BETTER TOGETHER

SHARING INSPIRATION & LEARNINGS FROM IAPCO2022 – SPECIAL EDITION
Forward-thinking heritage
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**IAPCO 2022**

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**DESTINATION PARTNERS**

**MEMBERS’ EVENTS AND NEWS**

Read the full stories of our members’ news on the IAPCO Knowledge Hub

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The PCO: published by IAPCO

Whilst every care is taken in the preparation and publishing of The PCO, the views expressed are not necessarily those of IAPCO or its members and no responsibility can be taken for articles, errors or comment.

Editor: Caroline Gutierrez / Design: jo-harrison.co.uk
DEAR READER

This year’s theme for our annual meeting was “There’s no future without history”. It was not chosen by chance but due to the fact we were standing in an ancient city, rich with fascinating history that has contributed to the progress of mankind. And there is so much to learn from that in order to create a better future.

We have done our utmost to have the meeting in Rome in-person despite COVID-19 and Omicron. As a leading industry association, we needed to showcase that meeting can happen even in difficult times.

**We all understand the value of business meetings:**

- The economic impact of course, which remains very important and can help many destinations with a faster recovery from the pandemic
- But beyond that economic impact, business meetings are the accelerator for the advancement of science and technology, they improve patient care, and enhance business collaboration
- They also leave valuable legacy to the local community and help raise awareness for sustainability

The only way for the business meeting sector to recover is if we all work together: Government, Municipalities, Policy Makers, CBVs, industry associations and PCOs. Our Meeting in Rome marked a new beginning on that critical collaboration to collectively build the future of our Industry.

We don’t forget that the future is also hybrid – creating huge opportunities to raise the level of engagement within communities by providing accessibility and inclusion. By holding our meeting in an hybrid format, we were not only able to accommodate those that could not travel to Rome, but also open up to new attendees, and engage a record number of them this year through an exciting online programme.

Thank you to our Italian hosts for welcoming us so warmly in Rome, to our speakers for inspiring us during the 3 days, to our partners for their continued support and to all our members for their participation and engagement.

This edition provides an overview of what was discussed during those 3 intensive days and offers a picture of our industry as it is today, as much as reflections on what it might be tomorrow.

**To the future!**

*Ori Lahav, IAPCO President*
During the Highlights session, Council Members provided an update on all activities from 2021 and gave insight into the future for IAPCO. We asked Martin Boyle, CEO, to share with us four of the highlights for IAPCO in 2021.

1. A CONTINUED APPRECIATION OF THE VALUE OF IAPCO MEMBERSHIP
The immense value that our Members place in their Membership of IAPCO is evident in this years’ annual retention rate which reached 99% in 2021. This is a remarkable success in light of the global pandemic and in comparison to what many other industry associations are experiencing and is a testament to our relevance to IAPCO Members, their clients and to the global meetings industry as a whole.

2. MORE ACTIVITIES THAN EVER BEFORE
Our global meetings industry faced continued challenges through 2021 but thanks to the leadership of our President, commitment of Council, IAPCO Faculty and the drive of the HQ team, we succeeded in delivering more activities than ever before. Delivering on-going educational programmes through virtual and hybrid events, advocating for the professionalism and value of working with an IAPCO accredited PCO, and for the safe re-opening of business and professional events remained key drivers through the year. IAPCO Council, Faculty, Ambassadors and myself presented, on average, over 2 seminars, webinars and events per month in 2021. In addition, IAPCO delivered a Tourism Ministers’ Forum, published the first edition of the COVID fact sheets from 14 National PCO Association partners and delivered a joint research project with AIPC entitled “Hybrid Events: Just how profound a pivot”. On top of this, webEDGE was completely refreshed.

3. DEVELOPMENT IN THE APAC AND LATAM REGION
In line with our 5-year strategic plan, support of the industry within APAC and LATAM regions was important throughout 2021. Driven directly by IAPCO and supported by Members, the creation of a new EDGE LATAM and EDGE APAC virtual seminar series and the development and delivery of two regionally focused IAPCO Impact Dialogues all helped to contribute positively. Additionally, speaking engagements at regional external events along with the initiatives delivered through the National PCO Association Task Force all helped to increase the IAPCO ‘presence’.

4. THE POWER OF COLLABORATION
We remained dedicated to reaching out into our IAPCO community to ensure engagement comes from all levels within our Member companies. IAPCO Ambassadors have worked on a new induction programme for our joining members and we, with Members’ approval, created a new Next Generation Council Member. Alessandra Damant (Arinex) was co-opted onto Council in October as a next generation representative and has already appointed a new committee to help us address the needs of the next generation of IAPCO Members.

Externally, collaborating together with other industry organisations such as Best Cities Global Alliance, AIPC, JMIC, EIC, PCMA and ICCA (to name only a few), as well as developing new destination partnerships in Japan (JNTO) and Athens (This is Athens) are all shining examples of the length and breadth of our global network of collaborators and the vision and belief we have that by partnering with like-minded organisations, we can achieve so much.
IAPCO Council elections were held during the General Assembly. **Sarah Markey-Hamm, ICMS Pty Ltd** (Australia) was voted as the new President-Elect of IAPCO; she will start her term as President in February 2023. The Council also welcomed one newly elected member – Jason Yeh from GIS Group (Taiwan), and four re-elected officers – Keith Burton, African Agenda (South-Africa), Barbara Calderwood, MCI UK (United Kingdom), Monica Freire, AIM Group International (Portugal), Alejandro Ramirez Tabche BTC (Mexico).

**IAPCO Council 2022-2023**
- **President:** Ori Lahav, Kenes Group, Israel
- **President-Elect:** Sarah Markey-Hamm, ICMS Pty Ltd, Australia
- **Treasurer:** Keith Burton, African Agenda, South Africa

**Council Officers:**
- **Barbara Calderwood,** MCI, UK (Next Generation, Co-opted)
- **Alessandra Damant,** Arinex, Australia (Chair of the Training Academy, Co-opted)
- **Monica Freire,** AIM Group International, Portugal
- **Sissi Lygnou,** AFEA S.A Travel & Congress Services, Greece
- **Mathias Posch,** International Conference Services, Singapore
- **Alejandro Ramirez Tabche,** Business Travel Consulting, Mexico
- **Nicolette van Erven,** Congress by design bv, Netherlands
The Hero Award recognises an individual at one of our member companies going above and beyond expectations for the meetings industry. This year’s award goes to Hannah Jarvis, from MCI UK. We asked a few questions to Barbara Calderwood, who nominated Hannah, and to Hannah herself.

Q&A Barbara Calderwood, Divisional Director, Engagement, Associations & Communities

What motivated you to nominate Hannah?

Hannah is an amazing nextgen talent in our business, bringing much encouraged energy and enthusiasm to our sustainability agenda, a topic deeply entrenched in our principles here. She is inspirational in her perspective on all things CSR, which we champion internally across our teams and isn’t afraid to tell it the way it is on issues relating to our focus on Diversity and Inclusion. What isn’t there to love here?!

How do you believe she makes a difference in our industry?

"The industry has forsaken the importance of all things sustainability for many years. It takes courage and determination to make a real difference and grasp every opportunity to make a real difference. This is what Hannah does."

Q&A Hannah Jarvis, Producer

Can you tell us more about yourself and your passion for this industry?

