Olympia Forum on DOSB’s Website: Promoting E-Participation through Digitainability
E-Participation Platform by eKairos

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Challenge

The challenge given: eKAIROS is a consultancy that leverages AI-assisted, low-threshold co-creation to activate the collective wisdom of many. Recently, they drew attention to the fact that Germany is the only G7 country that has not hosted an Olympic Games in the past 50 years. While they acknowledge that hosting the Olympics could bring sustainable positive impacts to the host location, they emphasized the need to realize this potential before any such event is hosted.

Their analysis raised several important questions, including:

- How can we identify the potential for sustainable positive effects of hosting the Olympic Games, while taking into account ecological, economic, and social aspects?
- How can an agile e-participation process lead to the most concrete approaches for the implementation?
- How can we ensure that the largest possible portion of the population feels heard and seen throughout the process?
- Which stakeholders should be involved in the process?
- How can we convince a significant portion of the public to participate in such a process?

Background & Problem

Referenda were held in Munich and Hamburg to determine Olympic game hosting. Issues included low voter turnout in Munich due to conflicting information, and external influence in Hamburg from NO Olympics Boston group. Clear guidelines on information sources and encouraging voter participation can prevent undue influence on the referendum outcome.

Solution

The main strategy adopted for the solution was to have a neutral and democratic process, in which every opinion could be heard. This would foster citizen participation and shape Olympic Games in Germany according to their needs.

The developed solution is an e-participation platform available on the DOSB website. When accessing the DOSB website, users can navigate to the "OLYMPIA FORUM" tab and obtain general information about the Olympic Games in Germany. It includes a description of the new norms of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), risks and opportunities, budget requirements, the need for new ventures, and sustainability goals.

To participate in shaping the Olympic Games, users can sign up or sign in to confirm their identity as citizens. Then, they can access the "PARTICIPATE - FORUM" tab and enter the platform. Users can browse through posts, search or filter for specific ones, and view proposals or discussions. Posts are color-coded to indicate their origin, with red denoting official DOSB proposals, blue for those initiated by a political party, and grey for those created by citizens. Users can access a post, read more information, support or oppose it, and add comments to the proposal or discussion. Additionally, users can click the up or down arrows to increase the post's popularity and share it via social media using the "Share" button.

Once a proposal reaches the threshold of supporters, it will be added to the implementation list. Proposals on this list will be reviewed in conjunction with the city hall to ensure feasibility. All necessary additional steps to implement a proposed project will be shared with the public to ensure transparency. The "CONSULTATIONS" tab provides citizens with an opportunity to access videos, webinars, and ask questions directly on topics related to environmental, social, and governance issues surrounding the Olympic Games.

Public Engagement Strategy

We have a public engagement strategy to mobilize three groups of people towards the Olympic Forum: Olympic enthusiasts, Olympic sceptics, and non-engaged people.

For Olympic enthusiasts, we plan to launch an online campaign with famous professional athletes as ambassadors and mobilize stakeholders from previous referendums. Social media campaigns and the involvement of multipliers such as sports clubs and celebrities will also be used to raise awareness.

For Olympic sceptics, we will create a neutral forum that allows people to express criticism of the Olympics and organize Q&A sessions with neutral experts. We will collaborate with organizations that tend to be skeptical of the Olympics and ensure that the platform is transparent and easy to use.

For non-engaged people, we will work with local community organizations such as sports clubs to direct them to the forum. We will provide non-biased information and offer incentives such as prizes or recognition to encourage participation. We will also ensure an inclusive environment that provides everyone with the same opportunity to participate equally.

Outlook and Key Learnings

The success of eKAIROS is dependent on the decision of stakeholders. An offer is being prepared for the DOSB and the German Ministry of Sport to develop the Olympia Forum. It is up to the decision-makers to determine whether they want to implement e-participation in the bidding process. Large events such as the Olympics often face criticism from the public, making it essential to involve them in the decision-making process and the development of the application through e-participation. However, implementing e-participation in controversial topics like the Olympics can be challenging due to the need for neutrality. Any violation of basic principles of neutrality can jeopardize the legitimacy of the e-participation process and render it useless. Therefore, it is crucial to maintain neutrality in the design and observe the basic principles to ensure the success of the project.