

WILPF 33rd Triennial Congress Survey

Open-ended responses:

Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience at the WILPF-US 33rd Triennial Congress held this year, July 2017, in Chicago?

- At the beginning, it was hard to see how the new format would get to the desired result, but by the end, I was excited to see that it had.
- This was my first WILPF Triennial Congress and I found it very informative and enjoyable.
- As I was co-program chair, I was able to dip into a number of the sessions. I participated in couple that went well and produced some good Next Steps such as for Earth Democracy, International WILPF 201 and Election 2018.
- It was well-organized, the UIC campus provided a great setting, the planning committee offered thoughtful and interesting workshops, the speakers were very good, the Hull House experience was excellent, the ambiance was friendly and welcoming, the Chicago area restaurants were the icing on the cake
- As an attendee, I thought it was great. As a Board Member, I wish we had had more time for skills-building and internal information folks really need but don't often ask for. This should have been at least 2 plenaries.
- Excellent conference
- The congress was great. The accommodations (single rooms in medical tower) were not. There was gunk and goo on the walls. The doors had disgusting patina of use. The shower did not work easily. There was no way to read in bed (layout and outlets) and having to walk 5 blocks from car-park to room was unacceptable for mobility-limited people who drove. There was no handicap option. If you return to Chicago, I recommend looking at the Catholic Retreat House near DePaul U. Begins with a C. We did a grassroots event there last Dec and it was dreamy easy / good / affordable. REALLY NOT OK where you put us for the Congress
- I appreciated the feel that was created for the event. Whether in the lobby or either of the conf large rooms I felt WILPF around me.
- Well planned, good attendance, worked well having all workshops on one floor.
- This was my first time to attend. It was informative and inspiring.
- The Congress was more focused than earlier Congresses.
- It was my first Congress and I loved it: excellent speakers and WILPH leaders present and engaged!
- I very much enjoyed the Congress. I thought the speakers the first evening and the evening that focused on Chicago activists were excellent and inspiring. The workshops I went to were great, lots of helpful information. I also loved the opportunity to talk with WILPF'ers from around the country.

Please rate your experience with the following aspects of this year's Congress.

(note: answer N/A if you did not experience the item listed)

Overall Program (structure and content)

- I enjoyed Thursday evening's content and structure. That was the only session I was able to attend.
- confusing to interpret the program from materials given
- More time needed to have been allowed for the Sunday morning Next Steps...the time got "eaten into" by other program bits.
- loved the singing. Could have given more leadership to non-white members. I know that is in the works--but don't have whites "inviting" have ALL participating in planning!
- Esp. liked the two panel presentations and field trip to Hull House.

Overall Schedule (flow from Thur to Sun)

- As always, more time for each item would have been good.
- The schedule needed 5-10 minutes between activities for us to go to the new room etc. Every session started late.
- I think some of the workshops that were repeated didn't need to be repeated in order to leave space for other's that were needed: such as for the Democratic Arts, more for WILPF US 101, and a session on NAFTA.
- There was little time given for moving between workshops, so many started late.
- Confusion on session sequence (part 1, part 2) in two I went to. People expressed disappointment about the early / late self org sessions-- people not showing up. Good to allow 5 min "poster" time during formal session time for people to pitch the informal sessions
- The criticisms I would have is when there were two hours of workshops without a break in between, and you could go to more than one, I don't think that worked for very many people, since it meant you would have to leave your first workshop in the middle and enter the other workshop in the middle. I think one-hour workshops were more realistic.
- Could use more down time, unscheduled

Workshops (on Fri and Sat)

- Only complaint is that all of the committees met at the same time. Many of us would have liked to attend other committee workshops, as we serve on more than one.
- The survey to assess what topics members were most interested in was a valuable guide. Given the numbers of members attending maybe there were still too many workshops so that attendance was too divided. And maybe the survey method of identifying who would give workshops didn't capture or identify those more knowledgeable and eager to give a workshop. In the effort to get away from "sit and listen" format, I thought that in many cases discussion leaders mat worked quite well and helped to incorporate more voices into the presentation. Some workshop discussion leaders did work together before Congress to decide on content, format, and handouts which was excellent preparation.
- Excellent- except for one workshop which didn't have a moderator...
- I did not go to many--the two I went to were great.

