

Headquarters

FEBRUARY 2022 #103 BUILDING BRIDGES IN THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

Association Profile

European Society Radiation
Oncology

HQ Essential

Valencia, Meet Surprise
BestCities Global Forum 2021

#MEET4IMPACT

Architects of Legacy Impacts

GDS Movement

Impact Strategy Masterclass
with
Destination Canada

BAIF

From Membership
Communication to Community
Engagement



THE ASSOCIATION
MAGAZINE



EVENT LEGACIES



AUSTRALIA INNOVATES PIONEERING NEW HYBRID ROCKET TECHNOLOGY



Australian rocket company Gilmour Space is emerging as a world leader in hybrid rocket technology with a goal to provide more affordable access to space.



In 2015, brothers Adam and James Gilmour launched a venture-backed rocket company with a vision to go to “all orbits and all planets”.



Seeing a global opportunity to provide small launch vehicles to new space companies, Gilmour Space began developing hybrid propulsion technologies and launched its first low-cost hybrid rocket in 2016.



While the majority of commercial rockets use either solid- or liquid-fuelled engines, Gilmour Space’s hybrid engine combines a liquid oxidiser with a proprietary solid fuel.



The company has raised A\$87 million in funding since its inception and is on track to launch small satellites to orbit from 2022.



These satellites have the potential to be scaled up for use in detecting bushfires, monitoring crops and improving internet coverage from space.



Gilmour Space continues to be at the forefront of cutting-edge space technology, helping to put Australia on the map as a key player in the space industry.



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Reboot, Refresh and Reimagine Your **Events** in **England**

Welcome to England – a country infused with history and heritage and fuelled by inspirational energy.

Channelled by pioneers across a range of industries, like Sir Isaac Newton and Charles Darwin, England is home to some of the world's top manufacturers. With a long history of innovation and entrepreneurship, the largest region of the UK is striving to create a lasting legacy through the implementation of sustainable initiatives. Easily accessible by train, sea and air, it offers an impressive portfolio of business events facilities including over 43 leading business events destinations and 20 high-quality, purpose-built international convention centres. Intrigued? Explore these four English destinations that are ready to host your next conference.

Devon, South England

Known for its jaw-dropping National Parks, world-leading universities and 95 miles of stunning coastline, Devon is one of England's leading conference destinations. The birthplace to some of the world's most inspirational people and ideas, Devon is leading the way in areas such as technology, sports, politics, academia and the arts as well as striving to become one of the leading destinations in hosting sustainable events. Located only two hours from London and with an international airport on its doorstep, the region is also the proud home to a treasure trove of leading venues, including the purpose-built **Riviera International Conference Centre** that can host up to 1,200 delegates.

Brighton, South England

This city by the sea has a passion for creativity and a desire to look at things differently. Located only 30 minutes from London Gatwick Airport, Brighton offers fantastic transport links and a variety of world-class hotels and venues all within walking distance of each other. Combining a coastal location with a quirky city atmosphere, it is also renowned for leading the way in creative technology, health and life sciences and environmental studies. All this combined with the state-of-the-art, 5,000 sqm international convention

centre, **Brighton Centre**, it is easy to see why this lively city is the destination of choice for inspirational conferences and events.

Birmingham, Central England

Birmingham and the West Midlands provides truly world-class convention facilities, accommodating thousands of conferences and exhibitions annually. Located in the heart of England, the destination is home to an impressive transport network, with more than 95% of the UK being easily accessible within a four-hour travel time of the city. As well as being easy to get to, the West Midlands is home to more MedTech companies than any other UK region and has remained at the forefront of the industry for centuries, from inventing the steam engine in the 18th Century to being the UK's first multi-city testbed for 5G technology. All this combined with its plethora of dynamic venues, including the largest all-purpose venue in the UK, the **NEC** and the 3,050 sqm **ICC Birmingham**, makes Birmingham a leading choice for international events.

NewcastleGateshead, North England

Famous for its 'warm Geordie welcome', the destination of NewcastleGateshead will soon be home to a brand new £260 million convention centre, **Gateshead Quays**. Opening in 2023, the new complex will include a world class arena, purpose built conference and exhibition centre, restaurants, a dual branded hotel and large areas of outdoor space. The northern city is also paving the way in areas such as medical science, computer forensics and sustainability as well as just being named 'the UK's smartest city' thanks to its pioneering work in technological innovation. All this combined with un-paralled accessibility options and a thriving city scene makes NewcastleGateshead a leading choice for future conferences.

Start your journey at [meetengland.com](https://www.meetengland.com). Contact MeetEngland's Europe office for more information on how they can support your events, offering expert advice and connecting you with the right suppliers to help you reimagine your future events in England.

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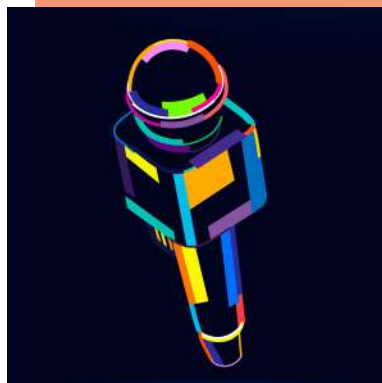
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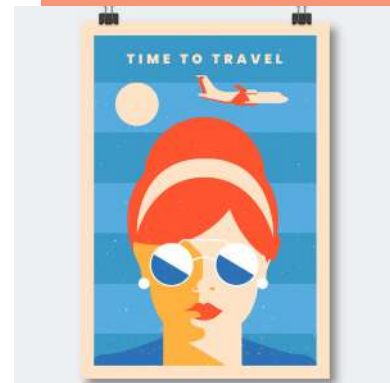
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Congresses are **More** Than **Just Congresses**

AUTHOR: MARCEL A.M. VISSERS, EDITOR IN CHIEF

Congresses have never existed in isolation. A convention is a man-made invention and therefore subject to its strengths and weaknesses. The curious thing in this path trodden by the media world and the MICE industry is that the world's first Convention and Visitors Bureau was founded in 1896 by a journalist in Detroit – at the time one of the ugliest cities in the world. These specialised agencies promoted the importance of conventions year after year and turned them into a special industry: ours, the Meetings Industry.

Conferences were used for various purposes. And there are examples of destinations that have used them purely as propaganda for their city or country. Conventions are also strongly determined by history and culture. We can safely say that the entire convention world has been shaken up by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We see a major reversal in the importance that congresses can have for society. Whereas conferences used to be an important source of prestige and income, we are now seeing a shift towards more intrinsic values. Of course, values such as knowledge transfer and innovation remain at the top of the list.

A congress is valuable not only for the association and the organiser, but also for the destination and the

participant. The latter group has not always received the critical attention necessary for future-oriented thinking. *Conference Monkey* has done some interesting research for this group (academic conferences) and published “8 Benefits of Attending Congresses”. Interesting to learn, for example, how one of the benefits – “Visit a new place and have fun” – is written.

At present, we may assume that there are about 10 types of congresses, all of them with their different history and purposes, thus leaving a separate legacy. In this first issue of *HQ* in 2022, you can learn more about the role and importance of congresses in this day and age. But most of all about what the future will bring.



Why Should we **Stop Calling** it “**Business Tourism**”

AUTHOR: MANUEL A. FERNANDES, HQ MAGAZINE MANAGER



I believe that all of us, at some point in our lives, have been called upon to explain what we do and where we work in an intelligible and practical way to our group of friends and family. In general, all jobs and professional sectors have always been associated with an active role in society or a cog in the wheels of a local community – and indeed, this is not far from the truth for us either. Nobody is left scratching their head by hearing that someone is a “designer”, “lawyer” or “doctor”; or that they work in the entertainment or pharmaceutical industry. Yet here – in the “MICE”, “association meetings”, “business events”, “congress” industry – we – the PCOs, meeting planners, event managers, etc. – multiply terms and titles, versions and shortcuts, going around in circles only to return to the original question. Mediating professional associations with convention bureaus remains a strange world for people outside our cocoon. Why is it so difficult to get the message across?

The struggle to realise the meaning and value of our work in a social context also stems much from the isolation we undergo in this industry. For several years and continuously, our activities have been responsible for economic and social impacts that have rarely been measured, construed or even recognised. On the other hand, our social fabric driven by the same annual goals resembled more of a global “private club” where deals were still quietly closed and the same

faces were spotted on the show floors. Of course, none of this is wrong *per se*, but this apparent divorce with wider society and excessive focus on the supply chain could only lead to a call for relevance and mobilisation – well exemplified in our interview with **Geneviève Leclerc** of **#MEET4IMPACT**. By instance, calling our industry in 2022 “business tourism” after a worldwide viral pandemic is a disservice to everyone and the definition of backpedalling. No one is here for tourism, and while many do, business doesn’t sit at the top of an association’s priority list – at least for the ones we interviewed in this issue. Disruptions are a hotbed for creativity, but they also make organisations reconsider their objectives and *modus operandi*.

It is about time to support the advocacy of our events crosswise and the work of our associations as agents of positive change, disseminators of progress and social allies. Creating a holistic view of the entire industry not limited to our memberships, but rather aware of our socio-economic reach and future global challenges. “Why is this congress taking place here?” is a perfectly fair question to ask. “What kind of legacy do I want to build with our annual event?” should be a mandatory thought for any association. In this first edition of the year, we dive headlong into the topic of event legacies and their possible social and economic long-term impacts. Stick around!

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Any association has a forefront community of professionals, organisations and companies, orbiting around its vision and defending its interests. As long as an association can understand and strategically convey its mission, there will always be direct beneficiaries everywhere. And, therefore, a legacy to embrace. The **European Society Radiation Oncology (ESTRO)** is a prime example of this, and its last congress in Madrid prompted a curious case-study of societal change. The CEO, **Alessandro Cortese**, explained to *HQ* the X's and O's of this process.

"The moment we made that **RFP**, we tried to use **legacy** as our **Trojan horse**"

The last ESTRO congress left a trail of change in Madrid linked to the scientific and social components of your organisation. Has it always been like this since you joined ESTRO?

No, but all the ingredients were already there. ESTRO had been conducting for some time a series of studies in Health Economics that attempted to assess the use of radiation oncology comparable to scientific indications and the need for it, considering the availability of resources, personnel, equipment, etc. A programme of research projects that basically created the backbone for our measurements. While many organisations today are struggling to find real measurements, we had already found them in these studies. I have witnessed four strategic cycles during my 12 years at ESTRO. In the first cycle, the focus was on reorganising the vision of the different stakeholders in the radiotherapy treatment supply chain and therefore understanding ESTRO's role in relation to these stakeholders. From this, we better understood the role that the Society could play and we obtained both impact measures and the identification of relevant actors which guided us towards our legacy path. Over time the idea became more progressive and legacy-focused, aligning with our long-term vision and outcomes. The process culminated in 2018, when we launched this current RFP for the selection of congress venues. We found it completely logical to put our agenda at the centre of that bidding process, so that we could engage all partners in the same vision.

Why Madrid last year and Copenhagen this year? What is the common thread between these two cities?

We took a theoretical approach behind the selections. When we analysed patient outcomes, we also tried to uncover barriers that create a gap in the use of radiation oncology. We identified four major potential barriers – equipment, personnel, patient perception, referral pathways between medical disciplines – and what we then found is that they do not interact in the same way across countries at different stages of development. So, we came out with three main groups of countries with similar patterns to see how these barriers interplay. By announcing our three conferences, the idea was to convene a destination for each of the country clusters. We wanted to strategically test our module to adapt and tweak the legacy project by breaking down those gaps. Madrid, Copenhagen and Glasgow belonged to three different clusters at the time, and what followed was an analysis of the most active convention bureaux and their tools to start the discussion. In this way, we issued a generic RFP and tried to compare these destinations with others in the same clusters.

What were the most important





factors in drawing up your RFP?

In 2019, we wanted to make a statement when evaluating the engagement project by 60% in the bid proposals. We wanted competing destinations to recognise our impact driver and to not take our position lightly. The moment we made that RFP, we tried to use legacy as our Trojan horse. The legacy theme existed long before, we just tactically stirred it up to create the right leverage. Another vantage point is that convention bureaus are the right partners to talk about legacy plans as they aim to go beyond tourism and become enablers of societal and economic change. Overall, we had a good number of responses and some reacted positively to this special need around the RFP. The next step started the whole process of strategic design for the congress, with the task of picking the right players and angles for local impact. We might even know some partners and experts in the sector, but we certainly did not know the whole chain of actors and local political players. In Madrid, for example, the **Sociedad Española de Oncología Radioterápica (SEOR)** was extremely important.

How does ESTRO manage its legacy and social impact concepts? Are your impacts estimated directly from the legacy of the event?

