanía

13:30 Musical from Russian speaking countries

14:00 The Welsh Society

14:30 Philippine Folk Dancers

15:00 Touch of Class

15:30 Choir Santo Domingo de Guzman

16:00 Music from Colombia

16:45 Finnish Choir

16:30 Traditional Tanzanian Maasai Tales.

17:00 Music from Venezuela

17:30 Celtic Dancers

18:00 Belly Dance

18:30 Los Bataneros

19:00 Tango de Argentina

19:30 Mexican Folclore

20:00 Bolly Danz from India

20:30 Sud American Rockers, Chile

21:00 Music and dance from Chile

21:30 Cuban Show

22:00 Capoeira and batucada from Brasil

22:30 Ballet Africain Sunugal from Senegal

Papa Noel ruso 12:00 – 13:00

Finlandia Papa Noel 13:00-14:00 sentado en una silla al lado del escenario