- Only problems were technical, av issues
- I was disappointed not to be able to attend any workshops since mine was scheduled twice, something I hadn't known until I arrived.
- Awesome conversations with everyone and was very interactive!!
- In the morning on Friday, I went to the Reclaim Elections 2018 workshop. Both presenters, Michelle Laws and Nancy Price, were excellent, and we had a great discussion afterwards. In the afternoon, I went to the Effective Advocacy workshop, which was great--lots of helpful information about how to get the word out. I thought the goal of the Saturday workshops was maybe too ambitious with lots of issues to try to move from discussion and ideas to strategy and tactics. Our group did come up with several specific ideas around clean water and public banking and financing.
- Would like to have had more time to participate in Issue Committees workshops. Only able to attend one, and had hoped for at least two.
- I went to Effective Advocacy, which was very helpful. Dace Zeps should go around the country to help branches learn to use various social media. She was a great teacher!

Thur Afternoon Pre-Congress Bus Tour (Chicago Neighborhoods & Diversity Tour)

- It was somewhat superficial. What about Black activism and current issues work?
- Info on the neighborhoods was great but the guide/owner didn't seem to really understand who WE were and our connection to Jane Addams.
- excellent info
- I thought the commentator was somewhat racist- didn't acknowledge the First Nation people in her speech, and was ignorant when it was pointed out- she should know that.
- Such a memorable experience!
- route guide excellent but could have been more critical of gentrification

Thur Night Peace Activist Panel (with Bennis, Kelly, Bolger, Thomas)

- Excellent speakers and most inspiring
- Excellent
- I thought it was a little repetitive and one too many speakers on a night when most of us were tired from traveling.
- fabulous women!
- flight arrived late, so missed all but last speaker, really liked the discussion at the end
- lively, inspiring
- Phyllis Bennis is always superb, and Kathy Kelly is such an inspiration.
- I wonder if WILPF spent much money to bring these 3 people with lots of name recognition. Their presentations were not very info rich. Rather than prepared talks, they were off the cuff remarks. I think that if someone is paid more than a few hundred dollars (or more than expenses) we have a right to expect that they prepare speeches tailored to enhance WILPF members' already considerable expertise on the subject of current wars. I was disappointed, having heard both Bennis and Kelly deliver more substantive talks.
- Phyllis Bennis' speech was one of the highlights of the Congress for me. She's amazing.

Thur Night Entertainment with "Voices" (guitar group)

- Please provide us with contact info on such groups.
- wonderful group
- They were fantastic!
- Very inspiring
- Chris Inserra set beautiful activist tone
- I loved the group and their music was perfect for our event.

Fri Morning Plenary (with Larry Spivack from IL Labor History Society)

- One of the best events.
- good talk and connection of labor and democracy
- good local info
- really wonderful to give Larry that pulpit
- too much history, needed more focus on current problems of labor
- Again, not much info; more of a pep talk to supporters.

Fri Afternoon Issue Committee Roundtables

- felt I contributed some to the issue committee roundtable.
- The one on Earth Democracy and C v D that I helped to facilitate was pretty productive on Next Steps
- It was good to hear from people what was important to them.
- look forward to the follow up
- The two I attended were not well organized and I felt the facilitators didn't know exactly what the goal of the meeting was. It was disappointing.
- This seemed a bit awkward with no real leader or facilitator assigned, and difficult for everyone to weigh in.
- The one I attended evidenced no planning. The moderator talked for most of the session. When attendees brought up items they/we wanted to discuss, there was not much action, though the moderator was ultimately receptive to our views.
- Satisfied but wanted to attend more than one. There was not time to do so; needed more time break between workshop and Issue Comm. Roundtables.
- The room split by a curtain was way too noisy
- Human Rights committee roundtable was too 'inside baseball.' Hard to follow for a newcomer.

Fri Night Chicago Activist Panel (with Bautista, Dean, Hernandez, Smith)

- so good to hear local activists and learn about Chicago
- Great job finding this group
- informative talks
- excellent content and speakers, though more guidance might have been given to make the explicit connection of their activism to peace and freedom and democracy
- a little too long. But very good. We could have gone with 3 speakers instead.
- wish mary dean had spoken for longer

- I think this was the best event of the conference
- Fabulous! It's wonderful to see what real people are doing on a local level. So impressed.
- good presentations, but didn't get a sense of the deep crisis facing Chicago as a whole
- Bautista and Smith were especially strong. Dean was weak.
- Another highlight. I was particularly moved by the work of Pam Smith, training youth in Kingian Nonviolence.
- Great to know what happening in Chicago and inspired by presentations. esp. Bautista and Smith.

