



Promoting health enhancing physical activity and social welfare through outdoor running events

RUN for HEALTH

Literature review

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1. Background

In this document the results of the literature review of the project “Promoting health enhancing physical activity and social welfare through outdoor running events/RUN for HEALTH” are described. The project aims to promote sports, exercise and social well-being through the organization of running events. The mission of the project is fourfold:

1. Study of running events – from management, marketing, organizational policy and communication perspective – for in-depth insight.
2. Development of practical guidelines and policy recommendations for the organization of running events.
3. Stimulation of (international) communication between organizers of events and policy makers.
4. Increasing awareness about the (im)possibilities to stimulate sports, exercise and social well-being through running events.

The results of this review were input for work package 4 (field research, especially the construction of the participant questionnaire) and work package 5 (case study's, including developing a typology of running events).



2. Typology of sport events

Running events around the world have been enjoying a growing popularity, and their evolution of running has been well-documented (see Bottenburg, Scheerder & Hover, 2010, Scheerder, Breedveld and Borgers, 2015). Three complementary developments are responsible for this popularity.

The first development is practical and concerns an ever-increasing number of different types of running events, number of participants and organisations involved. For example, the running calendar of the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) includes 81 events in three categories (i.e., gold, silver and bronze). These events are designed for both elite athletes and non-professional runners where meets' organizers offer also half marathon, 10K, and 5K races. In addition to these events, IAAF has certified over 1000 marathons all over the world. Similarly, the European Athletics Running for All list 13 categories of events for all ages and levels of abilities. Running as a hobby has grown globally and different running events attract people to participate and practice. The traditional events, such as marathons, half marathons and shorter distances have been popular reason for travelling around to world. New types of running events have grown together with these traditional ones including path and trail runs, night runs, ultra runs, xtreme runs and obstacle runs. These events attract more people to test their limits and in the process, they help promote awareness and healthy living behaviours. The proliferation of running events provides support to one of the earliest multinational studies on sport participation by Kamphorst and Roberts (1989), which concluded that regardless of context and fads, running has always been a popular activity, which is fundamental to human survival and wellbeing.

The second development is conceptual and relates to the emergence of a field of enquiry dedicated to event studies, which includes sport events (see Getz, 2012).

The third development has to do with the institutionalisation of sporting events and running events specifically. Countries around the world have long recognised the social, economic and political benefits of sport events and have been establishing national policies for bidding, hosting and leveraging them (e.g., Canada, 2015, UK, 2015, Australia, 2016). Furthermore, running events have become highly standardized. The European Athletics Quality Road Race standards act as an assurance for roadrunners throughout Europe. They distinguish between races that respect the standards and those that have not sought certification or assessment. They form the foundation of Running for All, a strong recognisable brand for running activities throughout Europe.

Three levels of standards were established that encompass all types and sizes of races as follows (<https://www.european-running4all.org/en/standards/>):



- 1 Star: The race fulfils guaranteed minimum requirements of safety and security for athletes during a race with a small number of runners.
- 3 Star: The race guarantees a good level of safety and security, and offers runners a satisfactory level of quality of services for a race with a large number of runners.
- 5 Star: The race guarantees a comprehensive level of safety and security, and high quality services, for a race with significant numbers of runners.

How the standards are set: races are assessed on a total of 54 categories that cover:

- Administration and finance
- Course
- Environmental and social responsibilities
- Measurement
- Medical
- Results
- Safety
- Services
- Timing

To ensure legitimacy and credibility, and to make sure the standards take account of the needs of today's runners and race organisers, Running for All have consulted runners, race organisers, European Athletics Member Federations and competition and medical experts.

Event standardization has also been occurring in the knowledge domain (<http://www.embok.org/index.php>). The Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) platform was set up with the explicit aim to promote research and knowledge generation and dissemination in the field. Similar online platforms were established elsewhere, and they serve as an important reference point for participants and events promoters (e.g., UK <http://www.eventimpacts.com/>). From an event typology point of view the standardization of running events suggests that two important dimensions need to be taken into consideration. These include the event certification by a professional body and its formal evaluation.

As far as can be ascertained, typologies of running events do not exist in the literature but there have been several attempts for developing typologies of events in general and sporting events in particular. Typologies represent organised systems of types and are well-established tool in social



sciences. Their main purpose is to assist in forming and refining concepts, drawing out underlying dimensions, creating categories for classification and measurement, and sorting cases (Collier, LaPorte and Seawright, 2012). Collier et al. (2012) distinguish between conceptual typologies, descriptive vs explanatory and multidimensional vs unidimensional typologies. This literature review attempts to provide a conceptual typology of running events. The main function of this type of typology is to explicate the meaning of a concept by mapping out its dimensions.

Like any event, running events represent special public occurrences that take place in a given time and space. These are planned events, that is, they have well-defined purposes, target groups, format, governance arrangements, and which have both certain kind of public appeal and impact. Therefore, by definition, running events are social constructs, and as Jago and Shaw (1998, p.29), noted they provide participants with a leisure and social opportunity beyond everyday experience. It follows that, as a public event, running events are based on a consequential logic – by showcasing human excellence on the sport field, they aspire to affect social life by inspiring people to take up sport, to appreciate other cultures, religions and gender and, more broadly, to bring about change by making the world a better place. As Handelman (1998) points out, this is a functional relationship that “lies at the epistemological core of any conception of public event. The features of the public event indicate that it points beyond itself, or in other words, it is symbolic of something outside itself” (p. 12).

The symbolic meaning of running events varies significantly across contexts but in order to affect a positive personal or social change they need to meet some basic human needs. Those needs are captured by the concept of the “triple bottom line”, which focuses on the integration of social well-being, environmental protection and economic viability goals. Rogers and Ryan’s (2001) discussion of the “triple bottom line” concept explicate that there are nine basic, universal, human needs including the need for sustenance, protection, affection, idleness, creativity, freedom, understanding, participation and identity. Furthermore, as both Getz (2012) and Parent and Smith-Swan (2012) pointed out, the study of sport events has been the subject matter of several academic disciplines such as anthropology, geography, economics, sociology, management, history, political science and psychology. Therefore, discipline-specific perspective will offer different interpretations of the satisfaction of human needs.

At event-generic level, Getz (2012, p. 41) proposed a typology of planned events including (i) cultural celebrations, (ii) business and trade, (iii) arts & entertainment, (iv) sport & recreation, (v) political & state, and (vi) private functions. Getz further categorised sporting events into league



play/championships, one-off meets/tours, fun events and sport festivals. This typology seems to be rather broad and not analytically helpful. However, Getz explicitly noted the multifaceted functions performed by events, which represents an important dimension in their understanding.

