

**School of Human Kinetics
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Ottawa**

EXECUTIVE MASTERS IN SPORTS ORGANISATION MANAGEMENT



**MEMOS XXV
2022-2023**

**“How to Organize a Successful Olympic Day with a Long-term Impact
in Chinese Underdeveloped Areas”**

“Han YAN”

Tutored by Professor Alain Ferrand

Université de Poitiers (France)



Content

1. Introduction	1
2. Literature Review	3
2.1 Introduction	3
2.2 Sports development in underdeveloped regions of China	3
2.3 Collaborative Partnerships and Events Leveraging	5
2.4 The impact of small-scale sports events	8
2.5 Social Exchange Theory (SET)	10
3. Methodology	12
3.1 Interviewees	12
3.2 Interview Guide	13
3.3 Data Collection	14
3.4 Data Analysis	15
4. Findings	16
4.1 Dates and duration	16
4.2 Themes	17
4.3 Organizers	18
4.4 Activities	21
4.5 Participation	23
4.5.1 The number of participants	23
4.5.2 The method of participation	26
4.5.3 Participation of schools	27

4.5.4 Participation of local Sport Associations	29
4.6 Other Stakeholders	30
4.6.1 The General Administration of Sports of China (GASC).....	30
4.6.2 The Chinese Olympic Committee (COC).....	31
5. Conclusion	33
5.1 What are the reasons for the limited impact of Olympic Day in underdeveloped areas	33
5.1.1 Fewer people participate in sports	33
5.1.2 Lack of awareness of sports	34
5.1.3 Local authorities' bias against sports	34
5.1.4 Insufficient publicity and incentives for the Olympic Day	34
5.1.5 The Olympic Day's duration is too short and the activities are unattractive.....	34
5.2 What should be the impact of a successful Olympic Day (both long and short-term).....	35
5.2.1 Impact on the local sport authorities	35
5.2.2 Impact on the local sport organizations	36
5.2.3 Impact on the local schools and students	37
5.2.4 Impact on the local residents	38
5.2.5 Impact on the Chinese Olympic Committee	39
5.3 How to organize an impactful Olympic Day in Chinese underdeveloped areas	40

5.3.1 Targeted publicity and promotion campaign	40
5.3.2 Organize pre-events	40
5.3.3 Foster partnerships with schools and sports associations	41
5.3.4 Reduce participation requirements	41
5.3.5 Design diverse activities	42
5.3.6 Provide professional training and guidance	43
5.3.7 Reward and recognition mechanism	44
5.3.8 Volunteers	44
5.3.9 Post-event Evaluation	45
6. Bibliography	47
7. Abstract	51

Introduction

Olympic Day, a festival for people around the world to come together to celebrate the joy of sport, was introduced in 1948 to commemorate the birth of the modern Olympic Games. Over the years, it has developed into an annual worldwide celebration of the Olympic Movement with sports, cultural and educational activities, to bring people together to contribute to a better world through sport.

The Chinese Olympic Committee (COC), according to its statutes, is a non-profit national organization responsible for the development and promotion of the Olympic Movement and sports in China. The COC has been in charge of celebrating Olympic Day since 1987, and Olympic Day in China gradually expanded from the Olympic Day Run into a composite event of sport and Olympic culture and education, engaging millions of participants.

In recent years, with the aim of promoting the Olympic Movement throughout the country and raising awareness of sports in underdeveloped areas, the COC attached more importance and increased assistance to the underdeveloped areas. Launching Olympic Day is considered a pilot project with a strong exemplary significance and is highly valued by the COC. Therefore, since 2020, the COC invited several underdeveloped counties every year to join the Olympic Day and offer them subsidies (usually RMB 100,000) to organize Olympic Day activities (mostly the Olympic Day Run). Over the years, Olympic Day has increased local sports participation to a certain extent, but due to a variety of reasons, it has not functioned as it was designed

and has a very limited long-term impact. In order to play a better role of the Olympic Day, enable sports to make contributions to the underdeveloped areas in the long term, and engage more people in underdeveloped areas participating in sports and inspired by the Olympic spirit, the COC decided to get more involved in the Olympic Day in underdeveloped areas and help them with the arrangement and long-term designation. Therefore, the main research question is how to organize a successful Olympic Day with a long-term impact in Chinese underdeveloped areas, and its related sub-questions are: 1. What are the reasons for the limited impact of Olympic Day in underdeveloped areas? 2. What should be the impact of a successful Olympic Day (both long and short-term)? 3. How to organize an impactful Olympic Day in Chinese underdeveloped areas?

To answer the above questions, this project will provide the contextual background of Chinese underdeveloped regions and subsequently present a literature review that explores the current understanding of collective partnership and event leveraging, as well as small-scale sport events' impact, then sets out the methodology that was used to gather and analyze data, then present and discuss the findings, draw conclusions and provide contributions for future research.

Literature Review

Introduction

With the success of Beijing 2008 and Beijing 2022, the Olympic movement has been greatly promoted and the Olympic spirit is widely spread in China. Chinese scholars have taken a keen interest in the Olympic movement, but mostly focused on the whole progress, and research on Olympic events such as Olympic Day is scarce. However, there is abundant research on mass sports development in China and literature emphasizing event leveraging through cross-sector partnerships and research on the impact of the small-scale sports events and their measurement. Those studies inspire playing the role of Olympic Day in promoting sports development and making a long-term impact in underdeveloped regions. This chapter reviews the current situation and solutions for sports development in Chinese underdeveloped regions and explores the long-term impact of sports events and their measurement.

Sports development in underdeveloped regions of China

China is a country with unbalanced regional development and uneven urban-rural development. With the Chinese government delineated four economic regions of China as east, central, west, and northeast in 2004, it gradually became a consensus that Eastern China, especially the eastern coastal region, is relatively developed, while Western, Central and Northeast China are relatively underdeveloped (Zheng, 2021). The main characteristics of underdeveloped Chinese regions (including most rural areas) studied and agreed upon by Chinese scholars are featured the relatively low

level of economic development, low degree of marketization, outdated mindset, and local government's incapability of adapting to the economic and social development trends. (Zheng, 2021).

Academic studies on sports development in rural and underdeveloped areas show that these two type of areas are in similar situations and face the same problems and challenges. In general, there are three aspects featuring: **1. Lack of support.** The local governments lack supporting, targeted and detailed policies for sports (Zhang, 2022). Most of the rural sports organizations are managed by the village's administrative personnel, who lack sports knowledge and with no formal sports administrations. From the financial investment perspective, 63.8% of rural areas in western China and 80% of villages do not have dedicated sports funding (Yang, 2022). **2. Lack of sport service.** According to the report of the Sixth National Sports Venue Statistics, 42% of villages lack sports venues, 60.1% barely organized sports activities and 78.5% do not provide basic sports information. There are more than 94.1% of the sports venues and equipment are decided unilaterally and directly by governments, and only 23.5% of them are being fully utilized (Zhang, 2022). Research shows that 50% of rural areas lack sports organizations, 90% do not have sports instructors, 60% lack sports activities, and 78% do not have access to updated sports information (Li, 2022). **3. Lack of sports awareness.** The development of rural sports activities should be based on the premise of spontaneous participation of the residents, whose awareness of sports play a decisive role (Yang, 2022). However, the awareness of fitness and sports in rural areas is currently weak and needs to be improved, mainly because of the lack

of awareness of the necessity of physical fitness, lack of sports skills, and lack of understanding of sports rules, the weak awareness of participating physical exercise and the reluctance to spend time on sports activities.

Collaborative Partnerships and Events Leveraging

In response to the current situation of sports development in underdeveloped regions that aforementioned, a successful Olympic Day in underdeveloped areas should play a better role in providing sports activities and enhancing sport awareness. However, although the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC) is responsible for the promoting Olympic Movement and organizing Olympic activities in China, it is the local sports authority (local government) that is in charge of organizing sports events (including Olympic Day) in its area. Therefore, the COC needs to establish a cooperative partnership with the local government.

Partnerships between sports organizations and other sectors have become an increasingly common mechanism for designing and implementing sports policies and programs (Peachey & Cohen, 2016). Researchers have examined partnerships in sports in various contexts, which could be broadly categorized into elite sports, community/sports for development, professional sports, intercollegiate/educational sports, sports tourism, and sports events (Misener et al., 2020). To organize an Olympic Day with a long-term impact in underdeveloped areas, the partnership between the COC and local government should focus on sports events, and given the different nature of both parties, a cross-sector partnership should be built and fostered.

