

THE INAUGURAL YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES AS A CATALYST FOR SPORTS
TOURISM IN SINGAPORE

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Introduction

"It is a new era for sports in Southeast Asia. It is the first time that the Olympic flame will be in Southeast Asia and Singapore."

*Lee Hsien Loong
Prime Minister of Singapore*

From 14th to 26th August 2010, Singapore will be hosting the inaugural Youth Olympic Games, the first new Games the Olympic Movement has created in 80 years. The Youth Olympic Games, or YOG, was created with the goal of inspiring young people to achieve sports excellence and to adopt the Olympic values of Excellence, Friendship and Respect in everyday life. Singapore was shortlisted along with Athens, Bangkok, Moscow and Turin to host the Games and triumphed over Moscow in the final round of votes with a tally of 53 to 44 votes on 21st February 2008 (Olympic.org, 2008). This unprecedented win will bring the Olympic flame to South-East Asia and Singapore for the very first time.

From being a host venue of several small-scale sporting events, Singapore has made significant progress in the recent years. She played host to the very first night race in the Formula One series in 2008 and the first Asian Youth Games in 2009. At the 2010 biennial Sport Accord Convention in Dubai, Singapore also made it to the list of the 25 shortlisted countries for the first time. The judging criteria was based on the sporting events each city hosts annually, has hosted or will host between 2006 and 2014 (De Cotta, 2010), and with Singapore's line-up of mega sporting events, the city was named

the number two Ultimate Sports City in the world, behind Melbourne which has received the top accolade since the inception of the award three years ago.

These significant milestones in its history of hosting sporting events come at a time when Singapore is moving away from manufacturing into service industries such as finance and tourism to diversify its economy (Koh, 2008). On the tourism front, she faces competition from Hong Kong, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Tokyo and Shanghai among other regional destinations, all of which has necessitated the importance of consistently marketing Singapore as a compelling travel destination and to look into developing other forms of tourism.

Hosting the Youth Olympic Games will mark Singapore's emergence as a key player in hosting major international and regional sports events. At this stage, the exact economic and tourism impacts which the Games will bring to Singapore are predictive, but there is no doubt that the launch of this new mega sporting event dedicated to youth will leave a lasting legacy in the city state and around the world, establishing Singapore as a worthy choice for future sporting events. As such, this paper looks into the case of making use of the Youth Olympic Games as a catalyst for sports tourism in Singapore.

Background

Tourism in Singapore

Singapore has been welcoming international visitors to its shores long before, and especially after the inception of the Singapore Tourism Board in 1964. Tourists visit the

clean and green ‘Garden City’ for a whole host of reasons such as the multiple award-winning Night Safari, the smorgasbord of local delicacies such as Chilli Crabs and Hainanese Chicken Rice, Business Travel and Meetings Incentives travel, Conventions and Exhibitions (BTMICE) events, and to enjoy and experience the multi-racial and multi-cultural society.

In 2008, total visitor arrivals to Singapore was 10.1 million and the top 10 visitor arrival markets were Indonesia, People’s Republic of China, Australia, India, Malaysia, Japan, the United Kingdom., South Korea, Philippines and the United States. The average length of stay for visitors was 3.96 days and tourism receipts totaled to S\$15.2 billion (US\$10.97 billion). This accounted for about 6.5% of Singapore’s Gross Domestic Product (Singapore Tourism Board, 2008a). As a form of comparison, the top contributor to Singapore’s GDP is the manufacturing sector (approximately 23%), followed by wholesale and retail and trade (16%), business services (13%) and financial services (12%) (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2009). Though not the top contributor, the tourism sector clearly plays a significant role, especially when the service industry has been recognized as a means of diversifying the Singaporean economy. A study of the tourism employment multiplier in Singapore found that for every S\$1 million (US\$0.7 million) of externally generated spending, tourism creates more than three times as many jobs as manufacturing (Khan, Toh, & Fathima, 2001), further attesting to the importance of growing and developing tourism in Singapore.

Sports Tourism in Singapore

Whilst there has been much scholarly debate about the definition of Sports Tourism (Gibson, 1998), most researchers agree upon the general definition of Sports Tourism as travelling temporarily to another country to participate in sporting activities, watch sporting activities and/or visiting and perhaps paying homage to attractions associated with sporting activities.