One of the earlier sport events typologies was proposed by Gratton, Dobson and Shibli (2000, p. 26) and includes four types of major events according to their economic impact where the word 'major' in each category signifies the importance of sporting outcomes of such events. These are:

- **Type A:** Irregular, one-off, major international spectator events generating significant economic activity and media interest (e.g. Olympics, Football World Cup, European Football Championship);
- **Type B:** Major spectator events, generating significant economic activity, media interest and part of an annual domestic cycle of sports events (e.g. FA Cup Final, Six Nations Rugby Union Internationals, Test Match Cricket, Open Golf, Wimbledon)
- **Type C:** Irregular, one-off, major international spectator/ competitor events generating limited economic activity (e.g. European Junior Boxing Championships, European Junior Swimming Championships, World Badminton Championships, IAAF Grand Prix)
- **Type D:** Major competitor events generating limited economic activity and part of an annual cycle of sports events (e.g. National Championships in most sports).
- A similar typology for the purposes of bidding and managing events was proposed by the UK Sport, which classify the sporting calendar into four groups within the overall umbrella of major events, including mega, calendar, one-off and showcase events.
- **Mega events:** awarded after competitive bidding. Includes the Summer Olympics, the Paralympic Games, the FIFA World Cup and the IAAF World Athletic Championships.
- **Calendar events:** no bidding required, commercially successful events, play a regular part in the international calendar for that sport, e.g. The Championships (Wimbledon), the British Formula One Grand Prix, The Open Championship, Test Series in cricket, Rugby Union Internationals.
- **One-off events:** generally awarded after competitive bidding, substantial television rights interest nationally and internationally, e.g. the Rugby League and Union World Cups, the Cricket World Cup and European Football Championships. Identifying and analysing existing research undertaken in the events industry.
- **Showcase events:** generally awarded after competitive bidding, these events have the potential to boost sport development, provide the UK with a good chance of winning medals



and can improve the UK's image overseas and/or involve regions in UK, e.g. the World Judo Championships, the World Disability Championships and the European Showjumping Championships (Bowdin, McPheerson & Flinn, 2006).

This typology outlines two important dimensions of sporting events including their ownership and the process of obtaining the right to organise them. These two dimensions directly affect the outcomes of any event as they impact on the process of their delivery and regulate the public access to it.

Building on Jago and Shaw (1998) and Getz (2005), Parent and Smith-Swan (2012) provide a typology of sports events with seven types including: special events (planned); minor sports events (local/community level with relatively low attendance or media attention); festivals (community-based); major sports events (high attendance, media attention); hallmark events (recurring; tied to a place); large-scale sports events (one-off or recurring); mega sports events (one-off). Despite its level of detail this typology revolves around one dimension of events, namely their size.

There is also a significant body of literature on the impact and legacy of sporting events, which concerns the current project. Two current systematic reviews of the field are worth noting including Scheu and Preuss (2018) and Koenigstorfer et al. (2017). Both reviews have established the link between events' vision and actual impacts and legacies. Impact in tourism is one aspect when discussing big running events. Running events are widely recognized to have social and economic impacts in the hosting city. Herstein & Berger (2013) discuss sport events as a form of branding the city and stress those cities that host international sport events should try to make the event more attractive each year, and the hosting city should concentrate in its tourist function. Hosting major sporting events can create both, short-term impacts and long-term legacies (Solberg & Preuss, 2007). Hosting different sport events have become an important business opportunity for cities since these events benefit the business environment and can strengthen the city's image. The media, and especially the social media, plays an important role in promoting sport events and creating the city image since tourists have become global media users (Knott, 2012). Thus, in order to understand the health impact of running events, we need to attend to the visions of events' promoters, and how these have been carried out in order to deliver the stated impacts.

The above typologies provide some key dimensions of running events, which allows for developing the project's own typology to guide the conceptualisation and measuring the impacts of running events in participating countries. Table 1 shows the typology of running events.



Table 1. A typology of running events

Event dimension	Indicator	Measurement
Name		Document
Ownership	Public/private/voluntary organisation	Document
Organiser	Single/consortium	Names of organisations
Event history	Starting date	No years
Acquisition process	Formal bidding	Yes/No
Certification	IAAF/ Europe Athletics/Other	Yes/No
Form	Mass participation; commemorative, regular, for certain type of runners, cause-related; corporate	Document
Frequency/Duration	Annual/Monthly/By-weekly/Seasonal	No days
Access	Registration/fee required	Yes/No (amount in €)
Function	Stated aim	Survey/Focus groups/ Health statistics /medals/points
Level	Local/regional/national/international	Document
Location	City streets, park, other	Document
Participants	Young people, semi/pro athletes, etc.	No
Distance	In kilometres	Document
Media coverage	TV, newspapers, internet, other	Yes/No
Sponsorship	Public/commercial	Yes/No
Auxiliary activities	Workshops, exhibitions, master classes, public celebrations, research	Yes/No
Prizes	Cash, in kind	Yes/No
Formal evaluation	Own/independent	Survey/other
Sporting/health outcomes	Improved wellbeing/health/participation /awareness/standards/qualifications	Survey/Focus groups/Health statistics/medals/points

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3. Tourism and economic impacts

It is well recognized today that sport events can lead to positive economic outcomes and tourism development for the hosting destinations (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Lee & Taylor, 2005). While there has been extensive research on large-scale sport events (e.g., European or World Championships and Olympic Games), limited research so far have focused on small / medium size sport events' and their impact on the hosting destinations (Gibson, Kaplanidou & Kang, 2012).

It has been proposed that small-scale sport events, such as running events in urban or natural environments, stand as a 'good' practice for local tourism and economic development (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010). Such events are easier to be organized and managed, compared with large-scale sport events, due to their smaller size, limited or no further sport and infrastructure investments (usually they take place in facilities) and smaller number of volunteers (Higham, 1999). The value of such events relates to their direct economic impact (money spent by participants and their associated members), the building of the destinations' image, the development of social and entrepreneurship networks among stakeholders, and the involvement of local communities (Tanks, 2013; Taks, et al., 2015). The direct economic impact is due to the money spent by participants and visitors in local transportation, food, accommodation and tourism services (Barajas, Coates & Sanchez-Fernandez, 2016; Taks, Chalip & Green, 2015; Taks, Green, Chalip, Kesenne & Martyn, 2013).

