



The Role of Community Involvement in Sustainable Event Planning

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Abstract

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<p>This thesis explores at how involvement of local communities can make event planning more sustainable. It explains why sustainability in events is important and points out that there is not enough research on how to include communities effectively. The main goals are to explore the benefits of community involvement, understand the challenges, and suggest ways to improve it. The research focuses on five international festivals to give a global view, but it also notes that the results may not apply to every type of event.</p> <p>The theoretical framework chapter explains the main ideas behind sustainable event planning. Which includes taking caring for the environment, supporting local people, and making sure events are economically good. It highlights the role of the community and uses some theories like, stakeholder theory and social capital theory to show how working together leads to better results. It also talks about common problems, like limited resources or resistance to change, and introduces helpful models such as Community-Based Participatory Theory.</p> <p>Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative approach, by combining case study analysis with semi-structured interviews. The research design focuses on five international festivals, which was selected for their cultural diversity and documented success in community engagement. Interviews with event organizers provide practical information into the challenges and benefits of participatory planning. Data collection and analysis methods, including thematic analysis, are detailed to ensure reliability and validity. Also, ethical considerations are addressed to maintain participant confidentiality and research integrity.</p> <p>The findings chapter presents results from the case studies and interviews, which is highlighting successful practices in community-driven events. Key themes include the environmental benefits of local participation, such as waste reduction and resource efficiency, as well as social and economic impacts like cultural preservation and economic empowerment. Challenges such as stakeholder misalignment and resource constraints are also identified. A comparative analysis reveals patterns in participatory decision-making and the adaptability of sustainability strategies across different cultural contexts.</p> <p>The discussion chapter synthesizes the findings, connecting them to the theoretical framework and offers actionable recommendations. It emphasizes the need for early community involvement, capacity-building initiatives, and culturally sensitive planning to improve sustainability. The author reflects on the research process, acknowledging its transformative impact and the lessons learned about inclusivity and resilience. The thesis concludes by advocating for a balanced approach which prioritizes community ownership, ensuring events are not only environmentally responsible but also socially meaningful and economically viable.</p>
Key words Sustainability, Event management, Community Engagement, Festival, Event

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1 Introduction

As concerns about the environmental, social, and economic impacts of events grow, sustainable event management aims to reduce harm and increase benefits for people and stakeholders (Saluja, 2023). One key strategy is involving the local community in event planning and hosting. This helps reduce waste, lower environmental impacts, and bring long-term benefits to the community (Hasija, 2023).

Today, many event planners include residents, businesses, and organizations to make events more sustainable. Whether it is a small-town fair or a large conference, community involvement supports sustainable outcomes. However, planners also face challenges such as low public awareness, limited resources, and coordination difficulties (Kapoor, 2025). Although interest in sustainable events is rising, there is still a lack of understanding about how community participation contributes to sustainability. Many planners struggle to engage communities effectively, leading to missed chances to improve environmental outcomes (Karen, 2023). There is also limited guidance on how to support and increase community involvement in event planning (Palmer, 2023).

This thesis explores how involving communities can improve event sustainability. It looks at effective strategies, key issues, and how local engagement can help reduce waste, save resources, and support the local economy. It also examines the barriers such as lack of awareness, resistance to change, and limited funding. By addressing these challenges, the study offers practical advice for planners, policymakers, and stakeholders to improve community involvement and achieve lasting positive impacts.

Additionally, the research will include case studies of events that became more sustainable through community participation. These examples will help build practical models that future planners can follow. The overall goal is to show how community outreach can lead to events that are environmentally responsible, socially fair, and economically beneficial.

1.1 Objectives and Limitations

Community participation is one of the elements of sustainable event management. It is not a contributing factor but a requirement for environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Events rely on local communities to succeed, and their contribution results in more responsible and meaningful effects. This thesis examines the potential of community participation to shift towards sustainable event management by identifying its strengths, weaknesses, and best practices.

Sustainable event management is not only reducing the environmental footprint but also trying to bring social and economic welfare. Events can prove to be a positive aspect in the long run to communities but, in the absence of participation, are disruptive and lead to resource degradation and economic outlay. Participation is a step that makes events local needs responsive, value-sensitive, and respectful of culture and is more integrated and welfare-promoting. Where the local people and public are actively involved, events are not short-lived experiences and leave positive legacies.

The research concentrates on how the community becomes engaged in event planning to achieve sustainability. Community participation assists in managing resources in waste minimization, energy conservation, and green transport. Participation in decision-making also ensures a sense of ownership, leading to higher responsibility and fewer conflicts. Economic sustainability is also facilitated because participation generates employment, drives local businesses, and fosters regional tourism.

