

# The socioeconomic impact of a music festival on a community: The case of Bons Sons in Cem Soldos village

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## Abstract

Music festivals have historically celebrated regional culture and community (Duffy, 2000). Over time, their commercial aspects have overshadowed community goals, favouring urban areas over rural ones. However, the rise of nostalgic tourism offers hope for rural revitalization. This research examines the Bons Sons Festival, evaluating its cultural, social, and economic impacts through interviews, surveys, and regression analysis. Results indicate that the festival positively impacts the local economy of Cem Soldos village, particularly in accommodation and food services, and fosters community projects throughout the year.

**Keywords:** music festivals, rural revitalization, economic and social impact

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## 1. Introduction

Music festivals have significantly increased worldwide, especially in post-World War II Europe. Initially, these festivals aimed to bring communities together and celebrate local cultures. Over time, commercial interests have taken precedence, moving festivals to urban centres with better infrastructures. Both rural exodus and demographic challenges significantly contributed to the decline of traditional community-based festivals, while new trends in music consumption and the music industry itself contributed to the growth of products associated with the expansion of festivals also in terms of time, space and content, a trend that has been termed “festivalization of festivals”, preferably in urban contexts and for specific musical styles. In addition to all this, culture and festivalization processes have been used as part of urban marketing strategies led by the municipal governments themselves. However, the rise of nostalgic tourism, and also of creative tourism, provides an opportunity for cultural and economic development in small communities, fostering the preservation of traditions and active participation among residents. In fact, music festivals have historically played a significant role in cultural expression and community bonding. They offer a platform for artistic showcase and have evolved into events that can drive economic and social changes. As such, examining their potential to stimulate rural revitalization is both timely and relevant. In this study, we analyse the local impact of a music festival that takes place in a small Portuguese village.

The study aims to answer the following questions: “Can music festivals revitalise and develop rural communities? If yes, how does it happen?” To achieve this, the research employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, surveys, and regression analysis. The Bons Sons Festival, an annual event in Cem Soldos, serves as the case study for this investigation.

In rural areas, economic activities are often limited, leading to challenges such as unemployment and population decline. Music festivals, with their ability to attract visitors, can introduce new economic opportunities, enhance local businesses, and create a sense of community pride. This research investigates these dynamics by focusing on the Bons Sons Festival. The Bons Sons Festival was chosen for this study due to its unique characteristics and the significant impact it has had on the village of Cem Soldos. Since its inception, the festival has aimed to promote Portuguese music and culture, integrating the entire community in its planning and execution. This holistic approach makes it an ideal case to study the broader implications of music festivals on rural development.

Moreover, this research is structured to provide a comprehensive analysis of the festival's impact. The first part includes a detailed literature review that explores the theoretical foundations of music festivals and rural revitalization. The methodology section outlines the mixed-methods approach adopted for data collection and analysis. Subsequent sections present the findings from surveys, interviews, and regression analysis, offering a nuanced understanding of the festival's effects.

By focusing on the Bons Sons Festival, this study aims to contribute to the academic discourse on cultural events and rural development. It seeks to provide insights that can inform policymaking and encourage the implementation of similar initiatives in other rural contexts.

In summary, the primary objective of this research is to evaluate the capacity of music festivals to drive socioeconomic development in rural areas. Through an in-depth case study of the Bons Sons Festival, the research examines how cultural events can stimulate economic growth, foster social cohesion, and enhance the cultural landscape of rural communities.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Music Festivals

Music is one of the oldest and most universal elements of human culture, often integral to festivals and celebrations. Historically, music festivals served as communal events centred around harvests,

village fairs, equinoxes, and Mardi Gras (Gibson & Connell, 2012). In contemporary times, the proliferation of music festivals is remarkable, catering to various demographics and niche audiences (Gibson et al., 2010). Festivals range from small, community-based events to large, commercially driven spectacles. Music festivals constitute spaces for articulation and experimentation with identity and lifestyles and provide an opportunity to problematise new ways of looking at an emerging and diverse contemporary culture, in the sense that festivals can be effective vehicles to promote social values and sustainability (Guerra & Oliveira, 2022).

O'Sullivan and Jackson (2002) categorised festivals based on scale, location, theme, organizers, and aims into three types: "home-grown", "tourist-tempter" and "big-bang". Home-grown festivals are small and rural, primarily for local communities and heavily reliant on their participation. Tourist-tempter festivals are medium-sized, targeting both locals and tourists, often held in urban areas or their suburbs. Big bang festivals are large urban events aimed at tourists and residents, designed to stimulate economic growth through tourism. These categorizations help in understanding the diverse motivations and impacts of festivals across different settings (see Table 1).

Table 1. Typology of Festivals

Type	Scale	Location	Theme	Organizers	Aims
<b>Home-grown</b>	Small	Rural	Local culture	Local community	Community building, local pride
<b>Tourist-tempter</b>	Medium	Urban/Suburban	Mix of local and external acts	Local authorities	Economic stimulation, tourism
<b>Big bang</b>	Large	Urban	High-profile acts	Professional promoters	Economic growth, tourism

Source: O'Sullivan & Jackson, 2002

## 2.2 Rural revitalization

Rural areas worldwide have faced significant challenges, including population decline, ageing demographics, and reduced access to services. These challenges have been observed in Western Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand (Connell & McManus, 2011).

One of the critical issues in rural areas is the 'post-productivism countryside', where traditional agricultural activities no longer sustain the local economy and way of life (Smailes, 2002). This has led to the "rural exodus", where young people leave for better opportunities in urban centres, exacerbating the decline of rural communities. Consequently, rural areas struggle to maintain essential services such as healthcare and education, leading to a loss of community identity and heritage.

Despite these challenges, there are emerging trends that offer hope for rural revitalization. The concept of rural revitalization involves multifaceted approaches to counteract the decline of rural areas. These include economic strategies such as promoting tourism and local industries, as well as social strategies aimed at enhancing community life and retaining residents.

Nostalgic tourism, which includes visits to places with historical and cultural significance, is gaining popularity (Gibson & Connell, 2012). This form of tourism allows rural areas to attract visitors interested in experiencing a different way of life, rooted in tradition and heritage.

Bakas & Duxbury (2018) also highlight the importance of creative tourism as a strategy for revitalizing rural areas and small cities, promoting interaction between tourists and local culture,

and contributing to entrepreneurship and sustainability. The analysis of cultural initiatives and proposals implemented in European rural areas, conducted by four cultural organizations (CAE et al., 2020), highlighted several persistent weaknesses and risks. These challenges, still evident in many current cultural and rural policies, threaten to undermine recovery strategies. The main findings can be summarized into four key points: a) A narrow vision of culture focused on material heritage and tourism, neglecting contemporary creation and its innovative, transformative potential; b) An instrumental and shortsighted approach to culture, disregarding the importance of experimentation and medium-to-long-term impact studies to understand its role in improving community life; c) Insufficient infrastructure and financial resources for cultural projects, exacerbating the rural divide in access to collaborative and market networks; d) Limited access to education, knowledge, and high-quality creative experiences for many rural communities.

Despite these challenges, the potential of culture to drive sustainable development in rural areas has garnered increasing recognition from scholars. Until recently, policy discussions were narrowly focused on a few cultural sectors, often prioritizing economic impact over social outcomes. However, factors such as globalization, demographic shifts, and cultural hybridization have prompted greater attention to the role of culture in addressing rural challenges. This dialogue now incorporates broader social and environmental themes, including community participation, good governance, well-being, and the evolving labor market (Cotte, 2019). To unlock the potential of cultural and artistic initiatives, efforts must begin with positive narratives about rural communities. This approach is supported by research conducted in rural contexts (O'Connell et al., 2020).

Festivals, particularly music festivals, are powerful catalysts for rural revitalization, driving tourism, boosting local economies, and fostering community spirit (Gibson et al., 2010; Smailes, 2002; Wood & Thomas, 2009). They create social value by strengthening community pride, enhancing social cohesion, and promoting creative tourism activities (Bakas et al., 2019). Similarly, pop-rock festivals not only provide immediate economic benefits but also contribute to long-term cultural and creative tourism development in overlooked regions (Guerra & Oliveira, 2022).

Beyond their economic impact, festivals serve as platforms for cultural enrichment. Literary festivals, for instance, enhance individual cultural capital, while music festivals strategically position music as a driver of tourism and cultural identity (Rossetti & Quinn, 2021; Sound Diplomacy & ProColombia, 2018). Festivals also play a vital role in showcasing local culture, traditions, and landscapes, promoting a sense of place and community pride that sets them apart from other development initiatives (Gibson & Connell, 2012).

However, festivals face challenges such as limited resources and infrastructure, which require sustainable management, strategic planning, and government support to maximize their benefits (Wood & Thomas, 2009; Derrett, 2009). Overall, festivals are not merely entertainment but essential tools for uniting communities, enhancing cultural identity, and driving rural development.

### 2.3 Measuring socioeconomic impact of festivals

The impact of music festivals on local economies and communities can be multifaceted, encompassing economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Direct economic impacts include immediate spending by visitors and organizers, while secondary effects result from business-to-business transactions, such as suppliers and service providers. Induced effects arise from increased local spending due to higher incomes generated by the festival.

Assessing the impact of music festivals involves examining direct, secondary, and induced economic effects, as well as social and cultural benefits. Economic models such as Input-Output (I-O)<sup>1</sup> and Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) are commonly used, though they have limitations (Dwyer et al., 2010; Crompton et al., 2015). Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)<sup>2</sup> and key impact indicators (KIIs) provide

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<sup>1</sup> I-O models estimate the economic multipliers, indicating how initial spending circulates through the local economy. However, these models have limitations, such as assuming unrestricted resource flow and failing to account for interactive effects (Crompton et al., 2015).

