

Sustainable Events Tourism: A case study of Egypt

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Abstract

Tourism has been a key force in promoting events; their growth and expansion. Destinations are increasingly keen to share their attractions, culture and environment with visitors by promoting a variety of planned events. It has become widely accepted that every community and destination needs to adopt a long-term, strategic approach to event tourism thereby planning, management and development in order to realize the full tourism potential of events. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of events- especially in uncertain times- and how destinations can use events as a tourism product. The paper provides an overview of festivals and events held in Egypt, highlighting major guidelines for sustainable events taking into account positive as well as negative impacts of events with the aim of improving the local economy and increasing Egypt market share of international tourism through enhancing Egypt positioning as an international tourism destination.

Methodology: Descriptive qualitative approach is followed. Information is obtained through primary and secondary data.

Keywords: Events, Tourism, Promotion, Sustainable, Egypt.

1. Introduction

Since the dawn of time, human beings have found ways to mark important events in their lives. Both in private and in public, people feel the need to celebrate key moments (G.A.J.Bowdin et al., 2001). During the last two decades, the number of sports and cultural events designed to attract tourists to every corner of the globe has multiplied many times (MacPherson, 1997; Flognfeldt, 1999; Gelan, 2003; Wood, 2005; Williams and Bowdin, 2007; Jackson, 2008). More recently, cities and towns have added events such as exhibitions, crafts expos, themed markets, festivals, and fairs to their traditional offerings (monuments, museums, mountains, for example) to attract more tourists and lengthen their stays.

Competition between places for economic development is fierce, and during recent years globalization has greatly intensified the pace (Kotler et al., 1993). At the same time tourism, the world's fastest growing industry has become a vital strategy for urban regeneration, and today forms a significant component of the economic base (Fainstein, Susan S., and Gladstone D., 1999). According to Ooi (2001), tourism can rejuvenate a physical area; help improve infrastructure and environmental quality as well as enhance leisure facilities for residents. In order to attract tourists and their expenditure, destinations compete with each other regionally, nationally and internationally.

New tourism destinations are constantly emerging and marketing themselves as uniquely wonderful places to visit. As a result today's tourists have an ever-greater range of possible destination alternatives to choose between. In order to attract tourists; cities must convey

something seemingly out of the ordinary. At the end only a small number of properly managed and developed tourism destinations will be able to compete and prosper.

Cities that want to stay competitive need to adopt strategic planning in relation to their tourism planning. Van den Berg et al. (1995) point out how the conquering of a position on the tourist consumer market is a long-term process, and therefore a long-term strategy is needed. According to Getz (1997) strategic planning in destination is: "... a future oriented process that seeks to attain the set goals through the formulation and implementation of broad, long term strategies."

In Tourism Destination Management, strategic decisions include regarding the type of tourism to offer, segments to be attracted and the type of products to be developed for the market (Moutinho,L., 2000). Nevertheless, once the city attraction to tourists is achieved it should never be taken for granted. Van den Berg et al. (1995) stress that the destination tourism strategies need continuous monitoring and adjustment. Innovativeness should play a key role, especially in relation to the quality of the tourism product.

Events are an important motivator of tourism, and figure prominently in the development and marketing plans of most destinations. They can attract tourists and visitors, both national and international. The tourism influx generated is especially welcome when it occurs in a medium or low-tourism season since it reduces seasonal ebbs. Events help to capture attention and promote attractions and infrastructures. The roles and impacts of planned events within tourism are of increasing importance for destination competitiveness.

Events can spread tourism both geographically and seasonally, allow the destination to celebrate its uniqueness, promote itself, develop local pride and enhance its economic wellbeing, in addition to producing sizeable economic and tourism benefits (Goeldner and Ritchie, 2009).

According to Kotler et al. (2006), event-based tourism is a vital component of programs designed to attract tourists. Small and rural communities are using festivals and events to get on the bandwagon and reap the same benefits that large communities do.

Planned events are spatial-temporal phenomenon. Each event is unique because of the interactions taking place between the setting, people, and management systems such as the program. Events are such a powerful communication tool, as they always are unique, produce a feeling that you 'have to be there' to fully enjoy the full experience, since it will be a lost opportunity once you have missed it (Getz, 2007). Planned events are organized for a purpose. Centuries ago events were created from individual and community initiatives, while these days the organizing of events is mainly carried out by entrepreneurs and professionals for the simple reason that events are too important , organized for strategic goals ,and too risky to be left to amateurs. This shift has led to the development of the event management field devoted to designing, producing and managing planned events.

