

## Festive Cities: The Evolution and Adaptation of the Deutsche Internationale Schule Johannesburg Schulbasar

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### Abstract

Within a burgeoning international festival scholarship South Africa emerges as a major ‘growth pole’ in the literature. It is in this context of vibrant international and local debates that the article offers a modest contribution on a little researched aspect of festival development in South Africa. The focus is upon festive cities and the evolution, management and organizational adaptation of one distinctive cultural festival which is a celebration of German culture in South Africa. The case study is of the evolution and change of the Deutsche Internationale Schule Johannesburg Schulbasar. Within the literature on festival tourism the case study is distinctive because of its history which dates back to 1905 as well as the fact that the institutional organisation of this festival is undertaken by the school as a major fundraising initiative. The organisation of this festival linked to school management which undertook a number of adaptations to how the festival was organised whilst constantly seeking to retain its central objectives of highlighting German traditions. Arguably, the greatest challenge in the over 100 years of the Schulbasar’s existence has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which changed the festival from a physical event to a virtual event part of which involved a charity fundraising drive.

**Keywords:** Festivals; cultural festivals; German culture; school fund raising; Johannesburg; COVID-19 impacts

### Introduction

Festivals are central elements in the tourism product of many destinations (Getz & Page, 2016; Mair & Weber, 2019). Within the landscape of event studies Getz (2005: 21) styles the festival as a “themed public celebration”. For Cudny (2016: 19) a festival is an event based on “extraordinary experiences” which occupies a specific place for a specified period of time. Arguably, festivals have been recorded for their cultural practices and public display thereof since antiquity and continued to develop and grow numerically in subsequent historical periods (Quinn, 2009; Cudny, 2016). Their recent proliferation, as observed by many scholars, is associated with their tourism potential. Critical influences on the historical development of festivals include increase in the amount of leisure time, improved mobilities, rising incomes as well as the 20<sup>th</sup> century appearance and rise of ‘experience societies’ (Cudny, 2014a). The types of festivals that have been hosted have broadened to include a range of themes which cater for a wide cross-section of individuals with the largest numbers being related to food and drink, music, arts and culture, agriculture, and sport (Quinn, 2005; Stander et al., 2021).

By the early 2000s Picard and Robinson (2006: 1) could argue that the observance and participation in festivals “is an increasingly significant aspect of the contemporary tourism experience”. More recently, with the continual international expansion of festivals, they have become an essential part “of the cultural fabric of global society and a tourism and leisure pursuit that is participated in by many” (Davies, 2021: 184). Festivals as a form of event have become an important cultural phenomenon due to the significant effects they have for host cultures, most notably of enriching the cultural lives of community members (Ryan & Wollan, 2013). For Cudny (2013) the main aim of festivals is expressed as to preserve heritage and culture by making an effort to regularly celebrate them and to develop the necessary infrastructure in order for their hosting. An important social role of festivals as an organised phenomenon is given (Cudny, 2016). For destination managers, however, of central concern is their importance for developing or regenerating spaces and places. In several parts of the world, both in urban and rural areas, festivals now feature as a critical element in programmes for place-based economic development strategies (Visser, 2005; Cudny, 2011; Rogerson, 2014).

Quinn (2009: 483) observes that the study of festivals “is now an important and prolific area of tourism enquiry”. Event scholars and tourism researchers have responded energetically to the global growth of festivals (Wilson et al., 2017; Dolasinski et al., 2021). In addition, Cudny (2013, 2014a, 2016) stresses the importance of festivals as a subject for tourism geographical research. According to Wilson et al. (2017) festivals represent an important sub-field within event studies. Likewise, van Vliet (2021: 1) records that “festivals have now become an important field of research of their own within the general field of event studies, with a substantial literature”. Indeed, nested within international scholarship on events, festival tourism is a sub-field of research that has exhibited a growth in quantity and significance since the 1990s (Getz, 2008, 2010; Ma & Lew, 2012; Cudny, 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2016; Mair & Weber, 2019). Over a decade ago Quinn (2009) could describe the amount of literature focused around festivals as “burgeoning”. Getz and Page (2016: 593) pointed out also that in recent years the volume of international scholarly research on festivals and events had “expanded exponentially”. The burst of research on festivals is confirmed in the reviews and reflections of the state of international scholarship as conducted by Getz and Page (2016), Wilson et al. (2017), Laing (2018), Mair and Weber (2019) and, most recently by Mensah et al. (2022).

