

# **Event Leadership**

## **Theory and methods for event management and tourism**

### **Instructor's Manual**

## **9: Modelling events as social change agents**

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This is the instructor's manual produced to accompany the book *Event Leadership – theory and practice for event management and tourism*, by Emma Abson (with contributions by Miriam Firth and Jane Tattersall), 2021, published by Goodfellow Publishers Ltd.

This manual and the accompanying illustrations are provided by the authors for the private use of instructors using the book *Event Leadership*. All the diagrams are copyright protected and should not be circulated beyond the classroom. To further support instructors, there is a set of PowerPoint slides for each lecture available.

## How to use the book for teaching & learning

The content of the book can easily be adapted to facilitate learning from the content. Instructors using the book will have access to the following:

- ◆ *Learning objectives* - each of these suggests one or more study or discussion questions, as the reader should be able to demonstrate the applicable knowledge drawn from the chapter.
- ◆ *Short explanations of leadership theory* – these can be used to stimulate discussions or debates, as the basis of case study evaluations or to ask students to reflect on their own experiences of leadership.
- ◆ *Scenarios* – these can be used to prompt conversations, for analysis and for problem solving.
- ◆ *Further questions* that could be integrated into study are at the end of each chapter.
- ◆ *Further reading suggestions* are typically 3-5 additional texts which the authors believe will help to develop understanding of key topics further.
- ◆ *'Voice from the event industry'* – these industry insights enable the reader to gain useful insights into how leadership works in the event industry.

It is recommended that instructors use a blend of class discussions, debates, case study evaluation, real life scenario setting and student-led presentations in order to fully utilise the content of the book.

## How to introduce the subject of event leadership to your students

A lack of research into human resource development, managerial skillsets and leadership practices of event managers has meant that there is very little understanding of the contribution that leadership makes to the management of experiences. The purpose of this book is to shine a light on leadership theory and explore how it relates to the unique context of planned events and event tourism.

An understanding of leadership is essential for the development of successful event managers and for the delivery of successful event experiences - whilst some sectors of the leisure industry are run by large corporations, with well-established leadership structures in place, the event industry tends to be more transient, and often has temporary management structures which exist only for the duration of the event. In addition, the difference in leadership required for a small-scale local community event and that of a large-scale international event such as Glastonbury Festival is vast. This then is the tension at the heart of leadership within events – event projects are intangible and temporary in nature and they provide only one opportunity to get it right. However, in order to be successful leaders, they also need to work in teams, motivating, empowering and developing team members. This then is the challenge in planned events and makes them a unique context within which to study leadership.

This book explores the key questions of how those who work in events resolve the tension between the intangibility of event experiences, the planned nature of the events, and how event managers become successful leaders and lead successful event experiences. The purpose of this book is therefore to provide a concise introduction to leadership theory and methods for use in event management and event tourism.

## Lecture 9

### Chapter aims

- Define Social Agents of Change,
- Understand how events produce a stage of information and education to lead and inform society,
- Analyse how events mirror societal attitudes and behaviours,
- Explore motivations and outcomes for leaderless events,
- Identify how economies driving Events management lead to new employment practices.
- Focus on leadership in action – music venues as social agents of change.

### 9.1: Introduction to viewing events as social agents of change

*Use the following extracts to introduce this lecture. This lecture is a bit of a departure, and requires the students to think about the power of events to create changes in society. The hope is that it will wrap up the review of leadership, and challenge them to think about events in a new light.*

This lecture offers a model of events as social agents of change to outline how Leadership in, and through, Events evidence leadership of societal change. First, social agents of change is defined to clarify this term to apply to the model. Following this, each area of the model is discussed to identify how events can be modelled as social agents of change. Through this model, you can consider how events provide information and education and how events clarify societal behaviour and action. Each element of this model refers to theory and case studies to provide support for events being seen as social agents of change. The summary offers the model in full and student questions offered at the end enable you to apply this in your studies to complete critical analysis of events as social agents of change.

#### Social agents of change: A definition

A social agent of change (SAC) can be a person, group or outcome from a range of activities. They are signalled as the start, or leader, in changing existing phenomena. Social agents of change as a term is rooted in Sociology theory as they evidence a change in existing social practices, scaled according to the issue actioned. Although the origins of the term have been linked to University students in Canada in the 1960s in contemporary practice SACs can be seen in businesses and individuals.

An excellent example of organisations set up to change existing phenomena is 'Grind out Hunger'. This is a not for profit organisation whose mission is to empower youth to take leadership in the fight against childhood hunger and malnutrition, through their passions of skateboarding, surfing, snowboarding and music to. SACs are not always one action or person but can be a combined effort by groups of people to change societal issues. An SAC is not always created to lead in societal change though. Film and media, for example, can serve to question the status quo in society to enable viewers to consider ways in which society act and behave. Other examples of SAC use is noted in linguistics, mobile phone use and migrant participation in society. Therefore, although SACs are noted as a singular term, they are present in a wide range of businesses, individuals,

media production, communication forms and members of society. If you raised money for a charity, you are also a SAC as you are raising awareness of the charity and signalling support is required for the Charity's cause.