<sup>2</sup> CBA evaluates whether the benefits of a festival outweigh the costs from a societal perspective, considering both tangible and intangible impacts (Hanley & Barbier, 2009).

a broader assessment, capturing both tangible and intangible benefits (Andersson & Lundberg, 2013; Getz, 2019, see Table 2 for a summary).

Table 2. Summary of potential local tangible and intangible benefits and costs of hosting music festivals

<b>Tangible Benefits</b>	<b>Tangible Costs</b>	<b>Intangible Benefits</b>	<b>Intangible Costs</b>
<b>Increased revenue</b>	Essential services costs	Improved quality of life	Perceived loss of traditions
<b>Job creation</b>	Direct costs of staging event	Enhanced community pride	Crowding and inconvenience to residents
<b>Positive media coverage</b>	Promotion costs	Place promotion and marketing	Environmental degradation
<b>Sponsorship opportunities</b>	Infrastructure costs	Increased cultural awareness	Social exclusion
<b>Networking opportunities</b>	Eroded markets for local businesses	Development of human capital	Rising property values

Source: adapted from Wood & Thomas, 2009; Reid, 2008.

Direct economic impacts refer to the immediate financial benefits generated by festivals, including ticket sales, accommodation, food, and other visitor expenditures. Secondary impacts involve the business-to-business transactions that occur because of the festival, such as increased demand for local suppliers. Induced impacts are the longer-term economic benefits derived from increased income and spending in the community (Gratton et al., 2000).

Social and cultural impacts, while harder to quantify, are equally significant. These include enhanced community cohesion, increased cultural activities, and the preservation and promotion of local traditions. Social Impact Assessment (SIA) frameworks are often used to evaluate these aspects, considering factors such as community well-being, social capital, and cultural sustainability (Burdge & Vanclay, 1996).

Moreover, the economic multiplier effect is a common method used to estimate the broader economic impact of festivals. This involves calculating how initial spending (direct impact) circulates through the local economy, generating additional economic activity (Frechtling & Horváth, 1999). However, the accuracy of multipliers depends on several factors, including the size of the local economy and the extent of local sourcing (Crompton et al., 2015).

One of the significant challenges in measuring the impact of music festivals is the attribution problem – isolating the effects of the festival from other concurrent events or trends. Additionally, data collection can be difficult, particularly for intangible benefits such as social cohesion and cultural vibrancy (Dwyer et al., 2010).

To address these challenges, mixed-method approaches are often recommended. These combine quantitative methods, such as economic modelling and surveys, with qualitative methods, such as interviews and case studies. This approach allows for a more holistic understanding of the festival's impacts and helps to triangulate findings from different data sources (Flick, 2004).

Several case studies have demonstrated the potential of music festivals to contribute to rural revitalization. For instance, the Tamworth Country Music Festival in Australia has been shown to generate significant economic benefits for the local community, as well as enhancing its cultural profile (Gibson & Davidson, 2004). Similarly, smaller festivals in rural areas have been found to foster community spirit and local pride, which are important for long-term sustainability (Reid, 2008).

Empirical evidence from these case studies indicates that the success of festivals in driving rural development depends on various factors, including the level of community involvement, the uniqueness of the festival's cultural offering, and the support from local authorities and businesses (Gibson et al., 2010).

The existing literature underscores the multifaceted role of music festivals in rural revitalization. They serve not only as economic catalysts but also as platforms for cultural exchange and community bonding. However, their success requires careful planning, community engagement, and comprehensive impact assessment. The subsequent analysis of the Bons Sons Festival will provide further insights into these dynamics, offering a detailed case study of a successful rural music festival.

### 3. Methodology

This study employs a single-case study approach, focusing on the Bons Sons Festival in Cem Soldos, Portugal. Data triangulation combines qualitative and quantitative methods, including interviews, surveys, and statistical analysis. The mixed-methods approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the festival's impacts, combining numerical data with personal insights from the community.

Three semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather qualitative insights. These included a member of the festival organization and two local inhabitants of different generations. The interviews aimed to capture diverse perspectives on the social, cultural, and economic impacts of the festival. A semi-structured interview guide was used to allow for flexibility and depth in responses. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants and later transcribed for analysis.

A survey was distributed to local businesses in Tomar to assess the economic impact of the festival. The survey included questions about changes in demand, turnover, operational costs, and employment related to the festival. Initially, the survey was sent via email to businesses with publicly available contacts. Due to a low response rate, follow-up visits were made to collect additional responses in person. The survey ensured anonymity and confidentiality for all respondents.

Statistical data on the demographic evolution of Tomar, educational attainment levels, and employment statistics were collected from official sources such as Statistics Portugal and PORTATA. Annual data on the turnover of the "accommodation and food service activities" sector in Tomar, real GDP per capita, unemployment rates, and current inflation were gathered for the years 2004 to 2019.

The qualitative data from the interviews were analysed using content analysis. This method involves categorising and coding the data into key themes related to social, cultural, built environment, and economic impacts. Thematic-categorical analysis helped in identifying patterns and drawing meaningful insights from the respondents' experiences and perceptions.

To validate the qualitative findings and understand the economic impact quantitatively, two Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions were estimated. The regression models aimed to determine the relationship between the number of festival visitors and the impact on local businesses in terms of employment and turnover in the "accommodation and food service activities" sector. This dual approach ensures robustness in the findings, allowing for cross-verification between qualitative and quantitative insights.

The selection of interviewees followed a purposive sampling method, ensuring that key individuals with in-depth knowledge of the festival and its impacts were included. The survey, distributed both online and in-person, aimed to reach a broad spectrum of local businesses, from accommodation providers to retail stores.

The regression analysis focused on assessing the relationship between festival attendance and economic indicators such as local employment and business turnover. Dependent variables included turnover and the number of employees, while independent variables included festival attendance. Control variables such as regional GDP growth, unemployment rates, and inflation were included to isolate the festival's impact from broader economic trends<sup>3</sup>. The rationale for using OLS lies in its suitability for identifying linear relationships in small datasets, though its limitations are acknowledged.

The regression equations were formulated as follows:

$$(1) \text{ nemploy}_t = \beta_1 + \beta_2 \text{GDP}_t + \beta_3 \text{Unemploy}_t + \beta_4 \text{inflation}_t + \beta_5 \text{nvisitors}_t + \varepsilon_t$$

and

$$(2) \text{ turnover}_t = \beta_1 + \beta_2 \text{GDP}_t + \beta_3 \text{Unemploy}_t + \beta_4 \text{inflation}_t + \beta_5 \text{nvisitors}_t + \varepsilon_t,$$

where  $\text{turnover}_t$  denotes the turnover of establishments of the “accommodation and food service activities” sector, in thousand euros in the year  $t$ ,  $\text{nemploy}$  denotes people employed in Tomar's establishments on the “accommodation and food services activities” sector in the year  $t$ ,  $\text{nvisitors}_t$  denotes the number of festivalgoers in the year  $t$ ,  $\text{GDP}_t$  denotes the real GDP per capita (annual growth rate) in the year  $t$ ,  $\text{Unemploy}_t$  denotes the unemployment rate in Portugal in the year  $t$ ,  $\text{Inflation}_t$  denotes current inflation in Portugal in the year  $t$ ,  $\varepsilon_t$  denotes the error term associated to year  $t$ .

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the study. Interviewees provided informed consent, and anonymity was guaranteed to ensure honest and open responses. Survey data were anonymised and securely stored, with findings reported in aggregate to protect individual business confidentiality.

By employing a case study approach, this research provides a detailed and context-specific analysis of the Bons Sons Festival. While this limits the generalisability of the findings, it allows for an in-depth understanding of the unique dynamics at play in Cem Soldos. Future studies could adopt a similar methodology to explore other festivals and rural contexts, building a comparative framework that enhances the external validity of the results. The methodological rigor applied in this study ensures that the findings are both reliable and valid, providing a solid foundation for the subsequent analysis and discussion.