The identification of challenges of community participation towards sustainable event management is another key issue of this thesis. As great as the benefits are evident, seamless participation is not always easy. Issues pertaining to lack of awareness, few resources, resistance to change, and competing priorities tend to impose adversity to both the community and event managers. This study provides such issues and resolutions so that community participation can reap long-term sustainability.

Apart from this, this research encompasses effective case studies in which community involvement has played a key role in sustainable event management. Drawing on case studies that have been real-life, this thesis presents event organizers, policymakers, and stakeholders with insightful information on how to enhance community participation. The goal is to come up with a model that not only renders events socially and environmentally sustainable but also incurs long-term benefits to host communities.

This thesis reiterates that local interaction is the core of sustainable event management. Events that integrate local interaction perform better, sustainably, and according to the sustainability strategy. Understanding community engagement dynamics and best practice enables event managers to host effective events and produce positive long-term effects on society and the environment.

Limitations:

This research investigates five specific case studies: Pushkar Camel Fair, India, Rajasthan; the Notting Hill Carnival, London, UK; Pori Jazz Festival, Pori, Finland; Inti Raymi Festival, Cusco, Peru; and Sapporo Snow Festival, Sapporo, Japan. Although these are diverse, these have a mixed cultural, geographical, and organizational heritage of rural-themed events to large urban city-wide celebrations. The results do not immediately generalize to other event forms, i.e., low community-based ones such as world sporting events or corporate conferences. All festivals occur within specific socio-economic and environmental conditions, therefore sustainable community participation strategies in a specific context may not be applicable across contexts

Second, the question is within its timeframe constraint and is based on first-hand information collected over the period between 2020-2024, by interview of planners and stakeholders at ground level. It cannot be hoped for, as with a comprehensive view of rather recent process, it does not present even an eye-spy into the impacts after several decades or years of years that remain realized over centuries of their planning timeframes. These views collected from event organizers, as well-informed as they are likely to be, are not thus also views of the general population, or of marginal groups or non-participating individuals.

Finally, while the selected events represent robust cases of community-driven sustainability, the research does not examine events with low participation or top-down-controlled events. Future researchers can build on this research by examining a more varied set of event categories or longitudinal analysis to identify long-term effects.

Overlay Matrix

Below is the overlay matrix for the thesis, from where it is easier to find the contents of research questions on discussion and result chapter.

Table 1 Overlay Matrix

Research Question	Discussion Chapter	Result Chapter
Why is it important for communities to take part in planning events to make them more sustainable?	2.1, 2.2, 2.2.1	4.1, 4.3
How does community participation help protect the environment, support social connections, and boost the economy?	2.2.1, 2.2.2	4.1, 4.2, 4.5

What are the common challenges that make it difficult for communities to be involved in sustainable event planning?	2.3.1, 2.3.2	4.4, 4.5
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1.2 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five main chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the topic and presents the objectives, limitations, and an overlay matrix that guides the study. It also outlines the structure of the thesis. Chapter 2 serves as the theoretical foundation and reviews key concepts related to sustainable event planning. It highlights the importance and benefits of community involvement, includes relevant case studies of successful community-driven events, and identifies common challenges and barriers. The chapter also discusses strategies to overcome these challenges and presents theoretical frameworks for understanding community engagement in sustainable event contexts.

Chapter 3 details the research methodology. It explains the research design, data collection methods by including interviews with stakeholders and the use of case studies, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. This chapter also addresses research reliability and how validity was ensured throughout the research process. Chapter 4 presents the findings and results of the study. It discusses actual practices of community involvement, stakeholder perceptions, comparative analysis of the selected case studies, and the results from interviews. It also identifies key success factors and obstacles in implementing sustainable event practices with community participation.

Chapter 5 provides a comprehensive discussion and interpretation of the findings. It summarizes the key results by reflecting on the implications for sustainable event planning, and also offers practical recommendations based on the study's outcomes. The thesis also concludes with a full reference list and supporting appendices, including the interview questions used for data collection. Together, these sections provide a holistic examination of how community involvement contributes to sustainable event management.

2 Theoretical Framework

Green event management is the norm in the events business as a way of countering environmental degradation, upholding social justice, and increasing economic viability. Sustainable event planning requires all hands-on deck, and community involvement is one of the critical factors for long-term event success. Community involvement and their impact on sustainable event planning through collaborative responsibility, power relations, and participatory decision-making were framed by stakeholder theory and social capital theory.

2.1 Sustainable Event Planning: Key Concepts

Sustainable events are a growing industry dedicated to minimizing the unwanted environmental, social, and economic impacts of events and maximizing their wanted ones. Sustainable event management is the integration of sustainability principles into all processes of event planning and management from organization to implementation, logistics, and post-event evaluation. Its purpose is to make efficient use of resources, reduce wastage, conserve energy, and bring people together in a bid to plan even and responsible events.

