The Rio De Janerio 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil: Lessons for Education Managers

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Abstract
Various aspects of the Rio-Olympic games in Brazil have been speculated and dwelt upon by several schools of thought. This work seeks to present for education managers the view that they too have enormous lessons to learn from the entirety of the events, the historical perspective, and the importance of the games, their positive and negative effects on the economy of host nations. General advantages and disadvantages all culminate into lessons for education managers as they face the task of shaping a generation of the future with renewed vitality.

Key words: Olympic Games, Lessons, Education Managers, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Introduction
The Olympic Games has become perhaps the most popular sporting event in modern society. The First modern Olympics held in Athens in 1896. The most recent is that of Rio in Brazil in 2016. Given the global attention afforded to the event, a host city is unlikely to stage an Olympics Games without substantial urban development and investment. The host cities are required to provide new or substantially refurbished sports facilities to a world class standard. In addition, wider investment in tourism, transport and telecommunication infrastructure, hotel accommodation and environmental improvement are also often necessary to ensure the smooth running and success of the games for both athletes and spectators. These wider investments also contribute to establishing a global image for the host city, which can encourage inward investment and tourism over a long-term. The Olympic Games is much more than a sporting event. It has evolved into a tool of urban renewal and a catalyst of substantial urban transformation. Nevertheless, the Olympics present major risks as well as opportunities for effective transformation of host centres which can constitute lessons for educational managers.

The paper aims at reviewing and presenting lessons from the Olympic games recently concluded for education managers. The paper shall attempt a historical perspective for Olympic Games, trace the importance of the games, their effects on the economy of the host nation, the general advantages and disadvantages of the games as well as some lessons for education managers and then draw a conclusion.

The Olympic Games in Historical Perspective
The Olympic Games, which began in 776BC in Greece, were the clearest expression of the origin of organized sport. The Games gathered competitors together on one site and integrated sport into a wider festival. They were taken very seriously. In Sparta, youths were taken from their families and reared in austere conditions in preparation for combat, the forerunner of the modern training camp (Harvery, 1989).
The Olympics remain unique as a sporting event. Held every four years, the Olympic Games represent the pinnacle of sporting achievement. Athletics sacrifice everything in the preceding four-year period for the chance of winning a medal, or even just for the honour of taking part. The Olympics, more than any other sporting event, have managed to find a place for the true amateur, the representative of the tiny nation alongside the millionaire superstar American sprinter. The Olympics also have an unrivalled pedigree.

In fact, there was more in common between the ancient games and the modern ones than one might expect. Competitors were supported during their training, and successful ones richly rewarded when they returned to their hometown.

The announcement of the festival was made about a year in advance, inviting entries from all over Greece and only free-born Greeks could compete. Competitors undertook to train for ten months, of which the last one would be spent in the gymnasium at the Olympia.

Founded on Mount Olympia, far from Sparta, Corinth and Athens, the origin of the Olympic Games is shrouded in mystery and legend. According to one legend, Hercules founded the Games to celebrate his own feats. Another Legend is that they commemorate Zeus's victory Comus. Then there is the Legend of Pelops winning his bride in a chariot escapade. It is perhaps significant that all these legends involve aggression, competition and victory.

The ancient Greeks believed that the body and the mind required discipline, and that those who mastered this discipline would best honour Zeus. They referred to it as a marriage of mind and muscle.

Whatever the origin, the link to Zeus is undeniable as Olympia was made a shrine to Zeus in 1000BC. Young Greeks competed as an act of worship to Zeus. While today athletes have accommodation provided in an Olympic Village, only in 350BC was anything provided for the competitors. Before that, it was normal for athletes to sleep in the open.

The modern Olympic opening ceremony can be traced back to ancient times. The spectators at the ancient Games would have to watch a procession of Priests and officials, of animals for sacrifice, of athletes and chariots and horses. Ambassadors from many states were also present. As each competitor passed the VIP rostrum, the herald would announce his name, his father's name and his city of origin. Then the festival would commence with the sacrifice of the animals on the altar of Zeus (Harvery, 1989).

The Olympic festival took place in August or September. This was a hot and dry time of the year, a time when the farmers were not at their busiest and were, therefore, able to attend the Games.

Women were banned on pain of death from even attending the Games. Pausanias tells the story of Phereinice who was so desperate to see her son compete that she disguised herself as a trainer and took a place in the stadium. When her son won, in her excitement she jumped a barrier, fell and was revealed to be a woman. She narrowly escaped death, but the rules were changed to specify that in future all trainers must, like the athletes, be naked.

