

**WORLD LEISURE INTERNATIONAL POSITION STATEMENT  
ON  
LEISURE EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Drafted and approved at

**The WLRA/ELRA International Seminar on  
Leisure Education and Community Development  
Jerusalem, Israel September 1998**

Ratified by the WORLD LEISURE BOARD  
February 2000

**NOTE:**

WLRA's Seminar on Leisure Education and Community Development, which was held in Jerusalem in September 1998, was convened primarily in response to growing expectations around the world regarding the benefits of leisure. This Position Statement is based on the WLRA International Charter for Leisure Education which was drafted in Jerusalem and ratified by WLRA in 1993. The Seminar was sponsored also by ELRA - The European Leisure and Recreation Association.

The Seminar was organized by the WLRA Commission on Education, The European Leisure and Recreation Association (ELRA), the Israel Leisure and Recreation Association, (ELRA Israel), The Cosell Center for Physical Education, Leisure and Health Promotion of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The Zippori Center for Community Education in Jerusalem and The Variety Center for the Child and the Family in Jerusalem.

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**1. PREAMBLE**

- 1.1 Leisure is a form of human expression that varies from the very casual and informative to the highly committed and formal. Whereas, there has been an evolution of this provision of leisure services by the private as well as the public sector; all leisure entities and commercial developments should reflect emerging needs of the individuals in the delivery of all future services. Leisure services and programs have the potential for facilitating the introduction of youth, adults and retired individuals to potential leisure career options. Leisure as a social institution also is interwoven with other institutions, notably work, family, community, and education in the age of information technology.
- 1.2. Two forms of leisure are referred to from time to time in this work. The first is called "serious or substantial leisure," which is a systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist or volunteer activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge and experience. The second form is labeled "casual leisure" or "diversionary leisure," which is the immediately intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it.
- 1.3. Leisure in the life of people has profoundly affected established institutions. One of the more vitally affected has been the institution of public education. The cumulative effects of social, economic and cultural trends have necessitated the establishment of both formal and informal agencies for fostering leisure access.

- 1.4 An important contribution that schools may make to the common means of enjoyment is to offer leisure opportunities in an environment where people find it conducive for learning.
- 1.5 Leisure is a most valued component of community development and requires an awareness of its advantages and benefits. Leisure literacy should be a societal goal, since community development depends, among others, on the personal development of its members.
- 1.6 Pursuant to the 1993 WLRA International Charter for Leisure Education, the following recommendations are proposed:

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Governments and public institutions and organizations should:

### **2. General**

- 2.1 Recognize the important role of formal and informal educational systems within the community in the development of leisure values, attitudes, skills and knowledge.
- 2.2 Establish credit and non-credit courses on leisure education and community development that should contain a section on the systematic pursuit of meaningful and lifelong serious leisure and the many contributions it can make to communal life.
- 2.3 Inform educators and leisure professionals whether in their training or in their continuing education, of the considerable role that the systematic pursuit of meaningful and lifelong serious leisure plays in community development.
- 2.4 Inform leisure educators and leisure professionals whether in their training or in their continuing education, of the overuse, disuse, misuse and abuse of leisure.
- 2.5 Use educational and community institutions for implementing leisure education programs through formal and informal channels.
- 2.6 Establish channels for reaching out to the community and empowering members to make optimal use of available and accessible leisure resources through educational systems such as schools and community establishments for all ages.
- 2.7 Implement educational approaches and strategies that emphasize self-direction. These strategies will nurture facilitation and counseling and support freedom of choice within a non-threatening context of trial and error.
- 2.8 Establish links between educational frameworks, commercial and private institutions and voluntary organizations within the community for optimal use of leisure facilities and resources.
- 2.9 Design in partnerships with organizations providing services to special populations, these leisure activities that meet their specific needs.
- 2.10 Train individuals to become leisure educators, promoters and facilitators of leisure services and development across different ages and life stages within the community.
- 2.11 Organize inter-culturally diverse leisure experiences that foster participation and integration of all members of the community while eliminating possible barriers or discrimination.
- 2.12 Use Information Technology for the retrieval, compilation and dissemination of knowledge related to leisure and the establishment of links between members of different community groups.
- 2.13 Identify the importance of serious leisure opportunities for individual self-actualization, self-definition and self-determination and further contribution to the quality of community life.
- 2.14 Recognize that specific groups in various communities (such as women, different ethnic groups, gay men and lesbians, elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, persons of low-income and socio-economic status) are routinely denied access to play and recreation opportunities in parks, beaches

and leisure education.

