

1) MISSIONARY PROJECTS AND FUNDRAISING ISSUES

During our move towards the XVIII° GC, the question of economy deserves a place in the reflexive approach which will lead us more to “love our Xaverian vocation”. Each of our circumscriptions has human and material resources and an intrinsic potential which, sometimes, still remains to be brought out and deployed in view of the mission. However, we are inserted in contexts that constantly confront us with the challenge of economic self-help. The Church is not spared from certain multifaceted upheavals on this level. The Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life (ICLIAL) are not on the margins of these dynamics either, to the point where the less prepared among them sometimes suffer aggravating effects.

The social teaching of the Church invites us to go beyond the apparent dichotomy between the proclamation of the Gospel message and the question of economy. The Church « *does not propose economic and political systems or programs, she does not show preference for one or the other, provided that the dignity of man is duly respected and promoted and that she herself way to leave the necessary space to carry out his ministry in the world. But the Church is an "expert in humanity", and this necessarily impels her to extend her religious mission to the various fields in which men and women deploy their activity in search of the happiness, always relative, which is possible in this world, in accordance to their dignity as persons* »¹. Moreover, « *the great challenge facing us, which emerges from the problems of development in this period of globalization and which is made even more pressing by the economic and financial crisis, is that of showing, at the level of thought and behavior, that not only the traditional principles of social ethics, such as transparency, honesty and responsibility cannot be neglected or undervalued, but also that in market relations the principle of gratuitousness and the logic of giving, as an expression of fraternity, can and must find their place within normal economic activity* »².

In our Family, the reduction of European confreres in certain circumscriptions has as its immediate corollary the gradual - but certain - disappearance of the benefactors who were once attached to them. The problem of self-care leaves the periphery of reflection on the mission to be taken into account with particular attention because it forces us to come to terms with an erroneous understanding of dependence (cf. XVII° GC, n. 75). In fact, the mission, without detaching itself from its contemplative dimension and from fraternal life in community, « *requires the mediation of material goods* »³. Now, the economic question allows us to glimpse with particular clarity that, as a missionary institute, we began a period of transition some time ago. We are thus obliged to note that the old methods consisting, particularly, in linking the financing of socio-pastoral or religious projects to the country of origin of the missionary no longer works. If, perhaps, we worry less about the economic support of our "ordinary life" this is not the case when it comes to slanting on the preparation of a missionary project.

That said, it is high time to collectively re-examine a certain understanding of the notion of Providence with a passive connotation and essentially turned towards external help (cf. XVII GC, nn. 76 and 78). We can begin by examining the imbalance between local resources and income from abroad (cf. XVII GC, n. 88) and study the strategies to be promoted to reverse the trend in the short, medium and long term. By asking ourselves: does our Circumscription formally have a network of nominally identifiable local benefactors? Are we attentive to the material contribution of lay people

¹ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 41.

² Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, n. 36.

³ José Rodriguez Carballo, “L’administration et la gestion des biens ecclésiastiques des IVCSVA au service de l’*humanum* et de la mission de l’Église. Orientations bibliques et ecclésiologiques”, in CIVCSVA, *La gestion des biens ecclésiastiques des Instituts de vie consacrée et des sociétés de vie apostolique. Au service de l’*humanum* et de la mission de l’Église*, Rome 8-9 Mars 2014, p. 35.

(from our parishes, schools, boarding schools, GAMiX...) and other people of good will at the level of our local communities? Have we really embraced the constant need to feed the Common Fund in a spirit of co-responsibility, solidarity and sharing? Is our lifestyle consistent with our common spirituality?

