

Case Study:

Writing a better future: How the World Library and Information Congress embraced sustainability

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Introduction

For the past 84 years librarians have found themselves waiting for one event: The World Library and Information Congress (WLIC).

Together with IFLA, the association behind the WLIC, K.I.T. Group takes care of all the logistical details and makes sure delegates experience a productive Congress.

This year we had a new challenge: how to make the Congress more sustainable?



Definition of the Goals

First, we defined two goals:

- 1/ Giving back to the Malaysian community (the Congress took place in Kuala Lumpur)
- 2/ Reducing the ecological impact of the Congress

Then, we delved into the details of planning the Congress to find effective ways to achieve those goals.

This is how we did it:



Initiatives

For the locals

1/ Live streaming of sessions: 95033 librarians from across the planet followed the WLIC online. There were about 30 times as many people watching the main sessions online as delegates sitting in the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

2/ Involving local volunteers: over 300 volunteers from all over the world assisted our team before, during and after the event. They helped with the organization significantly, and their enthusiasm brightened the mood.

3/ Highlighting local culture: delegates could use their breaks to immerse themselves in local library culture via an alley of roll-ups showcasing Malaysian libraries installed inside the conference center.



Initiatives

For the locals

4/ Supporting local associations: to increase access to culture and education for Malaysian children, a donation box was set-up and its contents donated to local charities.

5/ Book sharing: there is no better place than a Congress full of librarians to collect books.

Delegates donated 83 books to local schools. Languages included English, Malaysian and even Chinese!

Initiatives

For the planet

1/ Avoiding paper waste by going digital: 64% of delegates downloaded the WLIC app to check the program and additional information about the Congress and IFLA. Thanks to this, we were able to print fewer programs than previous years, saving paper and money.

2/ Digital signage: most of the signs inside the conference center were digital. These electronic signs helped to avoid paper waste and made last-minute changes easy.

3/ Responsible sourcing: for the few communication materials which still had to be printed, we chose eco-friendly paper (Forest Stewardship Council certified). Using certified paper is essential to fight against illegal deforestation and help to promote the practice of sustainable forestry worldwide.

4/ Promoting public transport: To decrease the number of delegates using taxi services, we promoted Kuala Lumpur's free bus service and the airport's express train at the Congress.



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