

Barriers to cultural participation by people with disabilities: a qualitative investigation about Lollapalooza Brazil (2022)

Barreiras na participação cultural de pessoas com deficiência: uma investigação qualitativa sobre o Lollapalooza Brasil (2022)

Barreras a la participación cultural de personas con discapacidad: una investigación cualitativa sobre el Lollapalooza Brasil (2022)



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ABSTRACT

This study examines the inclusion of people with disabilities at Lollapalooza (2022) based on the perspectives of digital influencers with disabilities. Despite the festival's professed commitment to inclusivity, it falls short in accommodating these influencers, highlighting mobility and autonomy challenges due to accessibility issues, hindering their full participation. This study emphasizes superficial measures in fostering genuine inclusion and advocates for substantive efforts to ensure the participation and enjoyment of all individuals in public events and spaces.

KEYWORDS: PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (PWDS) • INCLUSION • LOLLAPALOOZA • MUSIC FESTIVAL • EVENTS.

RESUMO

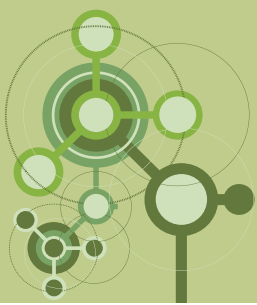
Este estudo examina a inclusão de pessoas com deficiência (PCDs) no Lollapalooza (2022) a partir das perspectivas de influenciadoras digitais com deficiência. Apesar do compromisso declarado do festival com a inclusão, este não consegue acomodar as influenciadoras, destacando os desafios de mobilidade e autonomia devido a questões de acessibilidade, dificultando sua plena participação. Este estudo enfatiza medidas superficiais na promoção da inclusão genuína e defende esforços substantivos para garantir a participação e o prazer de todos os indivíduos em eventos e espaços públicos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: PESSOAS COM DEFICIÊNCIA (PCDS) • INCLUSÃO • LOLLAPALOOZA • FESTIVAL DE MÚSICA • EVENTOS.

RESUMEN

Este estudio examina la inclusión de las personas con discapacidad (PCD) en Lollapalooza (2022) basándose en las perspectivas de los influenciadores digitales con discapacidad. El festival defiende el compromiso con la inclusión, pero esta acción no se realizó según los influenciadores, destacando los desafíos de movilidad y autonomía por problemas de accesibilidad, lo que obstaculiza su plena participación. Este estudio enfatiza medidas superficiales para fomentar una inclusión genuina y aboga por esfuerzos sustantivos para garantizar la participación y el disfrute de todos los individuos en eventos y espacios públicos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: PERSONAS CON DISCAPACIDAD (PCD) • INCLUSIÓN • LOLLAPALOOZA • FESTIVAL DE MÚSICA • EVENTOS.



INTRODUCTION

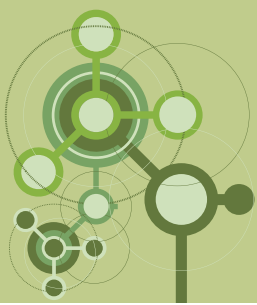
People with disabilities (PWD) have long endured exclusion from opportunities for inclusion and citizenship, making it impossible for them to fully participate in society and public events (Jesus; Souza, 2022). The State currently seeks to reverse this situation with policies aiming to include socially excluded groups and ensure them equal treatment and access to opportunities in public and private spheres (Freitas, 2021). Measures such as reserved company positions, elimination of architectural barriers in shared and private environments, adaptation of workspaces, and affirmative education action configure examples of such initiatives (Antunes; Bertotti, 2022; Chaves, 2023; Salvatori, 2021).

Accessibility is a crucial aspect in events as it ensures that PWD have equal access to programs and venues. Events aim to offer relevant and engaging experiences to participants (Kotler; Keller, 2006). Thus, organizers must understand that these experiences go beyond interactions with attractions in events. Experiences at the Lollapalooza music festival, for example, were shaped based on participants' first interactions. Media convergence has meant that the way to enjoy festivals goes beyond being there in person. Paid channels and social media are offering a variety of experiences at both large and small events. Lollapalooza for example, was broadcast by Multishow, Bis, and Gshow (Lollapalooza..., 2022).

