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The Organization of World Youth Day from the Perspective of Large-Scale Social Project Management

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Abstract

This article evaluates the organization of World Youth Day (WYD) from the perspective of large-scale social project management. Initiated by Pope John Paul II in 1985 and first celebrated as a formally instituted observance in 1986, WYD is a major social and religious undertaking that has been continued by his successors. Its organization poses significant, multifaceted challenges for organizers and participants alike. Although WYD has been examined extensively in religious and social research, its organizational dimension has received limited systematic attention in management studies. The analysis therefore applies a project-management perspective. The study is based on the author's qualitative research, including narrative interviews, conversations, and oral history accounts by individuals who participated in different social roles in the international WYD gatherings held in Kraków (2016), Panama City (2019), and Lisbon (2023). The findings, considered from several perspectives and including participants' assessments, support a broadly positive evaluation of WYD organization. At the same time, the study's exploratory design and small purposive sample indicate the need for broader international research.

Keywords

World Youth Day, project management, organization, evaluation

1. World Youth Day: Concept, rationale, and organizational framework

World Youth Day (WYD) is an international religious gathering of young people. It enables young Catholics to profess and deepen their faith, experience ecclesial community, and participate in evangelization. Its primary dimension is spiritual and religious, at both the individual and communal levels. The communal dimension extends beyond the immediate body of participants and may contribute to the renewal of the Church at the local, diocesan, national, and universal levels (“Idea” n.d.).

John Paul II initiated WYD. Its immediate origins lie in the international youth gatherings held in Rome in 1984 and 1985 (Bieliński 2023). In 1983, he also established the San Lorenzo International Youth Centre in Rome. This initiative reflected a defining feature of his ministry: as a priest, bishop, cardinal, and pope, he maintained close ties with young people, especially university students, and addressed their intellectual, pastoral, and spiritual concerns. Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re emphasizes this historical dimension:

The Holy Father surrounded young people with special and sincere care. He was their true yet demanding friend. He was characterized by a great passion for education. He established a direct relationship with young people based on trust. Pope Wojtyła loved the youth from all over the world and was a great advocate of their ideals and values. It was precisely from this bond that the brilliant idea of World Youth Day was born (Re 2024, 24).

The United Nations designated 1985 as International Youth Year under the theme “Participation, Development and Peace” (United Nations Secretary-General 1985). The Catholic Church supported the initiative, with John Paul II’s personal involvement. On March 31, 1985, the pope issued the apostolic letter *Dilecti Amici* to young people throughout the world, whose opening scriptural exhortation calls them to be able to “give an account of the hope that is in you” (John Paul II 1985).

The letter’s content and conclusion foreshadowed a permanent initiative. On December 20, 1985, John Paul II formally announced the institution of World Youth Day (Holy See n.d.).

The first formally instituted World Youth Day was celebrated at the diocesan level in 1986, and the first international gathering outside Rome took

place in Buenos Aires in 1987. Subsequent international gatherings were held in Santiago de Compostela (1989), Częstochowa (1991), Denver (1993), Manila (1995), Paris (1997), Rome (2000), Toronto (2002), Cologne (2005), Sydney (2008), Madrid (2011), Rio de Janeiro (2013), Kraków (2016), Panama City (2019), and Lisbon (2023). The next international WYD is scheduled for Seoul on August 3–8, 2027 (Holy See n.d.; Bieliński 2023; WYD Seoul 2027 Local Organizing Committee 2025).

The formative and religious significance of WYD has been the subject of scholarly research (Chagas 2015, 45–51; Przywara 2023, 167–84). Participants' testimonies—whether concerning parish, diocesan, or international gatherings—are particularly important for assessing its impact. WYD's religious and spiritual significance is also examined in Michał Kania's doctoral dissertation, *Inspiracyjny wpływ przesłań światowych dni młodzieży na dynamizację nowej ewangelizacji* ["The inspiring influence of World Youth Day messages on the dynamism of the new evangelization"] (Kania 2020).

Analyses by national organizing offices, local authorities, and academic institutions are important for examining cooperation between public and ecclesiastical institutions in organizing WYD (Seweryn et al. 2017; "Podsumowanie Światowych Dni Młodzieży"; "Światowe Dni Młodzieży w Panamie — podsumowanie" 2019; Niemczyk and Seweryn 2018; Bajgier-Kowalska and Tracz 2019, 150–65). Event management and security are especially consequential during the central gathering (Żurek 2023). The pope's concluding Mass, attended by numerous cardinals and bishops, has drawn crowds ranging from hundreds of thousands to several million; reported attendance has included approximately 4 million people in Manila (1995), 3.7 million in Rio de Janeiro (2013), 2.2 million in Rome (2000), and 3 million in Kraków (2016) (Bieliński 2023).