Fri Night Entertainment with "Harmony, Hope and Healing"

- Wonderful group
- Excellent!
- good to know there's a group addressing healing
- Great band
- FAB! Great mission too!
- WOW!
- unique friendly musical group
- Wonderful musicians--I enjoyed them a lot.
- Too gospel for me.
- Thanks for these great local musicians both nights.

Sat Morning Plenary (WILPF Intl and Commission on Status of Women, etc)

- More needs to be done to make these programs known to all members.
- loved the video greetings from WILPF Cameroon & Intl
- Even more detail about WILPF International and the importance of WILPF US connecting to the UNO and to the CSW might have been featured.
- The Q&A was particularly interesting.
- good to hear that the students like their experiences, but wish we'd heard more specifics
- wanted to hear future plans and hopes: also some self-criticism
- The students should have had more time to speak and discuss their experiences, their learnings. They have viewpoints and info we need, the organizations need.
- Informational; need more diversity for interns as pointed out; improve funding

Sat Afternoon Community Gatherings

- A lot was accomplished here.
- the C2 gathering suffered a bit from lack of assigned facilitator
- The one on Changing the System: Community by Community yielded some good suggestions/decisions for Next Steps for local community action and factsheets needed.
- Wished we had more time!
- This is where it all came together for me. The only thing that was missing was time to process all the input into a coherent 'next steps' plan.
- This was the first event I participated in and it was wonderful and a learning moment for me.

- Good discussions, but not really enough time to come up with specific actions to recommend to the entire group on Sunday morning.

Sat Afternoon Plenary (with Stefanee Parks-Ache from IL Labor History Society)

- Enjoyed MHH's description of Jane Addams
- Excellent talk
- She was good, but it would have made more sense to me to continue the Roundtable discussion or have a Plenary about skills building and WILPF US.
- only heard part of it
- Outstanding
- She didn't know who WILPF is, what our awarenesses and knowledge are and so didn't prepare to talk to US. Again, little depth. Do we need a person who educates possible speakers about WILPF, and what we do so that their presentations will be less superficial, more about engaging with us?

Sat Afternoon Jane Addams Hull House Walk (or bus ride) & Tour

- Really enjoyed the visit to Hull House, I was the last one there as I read everything
- Took bus: thanks for arranging that. Wonderful House and history; made Jane Addams and her work come more alive and I now understand her contribution to the settlement house movement that I hadn't really focused on before.
- Wonderful walk and education about Addams and the settlement house, so relevant in today's world.
- This was important to offer, but I had been often to Hull House before.
- made her life so real to me.
- Wonderful to see this- my first time
- A learning moment for me.
- every WILPFers should tour Hull House, very inspiring and CURRENT
- fun and instructive
- Got lost on the walk over and missed almost everything.
- Great opportunity. It's unfortunate that the UIC does not have the funding to fully staff Hull House. Perhaps WILPF should have offered to pay for 2 hours of a staff member's time in the bookstore. They'd have made a tidy sum from us.
- Another highlight. I loved all walking together, the film was very good, and the house was full of interesting stuff about Jane Addams' life.
- Great to see and learn.
- I went independently of the group and very much enjoyed this museum and experience.

Sunday Morning Voices of the Board

- It humanized the board for many who didn't know them.
- Many folks had to prepare to leave Sunday morning - could we have the voices and voting earlier in the program?
- very informative about what the national org is doing

- It was hard to get everything in that people wanted to have on Sunday morning and more pressed for time with a shortened Congress for reasons of cost/time. At the next Congress, I think that Board program/activities should be programmed for some time in the middle of the Congress. Maybe don't need two evening Plenaries.
- We tried to cover too much in too short a period.
- History of organization and watching it in action was powerful. So much pride in the work done.
- Will be even better when there is more diversity!
- needed more time
- I appreciated the opportunity to meet the Board members and to hear from them about their plans and ideas for WILPF.
- Great to meet them.