Alongside the sporting festival, there was a significant fringe with authors reading from their books, sculptors exhibiting their arts, poets seeking commissions to immortalize the victors. There was fun and entertainment with food and drink for sale. The whole area was turned into a tented village.

The first Games consisted of only one race. Gradually others were introduced, then the pentathlon, wrestling, boxing and chariot races.

From 632BC onwards, the Games became more organized, lasting five days. To be more precise, the festival lasted five days, the games themselves only two and a half. The first day was the Opening Ceremony, with oaths, prayers, sacrifices and hymn singing.

Competition began on day two, with chariot races and equestrian events. The day started with the sacrifice of a ram in honour of Pelops. In the afternoon, it was the pentathlon: discus, javelin, standing jump, 200 metres and
wrestling. If a contestant won three events he was instantly declared the overall champion. The pentathletes were much admired for their combination of strength and speed.

On day three were the foot races from 300 to 4800 metres. Day four was given over to the heavy events: wrestling, boxing, armoured foot-races, etc. Day five was taken up with prize-giving and feasting.

17th century. Robert Dover started the Olympic Games in Chipping Campden in 1612. They included running, equestrian events, wrestling, hunting, coursing and throwing as well as a cultural festival. The Games continued until 1852 when they were banned for rowdiness and dangerous activities. In 1850 William Penny Brookes, a Shropshire doctor, started the Wenlock Games at Much Wenlock, which included traditional English sports.

Baron Pierre de Coubertin was born in Paris in 1863. He was concerned about the state of French education and wanted to introduce an element of physical education into France. He visited Much Wenlock and was impressed. He was also intrigued by the development of sport in the English Public Schools, through the influence of the Muscular Christianity movement (Hiller, 2000).

De Coubertin first proposed the idea of the modern Olympics in 1892 and spent the next three years getting support for the idea. He held an international conference in Paris in 1893. Twelve countries were represented and another 21 wrote to express support for his ideas. The conference formed the International Olympic Committee. The modern Olympic movement had been born. The first Games were set for 1896.

De Coubertin regarded the opening and closing ceremonies as a vital part of the Olympics, without which the Olympic would just be another World Championship.

When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, Christians insisted that all pagan temples be closed. In 393-94AD, the religious rites associated with the ancient Olympics were severed, by the order of the Christian Roman Emperor, Thecososius. This closed the sanctuary and the Games gradually died. Then in 522 and 551 two massive earthquakes levelled the temple and changed the course of the river Cronus, washing the Hill of Cronus into the valley (Hiller, 2000).

The Importance of the Olympic Games
The medals, the five rings, the flags waving in the breeze, the cheering fans, the carrying of the touch, the wonder and awe that is the Olympics. Every four years the world gathers in a specific, distinguished city to celebrate each nation’s outstanding athletes. These athletes have made a career of their training and have developed a passion for their sport. The time has come for them to step into the spotlight.

In 1896, the legend of the modern day Olympics began in Athens. It is the story of the human mind, body, and spirit breaking barriers, transcending limits and reaching new levels of excellence, achievement, and possibility. Since then, the Olympic ideal has spread throughout the globe, as well as our ability to record visual information, not only on film but also on the 3-D max of the mind. Every four years, as athletes from around the world shatter the boundaries of time and space, the cradle of humanity shares in this wondrous spectacle and experiences a supreme sense of unity (IOC, 2016).

The games are important because all countries unite and participate on a friendly level against one another. The intention is to win as many medals as they can for their country. One would imagine this would be an emotional experience to represent one’s country at the Olympics because the games aid in enriching a nation’s moral. In the past and present, countries at war have united for this memorable “coming together” where they competed without prejudice; regardless of skin colour, sex, or race. From the athletes who work untiringly towards the glory of the gold, to the organizers who dedicate their time and effort into these games, we should not forget those that do menial jobs, for without their efforts, things would not run as smoothly. There is no better example of how the world can be united than the Olympics.

The Olympics’ Effect on the Host Country’s Economy
When countries and cities bid on the Olympic Games, one of the main reasons they do it is for the chance to boost the economy in
that city. The Olympic Games attract thousands of visitors and media attention. During the time that the games are held, you may see a sharp increase in tourism, revenue and a big boost to profits for all of the businesses in the area. However, hosting the Olympics may provide only a short-term economic benefit. It is important to fully understand the benefits of hosting an Olympics.