Event planning must combine strategies to ensure their consumers' full experience. Thus, people's inclusion and active participation (especially of those with disabilities) are important steps toward full experiences (Andrades, 2022; Blankenburg, 2023; Cavalcante, 2021; Oliveira, 2022). Inclusive events should feature the following characteristics: spaces for wheelchairs and guide dogs, ramps and handrails to facilitate the circulation of visitors with reduced mobility, signs identifying seats and bathrooms for those with impaired hearing, reserved parking, and other tools to promote people's autonomy (Berni, 2021; Faria, 2023; Remião, 2012; Silveira, 2023). These characteristics follow Law no. 10,098, of December 19, 2000, which demands the removal of architectural, communicational, methodological, and instrumental barriers to ensure accessibility, quality of life, and autonomy for PWD or reduced mobility (Brasil, 2000).

This study aims to understand the inclusion of people with disabilities in music festivals such as 2022 Lollapalooza given the importance of ensuring their effective levels of physical, functional, social, and community inclusion (Amaral, 1995), which would require movement autonomy, adapted spaces, interaction with other participants, opportunity offers, and access to social movements. Law no. 10.098, of December 19, 2000, provides for these inclusion and accessibility plans, aiming to avoid the marginalization of PWD in social and cultural events. This study seeks to answer the following guiding question: what were the narratives Lorrane Silva (@_pequenalo), Lorena Eltz (@lorenaeltz), and Giovanna Massera (@toranja.mecanica) produced on physical, functional, social, and community inclusion at the 2022 Lollapalooza music festival?

Lorrane Silva, a 26-year-old digital influencer (Karhawi, 2017) with a background in Psychology, has won the Forbes Under30 award, reserved for the most talented Brazilian content creators younger than 30 years of age. With 4.6 million followers on Instagram, Lorrane produces humorous memes without necessarily addressing the rare syndrome reducing her movement. Lorena Eltz, a 21-year-old influencer with 597,000 followers on Instagram, uses the platform to talk about people with disabilities' health and rights, especially those, such as her, who have Crohn's disease. Giovanna Massera, a 25-year-old model and influencer with lupus, has 15,800 followers on her Instagram profile, in which she addresses issues such as Blackness, sexuality, and the rights of PWD.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Events configure strategic activities for the public relations planning of any organization that can be used at several levels of organizational communication. Internal communication and motivational campaigns are some examples of the importance of events for brand planning or organizational reputation. Business communication consists of three main areas: internal communication, marketing communication, and institutional communication (Kunsch, 2002). Each has several tools the choice of which must respect the interests, stakeholders, and communication objectives of an organization.

Although Kunsch (2002) mentions events as something other than integrated communication tools, their importance for business communication strategies is indisputable (Fortes; Silva, 2015). This change in the mentality of public and private institution managers has led to the use of events as a strategy to integrate organizations, communities, and consumers.

Despite their advantages, many companies prefer to only sponsor events—as with the 21 sponsors of 2022 Lollapalooza, which included car brands and mobile network operators such as Chevrolet, Vivo, and McDonald's (Filippe, 2022)—that have developed strategies to engage the public in experiences, such as those they would have at that music festival.

Sponsors included brands such as Tanqueray, Samsung, and others. Instagram was the official social media partner of the event. Globo, Multishow, 89 Rádio Rock, and Rádio Mix aided content production. Events configure a business in themselves that involves several activities, including marketing products with sponsor brands (Brennand, 2023). The challenge organizers face involves seeking maximum business partnerships without compromising the essence of the event (Fortes; Silva, 2015).

