



ZIMFEST LONDON UNITED KINGDOM – CASE STUDY

Introduction

Zimfest is an annual outdoor music and cultural event run in 5 cities on 3 Continents by UK registered Charity WEZIMBABWE (registered charity number: 1111282) and it's partners around the globe. The charity is a small and largely self-funded entity based in London with members and partners all over the globe that can be leveraged for support and service delivery in our various projects.

Our Mission

Our mission is deliver opportunities for the empowerment of Zimbabweans through the development of a strong and united global Zimbabwean community and to the provision of access to formal education and non-formal life skills training for children and young people throughout Zimbabwe. Zimfest is the main project set up to deliver the first part of our mission, the development of a strong Zimbabwean community globally. It is important that the Festival is viewed in this context.

Links

www.zimfestlive.com

www.wezimbabwe.org

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ZIMFEST LONDON 2008 - REVIEW

Zimfest London was set up in 2001 by WEZIMBABWE and attracted 800 and has since grown to attract approximately 6000 people in 2008

Zimfest London 2008 was held at Prince George's Playing Fields Raynes Park, South West London. 4,200 tickets sold in advance of the day and this along with ticket sales on the day and guest list invitees bringing the total of festival goers to 6,000.

Zimfest attracted a very mixed crowd of predominantly Zimbabwean and South African immigrants and visitors of all ages to the event. The rest of the crowd is very mixed with a large contingent of Australian and Kiwi attendees due to cultural similarities, British and Irish, other African immigrants and visitors and a growing number of people from the EU due to the strong historical ties between Zimbabwe and the Nordic, Benelux and German communities.

We actively encouraged families to attend by offering free entry to the event for kids under the age of 13 however the majority of our audience are in the 20s and early 30. This group is made up of mostly Students, Professionals and young entrepreneurs encouraged to attend by our thriving Market and Business tent.

Activities and Structure

1. Zimfest London comprises the following
2. Main music stage with live bands through out the afternoon and evening
3. Second Music Stage (Tent) – Hosting a variety of Djs
4. 2 Licensed bars selling alcohol and soft drinks through out the day
5. Free standing catering stalls, selling traditional Southern African food
6. Business and Market marquee where individuals hired stalls to sell goods and space is given to other charity organisations
7. Children's entertainment area, providing face painting, bouncy castles etc
8. Rugby 7s and football tournaments



ZIMFEST 2008 PR AND MARKETING

Print Media

Our Main Media partner for the event was TNT magazine ran a campaign comprising the following; 2 x full page adverts, 1 x ½ page advert, featured on 3 x online newsletter and on TNT website We also carried print advertisements in various London based print publications catering for our target demographic. These included The Zimbabwean, In London Magazine, and the South African. We distributed over 15,000 flyers and posters around the UK however we do realise that this is quickly becoming a redundant form of marketing in the face of the PC and hand held opportunities available.

Broadcast Media

We carried out a number of interviews with Zimbabwe's only independent radio station SW Radio Africa as well as a number of internet based stations.

Online Marketing

Reciprocal links were exchanged with a number of online publications and websites catering for our target demographic. We also ran effective campaigns including mail outs and competitions on our own mailing list of 4000+ people and various lists through our partners. We also had dedicated Zimfest pages on the WEZIMBABWE website as we did not have a stand alone site at the time.

Social Media

By far our greatest success has been achieved by the use of Social Media Networks. We set up a group on Facebook as a test of the use of this medium and this exploded providing us a solid presence in this network of about 6000 – 10000 members either directly on our WEZIMBABWE profile or Zimfest groups or indirectly through our partner event groups in Australia and South Africa. There was also a groundswell of buzz generated in other online forums line on newzimbabwe.com which has 20000 + subscribers. We quickly realised that we had to assign resource to managing the publicity in these forums to ensure that the event received the best representation.

Public Relations

We managed to achieve extensive publication of our press releases for the event including for the first time coverage in The Independent on Sunday, The first broadsheet to dedicate significant column inches to Zimfest. Articles were published in various other print publications. Significantly Virgin News attended the event and ran an interview they held with our Managing Trustee on the day of the event. We are encouraged by this and would like to engage more with the broadcast media, as we believe that given the situation in Zimbabwe over the past 10 years the success story that is Zimfest has a special resonance.



2009 AND THE FUTURE

In the run up to Zimfest 2009 we have taken significant steps to improve our product. These Include;

Professional Staff

The engagement of a greater proportion of professional staff to run the event, it's marketing and it's promotion. We have previously run the event extensively using Volunteers. To this end we have hired reputable London based events management company Seventeen Events to run the logistical elements of the festival and pulled together a teams of Marketing, Promotions, Design, Music Management and Operations professionals to cover all the other aspects of the event.

Global footprint

We have taken steps to leverage our global footprint which will eventually bring all of our partner events together under the same branding and occupying the same space online exponentially increasing our captive audience and improving on groundswell. This will open up cross marketing opportunities and the possibility for live audiovisual links to introduce an new and exciting element to the event. Where this is not possible we will be exploring delayed broadcasts of footage from other global events. We project that by 210 Zimfest will attract a global attendance of at least 50 000 and an even greater audience exploiting online opportunities.

Zimfestlive.com launch

We have launched for the first time a dedicated Zimfest website to take greater advantage of our online presence and to improve the communication of the Charities and the Zimfest messages. The site also offers a better platform for advertising than our previous site, which was trying to be two things at once.

Zimfest London Launch and After Parties

We will be hosting an official launch party for the event. This will be an opportunity for our sponsors and partners to meet our team informally. We will also e expanding the Capacity of the event by having a Post Zimfest after party targeting a further 2000 ticket sales. This is largely driven by Zimfest attendees themselves and those who cannot attend the day time event due to work commitments etc encouraging us to launch this event

Zimfest Bulawayo

We are also launching our first event in Zimbabwe this year, which we will dun "The Zimfest Sevens" intended to be a big Rugby 7s Festival held in Zimbabwe's second city Bulawayo. This event will have all the trappings of the other global offerings but the central focus will be switched from the main music stage to the Rugby 7s tournament. This event is viewed as a test event to wider expansion in Zimbabwe.