I began in the industry when studying an undergraduate degree in Event Management at the University of Chichester in 2016. I had limited practical experience in events prior to this, but I had dreams of pursuing a career in it and felt a degree, although completely not necessary to succeed in the events industry, would be a good place to start, as I just did not have the knowledge, the confidence, or the connections to seek a job at that stage. Whilst studying, I engaged in modules focusing on sustainable events which formed a great basis for managing venue sustainability and eventually event sustainability with our live event projects. During my studies, I also managed the production of 15 musicals in 3 years within our Musical Theatre Society, giving me an early introduction to the association world and leveraged my passion for event production. This continued to grow my love for the events industry and all the unique aspects of it, it is such a huge industry and I just wanted to be part of it in whatever way I could be. After graduating, I was so keen to make sure I could get a job in the events world and keep the momentum going, which in 2019, pre-pandemic, was very lucky timing! I have been very grateful to be with the lovely team at MCI UK ever since. My role as a Producer allows me the flexibility to bring my ideas around intersectional environmentalism to the forefront of my projects, as well as falling into my side roles within our CSR team, and our DEI&B Task Force. Without being empowered by my teams to have the freedom to explore my interests within my job, I really don’t think I would have gotten this far, as it grows my passion for the industry and sparking positive change.
As the next generation of event managers, and a strong champion of sustainable and inclusive meetings, how do you envision the future of our industry?

The next generation are incredibly strong, with communities like ‘Event Grads’ building opportunities and outlets for us all to connect and grow together, it’s going to be a great development to see in the industry as our managers and leaders of today continue to invest in our growth and empower us for success. I envision the future of the events industry to be a lot more sustainable, with more conscious and proactive efforts through investments in research and development towards solutions to areas that aren’t currently perceived as problems but do in fact cause huge impacts on the environment. Alongside this, I hope the events industry continues to become more inclusive of diversity in all its forms for our talents, our clients and their audiences. With both sustainable and inclusive practices, the turbulent years of 2020 and 2021 has allowed for a reset on many of our processes, but more long-standing adjustments need to be made to secure the future of events alongside the future of our Earth, and an adaptable mindset will do wonders for these changes to occur.

What changes would you like to see?

I would love to see more diversity in the events industry, as more diverse voices being present and actively contributing to our industry will vastly improve the experiences of our event attendees. This needs to be addressed in education by encouraging people at younger ages to consider a career in the events industry, whilst also highlighting more of the diverse and empowering role models who are already thriving in the industry but are often overlooked. With more open discussion and connection, this could be so easily achieved. I would also like to see the industry shake-up their processes and have our peers better recognise the importance of the industry’s impact on the environment and our communities, and being provided with the appropriate resources, support and expertise to hold ourselves accountable for the damage that has been done previously and take proactive steps towards full industry buy-in of a new approach to events, and ensure all clients recognise this, also.

What are your plans for the years to come?

Moving forward, I hope to continue my personal growth in this industry whilst simultaneously pushing the industry towards change and a more sustainable and inclusive future. I hope to empower more change and continue to influence the industry positively, whilst also empowering those around me to do the same and have their voices heard – conversations really do have the power to spark incredible change within our industry and beyond!

Is there an initiative you would like to promote?

There are many industry initiatives I support, but the Elevate mentoring scheme and the Event Grads community have both positively impacted on my growth and development. Elevate host a yearly intake of mentors and mentees within the event industry who take on a recommended 6-month programme of mentorship, in addition to providing networking and educational opportunities which I found to completely diversify and deepen my knowledge and network. Max, Mel, Peter and the team at Elevate have crafted a truly magical resource that is so valuable to promote continued growth of the industry. The Event Grads community are equally incredible, they have nurtured the connections of so many of us in the next generation who have started in the industry as graduates of Event Management or related degrees during such an uncertain time. Naomi and the Event Grads team continue to empower graduates by assisting with job hunting, providing free resources, and connect a community of like-minded individuals. I would also like to quickly shout-out the efforts of Isla, EventWell and Diversity Ally who are shaking up the industry in so many necessary ways and providing the resources to see this through actively. The events industry seems to be in very safe hands to continue to make more positive impacts on the world around us.
During the pandemic the working conditions changed drastically and the global health crisis led all employees, irrespective of the feature of their job or job level, feeling confused, insecure, overwhelmed, disconnected, wondering what the future will bring.

During IAPCO 2022 Annual Meeting leadership expert Paolo Gallo presented the challenges leaders are facing in the post-pandemic era – so called “new normal” - and which talents & characteristics are required in order to successfully lead a team or an organization.

How can leaders adjust to this “new normal”, to this critical moment of transition?
There is no future without history. Leaders need to learn from past experiences and have the energy & determination to deal with the complexity and speed things are happening with a sense of responsibility towards their organization as also the global community.

What is coming next?
The past 18 months have transformed our society – and sped up the digital transformation of our world. We are experiencing the biggest technological transformation in the history and managing the new work transition is not a choice but a reality and one of the greatest challenges leaders are facing. Stability is out of the game. The need to constantly re-invent, re-think, re-imagine is a key element to the success of an organization.

At the same time, the way we communicate with each other has changed and our community is moving from a community of purpose, of practice entering to a community of impact.

However, can what is coming next be defined as normal?
Normal is a Greek word meaning average, predictable, what people can expect. In Paolo Gallo’s view we are entering a new context with 5 components that will be part of our daily life: chaos – crisis – complexity – confusion & constant change. So, the so referred “new normal” is actually a “new world”.

In this new world, what are the new & unprecedented features of the global job market?
Will this technological transformation create new jobs or destroy jobs? Nowadays a high number of job openings is noticed worldwide, but at the same time the number of unemployed persons is not decreasing respectively. How is this possible?

Leaders need to understand that digital transformation has changed the way we work, and need to help their employees develop new skills as also invest in their training.
At the same time, leaders need to avoid falling into the acceleration trap of this high speed era and always remember to use the breaks, set boundaries.

What kind of new leadership is then needed?

In many studies conducted with regards to the word that characterizes a good leader, the results showed that the best leader characteristics are not based on academic qualifications or financial results but on human quality such as integrity, trust, compassion, fairness, sensibility, vision, empathy, authenticity etc. Good leadership equals good people.

In this new world that we are entering, leaders need to invest time, energy, love and resources to develop their people in ways they have never imagined before, learn to develop trust rather than control, create an impact and leave a legacy to their organization and the global community. And never forget to use the breaks before accelerating again!

The New Leadership Model, as proposed by Gallo comprises of 5 elements:

- **CARE** (showing empathy to gain your team’s trust & loyalty), **CAUSE** (connect your people with the sense of mission which is the factor that drives people to perform), **CONNECTION/COLLABORATION** (combine your team’s individual talents), **CREATIVITY** (preserve the diversity of each team member but on the same time assemble the team to work towards achieving the same goal) & **COURAGE** (be straight with your values and people will follow you).

**Summary by Kleopatra Giatsou, Operations Manager, PCO Services, AFEA Travel & Congress Services**
Adolfo Fernández of Google spoke to our IAPCO virtual and in-person audience on the importance at our 2022 AM&GA of technology in building human connection and how the tech evolution is contingent on people’s need to feel connected. This is certainly a topic of concern for many in the meetings industry and one that resonates as remote working has become so commonplace over the past 2 or so years.

He began his talk by outlining three notable trends—tracked through Google search analytics from 2020 to 2022. Starting with the understanding that people are better together, followed by their eagerness to make changes, and lastly, how events are evolving to follow a hybrid model to support these collective needs.