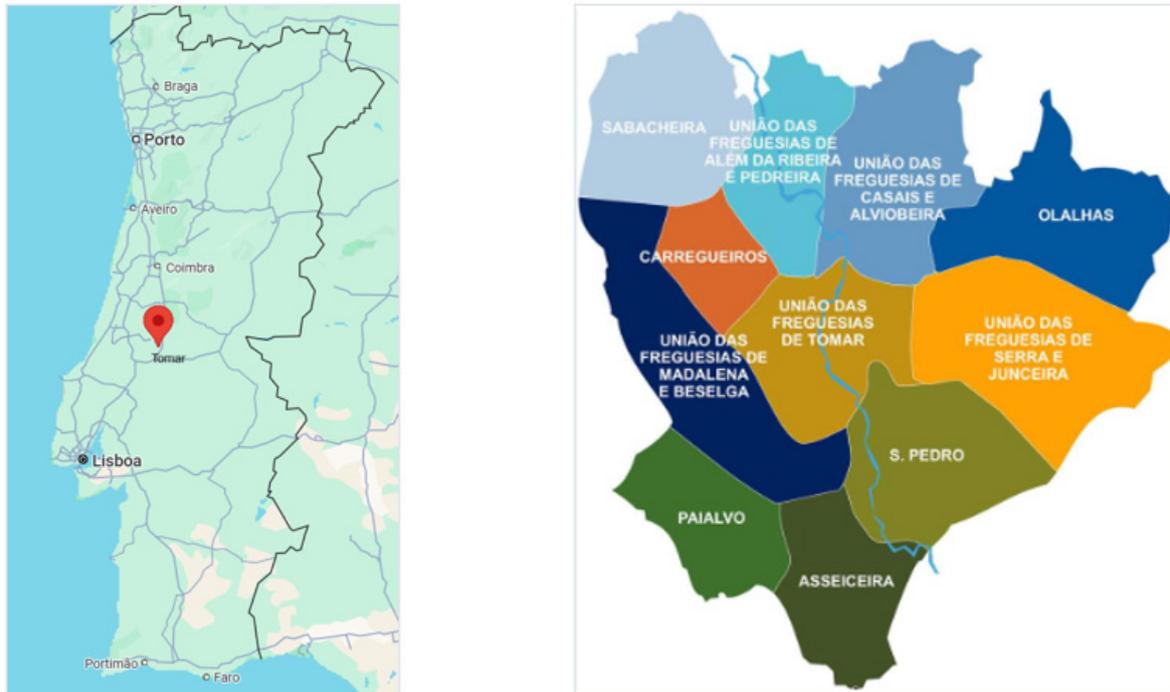
#### 4. Case study: Festival Bons Sons

The Bons Sons Festival is an annual music event held in Cem Soldos, a small village located in the parish of Madalena and Beselga, in the municipality of Tomar, Portugal (see Figure 1).

According to PORDATA, in 2021, the parish of Madalena and Beselga, that is divided into 12 hamlets (Caldelas, Caniçal, Carvalhal Grande, Carvalhal Pequeno, Cem Soldos, Charneca do Maxial, Madalena, Maxial, Paço da Comenda, Porto da Lage, Porto Mendo and São Miguel) had 3 421 inhabitants, representing 9.4% of the total inhabitants in the municipality of Tomar.

<sup>3</sup> The control variables, i.e. GDP, unemployment, and inflation, that were included in the regressions, intend to account for the cyclical fluctuations that occur in the Portuguese economy over the years in which the festival has been held. This way, appreciations regarding changes in Tomar are not merely related to changes in the overall economy.

Figure 1. Location of the Municipality of Tomar and Cem Soldos



Source: The map on the left shows Tomar’s position within Portugal, based on Google Maps. The map on the right illustrates the administrative division of the municipality’s parishes, as presented on the *Tomar na Rede* website (<https://tomar-narede.pt/sociedade/saiba-qual-a-area-da-sua-freguesia/>)

Established in 2006 by the local cultural association SCOCS (Sport Club Operário de Cem Soldos), the festival focuses on showcasing Portuguese music and fostering community engagement. Over the years, Bons Sons has grown into a significant cultural event, attracting visitors from across the country and contributing to the socioeconomic revitalization of Cem Soldos.

Originally created as part of a cultural programme to celebrate the 25th anniversary of SCOCS, the festival started as a biennial event but became annual in 2015 due to its increasing popularity and success, although, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the festival was cancelled both in 2020 and 2021. Its unique in its approach, transforming the entire village into a festival ground with multiple stages integrated into the streets, squares, and public spaces. This setup not only enhances the festival experience but also immerses visitors in the local culture and community life. Attendance is limited to 35.000 visitors to preserve its community-focused character. The number of visitors can be observed in Table 3.

Table 3. Years the festival was held and the respective number of visitors

Year	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022
<b>Number of visitors</b>	15000	20000	30000	35000	38000	35000	33000	32000	38500	35000	35000

Source: Own Elaboration.

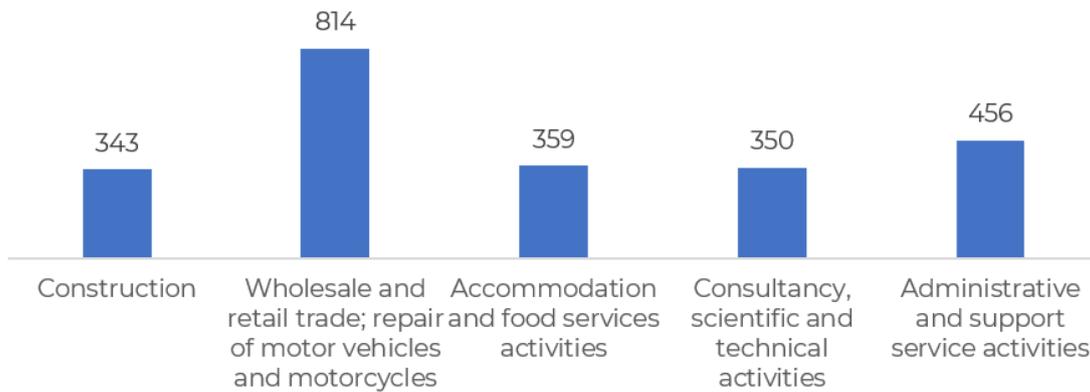
Beyond music, Bons Sons supports various community projects aimed at enhancing the quality of life for residents. Two notable initiatives are Escola-Aldeia and Lar-Aldeia. Escola-Aldeia emerged in response to declining student numbers at the local elementary school. By integrating the school with the village’s cultural and social activities, Escola-Aldeia provides a unique educational experience

that combines traditional knowledge with modern pedagogical practices. This initiative has not only preserved the local school but also attracted students from neighbouring areas. Lar-Aldeia, on the other hand, focuses on supporting the elderly, this project aims to provide comprehensive support based on the village’s cultural, physical, and human resources. Lar-Aldeia offers various services, including home adaptations, daily assistance, and community integration activities, ensuring that older residents can lead fulfilling lives while contributing to the community.

The municipality of Tomar is renowned for its rich historical and cultural heritage, primarily linked to the Knights Templar. The most iconic landmark is the Convent of Christ, a UNESCO World Heritage site, which showcases a blend of Gothic, Manueline, and Renaissance architectural styles. Tomar is also famous for the Festa dos Tabuleiros (Festival of the Trays), a vibrant and colourful event held every four years.

The sectors of activity that weigh the most in terms of number of enterprises (Figure 2) are the Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles (814), administrative and support services (456) and accommodation and food service activities (359). The total number of enterprises in the municipality of Tomar, according to Statistics Portugal (2019) are 3884.

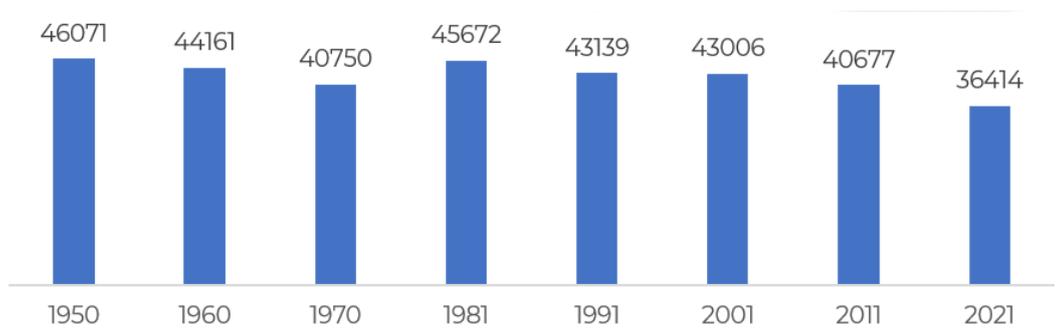
Figure 2. Sectors of economic activity in the municipality of Tomar with the higher number of enterprises



Source: INE.

Like many rural areas in Portugal, the municipality of Tomar has faced challenges such as population decline and ageing demographics. According to Figure 3, Tomar has seen a significant decrease in population over the past few decades, coupled with an increase in the proportion of elderly residents. These trends pose a threat to the sustainability of local communities and economies.

**Figure 3. Demographic evolution of Tomar between years 1950 and 2021**



Source: PORDATA.

The Bons Sons Festival has played a crucial role in reversing some of these trends by attracting visitors and generating economic activity. Local businesses, particularly in the accommodation and

food service sectors, have benefited from increased demand during the festival period. Moreover, the festival's emphasis on Portuguese music and culture helps to preserve and promote the region's cultural heritage.

In conclusion, the Bons Sons Festival serves as a compelling example of how cultural events can drive socioeconomic revitalization in rural areas. By combining cultural celebration with community development, Bons Sons has transformed Cem Soldos into a vibrant cultural hub, offering valuable insights for similar initiatives in other regions.

## 5. Results

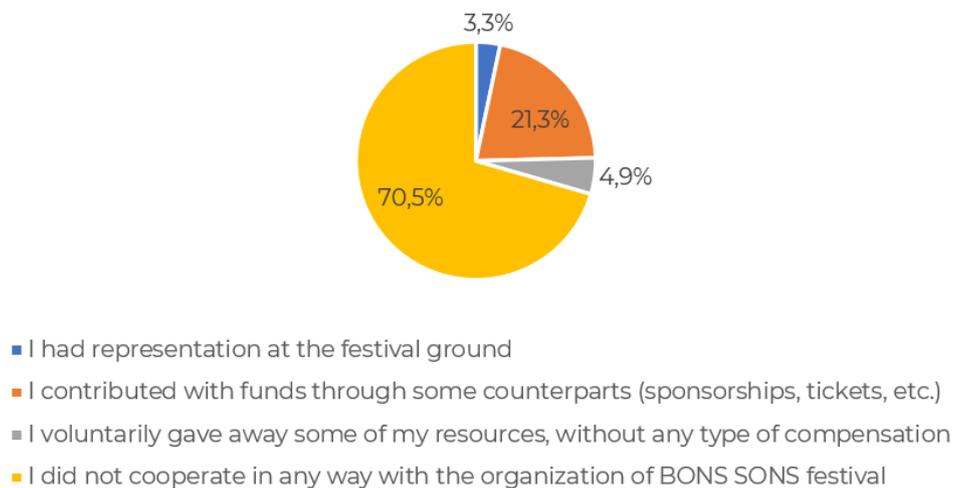
This study explores the socioeconomic impact of the Bons Sons Festival on the village of Cem Soldos, focusing on its potential to revitalise and develop rural communities. The results derive from a combination of surveys, semi-structured interviews, and statistical analysis. These results are categorised into three main areas: survey findings, regression analysis, and interview insights.

