



News from the Chairs

Time flies and we are happy to share the second issue of LeisureEd Newsletter – the official newsletter of our Special Interest Group on Leisure Education.

In this issue we reflect on some activities that were held at the 17th World Leisure Congress. We also extend our warm invitation to all of you to participate in a Webinar on Leisure Education and Children’s Free Play jointly organized by our Special Interest Group on Leisure Education and the Special Interest Group on Leisure and Human Rights. We are privileged to have a piece on Leisure Education in Difficult Time written by Prof. Michael J. Leitner, from Reichman University in Herzilya, Israel.

We hope you enjoyed your World Leisure Day celebrations on 16 April. We would like to share photo’s of your celebrations.

Last but not the least we invite you to submit a paper and take part in our SIG LE session in the coming World Leisure Congress 2025.

We welcome your feedback, suggestions, insights and comments. Please email us anytime.

Atara & Marie



17th World Leisure Congress 2023

The 17th World Leisure Congress was hosted by the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. It offered a great opportunity to connect with one another after the pandemic and for those that were able to attend, it was great to meet you in person. The Special interest Group on Leisure Education (SIG LE) had the opportunity to connect on several occasions.

Dr Alison Link presented her paper on **Updating and implementing school-based leisure education in pandemic and post-pandemic times** that she wrote together with Dr Linda Caldwell. The paper was presented during the special session titled **Leisure education and the right for leisure.**

The paper discusses the update of the TimeWise program, a school-based initiative by Healthy Lamoille Valley, to promote healthy use of free time focusing on lessons learned from the pandemic. The program aims to reduce substance misuse, promote healthy choices, and support educators with resources for students’ free time. The program has been updated to support various school districts and private schools, addressing challenges like apathy, amotivation, and technology overuse.



CALL FOR ARTICLES

We plan to publish a Newsletter per term. Please send us a short article of your work or a project by 30 July 2024 to be included in the next Newsletter.

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Snapshot from our SIG LE special session at the Congress



SIGs were offered the opportunity to meet up with their members during parallel meeting sessions. The LE SIG met some new members from the Asian region. It is good to see our membership growing across the globe.

Apart from these sessions there were several presentations on topics related to Leisure Education in other sessions across the conference showing the important role that Leisure Education plays in the leisure industry. We thank all contributors and the University of Otago for a successful Congress making it an unforgettable event.

Coming up Webinar on Leisure Education and Children's Free Play – June 6, 2024 1-2pm CEST



PRESENTERS



PROF. ATARA SIVAN
HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY, HONG KONG
"LEISURE EDUCATION AND FREE PLAY"



PROF. TONY VEAL
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
"CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TO REST, LEISURE, PLAY AND RECREATION"



DR. WINNIE WONG
DR PLAY, HONG KONG
"EDUCATING FOR CHILDREN FREE PLAY: HONG KONG PRACTICE"

DISCUSSANT



PROF. MARIE YOUNG
UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

WEBINAR

LEISURE EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S FREE PLAY

This webinar is jointly organized by the WLO Special Interest Groups (SIGs) on Leisure Education and Leisure and Human Rights. It explores the intersection of leisure education and human rights, with a specific focus on children's free play. The webinar will delve into the relationship between leisure education and free play, discuss the right of children to leisure and play, and share practical experiences of educating for free play and incorporating it into educational settings.

June 6, 2024 | 7-8pm HKT

FOLLOW THE LINK TO REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZErf-iurTMqGdwcxxaakMUgw4RaxpmV67N>

Leisure Education in Difficult Times

Prof. Michael J. Leitner, Ph.D.,
Reichman University in Herzilya, Israel

It is October 11, 2023 and Israel has been experiencing a tragedy beyond the scope of imagination. At last count more than 1,200 of its citizens have been brutally murdered and over 3,000 injured by terrorists and thousands of rockets and missiles continue to be fired at its cities. Israeli citizens are experiencing great sorrow and also the unknown of the near future as a major war is being fought that might last for a long time. What on earth is the role of leisure education in this horrible situation?