In short, he noted that, as the world reopens after a dormant 2+ years, people are reprioritizing what’s important to them: feeling connected. This begs the question: with this shift in personal priorities, do companies, organizations, and other enterprises need to shift with them? Fernández believes that, while consumer behaviour has changed (and will continue to), the way we build and market our businesses has not. Business-to-consumer relations still require the need to provide solutions, build a connection, and understand the consumer—only now with a focus on helping them faster, connecting them everywhere, and understanding them better. And Fernández was clear in saying that technology is the most effective tool for strengthening these relations.

Following the keynote presentation was an open-ended Q&A period that fostered discussions around topics such as target marketing, user data, and the future goals of Google. The topic of heightened interest? The evolution of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and the metaverse and how this evolution will affect connectivity and the events industry. Some questions included: is AI a business-building prerequisite? How long until AI becomes self-aware? And are we heading towards a world that is entirely experienced in the metaverse?

Fernández’s responses were honest, transparent, and frank. He explained that AI will be user-friendly and accessible moving forward but will never develop the ability to feel emotions or think critically like humans. Nor will the metaverse become the only experiential space. Instead, these innovations will only further enhance human connectivity and with that, build stronger consumer relations.

To conclude his keynote, Fernández emphasized the important division between technology and how we use it. He views it as a compulsory, but supplementary form of communication that helps us understand one another better. But it does not—and will not—have the strength to overcome the need for real-life critical thinking and connection based on human emotion and interaction. A welcome response as we all continue to advocate on the importance of people meeting together to solve some of the world’s toughest problems.
**Juli has 15 years of experience developing international sponsorship strategies for top entertainment and sports properties, including FC Barcelona and AS Monaco FC.**

The meetings industry has a lot in common with the sports world. In his presentation, Juli Ferre Nadal described the sports events of the future. An inspiration for our industry?

**The digital revolution is a reality**

The digital revolution is impacting the sports industry as much as others. With the blockchain technology, the future will include NFTs, Fan Tokens, Metaverse sport experiences, with even the possibility to experiment a full immersive experience through cameras on players’ shirts or helmets.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic with a brutal halt on competitions followed by a period with games but no public, was the wake-up call the sports industry needed to realise that the magic is in the live experience, and digital can not replace it.

**Embracing the full live experience**

But now we know what we can do from home and the technologies are in place, we need to change perspective and realise it is an effort to attend a sport event. Of course the appeal for the big events will still be there but how about the smaller events? People will need a real motivation and clear added value to make it worth their time and money to attend. The competition is not with other sporting events anymore, it’s with Netflix or Disney +.

Attending has to be about the experience, the storytelling the personnalisation.

**The uniqueness of the experience is critical:**

*provide access to the backstage, meeting the players, create an experience for the entire family with kids programmes...the creativity is endless.*

**Hybrid model – the winning formula**

The hybrid model has been going on for a long time in the sports industry with a choice between being in the stadium or watching on TV. An additional choice is emerging, with meta-spectators.

The hybrid model provides a unique opportunity to grow the audience whilst generating added value for the sponsors and further engage the community and loyalty.

According to Juli Ferre Nadal, the winning formula consists of a mix of a meaningful live experience with a rich digital experience. Certainly something that can be applied to the meetings industry!
Maria Serena Porcari is the Managing Director of Dynamo Foundation, Chairperson of the Dynamo Camp Onlus Foundation, and, since May 2010, Chairperson of Dynamo Academy Social Enterprise. She sits on the Board of Directors of the Serious Fun Children’s Network Association.

ABOUT DYNAMO CAMP

Dynamo Camp is part of a global organisation that was founded in 1988 in the US by Paul Newman. A group of Italian entrepreneurs decided to invest in philanthropic projects and brought the concept of a camp for seriously ill children in Italy with the same spirit.

These camps are free of charge, which means that you reach out to everyone in need without considering any issue around income or diversity. The camp has a medical component inside as children who attend are often still in treatment for their condition, but for once doctors and nurses are adapting to the children and not the opposite.

As these kids always spend a lot of time in hospitals and family shelters, this is a big difference.

Some campers are in wheelchairs, others take treatments four times a day. But everything inside the camp is based on fun.

CREATING AN EXPERIENCE FOR CAMPERS: A MODEL THAT RESONNATES WITH BUSINESSES

The experience created by workers goes through challenge, choice, collaboration, success, reflection and discovery. Not a very different model that an event company would go through with their clients! The amount of work required to do every single step is so high, both in preparation and in execution.

‘LEADERS IN TRAINING‘: FROM CAMPERS TO VOLUNTEERS

The rules at the camp are strict: you can come back 3 years in a row, and need to be under 17. After 17, a number of campers decide to come back and train for 3 years to become volunteers and to give back to the community, despite their issues.
Dynamo Camp has set a benchmark of 30% of the staff being previous campers – building the confidence of those once in need to learn to give back.

**SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: INVEST IN THE COMMUNITY**

Dynamo Camp decided to take its expertise and knowledge in engagement to organisations and corporate companies. It has developed ‘social education’ – teaching how you can change the lives of your community, engage employees, empower diversity and inclusion, or train the caregivers, in jail for example.

In addition, Dynamo has launched companies, such as a food company, and became a social entrepreneur – where profits are invested in the community and in social projects. Sustainability goes beyond environmental concerns – community investments can have such a strong impact on the future of society. Having a clear sense of purpose, passion about making others feel better and engaged for the greater good of the community is truly sustainable.

Visit [Dynamo Camp](#) to learn more and support.

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**TWO PIECES OF ADVICE FROM SERENA**

1. **TAKE RISKS – AND ALLOW OTHERS TO TRY**
   
   When leaving a big corporation to work with one person, Serena encountered much more accountability, good or bad. What has been a game changer is the ability to make mistakes, try new ideas, explore, and accept that not everything will work. Allowing ourselves and others to fail, go back, improve, and restart provides a framework for people to be courageous and innovative.

2. **FIND PURPOSE IN WHAT YOU DO – AND COMMUNICATE**
   
   A sense of purpose is essential to feel motivated, as well as understanding your responsibility. On a day-to-day basis, it is important to remind yourself what that purpose is, so that tasks remain meaningful. Working with the next generation is finding people who want to change the world and have an impact. Creating a culture of purpose, setting clear vision and empowering that making a mistake is natural is critical to foster an environment where these talents will be blooming.
**“TALENT IS COMING FROM THE FUTURE”: MEET NEHA SHUKLA AND GAETANO DIENI, 2 REPRESENTATIVES OF GEN Z**

In a powerful Q&A session, they talked about the need for more authenticity, role models, and unleashing the power and the enthusiasm of the next generation.

Neha Shukla is a teen scientist and inventor, innovator, an author, a changemaker, she is passionate about leveraging science and technology to create positive change in communities. Her innovation journey truly began at the start of the COVID 19 pandemic, where she felt concerned members of her community were taking risks by not being able to keep social distancing. She invented “six feet apart”, which is a wearable social distancing device that uses the latest developments and ultrasonic technology and microprocessors to essentially alert the user when an approaching person comes within that six foot detection range.

She is now running free teen STEM workshops all around the world to encourage teens to innovate and has released her first book.

She discussed all of this with Gaetano Dieni, the third generation of EGA PCO in Italy, currently working as a head of marketing and communication.

