
**JOIN THE WORLD'S LARGEST
SAILING RACE**

 **BARCOLANA[®]57**

BARCOLANA

Barcolana began its sustainability journey in 2018, on the occasion of the 50th edition of the regatta.

That edition was entered into the Guinness World Records with 2,689 registered boats, over 18,000 people at sea and an estimated audience of more than 400,000 spectators, generating significant international media exposure for the event.

That edition demonstrated Barcolana's potential as a modern event, capable of engaging with its audience across multiple platforms:

- sailing;
- watersports;
- onshore events: culture and art;
- entertainment and leisure.

However, the most attended edition of the largest regatta in the world also highlighted the need for us to further develop both onshore and offshore content capable of educating and inspiring people.



In 2019, we focused specifically on education, along two main strands:

- 1 – **onshore sustainability;**
- 2 – **inclusion at sea.**

We succeeded in engaging strategic stakeholders/sponsors for both projects, securing the necessary budget for their implementation.



ALICE

Alice is a large “sardon”, the typical sardine of the Gulf of Trieste. In partnership with the local supermarket chain Despar and Trieste’s multi-utility company, we collected over 10,000 used plastic bottles and, together with an Italian artist, created a large-scale fish installation.

- For the first time, we used Piazza dell’Unità d’Italia as a reflective space connected to Barcolana;
- We involved local schools in the project.

The result was a major awareness initiative on recycling: the creation of a mascot that is also a work of art – still on display in Trieste today – and over four months of local media exposure focused on plastic recycling.



WOMEN IN SAILING BY GENERALI

Our presenting partner Generali demonstrated a strong commitment to **diversity & inclusion** in the workplace and sought to use Barcolana as a metaphor for an inclusion project. This activation, launched in 2019, has grown year after year and has led to a 5% increase in the presence of women in key crew roles within the Barcolana rankings.

The project was initially based on two pillars:

- 1 – A prize awarded to the first woman to win as skipper or helm;
- 2 – A “manifesto regatta” dedicated to mixed youth crews, sailed in one-design boats on the Friday preceding Barcolana.

Today, after six years, Women in Sailing has become:

- an **online training platform for coaches and sailing club managers**, supporting the creation of mixed crews;
- a face-to-face **training programme with sports psychologists for coaches** in Friuli Venezia Giulia;
- a **face-to-face training programme for Italian Sailing Federation (FIV) Level II coaches**;
- a **mentoring and support programme for women** working across the sailing industry
- worldwide, in partnership with partners such as the Magenta Project.



BARCOLANA DURING COVID

Continuing our journey, we arrive at 2020, the year the **Covid pandemic** began.

Barcolana takes place in October and, in March 2020, while Italy was in lockdown and paying the highest price in terms of deaths and hospitalisations, **we decided that the event would go ahead regardless.**

That edition was extremely complex to organise due to social distancing measures and mandatory covid testing (which we trialled for the first time during the event). Ultimately, because of the Bora wind, the regatta itself could not be sailed; however, onshore **events still took place with 600 crews** – an extraordinary number during Covid.

That year marked another turning point in our sustainability projects.

We had both the time and the commitment to introduce a **new pillar into our calendar**: an event dedicated to marine sustainability, bringing to Trieste – Italy's city of science – a platform for discussion on the topic.