The organizational framework of WYD has evolved over time (Bieliński 2023). The model developed by the Roman Curia comprises two principal components: the diocesan phase ("Days in the Dioceses") and the international phase ("central events"), a week-long gathering in the host city (Chagas 2015, 45–51). International WYD gatherings now take place every three to four years, with dates adapted to local circumstances. Kraków hosted the event in July 2016, Panama City in January 2019, and Lisbon in August 2023, reflecting climatic and logistical considerations ("Organizacja KBO ŚDM" n.d.).

The Days in the Dioceses combine the religious, social, and relational dimensions. They allow participants to learn about the host region—its history, culture, and achievements—while fostering integration, friendship, and interpersonal ties.

Activities typically include catechesis, evangelization meetings, personal testimonies, discussion, and prayer vigils. The central events, by contrast, follow a more standardized pattern, usually extending from Tuesday through Sunday. The opening Mass inaugurates the gathering on Tuesday; the following days include catechesis, meetings, church visits, the Youth Festival, and other activities. The pope is welcomed on Thursday, the Way of the Cross takes place on Friday, the vigil on Saturday evening, and the concluding Mass on Sunday morning. At the close of the event, the pope announces the host city for the next international WYD. In Lisbon in 2023, Pope Francis invited young Catholics worldwide to gather in Seoul in 2027 (WYD Seoul 2027 Local Organizing Committee 2023).

At the level of the Holy See, WYD is coordinated by the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, which in 2016 succeeded the former Pontifical Council for the Laity. The host Church establishes a local organizing committee, usually under the relevant episcopal structures. In Poland, the National Organizing Office for World Youth Day (KBO ŚDM), operating within the Polish Episcopal Conference, has possessed legal personality since 2010 (“Statut KBO ŚDM” n.d.).

In implementing a WYD project, the national or local organizing office collaborates with public authorities, regional and municipal services, healthcare and security agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and other stakeholders. Because of WYD’s mission, complexity, and multidimensional character, preparation is a multi-year process: it begins soon after the host city is announced and continues for months after the event, through financial settlement, evaluation, and final reporting (“Podsumowanie Światowych Dni Młodzieży”; “Delegaci z ok. 100 krajów” 2017; “Światowe Dni Młodzieży w Panamie — podsumowanie” 2019). Coordination meetings in Rome and exchanges between organizing committees facilitate the transfer of experience and good practice in responding to organizational challenges (“Delegacja Komitetu Organizacyjnego” 2017; “Koordynator polskich przygotowań” 2017; “Międzynarodowe spotkanie” 2019). WYD thus offers a significant case of large-scale social project management.

2. Social and organizational project management

This section provides a synthetic and selective discussion of the principal elements of social and organizational project management. It draws on foundational project-management literature (see, among others, Hill 2004; Young 2004; Stabryła 2006; Project Management Institute 2017; Trocki 2017; Cabała 2018).

A project may be defined as a “unique, complex undertaking within a finite timeframe, with a distinct beginning and end, carried out by a team in a manner relatively independent of an organization’s routine activities, using specialized methods and techniques” (Trocki et al. 2003, 18). This definition provides a basis for analyzing the organization of World Youth Day through the lens of project management.

Projects possess distinctive characteristics. The literature identifies a diverse set of elements that constitute a project’s identity and inform project portfolio management (Young 2004; Jałocha 2014). Drawing on Project Management Institute standards and related scholarship, four basic characteristics are especially relevant here: purposefulness, complexity, uniqueness, and specificity. Each also applies to the organizational dimensions of WYD.

Projects are goal-oriented undertakings designed to achieve a specified objective. Their structure should align with the mission and overarching goals of the organizing entity. The objective provides a basis for organization, justification, decomposition into tasks, resource allocation, coordination, and stakeholder collaboration. This central feature of project-based management corresponds closely to the mission of WYD outlined above.

Complexity is inherent in projects, and its effective management is often decisive for project outcomes. It requires an understanding of the task structure, an appropriate organizational and financial framework, coordination among team members (including volunteers), and reliable execution. WYD exemplifies such complexity: it is a multilevel, multistakeholder undertaking involving an extensive portfolio of interrelated projects.

