



Competence Framework

Introduction



The importance of the third sector in Europe is increasingly recognized from different perspectives. It holds economic significance in terms of employment and production, particularly in service provision. Public authorities have started acknowledging third sector organizations as partners for implementing public policies. However, this recognition often appears to be instrumental or limited to specific fields, and the public's perception of the third sector remains

unclear. Even within the sector itself, organizations vary in their awareness of belonging to a distinct and broad sector, which is often low. European fundraising plays a crucial role in supporting the third sector and its initiatives. It helps ensure the sustainability and growth of organizations working towards common values, civic engagement, and participation. By raising funds, European organizations can expand their programs, reach more individuals, and make a greater impact in their respective fields. Fundraising efforts contribute to the economic significance of the third sector by providing employment opportunities and facilitating the provision of vital services. Additionally, effective fundraising strategies can enhance the visibility and public perception of the third sector, fostering greater understanding and support from the European population.

In this context, the FIRST project aims to enhance the role of foundations in promoting common values, civic engagement, and participation by boosting their fundraising and storytelling skills to achieve their objectives. With the online course, FIRST provides training and resources to help organizations develop effective fundraising strategies on a European level. By equipping organizations with the necessary skills and knowledge, FIRST empowers them to maximize their fundraising potential. FIRST also facilitates networking and collaboration among organizations within the third sector by connecting like-minded organizations and individuals through an interactive online networking tool. That way, FIRST creates opportunities for knowledge sharing, best practice exchange, and collaboration on joint fundraising initiatives. This fosters a supportive and interconnected fundraising community. This competence framework provides a structured and comprehensive guide for identifying and understanding the competences and skills the FIRST partnership deems elementary for carrying successful fundraising and storytelling on a European level.

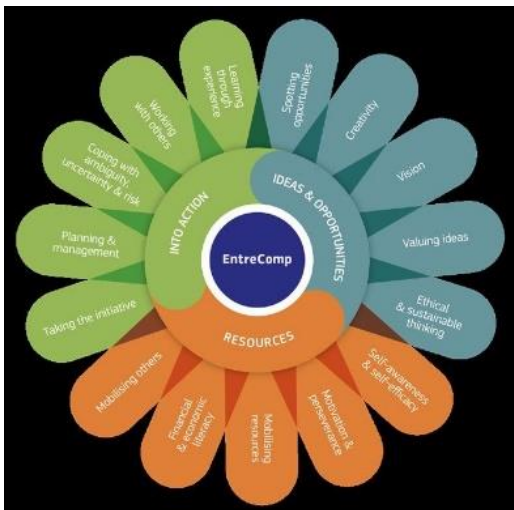
For the selection of competences, we consulted a variety of European competence frameworks, such as EntreComp, DigComp, and the EFA Competence Framework. From these, we then selected the potentially relevant competences and conducted a needs analysis with European foundations, asking them which competences and skills would be most relevant for them in the context of fundraising and storytelling. Here, the following competences were named as particularly important for a training: communication skills, creativity, content storytelling, visual storytelling, cross-media storytelling, convincing abilities, and networking. For the detailed results, please see the [research paper compiled by i-strategies](#). The FIRST partnership then started to create a training program tailored towards the development of these specific competences. The result is the online training course with four modules available via the platform network-first.eu. In this document, we line out the logic behind selecting these specific competences, their meaning in the context of fundraising and storytelling, and how they are trained in the FIRST online course.

I. European Competence Frameworks and FIRST

The term ‘competence’ refers to the combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that individuals possess and apply effectively in specific contexts to achieve desired outcomes or perform tasks successfully. It encompasses both the technical expertise and the personal qualities required to excel in a particular field or role. This includes knowledge (understanding), behavior (including it in a repertoire), and values (attitude and quality)

This is the formal expression of describing competences. To put it in simpler terms, it means that it's not just about what people know, but more importantly, it's about what they can do with that knowledge and their ability to keep improving their skills. The question is whether education makes learners knowledgeable or competent.

The selected FIRST competences correspond with the frameworks mentioned in the original project application, namely:



EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework was developed by the European Commission to define and promote entrepreneurship as a key competence for individuals and organizations. It outlines a set of entrepreneurial skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary for success in the dynamic and ever-changing world of business.