Running events are among those with the highest growth the last ten years. It is estimated by Breedveld, Scheerder & Borgers (2015) that in Europe there are over 50 million runners today. These European runners are estimated to spend 9.6 billion euro annually on expenses related to the activity of running. Outdoor runners are increasing worldwide. In the USA it is estimated that the number of runners had increased from 45.67 million in 2008 to 60.48 million in 2015 (Statista, 2015). Recently, organized running in the form of city marathons has also shown considerable growth. In 2013 there were at least 80 major international marathons worldwide and thousands of smaller ones (Stewart & Dwiarmein, 2015).

These city marathons are supported by local and national governments, because they bring economic, tourism, and social benefits (Gibson, Kaplanidou, & Kang, 2012; Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010; Stewart & Dwiarmein, 2015). They also promote an active life-style and are associated with personal happiness levels for participants (Theodorakis, Kaplanidou, & Karabaxoglou, 2015). According to a report by SportCal (Stewart & Dwiarmein, 2015, Table 2), New York marathon is the biggest marathon worldwide in terms of the number of runners registered (55,000 in 2014). The Chicago (40,802 runners) and Berlin (36,755 runners) marathons are included in the list of the top



three. To understand the size of these marathons, New York marathon is estimated to have an economic impact on the city of around 340 million US dollars.

Table 2. World Marathon Majors Series.

Marathon	Starters 2007	Starters 2014	Increase %
Berlin	32.497	36.755	13
Boston	23.869	35.755	50
Chicago	25.522	40.802	60
London	36.396	36.621	<1
New York	39.265	55.000	40
Tokyo	30.879	36.030	17

Source: Adapted from Funk, et al. (2016)

These trends in the development of running have created a new sport model, which is different from the pyramid shape model. According to Scheerder et al. (2011), the ‘participation running’ and ‘performance running’ modes, which are delivered through organized sport clubs, revealed the church sport model, which is based on mass participation and on a small number of individuals with high – level competitive and elite running performance. The emphasis of participating in such events has been moved, therefore, from competition to a more a recreational type of participation, which is strongly linked with tourism development (Alexandris, Theodorakis, Kaplanidou & Papadimitriou, 2017).

Impact on the Destination Image

Apart from the economic impact, small size sport events may contribute to positive tourism outcomes, such as longer seasonality (e.g. Higham, 1999), tourism development of mountain regions (e.g. Alexandris, 2016; Duglio & Betramo, 2017) and updating image of the destination (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). Empirical studies have shown that a strong event image and a distinct destination personality profile can lead to positive participants’ attitudes and intentions to revisit (Hosany, Ekinci & Uysal, 2006, Kaplanidou, Jordan, Funk & Ridinger, 2012). Chen and Funk (2010), tested the influence of the destination image towards intention to revisit the place among sport and non-sport tourists. The results indicated that sport and non-sport tourists had different perspectives. Sport tourists scored higher on intention to revisit the destination because of the its image and its relevance



with the sport activities. In contrast, non-sport tourists had a moderate score on their intention to revisit the destination. Kaplanidou and Vogt (2007) also reported that a strong destination image interacts with the event image, while Wong, Xu, Tan & Wen (2018) emphasized on the important role of destination image for the development of positive tourism experiences. To summarize, small-scale sport events can contribute to the development of a destination's image and participants'/visitors intentions for revisiting the destination for sport or tourism reasons.

Examples of Small-Scale Sport Events and their Economic Impact

There are several examples in the literature of small scale sport events and their economic impact:

- Daniels and Norman (2003) estimated the direct economic impact of Cooper River Bridge Run into 3.5 million dollars. Every participant in the event had an average length of stay of 2.7 days.
- Gibson, Kaplanidou and Kang (2012), reported the economic impact of a local running marathon in Gainesville, Florida. The direct economic impact of the 932 participants was reported to be 316.570 dollars, with a daily average spending of 95.2 dollars.
- Duglio and Betramo (2017) measured the direct economic impact of a branded trail running event in Dolomites Collon Trek, with 1.000 runners. They reported that 76,000 thousand euros were spent at the hosting destination.
- Alexandris (2017) estimated the direct effect of the most famous trail running event in Greece, which held more than 1.500 runners, at 161.000 thousand euros.
- Konstantinidis, Karagiorgos and Alexandris (2018), who conducted research on a small-scale open water swimming event in a seaside area in Southern Greece with 700 national and international participants, estimated the direct economic impact of the event on the local community at approximately 89,000 euros.

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4. Socio-cultural impacts

The development of commercial sport events

The sports and exercise sector has evolved enormously in recent decades. Two waves of running have made the running sport into a popular leisure time activity as we know it now. However, this has not always been the case. More than fifty years ago, running was known as an activity executed by competitive athletes on athletics track in a track and field club or in physical education programmes (Scheerder, Breedveld & Borgers, 2015). Running in public was seen as a peculiarity. However, the Cultural Revolution as well as the fitness revolution and accompanying process of ‘informalisation’ of the sixties and seventies has caused a change. People became more outspoken and their straightforward attitude became more accepted (Scheerder et al., 2015). This resulted in the first running boom at the end of the sixties and running evolved to an independent, well-pursued sporting activity (Scheerder et al., 2015). Running became a topic of interest during the seventies as more and more people realized that running had health advantages. By running people showed that they were healthy and vital. Governments started investing in social programs and leisure facilities to facilitate running (Breedveld, Scheerder & Borgers, 2015). Many city marathons all over Europe were founded this period, which were being organized by local (sport) clubs and (municipal) governments. This was not only nurtured by the popularity of mass running, but it was also the result of the attractiveness of mass running events for business enterprises as they saw the participants as a possible new group of consumers (Scheerder et al., 2015). During the eighties onward, the number of marathons and running participants kept increasing.

However, during the nineties a stagnation could be recorded for both the number of running participants and number of running events (Scheerder et al., 2015). At the beginning of the 21st century the number of participants and events increased once again, which indicates the emergence of the second running boom in Europe. Both statistics of marathon events as well as European Athletics Association member federations confirm this trend (Scheerder et al., 2015; van Bottenburg, Scheerder & Hover, 2010). This boom was also shaped by the commercialization and professionalization of sports providers (Scheerder & van Bottenburg, 2010). More and more (differentiated) people started running. ‘Completing’ became more important than ‘competing’ (van Bottenburg et al., 2010). People started running on their own, some founded their own running group with friends where they could run without any obligations. This period can be characterized by the emergence of ‘light running communities’, as the vast majority of runners does not participate in a running club (Breedveld et al., 2015). One could run whenever he or she wanted, wherever he or she wanted, with the companionship



he or she wanted. Also women, elderly and other target groups started running (Breedveld et al., 2015). Commercial event organizers eagerly anticipate on these flexible and light relationships in a time where the ‘experience economy’ plays a central role (Pine & Gilmore, 2001; Scheerder, Claes & Vanreusel, 2014; Scheerder & Vos, 2015). To keep the runner captivated, organizers are putting more effort on the ‘experience’. Participants do not longer just run a 10 miles, they experience the spectacle, the course, the environment, the side events, etc. It is no longer about the physical activity itself, but about the unique memorable experience (Scheerder & Vos, 2015). Organizers must constantly reinvent themselves and their concepts in order to permanently retain runners. The recent introduction of urban trails, color runs, mud runs, etc. confirms this trend. It is not surprising that different types of events (read: experiences) attract different types of people. This becomes very interesting for marketing specialists to analyse specific running segments and target them with different marketing strategies.