The cross-sector partnership is a type of cooperation formed with different sectors of

society to "address social issues and causes" (Selsky & Parker, 2005). This type of partnership formed between community groups, government, and municipal organizations is claimed to be a way to not only organize events but also to develop long-term plans that provide sustainable benefits to the community (Misener, 2015; Mariani & Giorgio, 2017). To this end, researchers stress the importance of building collaborative partnerships among sport event stakeholders and across sectors (Darcy & Appleby, 2011; Bell & Gallimore, 2015; Girginov, Peshin & Belousov, 2017). Besides, as sports events provide opportunities and resources to strategically achieve multiple social, economic, environmental, and sporting outcomes for the benefit of local communities, sport management researchers and practitioners are increasingly interested in the concept of event leveraging (Chalip, 2017; Chen & Misener, 2019). As defined by Chalip (2004), "event leveraging" refers to activities that take place around the event itself and are designed to maximize the long-term benefits of event. In this context, events act as a resource from which other benefits can be derived (Smith, 2014). The types of benefits sought through the use of leverage vary but are generally aimed at sports, economic, and social outcomes (Chalip & Leyns, 2002; Chalip, 2006). O'Brien and Chalip (2007) describe the leveraging approach as sustainable, preparatory, and long-term strategic planning and define it as an improvement on previous follow-up studies that focus on impacts and outcomes. Shifting the focus to leverage allows researchers to determine which specific strategies and tactics were effective in achieving specific outcomes (Misener, 2015). The use of leveraging sports and other benefits relies on planned and targeted efforts,

strategies, and tactics to increase the potential post-event outcomes for hosts and organizers (Chalip, 2006). There is much research on event leverage outcomes focused on the impacts of hard aspects such as economic or infrastructure, but there are also other studies (Bell & Gallimore, 2015; Taks et al., 2014; Misener & Mason, 2009; Chalip, 2006) consider "soft legacies" related to the impact on the people, processes, and communities in which events take place, or more generally, the promotion of social benefits.

The Chinese government also calls for the establishment of a collective partnership between governments at all levels and sports organizations to promote national fitness development and meet people's fitness and health needs in a better way. The National Fitness Plan (2021-2025) attached importance to stimulating the vitality of sports organizations, by supporting the development of grass-roots sports organizations and encouraging national sports federations and various types of sports organizations to organize sports events in villages and communities. Some experts emphasized that in Chinese rural and underdeveloped areas, equal consultation and cooperation between the government and social sector are the foundation of building collaborative governance in sport, and should lead to a "government-led, social sector cooperated, market promoted, and residents participated" rural sports development model, to effectively address the needs of all stakeholders, build a more complete collaborative governance system in underdeveloped rural areas, and address the problems in the governance of the rural sports environment (Zhang, 2022). However, due to the traditional administrative ideology and the relatively weak social sectors in

underdeveloped rural areas, there are still many challenges in the process of cooperation between the underdeveloped rural government and social organizations (Zhang, 2022). Fortunately, although the COC is a national sports organization with non-governmental nature, since the president of the COC is also the Minister of the General Administration of Sport (equivalent to the Sports Ministry), given the subordinate relationship between the General Administration of Sport and the local sports authorities, the local sports authorities tend to attach more values to the opinions and suggestions of the COC, and in this regard, the COC has a unique advantage that other social organizations do not have, and it is reasonable for the COC to join hands with local government to build up collective partnership, to leverage the Olympic day and maximize its impact.

The impact of small-scale sports events

In general, sports events, regardless of their size, have a variety of short and long-term effects on the residents of the host locations (Duan et al. 2021). Studies have shown that large-scale sport events could foster social cohesion, providing residents with a sense of enjoyment and national pride (Heere et al. 2013), while small and medium-sized sport events are considered as opportunities for more positive social impacts and outcomes for local communities (Taks 2013, Taks, Chalip & Green 2015). The Olympic Day held in underdeveloped areas is characterized by being a recurring and participatory event, whose participation and media coverage are local, and economic benefits are limited, therefore, it is reasonable to consider the Olympic Day held in underdeveloped areas of China as a small-scale sport event.

Duan et al. (2021) found that Chinese people are more interested in the social impact of small- and medium-sized sport events than their impact elsewhere. The social impact of sporting events is an important part of the interaction between residents and the event and is reflected in changes in residents' quality of life after sporting events (Parra-Camacho et al. 2020).

Taks (2013) found that small-scale sport events are associated with opportunities for sport participation in the local community. Weed et al. (2009) agreed by stating that the demonstration effect of sport events could motivate those already involved in sport to continue participating and engage more people. Moreover, small-scale sport events can have a positive impact on the local community, even beyond the benefit of developing sport (Hautbois et al. 2020). For instance, Jones (2001) stated that sport events provide opportunities for social interaction for residents, by volunteering at events, feeling the atmosphere of events, and interacting with spectators, participants, and other stakeholders, residents' satisfaction with the quality of life could be positively influenced by these interactions. Therefore, according to Taks et al. (2015), "non-events" are likely to allow for greater community interaction and produce more beneficial outcomes for the community.

Taks (2013) points out that sport events offer people the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills through activities related to these events. In this sense, sport events could provide residents the opportunity to develop personal skills and growth through volunteering and organizing, as they can be involved in planning and managing small and medium-scale events. Duan et al. (2021) also argue that small

and medium-scale sport events have a positive psychological impact on the residents.

The perceived psychological effect of sport events is an intangible outcome that can increase people's satisfaction with their quality of life (Kaplanidou et al., 2013).

Furthermore, the ability to improve or construct sport facilities according to the needs of the community, ensuring their long-term use in the community, is very important for the sustainability of sport activities and can help to improve perceptions of sport development (Taks et al., 2015).

In order to foster strong social interactions between residents and events, event organizers should pay close attention to the social impact of the event and provide residents with meaningful social benefits associated with the event (Duan et al., 2021).

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

After establishing collaborative partnerships and leveraging the Olympic Day to maximize its impact as a small-scale participatory sport event, it's reasonable to move for the measurement of impact, and there are various theories and literature explaining the social impact of sport events.

The Chinese government attaches great importance to the public orientation of sports events, but engaging public participation and seeking their opinions are still in the early stage in the conduct and organization of sports events (Zhu & Zhang 2014).

Event organizers might not realize that local people are one of the most important stakeholders of sport events, their perceptions and opinions about sport events are often not taken into account (Lu & Song 2014). Therefore, as gaining the support and

satisfaction of the local community is important in developing and sustaining a successful sport event (Prayag et al. 2013; Theodorakis, Kaplanidou & Karabaxoglou 2015). Social Exchange Theory (SET, adopted by Duan et al. 2020 and Parra-Camacho et al. 2020) could be used as a starting point to analyze the impact of Olympic Day on the local community and their attitudes towards the future Olympic Day.

SET has been widely used to analyze how economic, social, cultural, and environmental variables influence local people's support for sport events (Gursoy & Kendall 2006). It is based on the assumption that people will support a sport event if they perceive the benefits of the event outweigh the costs (Harrill 2004; Liu et al. 2017). It could also fit with participatory sport events, as participants' preferences depend on the perceived cost-benefit comparison of the event, which is an important component of social exchange theory (Hautbois et al. 2020). For example, residents participating in sport events have different perceptions of the benefits that a sport event may bring them, as they know they would prefer not to participate in the perceived costs that seem greater.

In general, SET could reflect the different characteristics and roles of the relationship between sport events and residents and help understand the existence of such exchange relationships. Therefore, it could be used as the theoretical framework to explain the impact of the Olympic Day and evaluate residents' attitudes toward it.

Methodology

With the aim of gaining the most practical and useful information, this project implied the qualitative research methodology, using semi-structured interviews to collect data to generate more in-depth and detailed participant feedback (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

Interviewees

Although the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC) has conducted Olympic Day in over 300 cities for more than 30 years, only three counties (Fanshi, Daixian, and Daixian) in underdeveloped areas of China were included. Therefore, the interviewees were mainly from the stakeholders of the three counties, including the deputy county chief in charge of sports, the administrator of the county's sports department, the administrator of the county's education department, the principal of schools, students, and the head of the sports association, etc. A total of 12 people from 3 counties were interviewed. The interviews were conducted by telephone and lasted for about 30 to 90 minutes based on the schedule of both sides. Some of the stakeholders were interviewed twice as the 2023 Olympic Day has just concluded and updated feedback is needed to complete the data.