## 9.2: What are the global issues that SACs champion and try to change?

*You can use the below, but it would be more appropriate to use current literature / news stories to ensure that you are covering relevant material. You can expand on these points, and discuss their relevance with the students.*

Some of the common issues addressed by SACs include climate change, sustainability, gender equality, racial equality, healthcare issues, fair trade and inclusion. The issues may be specific geographic scales also: local, regional, national or international. The change does not have to be global to have an effect and the issue it champions can relate to a small area or group of people.

Probably the most widely known global issue championed by SACs is that of climate change and the sustainability of our planet. This is a known issue across the world and has been highlighted most recently by the work of Greta Thunberg (a clear SAC). Greta's medical history coupled with her environmental activism is a story which has had a global impact. From school strikes to protests, her activism work has increased discussion on climate issues in many world nations. This is an interesting example of an SAC as the issue is not new, but through the SAC the issue has been brought to the public's attention and enabled wider debate and consideration of the ways to reduce our impact on the natural environment.

## 9.3: Events as Social Agents of Change

*Use the following to discuss with the students how events can bring about change. You can prompt them to give examples of events they have attended / read about which have changed their own views.*

In terms of understanding or positioning events as SACs, this is a relatively new, and sometimes contested link. Historically events are seen to be created through the heritage of local traditions and celebrations, which have then led to larger scale profitable event businesses. St Patricks Day and Notting Hill Carnival are two such examples of when a local tradition grows to become a significant economic contributor both locally and internationally. However, from discussion in this chapter it is clear that almost every SAC will require events in order to gather people together to discuss and raise awareness of the issues and changes they want within the society. It is, therefore, clear that SACs depend upon events to ensure citizens can actively participate in understanding the issues at hand. Modelling all events as SACs is a nuanced shift from this though. SACs using events is different to seeing all events as SACs. There is also a body of literature on the social impacts of events, but this, again, is not the focus or position this chapter offers. Events in museums are seen as SACs as they mirror society and local history offering information and raising awareness on historic events. School education through museum exhibitions is also seen as an SAC vital for local history education. These papers offer confirmation that arts events in museums are natural SACs as they educate and reflect upon society's history. The form of change created is often through education and knowledge development, but this can lead to societal change from awareness raising. For example,

visiting the National Holocaust Centre and Museum in Newark, UK would inform you of how prejudice and racial profiling led to mass genocide. The aim of the museum is not to promote genocide, but to “encourage personal responsibility and the promotion of fairness and justice”. Therefore, visitors of this museum would not only learn about the history of the Holocaust, but be actively encouraged to be more socially responsible and act fairly towards others.

Sharpe (2007) identified how small scale music festivals can be SACs through mixing music with political agendas and ideas. For any avid festival attendee the political link is well known and seen. Festivals enable gatherings of large groups of people to share, experience and learn from each other and political groups are often seen within these promoting and sharing their policies and agendas with the public in attendance. SACs using events for political issues are also often seen in marches, protests or movements. The protests against Brexit, #blacklivesmatter marches and Greta’s school strikes are three such examples already noted in this chapter. Sharpe’s (2007) discussion of a political music festival is interesting and can certainly confirm an event as an SAC. More often though events are used as SACs in leaderless events for protests, marches or strikes.

## 9.4: The SAC Model

### Part 1 of the model - events are a stage

Discussing some of the (very) limited literature linking events and events management to SACs is it clear that they can provide a stage for social learning and change, they can mirror society leading to socially responsible action, and can challenge political ideals in leaderless events.

Earlier discussion on events as SACs outlined how an event can be seen as a stage to present or address issues to event attendees. Whether this is cultural awareness (as a tourist) or learning about political agendas (at music and politics festivals), event attendees are presented with information and experiences which can lead to changes in society. For example, the ‘One World, Together at Home’ event of 2020/1 was a music event which praised the work of healthcare professionals working through the COVID19 pandemic, whilst educating the attendees to act as ‘Global Citizens’ and complete 15 actions to support stopping the spread of the virus. This event was requested by the United Nations (UN) and World Health Organisation (WHO) so that attendees could both celebrate through music and actively support the public during a global pandemic. Attendees were not required to visit a venue, but were actively encouraged to stay at home and enjoy music from leading artists across the world. Similar to the ‘Live Aid’ concert of 1985 the ‘One World: Together at Home’ event is an SAC to support contemporary society issues.

To further explore this part of the model two aspects are discussed: events as thought leaders, and education and training through events.

