

LASA2021 Congress Report

Crisis global, desigualdades y centralidad de la vida

The XXXIX International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), May 26 to 29, 2021, was the second virtual Congress of LASA. Its planning began as a hybrid congress that would enable both, face-to-face participation in the city of Vancouver, Canada, and virtual sessions. However, the advance of COVID-19, the appearance of new variants and the uncertainty about public global health forced the LASA Executive Council to make the difficult decision to eliminate the in-person element of the Congress by November 2020.

Taking into consideration the experience from the LASA2020 virtual Congress, LASA worked hard to carry out this second virtual Congress successfully and managed to increase the participation figures from 3,564 in 2020 to 6,021, the number of presenters from 1,838 (2020) to 4,742, and the number events and sessions from 623 (2020) to 1,198.

LASA2021 Facts

Total Participants	6,021
Total Presenters	4,742
Total Sessions and Events	1,198
Films and Documentaries	40
Book Exhibitors	30
LASA Grantees	590
Book Presentations	23
Sponsors, Contributors, and Institutional Partners	27

Satisfaction Rates

Every year, during June and July immediately following the Congress, LASA sends a survey to collect Congress demographic information and respondents' feedback with the objective of measuring the experience of our most important constituents, our members.

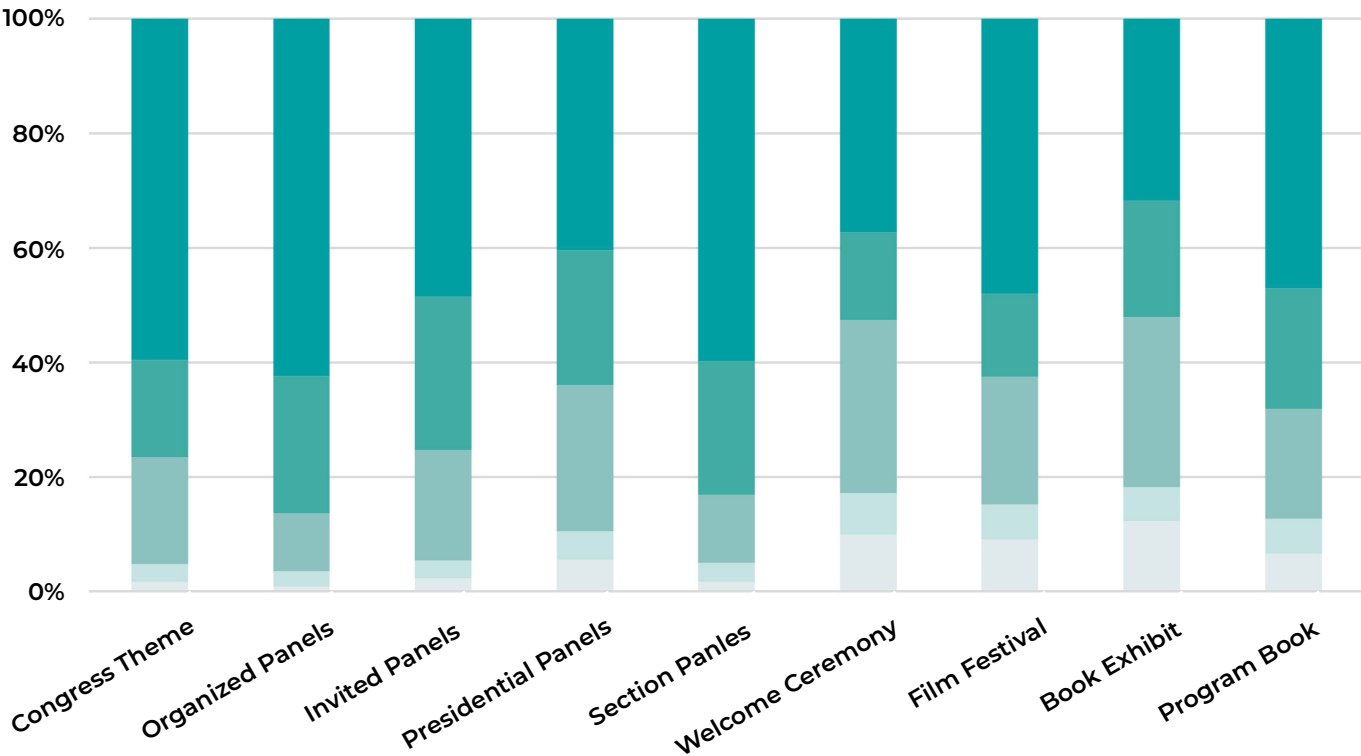
Their opinions are highly relevant, even more so when 72% of the respondents have attended two or more LASA Congresses, and 49% attended four or more sessions during LASA2021. Only 28% were attending a LASA Congress for the first time. Therefore, their responses are relevant to help us improve for future Congresses. We thank the 760 people who participated in this year's survey, who represent 12.6% of all of the LASA2021 registered participants.