### 5.1 Survey findings

The survey was sent to 190 enterprises and was answered by 61 local businesses (response rate of 32.1%). The majority representing the accommodation and food service activities sector (52.2%), followed by wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (21.3%), and other service activities (11.5%).

Figure 4. Ways local businesses collaborated with BONS SONS festival organization

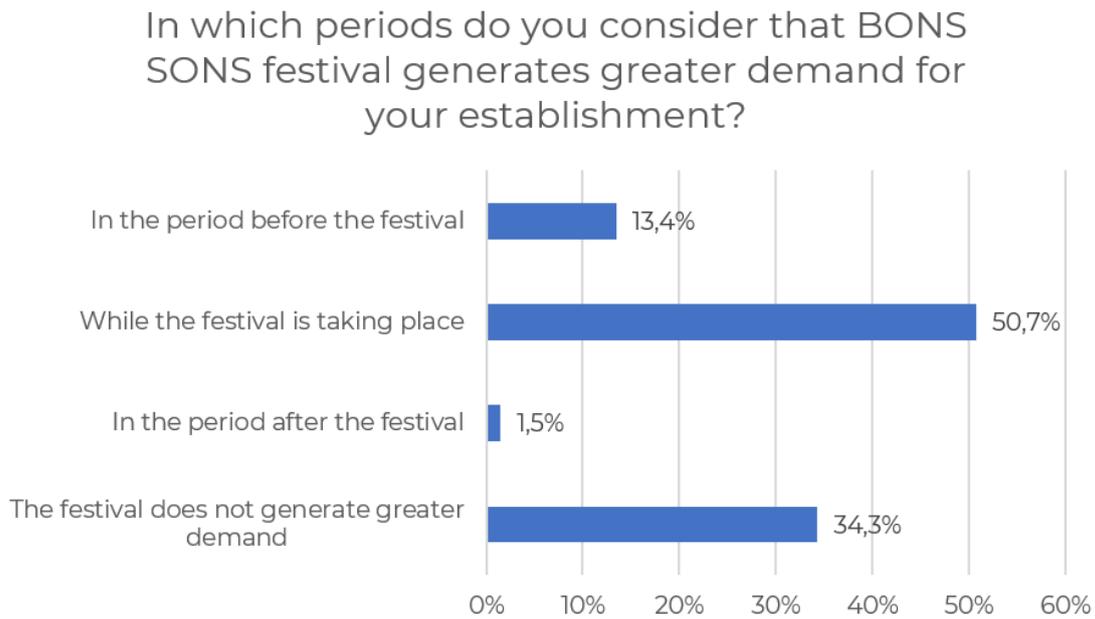
In what ways did you collaborate with the organization of BONS SONS festival?



Source: Own Elaboration.

The survey revealed that 50.7% of local businesses experienced increased demand during the festival (Figure 5). Despite this, 70.5% of businesses reported not having collaborated with the festival organization in any significant way. Among those who did collaborate, contributions mainly took the form of sponsorships or providing services during the festival (Figure 4).

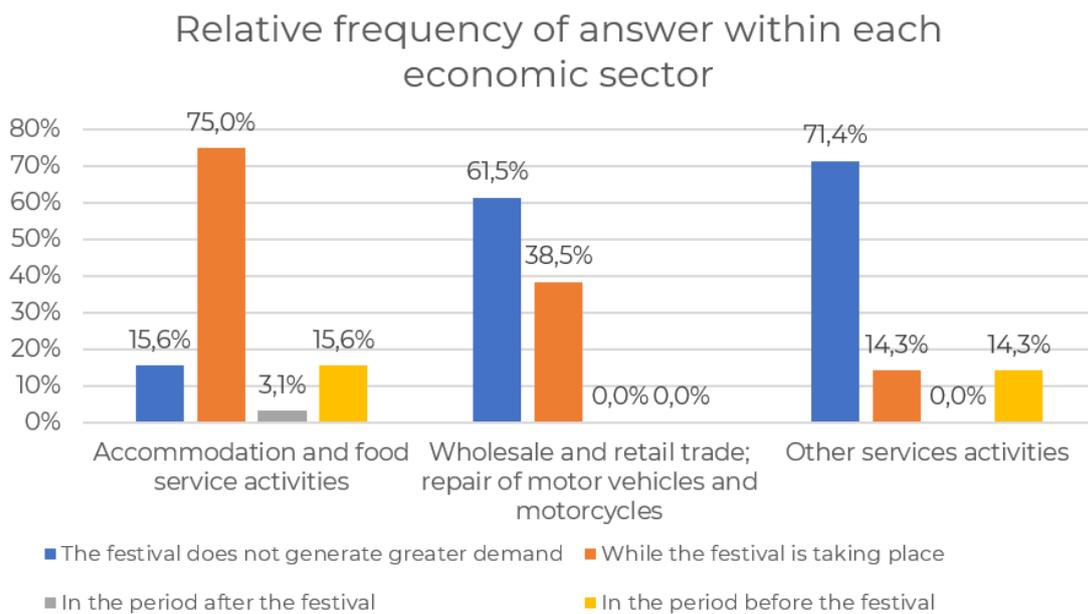
Figure 5. Periods in which festival generates greater demand



Source: Own Elaboration.

When examining the period of increased demand, it is evident that the accommodation and food service activities sector benefited the most. 75% of businesses in this sector reported a higher demand during the festival, compared to 38.5% in the wholesale and retail trade sector and 28.6% in other services (Figure 6).

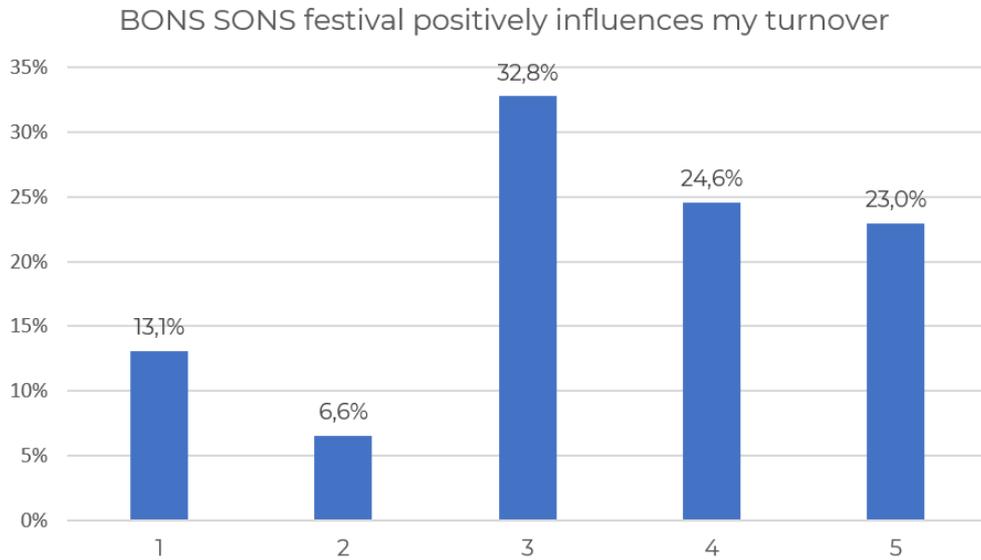
Figure 6. In which periods do you consider that BONS SONS festival generates greater demand for your establishment? Comparison by economic activity



Source: Own Elaboration.

47.6% of respondents agreed that the festival positively influenced their turnover, with the accommodation and food service activities sector again showing the highest positive response (Figure 7).

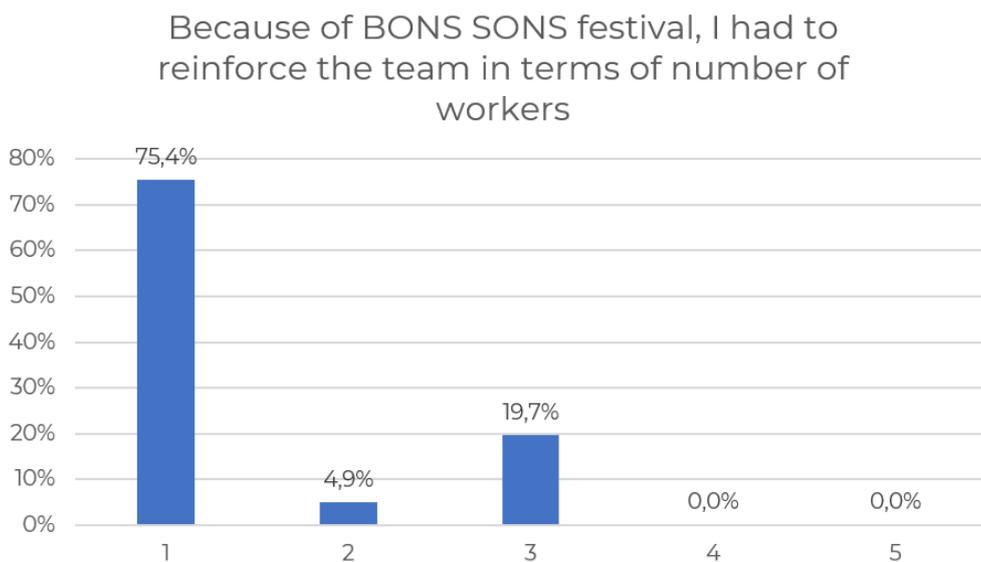
Figure 7. Assessing BONS SONS festival positive influence on turnover



Remark: Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 correspond to a Likert scale of agreement, where (1) represents "Totally disagree", (2) "Disagree", (3) "Neither agree nor disagree", (4) "Agree", and (5) "Totally agree".  
Source: Own Elaboration.