The Impact of running events

Running events are not organized for no reason. Commercial event organizers want to attract as many participants as possible to make profits. (Municipal) governments support events (e.g. by means of subsidy, security, etc.) for the possible soci(et)al effects it could create. That is why the impact of events is being investigated. In literature, a distinction is made between different forms of impact. We prefer the typology proposed by the ‘triple bottom line approach’. This approach makes a distinction between the (1) economic impact; (2) social impact; and (3) environmental impact (Fredline, 2005; Ritchie, Shipway & Cleeve, 2009; Kim, Jun, Walker & Drane, 2015). Different authors appoint different denominations to the categories (e.g. Ritchie (1984) uses the term ‘socio-cultural’ where the triple bottom line approach uses the term ‘social’), but generally the three major categories can be distinguished.

Previously, research was mainly focused on investigating the economic impact. On the one hand were economic aspects often the decisive factor when deciding to organize an event. If the organizer would make a profit, the event will be organized. If the organizer would make a loss, the event will not be organized. Sport events can have huge financial consequences as shown in the case of the Olympic Games of 1976 in Montréal (Patel, Bosela & Delatte, 2013). On the other hand, is it difficult to measure the intangible social impact when comparing it with the tangible economic impact. After all, it is very difficult to measure the profit made by the community pride or social cohesion (compared with the profits made by the registration fees). In recent years, the importance of



investigating the social impact of events has been recognized (Hover, Straatmeijer, Breedveld & Cevaal, 2014; Misener & Mason, 2006).

In literature, different definitions of social impact are used. Table 3 displays some of these definitions. Some definitions are limited, because they focus on the quality of life (Fredline, Jago & Deery, 2003; Mathieson & Wall in Fredline 2005 and Ohman, Jones & Wilkes, 2006). The definition of Hall (in Balduck, Maes & Buelens 2011) is broader and therefore preferred.

Table 3. Definitions of social impact

Source	Definition
Fredline, Jago & Deery (2003, p.26)	‘Any impacts that potentially have an impact on the quality of life for local residents’ (socio-cultural impact)
Mathieson & Wall in Fredline (2005, p. 264); Ohmann et al (2006, p. 130)	‘Social impacts of tourism refer to the changes in quality of life of residents of tourist destinations’
Hall in Balduck et al. (2011, p. 94)	‘Manner in which events effect changes in the collective and individual value systems, behavior patterns, community structures, lifestyle and quality of life.’
Olsen & Merwin in Ohmann et al. (2006, p. 130)	‘Changes in the structure and functioning of patterned social ordering that occur in conjunction with an environmental, technological or social innovation or alteration’
Ritchie in Inoue & Havard (2014, p. 297)	‘Social impact of a sport event is the enhanced level of local pride, a sense of community and enthusiasm for the community among residents of a host community’

Sport events can have both positive and negative social impacts, as well as impacts on short term or long term. In addition, the impact is dependent on the nature, the scale, the location and duration of the event as well as unique historical, cultural, economic and environmental factors of the community (Fredline, 2005; Ohmann et al., 2006). The Olympic Games will provide another social impact, compared with a regional championship. Also the social impact of an event in a huge city in Asia will be different from the social impact of an event in a small village in Europe or Africa. Finally, the type



of the sport is at stake. The national championship of cycling has a different impact in Flanders compared to Canada because of the popularity of cycling in Flanders. Conversely, the national championship of ice hockey will have a stronger impact in Canada compared to Flanders.

Social effects of sport events do not just happen (Taks, Green, Misener, Chalip, 2014). Sport events can bring a theme under the attention of the public, but from them on side events are interesting (Scheerder & Vos, 2015). In literature, the two terms *legacy* and *leverage* are often used in this context. Legacy are the '*planned and unplanned, positive and negative, intangible and tangible structures created through a sport event that remain after the event*' (Gratton & Preuss, 2008, p. 1924). When these outcomes are strategically planned, in other words when these side events are organized with a predetermined purpose in order to guarantee the long-term effects of the sport event, one talks about *leverage* (Chalip, 2006). When these side events are properly organized, the social impact will be expressed.

Factors of social impact

Social impact is a very broad term. This was confirmed earlier by comparing the different definitions that were found in literature (see above). Based on the available literature, the most common social impact factors will be discussed here.

Feeling Good Factor

When a person feels proud about the event, the person will feel good and therefore will show his support for the event. On the one hand, good performances of a country, a team or an athlete will result in a feeling of pride for the person (Kim & Petrick, 2005). On the other hand, faultlessly organizing an event can also result in a feeling of pride. Despite the fact that South-Africa did not perform well on the World Championships Soccer 2010 the inhabitants felt proud because in their opinion they organized the event rather well (Gibson et al., 2014).

A second factor that has an influence on the feel good factor is the excitement within the community (Chalip, 2006). Something big is going to happen and people are looking forward to it and experience a form of excitement.

Social capital and social cohesion

Social cohesion concerns the relation between people. They experience the event together and, in that way, feel connected. For example, the organization of an event for a good cause can result in



developing relationships between people in a community but can also result in the strengthening of already existing connections between people (Inoue & Havard, 2014). Social capital on the other hand concerns the relationship between a person and its community. By organizing an event, the inhabitants can feel more connected with the community as a whole (Gibson et al., 2014; Taks, 2013). In Germany, the World Championships Soccer 2006 has ensured that the relationships between different ethnic groups improved (Ohmann et al., 2006).

Sport participation

Sport events are often used to increase sports participation among the population. This demonstration-effect or trickle down-effect is often highlighted by event organizers as a goal to organize the event. Weed & colleagues (2015) were able to conclude that some people exercised more because of the London Olympics. In addition, some non-active people became active again. However, increasing sports participation through events sometimes leads to a Matthew effect – participants in sports participate more instead of an increase of participation among non-participants - and often proves to be a utopia (Taks, 2016). In the end, it seems that it is not impossible to increase sports participation, but there is not yet a ready-made step-by-step plan developed with which this would succeed.