Like the first virtual Congress, LASA2021 also demonstrated the great support of its members for the Association. For this, we would like to start this report by thanking all participants for their willingness to continue with us in the virtual format and share their research, presentations, and knowledge in the academic space that LASA offered.

Proof of this support from the membership is that when asked about the general satisfaction of the LASA2021 Congress, 79% of respondents said they were satisfied, about the same as last year. Only 9% were neutral and 12% were dissatisfied.

Regarding the theme of the congress, *Crisis global, desigualdades y centralidad de la vida*, this year, 77% responded that they were somewhat or very satisfied with it, a figure similar to that of 2020, 79%. Among the academic elements of LASA2021, the two that obtained the greatest satisfaction were the organized panels with 86%, followed by the section panels with 83%.

Figure 1. General satisfaction with academic elements of LASA2021



These were the percentages of approval (respondents who answered that were somewhat or very satisfied) with the academic elements of the Congress:

Organized Panels 86%
Section Panels 83%
Congress Theme 77%
Invited Panels 76%
Program Book 68%

Presidential Sessions 64%
Film Festival 63%
Welcome Ceremony 52%
Book Exhibit 52%



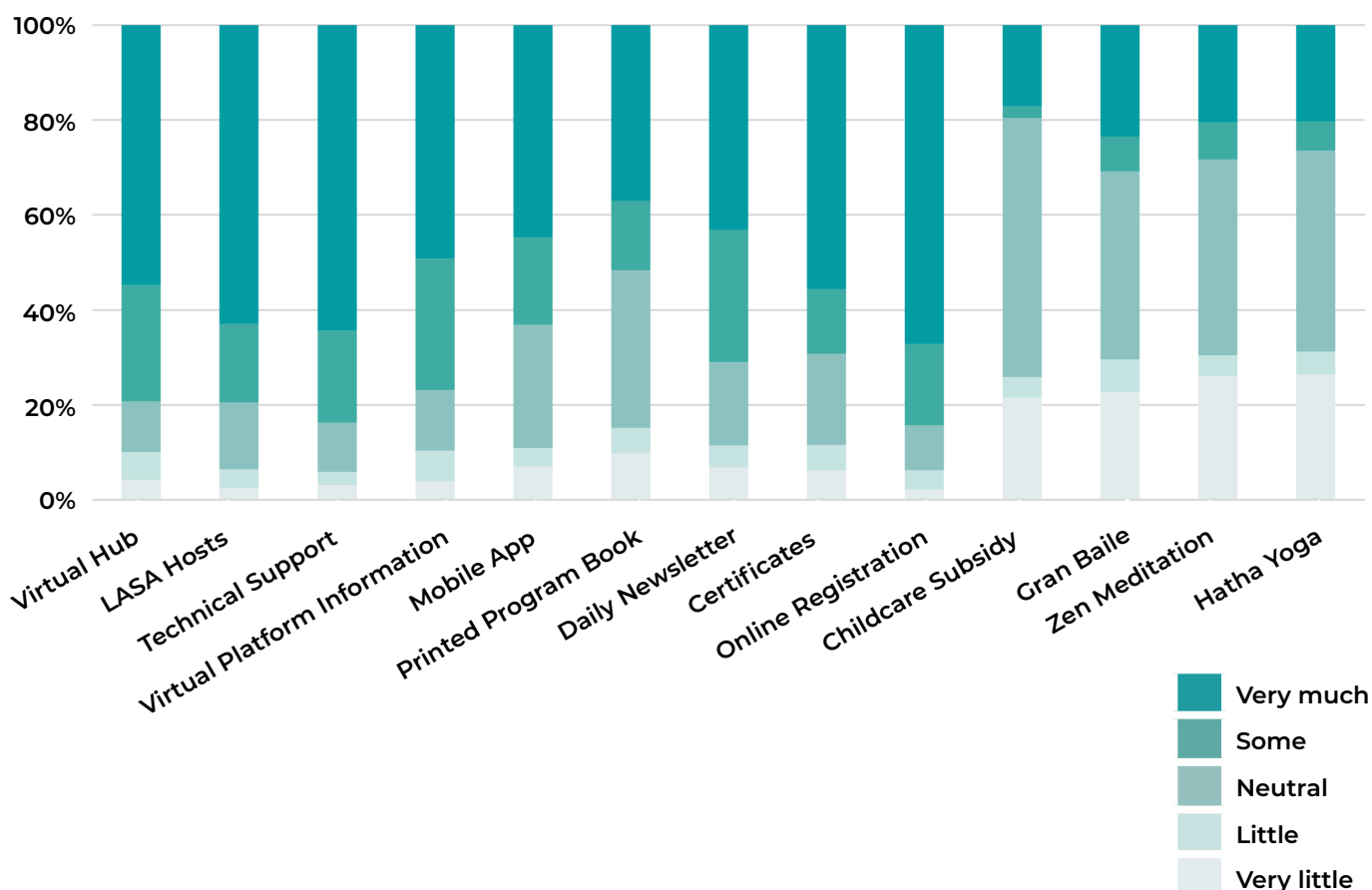
The online space of the LASA2021 Congress took place on the LASA2021 Hub, a website available in Spanish and English where registered participants visited to participate in or attend any academic session, meeting, or Congress activity including the Book Exhibit, the Film Festival, the Gran Baile, the informal meetings room, yoga sessions, and more. 80% of the respondents were pleased with this website, 10% were neutral, and only 10% responded that were not satisfied with the website.