The second most crucial aspect of planning sustainable events is environmental sustainability. This involves factors like using biodegradable materials, minimizing the use of single-use plastics, encouraging environmentally friendly modes of transportation, and effective waste management systems. Planners are ever embracing green trends to curb carbon footprints and environmental degradation, for instance, by using e-tickets, providing virtual attendance, and providing ecologically sourced catering services.

Besides environmental, sustainable event management also addresses social and economic justice. Social sustainability addresses making events inclusive, respectful, and beneficial to host communities, and give a feeling of collective responsibility and shared identity (Li, Kim and Lee, 2021). Economic sustainability addresses long-term returns in terms of finances to local businesses, job opportunities, and tourism income, thus enhancing the region's overall well-being.

2.2 The Importance of Community Involvement in Events

At the core of event sustainability and longevity, specifically tourism development and local events, is community involvement. Host community participation in event planning, hosting, and evaluation is followed by ownership, cultural identity, and togetherness. Locality participation is designed to make the event reflect the first impression of the location, thus being more leisurely and interactive to the locals and visitors.

Practically, local engagement can facilitate the provision of resources, volunteering, and logistics, which lower the cost of business and create goodwill among citizens. Also, if activities are articulated in a way that aligns with local values and priorities, they will be popular with the public, minimize resistance, and pay long-term dividends. The involvement of the local community also offers inclusive decision-making with contributions from all those who are engaged, creating more innovative and culturally sensitive solutions. Economically, the entrepreneurs in the host community will benefit through enhanced visibility and dividend payment for investing in the activity, an avalanche effect economic and tourist (OECD, 2024).

By consensus, community engagement not only remains a moral necessity, but also a strategically effective reaction, thus making events cost-effective, sustainable, and productive in good time to the advantage of all the stakeholders (Khonko, 2024).

2.2.1 Benefits of Community Participation

Community participation in events offers numerous social, cultural, and economic advantages that are vital to the overall success and long-term viability of the event. Active resident involvement is a solid foundation for creating events that are not only popular but also highly meaningful to all parties involved. When members of a community are engaged for real, it reinforces their social ties, constructs trust in one another and develops an intense sense of unity. Such a common sense of belonging is likely to go beyond the event itself, creating stronger neighbourhood connections, more civic pride, and a cooperative culture that can extend to future efforts. Events become greater than singular occasions; they become spaces for communities to reconnect, recall shared memory, and partake in shared values (Mykletun, 2013).

Participation also provides spaces of cooperation, co-experience, and shared celebration of community culture. By collaborative work, citizens can bridge generational divides, foster intercultural comprehension, and offer diverse representation in event actions. Events organized by the community will reflect more diverse and wider ranges of tradition, language, and art form, contributing to the general experience for citizens and visitors alike. When residents partake in organizing and planning an event, too, they attach themselves to it. Such ownership gives individuals a sense of pride not only to see the success of the event, but to see the standing and well-being of their larger community.

Ownership generally results in increased upkeep of public spaces, increased volunteering, and continued patronage of causes initiated by communities beyond the confines of the event itself. In addition, it promotes adherence to safeguarding local culture and the environment, reinforcing the value of stewardship as opposed to exploitation (Paula, 2020). Events that are founded upon local

engagement are more sustainable in nature as they tap the passion and altruism of individuals who have personal stakes in their success (Li, Kim and Lee, 2021).

Community involvement also ensures that the cultural aspects presented during the event are authentic, respectful, and representative of the community's identity. Rather than relying on others' translations, which may be inauthentic or commercialized, locally focused events can showcase real traditions, foods, acts, and rituals. This authenticity not only preserves cultural heritage but also offers visitors an engaging and respectful experience of the destination (Kaptchuk, 2003). Visitors are now seeking richer, more meaningful experiences, and authentic cultural representation greatly enhances the appeal and credence of an event in the competitive tourism market.

Economically, local entrepreneurs, artists, and small companies' involvement can yield high dividends. Events also offer immediate earning possibilities by means of food stalls, selling handi-crafts, providing accommodations, arranging guided tours, and other event-related services (Bhargavi, 2024). For most small businesses, attending events like these is crucial to give small businesses visibility, which helps with brand awareness and customer base expansion. This also helps with economic resilience by retaining money within the economy and not outsourcing the services to foreign suppliers (Caplead, 2025). Additionally, special event markets foster entrepreneurial creativity, as citizens devise new products, experiences, and business models specifically designed for the requirements of event goers.