Sports tourism is a viable avenue of growth in Singapore due to its experience and successful track record of hosting various domestic and international sporting events over the past decades. In 1973, 1983 and 1993, Singapore was the host venue for the South East Asian Games. The country also plays host to the annual International Rugby Sevens, Barclays Singapore Open and AVIVA Open among others. On a domestic level, the Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon created in Singapore in 2002 has seen its number of local and international participants increase from 6,300 to 50,000 in seven years. The 2008 edition of the race also managed to secure the participation of the current world marathon champion, Luke Kibet in its line-up of elite athletes (Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon, 2009).

However, as noted by Ms Rakei Liew, the Director of Sports Business in the Singapore Sports Council, it was only in July 2005 that Singapore placed herself on the world map for sports when she hosted the 117th International Olympic Committee session for 5000 IOC members (Singapore Tourism Board, 2009). After that, Singapore saw bigger names in sporting events coming to her shores. The FINA Swimming World Cup Series was held in Singapore in 2007, 2008 and also 2009, the annual HSBC Women's Champions

since 2008, the inaugural 2009 Asian Youth Games, the 2009 Junior Hockey World Cup and the 2009 Dextro Energy Triathlon - ITU World Championship Series, just to name a few.

The annual Aviva Ironman 70.3 Singapore Triathlon, which has been hosted since 2007, has positioned itself as one of the best organized races within the Ironman 70.3 series. 1,210 individual and 74 team entries were received for the 2008 event, of which up to 56% of athletes were international. As an example of how this sporting event contributes to tourism, each international athlete was accompanied, on average, by 3.1 supporters; 71% of whom stayed in Singapore for at least four nights (Singapore Tourism Board, 2009).

Singapore was also the first and only South-East Asian stopover for the Volvo Ocean Race in 2008-2009. Dubbed the 'F1 in sailing', the 2008-2009 series saw the race coming to Asia for the first time, with India and China being the other two stopover venues (Volvo Ocean Race Official Press Information, 2007). Singapore was also the longest stopover, with the crew and organizers choosing to spend Christmas and New Year in sunny Singapore (Singapore Tourism Board Annual Report 08/09, 2009).

The very first night race in the Formula 1 series was also held in Singapore in 2008, with an estimated 100,000 spectators and a sell-out, capacity crowd of which about 40% were foreign visitors. S\$168 million (US\$120 million) in tourism receipts was generated, and the race was watched by 110 million viewers worldwide (Singapore Tourism Board Annual Report 08/09, 2009). This was a key sporting event which helped Singapore

garner top-of-mind recall through international broadcasting (Singapore Tourism Board, 2009) and helped to establish Singapore as a prime location for sports tourism.

The Inaugural Youth Olympic Games 2010 - Why Singapore?

"The Youth Olympics will celebrate sports and promote the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect. We share these values, and believe that Singapore is a working model of these values in action. Although we are a small, young nation, we can offer first class right sized facilities for these inaugural games within the short time frame available. The fully integrated sport, education and cultural programmes will reach out to millions of youth across the world to ignite their passion for sports and unite them with these ideals."

*Dr Vivian Balakrishnan
Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports
(Singapore 2010, 2007b)*

The Youth Olympic Games will follow the traditional Olympic Games cycle of 4 years, with the first Summer YOG in Singapore in 2010 and the first Winter YOG in Innsbruck, Austria in 2012. All 26 sports of the traditional 2012 Olympic Games will be played, but the YOG will also feature newer popular sports such as BMX bike riding and 3-on-3 basketball. Some sports disciplines will also be non-Olympic, such as mixed gender and/or mixed National Olympic Committee (NOC) events, encouraging greater interaction (Olympic.org, 2009). It will not be as grandiose as the Olympic Games; all sports venues must be located in the host city, and the host city is not required to build any major venues (Singapore 2010, 2009b), thereby minimizing the cost of the Games.

Singapore's bid was based on the ability to deliver on 15 themes, as required by the International Olympic Committee: concept and legacy; sports and venues; the Youth Olympic Village; education and culture; marketing; political and economic climate and structure; legal aspects; customs and immigration formalities; finance; medical services and doping control; security; accommodation; transport; technology; and media operations (Singapore 2010, 2007a). In particular, Singapore has existing world-class sport facilities and an excellent transport infrastructure which are essential for the successful staging of the Games (Singapore 2010, 2009b). Some upgrading and refurbishment works will be carried out on sports facilities in the Youth Olympic Village and across the island to ensure that they meet competition requirements set by the International Federations (Singapore 2010, 2009f), but for most part, the necessary facilities are in place to cater for the YOG within a short time-frame of about two and a half years. Her compactness also allows for all the 26 sports to be held within minutes of the city centre (Singapore 2010, 2007b).

