

Paulina Guzik

Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, WYD 2016 International Media
Director, coauthor of *WYD Krakow 2016, The Largest European Event of the
21st Century*

The legacy of World Youth Day (Why bother organizing a large Church event?)

1. Introduction

The minute World Youth Day (WYD) in Krakow was over, the press started to ask – so what are the fruits of the event: finances, numbers of people attending, countries represented, pilgrims at the final mass. Standing in front of the press any communications officer wrapping up World Youth Day needs to take a step back and comment: you don't grow plants by pulling them up. Plants grow slowly and the more you take care of them, the more fruits they will give. World Youth Day Legacy is in fact similar to growing the garden – you don't see the fruits of the event right away, but the long-term legacy is for 35 years now a living garden of values and changes that World Youth Day brought to the Church and youth at large. This article aims to show the legacy of the event, helping future organizers to answer a fundamental question – why bother organizing this huge event? Managing the logistics, security and sanitation for an event of this magnitude might seem utterly overwhelming, especially that most of peo-

ple organizing it have no professional experience in putting together such large events (which was for instance was a case of Krakow).¹ Organization of WYD requires the cooperation of many stakeholders starting with multiple church institutions, such as Vatican Dicasteries and Bishops Conferences, followed by highest state offices and local government and communities and, last but not least, pilgrims planning to come. It is the Olympic Games – only the budget is way lower and crowds coming to watch and participate – bigger by millions. The miracle of WYD features millions of dollars spent, many tears, numerous frustrations and a few close breakdowns. So again – why bother? This article not only shows the joy of World Youth Day itself and it's immediate fruits depicted in surveys but also analyses how the perception of youth at large changed over the years thanks to the event. Holding the Synod on youth in the fall of 2018 was a major sign that World Youth Day opened the path to serious and deep dialogue with the youth within the church and it also needs to be seen as an important point in the legacy of World Youth Day. In this article the reader will find more examples of the broad WYD legacy that was carved throughout 35 years of meeting and listening to the young church starting with the Pontificate of John Paul II.

2. Structure and methodology

1. Measuring the legacy in a scientific manner is somewhat challenging. Rating of World Youth Days, starting from the Spanish WYD in Madrid in 2011 was analyzed by a survey submitted to participants through the website and social media. The newest surveys of that kind were provided after Krakow 2016 and will be quoted in the article. This work offers a compilation of examples of how World Youth Day influenced local Christian communities and global church reality. They will be driven from experiences observed mostly by past organizers of World Youth Day. Two recent publication coauthored by the author of these words will be quoted

¹ Cf. P. Guzik, C. O'Reilly, *WYD 2016: The Largest European Event of the 21st Century*, Krakow 2018.

in this article: *WYD 2016: The Largest European Event of the 21st Century and Megaevents of the Catholic Church*².

In the first part of the article WYD will be introduced through a prism of a challenge that it is, in the second part of an article we will show the value of large church events and in the third part – legacy of World Youth Day.

3. Part one: what is WYD and why is it a challenge

World Youth Day is an international meeting of young Catholics with the head of the Catholic Church, the pope. The event takes place every two or three years and brings together groups of young people from every corner of the globe, along with bishops, priests and members of religious and lay institutions, all in a prayerful and festive atmosphere. It is open to all, including young people of other faiths.³ St. John Paul II started WYD in Rome in 1986. That first gathering was followed by Buenos Aires in 1987, Santiago de Compostela in 1989, Częstochowa in 1991, Denver in 1993, Manila in 1995, Paris in 1997, Rome again in 2000 and Toronto in 2002. Pope Benedict XVI led three WYDs: Cologne in 2005, Sydney in 2008 and Madrid in 2011. Pope Francis continued the tradition, meeting with youth in Rio de Janeiro in 2013 and in Krakow in 2016. He announced that the next WYD would be hosted in Latin America, in Spanish-speaking Panama in 2019.

What is crucial from the standpoint of the organizers of the event is to remember the objective: providing youth with an opportunity to experience the universality of the Church. Young Christians are called to come and join the meeting from all over the world – also from parts of the world in which living the faith is an act of courage and a threat to their lives, “In such an environment, youth discover that diversity is a gift. They

² First co-authored with Cecilia O'Reilly, second edited by Yago de la Cierva and co-authored by Maria Jose Abad, Jamie Lynn Black, Thierry Bonaventura, Marilu Esponda, Paulina Guzik, Maria Lozano, Cecilia O'Reilly, Paula Rodriguez, Rafa Rubio, Manuel Sanchez, Dina Simoes, Javier Sobrino and Christopher White (*Megaevents of the Catholic Church: A Logbook for Organizers and Communicators*, Mexico City 2018).