Leisure is the time of freedom we have which can be used in a positive way to help maintain and improve our physical, mental and emotional well-being. However, leisure (free time) can also be spent in ways that detract from our health, such as excessive alcohol consumption and other recreational drug use, excessive television watching and other passive activities. Leisure activities can help lift the human spirit in times of crisis. The people of Israel are certainly experiencing a major crisis right now.

Leisure education can help people tremendously in times of crisis by giving them the tools to have positive leisure experiences which can keep their spirits strong. It is extremely important for people to understand what activities can have a positive impact on their physical, mental and emotional well-being because with that knowledge they can try to pursue these activities even when they have limitations on movement imposed on them by a state of war.

During a state of war, the tendency is to continuously check for news updates on our phones, computers, television and radio. Certainly, it is important to check the news frequently for updates and to know what needs to be done. However, it is widely documented that excessive screen time can be harmful to physical, mental and emotional health. Specifically, in the current situation, while it is important to be aware of the atrocities that were committed by terrorists against Israeli citizens, watching the images of these atrocities over and over again can dampen the human spirit, which is one of the major aims of the terrorists.

So, in these times the key is to remain strong so that we can help ourselves and help others. Volunteering is one form of leisure activity that can be personally uplifting by enabling us to experience “helper’s high” as well as directly benefitting other people who are in need. Fortunately, it seems that Israelis are very well educated in the value of volunteering and there has been a tremendous response to volunteer opportunities, most of them filling up with volunteers almost as soon as they are announced. I went to a nearby center for distributing food and clothing to soldiers yesterday. I walked through mostly empty streets to get there and was so surprised to see many hundreds of people there, volunteers working very hard to accept and sort out for distribution the massive nonstop deliveries of goods being donated. It was amazing and inspiring to see. This volunteer effort is an example of something important and essential and yet it can also be viewed as a leisure choice. All of these volunteers could have instead chosen to stay home watching the news and feel despair. Instead they chose to come and volunteer at this distribution center, helping others and at the same time doing something positive for their own well-being.

The streets are mostly empty, quite unlike the usual scene here in Tel Aviv. However, you can see some people exercising in the park and at the beach, working out at outdoor gyms, running, walking their dogs, bicycling, and swimming. Yes, there is some risk involved in doing these activities because if there is a missile attack people in Tel Aviv have only 90 seconds to get to a safe place once the warning siren sounds. However, the benefits of doing these activities is great. Also, people are doing exercise at home, even things such as ballet classes via Zoom and the benefits of these activities are enormous. Fortunately, we learned from Coronavirus how to enable participation in a wide variety of activities via Zoom at home.

In summary, experiencing positive leisure during a war might sound like a crazy notion but it is in fact very important for keeping individuals and a nation strong and able to deal with a horrible situation. Leisure education can help to give people the tools to know how to be creative and participate in uplifting activities during challenging times.

I suppose that writing this piece was a form of leisure activity and I can tell you that expressing my thoughts and feelings has lifted my spirits. I hope that many people read this article as I believe it can provide a great deal of insight not only into what is happening here in Israel but also how, in general, leisure activity and leisure education can help people in difficult times.

World Leisure Congress 2025 | Breda

WLC 2025

18th WORLD LEISURE CONGRESS

25-28 August 2025

Breda – Rotterdam, The Netherlands



GIS LE is planning to hold a session on Leisure Education in The World Leisure Congress 2025 which will be held in Breda – Rotterdam, The Netherlands. We welcome researchers, academics, practitioners, and professionals from various disciplines to share their academic and professional work exploring diverse aspects of leisure education, including but not limited to theoretical frameworks, innovative pedagogies and models, program development and evaluation, and the role of leisure education in different settings and cultural contexts.