Before The Olympics
There is often a boost in the economy just before the games come to a country. Most areas need to create additional venues, improve road construction and take time to plan the crowds. Government will fund not all of the costs, since many businesses, such as hotels and restaurants, will begin building in the area to take advantage of the increased sales. The added building and construction costs can boost a failing economy. It can help an area that may be lagging behind economically. However, the government may take on additional debt to cover some of the expenses, which may result in raising taxes. That may end up hurting the economy in the long run.

During The Olympics
The most noticeable upturn in the economy will be during the Olympics. During this time, visitors from all over the world will be coming to see the Olympic events. This will increase revenue in travel sales and in hotels and restaurants. This means that many small business owners may benefit from the Olympics being held in the area. Some private citizens may opt to rent out their home for the Olympics and may benefit from the additional money that will bring in. Nearly every type of retail business will benefit from having the Olympics in the area. Often the taxes collected during the actual Olympic events will be enough to pay back the additional debt the government accrued while preparing for the Olympics.

After The Olympics
If the tourism board works hard, they may be able to attract more conferences and sporting events to the venues that were built for the Olympics after the Games have ended. Tourism may also increase to the area for a short time, as people are interested in seeing that area where the Olympic Games took place. The big economic push may not stay, and some of the smaller businesses may suffer if chains are competing with them for business after the Olympic. It is important that the city and state governments work on a plan to continue to attract tourists and conferences to the area.

Advantages of Hosting a Major Event
Like the Rio Olympics
Hosting a major sporting event can give many economic, social and cultural benefits. However, the costs of hosting the event can also be quite high. What determines whether the benefits outweigh the costs?

The Advantages:
1. Raise Profile of City/Country
Raising the profile of a city can lead to lasting economic benefits. For example, cities which host the Olympics can be assured of a persistent increase in recognition and tourism. Barcelona, Sydney, Beijing have all seen this from hosting the Olympics. For a country like China with a controversial human rights record, hosting a major sporting event can be a way to gain greater international acceptance. When South-Africa hosted the Rugby World Cup and later the Football World Cup, it was a defining moment in highlighting the new 'post-apartheid' South Africa. This raised profile can be important for giving economic benefits, such as attracting tourists and business investment. The importance of this point depends on the particular city. For South Africa, the World Cup made a big difference to perceptions of South Africa. For a city like London, which already has a very strong reputation, hosting the Olympics will be less influential. However, even hosting the Commonwealth Games can be beneficial for a city like Manchester, which benefited from
hosting games, despite persistent rain and more so for Rio in Brazil.

2. Long Term Investment
A significant benefit is the long-term investment which comes from preparing for a major event. The city/country will have a legacy of improved sporting venues. Also, cities will usually have to invest in infrastructure and transport to cater for influx of cities. For example, there has been significant investment in public transport projects around Rio. This will leave a lasting legacy for residents of Rio. From the 2016 Rio Olympics, Brazil has benefited from improved public transport.

3. Jobs and Investment
The several years of planning and investment will help create jobs and can revitalize depressed cities. This was an important claim of the Rio Olympics, choosing a site in Rio which at a time was relatively depressed. It is estimated that the Rio Olympics 2016 created 8,000 full time jobs and eventually has led to a boost in economic output.

4. Create Enthusiasm
It is often easy to find reasons not to host a major sporting event, too much debt, more important priorities. But, a major sporting event can create enthusiasm and excitement for such an event. It can help promote uptake of sport which has lasting benefits for the nation’s health. Also, a major sporting event can lead to a rise in volunteerism which promotes civic virtues.

5. Short Term Economic Benefits
The Olympics will see a surge in visitors, athletes and media. This will provide an increase in spending and injection of money into the local economy. However, this injection of money will only be short-term (a few weeks) and make little overall impact on the wider economy. Also, the injection of foreign visitors may be offset by locals leaving to avoid the influx and over-crowding.

The Disadvantages
1. Cost of Building Stadiums
To host a major sporting event like the Olympic can cost significant sums, which have to be paid for by the taxpayer. Costs of Olympics have a tendency to rise over time and be much greater than expected.

2. Short-Term Use
Many facilities built for the Olympics can never be fully used again, e.g. an 80,0000 athletic stadium will rarely be full outside of the Olympics. This can be mitigated by careful planning, e.g. the Olympic Village will be probably converted into affordable housing.