In addition, personnel from the General Administration of Sport of China (GASC, China's sports authority) and the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC) were also interviewed. The GASC is not only responsible for sports development in China but is also known to have taken special policies to assist the development of the three

counties. The Director of the Secretariat of the COC, who is in charge of the Olympic Day and implementing its activities, his views on organizing the Olympic Day in China's underdeveloped areas are also very important. Besides, the Manager from the China Sport Management Group, a company that is responsible for assisting in the implementation of event in China, was also interviewed. All of the above people were consulted face to face and the interview time was about 30-60 minutes.

To protect privacy, all interviewees are referred to by random capitals as follows:

1. Mr. F, Deputy County Mayor of Fanshi
2. Mr. D, Deputy County Mayor of Daixian
3. Mr. Z, Deputy Director of the Bureau for Culture, Sport, Tourism, Radio, and Television Administration of Zhijin
4. Mr. J, Deputy Director of the Bureau for Education and Technology Administration of Zhijin
5. Mr. H, High school principal in Zhijin
6. Mr. B, Manager from the Basketball Association of Zhijin
7. Mr. G, Manager of Sports for Poverty Alleviation Project, GASC
8. Mr. C, Director of the Secretariat, COC
9. Ms. T, Manager from the China Sport Management Group
10. Students A, B, C, D, E, F, students from Zhijin high school

Interview Guide

A well-prepared interview guide is important for the semi-structured interview since it reminds the researcher to cover all the topics and important points (Matthews & Ross,

2010). The interview guide of the project was established based on the research objectives and was updated as the project progressed. It began with general questions to learn the interviewee's background and a general understanding of the Olympic Movement and Olympic Day. To analyze and evaluate the impact of the Olympic Day, questions were designed to find out if the local stakeholders were interested and involved in, accountable, financially dependent, and result-oriented for the event, and if the stakeholders from the GASC and the COC have experiences worth-learning. These questions echo the theory of Collaborative Partnerships and Events Leveraging that state the event should be conducted by cross-sector partners and designed to maximize its long-term benefits. Interviewees were also invited to talk about their sub-stakeholders' (if any) roles in organizing the Olympic Day, as well as their overall evaluation of the past editions of Olympic Day and/or suggestions for the future version. While using the interview guide to conduct the interviews, some interviewees did not answer the questions straight forward but talked about other areas based on his/her observations, so some of the questions remained unanswered.

Data Collection

Participants were voluntary to take part in the interviews. Before the interviews were conducted, interviewees were asked if they agreed to have the interview recorded. Considering the significance of ethical issues during the research process and to show respect to the participants, all of the information of the interviewees, except for the organizations they belong to, is confidential and the data is anonymous. This is also to protect the interviewees' privacy and encourage them to express their opinions

without concerns. The data was original to ensure accuracy and no modification was deliberately made to meet certain conclusions.

Data Analysis

A content analysis was carried out with the data collected. The collected data was read twice to ensure familiarity with the information. The information was then coded according to themes in the interview guide and analyzed to find the important matters that were emphasized by one or more interviewees. This stage is followed by a more detailed analysis of the findings, which is described in the next chapter.

Findings

The interviews provided detailed information about previous Olympic Days held in the three counties, including dates, duration, themes, organizers, activities, participation, and other stakeholder perspectives, etc.

Dates and duration

As the initiator of Olympic Day in China, the COC sets the annual Olympic Day on the weekend of 23 June (if 23 June is not in the weekend or holiday). Generally, the Olympic Day activities last for half a day, but the COC has held two online versions due to the Covid-19 since 2020, and such online events usually last a month. In 2023, as the Chinese government lifted Covid-19 restrictions, the Olympic Day resumed offline, with a promotional period from 1 to 22 June, and was officially held in 11 locations across the country on June 23. Fanshi and Daixian have been participating in Olympic Day since 2020, and Zhijin has been participating in Olympic Day since 2021 (see Table 1).

Table 1: The Dates and duration of Olympic Day in the 3 counties

Location	2020	2021	2022	2023
Fanshi	6-23 June	20 June	6-23 June	23 June
Daixian				
Zhijin	Not included			

Themes

In response to the IOC appealing, the COC organizes Olympic Day events with different themes each year, including Stay Strong in 2022, Cheer for the Olympics in 2021, Together for A Better Future in 2022, and Let's Move in 2023. Correspondingly, each location hosting Olympic Day is requested to use the same theme and is encouraged to organize activities echoing the theme. However, for Fanshi, Daixian and Zhijin, there is barely any difference in the activities every year, even some organizers are aware of the difference in the themes. But in 2023, as the Olympic Day coincides with the traditional Chinese festival Dragon Boat Festival, which is not only a weekend but also a public holiday, Daixian took the opportunity to arrange folklore activities with local characteristics, not only to spread the Olympic spirit but also to promote local intangible cultural heritage.

Mr. F mentioned, *“I knew that the Tokyo Olympics would be held in 2021, and I wanted to focus on the theme of the Olympics, but I didn't come up with a plan that fit for the size of the venue and guarantee the safety of the participants, so I organized a small and normal event”*.

MR.D expressed, *“To be honest, previously we didn't pay that much attention to the Olympic Day and only regarded it as a task to be accomplished. But after these years, we found that the Olympic Day is very welcomed by the local people, which greatly encouraged us and we are willing to put more effort to make it innovative and distinctive”*.

Organizers

Since organizing the Olympic Day requires venues such as gymnasiums and parks, the local sports authorities are usually counted as organizers, because they are in charge of the sport venues and are more familiar with the situation of local sport development. The local organizer in Fanshi and Daixian is their Bureau for Health and Sport. The Culture, Sports, Tourism, Radio, and Television Administration of Zhijin was responsible for organizing the Olympic Day for the past years. It is obvious that all three counties do not have separate sports administrations, they are combined with other sectors such as culture and health. When asked about their ability or difficulties in organizing the Olympic Day, interviewees expressed concerns as follows:

Lack of awareness. All three counties confessed that sport is not their priority at present. For underdeveloped areas, sport accounts for a very small percentage of the government's annual assessment, and the government mainly wants to accomplish economic goals and increase people's income. Thanks to the COC's respectful position in China, the local governments organize the Olympic Day as a task, but they actually do not expect to achieve any goals through the Olympic Day.

Mr F confessed: *“There is actually no intention for us to hold the Olympic Day, but due to the respect for the Chinese Olympic Committee, we are willing to actively cooperate and try to make the event a success”*.

Lack of sport professionals. All three counties are facing a shortage of sports talent. The people in sports departments are barely or never worked as sports managers, and

the number of sport staff is limited. In Zhijin, sport staff is also responsible for other sectors such as culture and it's hard for them to concentrate on sports. In Fanshi and Daixian, although there are people who are full-time engaged in sports, they don't have sports background and their work is mostly based on their experience, and they don't have a sense of innovation.

Mr. Z mentioned: *“There are very few young people in our Bureau. Most of the personnel are transferred from the Finance Bureau or other sectors due to illness or various reasons, and very few of them have worked in sports before or are familiar with sports management. The lack of enthusiasm for sports led to their indolence in work, and they neither want nor have the ability to promote sports development”*.

Mr. F expressed: *“Our sports department is eager to develop sports, but to be honest, they don't have ideas of where they should start. For the Olympic Day, they actually don't know how it differs from other mass sports events, and they probably don't understand the role of Olympic values. They need someone to instruct them what should be done, instead of letting them design the activities”*.

Lack of management assistance. The COC authorizes the China Sport Management Goup (CSMG), a sports event company to contact the local organizers and provide them with promotional materials such as event backdrops and posters. But the CSMG doesn't interfere with the designation of activities, and the local sports organizations have full rights. However, three counties all expressed they would be happy to receive help from a sports management company. Mr. Z even mentioned they would love for

the COC to allocate the subsidies directly to a professional sport event company that would produce promotional materials and complete event planning directly.