They are not the same thing, but somehow, they touch on the same nebula. When we talk about cancer patients, we are talking about any citizens and communities at large. Citizens who will need a therapy to be treated, diagnosed and followed up. Citizens are also cumulatively the target audience of a CVB, if that office is involved in societal change. If a bureau is also talking to its government about the role it can play in social development and concrete outcomes for its citizens, then we are talking about the same ultimate beneficiaries. It is necessary to understand what drivers can be unleashed around the conference to trigger a positive process. Now, do we want to say that it was

because of the conference that change was achieved? Personally, I am not very interested in determining a causal effect relationship. I just see conferences as a great catalyst for stakeholders and a good place and time to get everyone moving towards the same vision. After that, we measure the impact by looking, over time, at how the indicators of that legacy process evolve. This is also why it is important to decipher the elements that help create impact. In our case, how to overcome those barriers and lead to better outcomes for our patients.

Do you think the interests of scientific societies and associative events are shattering the mould of the so-called “business tourism”?

I hope so, that’s why I’m participating in these kinds of discussions. Honestly, if I look back over the last five years, the situation has improved a lot. What we are witnessing now is a turning point. The events industry as a whole can speak to a wider audience and cross several crucial topics, or remain something of a niche for a specific group of professionals. On the other hand, it is important to mention that as long as associations drive their revenue streams through an event-based business model, they cannot break away from that bottom line. Meetings and events remain the great opportunity we have to reflect about change, impact and catalyse resources for our membership. The paradox of this discussion around the digitalisation of work is that it reflects the greatest threat to the essence of an organisation such as ours. Associations operate on a blended basis between content and networking, that is our added value. If we digitalise fully, then we will “break that mould” and become just a multimedia platform. Hence, the paradox and the threat.

ESTRO

Predicting the Future of **Event Technology**

Brian Ludwig (pictured below), senior vice president of sales at Cvent, considers the future of event technology and how it might impact travel, hotels and venues, and the way attendees engage with each other and their event environment.

The meetings and events landscape looks a whole lot different than it did when we started Cvent 22 years ago as an online event registration software company. Most of these changes have been slow and gradual – but these last two years have been completely transformational. Regardless of the speed of change, it is part of my job to stay ahead of the innovation curve – which is why I enjoy looking to the future of what comes next for the industry and predicting what technology will be developed and adopted to support those changes. In fact, some of my predictions that once seemed so far-fetched are now in the realm of possibility. For example, back in 2016 I gave a presentation in which I predicted the growth of hybrid events at a time when only 2% of events were using such technology – now, they're quickly gaining in popularity and the term is commonplace, something that was obviously accelerated by the industry's rapid digital transformation in response to the pandemic.



So, how will technology and the event experience continue to evolve in the next five, ten years? While there are so many ways to explore this question, I'm going to focus on three key areas: **how attendees will get to events, how venues of the future will innovate, and how attendees will engage with each other and their event environment.**

With travel congestion and environmental impact to consider, there is an incredible opportunity to find new ways to get event attendees from point A to point B, many of which are currently being explored by some of the world's most recognised brands. For example, at **Consumer Electronics Show** this year, an Uber/Hyundai partnership revealed a drone-taxi hybrid vehicle that could be used to transport delegates through the skies, perhaps even autonomously. Second level public transport is another fascinating option, where large vehicles that look like a cross between a train and the Imperial Walkers from Star Wars, simply move above the already existing road infrastructure above congested traffic lanes.

When it comes to longer journeys, we can also expect to see changes at airports, including security scans taking place passively as you walk through specific areas, removing the need for long queues that have become an airport staple. This technology is not



that far-off and is currently being tested at the Dubai International Airport. Speeding up the process even more could be autonomous suitcases that follow you, going where required, perhaps all the way to your robotic hotel? Already in existence in China, robotic hotels offer an entirely interaction-free accommodation experience that includes room service robots. It will be interesting to see how both travellers and hospitality professionals balance the desire for automation with our expectations for high levels of service.

The venues of the future will have sustainability as part of their core infrastructure. There are incredible options in development around the world including plastic eating bacteria, concrete that absorbs the energy from footsteps converting it into usable electricity, and even a hospital in Mexico that has external cladding capable of filtering and cleaning the pollution from passing vehicles. Even the flights to and from an event could be made more sustainable by making the actual journey part of the event with onboard meeting rooms. The ROI of our events and their impact on the environment will certainly be improved if networking and knowledge sharing start at the point of departure, rather than arrival.

Augmented reality is already utilised in the industry, but in a very modest way. This is bound to change as organisers truly start to appreciate its benefits and capabilities. Through both our phones and other mobile devices, we will be able to layer personalised insights and information in real time – providing delegates with critical information about both the event space and the people around them. It is hard to comprehend just what this will look like in the future because mobile and wearable technology develops so quickly. It's only been 15 years since the launch of the first iPhone, who knows where we will be in 2036.

For virtual events, the technology is also continuously improving. Gamers are already riding the VR wave, but the technology will become more pervasive and mainstream – giving virtual attendees a “real-life” experience as if they are at the event alongside

in-person delegates. With the right use of drones, robots, and cameras, this is a very real possibility and could be closer than you realise. Not to mention, it offers an incredible opportunity to increase engagement between virtual and in-person delegates.

In short, we're living in an era where technological development occurs at a pace we've never seen before and it's going to be exciting to watch this space and see how these new technologies, many of which are already in development, will shape our industry and the metaverse. What we've seen from the past is that the best technology enhances the attendee experience rather than detracts from it, which is what makes these predictions so exciting. The technology of the future will make events more sustainable, accessible, interactive, and engaging – providing digital components that complement and enhance both the in-person and virtual experience.

“

The venues of the future will have sustainability as part of their core infrastructure. There are incredible options in development around the world including plastic eating bacteria, concrete that absorbs the energy from footsteps converting it into usable electricity...

cvent



Valencia, Meet Surprise

Historical capital of the ancient kingdom of Valencia and Iberian face to the Mediterranean, we are indeed in a place wonderfully alive with a thriving culture, artistic cuisine and a vivid nightlife. A city lying on the east coast of Spain never afraid to innovate, where the riverbed has been transformed into beautiful green parks - Valencia, the third largest city in Spain, where history and modernisation meet in such a harmonious yet stunning manner.

AUTHOR: VIVIAN XU, HQ MAGAZINE MANAGING DIRECTOR

From the beach to the old town...

A city blessed by Zeus, with over 300 sunny days in a year! From the golden beach to the Plaza de la Virgen (pictured above) in the maze-like old town, Valencia has so much to offer. **Veles e Vents**, an iconic minimalist-style building standing at the epicentre of La Marine de Valencia, is a place where the best celebrations and events are held. A 4-storey building designed by the prestigious architects David Chipperfield and Fermín Vázquez for the purpose of hosting the **32nd America's Cup**. With approximately 11,000 m² of event space, two panoramic floating terraces (7,000 m²) and three marvellous restaurants, **Veles e Vents**, is undoubtedly one of the favourite venues for event organisers. Kindly bear in mind that the entire building can be requisitioned. If you are a creative event designer and looking for a playground, this is definitely the go-to place!

Speaking of Valencia, who can afford to miss the famous *Paella*? Enjoying a 10-minute walk from **Veles e Vents** and embracing the breeze from the sea, in between the dancing palm trees, there is the **Neptuno** restaurant. A place adored by locals, where the best *Paellas* are served – be aware of the amount, they are generous!

The gorgeous old town is no more than a 20-minute ride from the beach, where its history is printed on the wall.

From the Roman gothic St. Mary's Cathedral and the mighty Serranos Gate, to the abundance of colourful, narrow alleys within walking distance, this compact old town is a eye-catching storyteller. Right in the heart of the old town, close to Plaza del Ayuntamiento, **Only YOU Hotel Valencia** opened its doors last year. Renovated from a historical hotel and decorated by well-known Spanish interior designer Lázaro Rosa-Violán, the hotel is a gem for visitors and locals alike. The decor of the meeting space has a touch of Mediterranean inspiration, which provides a sense of liveliness and character with plenty of natural light. Facilitating approximately 400m² meeting space, 191 stunning guest rooms and two sophisticated restaurants, **Only YOU Hotel Valencia** is ready to surprise its guests.

A 10-minute drive will take you to the other side of the city, where **Bombas Gens Centre d'Arts** is located. It is the largest centre of contemporary art having been transformed from a former hydraulic pump factory. With its programme of exhibitions and cultural activities, the centre aims to extend the meaning of art towards a service for people and raising social impact. Both indoor and outdoor space can be used for meetings and events.

Wandering between the streets, various restaurants are at your disposal. **Birlibirloque**, a gastrobar with a cosy and cosmopolitan atmosphere, suggested by Michelin

Guide, serves a refined dining with an extensive wine list. After a busy day, this is the place to indulge!

From greening to modernisation...

On 13 October 1957, the people of Valencia were not prepared for the immense torrent that was gushing its way down via river Turia after a tremendous amount of rainfall in only two days. As the river continued to swell, the flood spread its hand over the populated area and resulted in a complete catastrophe and loss of life as the water eventually spilled into the sea. In less than 24 hours when the worst had finally gone, the city was filled with heavy mud, debris and – way worse than that – thousands of homeless people. Peace would not be restored until the end of that November.

In June 1958, the “Plan Sur” was born, an ecological project to divert the river – that plan was set to create an enormous green space in the city over the construction of a huge highway to get people from Madrid to the beach a fraction faster. Backed by people’s choice, the city had successfully turned the riverbed into today’s **Turia Riverbed Park** which nestles many sports facilities such as a football pitch, basketball courts, athletics stadium, walking paths, as well as cycle lanes, etc.

With over 156 kilometres of cycle lane, Valencia is a great

“

A little advice, put it on your list to organise an event. Valencia offers spaces for all your activities, conferences, product launches, incentives, sports events. This coastal town also has a major advantage: prices are very reasonable and it has remained on a human scale.”

– Anne Vallès Meunier – Senior Manager Governance & Events | ETNO

“

Valencia is a city which truly belongs to my favourite 3 cities within Europe! It is sometimes a ‘forgotten city’, but I really love it! The city has everything: old town with its rich culture, port area, beach. Moreover it is a super safe and clean city!”

– Anniek De Vlieger – AdVangarde Passionate Upscale Project Management Expert

“

After having organised two major congresses in Valencia some years ago, it was really a pleasure being back in this wonderful sunny city and to personally experience how Valencia positively evolved since and without losing its typical authenticity.”

– Werner Van Cleemputte - Medicongress

city to explore on two wheels. A **bike-tour** is one of the most popular activities for visitors to get to know the city from ancient to modern. Gliding under the bushy orange trees through the riverbed park, among the lights and shadows, you will reach the modern masterpiece designed by renowned local architect Santiago Calatrava, **Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias** (City of Arts and Sciences) – a cultural and architectural complex, as well as one of the **12 Treasures of Spain**. This world-famous complex occupies a massive 350,000 m2 swath at the southeast end of the former river Turia, and contains several principal buildings such as the opera house, science museum, 3D cinema and aquarium.

Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia – the opera house – is another must-see place for events. Offering the possibility of using its diverse and versatile rooms and halls, this venue has opened its doors to different types of events and gatherings, as well as large celebrations and congresses. **L’Umbracle** is an opening structure decorated with various species of plants indigenous to Valencia, and numerous contemporary sculptures. When night falls, L’Umbracle offers a stunning view towards the entire luminous complex. With a length of 320 metres and width of 60 metres, it is an ideal stage for an unforgettable event.



BestCities Global Forum 2021: Time to Push Legacy Impacts Forward!

AUTHOR: *MANUEL A. FERNANDES, HQ MAGAZINE MANAGER*

If I were to ask you, dear reader, what you understand by event legacy, what would be the first thing you would come out with? Sustainability? Right, but that would only be the tip of the iceberg that hides so many other layers. Economic development? Sure, we can't run away from numbers but it is not the be all end all of an association conference. Customer loyalty? Also, but that might put the cart before the horse as to the real reasons why that loyalty happens in the first place. Even today this concept, which is gaining traction in the global events industry, often raises eyebrows out of mere mistrust or sheer ignorance of its true scope. On both sides of the fence (i.e. destinations and associations), the notion of tangible results that last way after a one-off event and capable of generating a quantified social impact is often underestimated in favour of the “good ol’ business as usual”. But if money always talks, it's time to take a step back and let other voices do the talking. It would therefore be useless to waste the expert contributions of a local scientific community for the programmatic agenda of a medical congress. Or strong synergies made possible with innovation companies and start-up “unicorns”, to pump new blood into a tech summit.