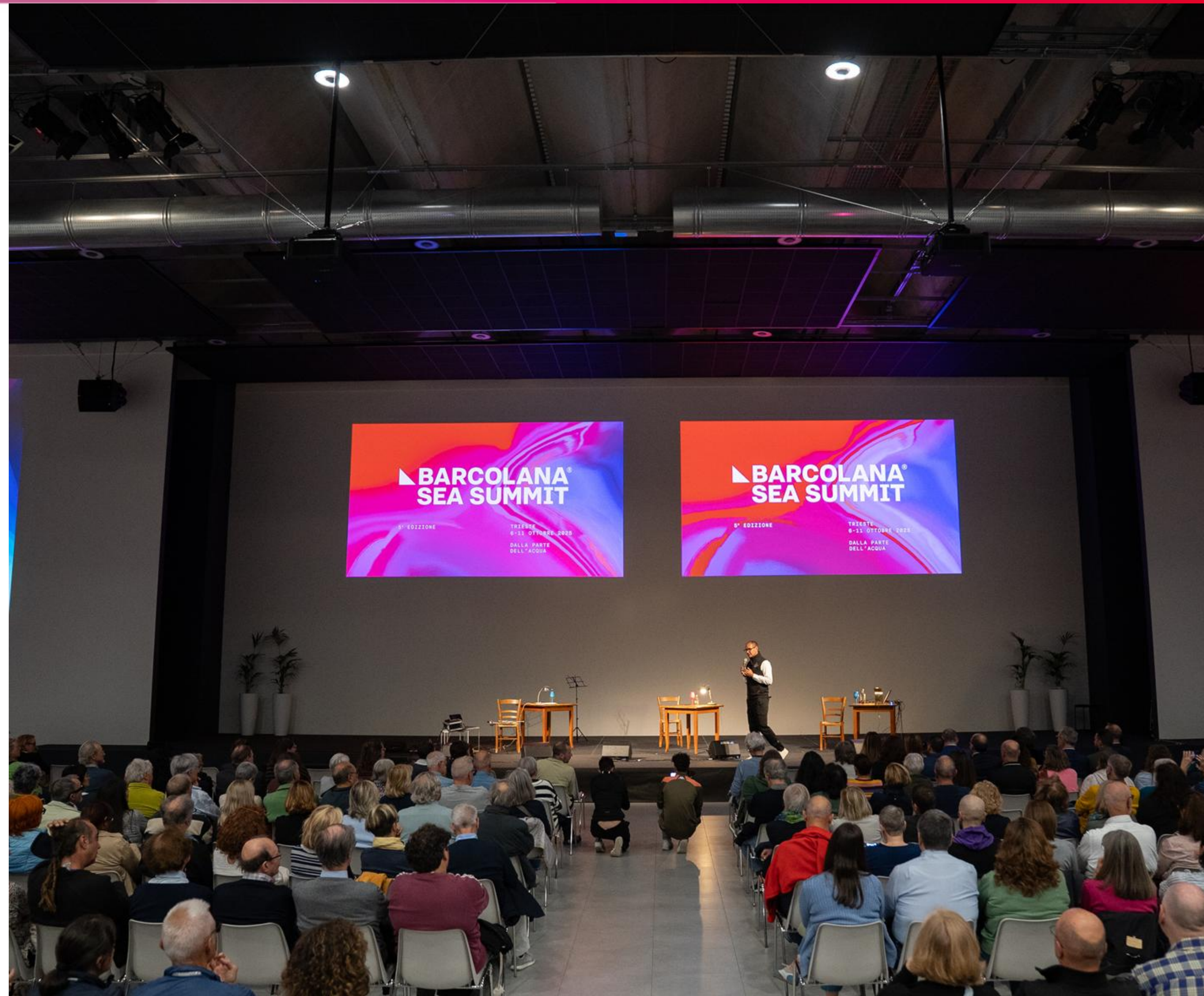
BARCOLANA SEA SUMMIT

Barcolana Sea Summit began in 2021 and, over five years up to the most recent edition, has brought 2,000 students per year to its educational conferences, alongside scientific stakeholders, Italian institutions and the media.

It has become a key event for addressing environmental sustainability, outreach and, above all, Italian, Slovenian and Croatian policies concerning the future of the Adriatic and the Mediterranean.

Since then, we have evolved the format to include:

- conferences;
- guided visits to Barcolana for students;
- school-based activities (such as the “Follow Me”
- project run by the Nautical Institute).



BARCOLANA & WORLD SAILING

In 2022, at the end of the pandemic, Barcolana began its development pathway together with **World Sailing**. While we had already been collaborating since 2019, in 2022 Barcolana recognised that it possessed a sustainable and inclusive DNA it had not previously identified: a focus on mental health.

Trieste has a unique history in this field. It is the city of Dr Franco Basaglia, where inclusive approaches for people with mental health conditions have been developed since 1969. There are no psychiatric hospitals, but instead **a network of community-based supported housing facilities**.

Since 1982, Barcolana has included the “Barcolana per il Sociale” initiative, featuring regattas and onshore events for people with intellectual disabilities and, more recently, physical disabilities.

For over 30 years these regattas have been organised within Barcolana itself, not as standalone events. To give them greater visibility, we developed a dedicated calendar including:

- **Para Sailing regattas with the Italian Sailing Federation (FIV) and World Sailing, culminating in the recent Hansa 303 European Championships;**
- **a full day dedicated to social inclusion**, with inclusive onshore events and regattas pairing sailors with intellectual disabilities and local skippers;
- **a dedicated space promoting inclusion;**
- **an accessible berthing area for crews including sailors with disabilities;**
- targeted communication and promotional activities, supported by strong and shared storytelling.



BARCOLANA PER IL SOCIALE

In addition to our own initiatives, **Barcolana** attracts associations that independently organise:

- introductory **sailing experiences for people with disabilities** who have never previously taken part in activities at sea;
- **onshore engagement initiatives** such as “Drum Circles”;
- **projects for children from disadvantaged urban areas** who have never experienced the sea.

Together with Wendy Schmidt, we have launched a project “Sail and Science” similar to that developed in Rhode Island, introducing schools to sailing and marine sustainability. Schools use our headquarters as a classroom for four weeks each year and go out sailing.



BARCOLANA TODAY

Meet – Enjoy – Sail

As a preview, this is the **payoff of the current edition**, designed to be inclusive and open to all audiences, demonstrating that sailing is for everyone.

- **Barcolana Sea Summit:** further evolution and earlier scheduling within the calendar, targeting a broader audience;
- **Ocean literacy** projects supported by funding from **Wendy Schmidt**;
- **Greater inclusivity** within Barcolana, enabling increased participation by people in disadvantaged conditions;
- **Continued growth of Women in Sailing**;
- **Internships for women** wishing to organise Barcolana, in partnership with the **Magenta Project**;
- **Further development of Para Sailing.**



WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

Barcolana is certainly a regatta, but it is also a **major platform for educational content, passion for the sea and social themes;**

As a popular event – different from the America's Cup or SailGP – we can focus on our audience not as ticket buyers or fans, but **as active participants in the event;**

Approximately **10% of our budget is allocated to storytelling:** ensuring that across all communication channels – print media, television, social media and digital platforms – the event is presented with the constant objective of encouraging participation;

Inclusive events are now at the core of the Barcolana calendar, while private events have become secondary and almost invisible.



TAKEAWAYS

When investing in inclusivity and sustainability and developing a shared project, you must also invest in communication.

Without communication, it remains an interesting platform for participants but does not generate educational impact;

To invest in inclusivity, **you must be open to your local community, listening before speaking.**

Understand which issues the community needs to address **and provide them with a platform and a voice;**

When investing in sustainability, as an organiser you must **recognise that your goal is also to learn, not to teach.** Your event must remain open and receptive.



THANK YOU!