

LONG REPORT

TELL ME YOUR STORY

The project consisted of events:

- CRACOW, 9-10TH OF APRIL, 2018
- WROCŁAW, 26-27TH OF MAY, 2018
- WROCŁAW, 26-27TH OF MAY, 2018
- WARSAW & BYDGOSZCZ, 28-30TH OF AUGUST, 2018

The main objective of this project was to exchange knowledge and experience of liberal parties in building a permanent engagement with citizens and a successful permanent campaign based on storytelling and emotions. More precisely, a well-established political party – which has proven to be successful in advocating liberal solutions nonstop – were matched with rather new start-up parties. Hence, both were in the position to learn from each other, in terms of developing strategies to effectively engage with citizens and keep on doing so throughout election cycles. Consequently, the outcomes will benefit parties in future elections, especially the European elections of 2019.

The main idea was to gather three times the same group of campaigners to build on their knowledge and skills, but because of the political circumstances (elections in Hungary and street protest in Slovakia) it was not possible. Nevertheless, engaged campaigners participated in all four events. Based on the expertise of the participants of respective events, the angle of each training was a bit different.

The project was designed mostly for liberal organizations from Central Europe, united on the New Central Europe platform within the ALDE Party, with participation of the USR Romania, and the Reform Party (Estonia). The Western European perspective was given by experts from VVD International, SILC and Friedrich Naumann Stiftung Brussels. In the last event participants from the Ukrainian party Sila Lyudey were also involved.

In total 15 campaigners from 5 different countries were trained. Additionally, ca. 40 other participants were involved in project's activities.

The first event in Cracow focused on framing and using data for storytelling. Raymond Mens, Head of Communications at VVD, presented best practices from last VVD campaigns and Zuzana Papazoski from the National Democratic Institute shared data from the Institute's newest research on values and politics in Central Europe. In the event recent campaigns of Nowoczesna, NEOS and USR were analyzed.

The second event in Warsaw focused on building a story around a brand and it used experienced from both political and corporate world. Szymon Walkiewicz, CEO of the WALK PR agency, Airis Meier from the Estonian Reform Party, and Maaïke Langedoen and Guus Bathoorn from the VVD social media team gave presentations on creating emotional stories, sharing best practices that could be used by the participants. In the event recent campaigns of Progressive Slovakia and Momentum were analyzed.

The third and last event took place in Wrocław and focused on psychology and building personal link with target groups based on emotions. The main workshops were run by political communication advisor Jowita Kacik.

The fourth event was organized as an aftermath of another ELF event, namely “Future of Freedom” in Kiev (organized in cooperation with SILC) where participants from Swedish, Ukrainian and Polish liberal parties decided it would be fruitful for them to cooperate and exchange knowledge and experience. In a result a series of meetings of Hanna Gerdes, a lawyer and SILC board member, was organized in Warsaw. It consisted of debates with representatives of Projekt: Polska (on hate crimes and discrimination) and Nowoczesna politicians and legislators (on legislation as regarding the women’s rights). An open presentation on campaigning for women’s rights was also given to the public. The second part of the event consisted of presentations and Q&A sessions between liberals from Poland and Ukraine.

During every event participants met with the most important liberal politicians, including Katarzyna Lubnauer, Adam Szlapka, Jerzy Meysztowicz. During the event in Warsaw a guided tour in the Sejm was offered to the participants.

The project achieved all goals foreseen in the application form. It created an open and effective platform of knowledge exchange between the Central European liberal parties, and created a link between them and campaign experts from all over Europe. It was an excellent example of peer-to-peer learning within the European Liberal Forum and ALDE network, supported by top experts in campaigning. It was a unique experience also because it included professionals from outside politics, eg. PR and strategy experts from the corporate worlds, psychologists. Campaigners from 9 different countries gained skills and knowledge on newest campaign methods and tools, especially on emotional campaigning and storytelling.

As a consequence of “Tell Me Your Story” a few bilateral projects have been established and partners agreed it should continue in 2019.