The international scan of literature reveals that festival scholarship has been undertaken in a variety of geographical contexts, albeit most research historically has been conducted in North America, Europe and Australia (Getz, 2010; Gibson & Connell, 2011; Cudny, 2016; Getz & Page, 2016). South Africa emerges as a major emerging ‘growth pole’ in the international landscape of festival scholarship according to the bibliometric review of five decades of research recently produced by Mensah et al. (2022). This finding confirms the observation made by Harmer and Rogerson (2017) that in the context of sub-Saharan Africa there had occurred a surge of South African research on events and festivals of various kinds (Visser, 2005; Kruger et al., 2010; Saayman & Rossouw, 2010, 2011; Rogerson & Collins, 2015; Rogerson & Harmer, 2015; Harmer & Rogerson, 2016; Kruger & Saayman, 2016; Harmer & Rogerson, 2017; Nyikana, 2017; Donaldson, 2018; Bob et al., 2019; Drummond, Drummond & Rogerson, 2021; Drummond et al., 2021; Kruger & Viljoen, 2021; Snowball & Antrobus, 2021; Stander, 2021; Stander et al., 2022).

It is within this international and local context of a vibrant scholarship on festivals that this article offers a modest contribution on a little researched aspect of festival development in South Africa. The focus is upon festive cities and the evolution, management and organizational adaptation of one distinctive cultural festival which is a celebration of German culture in South Africa. The case study is of the evolution and change of the Deutsche Internationale Schule Johannesburg (DSJ) Schulbasar. Within the literature on festival tourism

the case study is distinctive because of its history which dates back to 1905 as well as the fact that the institutional organisation of this festival is undertaken by the school as a major fundraising initiative. A brief review is provided on festivals and urban tourism as context before presentation of the research case findings. The research for this study makes use of scattered historical material, participant observation, semi-structured interviews with school management and social-media research to understand the evolution and adaptation of this festival event over a period of more than a century.

### **Festivity and urban tourism**

The prominent role of festivals in urban contexts was highlighted in several contributions by Quinn (2005, 2009, 2010). The theme of festivity has continued to be of rising significance in urban studies as many cities have experienced what is styled as the festivalisation and eventification of the city (Cudny, 2016; Colombo et al., 2022). Festivals are described recently by Quinn (2019: S8) as “a mainstay of urban landscapes, and feature strongly in urban development, urban regeneration and urban tourism policies”. Indeed, they represent significant facets of contemporary cities that can be understood as celebrations or attractions. In addition, as pointed out by Smith et al. (2022: 1), festivals can be “agents of urban change”. As festivals occupy urban spaces and also are inherently linked to time they can be understood as “distinct time-spaces, defined by their contrast to the everyday” (Smith et al., 2021: 1). Many urban festivals are socially constructed, are mutually reproductive of place and place identity and are linked to the appropriation and evolution of cultural practices (Quinn, 2009). Accordingly, research on festivals can shed light on a range of issues relevant to urban studies and the geography of cities (Cudny, 2014a, 2014b, 2016). Arguably, whilst in the urban setting the field of events and festivals research is dominated by works relating to Northern cities, festivals and festivalisation must be understood also as an integral part of the ‘other half’ of urban tourism in terms of cities in the Global South (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021).

