

Sliding Scale Ticketing

SQIFF making the festival affordable



Image courtesy of Connor Limbocker, Unsplash

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SQIFF



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“Can’t emphasise just how huge a difference this made, I’ve done SQIFF twice as an audience member (once as volunteer), first time I went I could afford 2 screenings, this year I saw 11 & felt like I belonged so much more.”

Vistor and audience member

SQIFF



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Introduction

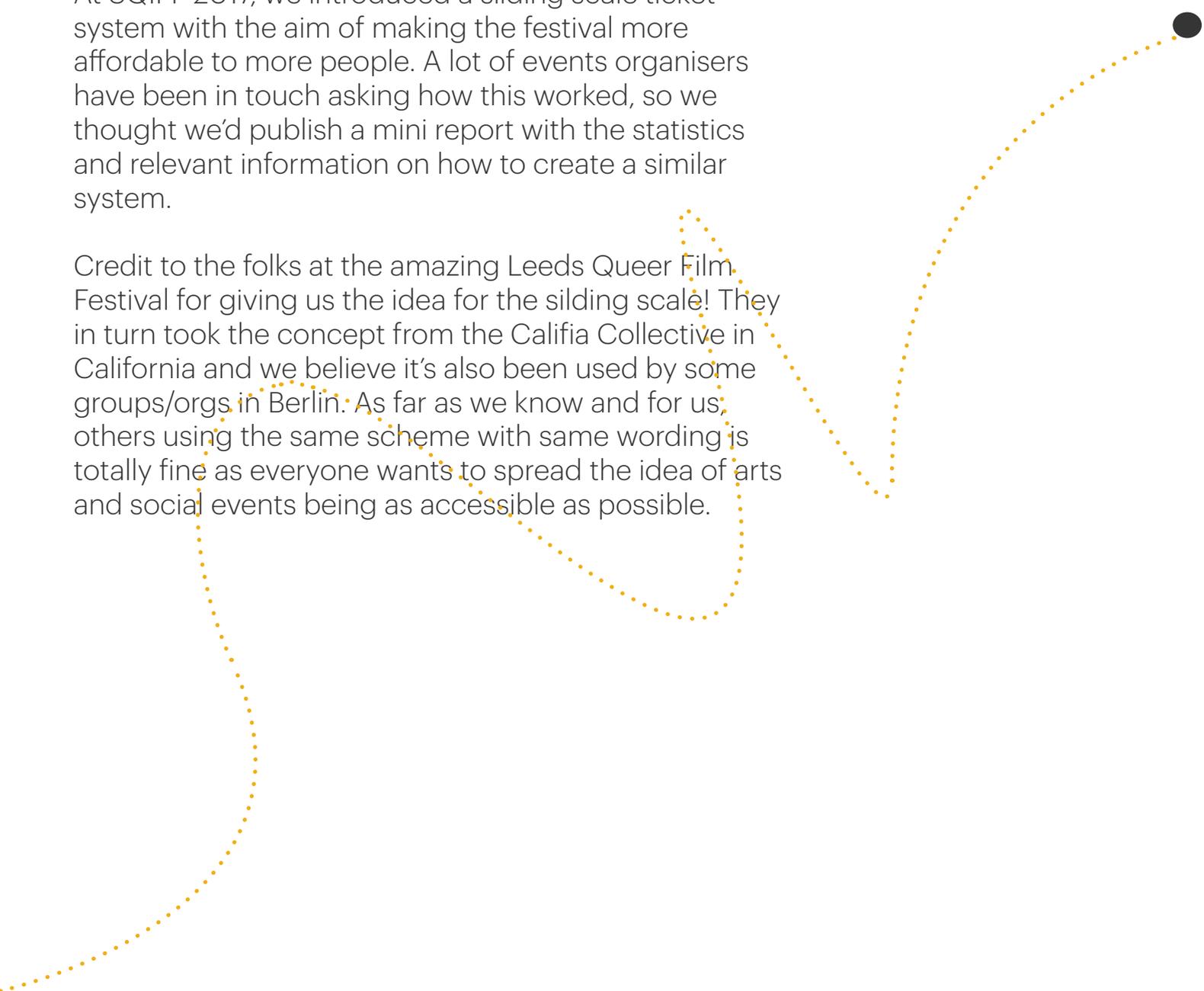
The origins of the idea

SQIFF (Scottish Queer International Film Festival) was formed with the aim of adding to the exciting and growing amount of queer film stuff happening around Scotland. Since 2015, we have held an annual festival in Glasgow alongside providing year round events across various locations.

