



CHAMPION
CITIES

RECOGNISING THE TRANSFORMATIVE
POTENTIAL OF MEGA-SPORTS EVENTS

A Mirabilis Advisory Initiative



CHAMPION CITIES

THE GOAL OF CHAMPION CITIES IS TO PROVIDE AN INVALUABLE PLATFORM TO A CROSS-SECTION OF STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN THE DELIVERY OF MEGA-SPORTS AND CULTURAL EVENTS WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON HOST CITIES IN ASIA AND AFRICA.

THE INAUGURAL CHAMPION CITIES SUMMIT WILL TAKE PLACE IN 2009 IN NEW DELHI, WHICH WILL HOST THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES IN 2010.

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Creating Champion Cities: Recognising the Transformative Potential of Mega-Sports Events

Why Champion Cities?

We think cities and we invariably think buildings, roads, modes of transportation, and parks which are the dominant and visible markers of any city. In this paper, we explore the role of the intangibles: arts, culture, education, and sports that arguably shape the cityscape.

In the 21st century, “cities with dynamic and active cultural environments have global competitive advantages”; a global reality, this worldview is not shared by a majority of India’s policymakers, corporate players, civil society organisations and citizens. As Nandan Nilekani, co-chair of Infosys, a leading corporate brand born in urban India’s IT capital — Bangalore, said at a recent seminar, “Indian cities have been fugitives in their own country.” In fact the very term ‘urbanisation’ is a recent addition to the vocabulary of a society that still believes the myth that “India lives in its villages”. While two-thirds of India maybe rural, what must be considered is the nature of the built environment in our habitats. Today, the response to the growing reality of urbanisation has been a zealous overdrive to build hardware — roads, flyovers, housing complexes, retail spaces and public transport systems. While we welcome this focus on physical infrastructure which is a tablestake requirement for India’s future competitiveness, we argue that the conspicuous absence of equitable investment in the spheres of art, culture, sports and education actually inhibits and may even retard India’s long term economic development potential.

Taking the Mirabilis Matrix (see table), an analytical framework for urban thinking, as a way of understanding how this impediment can be overcome, it becomes apparent that investments need to be made into creating not just suitable hardware but also be directed towards developing suitable software and governance systems in India’s cities. While the importance of physical infrastructure or ‘hardware’ has been well recognised, it is the role and economic potential of the ‘software’ that needs to be more fully understood to develop successful, vibrant and liveable cities in 21st century India.

Leveraging Culture and Sports for Economic Development

There are two distinct but related reasons why cities should invest in arts, culture and sports. First is to improve the quality of life of those who already inhabit the city, while also making the city more attractive to a group of highly skilled but increasingly mobile migrants. The retention of existing human capital and the continuous influx of people with new skills, helps a city cultivate and retain its competitive edge. In his essay *Cities, Culture and Happiness*², Bruno S. Frey, based on survey results from Germany, found that people who attend cultural events are often more satisfied with the life they lead than those who consume art rarely or never. Also “participating in the improvement of urban culture engenders a sense of belonging and encourages people to improve

¹ Managing Asian Cities: Sustainable and inclusive urban solutions, Asian Development Bank, 2008

² Cities, Culture and Happiness, Bruno S. Frey; Ethos, World Cities Summit Issue, June 2008

THE MIRABILIS MATRIX: AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR URBAN THINKING

	HARDWARE	SOFTWARE	GOVERNANCE
LIVEABILITY	Good quality housing and amenities like parks, hospitals, clubs and schools.	Social networks & interaction. Clustering of amenities to create “urban buzz”, a sense of place and history.	Safety and enforcement of Law. Simple and well enforced system of municipal regulation.
COMPETITIVENESS	Transport & communications links. Quality of office/ commercial space.	Clustering of human capital and ability to attract talent, socio-cultural openness.	Reasonable tax rates. Efficient governance structures.
ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT	Public transport, density, green spaces, waste management, etc.	Environmental consciousness, low impact lifestyles.	Air and water quality. Sustainable practices with regard to water supply & usage, etc.

their properties and remain in the historic city³.” There are also numerous examples of cities that have leveraged their cultural heritage for economic and social development. Examples include Lille in France, Melaka in Malaysia and Elmina in Ghana. According to a 2007 ADB paper each of these three towns, through public-private partnerships revitalised heritage assets to not only improve living conditions of the local population but to also generate significant employment and wealth.