³ For an extensive analysis of WYDs, cf. *World Youth Days: A testimony to the Hope of Young People*, eds. J. Stala, A. Porębski, Krakow 2016.

share different national and regional experiences of faith and exchange ideas and projects in youth formation.”⁴

This mission has not changed over the years; it was the same back in 1984, when St. John Paul II created WYD – it is all about “getting together with God”: “If we were to summarize the idea of World Youth Days in one single sentence on the basis of the pontiff’s public speeches during the first officially ‘numbered’ meeting, we might choose the following quote from his homily: ‘World Youth Day means just this, going to encounter God’.”⁵

As cheerful and fruitful as it is, World Youth Day may seem a major challenge for an organizing country, and specifically for an organizing city. The world has changed immensely since 1984, when St. John Paul II called young people to the first WYD in Rome. The development of technology, increasing terrorism threat, demanding security measures which caused an increase of costs are only few challenges listed. For instance in Krakow the organizers faced terrorist threats mentioned above. That summer was particularly dangerous in Europe, which was plagued by several terrorist attacks across the continent. However, in a world under the constant threat of violence, WYD was incident-free and took place in a completely peaceful environment.⁶

World Youth Day also did not have an easy start: the internal atmosphere in the Church when WYD started was full of discouragement and sadness. Marcello Bedeschi, a lay Vatican insider who participated in the preparations for the first international gathering of John Paul II recalls that “the life of the Church in those times [1978–1984] was characterized by two factors: persistent ‘infighting’ inside the Church, and especially between associations and the newly founded ecclesial movements. Secondly, the difficulties experienced in the clergy, particularly among those dedicated to young people, causing a lack of commitment towards the new generations.”⁷ Moreover, some people working in the Roman Curia were

4 Cf. P. Guzik, C. O’Reilly, WYD 2016: *The Largest European Event of the 21st Century*, op. cit.

5 S. Dziwisz, *The “genesis” of World Youth Day*, in: *World Youth Days: A testimony to the Hope of Young People*, op. cit., p. 21.

6 Cf. P. Guzik, C. O’Reilly, WYD 2016: *The Largest European Event of the 21st Century*, op. cit.

7 M. Bedeschi, *World Youth Day. Its origins and the development of an idea*, in: *World Youth Days: A testimony to the Hope of Young People*, op. cit., p. 39.

against the Pope's call to young people to come to Rome. "Today, when local Churches from all over the world strive for the organization of World Youth Days gathering millions of participants, it is difficult to believe that only thirty years ago, in fact nobody wanted it."⁸ At this moment of history one can ask – why WYD wasn't wanted? The answer lays in the initial distrust in the "possible positive response from young people to the invitation to take part in the jubilee pilgrimage."⁹

Today we know that young people are really keen on participating in World Youth Day, they are ready to travel very long distances, but also they are ready for the inconveniences of the event (long walks, uncomfortable sleeping in common housing such as schools, eating food packs for a week).

Therefore, the challenges today are twofold:

- ▶ Finance and logistics (the mass event needs to be secure and security costs a lot and it is necessary to include the money of many different stakeholders, e.g. the state, sponsors, the national church at large).
- ▶ High demand for organizing the event in a professional and modern manner with little human resources and budget as little as possible (let's remember that WYD is the Olympic Games to organize with budget 1000 times less¹⁰).

As heavenly an event as it is, WYD needs down-to-earth money to exist. A lot of money. Let's imagine organizing a film festival that lasts for five days, hosts at least 10 heads of state and large numbers of people, culminating with nearly 2.5 million people on a single venue. There is no other event like that on the planet. Why is communications so crucial here? Because partners and sponsors will not join if there are doubts about the organization of the event; and parents will be unwilling to send their kids to WYD in a foreign country, or continent, if they constantly hear about security concerns.

⁸ Cf. T. Krzyzak, *The difficult beginnings. World Youth Day as the laity's response to the call of the Second Vatican Council*, in: *World Youth Days: A testimony to the Hope of Young People*, op. cit., p. 433, 438.

⁹ M. Bedeschi, *World Youth Day. Its origins and the development of an idea*, op. cit., p. 41.