Facts and Figures

The Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Games is estimated to draw 3,600 young athletes between 14 and 18 years of age, 1400 officials, 205 National Olympic Committees, 1200 media representatives, 20,000 local and international volunteers and 500,000 spectators who will be able to purchase tickets through global ticket sales (Singapore 2010, 2009m).

The bulk of the cost of the Games will be borne by the Singapore government which has set aside a budget of S\$114 million (US\$75 million). A targeted \$50 million is expected to be raised in private sponsorship in either cash or kind (Lim, 2008) and the Government of Singapore will act as the ultimate financial guarantor should there be a shortfall between the costs and revenues of the Games (Singapore 2010, 2009i).

Youth Olympic Village

The Youth Olympic Village will be housed within the grounds of the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Unlike the traditional Olympic Games in which athletes leave the village after their competitions, YOG athletes will stay in the Youth Olympic Village the entire duration of the Games to participate in the Culture and Education Programme. To cater to their extended stay, upgrading works were carried out at the university to ensure safety and security features, residential halls were refurbished and given new coats of paint and air-conditioning, acoustic elements added to reduce noise levels in dining halls, and the university's Sports and Recreation Centre upgraded its sports facilities to serve as a training venue for athletes during the Games (Low, 2009).

Culture and Education Programme

Athletes of the YOG will embark upon 7 aspects of a Culture and Education Program (CEP) centered on the educational themes of Olympism, skills development, well-being and healthy lifestyle, social responsibility and expression (Singapore 2010, 2009c).

The Exploration Journey includes visits to Singapore's newest environmentally-themed attractions, the HortPark and Marina Barrage, with the aim of promoting greater awareness of environmental protection and sustainable development in the young athletes (Goh, 2009). As for the Island Adventure segment, athletes will be going to the Outward Bound Singapore school where they will take part in outdoor activities and work together as team mates even though they may be competitors in the sports arena (Singapore 2010, 2009a). Chat with Champions will allow athletes to interact with and learn from inspirational stories of global leaders and Olympians, while the Community Project involves athletes helping out at local beneficiaries to learn about social responsibility and encourage them to contribute back to their own communities. The World Culture Village set within the Youth Olympic Village features booths set up by each of the NOCs showcasing their respective cultures and traditions. Athletes can also enjoy dance, music performances and Olympic-themed art installation as part of the Arts and Culture segment. Lastly, through the Discovery Activity, they will have the opportunity to learn about careers in sport, health and nutrition, the history of Olympism and global issues through free and easy interactive exhibitions (Singapore 2010, 2009a)

Bringing together the Youth of the World

The Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organizing Committee (SYOGOC) has also come up with several initiatives as a part of the YOG to engage youth all over the world in the run up to, during, and beyond the Games. The Singapore 2010 Friendship Camp took place from 8 to 12 December 2009 in the Singapore Sports School. It was conducted with the aim of promoting the Olympic values among participants and providing them an

opportunity to form friendships with youths from other nations. Each of the NOCs were invited to send one male and one female young athlete and the camp received a total of 417 participants, comprising 262 student athletes from 130 participating NOCs and 155 student athletes from Singapore (Singapore 2010, 2009l). Camp participants had a preview of some of the CEP activities which also provided organizers with a chance to run through and fine-tune the activities prior to the YOG in 2010.

The Friends@YOG is a school twinning program endorsed by the IOC that pairs a local school with one or two schools of 204 participating National Olympic Committees. As of 21 October 2009, 113 local schools were twinned with 88 foreign schools. (Singapore 2010, 2009e). This program reaches out to youth who are not necessarily athletes to enable them to build international friendship, and in doing so, gain a better understanding of cultures and traditions around the world and also connect with the Games as well as the Olympic Movement (Singapore 2010, 2009d). In addition, Singapore Youth Olympic Scholarships will also be offered to six young athletes every 4 years during the summer YOG, beginning with the inaugural YOG in 2010. One scholarship recipient will be selected from each of the 5 continents represented by each of the Olympic rings, and the sixth recipient will be from Singapore. The scholarship will enable these athletes to attend the Singapore Sports School where they will experience an integrated educational and sport training program (Singapore 2010, 2010d).

30 Young Ambassadors from all over the world have also been selected by their NOCs to promote the YOG and CEP to athletes and youth back home. They come from a range of

backgrounds including past Olympians and scholars, and will serve as mentors to the YOG athletes during the Games (Singapore 2010, 2010b). These Young Ambassadors will play a key role in creating greater awareness of the Games and the Olympic values among youth back home, encouraging a wider level of participation and interest among young people worldwide.