This complexity arises from a multilevel structure encompassing the Roman Curia, the episcopate and local Church, national organizing offices, and parish organizing committees as well as from the relationships between ecclesiastical and public authorities. It is intensified by the international character of the event, its cultural diversity, the number of participants, and the need to maintain a coherent identity and continuity across annual diocesan observances and periodic international gatherings.

Projects are also characterized by uniqueness, which entails a degree of novelty and originality. This feature nevertheless requires qualification: project-management methods and procedures may be standardized, replicated, and adapted across undertakings (Flyvbjerg and Gardner 2024; Trocki 2017). Such transfer enables organizational learning from prior experience and critical evaluation of the conditions, methods, and outcomes of implementation.

Each project is defined by its time, place, procedures, and methods of execution. It has an origin, rationale, and operating conditions, together with a specific method for decomposing the principal objective into stages and tasks, setting deadlines, establishing rules of team collaboration—including leadership and implementation roles—and providing for supervision, audit, assessment, and evaluation. This synthetic characterization corresponds closely to the nature and organizational challenges of WYD.

3. Research methodology

Research methodology begins with the identification of a research gap. In the problem addressed here, that gap is twofold. First, project-management scholarship has devoted limited attention to the organization of a large global undertaking—or megaproject—such as WYD. Second, the literature on WYD has focused primarily on its religious and spiritual mission rather than on its organizational dimension. The study therefore addresses both a knowledge gap and an empirical or evaluation gap as well as an interdisciplinary gap: the limited integration of management research with scholarship on WYD's religious and evangelizing role. Given the complexity and interdisciplinary character of the problem, together with the limited scope of the author's empirical research, a qualitative methodology was adopted—an established approach in the social sciences (Nowak 2007; Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 2001; Babbie 2008; Kvale 2007), including management studies (Czakoń 2016; Sułkowski and Lenart-Gansiniec 2021). The exploratory design informed the use of narrative interviews and oral history techniques (Abrams 2016; Oral History Association 2009; Kurkowska-Budzan 2011, 9–34).

Narrative interviewing and oral history are established tools in qualitative sociology and can also support interdisciplinary research. Both document individuals' participation in and experience of past events in relation to the problem under study: here, the evaluation of the organizational dimensions of the international WYD gatherings in Kraków (2016), Panama City (2019), and Lisbon (2023). Purposive sampling was used because participant selection followed from the research objective and practical feasibility. The resulting accounts form a mosaic of individual perspectives on the organization of international gatherings in three cities. The principal selection criteria were the need to examine three distinct events and to include narrators who had occupied different

social roles. The sample comprised seven individuals: a university rector closely involved in preparations for WYD in Kraków; priests who organized travel for Bolivian and Polish groups to the Kraków and Lisbon events; a journalist who covered all three gatherings; a parish volunteer; and participants in the Panama and Lisbon events.

The research adopted an open, exploratory perspective, allowing each memoirist—or narrator, to use oral history terminology—to speak freely without the imposition of predetermined conceptual or substantive categories (Oral History Association 2009; Silverman 2012; Creswell 2013; Urbaniak-Zajac and Kos 2013). Participants were asked: “How do you rate the organization of World Youth Day in which you participated?” At the outset, they were reminded of WYD’s mission and character, discussed in section 1, and of the proposition that, in addition to its religious significance, WYD displays the characteristics of a large, complex organizational undertaking—a megaproject. They were also presented with the project characteristics discussed in section 2: purposefulness, complexity, uniqueness, and specificity. At a high level of generality, these categories provided a framework for describing and evaluating the organizational dimensions of WYD and participants’ experiences.

Participants were informed that every project has an origin, rationale, operating conditions, implementation rules, division of the principal objective into stages and tasks, deadlines, rules for cooperation among teams at all levels—from the Roman Curia and national organizing office to the parish—and allocations of competence and responsibility among ecclesiastical, state, regional, and local institutions. The framework also encompassed assessment, audit, and evaluation. Functionally, it included arrangements for the religious program, logistics, catering, accommodation, security, transportation, and related areas.

The research was conducted in December 2024 and January 2025. Because of editorial constraints, the article presents only excerpts from the recorded statements. In accordance with oral history principles (Oral History Association 2009), all statements were submitted to their narrators for authorization. Some narrators consented to the disclosure of their names; others requested anonymity. Attribution therefore varies accordingly.