Table 1 provides an overview of the types of events as they are distinguished by Getz (2005). A typology of the main categories of planned events that obviously differ in their purpose and program. Some are for public celebration (this category includes so-called 'community festivals' which aim to foster civic pride and cohesion), while others are planned for purposes of competition, fun, entertainment, business or socializing.

Table 1. Typology of planned events

CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS	POLITICAL AND STATE	ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT	BUSINESS AND TRADE	EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC	SPORT COMPETITION	RECREATIONAL	PRIVATE EVENTS
Festivals -carnivals -commemorations -religious events	-summits -royal occasions -political events -VIP visits	concerts -award ceremonies	-meetings, conventions -consumer and trade shows -fairs, markets	-conferences -seminars -clinics	amateur/professional -spectator/participant	-sport or games for fun	-weddings -parties -socials

Source: Getz, 2005

Closely allied to the events industry, and often seen as a component of it, is the MICE industry (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions). Today this branch is growing and getting more and more important. For the hosting cities there is a chance to fill their venues for these kinds of activities.

2. Event tourism

“Event tourism” was a new term introduced in the 1980’s, but it has become firmly established as a major component of special interest tourism and a significant ingredient in destination marketing strategies. Every community and destination can employ events effectively in a tourism role (Getz, 1997). These special events are being viewed as an integral part of tourism

development and marketing plans for cities, regions and countries alike. Indeed, they can play a number of important roles in tourism destination planning, including; attractions in their own right or contributors to destination attractiveness; animators of static attractions and facilities; image makers; and catalysts for other urban development and renewal (Getz, 1991).

People have become more and more interested in events of all kinds and will travel far away to participate in events that they find interesting. According to Getz (1997) these people form their own tourism market segment- event tourism. Event tourism as a market segment consists of those people who travel to attend events and their companions who act as normal tourists. It includes also people who can be motivated to attend events while away from home.

Events can enhance the tourism experience by providing newness, freshness and change, which sustain interest in the destination for locals, and promote its attraction for visitors. Tourist attractions and theme parks incorporate events as a key element in their marketing programs. Bradford Museum of Film, Television and Arts, Alton Towers in Staffordshire and Blackpool Pleasure Beach all use extensive event programs to increase market profile and attract repeat visits. Tour operators choice of which destinations to promote depends on the agenda of events of destinations and its popularity and strength Built attractions and facilities everywhere have realized the advantages of 'animation'- the process of programming interpretive features and/or special events that make the place come alive with sensory stimulation and appealing atmosphere. Before efforts and investments are made to develop these events, it is necessary to assess the impact they may have. These assessments are crucial to the planning process (Williams and Bowdin, 2007).

3. Impacts of Events

Events have a range of impacts-both positive and negative- on their host communities and stakeholders. Often negative impacts can be minimized through awareness and intervention, good planning is always critical. Great emphasis is often placed on the financial impacts of events, partly because of the need of employers and governments to meet budget goals and justify expenditure, and partly because such impacts are most easily assessed and are the real determinant of success or failure of a certain project or event.

3.1 Economic Impacts

Gelan (2003) notes that studies of economic impact are useful in marketing decisions and that developers and local politicians may justify public funds by citing the economic benefits events may have for the whole community. Goldman et al. (1997) argue that studies of economic impact focus on how a project can impact the surrounding community by creating employment, income, and helping territory spatial organization. Kotler et al., (1993), in their book *Marketing Places*, recognized the value of events in ameliorating the image of municipalities and in attracting tourists. Through cultural events, places may attract not only tourists but also investments. The tourism industry that supports events generates employment and economic diversification. Getz (1997) made a figure that illustrates the economic roles of events. One of these roles is place marketing which provides a framework within which events and event tourism find multiple roles; as image makers, quality of life enhancers, and tourist attractions. Events make it possible to maximize and rationalize the use of certain spaces. Preservation of these spaces may result in financial benefits and dissemination of artistic and cultural heritages.

Events can function as *attractions* that motivate both local and non-local travel and may increase tourism spending and length of stay. It may also assist in keeping residents and their money at the home destination, rather than travelling somewhere else. Events can furthermore act as *animators* by structuring programs of special events at already existing facilities in order to make extra use of theme parks, museums and resorts. This has the advantage of attracting people who may otherwise not visit the premises and can as well encourage people to make repeat visits. Major events may act as *image-makers* through its role of forming the image of a destination, much due to the media attention and publicity it attracts in relation to the event. The English Football league attracted 750 thousand tourists spending nearly one billion dollars. Those tourists ranked attending the football games as the main motive for their visiting England.