Ms. T mentioned: *“Currently, our company mainly provides the counties with standardized promotional material templates that are used nationally. We can also deliver other services such as activities design and pre-event campaign, or whatever is needed. But the local authorities didn’t approach us with such requests, maybe for the concern of the additional costs”.*

Mr. D expressed: *“Your interview in 2022 inspired us to think about entrusting a company to undertake the event, so this year (2023) we contacted a sports company in the county, we put forward the initial idea and they designed and implemented it. It was a relief for us and we were satisfied with the outcome”.*

Lack of financial support. All three counties do not have financial allocations for sports development. The current mass sports programs are organized by the residents on their own initiative, and they raise the money themselves if funding is needed. The local authorities don’t have a sponsorship strategy or adequate program for sports. The COC allocates 10,000 RMB (approximately \$1,500 USD) per year for each county, as a supportive subsidy for them to organize the Olympic Day. However, other than the money from the COC, there is no other source of funding for the Olympic Day activities in those counties.

Mr. Z mentioned: *“As a matter of fact, the current Olympic Day is well funded, though it all comes from COC subsidies. We mainly use the subsidies for promotion materials such as posters and boards, because it is a government-related event, its*

venue and security and medical teams are cost-free. But if we have more funding, we could have more options to organize the event. But unfortunately, funding is usually difficult to apply for from the local government”.

Activities

Despite the limited capability of the organizers, a total of 11 Olympic Day events were held in the three counties between 2020 and 2023, which included 11 activities listed in Table 2.

Table 2: The Activities of Olympic Day in the 3 counties

Year	Format	Location	Activities
2020	online	Fanshi	Residents spontaneously uploaded exercise videos (e.g. push-ups, squats, jump ropes, sit-ups) on sports Apps or social media.
		Daixian	Sprinter Xie Zhenye interacted with local running clubs online to exchange exercise tips on Olympic Day.
2021	offline	Fanshi	Power-walking, Running
		Daixian	Running,
		Zhijin	Running, Wushu demonstration, Public square dancing
2022	online	Fanshi	Basketball match, Football match, Sporting games
		Daixian	Running, Basketball, Football, Shuttlecock, Badminton, Spinning demonstration
		Zhijin	Wushu demonstration, Fitness Qigong demonstration
2023	offline	Fanshi	Running, Power-walking, Shuttlecock,

	Fitness Qigong demonstration,
	Taiji softball demonstration
Daixian	Treasure hunting (Orienteering)
Zhijin	Power-walking, Wushu demonstration,
	Taiji Demonstration, Public square dancing

To be more specific, the details are the following.

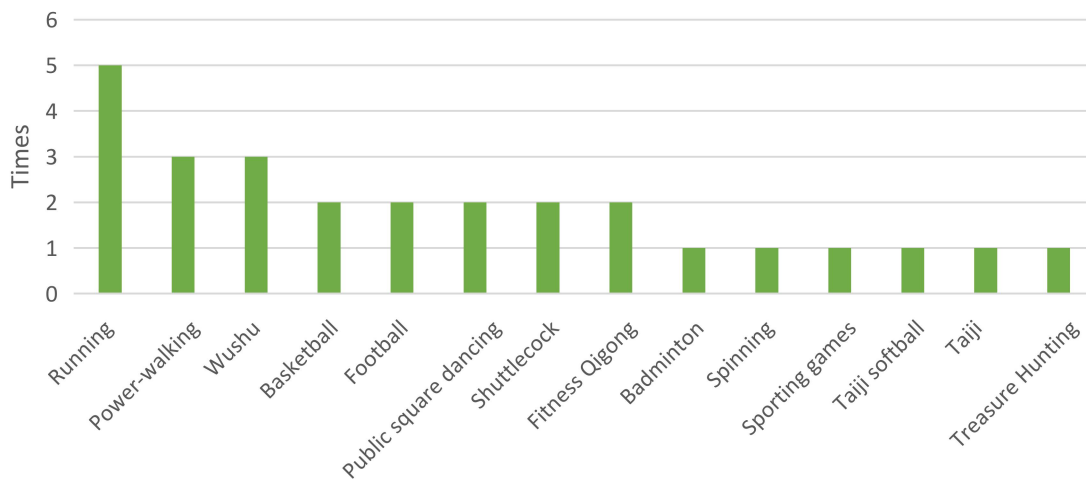
- In 2020, due to the COVID-19 epidemic, the COC decided to hold an online Olympic Day, where people could spontaneously take exercise and upload sports videos to cheer for the athletes participating in the Tokyo Olympics, which was postponed due to the epidemic. Since it was the first time the Olympic Day was held online and the first time underdeveloped counties participated, neither the COC nor the local sports organizations had the intention of designing a promotion campaign for the local residents to participate, it was purely spontaneous participation, and the number of participants in the three counties is based on estimation and is inaccurate.
- In 2021, the Olympic Day resumed offline, and all three counties organized running, as it requires less funding and venues, and less requirement for the age and physique of the participants. For Zhijin, since the local authority focused on the development of Wushu, it is included in the event.
- In 2022, taking into consideration the epidemic situation and the effect of the last year's event, the Olympic Day reverted to being held online, with participants uploading sports videos. Unlike in 2020, this time local sports organizations called on more sports enthusiasts, with basketball and soccer matches held in both

Fanshi and Daixian. Daixian also engaged local sports clubs and added more activities like shuttlecocks and badminton, while Zhijin added a Fitness Qigong demonstration.

- In 2023, it is the first time China has hosted Olympic Day since the lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions, and all three counties have more activities than before. In particular, Daixian was a big hit with their treasure hunting event, which made full use of the intangible cultural heritage featured by local sports, and the location was chosen at Yanmenguan scenic spot (a local tourist landmark), realizing the joint achievement of sports and tourism.

Through the four-year Olympic Days in the underdeveloped counties, it can be found that power-walking and running are still the mainstream activities, while other sports are being added in continuously (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The frequency of Olympic Day’s activities in the 3 counties



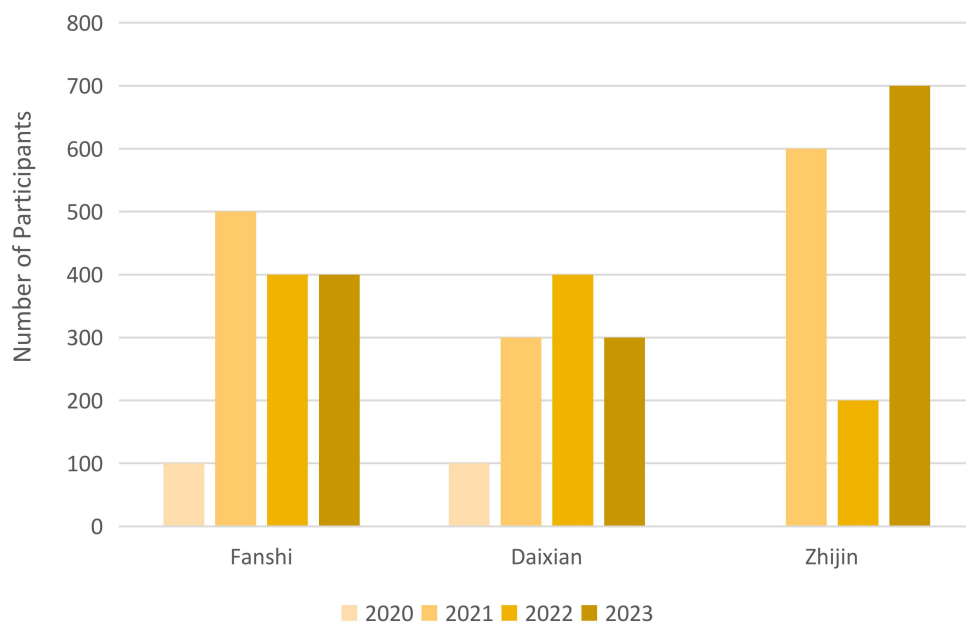
Participation

The number of participants

According to the interviews, the number of participants in Fanshi and Daixian reached

a total of 1,400 and 1100 since 2020, and 1,600 people in Zhijin have participated in the Olympic Day since 2021. When counted by year, there are about 200 people from the 2 underdeveloped counties participated in the events in 2020, followed by a total of number of 1,400 and 1,000 in 2021 and 2022, and 1,4000 in 2023. Figure 2 presents the evolution of the number of participants.

Figure 2: The number of participants in the Olympic Day in the 3 counties



Based on the trend of participation in each county, the number of participants in Fanshi and Daixian increased by the year, while the number in Zhijin experienced significant fluctuations. By means of interviews and analysis, the reason for the number of participants in 2020 is that it's the first time the two counties held the Olympic Day event, and the promotion and organization are not well prepared.

