Introduction

Continuing on after the first feedback session, the project resumed with a fresher approach. Week 2 marked off a start with exploring different other cultural festivals and figuring out the core ethos of what a cultural festival is and what Mood Indigo stood for under this larger umbrella.

The Ethos of Cultural Festivals

A cultural festival, simply put, is a festival featuring arts and events specific to a particular culture/s, especially one celebrating and promoting that culture/s in a wider public context. It marks itself as a celebration of the richness and diversity of cultures.

Further research was studied to understand the salient features of the same.

Effect on Tourism

Festivals draw massive crowds, both local and tourist to the venues. This has a positive economic impact on the local community as sales of food, accommodation and local goods shoot up to cater to this larger crowd. Thus it lies in the interest of the governments to promote such festivals bringing in this unique wave of tourism and related revenue. Active participation of diverse people has been proven to have positive cultural, social, economic impacts across communities.

Tastemakers and Trend-Setters

These festivals share a causal relationship with the art and entertainment forms they choose to showcase, with the festivals factoring in trends to curate the event, but also being the changemakers and trendsetters by providing a huge platform to the newer experiments. This is evident in examples like the NH7 Weekender which became a major boost to the indie music culture in India; and another closer example would be the trend wave set by Mood Indigo by inviting a progressive rock band Porcupine Tree for the first time in India. Thus the organizers and curators of the festival have considerable influence in framing the performing arts fields and become hidden tastemakers for generations. This may also sometimes lead to creating imagined hierarchies among the arts/genres, and further enhance upon the notion of privilege and elitism in the arts by becoming an integral part of the concept of social capital.

Advisory Features

A few festivals also annually looked into providing training and support to all the artists and performers and thus managing to keep in touch with the community of artists throughout. So instead of just being a platform for them to showcase their talent, festivals also provide them with the opportunity to grow in their fields through advisory committees comprising of well established artists.

A Broader View

Taking off from the feedback we received last presentation we decided to research practices, systems and features employed by other festivals apart from Mood Indigo. We broadly divided the festivals into three tiers - International Festivals,, National Festivals and festivals held at the university levels.

International Festivals

In International festivals, we particularly looked at the Edinburgh Fringe festival and the New Orleans Jazz festival to understand their relationship with the city and the venues as a whole and their unique stance at curation across their rich history. We also briefly looked at a few heavily commercialized festivals such as Tomorrowland and Coachella.

National Festivals

In the second tier, we looked at various unique and niche local festivals like the Hornbill festival in Nagaland with its interesting blend of the traditional tribal culture of the Nagas and Rock Music. We also looked at a few others like the completely crowdsourced Ctrl Alt Delete and the state sponsored Kochi-Muziris Biennale.

College Festivals
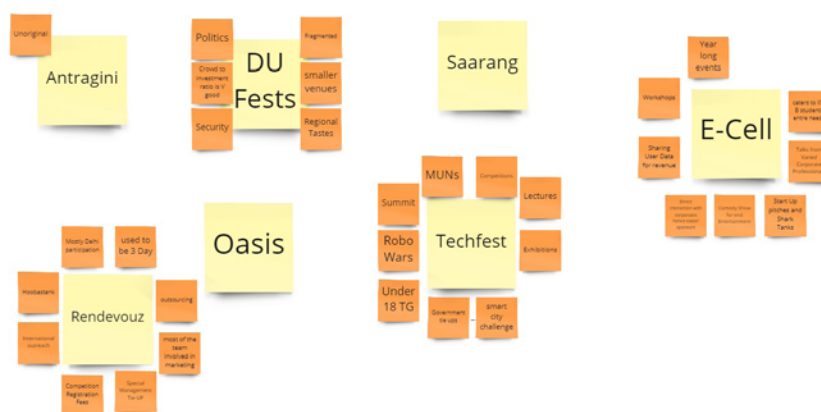
We also looked at a few other student run college festivals, including technology and entrepreneurial festivals at IIT, and cultural festivals in other colleges which were found to employ similar structures to Mood Indigo with a few changes here and there, some going so far as to outsourcing the curation of the festival entirely and boiling down workforce tasks to just curation and a bit of marketing.

