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Evaluation Report: Erasmus+ Training “Fundraising in Europe” (February–June 2025)

Introduction

From February to June 2025, the digital Erasmus+ training course “Fundraising in Europe” took place. The training included four half-day online workshops (a total of 16 hours) and was led by Dr. Marita Haibach. A total of 15 staff members from the Caritas associations in Vienna, Trieste, Bolzano, Alba Iulia, and Bonn as well as the Diocesan Caritas Association of Cologne participated. Thirteen participants completed the evaluation form afterward. The following is a detailed summary and analysis of their feedback.

Training Content

The training covered a broad spectrum of fundraising topics, with key content areas including:

- Fundamentals of fundraising (terms, principles, and ethics)
- Fundraising organization and markets (structuring fundraising within organizations, overview of donation markets)
- Forms and methods of fundraising (traditional and modern methods, e.g., appeal letters and online fundraising)
- Corporate partnerships and sponsorships
- Fundraising events (donor acquisition and retention through events)
- Major donor fundraising (identifying and stewarding major donors)
- Legacy giving (bequest and estate fundraising)
- Foundation fundraising (practical cooperation with foundations)
- Donor retention and acknowledgment (relationship building and donor appreciation)
- Reporting (transparency and accountability to donors)

Participant Feedback on Content

The survey results show that most topics were met with great interest. Almost all listed subjects were rated as interesting or very interesting by the majority. Fundamentals of fundraising, ethical aspects, as well as practical topics like appeal letters and donor retention were especially well received — nearly all participants found these highly relevant and helpful.

Some topics received more varied responses, likely reflecting the specific professional contexts of the respondents. For instance, areas such as corporate partnerships or legacy giving were rated as only moderately interesting by some. One comment noted that donor retention and acknowledgment were discussed too briefly toward the end of the training, although these were considered very important by several participants. Overall, the positive evaluations show that the content aligned well with the needs and interests of the participants.

Quality of Implementation

Organization and Technology: The organization and technical implementation of the digital training were rated very positively. Both the preparation and the execution of the online

seminars went smoothly. A large majority (12 out of 13) rated this aspect as high or very high, indicating stable video conferencing technology, good time management, and clear communication. Technical issues or organizational problems were hardly mentioned.

61.5% rated organization and technology as "very high", 30.8% as "high", and 7.7% as "medium".

Presentation Materials: The PowerPoint slides were also praised. Most participants rated their quality as high or very high. The slides were seen as visually appealing and informative, supporting the learning process effectively.

Delivery and Methods: The professional competence of the trainer, Dr. Marita Haibach, was unanimously rated very high. All feedback fell into the top category, indicating strong satisfaction with her expertise. The methodological delivery (didactics) was also mostly positive, though slightly more varied: while most found it satisfactory, three respondents rated it only as medium. Overall, her presentation style was described as clear and structured, and questions were competently addressed. The few lower ratings suggest a general desire for more active involvement in an online setting.

38.5% rated knowledge delivery as "very high", 46.2% as "high", and 15.4% as "medium". Practical examples were rated "very high" by 15.4%, "high" by 46.2%, and "medium" by 38.5%.

Practical Relevance: Feedback on practical application was more mixed. About half of the participants rated the training's relevance to their work as high or very high, stating they gained valuable and applicable insights. The others rated it as only medium or low. This suggests that not all content was equally relevant to everyone or easily transferable to their specific work environments. Country- or organization-specific factors likely played a role — some approaches feasible in one country (e.g., Germany) may not be directly applicable in others. Nonetheless, most agreed the knowledge provided a solid foundation for further developing fundraising within their organizations.

Collegial Exchange and Learning Atmosphere

The learning atmosphere was described as pleasant and collegial overall. Most participants felt that the digital format was conducive to learning. In the survey, 9 out of 13 rated the atmosphere as high or very high (70%). The international group setting was particularly appreciated, with participants valuing the exchange of knowledge and perspectives across countries. All feedback indicated that participants felt comfortable and respected.

Despite the positive atmosphere, some noted that collegial exchange was somewhat limited. Four respondents rated this aspect only as medium (30%). The digital format likely limited spontaneous conversation and informal networking, which might occur more naturally during in-person events. Some participants wished for more opportunities to interact directly and share experiences from their respective countries. Language was also a factor: the workshops were conducted in German, which may have been a barrier for non-native speakers, potentially limiting their participation. Nevertheless, the atmosphere remained respectful and friendly, with everyone showing openness and a willingness to learn from one another — a core goal of Erasmus+ projects.

Participant Comments and Criticism

Participants were able to provide additional comments in open-ended sections of the evaluation. Three main points emerged:

- *International Relevance:* Some noted that content was very Germany-centric. Certain examples and approaches weren't easily applicable for participants from other countries. This suggests that future international trainings should focus more on cross-border perspectives and transferable best practices.
- *Time Allocation:* Several participants felt that important topics like donor retention and acknowledgment were treated too briefly at the end. These were seen as particularly valuable.
- *Interactivity:* Multiple comments expressed a desire for more interactivity during the workshops. The virtual format likely limited spontaneous dialogue. For future online sessions, more interactive elements (e.g., breakout groups, discussions) were recommended — though this might require extending the total training time.

Conclusion

Overall, the digital Erasmus+ training “Fundraising in Europe” received very positive feedback. Most participants were satisfied with the content and gained valuable knowledge for their work. The trainer's expertise and the smooth organization were particularly praised. Despite some minor criticisms — especially regarding international applicability, time management at the end, and interactivity — participants found the training to be successful and enriching. In conclusion, the training met its objective: it provided solid knowledge in fundraising and promoted cross-border exchange among fundraising professionals in Europe.

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