For several years now, **BestCities Global Forum** has been a committed advocate of this collaborative matrix, pushing the idea that neither the convention cities nor the associative community are apart from a common pathway and set of goals. The three-day event brought together 25 international association executives and ambassadors from the 11 convention bureaus that make up the Global Alliance, under one roof – the Hyatt Regency Hesperia – to explore this time the achievements and transformations of the Madrid chapter. But those who think that this annual meeting is just another hosted buyers programme spiced up by the liveliness of the Spanish capital should not be fooled. Here, the very legacy of BestCities has been unpacked in the search for a broader understanding of this cooperative axis between destinations and associations; a bridge was established between the objectives endorsed by **Copenhagen** – the former organising city – and its **Legacy Lab**; and, finally, the first seeds have been sown for what **Madrid Convention Bureau (MCB)** plans to take on as sustainable applications and long-standing co-operations with associations in the form of its **Madrid Challenge**.



At the heart of this idea were the various programme presentations that helped to crack the code on how to institute legacy design and create/predict impact. The testimonies were both personal – with the radical life story of Armando del Rey, co-owner of the famous Flamenco *tablaó*, “Corral de la Morería” – and collective, when visiting the **Spanish Red Cross**. Through the voice of their director **Kai Troll**, we also learned about the work of **Best Buddies** – an international non-profit organisation running a global volunteer movement that aims to develop opportunities, integrated employment, and inclusive living for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. “Madrid has long since set itself the objective of valuing the impact of events beyond the merely economic. This forum aims to leave as its “legacy” how to improve social, environmental or working conditions through well-designed actions” – **David Noack, Director of the MCB**, thus positions this forum on the city’s wide convention scene. A strategy that promoted a prodigious and unique outcome in the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology’s (ESTRO) curious case study. Through the joint legacy project with MCB, the impact of ESTRO’s 2021 congress ultimately resulted in a €700 million investment by the Spanish government in a roll-out of radiotherapy machines, which were in short supply not only in Madrid but throughout Spain. A real life-saving operation! – (check our interview with ESTRO’s CEO on page 8).

But this BestCities was not only made by cases and stories, there were also tools and projects to be launched. **Madrid Plus**, for example, is as simple as it is brilliant at honing in on RFPs that take into account sustainability and impact actions on their core legacy. A digital platform open to all associations that offers specific reports and filters for meetings and events in Madrid, calculating the impact from the planning stage to the actual implementation of the event. The adoption of the **UN Sustainable Development Goals** as a framework can also guide the thought process and trigger legacy

plans with this service. The event came to an end with a symbolic gesture: all the association executives and destination leaders agreed and committed to this set of ideas and ambitions in what will be remembered as the **Madrid Challenge**. Smart mobility, eco-friendly venues, community engagement, any of these points can make a difference to a better society and a more compact event under this “challenge”.

Wrapping up, legacy can and should reflect the political capital and intellectual heritage of an event, both in the host city and in the organisation’s *raison d’être*. Leaving a deep mark on society at large and a series of long-term impacts that can range from industry transformation, research progress and policy making. “Financial sustainability is also a precondition for having impact. If your meeting doesn’t have a purpose people won’t show up again, but if you’re not surviving as an organisation your impact will be limited as well. The sweet spot is to make these two factors progress hand in hand,” says **Lesley Williams, managing director, BestCities Global Alliance**. Her team will be sure to amplify this dialogue and extend legacy-related topics at their next forum scheduled for later this year in Vancouver, Canada.

“ *...legacy can and should reflect the political capital and intellectual heritage of an event, both in the host city and in the organisation’s *raison d’être*. Leaving a deep mark on society at large and a series of long-term impacts that can range from industry transformation, research progress and policy making.*





BestCities 2021:

Let's Give the 'Mic' to Associations!

In a way, even convention destinations are already waking up to the fact that international competition around meetings and events demands much more than overnight beds and venue capacity. On the other hand, the impact that international associations can generate – more than just delegates through the door – is becoming the talk of the day moving away from the mere idea of tourism and towards that of social development.

During the BestCities Global Forum we met with three associative executives, and asked them:

1. **From your association's perspective, what do you look for in an events destination today?**
2. **What is the grand design and central thrust that your association wants to fulfil with its 2022 flagship event?**
3. **Speaking now specifically about BestCities, what were the key findings and benefits you brought home?**

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE PARKS AND AREAS OF INNOVATION

BY *EBBA LUND, CEO OF IASP*

1 We look for a destination with a thriving culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, where our worldwide membership can connect with local organisations and get inspired. As we support our members to enhance sustainable economic development, we build relationships with innovation peers around the world. Therefore, we're interested in destinations that are home to a range of science and tech-based businesses, and which are actively cultivating a flourishing innovation ecosystem. On top of that, we look for a place which can offer our delegates unique local insights they can take home with them, enriching their own cities and regions long after the event has concluded.

2 Our conference theme of “Green and digital change powered by innovation: The role of innovation ecosystems” is a key issue and we can all learn from the sustainable solutions developed in Seville (Spain), our destination in 2022, at the same time as we learn from the best practices of the international delegates who join us there. Knowledge sharing is the foundation

of what we do, and it's something that works both ways: we bring a pool of global reflections to our conference destination, leaving a lasting legacy in there, as well as making an impact worldwide thanks to the new perspectives our delegates take back home.

3 The highlight of the BestCities Madrid was clearly the opportunity to discuss, laugh and network face-to-face with association colleagues from around the world after the standstill of in-person meetings during the pandemic. Reflecting together on key issues such as conference legacy and future formats of international events was another key pillar as we continue to support our respective memberships and keep the global conversation going. Madrid also lived up to its reputation as a lively, welcoming city that brings people together: it was buzzing with life, energy, and Christmas splendour, and provided the perfect setting for the meeting!



WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CONGRESS

BY *BIANCA LA PLACA, EXECUTIVE MANAGER OF WEEC NETWORK*



1 We do not directly select a congress destination, but, every two years, we open a call in which institutions that deal with environmental education can participate. They (universities, foundations, public agencies, etc.) highlight the characteristics of their destination, and explain why we should choose them. All this in line with our themes, pushing up the “green” aspects of the city and venues – sharing with us sustainability parameters of the destination, public transport, and the use of environmentally conscious suppliers.

2 For some years now we have been trying to leave a positive and concrete impact on the destination we go to. In 2019, with our congress in Bangkok, we supported two environmental education projects linked to the university with which we collaborated. In March 2022, for our congress in Prague, delegates will have to pay a mandatory fee of 7 euros for offsetting emissions.

The carbon footprint of the 2022 WEEC will be offset by equipping photovoltaic solar panels for environmental education centres in the Czech Republic. On one hand this will help reduce electricity consumption while also helping environmental education centres lowering their operational costs and increasing their financial sustainability.

3 The most important thing for me, working in a small association, is training: both that offered by the official sessions and the opportunity to compare myself with other colleagues who have the same problems as mine. It allows me to see things from a broader and more complete perspective. Maybe something could be added on how to involve the delegates on the importance of legacy, as it does not seem to affect them directly. In my report I highlighted how Best Cities can build a real community and do so by growing on a common path, with documents and guidelines available to all.

EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF ALLERGY AND CLINICAL IMMUNOLOGY

BY *NOUREDDINE M'GHARI, CONGRESS AND EVENTS MANAGER OF EAACI*



1 The COVID-19 pandemic was the push we needed to organise our events in completely different formats. The EAACI Digital Congress 2020 was the first fully digital event ever organised by EAACI at the height of the lockdowns and restrictions. In 2021, EAACI opted for a hybrid meeting – a very successful format that will be replicated in the future. In fact, EAACI is already planning our 2022 Congress in Prague and online, from 1-3 July 2022. These days, with ever-changing travel rules and limitations, we need venues that are very flexible where the size of the event can be scaled down without compromise. We also highly rate the ease of travel and its readiness to host more participants, meeting all health and safety requirements.

2 We noticed at the 2021 hybrid event that participants are more interested in meeting face-to-face as the physical participation rate in the sessions was far higher than the number of registered participants. The motto of the EAACI Hybrid Congress 2022 is “One Health Approach”. It is becoming increasingly clear that allergies

and asthma are caused by the interconnections between the environment, plant and animal health, pollution, industrialisation, and the atmospheres in which we live. In a world hit by a global pandemic and impending environmental crisis, this topic is overarching and requires discussions about the bridges between these dimensions.

3 For EAACI, legacy in terms of research is imperative. We need to create momentum and raise longstanding awareness about allergic diseases and asthma. According to the motto of our 2022 congresses, the one health approach will shed light on how these diseases can be prevented. The research conducted now will be instrumental to safeguard the health and wellbeing of our future generations. We have ensured legacy in the past through advocacy initiatives, collaborations with media, and permanent projects such as the presentation of an allergen monitor instrument unveiled at the Annual Congress in Munich in 2018, which up until now is used by the city to give a forecast on seasonal allergen exposure.



Brussels is preparing to host a new association forum on 14 and 15 March, bringing together various representatives of international and European associations, as well as non-profit organisations, federations, societies and NGOs. The **Brussels International Association Forum (BIAF)** aims to create a knowledge-sharing event and establish a meeting platform in one of the city's venues of excellence: **Tour & Taxis**.

Brussels International Association Forum: Moving from Membership Communication to Community Engagement

Building on the recent success of the **Geneva International Association Forum (GIAF)**, the organising body, **ASSOCIATIONWORLD**, has considered the possible expansion of its collaborative network, launching the discussion with its various partners – such as **Visit Brussels'** European Association Summit (EAS) – about the synergies that a new association forum in Brussels could create. BIAF is a different type of event to EAS and aligns with the concept of the GIAF event and its experiential learning in one of the world-class cities for international associations.

The programme combines keynote speakers, a masterclass, peer-to-peer exchange and workshops, panel discussions and outdoor activities related to innovation, well-being and healthy minds. Especially considering the critical moment that many associations are going through after the wear and tear of these two difficult years. On that note, 92% of expected participants transferred their tickets to the March date when the event – originally planned for December 2021 – was postponed due to the pandemic.

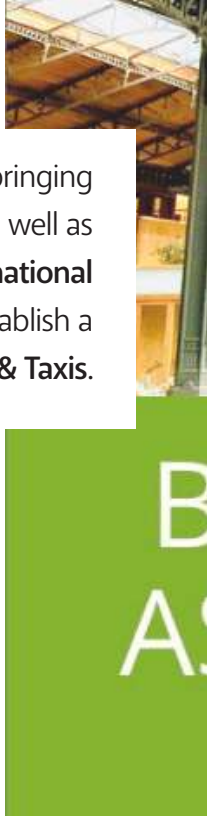
We asked the event's founder, **Kai Troll** (*pictured in the right*), to dig deeper into the BIAF down here:

When you set out on this idea of creating a new associative forum, what geographical targets and what prototype association did you have in mind?

Although we have 70% European associations and 30% international associations based in Brussels – which is the opposite of Geneva, for example – we will address not only the EU bubble class of associations, but also international associations, non-profit organisations, institutions and academic partners in order to discuss themes and topics that are universal, relevant and with tangible learning outcomes. Our future goal is that besides the local presence of international and European associations based in Geneva or Brussels, we could see approximately 20% of associations coming from abroad. We also started to see more exchange between our GIAF and BIAF participants, even before the latter was launched. Realistically, due to the restrictions and measures in place around the world, we will see mostly representatives of associations from Benelux and neighbouring countries attending the first edition of BIAF on 14 and 15 March. The understanding of our participants towards the postponement of the event was great news and indicates that our industry is ready for face-to-face peer exchange. We will go above and beyond to keep everyone safe.

What kind of programme are you preparing to address the most critical problems and hurdles within the international association?

There is clearly much more member communication going on than before the pandemic. I believe that in 2022, associations are moving towards more quality engagement rather than keeping or even boosting the level of online and virtual exchange. The key





BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FORUM (BIAF)

www.biaforum.eu

question now is how you move from membership communication to community engagement. This is also a topic that we will address at BIAF. We asked our advisory committee to reach out to association peers and ask them what relevant current topics they would like to hear and discuss. The March agenda will remain similar but we will update about 20% of the programme to keep it relevant. We see discussion topics around event strategies, monetisation and pricing structure of (hybrid) events, diversification of revenue and the current *status quo* and planning of our events in these challenging times. We will discuss concrete new revenue streams that every association or non-profit can implement. Sustainability and innovation, advocacy, campaigning and media workshops are on the agenda to share the great works that associations are conducting. The topic of well-being cannot be missed in any agenda these days and we have inspiring corporate and professional speakers talking about impactful leadership and brand building.

Last but not least, BIAF is also the next best possibility to meet associations peers and friends that haven't seen each other for too long and to discuss informally. Often, these are the best conversations.

What is the legacy and story you wish to tell with this BIAF debut?