3.2 Social and cultural Impacts

All events have a direct social and cultural impact on their participants, and sometimes on their wider host communities as outlined by Hall (1997) and Getz (1997). This may be as simple as a shared entertainment experience, as is created by a sporting event or concert. Other impacts include increased pride, which results from some community events and celebrations of national days, and the validation of particular groups in the community, which is the purpose of many events designed for senior citizens and disabled people. Some events leave a legacy of greater awareness and participation in sporting and cultural activities. Others broaden people's cultural horizons, and expose them to new and challenging people, customs, or ideas (G.A.J.Bowdin et al. ,2001).

Large-scale events can do a world of social good. The excitement of being chosen to host an event can be infused directly into communities, schools and other areas with powerful results. The benefits continue to accrue well after the event is over and are self-sustaining, meaning they

either require no more investment or they have local sponsors that are committed to continuing the program. A social legacy can be revitalizing to the local community, improve education and cultural values and inspire pride and unity.

The sports legacy is the most obvious outcome of a mega-event. Sports inspire passion and contribute to the overall well-being of individuals and communities. Obviously it is important for the host community or host nation to do well in the competition in order to elevate the level of pride and passion.

3.3 Environmental Impacts

An event is an excellent way to display the unique characteristics of the host environments. Hall (1989) points out that selling the image of a hallmark event includes the marketing of the intrinsic properties of the destination. However, host environments may be extremely delicate and great care should be taken to protect them. A planned event may require an environmental impact assessment to be conducted before council or government permission is granted for it to go ahead. The impact may be much greater if the event is to be held in a public space not ordinarily reserved for events, such as a park, town square or street. Aspects such as crowd movement and control, noise levels, access and parking will be important considerations. Other major issues may include wear and tear on the natural and physical environment, heritage protection issues and disruption of the local community (G.A.J.Bowdin, et al., 2001). Incorporating a waste management plan into the overall event plan, involving models for recycling has become increasingly important.

Environmental considerations are becoming a major issue in the selection of Olympic host cities. In fact, the International Olympic Committee added “environment” as the third principle of the

Olympic movement, right behind sport and culture. With this in mind, the Chinese government did their best to make Beijing 2008 the “Green Olympics.”

For example, mega-sporting events can transform a city. Forgotten neighborhoods get desperately needed makeovers. Massive clean-up efforts curb smog and pollution. Transportation upgrades enhance mobility. Yet for every story of a city cleaned up, there is another of lingering debt and disrepair. Only a few large-scale events live up to their full potential. Even fewer deliver the promised long-term rewards. However, for cities and nations that focus on both the immediate and the longer term, they do more than simply host an event, they build a legacy.

Cities and nations that host such events, and manage them correctly, can expect to increase tourism, create jobs, improve their infrastructures, and boost demand for products and services. The prospective economic returns are unmistakable and capturing them is what every host should be able to do well, or well enough. The most successful hosts begin by building a legacy in three areas: society, sports and the environment. Shone and Parry (2004), Dwyer et al (2005), Ohmann et al (2006), Bull and Lovell (2007) and Jackson (2008) grouped most of the impacts of events in the following table

Table 2. Impacts of Events

Impacts of Events: Benefits and costs	
Benefits	Costs
Better social interaction	Conflicts between residents and tourists
Better community cohesion	Interruption of residents' lifestyle

Increased cultural and social understanding	Traffic congestion
Improved community identity and self-confidence	Noise
Community development	Vandalism
Community Pride	Crowds
Extension of the tourism Product	Crime increase
Increased participation of individuals in community activities	Disruption of community life
Opportunities for entertainment facilities	Increased costs of living
Unique opportunities and diversity of local activities	Interrupting normal business activities
Variety of cultural experiences	
Long-term promotional benefits	
Induced development and infrastructure	
Additional trade and business development	
Increased property value	
Job creation	
Attracting investments	

Source: Alves, Helena Maria Baptista and Cerro, Ana Mari'a Campo'n and Martins, Ana Vanessa Ferreira, 2009

4. Synergies between Events and Destination Marketing

4.1 Sustainable urban development

Destination marketing is instrumental in the overall objective of urban management, i.e. sustainable urban development. In today's society, events are an integral part of the package of amenities that make a destination an attractive place, along with its infrastructure and superstructure. That is to say: an attractive competitive destination cannot do without a basic supply of sports, arts, culture facilities that can be well employed and promoted through an agenda of events covering all regions and distributed among different seasons of the year.