Involvement

The involvement towards a sport event is often measured from the perspective of volunteers (Kerwin, Warner, Walker & Stevens, 2015; Warner, Kerwin & Walker, 2013). Volunteers, for example, may be asked to give their opinion concerning the organization of the event or the solving of problems during the event. Kerwin and colleagues (2015) concluded that the level of involvement of volunteers who volunteered for a small-scale kayak event in Canada increased two days before the event compared to three weeks before the event.

Conflict

Sport events can cause various forms of conflict: excessive drinking by spectators, hooliganism, etc. (Balduck et al., 2011; Kim & Petrick, 2005). The event also produces a lot of waste that can remain after the event. In addition, the access to certain streets can be blocked or hindered and in that way, residents have difficulties in reaching shops (Cegielski & Mules, 2002). Sport events also produce a lot of noise which can result in noise pollution (Cegielski & Mules, 2002).



In addition, events are often accompanied by an increased mobility. A large crowd must reach the stadium at a certain time and this often causes traffic problems. There may be closed roads, traffic jams, difficulties in finding parking spaces, etc. Residents can become irritated by these traffic problems, which causes them to dislike the event and no longer support it. Insight in traffic jams is very important because research shows that traffic congestion and roadblocks can indeed be a reason not to participate in an event (Bull & Lovell, 2007). Moreover, mobility problems can also be tackled prior to the event by developing the right strategies. For example, the 2006 World Cup soccer which was staged in Germany was used to construct an underground metro system in Munich and was also used to increase the number lanes of motorways (Ohmann et al., 2006). This example shows that targeted strategies can be used to turn disadvantages into benefits.

Sense of unsafety

Because many people come together in one place, one can feel unsafe. Not only can panic erupt among the public, the large crowd can also be attractive for terrorists. These security risk can prevent people from participating in an event or some people event don't want that certain events will be organized in their city. Results show that an event can be accompanied by crime (Ma, Ma, Hwa & Rotherham, 2013; Twynam & Johnston, 2004).

Factors that influence the social impact on sport events

As indicated earlier, social impact of sport events cannot be created out of nothing (Chalip, 2006; Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012). Targeted strategies need to be developed in order to create and/or maximize the social impact, a process that is called *leverage* (Chalip, 2006). The earlier example of the 2006 World Cup soccer in Germany was a successful example of how the impact of sport events can be leveraged (by using the event to improve the mobility in the city). Event organizers can also provide possibilities to eat, drink and chat before and after the event. In that way, spectators will arrive earlier and stay longer which improves social cohesion (Chalip, 2006).

Another way to improve the social impact is by organizing side events (Balduck et al., 2011; Hover et al., 2014; Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012). These are events that are organized alongside the main event for people who were not initially attracted to the main event. Hover and colleagues (2014) state there are two conditions that need to be met to talk about side events. On the one hand, these side events must be a part of the broad concept of the event. On the other hand, they may not exist if the main event did not exist (Hover et al., 2014). For example, an art or culture festival can be organized



in the run-up to a sport event. That festival can attract people who were not initially attracted to the main event, it can be a part of the broad concept of the sport event and it is possible that it did not exist if the sport event would not be organized (Chalip, 2006).

Target audience

There are numerous stakeholders that are affected by organizing a sport event. Besides the event organizer and participants that are at stake, also the local community with its inhabitants, suppliers of goods and a lot of volunteers can perceive an impact when organizing a sport event. Whereas previous research investigated the social impact on inhabitants (Balduck et al., 2011; Pranic, Petric, & Cetinic, 2012) or visitors (Hover, Davids, Baart de la Faille – Deutekom, Dallinga, 2016), the current project clearly focuses on the impact on participants.

Figure 1. Overview possible stakeholders for sport events



Source: Adapted from Scheerder & Vos (2015)

The Policy in Sports & Physical Activity Research Group of the KU Leuven (Belgium) has a strong research tradition in measuring the social impact of (large-scale) participatory events. From 2007 onwards, participatory running and cycling events are being studied (Derom, Van Wynsberghe, Scheerder, 2013; Salien, Scheerens, Borgers & Scheerder, 2018; Scheerder & Boen, 2009).



Derom and colleagues (2013) investigated the degree of physical activity six months prior and three months after the 2013 Tour of Flanders Cyclo in Belgium. Results showed that three percent of the respondents were inactive before the event and became active after the event, which is evidence of a limited demonstration-effect. However, almost twelve percent of the respondents were active before the event but became inactive three months after the event. Results show that the event can be a manner to increase physical activity because people train prior to the event. However, this impact is mainly applicable for the already active population (Derom et al., 2013).

In addition, research regarding the satisfaction of several aspects of both running and cycling events was executed in the above mentioned research group during several years (Salien et al., 2018, Scheerder & Boen, 2009). In 2009, participants scored the atmosphere as most important when choosing a running event and the price to quality ratio as least important when choosing a running event (Scheerder & Boen, 2009). In 2016, respondents also scored the atmosphere during the event as most important factor when choosing a running event, and the location as most important aspect when choosing a cycling event (Salien et al., 2018). Further, the authors analysed the predictors for participating in the same event the year afterwards. In 2009 the location was the best predictor for renewed participation in running events (Scheerder & Boen, 2009). However, in 2016, the atmosphere during the event was the best predictor for renewed participation (Salien et al., 2018). Moreover, it is possible to compare these findings between the sexes. For example, women seem to attach more importance to the atmosphere during the event than men (Scheerder & Boen, 2009).

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5. Psychological and wellbeing impact

Well-being is a somewhat broad and ambiguous concept whose definitions depend on the theoretical perspective taken. The concept itself represents a reaction of researchers in multiple fields, including but not limited to health sciences, psychology, and sociology, to the persistent Western focus on dysfunction and disease as main concerns of social science. If someone is sick or suffering, the logic goes, it should be a researcher's main priority to relieve their misery, rather than helping people in a relatively acceptable state function better or more agreeably.

This logic has been overturned for several reasons. Broad social changes, such as advances in medicine, demographic aging, and cultural trends have raised the demands people make of their own lives. People are no longer content to merely survive; they want to be *happy*. This trend has made optimal living and functioning a worthy research topic over the past several decades (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

A second reason that researchers have recently turned from the negative to the positive sides of functioning comes from findings of research themselves. It is increasingly clear that the most severe causes of suffering, which have thus seen the greatest investments of research in the past—cancer, cardiovascular diseases, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, criminality—can be linked to differences in positive functioning as potential root causes. In other words, people who are healthy but not functioning at their best are more likely to decline into disease than people who function optimally. As a result of these findings, cancer and cardiovascular diseases were termed *lifestyle diseases* that is, caused by lifestyle choices within the range of “normal functioning,” such as smoking, sitting for long periods of time, and eating large amounts of processed foods. In policy circles, the terms *preventative medicine* and *preventative care* came into vogue in the 1990's, suggesting that helping people function optimally—so, fostering well-being—could save money and time by never giving myriad diseases a chance to take root.