The legacy of an event does not start the day the event ends, but rather when it starts to be planned. Therefore, the choice to partner with Tour & Taxis

was almost inevitable. The sustainable development goals are widely discussed within associations, and they very much help tackle one or several of the UN SDGs. Sustainability and legacy building is, for many, a big part of the core business and the reason for their existence. If that is the case, then we also have to walk the talk and that thinking must extend to the organisation of our events as well. One of the legacies of BIAF should be that associations gain a better understanding and assessment for themselves of what "legacy" actually means for them. How can each of them better define the internal and external components of legacy and how can they be measured? Legacy planning should be part of every strategic process. It brings several stakeholders to the discussion. If you don't plan legacy, it won't happen. Another BIAF legacy will be the launch of a new annual campaign by ASSOCIATIONWORLD, the **European Association Week**, which will take place in the last week of each May starting in 2022.





“I foresee **a hunt for quality** rather than quantity of events.”



Associations are truly sensitive to local relationships. Typically, these partnerships are deeply connected to their own subject matter supported by their local committee when choosing a congress destination. And while everyone feels that events should be tailored to the needs of the event organiser, few think about the specific needs of delegate accommodation. During IBTM World in Barcelona we had the opportunity to meet the Co-CEO of **bnetwork**, **Stéphane Teboul** (*pictured in the right*), and discuss the projects and service experiences of this leading hosting management company.

When you stepped into the market, did you feel you were presenting something exclusive and unheard-of?

bnetwork is responding to a central issue that is not always clearly identified. Accommodation accounts for 35% of the overall expense of a major event. This is a crucial issue, and can put your event at risk if you don't address it properly. We are treading a joint path with convention bureaus as partners. As a private agent, we are authorized to negotiate on behalf of our clients. Therefore, booking conditions, both in terms of price and timing, are essential to the sustainability of an offer. We are the link between destinations and event organisers to offer a comprehensive, reliable and sustainable solution in the long term. When we look at the most prevalent businesses, they will have to be more agile, more creative, and more efficient under the concept of a must-go event. Therefore, it is very important to address the fundamentals of a long-term relationship from the beginning. How? By explaining to the hotels and the different stakeholders the reasons why the event has come to this destination.

Can you tell me right now the impact that digital offerings have on your market share and the hotel industry?

It's really about seizing and replicating the right models. The digital space has helped us maintain a secure and sustainable customer environment, whether in Asia, South America or Europe. By developing a comprehensive and stable digital environment, we are able to generate a certain sense of security and trust. One of the fears of visitors when searching for a hotel online is the risk that there is no reliable actor. There are many fake agencies and scams that are destroying the online environment and customers' trust by selling non-existent products. In many large events, there is a risk linked to pirate agencies selling products that are very appealing but do not correspond to reality, such as hotels that do not exist. Getting a secure provider to maintain a safe and smooth journey for your visitor is part of an event planner's duty. You have to make sure that your client is not only getting value for money, but also the right expert behind it.

When you had the idea to create bnetwork, did you have this in mind? Combining a quality agency service with technological offerings?

We made a point of identifying leads ahead of time by driving our business solutions with high-end technology. Our tech presence grew thanks to the **Mobile World Congress (MWC)** in the early 2000s in Cannes. That was the origin of our story. The event

had about 600 people (we're talking about an event that in 2019 hosted 110,000 people). So, this was really the beginning of mobile technology. The exponential growth of the event forced us to adhere to the most efficient technology available to deal with such a large volume of people. We had to find some ways to handle that traffic without losing quality. Therefore, we had to come up with a business model and a set of tools to a traffic that was absolutely unexpected...

...so, the congress forced you to streamline new ways of getting accommodation for those delegates as the event grew?

You have no idea to what extent! Now, it seems like an obvious choice to make but we're talking about a time when Airbnb didn't even exist. We had to aggregate a huge supply of apartments to meet that demand. We even had to include student residences and summer camps to find alternatives for different budgets, and travel a radius of 100 kms to accommodate everyone. The MWC moved from Cannes to Barcelona because it was facing a huge growth crisis, as they desperately needed a bigger stage. I can give you another example: we are currently collaborating with the **Web Summit** in Lisbon. The event is aimed at young engineers working in start-ups, and this audience has a great sensitivity to everything that is available online. We have to deliver something that addresses these desires from a hosting perspective, as they ask for a quick and easy overview for immediate comparison. We have to accept the open environment in which we operate where our customers are experienced and able to find the right answer to their needs.

Can you give some more details about the Destination Network Alliance, which is also a very interesting proposal for the association environment?

The DNA project is a joint venture between bnetwork and, so far, five DMCs and other event management entities to further improve the best solutions for our clients. It will help us bring solutions to meet both the technological needs of our clients in a secure environment, and to deepen a local intimacy with each destination selected by the associations. Behind this project lies a proper educational component, a real teamwork with local DMCs in order to nurture an alliance that avoids the risk of creating an artificial scenario. Our goal is to establish a real involvement of local partners not only to deliver, but also to deeply understand the products we are running – to

promote themselves and this alliance at a local level and to address an audience that requires the right technology to deliver their events.

Have you given any thought to the long-term impact and positive results your work can leave on the destinations you are working with.

I foresee a hunt for quality rather than quantity of events. We want to position ourselves as an asset to increase the attractiveness of a destination. Our expertise is aimed at helping the destination optimise the performance of its housing aspect. That is definitely where we feel we are giving back here. We are grateful that all these destinations have invested a lot to bring offerings that are the basis of our services – we need them. We are working with a deep respect for these investments to ensure that in the long term we can join these players in successfully meeting the huge challenges ahead. That is our legacy, which is also a matter of loyalty.

“ *In many large events, there is a risk linked to pirate agencies selling products that are very appealing but do not correspond to reality, such as hotels that do not exist.* ”



bnetwork
we provide accommodation | you deliver experiences



Disruptions are a hotbed for creativity and also a major driver for people to refocus their priorities, principles and *ethos*. The pandemic has also raised the issue of values, and even organisations are realising that they need to have a better corporate culture, carry strong values, and give a new meaning to their events. At **BestCities**, we met **Geneviève Leclerc**, president and CEO of **MEET4IMPACT**, a collective and collaborative project focused on making the events industry a driver of positive societal impact and lasting legacies. Check our conversation below:

“Sense of relevance is perhaps the most pressing issue today”

How would you describe the role Meet4Impact plays in the business events industry?

I think the core role we play revolves around two aspects. First, building capacity: there seems to be an increased awareness that DMOs need to gain a better understanding of the impact their events are having on their community. We see more willingness to undertake efforts to remedy this situation and to put in place such strategies. We do that by training and consulting. The second gap concerns a lack of tools, methodologies and mentoring practices. This is the second role we play: developing tools, processes and methodologies for DMOs to carry out their social impact and legacy strategies around events.

Do you think this is where destinations in the future will excel in bidding for association meetings and events?

We will have a period where this will become a competitive advantage, however another will follow where not having done so will become a disadvantage. Sustainable development will see a ramp-up phase where more and more destinations are going to address this issue, and implement legacy and impact

planning proposals. While this is happening, those who do it best and fastest will gain that advantage. Then there will be a tipping point with a cost for other destinations for not having done so, and therefore the dialogue will revolve on the loss of competitiveness by the absence of these strategies. It will take some time for that to happen as, after the setback we are experiencing now, people will go back to survival mode and risk management, to open the borders with all these contingencies. That's going to delay the strategic work in a lot of places. The other thing is that it is also a long-winded process, so people who are investing now will probably start reaping the benefits within a year or two.

What major differences do you denote between the pre-COVID phase and now in the understanding of this matter?

I would say that the sense of relevance is perhaps the most pressing issue, which has driven decision-makers to want to make sure that what they are presenting is highly relevant. This is true both on the organiser side and the destination side. Especially for associations, as their members will start asking from now on why they should travel to meetings. The value proposition

in travelling to a meeting is going to be a real issue in the coming years. So, associations will be looking for new strategies to attract people by including mechanisms that can create wider additional value in their meetings.

Another point is that associations also have to demonstrate that they are fulfilling their mission. There is a small core of associations that are quite advanced in merging the objectives of their meetings with their underlying mission. But the reality is that there is a whole silent crowd behind them where that work is not necessarily being done. How to broadly align your meetings with your 360 strategy, and tie them together over the years. Anchoring your meeting in a stronger impact narrative is a tool for associations to strengthen their mission.

With the associations you have worked with, have you at any point struggled to guide your partner in the search for a core legacy of a particular event?

Many associations have built into their mission how to serve members every day. Almost all their resources and time presuppose responsibility towards them. In fact, not all associations pay attention to how they help the world in a wider sense and fewer think about the possible link between these two axes - how to improve the world around them while helping their members! If they get that kind of clarity, it will be much easier to engage them in a legacy or impact

initiative. Thinking about how to positively shape society and leave an important legacy behind is the natural first step. Somehow, in Madrid, we felt that the technical membership associations were possibly more out of touch in this dialogue. Certain associations – because they are so focused on serving their members – may lack clarity about actions that could impact their environment. If they cannot articulate that impact through their activity, they will find it harder to implement a legacy at their meetings. They need to go back and realise “what is our true value proposition”, to see how an event can influence that.

Do the concepts of legacy and social impact belong to the same framework and methodology? Are they necessarily complementary?

They are two sides of the same coin. The legacy is what the organisation is going to intentionally create and leave behind. This is what associations and destinations can do together, working on the development of tangible projects for people to relate their respective legacies to the conferences that preceded them. It is driven by the organisation as a desire to leave positive results and generate added value. Impact is the change this legacy will create. When the legacy creates positive local change and the community feels it, we call it impact. This is what you want to measure in the end: whether the legacy of the conference, two or three years after it took place, generated positive value and change. On the other

“ *Sustainable development will see a ramp-up phase where more and more destinations are going to address this issue, and implement legacy and impact planning proposals.* ”



hand, legacy does not necessarily leave an impact and impact is never generated solely by a legacy. It has to be monitored, measured and evaluated like any other change process. The final impact will always be a combination of factors, especially if you are talking about three years downstream. Considering that the legacy itself belongs to the conference and the efforts to create impact, that contribution may not be 100% relatable or accountable. That is why we talk about legacy planning and impact measurement.

Do you think that a possible hunger for business after the pandemic, could undo or slow down all the great steps we have been making these last two years?

Yes, I do. We, as associations, always tend to choose destinations that already have a strong base, a strong national society, that can generate more money and participants, and yet are not necessarily the ones that need us the most. We would probably have had a much better impact, if we had gone to a destination that was struggling to have any kind of representation and was willing to grow in the same field as the conference. Struggling to have social acceptability. These were the destinations we should have gone to and with the greatest potential impact for our conference. Now, are we competing with business interests? Absolutely, we are. Coming out of the pandemic, associations will need more than ever to generate direct revenue from their meetings. I do fear it will take a back seat and I think only very strategic organisations will be able to keep it at the forefront. However, financial sustainability is also a precondition for having impact. Therefore, business and impact objectives have to go hand in hand because if you don't meet one, you won't get the other. If you are not surviving and thriving as an organisation, then your impact will indeed be limited.

**#MEET
4IMPACT**

Coronavirus VS MICE

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“The **need** for **legacy impacts** has definitely **increased**”

The Belgian region of Flanders has been committed to legacy development for several years and will be a perfect testing ground to create lasting impacts for both associations and local communities. To reinforce this purpose, **VisitFlanders Convention Bureau** has co-developed with #MEET4IMPACT a legacy creation and impact measurement strategy to guide the region's events agenda over the next two years. Their fields of expertise will be the starting point for a conference roadmap with wider legacies and concrete impacts. **Gemmeke de Jongh** (*pictured in the right*), International Association Expert for Flanders, unveiled the curtain on this action plan.

Why did you decide to go down this road and implement this legacy layer in the Flemish conference scene?

It all started with our new vision developed two years ago which includes our events and congress department, called “**Travel to Tomorrow**”. We saw that meetings and events were under pressure and that over-tourism would be a problem sooner or later. So, we took it as a destination that it was time to opt for a paradigm shift using the tools and means at our disposal. The end-goal was to bring us closer to a more prosperous and balanced destination for all stakeholders and partners. This means that delegates coming to Flanders need added value, locals should be comfortable with visitors coming in, and entrepreneurs should also take advantage of these events we are attracting. Instead of having more congresses, we wanted better congresses, so that people would retain something that would last longer for the benefit of locals and delegates. A vision that would translate into legacy planning and concrete impacts for our destination.

How has the work of #MEET4IMPACT guided your steps in implementing this project?