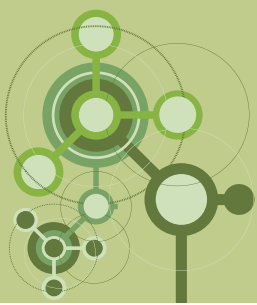
Events are typically held to mark a moment; establish new scientific, organizational, or advertising paradigms; promote organizational launches; celebrate art and culture; or disseminate socio-educational campaigns (Freitas; Lins; Carmo, 2016). They are, therefore, powerful public relations tools that can unite people around common causes to promote institutional, family, and personal dialogues. For the author, these are important resources to combat dissent or lack of information on a subject of organizational and/or public interest.

For events to achieve their success, they must respect local, regional, and national laws and ensure cultural diversity. Also, they must respect attendees' different profiles, recognizing and considering workers' and consumers' rights, including full accessibility to venues. By promoting an inclusive environment, events will more likely provide positive experiences and strengthen their reputation with their audience.

The importance of the effective inclusion of PWD in music festivals

After two years without occurring due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Costa, 2021), Lollapalooza (organized by Time For Fun) was held from March 25 to 27, 2022, at the Interlagos Circuit in São Paulo, with tickets costing from R\$900 to R\$3,700. In this edition, the festival announced its inclusion of PWD, making available services such as facilitated entrances, elevated areas for better stage viewing, golf carts for transport from venue gates to the stages, Brazilian sign language (LIBRAS) interpreters on elevated platforms in front of the stages, and audio description devices.

Since people with disabilities are in society, the planning of events such as Lollapalooza must consider their needs and experiences (Amaral, 1995). For Amaral, disability is characterized by three reasons: anatomical-functional ones, referring to the form and function people exercise; statistical ones, linked to an average general population; and an ideal model related to a social comparison based on an ableist view (Pereira, 2008) that defines ideal bodies and disregards their real capacities



and limitations. Even people without disabilities may fail to reach this ideal societal model (Lucena; Seixas; Ferreira, 2020). The plans of Lollapalooza would theoretically respect these groups' specificities and possible limitations, ensuring the services that are essential for access to its performances.

About 18.6 million Brazilians (around 8.9% of the population) claimed having some degree of visual, hearing, motor, mental, or intellectual impairment (IBGE, 2023). A considerable part of the Brazilian population has difficulties seeing (3.1%), moving (8.3%), hearing (1.2%), and acquiring formal knowledge (3.7%). Despite such high numbers, these people normally have no opportunity to enjoy leisure time because spaces for large events still need specific adaptations for them.

It is essential to recognize the right of PWD to social inclusion, covering areas such as culture, leisure, and work, including Lollapalooza (Amaral, 1995). Effective inclusion is not only musical events but also all society spaces must consider four levels: physical, functional, social, and community. At the physical level, it is essential to adapt spaces, eliminating physical and environmental barriers to ensure accessibility and mobility for people with disabilities. At the functional level, it is important to create environments that meet the needs of these people, enabling them to autonomously perform basic activities. At the social level, the places in which social interactions occur (including events) should be planned to ensure access, mobility, and autonomy for people with disabilities and avoid excluding them from living with others. Finally, it is essential to enable the active participation of PWD in social movements, promoting community inclusion.

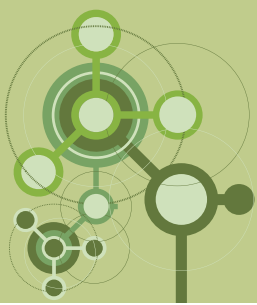
Since the 1970s—when culture, leisure, and tourism markets began to consider the inclusion of people with disabilities in their programs—flaws in physical, functional, and social inclusion have been identified (Faria; Motta, 2012). Producers faced difficulties communicating with customers, employees were unprepared to deal with PWD's demands, and event and trip creators ignored the barriers in the spaces intended for these activities (Sasaki, 2003). The lack of LIBRAS interpreters, ramps, elevators, electric vehicles, and spaces adapted to users' needs contributed to many PWD being unable to participate in social events or to integrate community groups, restricting their lives to their households.