Our goal is to get people watching, talking about, and making more queer films. We want to screen movies that people might not otherwise get a chance to see and to create inspiring and informative events alongside challenging inequality and barriers to accessing the arts.

At SQIFF 2017, we introduced a sliding scale ticket system with the aim of making the festival more affordable to more people. A lot of events organisers have been in touch asking how this worked, so we thought we'd publish a mini report with the statistics and relevant information on how to create a similar system.

Credit to the folks at the amazing Leeds Queer Film Festival for giving us the idea for the sliding scale! They in turn took the concept from the Califia Collective in California and we believe it's also been used by some groups/orgs in Berlin. As far as we know and for us, others using the same scheme with same wording is totally fine as everyone wants to spread the idea of arts and social events being as accessible as possible.



The Scale

The scheme works by having a sliding ticket price scale – our tickets were free, £2, £4, £6, or £8 – along with a recommendation of what people might choose to pay according to their personal situation. No proof of the latter is asked for. Our suggestion for what to pay was the following:

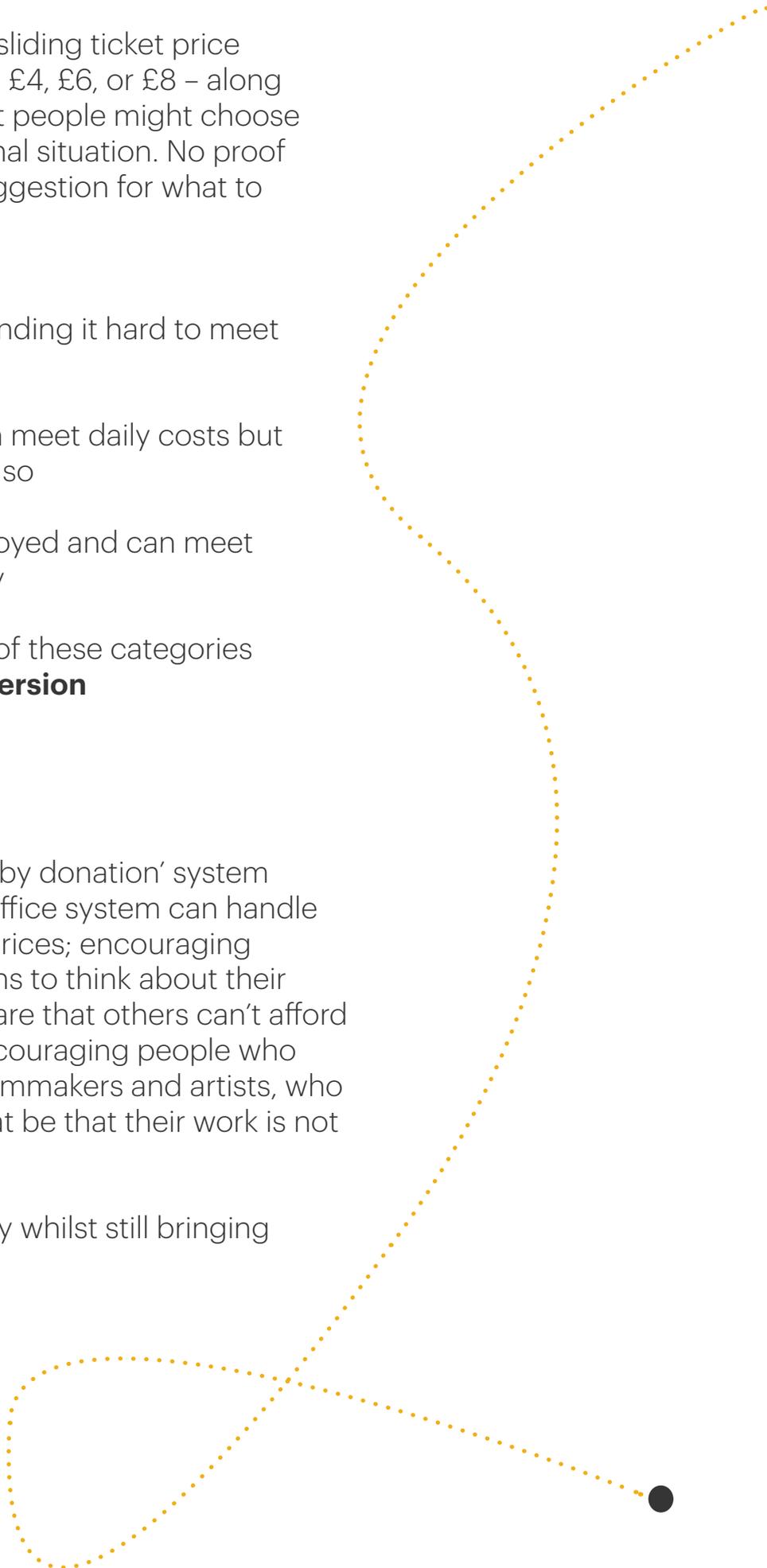
- Free or £2 - those who are finding it hard to meet every day costs
- £4 or £6 - for those who can meet daily costs but find it can be stressful to do so
- £8 - for those who are employed and can meet thier daily costs comfortably

