Managing Cross-Sectoral Leveraging Partnerships in the Post-Event Era

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The partnerships that arise to leverage benefits and facilitate positive outcomes as a result of hosting sports events are a prominent organizational form (Chen & Misener, 2019; Christie & Gibb, 2015; Kellett, Hede, & Chalip, 2008). Yet few studies have examined the evolution and governance of these partnerships in post-event era. If events are to positively impact communities in a sustainable manner, it would seem logical that partnerships formed to leverage the event should create ongoing collaborations post-event. However, given the lack of ‘catalytic opportunity’ (Misener et al., 2018), there may be more challenges for partners to collaborate. This study examines the collaborative formation, processes, structures of relationships, and leadership of event-leveraging cross-sector partnership in post-event era. The case in point is a Canadian Provincial Parasport Collective (CPPC), a diverse group of organizations that formed to leverage the 2015 PanAm/Parapan American Games to build a strategy and a shared understanding of a parasport framework in the province.

The interorganizational partnership originated as the Provincial Parasport Legacy Group (PPLG), which developed in conjunction with the hosting of the 2015 Pan/Parapan Games as a means to increase awareness and opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in sport (Misener et al., In press). The PPLG was later transitioned to the CPPC in post-Games era. The CPPC is composed of individuals and organizations representing diverse interests (i.e., high performance, grassroots programming, coaching) and sectors (i.e., national parasport governing bodies, provincial sport/parasport governing bodies, municipal sport organizations, disability sport organizations). The process thus far has demonstrated collaboration and engagement between sectors and leadership on behalf of a group of dedicated members of the parasport community. Employing an ethnographic approach which involves participant observation in meetings, interviews with key stakeholders, network surveys, and ongoing document analysis, this study investigates the post-Games iteration of this event-leveraging cross-sector partnership. Our approach identifies factors that led to the development of the Collective to continue to pursue strategic objectives post-event; what strategies, structures, and leadership mechanisms are employed to manage cross-sector collaboration; and how the substantive outcomes of the partnership helped address individual participants needs, member organizations resource challenges, and collaboration as strategic mechanism. We offer insights into how such a collaboration might continue to pursue strategic objectives once an event is complete. We use Bryson, Crosby, and Stone's (2015) systematic cross-sector collaboration framework to demonstrate the collaborative antecedents, processes, structures of relationships, leadership, potential conflicts/challenges, and outcomes of the OPPC to understand resultant strategic tactic developments in post-Games era.

Although a growing number of sport management scholars have acknowledged collaborative partnership as an important mechanism for enhancing an event-leveraging approach (Bell & Gallimore, 2015; Chen & Misener, 2019; Misener, 2015), little research has conducted a comprehensive and systematic examination of collaborative aspects of a cross-sectoral partnership built to leverage a sport event in post-Games era. Thus our works adds to the theoretical calls for understanding cross sector partnership sustainability (Babiak, Thibault & Willem, 2018) and offer practical clarity on the tactics for supporting ongoing strategic alliances.