



HUMAN
BEHAVIOUR:
A CRITICAL
PERSPECTIVE
ON EVENTS

Angelika Wiens, Lisanne de Kroon,
Lisha Maduro, Qian Heemstra

Resilience Strategies:

NAVIGATING EVENTS' IMPACT ON HOST COMMUNITIES

Written by: Angelika Wiens

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Setting the Stage

In the dynamic world of events management, where planning and logistics often take the pivotal role, it is essential to look beyond timelines and spreadsheets and gain critical insight into events' impact on the hosting destination. Critical event studies invite us to explore events from various angles, including personal, societal, political, cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions (Getz, 2007).

In this article, we delve into the event's impact on the hosting community, predominantly due to human behavior, and present strategies to minimize such negative impact by understanding the intricate interrelationships between events, host communities, and human behavior. As academics, practitioners, and policymakers we must embrace these perspectives and follow resilience strategies to shape the future of our industry.

The Host Community: A Partner in Event Resilience

Host communities, in the context of events management, extend beyond geographical boundaries (Robertson et al., 2021), include various stakeholders, and are interrelated through engagement and take an essential role in the event's success (Kennelly, 2022). They are partners who shape the event experience and its outcomes, whether it is a local festival, a sports or a corporate event, the community's impact cannot be overlooked since they are directly affected by events. Their resilience and adaptability are crucial assets in managing events effectively with focusing on positive impacts for all involved (Bodin, 2023).

Human Behavior in Events Management

Human behavior lies at the heart of events management, shaping the experience and outcomes within the events industry not only from the planners' side but predominantly through all stakeholders and their dynamics and interactions. The behavior during the decision-making processes and the event itself determine the effectiveness of the response (Carswell et al., 2023). Events provide unique opportunities for social interactions and serve as microcosms of human behavior. This is prevalent through unleashed emotions, social and personal identity navigation, and formation (University of Colorado, 2021). Understanding the role human behavior has supports anticipating reactions and implementing strategies that promote resilience and mitigate negative impacts.

Building Resilience: A Holistic Approach

When events unbalance host communities, resilience becomes paramount. Resilience is not merely about bouncing back, but about adapting and thriving from unexpected changes. Event resilience involves creating innovative and adaptable environments to handle uncertainties and unexpected situations (Dragin-Jensen et al., 2022). Let's explore strategies that enhance destination resilience, with a focus on how human behavior plays a pivotal role.

Resilience Strategies

1. Community Engagement

Strategy: Foster stronger relationships between event organizers, local communities, and businesses. Engaged communities are more resilient and better equipped to handle challenges.

Human behavior: Encourage active participation in community initiatives and events. When residents take ownership of their community's well-being the willingness to collaborate grows (Bodin, 2023; Magno & Dossena, 2020).

2. Community Capacity Building

Strategy: Train local event professionals and volunteers to handle various scenarios to ensure a skilled workforce during challenging times.

Human behavior: Inspire residents to actively engage in capacity building to learn how to become resilient (Prevention Institute, n.d.).

3. Risk Assessment and Scenario Planning

Strategy: Conduct thorough risk assessments to identify potential threats and use this data for effective future scenario planning.

Human behavior: Involve the local community in research projects to showcase the need for effective strategies to build resilience (Carswell et al., 2023).

4. Adaptive Decision-Making

Strategy: Develop adaptive structures that allow for flexibility and quick and inclusive decision-making that enables timely adjustments to changes.

Human behavior: Effective communication and collaboration among all stakeholders lead to informed decisions. Resilience is stronger when no one is left behind (Carswell et al., 2023).

5. Sustainable Event Practices

Strategy: Implement sustainable event management practices that follow the Sustainable Development Goals including waste reduction (SDG 12), energy efficiency (SDG 7), and local resources (SDG 12).

Human behavior: Educate and encourage residents to follow sustainable measures that enhance resilience by minimizing negative impacts (United Nations, n.d.)