¹⁰ Cf. <https://cruxnow.com/global-church/2018/05/07/world-youth-day-is-the-oiympics-with-budget-1000-times-less/> (20.06.2018).

It takes a lot of thoughtful and strategic planning on the part of organizers to realize what St. John Paul II dreamt of and created: to spread the message of the Gospel to the youth of the world.

The event is also demanding for the Pope himself. In fact, Benedict XVI explained that one of his reasons for resigning was to ensure that there was a pope with sufficient physical strength to go to Rio de Janeiro for WYD 2013.¹¹ The urgency of being present at WYD also was the case of Pope Francis. He had never been keen on traveling and, when he began his papacy, he considered reducing papal journeys to a minimum. But, he changed his mind after seeing the effectiveness, which a journey (that is, an event) has in transmitting a message: “After the mission to Lampedusa, I understood that I had to travel”¹² he admitted in an interview.

4. Part two: the value of a large church event

No matter whether we put WYD in a category of institutional communication (as many scholars do with events)¹³ or in the area of marketing, an event is an instrument with objectives of a relational nature. It provides the opportunity of direct contact between the organization (in this case, a Church) and their audiences (the youth), without intermediaries and in circumstances which favor the consolidation of interpersonal relationships – in Pope Francis terms – the culture of encounter. “Events are related to the transmission to their audiences of the identity of the organization and the PR team is responsible for the configuration of this message by using the instruments and methods which will transmit it faithfully.”¹⁴

Therefore ultimately, this whole encounter is about communication. Events could be described as “any initiative, action or manifestation car-

¹¹ Cf. P. Seewald, *Last Testament in his own words*, London 2016, p. 45.

¹² Cf. <https://cruXnow.com/vatican/2017/01/08/pope-francis-says-lampedusa-knew-travel/> (20.06.2018).

¹³ In most manuals of corporate communications events are considered “public relations actions” (M. T. Otero Alvarado, *Protocolo y organización de eventos*, Barcelona 2009, p. 129); J. E. Grunig, T. Hunt, *Managing Public Relations*, New York 2000, puts them in the category of bidirectional communication actions.

¹⁴ M. T. Otero Alvarado, *Protocolo y organización de eventos*, op. cit., p. 135.

ried out by a person, group or organization within the framework of their objectives, with the aim of establishing a relationship with certain direct audiences (the participants and the media) and through the event with an indirect audience (the community in a wider sense) to consolidate, improve or create the public perception of the promoter of the event.”¹⁵

Church is full of events on a daily basis – retreats, concerts, processions, and special celebrations. They don’t have to be always large, but they are events.

Let’s try to put the above theories into practice with an example of a consistory. It is rather a regular event in Church terms with all participants fitting in St. Peter’s basilica, yet it requires certain organizational procedures. Nevertheless it is an important example of how influential a regular church event is, and later we will show a magnitude of an influence of a special large church event.

Approximately 300 journalists cover the consistory and need to be accredited, two big media stands are required inside St. Peter’s basilica and many thousands invitations for the event are distributed among the new cardinals, their families, friends, but also church and government officials and faithful in general. Because of the geographical variety of cardinals the event is covered all over the world. The focus on transmitting the message lays on the Pope¹⁶ who dresses the new cardinals with their red caps but also addresses them (and – through the media – the whole world). In June 2018 during the consistory in Rome the following words of Pope Francis made headlines: “None of us must feel ‘superior’ to anyone. None of us should look down at others from above. The only time we can look at a person in this way is when we are helping them to stand up.”¹⁷ The message transmitted, therefore, was of a cardinal – a Prince of the Church – as a humble servant of the poor and

¹⁵ M. J. Canel, *Comunicación de las instituciones públicas*, Madrid 2007, p. 179.

¹⁶ Here the boss – meaning the pope takes the approach needed for a communicator: “he must take the lead in promoting the change” cf. *Megaevents of the Catholic Church...*, op. cit.

¹⁷ https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20180628_omelia-concistoro-nuovicardinali.html (10.06.2018).

needy – this is what new cardinals are meant to be in the eyes of their boss, the Pope.