The broad directions taken in urban festival tourism research can be understood in terms of Getz (2010) review of the state of research literature. Three major discourses can be identified (Mair & Weber, 2019). These relate to a classical discourse concerning the roles, meanings and impacts of festivals in culture and society; an instrumentalist discourse in which festivals are viewed as vehicles for local economic development, tourism expansion and place marketing; and a management discourse which centres on the production and organisation of festivals as well as the management of urban festivals. In terms of the types of urban-based festivals that attract international academic attention, music, sport and arts festivals have been popular foci, as well as food/drink and cultural/community festivals (Quinn, 2010, 2015; Rogerson & Collins, 2015; Cudny, 2016; Everett, 2016; Getz & Page, 2016; Wilson et al., 2017; Quinn, 2019).

Concerning specific research foci Getz (2010) identified a diverse global scholarship was consolidating around various topics such as why people attend festivals, authenticity and commodification, resident perceptions, and local economic development ramifications. In their review Getz and Page (2016) discerned several critical topics which related to festivity, namely myth, ritual and symbolism; ceremony and celebration; spectacle; host-guest interactions; liminality; authenticity and commodification; and, debates about destination development, marketing and the local economic impacts of hosting festivals. The international survey of festival research by Wilson et al. (2017) maintained that whilst festivals are diverse in character scholarly interest essentially concentrates on five themes *viz.*, the motivations for organizing, funding and attending festivals, the experiences of festival attendees; the relationship between festivals and their local environments; the economic and socio-cultural impacts of festivals, and the management of festivals. In the pre-COVID-19 period other emerging research themes

included the location or geography of certain kinds of festivals (Cudny, 2014a, 2014b), debates concerning the environmental impacts of festivals and of sustainability issues (Collins & Cooper, 2017; Mair & Smith, 2021) and, the contributions of festivals to economic resilience (Vecco & Srakar, 2017). Much attention was directed also at social impacts and social issues surrounding festivals (Mair & Smith, 2021; Smith, et al., 2021).

A significant research focus in urban studies and geographical writings surrounds the processes of urban restructuring and of the production side of festivals. It is argued that a central driver for the growth and reinvention of festivals has been their potential for delivering a suite of positive development outcomes in relation to urban economic restructuring and revitalisation, destination repositioning/rebranding and for tourism expansion (Quinn, 2009; Dzapka & Sebova, 2016). Arguably, for cities, festivals can represent a critical part of new cultural strategies to regenerate post-production economies towards consumption as well as an element of place-marketing strategies that were fuelled by globalization and the growing competition among cities, including for the hosting of particular festivals (Quinn, 2005, 2010; Van Aalst & van Melik, 2012; Bogan et al., 2017). Festivals emerged as a significant tool both for energising economic development in tourism as well as re-imaging and re-branding certain urban centres and regions (Ma & Lew, 2012). Many city governments in the Global North regard festivals as “important urban showcases” (Van Aalst & van Melik, 2012: 195). With the inclusion of culture in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Quinn, et al. (2021) observe that cities have been compelled to scrutinize their approaches to making their cities ‘inclusive’. In many European urban centres - examples being Barcelona, Dublin, Glasgow, Gothenburg and London – festivals are viewed increasingly as an integral component of policies for cultural inclusion. In this regard alongside the economic implications of events, research on their social value as community celebrations has advanced in importance with investigations of the values, impacts, meanings and outcomes of festivals (Smith et al., 2021).

In a useful intervention Laing (2018) considered the future of research into festival tourism based on current gaps in the literature. Six key areas were pinpointed as directions that research might take including for urban festivals: (1) overcoming the tendency for non-tourism research related to festivals to be under-researched; (2) the imperative to extend the theoretical foundations of management to festival tourism; (3) addressing gaps in sustainability research connected to festivals; (4) interrogating the ongoing relevance of and challenges of traditional festivals in a modern digital era; (5) the significance of understanding sub-cultures, social worlds and serious leisure; and, (6) the potential to transcend disciplinary boundaries through interdisciplinary and post disciplinary approaches. Important under-explored themes in international festival scholarship as identified by Wilson et al. (2017) related to research at the micro-level which addresses festival processes, including how festivals are established and their development over time. The systematic review of the domain of festival research conducted by Wilson et al. (2017: 195) revealed that “the literature rarely discusses the development of festivals over time”.