The ongoing lack of inclusion persists in contemporary events, such as Lollapalooza. Lorrane Silva encountered accessibility issues with her motorized chair, while Giovanna Massera and Lorena Eltz faced challenges due to non-functioning golf carts, resulting in physical discomfort and inconvenience. The festival spaces were inadequately adapted to their needs, indicating a lack of functional inclusion. Massera and Eltz missed subsequent days of the event, illustrating the absence of social inclusion as they were unable to enjoy it with friends. Despite difficulties, Silva attended part of the event due to professional commitments. These influencers have advocated for basic rights in social media, contributing significantly to the participatory inclusion of PWD in social movements (Tabarkiewicz, 2022).

Lollapalooza quickly commented on these cases of negligence with a note (lacking self-criticism or an apology) written by its press office to Cabral (2022):

Lollapalooza Brazil is committed to holding an inclusive event in which everyone is welcome. Each year, the festival refines its structure and thinks of improvements so that everyone can have a good experience inside the Interlagos Circuit. This year, LollaBR offered people with disabilities access through a dedicated gate, golf carts to take them to the festival area, elevated platforms so they could watch the shows, and motorized equipment to facilitate movement across the space, as well as professional LIBRAS interpreters and audio description devices. All services will be evaluated and improved for the next editions. (Cabral, 2022)

Planning is fundamental for the development and management of events, encompassing executive coordination, financial control, and technical and social administration (Freiberger, 2010). This phase must consider the physical environment of an



event, anticipating possible failures so teams can readily solve them. After all, event venues must comfortably accommodate all attendees (Freiberger, 2010).

The definition of an event includes planning: “it is the sum of previously planned actions with the objective of achieving defined results with its audience” (Canton, 1997, p. 19). For the author, planning is indispensable as it considers facts, events, marketing strategies, clients' and promoters' expectations regarding programs, and marketing objectives. “The event, by the very meaning of the word, is every fact or knowledge, spontaneous or organized, which occurs in society; and from the professional point of view, it presupposes planning and organization” (Canton, 1997, p. 19).

Lollapalooza failed in its planning by ignoring accessibility for PWD at the Interlagos Circuit. Its lack of accessible toilets, elevators, golf carts, and motorized chairs for autonomous circulation hindered the participation of these people in the event. Moreover, the note the organization issued lacked self-criticism and an apology, giving the impression of a prefabricated text unrelated to harmed individuals. Official notes during crisis management must explain mistakes; remedy actions; and show genuine, critical, and empathetic thinking toward those affected by the failures (Genú, 2007).

METHODOLOGY

As its methodology, this study employed narrative analysis and literature review (Bastos; Biar, 2015). In a qualitative, interpretative, and dialogical manner, we aimed to describe social life events and explore the meanings that individuals attribute to them within their narratives (Spink, 2010). An interdisciplinary dialogue examined narrative flows—this social practice that unveils reality, the processes of resistance, and the reformulation of meanings.

We analyzed stories (short videos up to 60 seconds that are viewable for 24 hours) and reels (videos of up to 15 minutes that stay on an Instagram profile indefinitely), published from March 25 to 27, 2022. Lorrane Silva shared 15 subsequent stories. Lorena Eltz published one reel and 12 stories. Giovanna Massera posted one reel. A total of two reels (3'38") and 27 stories (4'01") with discourses and texts were investigated.

Only stories and reels from Lorrane, Lorena, and Giovanna were analyzed. Journalistic narratives were cited but they were not analyzed as they only serve to supplement the influencers' narratives. The qualitative and dialogic analysis incorporated external sources to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding, encouraging the construction of individual meanings about the described events.