The local knowledge and expertise that residents possess are invaluable as they enhance event planning, more effective logistical arrangements, and the avoidance of cultural misunderstandings or conflicts. Local stakeholders can caution organizers against offending sensitive cultural issues, recommend appropriate venues, advise on the most suitable event timings based on seasonal or religious calendars, and give tips on getting around local bureaucracies (Tygart, 2025). Localized knowledge reduces risks, enhances efficiency, and makes the event more attractive to the intended audience. Moreover, involving residents in crucial decision-making processes enhances the empowerment of the community and raises trust in their ability to shape public activities (Werner, Beckers, & Jongsma, 2023).

By keeping event objectives in perspective as regards local issues, values, and environmental concerns, community engagement strongly supports long-term sustainability (Cademix Institute of Technology, 2025). Rather than planning events that achieve maximum short-term gains at the expense of local well-being, planners can create programs that respect carrying capacities, decrease ecological footprints, and satisfy social requirements such as accessibility and inclusivity. Sustainable event planning encourages sustainable tourism by educating travellers on conservation

measures, fair consumption, and respect for cultural diversity (Haessler, 2020). In the long term, such models of responsible tourism save natural and cultural resources so that both the environment and the livelihoods of the community are safeguarded for generations to come.

Finally, events provide excellent chances for locals to work as volunteers, gain new knowledge, and become more employable, hence fostering individual growth along with the overall development of community capacity. Through volunteering, individuals can gain skills in project management, hospitality, marketing, logistics, leadership, and customer service (Granza, 2024). Transferable skills of this nature have the potential to open new educational or career opportunities. In addition, emotions of accomplishment and approval from others that result from volunteering have the potential to enhance self-esteem and social incorporation, particularly among disadvantaged or marginalized groups (Leigh Espy, 2016). Involvement in activities can also detect hidden abilities within the community, enabling residents to experiment with new things or take on leadership roles that they might not have thought of otherwise.

In practice, community involvement transforms events from entertainment to drivers of social cohesion, cultural preservation, economic empowerment, and sustainable development. By putting communities at the forefront of event planning and execution, organizers can ensure that events leave a positive legacy that extends far beyond the final curtain call.

2.2.2 Case Studies of Successful Community-Driven Events

Community events have proven to be successful tools in the maintenance of culture, economic development, and social interaction. Through active participation, communities place local festivals on the global map, making them sustainable while promoting social cohesion and economic growth. Below are some notable case studies proving the success and far-reaching impact of community engagement in event management.

1. The Pushkar Camel Fair, Rajasthan, India

The Pushkar Camel Fair in Rajasthan state is a traditional yearly celebration that unites locals, entrepreneurs, and tourists at the ancient town of Pushkar. Locals are the focal point of the festival, organizing vibrant culture events, busy handicraft fairs, and camel exhibitions. The fair greatly benefits the local community: artists and performers get a chance to earn them positive publicity and money benefits. Concurrently, the event serves to preserve cultural identity in terms of cultural ceremonies, folk music, and religious rites, while the touristic inflow activates the local economy and tourism sector (Agnihotri, 2024).

2. Notting Hill Carnival, London, UK

London's Notting Hill Carnival, Europe's largest street carnival, is a fine case of community empowerment and promotion of culture. Having its humble origins in the 1960s to promote Afro-Caribbean solidarity and pride, it has now grown into an internationally renowned event. The carnival provides minority groups a platform to show their rich heritage, provides employment, and contributes significantly to the economic well-being of the local business community (Admin, 2024). Its city celebration model of inclusion has since been replicated by other businesses globally to demonstrate the wide social reach possible through events staged by communities.

3. Pori Jazz Festival, Pori, Finland

The Pori Jazz Festival is also a good example, highlighting the place of local community involvement in cultural event success (Pori Jazz, 2025). Local volunteer residents are fully engaged in festival operations, hospitality, and logistics, enhancing greater local community solidarity and pride. In addition to enhanced sense of belonging among local community residents, the event has attracted foreign audiences and had a high contribution to the regional tourism. Additionally, it has acted as a catalyst for the development of cultural tourism in Finland's small towns and served as a model for similar communities.

4. Inti Raymi Festival, Cusco, Peru

In Cusco, the Inti Raymi Festival, or Festival of the Sun, is a lavish re-enactment of an old Incan custom due to the continued participation of the community. The rites, dances, and re-enactments that bring this piece of the past to life are conducted by the locals themselves (peru.travel, 2020). By engaging the younger generations in cultural education and heritage performance, the festival maintains the transmission of traditional practice and knowledge. The event also advances the local economy through heritage tourism with cultural and economic motivations for sustained community engagement.

5. Sapporo Snow Festival, Sapporo, Japan

Sapporo Snow Festival is a world-renowned winter festival that comprises magnificent snow and ice art by locals, students, and artists. In addition to its artistry, the festival is accompanied by community-drawn food stalls, cultural exhibitions, and widespread volunteer work (Curated Japan Travel, 2025). Its success has greatly boosted local tourism in Japan's traditionally slow winter months and fostered a culture of innovation, collaboration, and local pride.