Events of any kind, from the Olympic Games to a royal wedding or a summit meeting between heads of state, are a living way to transmit information, share values and strengthen corporate or social unity. What is more, the success of an event is measured not because everything worked very well and there were no incidents but because the event demonstrated its effectiveness in transmitting a message. If we have brought about a change for the better in the participants, if they now feel closer to the organizing body and more committed to its mission, then we can own to having earned our pay.¹⁸

It is important to stress that events are organized because they transmit content: they are means to divulge complex information, in the context of a gathering of people.¹⁹ Events are above all instruments of persuasion: they move people to think in such a way as to make them want to act. They add a bonus of motivation to the mere transmission of data. By the same token, communicating an event aims not merely at informing but at convincing people to take part in the project.

Again, only thinking of a consistory during the event, media covered personal stories of the cardinals. Among them was a Polish cardinal working as the Pope's Almoner, Konrad Krajewski. On a daily basis he distributes the Pope's charity money to the homeless, needy, migrants. After the consistory he organized a party for the poor and needy for 280 people. Pope Francis came to the party and stayed there for two hours, eating with the poor. The story was told in the media, proving right the Pope's address during the consistory, which happened only 3 days before.²⁰

Therefore, events are the best option when you want to achieve a change of perceptions, of values and of conduct. In this sense, an event may be the best initiative to transform an institution, either civil or religious. Its

¹⁸ P. Guzik, C. O'Reilly, *WYD 2016: The Largest European Event of the 21st Century*, op. cit.

¹⁹ We are talking about corporate events: gatherings organized by an institution. Church institutions don't organise events for the purpose of pure entertainment therefore transmitting content and the culture of encounter is a number one goal.

²⁰ <http://www.lastampa.it/2018/06/30/vaticaninsider/dinner-with-the-pope-and-poor-to-celebrate-krajewski-ok4CB1vNf3CDkCSHkxBjZI/pagina.html> (20.06.2018).

combination of experiences, intellectual content and emotions can provoke profound changes in people. Here are the examples of how WYD changed the common perception.

A) WYD in Częstochowa was the first international gathering after the fall of a Berlin Wall, where “Europe could finally breathe both lungs” as John Paul II acknowledged²¹. Youth from the Soviet Union could finally meet with youth from Western Europe in the atmosphere of encounter and joy, but above all, without fear.

B) WYD in Toronto helped overcome the fear of organizing a large event of any kind after 9/11 happened only 10 months before the summer of 2002. Pope John Paul II was especially keen on organizing the event in those turbulent times, wanting to show that the only way to overcome fear that was a goal of terrorists is the real encounter with young faithful.

C) WYD 2005 Cologne changed in Germany the social perception on the Catholic Church as an institution. Before the event, the Church was seen as made of old people, mainly women with a veil over their heads, praying the rosary with a sad face. Images of thousands of young and joyful people occupying streets and squares of many German cities were a big surprise. They had to see them with their own eyes in their own streets, because it happened a few years earlier in WYD 1997 in Paris, at two hours by train, and it was not a news story for the German networks. It is safe to say that WYD in Cologne marked a turning point for both people and the media.

D) WYD in Krakow happened in the worst month in terms of a history of terrorist attacks in Europe (and its proximity). Fearless youth coming for the event with hope and joy proved that not only they want to come besides the threats (and fear is what terrorism is based on, but also that they trust – both in God to make them peacefully pray and in the people who organize the event to organize WYD in a safe and modern manner. WYD in Krakow was also a “test” for stereotypes towards Pope Francis – he was previously perceived in the media as one who is not too happy to travel around Europe and he could not be more joyful in Krakow, among the youth.

21 Cf. Guzik, O'Reilly, WYD 2016: *The Largest European Event of the 21st Century*, op. cit.

As only a few examples above show, an event can mark the turning point in the trend, and help people leave behind inertia and prejudices of the past by taking another course.

It appears that the Church has recognized this communication tool throughout its history, but in a more specific way over the last 30 years during which both WYD and WMOF began. Given the nature of these events as unequalled communication opportunities, it is important that organizers of large Church events prioritize their communicative dimension, understanding it as key to the success of the event itself.²²

5. Part three: the legacy of World Youth Day

Let's now take a look at WYD 2016 from the perspective of one of the stakeholders – the inhabitants of the city of Krakow. Right before WYD 2016 started it seemed that most of the Krakowians left the city due to fear of traffic and unprecedented numbers of youth coming; local papers did not help with the positive publicity of the event – neither did the mayor of the city who famously told at the press conference a year into WYD: “Of course the city will be paralyzed!”²³. Most of those people returned to the city seeing the powerful images of the prayers and meetings with the pope. The people of Krakow in fact regretted later they did not plan to participate, as they didn't expect such a joyful celebration.