Relevant competences: creativity, vision, valuing ideas, spotting opportunities, mobilizing resources, taking initiative, working with others, learning through experience



DigComp: The Digital Competence Framework was developed by the European Commission to describe and assess digital skills and competencies. It defines a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for individuals to effectively navigate and thrive in the digital era. DigComp covers areas such as information and data literacy, digital communication, digital content creation, and problem-solving in digital environments. Relevant competences: evaluating, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, creatively using digital technologies



EFA COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK: The European Fundraising Association Certification Standard Competence Framework focuses on the fundraising competencies required in the standard EFA Certified fundraising qualification, together with guidelines for delivery and assessment.

Relevant competences: CF1.4 Cultural and Social Context; CF2.3: Establish a case for support; CF 3.4: Direct marketing for new donor acquisition; CF3.5:

Digital fundraising for new donor acquisition; CF5.0 Building supporter relationships

II. Storytelling



Storytelling is the art of conveying a narrative or a series of events through words, images, or other creative means. It involves captivating an audience and engaging their emotions, imagination, and attention through the power of a well-crafted story. It thus is an incredibly important, versatile, and effective tool for fundraising. However, the fundraiser and storyteller needs certain competences to use this tool to their advantage: Effective

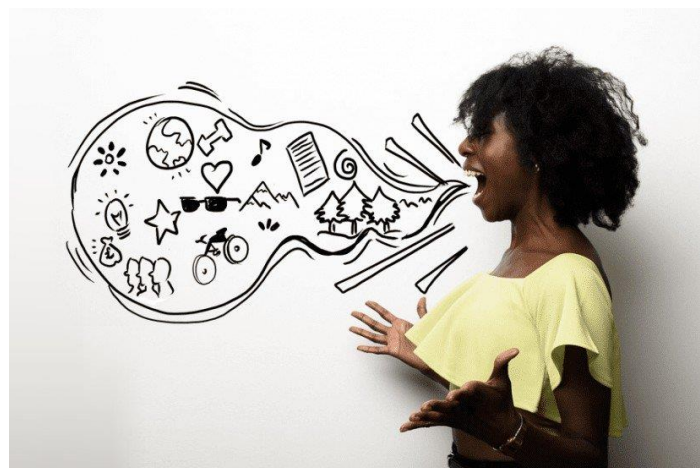
storytelling requires strong communication skills, including the ability to articulate ideas clearly, use appropriate tone and language, and convey emotions effectively. It calls for creative thinking and the ability to develop unique and engaging narratives that capture the audience's interest and leave a lasting impression. You need to be able to structure stories, create compelling characters, and build engaging narratives. Storytellers need to connect with their audience on an emotional level, evoking empathy and resonating with their experiences. They need to adapt their storytelling techniques to different audiences, contexts, and mediums, tailoring their approach to suit the specific needs and preferences of their target audience.

In turn, storytelling allows you to develop or strengthen a whole set of competences as well: Competence in storytelling can enhance empathy-building skills, enabling individuals to understand and connect with others' perspectives and experiences. It can be used as a persuasive tool to influence attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs. Competence in storytelling allows individuals to craft narratives that effectively communicate messages and inspire action in others. It can deepen individuals' understanding of different cultures and promote intercultural appreciation and sensitivity, it encourages critical thinking by prompting individuals to question assumptions, evaluate evidence, and engage in meaningful analysis. These are only a few examples for competences which are essential for both individuals directly involved in storytelling as well as those who use storytelling as a means of communication and engagement in various fields, such as marketing, education, advocacy, and leadership.

For the FIRST online course, we consider storytelling as beneficial to both a useful skill for effective fundraising and a valuable way of further developing personal skills.

III. Fundraising and Storytelling

Fundraising refers to the process of soliciting and collecting funds or financial resources to support a specific cause, organization, project, or initiative. It involves reaching out to individuals, businesses, foundations, or other potential donors and persuading them to contribute financially to the cause or organization. Here, storytelling can play a crucial role in improving fundraising efforts by creating emotional connections and engaging potential donors.