I think that our generation has the power to share our message with the world. And when we have forums like meetings and conferences, we can really share and have a dialogue with our communities, as well as just audiences of people that we might not normally interact with. So having the opportunity to talk to CEOs and leaders and people from different sharing their message and sharing their experiences, is an amazing power.

The second way is that gen Z is really exploring lots of new tools and technologies that can be really useful. The metaverse for example: if gen Z was more involved with meeting spaces and forums, we could potentially have spaces like metaverse meeting rooms where people and their 3d avatars can share their thoughts.

**How can Generation Z change and impact the meetings industry?**

NS I think there are two big ways that gen Z has the power to revolutionise the meeting industry. The first way is just by being a part of it. I know so many young people who are change makers, innovators, leaders, and activists.

I think diversity, equity and inclusion is a key point of gen Z and what we care about today. I like to describe diversity, equity and inclusion as not just having a seat at the table, but being able to use your voice in terms of decision making, problem solving and how education is being conducted. But then they also have to be listened to. There are so many ways to involve people who are underrepresented. Bringing in role models and having people who can inspire the next generation to get involved is critical.

**How do you see and how would you describe diversity equity inclusion?**

NS

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**Here are 4 questions they exchanged:**

**How can Generation Z change and impact the meetings industry?**

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Gaetano, what have you learned about leadership?

GD I think that no one is born as a leader because you need to learn to become a leader. This is why I’m the third generation, but I’m not the leader. I am just working a lot inside all the offices of my company to learn about it, starting in the operations’ field.

I believe you need to learn a lot to become a leader and you need also to listen a lot to what people think, what people need. And last but not least, people need to recognize you as a leader. So you are not a leader until others see you that way.

What advice would you give to young people today who want to create a positive impact on their communities through entrepreneurship, but really don’t know how to get to?

GD To make an impact to communities through entrepreneurship, my best advice is to never give up because you will receive a hundred or thousands of ‘no’s and obstacles in front of you. You have to take risks, but not risking money. Money in business always helps, but you have to risk your time. You have to put your effort in your project and you have to believe in it because if you risk, you will reach your goals. If you don’t take risks you will fail.

The younger generation maybe sometimes comes across with a sense of entitlement, a sense of judgment. How do you think we should create the right environment of nonjudgmental dialogue?

It is all about creating an environment where we can see collaboration between all the different generations, between schools, companies, institutions, and nonprofits. So really seeing an environment of collaboration because ultimately there’s no point in pointing fingers at who created the problem. It needs to be solved.

Problems like climate change, diversity and education and inequalities are issues that have a deadline and they need to be solved now. Our generation as gen Z and young people need to collaborate with the older generation so that we can start solving these problems right now.

Our generation has so much passion and so much excitement about problem solving. And we might not have all the resources. We might not have all the experience and the wisdom of how to really carry out our mission and our vision. So I think collaborating with the older generation is key.

We asked Greg Carew, CEO of Abbey Conferences & Events in Ireland, to provide his views on the session:

The Empowering the Youth Session was one of the moments at IAPCO 2022 which really stood out for me. I left the session feeling genuinely inspired and excited for the future. Keynote Speaker Maria Serena Porcari from the Dynamo Foundation also joined and her earlier talk about Leaders in Training really set the scene for a fantastic discussion with Neha Shulka and Gaetano from EGA. Maria spoke about the importance of building a spirit of engagement and making people feel relevant in your organisation to grow the leaders of the future.

We then met Neha who was very appropriately nicknamed “Wonder woman” by Moderator Patrick Delaney. The incredibly impressive Neha spoke with great passion about building the next generation of young innovators and problem solvers. This certainly resonated with me and led me to think about how we can use our conferences and business events to bring this next generation together to collectively solve these problems. In Neha’s words, we should “combine our passion with a real world problem”.

There is no doubt that Generation Z can revolutionise the meetings industry. The spirit of innovation and willingness to try new things is something we can all learn from and take into our day to day PCO activities. Good leaders don’t just lead by example, they also listen and learn themselves. Our next generation are bringing a fresh and innovate approach with an entirely new skillset and this is something that everyone in an organisation can learn from.
Mark Stevenson is a self-described ‘reluctant futurist’ and ‘chief annoying question asker’; a high-level strategic consultant who works with clients to develop zero emissions strategies.

His clients include the world’s first international regenerative hospitality business, NGO’s and rock bands U2 & Massive Attack who are planning regenerative world tours.

Mark qualified his ‘reluctant’ job title with striking examples of erroneous historic predictions. We tend to get stuck in our own way of thinking and make predictions that conveniently fit in with our own prejudices.

We are living in a time where the world must be repaired as we have not taken bio-diversity seriously. Any investment of your time, money or talent that doesn’t consider human health or the environment is not an investment; it is theft from your own future. Summised in the words of American writer William Burroughs “After one look at this planet any visitor from outer space would say ‘I want to see the manager’.”

Mark and his team are currently working with the UK Ministry of Defence on their zero emissions strategy. The climate threat to National Security is so great that an International Peace & Climate Declaration will be signed by two-thirds of the world’s military at the Munich Security Conference so they can ‘battle’ climate change.

The road map out of this crisis is the UNSDG goals and governments throughout the world will pass legislation in the next 15 years requiring businesses to report their carbon emissions and offsets as part of a Net Zero plan. It’s easy to create strategies that pledge to make change happen but unless we make culture shifts within our organisations, nothing will change.

People think that innovation will solve the problem but what is innovation? Innovation is the culture of asking the right questions but how do you ask yourself the questions you don’t know you should be asking?

To find this out, make a list of all the rules of the game that nobody else questions and then ask yourself which of these...
assumptions is not true? The questions which are raised by these false assumptions are the questions you need to answer.... and then ask yourself which of them will no longer be true in 5 years’ time?

Mark gave examples of a culture shift in a mining company he is working with who questioned their assumptions and changed their business strategy to become ‘good ancestors’; and the housing company whose strategy is now focussed on ‘building homes which reduce loneliness’.

Another technique is to ‘think like a magician and brainstorm new ideas but only keep the ones that are impossible. By questioning your assumptions, you will find that the impossible suddenly becomes possible.

What is your impossible? The regenerative Congress? Congresses are catalysts for change, where people are encouraged to exchange ideas and dream of what could be. The best Congresses are the ones that challenge us and concentrate rejuvenation and regeneration culturally and environmentally.

Don’t be passive and wait to be told what your future will look like; decide what kind of future you would like and build it.

You may be thinking that you are too small to make a difference, but Congress organisers are in a unique position to create the spaces that help all of us challenge our assumptions and build the impossible. The people in this room could change the world but ‘The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any’.

Mark ended with a Chinese proverb.... ‘when the winds of change blow, some people build walls while others build windmills’. The Congress industry could be the biggest windmill of change.

Examples of net zero strategies at live events such as Glastonbury can be found on the Tyndall Centre website. If you want to hear more from Mark Stevenson, listen to his podcast The Futurenauts or follow him.
When I first saw the announcement of Bebe Vio as a keynote at the IAPCO Annual Meeting set to take place in Rome, Italy in February 2022, I had mixed feelings. I do love athletes’ stories filled with passion, grit, and drive. But would this story also manage to connect with our industry and our own struggles?