Having stressed the above, WYD not only transmits the Gospel to youth but also strengthens the positive image of the Church – among youth and among people who host them in a particular country. It did so in Krakow, it did so in Cologne and in Sydney.

Discouragement seen in the media before the event derives from a very common media rule: media focus is mainly on infotainment, scandal and wrongdoing. It is important to remember to show as much

²² Y. de la Cierva, J. L. Black, C. O'Reilly, *Managing communications for large Church events*, “Church, Communication and Culture” 1 (2016) 1, pp. 110–134, DOI: 10.1080/23753-234.2016.1181308.

²³ jp2tv.pl footage.

positive aspects of the organization as possible.²⁴ WYD lets the Church do it, being one of the most powerful means to communicate its message. If event communicators should remember one thing about fulfilling their duties, it is enough to recall the words of Bl. Pope Paul VI. He encouraged the Church to communicate by all the means given to her, so as not to “feel guilty before the Lord if she did not utilize these powerful means.”²⁵ Therefore anyone who organizes WYD needs to understand that in terms of professional experience and organization, it is like any other massive event – except the success is not calculated in material terms, but rather in human development. Teaching youth crucial values and giving them the opportunity to encounter the global Church along with its leader, the Holy Father, strengthens not only their faith but also interpersonal relationships.

The purpose of World Youth Day needs to be seen in three dimensions and the value of WYD is seen in those three points already:

A) For the youth, the event is an opportunity to personally encounter Jesus Christ, an encounter that calls to conversion, to love, to community, to growth, and to building a better world around them²⁶.

B) For the Holy Father it is an opportunity to encounter the youth and offer them a message of hope, which is crucial in a world plagued by violence and suffering.

C) For everyone, including the inhabitants of the host city it is an opportunity to experience the universal Church, listen to the Word of God, and celebrate or receive the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation.

Some of the fruits of this exchange are unique to each host country. Examples from WYD 2016 in Krakow will be given down below along

24 Cf. M. Przybylski, J. Kłoch, *Media w Kościele i Kościół w mediach*, Katowice 2012, p. 12: the image of the Church needs to be taken care of, and it is the Church that needs to work on it “It is not the sign of fashion, sign of looking at media novelties or PR trick. Caring for the image of the Church is the answer of the Church to the challenges of contemporary times and is driven from the essence of this institution.”

25 Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (December 8th, 1975): “Acta Apostolicae Sedis” 68 (1976), p. 45: http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html (10.05.2018).

26 Regarding WYD spiritual fruits, cf. S. Ryłko, *The World Youth Day Generation*, in: *World Youth Days: A testimony to the Hope of Young People*, op. cit., p. 27–34.

with the points of important WYD legacy. The legacy of WYD closes here to 4 main points.

5.1. Identity value – Christianity as a share culture

For WYD in Krakow, Poland's firmly Catholic identity, as a country that is more than 90% Catholic, made an intense impact on pilgrims coming from places where the Church is much less active. Young people coming for WYD were surprised that churches in Poland were full of young people not only for Sunday mass, but also on weekdays and in line at the confessionals. On the other hand, young Poles learned a lot from their friends who live in countries where they must defend their faith, who are fewer in number but better trained on intellectual issues (for instance, the ambitious English-speaking cultural program during WYD surprised many Poles²⁷). WYD 2016 also offered Polish youth an occasion to be grateful for their freedom to go to church every Sunday, in comparison with their peers from Iraq or Pakistan who are persecuted for their faith.²⁸

Every World Youth Day has a specific geographical dimension, as mentioned in that paper. Poland was a fairly close destination for the youth from the Middle East and from the post-Soviet block of countries such as Ukraine, Russia and Belarus. In the world full of stereotypes such encounters help built a peaceful relationship among representatives of particular states proving that in fact religion doesn't know borders, which brings into practice the idea of a universal church. Hosting WYD in Panama in 2019 will give participants a unique opportunity to experience such encounter in that particular part of the world. With the immigration crisis happening at the border of Mexico and the United

27 The Mercy Center – English speaking pilgrims evangelisation and catechesis center set in the biggest sports arena in Krakow offered youth, mostly from the United States, a unique opportunity to learn teachings of the patron saint, John Paul II. After WYD the whole programme was established (inspired by WYD, in fact) was American students wanting to come to Krakow for a semester of studies focused on the teachings of saint John Paul II. The programme is called JP2 Project and in the summer of 2018 the first group of student evaluated the programme, being a visible proof that the legacy of WYD is much wider than the idea of an event itself.