Engaging youths online, the Singapore 2010 Odyssey is a three-dimensional virtual world in which young people can learn more about sport, culture, the Olympic values and Singapore 2010 via quests and games styled on a futuristic theme (Singapore 2010 Odyssey, 2009). For instance, participants can explore the International Convention Center in Singapore, one of the key venues for the YOG sports. They can also explore Pulau Ubin, the offshore island which is home to the Island Adventure segment of the Culture and Education Programme. Competitions such as poster designing are routinely organized online and participants and winners stand a chance to win 'sports credits' to be used in the Singapore Odyssey and to obtain sets of the YOG merchandise. It was made available on <http://www.singapore2010odyssey.sg/> in early 2010, with Singapore students recruited as Odyssey Sentinels to guide schoolmates and friends all over the world around the virtual platform (Singapore 2010, 2009n). Since Internet use is extremely prevalent among today's youth, the Singapore Odyssey is yet another platform through which greater interest in the Games can be generated.

All in all, these initiatives also have the benefit of establishing bonds between young athletes and non-athletes around the world, encouraging youth to be excited to play a part

in the YOG, be it participating online, via their schools or making visits to Singapore during and beyond the period of the YOG.

Transportation and Accommodation during the Games

Mega sporting events will bring a hike in visitor arrivals in a country and possible traffic congestions. For example, at the East Asian Games in Hong Kong in December 2009, tens of thousands of bus and ferry passengers had to find alternative modes of transport when the Victoria Harbor was closed off for the opening ceremony (South China Morning Post, 2009). In the month leading up to and during the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008, authorities introduced car bans in a bid to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. Cars were banned from traveling on roads on alternate days of the week depending on whether their license plate numbers end in odd or even numbers. Dedicated Olympic lanes were introduced on the road and three new subway lines were added, all in all increasing the capacity of the public transportation system by 4 million passengers per day (Mulvenney, 2008)

Traffic congestion is an important issue which needs to be addressed by authorities during the period of the Games when timely transportation of athletes and officials for the smooth running of events is key. While transportation problems and congestion is not likely to be an issue due to the smaller scale of the event and the extensive and efficient public transportation system which Singapore is acclaimed for (Gakenheimer, 1999; May, 2004), several initiatives have been put in place. For one, dedicated direct shuttle bus services will link the YOG venues for all members of the Olympic Family and

accredited personnel, with an additional fleet of cars on standby. Authorities will also have designated Olympic Lanes along key transportation routes to ensure speedier access to the sporting venues (Singapore 2010, 2009j). In addition, tickets to all the sporting events will be accompanied by a Singapore 2010 DBS Visa Prepaid Companion Card. This card gives the ticket-holder four complimentary train rides on Singapore's Mass Rapid Transit system as well as unlimited rides on public buses on the day of the event (Singapore 2010, 2010e). The prepaid card also has the additional draw of allowing visitors to Singapore take the opportunity to sightsee and save on transportation costs.

With regards to accommodation, 4,310 hotel rooms in Singapore have been secured for the YOG officials, media personnel and spectators by the organizing committee. This is above the 3,000 as stipulated by the IOC. The Olympic Family and IOC will be residing in the Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore overlooking the Float@Marina Bay which hosts the opening and closing ceremonies, and all other secured hotel rooms are also located close to the YOG venues and cover a wide range of price options to cater to the needs of all spectators (Singapore 2010, 2009j). From correspondence with SYOGOC personnel, as with past Olympic Games, there is unlikely to be an issue of shortage of accommodation. Singapore has 39,000 hotel rooms within 20km of the city center (Singapore 2010, 2009j) with many more in the suburban areas as well. The phased opening of some 963 out of over 2,500 hotel rooms in the Marina Bay Sands Integrated Resort will also be happening before the Games on 27 April 2010 and provide additional places for accommodation close to the city center (Las Vegas Sands Corp., 2010).

Showcasing Singapore to the World and Bringing the World to Singapore

With the high level of local and international interest in the very first Youth Olympic Games, the SYOGOC has several outreach channels and platforms for locals and tourists to find out more.

By tapping on the Olympic Broadcasting Service network, the YOG will be broadcasted live in countries all over the world and reach an estimated 2 billion of viewers according to the SYOGOC. As a form of comparison, the 2008 edition of the Olympic Games in Beijing drew an estimated 4.7 billion viewers, exceeding the 3.9 billion who followed the Games in Athens 2004 and the 3.6 billion for Sydney 2000, as reported by market research firm The Nielsen Company (Nielsen, 2008). One study also showed that the Opening Ceremony of the traditional Olympic Games is watched by 3 billion people and the sporting events themselves are followed by more than 90% of all adults who have access to a television (Preuss, 2007). Though on a smaller scale and a new international sporting event, the Youth Olympic Games is still going to be an extremely significant advertising opportunity that Singapore has to share with the world her diverse culture, efficiency and organizing capabilities.