Insights

We instantly noticed the scale and reach of global fests. They had tie-ups with local governments and tourism boards making the events so massive that the locals became a stakeholder as well. The New Orleans Jazz festival is primarily catered by the local restaurants and that became a drawing factor for the visitors to taste local delicacies.

The scale also leads to higher quality of sponsors and prevents ads plastered everywhere. They just don't have to buy press because it becomes a reinforcement feedback loop. The barrier of entry is, therefore, very high. Tier 2 level Fests are smaller and therefore either focus on replicating larger fets or they focus on a niche like Hornbill fest. They still have freedoms that a college fest can't enjoy like sponsorships on alcohol.

In the third Tier, their were unique problems with regard to censorship and scope. The college administrations would want the festival organizers to implement the own cultural value and ethos of the university while at the same would not want to get involved much in its functionings. This led to constant battles between college administrations and organising committees.

The annual tenure of the organising committees also serves as a major roadblock for all these fests. They need a mechanism to retain the trained volunteers or effectively continue the cycle of training. The smaller scale and lack of funding would drain from the experience. Fests like Typoday had sponsors who were few in number and some partners were from the organisation itself, allowing more freedom.

Focus Isolation
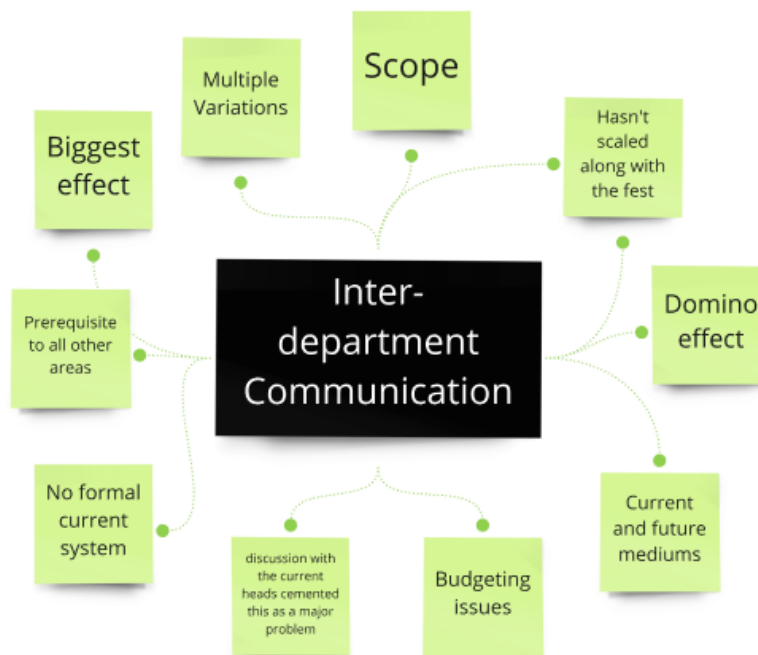
After the explorations, we decided to focus on Interdepartmental communication as our focus for the course of this project. Earlier we had already identified what the related subsystems and related metrics would be for all the major subsystems in Mood Indigo. This was selected because it was one of the prerequisites to some of the other areas and would entail a domino effect on the other aspects of the festival. We identified that the current system was formed out of convenience and not optimization. The current system has not scaled well with MI and there has been no effort to revamp because they feel that a complete overhaul may be needed. Together with the scope and the multiple variations that can be looked at propelled this as our choice.

Understanding the System

We conducted frequent meetings with the current team of the festival to keep our project aligned with the vision of Mood Indigo 2021, which would be decided by the current and the future team. We discussed all the possibilities of the project and points of interventions which highlighted new areas and reinforced our earlier ideas and problem areas.