Finally, in terms of festivals and urban studies, the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced new research agendas. The devastating impacts of COVID-19 for urban tourism as a whole included negative implications for the hosting of city festivals and events many of which were cancelled or postponed. A wave of research is observable on issues surrounding the hollowing out of the festival landscape and of the pandemic adaptive responses made by the festival sector (Davies, 2021; Gradinaru, 2021; Mohanty et al., 2021; Rentschler & Lee, 2021; Drummond, et al., 2022). Emerging directions and themes include a new emphasis on ‘localism’ (Rentschler & Lee, 2021) and of the prioritisation of social benefits with the growing connections between festivals and communities (Gradinaru, 2021) as well as changing festival geographies as adaptation strategies changed to virtual or hybrid approaches (Drummond et



al., 2022). Kaczynski, et al. (2022a, 2022b) highlight the manner in which COVID-19 has transformed festivals, altered festival landscapes and people's sense of place in relation to such events. These authors stress that COVID-19 experiences affected how people remember and imbue meanings to festival landscapes and in particular that the experience of immobility with pandemic lockdowns gave extra potency to physical engagements with festival landscapes (Kaczynski et al., 2022a).

### **The Deutsche Internationale Schule Johannesburg Schulbasar**

The development of the Deutsche Internationale School Schulbasar in Johannesburg is interwoven with the history of German immigration and settlement in South Africa. However, a comprehensive account of that history remains to be written; most existing studies focus on the 19<sup>th</sup> century German settlement in the Eastern Cape (Zipp, 2013). The spectacular gold discoveries in the Witwatersrand during the 1880s attracted a wave of German immigrants and the establishment of a local German community in the mining settlement of Johannesburg. This German community was the trigger for establishing a school where children would be taught in German (DSJ, 2021a).



Figure 1: The First Schulbasar 1905 (DSJ, 2021b)

By the 1890s the German population was approximately 4000 in total and the community collected and donated funds such that in 1897 a school could be built in the Hillbrow area of Johannesburg (DSJ, 2021a). The property was a present from the former president of the South African Republic, Paul Kruger; on 4 April 1897 the foundation stone was laid for the Deutsche Schule Johannesburg. The location of the school would remain in Hillbrow for 70 years. A change occurred as a consequence of the surge of German immigration to South Africa that followed the end of World War II. The school faced the issue of growing numbers of students and a facility in Hillbrow that was now too small to accommodate them. In 1959 land was purchased in Parktown but due to budget constraints construction of the new school was delayed. Building work began only in 1967 with the costs of the new construction funded both by the Federal Republic of Germany and from a fund established by parents. Following two years of construction, the school was relocated from its Hillbrow premises to Sans Souci, Parktown in January 1969 (DSJ, 2021a). This remains the location of the school which is committed to providing an education which conveys German tradition, language and culture. One manifestation of that commitment is the school's annual celebration of German culture, the Schulbasar, which was first hosted with small beginnings in 1905 and subsequently expanded over time with a Bierfest to become a popular annual event in the Johannesburg social calendar (DSJ, 2021b).

The first Schulbasar took the form of a funfair and was based on the model of the Hamburger 'Dom' with games and the provision of traditional German food (DSJ, 2021b). The

Schulbasar event was a celebration of German culture and traditions and a fundraiser for the school. It was anchored on German festival traditions where traditional German foods are sold. This food is largely made up of meat such as fish and pork and different kind of sausages such as Bratwurst, Knackwurst and Currywurst. In addition to meat, bread is also a popular food and usually rye or wheat-based. Popular German desserts include Lebkuchen and Stollen (Hartzenberg, 2022).