Sunday Morning Rise Up & Wrap Up (recap of plans from workshops, issue committees, community gatherings, etc)

- This needed more time; it felt rushed.
- Seemed a bit chaotic
- Glad to hear what happened in the sessions I could not attend
- The combination of Board Voices and Next Steps left insufficient time to have good presentations, discussion and decisions. It was all too rushed and the original one hour and thirty minutes reduced to one hour by added activities. There should be some time in Congress either at Next Steps or during the Congress time for discussion and evaluation of how the past three years of Next Steps were actually carried out..what was achieved and what was not and why. What is needed to help fully realize the Next Steps of the Issue Committees. .
- There was not enough structure or enough time to do this justice... and it should have been the most important piece. We should have come away with plans, resolutions, strategies.
- Next time we need a group photo in the middle!
- Good.
- Should have included issue committee chairs for a more complete recap of what we're doing as an organization and where we're headed.
- felt rushed
- needed more time
- I think that the results of workshops, gatherings, etc. should have been the center of the Congress. WILPF numbers appear to be shrinking and foci, apart from ending war and disarmament and all that entails, are somewhat nebulous. Perhaps that's due to moving away from a national agenda. It's also due to branches addressing issues in their own communities. Given the diversity of issues different WILPFs work on, it would be good to invite branches that have well-defined projects to present those at the beginning of the Congress, or, better, to send in descriptions of their projects before the congress so that those who are new to those foci and to others' strategies know something of them in advance of the congress and can ask more detailed info during congress sessions. It might also be good to develop an outline that moderators agree to for providing feedback about specific sessions. WILPFers are generally supremely well-informed about certain traditionally political issues, has developed formidable programs such as corps v. democracy. Of course we also have to be ready at any time to

respond to new and renewed threats like white supremacy and nazism. As I'm writing, I wonder if we need a national and international online news and, well, ideology exchange or blog to keep each other up to date on what we're doing. I realize that this would be quite a bit of work to set up and that a few people would have to commit to keeping it going.

- Would like to have heard more and discussed the "Advancing Peace, Justice and Human Rights": 2017 Strategic Plan--did I miss it?

Meals Served

- First day was great, but then it went downhill.
- good variety of food and plenty of it
- Amazing, delicious food and well served. Box supper not great.
- The food was wonderful, there was more than enough, and it was easily accessible.
- didn't know food court closed at 6. Thank heaven for Subway.
- Pretty good over all - except the box lunch.
- Amazing college food! And I loved having coffee continually available.
- very good food and range of choices, one breakfast excepted.
- Everything except the bag dinner was fine.
- Friday dinner to go only one not so good. Breakfasts excellent.

Dorm Accommodations

- a bit rough, but - good people!
- Sparse but everything one needed was there
- Good dorm, but hate dorm beds when the mattress cover is plastic and the sheets move all around during the night.
- It was nice to have separate rooms in the suites.
- single rooms we had sucked
- Hmm. The bed was not as uncomfortable as the train sleeper. I've reached an age and state of decrepitude where I really need grab bars in the shower or less slippery tub surface.
- Except there were no wastebaskets!
- OK. Community rooms (used by other students) could have been cleaner
- Good accommodations and fair price
- Beds/linens were pretty bad
- I think the dorm rooms showed the consequences of the state not passing a budget for three years. They weren't very clean, lights and other things didn't work, the bedding was minimal. The people at the desk downstairs were fine.

Conference Facility Accommodations

- Elevators were hard to find. Room arrangements were cramped. The chairs gave several of us circulation problems, as evidenced by many swollen legs.
- excellent, compact, good meeting rooms and dorm/conf. facility and great walking distance.
- Excellent

- elevators license had expired, but they still worked.
- Good but limited for me.
- There were ZERO signs for elevators which were HIDDEN. I get energy efficiency as a goal, but for mobility limited people having to WALK all around to find an elevator that was right there (but hidden and no sign) is extremely frustrating!
- While the campus lacks green spaces, it worked pretty well.
- Very good, handy to dorm, too.
- IT was somewhat troubling
- I thought the conference facilities were fine.

