



International Public Fundraising Council (IPFC)
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The state of face-to-face differs quite broadly from region to region in the world today. There are some markets that are well on their way to recovery and expansion and some that are still in lock down with no solution in sight. The IPFC and its members continue to coordinate and share information for common benefit.

A replay of the preceding fourteen months would tell a tale of unprecedented hardship to our channel and the broader sector. The same replay would be full of resilience, courage and adaptability embodied in nearly every person we know.

The IPFC would like to offer thanks to our colleagues who continue to lead the channel to rebuild and recover and encouragement to our colleagues who may still be facing some very dark days in their region.

This newsletter provides unique views into the challenges teams are still facing, despite successful relaunch. Several programs and countries are reporting higher conversion and better retention, to name a few silver linings for which we are grateful. However, the challenges of workforce rehire, training and retention to replace the seasoned teams of pre-Covid days and the challenges booking sites are just a few examples of items that continue to pose a risk to the channel.

As we work to harness the experience from around the world for the benefit of our colleagues and members, we hope you find value in this edition of the IPFC newsletter.

F2F in the pandemic: Good experiences with strict security precautions in Austria and Germany

by **Franz Wissmann & Günther Lutschinger**, German and Austrian Fundraising Quality Initiatives



Franz Wissmann



Günther Lutschinger

Face-to-face fundraising represents one of the most important channels in acquiring donations for NPOs. Approximately 20% of the Austrian population are using this channel, estimations for Germany show corresponding figures. However, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the sector has faced massive restrictions and losses. Nevertheless, according to the

COVID-19 protective-measures-ordinance of the federal government, fundraising is explicitly allowed as an activity with direct customer-contact at an evaluable workplace. Of course, the members of the Austrian and the German quality initiatives in F2F-Fundraising act with high sensitivity and caution. Whereas only a few Austrian organizations attempted to start their F2F-campaigns in January (in Germany at the beginning of February), campaigns have expanded since February on a wider scale in public space and from door to door. However, some NPOs are cautious and still waiting to resume their F2F-Fundraising activities.

Although law in every region does not require it, members of both initiatives have voluntarily committed to ensuring a 1,5 or 2-metre safety distance and to wearing an FFP2-mask. Overall, strict concepts on hygiene and protection have been developed in the sector since the beginning of this year such as working with smaller teams without rotation, separate bedrooms each team member when on tour, contactless dispensing with self-checkouts and disinfectants. Especially a consequent and regular testing strategy with an entry test at the beginning of the employment and up to three COVID-19-tests per week has proven effective and pays off. Therefore testing-strategies have been included in the members' quality standards. As a consequence, hardly any infections among the F2F-Fundraisers have been recorded and subsequently none at all among all approached potential donors.

Numbers of those organizations that have their campaigns up and running are promising and are nearly reaching the usual level after the Christmas break. Fixed stands in larger cities show an almost normal frequency of passers-by, but it is harder to get a permission from the public authority therefor many teams are working just with a clipboard or tablet instead. Because of the partly lock down the frequency of the sites has changed from shopping malls to metro stations etc. In smaller cities in general the frequency is significantly lower. The feedback of clients is very positive and underlines the continued solidarity in most parts of society. There are hardly any complaints. Employee bottlenecks are expected because some experienced fundraisers are not available due to distance learning and postponed exams in universities. According to a survey by the Fundraising Verband Austria, 2,500 to 3,000 jobs are available in the Austrian F2F fundraising sector during the year.

The Austrian and the German quality initiatives maintain a regular exchange of practice in regular virtual meetings and coordination of with their members. Like in other industries, uncertainty regarding legal regulations affects the F2F-Fundraising sector as well. Therefore, the Austrian Fundraising Association supports their members with a flyer explaining current safety regulations in F2F-Fundraising activities with reference to the current legal situation – a leaflet that builds trust and confidence not only among pedestrians but also among F2F-Fundraisers on the street.

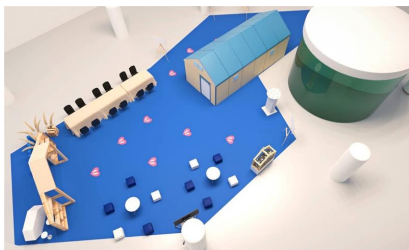
Covid-19: F2F Fundraising during the pandemic – An overview of the Asia-Pacific region

By **Christophe Glenisson** – Chief Private Sector Fundraising Asia Pacific at UNHCR



What was the impact of the pandemic on UNHCR fundraising in the Asia-Pacific region?

