

CIROS Sustainability Report 2023-2024

At CIROS, we strive to be part of the sustainable movement towards a better future for all. Change is necessary to preserve our current planet and society for future generations, and we are ready to make such transformative changes. We have identified four main goals to commit this association to sustainable development, and progress has been made towards these goals in the past academic year.

Event sustainability

This year, CIROS's events aim to continue its engagement by proposing sustainable and conscious events about the planet. That is why all Committee Heads this year have worked hard to conceptualize their events, keeping in mind minor modifications that could enhance the sustainability of their event. For example, Goodwill notably provided participants with supplies from the second-hand store Kringloop during the "Sustainable Christmas Gift Making" event. Their other commendable events, such as their "Clothes Swap", promoted the reusability of the community's clothes, giving them another life.

Moreover, our efforts towards sustainability extended to our working member bonding events. We successfully reused the cutlery, plates, and decorations purchased last year or during the first event of this kind, demonstrating our commitment to reducing waste and environmental impact.

This year, the 'sustainable category' in our event proposals played a pivotal role in shaping our events. It was heartening to see all Committee Heads, without exception, not just ticking this box but actively seeking innovative ways to incorporate sustainability into their event planning. This underscores the importance we place on sustainability in our events. Now that Committees have integrated reusable supplies such as cutlery into their events, we now have a sufficient stock of materials to be used again and again.

However, event sustainability could have been enhanced this year by providing training earlier, instead of in the second semester. Committee Heads could have had better insight into alternative eco-conscious event planning methods.

Sustainable network

Sustainability is not just something we think about in our internal operations, but also our external collaborations. Many partners that we choose to work with are striving towards a sustainable business model. This comes in the form of eco-friendly packaging, or low-carbon emission delivery methods, to name a few examples.

We will continue prioritizing our sustainability principles as we seek out new partnerships, and further develop existing ones.

Merchandise

We launched a new merchandise collection this past year and have made various sustainability considerations along the way. Our products, including stickers, bags, and apparel, have all been made in Europe, if not the Netherlands. To further reduce our carbon footprint, most of our merchandise can be picked up at our office, instead of being sent via postal shipping.

With waste being one of the most prominent environmental issues today, we have tried to limit waste to the best of our abilities. Our products are either made on demand or ordered in small batches to prevent excess inventory. Additionally, we try to keep packaging to a minimum, sometimes none at all, depending on the product's qualities.

Due to financial constraints, we have not been able to source more eco-friendly materials for our products, though we hope to eventually achieve that in the future. Nevertheless, when selecting producers, we try to work with companies that are committed to sustainability and fair trade, such as Printful.

Raising awareness

This year CIROS has taken great pride in ensuring that the committees promote awareness towards the cause of sustainability. One of the main vehicles for this has been the organization of events that emit a sustainable mentality such as the events provided by Read Cycle and Goodwill. The events raise awareness by communicating to members the importance of an eco-conscious mind such as recycling second-hand books (with proceeds going to a school in Ghana) or donating clothes during the Swap Shops.

We will continue using our voice to promote a sustainable lifestyle within our community. Future efforts can include informing students of sustainable stores and businesses, such as repair workshops. Additionally, it would be beneficial to strengthen our relations with the Leiden University Green Office, which is actively striving to make our University more sustainable; we can learn a lot from them as we reach our goals.

Looking Forward

We are proud to say that we have made progress in each of these sustainability goals in the past academic year, and will continue to do so in the upcoming years.

Having reflected on our performance, however, we think new ideas can be incorporated to take us to the next step. We want to bring in initiatives to help our Committees plan events more sustainably. This includes an early sustainability training session, a detailed sustainability checklist in event proposals, and a sustainability performance tracker, to name a few. These are only some of the many ways we can work towards a more sustainable CIROS that is well-adapted to current times.