6. Policy Advocacy

Strategy: Advocate for policies that support community resilience such as zoning regulations, and emergency response protocols.

Human behavior: Inform about existing policies. raise awareness about the importance of resilient policies for the local communities and engage in direct advocacy with policymakers (Prevention Institute, n.d.).

Resilience in Action: The Power of Human Behavior in Strengthening Host Communities

In navigating events' impacts on host communities, resilience emerges as a collective endeavor. Human behavior - whether through community engagement, capacity building, or risk assessment and scenario planning - shapes the resilience of the hosting community. Let's prioritize strategies that empower communities, minimize negative impacts, and foster a culture of resilience within the industry by integrating human behavior and events. Understanding the importance of the interconnection between human behavior and events' impacts enables opportunities for growth and resilience, ensuring future-proof host communities.

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Turning the Tide on Microplastic Pollution

INSPIRING INFLUENCE OF OCEAN PATROL DURING THE WORLD SURF LEAGUE

Written by: Qian Heemstra

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Microplastic pollution poses a growing threat to human health and ecosystems worldwide (Yu & Singh, 2023). In this context, the unexpected truth behind the World Surf League reveals a contrast between appearances and reality. While events can positively influence sustainable behaviour among visitor, the question remains: does the responsibility lie with the visitors or the organization? Fortunately, there are initiatives of Ocean Patrol Peniche Portugal (Ocean Patrol), that resist the system.

Long way to go

Human behaviour regarding single-use plastic creates a significant littering problem: improper waste disposal, and massive plastic use (Kona et al. 2023; Werner, 2018). Despite efforts to promote a sustainable and responsible waste management, organizations still struggle to address this issue. According to UNLEASH as cited in Bianchini & Rossi (2021), major international sport events are responsible for 50 tonnes of plastic waste, with only 15-20% being recycled. This indicates that for the World Surf League there is a lot to gain by changing the attendees' behaviour

towards plastic waste.

Besides the impact on the environment, microplastics can have health implications. According to Sharma &

Chatterjee (2017) microplastic burden affects various areas such as health issues: infertility, obesity, and cancer.

The truths about surf pollution

The World Surf League attracts more than 50,000 people resulting in a huge event within the small city Peniche. It should be evident that the plastic waste during the World Surf League is not only caused by the numerous visitors but also by the organization itself (Jovanovic, 2017; Alberghini et al., 2022). Ocean Patrol states: *"This microplastic is getting eaten by the fish and birds (marine animals in general) and we eat the fish"* (personal communication, May 13, 2024). These microplastics can then be transferred into a human's body, leading to health issues. However, this research field is not fully understood and needs further research. From the perspective of microplastics pollution, the focus on the decrease in biodiversity should be evident.



Microplastics can cause physical harm to the fauna: digestive issues, and reproductive abnormalities, which will contribute to an imbalance of coastal habitats (Tang, 2020; Zolotova et al., 2022). For example, in Australia there is already a huge threat in the "Great Barrier Reef", where plastics ingested by marine organisms cause a range of health issues (Deng et al., 2023; Sarkar et al., 2023). Ocean Patrol was planning to replant seaweed in the ocean in collaboration with several organizations, but this activity was not supported by the municipality. Ocean Patrol states: *"I even did a video with what WSL is promoting, and what was the reality. So, they are cleaning, carbon print etc. but no it is not true because on the other side they are producing... they want to hide our knowledge"* (personal communication, May 13, 2024). This statement, given with considerable emotional discomfort, highlights the concerning perspective towards the beaches in Peniche. It became clear that the World Surf League does not want to collaborate with local businesses, which can questionably have a big impact on the beaches.



Time for change

Attendees should be made more aware and educated about the impact of microplastics on the environment (Ocean Patrol). Ocean Patrol states: *"Then you arrive at the beach and see the bins next to the pizza trucks with a pile of 2 meters high pizza boxes and they are still selling pizzas, and nobody does anything, and people keep on consuming"* (personal communication, May 13, 2024). This observation highlights the need to focus on



education, nudging strategies, policies and regulations, and further behaviour strategies are required to influence people's behaviour towards plastic (Solomon & Nagarajan, 2014; Oliveira Silva et al., 2013). Just as this authors own experience, the beach appears to be clean from a distance but looking more closely it shows a never-ending cycle of plastic.