4. Potential for Negative Publicity
If things go well, a city can benefit from positive publicity, but if things go badly, it can cause the opposite. For example, the Delhi suffered negative publicity over the state of its facilities at the Commonwealth Games.

5. Higher Taxes to Pay Tax
Some cities have seen an increase in tax post games to finance a loss making Sporting event. The Brazilian Rio Olympics is not an exception.

The Nigerian Experience at Rio De Janerio Olympic Games in Brazil
Despite all odds the most populous country in West Africa had her Representatives at the recently concluded 2016 Olympic Games in Rio De Janerio, Brazil. These individuals embarked on a national assignment to represent their country at the biggest sporting event in the world with hopes for Gold.

Nigeria participated in ten games at the Rio Olympics with some stand-out players. Some of them had made Nigeria proud before and were set to do so again.

Nigeria first participated in the Olympic Games in 1952, and since then Nigeria athletes have won a total of 23 medals mostly in athletics and boxing. The national football team won the gold medal in 1996. This year, Team Nigeria ended the entire competition with a bronze medal, which was won in the men’s football competition by the dream team six. While Nigeria struggled her way through, the United States of America finished top with 121 medals (46 gold, 37 silver and 38 bronze), while great Britain came second with 67 medals (27 gold, 23 silver, and 17 bronze).
question here is, given our population, what is wrong with Nigeria and why (IOC, 2016)?

Lessons for Education Managers

The main interest of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in awarding the games to a candidate city is to foster goals of competitive sport, to provide a legacy of facilities that will stimulate athletic development; and also to heighten the profile of sport by providing better opportunities for training as well as sites for national and international competition. Like the IOC, education managers have objectives for every undertaken educational move, they must however move from being goal setters to goal getters.

This would entail imbibing the many tenets from the Olympic Games as educational managers have the similar task of organizing, harmonizing and bringing out as well as cultivating the best of human talents. A few lessons can be imbibed from the following:

1. Educational Lessons

The success of the games depended much on training, coordination and articulation of skills from even planners to participating athletes. So it is with the education sector. The lesson here is success depends on hard work and commitment from the organizers to participating teams to individual partakers.

2. Economic Lessons

Host nations of Olympic Games are only mostly justifying the expenditure involved in preparing and staging the games through the stimulus that the event can bring for economic development and urban regeneration-via; job creation, investment in new infrastructure, environmental improvement and image creation plus marketing. Education managers must never be caught in the same web while planning and executing educational events.

3. Political Lessons

The Olympics has an ability to capture the imagination and support of the general public and politicians alike, who can channel energy and finance into the project and fast-track investment and planning to meet the Olympic deadline. The role of mega-events in stimulating such developments has become increasingly important in the urban economy as deindustrialization and globalization have forced planners to discard policies of development based on local production in favour of new strategies designed to compete on a global stage and to encourage consumption-based activities. Education managers must learn never to be subsumed in the same legacies.

4. Facility Lessons

The scale of the Olympic event requires substantial amount of land to provide the sports facilities and related infrastructure to stage the event. School managers stage similar events and must learn from this elaborate preparations as they too stage similar events at their local levels. The structural development opportunities provided by sporting events must not be ignored by education managers.

5. Multi-Faceted Lessons

Education managers must learn to avoid the one sided view to events as presented by Olympic Planners. This is because when subjected to a critical view, one notices that even the Olympic Games have their negative side. For instance: Local government investment can be diverted from social services and education in order to pay for Olympic-related infrastructure. Increased local taxation to pay for Olympic-related infrastructure could become a central issue. Disruption and disturbance of existing communities by Olympic-related development can be a significant problem. Environmental issues could be another area of social concern and global equity could begin to rise.

The above in themselves also present lessons for education managers which must not be trivialized.

Conclusion

Time and space may not allow us to be too detailed but the discussions above should
serve to stimulate further observations that education managers have a lot to learn from the lessons presented by the staging of Olympic Games as an event that is global and above all seeks to unite nations in an exercise and show of talents rather than allowing humanity to wallow away in their cultural, religious, political and social inhibitions. The Rio Olympics have again demonstrated that even in the midst of political turmoil and economic meltdown, nations can muster the will power to overcome divisive issues of the moment and go for gold and values that keep us ethically bound. Education managers in Nigeria should commit themselves to preparing a new generation of Nigerians that could mentally, physiologically, economically, politically, religiously and otherwise bring home the Olympic Games to Nigeria and thus give this country a new place on the world stage.

References


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