As such, many of the YOG events are strategically planned to showcase Singapore's iconic attractions and tourist destinations. The Opening and Closing Ceremony will be held at the Float@Marina floating platform which will highlight the brand new Marina Bay development area as the backdrop. This area includes the new Marina Bay Financial Center, a 3.5km waterfront promenade and the Marina Bay Sands Integrated Resort

developed by the Las Vegas Sands Corporation. The road cycling route will go through Singapore's historic civic district and parts of the Formula 1 race circuit in addition to the Marina Bay area. As for rowing and canoeing events, they will be held in the Marina Reservoir bounded by the Marina Barrage and the new Gardens by the Bay, exemplifying Singapore's water and green solutions.

Apart from the official Olympic broadcasting network, the SYOGOC reports that the Youth Olympic Games is also promoted to the international sporting circuit at regular international sports events such as Sport Accord, Sportel and Legacy Lives. In addition, Singaporeans living overseas area also kept "in the loop" through events such as the Singapore Day 2009 in London.

Official information on the games can be accessed by the general public via the official Singapore 2010 website <http://singapore2010.sg> and the WhyOhGee website <http://www.whyohgee.sg>, the latter of which is geared towards making the Olympics exciting, relevant and understandable for young people. There is also a YOG Learning Centre in Singapore, providing visitors with the opportunity to learn about Singapore's experience in hosting the YOG, past Olympians, try out table tennis, fencing and even hold the Beijing Olympics 2008 torch (Singapore 2010, 2009k). The centre offers guided tours to visitors and is an interesting venue for tourists to visit throughout and beyond the period of the Games.

With large numbers of athletes, organizers, supporters and spectators coming to Singapore for the Games, the SYOGOC, Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and other partners are collaborating to have tourist deals, promotions and special events for visitors during the Games. For example, a memorandum of understanding was signed by Visa and the STB to jointly promote Singapore to all Visa cardholders over three years beginning 2009 (Visa, 2009). Cardholders will be entitled to exclusive discounts, benefits and privileges at participating merchants and tourist attractions during key events in Singapore such as the Youth Olympic Games and the annual Christmas in the Tropics and Singapore Grand Prix Season.

Visitors to Singapore during the period of the Games will also be treated to a host of sport and youth-centered events. At the International Convention Center, one of the key competition venues, visitors will be able to try out sporting events such as boxing, fencing and wrestling competition for themselves and visit an Olympic themed art and information gallery. Music and dance performances can also be enjoyed as part of the activities organized by the Singapore Street Festival, Singapore Heritage Festival, Singapore Youth Festival and NOISE (Singapore 2010, 2010a).

Economic and Tourism Benefits of the YOG

The inaugural Youth Olympic Games is expected to draw an estimates 15,000 overseas participants including athletes, Olympic officials, spectators, members of the media and provide a minimum of 180,000 visitor nights for the duration of the Games (Singapore Tourism Board, 2008b).

Tickets went on sale on 31 March 2010 both online and at twenty-nine ticket offices in Singapore and six overseas ticket offices in Malaysia and Indonesia. More than 600 tickets were sold within the first 30 minutes of the sale and the Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organizing Committee is confident that all 320,000 tickets will be sold, although contingency plans are in place should demand be slow (Singh, 2010). At the two week mark, 20,000 tickets had been sold, out of which 25% were purchased by foreigners (The Straits Times, 2010c).

The expected contribution to Singapore's GDP is uncertain at this point of time, but one thing for sure is that the increased visitor arrivals during the Games will translate into greater prospects for local businesses (Singapore 2010, 2009b), whether in the hotel industry, food and beverage business, transportation, cleaning or shopping and dining. It will also bring about new opportunities for local establishments to venture into the sporting industry surrounding the Olympic Games.

The YOG will also put Singapore in the international media spotlight and market her as a choice destination for the hosting of future large-scale events, be it sports-related or not. This is expected to have longer-term economic benefits and prove useful in catalyzing sports tourism as well as other forms of tourism. For instance, the YOG is likely to bring about more Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) opportunities for Singapore. The fact that Singapore won the right to host the inaugural Youth Olympic Games would garner the attention of convention and exhibition organizers worldwide,

projecting the image of Singapore as an efficient and reliable venue for large-scale events. Take the case of Sydney, which used the Olympic Games as a means of differentiating themselves as a MICE destination and won 202 bids for MICE events from the time the Olympic bid was won to the end of 1999. This resulted in an estimated economic value of A\$9.2 billion (US\$8.5 billion) (Chalip, 2002) and increased MICE opportunities for Melbourne as well.

