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Can sport events be leveraged to create social change?

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Can sport events be leveraged to create social change?

Erin Pearson

Through my sport participation and work experiences at sport events, I have witnessed firsthand the joy sport events can bring to host communities. Sport events provide host cities the opportunity to leverage the events resources and create positive outcomes for local residents. However, positive outcomes from sport events do not occur automatically and all too often result in negative outcomes for the host communities instead. Positive outcomes require copious amounts of planning, resources, and strategic networks to ensure their sustainability. What is missing from research, however, is knowledge of an effective planning process for creating positive outcomes. The purpose of my research is to examine the ways in which sport events may be leveraged to create positive outcomes and to create a toolkit to help event stakeholders in this planning process. By addressing this gap, we can enhance the potential of future sport events to be catalysts for social change.