RESULTS

On the first day of Lollapalooza, Lorrane Silva faced difficulties navigating the event with her motorized tricycle. Her stories evinced the lack of physical and functional inclusion (Bressani, 2022). In addition to participating as a consumer and enjoying the festival for the first time, Silva also commentated on the Multishow channel, participating in lives on music, culture, and entertainment. During the event, she had difficulty getting onto the electronic music stage due to broken elevators and no ramps. Nevertheless, an unknown man unrelated to the festival helped her up the steps:

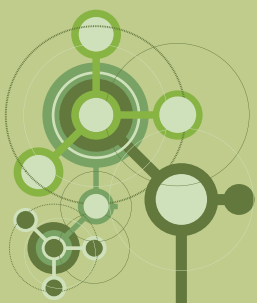


Figure 1: Lorrane Silva carried by a stranger



Note: Posts taken from the @_Pequenalo² Instagram profile on 12/20/2022.

She posted some stories the next day about the lack of accessibility for PWD at Lollapalooza. She said that all events should ensure inclusion and the effective, comfortable, and autonomous participation of PWD: “we pay the same amount as everyone else to enjoy the event and we are not included, understand?” Seeking to reinforce the importance of physical and functional inclusion, Lorrane also stated: “I think the least they could be do is to also include us so that we have independence and can enjoy [the festival] the same as all the people who are there who are not people with disabilities.”

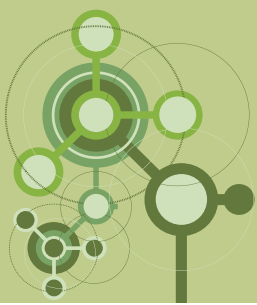
She proposed a discussion on her Instagram profile to help other event producers implement effective plans to include consumers with disabilities: “I hope I can help by talking about this in these stories [...] not only for Lollapalooza but for all big-named events; and not only big-named events... it could also be for a small event, but inclusion must be there.”

Figure 2: Lorrane Silva talking about inclusion in events



Note: Posts taken from the @_Pequenalo Instagram profile on 12/20/2022.

² Retrieved from: https://www.instagram.com/_pequenalo/. Access in: Sep. 16, 2024.



The narrative built on her Instagram profile stated that not all spaces of the festival were prepared to receive her. Only those reserved by Multishow (the company that hired her) had ramps, elevators, adapted bathrooms, and trained professionals to serve her: "I have nothing to complain about Multishow, I'm working with them at Lolla, so [I enjoyed] accessibility from the beginning to the end of the booth and elevators (especially for me to go down or up) [and could] have my independence and be able to walk wherever I want."

Despite difficulties getting on stage, Lorrane could enjoy the festival for two days and experience social inclusion (Figure 3). Unlike the other two influencers, she had access to social inclusion even if she faced mobility obstacles at Lollapalooza. Lorrane could participate in other days of work and party but chose to watch the festival in her hotel room. Giovanna also opted to follow it at home, evidence that the lack of physical and functional inclusion results in social exclusion.

Figure 3: Lorrane Silva with friends at Lollapalooza



Note: Posts taken from the @_Pequenalo Instagram profile on 12/20/2022.

Chevrolet invited Lorena Eltz to participate in the three days of Lollapalooza, but she attended only the first one (03/25/22) due to the lack of physical and functional inclusion, as reported in her stories. She has Crohn's disease, which causes inflammation in her digestive tract and demands that she use a colostomy bag that collects her fecal matter. At the start of the event, after traveling about 20 minutes on steep, uneven terrain to the festival bathrooms, her bag burst open. She found no preferential bathroom lines for PWD. The festival had adapted bathrooms for PWD, but all attendees used them, and security guards failed to prevent the entry of people without disabilities (Valinhos, 2022). She said in a reel: "The event is obviously not responsible for my bag leaking but I wish I had found more toilets (including to record content about toilets) for people with disabilities or ostomized patients at a music festival."

Lorena expressed her fear of attending large events due to the uncertainty about their accessibility and how they may be unsuitable for people like her: "It's sad to think that people who have an illness or a disability end up not going to this type of event for fear of what might happen there." Due to the lack of adequate bathrooms, she experienced social exclusion, choosing to return to her hotel to watch the last shows of the festival with her mother, Patrícia Carvalho. She even shared a story from her mother at a private space, mentioning, "what's left [for us] is to watch it on television." This evinces that Lorena was unable to attend her favorite performances and enjoy the company of her friends due to her health condition.

