

FOREWORD

Almost three years have passed since World Youth Day 2011 in Madrid, enough time to look back and learn from our successes as well as from our failures.

WYD's Communications Department has prepared this report in the hopes that it will be a tool for those who plan future World Youth Days, as well as other major events taking place in Madrid or other major European cities. We would like those who will work on similar projects in the future to take advantage of our experience so they will be able to imitate our successes and learn from our mistakes.

Certainly, the most important part of any World Youth Day is its religious aspect: the event is convened by the pope, attracts mainly believers, and its activities are designed to convey a spiritual message. But we should not forget that it requires a support system, which is the cornerstone of the entire event: tackling everything from lodging to transportation, logistics and volunteers.

This study will focus on only one of these areas of support: communications. We would like to share our experience – including the challenges and our decision-making criteria – with communications professionals (communications directors for companies and organizations, journalists, journalism professors and public relations specialists). Our objective is to present the lessons learned in the form of

a case study in order to contribute to the progress of public relations as a profession, and to Church communications in particular.

We are well aware that we have left out other relevant aspects of WYD such as infrastructure, liturgy and security. We hope our colleagues in charge of these aspects will publish similar studies; this report, however, will focus solely on communications.

Our starting point is the consideration that events are nothing more and nothing less than communication tools. Everything in an event is part of passing on a message, which may be a transcendent one as in WYD, or merely human, for example the theme of the recent Olympics in London. For instance, the Mayor of London explained that his reasons for taking up such a challenge was an effective tool in convincing the British of the importance of physical fitness, in improving the country's image, and reinforcing the pride of being Londoners. These three objectives, which fall under the category of communications, might have been achieved through advertising campaigns or through the media, but another way was chosen: an event.

Today, entertainment is a large element of communications, and many companies and organizations use events to explain who they are and what they do, both internally and externally. Event planning has come of age and has gained a place among other older disciplines such as corporate communications, media relations and crisis communications.

The bulk of this report is dedicated to outlining the WYD communications strategy, followed by details of the activities carried out during the event: social media, the website, media relations, marketing and promotion, etc. The criteria is objective: we will discuss topics related to communications even though other WYD departments handled them, and we will leave out tasks our department handled that were not related to communications.

In addition, we have added an introduction concerning WYD's identity so as to provide a context: its history, internal organization, etc. Also, we touch upon on the management of personnel and resources, which are critical in to an understanding of WYD, and where com-

munication was an indispensable element in decisions. In addition, transparency in these areas demonstrates the social responsibility of the Church with respect to society.

We strove to be objective in this report. This document is not a rose-colored memory of how marvelously everything turned out, nor is it a confession of how badly things went. Whenever possible, we refer to data and external experts; and if we do express opinions, it is so that the reader can put himself in our shoes. We have tried to humbly describe what we did well and what we did poorly. One learns more from one's errors than one's successes, even though it's not exactly fun to explore one's shortcomings.

Many people, including the head of each of the communications sections, contributed to this analysis with a report on their team's work: María José Abad, Daniel Arasa, Patricia Capa de Toca, Borja Ezcurra, Antonio Gallo, Kristen Gardner, María Gil-Casares, Gabriel González-Andrío, Marieta Jaureguizar, Ivo Leahy, Jorge Milán, Benja Paz, Montse Pérez, Mariano Rodríguez, Paula Rodríguez, Rafael Rubio, and Javier Sobrino. In this publication the editor has added to these reports and given them structure and uniformity of style.

This report is an abridged version of the original case study, edited by María José Abad, Yago de la Cierva and Rafael Rubio. This English-language version, translated by Susanna Pinto, includes the most relevant data from an international perspective. For more information about facts, figures and names, please consult the original.¹

We would like to end by thanking all those who worked so hard on World Youth Day, from the members of the organizing committee to the last volunteer out in a parking lot for buses. In particular, we would like to thank the communications team: it was wonderful to meet and work with such great people! They, along with the pilgrims, were the reason behind the success of World Youth Day 2011.

¹ María José Abad, Yago de la Cierva and Rafael Rubio, eds. *Así fue la JMJ y así se la contamos – Case study de un evento global*. Eunsa, Pamplona 2013.

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A special thanks to the School of Communications of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross that played quite an important role both in the planning process and in its implementation. Several professors offered their advice and even came to Madrid, along with a group of students, to take care of different communications projects: the Media Center, WYD radio, WYD television, etc.

And along with our thanks, we extend our apologies for not having made it better.

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