However, there is also the possibility of the YOG being a loss leader, incurring some economic losses in the form of large investments and then recouping them in the long-run from economic and tourism spin-offs. In the case of the Beijing Olympics, Chinese businessmen from outside of the country's capital avoided having meetings scheduled in Beijing during the period of the Games, prompting hoteliers to lament that the spike in visitor arrivals was offset by reduced business activity (Tschang, 2008). Hotels hosted far fewer visitors than originally expected (Chang, 2009) and this was due to several factors including tighter visa restrictions, the economic downturn and also an earthquake in Sichuan and riots in Tibet preceding the Games. However, there is some evidence that the positive publicity of the Games increased visitation afterwards and the Beijing Olympic Economic Research Association estimates that number of tourist arrivals will grow by approximately 8 to 9% per annum in the 10 years after the Games as a direct result of the 2008 Olympic Games itself (Sands, 2008).

Moving the focus back to Singapore, it is uncertain at this stage whether the Youth Olympic Games will incur greater costs than revenue or if long-term benefits will

outweigh short-term losses. But considering that bulk of the costs involved in staging Olympic Games and other mega-sporting events often comes from building infrastructure and facilities for the large numbers of spectators (Atkinson, Mourato, Szymanski, & Ozdemiroglu, 2008), the YOG is likely to incur significantly lower costs than other Games. This is because one distinguishing factor of the Youth Olympic Games is that new major venues will specifically not be purpose-built for the Games. This averts the issue of costly and massive sports facilities becoming useless after the Games, as was the case in Barcelona where the diving and baseball facilities had to be torn down due to under-utilization (Chalip, 2002). Also, more recently, managers of the affectionately-termed 'Bird's Nest' stadium in Beijing have struggled to find ways to utilize the \$500 million stadium post-Games apart from selling tickets to tour the stadium inside. Some 50 million yuan (\$7.3 million) was spent to transform the stadium into a ski dome to attract foreign and domestic visitors over Christmas in 2009. The project required approximately 25,000 cubic meters of water to create enough snow for the stadium, which was a possible issue and clearly not a long-term solution in the light of Beijing's chronic water shortage problems (Bu, 2009).

As for the direct impact of the Games on the sports industry, as of January 2009, the sports industry in Singapore employed 14,000 people and was expected to exceed the S\$1 billion (US\$0.7 billion) mark. This was greatly due in part by the successful hosting of the 2008 Formula One night race. Now, taking the YOG into account, the sports industry is projected to contribute S\$2 billion (US\$1.4 billion) to Singapore's GDP by 2015 and increase employment in the industry to 20,000 (Singapore Tourism Board, 2009). This

growth that is driven by major sporting events is also reflected in China's sports industry, which the Hong Kong Trade Development Council estimates to grow by 20% a year due to mega-events such as the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and Guangzhou Asian Games in 2010 (Sands, 2008).

The Legacy of the Youth Olympic Games

The economic and tourism impact are key determining components of the legacy that the Youth Olympic Games will leave for Singapore. But perhaps the key legacy that the 2010 YOG will leave behind is that this international sporting event dedicated to the youth of the world was first hosted in Singapore. The SYOGOC has shared that post-Games, a Singapore Youth Olympic Museum will be built to house collections of current and future Youth Olympic Games artifacts. Upon completion of the SportsHub, this museum will form part of the attraction of the SportsHub for locals and tourists alike. The new Marina Bay waterfront promenade in Singapore will also comprise a Youth Olympic Park and an Olympic Walk to feature Olympic-themed sculptures, artwork by youth (Singapore 2010, 2010c) and trees dedicated to each of the 205 participating NOCs (Teo, 2010) to commemorate this historic event.

Building a Sports Culture in Singapore

It is important to have the adequate infrastructure, excellent planning and a successful track record of hosting sporting events, but a keen sporting culture in Singapore would also play a strong supporting factor in fuelling the growth of sports tourism in the city. In 2001, the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sport (MCYS) recognized

the multiple benefits that sports could bring - not just in promoting a healthy lifestyle, but also in developing resilience and perseverance in people, building teamwork, focus, creativity, discipline and the drive to excel, establishing bonds among local and international communities, contributing to the economy and enhancing national pride. As such, the Sporting Singapore vision was conceived. MCYS and various supporting agencies have since initiated projects to strengthen the sporting culture and provide a conducive environment for sports in Singapore (Singapore 2010, 2009i).

