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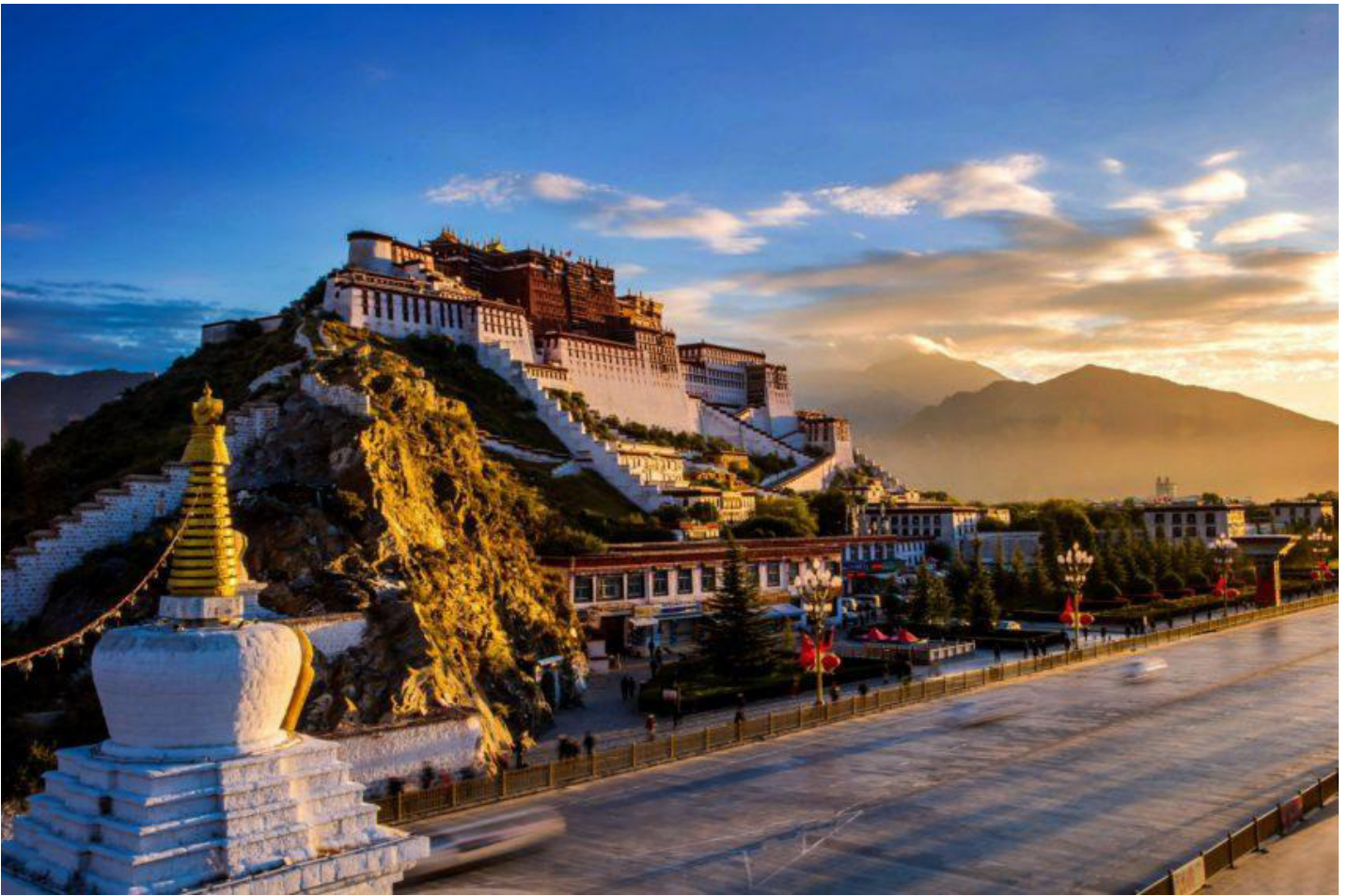
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## Creating Lasting Legacy in Kathmandu

November 15, 2019



Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal tucked in the Himalayas, isn't your typical conference destination. It's not as easy to fly to Kathmandu as Brussels or Barcelona; air connections are limited and usually require a stop in the Middle East or Asia. Hotels and local suppliers are another concern. But the Reproductive Health Supplies coalition (RHSC) gladly accepted these logistical challenges when planning the [19<sup>th</sup> RHSC General Membership Meeting 2019](#) in March. The four-day event brought together 300 reproductive health experts and more than 60 speakers from around the world, leaving a major legacy on the local community by involving local speakers and attendees.

*"This event confirms the high potential that scientific events can have for the shareholders community and how events can benefit from the connection with the destination in terms of contents richness and originality, image and attendees' experience,"* explains Patrizia Semprebene Buongiorno, vice president [AIM Group International](#), which helped organise the meeting for the fourth time.

One of the main objectives of the meeting was to involve the local community in order to increase access to a larger selection of safe and modern contraceptive methods in low- and middle-income countries. Six local non-profits—including [USAID Nepal](#), [UNFPA](#), [Safe Motherhood Network Federation Nepal](#) and [Radha Paudel Foundation](#)—as well as local experts and politicians, like the Secretary of Nepal Ministry of Health and Population (who opened the plenary), were brought into the discussion throughout the event. As a way to share some of the practices taking place on the ground in the community, the RHSC team arranged field visits to healthcare centres and non-governmental organisations, like the Youth Center Information Kathmandu and Marie Stopes Youth Centre Putalisadak.

*"The RHSC Meeting held in Kathmandu has been realised with this vision and was effectively able to involve local associations, politicians, professionals and providers giving them a unique and rare opportunity to meet international experts and have access to the state-of-the-art products and discussions about reproductive health,"* says Buongiorno.

Ties were strengthened with the local community by offering congress bags made by local artisans, morning yoga sessions in the garden led by a local yogi, and local handicrafts and traditions. *"Aside from the different time zone, weak land lines, finding a stable Wi-Fi provider and dodgy power lines, we always had to double check that local providers understood and carried out what was agreed,"* explains Lisa Stern, project manager, AIM Group Vienna Office. *"That being said, the Nepalese people are really friendly, their hospitality culture is amazing, and the local*

*providers were enthusiastic about working for an international conference and with a PCO like AIM Group, so they did their very best, which was evident in the success of the conference."*

Interactive sessions featuring round table discussions, workshops and games helped add an informal air to complement the creative social programme that encouraged member networking and new collaborations. In fact, 85 percent of participants said they established a new contact.

*"The impact meetings can have on destinations and local communities is really wide, at different levels. The knowledge or skills transfer, the sharing of scientific and healthcare advancements with local professionals, the empowerment of young people or women in developing countries, the involvement of politic leaders, are all important legacies," says Buongiorno. "It's about how events can leave a concrete contribution to the destinations."*

This article was written by Boardroom Editor [Lane Nieset](#). The right to use it, in parts or in full, has to be granted by the Publisher.

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