There is, however, little agreement on what well-being means. It is often merely defined in opposition to illness, disease, or misery. When pressed to explain what it *is*, researchers tend to choose one of two directions in defining well-being. They either look to disciplinary or social priorities to define certain *indicators* of well-being (Uchino et al., 1996; Ryff and Keyes, 1995; Cohen & Wills, 1985), or they (Diener et al., 1999) simply ask people how well they *feel*, and how well they *think* they are doing. The former approach is known as the *indicators* view of well-being, whereas the latter is termed *subjective well-being* (SWB) (Eid & Larsen, 2008).



In the present project we follow the subjective well-being view, for two reasons. For one, it is difficult to argue that any researcher or policy-maker is well-positioned to decide what is important for a diverse population, for example, all Europeans. Rather than imposing such a choice on the population of interest, subjective well-being allows each individual in a population to judge their life based on their own standards and priorities. The second reason that the subjective well-being view is more suitable to the present project is that it depends on global judgments of well-being, such as: how much is my life worth? How well is it going? To what extent am I happy or unhappy? These global assessments encapsulate the effects of more indicators than any researcher could think of on their own (Eid & Larsen, 2008). Measuring just the indicators would necessarily omit other indicators which, for example, future studies or social movements could reveal to be more important.

Under the subjective well-being view, most prominently developed by Diener, Lucas and Scollon (2006), how well someone is depends on two main components: how well they *think* they are, and how well they *feel*. The first, primarily cognitive component is usually operationalized as life satisfaction, and measured with items such as *to what extent are you satisfied with your life? Or how well do you believe your life has gone so far?* The second, primarily affective component is further broken down into two sub-components, a positive and a negative one. Measuring affect is an extremely complex matter, but for practical reasons, it is usually simplified to asking people to what extent they have experienced certain feelings—some positive and some negative—in a certain past period of time (Diener, Lucas and Scollon, 2006).

In 1967, Wilson presented a review of subjective well-being in which well-being was directly connected to demographic characteristics. According to Wilson (1967, p. 294), a happy person was a “young, healthy, well- educated, well-paid, extroverted, optimistic, worry-free, religious, married person with high self-esteem, job morale, modest aspirations, of either sex and of a wide range of intelligence”. Thus, in the past years, research on subjective well-being has evolved. Researchers have become more interested in understanding the processes that underlie well-being rather than simply describing general demographic characteristics related to it (Diener et al., 1999). The approach used in this study is based on indicators which measure people’s evaluations of their lives, such as life satisfaction and evaluations based on both positive and negative feelings and emotions (Diener and Chan, 2011). It is important to note that subjective well-being set points can change under some conditions and individuals differ in their adaptations to events. For example, some individuals can change their set point in reaction to some external factors (Diener, Lucas and Scollon, 2006).



A central question pursued by subjective well-being researchers in the 21st century is how individuals' subjective well-being can be increased. It has been well established that some extent of subjective well-being is under peoples' control (Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek, & Finkel, 2008; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). It has also been widely recognized that leisure experiences, such as running events, play an important role in the effects of people's choices on their subjective well-being (Tugade, Fredrickson, & Feldman Barrett, 2004). First of all, it is important to understand what previous studies have found about the correlation between leisure and subjective well-being. In the past, Aristotle stated that leisure is more important than work, because leisure provides pleasure and happiness in life. This is a belief that continues to our current day (Newman, Tay & Diener, 2013). Furthermore, in the past years, there has been an increase on scientific support for the statement that leisure enhances subjective well-being (SWB). Coleman & Iso-Ahola (1993) agrees by stating that leisure has the capacity to provide a health benefit. Finally, Chun et al. (2012, p. 437) state that leisure has the potential to be a "vehicle for personal transformation" as it helps individuals to experience strengthened relationships and to discover new options for leisure. However, this study does not only focus on the broad concept of leisure, but specifically focuses on the effects of running events on subjective well-being. Therefore, according to Newman, Tay & Diener (2013), SWB positively correlates with this aspect of leisure; playing sports or games. Henderson & Ainsworth (2002) agree by stating that the relationships among physical activity, leisure and health have implications for everyone's quality of life.

Newman, Tay, and Diener (2014) highlighted the importance of leisure as a context in which six important psychological mechanisms act to contribute to well-being. These six mechanisms, abbreviated DRAMMA, comprise detachment, relaxation, autonomy, mastery, meaning, and affiliation. Of these, five can be recognized as common aspects of running events. The challenge and atmosphere of running events may foster detachment, helping participants forget their daily hassles. This may explain why Szabo (2003) found that both humor and exercise had an equally positive effect on well-being. Specifically, 20 minutes of running or jogging at a self-selected pace had positive effects on a participant's mood (Szabo, 2003). Being able to train for and successfully complete an event requires knowing and using one's own body, fostering a sense of autonomy. To do so within a target amount of time or beyond what one was able to do comprises mastery of the challenge of running. Along these lines, Mannell (2007) found that the notion of commitment in freely chosen activities is central in understanding the effect of leisure on the quality of life. Once a person is engaged in and committed to freely chosen activities, taking on increasing challenges contributes to



subjective well-being. The fact that running is challenging, healthy, and to some degree self-expressive promotes various possible meanings for participants. Finally, training with partners, friends, or clubs, and interacting with other participants at events creates affiliation among runners (Yair, 1990). Thus, there are many reasons to believe running events are an important way that people can improve their subjective well-being.

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6. Marketing and management of sport events

Marketing

A common misconception held by many in the festival and event area is that marketing means nothing more than advertising (McDonnell et al., 1999). As shown by McDonnell et al. (1999) marketing is a structured way of thinking about managing an event or festival to achieve the objectives of customer satisfaction and either profit or increased awareness of a cause or movement. The core of the marketing concept is a focus on the consumer, in this case the event participant. Successful marketing flows from a complete understanding of these consumers (Bowdin et al., 2006).

Additionally the event concept is seen as a crucial factor for an event to be successful. Events are often one-off or annual occurrences, which means that the event team only has one opportunity to get everything right which makes it essential that the event concept is workable right from the start (Van der Wagen, 2001). According to Van der Wagen (2001), elements like the purpose, theme, audience and venue need to be compatible for the event concept to be successful. The author furthermore states that in order to determine the feasibility of an event concept questions need to be asked about the financial viability of the concept, the demographics of the audience, the infrastructure required to stage the event and, very importantly, the potential risks.