They helped us materialise these ideas to start defining a programme. We wanted the next congresses to have a long-term positive impact on Flanders and to promote a legacy plan. But the question has always been: how can we do it? We were struggling with this task until we came across #MEET4IMPACT with whom we put together a methodology for the next two years, working on four concrete cases. To this end, we have identified three congresses that will take place over the next two years, and the **World Breaking Championship**. In December, we started training local staff and local organising committees on the various tools and methods for these much-desired impacts. One of the tools we use was the “theory of change”, which is at the heart of the strategic plan over time. From there, we decided, based on that impact intention, which activities to organise, which stakeholders to involve, and how we will measure all of this. The measurement part is tricky because, as a government agency, we have to prove it. How can we make it tangible? All these questions are still a bit up in the air but we intend to solve them in the next two years, through co-working and co-development methods.



Do you think that this paradigm shift meets the overall perception of associations?

We have been talking about issues such as climate or sustainability for many years, and I believe there is now an urgency to address them. COVID-19 shook everyone up and made us realise the importance of being involved far beyond a one-off event. In our case, this decision was taken even before the pandemic broke out. From COP26 to the digitalisation of industry, the need for legacy impacts has definitely increased. We felt it in the decision-making capacity in Flanders and in the availability of our teams. I think many partners in the meetings industry would like to take on these actions but often do not have the mandate, the time, and the resources to do so. As a government agency, we had a mandate to work long-term to bring new solutions to the region's current problems. With the expected return of conference travel, our focus will be on providing additional impact to associations, their members and, ultimately, the destination.

Do you see this project as a way to strengthen existing clusters in Flanders or as a hook for new industries to establish here?

When we started down this path, our aim was to attract associative congresses that would be linked to our strong economic hubs from 2017 to 2021. As we took on our new vision of "Travel to Tomorrow", we considered a change of the congress hubs we would support. We therefore looked at a Flemish government vision document called "Vision 2050", in which six transition domains were identified. These six domains – such as circular economy, lifelong learning, industry 4.0, etc. – will be crucial for the Flemish economic development in 20 years' time. If we consider the circular economy, the fact that Flanders has created a thriving ecosystem with new development hubs, researchers and industrial partners, leads us to believe that legacies can be encouraged in this area. VisitFlanders has also embraced the values of our tourism assets, such as beers, gastronomy, cycling, nature or arts,

culture and heritage. These all relate to experiences in the region, and can thus lead to long-term impacts on the congress field. If we can attract congresses within these spheres, this can increase new synergies and knowledge exchange for both parties. Our

efforts and support will be directed towards strategic areas in our vision for the future.

Have you conducted any pilot projects to test the results and impacts you expect from these conferences?

Yes, we did. We have four concrete cases and two of them will be exhibited this year. One is **Innova Flanders** in June, and the other is the **European Forum for Primary Care** in September, both in Ghent. Our challenge is to explain to people that what is happening at these events really makes sense and is valuable. It will be a possibility to get out of the theory and experience it. For example, I have been working with the **Hands On!** conference that will take place in Mechelen in 2023, which aims to involve children in museums. Mechelen is a child-friendly city and one of its future political priorities is to reduce children's poverty and to make children more resilient. So, bringing this conference to the city could act as a catalyst for local people to discuss and work towards this goal. This will take some time, but legacy also involves looking at the long term and sowing seeds to reap the rewards later.

How do you assess the concepts of social impact and legacy in your working framework and methodology?

In fact, they are seen differently. The development of our methodology goes through a framework that will guide us step by step in choosing – once we have defined the impact intention – which outcomes and capitals we will focus on. They could be social like the Hands On! conference, but they could also be ecological, economic or innovative impacts. We will have to define the exact impacts we want and their characteristics in order to measure them. Within our team at VisitFlanders we have a research department that will look closely at the indicators we need, and how we will measure them throughout the process. We are also moving towards structural partnerships with academics to show that in ten years' time we can still create similar projects and measure the impacts with greater accuracy and comparability.





100 Years Driving **Austrian Meetings & Events**

Despite the enormous challenges the MICE industry has faced heading into the third year of pandemic, it is crucial to highlight the stories of resilience that various market players have instilled along the way. Messe Wien's 100th anniversary celebration thus evokes Vienna's current status as one of the leading convention centres in Europe.

In autumn 1921, the first “Wiener Internationale Messe” set in motion a remarkable chronology that saw the Austrian capital establish itself as a centre of progress and innovation. **Messe Wien Exhibition & Congress Center** is now a 15-hectare site with 55,000m² of exhibition space, capacity for 25,000 visitors and separate conference centre, complete with a cutting-edge office tower, welcoming hundreds of thousands of participants each year. But this fascinating backstory was not always quiet as the building holds memories that witnessed devastating fires, regime changes and World War II bombing raids. Between reconstructions, expansions and public reacquisitions, the new Messe Wien was inaugurated in 2004 and is now operated by **RX Austria & Germany**. Major events that have been hosted here include the **annual congress of the European Society of Cardiology**, the **36th Congress of the European Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons** or the **Latin American Summit** during Austria's EU Council Presidency. While waiting for the doors to reopen by spring, the Messe team assumes it's time to change the mindset and be open to new business models.

“We are still in the middle of a challenging period of this transformation process, as many uncertainties still persist,” **congress & events director, Martina Candillo** (pictured right) tells us. During this period,

the event team had to be resourceful and flexible in order to meet the venue's economic goals, which kept them busy: “We looked at new revenue streams, such as broadcast studio, filming and photo shoots, and events organised by universities or other public organisations. We had to adapt to different event formats, pricing models, COVID prevention concepts, mobile working, virtual meetings and new technologies.” The pandemic changed the rules of the game but not so much as to wreck their 2022 business prospects. “If international events can take place as scheduled at least starting April we should meet our financial goals, which we want to complement with employee engagement and satisfaction, as well as talent management.” On the other hand, Messe Wien has been working closely with the **Vienna Convention Bureau** taking advantage of the Vienna Meetings Fund scheme (*check last year's HQ for more*) to secure several new events for the coming years.

We are still in very uncertain times regarding international events with travel restrictions and changing regulations. Venues in Vienna are operating under diligent security protocols with PCR testing infrastructure and results issued online. “We are negotiating fair and flexible contracts by developing a





new pricing model and minimising planning risks for the organiser,” adds Candillo. “Instead of a rental price based on rented space, we’re offering a per person fee.” The venue reaffirmed its status as an essential element of the capital’s infrastructure once again during the pandemic. “Messe Wien which is managed by RX Austria & Germany has served as a centre for medical care, testing and vaccination, waking us up to other possible uses for local communities.”

Last year, Messe Wien invested in a new broadcast studio and adopted Wifi 6 technology for its visitors; plans that aim to keep that momentum in its vision for the future. “This year, we’re slowly moving back to live events and that will be the time to try out new ideas, find out what works and where to invest smartly,” says Candillo. “We have to say goodbye to the mere function of renting space to become intermediary agents of meetings for third parties and experts in curating themes and content – regardless of whether it is in the physical or digital realm.”

Sustainable development is a strong priority for RX – the operator of Messe Wien – which is a founding member of the **UFI Net Carbon Zero Events** pledge and sits on both its executive steering board and operational board. This means the convention centre will be ready to develop a roadmap towards Net

Zero, helping it to raise the bar in terms of economy, ecology and social responsibility. Messe Wien is also a licensee of the Austrian Eco-label “**Green Meetings and Green Events**” with the option to certify an event as environmentally responsible. Their next step aims at **LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification**, a rating system for the sustainability of buildings. “We are also proud to be a healthy venue, accredited by the World Obesity Federation, and support event organisers, visitors and staff to minimise the negative health impacts of conference-going by promoting physical activity and healthy eating,” Candillo concludes.

“

We have to say goodbye to the mere function of renting space to become intermediary agents of meetings for third parties and experts in curating themes and content – regardless of whether it is in the physical or digital realm.



Iceland: Meetings in the Arctic Tundra!

There are places in the world that offer experiences that go beyond the conference itself... and then there is Iceland. **Meet in Reykjavík** explained to us its focus on environmental and social responsibility, but also on innovation and dynamic events.

Iceland is giving event organisers the opportunity to challenge the *status quo* with fresh event concepts, meaning, innovation, insight, and a clear connection to the world at large. The small Scandinavian island of approximately 330,000 people is among the cleanest, greenest, safest and most organised nations in the world. All arguments in favour of **Reykjavik**, an emerging international meeting destination just a short distance from the Arctic Circle. With a high-skilled manpower and a competitive economic background, forward-looking industry and modern infrastructure, Reykjavík also enjoys a magical geographical position – not only for the easy accessibility between America and Europe, but for the unrivalled landscape and environmental beauty.

Just as the country continues to change its shape due to its geological activity, so too has its MICE industry not stood still – even when the global dynamics indicates otherwise. “Many conferences and events have been postponed and RFPs have not converted into bookings.

However, it was not all bad. We managed to host some significant events like the **Arctic Circle Assembly**, the **World Geothermal Congress** and **Women Leaders – Global Forum 2021**,” says **Sigurður Sigurðsson** (*pictured in the right*), **marketing director** of **Meet in Reykjavík**. In addition, they have hosted three of the world’s biggest e-sports tournaments, proving to be a global stage in this fast-growing sector. In January 2021, Meet in Reykjavík merged with **Business Iceland** – a public-private partnership established to lead the promotion of the country in foreign markets and economic growth through increased exports. “Last year Meet in Reykjavík published a new communication strategy in line with Business Iceland’s long-term strategy. We placed more emphasis than ever on sustainable practices in the nation’s business travel industry, underlining our values in nature and climate preservation, gender equality, and human rights. We are now updating our website and all our promotional material to better reflect our goals and vision for the destination.”

Furthermore, Iceland was commended for its response to the coronavirus with over 90% vaccination rate, which ensured adequate measures to minimise the impact of the pandemic on the sector. “Last May, we hosted back-to-back the **League of Legends Mid-Season Invitational** and **Valorant Masters 2**. Approximately 500 players and production teams from around the world worked for over five weeks alongside local partners, staying in hotels in Reykjavík, enjoying our restaurants and activities, and not a single case of COVID-19 was reported. This success led to the decision to host **League of Legends World 2021** in Iceland, five months later,” Sigurðsson reports.

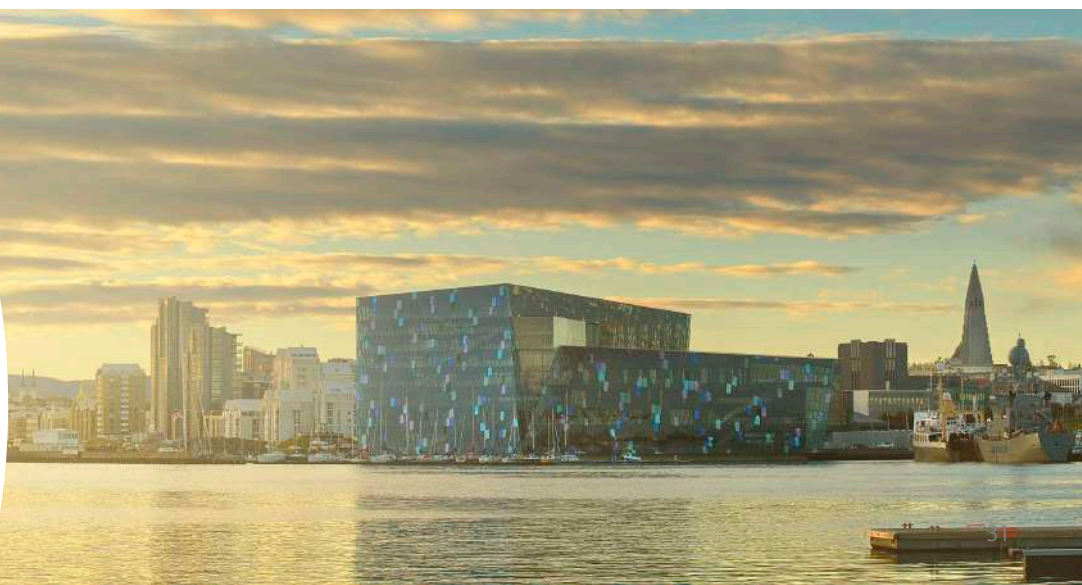
However, 2022 will be a new beginning for Meet in Reykjavík. Following the new strategic planning with Business Iceland, the bureau plans to change several measurable aspects of its operations such as its membership structure. “We will not charge our partners for membership, instead the CVB is open to all stakeholders from Iceland who have operational insurance and a relevant government-issued licence and can also apply for ‘Trusted Partners’.” The programme recognises organisations that have established commitments to service excellence and share a common ambition towards environmental and social responsibility.