Registration Process

- The volunteers didn't know where things were.
- Could not have been easier!
- didn't know I could have checked in until 10 pm Wed.
- Thank you for the scholarship!
- Really went well.
- Well administered
- Well organized

Pre-Congress Communications (updates about what program, schedule, logistics)

- Although there were frequent re-sends of info, it was not sufficiently informative, and the logistical information came out too late for many to participate. Also, the scholarship funds should have been paid in advance. If people can't afford to attend, they should not have to borrow money in order to do so, and then wait to be reimbursed.
- Professional: lots of thought put into what attendees needed to know
- Good.
- I was informed from the beginning of the invite.
- Very good job!
- Took quite a while to hear from the Program Committee (which was essentially one person doing it all!) about conference panels. We need an active group of several people to handle all of this planning and design.
- Looking forward to a summary of the workshop.
- On the whole very good.
- Chris w is an organizer extraordinaire.

During-Congress Communications (announcements, reminders, clarifications, etc)

- Once announcements are made, they should be posted for those who had to be elsewhere, or who had difficulty hearing or understanding them (Hey, we're mostly a bunch of old women!)
- Title email headings specific to logistics with "Logistics (+ Day, location, etc.)"
- some people just don't read their packet material!
- As program co-chair, I would like to have been ever clearer about the "arc" and what was needed in terms of discussions to get to Sunday "Next Steps."

- Chris did a great job. We could have reminded people about Night Owl and Early Bird gatherings.
- Excellent work by Chris and those who helped her.
- No strong feelings about this

Post-Congress Communications (follow-up information after Congress)

- Good communication about request for reports and videos. Hope these come in so we have a good record of Congress and can make a good report to members. Maybe this request needs to be made at the opening and during the morning updates.
- There is still more coming, so it's difficult to judge
- Well we're still waiting for the reports....
- They were immediate and I appreciated that.
- I appreciated the list of participants and I think the survey is a very good idea.
- I have not yet received Post Congress Communication

Welcome Packet (information included in your folder)

- I found myself flipping through papers repeatedly, as the cross-referencing system about locations was confusing.
- colored sheets - good idea
- Excellent
- Especially the PINK SHEETS!
- Very important.
- Very good
- Could have included a transportation map (all the lines--there is such a map).

Congress location (Chicago)

- Great city for conferences, but a rather obscure site; my airport shuttle driver wasn't sure where to drop me, and we had no info that told us where to be for registration, etc.
- I was very satisfied with my whole Congress experience.
- Traffic from ORD on Thursday pm was awful. Weather was pleasant.
- Having Congress in Chicago gave us the chance to have event at Hull House for which I am grateful.
- It was great to be near Hull House. There was really nothing near enough to walk to... and the area was not very safe to be walking about.
- Glad to be part of the Hull House trip and discussion with members. The after- tour visit and film were outstanding.
- but really, find a better facility
- great choice
- Sorry I didn't have time to see more of Chicago.
- reasonable cost, but hard to get to
- I thought it was great to have the Congress within walking distance of Hull House, and it was easy to get there from the airport and to get downtown after the Congress on public transportation. I spent a few days after the Congress in Chicago and had a great time.

- Excellent location.

Moving from the Workshops, to the Issue Committee Roundtables, then to the Community Gatherings was an effective method for determining "next steps" and "action items" to work on.

- The switch after first hour didn't work out so well
- There was not enough time to come to consensus.
- Some people skipped about and so didn't know what had been said in the related workshop
- I strongly agree....but a number of adjustments to the program design and flow need to be made to allow sufficient time for "Next Steps" reports and discussion.
- The attempt to have this overall approach was refreshing.
- It was a good format. It could have been better if we made the connections between them more clear... set expectations for how they would inform each other.
- I am not sure. I am not a member and don't know how this works.
- On paper this looked logical, but not possible to go to more than one issue committee roundtable, then community gatherings had a different make up.
- While it made sense conceptually, I felt that the range of experience in each group made it hard to move to action items. One of the meetings - I'm not sure if it was the Issue Comm RT or the Comm Gathering -- was useful for hearing great ideas from what various branches are doing.
- I didn't get any sense of building a plan from one meeting to the next. Wasn't even aware that was the purpose! Did the other facilitators understand this plan?
- I'm not sure how it might be improved, but it seemed like we didn't know what we were supposed to be doing in these sessions, and that there was no clear leader to move us forward.
- It's an interesting design, but not all roundtables moved in this direction.
- I thought the steps were logical, but there's only so much you can accomplish in a weekend.

