

# Chapter 11

## When Ethical Values Drive the Creation and Development of Sporting Events

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### ABSTRACT

*Based on the case study of ColleMarathon, this chapter aims to describe how local volunteers were able to transform a very small-scale sporting event into a successful occasion that merged sports with ethical values and generated positive outcomes for the local communities. Members of the local sports associations and volunteers are the inventors, managers and workers of the marathon that want to communicate the spirit of care and authentic values as its title suggests, “The Marathon of Values.” Ongoing growth (from 350 to more than 1000 athletes) and the participation of new businesses and entities has not changed the governance and the aim of the race: after 17 years, ColleMarathon is still managed by an organising committee made up of representatives of the sports associations and volunteers, who are set in motion by the values they want to disseminate with the event. Values are the glue that binds all actors and still attract participants that run through villages, hills, and old castles, meeting the local people and learning their cultural traditions.*

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## **CHAPTER OBJECTIVES**

- Understand the impacts of a small-scale sporting event on the local community
- Identify what favours the local community and volunteers' commitment to the event
- Contribute to devising the creation and consumption of social capital in sporting events
- Describe possible links between sporting events and tourism

## **INTRODUCTION**

Literature on sporting events usually concentrates on large or mega-events such as the Olympic Games or Football World Cup, as they have significant economic and social impacts, from urban development to job creation, regeneration of peripheral areas, revitalisation of public life through community interactions and tourism (Essex and Chalkley, 1998; Gratton and Taylor, 2000; Chalip et al., 2003; Liu and Gratton, 2010). In other terms, these events generate legacies, i.e., the tangible and intangible structures created for and by a sporting event that remains longer than the event itself (Preuss, 2007, 2015). Nevertheless, recent research has highlighted that such large events may also have negative outcomes (Liu and Wilson, 2014), and their social sustainability is questionable (Smith, 2009). Mega sporting events may increase civic pride, but they are one-off occasions that have little to offer for the long-term sustainability of local communities.

On the contrary, small-scale sporting events recurring every year may bring about more long-term impacts distributed equitably (while the organisation of a large event usually benefits some elites or specific groups of actors). Small-scale sporting events may reinforce collective identity and a sense of connectedness in their own neighbourhoods better than large events that change spaces (new infrastructures are created) and often modify the image of a location (to make it a symbol for renovation and hope).

Literature on small-scale sporting events suggests that these events have an economic impact of negligible relevance compared to large events (Wilson, 2006), but they may have strong positive social effects on the local community and potentially contribute to encouraging tourism activities, especially in rural areas (Bertella, 2014; Duglio and Beltramo, 2017).

Small events have different dynamics that govern the stages of conceptualisation and realization (Bertella, 2014), heavily rely on local stakeholders and volunteers whose perceptions are of key relevance (Bazzanella et al., 2019) and face more difficulties compared to large events in attracting participants (Fotiadis et al., 2016). Their differences from large events have made several researchers call for additional

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