The organizational dimensions of the three international WYD gatherings were assessed by the following participants:

- WYD in Kraków (July 26–31, 2016): (1) Rev. Prof. Wojciech Zyzak, rector of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow from 2014

to 2020; (2) Rev. Tomasz Grzyb, a missionary in Bolivia who attended WYD in Kraków with seven Bolivians; and (3) Jan D., a participant and volunteer on a Parish Organizing Committee (POC) in Kraków (World Youth Day n.d.-a).

- WYD in Panama City (January 22–27, 2019): (1) Paweł Ż. and (2) Zuzanna R., both participants (World Youth Day n.d.-c).
- WYD in Lisbon (August 1–6, 2023): (1) Fr. A. Ż., a Franciscan; and (2) Karolina Zając of the Press Office of the Archdiocese of Kraków (World Youth Day n.d.-b).

4. Research results: Social evaluation of the organizational dimensions of WYD

The findings are presented for each international WYD gathering: Kraków, Panama City, and Lisbon. The selected excerpts are drawn from a larger body of empirical material and emphasize statements that articulate distinctive, individualized assessments of organization; reflect personal experience; and capture the particular temporal, geographical, cultural, and organizational context of each event.

4.1. World Youth Day in Kraków (2016)

- Rev. Prof. Wojciech Zyzak, rector of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow (2014–20):

WYD in Kraków in 2016 coincided with my first term as rector of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków from 2014 to 2018. For two years, I was therefore able to follow the preparatory activities of the committee, which in Kraków was led by Bishop Damian Muskus, as well as my successor as rector, Rev. Prof. Robert Tyrała. The preparations were particularly interesting to me, as I had previously worked within the German diocesan structures in Cologne and was significantly involved in organizing World Youth Day in 2005. Having witnessed firsthand the time, financial resources, and effort required for these preparations as well as the challenges that arose during the event itself I followed the work of our Polish organizers with great interest. The precise administrative machinery of the German environment seemed

to jam in unforeseen situations. This was evident in the shortage of meal packages in the city center, despite unused supplies in the outskirts. Polish organizers appeared to be more flexible in handling unexpected circumstances. Of course, this does not mean that World Youth Day in Kraków was not meticulously prepared. I can confirm that the committee effectively engaged both the staff and students of our university. Those associated with journalism, theology, and church music studies were particularly visible in the preparatory work and during the event itself. The university infrastructure was also appropriately utilized in a timely and effective manner. To this day, we benefit from the fiber-optic connection installed in the building, which served as the media center for all Italian participants. Organizers must not only anticipate various difficulties and scenarios but also demonstrate flexibility, imagination, and the ability to make quick decisions, especially when managing such a large and multifaceted event. In my opinion, the committee in Kraków handled this task excellently. The scale of preparations was incomparably greater and more complex than what we had experienced in Częstochowa during WYD in 1991. Moreover, after the event, there were no reports of financial issues, which had occurred previously, particularly in Brazil. This is further proof of the committee's professional approach.

- Rev. Tomasz Grzyb, a missionary in Bolivia who attended WYD in Kraków with a group of seven Bolivians:

Although eight years have passed since World Youth Day in Kraków, the memories remain vivid and very positive—not only for me but also for the Bolivian youths of that time, who are now adults. Preparations for the trip to attend WYD began nearly a year in advance.

The stay in Poland was very well organized. In the Diocese of Siedlce, we encountered immense openness and kindness. The parishes that welcomed us had prepared everything down to the last detail—accommodation, meals, transportation. The Bolivian youths were in awe and still recall everything with great emotion.

We had the same experience in Kraków—tremendous openness, kindness, and volunteers everywhere, always ready to help. We vividly remember the hospitality of our hosts, their concern for our well-being and comfort, and how we felt like part of their families during those days. The liturgies, catechesis, vigils, and central celebrations were beautifully and thoughtfully prepared.

Although the site of the overnight vigil and the final Eucharist was some distance away, reaching it did not present significant difficulties.

I believe that the preparation and organization, both at the Church and state levels, were very well-executed. The youth who participated in WYD in Kraków still cherish beautiful memories and the testimony of faith shared with hundreds of thousands of young people from around the world.