I was reluctant going into the session. I expected one of those inspirational presentations with no interaction or time for reflection, a fast-paced narrative at play with my emotions. I braced for impact… and then I saw Bebe Vio taking the stage, accompanied by Nicola McGrane (CEO at Conference Partners International) and Nicola Testai (CEO at OIC Group). I sat upright in my chair and pulled out my notes – this was going to be different.

As a person that does not follow the Paralympic Games, I was interested to learn more about Bebe Vio, her story, and her past wins. This part was covered with a short video and the rest of the session was a very open and heartfelt interview navigated masterfully by McGrane and Testai. Thanks to them there were the needed parallels with our industry.

I was first hit by the burst of energy and positivity that Bebe Vio is. She is the embodiment of a positivity powerhouse. It felt like we are all fencing with the thoughts, ideas, and motivations that she somehow manages to contain within herself. It was a duel where both sides were about to win. Here are my takeaways.

**Transition**

Vio spoke of the time when she had to transition, at the fragile age of 11, from a fully capable child with big athletic dreams to a child living with the new reality of disability. The parallel with our pandemic transition was pointed out by Nicola McGrane. Bebe spoke about her quick realisation that what she needed to do was to replan, and re-fuel her dreams about the future and then go and achieve the impossible – her favourite word. Resilience for her came down to the simple – you just must find a way, and I cannot agree more. After all, as Dwight Eisenhower said: “Plans are nothing. Planning is everything.”

**The importance of collaboration.** What a valuable reminder in times, when working from home is still the norm, and we are rather disconnected from the familiar and unfamiliar faces involved in our projects. She reminded us that each of us is held accountable for the energy we bring to the whole and that we should strive to lift each other up, especially as we have a common goal to reach. I loved that she noted that we may not know the dreams of one another, even if we spend so much time together. If we mindfully check, we may go even further together and grow personally and professionally as a result.
One team
A couple of the initiatives that she is currently running, are the Bebe Vio Academy and Embrace. Her aim is to create sports teams that are made of both children with disabilities and regular kids, with the idea to make all kids aware that there are others living in various circumstances, reinforcing empathy, and helping them embrace the different.

While her idea is more than noble, I couldn’t help but make a parallel with our world of events. While we see the disability of virtual events, we know that there is no future without us embracing them. One. Embracing the challenge, aren’t we in the situation where we should stop seeing what sets events apart and move towards organising one event? Isn’t ONE the answer? Yes, it will require a completely new solution, but this should be our goal to reach one experience.

Dare to dream
The future for Bebe is bright and filled with big dreams. She reminded us that we are the ones responsible for what happens to us and the importance of being scared. If you are not scared, it means that you are not ready to make the leap.

I leave you with that - make sure that you dare to dream every day, and to celebrate small wins daily. Bebe Vio was one of the most impactful sessions at this year’s IAPCO annual meeting – a reminder to never judge the book by its cover, to enter new experiences with an open mind, embrace the word impossible, and take the leap.

While her idea is more than noble, I couldn’t help but make a parallel with our world of events. While we see the disability of virtual events, we know that there is no future without us embracing them.

Author: Magdalina Atanassova, Marcom Director at Kenes Group
Each day during the Annual Meeting, was held a different Panel Session – one with a representative of different sectors of the business meetings industry, one with a representative of each region of IAPCO, and a final one with representatives of the association with lots of new ideas. Here a few things our panellists said:

Monica Fontana European Renal Association, on business models after the pandemic:
We are charging the same fee for our delegates, whether they’re in person or fully virtual. According to the surveys that we have done in all these years, our delegates appreciate the content and that content can be used in person or at home. It is a winning factor. People that attend in person actually have more costs, why should they be penalized by paying more for the registration? So this is what the novelty that we have done in our society.

Steen Jakobsen Dubai Tourism, on Sustainability:
I don’t think sustainability is high enough on the agenda. I know it’s now part of most of event guidelines but it’s still quite far down the list of factors impacting decisions. So associations should really dare to put more focus on it and raise it higher: that we’ll leave no choice for destinations and for suppliers. There should be a global association index that benchmarks the efforts of associations or planners in general, in their sustainable efforts.

Marie Claire Caldwell ICC Belfast on new revenue streams:
For us the best revenue stream we opened up was our hybrid offering – so we have made significant investment in that area, including pieces of kit such as a led wall, but also offer support onsite. We need to provide the facilities that will make running an hybrid event financially viable, and easier to manage for our clients with trained teams and packages for live on online experience.

Jurrien Sleijster, MCI on attracting talents:
We need to have an enormously diverse set of skills to pull off a projects for clients. Being a business partner for an association on engagement is the new way of running our business. (…)

My motto is: get them the tools, get them the vision and get out of the way. Hire the people that are motivated and inspirational, create a team and let them loose. I think we, as an industry, are sexy. We will attract the right people, more skilled than ever before. And that’s what makes our industry increasingly attractive.

Senthil Gopinath ICCA, on workforce:
We have been bad at creating awareness and selling our own industry. There are not so many other jobs where you can be traveling the world, meeting extraordinary people, engaging, developing your own skills so rapidly…we need to do that better. We need to create that awareness early.

Ori Lahav, IAPCO, about Competition between members
It is of course a topic we cover as an organization, but one of the best product we have as an organization is education – providing high-evel education to our members. That is a key value, where we go beyond competition.

Sheriff Karamat PCMA
Our industry has a major role to play in the future of our planet. The time is now. The time was yesterday actually. This is not a nice to do, it is a must do.

Carola Van Der Hoeff, AC Forum, on digitisation:
We want to go back in person, but digitisation will remain. It’s a good way to engage with members, and it has brought also new revenues to our association. It is an opportunity to grow.
Sven Bossu, AIPC, on collaboration:
Collaboration is a key lesson learned from me in the past 18 words. It’s all about value and purpose. The definition of excellence has changed. Our role is to offer the platform to members to do that. Our members are addressing these issues collectively.

Stephen Noble, The Conference Company on having the right business models:
I would give our industry a 5. We have the technology ready, we are resilient. But we don’t yet have the efficiency and the scalability.

Jason Yeh, GIS Group, on competition
In the Taiwanese market, we are facing more and more clients insourcing, for financial reasons or outsourcing to different suppliers instead of just one handling everything. Our future competitor is the Tesla of our market – that will change the core of our business and make a very different proposition.

Christine Hence, Interplan, on workforce:
”With the digital shift, upskilling your existing team, who is ready and able to learn, is critical. But we shouldn’t forget these people want to be onsite too, and that is what makes the team come together

Ahmed El Shal, ICOM, on opportunities:
Certainly the digital shift offers bigger markets, bigger opportunities: first there are a lot of new products we can be, several audiences, new sponsorship opportunities, and new data and databases.

Alejandro Ramirez Tabche, BTC Americas on Data:
We are still learning about data, and monetizing data. We need to work with clients to ensure they are using the data they own to the best potential and decide what is the best use for data in the future.

The take-away from Monica Freire, AIM Portugal and IAPCO Council Officer:
Meeting in Rome for the 2022 IAPCO Annual Meeting & General Assembly was pure joy. Reconnecting face to face with industry friends and meeting new faces felt like a real privilege because, yes, some of us were only able to participate online, and yes we all know too well: it is not the same. It is not the same for the participant, it is not the same for the organiser, it is not the same for the speaker.

In the Eyes on the Market session we gave the floor to our members from different regions to talk about our industry – what we have learned since 2020, how do we see our role as leaders, why change is key to strive. In a nutshell, are we, PCOs, being sexy enough to our stakeholders?