To see the detailed breakdown of these categories please **download the full pdf version**

Benefits of the scheme*

Benefits include: an equivalent 'by donation' system but one which a standard box office system can handle through setting specific ticket prices; encouraging people who have financial means to think about their privilege more and be more aware that others can't afford to go to cultural events; and encouraging people who can afford it to support queer filmmakers and artists, who are often told by the powers that be that their work is not commercially viable.

(*aside from greater accessibility whilst still bringing income in)



Some statistics and results

- Potential capacity between our 2016 and 2017 Festivals rose by 40%
- Our audience numbers across the two Festivals went up by 45%
- Our box office takings increased by 69%
- Uptake of different ticket prices at our main venue, the CCA, was as follows:
 - Free – 43%
 - £2 – 17%
 - £4 – 20%
 - £6 – 12%
 - £8 – 8%

*Capacity and audience numbers for the 2017 Festival leave out a free exhibition which we put on at Glasgow's Gallery of Modern Art, which brought in 1000 or so people (meaning an overall audience increase of 85%) but might skew the stats because we didn't do an exhibition the previous year.

Stats include several events at venues where we weren't able to implement the sliding scale tickets (but where in most cases we offered free tickets to people who couldn't otherwise afford to come). Our ticket prices in 2016 were £5 (full price), £4 (concession), or free for refugees, asylum seekers, and those who were unemployed (no proof required).

Audience feedback

And here just a few audience comments on the scheme:

"I...very much appreciate the sliding scale which made it possible for me to come."

"Appreciate being able to pay what I could afford."

"

AMAZING PRICE STRUCTURE. SUPER GENEROUS.
thank you"

"I LOVE THAT THERE WAS A PRICE CHOICE + FREE
OPTION MAKING IT ACCESSIBLE FOR EVERYONE."

"Can't emphasise just how huge a difference this made, I've done SQIFF twice as an audience member (once as volunteer), first time I went I could afford 2 screenings, this year I saw 11 & felt like I belonged so much more"