The supply of running events is diverse and each type of event has its own characteristics. Additionally new types of running events are emerging, like colour- or mud runs.

Before determining the event concept it is however important to set the event's objectives. This allows the whole planning process to be driven towards the event's intended goals and in many cases these two stages can be delivered at minimal expense (Masterman, 2004). In order to successfully set these objectives, an event manager must gain a clear understanding of why the event exists (its mission), what it is trying to do for whom (its objectives), and decide the strategies needed to achieve these objectives (McDonnell et al., 1999; Bowdin et al., 2006). By doing so the event manager chooses the added value the event will deliver. The added value will be created when an appropriate marketing in the form of the traditional four P's, Product, Price, Place and Promotion, is developed (Kok & Gruijters, 2013; Shank, 2005; Beech & Chadwick, 2007). It is critical that the elements of the marketing mix are coordinated. The pricing must be aligned with the perceived quality of the product and that the place the sports product is delivered is consistent with the promotional message received by consumers (Shank, 2005). A successful event manager must also be able to identify the range of stakeholders in an event and manage their individual needs, which will sometimes overlap and conflict (McDonnell et al., 1999). McDonnell et al. (1999) identifies six groups



of event stakeholders: host organisation, host community, sponsors, media, co-workers and participants and spectators.

Management, impact, legacy and leveraging

The impact of an event is what happens more or less automatically as a result of the event, and which is usually temporary. If this impact is sustained, then this is referred to as a legacy (Taks et al., 2015). Gratton & Preuss (2008) define legacy as the planned and unplanned, positive and negative, intangible ('soft') and tangible ('hard') structures created through a sport event that remain in place after the event. An example of a hard legacy are the sporting facilities that have been built for the event. Soft legacy refers, for example, to people's experiences, attitudes and behaviours as a result of the event (e.g. Holt & Ruta, 2015). Social impact is an example of a soft impact. In addition, Dickson et al. (2011) argue that one should also consider the concepts of time and space when referring to legacy: legacies may change over time (e.g. can turn from negative to positive and vice versa) and may be different from region to region. In addition, the duration of the legacy might differ as emotions may only be felt briefly, while investments in infrastructure last much longer (Preuss, 2014). To summarize: legacy can be planned and unplanned, positive and negative, tangible and intangible and it differs in terms of time, space and duration.

A sport event does not by itself lead to all of the outcomes desired by investing parties. In order to produce positive social impacts, leading to a sustainable social legacy, stakeholders must put mechanisms in place which anticipate on the momentum that a sport event offers. Strategic planning for event legacies is called leveraging. Leveraging refers to the way the event and its resources are exploited in order to produce desired (social) effects (Taks et al., 2015; Chalip, 2004; Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012). Thus, a prerequisite for generating legacies is that the organisations and stakeholders involved have planned for it (Tichaawa & Bob, 2015). Even though social outcomes of sport events are generally hoped for and desired, this rarely means that such effects are also planned for and that leveraging processes are being put into place (Chalip, 2006). Successful leveraging is absent in a significant number of events, partly because of inadequate knowledge, and sometimes unwillingness to invest time and money. Typically, the main event manifests itself as a 'greedy institution', absorbing all the time and money and leaving little energy for thinking about and acting on activities that extend well beyond the closure of the event (Breedveld & Hover, 2015).

Leverage is relatively new discourse (Chalip, 2006; Chalip, 2014; Ziakas, 2015). As a result, there is very little understanding of how events could be used for more inclusive, positive social



outcomes (Misener, 2015). In many studies the basic facts about the sport event (like duration, number of participants and visitors) and the impact it generated is what is presented. What happens in between – strategies separate from the organisation of the event itself, aimed at creating social impact - frequently remains a ‘black box’. This is a significant finding as it is assumed that it is precisely this process that highly influences the intended social (and economic) effects.

Next to managing the leverage of an event another essential aspect of the event manager’s job is human resource management (Bowdin et al., 2006; Van der Wagen, 2007). Without a motivated, trained, enthusiastic and willing work force, no event can achieve its desired outcomes. Volunteers form a major share of that work force for many events, which is especially true for participatory running events. Since these volunteers play such a vital role their involvement needs to be planned and budgeted for (van der Wagen, 2007). Paid and unpaid staff contribute, in many ways, to the ambiance created, which makes the motivation of volunteers crucial to the success of the event.

Tools for positive impact

Sport events are frequently seen as significant tools for creating positive social impact. This makes sense, as sport events have the power to attract enthusiastic participants, volunteers and to reach large audiences of visitors and followers via (social) media. Outbursts of excitement, pleasure and feelings of camaraderie are experienced among millions of people in the case of mega events. Social impact refers to the manner in which a sport event prompts changes in collective and individual value systems, behaviour patterns, community structures, lifestyle and quality of life (Taks, 2013). When aggregated, three main aspects of social impact can be identified (Hover et al., 2016):

- Sport and sport participation: the degree to which sport events stimulate the sport sector and especially stimulate participation in sport;
- Attitudes and beliefs: the degree to which sport events influence people’s beliefs, attitudes, norms and values (e.g. pride, happiness, ‘feeling good’);
- Social cohesion: social cohesion is the ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunities, based on a sense of trust, hope and reciprocity (see Jenson, 1998), as a result of a sport event.

Sport and sport participation

Proponents of sport events recurrently refer to the manifestation of a ‘demonstration effect’. The demonstration effect, or the trickle-down effect, is a process by which people are inspired by elite



sport, sports people, or sports events to participate themselves (Weed, 2009; Taks et al., 2014). Taking all of the evidence into account, one can only say that the evidence for the manifestation of a demonstration effect is, at best, mixed (e.g. Frawley, 2013). If there is evidence for an increase in sports participation, the effects are often temporary, seldom created among inactive people and sometimes only in certain regions. When aiming for a demonstration effect there are two promising target groups: those who are already active in sports (raise their frequency of participation) and lapsed participants (re-engage them) (Weed, 2009).

Participatory sport events have been recently proposed as one of the strategies to promote physical activity participation (Alexandris et al., 2017), because of the “sport participation effect” (Derom et al., 2013). These mass participatory sporting events have a considerable potential for public health action as participants usually participate in a spirit of social participation with their friends (Bauman, Murphy and Lane, 2009), although evidence on the health effects of these participatory sporting events is lacking (Murphy et al, 2015). Additionally, research has shown that runners participate in several running events per year (Funk et al., 2016). Not only the participation itself creates an increase in physical activity among participants, research has shown that always some training takes place before participating in a running event (Derom et al., 2013). Successful running events promote an active life-style and are associated with personal happiness for participants, psychological well-being, improved social life and improved quality of life over the long term (Alexandris, 2016; Theodorakis et al., 2015). Furthermore, sport events can attract local, national and international media, depending on their type (Stewart, & Dwiarmein, 2013). Exposure in the media means that the sport itself (running) will be promoted, which can increase its popularity among the general population.