To further our understanding of the system as a whole, we built separate Macro-Network maps for the on-ground and pre-fest interactions, so as to get a macro-view of all the stakeholders of the fest and all the interactions that usually happen between them. This is an early stage list and we are still expanding on the same with further discussions with the present and previous teams to create detailed feedback loops for each stakeholder. The concentric circles show different hierarchies and supporting individuals that constitute the workforce of Mood Indigo.

Onground   Pre-Fest
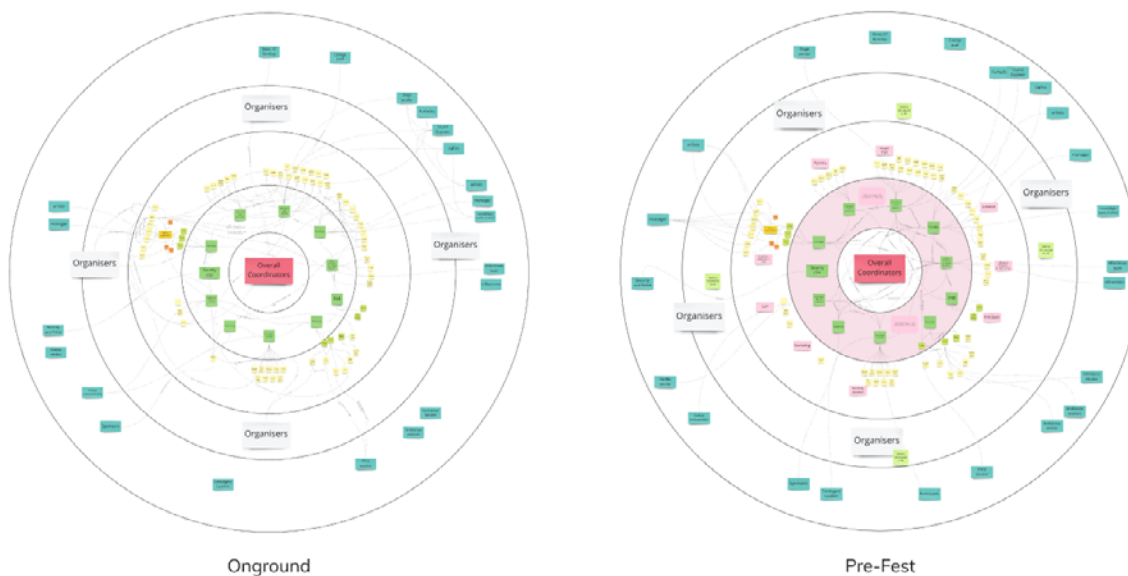
External Stakeholders

The external support structure consists of individuals who aren't a direct part of the team but play an important role in supporting the fest. These include vendors, sponsors, partners, artists, their managers, security personnel and more. They are external collaborators who are crucial to the working of the festival at large.

Organisers

Moving inwards, we come to the Organisers who are first year students at IIT-B. They help out with low-level tasks such as artist pickups, in fest publicity and anchoring. These students are attending their first Mood Indigo, and thus are motivated by the seniors and the team to enjoy the fest to the fullest. They are expected to experience the wonder of what the fest offers and then later decide if they would want to continue working for the festival in the future. Therefore you will see on the map that they have very few responsibilities.

Coordinators

The Coordinators are second-year students at IIT-B who volunteer to take up operational responsibilities and are majorly responsible for the execution of the fest. There are extremely specialised roles that are undertaken by the "coordies", ranging from handling transport services, execution of specific events and on ground artist handling. They have been involved in the ideation and execution of the fest as early as the summer vacations and therefore have a decent idea about the entire thing.