### Events as thought leaders

A thought leader is a business or someone who is recognised as a leading expert on a particular subject. The following table notes case examples of events which are both Thought Leaders and SACs to aid leading change in society. See the table below for examples:

Title	Attendees	Event type	SAC issue addressed
Web Summit websummit.com/	+100,000	Conference	Female leaders in the technology industry. Equality in employment practice. Societal issues linked to technology development.
Summit summit.co/	+1500	Conference	Brings together experts from society to create ideas and initiatives to solve societal issues.
Ted Talks www.ted.com/talks	Millions	Conference	Spreading ideas and information on important societal topics.

**Table 9.1**

### Education & Training through events

Events are often created with the primary purpose of educating and training attendees. Education and training events enable attendees to develop knowledge in particular areas, but some events result in education due to the topic/s in which they are focussed. A few examples are noted below:

Title	Attendees	Event type	SAC issue addressed
Koningsdag	+800,000	Festival	Education on the history of the royal family in the Netherlands
Pride Festivals	Millions worldwide	Festival	Educating and celebrating lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.
BETT Show www.bettshow.com	+30,000	Trade Show	Transforming education technology to support future educational practices.
LEEF www.leef.org.uk	+800 followers	Forum	A London based educators' forum which hosts annual conferences on urban environmental issues.

**Table 9.2**

### Part 2 of model - Events are mirrors of society

Events were traditionally created to support local and personal celebrations around societal frameworks (such as birthdays or marriages). National holiday celebrations are also present in most countries whereby historic events are remembered (such as Thanks Giving). As such, events are created, accessed and attended by most communities across the world. With this background framework to events management, it is noted that events can be seen as miniature communities, or Petri dishes, of society from which you can analyse human behaviour. In conjunction, events can also lead to societal changes in behaviour if they educate and require different behaviours. SAC are notable when event attendee behaviour is undesirable and later action seeks to alter this, and also event engagement leads to changes in attendee behaviour after the event. Poor behaviour and promotion of new behaviours through events are now discussed to evidence how events as mirrors of society can lead to social change.

### Poor human behaviour example

This position is most notable within festival attendee behaviour and the disposal of waste and possessions on site. From a 3-year on-site study completed at the UK's Glastonbury Festival to support their 'Love the Farm, Leave no Trace' campaign management sought to correct poor attendee behaviour concerning waste management. This campaign was created to support the reduction of waste and the overall negative impact of attendee behaviour on the festival site. With over 200,000 attendees, this festival is a mega-event



which produces a mega amount of waste. When completing exit surveys with attendees at this festival in 2015, several people reported that they had taken their tent and possessions away and not littered, and yet they were not carrying anything on their departure. They knew that they should not litter, reported this in the survey, and yet did not act or behave in a way which represented this. It was clear they had a social conscience on appropriate behaviour and treating the site correctly, but for whatever reason, they did not all act in the appropriate way when on site. This position is confirmed in Musgrave and Henderson's publications also and they note that understanding on and offsite attendee behaviour is important to ensure events are sustainable and attendees treat their local environments appropriately at all times.

### **Promotion of new human behaviours example**

Event Campaigns and new event concepts can lead to changes in attendee behaviours during and after events. The Love the Farm, Leave no Trace campaign at Glastonbury festival has raised awareness of attendee behaviour and has led to an increase in reusing materials, reducing waste and respecting the local environment. Strafford et al. (2018) noted how pop-up shopping centre events create enlivenment and add to usual shopping experiences. Instead of solely completing shopping and eating activities in a shopping centre, or mall, customers can immerse themselves in additional events which can lengthen their commercial experiences. Product displays, food samples, demonstrations, and leafleting local causes are all examples of how these retail events can lead to altered human behaviours. The Affordable Art Fair in Singapore offers an event where more people have access and opportunity to purchase art, as this is seen as too expensive for the majority of the local population. Educational events will also lead to altered attendee behaviours as they will gain knowledge to consider alternative ways of acting and behaving.

### **Part 3 of the model - Events can be leaderless**

When an event is created and led by a society's needs, rather than a small group of individuals or businesses objectives, it can create mobilised groups of society to act and challenge societal issues. Whether or not there is a singular leader in these events is contested. In essence, they are created due to a spontaneous societal problem perceived with the state, government, or society. As such, these events are usually seen in the form of protests, movements or demonstrations. Examples of historical leaderless events are noted below with comments on how they attribute to the model on SACs:

- ◆ **Gandhi's Salt March** (India, the 1930s): This demonstration of civil disobedience required thousands of activists across India acting against national laws. They demanded sovereign rule from the British and that the British rule in India was only due to the consent of Indian communities. Although this event did not lead to an immediate change in Indian rule, the campaign and marches enabled Indian people to confirm their civil rights requirements in solidarity across a nation.
- ◆ **South Africa's National Day of Protest** (1950): On 26th June 1950 over 500 delegates and 10,000 people attended events to protest the Suppression of Communism Bill in South Africa. This event and rally was part of a building series of protests called the Defiance Campaign based in South Africa. This campaign was tackling apartheid laws which sought to segregate citizens according to their race.

