

## #1 Mass mega sporting events

Mass sporting events are an important part of outdoor recreation. They can provide significant benefit to those involved either as a participant or volunteer or spectator. Sheffield Hallam University has undertaken two decades of research quantifying the impact of major events in terms of economic impact, inspirational impact and increasingly, wider social impacts. However we face a challenge. How do we balance the benefit generated by events with the need to ensure environmental protection and sustainability?

On the first day of this Euro'meet Conference we heard from five passionate speakers who spoke about mass mega events from very different perspectives. We heard about:

- The rationale behind the 2022 Winter Olympic Candidacy for Barcelona and the Pyrenees, and the challenges faced during this multi-disciplinary team effort. This presentation posed the questions of sustainability, legacy and return on investment from the development of the necessary infrastructure for a winter Olympics in a warmer environment. What would be the longer term legacy from such an event? There is limited evidence to suggest that any modern Olympic Games has achieved long term legacy impacts in terms of participation and it is a challenge for facilities to be used effectively once the event ends. These should be key considerations of any bid to host such a mass scale event.
- We learned about the theories behind why people participate in mass mega events - how participants classified as 'involved or serious runners' achieve a balance which allows them to train and compete and how increasingly their families attend events with them. Dr. Andersson also offered the use of a questionnaire to help understand participation in events. This 'mass mega' survey, which contains 250 different questions(!), is split into five different themes, each of which captures insight into a different element of event participation from motivations to economic impacts.
- There were also three shorter presentations from Oriol, Joan and Elise which provided specific insight into: a cycling event, trail running classifications and a major equestrian competition. This included a good practice example of how the Transpyr adventure race focuses on sustainability and protection of the routes used.

We all have a role in promoting and advocating outdoor recreation participation and encouraging people to enjoy the natural environment but increasing popularity, usage and events has potential consequences on the land used. Many participants and consumers call for things to be done in sustainable ways and hopefully this growing pressure will help to further prioritise the importance of sustainability. Whilst some nations have codes of conduct or guidance on sustainable delivery these are usually voluntary rather than compulsory and there is no consistency across Europe.

### Key Recommendations:

1. The EU continues to view / acknowledge 'mass mega events' from a narrow perspective, including just high profile sporting events such as football and Olympic Games. Wider acknowledgement of the range of events is needed to shift the focus to wider participatory events, which often offer greater benefits to a wider community.

2. Some type of 'payback scheme' might be appropriate for mass mega events which are revenue generating / hosted for profit
3. The increasing popularity of a range of outdoor sporting events puts pressure on certain landscapes. It is necessary to track usage of land and to work with expert groups and local communities to ensure that such areas are not over-used.
4. We should work together to establish a resource of good practice to share knowledge and to work towards universal standards of high quality sustainable practice.
5. Further work is needed to understand participation in mass mega events to help to maximise the benefits created. Tools such as <http://www.eventimpacts.com/> can be utilised by event providers and organisations to help to evidence the power of events. There may also be sections of the Gothenburg University survey which can be used to provide increased insight into the motivations for participation. Both these resources are free to use.

## 2# Active Tourism

The session *Active Tourism* dealt with all the facets of outdoorsport in a touristic setting. The speakers came from different organisations and could give therefore an adequate view on the topic.

Enric Torres (National Tourism Office of Andorra) gave an insight on the role of outdoorsport for the touristic development of Andorra. Dr. Lázaro Mediavilla and Dr. Vicente Gómez (Universidad Politécnica de Madrid) talked about the service quality in outdoor providers and highlighted the role of guides and leaders in the field of active tourism. Niels-Christian Levin Hansen (National Olympic Committee Denmark) signposted the value of outdoorsport for the Danish society and the work of the NOC in Denmark for the various outdoorsports. Lisbeth K. Lund (University Oslo) analysed in her speech the conflicts of outdoor sport and sports in nature that are discussed in the actual literature. Pau Mateu, Miriam Rocher and Victor Labrador (INEFC – Barcelona) explored the personal and social effects of outdoor interventions through their empirical research during a nordic skiing camp. Romain le Pemp (idee-o, France) described in a case study about ski touring the development and changes of outdoor sports with the effects on space, participants and stakeholders and tried to give solutions to the occurring problems.