- In 2021, due to the Covid-19 restrictions, there were fewer offline activities held that year, so people were more excited and willing to get involved in the Olympic Day, and the local sports authorities paid more attention than last year. It is worth

mentioning that the first Olympic Day in Zhijin reached 600 people, for the reason of a new tourist destination had just been built that year, and the local government wanted to grow the popularity of the destination through sports, so more people were organized to participate in the event.

- In 2022, the event was back online, with a similar format to 2020, which is people participating in the event by uploading sports videos. However, the number of participants in Fanshi and Daixian reached four times more than in 2020, as the organizers gradually became aware of the Olympic Day function and engaged more people. However, compared to 2021, Zhijin only 200 people participated in 2022. Given the fact that it was the first time that Zhijin participated in an online Olympic Day event, the local sports authorities did not fully realize how to organize such online events, and because there were Covid-19 restrictions for people gathering, the organizer didn't encourage large participation.
- In 2023, the number of participants in the three counties varies, with Fanshi staying the same as last year, Daixian decreased slightly from last year, while Zhijin jumped to 700, becoming the most participated in three counties. The sports development in Zhijin is not very competitive, and there are not many sports activities, but that's the reason that people are very interested in the Olympic Day and are willing to participate. Some students mentioned that the Olympic Day has brought the Olympic Rings into their lives, instead of just on the TV. They felt delighted to be able to connect with the Olympics and wish to

continue to participate the Olympic Day in the future.

The method of participation

Except for the spontaneous participation in 2020, the Olympic Day in 2021 and 2022 were organized by local sports authorities, which invited a designated group of people to participate. For example, the 500 people participating in 2021 in Fanshi are mostly from government or governmental institutions, and it is similar for the other two counties, with very little participation from the public. But in 2023, both Daixian and Zhijin have reserved quotas for the local community.

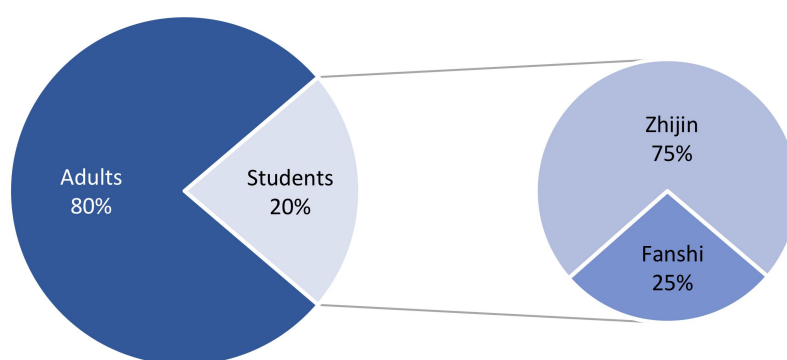
Mr. F explained: *“As for Fanshi, the priority of organizing one event is to ensure its safety and punctuality. Safety means minimizing the risk of injury. Children and the elderly are more vulnerable to getting injured. Punctuality means that people must be present on time. These two factors are reasons that we organize people from the government, as they have a lower chance of being injured and are guaranteed to show up on time. The people here are living a casual life and we cannot guarantee they attend the event as scheduled. This is the result of our compromise to ensure the delivery of an event”.*

Mr.Z noted: *“This year (2023) we set 200 quotas for the public and they were filled up quickly. Because we had already held Olympic Day for 2 years, the public was aware of the event, eager to participate, and expressed a desire to expand the event. For us, the security risks did rise up, but we were surprised and touched by the enthusiasm of the people who participated, even though it was raining that day”.*

Participation of schools

According to statistics, a total of 4000 people from the three counties attended Olympic Day between 2020 and 2023. As for the participation of schools, Zhijin invites schools to participate in 2021 and 2023, and Daixian invites them in 2023, with 600 students in Zhijin and 200 students in Fanshi participated, as shown in Figure 3

Figure 3: The participation of schools of the 3 counties



As can be seen from the table above, students accounted for 20% of the total number of participants, with students in Zhijin dominating of 75%, students in Fanshi accounting for 25% , and no schools in Daixian officially participated. Through discussions with the three counties, the following analysis emerged:

- The attitude of the local sports department towards youth participation in sports varies. Zhijin is the least developed county in terms of sports with only 5 sports associations (compared to more than 10 associations in both Fanshi and Daixian), but the current sports director in Zhijin is well aware of the importance of youth participation in sports, and is willing to coordinate with the education department

(as it is responsible for managing the schools), and engage schools as the main participation of the Olympic Day in 2021. Fanshi also believes that such events require school participation, but only some high school students were invited for safety reasons.

- Communication and coordination mechanism between government departments is complicated. When asked why the schools were not invited, Mr.D explained that although they wanted students to participate, the local sports department needed to send official papers to the Education Bureau, which would then contact the schools, and the sport department were not willing to waste time with such paperwork. In addition, they were concerned that schools would decline to participate using the excuse of safety, but that was just their assumption.
- Restrictions of sites' size and lack of supportive attitude from schools. When asked why not organize more students for the Olympic Day, Mr.J explained that the location for the 2021 event was a newly built tourist spot, part of which had not been fully constructed, so it could only accommodate a limited number of people to participate in the event. Mr.F expressed that the school had the mentality of completing the task for the government-organized sports activities and was not so positive or willing to participate, so won't apply for more student participation. In fact, this negative mentality is common in the three counties, but some schools have discovered benefits in participating in the activities and have expressed their willingness to continue to participate in such activities in the future. Both Mr.J and Mr.H mentioned that the education department and school

in Zhijin, are very willing to be engaged in the Olympic Day and would like to send more students to participate in the future. Mr. H expressed, *“At first we were doubtful about the Olympic Day, but students registered very actively, for instance, our school had 100 spots for the 2023 Olympic Day and it was filled up in less than 5 minutes. We hope that we will be given more participating chances in the future, otherwise, we have to consider this as an incentive for some students to participate”*.

Participation of local Sport Associations

The interviews revealed that all three counties have local sports associations, with 12 in Fanshi, 17 in Daixian, and 5 in Zhijin. However, the sports associations were not fully involved in the Olympic Day activities, and the local organizers would only invite some of them for demonstrations (such as those of Wushu), while people from other associations rarely participated. When asked about the reason, the local organizers indicated that they were not seeking a complex or comprehensive event and that their demonstration sessions were only used as embellishments for the main event (e.g. power walking, running), etc.

Mr. Z mentioned: *“Our activities such as basketball matches are self-funded and have a very limited impact, but this kind of government-organized event has a higher level of attention, so we are willing to participate. As far as I understand, the Olympic Day is based on running, this kind of sport is relatively easier than basketball, but there are a lot of young people who like basketball, and can promote the event through basketball”*.

Other Stakeholders

Given the realities of the three counties, a more influential Olympic Day needs to draw on help from other sectors beyond the local area. As a result, GASC and COC officers were interviewed.

The General Administration of Sports of China (GASC)

The GASC is the national authority for sports development in China, responsible for the overall planning of mass sports development and the implementation of the national fitness program, etc. Fanshi, Daixian, and Zhijin are the counties supported by the GASC, especially Fanshi and Daixian, they have been receiving support from the GASC since 1994 and 2002 respectively.

Mr G introduced the situation: The GASC has been helping two counties (Fanshi and Daixian) in Shanxi for 27 years and has introduced a series of sports policies and measures in underdeveloped areas across the country, helping not only Fanshi and Daixian in Shanxi province to be relieved from poverty, but also the development of sports in poor areas across the country. In recent years, the GASC has held national events annually in these counties. In order to inspire the local people, the GASC organized 6 champion athletes last year to go to Fanshi and Daixian's schools and communities to interact with students and the residents. In terms of talent support, the GASC has selected 15 cadres for 2-year on-location work in Fanshi and Daixian since 2012. More than 60 interns and teachers from sport universities were selected in 2022 to carry out teaching services in primary and secondary schools in Fanshi and Daixian. Gymnastics, Fitness Qigong and Wushu administrative centers led by the GASC have

conducted training programs in the two counties respectively, a total of about 700 people were trained. Regarding the funding, 900,000 Yuan were invested to support the renovation and upgrading of the venue facilities and equipment of the Fanshi Fitness Activity Center, and 632,000 Yuan of funds were invested to complete the construction of information technology in the new sports venues in Daixian.

Mr. G concluded: *“As you know, we have devoted a lot of effort to those areas, and we are delighted to welcome the COC to hold Olympic Day in the underdeveloped area. As a matter of fact, I think what they really need is a change of mindset and the genuine value of the government to sports. Understandably, the underdeveloped areas regard economic development as their priority, but if they do not have the mindset of developing sports proactively, it is difficult for the event we have or you have to achieve the desired results”*.

