

Health Policy Responses & Infrastructure Re-Use in Host Cities of Mega-Sporting Events

in Non-Traditional Host Countries

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3 Case Studies



2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia; 2010 FIFA World Cup in Johannesburg, South Africa

Table 4: Policy Contexts and Impacts

<i>Rio de Janeiro</i>	<i>Sochi</i>	<i>Johannesburg</i>
Morar Carioca; some impact, discontinued due to lack of funds and political turnover	Increased access to sport opportunities for the disabled	FIFA Legacy Fund to improve the sporting infrastructure in South Africa
Implementation of PSF and UPA programs: relieved pressure on hospitals and prioritized family in low-income neighborhoods	Winter tourism dramatically increased	Some local and community based sporting initiatives, most short lived
Implementation of PSAM program to address environmental health concerns; Worked with WHO to contain zika outbreak	A Campaign to Olympic ideals (healthy and active society) led to increases in sport and physical activity participation levels	20 public health centers built; hospital and emergency service upgraded

Policy and Infrastructure

South Africa led the way in infrastructure re-use, finding uses for all of their stadiums. Rio and Sochi, however, did not follow through on pre-event promises and now are saddled with unused stadiums and Olympics Parks in the middle of their stadium. Rio de Janeiro led the way in policy initiatives; two programs helped relieve pressure on a health system in crises. Efforts to clean up bays, while incomplete, still yielded results in decreasing environmental pollutants. Public health efforts to mitigate the spread of the zika virus was further evidence that a mega-sporting event can serve as a focusing event for change. Sochi and Johannesburg used their mega-sporting events to encourage physical activity by increasing opportunities for youth to participate in sport; both cities also expanded previously existing health infrastructure.

Abstract

The IOC has increased their focus on long-term effects for hosts of the Olympic Games, coinciding with increased academic interest in studying the positive and negative legacies of mega-sporting events in the host city. Recently, cities in relatively underdeveloped countries have won bids for mega-sporting events. City officials and the IOC have begun marketing mega-sporting events as transformational events for underdeveloped cities' economies, urban infrastructure, social landscape, and health. The thesis investigates the impact of hosting mega-sporting events for public health and infrastructure in three case studies: the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, and the 2010 World Cup in Johannesburg, South Africa. By investigating health policy responses and urban infrastructure re-use projects, this research contributes to understanding the impacts of mega-sporting events on communities in host cities. Specifically, policy and health behavior theory are connected with the potential for health policy response and infrastructure re-use to benefit community residents in mega-sporting event host cities.



Table 5: Infrastructure Use and Reuse

<i>Rio de Janeiro</i>	<i>Sochi</i>	<i>Johannesburg</i>
Nomadic architecture allows for immediate and purposeful re-use; idea scrapped	Fisht (main stadium) being reused for World Cup matches	Most stadiums now host professional sports teams
Olympic Park rarely used	Olympic Park rarely used	Upkeep costs dramatically outweigh revenue
Some major stadiums abandoned and not maintained; already falling into disrepair	Winter Sports Infrastructure currently utilized for increased tourism and population.	Surrounding area upgrades made in some cases

Conclusion

More research should investigate the link between living in a mega-sporting event city and increased participation in sport and physical activity. Current research has found that there may be a festivalisation effect in that city residents want to participate in a culturally significant moment and event (Weed 2012). There is evidence that Kingdon's (2010) policy stream theory applies to mega-events as focusing events. There is therefore the potential that mega-sporting events can in fact be used as the catalysts they are often marketed to be; however, current efforts have ended with merely words and plans. If the challenges of funding and political turnover can be overcome, cities in traditionally underdeveloped contexts can use mega-sporting events as springboards for public health policies and programs. Additionally, infrastructure can be re-used in meaningful ways (London and Los Angeles) so that residents benefit from the very buildings that they helped pay for.

References

- Kingdon, J. (2010). *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Updated 2nd Ed. New York: New York.
- Weed, M., & Mansfield, L. (March 2012). Developing a physical activity legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: a policy-led systematic review. *Perspectives In Public Health*, 132(2), 75-80.