28 Cf. P. Guzik, C. O'Reilly, WYD 2016: *The Largest European Event of the 21st Century*, op. cit.

States and many political turbulences across the region of South America, Panama can be a place where hope and tolerance is born and cherished. Images of American and Mexican youth praying and singing together are an expected and a needed “detox” and balance for the pictures now shown all over the world of immigrants storming American border and not only being denied access but being treated in an inhuman way. Sharing the pilgrimage hand in hand helps young people see a human being in their colleagues from all over the world, not “illegal immigrants” or “foreigners”. WYD helps young people realize we are all equal in the eyes of our Father²⁹.

5.2. Human development value (encouraging youth to be better persons)

As pathetic as it seems – this is actually scientifically proved.

The personal impact of WYD 2016 on participants was very big – 91,8% admitted it reinforced their relationship with God, which means their faith was strengthened during WYD 2016. More than half of the pilgrims admitted that WYD “very much” taught them more about mercy, 33,6% admitted it “somewhat” taught them about that matter, which gives a total number of almost 90% of the youth admitting to be taught about mercy in the birthplace of its communications. The chart below shows other examples of the personal impact that WYD 2016 had on its participants.³⁰

What is important to add, over 40% of those who participated in the survey admitted that they already decided to practice deeds of mercy

²⁹ In fact, organisers of Panama 2019 themselves stressed before the event that immigration will be the number one topic during their WYD, along with the place of women in the Church and environmental issues, which was already named by the media a first “testing ground” for lessons of Synod on young people: <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-americas/2018/12/12/world-youth-day-first-testing-ground-for-lessons-of-synod-on-young-people/> (accessed: 12.12.2018)

³⁰ Cf. P. Guzik, M. P., Mistygacz, R. M., Lanz, R., *Communicating mercy during World Youth Day 2016. A case study on how to make young people practice Christian values*, in: *La comunicazione strategica negli eventi ecclesiali*, ed. S. Tapia-Velasco, Edusc 2018, chapter 6 (e-book format).

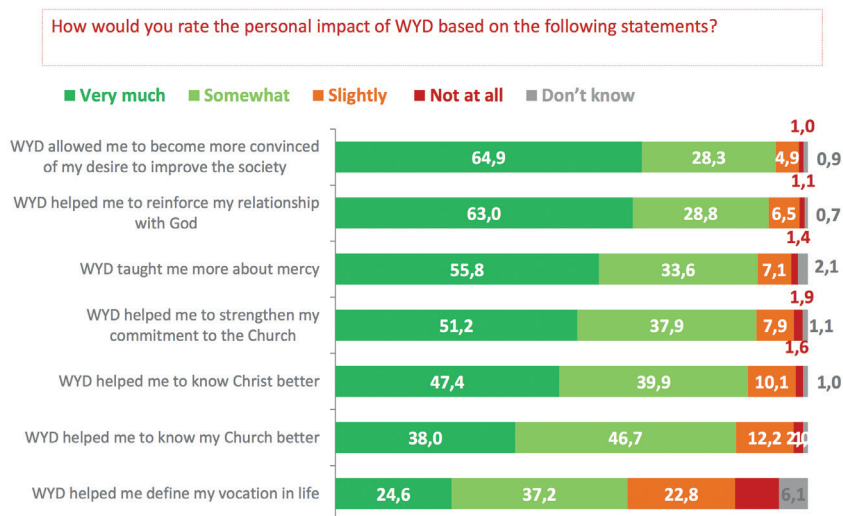


Table 1: How would you rate the personal impact of WYD based on the following statements? – Post-WYD survey results³¹.

through “Active life and positive attitude” and “Help and service”³¹, giving concrete examples of that practice such as: going on a foreign mission, helping neighbors, being a better son/daughter and helping mothers run errands.

It is a sign of hope. Today, most news involving the young is about violence, addiction, lack of commitment, and political disengagement. Newspaper headlines often represent the worst of their generation. In that context, it seems impossible to believe that a little over two million of them gathered in the middle of the summer without even a single report about drunkenness.³³ Even more positivity was shown by the youth proving they listened to the pope and, encouraged by his words, decid-

³¹ Cf. Guzik P., Mistygacz M., Lanz R., *Communicating mercy during World Youth Day 2016. A case study on how to make young people practice Christian values*, op. cit.