- 2.15 Help community members of groups excluded from community resources to develop visions and strategies and give voices to their rights to leisure and recreation.
- 2.16 Work with people to create an empowerment process that leads to broad-based community support and calls on them to create plans for change that lead to enhanced open spaces, parks and leisure education and recreational opportunities.
- 2.17 Educate professionals about their ethical responsibilities in advocating for those who are denied essential entitlements to leisure education and recreational opportunities.
- 2.18 Organize an advocacy program that focuses on the equal distribution of recreational resources, equal access to services, and opportunities to recreate in safe and healthy environments.
- 2.19 Utilize the effects of advocacy groups to promote community-building activities that are based on common interests and that meet the needs of diverse community groups.
- 2.20 Use "trigger" community events to identify leisure and recreational deficiencies and to mobilize community members to obtain long-term change for human development and self-actualizing experiences.
- 2.21 Provide training for teachers and community center personnel in leisure counseling techniques to enable them to implement leisure counseling services.
- 2.22 Provide leisure counseling services in various community facilities including pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, community centers and camps, to both teachers and children.

### **3. Leisure Education, Community Empowerment and Poverty**

Discretionary time is of critical importance to people who are marginalized, powerless and economically disenfranchised. One of the roles of leisure educators is to facilitate access to such time for those who can not mobilize it on their own and to develop optimal strategies for creative use of this discretionary time.

Therefore, governments, Public Institutions and organizations should:

- 3.1 Stimulate the process of personal and collective empowerment to create supportive environments through leisure education, and mobilize community leisure resources for the community.
- 3.2 Facilitate the establishment of leisure education programs that are developmentally and socio-economically appropriate.
- 3.2 Support the creation of leisure and community activities that use youth/adult partnerships and peer education.
- 3.4 Understand that physical spaces and recreational facilities communicate messages about their services. Therefore they should communicate that:
  - 3.4.1 They are safe public places and they are accessible and supportive environments for all people regardless of age, gender, socio-economic status and ethnic origin.
  - 3.4.2 They are not reinforcing societal structures of domination and hierarchy.
- 3.5 Recognize the importance of all people in engaging in a shared process of decision-making to determine the nature and rules related to community services such as:
  - 3.5.1 Criteria for acceptance, including processes for overcoming barriers like fees and costs.
  - 3.5.2 Implications of program designs on measures or criteria of "success" and/or "failure".
- 3.6 Establish an evaluation program as an integral part of the empowering process, including signs of desirable outcomes such as:
  - 3.6.1 Expanded social inclusion.

- 3.6.2 Increased personal and social skills.
- 3.6.3 Greater sense of self-efficacy.
- 3.6.4 Enhanced fulfillment of socially-valued roles.

#### **4. Leisure Education, Globalization and Edutainment \***

Whereas mass entertainment (e.g, rock concerts, art festivals, theme parks) now reflects major global, political, economic, cultural and education trends, it is essential that:

- 4.1 Leisure education approaches include new goals related to problem-solving and learning within the framework of global edutainment.\*
- 4.2 Leisure education as part of the global edutainment has to be incorporated into community development processes.
- 4.3 Leisure education must be cognizant of professional and career opportunities in the field of edutainment.
- 4.4 Various forms of edutainment (such as adventure, culture, mass-entertainment) need to be critically and objectively examined for their potential roles in the leisure education process.
- 4.5 Marketing strategies need to be recognized and utilized for their leisure education potential.
- 4.6 Global leisure education occurs through the use of the internet and should be utilized to enhance self-actualization through leisure.
- 4.7 Leisure education as part of the global education system is evolving through the use of the myriad Information Technologies that have become part of the information highway delivered through the internet and its related services.

#### **5. Leisure Counseling**

- 5.1 Individuals and group leisure counseling should be a standard service offered by leisure service providers at leisure facilities of all kinds.
- 5.2 Professionals engaged in leisure counseling services should receive special leisure counseling training, including training for school teachers and community center personnel.

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\*Edutainment is leisure education delivered through the global mass entertainment system that may have both positive and negative potential for consumers.