A call for action!

Microplastic pollution impacts both human health and ecosystems. This article discusses the effect of human behaviour regarding single-use plastic on the environment and on the health of both humans and life below water. Especially during events like the World Surf League. It is clear that better management of plastic waste is needed. Despite efforts to improve, it remains a huge issue. To initiate even a slight reduction in microplastic pollution, there should be a different mindset towards the use and waste of plastic. And that should start at the root of the problem, the authorities of Peniche and the World Surf League organization.



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Nudging. Guidance, or Social Pressure?

EXPLORING SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOUR IN EVENTS

Written by: Lisha Maduro

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Ecological sustainability is no longer a buzzword; it has become a moral and ethical obligation for event organizers. The main goal is to minimize the environmental footprint of events while maximizing their positive impact. The emergence of nudging has been prominent in event planning to steer sustainable practices within the event. Thaler and Sunstein (2008) describe nudging as designing the choice architecture in a way that encourages specific behaviors without restricting freedom of choice. It capitalizes on human cognitive biases and social dynamics to steer individuals toward desirable actions.

Prosocial behavior represents voluntary behavior intended to benefit other individuals or even society as a whole, comprising actions such as helping, volunteering, donating, or sharing (Aronson et al., 2005, Eisenberg et al., 2007).

Alternatively, pro-environmental behavior can be defined as all possible actions aimed at avoiding harm to the environment, either performed in public, e.g., participation in environmental movements” (Balunde’ et al., 2019, p2).

Event organizers and managers now face the ethical challenge of minimizing environmental harm while maximizing positive contributions.



**A little Nudge
goes a long
way.**

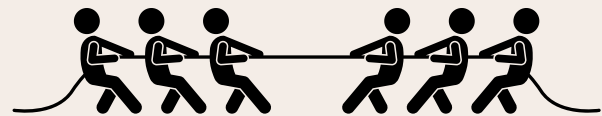
In this context, the subtle yet impactful technique of nudging emerges as a promising approach to inspire sustainable behaviors among event attendees. It is considered that Nudge-theorising allows policy-makers to understand better and influence people’s behavior (European Commission, 2013), which will help design public event policies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. Unlike regulations, nudges respect individual autonomy while gently steering choices toward desirable outcomes.

On the contrary, Bhalla (2013) discusses that people feel pressure while exposed to the social norm but then contribute according to their preferences. Though nudging sustainable practices in events may seem to respect individual autonomy, questions about the theoretical and practical value of nudging have been explored (Kosters & Van der Heijden, 2015) concerning their ability to produce lasting behavior change (Frey & Rogers, 2014), as well as their assumptions of irrationality and lack of agency (Gigerenzer, 2015) It is still being questioned whether nudging producing long-time effects and change or is simple based on social pressures - doing what everyone else doing; or doing what people see as 'the right thing to do'.

Collard's (1978) also argues that the ultimate goal of giving is only benefit to the self. Benefits include feeling good about oneself, avoiding feeling bad, and receiving social rewards or avoiding social punishments. In addition, Batson et al., (1989) make the case for pure altruism and claim that prosocial behavior resulting from empathy is directed towards the benefit of those one feels empathy for rather than only towards obtaining praise or avoiding guilt.

Feel Festival, a music festival in Berlin, exemplifies the power of social nudges. By creating a sense of collective responsibility, they successfully nudged attendees toward sustainable actions through Group Dynamics, Inconspicuous Nudges, and Ethical Responsibility.

So, Where do we go from here?



Qualitative analysis of music festivals highlights several key nudges that can foster sustainable behavior among event-goers. However, nudging creates the idea of conformity and non-meaningful decisions. In the end, nudging can positively impact the environment at events but how can we create pure altruism rather than continuous prosocial behavior which may not produce lasting behavioral change?