One initiative was the specialist Singapore Sports School dedicated to providing integrated academic and sports training for young athletes in Singapore. There is also sustained public investment in sporting facilities and infrastructure. Despite her size, Singapore has 100 Olympic sized swimming pools, 972 multi-purpose sports halls and 75 synthetic athletic tracks among other sporting facilities (Singapore 2010, 2009i).

An Olympic Education Program developed by the SYOGOC and Ministry of Education (MOE) was launched in January 2009 all primary, secondary and pre-university educational institutions in Singapore. It was created with the aim of teaching local students about the Olympic movement and to encourage them to embody, embrace and live out the spirit of Olympism and the Olympic values. Another aim of the Olympic Education Program was to increase the awareness of sport-related issues such as leading a healthy lifestyle, pursuing careers in sports and anti-doping (Singapore 2010, 2009g).

A Singapore Youth Sports Development committee was jointly formed by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS), Ministry of Education (MOE),

Singapore National Olympic Council, Singapore Sports Council, the Singapore Sports School and National Sports Associations (NSAs) in September 2008 after Singapore won the bid to host the YOG. This committee hopes to strengthen the sporting system in Singapore and catalyze a sporting culture, thereby increasing the level of participation in youth sports and maximizing the performance of Singapore's youth athletes in the YOG (Wang, 2009). Seed funding of S\$15million has been committed by MCYS, MOE and the Singapore Totalisator Board to support these youth sports development initiatives (Teo, 2010). One-third of the funds will be used to support and enhance the training of Singapore's YOG athletes and the remainder will be used for other programs designed to groom more Singaporean athletes in the long-term (Wang, 2009).

For instance, the MOE has set up a series of Junior Sports Academies and Youth Sports Academies to train selected students in primary and secondary schools, junior colleges and centralized institutions who are talented in sports. These sports academies are housed in existing schools which have the facilities and expertise for the training of the athletes (Ministry of Education, 2010). Previously, the Singapore Sports School, which was established in 2004, was the only secondary school specialized in developing the talents of student athletes, but the increasing number of these new sport academies, which were launched in 2008, will complement the Sports School by reaching out to other talented student athletes who are enrolled in regular educational establishments (Wong, 2010).

The upgraded sports infrastructure in the Nanyang Technological University as well as other sporting facilities across the island will be able to benefit the students and staff of the university (Low, 2009) and other Singaporeans. Also, with YOG competitions held in

community venues, the Games will be brought to the doorsteps of everyday Singaporeans (Singapore 2010, 2007b) and hopefully generate a greater interest and participation in sport.

In addition, CAN! or Create Action Now! Festival events were also launched by young people in Singapore in the lead-up to the Games to involve other local youth and the public in preparations for and celebration of the YOG (WhyOhGee, 2009). The wordmark “in Celebration of Singapore 2010” and a “Celebrate Singapore 2010 Event Starter Kit” were created to encourage communities, youth and organizations to be more active and live by the Olympic Values. This has spurred sporting activities ranging from events such as a Beach Fiesta (Institute of Technical Education, 2010) for the young, SubUrban Run @ North East for adults, and North West Brisk Walking for the aged. It also generated many non-sports activities such as designing games, writing songs and even conferences (ICPESS, 2010). A seed fund of S\$300,000 (US\$215,000) was provided by the Young ChangeMakers grant (Singapore 2010, 2009h) to start and support such events.

Even groups not directly related to sports have been actively promoting it to the community. The National Library Board in Singapore launched Sports@Public Libraries featuring talks, workshops, exhibitions, writing competitions and reading sessions for children centered around sports and the Olympic values of friendship, excellence and respect (Channel News Asia, 2010). As can be seen, from the time at which Singapore won the bid to host the Youth Olympic Games and years after, an extensive range of sporting initiatives have arisen to bring the city closer to realize its Sporting Singapore

vision. A strong community passionate about sports and sporting values will no doubt aid in propelling Singapore onto the global stage and be another compelling reason for her to host regional and international mega sporting events.

Supporting elements for Sports Tourism in the Future

Beyond the Youth Olympic Games in 2010, a line-up of new first-rate sporting events have already been planned to take place in Singapore, for instance, the World Netball Championships in 2011. The International Canoe Federation's Marathon World Championships will also be hosted in Singapore in 2011, making it the first time an Asian country has hosted the competition (The Straits Times, 2010b). Additional sports infrastructure will be built to accelerate the development of the sports industry in Singapore and encourage even more people to incorporate sports in their lifestyles.