The last couple of years have proven us right: PCOs have shown an unrivalled ability to adapt, reshape and rebuild. We have also learned that our business is made of the human factor in building trust with our clients and partners and these relationships must be nurtured at all levels in our organisation inside and out. Our biggest asset in our success is our human factor: our people. Maintaining our great people on board and supporting them through the large scale and recording breaking reskilling was as challenging as finding the new business opportunities in a market turned upside down.

Now more than ever, change is here to stay and we need to focus on diversifying our business, finding new partnerships and training our human resources to perform to their best abilities and allow PCOs to fully transition to the much needed consultancy role. We should not forget data is key and is out there for us to utilise and bring us closer to our goals.

Enhancing the attendees and sponsorship experience in meetings, taking full advantage of our learning from the virtual experience will be key to engage the wider audiences associations are reaching out to. Associations need new business models and we are ready to lead that change.
A popular element of the IAPCO programme is IAPCO’s Expresso Exchanges which continued in Rome covering a wide range of topics important to Members from operational, practical issues such as talent management and virtual congress service provision to more ‘blue-sky’ thinking such as the future of Congresses in the Metaverse. These informal exchanges between participants are highly valued for their usefulness and ability to provide new perspectives.

**TALENT MANAGEMENT**

Sissi Lygnou (AFAA S.A.) chaired the session on talent management and reported that the group set out to clearly define its meaning, settling on ‘the strategic process of attracting, motivating, developing, and retaining high-performing employees’. They decided on seven key components to talent management:

- recruiting
- onboarding
- performance management
- compensation planning
- succession planning
- education
- development/workforce planning.

The group agreed that, in order to attract top talent, it is important for PCOs to promote why our industry makes an impact on legacy, economy, revenue, new tech, thought leadership, education, and knowledge exchange.

**ACCOUNTABILITY VS ENGAGEMENT**

Oonagh O’Reilly (ICC Belfast) chaired a session on Accountability vs Engagement with the attendees feeling that it was certainly a topic for deeper and further discussion especially surrounding Gen Z engagement. The group considered whether the industry has gone too far with engagement and therefore lost sight of accountability, whether leaders are responsible for serving the younger generation, and whether any kind of balance was achievable. This led to discussion of inclusivity and diversity with a focus on how to lead in this area without alienating some. It was resolved that the topic was certainly one that should be included in future IAPCO AM&GA sessions.

**CONGRESS ENGAGEMENT IN THE METAVERSE**

Barbara Calderwood (MCI UK) chaired the session on Congress Engagement in the Metaverse. She reports that those who attended all had an understanding of what the Metaverse was with some identifying the potential for congress engagement for their customers in utilising the platform for a blended online, immersive experience. There was concern from some surrounding the loss of the benefits of in-person experiences, particularly regarding networking, whilst acknowledging the potential new audiences that the Metaverse could bring. The group discussed the implications for data ownership, of wearables, of avatars on the potential for inclusivity, and for delivering on sustainability goals. The group also discussed the education potential for the Metaverse and how this would like in practical terms.

Aside from the sessions referenced above, a session on ‘Educating Clients on the Minor Role of Tech in the Future of Events’ was led by Jurriaen Sleijster (MCI Group), a ‘Marketing In Uncertain Times’ session was led by Anat Regev (Ortra), a session on ‘Greening with Low Budget’ was led by Katrin Krueger (Copernicus), and a practical demonstration ‘EventsAIR User Forum’ session was led by Paul Martin (EventsAIR).
The 18th World Congress of Chinese Medicine (WCCM), one of the world’s largest academic events in the field of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), was successfully held in Hong Kong for the first time at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on 4 December 2021.

Thanks to the bidding efforts of the Hong Kong Registered Chinese Medicine Practitioners Association - a member of the Hong Kong Convention Ambassador (HKCA) programme initiated by the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB); and in collaboration with the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies (WFCMS), the hybrid event attracted more than 2,000 TCM academics and experts, generated over 3.8 million views from over 60 countries and regions.

As physical gatherings resumed for the first time since the pandemic started, WCCM provided a platform for participants to engage in meaningful dialogue, covering TCM practices, benefits, opportunities and challenges, and the development potential of TCM.

Mr. Ma Jianzhong, President of WFCMS, said, “We are pleased to host this edition of WCCM in Hong Kong for the first time. Embracing Chinese philosophy and culture, Hong Kong is the ideal place for academic and cultural exchanges to explore the way forward for furthering the global development of TCM, and its role in combating the pandemic through collaboration between practitioners and public sectors.”

Mr. Sang Binsheng, Vice President and Secretary General of WFCMS added, “Hong Kong is renowned for being the ‘World’s Meeting Place’ thanks to its globally accessible and convenient transport network, large-scale world-class venues, facilities and professional services. We look forward to gathering again in Hong Kong and navigating the future of TCM development together.”

With its unrivalled fundamentals, Hong Kong is the core international city in the Greater Bay Area, a super-connector in the Belt and Road Initiative, and the ideal platform to promote TCM on the global stage.

HKTB Executive Director Mr Dane Cheng said, “Hong Kong enjoys unique geographical and cultural advantages, and is the ideal destination for international conventions. Many such events have taken place recently, demonstrating Hong Kong’s ability to host large-scale global events safely and efficiently. Apart from TCM, Hong Kong will continue to leverage the city’s advantages as an East-meets-West showcase to promote the very best of Chinese heritage.”

The congress received extensive support from government and industry bodies. The National Administration of TCM and the Hong Kong Food and Health Bureau acted as advisors, and it was organised by the WFCMS, along with the Hong Kong Registered Chinese Medicine Practitioners Association and the WFCM (Hong Kong) Council Members Association as local hosts.
As the most diverse city on the planet, Toronto is a place to convene, create, play, do business and launch the next great idea that could change the world. While the last few years had put meetings on hold, the city is ready to host events and welcome the world back with open arms.

Toronto’s unique DNA – a combination of cultural diversity and the potential alchemy that can come from mixing, and remixing it together to produce something entirely new makes it an ideal destination for bringing people together. The city’s kaleidoscope of cultures, each unique, and when combined with views and perspectives from people across the globe, holds the potential to create something that has never been done before.

In recent months Canada has reopened its borders to fully vaccinated U.S. and international visitors and as such, Toronto Pearson International Airport, named the best large airport in North America four years straight, has implemented strict health and safety procedures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. It’s all about making travel safer for everyone. While travel requirements are subject to change, here’s what to expect when you come to Canada’s largest city.

Canada no longer requires most fully-vaccinated visitors to quarantine upon arrival, you must still prepare a quarantine plan just in case a border official asks for it. You should also know that you may be randomly selected to undergo a COVID-19 arrival test.

It may not be obvious when walking through the terminals, but Toronto Pearson has made several high-tech improvements to ensure a safe travel experience. Here are just a few of the highlights from Toronto Pearson’s Healthy Airport program:

- Enhanced airflow and ventilation; state-of-the-art air quality monitoring equipment and continual facility monitoring to help avoid congestion
- New touchless elevator technology that visitors can operate via a smartphone QR code
- Thorough disinfection of high-touch areas; contactless check-in, bag drop and boarding
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) vending machines and hundreds of hand sanitizer and smartphone sanitizing stations
- Plexiglass barriers installed in screening areas, shops and restaurants and in airport taxis and limos

When it’s time to return home, departing travellers are asked to arrive at Toronto Pearson at least 90 minutes prior to a domestic flight and three hours before an international flight. Save time by checking in early from your phone and by using the airport’s touchless self-serve kiosks to print your luggage tags. International travellers can take their departure tests right at Toronto Pearson.

