



NGO LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

May 27-31, 2019 ❖ Warsaw, Poland

Overview. In May 2019, 24 NGO leaders from 13 countries completed an interactive four-day management workshop designed to strengthen civil society in young democracies. This was the fifth annual workshop spearheaded by two University of Michigan units focused on strengthening emerging democracies: the Weiser Center for Europe & Eurasia and the William Davidson Institute. It was the second consecutive workshop held in Poland with Warsaw-based partner the Education for Democracy Foundation, which supports democratization and civil society development.

The program targeted leaders of organizations in countries that have experienced great change over the past three decades as their societies have undergone democratic transitions. The 24 participants were selected through an open application process from a pool of over 400 applicants. Participants attended the workshop at no charge and came from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, North Macedonia, Russia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Their NGOs focus on democracy, education, human rights, and youth.

Content. Day-long sessions focused on:

- 1.) *Planning and Sustainability of NGOs*
- 2.) *Essentials of NGO Management*
- 3.) *Marketing Strategy for the NGO*
- 4.) *Fundraising*

These sessions were taught by, respectively:

- *John Beauclerk* is Associate at International NGO Training and Research Center (INTRAC), where he concentrates on consultancy in program design, evaluation work and training.
- *Linda Gasser* is Lecturer in the Department of Human Resource Studies at Cornell University, New York and Faculty Affiliate with the William Davidson Institute. She helped found and served as Executive Director of the Central Europe Human Resource Education Initiative.
- *Peter Šebo* is a Slovak-based branding and digital marketing expert with experience supporting the marketing efforts of NGOs. He is the founder of PS:Digital, a digital marketing agency in Bratislava.
- *Andrzej Pietrucha* trains employees of NGOs, local governments, and SMEs in Poland, Croatia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kosovo for the Academy of Civic Organizations Foundation (FAOO) and as a consultant. Co-trainer *Lidia Kuczmierowska* is a fundraising and marketing trainer for the Foundation



Trainer John Beauclerk guides participants through an organizational planning exercise.

Academy of Civil Organizations (FAOO) and an author of campaigns and solutions promoting regular and conscious philanthropy of individuals and companies.

Jan Jakub (Kuba) Wygnański, President of Shipyard – Centre for Social Innovation and Research and member of Education for Democracy Foundation’s council, drew on his experience as a sociologist and activist to deliver the workshop’s opening keynote address on the present challenges facing NGOs. The keynote address and opening were held at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. The evening began with welcoming remarks from museum director Dariusz Stola.



Kuba Wygnański discusses the challenges facing NGOs at the workshop’s opening event at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

Participants had ample time to network over the course of the week. Beginning with the opening keynote and reception on the eve of the program, the camaraderie continued through a group visit to POLIN, an interactive walking tour of Warsaw, and a toast-filled closing dinner at a restaurant in Old Town Warsaw.

Results. The goals of the workshop were to empower NGO leaders to: strengthen their internal expertise, managerial and income-generating capacities, learn to more effectively engage with both general public and government stakeholders, and build their international networks. Particular focus was on advocating for vulnerable groups and advancing democratic accountability in their countries. The ExtendEd portal was

utilized to solidify learning before, during, and after the workshop. Facebook and LinkedIn groups are currently extending the workshop’s network. Participants continue to use these platforms after the workshop to share resources, funding sources, and ideas.

Evaluations were extremely positive, with measured outcomes of the overall program receiving high approval: relevance of content to organization; applicability to work; and match with expectations. As with past workshops, nearly all participants reported they would strongly recommend the workshop to others in their field. In summary, the program reached its goal of equipping NGO leaders with skills and tools needed to run more sustainable and effective organizations. This training will help organizations counter authoritarian currents and enable democratic values to further develop in their societies.

Testimonials:

“[The workshop is] a great opportunity to learn new techniques and apply in your daily work.”

“The NGO Leadership Workshop was responsive to my needs and will help me in increasing capacity in my organization.”

"Come! Listen! Improve!"

Next steps. WCEE and WDI plan to build on previous successes to offer a sixth workshop in Bratislava in October 2019 and a seventh workshop in Warsaw in spring 2020.

Further Information. Please see the [Weiser Center](#)’s or [WDI](#)’s workshop pages and the [Michigan Daily](#)’s and [University Record](#)’s coverage (2015 workshop).