The Chinese Olympic Committee (COC)

The interviews revealed that the Chinese Olympic Committee, as the organizer of the event, was satisfied with the Olympic Day activities in the backward areas since 2020, and expressed its gratitude to the local government departments for their support and cooperation. But it also pointed out that holding the Olympic Day in underdeveloped areas is very different from that in cities and faces more difficulties. In this regard, the Chinese Olympic Committee is willing to provide further assistance.

Mr. C commented: *“We would like to make the most of the Olympic Day in the underdeveloped areas. In fact, the number of participants in the underdeveloped areas has increased in recent years, for instance, the number of participants in Zhijin*

this year has exceeded Beijing, which shows that the Olympic Day has a certain influence in the local area already and can be used to achieve many objectives, such as spreading knowledge and promoting sportsmanship. Unfortunately, the activities in most areas are now rather one-dimensional and not very interactive and educational, so we recommend that they organize more enriching and leveled activities in the future. We understand the limited capacity of the county, so we are happy to help if more funding or instruction is needed.”

Conclusion

As a result of the findings and analysis, the following questions will be answered: 1.

What are the reasons for the limited impact of Olympic Day in underdeveloped areas?

2. What should be the impact of a successful Olympic Day (both long and short-term)?

3. How to organize an impactful Olympic Day in Chinese underdeveloped areas?

These questions could be considered as responses to 1. The problems and difficulties

currently faced in organizing the Olympic Day in the Chinese underdeveloped areas,

2. The effects that should be achieved by organizing the Olympic Day, 3. The actions

that should be taken by various stakeholders to achieve those goals.

The answers to the above questions are as follows:

What are the reasons for the limited impact of Olympic Day in underdeveloped areas?

If there is a desire for Olympic Day to have an impact, it is important to first identify the reasons why it is not having the impact it deserves. Through interviews and analysis, the following reasons have been integrated into the views of all sides.

Fewer people participate in sports. This is a direct manifestation of the rural decline in the population for sports. To varying degrees, all three counties interviewed indicated that the majority of those left behind in the area were children, students, and the elderly due to the hollowing out of the rural areas and the fact that most of the young and middle-aged population chose to go to the cities to work. As the total population decreases, there is also a decrease in the sports population, and those left

behind are less enthusiastic about participating in sports than the youth who leave for the towns.

Lack of awareness of sports. Interviews revealed that residents (both adults and students) have a dispensable attitude toward sports. For adults, they are more inclined to watch popular games than participate themselves. For students, they tend to use PE classes as a brief release from academic stress. They won't explicitly object if PE becomes another class that does not require the submission of assignments, and some students even want to turn PE into free time so that they can use it for homework.

Local authorities' bias against sports. The interviewees of sports departments in all three counties believed that because sports were not included in the assessment of achievements in governance, local governments were more focused on boosting the economy, raising residents' income, etc., and did not pay attention to sports. As a result, the local sports bureaus face the dilemma of insufficient funding, and the sports bureaus' personnel are inexperienced and incompetent, they also more or less believe that sports are not important and are not keen on organizing sports activities.

Insufficient publicity and incentives for the Olympic Day. Because all three counties are accustomed to organizing government department personnel to participate in Olympic Day events, local organizers did not fully publicize the event beforehand, or in some cases, not at all. The reward for participants was generally a T-shirt with Olympic Day on it, with few other prizes beyond that.

The Olympic Day's duration is too short and the activities are unattractive.

While Olympic Day is also a half-day event in big cities such as Beijing, the public

does not rely on it because there are many mass sports activities in big cities. But for the underdeveloped areas that lack sufficient mass sport activities, some interviewees indicated that they would be more interested and would call on their families and friends to participate if the time could be lengthened to one day and more rich activities could be held.

What should be the impact of a successful Olympic Day (both long and short-term)?

According to the theory of Leveraging Events to Develop Collaborative Partnerships, the event provides a seed opportunity and resources to strategically accomplish several social, economic, and sporting outcomes for the benefit of local communities. To achieve the desired outcomes that can be leveraged, it is suggested to define and aim for the purpose or desired impact from the perspective of different stakeholders before staging the event, and achieve greater impact by meeting the goals of all stakeholders to the extent possible. Unfortunately, most of the stakeholders organizing Olympic Day in underdeveloped areas are not result-oriented and just organize the event for its own sake. For different stakeholders, activities should be designed from the perspective that obtains the following objectives or impacts:

Impact on the local sport authorities:

- Call on more people to participate in sports: Although the sports departments in underdeveloped areas have to undertake other tasks, promoting sports development is still one of their responsibilities, and Olympic Day will drive people to engage in sports, which is the shared goal with the GASC.

- Enhance the influence: The Olympic Day could help to raise the visibility and image of sports authorities, making more people aware of and interested in their work, and strengthening the social recognition and support for sports.
- Expand cooperation opportunities: The Olympics Day can be used to increase cooperation opportunities with other local government departments and sports organizations, strengthen exchanges and mutual assistance, and promote the development of local sports from different sectors.
- Improve professional skills: By organizing Olympic Day activities, sports authorities have the opportunity to improve their professional skills such as the ability to plan and organize activities.

Impact on local sport organizations (in the case of basketball association):

- Promote the popularity and development of basketball: Olympic Day can be a comprehensive multi-sport event that includes events such as basketball matches and basketball skills challenges. Therefore, sports organizations such as local basketball associations can promote the popularity and development of basketball in underdeveloped areas and provide more people with the opportunity to get in touch with and participate in basketball.
- Increase visibility and influence: Olympic Day could provide opportunities for sports organizations such as local basketball associations to promote themselves and increase their visibility and influence. By attracting more participants and spectators, it will further promote its development.
- Introduce new talents and resources: By attracting more young people to

participate in sports, it will bring new talents and potentially good athletes to the local basketball association and other sports organizations, providing more opportunities for their development. In addition, holding events can also attract more sponsors and partners, providing more resources and support for sports organizations.

- Increase social support and cooperation opportunities: As an event with a certain social influence, Olympic Day will attract more social attention and support. By establishing partnerships with other sports organizations, schools, government departments, and volunteers, local basketball associations can get more resources and help to promote the development of basketball in underdeveloped areas.

Impact on the local schools and students:

- Cultivate interest in sports: Olympic Day provides opportunities for students to participate in sports. Through hands-on experience and participation, it helps cultivate their interest in sports and inspires them to love sports and care about their health.
- Cultivate teamwork spirit: By participating in team activities of the Olympic Day, students can improve the ability of teamwork, coordination, and communication, as well as mutual support, and develop team spirit and good interpersonal relationships.
- Build positive values: Olympic Day activities emphasize the Olympic spirit, such as friendship, fair competition, and respect, etc. Through participation in these activities, students can appreciate these values, develop positive qualities and

moral values, and promote the implementation of comprehensive quality education.

- Discover sports talents: Through Olympic Day activities, schools can discover and cultivate outstanding talents in sports, provide a platform for them to showcase and develop, and create conditions for students' sports development.

Impact on the local residents:

- Increased participation in sports and health awareness: Olympic Day provides residents with the opportunity to participate in a variety of sports, and they can improve their physique, sporting skills, and enhance health awareness, which helps to improve the physical fitness of residents and reduce health problems due to lack of exercise.
- Promote sports culture and values: The Olympic Day emphasizes the Olympic spirit of fairness, friendship and respect. By participating in the activities, residents can appreciate these values and apply them to their daily lives, which helps promote positive values such as teamwork, self-discipline, perseverance and fosters a sense of citizenship and social responsibility.
- Enhance social interaction and cohesion: Through the group activities on Olympic Day, residents can meet new friends, strengthen social relationships, and enhance collective cohesion, which will improve community relations and enhance cooperation and communication between neighbors.
- Identify and develop talent: Olympic Day provides residents with the opportunity to showcase and develop their athletic talents. Young people with potential and

talent may be identified, and they have the opportunity to receive professional education and training, as well as more competitive opportunities.

- Enhance community identity: Since Olympic Day is only held in a few cities of China, hosting the event will add a touch of glory to the underdeveloped areas and residents will feel pride and identity that the community they belong to is vibrant and has potential for development. This will help improve the sense of belonging of residents.