The marketing director reinforces that the great strengths of the Icelandic people are their local mentality, power of adaptability and resourceful lifestyle. “Throughout most of recorded history, Icelanders have lived mostly isolated from the world with frequent volcanoes, earthquakes and other natural disasters. An unconventional way of life that gave us the flexibility and resourcefulness to face a challenge like the COVID-19 pandemic.” Like many hotels and venues, **Harpa**, the main conference centre, had to close its doors temporarily. The Government of Iceland responded very quickly to put many initiatives and

programmes in place to mitigate the economic, social, and environmental effects of COVID-19. “That included revenue loss subsidies to help companies maintain a minimum level of activity while the impact of the pandemic persists. Fortunately, most of our partners have offered full-service levels for MICE planners throughout most of the pandemic,” adds Sigurðsson. Meet in Reykjavík tried to ensure that meetings and events would not be forgotten in any recovery plans, making the most current information available for clients and partners.

Iceland is one of the most advanced information societies in the world with high-speed mobile and fixed networks everywhere, and almost the entire population online. Likewise, Reykjavík already has state-of-the-art software and technologically advanced conference rooms, convention centres and meeting venues within its infrastructure. Sigurðsson leaves no room for doubt: “We are not followers when it comes to modernisation and innovation within the MICE industry; we are paving the way. Our partners understand that planners are expected to design more complex and innovative experiences than ever before. Creative and cutting-edge tech solutions aren’t just ‘nice to have’ in today’s environment, they are a must-have.”

Finally, the country is recognised globally for its environmental awareness being ranked 5th in the **GDS-Index 2021**, and is a world leader in the development of sustainable energy. The capital gets 100% of its electricity and heat from domestically produced renewable energy sources, making it one of the greenest cities in the world. Sustainable food options are also easy to find. “Meet in Reykjavík has a long-term strategy for green meetings and events and a comprehensive corporate social responsibility strategy. The MICE industry in Iceland already plays an important role in the city’s plans to make it carbon neutral by 2040,” concludes Sigurðsson.





Finnish Congress Heroes:

"If we promise, we do it"

...at least, that's how one of the Finnish heroes pledged alliance with the MICE industry. Finland is proving to be a great country for business travel and associative events once again. This is the story of four events that defied the odds and became benchmarks in a stalled industry.

It is likely that, in the not too distant future, one will try to describe this professional limbo by the various resistance stories of restless professionals who sought (and found) new ways of survival. When the pandemic hit Finland at the height of social restrictions, congress organisers and event planners found themselves in a world of trouble. How to keep your word to clients and create a bond of security in one of the most hostile periods to “meet and greet”?

Paving the way for a new year, **Finland Convention Bureau (FCB)** has unveiled four inspiring stories of local event heroes showing how they managed to combine small solutions and innovative experiences with health safety. These four focal events – different from each other in typology, structure and size - are proof that even in difficult times, obstacles can be turned into opportunities by making use of unlikely players, technological solutions and local resources. In

the wake of a sustainable events industry, Visit Finland has also developed a business advisory programme called **Sustainable Travel Finland** providing companies and destinations with a concrete toolkit to tackle climate change.

The Finnish leadership has had the awareness to promote the country not only as a venue for high-level events, but also as a digital hub in the export of its own products and “grey matter”. Content will be even more important in the future, and congresses are great tools to create and enhance international reputation around universities, scientific institutions and associations. In this vein, the **EAS Congress for the European Atherosclerosis Society** in Helsinki, the **23rd IEEE International Workshop on Multimedia Signal Processing** in Tampere, the **European Bat Research Symposium** in Turku, and **Arctic Circle Jukola** – the world’s largest orienteering relay race

– held in Rovaniemi, were clear-cut examples of virtual transition, hybrid setups and interactive formats that summed up the trials and tribulations – in Finland but also a bit all over the world – of 2021.

Legacy means action! **Ines Antti-Poika** (pictured below), **business events manager** at FCB, spoke to us:

How did this idea of compiling and promoting these four cases come about?

Us Finns don't give up easily, and even in the times of the pandemic, our local congress organisers wanted to create memorable experiences to their peers, so they let their creativity fly. Organisers looked for innovations and created new ways of working. Essentially, they prepared for a new era of congresses and created a positive disruption of "old" meeting routines. This is what we wanted to highlight and celebrate – and this was the key idea behind our campaign. We wanted to bring the real heroes into the spotlight. Of course we also wanted to keep Finland top of mind of our international clients and share inspiring stories with a local twist.

Are you confident that hybrid events in Finland can sustain or even improve your market share in the long run?

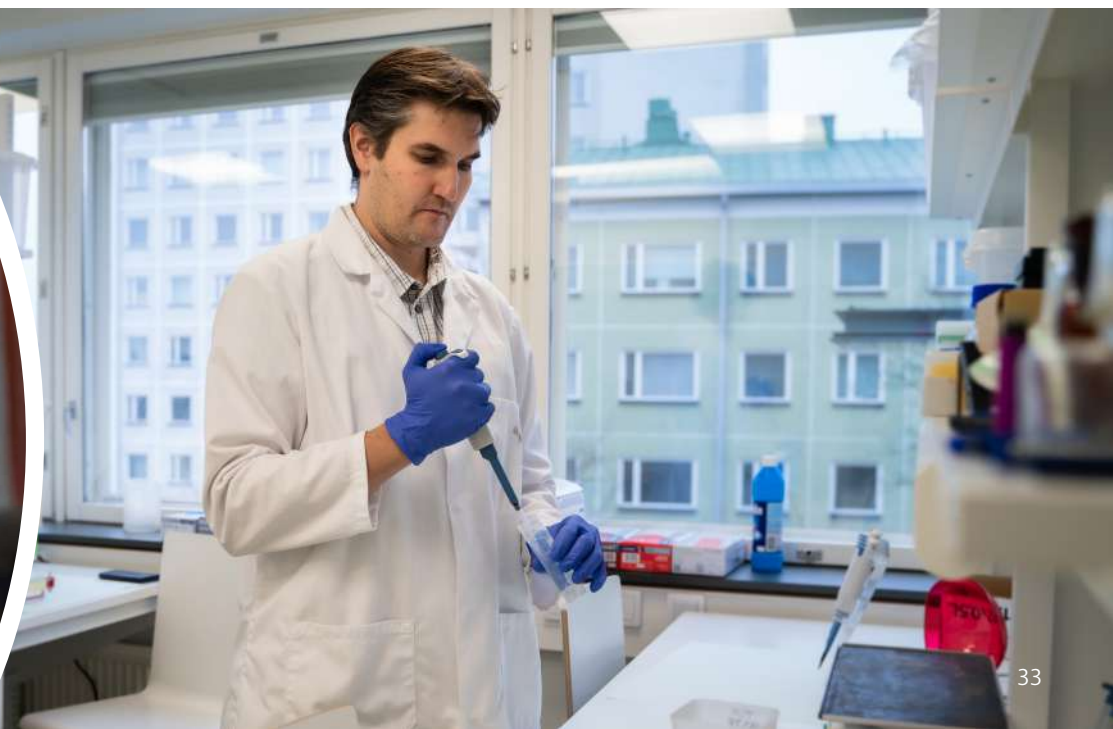
It is very challenging to ensure an equal experience for both on-site and virtual attendees. It is crucial to all participants to get proper scientific feedback from their peers, and to be able to network and share ideas. There are definitely benefits in a virtual congress, but nothing beats meeting in-person. Virtual elements are a bonus; they work well for content delivery and can

provide an option for those who cannot travel.

We believe in the power of face-to-face meetings, and feel that there is a lot of added value in organising physical meetings in Finland. Finland consistently ranks among the most popular congress destinations in the world, and our aim is to retain our status. I believe that the country will become even more attractive in the future, thanks to our infrastructure, accessibility and reputation as a reliable congress organiser. It is also very important for Finnish universities, research institutes and associations that they can showcase their expertise in their home country.

What is Finland's legacy mission after the pandemic? Have you thought about it?

The pandemic has put us all under pressure. One of our key drivers is active local cooperation. I believe that business events are a catalyst for sustainable growth and they will help the industry recover. They also generate jobs as well as having a positive impact on society. We will continue to promote innovation and know-how and create lasting assets for our society. This will also help us increase competitiveness and perhaps even help win more bids in the future. For Finland and for our local universities, congresses are an important platform for the dissemination of science and local knowledge. Therefore, it is important for us to motivate and help local hosts to organise meetings in their respective fields, in the country. And when it comes to the participants, I am sure they are keen to know Finland on a personal level and give back to the society by attending an event here.



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ASSOCIATION & PCO



The War on **Talent** and Why the **Event Industry** is in a **Good Spot**

AUTHOR: *SVEN BOSSU - AIPC CEO*

The Big Resignation in the US continues in 2022 – it is expected that 23% of the workforce will seek a new job this year, according to research done by *ResumeBuilder*. The same is happening in Western Europe, with especially young Europeans re-examining their jobs according to research by *YPulse*. The research showed that salary was the key driver in only 20% of the cases. Other drivers are: no passion for the current job, no sense of purpose, negative impact on mental health or the lack of opportunities. And while the figures in Asia are lower, employers recognise it is hard to attract and retain talent, as discussed during a roundtable organised by *PRovokeAP*. It is no longer just about the salary – employees are rethinking not just how they work but why they work.

When talking to CEO's of convention centres who have reopened for business, there is one common topic: the shortage of labour. It is not uncommon to hear statements like: "It is a good thing we can't work at full capacity yet, because we don't have the staff to make it happen". The two-year standstill resulted in qualified staff leaving the event industry. **Stageco**, one of the world's biggest stage builders, already sounded the alarm bell: nobody has enough qualified staff for the upcoming concerts and festivals. In addition, the quarantine rules still in place in many countries can have a considerable and unpredictable impact on staff availability. And thirdly: there is of course the impact of The Big Resignation, whereby people question their relationship to work.

Talking to the participants of the AIPC talent programme, **Future Shapers**, on why they like working in the event industry, the exact opposite can be heard – it is all about values like passion, purpose and personal growth. When you play a role in making COP26 happen, how challenging it might be, the sense of purpose is definitely there - you enable addressing global climate change in an unprecedented way. And there are many other examples where bringing communities together results in innovation, collaboration or breakthroughs which impact people across the globe.

The second big advantage of the event industry is the wide range of opportunities for personal growth. For personally, the human side of events has made me grow enormously as an individual. But there are also the various "classic" growth opportunities, both vertical and horizontal. Moving from catering to sales, to operations, to finance? Perfectly possible in a convention centre.



And the third key value is of course passion. Event professionals have a passion for people that is shared by all parties involved in creating those unique moments which are the hallmark of great events. When the magic of organised events happens, the emotions of the people involved can be best compared to a NASA control room when a rocket is successfully launched – joy, pride, and a sense of belonging.

We are about to witness the launch of a very different event industry, focusing on value and purpose. Now, more than ever, the event industry is the place to be for talents. They will be able to use all their creativity and imagination, to ensure these events are truly sustainable and to bond communities by creating unique moments of sharing experiences. We should consider the Big Resignation as a unique opportunity to attract new talent, and we should showcase all the opportunities we can offer.

The participants to the AIPC talent programme, Future Shapers, will be part of that effort, and as the global association of convention centres, AIPC will continue to lead the way in making sure their story is heard.



Beyond the legacy activities that can be planned during events, scientific congresses undoubtedly generate a legacy per se. When scientists and healthcare professionals come together, scientific exchanges take place and value is created. Ideally, this impact should not only lead, in the case of medical congresses, to better and more effective patient treatment, but also lay the foundations for future scientific meetings. The following case study explores the impact and value created beyond scientific development within a professional community. Looking at a distinct case of 2021, the question of what a PCO can do to create an additional legacy will be discussed.

The Power of Legacy

AUTHOR:

FLORIAN FEHRINGER – DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS AT MONDIAL CONGRESS & EVENTS

Let's travel back to a time when the only pandemic knowledge we had was from films and not from personal experience. That was a time when biannual congresses brought together over 3,000 participants in person from over 70 countries, for 4 days. In the present case, this congress - an oncology conference - was to have taken place in March 2021, however, by the end of 2020, it became clear that it could not be held in its usual format as planned.

Rescheduling was not an option, as the scientific outcome of each edition helps define the latest treatment recommendations. It was therefore time to adapt to the situation and update the format, making it virtual. The objective was clear from the beginning: to set a high-level benchmark on how to continue with medical education, as well as the uninterrupted scientific meeting during the restricted face-to-face meeting periods. Turning individual lectures into a digital format was an easy step. The biggest challenge, however, was adapting the main asset of this conference - a one-day consensus session where a multidisciplinary panel of 50 experts from all continents discusses and votes on how to treat early-stage breast cancer.

Taking up the challenge, the PCO decided to get rid of the classic concept of the frontal lecture and add interactivity. They completely changed the narrative with more experts beyond the traditional panel of 50; and suddenly, those experts could join the discussion

from the comfort of their offices and homes. Doctors and scientists who traditionally would not have attended in person, but were still very much involved in the topic on a day-to-day basis, had a voice through this interaction. The decision to add the audience as a participating voice to the panel opened up the floor for even more informed and comprehensive discussions. For the first time, questions from the audience were raised with a new Q&A tool. Thus, the focus of the discussion was also set by the participants and the audience had the opportunity to vote and actively influence the direction of that discussion.