However, it is noteworthy that 80.3% of businesses did not need to reinforce their teams in terms of additional workers, indicating that while demand increased, it was manageable within existing staffing levels (Figure 8).

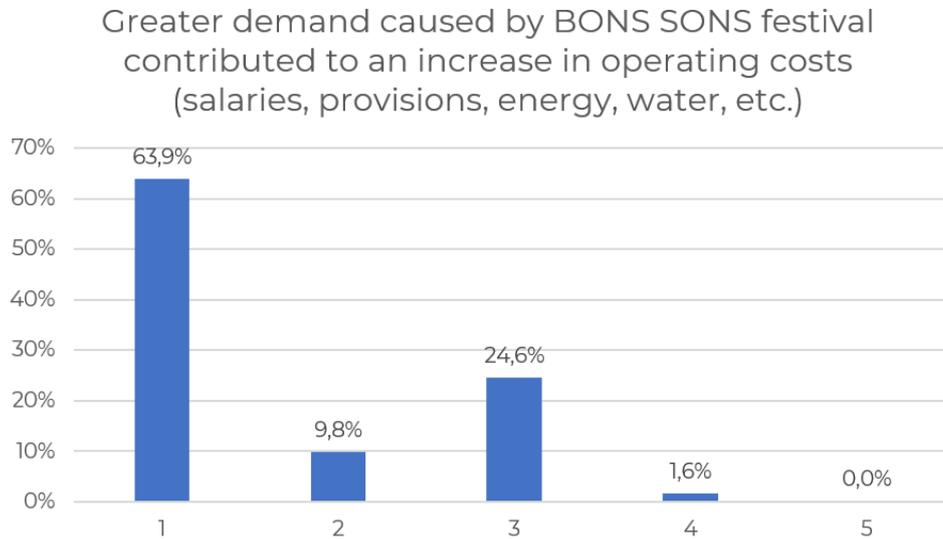
Figure 8. Assessing if local businesses had to reinforce their team



Remark: Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 correspond to a Likert scale of agreement, where (1) represents "Totally disagree", (2) "Disagree", (3) "Neither agree nor disagree", (4) "Agree", and (5) "Totally agree".  
Source: Own Elaboration.

The same can be seen in terms of the operational costs, as 73.8% of the respondents did not experience any increase (Figure 9).

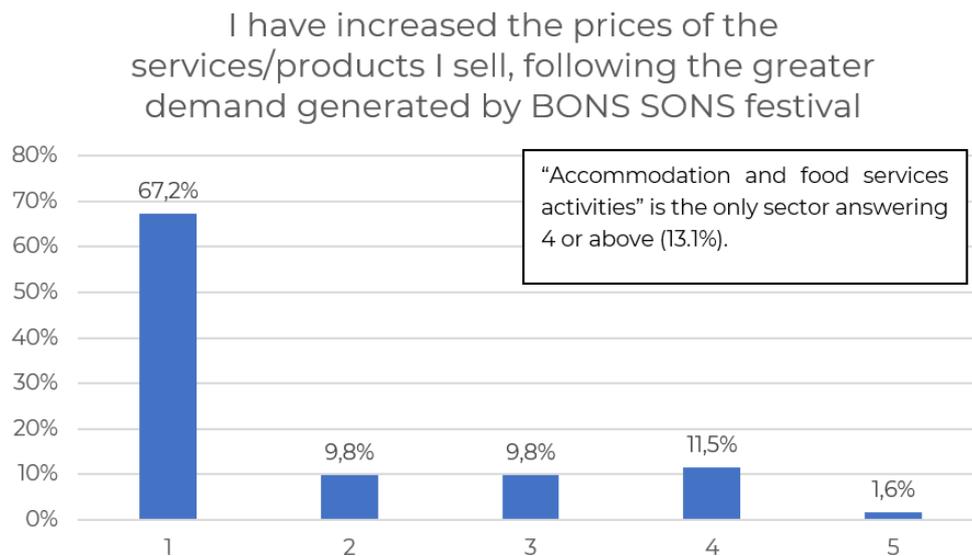
Figure 9. Assessing if the festival contributed to increasing operating costs



Remark: Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 correspond to a Likert scale of agreement, where (1) represents “Totally disagree”, (2) “Disagree”, (3) “Neither agree nor disagree”, (4) “Agree”, and (5) “Totally agree”.  
Source: Own Elaboration.

In line with what was previously observed, most local businesses (77%) did not increase the prices of their services or products. The few businesses that did increase prices were exclusively in the accommodation and food service activities sector (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Assessing if local businesses increased their prices, following a greater demand

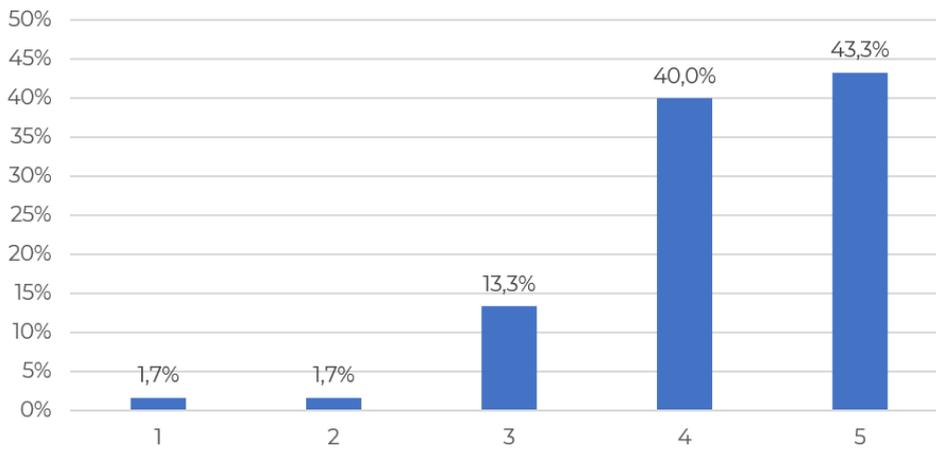


Remark: Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 correspond to a Likert scale of agreement, where (1) represents “Totally disagree”, (2) “Disagree”, (3) “Neither agree nor disagree”, (4) “Agree”, and (5) “Totally agree”.  
Source: Own Elaboration.

An overwhelming 83.3% of respondents believe the festival positively impacts the local economy (Figure 11), with 95.1% agreeing that it contributes positively to Tomar’s image (Figure 12). This suggests that the festival not only boosts economic activity but also enhances the cultural and social profile of the area.

Figure 11. Assessing if the festival positively impacts the local economy

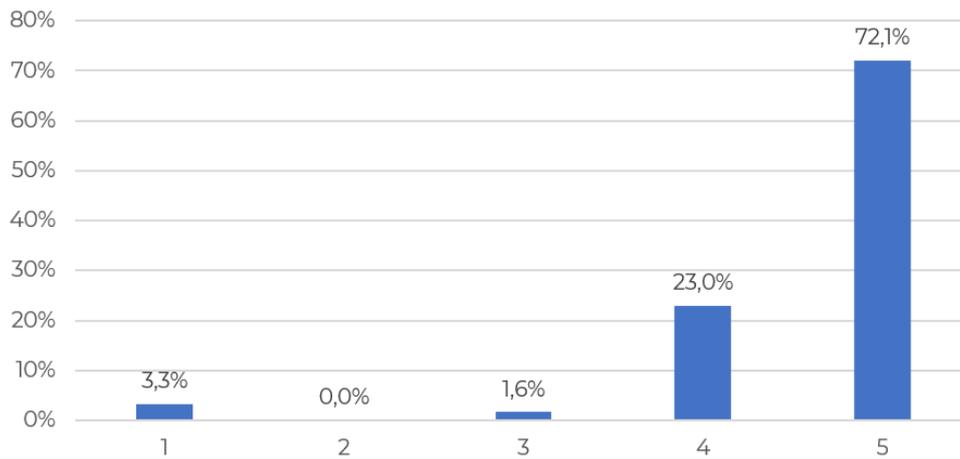
BONS SONS festival positively impacts the local economy



Remark: Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 correspond to a Likert scale of agreement, where (1) represents “Totally disagree”, (2) “Disagree”, (3) “Neither agree nor disagree”, (4) “Agree”, and (5) “Totally agree”.  
Source: Own Elaboration.

Figure 12. Assessing if BONS SONS contributes positively to Tomar’s image

BONS SONS festival contributes positively to the image of the municipality of Tomar



Remark: Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 correspond to a Likert scale of agreement, where (1) represents “Totally disagree”, (2) “Disagree”, (3) “Neither agree nor disagree”, (4) “Agree”, and (5) “Totally agree”.  
Source: Own Elaboration.