Impact on the Chinese Olympic Committee:

- Promote the Olympic spirit: Organizing Olympic Day events is one of the most important ways to promote the Olympic spirit. By holding them in underdeveloped areas, the COC can spread the Olympic philosophy and values to more places and people, and improve people's knowledge and understanding of the Olympic Movement.
- Expand the development of grassroots sports: By organizing Olympic Day events, the Chinese Olympic Committee can promote the development of grassroots sports, offering more sports support and resources to those in underdeveloped areas, and promoting the long-term development of national health and sports.
- Enhance social influence: By supporting and promoting Olympic Day and carrying out public welfare sports activities in underdeveloped areas, the COC can enhance its influence in society, build a good image and reputation, and strengthen the social influence and responsibility of the COC. This will make an important contribution to creating a healthy and comprehensive sports culture

environment for all people.

- Play a demonstration role: The experience of holding Olympic Day in these three counties can inspire the Chinese Olympic Committee to better promote and popularize Olympic Day in other underdeveloped areas.

How to organize an impactful Olympic Day in Chinese underdeveloped areas?

If the above objectives are to be achieved and the Olympic Day is to be utilized to its fullest potential and have a long-term impact, the design, implementation and conclusion of the activities should be improved in all aspects, as below:

Targeted publicity and promotion campaign

It is believed that for an event to have a greater impact, more people need to participate, and the participation starts with being informed. However, all three counties had only small notifications of participants and did not adequately publicize the Olympic Day. Therefore, it is suggested to use multiple media platforms for promotion, including social media, TV, radio, newspapers, etc. to ensure wide coverage and dissemination of information. It is worth noting that the interviews revealed that the social media preferred by the underdeveloped areas are different from those in the cities, and they prefer to use short video apps such as Douyin (Ticktock) rather than Weibo (similar to Twitter), so the social media they commonly use should be utilized in the promotion.

Organize pre-events

Interviews revealed that most local organizers didn't organize pre-events. However,

some interviewees indicated that if Olympic knowledge could be introduced and publicized before the event, it would enhance the experience of the Olympic Day and make it more beneficial for them. Therefore, it is reasonable to organize a series of pre-Olympic Day warm-up activities, such as inviting Olympians into communities and schools to share their experiences of participating in the Olympic Games, promoting the Olympic spirit, and distributing Olympic Day T-shirts signed by Olympians to attract more residents to participate in and learn about Olympic Day activities.

Foster partnerships with schools and sports associations

Currently, none of the three counties have set up partnerships with schools or local sports associations for Olympic Day. From the perspective of Collaborative Partnerships and Events Leveraging, it is wise to partner with local schools, invite them to organize more student to participate, and in return, they could receive donated sports equipment (e.g. basketball, soccer, equipment for experiential activities, etc.) after the event. Besides, it is suggested to cooperate with local sports associations and invite them to help design activities for their sports programs, and they could have a certain number of souvenirs in return.

Reduce participation requirements

In order to conduct the event safely and successfully, the local organizers set some restrictions on the participants that are not favorable for expanding participation. However, if the Olympic Day wants to have a greater impact, more people should be involved, and the following steps should be considered:

- Expand the scope of the application. Currently, all three counties have age requirements for participation, such as people over 60 are allowed to sign up, but this can be controlled by signing a pledge (e.g., a guarantee that they will be responsible for any problems) to address safety risks and involve more people.
- Welcome previous participants. Because the Olympic Day is held in a public open area rather than a closed location, the registration only assures that they will receive a commemorative T-shirt and wear it on the day, but that residents passing by on-site can also participate. Therefore, it's suggested to welcome previous participants to wear previous commemorative T-shirts to the event, and these people are not required to register, which would increase the number of Olympic Day participants.

Design diverse activities

It was identified through interviews that three counties were able to host the Olympic Day but did not specifically design Olympic-related activities. The activities available were mainly running, while other activities were mostly demonstrations with low participation. If greater impact is desired, there should be an enriched range of activities designed to increase the Olympic element and attract more people to participate.

- Diversify sports programs and competitions to cover participants of different ages and ability levels. For example, design competitions for different ages, provide appropriate programs for children and seniors as well as set up family programs to encourage family members to participate together.

- Incorporate attractive and interactive activities, such as demonstrations and interactions of emerging Olympic sports (e.g. street dance shows, skateboard experiences, roller skating instruction, etc.) to increase the entertainment and trendiness of the event.
- Set up an Olympic culture camp, which can promote the Olympic Movement and Olympic spirit to participants through Olympic know-how exhibition boards and Olympic trivia.

Provide professional training and guidance

Several local organizers revealed that the poor development of local sports and the lack of staff capabilities in the sports sector were major constraints to their delivery of the Olympic Day. Some of the participants also expressed the wish to be guided in sports techniques during their participation in the event. In view of the above, assistance should be provided to local organizers and participants.

- For participants, coaches from sports associations should be invited to provide on-site guidance to help them learn about the roles of the sport and improve their skills, to increase the participation and satisfaction of participants.
- For organizers, the COC should provide them with Olympic Day guidelines, inform them of the basic steps and necessities of hosting an event, share with them what other cities' especially other counties' experience, or provide them with tailor-made references. In addition, invite local organizers to participate in seminars for sports event preparation, and establish contacts with organizers from other areas to learn from.

Reward and recognition mechanism

Through interviews, it was found that some local organizers have recognized the need to promote participation through incentives. Some participants also mentioned that they were very fond of items with the Olympic rings, such as the Olympic Day T-shirt. Therefore, appropriate incentive mechanisms as well as souvenirs with Olympic elements may attract more people to participate.

- Establish various awards, such as Best Performance, Best Group, etc. These awards can be honorary certificates, trophies, prizes, or other tangible rewards to motivate people to actively participate and compete.
- Provide souvenirs such as key chains, mugs, caps, and other peripheral products with Olympic Day logo printing on them. These can be used as rewards for the winners or sold at relatively low prices, which can not only attract participation but increase the publicity effect and bring some income to the local organizers.

Volunteers

The schools and sports associations interviewed expressed their willingness to contribute to the organization of the Olympic Day, and some had volunteer teams themselves. However, all three counties did not make full use of such social forces and only organized activities and provided services themselves. For this reason, future Olympic Days should fully mobilize the positive forces of all stakeholders and make proper use of volunteers.

- Recruit and train local volunteers to help organize the event and provide support and services. The role of volunteers will become increasingly prominent as the

event scales up. Volunteers can be recruited from schools and sports organizations to participate in all aspects of publicity, venue set-up, judging, and reception to provide a good participation experience for residents.

Post-event Evaluation

It is well known that summarizing the events after completion is of great importance. However, none of the three counties had a comprehensive summary of the Olympic Day activities. Therefore, the post-event evaluation should be included in the future.

- After the Olympic Day, collect feedback and suggestions from participants and stakeholders to evaluate and summarize the preparation and delivery, find out the strengths of the event and the potential for improvement to present a better Olympic Day next year.

In conclusion, it is well known that the Olympic Movement should not be oriented only towards developed areas such as cities, the underdeveloped areas sometimes need the inspiration of Olympic values even more, and the sportsmanship of never giving up, cooperation and perseverance is important to be delivered to people in underdeveloped areas. As for this project, if Olympic Day is expected to influence more people and have a long-term impact, it should start by maximizing stakeholder benefits, that is, enabling all stakeholders to take advantage of the event, only in this way could Olympic Day inspire greater motivation and participation, which is the basis for the Olympic Day to have a greater impact. As the most important stakeholders of the Olympic Day, the local sports authorities (as the main organizers)

and the local people (as the participants), their perspectives of the Olympic Day or sport are crucial, but currently, the local organizers are limited in their capacities and are not fully motivated, and the local people are not aware of the importance of sport and have a low level of sport participation. These are issues that need to be solved for first and foremost, and this project makes recommendations to address such issues, providing feasible methods for organizing the Olympic Day in the future, so it could play a better role and have a longer-term impact. This project could be regarded as a useful exploration of the promotion of the Olympic Movement in Chinese underdeveloped areas, which also provides insights for organizing other mass sports activities in those areas in the future. With the great attention from the Chinese government and the assistance from the Chinese Olympic Committee in developing sports in underdeveloped areas, it is believed that more underdeveloped areas will organize increasing number of sport activities to improve the local sports in the future, and more people will participate and enjoy sports, leading a healthier life. At that time, this project can be seen as a brick in the pyramid of promoting sports in underdeveloped areas.

