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Developing Sustainable Snow Sports Education Programs for Adolescent Participation

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Abstract

Following Beijing's winning bid to host the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, winter sports have ushered in a great development opportunity for adolescents in China. Beijing initiated the Ice and Snow Sports on Campus Program in 2016, however, one of the challenges is that the lack of quality snow sports instructors and access to ski resorts is limiting sustainable programs. Greek Peak Ski Resort, located in upstate NY, has a successful history of running snow sport educational programs that Beijing may be able to learn from. The purpose of this study was to assess and compare the Ice and Snow Sports on Campus Program in Beijing with the snow sports programs at Greek Peak Ski Resort, having a goal to explore sustainable education programs for adolescents. Literature research, program reports, field observation, and interviews with program directors and experts were used in this study to assess and compare the programs in Beijing and Greek Peak Ski Resort. The findings indicated that with the Ice and Snow Sports on Campus Program initiated in 2016 by the Beijing Municipal Education Commission, about 2.1 million K-12 students' participation counts in ice and snow sports have been recorded. In 2021, more than 200 K-12 schools with ice and snow sports specialties were certified in Beijing. A total of 60 model courses with the topic in winter sports and Olympics have been developed to improve ice and snow sports teaching. The strong and historical school skiing program at Greek Peak Ski Resort includes about 55-57 K-12 school programs and 5 college PE programs each year, with an estimated student participation count of 20,000 per year. The collaboration between Greek Peak Ski Resort and local schools/ colleges/universities offers sustainable educational programs, benefitting generations of students and all parties involved and efficiently sharing resources. The 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics provides a rare historical opportunity for multi-level and multi-dimensional cooperation between the sports and educational departments in Beijing. With supporting policies and guidance, the strategic goal of cultivating more young people to participate in winter sports is being achieved. Education programs provide opportunities for adolescents to learn winter sports skills and promote active healthy behavior. The collaboration between local schools, colleges/universities and Greek Peak Resort can be a good solution for Beijing to resolve the critical challenge of lack of quality instructors and easy access to winter sports facilities.

Keywords: winter sports, adolescent education, ice and snow, collaboration