As we showed in the previous article on “**The missionary parish**”, self-sufficiency is sought in the participation of the faithful in initiatives that require a material and financial contribution. Hence the need to consider fundraising initiatives. For me, this notion of Fundraising is the new designation of the concept of Providence. Faced with the growing difficulty of accessing funding for missionary projects, the next GC should perhaps return to the momentum of the Fundraising⁴ which henceforth characterizes the Institutes working in the same parts of the world as us. It is not a question of a simple terminological substitution but rather of a real putting back into orbit. This perspective makes PROTAGONISTS those whom the Lord calls to collaborate with Him to the building of the Kingdom. It is about doing ALL that depends on us knowing that God will supply what is lacking. By placing our total trust in the Lord, we cannot underestimate our duty to cooperate with Grace. This principle is not opposed to our original charismatic identity, on the contrary it strengthens it. Our holy Founder is presented, for this purpose, as a « *Beggar for the Mission* »⁵.

In addition, it is showing lucidity but also humility to take inspiration, certainly with discernment, from the positive experience of others which has already proven its worth. Let us gather here the testimony of the Superior General of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians on the occasion of the International Symposium on the management of the ecclesiastical goods of the ICLIAL: « *For Don Bosco, the 'da mihi animas cetera tolle' was a fire which kindled his heart and made him ready for all the sacrifices to search for the money necessary to carry out his work in the service of the young people of Turin. His passion touched the hearts of benefactors who could not resist his requests. The wisdom and practicality of our Founders encourage us to trust in Providence, not with a passive attitude, but moved by great creative audacity* »⁶. Illustrations in this direction abounds. It suffices to look closely at the path travelled by so many other missionary Institutes to move from a mentality of assistance to structural and network solidarity by actively seeking new and current paths of Providence.

The challenge here is to get out of the lack of inventiveness to start fruitful practical solutions. From the perspective of this active research, let us limit ourselves to fundraising strategies for the realization of a missionary project. The missionary project, as such, is underpinned by a vision of development that allows its recipients to move towards more humane living conditions. « *Making a project means believing in the future and creating the objective conditions to give hope* »⁷. But how to proceed if we do not know who is or will be a donor? Where do you start if you have never raised funds for the mission and think you have little or no fundraising skills, knowledge and experience?

The following contribution will focus on fundraising methods for missionary project.

⁴ Sottolineato soprattutto nei numeri 1, 3 e 4 del **Messaggio finale** dell'ultimo *Convegno Economi delle Circoscrizioni Saveriane* a Tavernerio (20-27.08.2019).

⁵ Alfiero Ceresoli, «Economia in povertà oltre il voto il Vangelo e l'evangelizzazione», pp. 18-21 della versione digitale.

⁶ Yvonne Reungoat, « *Projet missionnaire et choix économiques* », in CIVCSVA, *Op. cit.*, p. 142.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

2) FUNDRAISING METHODS⁸

At the foundation of all mission fundraising techniques is, above all, prayer and trust in God⁹. We can raise funds through events, through marketing, by appealing to our collaborators for a particular cause, by working with the faithful of the parish, the diocese, etc. Their contribution is feasible in cash, in kind, by voluntarism or volunteering... Their mode of support and participation depends on the type of donors we have at hand. First for internal donors (within the country): individuals, community groups, companies. Their contribution is generally made in cash and in volunteering. Then there are external donors/funders, e.g. charities and grant-making organizations (NGOs, Charitable Foundations, etc.), possible government funding, corporate support. Their mode of support is mainly in cash.

As far as basic fundraising is concerned let's make it clear that the purpose of fundraising is to raise money. It requires a personal approach. Indeed, people do not give to vague and abstract organizations or concepts. They give to help others because they want to create a better world or transform people's lives. This requires a good dose of Faith, Hope and Charity. Among the possible sources of these funds, we can list: individual donors, a target community, grant and charitable organizations, government funding, companies, digital platforms. Let's now see in detail some steps to follow according to each of the above categories.

