



Big Games in Small Places

The African Youth Games and Organizational Capacity
in Botswana

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Outline

- 1. Background of the 2014 African Youth Games**
- 2. Research question, framework and methodology**
- 3. Results**
- 4. Takeaways**



Background

- 21 to 31 May, 2014
- Athletes 14-18 years old
- 2000 athletes, 21 sports
- Organized by Botswana African Youth Games Organizing Committee (BAYGOC)
- National Sport Federations organized individual sport competitions → *unique feature*





Research question

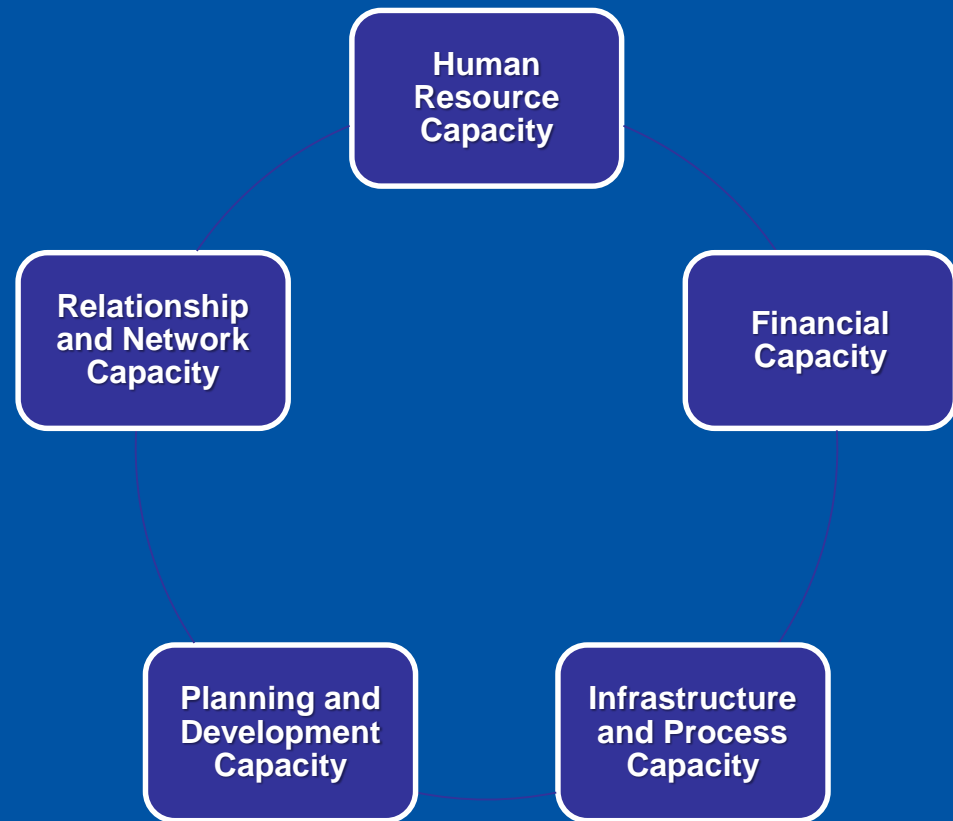
- National Sport Federations (NSFs) were coopted into organizing individual sport events
- Normally, multi-sport events hire individual managers to organize sport events
- By outsourcing to NSFs, BAYGOC was both cutting costs and looking to build the organizational capacity of local sport organizations
- Notion of capacity was prevalent in BAYGOC's public discourse

What effect did the 2014 African Youth Games have on the capacity of Botswana National Sport Federations?



Research methodology

- Open-ended, semi-structured interviews with actors from the Botswana sport system
 - 8 individuals from NSFs, 5 experts
- Interviews recorded and transcribed
- Qualitative analysis in MaxQDA