Bibliography

- Bell, B., & Gallimore, K. (2015). Embracing the games? Leverage and legacy of London 2012 Olympics at the sub-regional level by means of strategic partnerships. *Leisure Studies*, 34(6), 720–741.
doi:10.1080/02614367.2014.994553
- Chalip, L. (2004). Beyond impact: A general model for sport event leverage. In B.W. Ritchie & D. Adair (Eds.), *Sport tourism: Inter relationships, impacts and issues* (pp. 226–252). Bristol, UK: Channel View Publications.
- Chalip, L. (2006). Towards social leverage of sport events. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 11(2), 109–127. doi:10.1080/14775080601155126
- Chalip, L. (2017). Trading legacy for leverage. In I. Brittain, J. Bocarro, T. Byers, & K. Swart (Eds.), *Legacies and mega events* (pp. 25–41). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Chalip, L., & Leyns, A. (2002). Local business leveraging of a sport event: Managing an event for economic benefit. *Journal of Sport Management*, 16(2), 132–158.
doi:10.1123/jsm.16.2.132
- Chen, S., & Misener, L. (2019). Event leveraging in a nonhost region: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Sport Management*, 33(4), 275–288.
doi:10.1123/jsm.2018-0210
- Girginov, V., Peshin, N., & Belousov, L. (2017). Leveraging mega events for capacity building in voluntary sport organisations. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 28(5), 2081–2102.
doi:10.1007/s11266-016-9825-x
- Gursoy, D., and K. W. Kendall. (2006). “Hosting Mega Events: Modeling Locals’ Support.” *Annals of Tourism Research* 33 (3): 603–623.
doi:10.1016/j.annals.2006.01.005.
- Harrill, R. (2004). “Residents’ Attitudes toward Tourism Development: A Literature Review with Implications for Tourism Planning.” *Journal of Planning Literature* 18 (3): 251–266. doi:10.1177/0885412203260306.
- Hautbois, C., Djaballah, M. and Desbordes, M. (2020), “The social impact of

- participative sporting events: a cluster analysis of marathon participants based on perceived benefits”, *Sport in Society*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 335-353, doi: 10.1080/17430437.2019.1673371.
- Heere, B., M. Walker, H. Gibson, B. Thapa, S. Geldenhuys, and W. Coetzee (2013). “The Power of Sport to Unite a Nation: The Social Value of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa.” *European Sport Management Quarterly* 13 (4): 450–471. doi:10.1080/16184742.2013.809136.
- Jones, C. (2001). “Mega-Events and Host-Region Impacts: Determining the True Worth of the 1999 Rugby World Cup.” *International Journal of Tourism Research* 3 (3): 241–251. doi:10.1002/jtr.326.
- Kaplanidou, K., K. Karadakis, H. Gibson, B. Thapa, M. Walker, S. Geldenhuys, and W. Coetzee.(2013). “Quality of Life, Event Impacts, and Mega-Event Support among South African Residents before and after the 2010 FIFA World Cup.” *Journal of Travel Research* 52 (5): 631–645. doi:10.1177/0047287513478501.
- LI Xinze, YU Ronghui, CAI Jianguang, JIANG Hongyu, ZHAO Ke, Realistic Dilemma and Path Choice for the High-quality Supply of Public Sports Services in Rural Areas Based on the Theory of “Meta-governance”, *Journal of TUS*(05),578-584. doi:10.13297/j.cnki.issn1005-0000.2022.05.013.
- Liu, C. C., C. J. Chuang, S. Chang, and C. Y. Chang. (2017). “Benefits and Impact Influencing Support of Participants and Residents for Road Race Events: A Comparative Study.” *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation* 39 (2): 149–162.
- Lu, L., and M. W. Song. (2014). “Impact of Asian Games on Guangzhou Urban Development: From the Citizens’ Perspective.” *Journal of Chengdu Sport University* 40 (7): 37–40.
- Matthews, B., & Ross, L. (2010). *Research methods: A practical guide for the social sciences*. Pearson Education, 231-232.
- Mariani, M.M., & Giorgio, L. (2017). The “Pink Night” festival revisited: Meta-events and the role of destination partnerships in staging event tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 62, 89–109. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2016.11.003
- Misener, L. (2015). Leveraging parasport events for community participation: Development of a theoretical framework. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 15(1), 132–153. doi:10.1080/16184742.2014.997773

- O'Brien, D., & Chalip, L. (2007). Sport events and strategic leveraging: Pushing towards the triple bottom line. *Tourism Management*, 19, 318–338.
- Peachey, J.W., & Cohen, A. (2016). Research partnerships in sport for development and peace: Challenges, barriers, and strategies. *Journal of Sport Management*, 30(3), 282–297. doi:10.1123/jism.2014- 0288
- Prayag, G., S. Hosany, R. Nunkoo, and T. Alders. (2013). “London Residents' Support for the 2012 Olympic Games: The Mediating Effect of Overall Attitude.” *Tourism Management* 36: 629–640. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2012.08.003.
- Selsky, J.W., & Parker, B. (2005). Cross-sector partnerships to address social issues: Challenges to theory and practice. *Journal of Management*, 31(6), 849–873. doi:10.1177/0149206305279601
- Smith, A. (2014). Leveraging sport mega-events: New model or convenient justification? *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure & Events*, 6(1), 15–30. doi:10.1080/19407963.2013. 823976
- Taks, M. (2013). “Social Sustainability of Non-Mega Sport Events in a Global World1.” *European Journal for Sport and Society* 10 (2): 121–141. doi:10.1080/16138171.2013.11687915.
- Taks, M., L. Chalip, and B. C. Green. (2015). “Impacts and Strategic Outcomes from Non-Mega Sport Events for Local Communities.” *European Sport Management Quarterly* 15 (1): 1–6. doi:10.1080/ 16184742.2014.995116.
- Theodorakis, N. D., K. Kaplanidou, and I. Karabaxoglou. (2015). “Effect of Event Service Quality and Satisfaction on Happiness among Runners of a Recurring Sport Event.” *Leisure Sciences* 37 (1): 87–107. doi:10.1080/01490400.2014.938846.
- Weed, M., Coren, E., Fiore, J., Mansfield, L., Wellard, I., Chatziefstathiou, D. and Dowse, S. (2009), “A systematic review of the evidence base for developing a physical activity and health legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games”, Department of Health, Canterbury Christ Church University.
- YANG Hua, 2022, Opportunities, Problems and Strategies of Rural Sports Development in Rural Revitalization, *Journal of Chengdu Sport University* (05),8-14. doi:10.15942/j.jcsu.2022.05.002.
- ZHANG Zhen dong, ZHANG Ya-kun, YUAN Rui, LIU Pan-pan, DA Zhi-qiang, XIONG Yi-ming, 2022, Effective Supply Path of Rural Sports Public Service

Under Good Governance Idea, Sports Culture Guide No.6 June 2022

ZHENG Zhibin.(2021). Research on Multiple Dilemmas and Improvement Strategies of the Supply of Public Sports Services in Underdeveloped Regions -- Take Jilin Province as a Case.

<https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CDFDLAST2022&filename=1022426464.nh>

Zhu, H. J., and L. Zhang. (2014). "An Empirical Study on the Major Sports Events and City Public Participation." *China Sport Science* 34 (6): 11–17.

Abstract

This project examines the implementation of Olympic Day in underdeveloped areas of China and explores how to organize an Olympic Day with long-term impact in those areas. Semi-structured interviews were used to observe the evaluation of Olympic Day by various local stakeholders and Chinese sports authorities as well as the Chinese Olympic Committee. The interview data was used to analyze the previous accomplishments of the Olympic Day, which led to the conclusion that it is getting increasingly influential in general but has potential for improvement. Suggestions and recommendations were provided by the end of the project.

Résumé

Ce projet examine la mise en œuvre de la Journée olympique dans les régions sous-développées de Chine et explore la manière d'organiser une Journée olympique ayant un impact à long terme dans ces régions. Des entretiens semi-structurés ont été utilisés pour observer l'évaluation de la Journée olympique par divers acteurs locaux, les autorités sportives chinoises et le Comité olympique chinois. Les données des entretiens ont été utilisées pour analyser les réalisations antérieures de la Journée olympique, ce qui a permis de conclure qu'elle a de plus en plus d'influence en général, mais qu'il reste un potentiel d'amélioration. Des suggestions et des recommandations ont été formulées à la fin du projet.