

The legacy of le Grand Départ Tour De France Utrecht 2015: involving the city in the creation of legacy

Authors: Bake Dijk MA (1), Hans Slender MSc (2), Froukje Smits (3)

Institutions:

1. Utrecht University, School of Governance, Netherlands
2. Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands
3. Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands

E-mail: b.dijk@uu.nl

Aim

Research into the creation of social impact and legacy through sports events has primarily focused on outcomes (impact focus), but not on why those outcomes occurred (leveraging focus). Therefore Chalip (2006, p. 113) introduced event leverage theory, which refocuses on event evaluation by making it useful for future biddings, planning and production of sports events. With studying event leverage, the aim is not merely to evaluate what has been done, but rather to learn from the past in order to improve future leveraging efforts. This was also the case in the evaluation of the legacy of Le Grand Départ Tour the France 2015 in Utrecht. In our study we've focused on two types of legacy: 1) Organizational legacy; how did the cooperation between the several governmental and commercial organizations before, during and after Le Grand Départ contribute to leveraging the event for business, city marketing and economics? 2) Social legacy; how did the organization of a 100- side-event program contribute to the social leverage of the event?

Theoretical background

According to Chalip (2006) "events are more than mere entertainment, they are social occasions with potential social value" Rather than the traditional 'build it and they [benefits] will come' approach to sport events, the purpose of event leveraging is to be proactive in planning for the creation of specific event benefits for the host community, and taking strategic measures to make those events sustainable (O'Brien and Chalip, 2007).

Several scholars found barriers towards the creation of legacy (Misener et al., 2015; Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012). A lack of clear ambitions, what resources are available to support the ambitions and how the success will be appraised is one of the barriers (Misener et al., 2015; O'Brien, 2006). Besides that the difference between the responsibilities for organizing a sport event and the responsibility for creating legacy creates some tension for event organizers. Event organizers primarily have an event to stage, that is their main goal and legacies are secondary to that goal. Also, the event organizing committee is normally disbanded shortly after the event, which can make legacy programs unsustainable (Chalip, 2014). Last, there is an absence of evaluation programs that assesses or monitors the effectiveness of event leverage efforts (Misener et al., 2015).

Methodology

A mixed-methods methodology is used to gain insights in the process of the organization of legacy. (1) A database of all side-event activities is created to have an overview of all the

activities. (2) 11 focus group sessions were organized (before and after the event) in which 38 people represented 13 side-events (3) 21 representatives of the side-events and the local organizing committee were interviewed in person of (3) 653 surveys were conducted on sight at the side-event activities to gain insights in the experiences of the participants and the visitors. Data from the focus group sessions and interviews was analyzed by using MAXQDA 12. The findings from the focus group sessions and interviews were leading for our interpretation of legacy mechanisms and leverage strategy. The quantitative data from the surveys was used to give an overview of the experiences by the participants and visitors of the side-events. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data gives opportunity for fuller understanding of the working mechanisms and stronger inferences towards the used leverage strategies (Van der Roest, Spaaij & Van Bottenburg, 2015).

Results and discussion

Around 250 side-events are organized in the period from a year before the event till the date of the event. The side-event program had 138.000 participants, 570.000 visitors and 7.500 volunteers to carry out all the activities.

The bottom-up approach of the project organization to carry out the side-event program resulted in more side-event activities then the project organization could ever carried out themselves. Dozens of local cultural, sport and welfare organisations closely cooperated in organizing the side-event activities. The project organization only facilitated this cooperation's by developing communication tools which they gave to the local organizers and they've developed a website which gave an overview of all the activities. The cooperation between cultural, sport and welfare organizations resulted in new contacts between the organisations and new concrete cooperation's which lasted longer than the (side-)event period. Besides that, the sense of ownership over the side-event activities was so high that several local organizations have decided to carry out their activities this year again.

This study shows us that shaving a strategic (bottom-up) approach for the creation of legacy, and involving local organisations and residents, is an effective approach for the creation of legacy of sport events.

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