“Even though it sounds crazy to say so...it’s been quite a fantastic year for the UNHCR when it comes to fundraising! We’ve achieved income levels that were never seen before. Last year the total fundraising income raised globally was \$ 537 Million, (\$ 100 million more than in 2019). In the region,



\$ 148 million was raised, a 15% increase from previous year. Even if a big part of this was due to significant increase from Corporate and particularly with Gift-in-Kind, We indeed observed in 2020 a significant rise of individual giving. UNHCR Private Sector fundraising currently covers ten countries within the area (Japan, Korea, China, Hong-Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Australia & New-Zealand). Of course, there are some big differences among the countries. Japan for example broke all records with a +40% rise while some other countries had more difficulties and barely managed to stabilize their income from 2019.”

How much does F2F fundraising usually represents?

With existing and new donors, “F2F fundraising represents about 70% of the total income of individual giving (which is about 136\$ millions for the region) and more than 500,000 regular donors.” More than 100,000 have been recruited in 2020, a good figure but lower than pre covid (155,000 in 2019).

How did it handle the crisis?

“F2F fundraising has suffered a lot from the crisis. Not really in terms of results but rather struggling with the difficulty to keep on with our activities (due to governmental restrictions mainly but also local UNHCR decisions to pause) and maintain the workforce mobilized. Within the region, the situation was really different from one country to the other. Some countries like Hong-Kong experienced only a few days of restrictions while other countries faced a long-lasting ban that prevented them from fundraising and hitting the street for months. The UNHCR policy was really clear : we, of course, did encourage everyone (agencies & in-house programs) to strictly follow the rules.

The main objective for us was first to take care of our staff. We tried to do everything we could to keep our employees healthy and economically safe. This also appeared to be a necessity for resuming the activity as soon as it was possible.

A lot of initiatives were led in order to keep our staff busy. Some countries decided to relocate the frontliners within the back-office or to train them for telemarketing purposes. I believe that UNHCR truly treated this crisis as a real emergency. One of the initiatives that illustrates that reality the most was one led in Australia. Their workforce was reemployed to call each

elderly donor to ask them if they were ok and not feeling isolated, to answer to any question and link them to relevant organizations/support for Covid related issues. Other countries also took advantage of that period to work on their existing donors to keep them and also trying to bring back inactive ones

Overall, most of the budget was re-directed towards digital fundraising. The countries that performed the best were the ones that have had this responsiveness and understood quickly the necessity to do so.”

Were there any discussions led with the agencies/suppliers? How did you cooperate?

“Of course we did have a common reflection on what was going on. It was quite hard for the suppliers to find alternative activities for their whole staff. We tried to imagine and create the best conditions for the restart of the activity. We supported the agencies the best we could by leading socially oriented actions and tried to focus on employee’s well-being. It takes a lot to convince people to stay when things are going normal, but it is also our duty to motivate them to stay when things go badly.”

Did you manage to do so?

“Globally, we lost some of our workforce with differences from one country to another. But, it could have been a lot worse without the measures taken to stay on board! It was a big challenge and despite all the help we provided to the agencies, some of them couldn’t maintain their entire workforce in place. The situation really depends on the country you’re working in. In some places, people were even afraid to go back to work in the streets and we took that into consideration not forcing anyone to resume his/her job.

Once the activities resumed, did you enforce safety guidelines?

“Of course we did! We got back to the streets with strict safety guidelines (masks, gloves, hand sanitizers, tablets and to try to be contactless). We reduced our presence in closed-places such as malls. We also decided to adapt the shifts in order for the frontliners to avoid crowded hours within public transportation.”

How would you define public acceptance of F2F fundraising when it resumed? What about the results?

“It was rather good. It might have been a little bit harder to stop by people but the conversion rate was definitely better. The people who stopped generally signed up more. The big difference for F2F fundraising is the volume we did. There has been a significant drop in numbers of donors recruited. We recruited in 2020 only 60% of the donors we were planning to recruit, which represents about 100 000 new donors instead of 150 000 in the year before. We were not able to invest all the money we wanted to invest for F2F. ”

What does the UNHCR fundraising strategy look like for the coming years?

“F2F is the first channel for regular giving. And it is likely to remain so. Even though we’re trying to rebalance our investment budget, the diversification of the channels is a big challenge when you also want to acquire many donors. To date, digital and telemarketing are being pushed, show some promising growth but are clearly not enough to be a substitute to F2F and to acquire regular donors.