Large events can also act as catalysts for urban renewal, and for the creation of new or expanded tourism infrastructure. The Sheffield World Student Games in 1991 provided major facilities, including International Pool, the Sheffield Arena and the Don Valley Stadium that have contributed to Sheffield's reputation as a sporting city. Hotel and facilities development, better communications and improved road and public transport networks are some of the legacies left by such events.

The new infrastructure built in Athens, Greece to meet Olympic requirements - which included new roads, metro and suburban trains - launched the ancient city into a modern European city. Barcelona built an estimated 50 years of infrastructure in just eight years.

Four years after the Olympic parade moved on, the biggest economic benefits to Sydney may be intangible. "The Olympics enabled us to shake off the Crocodile Dundee image," as said by Ken Boundy, the managing director of Tourism Australia, a federal promotion agency. "It showed the world a sophisticated urban society, one that embraces inclusiveness and friendliness."

NewYorkTimes. (2004). *After 4 Years, Sydney's Olympic Site Starts to Pay Off*. Available from www.nytimes.com

4.2 Destination Brand marketing

Events can be used for brand marketing and differentiated marketing. The destination can be seen as a 'brand with a broad supply of urban products'. Image and identity are important location factors, but cannot by themselves change the general perception of a city or region. Major planned events can be focal points of brand-marketing strategies. In building a brand for a destination, it has been argued that the identity creation should not be restricted to the visual but should create an emotional relationship between the destination and the potential visitors (Morgan et al., 2002). This could be achieved by holding planned events that encourage and attract visitors to the destination.

Besides brand marketing, events can also be used for more differentiated marketing efforts, directed to specific target groups or particular segments of the market. The local community could be one of them, just as the international press, tourists or businesses.

5. Tourism in Egypt

Egypt is gifted with a large variety of natural and man-made attractions which make it a popular tourism destination for many tourists of different nationalities. Despite this fact, Egypt share of international tourism is less than it can receive or cater for. This might be due to inadequate management and marketing strategies or sort of deficiency in any of the products or services that altogether form the tourism experience.

Table 3. Egypt's Number of tourist arrivals, nights and receipts in 2009 and 2010

	2009	2010
Number of Tourists	12.5 Million	14.7 Million
Number of Tourist Nights	126.5 Million	147.4 Million
Tourism Receipts	10.76 Billion	12.53 Billion

Source: www.Tourism.gov.eg

5.1 Egypt Competitiveness

Competitiveness is defined as the set of institutions, policies, and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country. Egypt ranks 81 out of 139 countries in the overall global index in the competitiveness report, while it ranks 89 in basic requirements, 82 in efficiency enhancers, 68 in sophistication factors and 113 in environmental sustainability. Egypt's infrastructure ranks 64, Tourism infrastructure 88, airport infrastructure 55, ground transport infrastructure 76. Human Capital ranked 93, while labor market efficiency ranked 133, Technological readiness ranks 87, innovation ranks 83 and ICT infrastructure ranks 93. Egyptian market size is among the 3 largest African markets, ranking 26 among the GCI.

Regarding the travel and tourism industry, Egypt ranks 75 in the travel and tourism overall competitiveness index, 70 in the travel and tourism regulatory framework, 74 for the T&T business environment and 71 in the travel and tourism human, cultural and natural resources. Such ranking is not up to the required standards, but it is in progress from year to year as Egypt

ranks 22 in the prioritization of the travel and tourism sector and 29 in the affinity for travel and tourism (World Economic Forum, 2010).

Economic growth is needed to deliver improved human development outcomes on a sustained basis. It is also largely accepted that the Middle East countries, including Egypt have failed to deliver the skills required for successful export diversification (Dhillon and Yousef, 2009).

There is a consensus that the most defining constraint on Egypt's competitiveness is the quality of its human resources. In almost all the reports related to economic development in Egypt, skill shortage has been underlined as a deficit that has to be compensated for through educational and training policies. This diagnostic about the deficiency of the quality of human resources has also been observed across the region. What can be considered a double-edged sword is Egypt price competitiveness which is 5. According to the GCI methodology, Egypt is already in transition to the efficiency-driven stage.

5. 2 Events in Egypt

The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism is promoting the awareness of the importance of tourism as an export industry. Conference tourism in Egypt has steadily increased over the past six years where the total events held in Cairo International Conference Center amounted to 665 events, including 132 international and local conferences and 235 exhibitions and 298 ceremonies and occasions. In 2008, Egypt witnessed a significant recovery for conference tourism, where many world conferences have been held on its territory such as Davos economic forum in Sharm El-Sheikh, The National Conference on Population and the African Summit (<http://www.suezcanal.gov.eg>).

