



ICCA Association Success Story

World Leisure Day 2021 – The World Leisure Organization's newest initiative

Describe the project/initiative and its objectives

To celebrate and highlight the importance of Leisure, the World Leisure Organization presented its newest international initiative for the first time this year: the World Leisure Day (WL Day). This aims to reinforce leisure as a social right and its importance in daily life, as well as to expand its possibilities of manifestation and promote reflection on the accesses and barriers that still exist for many people around the world.

This inspiring initiative created by the World Leisure Organization was born as a legacy following the 2018 World Leisure Congress in São Paulo, Brazil, which symbolized a step forward and addressed the core theme “Leisure beyond its barriers to access”.

For this first edition, the main objective was to examine the state of leisure in this uncertain era, in the hope that it will become a real matter of interest for citizens seeking to mobilize the political will and the necessary resources to ensure a sustainable human development. Additionally, with regard to professionals, academics, etc., this analysis will help the leisure sector to determine its level of popularity at the present moment, and to know first-hand the public awareness in different regions of the planet, how people’s lives have been affected by the pandemic and their access to leisure in particular, etc.

How was the project realized

Under the theme Leisure for a Better Life, the World Leisure Day 2021 was held on the 16th of April of 2021. This first edition of the World Leisure Day was coordinated by World Leisure Organization together with its Brazilian partners WLCE - USP (World Leisure Center of Excellence/University of São Paulo), LAGEL (Laboratory of Management of Leisure experiences), and Sesc (Serviço Social do Comércio). Currently, the World Leisure Organization has seven World Leisure Centers of Excellence located in 6 different countries in the American, European and Asian continents. Every year, one of them is responsible for organizing the celebration of this date.

The World Leisure Day program included activities for all audiences, online and in-person, such as chats, debates, meetings, book launches, web series, documentaries, workshops, classes, virtual visits, among several others.

Were there any innovative approaches taken

As a major element for the World Leisure Organization, several international events are organized every year: WL Congress, WL Expo & Forum, WL Festival, etc. Yet, for the World Leisure Organization, the commemoration of the World Leisure Day has become the first event organized and performed between different countries and locations all over the world, working and fostering together a common project. For us, it is a great pleasure to consider that this first edition, originally intended as a pilot project, has reached a truly international recognition with 22 countries participating in the event.

What were the challenges faced along the way and how were they dealt with

Running for the first time the organization of an event of this scale is very exciting. The ultimate decision to organize the first edition of the World Leisure Day in 2021 was made when we were already in the middle of the pandemic, meaning that everything was planned and decided online from the very first stage. Nevertheless, we managed to put all of our effort and commitment to make it happen. The response from the audience was unbelievable despite the fact that most of the activities were also online and people might not have been willing to get involved due to the overload of this kind of experiences in recent times.

What were the results/achievements

The World Leisure Day 2021 was attended by partner and guest organizations from 22 countries, including Brazil, Costa Rica, Argentina, Japan, Canada, Hungary, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and China. The program took place in a hybrid format (online and in-person), with most activities taking place virtually. Aiming at bringing about greater integration among all the involved institutions, they were encouraged to create transversal initiatives, encompassing activities based on leisure-related cultural contents such as Physical-sports, Social, Tourism, Intellectual, Artistic, and Handcraft ones.

From the World Leisure Organization, we are very pleased to announce that World Leisure Day 2022 is already underway and will be coordinated by the WLCE – Vancouver Island University in Canada.

What was the wider impact for the association

Despite being a first edition of a pilot project, the World Leisure Day has allowed World Leisure Organization to make an impact at an international level in regions where the organization was not as well represented as it might like to be. This has enabled us to build new and inspiring connections and partnerships, as well as to raise awareness of our strong commitment to the enhancement of the human condition through the promotion of leisure rights, not just with governments and institutions, but more importantly, with citizens from all corners of the globe.

What would you do differently?

This year, due to the particular situation we are facing, we unfortunately have not been able to offer many of the activities we wished to conduct face-to-face. Hopefully, for the next editions we may gradually include more on-site experiences in our program of activities, while respecting the safety regulations that may apply at the precise moment.

However, the online or hybrid format will probably be around for a long time and, therefore, this first edition of the World Leisure Day will be the perfect case in point and will lay the foundations for future editions. We have tried our best to make it happen in the greatest possible way and we believe we are ready to embrace the future of international events.

Feedback/testimonials

“The International University Center – UNINTER is formed by a network of centers spread throughout the country. In the most urbanized regions and those remote ones, we find centers with students from different courses. For many of these students, the “EAD” (E-learning) connects them with the rest of the country and sometimes the world. By involving our social body – students, managers, coordinators, teachers, administrative staff – in actions that somehow work as a dialogue with a broader network, we believe that we collaborate to build a sense of belonging in everyone.

The proposal to mobilize our audience with the World Leisure Day, somehow, connected even in our student’s imagination, for example, with something broader. This was possible to observe, based on the feedback we had, with the posts on social media, with the expression of joy in participating of this moment”.



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