Later, the results were presented in comparison with the experts' results, showing much more than just an interesting outcome. It was a message to the participants, telling them that they were part of a successful meeting and that their knowledge and opinions played a vital role in the scientific outcome. They are an active and valued part of the community. What seemed like a very mundane message, had the power to transform a cold and digital conference into a bonding experience, giving the participant an active and key role for the scientific community.




The atmosphere was incredibly motivating and collaborative. The numbers speak for themselves: with 3,316 participants from six continents and a wide range of medical fields, the congress proved to be a popular and appealing event. More people attended than in previous in-person editions and the number of first-timers was well above average. More than 90% of participants rated the new session concept and learning experience as excellent or good. Furthermore, the impact was not limited to the participants' conference experience but, more importantly, directly affected patient care and standards of treatment. The Q&A segments not only allowed delegates to contribute to the discussion, but also led into more practical issues they encountered in their experiences – which included some points that would not have otherwise received much attention. As such, this provided participants with even more relevant information with a direct impact on patient care.

In uncertain times like these, it is the human being behind the screen that is often overlooked in the flood of digital solutions: the interaction gesture not only extended the scientific result by sending an important message of appreciation to the public, but also enhanced the scientific discourse in its practical application to improve patient care. We were forced to adapt an existing concept and made it even better by doing so. The ongoing pandemic led us to find solutions and further develop functional concepts to make them a better experience for everyone involved – a quest worth continually exploring.

Mondial Congress & Events is one of Europe's leading PCOs and market leader in Austria. In more than 50 years of existence, Mondial has organised more than 2.000 association congresses in locations all over Europe, with participant numbers ranging from half a dozen to tens of thousands of delegates

This article was provided by the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers. IAPCO represents today 137 companies from 40 countries, comprised of over 9900 professional congress organisers, meeting planners and managers of international and national congresses, conventions and special events. www.iapco.org



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Impact Strategy Masterclass with **Destination Canada**

MEET4IMPACT are the leaders and pioneers in coaching destination professionals and supporting DMOs in defining, managing, measuring and communicating the societal impacts of their events. Together with the GDS-Movement, the first Impact Strategy and Management Masterclass is now available through the GDS-Academy and, to date, 21 DMOs have benefited from their insights and hands-on teaching experience.

Upskilling yourself, your staff and your stakeholders is key to managing the future where tourism and events not only thrive but give back to the community and ecosystem in ways never before considered. We spoke to **Virginie De Visscher** (pictured above), **Senior Director Business Development Economic Sectors** from **Destination Canada** about her experience of the Masterclass and what she discovered.

Destination Canada brought together more than twenty DMOs to participate in the **Impact Strategy and Measurement Masterclass** ahead of a future research project focused on the legacy and impact of business events that will start in early 2022, spearheaded by Destination Canada. To do this there needed to be a common understanding and vocabulary around communicating the impact of business events, alignment to SDGs and overall collaboration of all stakeholders in order to create impact strategies for the long-term future of a DMO.

Please explain the motivation, the insight and/or the support that was required to enable the DMOs to participate?

It really came in multiple phases and approaches. In the wake of the pandemic, Destination Canada really stepped up to offer its partners across the country different tools and opportunities to support them in their journey. It aligned extremely well with our future research project and how much the long-term impact of business events is important in our global sector strategy. The masterclasses

were one of those opportunities that came along where we thought ‘wow, this is really an amazing opportunity to offer ‘free of charge’ to our partners, a chance to reset, to think about long term strategy and to be able to set themselves up for future success’. It took a lot of motivation from our team to get the project approved and shaped for our DMOs, a lot of insight to see the future gains, and finally it took a lot of personal perseverance to engage our DMOs to dedicate time and human resources to this opportunity.

Tell us more about the national approach to creating events with lasting impact and the role your team can play in supporting the objectives.

By converging diverse, creative and commercial interests across industries with Canadian innovators, academics, and thought leaders in face-to-face meetings, global conferences have the power to transform communities with its legacy impacts.

We see this as much more than a marketing tool to attract conferences because Canada’s priority sector strategy is a long-range economic development strategy, that will:

- Drive sector collaboration and innovation across industry, academia and NGOs;
- Showcase local advanced industry, creative, academic sector expertise to a global audience;
- Act as a catalyst for new R&D partnerships, trade and investment;
- Attract international talent and grow high-value employment;
- Motivate convention delegates to return as leisure visitors, or part- time/full-time residents.

What are the key impact goals for the next 5 years?

As a national tourism organisation, we aspire to support our entire tourism ecosystem in Canada for the benefit of our local communities and to maximise our guests’





When organisations choose to host their event in Canada, they not only gain access to some of the safest, greenest and most culturally diverse destinations in the world - they also gain access to their industry's thought leaders and innovators. These opportunities not only promote knowledge transfer, but can lead to future collaboration, talent attraction and investment."

experiences. Our guests (being our visitors) include business events delegates. So, while we strive to maximise the number of events and visitors that we welcome in Canada, we want to do so in a way that is socially, culturally, economically and environmentally sustainable and successful for both visitors/guests and host communities. This is why we are specific in the type of events that we wish to attract proactively and why we focus on the SDGs for alignment.

Share a great story of your experience in the masterclass – what was the most eye-opening aspect for you?

One of my eye-opening moments was that the take-away of the masterclasses were different depending on which level of the organisation the participant came from. For example, a sales person would take the learnings and share how they would apply them for securing more bids and being more effective in connecting with potential clients. On the other hand, a person in a senior leadership role would take the learnings and apply them to the bigger strategy of their DMOs or their own destination, bringing it to their board or their stakeholders and looking how to truly revamp and reshape their impact strategy for the long term. I thought that was fascinating to watch and evolve as the classes went on.

Where was the biggest learning overall and how will this affect future strategy development?

I believe that the biggest learning is that the concept of measuring the impact of business events solely based on room nights is gone and only the destinations that adapt to the new way of measuring impact for their destination post-pandemic, will thrive and be successful. The masterclass helped me in refining and shaping that vision of legacy and impact for Canada as a whole and envisioning the role that Destination Canada can have in achieving it, within the business events realm.

Minto Schneider (pictured below), CEO at **Explore Waterloo Region**, was one of the DMOs that benefited from Destination Canada's recommendation to undertake the Masterclass. Their organisation has been involved with Green Step Tourism for a number of years and is in the process of building a sustainability plan.



Explore Waterloo Region had already hosted events that had zero waste emission goals which gave their team first hand exposure to measurement of impact beyond that of pure economy. She believes that "the Masterclass really provided an insight into how we can move forward as a destination to embrace the impact and legacy events and to seek events that match the longer-term goals of our destination."

The training came at the right time as they are planning for 2022-25. Learning that sustainability, impact and legacy goals can be incorporated into the overall strategic plan has made a huge difference in how this strategy will be developed.

For more information about the masterclass, check out the GDS Academy website: academy.gds.earth



The Impact Strategy and Measurement Class not only helped our team internally to brainstorm new ideas and concepts but also opened up an alternate route to consider Strategic Planning for our destination. "





We hear the words 'digital nomad' all the time, yet who are we really talking about, and why do destinations seem so keen to attract them? To answer this question, **European Cities Marketing** has launched a groundbreaking report produced in partnership with place making and marketing agency, **TOPOSOPHY**. We interviewed **Manolis Psarros**, CEO & founder of TOPOSOPHY and **Petra Stušek** (both pictured in the right), president of European Cities Marketing to learn more about this trend!

“How can cities tap into **new sources of travelling global talent?**”

First of all, can you tell us why the topic of Digital Nomads is so accurate?

Manolis Psarros: Digital nomads have been on the radar for many years now, and this tribe has clearly seen a boost by the pandemic. We also believe that the ecosystem of businesses that has flourished to service this market can teach us many useful lessons about the wider hospitality industry and how it’s evolving to reflect the shifting patterns of how we all work, rest and play in the 21st century.

Petra Stušek: With the right approach, cities can turn this to their advantage and dip into new sources of attracting global talent. I am proud that ECM tackles this current trend, highlighting concrete tips for destinations, what cities can gain from attracting digital nomads and what they can lose.

What can readers expect from this insights’ report?

PS: The report examines the digital nomad lifestyle in more detail and explores the opportunities and challenges that the digital nomad market could bring to cities that want to become more attractive to the “long stay” market. We wanted to showcase different strategic perspectives with a number of inspiring case

studies from around the globe; you will be able to track how your city already caters to the market and/or how it can be on the digital nomad map.

MP: You can also find a wide range of practical insights that define who digital nomads really are and what they seek from a place to live and work. We included a comprehensive map of the digital nomad “ecosystem” and explained how cities can make sure they get the most from this dynamic market.

What drives people to become digital nomads?

PS: The factors were present long before the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic – such as the ability to work remotely, or the increased and improved digital infrastructure available for remote workers – however as seen with other trends, the pandemic has accelerated changes in the global labour market.

MP: The global labour market is currently in a state of huge flux. The pandemic is just one of the catalysts that’s pushing professionals worldwide to make dramatic changes to their lifestyle and career. With both workers and employers looking for unprecedented levels of flexibility, we can ask ourselves if this could lead to a new wave of “global nomads”.



Source: Digital
Extract from EC

Anyone able to work remotely can become a digital nomad?

MP: Unfortunately, becoming a digital nomad is not necessarily a lifestyle open to everyone. From a practical point of view, the availability of visas is strongly dictated by nationality, with considerable inequality around the world between those who are generally able to travel freely and those who are not.

PS: Digital nomads and their companies can also meet local legal, tax and other compliance issues when seeking to set up in a new country or even difficulty in accessing local healthcare services. The global digital nomad community has generally become the preserve of those who are white, highly educated and fortunate to have built up enough capital with which to travel. I hope this will change in the future. Maybe, at our level, cities have a role to play through an inclusive approach to attract a more diversified audience of Digital Nomads.

What makes a place attractive for digital nomads?

MP: In 2021, the Digital Nomads Observatory introduced seven key layers related to destinations' ability to attract digital nomads based on a thorough analysis of relevant surveys, desk resources and research. This model outlines how destination assessment involves the seven layers in order of hierarchy: cost of living, community of digital nomads, workplaces, interconnectivity, environment and activities along with an eighth element related to security



-  LAYER SEVEN
THINGS TO DO
-  LAYER SIX
ENVIRONMENT
-  LAYER FIVE
MOBILITY & TRANSPORTATION
-  LAYER FOUR
CONNECTIVITY
-  LAYER THREE
WORK SPACES
-  LAYER TWO
DIGITAL NOMADS COMMUNITY
-  LAYER ONE
COST OF LIVING

Nomads Observatory, March 2021

ECM - Understanding the World of the Digital Nomad, December 2021

& freedom. How each destination builds its positioning over these layers is a matter of what particular groups of digital nomads it aims to attract.

Since 2015, European Cities Marketing is partnering with TOPOSOPHY to publish Trends and insights report each year. Can you tell us more about this partnership?

PS: Thanks to our long-standing partnership with TOPOSOPHY, we are able to have a critical overview of the latest international trends in our industry and to provide our members with reports that can definitely help them in their strategic choices. The team once again produced a high-quality report on one of the most important learnings for our industry!

MP: Working with ECM for seven years also allowed us to be in regular contact with 130+ ECM members and partners, which is precious for our work. We are delighted to support the European Cities Marketing community with insights that can help them to think differently about who their cities are attractive to, and why.

To conclude, what do destinations looking to attract digital nomads need to know first?

PS: They definitely need to read the report! It's available on European Cities Marketing's Website to everyone. Because after all ECM's credo is "MEET. SHARE. GROW.!"

MP: I wouldn't have said it better! We also recorded a webinar for the launch of the Report and it's available on ECM's YouTube Channel if you wish to learn more about it!





How Events Can Create a **Long-lasting Impact**

BY THE *WORLD PCO ALLIANCE*

All event planners want their events to be a success. Strong attendance numbers, stimulating sessions and panels, robust sponsorship programmes, and unique social programmes are just some of the benchmarks used to measure the performance of an event.

But what about beyond the actual event? When venues are vacated and everyone goes home? Are there ways in which the event can somehow “live on”? The short answer is yes. In shifting the mindset from exclusively organising a successful event to one that favours the idea of leaving a legacy, event planners can begin looking at ways for their event to offer a lasting contribution.

In this article, three World PCO Alliance partners share their views on the topic of event legacy, and some advice for event planners looking to embrace this new mindset.