With the help of the question rounds and the discussion the following key recommendations could be developed.

### Key recommendations

1. Active Tourism and outdoor sport have and will have in the future a great potential for the development of rural areas and regions. The effects are already named in the white paper for rural development but have to be further broadcasted to the different stakeholders. Especially the following two factors should be taken into account:
  - a. Low investment to develop outdoor sport and active tourism
  - b. Longer average duration of stay of outdoor sport tourists compared to other touristic branches (statistically proven data) have a positive effect for the generated income and with longer and lesser stays can have a positive effect of the carbon footprint caused by the touristic activity.
2. There seems to be a wish from stakeholders, officials and outdoor sport participants to have sensible information and regulations affecting outdoor sport and environmental matters broadcasted through easy accessible media like websites and social media. In situ signposting and informational signs can give participants a positive sport experience but also transport environmental matters. This should be done in a similar way for the area or region.
3. Beside the wish for a European Qualification of outdoor guides and a high quality education of those, outdoor guides should get environmentally qualified in their education to get co-managers of nature protection. There seems to be a gap between European countries and their varied associations as some have this idea already in place others are just in the beginning. Further exchange of knowledge and learning from each other is necessary beside the cooperation with nature protecting organisations.
4. The importance of outdoor sport for the society as grassroot sports is recognised by some NOCs across Europe. There is a big need to continue this process because NOCs have a big influence of sport development in their country and can give a push for outdoor sport.
5. Regulations concerning outdoor sport have to be evidence based.
6. Research and exchange of knowledge about the positive effects of outdoor sport to society and to the individual are done and have to be continued.

7. Outdoor sport is developing and changing sometimes in a very fast manner. The sport itself and the behaviour of participants can be different from one season to another. Outdoor sport places or areas, participants, interest groups and stakeholders are effected and need to find a way to react in the right way concerning these developments. Adequate solutions have to be in line with these developments to balance outdoor sport in a sustainable way.

### 3#Outdoor Sports in protected areas

The session Outdoor Sports in protected areas started with a brief introduction of the coordinator who encouraged both the speakers and the participants to achieve a challenging aim: to define clear strategies to help the managers of natural protected areas to make get to a more sustainable management.

One of the main conclusions of the session can help us to organise the diverse talks: the strategies of management of natural protected areas towards a more sustainable development can be divided into three main phases, as mentioned in the first speech of the session by *Eduard Inglés Yuba*: 1) firstly, a situation diagnosis phase, once the conflict has been detected; 2) secondly, a period of action or process of intervention, in which the recommended strategies are revealed by which to attain a greater degree of sustainability in the final development; and 3) lastly, a phase of evaluation of and adaptation to the new needs generated by the strategies adopted.

The diagnosis phase consists of a deep analysis of the environment and the different dimensions of the context of the area, which coincide with the 4 dimensions of the sustainable development: social, economic, ecologic and institutional. This analysis, as shown by *Javier Gómez Limón*, should be done from a scientific point of view trying to define the carrying capacity of the area, renamed in his speech as the reception capacity of the area. *Estela Farías* added the importance of knowing the characteristics and the profile of the visitors and sportspeople in natural areas, showing the methodology to analyse their profile with the aim of giving the people responsible for the management of a natural area some strategies to deal with them and their activities.

The intervention phase has its starting point on the scientific studies developed in the diagnosis phase, with the aim of generating strategies to *leave no trace* on the natural area, as Noel Doyle tried to show with their good practices in Ireland. Their main aim is creating a positive attitude towards more sustainable behaviour by the use of environmental education actions. It is indispensable to set the strategies in response to the values of the different scopes of the reception capacity of the area: the physical capacity, as the limit of transit acceptable; the ecologic capacity, as the limit point of recuperation of the area by its own resources; and the psicologic capacity, as the maximum number of people that can be at the area without a feeling of mass use or insatisfaction. Some successful strategies where showed by the speakers: ecobriefing, that consists of the use of the explanation prior to the activity to show the effects of a bad behaviour for the ecologic conditions of the area; participatory processes with common agreements or shared responsibility and commitment.