The Sports Hub features a cluster development of world-class sports facilities to cater to domestic, regional and international sporting events. It features a new 55,000-capacity National Stadium with a retractable roof (the existing, sole, National Stadium in Singapore will be demolished), a 6,000-capacity indoor Aquatic Centre that meets world tournament standards, a 3,000-capacity multi-purpose arena, 41,000 square meters of commercial space, a Water Sports Centre, the existing 11,000-capacity Singapore Indoor Stadium and supporting leisure and commercial developments (Singapore Sports Council, 2009b). It is expected to be completed in late 2013 or early 2014[□] (The Straits Times, 2010a).

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□ The Sports Hub was unfortunately delayed by a steep rise in construction costs worldwide in early 2008 but construction expected to begin in first quarter of 2010 and due to be completed in late 2013 or early

In addition, the upcoming Changi Motorsports Hub is envisioned to be one of Asia's first premier motorsports and entertainment centers and a preferred venue for international motorsports events. It will feature top-notch motorsports facilities and amenities for motorsports enthusiasts, businesses, consumers and tourists. As of 27 August 2009, three bidding consortia submitted tender proposals to design, build, finance and manage CMH (Singapore Sports Council, 2009c), providing Singapore with quality facilities and infrastructure for hosting an even wider range of sporting events.

Future challenges for Singapore in Sports Tourism

As Singapore gears up with first-class sports infrastructure, she looks to face competition yet again from neighboring countries as sports tourism further develops in Asia and also other parts of the world.

The 2010 series of the soccer World Cup will be held in South Africa in June. Plans are in place to attract soccer fans to visit South Africa's famous game parks as well as watch the soccer matches, so as to maximize the number of future visits by tourists (Moody, 2009). Soccer fans will be able to see the Big Five animals in the game parks, and with the World Cup being held during the South African winter season, low foliage will allow for easy and optimal viewing of the animals. This potentially poses as a form of competition for the Youth Olympic Games in August for potential sports tourists who cannot or choose not to take 2 trips in a summer. However, as of April 2010, analysts

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2014. The government aims to build the hub expeditiously but not at all costs or at the expense of a sub-optimal facility (Singapore Sports Council, 2009a).

predicted 110,000 fewer visitors to the 2010 World Cup due to poor distribution of tickets to the other African countries and relatively high ticket prices. The previously projected 483,000 ticket-holders expected to visit South Africa has been lowered to 373,000, with other concerns being high crime rates, inflated plane tickets and hotel room rates and also the eruption of the Eyjafjallajokull volcano in Iceland disrupting air travel for tourists (Wonacott, 2010).

In other parts of the world, Dubai is currently building the world's first integrated Sports City featuring state-of-the-art sports facilities including 4 stadiums, residential and commercial developments such as international schools, medical facilities, hotels, community centers and entertainment venues (Dubai Sports City, 2009). Ferrari will also be opening its first theme park, Ferrari World, in Abu Dhabi in 2010 which features high-speed roller coaster rides replicating Formula One Ferraris (Motavalli, 2009). South Korea and India will also be staging their first Formula 1 Grand Prix races in 2010 and 2011 respectively, and there is the possibility of night races being incorporated into more Grand Prix in other cities. In the case of India, the new race circuit will form part of a sports city being constructed 35 kilometers outside the capital of New Delhi which will also house a 100,000-seater international cricket stadium (O'Brien, 2010). Malaysia will also host the inaugural Terengganu World Jet Race Challenge in February 2010 which has attracted world-class jet ski racers from around the world and is set to be an annual event (Khairul, 2010). It will also be the first Southeast Asian host city of the PGA Tour in 2010 (PGA Tour, 2009). Authorities in Hong Kong also have plans to build an

international-standard velodrome at a cost of HK\$600 by 2013 to host the track cycling World Cup and other international sporting events (South China Morning Post, 2010).

The inaugural Youth Olympic Games sets itself apart from other sporting events because of its wide international coverage and novel concept of being dedicated to youth all over the world. It is no mean feat to plan and smoothly execute this event, ensuring that young athletes are kept safe while enjoying the passion of sports, and staying true to the Olympic values. If hosted successfully, however, the inaugural Youth Olympic Games looks to establish Singapore as an ideal location for future regional and international sporting events which the world will want to come and be a part of. It will be a viable stepping-stone for the city to build on sports tourism; and with the multiple initiatives of the SYOGOC and supporting agencies, the YOG will be a new means of connecting the youth of the world and generating high interest in the Olympics and Singapore on an international scale. As such, one can expect her to effectively meet the challenges of this new venture.

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