- Jan D., participant and volunteer in a Parish Organizing Committee (POC) in Kraków:

During WYD in 2016, I was not only a participant but also an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion and a member of the POC in my parish responsible for communication with representatives of pilgrim groups. We hosted about 700 people. Most of them came from Central and South America, but there were also French, Spanish, and Chinese pilgrims. Together with the chair, we assigned accommodations. A reception office for pilgrims operated in the parish, staffed by the Seraphic sisters and young people from the parish. Other volunteers also came forward, proving to be very helpful, mainly because of their language skills. Although we initially feared that the scale of responsibilities might overwhelm us, everything went smoothly. The cooperation was exemplary. I do not recall any misunderstandings, even though unforeseen situations arose. There was no need to assign people to specific tasks, as volunteers came forward on their own. It was an exceptional, unforgettable, and transformative week for me. Although extremely intense, I have never before or since experienced such joy in hard work. It is difficult to find another explanation other than that it was the work of the Holy Spirit.

4.2. World Youth Day in Panama City (2019)

- Paweł Ż. (participant):

I went to Panama with a large, organized group of more than 100 people. A large number of us, including me, were accommodated by the Kol Shearith Israel synagogue. Our stay in Panama was very intense. On the one hand, we took part in events closely related to WYD itself and in daily Mass; on the other hand, we explored Panama. WYD-related events first included the Days in the Dioceses, followed by the central events: the opening Mass, catechesis

with Polish bishops, the welcome for the pope, the Stations of the Cross, the overnight vigil, and the Missioning Mass.

I would describe it as a great celebration of the Church, where one could feel the joy, the uniqueness of the moment, and unity with other pilgrims and the local people. The organization of the events was so good that I cannot recall any shortcomings. The entire trip was a very interesting experience, allowing me to see a new place and to meet people with a completely different mentality. I have fond memories of it and hope that one day I will have the opportunity to visit Panama again.

- Zuzanna R. (participant):

Upon arrival in Panama City, pilgrims were welcomed by parishes, and my group was hosted in... a synagogue. On the way back, we often met other groups of pilgrims from Poland, and every day we sang Christmas carols. Organizing the central events is a major undertaking for any city. A separate logistical undertaking is food security; traditionally, each pilgrim receives three coupons a day for use at designated service points. It is worth adding that, during the central events, the organizers usually provide access to clean drinking water. The Polish Organizing Committee was able to combine the events with celebrations of the centenary of Poland's independence. During the central events, communication was provided in five official languages, and radio translation into Polish was also available. Most important, however, was the opportunity for all Polish participants to meet for a shared Eucharist in Polish, followed by an evening of singing and dancing, including a grand polonaise. On Wednesday January 23, between the opening ceremony and the welcome for Pope Francis, approximately 3,500 pilgrims from Poland gathered in one place, together with about a dozen bishops, Primate of Poland Archbishop Wojciech Polak, scouts from the Scouting Association of the Republic (ZHR), and participants in the Independence Cruise; some cruise participants formed a choir that performed during the concert with the Siewcy Lednicy band.

I believe that, not only in my experience, arriving in the host city of World Youth Day always brings the joyful thought of returning to a familiar place. The pilgrims' joy and the hospitality of local residents create a unique blend—one that can almost be tasted from the first moments of WYD.

4.3. World Youth Day in Lisbon (2023)

- Fr. A. Ż. (Franciscan):

At World Youth Day in Lisbon, I was the guardian of the Kraków student group, which also included young people from the Warsaw and Gdańsk regions. Regarding the organization of the event, my opinion is distinctly positive. Organizing such a large gathering is an extraordinary task for the organizers. I would like to emphasize, however, that the main goal of the meeting is for us—the young participants—to experience an extraordinary encounter with God; this religious dimension is fundamental to the assessment of every other aspect, including organization. And there is a great deal to organize! Approximately 1–1.5 million people from all over the world came to Lisbon, especially for the Saturday vigil and Sunday Mass. This required accommodation, food, transportation, medical care, public order, and safety—for us, the participants, the pope, and large numbers of priests. I often return to each of these aspects and replay them in my memory. This image of the organization of World Youth Day is clearly positive. Everything was prepared in accordance with the arrangements, including information from the organizing committee. During the event, communication and information from the organizers were accurate, although there were occasional network overloads and problems with simultaneous interpretation. Two participant packages—A and B—were distributed using QR codes. The IT solutions were adopted from the Italians; Kraków had also used them in 2016. Transportation within the city, including metro tickets, was included in Package B and caused no difficulties. Traffic management in the city and within the sectors was well organized. I would also emphasize the considerable commitment of the volunteers: some took leave from work, made their cars available, and provided reliable assistance. Food and beverage distribution points were especially helpful because daytime temperatures during the first week of August reached 34°C. The organizing office also provided assistance around the clock. Overall, I believe that, in terms of organization, Lisbon passed the test.