³² Post-WYD survey, presentation of results, chart by GAD-3.

³³ This phenomenon (which occurred both in Sydney 2008 and in Madrid 2011) does not mean WYD attracts only the abstemious, but rather it shows the value of sobriety as taught by the Church, meaning alcohol can be good if taken in moderation and with common sense.

ed to search for their comfy shoes and take a long run life commitment to change.³⁴

5.3. Media value (opening a new horizon for a media-oriented church)

Vast crowds of enthusiastic youth offer powerful images that appeal to the media. This kind of event is a natural fit for national and international TV. Furthermore, as WYDs are generally hosted at the height of summer (considered a *slow news* period by the media), even outlets that are not usually inclined to devote time and resources to covering religious news do tend to invest significantly in WYDs. That allows for the opportunity for the Church to transmit its message in the mainstream secular media³⁵.

But the inner “news” needs to be also created and produced inside the committee. For a reason communications officers and social media managers of WYDs are respected figures in the communications world – if they handled a job as large, they can handle pretty much every crisis in the church. WYD is a great opportunity for the Church to learn best practices in the field of communications. Events and members of the organizing committee make people working in Archdiocese’s offices actually aware how important creating media content is and how many people and resources are needed to do it properly. Church communications cannot be something done with a loose structure. Communications has a fundamental, leading role in the organization and having hosted WYD

³⁴ For instance in Krakow a volunteers group was established after WYD, gathering the “former” WYD short and long term volunteers under the umbrella of “The Mountain of Good”. Coordinated by the former coordinator of WYD’s volunteer department Kasia Kucik, they gather volunteers for different types of actions around the city and the region – from organising Christmas celebrations for homeless to helping organise the World Day of Poor in the city of Krakow. Two years into WYD 2016 the groups is very actively involved in all kinds of charity works in the city.

³⁵ WYD Panama being hosted in a busy media time – European winter – attracted the attention of less journalists than Krakow 2016. It is also the case of “what’s around” in the calendar for the media – for February 2019 the Holy See announced organising a major summit on clerical sex abuse, which made a lot of journalists schedule the trip to Rome instead of Latin America only three weeks ahead.

any dioceses knows that having a spokesperson, social media manager and communications officer is not only needed, but crucial.

Of course, at the beginning, for most of the bishops, setting WYD committee is a challenge of great magnitude. It is somewhat surprising for them that each task in the communications department needs not only a coordinator but also a huge team to properly do their job (i.e. social media). The undoubted legacy of WYD is therefore communications sense and knowledge that stays in the dioceses after the event. If the church management (and most importantly – the boss – the bishop) is able to use the human resources of WYD committee in a smart way after the event is over – and make people previously working in a committee do a job for the dioceses on a daily basis – they can be sure they have a team not only competent in the field of communications but also people who “feel” the church and those we can put our trust in³⁶.

Media Value can of course be counted in media mentions as well.

Among 1800 foreign journalists that came to Krakow for WYD 2016, big name agencies were represented, such as Reuters, APTN, ANSA, and Catholic News Agency. Personnel also come from influential, but not necessarily the biggest newspapers – printed and online – like La Croix, El Mundo or EWTN. CNN and BBC were also present, not to mention a vast Vatican Press Pool of over 60 journalists who followed the footsteps of the Holy Father closely in Krakow.³⁷

36 Examples of that kind of thinking can be found among individuals working for many church institutions. For instance, Director of Social Media in Krakow 2016 set his own agency in Brazil, working for important church communications initiatives as Tweeting with God. WYD 2016 spokesperson used to be a correspondent of the main catholic news agency in Poland when WYD was over, later accepting a job at the Dicastery of Laity Family and Life, being responsible for the youth section of DLFL. Communications coordinator and designer of the WYD 2016 logo both created a creative agency that helps communicate multiple church projects and their clients include the Archdioceses of Krakow, parishes, sanctuaries and church museums. WYD inspired all those people to work for the church and use their exceptional abilities not only to make a living but to build a better understanding of the church here on Earth. Each of the people who carry the mission of World Youth Day after the event is over is an example of a unique legacy of that event.