This group suffers the most from a communication gap which demands to be addressed to increase the efficiency of the behind the scenes work of the festival. This group has to maintain a lot of cross-communication between different parties, and have to learn a lot on the job. Communication flow will branch both ways. Added to that was the problem that due to being the lowest in the ring in terms of authority, they would have to crosscheck and confirm their decisions with the higher level authorities within the team.

Core Team

At the heart of the festival lies the Core Group team, consisting of third-year students as Core Group members and fourth/fifth-year students as the Overall Coordinators. Core group members, as the name suggests, is the central team of 22 responsible for the ideation and execution of the fest, from inception to execution, led by 2 Overall coordinators, who are usually ex-core group members of the previous year. Core group members are divided into departments, each heading a particular department and coordinating with other departments when required. This total of 24 coordinate and collaborate together to set up the building blocks of the festival from scratch.

The ten departments are as follows:

<u>Competitions and LYP</u>: Responsible for ideating and executing competitions throughout the year, across different genres, and responsible for maintaining relations with LiveYourPassion brands and sponsors.
<u>Creatives:</u> Constitutes of Design, Web and Tech and Ambience. Responsible for the visual identity and ambience of the fest, while also elevating the front-end and back-end technology of the fest..
<u>Food and Beverages:</u> Responsible for managing Food and Beverages sponsors and related marketing deals and activities to bring Food Vendors to the festival
<u>Horizons:</u> Responsible for the ideation and execution of pro-shows in a multitude of genres like stand-up comedy, music, fringe, theatre etc.
<u>Hospitality, Assistance and Public Relations:</u> Primarily responsible for maintaining public relations and inter-college relations. Also Spearheads the College Connect Program to onboard other colleges onto the Mood Indigo system and ideates new methods to reach out to the college communities.
<u>Informals and Workshops:</u> Responsible for ideation and execution of hosting informal events and activities to foster interaction between visitors and ensure fun during the times when no event is active.
<u>Marketing:</u> Responsible for onboarding sponsors and maintaining sponsor relations. They are the department which brings in the money for the fest.
<u>Media, Publicity and Alumni Relations:</u> Responsible for handling all of the social media pages of MI, managing the festival coverage and press; and publicising MI all over the country.
<u>Pronites:</u> Responsible for ideation and execution of the night concerts - the biggest spectacle at MI to mark the end of each night. They also orchestrate Livewire, MI's flagship semi professional band competition to foster new talent across the country..
<u>Operations and Logistics:</u> Responsible for the on-ground operations and logistics of the festival and negotiate and maintain relations with various service vendors.

Future Steps

For our future steps, we will start working on Giga-maps to further connect all the dots in the system. We'd also be working to list out failure points in the current system and the proposed system, graph changes in the system and the proposed variables against a temporal perspective, identify common occurrences and their frequency, and finally, start identifying and building upon the possible solutions.

References

The hidden tastemakers: Comedy scouts as cultural brokers at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.(2014)

Cultural Effects of the Edinburgh International Festival: Elitism, Identities, Industries.(2003)

Developing brand relationship theory for festivals: A study of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.(2014)

Communication Strategies via Social Media : The case study of Tomorrowland.(2012)

Environmental Impacts Management of the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival.(2019)

Between Utopia and the Marketplace: The Case of the Sziget Festival.(2019)

'Already existing' sustainability experiments: Lessons on water demand, cleanliness practices and climate adaptation from the UK camping music festival. (2019)

Lessons in Managing Visitors Experience: The Case of Future Music Festival Asia (FMFA) 2014 in Malaysia. (2016)

Popular music festivals: An examination of the relationship between festival programs and attendee motivations. (2020)

Social music festival brandscapes: A lexical analysis of music festival social conversations. (2021)

Socio-spatial authenticity at co-created music festivals. (2017)

The antecedents of visitors' flow experience and its influence on memory and behavior in the music festival context. (2020)

The effects of social media on emotions, brand relationship, and word of mouth: A study of music festival attendees. (2014)

Thinking Complexity-Iversity Open Online Course