The evaluation phase consists of the corroboration of the real attainment of the established objectives, that is, assessment of the effects generated by the adopted strategies on the degree of sustainability of development of the territory. Once the results have been assessed, maintenance of the situation must be guaranteed, if the results are positive, or corrective measures devised in those cases where the desired degree of sustainability has not been attained. The evaluation, as shown by *María José Viñals*, has to be assessed from the point of view of the different dimensions of the development: social, ecologic, economic and institutional. We also had the experience of the manager of a real protected area: *Marc Garriga* from the Parc Natural de l'Alt Pirineu. He highlighted the importance of the managing capacity of the area, based on the human and economic resources that the natural protected dispose.

In conclusion, more questions than answers were laid on the table:

## Key Recommendations

1. Managers of natural protected areas should clearly separate their actions into the 3 main phases of the managing process: 1) *a situation diagnosis phase*, once the conflict has been detected; 2) a period of *action or intervention*, in which the recommended strategies are revealed by which to attain a greater degree of sustainability in the final development; and 3) *a phase of evaluation of and adaptation to the new needs generated by the strategies adopted*.
2. The diagnosis phase should be led by specialists and by the use of scientific studies. The actions and interventions of the second phase must be based on the conclusions of these diagnostic studies.
3. Carrying capacity should be understood and renamed as the reception capacity, divided into three parts: physical capacity, ecologic capacity and psicologic capacity.
4. Overlooking the existence of a stakeholder involved in the practice of a specific sports activity may constitute a major drawback when it comes to managing the activity. The first essential step towards more sustainable management of the area is to identify all the stakeholders who may be affected by, or else exert a degree of influence on, decisions adopted in relation to management of a specific activity.
5. When facing a specific conflict situation the people responsible for the management of natural sites must work towards establishing a network structure that would encompass all the stakeholders involved, and fostering collaborative processes in which they may all share.
6. Try to apply strategies that avoid unilateral solutions that lack a consensus basis, that foster the involvement of all stakeholders, and that respond to the strategies applied by the rest of the stakeholders; trying to create a collaborative network structure between the stakeholders involved.
7. Regulation is too much diverse and heterogeneous. Also within the borders of each country, regulation is different in the diverse areas. Actions of homogenisation should be developed to settle the general and common rules that have to be accomplished everywhere and laying the basis for the specific regulations needed by each natural area because of the specific features of the area.

## 4#Outdoor Sports and well-being

*Peter Varley* gave us a great start to our morning session and made us think about the pressures of a modern-day lifestyle and that we live accelerated technological lives. Time is now one of life's greatest luxuries and how we spend it can make a huge difference to our health and well-being. The concept of slow adventure is that it is about human or natural powered travel, it is about the journey as much as or even more so than the destination and it provides connectivity with nature. Peter talked about our need for "Vitamin N" which I thought was a great way to think about our need for natural connectivity.

*Tadgh McIntyre* was our second keynote speaker and provided a fascinating insight into the world of research into health and green/blue exercise. As a psychologist working in this field, Tadgh highlighted that there is still a significant research need into the impacts of green/blue exercise on health and well-being. However, there are a number of partner organisations working hard to bridge that gap.

He highlighted some of the work that has been done and one thing that struck me was that exercise in the natural environment invoked memory retention much better than that done in a gym or indoor facility. Tadgh also gave us some insights into motivation and behavioural differences between indoor and outdoor activity again showing that motivation can be stronger in the outdoors. The whole area of social and interpersonal connectivity through the outdoors was also an element of Tadgh's talk that struck a chord with me.