First of all, let’s define legacy. **Gregg Talley of Talley Management Group Inc.** suggests that, in assessing the full value of an event, benefits must be delivered to all stakeholders: the attendees, the sponsoring organisation(s), exhibitors and sponsors, and the destination. If an event is intent on delivering benefits to all groups and stakeholders, then this becomes the “legacy” of that event.

Patranuch Sudasna of CDM Thailand defines legacy as a long-term positive impact to the industry, the host country, and beyond. She urges event planners to keep legacy in mind when planning an event. “Host organisations should think about what they will leave behind for the industry, its people and the next generation.”

Such a legacy can be in the form of an economic, business, professional, academic or community benefit. “Essentially,” says Sudasna, “legacy is something to increase impact for both host organisation and local stakeholders.”

Let’s address, for a moment, what a legacy is not. Many people confuse legacy with corporate social responsibility (CSR), and Talley says it’s important to understand and make the distinction. While CSR is a noble and important element that should exist in all events, it is not the equivalent of leaving a legacy. “CSR is usually some beneficial action or contribution to a local cause during an event in the local destination,” Talley points out. “Usually this is in the form of upgrading local schools and playgrounds or providing items or funds to a local charity. Legacy is something much longer lasting that aims to benefit the local population or institutions connected to the event’s purpose.”

Some examples of a legacy include an endowed chair in the event specialty at a local university, a scholarship programme for local students who are studying that specialty, or a tree planting project with participation and contribution of delegates. The project is tracked annually and participants receive regular updates. Simply put, it’s a benefit with a long-lasting impact on a specific group tied to the overall mission, specialty or theme of an event.

Event legacy is still a relatively new concept, and many event planners and associations require some support

“*Host organisations should think about what they will leave behind for the industry, its people and the next generation.*”

in how to incorporate this goal in their overall event strategy. Moreover, a key component of this strategy lies with the host city/destination. Says Talley, “It is usually easier when destinations pursue an ‘alignment strategy’ in their event marketing and sales strategy. When they align sales to their unique economic development goals, key economic sectors, and knowledge hubs, there can be an easier confluence of interests in identifying and collaborating on a relevant, meaningful legacy.”

“*Legacy is something much longer lasting that aims to benefit the local population or institutions connected to the event’s purpose.*”

Sudasna also underlines the importance of local stakeholders in creating a legacy. She recommends that event organisers, through the host country’s convention bureau, reach out to local stakeholders to set meeting legacy goals and activities to contribute to those goals as well as determine ways of measuring the outcome. Says Sudasna, “It’s vital to find and share the values and objectives between the host organisation and the host country. Collaboration of all sectors is crucial to produce innovative meetings which serve the community, the environment, and the future.”

Sudasna offers these tips for identifying legacy goals:

- Invite local institutions, the convention bureau and the host city to be involved from the early stages of planning an event;
 - Encourage collaboration among the local stakeholders so they feel they are an active part of the organisation of the event;
 - Identify types of activities which resonate with their society. Then, contact notable non-profit groups.

Thania Carrera of T&C Group adds: “Teamwork is then essential between suppliers, the PCO and the client or association; all must have the same goal to ensure a legacy that will resonate with succeeding generations and enhance the association’s brand image.”

Event legacies can generate significant long-term impact. Take the ESTRO 2021 meeting in Madrid, for example, which ensured that every hospital in Spain received radiology equipment. The **ICCA/Best Cities Impact Awards** recognise other standout contributions.

While these examples are certainly inspiring, an event planner needs to keep a few things in mind when considering the legacy they wish for their event:

- Don’t make any decisions in a vacuum – as mentioned earlier, establishing a legacy requires an alignment from all stakeholders;
- Don’t overcommit – make sure the goal is laudable but also feasible;
- Don’t confuse legacy with corporate social responsibility – incorporating sustainable practises into an event is not the same thing as an event legacy.

In selecting a legacy, budgetary constraints often come into the picture, but Carrera doesn’t think such limitations need to be a reason for excluding a legacy. “Although budget can be an issue, various types of legacies can be realised that are all meaningful for association members, participants and the community in the destination.”

Professional conference organisers, or PCOs, play an important role in helping their clients determine appropriate legacy goals and facilitating the dialogue between the host organisation and the host country, which is so critical to any legacy’s success.

The fundamental question event planners must ask themselves is, how can we leave a positive impact on the local destination that reinforces our mission and event outcomes?

While pursuing a legacy may seem complicated, Talley and Sudasna both acknowledge its importance. Host organisations should start identifying meeting legacy goals in the early planning stages of an event and reach out to local stakeholders to explore those goals and ideas.

Sudasna concludes: “Whatever your sector, whatever field or specialty concerns your event, each of us has a role to play, and we should be engaged in contributing towards a better future for us all.”



World PCO Alliance



Membership Engagement: Get to the Heart of Your Story

Members are the lifeblood of an association. Fully engaged, they make our associations thrive, have impact and offer a meaningful experience. But having active involvement can be hard – and when it dips, so does membership, morale, finances & results. So, how to boost engagement?

We're investigating engagement strategies – what's your association doing to ensure members grasp your **purpose** and are able to **participate** in your causes? Do you have a **platform** in place that makes collaboration easy? Are your members making **progress** together? How do you **promote** their contribution?

Borjana Pervan speaks with **Jeffer London** about members humanising data. As communications director, at the **World Heart Federation (WHF)**, Borjana empowers the global cardiovascular community to speak with a unified voice. Her team works closely with members to shape a common narrative about how to achieve heart health for everyone.

PURPOSE How do members make sense of your *raison d'être*?

As the only global umbrella organisation for cardiovascular health, the WHF has the responsibility to unite, inspire and advocate for change at the international and local level, through its members. We exist to serve 200 groups spanning national and

regional scientific areas, academia, patient groups and various civil society organisations. If we are to achieve cardiovascular health for everyone on this planet, regardless of who they are and where they live, we need to be trusted and valued by our members. To do this on a global level, we depend on strategies and activities that are backed by our members and can be applied locally by them.

PARTICIPATION How do your members get involved?

Our strength stems from the combined results of the work of our members. Without their involvement in our strategy, plans and ways of communications, our success would be short-lived. An example of this, is our “2021 World Heart Day” campaign, “Use Heart to Connect”, which won a prize for Best Campaign from the International & European Association Awards.

Less visible is the process of keeping the members engaged, inspired and empowered to contribute. Virtual and in-person meetings, emails, newsletters, surveys, public and member-only events, all these come together to ensure that members participate. This participation is what lets us share the ownership of campaigns and events – and most importantly, the involvement keeps us aligned on the strategy and why we are doing it.

Campaigns like this get a boost from us in the form of a WH Grant. In giving these grants, we look at their strategy for including people who will benefit from the activity, how are they monitoring change – and potential for improving people’s knowledge of heart health. The grant supports them financially, so they can do more of what they are already doing.

PLATFORM How do your members connect and collaborate?

Our community is very diverse, and this is where its strength lies. Our power comes from being able to unite the membership and mobilise their support and resources. The flipside of this diversity is that we are often faced with the need to compromise, and our

“*Equip your members to tell the story. And when they do it well, invest in expanding their success.*”

messages could lose some of their initial intensity and clarity.

We put our energy into a congress and summit to showcase members’ work, a journal for sharing knowledge, and our campaign playbook. These platforms allow all our members to have the same resources – whether they have the strength and finances of successful organisation, or the independence and individuality of a one-person show.

Our goal is to nurture the exchange between members and give voice to those with limited resources for awareness raising and advocacy. Our publication – Global Heart – is a good example of how we share and validate members’ research, developments, trends, solutions and public health programmes.

PROGRESS How do your members move things forward?

Being a unified voice for heart disease makes it easier for institutions like the World Health Organisation to listen. It would be hard for them to reach out to all our members; we make it easier for our members’ positions to be recognised. This recognition leads to awareness (e.g. the impact of air pollution), changes in policy (e.g. taxation of unhealthy products to underwrite universal healthcare) and regulation (e.g. front-of-pack labelling that informs consumers about products impact on health).

Our members have a lot of scientific data. Our role is to bring all their facts together and shape the story that brings the data to life – to make it useful and compelling – for all our members, as well as the audiences our members want to reach.

PROMOTE How do you recognise a member’s talents?





Besides featuring the articles of members, we offer awards for prominent cardiologists as well as for campaigns. The campaigns are driven by members or teams of members who we match-made, and use the playbook that we created for all to use. The Awardees apply their own creativity to make the campaign take off in their area; and when we see potential in their initiative we provide them with funding for the following year.

Sometimes, we have been deeply involved – for example, we worked with BBC to run sessions on storytelling in my native Bulgaria which heightened the credibility of our members there, and brought about a whole new level of media coverage. Other times, we are happily surprised by member’s initiatives, like when Indonesian members used one of the five senses for each of their campaigns – making issues accessible through visual arts this year. Brilliant. In all

these cases, we had 3 key ingredients: a strategy we built together; a playbook they could pull resources from; and a platform where we could celebrate their results.

POSTSCRIPT Any other advice for creating engagement?

Align messages to strategic goals. Keep it clear and simple. Don’t just think about outputs; elevate your work to strategy. Nurture your community. Help people get in touch with WHY they are doing this work, and HOW to tell the human story about it. The WHAT is often already known, it is fundamental. Don’t hide behind data, transform your information into a compelling and memorable narrative. Put the heart in your story.

ABOUT AUTHOR

Jeffer London is a member of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) and hosts the Facilitation Impact Awards. The IAF promotes facilitators and all who use facilitation to help people work together effectively. Looking for better facilitation? Check out IAF-world.org or talk to Jeffer directly about facilitating leadership teams and association-wide engagement initiatives – see jeffer-london.com and [@jefferlondon](https://twitter.com/jefferlondon).



The International
Association of Facilitators
promoting the power
of facilitation worldwide

ABOUT INTERVIEWEE

Borjana Pervan is the Communications Director of the World Heart Federation. A leader and convener in global cardiovascular health, the WHF champions heart health and acts to reduce the global burden of heart disease and stroke. Their membership of more than 200 heart foundations, scientific societies, and patient organisations in more than 100 countries, is an active hub, promoting heart health and driving change at the local, regional and global level.



**WORLD
HEART
FEDERATION**

Long-term **Education Strategies** at the Centre of **Association Events' Legacy**

BY *ESTEFANÍA ZÁRATE ANGARITA, MARCOM SPECIALIST AT KENES GROUP*



Have you been to La Sagrada Familia in Barcelona? Then you might recall how architect Antoni Gaudí started its construction in 1882 knowing that he would die before his masterpiece was completed.

The legacy and impact of Gaudí's influence in society and arts remain relevant 140 years later because of his great vision and ability to commit to a project that was much bigger than himself.

The story of Gaudí and La Sagrada Familia beautifully exemplifies the concept of “cathedral thinking” – which in the words of writer and historian Rick Antonson is all about prioritising a long-term view to make decisions that involve further generations and engaging in work that perhaps you won't conclude. Does it sound familiar to you? If you're in the associations sector, then probably.

The periodic event of an association is the focal point for their members; its ability to leave a legacy and have an impact within their industry or sector is crucial for moving associations forward. And although both “legacy” and “impact” are concepts that have been around in the events industry for decades, the way we measure them is permanently evolving. A key indicator of an event's legacy is the development of relationships and friendships among participants while a key indicator for its impact is its levels of engagement and reach.

According to **Diana van Brakel, Senior Manager Continuing Education at Kenes Group**, “the education strategy of an association helps to look into the different formats and to implement activities based on a long-term plan. It is not just setting up an educational activity or an event, but it is all about the entire strategy behind it.” Consequently, when the major event of an association becomes part of a continuously ongoing educational programme, its main purpose shifts from networking,

advancing knowledge and selling products to creating an entire ecosystem grounded on collaboration, innovation, creativity, research, and community building to improve skills, competencies, practices and ultimately outcomes.

These new strategies for associations' legacy (the human aspect) and impact (the factual aspect) have a direct influence in the well-being of delegates, association membership levels, conference attendance, and talent retention within the industry. “It is very important that an association stays in touch with their target audience through the year by using online learning methods and different online learning formats. A knowledge hub cannot only ensure that the association can provide education to their members throughout the whole year, but it is also making it more interesting for non-members to become a part of an association and to improve their knowledge and skills”, adds van Brakel.

Such as Gaudí's vision was the key to the legacy and impact of his masterpiece, cathedral thinking is what will give associations an approach to their core events to leave a remarkable memory and strongly consolidate their educational strategies.

ABOUT KENES GROUP

For over fifty years, Kenes Group has been creating success stories with associations around the world. We're experts in helping associations reach their true potential by strategically building awareness, loyalty and satisfaction among current and potential members, as well as stakeholders. We harness the power of community, strengthening your association's brand through unforgettable experiences – fostering change, inspiring members, educating, and improving your association's business performance.





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