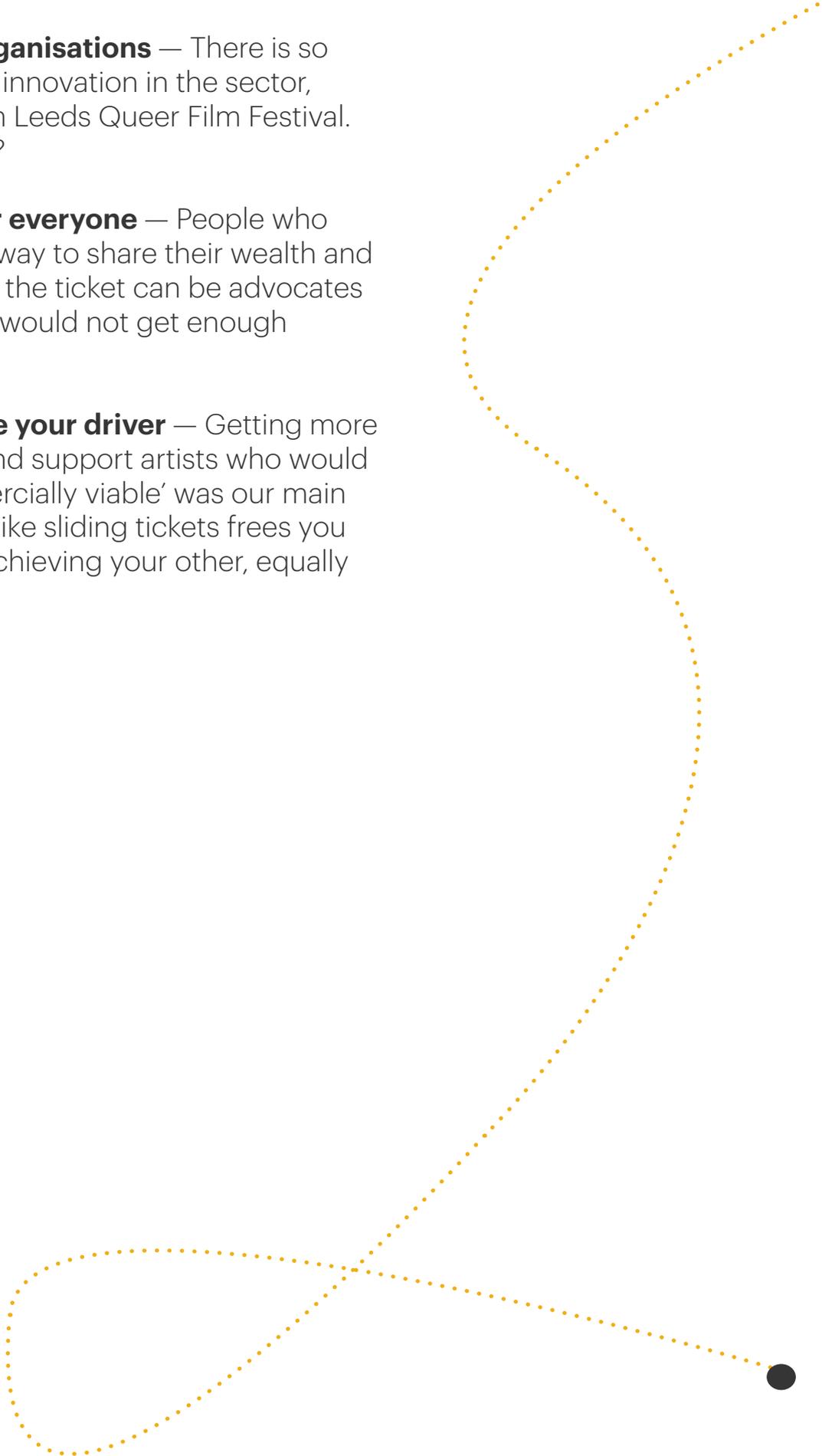


Recommendations

Look to other similar organisations — There is so much good practice and innovation in the sector, we found inspiration from Leeds Queer Film Festival. where will you find yours?

Sliding Scales works for everyone — People who can afford tickets have a way to share their wealth and those who can not afford the ticket can be advocates for artists who otherwise would not get enough support.

Profit doesn't have to be your driver — Getting more people to see the films and support artists who would otherwise not be 'commercially viable' was our main focus. Offering a system like sliding tickets frees you to put your energy into achieving your other, equally important, objectives.





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