*JEDERMANN ist hiermit herzlich eingeladen zum*

**SCHULBASAR**

**MIT NACHFOLGENDEM**

**TANZ**

**ZU GUNSTEN DER**

**DEUTSCHEN SCHULE, JOHANNESBURG,**

**AM**

**SONNABEND DEN 4. SEPT., 1948,**

**IN DER TURNHALLE.**

**PROGRAMM :**

12 - 2 Uhr: Mittagessen.  
2 - 6 Uhr: Grosser Jahrmarkt.  
Verkauf von Handarbeiten, Kleidungsstuecken, Spielsachen, Buechern,  
Lebensmitteln, Suessigkeiten, Blumen usw.  
Film-Vorfuehrungen - Kasperle Theater - Schiessbude.  
Grosse Verlosung: Erster Preis: 1 Fahrrad.  
9 weitere schoene Preise.  
Tombola - Gluecksrad - Spiele - Unterhaltung  
6 - 7.30 Uhr: Abendessen.  
7.30 - 12 Uhr: **TANZ.**  
Reichhaltige Kueche.  
**BIER** und andere Getraenke den ganzen Tag.

**Eintrittspreise:**

Von 12 bis 6 Uhr: 1/- pro Person  
- 2/6 extra fuer alle, die nach 6 Uhr bleiben.  
Fuer nach 6 Uhr Neu-Hinzukommende: 5  
Kinder der Deutschen Schule: frei.  
Garderobe: 6d. pro Person.  
Parken: 6d. per Wagen.

Figure 2: Schulbasar Program 1948 (Source: Schulbasar Facebook Page, 2021, in Hartzenberg, 2022)

Information is scanty about the Basar in the school archives for the next 30 years. With the outbreak of World War I the school's reputation was tarnished when in 1915 school learners burned British and Italian flags in the school courtyard, an event which forced the school to be closed. Several teachers were interned and others moved to other schools with the property and school building in Hillbrow leased to the government. It is recorded that for a number of years an English School "the Hospital Hill School, occupied the facility" (DSJ, 2021a). Further, with

Germans “no longer welcome in Johannesburg at that time” many people “disappeared or made sure that they could not be recognised as German”. In 1922 classes restarted at the school albeit with only ten learners and three teachers. As a consequence, “between World War I and II, little attention was paid to the Basar due to the prevailing social and political conditions” (DSJ, 2021b).

The outbreak of World War II posed another challenge for the school. A commitment was made to a strict policy of political neutrality which allowed the school to remain open throughout the period of World War II despite a rise in anti-German sentiment in South Africa (DSJ, 2021a). With the end of hostilities, the school was once more in a position to give some attention to fundraising and the Schulbasar. Figure 2 above shows a programme which depicts the schedule for the 1948 Schulbasar which was held in September. The social day consisted of lunch, funfair, supper, raffle draw, films, a play and concluded with a dance. Of note is that the programme highlights beer as available to festival patrons. Indeed, the drinking of beer historically is part of German festival traditions as reflected at Oktoberfest, one of the first cultural festivals established in Europe (Cudny, 2016).



Figure 3: Schulbasar flyers from the 1980s (Source: Hartzenberg, 2022)

The entrance fees, games and sale of food and drink contributed to school fund-raising. The language of the programme indicates that the event was particularly targeted at the German-speaking community in Johannesburg and its surrounds.



The colourful nature of the Basar attracted growing public attention in Johannesburg and the event expanded into the school's biggest fundraising occasion. The tradition of hosting the annual festival in September continued until 1969 when it was changed to May. This change was done deliberately in order "to not clash with similar attempts to host an event by the Friedenskirche, the church next to the old DSJ in Hillbrow" (DSJ, 2021). From the 1970s the annual May event of DSJ Schulbasar was marketed through the development of colourful flyers and posters the content of which shows a commitment to German cultural traditions most notably in terms of the cultural attire of Lederhosen for men and Dirndl a traditional German dress and apron (Figure 3).

The range of entertainment offered diversified with the addition variously of rock-wall climbing, hot air balloon rides, giant slides, horse shows, car flipping and staged dances. One constant was the importance of the beer tent, beer drinking and beer sales as the Bier Fest was held in conjunction with the Schulbasar. A further continuity was the tradition of putting up billboards and banners on the hockey field to showcase different German cities and culture as shown on Figure 4.



Figure 4: Schulbasar 1989 showing German city symbols (Source: Hartzenberg, 2022).