Meanwhile, cities like London, New York, Paris, Tokyo and Hong Kong have actively and deliberately used culture — art, theatre, music, museums and galleries — to attract not only tourists but also some of the best minds in the world. It is this coming together of people from multiple backgrounds and

cultures that can engender innovative thinking and collaborations of the kind that add to a city’s competitiveness. The second reason is more directly linked to economic growth — investments in arts, culture and sports can, and do generate employment and wealth. Take the case of New York City for example. Culture is big business there, with museums, art galleries and theatres being among the fastest growing sectors in the city. According to Cultural Affairs Commissioner of New York City, Kate D. Levin, “New York City is home to talented musicians, adventurous audiences, and more than 1,400 extraordinary cultural institutions.” The City receives upward of 46 million travelers from around the world, primarily due to the city’s rich cultural offer.

³ Managing Asian Cities: Sustainable and inclusive urban solutions, Asian Development Bank, 2008



In fact the sports industry also brings with it the promise of substantial economic gains. “It is an industry with unparalleled global reach and power. Globally, sports-related turnover amounts to three per cent of total world economic activity. In the United Kingdom, for example, sports-related turnover equals that of the automotive and food industries. Major events such as the Soccer World Cup or Formula One Grand Prix are watched around the world. The International Olympic Commission alone earns almost US\$ 2 billion from sponsorship and TV rights. At the same time, the corporate practices of this worldwide industry can and do have widespread impact, socially and environmentally⁴.”

However, an investment in the spheres of culture and sports results in more than just direct economic benefits. Witness the homecoming of an athlete who has won an Olympic medal or a cricket team that has won the world cup — there is a very visible sense of pride among the people whom the individual or the team represents. While one needs to be wary of engendering excessive nationalism, cultivating a sense of achievement and pride in one’s city and its

⁴ Eric Falt, United Nation’s Director of Communications, <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=413&ArticleID=4671&l=en>

ability to be both a springboard and platform for champions is an imperative. A vibrant arts, culture and sporting environment tends to act as a confidence-building measure which is indispensable in today's highly competitive world.

India too needs to think beyond building physical infrastructure and shed the mindset where sports and culture have traditionally been viewed as luxuries and treated as peripherals to the development of both the individual as well as the city. As Frey⁵ points out "Countries experiencing successful economic development should take into account that their population will exert an increasing demand for cultural activities in the future. The decisive question is in what way culture should be encouraged by policy."

Let us take the case of Delhi as a way of looking at how culture and sports can be leveraged for urban generation and economic development. Interestingly, Delhi is a city that does not require too many greenfield developments when it comes to culture and sports. What it does need is thoughtful investment in crucial brownfield projects. The city already has an arts' district in



⁵ Cities, Culture and Happiness, Bruno S. Frey; Ethos, World Cities Summit Issue, June 2008

its very heart. The area around Mandi House (the headquarters of the state television and radio broadcasters) has a number of theatres, galleries and museums, most of which are in disrepair. Just down the road is Delhi's historic Central Business District - Connaught Place which is of both economic and historic significance and needs to be regenerated using the principle of mixed land use (although it must be mentioned that some fledgling and few abortive initiatives have been undertaken in this regard).

Today, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation has done much to connect the old historic walled city of Delhi to this central area, but somehow our mental models of distance have not yet been similarly compressed. This prevents either of the areas from being fully exploited as vibrant tourist and cultural hubs. Their economic, social and cultural equity thus remains locked up. The city even has stadia, unfortunately many of which have remained underutilised for years, and it is only with the Commonwealth Games on the



horizon that efforts to put them back in shape have been initiated.

Transformative Potential of Mega Events

There is a reason why cities from all across the world compete with each other to win a chance to host mega-sporting events such as the Olympic Games and the Commonwealth Games. While these events themselves may last for just a few days, not only do they present the host city with a chance of being in the global spotlight, but they can also act as catalysts of urban development and regeneration in a way that few other events can. If approached smartly, these mega-sporting events can have far reaching positive impacts on the social, economic, physical and cultural landscape of a city.