As confidence for in-person meetings continues to grow, Toronto was recently named host city for the 2023 World Stroke Organization Congress, 2023 & 2028 EsportsTravel Summit, as well as Destinations International 2022 Annual Convention.

For more information visit destinationtoronto.com/meetings
IAPCO currently partners with 8 destinations around the world. 6 of them were present in Rome (Athens, Dubai, Hamburg, Hong-Kong, Melbourne and Rwanda) whilst two joined us online (Toronto and Japan (JNTO). Our 6 destinations present came up with a fun team building activity for participants: the creation of a video/jingle to promote their respective highlights.

Jingles turned to giggles, and all in presence seemed to have a very good time! We discovered hidden talents in singing, dancing, or acting…and certainly enjoyed watching the results of that hard work…and fun.
With part of our members unable to travel, the Annual Meeting and General Assembly was converted to a Hybrid Event early on. We called on IAPCO Partner EventsAIR to develop and manage the online platform wherein all main sessions were streamed and participants could interact.

Sarah Markey-Hamm, new IAPCO President-Elect hosted and moderated the 50 attendees in the virtual audience. Those were joined by a new audience for IAPCO Annual Meeting: the “watch parties”. Some members took the opportunity of the sessions being streamed to create in-house events for their teams.

Here is what Eleonora Regoli, OIC Group HR, said about the experience:

“Despite the remote connection, the experience of living all together, with our colleagues, the IAPCO Annual Meeting was super cool.

*Everyone of us felt so proud that OIC has been part of such an important event, full of inspiration and emotions, that we all would like to be there, physically, to share those emotions. Moreover, participating was a moment of sharing and debate also in our working team, helping the exchange of ideas and opinions.”*

We hope many more companies will take this opportunity in future years!
As an organizing committee we had to face many issues, planning and replanning the General Assembly to make it hybrid and interactive. It was an exciting opportunity to get back to the thrill of live events.

When we decided to candidate Rome as host city of IAPCO’s General Assembly & Annual Meeting, we could never have predicted how challenging it would be. Luckily, we took a good decision, together with our Partner Conference Organisers: ega worldwide and the OIC Group, we created a strong team. If we had to navigate the stormy sea alone it would have been even more difficult, once again, we witnessed that in our profession teamwork and collaboration is key. The evolving pandemic forced us to postpone the event, rethink the event and transform our plans from week to week.

Back Together!

Our industry has been forced to confront massive challenges during the pandemic which we have overcome with resourcefulness, creativity, and a smile on our faces. Our main goal with this meeting was to create a sense of IAPCO community, despite the difficulties that every member had to cope with in its market, despite the social distancing and the uncertainties faced. During these last two years, we have needed to feel close to our professional community. Industry associations like IAPCO have really proven their value to members during this challenging time.

The support we received from all our industry partners, both the local ones and from IAPCO demonstrated how valuable long-term partnerships are. Such Partners see the value in going beyond a traditional ‘client-provider’ approach. We are extremely satisfied with their visibility and with their interaction with the attendees during the event. In fact, looking now at the final outcome, we can safely say that we are really happy to have been part of this adventure and we are very satisfied with the results, in terms of education, inspiration, discussion, knowledge sharing and networking. Finally, as many attendees commented, we really missed that!

Back to party!

Going back to in-person meetings for our community of peers was so exciting. We tried our best to create the correct atmosphere to celebrate the moment. At the beautiful Villa Miani, overlooking the city we organized the Gala Dinner with Dolce Vita as the theme. Everything was focused on the attendee’s experience, and we succeeded to share feelings of togetherness, joy, relaxing and of course partying again! It was a memorable dinner.

ORGANISING THE IAPCO GA: A REWARDING CHALLENGE
What we learnt
Following this complex event organization, we learned some important lessons:

• Know your ‘why’. It was really important to know Why there was such a strong motivation to come back to a live IAPCO event. This motivated us and helped us overcome all difficulties.
• Stay flexible and know your options. Being able to adapt and change quickly is key.
• Choose the right partners. The event partners should operate as an extension of your own team, not just as a supplier.
• Safety first, it is important to reassure our attendees and make them feel comfortable and at ease when meeting in person again.
• One extra take-away (since we collaborated as three major PCOs). Harmony is the most important measure of success. The collaboration among competitors worked well because we were unified behind one main objective and one strategic approach. The commitment and skills of each partner can complete and complement each other. Collaboration is still competition, in a different way, and we all tried to do our best!

Finally, I would like to share some tips:

• Communicate, communicate, communicate. Every decision, change, last-minute problem can be better accepted if you share the reasons why and inform each stakeholder.
• Develop clear rules of engagement for all the partners involved in such a complex project.
• Resolve eventual conflicts with transparency and identify decision makers who are responsible for the solution.

Thank you to all our colleagues, partners, speakers and delegates who contributed to make the IAPCO assembly an amazing coming back.

*Patrizia Semprebene Buongiorno, Vice President, AIM Group International*
VIRTUOZ: THE VIRTUAL FACTOR OF THE HYBRID FORMULA AT ICCA CONGRESS 2021

Member: KENES GROUP  
Country: Switzerland

Kenes Group supported the ICCA Congress 2021 by providing the virtual platform for the successful execution of the hybrid event with more than 100 hours of live content and 120 world-class speakers to the stage. **READ MORE**

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“WILL YOU MARROW ME?”

An awareness raising event about the importance of donating hematopoietic cells/bone marrow, which included the registration of new donors was organized during the 30th Congress of the Hellenic Thoracic Society, by the Bone Marrow Donor Bank of the ‘VISION OF HOPE’ Association. The team “Will you Marrow me?” is a member of the Scientific Society of Medical Students of Greece (SSHMS).

#30thpneumonology #respiratory #oramaelpidas #hybridmeetings #afeameetings
Member: ICOM Group  
Country: Egypt

At ICOM Group, we are confident in developing strong stakeholders’ relationships because they are a critical component in the development of a successful business. It is what allows both organizations to thrive and grow. These connections are what keep the world turning and the economy growing. There would be no successful business if both entities did not work together. And, because we understand how important the relationship between stakeholders and ICOM Group is, as we can’t do business without one another. As a result, this year’s business gathering was all about growing partnerships with our stakeholders, which is how the event name came about: “GRO/PART”—Growing Partnerships.

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SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATIONS ADOPT NEW WAYS OF COMMUNICATING: SIR PRESENTS THE SHORT FILM "THE WALL"

Member: AIM Group International
Country: Italy

The film made by the Italian Society of Rheumatology (SIR) and Giffoni Film Festival, in collaboration with AIM Group International, will be screened during the 2022 edition of the Giffoni Film Festival.

"La Parete" (the wall), which was made by talented young people between the age of 18 and 28 years. It was premiered during the 58th National Congress of the Italian Society of Rheumatology and will be screened at the 2022 edition of Giffoni Film Festival.

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ARINEX THE FIRST CARBON NEUTRAL AUSTRALIAN EVENT COMPANY

Member: Arinex
Country: Australia

Arinex has become the first Australian event management company to gain carbon neutral certification.