Festival tourism is also one of the most important and latest types of tourist attractions, either sport, recreational, or artistic festivals. Egypt solely holds many popular festivals such as Cairo International Song Festival, International Film Festival, and Tourism and Shopping Festival, the annual fishing festival for amateurs and Alexandria International Festival for Mediterranean Song and the Sharm el-Sheikh International Championship for Bowling.

In September 2007, Al-Sharkeya governorate organized the XVI International Festival for Arab Horses, which is one of the most important tourism festivals in Egypt. The festival has organized several shows including the musical horse taming and horseback gymnastics and other show of various musical trots with horses.

In 2007, Egypt won the second rank among ‘the best five’ tourist destinations in the Middle East for setting up conferences and festivals on the sidelines of Egypt’s participation in the Gulf Incentive Business Travel & Meetings Exhibition.

The Cairo Opera House bursts into life when the Arab Music Festival is in town. It attracts top instrumentalists, singers and established ensembles, and provides visitors with a great opportunity to enjoy music from the Arab world at its very best.

The Oscar Video Clip Festival organized by the Egyptian Association for Art of Cinema, is an international event and competition held in Alexandria. It's open to all video makers, from producers and directors to singers and photographers.

Two weeks prior to the beginning of Ramadan, the Moulid of Abu el-Haggag celebrates Luxor's patron sheikh with a street festival. Horse races, music, dance and *tahtib* (stick fights) precede the parading of large boats. The parade resembles the solar barque processions of the Pharaonic era;

in Islamic symbolism boats represent the quest for spiritual enlightenment. Youssef Abu el-Haggag, the sheikh himself, was born in Damascus, then moved to Mecca and eventually settled in Luxor, where he founded a *zawiyah* (spiritual retreat).

The Egyptian resort of El Gouna celebrates Swiss National Day. A program of music in the piazzas, authentic dishes from the Alps at the Palavrion restaurant and a cocktail reception at the Ruetli hotel provide entertainment even during Ramadan.

Abu Tig Marina, a world-class resort in El Gouna, hosts Egypt's annual Hat Festival. Residents and guests unleash their imaginations to create their very own headpieces, which can be made of palm leaves, paper, feathers, flowers... or anything else. The most original pieces are awarded a variety of prizes, including hotel vouchers, romantic dinners, spa treatments and excursions. Entertainment includes recitals, opera and jazz performances and a firework display, while the grand finale is a oriental dancing show.

Every year on 31 December, the St Catherine Marathon gathers athletes on the highest plateau in Egypt for a 42km-long challenge around Mount Sinai's diverse terrain and extraordinary setting. It is really considered one of the healthiest ways to welcome the New Year.

Cairo's Wafaa Al-Nil Festival, meaning Fidelity of the Nile, remembers the ancient Egyptian veneration of the river, where beautiful girls used to be sacrificed to guarantee a good harvest. Today's celebrations focus around the arts, poetry, concerts and scientific discussions.

Dahab-based Moritz Landes and TEAM Water world organize the Surf Free ride Gold Camp, a week packed with training sessions to put former windsurfers back into shape.

Splash Cup is an exciting windsurfing regatta attracting pros and amateurs to Hurghada. Fun parties, new product launches and interesting seminars on water sports complete the program at the Pro Center Tommy Friedl.

Organized by the Egyptian Association of Film Writers and Critics since 1979, the Alexandria International Film Festival aims to broaden film culture and strengthen the relationships between filmmakers. Mediterranean productions are in the spotlight, although films from all countries are welcome. Entries are organized into two main sections: Competition and Out of Competition, with the former solely dedicated to feature films from Mediterranean countries.

The Ismailia International Festival for Documentary & Short Films calls all film-makers to present their documentary, short film and animated productions and compete in one of five categories. There are also non-competitive sections and opportunities for debate. Ismailia also holds an international festival for folkloric dancing. It hosts many countries from different continents to perform and show their unique national dancing costumes and ways of dancing. A competition takes place between participating countries.

The women's and men's fashion, lingerie, sports wear and accessories to be seen next season are presented at the Cairo International Conference Centre. Held in spring and autumn, the Cairo Fashion Tex show attracts both fashion enthusiasts and professionals.

Challenging athletes to race in some of the world's most remote locations, 'Racing The Planet' attracts adventurers to Egypt for the Sahara Race, one leg of the event. Participants race across some 250km, carrying along their equipment and food supplies. The series also encompasses the Gobi Desert in China, the Atacama Desert of Chile, Antarctica and a fifth event which roves to a new location each year.