By the 2000s the growing popularity of this Johannesburg event reached the point that by 2004 there were an estimated 27 000 visitors on the school grounds and with the addition of 3000 workers the size of the festival was such that it could not be accommodated safely at this location (DSJ, 2021b). As the school is situated adjacent to a hospital, problems arose in terms of ambulances unable to reach or leave the Milpark Hospital. A further problem stemmed from the use of glass beer mugs and sales of glass bottles which created a hazard with broken glass on the school fields. The School Management and Board thus chose to find an alternative venue and separate the Basar – essentially a school fete – and the Bierfest. Between 2005 and 2007 the Bierfest was hosted off school grounds but in 2008 the decision was taken to return the event to the school grounds. The relocation off school premises was because of the event's popularity attracting so many people "that it was deemed unsafe to host it here any longer" (Interview, Marketing Manager, 16 August 2019). In addition, "the split was because of the



image of having all of this nonsense going on at a school" (Interview, Beer Tent Manager, 14 January 2020).

From 2008 therefore the Bierfest returned to the school and the festival was once again called the Schulbasar because "despite the commercial successes of 2005, 2006 and 2007, the Vorstand (Board) believed that the event had lost its identity." (Interview, Marketing Manager, 16 August 2019). The number of attendees was, however, capped at 10 000 visitors in order to ensure the safety of the festival. At the same time the school made the decision to stop using glass beer mugs and instead to offer plastic mugs in order to ensure that no broken glass was left on the school premises. Another change was from use of cash at stalls to a token system which subsequently was replaced by the cashless system offered by Howler, which allowed attendees to purchase tickets from various local retail stores such as Game, Checkers, Makro, Spar and Shoprite (Hartzenberg, 2022).

A notable aspect of this festival throughout its history is that its organisation has remained the responsibility of the Deutsche Schule staff and community. Preparing for the Schulbasar involves a lot of planning over a period of several months. The planning process involves a number of staff from the school including the Principal, the board, the marketing team, teachers, students and parents. Before the organisation and set-up for the Schulbasar can begin, the school needs to ensure that they have permission to host the fest, as it might disrupt surrounding businesses, facilities and homes of neighbours. Therefore, the Basar committee and Principal contact neighbours, ward councillors, Milpark hospital and nearby business to request their consent. Tradition is an important aspect to maintain when hosting the Schulbasar as its aim is to showcase German culture. In the planning of the event it is important for the school to ensure that they meet the needs of attendees but at the same time to showcase German culture. It was observed, however, that "balancing tradition with today's needs is a tough act to follow" (Interview, Marketing Manager, 16 August 2019).

The organization of the Schulbasar is unlike other South African festivals where external vendors are allowed to book a stall or site for them to sell their products (cf. Stander et al., 2021). Instead the stalls are run by the various classes and the only external stand at the Schulbasar is the actual beer tent which is comprised of various beer vendors (Interview, Marketing Manager, 16 August 2019). Although there are no external vendors a variety of stalls are made available by different classes such that "while the Schulbasar is best known for its beer and food offerings, it is actually a family event" with "over 60 different stands (food, drinks, games and activities) which cater for the WHOLE family!" (Schulbasar Facebook Page, 2021). The marketing department works across various social media platforms to connect with different types of people who might be interested in attending the festival. In an interview the Marketing Manager stated as follows: "There are four words that I focus on: Family, German, Beer, Entertainment. The Basar is a truly unique event" and "Giving the event a purpose makes a world of difference in my opinion" (Interview, Marketing Manager, 16 August 2019). The announcements which the school has for their attendees and social media followers are posted on their Facebook and Instagram pages; the announcements include, artists, food and drinks available, parking allocation, as well as the rules and regulation of the festivals.

Overall, the Schulbasar has become the school's biggest fundraiser and marketing event. As noted by one member of the School's marketing team: "I think that every person at the school will have a different answer here but I believe that the Basar is the school's biggest PR/marketing tool while being the single biggest fundraiser. It's not often that we have so many people on the grounds at one particular day. It allows us to showcase our facilities and culture to the greater Johannesburg population" (Interview, Marketing Manager, 16 August 2019). For participants the motivation is to relax and escape from their everyday responsibilities, to experience culture (in this case German culture) and to spend time with family and friends.