The company says it is excited about the benefits for its clients, as certification will ultimately help reduce the footprint of the events it manages.

The carbon neutral certification by Climate Active, is awarded to businesses and organisations that have achieved a state of net zero emissions, otherwise known as carbon neutrality.

It comes as Arinex reports several new sustainable initiatives, all designed to help further reduce its footprint.

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THE STORY BEHIND 25 DAYS OF GRATITUDE

Member: KENES GROUP
Country: Switzerland

For 25 days in December 2021, Kenes Group turned their social media platforms into a place of gratitude and stories. The #25DaysOfGratitude hashtag was the link uniting all social media channels into one fun and engaging advent calendar where the company shared the journey of transformation that defined 2021.

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IPR OLYMPICS: HOW TO FOSTER ENGAGEMENT AMONG DIGITAL AND IN-PERSON ATTENDEES

Member: AIM Group International
Country: Italy

AIM Group International features a successful hybrid scientific conference which helped to connect North-American and European radiologists in a truly engaging way.

One of the main challenges of hybrid congresses is to establish collaboration among both the digital and in-person participants. AIM Group International is sharing a compelling case study from the International Congress of Pediatric Radiology. At their hybrid scientific conference an innovative feature helped connect North-American and European radiologists in a truly engaging way.

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FIRST EVER HYBRID UIA ASSOCIATIONS ROUND TABLE ASIA-PACIFIC OPERATED BY CONGRÈS INC. IN TOKYO!

Member: Congrès Inc.
Country: Japan

FAST FACTS:
- Meeting: 9th UIA Associations Round Table Asia-Pacific 2021
- Dates: 21 (Thu.) – 22 (Fri.) October 2021
- Format: Hybrid format (Onsite in Tokyo + Online)
- Venue: Congrès Square Nihonbashi, Tokyo, Japan
  https://congres-square.jp.nihonbashi/
- Online meeting platform: OnAIR (EventsAIR)
- Organiser: Union of International Associations (UIA)
- Host Partner: Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau (TCVB)
- PCO: Congrès Inc.
- Official Website https://uia.org/roundtable/2021/asiapacific/

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Aiming for maximum contact-less check-in, ID badges also were printed out automatically when attendees touched the QR code to the reader.

During the break, participants in the physical venue, Congrès Square Nihonbashi in the heart of Tokyo, could network personally with UIA representatives and speakers!

Telepresence robots developed by iPresence Ltd. enabled remote speakers to actually see their surroundings and carry on conversations with both participants in the venue and fellow remote speakers, via the avatar robots. This collaboration brought the online presenters much closer to an in-person meeting experience.
AIM GROUP
INTERNATIONAL SIGNS
PLEDGE FOR “NET ZERO CARBON EVENTS”

Member: AIM Group International
Country: Italy

The pledge commits organisations to achieve “net zero” by 2050, at the latest, and halve greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

AIM Group International is proud to announce that it has signed the “Net Zero Carbon Events” pledge, a joint commitment across the events and meetings industry to achieve the targets laid out in the Paris Climate Accord.

“We are convinced that achieving a sustainable long-term and prosperous future for the events industry depends upon finding new ways to meet, learn and engage that support the continuing health of our planet” explains Annalisa Ponchia, Innovation Director of AIM Group International. “As a market leader for more than 60 years, AIM Group is committed to providing cutting-edge formats, technologies and solutions and is proud to be a signatory to the Net Zero Carbon Events initiative, which we see as a key driver for change in our business. We believe that such change can only be achieved collectively, by combining our efforts, and are committed to joining our industry peers on this challenging but crucial journey.”

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SIOT SPECIAL ISSUE

The special, compact in-person event realised instead of the annual congress of the Italian Society of Orthopaedics (SIOT) (postponed to 2022), with a simplified format, including live streaming, received an enthusiastic response, exceeding expectations: 1,400 in-person participants registered in Rome, far above the expected 700.
Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) and the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) have long been key drivers of global connectivity and the knowledge economy, through to international business events the city bids for and hosts.

Together, they continue to fulfill this role following the announcement of three major international business events heading to Melbourne in the coming years.

Supporting Victoria’s standing as a global leader in digital technology and adoption, in an Australian first, Melbourne will host the largest blockchain series in the world - The World Block Chain Summit (WBS) 2022 and the Association for Computing Machinery’s annual international conference on multimedia - The ACM International Conference on Multimedia (ACM MM 2024) in 2024.

Combined these events are expected to attract 1,200 global blockchain gurus and technology players to the city and deliver $5.2 million in economic contribution to the Victorian economy.

Melbourne has also been confirmed as the destination of choice for the Global Entrepreneurship Congress in 2023, showcasing Victoria’s international reputation as a major exporter of new ideas and innovation.

This gathering hosted in rising entrepreneurial cities will bring together entrepreneurs, investors, ecosystem builders and policy-makers to identify new ways of helping founders start and scale new ventures around the world.

Importantly, it will provide a significant platform for Melbourne’s most innovative minds to share the secrets to their success on the global stage. Melbourne is Australia’s most innovative city, with almost a third (30%) of Australia’s top 100 young entrepreneurs hailing from Melbourne.

The GEC 2023 is expected to attract over 2,500 delegates from more than 170 countries, to foster collaboration and address challenges to grow entrepreneurial ecosystems and more effectively enable entrepreneurs everywhere.

The successful bids were led by MCB with all three events to be held at the MCEC.

Julia Swanson, MCB Chief Executive said Melbourne has a proven track record in hosting world class business events and is renowned for its collaborative model.
“With support from the Victorian State Government and Tourism Australia’s Business Events Bid Fund Program, MCB and Global Entrepreneurship Network’s (GEN) Australian Chapter have brought together key stakeholders across the Australian startup ecosystem, including Startup Victoria, Invest Victoria, and Melbourne Connect, to deliver a successful bid proposition to the congress host association.

“In addition to delivering $12.9 million in economic contribution to our State, the GEC 2023 will advance Melbourne’s already thriving entrepreneurial sector. It will bring the right people together to help get ideas off the ground and share insights and developments that will have a lasting impact on the community.”

As Australia’s knowledge, and innovation capital, Melbourne boasts more than 1,800 technology-based startups. The Victorian Government through LaunchVic, has led the development of a globally connected startup ecosystem in Victoria by funding programs that have played an instrumental role in driving this growth. Over $45 million is invested in grants, research, sponsorship, events and various programs, supporting more than 386 organisations and 4,800 entrepreneurs.

Also excited about the win, The Hon John Brumby AO, Chair of Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Trust said, “MCEC is delighted to play a role in supporting Victoria’s entrepreneurial leadership and innovation space; a cause close to my own heart. This is a terrific opportunity to reinforce Victoria’s international reputation and standing, as a major exporter of ideas and innovation.

“This will be a cornerstone in MCEC’s events calendar, delivering vital capital, not only in the economic impact, but also knowledge sharing.”

The GEC will highlight the strength and diversity of Melbourne’s innovation ecosystem with themes for sectors including life sciences, manufacturing, space and defences, agriculture, technologies including artificial intelligence, quantum computing, Fintech, as well as areas of social impact including climate impact, food security, Indigenous and female entrepreneurship and investment, as well as regional entrepreneurship ecosystem sustainability.

MCB and MCEC are committed to collaborating with you for your next conference, event, incentive program or meeting in Melbourne. Contact your nearest MCB office for more information and support.
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