The LASA2021 Hub had a direct link to download the LASA2021 mobile app. More than one third (36%) of respondents downloaded the app, and most who downloaded the app (88%) used it. Additionally, the LASA2021 Hub provided technical support from a LASA specialist. This service received a satisfaction rate of 83%.

The online registration was the most appreciated non-academic element with 84% satisfaction (respondents who said were somewhat or very satisfied with it). It is worth mentioning that for LASA2021 a progressive registration policy was implemented based on the membership type and the country of origin to facilitate the participation of people financially stressed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, in January 2021, the Executive Council recognized that this progressive registration model was not sufficient to respond to the serious burdens of the academic community and approved two new categories of registration for LASA2021: *Pay what you can* for people wishing to participate in LASA2021 but unable to pay the rate in the progressive model, and *Solidarity fee*, a registration category of \$400 for those who wish to contribute to LASA and would like help subsidize the registration of those who, because of their economic situation, have chosen the “pay what you can” category.

Figure 2. General satisfaction with non-academic elements of LASA2021

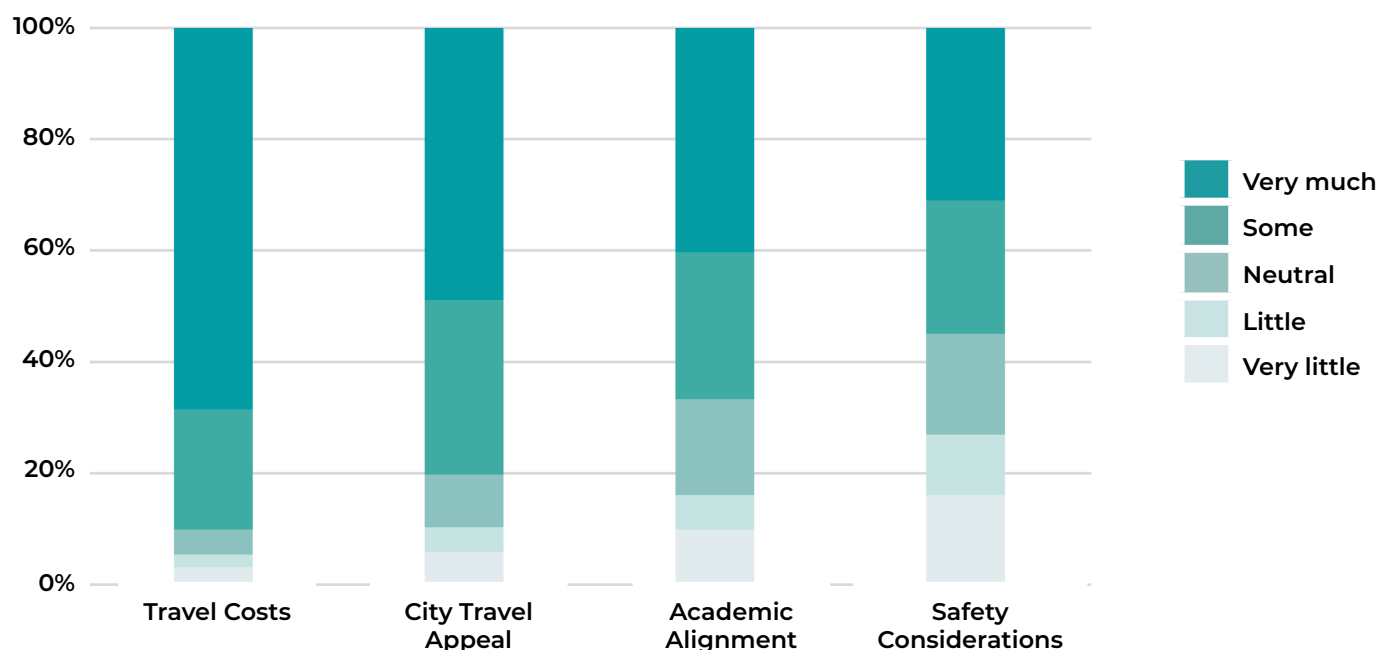


The satisfaction of the non-academic elements of the congress were rated as follows:

Online Registration 84%
Technical Support 83%
Virtual Hub 80%
LASA Hosts 80%
Virtual Platform Information 77%
Daily Congress Newsletters 71%
Congress Certificates 70%
Mobile App 63% (if used)
LASA2021 Printed Program Book 52% (if acquired)
Gran Baile 30%
Zen Meditation 28%
Hatha Yoga 26%
Childcare Subsidy 19%

