



The Organizing Committee of the XII ICC
The Institute for Camp Education in China
The ICF Ambassador to China
Beijing, China
March 15th, 2020

The Honorable ICF President John Jorgenson, the ICF Board, and friends of the camping communities around the world:

Thank you very much for your strong support to the Chinese camp education community at this difficult time. As we are united to fight against the epidemic, the show of international support has been very important and heart-felt by colleagues across the country. Poetic expressions such as “岂曰无衣，与子同裳 (o my brother, take my armor instead, and we will fight together)” and “山川异域，风月同天 (mountains may separate us but we are always united in spirit),” from Japan and other countries, are like warm sunshine that penetrates through the heavy mist. We are really deeply moved as well as encouraged. Again, thank you!

As the situation in China continues to evolve and we work to bring all issues under control, the outbreak has taken hold around the world and is likely getting worse. Based on the scientific evidence so far, we know that the COVID-19 is a new type of respiratory infectious disease that can spread amongst persons of all ages. We have seen many countries around the world are taking the drastic measures that China was forced to adopt, “the closing of the entire city,” “putting the entire residential communities under quarantine,” “business suspensions,” and “school shutdowns.” While effective, these measure are very costly.

As a result, many businesses and industries are facing grave challenges, among which the camp education industry may feel the hit even more real to home due to the nature our beloved business—traditional school education may be partly replaced by online

platforms but camp experience by definition cannot. Shortly after the outbreak of COVID-19, Chinese colleagues began seeking different ways to minimize the impact and this search is still ongoing every day. Some of the initiatives have proved to be useful. As the epidemic situation is now spreading on a large scale worldwide, to support our international colleagues to better respond to the impact of COVID-19, we would like to share our experiences and hopefully what we share will be of some help or encouragement to our international friends as they formulate a response strategy.

Here are some of the strategies our Chinese colleagues have done:

1. Objectively gauge the impact and actively adjust the business strategy.

Colleagues in China quickly came to the realization that no effective vaccine exists so far, and therefore, the ban for mass congregation will not be lifted in the short term. As a result, based on safety concerns, parents' confidence in sending their kids to camps will be limited, and many may even request for refunds. In response, many Chinese colleagues actively communicated with parents pleading for deposit extension to avoid the situation of outright refund. Also some camps offered more diversified list of camp product options, such as fall or winter sessions at greater discounts to ensure the current safety of the cash flow. Furthermore, in order to increase company revenue, or for the purpose of maintaining customer communication, during this current government ban, some companies have also tried to adjust the existing camp business, including extending the service cycle and increasing the service content, such as opening online, interactive sessions on parent-child education as everyone is effectively under house quarantine across the country.

So far the responses from the market have been encouraging, as the camps are responding to customer needs. Admittedly the very personalized and individualized camp experiences cannot be replaced by online communication but during this difficult time, the online interactive sessions are welcome by parents and campers as a way of showing the care from the camping community, which through games and engaging counselors boosted the morale of everyone at this time. In fact, many camps

even acquired new customers through these efforts and it proves to be an important opportunity for the camp to enhance and strengthen their online presence.

2. Launch online courses to share industry wisdom amongst fellow camping colleagues.

The crisis is also a critical point for everyone in the industry. As unfortunate as it is, it also provides a great opportunity to press the “pause” button in their business and reflect upon questions that are important to the future development: How to improve the professionalism of the team? How to explore the possibility of a new business model or change into new style of management? As a result, many camp education organizations in China, including The Institute for Camp Education (ICE) and the ICC2020 OC etc., organized online forums, training sessions, and interactions in various forms.

For example, various experts were invited to share their thoughts particularly those related to the future of the whole camping industry, while counselors and others from the frontlines share their tips with working with kids or communicating with parents. The forms of sharing are also very diverse, such as online classrooms and live chats. Also all these experiences were summarized in a timely manner after the online sharing, which was really well received by the colleagues, many of whom responded that these sharing sessions helped improve their confidence in the industry and their ability to get through the current crisis.