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Exploring nudging within festivals; a solution for social inclusion?

Lisanne de Kroon

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Festivals offer opportunities for social interaction and connection but can also highlight social divisions and exclude certain groups. While festival organizers are striving to become more inclusive, achieving Sustainable Development Goal 10 (SDG 10), is still a long road to go. This urgency is a topic of discussion in local media, such as in the Netherlands. A recent news article highlighted the rising costs of organizing festivals, which lead to higher prices for tickets, activities and food and beverages, which creates a larger division between social groups. (Lakerveld, 2024; Davies et al., 2023). While the costs are already rising, the right wing government, recently elected in the Netherlands, has decided to let the costs raise more. By 2026, a higher VAT on ticket prices will result in an 11% ticket price increase. This creates an even bigger social division, making festivals only accessible to the elite. The question now raises, what can festivals do to be more socially inclusive under these challenging conditions of rising prices? While a "bring your own sandwich" policy could be a solution, this article will explore a more complex technique: nudging.

Nudging towards inclusion

According to Sunstein and Thaler (2008), nudging is subtly influencing the choices people make, without forcing a person to make that decision. Various techniques, including incentives, using graphics, and simplification can be used (Sunstein & Thaler 2008; Sunstein, 2014). Schmidt & Engelen (2020) highlight nudging as a cost-effective approach that respects individuals' freedom of choice, often better received than traditional interventions. Hunnes (2016) confirms this, stating that individuals perceive nudges as acting in their best interests and potentially reducing the need for bans and fines. However, Kuyer and Gordijn (2023) present an opposing view, cautioning against nudging's infringement upon autonomy and raising concerns about its impact on well-being, long-term effects, and risks to democracy. Keeping the ethical considerations in mind, nudging presents as a potential solution for promoting social inclusion within festivals. Especially, because it is perceived better by people in comparison with traditional interventions (Schmidt & Engelen, 2020). By using nudging, festival organizers can proactively promote social inclusion within the event.



Festivals for everyone

Social exclusion is when a person is living within a society, but cannot take part in everyday activities that person wants to, because of factors they cannot control (Burchardt et al., 1999). Therefore, social inclusion is when a person can participate in the activities, in this case a festival. To connect it to a festival, social inclusion at a festival refers to ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background or identity feels welcome and respected and is able to fully participate. This means that income should not matter in case of purchasing tickets, and that there should be no social division on the festival terrain because of how someone looks or feels like. Laing and Mair (2015), suggest festivals foster social inclusion through interaction and propose strategies like discounted tickets and multicultural programs. Van Winkle and Woosnam (2014) state that community involvement enhances inclusion, advocating for meaningful interactions and inclusive strategies. In making communities more inclusive, festivals are often forgotten in policies (Quinn et al., 2021). This again highlights the need for a more inclusive festival terrain.

Celebrating togetherness

Embracing nudging as a tool to promote social inclusion within festivals, represents a forward-thinking approach to fostering inclusivity. By using insights from nudging theories, festival organizers can take proactive steps to ensure a festival is a place to celebrate togetherness. Practical implementations recommended are:

- Implementing inclusive signage and symbols with diverse imagery and symbols that represent different cultures and identities.
- Organizing interactive activities such as storytelling circles or closing bonfires to inspire mutual connection.
- Implementing inclusive pricing strategies to offer more affordable tickets for low-income individuals and families.
- Providing people with higher incomes with the default option to purchase an additional ticket for someone who cannot afford one
- Designing a festival ground lay-out with areas that facilitates mingling amongst attendees

However, important to note is that nudging can only have an impact till a certain level. While it is a great technique to use within the festival terrain, it is more difficult to use for the rising prices the festival organizers are struggling with. Ultimately, while nudging shows promise for enhancing social inclusion within festivals, additional research needs to be done to fully explore the potential impact.



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