Successful examples such as the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, where Japan used the event to showcase its post-restoration accomplishments, or that of the commercial success of the Los Angeles Olympics of 1984, and the urban transformations associated with the Barcelona Games of 1992 lead us to believe that mega-sports events do have an inherent regenerative potential. In fact, longitudinal research has borne out the fact that it was because Barcelona was able to successfully “harness the impetus and the legacy of

the Games” that the urban transformation associated with the Barcelona Games has had a far-reaching economic and social impact⁶.

The importance of incorporating a mega-event into “a comprehensive national strategy that captures the tangibles while also advancing a nation’s social and economic development, inspiring passion and national pride, and building a global reputation — all of which can last a lifetime” cannot be underestimated.



⁶ Brunet, Ferran (2005): The economic impact of the Barcelona Olympic Games, 1986-2004: Barcelona: The legacy of the games, 1992-2002 [online article] available at http://olympicstudies.uab.es/pdf/wp084_eng.pdf

⁷ Building a Legacy, AT Kearney Report

Take the case of the 2012 London Olympics. The organisers promise to regenerate the undeveloped area of East London, which is to become the primary location for the Olympic Village and the main facilities. It has been estimated that this will create around 3,000 jobs in the area and add about £70 million to its economic growth. In fact several of the Olympic projects have been dovetailed with the larger urban regeneration projects of the London Development Agency — an example that India must examine in closer detail if it wants to truly use the 2010 Commonwealth Games as a catalyst for urban transformation.

Commonwealth Games: The Hidden Opportunities

The Commonwealth Games have generated a lot of debate in India. The potential benefits of hosting such an event have been questioned, and issues of exclusion and displacement have also been raised. While we recognise the importance of these, the opportunities that are inherent in hosting such an event cannot be negated. As host of the Commonwealth Games, not only will Delhi be forced to put its house in order (much like what happened in China prior to the Beijing Olympics) it will also, given the right partnerships and investments, be able to create a legacy that will help leverage culture and sports as strategic sectors of economic development.



International Auditing

As the host of the Commonwealth Games, India and specifically Delhi will be in the world's eye and in a way be subjected to international auditing via the media, the tourists, and indeed, the Commonwealth Games participants. This may reveal existing lacunae in policymaking and implementation, which we believe is healthy in the overall scheme of things — an opportunity for further action and rectification.

The auditing could also act as a possible enabler of collaboration between civic, local and national authorities, creating networks/relationships that may become lasting ones — a legacy of the Games.



Promoting Urban Governance

This is Delhi's opportunity to institutionalise urban governance models. Urban governance has been defined by Richard Leete as "the process by which local urban governments — in partnership with other public agencies and different segments of civil society — respond effectively to local needs in a participatory, transparent and accountable manner⁸." It denotes both government responsibility as well as civic engagement.

The Games may be an opportunity for economic and environmental regeneration, but could overshadow or marginalise the needs of local people. Public, private and citizen partnerships are essential for creating the software that makes a city liveable. Also as the Barcelona case shows, the involvement of citizens right from the stage

of decision making and having them have a buy-in into the event and be made to feel like stakeholders is essential to create a sense of ownership which is what ensures a legacy.

Thinking Beyond Hardware

It is estimated that India will end up spending approximately US\$ 15 billion for the Commonwealth Games, the bulk of which is being spent on overhauling existing infrastructure and implementing new projects such as Delhi Metro Rail Corporation⁹. The deadlines for all major infrastructure projects across the capital have been tied to the Games.

It maybe useful to look back in time to avoid the mistakes made during the Asian Games of 1982. The construction projects — stadia, the Asiad Village, hotels and roads & flyovers — accounted for a majority of the budget but were largely shoddy and built without any thought to usability of these structures post the event¹⁰.

With just under two years left for the event to take place, it is perhaps time now to shift the focus to upgrading the city's software and governance systems.

How successfully Delhi manages to pull these various aspects together to truly convert itself into a world-class city will not only directly determine Delhi's chances of being selected as the host for the 2020 Olympic Games, but will also to a large extent shape its cultural landscape for decades to come.

⁸ Human Development and Urbanisation, Richard Leete in Ethos, World Cities Summit Issue, June 2008

⁹ In the Name of Game, by John Sarkar and Shantanu Nandan Sharma, The Economic Times on Sunday, 3rd August 2008

¹⁰ Uppal, V and Ghosh D (2006) The Impact of Commonwealth Games 2010 on Urban Development of Delhi, National Institute of Urban Affairs, www.niua.org