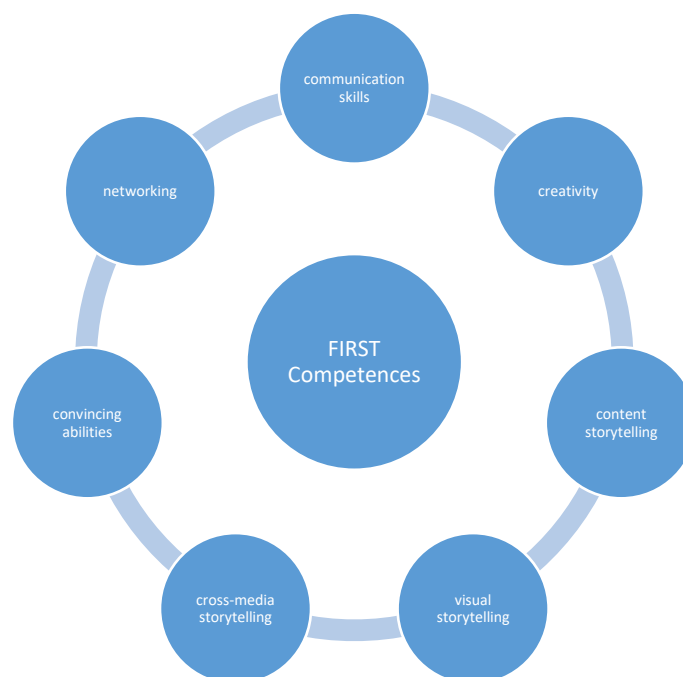


Storytelling has the power to evoke emotions and create a personal connection with the audience. By sharing compelling stories of individuals impacted by the cause or the organization's work, storytelling taps into empathy, compassion, and a sense of purpose. This emotional appeal can motivate potential donors to contribute and support the cause. It can also bring authenticity and relatability to the fundraising message. Personal narratives and real-life experiences help donors connect with the cause on a deeper level. When donors can see themselves or someone they can relate to in the stories, they are more likely to feel a sense of resonance and be inspired to contribute. Furthermore, storytelling allows fundraisers to illustrate the tangible impact of donations. By sharing stories that showcase how funds have been utilized effectively and made a difference, storytelling provides concrete examples of how contributions can bring about positive change. This helps potential donors understand the direct impact their support can have, increasing their willingness to contribute. Organizations can thus build trust and credibility by showcasing the organization's work, values, and accomplishments. By presenting stories of successful outcomes, testimonials from beneficiaries, or the journey of the organization itself, storytelling helps establish transparency and authenticity. Finally, well-crafted stories have the potential to be memorable and shareable in networks and media, which can extend the reach of the fundraising message, attracting more potential donors and supporters. By leveraging storytelling techniques, fundraisers can create a compelling narrative that not only informs but also inspires and engages potential donors. Storytelling helps transform fundraising from a simple ask for funds into a meaningful and impactful experience that motivates individuals to contribute and support the cause or organization.

IV. FIRST Competences

For the selection of FIRST competences, we consulted a variety of European competence frameworks, such as EntreComp, DigComp, and the EFA Competence Framework. We then selected the potentially relevant competences and conducted a needs analysis with European foundations, asking them which competences and skills would be most relevant for them. We collected 22 questionnaires from foundations from different European Countries: Belgium (5%), UK/CY (5%), Catalonia (5%), Cyprus (9%), Sweden (9%), Spain (14%), Germany (24%) and Italy (29%). The foundations involved in the survey work in different sectors, mainly in education, culture, and social aspects. The foundations involved in the survey vary in size, ranging from those that work mainly with volunteers to those that are more structured and have more than 200 employees.

As essential competences to work for them, the respondents named management skills, flexibility, and communication and communication, marketing and promotion as the most relevant. With regard to fundraising strategies, 40% of foundations said they wanted to improve skills related to communication and promotion, 20% digital skills and 15% networking skills. Only 32% of the foundations involved in the survey use storytelling purposefully. Of these, 67% use it to tell the history or stories related to the sector they work in and the 33% to tell the activities implemented. The most commonly used narrative media are texts (written and oral), images, photos and videos, and foundations use them both digitally and analogue. Among the 68% of foundations that do not use storytelling, 93% consider storytelling a useful tool for foundations' fundraising activities and 87% consider it useful for their specific fundraising activities.



Regarding the most relevant competences for successful storytelling in fundraising activities, the survey yielded the following seven key competences: communication skills, creativity, content storytelling, visual storytelling, cross-media storytelling, convincing abilities, and networking. These competences form the basis for the FIRST online training course and are presented below in more detail. For the detailed results of the survey, please see the [research paper compiled by i-strategies](#).