Individual donors. Be clear about what to ask and how to ask. We can start with our friends, relatives, neighbours, acquaintances, etc. Anyone who moves from a one-time donation to frequent or committed donations can become a major donor, a resource person and/or a volunteer. There are also individual donations that aim to pass on a legacy. In any case, it is essential to be precise in the initial request and to have regular and continuous communication with the donors. Keep details and clear record of attendees - regularly updated and communicated at an appropriate interval. Be honest and truthful by setting up adequate documentation focused on the desired result and the targeted impact and involving collaborators.

Case study: community fundraising. Mk 12, 44: “(...) *they all gave of their wealth; but she, of her poverty*”. In fundraising, every penny and every donor count, regardless of status. No contribution should be underestimated or overlooked. It should be carried out by staff who are (mass) volunteers and be participatory. It is the collection of funds from a group, network or community. Some examples of community fundraising: Door-to-door fundraising; special collection during a mass on a particular date (during Lent and Christmas in Catholic and/or non-Catholic schools);

⁸ L'intervento intitolato «*Il Fundraising come strumento per la relazione con i benefattori et per la sostenibilità della congregazione*» del professor Mauro Piacioli - insegnante all'università di Bologna nel corso di master in Fundraising - durante l'ultimo Convegno Economi delle Circostrizioni Saveriane (Tavernerio 20 - 27.08.2019) ci offre un approfondimento molto interessante su questo tema. Egli presenta quattro aspetti collegati a questo tema: il *Fundraising* come strumento per stabilire relazioni durevoli; il *Fundraising* per la sostenibilità nel tempo; il metodo di lavoro di *Fundraising*; come pianificare un *Fundraising* effettivo. Il professor Mauro continua evidenziando quattro elementi caratteristici specifici del *Fundraising*: essere trasparenti e chiari circa il progetto o la necessità per la quale si sta chiedendo il supporto della gente; usare mezzi appropriati (social media, posta, telefono, e-mail, ecc.) per sostenere durevoli relazioni con i benefattori; identificare per quanto possibile e allo stesso tempo rispettare il potenziale di ciascun benefattore; dare più importanza alla relazione con il benefattore che alla cifra che esso può elargire. Inoltre, discutendo di attività di *Fundraising* già attive nelle nostre circostrizioni l'esperienza, al riguardo, della regione degli USA (con i loro quattro strumenti: spedizioni cartacee/giornali; *mass card*; cena per la Giornata missionaria; sagra missionaria) è stata usata come esempio per individuare simili iniziative in altre circostrizioni.

⁹ Cf. l'intervento di Percy Patrick, “*Méthodes de collecte de fonds pour les Congrégations*”, PMF Basic EF 2021, 08.11.2021.

morning coffee; dance competition ; marathon, walk – 5 km or half-marathon; lent tender; day of sports or game; quiz show; raffles; gastronomic day; sale of religious objects; light a candle ; commemorate a birthday; collection in kind for the community garden; harvest festival in agricultural products. When it comes to organizing these community fundraising events, the first step is to define exactly what the event is and ask for help if needed. Then set a target to hit. Then promote the event in question by personally inviting people to it. Make sure you have a security service for the event. Take the opportunity to talk about the mission and the Congregation in general; note the contact details of the participants and keep in touch with them.

Grants and charities. It should be noted that these organizations pursue a certain objective and have their methods of operation to take into account. They also have various geographical attributions depending on the places where they are found. It is therefore necessary to read their guidelines before applying. It is also necessary to distinguish national projects from those that are local, unique grants from ongoing support and the limit of possible funding. Charities that give grants are usually independent organizations founded for a variety of reasons. They might then have different socio-political perspectives and approaches to grantmaking. Not everyone will be interested in funding our project.

Government funding. Inform yourself carefully by reading their application guides before applying. Acknowledge their compliance and reporting requirements. Be accompanied by highly qualified, experienced and competent personnel. Consider whether we should move towards contract subsidies, co-financing or cost sharing in terms of percentage. Most governments of Western countries, for example, have their own funding on various topics i.e. SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) from poverty eradication to ecological problem.