Combined, the above examples demonstrate the potential of community engagement in event management to change. They illustrate how community-driven, participatory approaches not only preserve and celebrate cultural identities but also engender social and economic sustainable development. By using local knowledge, expertise, and traditions, these events have attained

international fame while at the same time being firmly rooted in values and aspirations of the communities.

2.3 Challenges in Community Participation

Even though there are several benefits of community engagement in event planning, there are also some drawbacks. The biggest drawback is that people do not know how they can help events become more sustainable and successful. There are community residents who claim to be taking part in community activities but do not have information on the specific ways of participating and how to effectively participate (Donovan, 2025). Lack of such information always incapacitates participation, and hence education campaigns need to begin with organizers for awareness and motivation for participation (Cooper, 2024). Such campaigns may include workshops, learn-webinars, and community meetings where people can be trained towards participation. Social networks and community newsletters may also be utilised as the primary means of spreading information far and wide and reaching under-served communities. Moreover, success stories of other communities who are actively participating in sustainable event planning can be demonstrated through case studies or video testimonials so that individuals get motivated by tangible, real evidence of community positivity. Having ambassador programs where like-minded individuals encourage participation among their communities can possibly push such programs further (FasterCapital, 2025).

The second key issue is a scarcity of resources. Small firms and most communities suffer in the lack of resources, skill sets, and manpower and are therefore unable to play an active role (Singh, 2024). Without proper support, their involvement remains restricted, and therefore there is necessity for careful effort on the part of event planning to provide them with resources or subsidies (EngagementHub, 2020). This can be alleviated by the event planners finding time to meet with willing sponsors and local businesses stepping forward to offer monetary assistance or services for publicity at the event. Donations in-kind such as space, equipment, and time can be of a big help to alleviate budgetary problems. In addition to this, offering micro-grants to communities that are ready to organize their own side events as part of a larger program can make the process more democratic. Giving the people in such communities' event marketing, project management, and green logistics training can empower them with that capability which allows them to make a positive contribution despite being financially poor. Having mentorship in which experienced event professionals act as sponsors to members of the society has the effect of closing knowledge gaps and increasing participation levels (Stova, 2025).

Resistance to change is also the central concern here. People will not accept new green procedures for fear of the unknown, blind trust in the old method, or fear and inconvenience involved

(Riggio, 2024). People will also query new programs and view them as fad fashion and true efforts to benefit their society, not. This barrier must be overcome by breaking down through providing tangible incentives, focusing on tangible benefit, and allowing freedom of communication. A helpful method is to frame sustainable change as not something one is "giving up" but as quality-of-life enhancements, cost savings, and community pride (OECD, 2024). Being receptive to accepting the concept by organizing open sessions or focus groups on which the residents are provided with the platform where they can blow out their grievances and inputs secures the ownership and trust factor. Conducting demonstrations, such as how the use of green material lasts longer or functions better than the old ones, is also a way of materializing intangible concepts (Abbas, 2022). Moreover, pilot programs or pilot periods for the introduction of new practice enable communities to experience the advantage directly without mass conversions being enforced at the onset (United Nations University, 2025). Spotlights on early adopters and pioneers and sustainability leaders most significantly can still promote increased adoption.

Other than that, smooth coordination among an event's organizers and people living in a community is never easy (Parker, 2024). Cooperation is also made possible by cooperation, clear roles, mutual respect, and common vision. Such activities are, however, generally thwarted by expectation differences, technology issues, variation in degrees of commitment, as well as red-tape issues, which necessitate team effort in securing cooperation and agreement. Event planners should give special care to maintaining the line of communication open, such as frequent meetings, emails, and shared virtual spaces like Slack or Trello, to obtain attendance and get the participants in the same wavelength (Kozanecka, 2025). Adhering to decisions made among them in writing or in charters defining tasks and jobs, decision-making rules may even avoid confusion and place them in jeopardy. Also, knowing the personal capacity and motivational drivers of each of the community partners enables organizers to allocate tasks best suited to personal interests and abilities for the purpose of maximum participation and effectiveness.

Another aspect that cannot be overlooked while planning for communal cooperation is cultural sensitivity. Communities are sure to be diverse and most likely contain different customs, beliefs, and modes of communication. Disrespect and inability to bear such diversities can lead to conflict or isolation (Paths of Learning, 2025). Event planning should thus take time to research the community demographics, listen to the concerns of stakeholders, and be adaptable enough to adjust event activities to fit the heritage and culture of the destination. Not only is this more inclusive, but it also provides a more authentic and engaging event experience among participants (Bobel, Hinai, & Roslani, 2022).