How interested are you and/or your branch in pursuing a children's book program, after reviewing information from the book corner (tables located near dining room entrance) which featured 2017 Jane Addams Children's Book Awards?

- It's UNFORTUNATE that we no longer have the close affiliation with JAPA
- A great investment in the future.
- I'm at-large. I don't have a branch to work with here.
- Our branch is focusing on children this year, so it's a perfect fit.
- We are already very, very involved in the children's book program.
- interested if we can find a member to run with it
- We have an active one
- Sorry, didn't look carefully
- We have in the past ordered sets of the books each year from JAPA and intend to do so in the future
- San Francisco Branch already purchases two sets of JAPA Book Award books and gives to local libraries plus.

Are there any other comments you'd like to make regarding this year's WILPF-US Congress in Chicago?

- It was really nice to have met women from across the country! Thank you for your hard work. I would like to know if WILPF is working with the members in Houston to make sure they are safe. I remember meeting a couple of them.
- At some point during the Congress, (a plenary?), I would like all of the attendees to briefly introduce themselves and say what branch they are with at the microphone
- Did I miss your questions on the workshops? I thought they were good. I appreciated the videos/slides where members were honored. I liked the tables some branches/organizations set up. The five quilts behind the plenary stage were a colorful (although sad) backdrop.
- Thank you to Chris Wilbeck and Chris #2 for all the extreme, wonderful attention to detail and hard work on Congress logistics and on fabulous decorations and WILPF items to take home. And thanks to Chris Wilbeck for "orchestrating" all the program planning calls, formatting and compiling the surveys and countless other tasks. Without the two of you, there would not have been any "there" there.
- It was the first Congress I've been to that there was a more positive and encouraging atmosphere among the attendees. I'd like to thank the Congress Committee and the WILPFUS Board and the President for making this happen. WELL DONE!
- It was a really wonderful experience, so powerful to all be together... and it felt for the first time since 2006 that we were all on the same page with no internal battles. Very healing and unifying. Encouraging.
- It was very helpful to learn about what different branches are doing. A little more about national WILPF organization would have been helpful.
- I loved it! So impressed. And the leadership programme was wonderful So many amazing people. Thank you from New Zealand! xxx
- Continue to have time for members to meet each other and share their branches work. Have a panel of women of color's experience in WILPF-US. Have a panel on "continuing to tell the story of WILPF-US's strengths (huge) and challenges/weaknesses structurally, praxis, and ideologically.
- THANK YOU!
- Congress always reflects strengths & weaknesses of WILPF overall, including need for even better work reaching young women & women of color. Hard hard hard work...but that's what we need!
- Very worthwhile. So glad I was there!
- Huge gratitude to Chris W and the planning committee. In the absence of a Chicago branch, you all worked miracles! Many thanks.
- Chris did an awesome job!
- Chris Wilbeck was amazing! I appreciate all the work that went into planning this event. Thank you to my branch for making it possible for me to attend.
- Would WILPG be interested in partnering with other organizations and holding the Triennial in conjunction with a larger convention?
- By meeting in focus groups and issue committees we met members with similar interests who voiced their passion, thus enabling us to become friends.

- Very enjoyable event! Well done to the organizers!
- Great to meet WILPFers from around the country and to hear what they're doing and to reconnect with old friends.
- Overall GREAT JOB - and Chris Wilbeck was on it!
- There was little time for actual debate and discussion of future of WILPF and our priorities. The leadership institute should be evaluated honestly. If WILPF is going to offer such an "Institute" (a good idea) it should be done better and with more care, planning and commitment to overall leadership development - not just a "training" for WILPF membership.
- In general, I thought the Congress was well organized and had lots of interesting speakers and workshops. It's a great opportunity to come together and gain strength from each other. You can have conference calls until you're blue in the face, and of course they're important, but for me the personal connections you make at a Congress are extremely valuable and energizing.
- Overall was very good and great to meet people only "see" online or hear their voices on calls. Inspirational. Good calls to action. Hope to learn more from others who attended workshops I missed
- I was challenged by the experience. I appreciate women getting together trying to find their way to address such difficult concerns. I think we need to continue to work at finding our way.
- Could we have a separate meeting for "Young women in WILPF?" I think this might be a nice way to meet other young women activists.

END