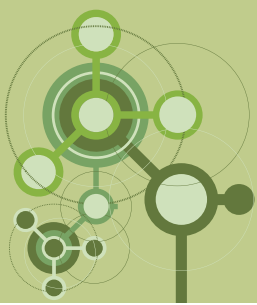
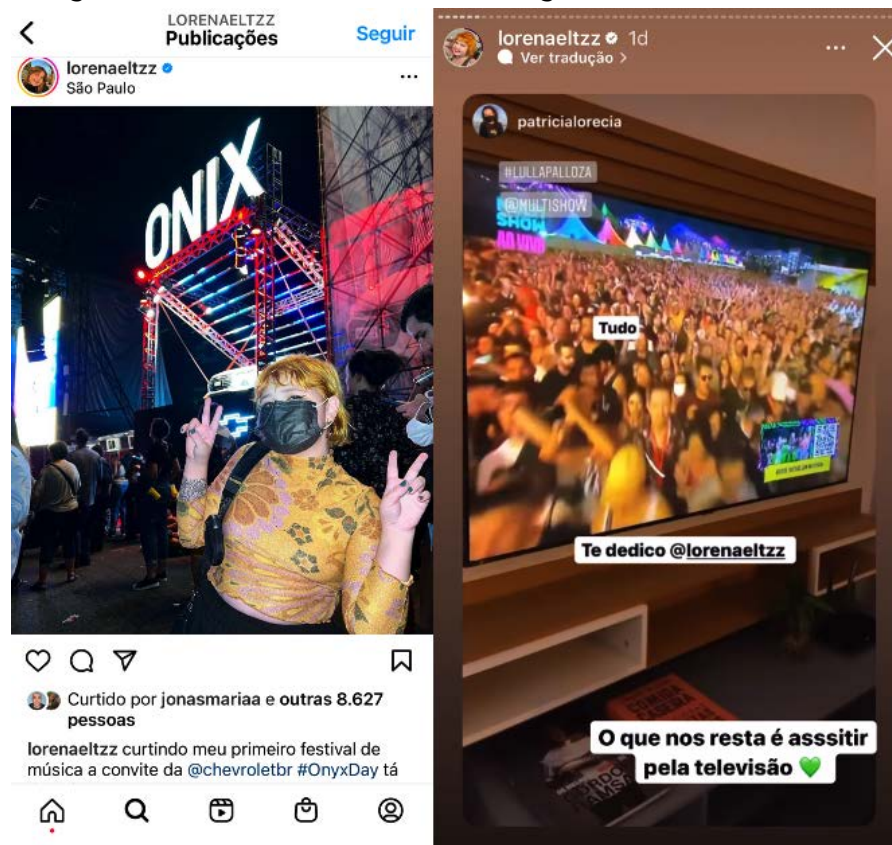


Figure 4: Lorena Eltz on the Onix stage and in her hotel room



Note: Posts taken from the @lorenaeltzz³ Instagram profile on 12/20/2022.

Due to these humiliating occurrences, she had anxiety attacks and had to go to a hospital: “the worst thing is to see the stories and photos of everyone at @lollapaloozabr and see that the reality is not like that.” She also recalled that “for those who are mega famous and have beauty cabins, it seems really wonderful. But those who have expectations end up being disappointed with the lack of care for the people inside.” As above, Lorrane Silva attended the three days of the festival, facing difficulties moving at some stages despite being in privileged areas.

