

# **ON THE BRIDE'S SIDE: crowdfunding to raises awareness on migrations in Europe**

## **External good practice, COSV**

### **Short description of method**

“What border guard would ever check the documents of a bride?”. Every day thousands of people fleeing the war in Syria were reaching Milan, after crossing the Mediterranean to the Italian island of Lampedusa and heading north. A journalist, a poet and a video-maker decided to make a journey, to accompany 5 Syrians and Palestinians to reach Sweden and obtain there the status of refugees, crossing illegally all Europe dressed up for a wedding. They organized a crowdfunding campaign to make a film, presented it at Venice Film Festival and get it into distribution circuits all around Europe.

The campaign raised € 98.151,00 euro, with 2,541 contributors in 2 months and today the film is screened in Europe, Middle East, Northern African Countries and South Africa. The team met recently the European Parliament to talk about mobility, supported by 2.541 people willing for a change in migration policies. On the bride's side show that digital crowdfunding campaigns can also give voice to contents. One of the major achievement of a crowdfunding campaign is in fact the engagement of the supporters,

that get to know the issue more in-depth, feel part of the enlarged team and take action to make the objective possible. They inform and reach other potential supporters, in some cases organize events to host the promoters and move from the digital experience to face-to-face meetings.

“On the bride's side” managed through the use of a digital tool such as a crowdfunding platform to reach a large basis of supporters to bring its message to Mediterranean citizens and institutions. Thanks to the use of a digital approach, this project managed to make a step in the process of social changes.

### **Digital aspects of good practice**

Crowdfunding is by definition, “the practice of funding a project or venture by raising many small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the Internet.” The methodology presented is in itself purely digital, but in the case of “On the bride's side” it has moved out of the web to channel supporters' voice to opinion makers and institutions and advocate for an intervention on migration issues.

### **Pedagogic aspects of good practice**

Crowdfunding campaigns aim at involving large number of people to support an idea. Each campaign should contain a powerful reason behind the idea, exciting and unique rewards, and an eye-catching display. Video definitely plays a huge role as well as correct use of social media, email distribution lists and local media.

Typically, most successful projects receive about 25-40% of their revenue from their first, second and third degree of connections. Unknown contacts usually join in a second moment. The preparation phase should take 30 days, the pre-launch and the construction of the community should take 15-25 days and the campaign will be then online for 45 days max. Rewards and follow-ups should follow after the closure of the campaign. Daily analytics are needed for a successful campaign.

## Strength, weakness, opportunities and threats of good practice

### *Strength*

Free platforms online to upload the project, possibility to promote any initiative and receive support, both financial and on the subject.

### *Weakness*

Limited amount of time, need of a coordinated team and of a community that could support the initial phase.

### *Opportunities*

If positively perceived by the community, the project can receive the funds and be implemented and the idea divulgated by the supporters.



### *Threats*

The investment in time and funds to make the campaign could be lost due to many reasons, such as a weak communication approach, other similar campaign online, inability to reach the community, unwillingness of the community to support the project.

## Which aspects are transferable?

Crowdfunding campaigns are nowadays widely used by private, public and no profit actors to reach communities and find supporters for

projects or causes. The methodology is though key for the success of the campaign, which due to the easiness of the online platform is perceived as a simple process. A good planning, a strong communication plan, networking and storytelling are all aspects to be taken in great consideration in order not to waste time and funds in failing initiatives. Online and off-line communication skills need to be developed to reach the goal.

### Facts of method

2,541 participants

Target groups

general public

European citizens

refugees in Europe

local authorities and institutions

1 time performed

10 staff involved

3 partners from 1 country (plus collaboration with people in other European and Middle East countries)

[Link to method:](#)

## A success story of the good practice

"This is the first time that a crowd-funded film is presented in the Venice International Film Festival. And it is the first time that such a brave act of civil disobedience arrives on the red carpet. We, the directors, are going to be there along with the crew and all the cast of our fake wedding convoy, including the five Palestinians and Syrians we smuggled from Italy to Sweden.

It is incredibly moving to think that only one year ago they were still in the midst of the war in Syria, then they experienced the journey at sea, the terrible shipwreck of October 11th and now...they have the opportunity to tell their story to the entire world and, why not, to meet YOU, who made this dream come true. They have never heard something like that in Venice... They have also never seen a cinema full of brides! Because of course, that's the plan!

We are inviting all the people to come to the screening dressed up like brides and grooms. A little sign to say that we all stand on the bride's side. Because this is not merely a film, it is an act of civil disobedience. For the same reason, after the screening we are going to celebrate in front of the sea a commemoration of the twenty thousand deaths caused by EU's im-mobility laws.

Thank you for everything! And see you in Venice!"

Antonio, Gabriele, Khaled and the rest of the wedding convoy

## **Final summary: what makes it in your opinion a good method?**

“On the brides’ side” is the biggest ever crowdfunding campaign in the history of Italian and Palestinian cinema. Thanks to supporters, the project creators were able to finish the post-production in time to enter the 71 Venice International Film Festival. The film was selected and won three special awards of the jury. One year later, it had been given a theatrical release in Italy and was featured in many of the biggest

international documentary festivals around the world (IDFA, HotDocs and DocEdge, to name a few). It has also been screened in 36 countries worldwide, broadcasted on Italy’s SKY channel, and now on Al Jazeera English. It is amazing how the idea of a small group could win the hearts of so many people around the world. They wanted to prove that the Mediterranean is not just a cemetery, but that it can also be the sea that unites people on both

sides. On The Bride’s Side did just that, using a digital method that had this potential in it: a crowdfunding campaign.