### 5.2 Regression Analysis

To further validate the survey findings and quantify the economic impact, two OLS regression models were estimated. These models examined the relationship between the number of festival visitors and local economic indicators, specifically employment and turnover in the accommodation and food service activities sector. The data was gathered for the years 2004 to 2019.

Table 4 provides a summary of the regression results, highlighting the significant predictors of local economic activity. There is a statistically significant relationship between the number of festival visitors and the number of employees<sup>4</sup> in the accommodation and food service activities sector (p-value < 0.10). Specifically, for every 419 festival visitors, one additional job is created, holding other variables constant.

Table 5 shows a similar significant relationship between the number of visitors and turnover in the same sector (p-value < 0.10). For each additional visitor, there is an estimated increase in turnover of €107.39, holding other factors constant.

Table 4. Results from regression model. Explained variable: number of employees

<b>Nemploy</b>	<b>Coef.</b>	<b>Std. Err.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>P &gt;  t </b>	<b>[95% conf. Interval]</b>	
<b>GDP</b>	3.860045	11.07094	0.35	0.734	-20.50693	28.22702
<b>unemployr</b>	-4.35593	6.359232	-0.68	0.508	-18.35251	9.640645
<b>inflationr</b>	-16.29903	14.55319	-1.12	0.287	-48.33037	15.73232
<b>nvisitors</b>	0.002383	0.0012829	1.86	0.09	-0.0004407	0.0052067
<b>_cons</b>	929.7408	77.73465	11.96	0	758.648	1100.834

\* All specifications are based on 16 observations

Table 5. Results from regression model. Explained variable: turnover

<b>Nemploy</b>	<b>Coef.</b>	<b>Std. Err.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>P &gt;  t </b>	<b>[95% conf. Interval]</b>	
<b>GDP</b>	110819.6	486589.4	0.23	0.824	-960156.5	1181796
<b>unemployr</b>	-872554	279500.6	-3.12	0.01	-1487731	-257377.3
<b>inflationr</b>	-598819.6	639640.8	-0.94	0.369	-2006660	809020.4
<b>nvisitors</b>	107.386	56.38684	1.9	0.083	-16.72057	231.4926
<b>_cons</b>	31700000	3416589	9.28	0	24200000	39200000

\* All specifications are based on 16 observations

<sup>4</sup> Employees with a work contract receiving remuneration; individuals without a work contract who do not receive regular pay (e.g., owner-managers, unpaid family members, active cooperative members; personnel from other companies/institutions working for the company and directly paid by it; individuals temporarily absent for up to one month due to vacations, labor conflicts, professional training, illness, or work accidents.

These results validate what was previously suggested by the survey regarding the increase in turnover. However, they also hint at more employment being generated. Given the 35,000 visitors limit, one can conclude that around 83 jobs are created annually.

### 5.3 Interview Insights

The semi-structured interviews conducted with members of Bons Sons Festival Organization and two residents provide an in-depth understanding of the festival's impact on Cem Soldos. These interviews reveal key insights into the social, cultural, and economic effects of the festival, while also highlighting certain challenges and social costs associated with its growth.

Interviews with residents and festival organizers, as well as surveys of local businesses, indicate that Bons Sons has had a positive impact on the local economy and community. The festival not only boosts business turnover but also fosters a sense of community pride and cultural preservation. Statistical analysis further supports these findings, showing a significant correlation between festival attendance and economic indicators such as employment and business revenue in the local hospitality sector.

#### 5.3.1 Sociodemographic profile

The sociodemographic profile of the interviewees is diverse, encompassing different generations and roles within the community. This diversity helps to capture a wide range of perspectives on the festival's impact. Table 6 summarises the key sociodemographic characteristics of the interviewees.

Table 6. Sociodemographic profile of interviewees

Interviewee	Connection to Festival
<b>Organising Committee</b>	Key organiser
<b>Local Resident</b>	Participant and long-term resident
<b>Former Resident</b>	Participant and former resident

Source: Own Elaboration.

#### 5.3.2 Addressing rural challenges

The interviews confirmed that rural regions face significant challenges, such as population decline, ageing demographics, and difficulties in maintaining critical services. The youngest interviewee states that he was forced to move to a bigger city, for lacking job opportunities in the county, within his field of studies:

“Unfortunately, we are often forced to come to large urban centres (...). Within my professional area, and given the opportunities there are in the region, it is very difficult to find anything with potential, and that gives me the capacity to grow. Here in Lisbon, it's totally different.” (Former resident)

The struggle of keeping critical services, as pointed by Connell & McManus (2011) was also something this case has proved to be true, with the attempt, in 2014, of shutting down the primary school of Cem Soldos, due to lack of students. But it was just that: an attempt. The festival organization, which

is the community, joined forces to create an alternative project – *Escola-Aldeia* –, which resulted in the survival of the school. The same happens with other social projects, as previously seen with *Lar-Aldeia*, that Bons Sons festival helps on leveraging, as stressed several times during the interviews:

“In 2014 (...) to close primary schools all over the country, and Cem Soldos was suddenly experiencing that. (...) we realized (...) the school was losing children (...) and we were only going to have one class the following year. Now, we have two. (...) Communicating the school, trying to create an alternative and differentiating project that would live from the logic of the relationship between the village and the people... It was a process.” (Organising committee member)

“(...) we also managed to make the other parallel activities survive, namely the ATL, and the school itself. (...) we even had to reinforce our teams, to maintain the quality of services. (...) like the Lar-Aldeia project (...) is basically to create a nursing-home in the village, without it being physical. The nursing home is people’s own home (...). We also want to create a nursing service, delivery and administration of medicines, psychological support.” (Former Resident)

“(...) there are things in Cem Soldos that have changed and that have had (...) some leverage with Bons Sons. (...) For example, we have a health centre, but we are the ones who keep the doctor coming. This is because SCOCS annually spends the necessary funds to maintain the building, cleaning, water, light, etc. (...) Lar-Aldeia project, that is, people end up being accompanied without needing another type of follow-up, such as real nursing homes (...)” (Local resident)

### 5.3.3 Enhanced liveability and local image

The festival has significantly enhanced the liveability and image of Cem Soldos. Even businesses that do not directly benefit financially acknowledged the positive impact on the village’s reputation.

Getz (2019) suggests that enhanced liveability is one of the KIIIs of holding an event, under the built environment category, as well as local image creation. This can convey the message to prospective visitors, businesses, and migrants that the area in question constitutes a good place to live, as pointed by Felsenstein & Fleischer (2003), given its affluence in cultural amenities. It appears this case checks all the boxes. Even local businesses that do not benefit financially from the festival seem to agree that Bons Sons as contributed to a positive image of Tomar. Also, not only was the festival able to place Cem Soldos on the map, but it was also able to attract new residents to the village. This can be due to SCOCS’s being so aware of the village needs, and constantly acting upon it:

“In fact (...) those young families my age, who have children and who were in other cities, are now returning. They are building houses here (...)” (Organising committee member)

“We have a lot of people wanting to come and live in Cem Soldos. Actually, I don’t think there are any houses available for rent or sale right now.” (Former resident)

“(...) I would say we have around 20% more people looking for Cem Soldos to reside permanently. (...) There are people from outside, people who come to Bons Sons and get to know Cem Soldos and gain some sort of affinity, who then want to come and live in Cem Soldos.” (Local resident)

Looking at the social benefits KIIIs (see table 7 for a summary), it is perceptible how proud they feel about this project and everything else the association does. All these aspects are visibly appreciated by the community. This may be the factor that leads them to contribute voluntarily for the edification of this project. There is a feeling of reciprocity. They give but get something in return:

“The second one is volunteering (...). The fact that the entire village is mobilised to build a collective project (...). We are occupying (...) backyards, houses, the dressing rooms are people’s houses, the reception of the teams is done in people’s houses, the backyards are occupied for food preparation (...). A village with 650 people, which

has 400 volunteers. (...) in terms of merchandising, we have local sewing groups that do the merchandising (...). Even at the catering level, we have our own catering services. They are teams of improvised village cooks who peel, cook, and stir the pot (...)" (Organising committee member).

"(...) we are a voluntary association, and everything we want to earn is for the benefit of the community. (...) it lives a lot through that logic of friends of friends, who help their friends. (...) we really like (and in a way, it's our payment) to hear good things about our village, to hear good things about the festival we organize..." (Former resident)

"Let's say that the montage/assembly is practically (but not exclusively) secured by the community. (...) practically 80% of the people from Cem Soldos are helping, whether serving beers, selling tickets, or being at the box office. (...) Whenever it is possible to unite the community for a common goal, people tend to give a little bit of themselves, to contribute with ideas, work, with effort... From the joint participation of all, something new always emerges, something richer always emerges." (Local resident)

Apart from that, Cem Soldos has more leisure opportunities, greater frequency of cultural activity and intergenerational interactions where one learns from the other. Social capital formation is one clear phenomenon happening in this village. The organising committee member does not feel comfortable on drawing a direct relation between Bons Sons and the increase of the cultural offer in Tomar. Rather, he prefers to say that new events and opportunities emerging there are "the result of joint work for the growth of the region." However, the former resident targeted new places and events that emerged after Bons Sons, saying other neighbouring villages in the county felt "spurred" by Cem Soldos dynamics. He trusts Bons Sons was one of the main drivers:

"The dynamics of SCOCs gained strength, gained visibility, gained impact and strategic relevance, due to the existence of Bons Sons. (...) I am sure that the events emerging in Tomar, and their dynamics and strength, are also the result of joint work for the growth of the region." (Organising committee member)

"(...) since 2006, there has always been more and more offers. (...) creation of new spaces, namely, next to Levada, you have the Cultural Complex of Levada, which is a very fun cultural space, in Tomar, near the river. The cinema itself was also rehabilitated and in terms of its offer, it has been improving little by little. (...) Now, we also have neighbouring villages holding music festivals too, although other types of festivals. (...) I think Bons Sons was one of the main drivers (...)." (Former resident)

"Our association has activities (I don't want to say daily, but), weekly or biweekly. We support several sports, which are activities that usually weigh heavily on the association's account. (...) this way, they have a series of sports, cultural activities, etc., that cost us (of course) but that we keep with great pleasure, because we keep the village running." (Local resident)

Table 7. Social Benefits of Bons Sons Festival

Social Benefit	Description
<b>Community Pride</b>	High level of community involvement and pride
<b>Cultural Preservation</b>	Promotion and preservation of Portuguese music and culture
<b>Increased Leisure Opportunities</b>	More frequent cultural activities and intergenerational interactions
<b>Social Capital Formation</b>	Enhanced social cohesion and volunteerism

Source: Own Elaboration.