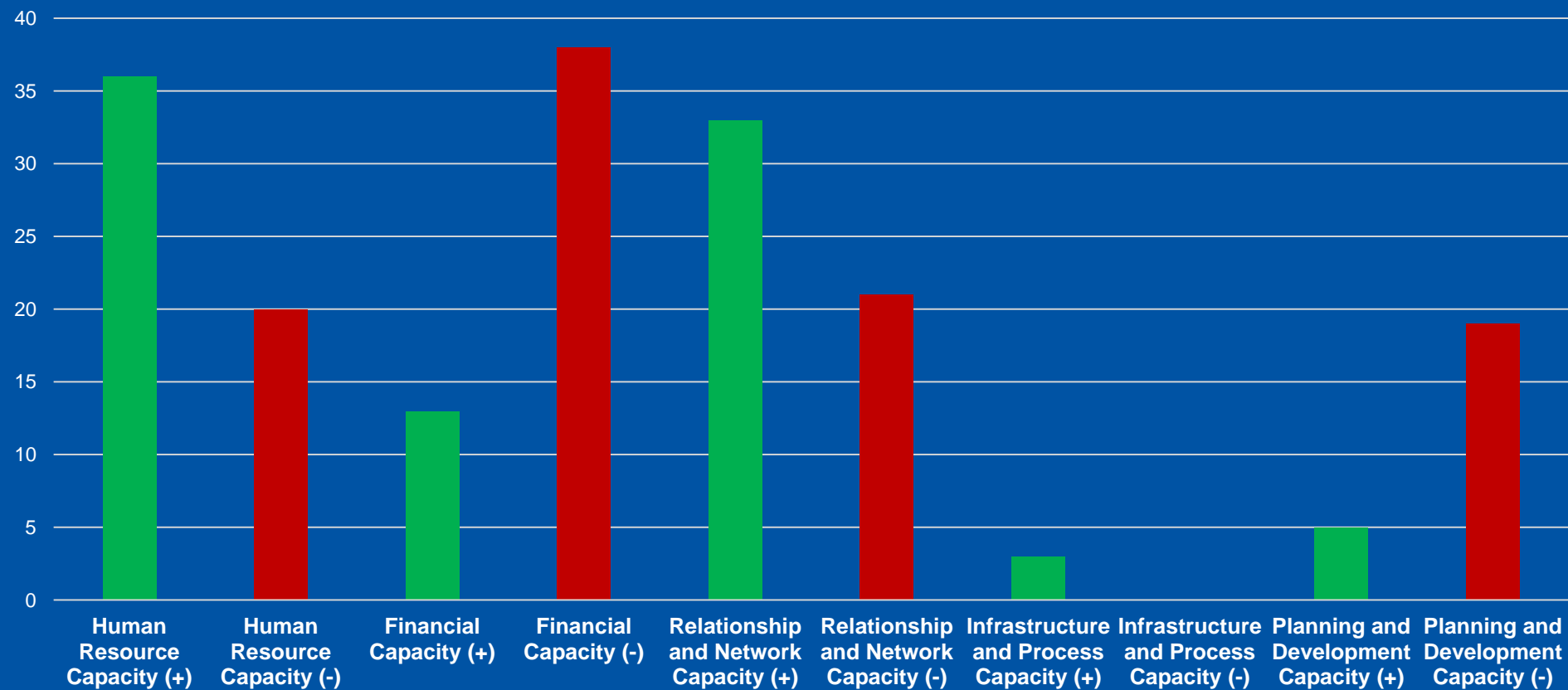


Conceptual Framework of organizational capacity (Hall, et al., 2003)



Results – Overview

Statements





Results – Human Resource Capacity

Positive

- Skill development and experience for employees, volunteers, officials and athletes

“I think the great thing was, individually, I learned a lot, I made a lot of friends (...) I also learned how to manage different people.”

(Anonymous NSF Source 01, pers. comm.).

Negative

- Lack of opportunities to further develop or use new skills

“The development of referees, technical officials, athletes, great. Because they pushed a lot of money into that“

(Anonymous NSF Source 08, pers. comm.).

“None of those people there are now continuing on to other projects (...) there doesn't seem to be a realization that things need to be continuous.”

(Anonymous Expert Source 04, pers. comm.).



Results – Financial Capacity

Positive

- Material legacies for some NSFs

“The federations walked away with nothing. (...) Even now to book (the swimming pool for) a gala at the UB, the costs are huge”

(Anonymous NSF Source 06, pers. comm.)

Negative

- Debt and unmet financial expectations for others
- Unused swimming pool

“The negative impact, definitely the relationship between (sport) and BNOC. Because, at the end of the day, the BNOC was running the AYG.”

(Anonymous NSF Source 08, pers. comm.)

“All of our checks bounced (...) And that really impacted us because we could’ve used that money to put on a local event. Maybe the sport would’ve grown”

(Anonymous NSF Source 06, pers. comm.)



Results – Relationship and Network Capacity

Positive

- Improved international networks and relationships

“The AYG brought some of the federations closer to the international and continental federations.”

(Anonymous Expert Source 01 and 02, pers. comm.)

Negative

- Frayed local (and some international) relationships

“There were a few bridges that were burned during the time”

(Anonymous NSF Source 01, pers. comm.)

“(The AYG left behind) a lot of mistrust”

(Anonymous NSF Source 07, pers. comm.)



Results – Infrastructure and Process Capacity

Positive

- New networks led to new processes

Negative

- None reported

“We get to know the events that are going on. So emails are shared all the way across”

(Anonymous NSF Source 07, pers. comm.)



Results – Planning and Development Capacity

Positive

- Increased ability to host future event

Negative

- No resources for future hosting
- Unmet expectations led to uncertain planning

“We don’t have money to host training camps or things like that”

(Anonymous NSF Source 08, pers. comm.)



Takeaways

All connected: Capacity areas are mutually influenced and decisions that may appear banal at the time can have long-lasting consequences

Big games in small places have big effects: Small size of Botswana sports sector magnifies these effects.



Thank You

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