

How Zurich Turned Obstetrics Expertise into Public Legacy

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LEGACY THAT LEAVES AN IMPACT

Legacy is often discussed in broad terms, but in Zurich it took on a very concrete form. Around Masterclass Zurich 2026 - Vaginal Birth, hosted by the Department of Obstetrics at University Hospital Zurich, the organising team created a public-centred initiative designed to bring specialist knowledge into the city itself. While the congress gathered around 200 senior physicians, specialists and midwives, mainly from the DACH region, the accompanying legacy project aimed to reach residents directly.

TRANSLATING SPECIALIST INSIGHT INTO PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING

The thinking behind it was simple. The Department of Obstetrics explains that the subject of the masterclass was “particularly well suited for a legacy project, because the standards and innovations discussed by medical professionals have a direct impact on healthcare delivery and decision-making for the population of Zurich.” The ambition was to ensure that knowledge generated within the professional community did not stop there, but became useful beyond the hospital and beyond the congress setting.

That ambition shaped the project from the start. In practice, that meant taking complex medical content from the symposium and presenting it in clear, accessible, and everyday language. The intended beneficiaries were expectant mothers and families seeking reliable, comprehensible information about pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum care.

The guiding principle was: “Continuous information builds trust and strengthens public health literacy.” The point was not simply to stage an outreach exercise, but to make medical expertise usable in real life, in a format that encouraged informed choices and more confident engagement with care.



OBSTETRICS IN THE CITY

The programme of the masterclass focused on physiological vaginal birth, labour induction, monitoring during labour, intrapartum ultrasound, biomechanics, assisted vaginal birth, shoulder dystocia and water birth. The faculty list brought together specialists from Switzerland, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom, showing the congress's international standing.

The legacy project took the form of an information booth at Zurich Main Station on 25 and 26 February 2026. Midwives and physicians were present for personal conversations, answering questions on pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period.

The principal focus was vaginal birth, with practical information on natural birth processes, personalised birth planning and individual support. The activation also highlighted the obstetric services available through USZ and included selected partners presenting products, services and informational resources related to pregnancy and birth.

The choice of venue was a strong one. A railway station is public, visible and connected to daily life. It allowed the organisers to meet people where they already were, rather than expecting them to seek out information in a clinical environment. That matters in a field such as obstetrics, where questions are personal and urgent.

THE ROLE OF PARTNERSHIP IN DELIVERY

The Department of Obstetrics also points to the role of the Zurich Convention Bureau in turning the idea into a workable format. They say the bureau played “a crucial role in realising the project, offering support in logistics and location consulting.” Just as importantly, the team contributed “valuable input to the conceptual development of the format and helped reinforce Zurich’s position as a capable and professional host for medical conferences.”

COMMUNICATE THE VALUE OF A LEGACY PROJECT

Zurich Convention Bureau was not only helping to service an event, but enabling a form of legacy that connected the congress with the city around it.

The project also delivered some useful lessons. It was noted that “fewer pregnant women were reached than expected,” which suggests that the on-site targeting can be refined in future editions. Yet, “the feedback from visitors was very positive, and the perception of both the clinic and University Hospital Zurich was strengthened”. Through direct contact and the distribution of informational material, the hospital was able to present itself as a leading academic institution in a way that felt approachable.

Another key challenge was “ensuring that the concept of a legacy project was sufficiently embedded internally and that its added value was clearly understood.” Not all staff were fully aware of the objectives or importance of maintaining a presence at the location. That has led to plans for deeper internal presentation after the event and stronger communication within the clinic.



FROM EVENT TO ENDURING IMPACT

The advice the Department of Obstetrics offers to others is useful: “Involve speakers early on, prepare expert content in accessible language at an early stage, and use visual and illustrative materials to make complex topics more tangible.” It was also stressed that “internal communication about the purpose and value of a legacy project is crucial for success.”

In medical settings, indeed, organisers must remain aware that compliance rules, particularly in collaboration with pharmaceutical companies, can limit direct interaction with end users.

Zurich’s obstetrics initiative stands out because it treated legacy as a practical extension of the congress itself. It took a specialist subject, identified its public relevance, and created a format through which expertise could move into the wider community with clarity and care.

- In 70% of cases, death, injury, or violence
- Besides accompanying patients, described adverse treatment outcomes (51%) such as medical errors, or deactivation attempts, or treatment complications as traumatic
- **Lack of support was identified as a relevant factor in 28% of events**

Source: IPSA-Study www.belastung-im-arztberuf.de

5



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