Companies. The areas of intervention here are: local projects generally related to the products of the said company, projects for economic/environmental/educational development, sports events and competitions. It is best to rely on contact or reference persons with this company. As types of companies, we can have multinationals, national leading or smaller companies, local companies for cash support, in-kind donations, volunteering, internship or work experience, advertising, sponsorship, etc.

Digital fundraising and social media. Here it is a question of creating a website, Facebook, E-mail, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc. Always be reassured of the protection and security of its data. As for the fundraising calendar, it must follow the concrete priorities on the ground and the availability of the target people.

In the context of our missionary service in some of our Circumscriptions, one of the greatest challenges to face is that of the paternalistic representation left by the missionary imprint in the collective imagination. Therefore, it sometimes becomes difficult to convince people that their input is needed. Difficult not to say impossible, what is most important in before this is to involve our collaborators as much as possible *in loco*, already from the diagnosis, design and planning of each missionary project. It is not impossible because experience shows it. In August 2018, for example, the implementation of the "*Pastoral do Dízimo*" in Dondo (in Mozambique) had already begun to prove itself in the sense of self-care. A few months later, we set up the "*Comissão dos projetos*" headed by a layman who has effectively dedicated himself to it until today. These initiatives, modest as they are, gradually contribute to the awareness of the role of the lay faithful in the follow-up of a missionary project. Their effective involvement - not superficial - is verified up to the level of the management process of each Fundraising event.

We will come back to this in the third and last part of our reflection.

3) FUNDRAISING EVENTS MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Fundraising events are diverse and varied in nature¹⁰. These include, among others, cultural, sporting, religious, digital, artistic, musical events, seminars and conferences. According to one or the other modality, they can be carried out in person, online or in a hybrid way (that is to say by joining the two previous modalities). By organizing one of these types of events, you can set a number of objectives such as: involving a maximum number of people, celebrating special dates, collecting contacts, raising awareness, thanking stakeholders, etc. An organizing committee for the management of the event must be set up, with the task of implementing all the appropriate strategies to establish partnerships and obtain sponsorships. In order to raise funds, three elements will be essential: having the resources (human and budgetary), clearly defining the purpose of the said collection and projecting the value and impact of the activities envisaged.

In relation to the size of the event, Nicola Begoni¹¹ suggests that for small projects, the objectives should be clear and involve few stakeholders. Large-scale events involve more complex objectives and multiple stakeholders. In either case, you have to be precise about the amount you want to raise, identify measurable objectives at all stages, make an achievable plan that takes into account the resources available, be realistic when we refer to the context, respect a schedule and set deadlines. The process of managing a fundraising event, according to the author aroused, can be divided into four phases: the preliminary phase (Analysis), the intermediate phase (Planning), the useful phase (Realization of the event) , the conclusion (Evaluation and monitoring).

Analysis. Context: analyze the context, identify the stakeholders, determine if the organization of the event is possible. Objectives: define the objective of the event, the recipient and the project for which funds are to be raised. Resources: identify human and economic resources that can be devoted to the event. Concept: define the concept by which the organization will implement the event. Results: identify the possible results and the impact that the event can produce in relation to the objective that has been set.

Planning. Activities: define the activities and the place (face-to-face, online or hybrid...). Timing: plan the schedule of activities. Human resources: involving staff, volunteers and partners. Budget: identify costs and revenues. Promotion: define the marketing and communication plan. Target and involve potential sponsors.

Execution. On the day of the implementation of the event, it is important to take into account some very important aspects: being committed to participants, partners and sponsors; collect all contact information of participants; do not forget to take photos and videos during the event; thank the staff, volunteers, sponsors and all those who made the event possible; keep smiling and having fun: it is not good to be stressed with stakeholders and participants.