In a manner of promoting sustainable community engagement beyond the event, the organizers ought to establish long-term instead of transactional relationships. This can be achieved through an assessment of the event post-event where the members of the community offer their suggestions, recommendations, and future expectations (Bergstrom, Rose, Olinger and Holley, 2014). Public recognition of their role, perhaps in certificates, social media shoutouts, or after-event celebration, can cement the feeling of belonging and encourage future engagement to become more manageable (Eccleston, 2023). Having regular community advisory boards can also institutionalize partnerships and put the voice of the community centre stage in the planning of an event in the long term.

Briefly, while incorporation of people's participation into event planning is plagued with undeniable impediments from ignorance and inadequate resources to opposition to change and complex cooperation dynamics-these are surmountable obstacles. With judicious training, vigilant cooperation, honest communication, cultural sensitivity, and investment in creating enduring partnerships, event planners can transform such vulnerabilities into strengths. An anticipatory, inclusive, and empathetic approach not only makes what is being done more effective and enduring, but also the social fabric of society more resilient, creating a sense of solidarity, pride, and resilience for future activities (Senevirathna, Jin and Wang, 2023).

2.3.1 Barriers to Engagement

Despite all the advantages of involving the community in activities, there are also certain challenges which may hinder one from being able to involve them successfully. Among the most typical challenges is insufficient information or knowledge about the activity itself. The community members will be less participating if they are not well informed or if they do not understand how the activity pertains to their daily life (Cooper, 2024). Aside from time, finance, and skills, which are finite resources, may pose challenges to the subjects in terms of getting engaged, particularly in scenarios wherein individuals already have financial or social problems.

The other grave limitation is the presence of social or cultural disparities within the community. Differences in age, gender, ethnic, or social status may deter equitable participation and block groups. In other cases, decision-making is taken over by some individuals or outside organizers, which arouses suspicion and deters others from participating.

Also, if the members of the community believe their ideas or suggestions are not valued or implemented, they will lose interest and will not participate in future events. Lack of proper training or experience in event planning may also make participation seem daunting or intimidating to some. All

these concerns acknowledge the necessity for inclusive planning, good communication, and facilitation structures to allow everyone to contribute actively to activities within the community.

2.3.2 Strategies to Overcome Challenges

It requires advance planning in strategy, and ongoing communication. It can be started by making the public very aware of why the event is being organized, how they will be positively benefited, and how they will be integrated into it. It can be achieved by conducting local activities, social media, leaflets, and public campaigns with legible and easy-to-read text.

Development of a character that not only encompasses but also where every all and any voice is heard is also required. The event organizers must try their level best to involve people of all ages, sections, and backgrounds and integrate them into the decision-making process. More effort must be put into unlocking open access to the excluded in resistant language, cultural sensitivities, and access barriers. Capacity building is also a strategy. Capacity building investment in terms of training, workshop, and mobilizing local volunteers will generate confidence and capacity so individuals can give back efficiently. Besides that, public appreciation and gratitude by certificate, token recognition, or public recognition motivates and retains long-term volunteering.

Avoiding burnout for the volunteers will also have to find a balance between doing good and getting good care. With the organization harmonized with the local schools, businesses, and organizations will also ensure that the foundation work for the event will be improved and less stressful for all the volunteers. Honesty and faith in the process also must be present. Getting individuals in, requesting ongoing feedback, and being receptive to new solutions creates a sense of ownership and co-operation and turns the event into a team effort instead of top-down.

2.4 Theoretical Frameworks for Community Engagement

Community involvement is at the heart of developing environmentally friendly, socially, and economically sustainable events. By using local knowledge, resources, and involvement, event managers are best positioned to develop successful experiences that fulfil the goals of sustainability (Accruent, 2025). In environmental sustainability, indigenous people have valuable information regarding their environment, and this allows event planners to use green processes, such as waste separation, promotion of public transportation, and utilizing local materials. All these measures significantly minimize the ecological footprint of events (Toniolo, Pieretto, & Camana, 2023).

Social sustainability is strengthened with the involvement of communities through promoting local ownership and sense of belongingness among residents (Krolikowski and Son, 2024). Outcomes

become more appropriate to the locality with the event planning and designing through the involvement of the local citizens, with reference to local society values, and with the establishment of stronger social ties. This kind of involvement generates long-term positive social effects. Economically, community involvement helps in promoting local businesses, generating employment, and keeping economic benefits within the community, thus stimulating economic development. In addition, the direct experience and support of local participants enable event planning and management, resulting in higher overall community satisfaction and improving the likelihood of long-term success and sustainability for events (The Event Calendar, 2024).

