

ASSESSING GROSS AND NET IMPACTS OF MEGA EVENTS: THE LONDON LEGACY SUPRA-EVALUATION.

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Synopsis:

This paper aims to contribute to debates about streamlining measuring tools by outlining the way in which a wide range of disparate measures and evaluations of programmes linked to a single mega-event, the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, were synthesised in the London Legacy Supra-Evaluation to present an evaluation of the gross and net impacts of the event on the host city.

Abstract:

AIM OF PAPER – RESEARCH QUESTION

Mega events such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games are often the stimulus for a programme of interventions in the host city lasting four to ten years or more. This paper aims to contribute to debates about streamlining measuring tools by outlining the way in which a wide range of disparate measures and evaluations of programmes linked to a single mega-event, the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, were synthesised in the London Legacy Supra-Evaluation to present an evaluation of the gross and net impacts of the event on the host city.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

As aspirations for the legacy of mega-sport events have grown to include a wide range of social, economic, cultural and community goals, interest has grown in approaches that can provide an holistic assessment of the gross and/or net outcomes of the programmes of interventions associated with such events. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has developed an Olympic Games Impact protocol, which focuses on key existing indicators in the host city (ESRC, 2010). For London 2012, the UK government commissioned a meta-evaluation, intended to be an evaluation of evaluations (Stufflebeam, 2001) but which, in practice, provided simply an compilation or aggregation of

data. In the host city, the London Mayor's Office and the Greater London Authority commissioned a supra-evaluation (Weed et al, 2013) which, drawing on programme theory (Rogers, 2008), sought to provide an integrated and synthesised comprehensible overview of the extent to which the investment of London resources had been responsible for shaping the imprint of the Games on London life. This focus on identifying a link between inputs (the investment of London resources) and outcomes (the imprint on London life) is a key tenet of programme theory, which focuses on identifying what outcomes are to be sought, identifying the inputs and processes by which they are assumed to be achievable, and then assessing whether such outcomes have been achieved by the processes assumed. As it measures inputs as well as outcomes, it also provides for an evaluation of net rather than gross outcomes of interventions.

METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

The London Legacy Supra Evaluation assessed 96 programme evaluations, reports, plans, strategies, policies and data sources which collectively provided a significant volume of detail on the imprint and potential future imprint of the Games on London life. In order to distill and synthesise this evidence to articulate clearly, concisely and comprehensibly the holistic imprint of the Games, two summary measures were developed:

Impact on place: Estimates of the extent to which the Games and Games-related programmes have accelerated development in different areas and sectors.

Impact on people: Profiles of four broad Londoner Groups, each of which have experienced the Games and Games-related programmes in different ways.

In developing the summary measures, source evaluations and data were assessed for the extent to which the outcomes on which they were reporting had been markedly or moderately influenced by London resources, defined as investments made by London stakeholders

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The paper will present and discuss details of the data underpinning the conclusions below, including a discussion of methodological challenges in developing the summary measures and in identifying net and gross impacts.

Impact on place:

- Development in and around the Olympic Park was accelerated by at least ten years.
- In the first three years of the regeneration programme in the London Host Boroughs, socio-economic development was accelerated by nine months.
- The development of London's transport infrastructure was accelerated by thirteen months
- By 2017 the growth of London's tourism income will be accelerated by two years.

Impact on people:

- 45% of Londoners are positive about the benefits for the city, highly engaged, and have felt a high level of personal positive impacts.
- 32% of Londoners are positive about the benefits for the city, but they were less engaged and have felt less personal positive impacts.
- 19% of Londoners are positive about the benefits for the city, but they are only slightly engaged and have felt no personal positive impacts.
- 4% of Londoners are negative, not engaged and have felt no personal positive impacts.

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