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Sportcal Insight story – Ian Logan, CEO, Lausanne 2020

## Three reasons why cities should host the Youth Olympic Games

The Youth Olympic Games were created by the IOC as a means for the Olympic Movement to connect with youth communities across the world in new and innovative ways. As the Games continue to grow and develop, this connection will get stronger and this can only be good news for the future of the Olympic Movement.

But as the CEO of the next winter edition of the Games in Lausanne in 2020, I believe that the benefits of a stronger Youth Olympic Games not only apply to the Olympic Movement, but also to potential and future host cities. Indeed, these Games are a unique opportunity for any ambitious sport city in the world to say and show new things about itself to a very important audience – youth – both nationally and internationally.

So here are three additional impacts that I believe make the Youth Olympic Games an obvious choice for any ambitious host city in the world.

### 1. They create a strong, visible link between the host region and the youth

Today, cities around the world are very much competing on who will be the most attractive to the younger generation, both at the national and international level. Why? Simply because these are future tourists, students, workers and consumers.

As implied with the name, the Youth Olympic Games' main target are the youth. They are a tremendous communication platform: the youth will tune in, either by participating on site on the field, off the field, or by watching remotely. With this in mind, the Games are therefore a clear opportunity to promote the host region as a great place to visit, study and work, within the context of a sporting, healthy environment - two strong arguments among 'millennials'.

In Lausanne, we have placed a great deal of importance on creating this strong link between our region and the youth. Many organisational aspects continue to be driven by the youth of our region, through many successful partnerships with local schools and universities. And by showcasing the best that this region has to offer in terms of education, innovation and career opportunities in international sport, all within the marvelous setting of Lake Geneva and the Alps, the beauty and potential of Lausanne will be broadcast to the world's youth, a prospect we find very exciting.

### 2. They (truly) encourage sport participation

Recent studies have shown that, unfortunately, major sports events generally fail to truly develop sport participation in host countries. One of the main reasons why this happens seems to be that while the youth might appreciate sports stars as role models, they are too far removed - both psychologically and physically - from their own realities, which limits their long term engagement as a result.

In comparison, athletes at the Youth Olympic Games' are between 15 and 18 years old. With this, the 'distance' between the athletes and young viewers is removed, meaning the values that the best Youth Olympic athletes bring with them through their achievements are much more likely to connect with the local youth than any other elite event. Additionally, the innovative formats encouraged by the IOC

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and the International Federations encourage the hosts to bring the sport to the youth rather than ask the youth to come to the sport. This is the future: and the Youth Olympic Games can do that.

In Lausanne, we plan to use the Games to inspire a renewed interest and activity in sport participation amongst our youth. We are already working closely with our National Olympic Committee and National Federations to develop ways not only to bring schools from all over the country to the Games, but to also bring the Games to the schools. Through this, we believe that we have a unique opportunity to engage those that might otherwise be unengaged, and with it, plant the seed for more active and healthy populations of the future.

### **3. They are...Olympic!**

Many other youth sports events can unquestionably have a positive impact for host regions and be successful in a number of ways. But let's not use false modesty here: The Youth Olympic Games have the capacity to resonate in a way that the others simply cannot. Why? Because they are *Olympic*.

By hosting a Youth Olympic Games, host regions are hosting an Olympic Games. With this comes the right to use all the symbols that have made the Olympics one of the most recognised and respected brands in the world. The Flame, the ceremonies, the medals, the flags. The values, the togetherness, the human stories. No other youth event in the world has the capacity to do that.

In Lausanne, we plan to seize the opportunity of becoming truly 'Olympic' by promoting the Olympic values in a brand new way, using innovation at our core. By being Olympic, we hope to create a unique story that can stand the test of time and inspire young people, both within our region and around the world.

By focusing on the youth, the Youth Olympic Games focuses on the future. The creation of a link between the host region and the youth, the encouragement of sport participation amongst the youth, and the opportunity for host regions to align themselves with the Olympic brand and values, all mean that the potential of hosting the Youth Olympic Games is truly astonishing. For any ambitious city around the world wishing to achieve any of these objectives, I think there is no better place to start.

#### **Bio**

*Ian Logan is the CEO of the Organising Committee of the 2020 Winter Youth Olympic Games in Lausanne, Switzerland. Alongside being a Fighter Pilot Colonel in the Swiss Air Force, Ian, a father of five, is an experienced organiser of major events and consults on various other Organising Committees in Switzerland.*