The Schulbasar evolved as a vehicle for both marketing the school and fundraising. By hosting the festival, the school has an opportunity to showcase its culture to visitors from around Johannesburg and at the same time raise money for whatever projects need to be done at the school, such as upgrades of the building as well as general maintenance and upkeep of the school, staff and students. The aim is “to raise funds for the school and to celebrate all things that are German... a chance for the German community of the time to feel at ‘home’ ” (Interview, Marketing Manager, 16 August 2019).

Table 1: Schulbasar revenue 2010-2019

Year	Revenue
2010	R 400,000
2011	R 380,000
2012	R 440,000
2013	R 450,000
2014	R 139,230
2015	R 130,000
2016	R 326,000
2017	R 581,000
2018	R 867,000
2019	R 757,140

Note: Data only for raffle sales revenue in 2014 and 2015 (Source: Hartzenberg, 2022)

Table 1 shows the profits generated for the school with the hosting of the Schulbasar. It was disclosed that entrance fees, the raffle and profits from the beer tent make up the largest share of revenues. The profits from the Schulbasar were used usually for general upgrades of the school. However, in 2018 the school made the decision to purchase a new 23-seater vehicle to use as school transport for events such as swimming galas, soccer matches and various other extra mural competitions or school field days were held throughout the school calendar.



Figure 5: Marketing for Schulbasar 2019 (Source: Hartzenberg, 2022)

The 2019 event was the last of the pre-pandemic period and held on 25 May with various entertainment activities, food stalls and bars set up for visitors of all ages to enjoy German

culture and to spend time with family and friends. Event preparation commenced a week earlier with the arrival of chairs, tables and tents and the hanging of the German City banners. Active marketing of the event took place on various social media platforms (Figure 5). As was the situation from 2017 #Basar19 worked with Howler to run the fest on cashless basis. The implementation of the cashless system in 2017 had been a controversial adaptation which was viewed as a positive change by festival organisers albeit not always well-received by visitors who had bad previous experiences of the system. Typical comments posted on Facebook stated: “Sigh another Howler party. But I’m keen!”, “Watch what you load on there is no slip to show your purchases and I lost R200 last year that they wouldn’t refund” and “Why are you using Howler? They force you to purchase a new card for each event and then give you 14 days to redeem any money left on the cards, if not you lose your cash” (Schulbasar Facebook Page, 2020, in Hartzenberg, 2022). The build-up for the 112th Annual Basar in 2019 was reflected on social media pages with previous attendees sharing what they were looking forward to at the fest as well what they did not enjoy in the previous years with the expectation that their #Basar19 experience might be better. A recommendation to the school was to have more food stalls as the existing ones became too full with long queues especially for popular food stalls such as Eisbein. Indeed, it was recommended that the event incorporate more German food as opposed to food such as pizza and burgers which detracted from the ‘authentic’ German experience. One attendee on the school’s Facebook expressed the critical opinion as follows: “We are going to the Basar to enjoy specific German food and not hamburgers or Boerewors!!!” (Schulbasar Facebook Page, 2021). The profits made from the 2019 Schulbasar (Table 1) were used to upgrade the school hall, refurbish the floors and install new curtains: the “#Basar19 PROFITS PUT TO GOOD USE!” (Schulbasar Facebook Page, 2019). Beyond monetary benefits, the 2019 Schulbasar once again had brought the German community together to celebrate German culture and the school as a German landmark in Johannesburg.