Inspired by National Flight Day, Egypt's Flight Festival sees children building aircraft models in a series of workshops supervised by specialists. The project culminates at Alexandria's Bibliotheca Alexandrina with an exhibition of the models and an outdoor air show.

Egypt's annual Beauty & Fitness Exhibition takes place at the Cairo International Conference Centre. The world's top cosmetic, health and beauty companies reveal their latest products, and visitors can try out all the lotions, potions, make-up and more.

During the Abu Simbel Festival crowds fill the temple at sunrise to watch the shafts of light creeping across the stone, illuminating the statues of Ramses, Ra and Amun. This spectacular sight happens twice a year, in February and October. It was Ramses II who, in a fit of precision and architectural egotism, carefully angled his temple so that the inner sanctum would light up once on the anniversary of his rise to the throne, and once on his birthday. Impressively, it is only the inner sanctum that lights up, while the statue of Ptah (the God of darkness) remains in the shadows. When the Aswan Dam caused the Nasser Lake to rise and inundate the area in the early 1960s, the entire temple was moved to higher ground and for this reason the sun now strikes a day later than Ramses had originally planned.

North Sinai offers the diver a different experience to the more developed diving areas further south. The clear waters offer perfect visibility and some of the least spoilt reefs off the Egyptian coast.

Raising money to support local water projects, the 7 Tribes Endurance Race is a four-day event covering 110km around Sinai's desert. After the marathon, visitors see Bedouins from seven local tribes come together for music, feasting and camel racing.

Egypt's Festival of Tutankhamen Tomb Discovery is an annual event organized by Luxor City Council. It celebrates the finding of the tomb on the 4th of November 1922, about 3500 years after the boy king was mummified. The festival is inspired by the ancient Opet, an Egyptian ceremony that commemorated the annual reunion of the Sacred Theban Triad (God Amon, his wife Mut and their son Khonsu) during the reign of King Tutankhamen.

Departing from Sharm El Sheikh and held at Ras Mohamed National Park, SharMarathon is an international half marathon of 21.097km. Sand dunes, Rocky Mountains and mangroves provide one of the most spectacular settings for a marathon route. The SharMarathon passes by Hidden Bay, the salt lake and back to the coast by Yolanda Bay. Like the views, the surface varies considerably and athletes can expect to run on tarmac, fine coral and pebbles before reaching the soft sand of the desert.

A prize ceremony and local entertainment welcomes participants back in Old Sharm.

The Alexandria International Bridge Festival is organized by the Egyptian Bridge Federation and held at the Alexandria Sporting Club. It's a tense few days as competitors take a shot at prizes that range from medals to a prestigious trophy. Held at venues including the Alexandria Atelier, the Alexandria Mediterranean Biennale presents a selection of art exhibitions from different Mediterranean countries. Video, photography and sculpture collections, along with a number of fringe activities, are all included in the program.

Held at the Swiss Club, Cairo's Sphinx Festival is a gathering of artists, scholars and Egyptologists. It celebrates the fusion of art and science with dance shows, music performances and seminars on topics ranging from Egyptian cosmology to sacred geometry

The Cairo International Film Festival has been going strong since its inception in 1976. Along with regular competitions, tributes and controversial films, it features seminars addressing contemporary world issues. Each year the focus falls on individual countries and their film-making industries. With a long cinematic tradition dating back to the early 1930s, Egypt has a remarkable influence on the Arab world and Cairo is known as the "Hollywood of the Middle East".

Held at Cairo International Conference Centre, Le Marché is a home furnishings and accessories exhibition, showcasing imported products and fresh, local designs. The event acts as a platform for the best products around and a forum for exchanging ideas and strategies.

Flora Egypt Fair is an international exhibition of fresh cut flowers and ornamental plants held at Cairo Fair Grounds. Along with stunning displays, the fair offers meetings and workshops on all horticultural matters, from marketing to future trends.

Egypt International Boat Show turns the spotlight on vessels and accessories of all kinds. Visit the show at Cairo International Convention and Exhibition Centre for all your navigation needs, from communication equipment to interiors and water sports accessories.

The International Egyptian Marathon takes place annually in Luxor, attracting nearly 2000 long-distance runners from around 36 countries. The route runs past the famous ancient monuments of the West Bank and through the local farmers' sugar cane fields.

The International Nile Song Festival, at the Cairo International Conference Centre, attracts kids from around 18 countries to compete for generous cash prizes in writing, singing and composing. All genres are allowed, though the songs must be new. There are also several charity concerts and

exhibitions. In previous years, the International Nile Song Festival has been organized in two categories, one for children from five to nine years old and the second for ages ten to 15.

