

THE OLYMPIC GAMES - CATALYST FOR CHANGE

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The Games are the largest peacetime event in the world, with over 200 countries coming together for a festival of youth, sport and culture. They have the power to transform Host Cities and effect deep-rooted change in the economy, culture, infrastructure, environment, image and urban development of a host city and country. The presentation will highlight how this has been played out historically.

The Olympic impact spreads beyond a Host City. IOC funded community sports development programmes such as 'Olympic Solidarity' and 'Sport for All' assist communities in the developing world and are also important catalysts for change.

The Olympic Games have become a high point for artistic expression and performance. Olympic ceremonies involve spectacular acts of artistic imagination and daring which showcase Olympic values such as peace, respect and friendship in dramatic and innovative ways that inspire global audiences, while Olympic host city cultural programmes have addressed issues of local and international importance, including social inclusivity, community relations, diversity, tolerance and reconciliation.

Globally exists the challenge of getting more young people into sport in order to help stem the growing health epidemic and associated economic costs of lifestyle related illnesses such as obesity. The presentation highlights the IOC's new Youth Olympic Games initiative and Olympic Movement's on-going commitment to promoting and providing opportunities for young people from all backgrounds to experience the benefits of sporting activity. Opportunities to inspire young people through unique Olympic youth focused sports, culture, education and environment protection programmes as part of the Olympic experience are also discussed in relation to future development of the Games.

The importance of managed change from the Games is stressed. The integration of post-Games legacy planning with Games time operations, services and venues requirements from the outset of the Olympic planning cycle is critical. Based around long-term community needs and development, the Olympic Games can be a catalyst for change for a Host City and its community and regions.