Figure 5: Lorena Eltz in her hotel room



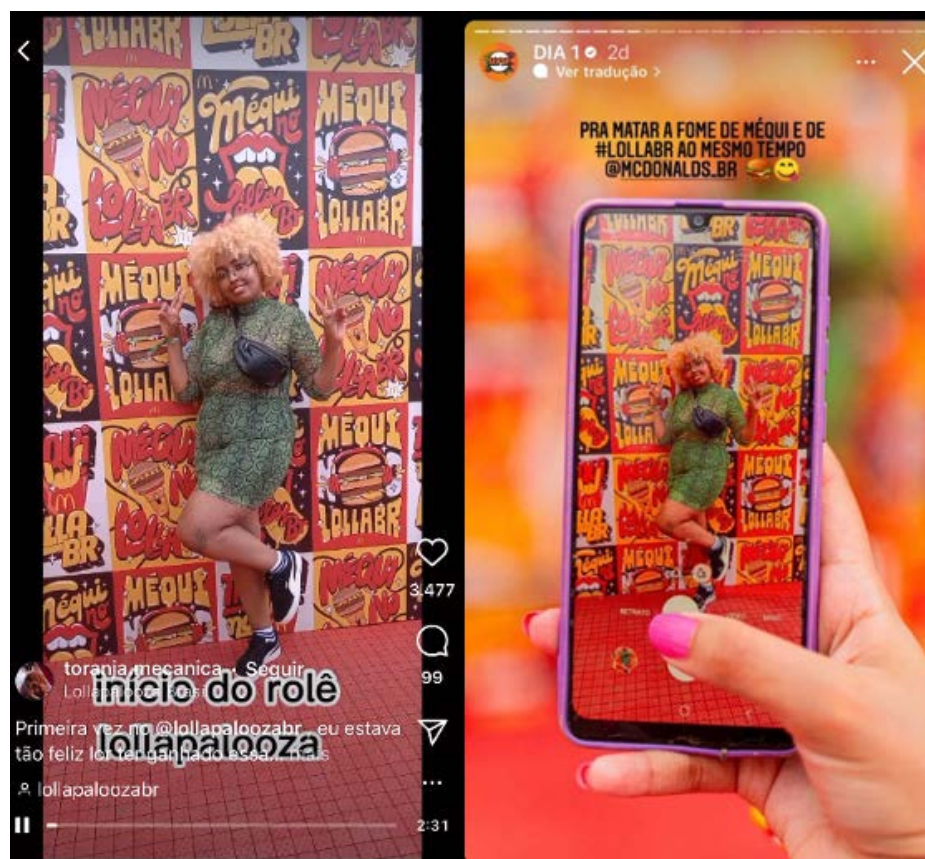
Note: Posts taken from the @lorenaeltzz Instagram profile on 12/20/2022.

³ Retrieved from: <https://www.instagram.com/lorenaeltzz/>. Access in: Sep. 16, 2024.



Giovanna Massera, who suffers from lupus and uses a cane, faced mobility difficulties (Maturana, 2022). The absence of physical and functional inclusion became evident from the moment she arrived at the event, on 03/25/22. As her team had no information, they had to tread long distances to find motorized carts and chairs: “for those who do not know, I am a PWD, and I was moving around with a cane during the event. The event was supposed to offer a PWD experience, it was supposed to have accessibility, but it wasn't working as it should.” About such problems, she said: “they didn't know how to guide us to access the motorized chairs. The chairs were only in one place, at one station, so if you went down the Adidas entrance, you had to walk the whole circuit.”

Figure 6: Giovanna Massera at Lollapalooza

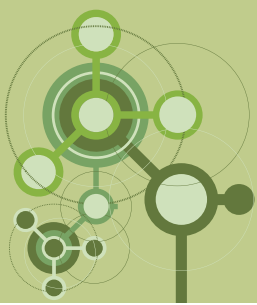


Note: Posts taken from the @toranja.mecanica⁴ profile on Instagram on 12/20/2022.