Stakeholder Theory

a Stakeholder Theory is identification and engagement of the individuals and institutions having an interest in or impacting an event (CommunityToolBox, 2025). Stakeholders are not outside agents to be manipulated but stakeholders who are co-performers who care about the legitimacy, success, and survival of an event. Theory provides the best response to "Who should be involved?" in sustainable event management by mapping the various stakeholders who influence or are influenced by the event outcome (Korstanje, 2024).

Through involving varied stakeholders like host communities, business organizations, governments, event promoters, suppliers, and tourist event promoters, events can be organized that not only are feasible but economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. Multi-cooperation in this way guarantees diverse perspectives at the planning and execution phases, leading to more informed decision-making processes that ensure all concerns of interest and value are accounted for. Since event planning involves multi-stakeholder engagement, areas of conflict are minimized from the onset, and possibilities for synergy are enhanced in the process that delivers more balanced and fair outcomes (Nonet, Gössling, Tulder, & Bryson, 2022).

In addition, collaboration enhances co-ownership of the event, where loyalty, trust, and long-term commitment are shaped in the long run. Having the stakeholders on board early on allows pre-expectation of problems, purchase of resources required, and advocacy chaining that helps promote the event organically to different sets of communities. Instead of relying on top-down promotion, the event is supplemented with bottom-up-promotion backed by stakeholders who believe in its cause and success.

Satisfaction of the stakeholders is not just a precondition for effective arrangement of a lone event but even in sustaining an event chain or celebration tradition over the long term (Bishop Dakar Consulting, 2025). Those stakeholders whose interests they felt that they were bringing onboard would tend to invest more, provide excellent feedback, and give donations later in the future. This

is enabled by an ethos of improvement perpetually since the things in the future draw from the shoulders of what had previously been known and participated in.

Controlled stakeholders whose interests are articulated legitimize the event with a greater sense of genuineness, resulting in increased acceptability, complete public uptake, and medium and long-term sustainability. Their endorsement lends credibility and reputation to the event, which can also draw more tourists, sponsors, and media. Additionally, if stakeholders are aware that environmental, social, or economic sustainability is a concern, they will most likely endorse the creation of the event and its replication elsewhere, its effects radiating beyond the immediate area.

Under sustainability, stakeholder involvement also involves greater transparency and accountability (Khonko, 2024). Organizers can be held accountable by stakeholders for the price of the environment for the event, treatment of individuals as workers, and effect that is local in scale on societies, so calls for sustainability are not made but enacted through tangible action. Through this ongoing interaction of organizers with stakeholders, a social responsibility culture, ethics, and continuous adaptation to the fast-evolving world is cultivated.

Stakeholder Theory maintains that sustainable events are not isolated incidents but an outcome of how everyone who has a stake in their success works with one another. By the identification and acknowledgment of these mutually dependent relationships, event planners can create experiences that not only endure in the short term but also support the long-term well-being of the surrounding communities and ecosystems on which they are based (Berridge, 2015).

Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory bases its focus on the networks, relationships, and trust among people within a community and how the social structures contribute significantly to sustainable event management (Tsounis and Xanthopoulou, 2024). It emphasizes that a community with a plethora of social capital, defined by strong interpersonal relations, trust, and shared norms is more able to cooperate, exchange information, and engage in collective goals. In event planning, they become simpler coordination, higher participation, and greater success in achieving sustainability targets.

The theory illustrates that trust and quality social relationships make it easier for individuals and organizations to collaborate and meaningfully take part in collective endeavours. When actors within a community know and trust one another through established relations, they are more likely to cooperate, exchange vital information, and share valuable resources. This cooperative environment enables a sense of community spirit that is likely to promote sustainable behaviours and community-led initiatives. It dissolves suspicion or competitive barriers and rather a culture of

cooperation, openness, and a willingness to act in favour of all is installed (Six, Zimmeren, Popa, & Frison, 2015).

This type of social cohesion greatly enhances the willingness of people to volunteer their time, skills, and other resources toward event planning and implementation. Members of the community, who feel a sense of belonging to the event as well as to each other, are more inclined to put their efforts towards collective success. Coordination becomes more effective, there is less requirement for top-down enforcement or excessive supervision, and there are smoother operational processes and improved outcomes overall. There is more regular work, creative solutions are discovered by joint problem-solving, and emergencies can be managed more effectively by rapid, based-on-trust communication.

Moreover, with strong social networks in place, event managers can leverage these connections to make an event more participatory and inclusive. These networks allow for outreach to different segments of the community, so diverse voices are heard and represented during event planning. Through the assistance of credible community leaders or peer networks, event managers can promote sustainability practices more easily, so that widespread adoption and increased commitment to eco-friendly or socially responsible behaviours are ensured (Park & Park, 2021).