### 5.3.4 Efforts to maintain community identity

SCOCS also makes efforts to preserve the identity of the village and the festival, as the increasing “demand” and media coverage could lead to a shift from a community festival to a commercial one, as suggested by Senior & Danson (1998). To prevent the festival from becoming overly commercial, the organizers have implemented measures such as limiting visitor numbers, from 2019 edition onwards. In 2018, they understood the festival was too crowded, the means to lose what better characterizes it, and as such, measures were taken to prevent the distortion of what they what to “convey as a village”:

“(…) in the months after Bons Sons, we insisted on communication that in the next edition there was going to be a limit. This limit remains at 35.000 people. We realized that the village has a capacity, it has a physical limit that cannot be exceeded, otherwise we are distorting what we want to convey as a village, and the image of a dynamic village.” (Organising committee member)

“(…) people have a very strong sense of belonging.” (Former Resident)

“(…) Ladies aged 80 and over make their geckos there (the festival's mascot) and that's it. It's a way to keep people active, with the feeling that they are being useful, and where their work and contribution is appreciated. (...) I'm retired, and I finally have my time completely available. Why not help? (...) Creating conditions so that the elderly do not feel marginalized, or put aside, and making them feel useful... All these, of course, are ideas that 15/20 years ago did not exist. (...) I am delighted to realize that the ideas these people are having, and some of them much younger than me, are valid ideas.” (Local resident)

### 5.3.5 Social costs and challenges

Despite its many benefits, the festival also brings certain social costs. Issues such as social disharmony and volunteer burnout were mentioned, although these do not appear to be representative of the population of Cem Soldos, as the exhaustion mentioned by the villagers does not seem to impact their will to continue collaborating with the organization:

“Imagine staging a festival in a village context, and a week before the start, everything is looking like a mess. This has an impact. The fact that the generator is next to that house, where that person lives. (...) These dynamics, like Bons Sons festival, deplete the village a lot in terms of manpower and all that, and the structure is very exhausting.” (Organising committee member)

“It's a very, very small portion, in our village, that dislikes and criticizes the way the festival is organized. (...) They feel affected by the noise. (...) We have a lot of ups and downs during setups and during the festival itself, and then suddenly there's a void. (...) Getting your ideas back for the festival and the future... It takes a lot longer, you know?!” (Former resident)

“It's a month of a lot of activity, confusion, machines, noise... 99% of the people enjoy it. (...) however, one or two percent of people who don't like that. (...) for the people who live in the village, it is for many hours on those days. Some can't sleep until the noise stops, which happens around 4am (...)” (Local resident)

### 5.3.6 Cultural and economic impact

Regarding culture KIIs, cultural capital formation is an aspect that seems to happen, almost involuntarily. People are stimulated to be participative, and to contribute with ideas. The skills acquired, especially the youngest, make them more outgoing and creative people, surely with other posture, making them stand out from the crowd. The former resident, for example, points that he managed to get a job in his area of studies through the festival:

“(…) we aim to have groups of young people working (…) to create other events, so that later, during Bons Sons, they realize they have a direct responsibility in the festival. (…) ‘Ok, Cem Soldos has already given so much to Portuguese music, now what are we going to be able to give? What area are we going to dedicate ourselves to, to give to the country, to the region, so that this area can develop?’ (Organising committee member)

“(…) we ended up being a ‘jack of all trades’. We helped with the assembly, disassembly, and answering phone calls… (…) at a professional level, I think it gives us a lot of soft skills. Since we were kids, we’ve been involved in the association, in its activities throughout the year (…) and that allows us, in a way, to shape our profile as people. (…) It was thanks to Bons Sons that I got my current job. (…) I also know more people who worked in various specific areas at the festival, and then, later, got jobs in those same areas.” (Former Resident)

“The introduction of younger people, in the organization’s board, with aptitudes more focused on the artistic sector, more culturally (…) and socially oriented, brought great changes. (…) I sometimes participate in some meetings (…) and I understand the urge of these people to praise the work that has been done by doing more and better. (…) everyone has a say.” (Local resident)

Bons Sons festival also promotes the interaction of the villagers with people from other backgrounds, with other ideas and perspectives of the world, which results in an increasing tolerance and acceptance of difference. This is also true for new artists coming to the festival, since the community has a unique opportunity to get to know them, to listen to them, without leaving their locality:

“When we have more people, the probability of finding differences (…) is greater. (…) It is incredible to realize that we will welcome and be with people who are completely different from us, with different beliefs, with different perspectives on how to live life, with visions of the future that are completely different from ours. This represents an opportunity for working on our tolerance, respect, and appreciation of difference.” (Organising committee member)

“If there was no festival, most would never attend a concert by the artists who come here. (…) Bons Sons was like an injection of culture, knowledge… Brought the need to diversity the offer… And also, somehow, it brought other ways of seeing the village, from a social point a view.” (Local resident)

As seen before, the festival relies heavily on volunteering, meaning it does not generate a lot of direct employment. But despite that, from both interviews and quantitative data, Bons Sons leverages benefits for local businesses, something the literature attributed to economic KIIs (see Table 8 for a summary). From the regression model, one learned that around 80 jobs are created annually in the county because of staging the festival, although these results should be read carefully. As stated in the interviews, for example, there is a part of the merchandising that requires some scale and for that reason, is done by a local company. Some services are also outsourced, and spaces sublet during the festival, and the organization seems concerned about preserving the ‘Produced locally’ stamp:

“There is part of the merchandising that we sell on a greater scale, so we have local companies that do this type of service for us (...). This is also true at the catering level and the leather goods fair. (...) We also sublet the spaces that are usually occupied by local restaurants and fairgrounds, (...) which ultimately also helps to boost the local economy (...).” (Organising committee member)

“(…) at the local level there is an audio company, which deals with the propagation of sound through the village, and it’s from there”. (Local resident)

Interviews also confirmed what the literature (Tindall, 2011) and the data collected from the survey suggest, which is the “accommodation and food services activities” sector is the one which benefits the most from the festival, even though the sample size is not statistically representative of the population:

“(…) even hotels get completely crowded (…). For local restaurants and cafes is the same. (…) Bons Sons is a breath of fresh air, even for local businesses (e.g., shops, cafes, and others).” (Organising committee member)

Given, however, the available infrastructures in Tomar, it is possible to understand that a few leakages happen, at least, at two levels. First, it's not possible to resort exclusively to companies from Tomar, for building the festival. There are some services that simply cannot be found locally, which results in outsourcing from elsewhere:

“(…) there is one or another service (…) for legal reasons, or for the continuity of the work (…) that requires some compensation in terms of safety, and health (…). So, these teams come from elsewhere (…).” (Organising committee member)

“For the assembly of the stages, for example, we have to hire. We rent the stages, which also include the assembly. (…) We make use of the companies that do the communication. (…) We have to have a series of infrastructures that, at the local level, can be hard to find.” (Local resident)

Another aspect has to do with the lack of amenities in the county to meet the demand. Visitors need to go to neighbouring municipalities, since they simply cannot find available accommodation:

“Some people send emails, 2 or 3 weeks before the festival (…) asking ‘Do you still have accommodation in the village?’ and we say ‘No!’. Then they ask ‘and in Tomar?’ and we say ‘maybe not even there. Maybe you have to go to Vila Nova da Barquinha, Entroncamento, Torres Novas, Ferreira do Zêzere. You need to try other places.’” (Organising committee member)

Leakages seem to be mainly direct, as Yu & Douglas (2000) suggest it would, especially in rural areas. Besides, since none of the survey respondents indicated having experienced an increase in their operational costs, assessing supplier's geography was irrelevant. As such, with this study, “secondary” and “induced” leakages were not verifiable to draw conclusions.

The long-term impacts of the festival extend beyond the immediate economic benefits. The festival leverages other social projects run by SCOCS, creating new permanent job opportunities and enhancing the community's overall quality of life. These findings suggest that the long-term benefits of the festival may outweigh the more visible short-term impacts. Most studies only assess the short-run impact of the event, which is more visible. However, in this case, it seems the long-run impact outweighs the one more observable in the short-run:

“I know that our association has grown, also in terms of employees, and Bons Sons has helped in this regard. (…) it led to the hiring of new people for the ATL.” (Former resident)

“(…) we have an ATL, the association has employees whom it pays monthly (if memory serves, I believe 9). (…) Look, a non-profit association, which already has this number of fixed employees... They are not fixed-term contracts, they are permanent employees, with all the costs that this means.” (Local resident)

Also, and as the literature foreseen, if the impact of the festival turns out to have a positive impact, it can attract local council support and sponsors (Gibson & Connell, 2012) which, from the analysis of the case, is also proven to be true. However, it only represents 20% of the total budget.