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The ability to use to get a certain message across in different contexts.

Effectively communicate the foundation's mission statement to donor personas

Selecting the appropriate language, activities, and media

CREATIVITY

The ability to think outside the box and to come up with new solutions

Defining the 'problem' and finding creative (narrative) solutions

Being able to determine and use skills and assets creatively

Finding inspiration by expanding your horizon

NETWORKING

The ability to build and maintain a network of contacts in order to further professional success

expanding connection with partners, employees, and customers by acting purposefully and authentically

Using storytelling for establishing a new network

Improving communication through storytelling

CONVINCING ABILITIES

The ability to build trust and a relationship with an individual or group to influence them in order to achieve a certain goal

Using storytelling to improve convincing abilities

Using convincing abilities in fundraising

CONTENT STORYTELLING:

The ability to create, structure,
and write the content of a story

Selecting suitable stories for
your donor persona and mission

Structuring a story

Presenting a story while
engaging listeners

VISUAL STORYTELLING:

The ability to use visual media,
such as photography, video, and
graphics, to create a narrative.

Knowing different options for
visual story telling

Being able to visually translate a
story

CROSS-MEDIA STORYTELLING:

The ability to produce a coherent narrative
with the help of and throughout different
media channels

Awareness for different strategies for different
media

Planning and structuring storytelling efforts

V. FIRST Competences within the Online Course

The seven competences informed the structure and content of the FIRST online course. In four modules, learners can enhance their knowledge on fundraising in a European context, storytelling, project management, and networking. Below you can find the syllabus of the online course. The entire course is available as an Open Educational Resource via network-first.eu.

1. Basics of Fundraising in a European Context

- I. Assessing your foundation in an EU context: Is your organisation ready for Europe?
- II. Adapting procedures, communication, and goals to a European context
- III. Developing a European strategy for your foundation

This module focuses on the following competences: COMMUNICATION SKILLS, CREATIVITY, CONVINCING ABILITIES, NETWORKING, PLANNING SKILLS

2. Communication and Storytelling in European Fundraising

- I. Basics of Storytelling
- II. Using Storytelling to communicate your cause on a European level
- III. Text-based, visual, and cross-media storytelling + useful tools

This module focuses on the following competences: CREATIVITY, CONTENT STORYTELLING, VISUAL STORYTELLING, CROSS-MEDIA STORYTELLING

3. European Projects as fundraising sources: Project management and financial management instruments

- I. Finding European Fundraising sources
- II. Management of European Projects: From incubation to finalization
- III. Management Tools and Tips

This module focuses on the following competences: COMMUNICATION SKILLS, CREATIVITY, CONVINCING ABILITIES, NETWORKING, PLANNING SKILLS

4. Building your European Network: Best Practice examples of EU

- I. Networking skills and strategies
- II. Best Practice examples of EU Foundations
- III. How to use the FIRST interactive map to build your network

This module focuses on the following competences: NETWORKING, COMMUNICATION SKILLS, CONVINCING ABILITIES

VI. Outlook



In the long term, we see FIRST having impact throughout the EU, since the project products will be designed as free online and offline resources, transferable to other countries and contexts, open for use at any level (local, regional, national, European and international). We particularly hope to support foundations with training their volunteers and staff, but also VET education centers providing them with modern learning materials a framework that can be used and adapted to their training programs. In

participating in the FIRST online course, learners will boost their communication and fundraising skills and can use the FIRST approaches to create their own fundraising and storytelling strategies.

Real-life best practices from around Europe provide first-hand expertise. Furthermore, the online networking tool and interactive map allows for direct contact between European organizations who are interested in expanding their network, sharing their experiences, and improve their fundraising. Learners thus will be able to directly apply what they have learned in the online course in a real work environment.

Similarly, trainers in VET and adult education will be able to enhance their teaching portfolios with the FIRST materials, capitalizing on the advanced expertise and know-how of FIRST partners. The learning materials can be also useful for career guidance services in order to give to job seekers a concrete idea of what job opportunities in the third sector might entail.

Overall, we hope to enhance the visibility of and connection between foundations, to foster their work on a European level, and provide valuable tools to increase their impact with a Foundations' Storyteller and Fundraiser in their ranks. This may in the future create job opportunities and have a positive influence on counteracting the unemployment of young people in the EU.