The Cairo International Book Fair at Cairo International Conference Centre is one of the leading cultural activities in the Middle East, attracting over 3000 exhibitors and three million international visitors. Go along to a discussion with a world-famous guest speaker. The event was initially set up in 1969 with the purpose of narrowing the gap between Arabic and foreign language books - the latter outnumbering the former. Within the first few editions, it became a cultural landmark, attracting intellectuals, publishers, writers and book lovers from around the world. In addition to literature, science and intellectual book collections, there are also arts events, seminars and music.

Gathering around 40 leading Middle Eastern and Western artists at St. John's Church in Cairo, Caravan is an arts festival set up to encourage intercultural dialogue. Visit art exhibitions or go along to one of the film screenings and concerts.

The Hurghada International Festival is a two-week event featuring three sporting disciplines. It opens with a triathlon competition, followed by the 75km Mare Monti, featuring international competitors running off-road between the sea and mountains. PADI, the professional association of diving instructors, organizes the Scuba Pro Event at Hurghada's Fort Arabesque. The event offers visitors training sessions, technical seminars and the chance to test dive newly launched gear (www.egypttourguide.org).

6. Events: Key to Tourism recovery in Egypt

The Egyptian Prime Minister confirmed the strategic importance of tourism for the country's economic recovery and social stability after January 25 revolution circumstances, especially in the current transition period. "We appreciate your visit and support; tourism is a critical activity for Egypt," he said. "This is a time for action which will help us get through the current bottleneck," he added. "International tourists are slowly beginning to return to Egypt. The sector is a lifeline for our economy and 14 million international tourists visited Egypt in 2010, generating nearly US\$13 billion in international tourism receipts. These receipts represent around 6% of the country's GDP and over 11% when the full sector is considered. International tourist arrivals saw a decline of 45% in the first quarter of 2011(<http://media.UNWTO.org>).

Tourism is clearly seen as a national priority involving all areas of public policy and thus can be a major contributor to consolidate the transition. Given the current difficulties in the region, it is important for the industry to get a clear message out that the new Egypt is stable and open for business.

Events can be one of the motives that can attract tourists back to Egypt. Sustainable and good management of planned events can increase confidence in Egypt as a safe and secured tourism destination with a lot to offer to tourists of all nationalities and all segments.

Case Study:

1- Opera Aida Event, Egypt

Verdi's Opera Aida was performed on the 26th of November 1994. Opera Aida is based on a story written by Egyptologist August Mariette, inspired by Pharaonic history at its height. The story is about a victorious Egyptian Pharaonic officer, Radamis. He falls in love with his captive Aida who tempts him to reveal to her his secret military plans. Pharaoh Ramses knows about their secret and sentences Radamis to prison in a cellar till death. Aida herself hides in the cellar to face death with her lover.

Verdi explicitly referred to the exotic tradition of French *grand opéra* in his choice of the Ancient Egypt setting, which allowed *Aida* to speak to Europe and to “do [. . .] a great many things for and in European culture, one of which is to confirm the Orient as an essentially exotic, distant, and antique place in which Europeans can mount certain shows of force” (Said 1993, 112).

Choosing Hatshepsut's Temple as the location for the Opera was not haphazard, as the Temple enhanced the Pharaonic theme. The annual performances of Aida were moved in 1988 from Luxor, one of the country's most popular tourists sites, to a temporary theatre built at the 4,500-year-old Giza Pyramids. A large number of foreign guests were coming to attend the Opera. All guests who attended the performance hailed the effort exerted, especially the construction of the bridge which linked the east and the west banks of the River Nile. The 600-metre long bridge was built by the Egyptian Armed Forces to transport spectators to and from the performance.

Aida was shown in the Giza pyramids about 16 years ago, it has almost now become an annual international event, one of the pioneer international events which were held in Egypt and attracted the attention to Egypt as an appropriate destination for a variety of planned events, and a sign of Egypt's cultural tourism development. It also encouraged charter trips from all over Europe to many cities in Egypt, such as Luxor, Hurghada, Sharm El Sheikh...etc.

2- Pharaohs Rally, Egypt

The Pharaohs Rally was born on 1982 starting with an idea of Fenouil, a re-known name for all passionate of African rallies. In 1989 Egypt Air realized the benefit of such event so they started to be the main sponsor of the rally and they changed the name of the rally to be Rally Des Pharaohs-Egypt Air also the Egyptian tourism authority and other official governorate authorities started to support the rally and provide all the facilities for developing it year after year, later large international companies and the Ministry of Information started to take part in the event so the rally became one of the most important events in the Arabian countries and all TV Channels found it a great chance to make great media campaign by media covering. Sponsors came from the largest international companies all over the world to be part of this great parade(www.rallyedespharaonsegypte.com).

