EVENT LEGACIES: LET’S UNLEASH THEIR POTENTIAL
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Major events such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Rugby World Cup and Grand Slam Tennis tournaments like Wimbledon are a platform for the host city (or country) to elevate its global image and enhance their economic and social development. However, a lack of understanding of the key drivers and outcomes can leave host cities unwittingly out-of-pocket, with little or no lasting impact or justification for the significant expense incurred.

WHY LEGACY?

Aspiring organising committees around the globe are increasingly looking to quantify the benefits of their events, and ensure their plans have a lasting impact on the wealth, health and happiness of their cities and communities. An event’s legacy is the long-term return on investment for host cities and is a fundamental part of making the business case for hosting a major event.

By understanding legacy impact, organisers can learn from previous events, attract new investments and ultimately deliver longer-lasting and sustainable benefits for their city. But it doesn’t stop there – with accurate measurement of the right metrics, cities can generate enough insight to:

• Select which tournaments to bid for – to focus resources on events with the greatest return on investment
• Quantify anticipated benefits – to justify the investment
• Design tailored interventions (such as new facilities or workforce development) – to maximise their impact
• Track legacy during and after the event – to fine-tune interventions and identify improvements for future competitions

Conversely, a lack of understanding and incorrect handling can leave host cities unwittingly out-of-pocket with a host of abandoned stadiums and little or no lasting impact.
We believe there are three key improvements to data collection that would dramatically improve the accuracy of legacy analysis:

1. **Standardised metrics for every event - for comparative insight**
   - Consistency of metrics and data collection is essential for comparison. This includes the actual metrics measured, the methods used to do so, and the specificities of the samples analysed, such as geographical breakdown or age range.

2. **A broader dataset for every event - for end-to-end insight**
   - Events create collections of interventions, which when combined with socio-demographic factors drive the legacy outcomes. Data collection should therefore cover not just the drivers of an event’s impact on physical activity, but also the wider outcomes that accompany this – from healthcare savings and productivity gains, to crime prevention and social integration. This end-to-end insight is vital for understanding the full impact of an event.

3. **Data collection before, during and after the event - for longitudinal insight**
   - Data collection on specific metrics should begin as soon as the bid is won. It should continue throughout the event and in the long-term, potentially up to 10 years after the event ends. This longitudinal insight is the only way to provide a complete picture of each competition, and the impact specific interventions have on each performance indicator.

There is likely to be a major governance role for the IOC and other major bodies to play in overseeing this process. They would be responsible for the selection of the indicators to be measured and would need to choose a range that is comprehensive enough to guide future policy, but not so wide as to raise serious logistical problems. The IOC has explored data collection through the introduction of initiatives such as the Olympic Games Global Impact Study, which aims to objectively and scientifically measure the impact of an Olympic Games on economic, social and environmental areas. However, there is still a significant need for improvement more broadly in the data collection and analysis of major events.

Collaboration and sharing of data between host cities and organising committees will also be vital, as the potential level of insight generated increases with the scale and reliability of available data. Only then, with the right leadership and effective partnerships, will we be able to accurately measure legacy impact with comparative, end-to-end and longitudinal insight.
UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL OF EVENT LEGACIES – ACTIVE CITIZENS WORLDWIDE

Although achieving the goals outlined above is a potentially onerous and difficult task, various initiatives are already providing detailed longitudinal and comparative insight. One such initiative is Active Citizens Worldwide (ACW), a data network providing policymakers in cities across the world with groundbreaking knowledge and insights on their physical activity profiles.

In partnership with the founding cities – Auckland, London and Singapore – ACW has already proved the health, social and economic benefits of specific interventions within physical activity (see the ACW 2018 Annual Report). The key to this comparative analysis is the capturing of end-to-end data for each city under four categories: physical activity, socio-demographic, interventions and outcomes (see Figure 1).

By applying cutting edge analysis to large volumes of raw data, it has been possible to ‘understand the delta’ and so isolate the relative importance, and impact, of specific interventions on a given individual’s propensity for physical activity. This can then be built into a picture of different demographic segments: by age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or geographical location – at the city, community, group and individual level. This is also possible on a longitudinal basis, unearthing new trends and providing an even broader understanding of the dynamics involved. The earlier these measurements can begin, the more holistic the insight that can be generated.

The combination of city-specific insights on what drives physical activity, along with the value of physical activity, provides participating cities with an unprecedented view of the social and economic return on investment in physical activity. Against this baseline, it becomes possible for host cities to measure the impact of major events on participation and its related benefits. This level of insight is critical in any design of future events and their legacies.

IT’S TIME FOR CHANGE

Understanding legacy is vital to future success of major events. Initiatives such as ACW are finally providing the type of rigorous, data-driven platform to enable organising committees to do so. The challenge is one of implementation. International federations, organising committees, national federations and city governments need to come together to invest in systematic data collection and analysis across their events. By doing so, not only will the city leaders, event organisers and governing bodies benefit, but ultimately the citizens of the host cities can reap the full reward of major sporting events – and ensure the long-term future of our sporting spectacles.