



LEVERAGING PARA SPORT EVENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

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WHAT WE DID

- We examined how the hosting of different forms of sport events for persons with disabilities were being leveraged to create opportunities for community participation and influence community attitudes towards disability.
- We reviewed policy documents, interviewed decision-makers, observed events, and collected survey data from volunteers and spectators for 2 large-scale sport events:
 - 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland (CG2014): An integrated event where able-bodied athletes and athletes with a disability compete alongside one another.
 - 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games in Toronto, Canada (TO2015): A non-integrated event where athletes with a disability compete in a distinct event separated by time but in the same location.

WHAT WE FOUND

- Diversity and inclusion plans were under-resourced due to a focus on performance.
 - TO2015 advanced inclusion across all aspects of accessibility, but initiatives were under-resourced due to a focus on performance priorities.
 - CG2014's accessibility and diversity initiatives were not resourced, with a focus on elite sports rather than broader participation.
- There were missed opportunities for social change.
 - Both TO2015 and CG2014 missed opportunities including better media representation of disability and basic accessibility (like transportation)
 - While some accessible sports facilities were created for the Games, few strategies to enhance participation for people with disabilities were leveraged post-Games.
- Spectators and volunteers showed improved awareness and attitudes toward disability.
 - Spectators showed a small increase in awareness of disability issues, with a more notable shift in volunteers who had direct contact with Para athletes.
 - Attitudes towards disability improved slightly among volunteers and spectators, but we don't know if these changes led to behaviour changes.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Sport events are an opportunity to **increase disability education and awareness** while **enhancing accessible transportation and facilities** for Para sport athletes.
- For this to happen, event organizers need to **balance performance-driven priorities with a focus on accessibility and inclusion**. They also need to be held accountable to these outcomes.
- **Specific, realistic, leveraging strategies embedded in existing community infrastructures** need to be crafted and resourced to promote long-term sport participation among people with disabilities.



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