Evaluation and monitoring¹². Monitoring: gathering all the data and information necessary to understand whether the results of the objective have been achieved. Monitoring can be done during and after the event to better understand if change has been produced. Reports: Evaluate the event by writing a report. Try to identify strengths and weaknesses to understand if it is possible to replicate the event in the future. Assess the impact and value produced by the event. Follow-up: thank participants, the public and stakeholders for attending this event. Thank sponsors and partners for their support. Follow up on the event through social media, newsletters, letters, videos, images, etc.

¹⁰ Cf. Marianna Occhiuto, "Événements de collecte de fonds", PMF Advanced 2022, 25.11.2022.

¹¹ Cf Daniel Fusi, *Events for Fundraising*, www.fundraising.it.

¹² *Ibidem*.

If we had to condense what has just been presented above into a kind of fundraising event checklist, we would say in summary: define the objective of the event; create an event committee; set the fundraising goal; aim for **SMART** objectives (acronym which translates as **SPECIFIC**: be precise about the amount to be collected, **MEASURABLE** i.e. measurable: identify measurable objectives at all stages, **ACHIEVABLE** i.e. feasible: make a plan achievable given the resources, **REALISTIC** i.e. which is relevant: be realistic when referring to the context, **TIME-BOUND** i.e. set a timetable and respect specific deadlines); define the activities of the event; plan the event schedule; involve staff, volunteers, sponsors; define the budget; promote your event; carry out the event with a certain relaxation; evaluate and monitor results; follow up with attendees and sponsors.

To conclude, let's say that fundraising should hardly be scary. It goes back to the very origins of our common history as a religious Family in the personal experience of our holy Founder. « *One is almost incredulous in the face of creativity and the thousand initiatives undertaken by Conforti. He really "stirred" as if everything depended on him and at the same time he abandoned himself trustingly to Providence as if everything depended on God. He undertook initiatives without fear of failure, without worrying about what could be commented on* » (translated from Alfiero Ceresoli, "Economics in poverty beyond the wish, the Gospel and evangelization", p. 18 of the digital version). However, what guarantees a fundraising success is the method used and all the technical strategies put in place. However, what matters more than the amount of money is the relationship created with resourceful people. Fundraising means first of all finding resources and not just money. It's also about not focusing on just one method of fundraising. The ideal is to consider multiple sources of income to deal with possible setbacks in the event that, for example, one is missing. It is therefore necessary to experiment with multi-channel fundraising methods to have a regular flow, not for individualistic or selfish purposes but rather at the service of Man and the Mission of the Church.

In order that what we described above be possible, it is necessary to demonstrate a great educational and cultural work¹³. It is also a service to be carried out as a team and in the community. Indeed « [...] *economy is too serious a matter to be left only to community bursars* »¹⁴ or parish priests. Ultimately, it must always be remembered that « *the lack of economic means at the time of planning, more than an obstacle to start, must be a stimulus to find the necessary resources - people and funds - to guarantee the viability of the project* »¹⁵. In a surge of faith and trust in God, « *we must never forget that the missionary projects to which we dedicate ourselves are not ours, but that they are of the Church and the mission is above all a gift from God* »¹⁶.

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¹³ Cf. Pontificio Consiglio della Giustizia e della Pace, *Compendium de la Dottrina Sociale della Chiesa*, nn. 375, 376.

¹⁴ Santiago Ma Gonzalez Silva, « La gestion des biens par rapport aux *Sodales* et à la mission », in CIVCSVA, *La gestion des biens ecclésiastiques des Instituts de vie consacrée et des sociétés de vie apostolique. Au service de l'humanum et de la mission de l'Eglise*, p. 121.

¹⁵ Santiago Ma Gonzalez Silva, « La gestion des biens par rapport aux *Sodales* et à la mission », in CIVCSVA, *La gestion des biens ecclésiastiques des Instituts de vie consacrée et des sociétés de vie apostolique. Au service de l'humanum et de la mission de l'Eglise*, p. 121.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 147.