It has been shown that the march of the COVID-19 pandemic and the introduction of government measures for lockdowns, social distancing as well as travel restrictions resulted in immediate and devastating impacts with the ‘hollowing out’ of urban tourism destinations across South Africa (see Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020, 2022a, 2022b). The landscape for the festival sector in South Africa was dramatically recast as the country was subjected to one of the most restrictive and longest lockdowns anywhere in the world (Drummond et al., 2022). The government restrictions imposed in South Africa included controversial bans on the sale of alcohol. With the forced cancellation of the Schulbasar scheduled to take place on 30 May 2020 the adaptation strategy of the School management was to shift to host a virtual event. Although the Schulbasar was cancelled, potential attendees signalled on social media their wish to enjoy the usual German food and drinks with one visitor going as far as to ask the School “Where can I get my keg of Windhoek for the day of celebration?” (Schulbasar Facebook Page, 2020).

The hashtag for the first ever virtual Schulbasar was #VirtualBasar2020 and the set event date remained the same. The virtual event was organised for four hours and configured in two halves with each a two-hour slot. The first half of the virtual Basar was a charity initiative, namely the Going for Guild Food Drive. This was planned by the School to collect food and various other necessities for Guild Cottage, a home for young girls who have been abused, and situated a street away from the School. Occasionally, students from the school would visit the cottage which is the basis of the relationship. The school community was encouraged to donate non-perishable food, stationery and winter clothing for the girls and which was delivered to the Cottage on the day of the virtual Basar. The first 100 people who donated to the initiative received a beer mug as a souvenir and branded with the date of the Basar.



### “GOING FOR GUILD!

The Schulbasar has always been our biggest fundraiser and this year we are helping others. We will be supporting our friends at Guild Cottage by running a food drive between 10:00 and 12:00 at the Deutsche Internationale Schule Johannesburg!

We will be collecting tinned food, non-perishable food, stationery and winter clothing for girls” (Schulbasar Facebook Page, 2020, in, Hartzenberg, 2022)

During the second part of the Basar the focus was on the celebration of German culture and bringing the school community together across all social media platforms. Attendees were encouraged to dress-up as they might do for the physical event and eat/drink their favourite German food and beer. The School partnered with a German butchery to give participants the opportunity to order German foods such as Eisbein, Pork Schnitzel and Bratwurst for home delivery. Finally, as part of Schulbasar the School encouraged a virtual Bewegungs Challenge to encourage the community to be physically active. As the 2021 Schulbasar was also cancelled as a physical event the virtual celebration followed the same format as in 2020 with a Bewegungs Challenge Weekend which followed a five-day period of the food drive for Going for Guild (see Figure 6). With donations the School raised R30 000 in this charity campaign.



Figure 6: Virtual Schulbasar Organisation 2021(Source: Hartzenberg, 2022).

### Conclusion

This study contributes to a growing literature around festive cities and the organisation of festivals. It is observed that much of the extant academic literature on festivals relates to the production of such events in support of urban economic development or as part of ‘quick fix’

solutions to city image problems (Quinn, 2005). The activity of school fundraising through the vehicle of a community festival provides a window on the alternative origins of certain festivals. School fund raising initiatives are widespread but few have reached the scale and scope of this case study.

Arguably, this study of the Deutsche Internationale Schule Johannesburg confirms the observation of Cudny (2016: 11) that festivalisation “understood as a development of festivals and their influence on people and the surrounding space is not a new phenomenon”. With its genesis in the period even prior to the formation of the Union of South Africa the Schulbasar was well-established by the time of South Africa’s democratic transition in 1994. Following the end of apartheid there has been recorded a burst of new festival establishment both in cities as well as secondary centres and small towns (Visser, 2005; Donaldson, 2018, 2021). The study of the Schulbasar’s growth in popularity as a social event in Johannesburg and celebration of German culture demonstrates that festivals “meet the requirements of contemporary societies as they are dynamic events, remaining in continuous motion” (Cudny, 2016: 79). The organisation of this festival linked to school management which undertook a number of adaptations to how the festival was organised whilst constantly seeking to retain its central objectives of highlighting German traditions. Arguably, however, the greatest challenge in the over 100 years of the Schulbasar’s existence has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which changed the festival from a physical event to a virtual event part of which involved a charity fundraising drive. In 2022 with the partial recovery of festivals and their relaunching in South Africa the changing organisation and adaptation of festivals is a topic that merits further investigation.

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