37 P. Guzik, C. O'Reilly, M. Kłosowski, *WYD 2016 International Media Coverage, Analysing the impact that the celebration of youth in Kraków had worldwide*, in: *Youth and the experience*

WYD Krakow was the second WYD in the last 16 years, which had the most mentions in the media (12,113)³⁸. The highest mentioned WYD – WYD Madrid 2011 with over 15,000 mentions – was also one of the most successful in history. The advertisement equivalent of such publicity only for a city of Krakow was calculated for a sum of approximately 15 million Euros³⁹ and a worldwide advertisement equivalent for the capital of Małopolska region reached over 130 mln Euros⁴⁰.

It is also important to mention that statistics and numbers do not have smiles. Too often, practicing Catholics are presented as aged and gloomy figures. The joy and enthusiasm of a young person is undeniably contagious so events such as WYD are effective tools to spread the Church's message globally, over all communications media, and today in a particular way, through social media. And this message is a joyful one – therefore the media mentions should be treated as such – happy and smiling – with the best possible ambassador of the issue – Pope Francis.

5.4. Trust value: making the real hope of the church (youth) visible and recognized

St. John Paul II did not intend to use WYD for publicity purposes, rather it was meant to evangelize the young. It was also a sign of trust that the Polish Pope put in the young people. Trusting the young and putting his highest hopes in them were trademarks of John Paul II's pontificate. "Let us 'trust the young' [...] They have had the advantage of growing up with the new developments, and it will be their duty to employ these new instruments for a wider and more intense dialogue among all the diverse races and classes who share this 'shrinking globe'"⁴¹ he said in the World Communications Day Message in 1990, a year before WYD in Częstochowa.

of faith. Dialogue in the context of World Youth Day Krakow 2016, eds. M. Składanowski et al., Lublin 2017.

³⁸ WYD Krakow 2016 media evaluation report based on data provided by GAD3.

³⁹ Instytut Monitorowania Mediów (Polish Institute of Media Monitoring).

⁴⁰ Data provided by the city of Krakow.

⁴¹ http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_24011990_world-communications-day.html (20.06.2018).

Pope Francis today sees not only the value of trusting the young and the urge of making the youth responsible for the church. For Francis youth is the force that can carry the difficult tasks that lay ahead of the Church. That is why the 81 year old pope, after WYD in Krakow, decided to call a Synod on young people, asking them to write a preparatory document for the bishops so that the old bishop's can better understand the needs and expectations of young people. One of the most important objectives of the Synod was making young people officially responsible for important parts of evangelization and church structures. Without WYD the magnitude of youth could not be visible and therefore it is thanks to WYD that events such as the Synod on the youth happened. It is derived from commitment that youth proved coming to any WYD – crossing the world to join other youth and the Pope in celebration for WYD is a proof that young people feel as part of the church, they want their voice to be heard and they are willing to take a rocky road (like a journey from war torn Aleppo to Krakow) to show the universal church – here we are, living testimony to our faith, ready to help the Holy Father and local churches to grow.

6. Conclusions

Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, a lifetime personal Secretary to John Paul II and a host of WYD 2016 as an archbishop of Krakow (and one of a few cardinals in the world that participated in every single WYD in the world) said during a presentation of the book “WYD 2016 – The Largest European Even of the 21st Century” in April 2018: “So now when you wrote a case study on WYD 2016, you need to write a book on the beautiful fruits of the event.” As those words were directed to the author of both the book and this article, this paper needs to be seen as an answer to the call. Of course, the cardinal was right – a book could be easily written on the legacy and fruits of WYD and the almost 40 years of its history. Books are nevertheless created in years, not months. And future organisers of large church events face the press on a daily basis asking “why bother organising an event of that magnitude and of that cost? What will stay when it's over?”. This paper aims to answer those questions, showing the lega-

cy in a compiled but concrete manner. The author hopes that this article will be treated as one of many manuals of how to communicate World Youth Day that on one hand is a complicated and challenging event, but on the other hand carries the legacy important not for the organising city or the region, but for humanity at large.

About the author

Paulina Guzik (PhD, University of Warsaw) teaches four communication courses at Krakow's Pontifical University of John Paul II, and works as journalist for TVP (Public Polish Television), hosting a weekly news-magazine on Church issues.

Regarding Church communications, she directed the International Media Office for WYD 2016 Krakow, and is a cofounder of Refugee & Migrant Education Network – a network of Universities and NGOs that reconsiders the role and social responsibilities of those institutions, aiming to provide migrants and refugees with education wherever they are.

She recently co-authored *WYD 2016 Kraków – The Largest European Event of the 21st Century*, 2018, Krakow: Pontifical University John Paul II Press; and *Megaevents of the Catholic Church*, 2018, KDP.

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