“We are supported by Turismo do Centro, (…) by the city council of Tomar, (…) by INATEL. (…) the festival lives on 80% of its revenues. Then you have the sponsors part (…), but it represents only 20% of the investment. (…) we live a lot of what is the ticket office, (…) of the spaces we sublet, of what is our food services and our ability to generate revenue.” (Organising committee member)

“(…) thanks to the festival as well, our square will undergo some work, so our ‘face’ will get some improvements.” (Former resident)

Table 8. Economic benefits of BONS SONS festival

<b>Economic Benefit</b>	<b>Description</b>
Increased Business Turnover	Higher revenue for local accommodation and food services
Job Creation	Approximately 80 jobs created annually
Long-Term Support for Projects	Funding for ongoing community initiatives

Source: Own Elaboration.

## 6. Discussion of results

The results of this study indicate that the Bons Sons Festival has a profound and multifaceted impact on the village of Cem Soldos. By examining the survey findings, regression analysis, and interview insights, we can discuss the broader implications of these outcomes in the context of rural revitalization through cultural events.

### 6.1 Economic, cultural and social impact

The Bons Sons Festival demonstrates that music festivals can indeed revitalise rural communities. The festival not only boosts the local economy but also fosters social and cultural benefits. The economic benefits of the Bons Sons Festival are significant, particularly for local businesses in the accommodation and food service sectors (see Table 8). Survey results show that 50.7% of local businesses experienced increased demand during the festival, with notable positive impacts on turnover. The regression analysis further supports these findings, demonstrating a statistically significant relationship between the number of festival visitors and both employment and business turnover. Specifically, each additional visitor contributes to an increase in local business revenue and job creation. This aligns with existing literature suggesting that festivals can drive economic growth by attracting visitors and increasing spending in the local economy (Gibson & Connell, 2012).

However, it is important to note that not all businesses benefit equally. While the accommodation and food service sectors see the most significant gains, other sectors do not experience the same level of impact. This disparity highlights the need for targeted strategies to ensure that the economic benefits of the festival are more evenly distributed across different business types.

Moreover, the festival generates significant secondary economic effects by encouraging local spending. Festivalgoers contribute to the local economy not just through direct expenditures on accommodation and food but also by shopping at local businesses and using other services. This creates a ripple effect, enhancing overall economic vitality.

The Bons Sons Festival plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting Portuguese cultural heritage. By featuring predominantly Portuguese artists and involving the local community in its organization, the festival fosters a strong sense of cultural identity and pride among residents. This cultural preservation is essential for maintaining the unique character of Cem Soldos and countering the homogenising effects of globalization (Connell & McManus, 2011).

Social benefits include increased volunteerism, intergenerational interactions, and the preservation and promotion of local culture. Interviews with residents and organizers reveal a high level of community involvement and a sense of reciprocity, where residents feel they give to the festival but also receive significant benefits in return. This mutual support system strengthens social bonds and fosters a collaborative spirit, which is crucial for the sustainability of community initiatives (Putnam, 2000).

The festival also plays a crucial role in cultural capital formation. By showcasing Portuguese music and involving the community in the organization and execution of the event, Bons Sons promotes

cultural exchange and learning. This cultural engagement helps preserve local traditions while introducing new cultural elements, enriching the community's cultural landscape.

## 6.2 Challenges and sustainability

Despite its many benefits, the festival also presents challenges. One of the main issues is managing the influx of visitors while preserving the village's character. The organizers have implemented measures such as limiting visitor numbers to prevent the festival from becoming overly commercial and disruptive. This balance between growth and maintaining the festival's original spirit is essential for its long-term sustainability (Senior & Danson, 1998).

Moreover, the festival faces potential social costs, such as volunteer burnout and social disharmony. Volunteer burnout is a significant issue, as the festival relies heavily on community members for its execution. Ensuring a steady stream of motivated volunteers requires addressing factors such as workload, recognition, and community support. While these issues are not widespread, they highlight the need for strategies to support volunteers and mitigate conflict within the community. Ensuring that the benefits of the festival are perceived as outweighing the costs is crucial for maintaining community support and participation.

Sustainable funding is another critical challenge. While the festival generates revenue through ticket sales and local sponsorships, securing long-term financial stability requires diversifying funding sources and building strong partnerships with local businesses and governmental organizations.

Overall, the success of the Bons Sons Festival is attributed to strong community involvement, effective organization, and the ability to attract diverse audiences. This case study provides valuable insights for other rural communities considering similar initiatives, highlighting the importance of community engagement, sustainable practices, and comprehensive impact assessment.

## 6.3 Implications for rural revitalization

The reluctance of interviewees to scale the impacts of Bons Sons beyond Cem Soldos provides an interesting perspective on the festival's community-centred benefits. This focus on localised advantages underscores the importance of cultural initiatives being deeply rooted in and aligned with the needs of the hosting community. While the festival's impacts may extend to the broader Tomar municipality, these are perceived as secondary to the transformative effects within Cem Soldos itself. This observation highlights the value of understanding how community identity shapes the perception and reception of cultural initiatives. Future studies could further explore the mechanisms through which localised impacts influence broader regional dynamics.

The Bons Sons Festival offers valuable insights into how cultural events can contribute to rural revitalization. By boosting the local economy, preserving cultural heritage, and enhancing social cohesion, the festival demonstrates that cultural events can be powerful tools for regional development. However, the success of such initiatives depends on careful planning and community involvement to address potential challenges and ensure sustainable growth.

Future research could explore the long-term impacts of the festival on Cem Soldos and compare its outcomes with other rural festivals to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to successful rural revitalization through cultural events.

## 7. Conclusions

The Bons Sons Festival stands as a compelling case study of how cultural events can serve as catalysts for rural revitalization. This research highlights several key findings that underscore the festival's significant economic, cultural, and social impacts on the village of Cem Soldos.

The economic benefits of the Bons Sons Festival are evident, particularly for local businesses in

the accommodation and food service sectors. Survey results and regression analysis confirm that the festival generates substantial revenue and job creation for the local economy. Each additional visitor not only boosts business turnover but also contributes to employment, highlighting the festival's role as an economic driver. These findings support the notion that cultural events can be instrumental in stimulating local economies, especially in rural areas facing economic stagnation.

The festival's focus on Portuguese music and culture plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting local heritage. By featuring predominantly Portuguese artists and engaging the community in its organization, the festival fosters a strong sense of cultural identity and pride among residents. This cultural preservation is vital for maintaining the unique character of Cem Soldos and ensuring that the village's traditions are celebrated and passed down to future generations.

Socially, the Bons Sons Festival enhances community cohesion and volunteerism. The high level of community involvement in organising and running the festival fosters a strong sense of belonging and mutual support among residents. This collaborative spirit is essential for the sustainability of community initiatives and the overall well-being of the village. The festival's support for social projects like Escola-Aldeia and Lar-Aldeia further underscores its positive impact on community development.

While the festival brings numerous benefits, it also faces challenges that need to be addressed to ensure its long-term sustainability. Managing the influx of visitors and preventing the festival from becoming overly commercial are critical issues that the organizers must navigate. Measures such as limiting visitor numbers are essential to preserving the festival's original character and maintaining community support. Moreover, potential social costs like volunteer burnout and social disharmony highlight the need for ongoing strategies to support the community and mitigate any negative impacts. Ensuring that the benefits of the festival continue to outweigh the costs is crucial for sustaining community involvement and enthusiasm.

The findings from this study have important implications for policymakers, festival organizers, and community leaders. Policymakers should consider supporting cultural events as part of broader rural development strategies, recognising their potential to drive economic growth and community revitalization. Festival organizers can learn from the Bons Sons experience, emphasising the importance of community involvement, cultural preservation, and sustainable growth. Community leaders can also draw on these insights to foster similar initiatives that leverage cultural events for local development. The success of the Bons Sons Festival illustrates that with careful planning and strong community engagement, cultural events can significantly contribute to the revitalization of rural areas.

Future research should explore the long-term impacts of the Bons Sons Festival on Cem Soldos and its surrounding areas. Comparative studies with other rural festivals could provide a broader understanding of the factors that contribute to successful rural revitalization through cultural events. Additionally, investigating the potential spill-over effects on neighbouring regions could offer insights into the wider regional benefits of such festivals.

In conclusion, the Bons Sons Festival exemplifies how music festivals can serve as effective tools for rural revitalization. By generating economic benefits, preserving cultural heritage, and enhancing social cohesion, the festival has transformed Cem Soldos into a vibrant cultural hub. These findings provide valuable lessons for similar initiatives worldwide, demonstrating that cultural events can play a crucial role in fostering regional development and community well-being. The success of the Bons Sons Festival underscores the potential for cultural events to serve as engines of economic and social renewal, particularly in rural areas facing significant challenges. The festival's model of community involvement, cultural emphasis, and strategic growth offers a blueprint for other rural areas seeking revitalization through cultural means. The enduring impact of the Bons Sons Festival on Cem Soldos provides a hopeful vision for the future of rural development, highlighting the power of culture to bring about positive change.

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