A study of Lane et al. (2008) shows that participating in a running events works as a stimulus for sport participation. Additionally, participants in such events form “social groups” and this socialization aspect is a strong incentive to participate in future events and continue training (Scheerder et al., 2007). Lane et al. (2010) additionally states that Meet and Train group respondents were more confident than individual respondents in their ability to be active when stressed, when the weather was bad and when family demanded a lot of time; an indication that self-efficacy was greatest amongst women who trained in groups. The main premise behind training in groups is that it fosters social support and greater self-efficacy for physical activity; both predictors of physical activity (Lewis et al., 2002). Running events play a double role, since they can both contribute to the promotion of physical activity and active life-style, but they can also contribute to community welfare



since they can be associated with social (community integration) and economic (economic impact) benefits (Theodorakis et al., 2015; Hodur & Leistritz, 2006). This is particularly important because such events take place in local communities, in which the impact of such events can be particularly strong (Djaballah et al., 2015; Taks et al., 2015).

According to Derom et al. (2013), active participation in sport events (and the training which participants prior to this event) can increase physical activity of both active and inactive individuals. Already active individuals are encouraged to remain active and maintain or improve their physical activity levels for continuing taking part in such events (Derom et al., 2013). Furthermore, the prestige and experience of running in such events encourage participants to train for longer distances over their leisure running careers. There has been evidence that runners who feel the positive psychosocial benefits of participating in a running event are more likely to return to this event and develop positive word-of-mouth (Alexandris et al., 2017).

Inactive individuals are encouraged to become physically active and adopt an active life-style, when participation in such events is associated with a positive experience, which is determined a) by fun and enjoyment during participation and b) the experience of health, social and psychological benefits of participation. A positive experience will increase runners' desire to participate in future events and this pattern will make them more physically active. A study on the Flora Women's Mini Marathon in Dublin, Ireland shows that approximately 18 to 25 percent of the participants did not meet healthy movement guidelines before the running event but were stimulated to train for the event (Lane et al., 2008). A follow-up study did however show that after three months 11 percent of the participants, who did meet the healthy movement guidelines during the event, went back to low levels of physical activity.

Bowles et al. (2006) focused in their study on the participants of a mass recreational cycling event. They find that participants who were novice riders or first time participants significantly increased their number of bicycle rides in the month after the event. Prior the event, 11 percent of the participants were physically inactive but after the event half of the participants increased their physical activity. Hover & Hoeijmakers (2018) reported that two third of the participants were stimulated by participating in running, cycling or walking events to increase their physical activity. In a study on a triathlon event for women in New Zealand the researchers found that prior the event 12 percent of the participants did not meet movement guidelines but from the follow-up study three months later they found that half of these women did increase their physical activity (Crofts, Schofield & Dickson, 2012). Studies on the Dam tot Damloop and the Marathon of Amsterdam also



show that participants of these events increased their physical activity prior the event as means of training and after the event most of the participants reported higher levels of perceived health (De Nooij & Horsseleberg, 2016; Dallinga et al., 2015; Baart de la Faille-Deutekom & Verhoogt, 2014).

Next to the regular running events also the somewhat more alternative running events like the English Parkruns have considerable potential. These, weekly organised, events are much more accessible for the general public than regular running events, as they turn out to be particularly attractive to non-runners (mostly women, elderly and overweighed people) (Stevinson & Hickson, 2013). This group of Parkrun participants turn out to report more health effects than regular runners, according to the study of Stevenson & Hickson (2013). These findings are also supported by a study of Schoemaker (2017) on the Dutch version of Parkruns in Arnhem. One third of the participants stated that they would not have gone running that morning if it was not for the Parkrun.

Also running side-events can be used to enhance the population's physical activity levels. In the Netherlands, National Sports Federations were funded to develop and implement "easily accessible" sporting programs, aimed at the least active population groups, for example the Start to Run program (Ooms et al., 2013). Start to Run is a 7-week group training program for novice runners developed by the Dutch Athletics Organization. A study of Ooms et al. (2013) shows that when comparing results between groups, significantly more Start to Run participants compared with control group participants were meeting health norms after six months. They conclude that Start to Run positively influences levels of health-enhancing physical activity of participants, both in the short- and longer-term.

Another example of a Dutch health enhancing running program is "Run to The Start". Run to The Start is a preparation program for running events which consists of weekly group training for a period of 12 weeks and focusses on both novice and experienced runners. Research shows that participants of the program show signs of improved health. In preparation for the 'Zevenhevelenloop' via the Run to The Start program participants report to meet health norms more often than prior the program (Magnée & Veenhof, 2013). Additionally Magnée & Veenhof (2013) find that participants of the Run to The Start program were more often a member of an athletics association. Furthermore, a study of Ooms & Veenhof (2013) reports that 72 percent of the participants has become more active.



Attitudes and beliefs

There is evidence for the manifestation of a wide-spread feel-good effect as a result of sport events (e.g. Cornelissen & Maennig, 2010; University of East-London, 2015). This positive mood can be substantial, and could be treated as an important sport event impact. Feel-good experiences also occur among participants of sport events (Theodorakis et al., 2015). That participation in a (running) event can lead to positive feelings and feelings of pride is exemplified by the statement of a participant in a running event: ‘Since finishing, I have smiled so much my face aches more than my legs’ (Shipway et al., 2012).

Social cohesion

When fun experiences during events (when normal social boundaries are broken and alternative social constructions are explored) engenders communities, additional social capital is activated as new social relationships are forged or existing relationships are strengthened (Chalip, 2006). Although social networks are widely regarded as a pivotal component of social capital (Portes, 1998), we know very little about how relationships are forged or strengthened via events. We do know, however, that social networks play a significant role in health (Poortinga, 2006), community development (Bull & Jones, 2006), and entrepreneurial success (Jenssen & Koenig, 2002). The unique feature of event communities is that they enable relationships to form across age, gender, and social class boundaries that are not normally broken outside the fun space of events. Borgmann (1992) claims that the coming together of people around a meaningful leisure activity presents a positive context for a ‘community of celebration’. Within this context, sport programs and events are often seen as a promising way to encourage communication and communal celebration, as they have a certain ‘intrinsic power’ to activate people, remove barriers between groups and change people’s attitudes and behaviour.

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