*Sina Hartmann* gave us a presentation on a Masters project that she was involved with to look at the impact of a summer camp in Sweden's impact on young people's confidence and personal development. Those of us who have worked in outdoor education are aware of the benefits that such programmes bring (we hear kids say: "that was the best day of my life!") but it is good to see some good research done that starts to quantify impacts.

One of the things that ENOS is doing through the BOSS project is starting to collate and provide a good record of the research that is being done that highlights the social benefits of outdoor sports.

*Kirsti Pedersen Gurholt* was next and provided us with a fascinating insight into work that he is doing on women and girls in arctic environments. She has been looking into the impact of a number of media mediums (both books and TV series) on girls who live and travel in Arctic Norway environments. She highlighted a number of projects where young people and especially girls were involved in amazing (we would think of it as wilderness) adventures, but they didn't see it as wilderness – just as arctic environments. Furthermore, she highlighted the impact these had on their academic success and their resilience but also highlighted the role of these girls in reshaping and rethinking feminine identity.

We then had a much more practical talk from *Anne Ward and Venora Hovelt* who are ambassadors for the Ring of Gullion area in Northern Ireland and provided an insight into the programmes that they run to provide a holistic approach to culture, identity and health through walking that connect participants back to landscape and a sense of place and also to local healthy food. It was good to see a very practical example of some of the theory that we had been exploring (especially as it was from NI)

Finally our last session was from *Feliu Funollet*. This was an inspiring and passionate talk on the power of nature for personal and collective transformation. Again, Feliu highlighted the challenges we face in a modern world and included how we are educating and perhaps stifling our young people. He highlighted the emotional connections that people have not just with nature but also

with each other after being active in natural environments and these are highly observable among students he has had involved in programmes.

We have often found the same thing and its one of the reasons that we do site visits as the connectivity that people gain through the activities is often much better than when in meetings. It is a principle we have adopted in the ENOS committee so that when we meet we often try to do some form of activity together to strengthen relationships.

In conclusion we had a very varied morning that included academic research findings, thought provoking challenges to us, practical examples of the power of nature to make a difference in people's lives, the importance of moving and being physically active (although not necessarily at a fast pace) and the need for us to be passionate drivers for the value of outdoor sports.

It is important that we support further thinking on well-being and the outdoors.

### **Key recommendations:**

1. There are proven health and well-being benefits of physical activity and likewise of being in nature, but there is still a lack of research into the whole area of green/blue exercise especially at a pan European level.
  - a. The European Commission should look to support this evidence base by the provision of dedicated funding for this work.
  - b. ENOS needs to promote and showcase any research that has highlighted this.
  - c. ENOS should develop a partnership agreement with the GOGreenEX network.
2. There is a need to promote the use of imagery of ordinary people enjoying physical activity in green spaces that are accessible rather than those of very athletic looking "perfect" individuals carrying out some form of extreme high adrenaline activity.
  - a. This applies to the European Commission, ENOS, federations, clubs and regional authorities.
3. Increasingly risk averse authorities and organisations are limiting opportunities for access to green space for health enhancing physical activity for fear of litigation.
  - a. The European Commission could alleviate this through a European Directive on access and personal responsibility to green spaces for recreation and physical activity. This is already enshrined in law in some countries.
  - b. The DG for agriculture that provides significant funding and subsidies to landowners and farmers could enshrine the provision of access for health and well being as a key component of this.
4. There is a need to develop training programmes for outdoor sports professionals and club leaders on how to develop programmes and maximise health benefits for participants on longer term programmes of activity in the outdoors.
5. There is a need to promote opportunities and the value of camps and residential programmes for young people to take part in outdoor sports in combination with personal and social education programmes and it is unclear if there is Erasmus funding dedicated for such activities.



- a. The DG for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport should look into the potential for the development of European Outdoor Youth Camps.
  - b. ENOS could facilitate pilot programmes for this.
  - c. These should be linked to academic institutes that can then carry out research into the social and health benefits accrued from such events.
6. There is a need to promote the importance of using physical activity in natural environment as a way of developing social interaction and community coherence.