Regarding accessibility to spaces with autonomy, she mentioned that the chairs would get stuck due to the lack of easily traversable soil, making it impossible to see some concerts: “If you wanted to watch some concert on the Adidas stage or the Onyx stage, you would have to take the turf, even with the chair, so the mud got it stuck. The turf was steep, so I almost rolled over with the chair.” About the security system (carried out by the Fire Department) and support in case of difficulties, she detailed: “There weren't enough firefighters to keep up with everyone on the turf, so the very people who were enjoying the festival helped me, I got hurt, people who were walking got hurt.”

At the end of the video, after telling her account, she confessed: “It was very sad because they preached so much [about] inclusion, that there would be an experience for people with disabilities and, in the end, it didn't work out. We were humiliated.” That was her first time at the festival, but she was only able to attend one concert due to social exclusion. Massera hopes that these issues will be resolved in other editions so that PWD will be able to avoid humiliations, which generate sadness and anxiety: “I hope that these problems are solved because we [PWD] want to have fun too. We are also fans and access this type of festival, we also have a favorite artist.”

⁴ Retrieved from: <https://www.instagram.com/toranja.mecanica/>. Access in: Sep. 16, 2024.



Although community integration remained unchanged, the three influencers successfully used their Instagram profiles to broaden the agenda of social movements advocating for the rights of people with disabilities. Social media platforms such as Instagram play a crucial role in spreading awareness about the struggle for PWD's rights to an engaged and interested audience (Tabarkiewicz, 2022; Oliveira, 2021).

Despite the promise of inclusion in Lollapalooza, service failures and poor equipment resulted in a lack of inclusive experience for these three influencers. Planning failures prohibited them to experience physical, functional, and social inclusion. However, the internet enabled them to express their demands and fight for greater inclusion in all societal spaces, promoting community inclusion.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

We find that all types of events should effectively include people with disabilities, which implies guaranteeing them movement autonomy, environment adaptation, social interaction, and dignified access to leisure and work. PWD require physical, functional, social, and community inclusion as consumers and professionals. The 2022 Lollapalooza promised an inclusive experience for PWD, offering facilitated entrances, golf carts, exclusive spaces, motorized wheelchairs, and LIBRAS interpreters.

Analyzing Lorrane Silva's, Lorena Eltz's, and Giovanna Massera's Instagram narratives shows flaws in 2022 Lollapalooza services and highlights its lack of effective inclusion. They faced physical, functional, and social barriers at the event, such as problems accessing the stages due to broken elevators, lack of adapted toilets, and difficulties getting around on uneven terrain, preventing them from fully enjoying the festival with their friends and family. Although this study lacks a detailed address of community inclusion, social media disseminated their narratives on the struggles of social movements for the rights of people with disabilities.

After analyzing the corpus, we found that Lollapalooza had planning flaws, showing a lack of respect for PWD accessibility. It also delayed solving demands related to defective bathrooms, elevators, and motorized cars and chairs. The lack of empathetic communication with those affected was also evident since the statement released by the organization had neither self-criticism nor apologies. These flaws show the absence of a genuine, empathetic connection with the audience and a lack of critical thinking and effective strategies to prevent future recurrences.

Lollapalooza showed planning flaws that resulted in negative experiences for those three influencers. These issues impacted attendees and the reputation of organizers, sponsors, and institutional supporters. The reputation of the event plays a crucial role in the image of those involved and can last for long periods, influencing its success or failure. The search for a successful event should not restrict itself only to hiring renowned artists and searching for sponsorships, but also ensure attendees' full satisfaction and respect regardless of their profile. After all, the image of an event is built by its participants' positive or negative experiences.

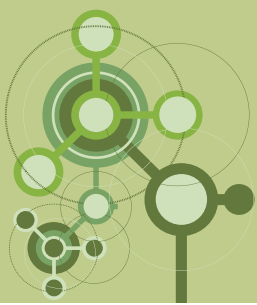
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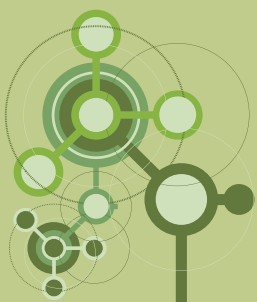
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