We know that the COVID-19 situation has affected the household income of academics, as well as university budgets in Latin America, and consequently has influenced the decisions of many of our members to attend a face-to-face Congress. In fact, when asked to what extent the travel costs are important for your decision to attend a LASA Congress, 91% of the respondents said it was somewhat or very important. Other factors such as city travel appeal, academic alignment, and safety are also considered by our members.

Figure 3. Extent of factors in decisions to attend a LASA Congress

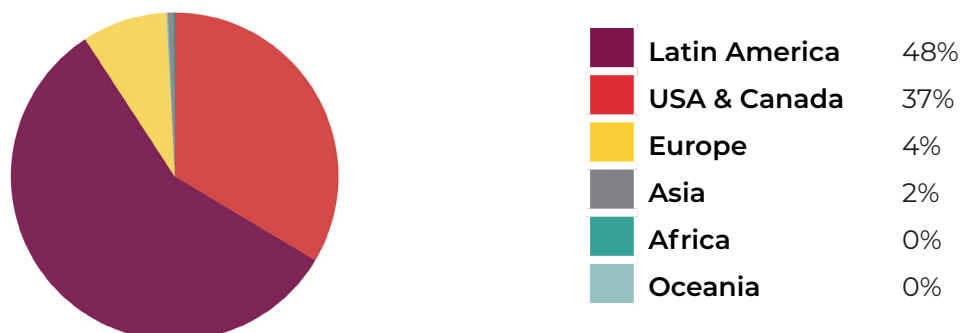


In this regard, and despite the pandemic situation, over half (51%) of respondents said they are planning to attend the LASA Congress next year, 40% were unsure and 9% said they were not planning to attend. Furthermore, when asked about the possibility hybrid Congress, 89% of respondents said they would be interested, while 11% showed no interest.

Demographics

The demographic figures of the LASA Congress attendees remained similar compared to last year, with Latin America being the place where the majority resides (57%) compared to 55% on 2020. Likewise, 34% of scholars were from the United States and Canada, and only 8% of respondents were from Europe.

Figure 4.
Scholars Residency



Regarding the primary activity of our attendees, there was an increase in those focused on research, from 48% in 2020 to 57% in 2021, and a slight decrease in those focused on education (34%), compared to 37% last year.

Figure 5.
Primary Activity



As in every Congress, LASA is very grateful to our faithful sponsors and foundations and to the Endowment Fund, which continue year after year to provide partial grants to our participants. This year LASA was able to offer 590 grants to participate in the LASA2021 virtual Congress.

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