This keenness becomes a venture in 1998 with taking over of the organization and make it a world wide known race; able to join great performances, an experience into the wilderness and the pleasure of shared fun. It is a rally which is not only speed and competition, but also continuous discovery and incredible human experience.

The great care dedicated to this venture took the competition to the FIM World Championship of Rallies Tout Terrain in 2000. The Pharaons International Cross Country Rally new name keeps the charm of the past and it gets introduction into the FIA World Cup on 2005. A renewed challenge takes the Pharaons I.C.C. Rally new Egyptian and French partners with strategical responsibilities since 2010. It is a thrilling week-long endurance race across the Sahara attracting competitors from around the world. The 3000km circular route begins under the gaze of the Sphinx in Giza ending up back in the lively Egyptian capital, Cairo. The event comes as part the Egyptian Tourist authority to promote tourism as sports festivals that attract large numbers of Arab tourists and foreigners, around 600 rider of different nationalities from Europe , Japan, the United Emirates , Saudi Arabia, and Egypt , as a total number of equipment to participate in the event is about 500 equipment (<http://egypholidaysdirectory.com/>).

The organizing Committee has laid down some moral, technical general and security rules, prescriptions and regulations to control the event and ensure the safety and security of both competitors and spectators. The continuous success of this event led to the establishment of the Egyptian Federation of Motor Sports in 2008, which then started the formation of a national team for motor sports and opening a specialized school to train competitors to participate in national and international competitions.

Thanks to the precious support of the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, Pharaons Rally is the ideal international planned event - at its fourteenth year in a row, 2011 - to discover the most remote corners of a stunning country that still hides many secrets inside its desert.

The previously mentioned events represent two different categories of events, considered successful international event brand, reflecting sporting and cultural activities, making use and adding to the existing attractions in Egypt. Such events not only add to the visitor experience, but diversify the tourism product as well. It also offers the possibility of adding to the country's infrastructure during times when it attempts to cater for a large influx of visitors.

Being pioneer events, statistical data and impact assessment studies were not conducted or if conducted were not recorded. Accordingly, no data was available regarding this matter.

Conclusion

Events seem to be an effective tool in positioning destinations in the market and in delivering tourism, culture and art strategies set by governmental tourism and arts bodies.

Hosts of events should no longer be satisfied with simply securing the tangible economic benefits that such events provide. They can have so much more, from community enhancements to innovative additions to the educational system. The event planning should not be viewed as a strategy on its own. Rather, it must be built into a nation's or city's social and economic development plan as a whole. By devoting the time and dedicating resources needed for planning and implementation, hosts can secure a positive future long after the event concludes. It is possible, indeed vital, to leave behind a lasting legacy. Most cities, even nations, fail to capture long-lasting benefits from events. Mega events have to incorporate a cohesive strategy that advances social and economic development, local passion and pride while building an international reputation. It is also critical to pursue the right initiatives and to secure funding and support. The concept objective is to organize mega events that maximize environmental compatibility. The lessons learned would also be of use for future improvements in a regional or national context.

Recommendations

- Overall Competitive ranking of Egypt and tourism competitiveness should be enhanced through handling weaknesses and maintaining points of strength in order to be able to promote Egypt as an International Tourism Destination and a destination suitable for a variety of international events.
- The press and information bureau should prepare modified tourist guidebooks underlining the element of safety and security, and preparing an agenda for tourist events to attract all types of events.
- Developing and promoting a high-quality, sustainable, inclusive program of public events to raise the profile of Egypt as a tourist destination is of great importance.
- Great care should be given to the recruiting and training of personnel in the tourism and events industry in order to achieve the desired positioning and gain the desired benefits from such a promising industry.
- The more involved the population and local suppliers are in terms of provision of services, food, beverages, and attractions, the greater the economic benefits to the country. In this sense, the organizers must plan ways to build partnerships and involve the greatest possible local operators.
- Great emphasis should be attached to the principle of sustainability, given the growing importance of mega events. These should not only focus attention on the host country or host city in the short term – there must also be recognizable long-term benefits, therefore Guidelines toward the sustainable management and operation of Events should be announced, followed and respected in order to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts of events.
- Impacts of Events should be continuously assessed in order to reach a model to benchmark when organizing future events.

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