

THE LEGACY OF LE GRAND DÉPART TOUR THE FRANCE UTRECHT 2015: Involving the city in the creation of legacy

**AUTHORS:**

Bake Dijk MA, Utrecht University, School of Governance ([b.dijk@uu.nl](mailto:b.dijk@uu.nl))  
Hans Slender MSc, Hanze University of Applied Sciences  
Froukje Smits, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences

**AIM**

Le Grand Départ Tour the France 2015 took place in Utrecht on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of July 2015. In advance to the first two stages a major side-event program is carried out which started a 100 days before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Utrecht University, School of Governance carried out a research to the legacy of Le Grand Départ Tour the France in Utrecht in cooperation with Utrecht University of Applied sciences, Hanze University of Applied sciences and the Mulier Institute. This research is commissioned by the local organizing committee of Le Grand Départ in Utrecht and is based on the project plan in which several legacy goals are mentioned. In this abstract we focus us on two types of legacy: 1) organizational legacy; what is the experienced cooperation between the several governmental and commercial organizations before, during and after Le Grand Départ? To what extend do organizations in Utrecht cooperate to create any social legacy and to what extend are the organizations focusing on creating leverage? 2) The social legacy; to what extend do the residents of Utrecht experience the side-event program which is carried out before and during Le Grand Départ.

A link between the elite sport event and the legacy goals is created by organizing an ambitious side-event program, leveraging existing local government policies and programs. The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the side-event program and gain insight in how a major elite sport event can be socially leveraged through a side-event program.

**THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

Several scholars found barriers towards the creation of social impact (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) Focus group sessions were organized with the organizers of 13 side-events and with representatives of the local organizing committee, before and after the main event. (3) Surveys were conducted on sight at the side-event activities to gain insights in the experiences of the participants and the visitors.

**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. In the first week of July 2016 (one year after Le Grand Départ took place) several activities from the side-event program will be carried out again with the purpose to celebrate the fun the city experienced whilst organizing Le Grand Départ. The event was evaluated with an 8,4 (on a 1 – 10 scale) by the visitors and the side-event program with an 8,2 by the participants and the visitors.

The bottom-up approach of the project organization to carry out the side-event program resulted in more side-event activities than the project organization could ever carry 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 choosing for a bottom-up approach, and involving local organisations and residents, is a really effective approach for the creation of legacy of sport events.

## REFERENCES

Chalip, L. (2006). Towards social leverage of sport events. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 11(2), 109-127.

Chalip, L. (2014) *From Legacy to leverage*. In Grix, J. (2014) *Leveraging Legacies from Sports Mega-Events*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Misener, L., McGillivray, D., McPherson, G. and Legg, D. (2015) *Leveraging parasport events for sustainable community participation: The Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games*. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 18 (4), pp. 450-469

O'Brien, D. (2006) *Event business leveraging: The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games*. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33 (1), pp. 240-261

Schulenkorf, N., & Edwards, D. (2012). Maximizing positive social impacts: Strategies for sustaining and leveraging the benefits of inter-community sport events in divided societies. *Journal of Sport Management*, 26(5), 379-390.