- Karolina Zając, Press Office of the Archdiocese of Kraków; participant in World Youth Day in Kraków, Panama City, and Lisbon:

I participated in the three most recent WYD gatherings—in Kraków, Panama, and Lisbon—in a different role at each. In Kraków, I was a volunteer; in Panama,

a translator and volunteer correspondent for the Press Office of the Archdiocese of Kraków; and in Portugal, a journalist and employee of that press office. These roles gave me three different perspectives.

WYD in Portugal consisted of two parts: the Days in the Dioceses and the central events. Although the hospitality of local people is always the most appealing aspect of WYD, and this time was no different, parish-level organization differed significantly from that in Panama, where volunteers helped us with everything and accompanied each group. In Lisbon, by contrast, groups were left to themselves by the local parish. During the day, each group organized its own activities; in the evening, there were joint prayers or other meetings in a church. For me as a journalist, the first week did not differ significantly from how other pilgrims experienced it, apart from the fact that I experienced it with a camera while working.

From my perspective, however, the week of central events was completely different from the experience of pilgrims, who slept in schools under field conditions that surprised everyone. The system of meals provided through the pilgrim package was unusual: food could be collected from designated restaurants and bars by scanning a QR code. From a professional perspective, however, the media center was very well prepared, as was transportation. The center's volunteers were very helpful and sought to facilitate the work of everyone with accreditation.

WYD in Lisbon was an engaging and intense professional experience, yet its atmosphere differed from that of Kraków and, even more significantly, from that of Panama. Although some of these differences may be attributable to my role, organizational factors were also decisive. In my opinion, WYD in Portugal was the worst prepared in organizational terms.

5. A synthesis of the research results

The study is exploratory and constitutes a contribution toward a comprehensive assessment of WYD's organizational dimensions. Taken together, the findings indicate a broadly positive social evaluation of the organization of the three international gatherings across different cities and countries.

Participants commonly evaluated both the religious and organizational dimensions of WYD positively. With respect to the latter—the principal focus of this article—particular emphasis fell on organizational professionalism and

effective teamwork: broad acceptance of project rules, adherence to schedules, appropriate forms of intercultural communication, respect for participants' agency, mutual trust, tolerance, kindness, and hospitality. The more critical assessment offered by the media professional does not invalidate the overall pattern. Taken together, the accounts indicate a strong practical understanding of the methods required to manage a large-scale global undertaking, as well as substantial competence and organizational capacity among event organizers.

Summary

This article evaluates the organizational dimensions of World Youth Day in response to an identified research gap and an open research problem. The introductory sections present WYD's mission and character and outline selected elements of large-scale social and organizational project management. The empirical assessment draws on the author's research among seven participants in three international WYD gatherings: Kraków (2016), Panama City (2019), and Lisbon (2023).

The findings are exploratory and do not support broad generalization; nevertheless, they have analytical value. They draw attention, beyond WYD's religious character, to questions of organization and management. The participants' oral histories support a preliminary synthetic assessment of organization through a mode of perception that Olga Tokarczuk calls *ognosia*. She describes it as a highly synthetic way of perceiving the surrounding world and the ability to "approach problems synthetically by seeking order and order both in the narratives themselves and in the details, small parts of the whole" (Tokarczuk 2020, 28).

The participants' narratives adopt precisely this perspective on WYD's organizational dimensions. At a broader cognitive level, and with due caution in light of the methodological standards and limitations of the study, their assessments suggest that WYD organization is broadly consistent with professional and socially responsible large-project management. The findings also support further research on a broader international scale.

One promising direction would apply the framework of the sixth edition of the PMBOK Guide, which organizes 49 project-management processes into five process groups and ten knowledge areas (Project Management Institute 2017),

within an international and intercultural research design. Such research could address the limitations of the present small sample by moving from individual narratives toward a mixed-methods megaproject case study based on larger samples. Flyvbjerg and Gardner (2024) ask how large projects can be managed effectively. WYD provides a significant case through which that question may be investigated; the present exploratory findings suggest, but do not conclusively establish, a positive answer.

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