3. Open up dialogues for innovative thinking and broaden the scope of camps.

Due to the epidemic, all offline gathering activities could not be carried out, which not only hindered peer communication, but also caused fear and anxiety to spread. A series of online projects were carried out to help relieve the situation: the “Cloud Camp” project is one of such initiatives: co-sponsored by the ICC2020 Organizing Committee, the Institute for Camp Education (ICE), and the Camp’s Cool College (酷营), the project included programs such as “Cloud Camp Visits,” “Cloud Battles” and “Cloud Workshop.”

As the name suggests, the “Cloud Camp Visits” is a way to learn about camps online. Camps are contacted nationwide and encouraged to present their strengths and opportunities for collaboration, which were responded enthusiastically by colleagues from around the country.

The “Cloud Battles” is similar to the ice bucket challenge that was very popular around the world couple of years ago. Many counselors and others from camps around the country took part in this activity: participants at different locations make funny videos, such as synchronizing the passing of objects from one to another, or synchronizing expressions, or gestures in such a way that despite being in different locations, from the recorded videos, the participants looked like they were doing all these activities seamlessly at the same place. It was meant to solicit laughs from the audience, a much needed therapeutic relief given the situation, and to express support for the hardest hit areas and the people who are fighting the epidemic. Many people said that these videos had a good heart and good sense of humor and thus transmitted positive energy to the society.

The “Cloud Workshop” is a call to camp counselors, experts, and other professionals and encourage them to bring various forms of online workshops, such as cool gesture dance, and indoor game experience, etc. to the millions of children and parents who are now trapped at home.

The purpose of all these activities proved to be very successful amongst a wide variety of audiences and promoted the value of camp education through online channels. All the participants also felt proud that their efforts helped the flow of communications continue despite the epidemic, and many of the young camp counselors indeed brought laughter, vitality and energy to the campers when they are trapped at home.

4. Make visible the role of camp in the process of helping the whole society cope with the difficult situation.

During China’s campaign against the epidemic, countless individuals, indeed heroes, from all walks of life contributed, and some may even pay the ultimate price, their

lives. They are angels in uniforms—the nurses, police officers, community volunteers, and delivery boys for all sorts of things from food to medical supplies. They are the backbone of China and the hero of the people. At the same time, everyone else is also looking for different ways to help, and the camp education industry is no exception.

As one of the most influential organizations in the camping community in China, The Institute for Camp Education (ICE) is convening 20 camps across the country to jointly launch the “2020 *Tribute to Heroes* Summer Camp” initiative, designed to provide free camp sessions for children of the aforementioned heroes, especially those of the frontline health professionals. The participating camps will provide at least 100 camp spaces, which will be free of charge for children of our heroes. We believe in the power of camp education, which as a form of innovative education, is future-oriented, and will provide great value to the children of the heroes. We understand this is not much compared to what these heroes did for us but we hope that this initiative can express our gratitude to them, and the participation of their children can also provide a great opportunity for the other campers in general to appreciate the importance of building a strong sense of social responsibility, which will be beneficial to all children involved.

Dear Mr. John Jorgenson and all our dear international camp education friends, what we have laid out above is an overview of some of the responses of colleagues from all over China during the epidemic. We offer it humbly and with gratitude for all that you have done for us. We hope that it is helpful as well as reassuring. As colleagues we must not lose the courage to face and fight. We will survive as an industry. As the epidemic spreads on a larger scale to more countries and regions, we sincerely hope that everyone affected can successfully withstand the impact of the epidemic, and most important of all, that everyone and the family will be safe and healthy. We will pull through all this together, in solidarity and brotherhood, and when all of this is done and cleared, we will meet again, even embrace and hug each other.

Our dear friends in camping of the world, despite all these difficulties, one thing we are certain of more than ever: the value of camp education is apparent to everyone, especially to children. We believe that the global camp education will have

a great new beginning after this, without doubt.

Our dear friends in camping of the world, in the fight against the epidemic, we are in the same boat, regardless of where we are from and what languages we speak. Let's unite and together, we will overcome the difficulties.

For now, so long, and stay safe!

Love, and Best Wishes from China,

All colleagues and friends from:
The Organizing Committee of the XII ICC,
The Institute for Camp Education (ICE),
and the ICF Ambassador to China