Understanding the Importance of Various Legacy Aspects among Key Stakeholders Involved in the Management and Delivery of the Olympic Games

Executive Summary

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- Although the legacy aspects have been identified in the literature primarily through reviews of documents and historical archives, the opinion of stakeholders involved with the management of the event can complement the understanding of the legacy phenomenon.

- This study aimed to present the perceptions of stakeholders involved with the legacy of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games to assist future Olympic Games organizers to better plan and manage a legacy program. Therefore, this study aimed to answer the following questions: (1) How can we gain a better understanding of the concept of legacy as it relates to host cities of the Olympic Games? (2) How can legacy be used as a marketing tool that will offer short- but also long-term benefits to the host city? (3) How can a host city remain Olympic after the Games are concluded and how can the host city and region sustain any gains from their investment?

- In order to understand the stakeholders’ perspective on the definition of the phenomenon and the importance of legacy aspects of the Vancouver Olympic Games, seven individuals were interviewed face to face. Their positions were either executive directors or managers in stakeholder organizations related to the sectors of Sport, Tourism, Volunteerism and Government legacy management.

- The interviews were semi-structured interviews. The duration of the interviews ranged from 20 to 60 minutes. The interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed. The interview questions required the participants to provide information on their perceived definition of the term legacy and consequently the identification of legacies; the importance of the legacy aspects for the host city and the stakeholder organization and the benefits and costs for the city and the stakeholder organization.

- Content analysis of the interviews revealed several themes related to legacies for the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games. Most of the stakeholders identified that the Olympic Games were considered the catalyst that would bring about positive changes in the geographic region of the host city and the host country.

- For most of the participants, the term legacy had a positive connotation and involved the continuation of any initiatives or programs after the end of the event. It was identified however, that legacy is a multidimensional phenomenon with tangible and intangible components as well as opportunity costs (associated to negative legacies).

- Within the tangible legacies category, the stakeholders identified the following four umbrella categories: infrastructure, programs and initiatives, advancement of technological resources, environmental improvements, and business network expansion.

- All the stakeholders strongly identified important intangible legacy aspects. These intangible components related to four different areas: diffusion of knowledge and governance reform, emotional capital, social change and image enhancement.

- All stakeholders identified there are no negative legacies but primarily lost opportunities to funnel financial resources somewhere else if the Games were not hosted in their community. Opportunity costs were related to the advancement of education programs, the improvement of the health sector and the elimination or reduction in the numbers of homeless people in the city of Vancouver.

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