- ◆ **The March on Washington** (the USA, 1963): This march was to protest and demand civic and economic rights for African Americans living in America. The march only lasted three hours, but it was preceded with years of meetings to establish clear demands in the political and economic change needed. Over 250,000 people attended the march and it resulted in pressuring the administration into a new civil rights bill in congress.

Gandi (India), Nelson Mandela (South Africa) and Martin Luther King (Washington) are famous figures involved in the above case examples of leaderless events. Although they are linked and signalled as important leaders within the movements, they were not the leaders of the events. They aided in creating a national movement against existing political restrictions within the countries and resulted in positive outcomes for citizens living in the countries. A further example of contemporary Leaderless events are the Brexit marches and protests completed across the United Kingdom. It will take some years to note how these affect political change, but they too signal social unrest in political change.

#### **Part 4 of the model - Events lead to new employment practices**

Events are often noted for their positive economic impact . Since their significant growth in western economies in the last 50 years events are seen as a core form of tourism and leisure activity supporting Gross National Outputs. Winning contracts to produce major sporting events, like the Olympics, or being the host to world-leading events signals and leads to increased skills and knowledge production within a society (Growth 2009). In tandem with the growth of the events industry, it is clear that new employment practices are emerging. Employment practices are said to need alteration to support environmental concerns but there is also evidence that the growth in events has also led to altered and improved employment practices.

Events management often requires temporary or fixed-term contracts. As such, Events employees do not complete traditional forms of contracted work, but will often have portfolio careers. This change has not come from a perceived societal issue but is emergent due to the increase in the events sector working environments which are often temporary and sporadic. When reviewing the top event management companies and managers, there are common themes: innovation, creativity, socially inclusive and active social change (environmental, sustainably and employment).



## 9.5: Summary

This lecture has offered a model of events as social agents of change. Through the definition of social agents of change it is clear these have the power to lead change in society and improve conditions and practices. They may be individuals or businesses, but they all lead to a change in societal action and behaviour. The model presented on events as social change agents included four elements presented below:



**Figure 9.1:** A model of events as social agents of change

## Further activities for seminars / independent learning and / or assignments

### Chapter study questions

*Each of the learning objectives suggests one or more study or discussion questions, as the reader should be able to demonstrate the applicable knowledge drawn from this and subsequent chapters. Further questions that could be integrated into study might be:*

1. What do you think about the UNs note on females being the leaders for climate change social agents of change? Do you agree? Discuss with others in your class.
2. Have you attend an event with the sole purpose of learning something? What did you learn and how was this applied outside of the event?
3. If events are being run more online during the pandemic, do you think this will affect attendee behaviour in events? If so, how?
4. Can you have a hedonistic festival experience in an online event? How could these elements be transformed to online events?
5. Have you ever attended a protest or march? Why did you do this and what did you intend to achieve in your attendance?
6. Do you plan to work in one company or a range of companies? If you would for a range of companies what form of career would this be called?
7. How do event management companies support emerging employment practices?

## Assignment suggestions

*In addition to the study questions listed above, instructors could use the questions listed as essay questions, or as presentation assignments.*

- ◆ Reviewing table 1, pick an example from each column and search for information on their work as a SAC. What issue are they highlighting and what are the differences in their actions to lead to change?

Businesses	Individuals
Grind Out Hunger ( <a href="https://www.facebook.com/grindouthunger/">https://www.facebook.com/grindouthunger/</a> )	Maria Shriver
Impakt ( <a href="https://www.impaktcorp.com/">https://www.impaktcorp.com/</a> )	Teachers
Ford Motor Company fighting HIV/Aids in South Africa	Emma Gonzalez
Green Mountain Coffee fair trade deals	Shamma bint Suhail Faris Mazrui

- ◆ Have you ever watched a movie or TV show which has led to you questioning how society acts? Did this lead to reconsideration of your existing views on this?

## Further reading

*Use the following texts as guidance for further, independent, study.*

Hayhurst, L. M. C. (2013) 'Girls as the 'new' agents of social change? exploring the 'girl effect' through sport, gender and development programs in Uganda', *Sociological Research Online*, **18**(2), 192–203. doi: 10.5153/sro.2959.

Roche, M. (2017). *Mega-events and Social Change: Spectacle, legacy and public culture*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

*Examples of leadership linked to societal issues and re-imagining leadership for social change:*

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/8-great-books-purpose-driven-leaders-sheri-nasim/>

*More examples of events companies acting as SACs;*

Waggle Events - <https://waggleevents.org/contact/>

Isla - <https://weareisla.co.uk/>