About VSA
The Visitor Studies Association believes informal learning occurs throughout life. We encourage civic engagement to support an informal citizenry, and ultimately, societal progress. VSA members aspire to create experiences that change lives. VSA is a global network of professionals dedicated to understanding and enhancing learning experiences in informal settings, wherever they may occur—in museums, zoos, parks, visitor centers, historic sites, and the natural world—through research, evaluation, and dialogue. VSA’s membership and governance encompass those who design, develop, facilitate, and study those learning experiences.

Reimagining and Rebuilding: Visitor Studies After a Year of Change

The past year has been one of rapid and significant change. A global pandemic that has affected the lives of billions. Protests in over 30 countries that have called for an end to police brutality and systemic racism. As a result of these worldwide events, the informal learning field has seen an immense amount of change, including loss of jobs, taking on new or different roles, and helping institutions address complex questions around equity and racial justice. Now more than ever, society demands that cultural organizations support anti-racist practices that establish more equitable spaces that ultimately benefit the communities they serve. Researchers, evaluators, and all museum professionals have been faced with the question of how we can create more relevant and socially conscious organizations, but given extensive layoffs and institutional restructuring, how can this work happen with fewer resources and competing priorities?

This year, the Visitor Studies Association will not only reflect on current crises in the informal learning field but also look to the future. How can we confront and dismantle oppressive structures in our field; recover from months of closures, extensive layoffs, and lost funding; and re-envision our organizations and the visitor studies field at large, ultimately rebuilding them for a better and more just society? We invite attendees to consider how the past year of change has led (and might lead) to structural changes within their organizations and how they are reimagining the fields of informal learning and visitor studies.
VSA 2021 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
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Please email visitorstudies@visitorstudies.org with any questions and to get signed up!

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