Moreover, building social capital through event attendance can become an ongoing cycle: as individuals collaborate successfully on one event, mutual understanding and confidence grow, so do future collaborations become more efficient. This not only reinforces the sustainability of individual events, but also the overall social cohesion of the community, with a legacy of empowerment, cooperation, and civic engagement that far outlasts any individual event (Chen, 2025). The involvement of people in these activities ensures that the organizers consider various aspects while maintaining equity.

Hence, social capital is not an additive benefit but a source of strength for participation in the community and sustainably applying event management practices. Social capital is the intangible adhesive that binds individuals together, promoting collective effort and shared responsibility, which are imperative determinants to build truly sustainable and effect-full events (Chen, Kaplanidou, & Potwarka, 2024).

Community Based Participatory Theory

Community-Based Participatory Theory emphasizes planning and decision-making by involving the active participation of population members. Rather than viewing communities as passive recipients of service or decision, the theory views them as active stakeholders whose experience, knowledge,

and understanding of local culture cannot be replaced. In the process, the activity is not only transferable and culturally relevant but also locally relevant to the participants. The participants can ensure that the theme of the activity, the activities, and the outputs are aligned with their heritage, values, and realities in a personally meaningful way to them. This will give the event deeper meaning to participants and make it resonate with a lot of participants (Henderson, 2021).

By engaging the people actively, the organizers impart to them a sense of ownership and empowerment that not only creates enthusiasm but also results in long-term commitment and involvement. Ownership inspires individuals to invest time, imagination, and money into assembling things to make the event work, thus implying more programming and volunteering on a grand scale (OTIENO, 2015). And, when people know that their voice is indeed being heard and making a difference, their self-efficacy is developed, they become more committed to the group (sense of belongingness), and they become more emotionally engaged in the event is (Dooris & Heritage, 2011).

Engaging people in a real process also makes sure that the event is consistent with the values and interests of the people it is impacting. This alignment reduces opportunities for cultural insensitivity, misreading, or misstating, otherwise with the risk of alienating participants or even damaging community relations. Action built through participatory processes is likely to engage local issues, place community strengths front and centre, and construct future action on issues of sustainability, equity, and inclusion (Murakami, 2024).

This type of interaction encourages collaboration, trust and participation, the drivers of accomplishment in sustainable endeavours. Trust serves as the platform on which cooperations among organisers and society are based over a period. Without it, efforts aimed at inciting changes in conduct, accepting fresh approaches, or getting individuals together behind social and ecological reasons would not be that powerful. Planning alliances also creates wider room for innovation, learning, and cross-sector partnership building as, through the integration of others, the masses are empowered to voice and respond (Mariani, Trivellato, Martini & Marafioti, 2022).

Lastly, Community-Based Participatory Theory facilitates planning interventions that are immensely meaningful to the population, frequent assistance and extended achievement. Those which occurred because of the population are not considered atypical, isolated instances but as social calendar events and population personality occurrences. They are ones which occur every year for which individuals anxiously look forward to spending money on and boasting about, even multi-generational repeated visitation and leadership (Shalowitz, Isacco, Barquin, Clark-Kauffman, Delger, Nelson, Quinn & Wagenaar, 2009).

This is a participatory process that fosters social cohesion since it brings together people and communities who otherwise would not have been in contact with each other. It creates a sense of being together, respect for each other, and shared success that transcends divisions of age, ethnic, socio-economic, or political background. Not only is the immediate outcome of the event palatable to the participants but, by participatory literature research required, the participants are also gifted with a sense of empowerment and future hope. Participants are also guaranteed to be happier as they are heard, valued, and invested in the success of the event and are not tokenized and marginalized (Nwachi, 2021).

Also, participatory event planning may be a method of empowering the people by providing them with capacity and leadership development and additional civic involvement (Windon and Adhikari, 2024). This, in the long term, can lead to resilient, empowered, and strong communities able to plan and implement other projects without any support. By and large, Community-Based Participatory Theory is not event planning, but building stronger, resilient, and sustainable communities by collaborating, hearing one another, and being owners.

3 Methodology

The methodology section describes the study design and procedure used to test the role of community engagement in sustainable event management. Due to the study being based on actual practice and the voice of the stakeholders, the mixed-method approach was used to combine qualitative case study analysis with semi-structured interviews. This dual approach provides an integrated view of how event communities contribute to event sustainability through the combination of theoretical insights acquired from documented case studies with pragmatic insights acquired by event organizers.

The chapter describes the research design, data collection methods (case studies and interviews), sampling strategy, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. By combining empirical evidence from globally acclaimed community-led events and first-hand experiences from industry professionals, this method ensures strong, credible, and actionable findings that fulfil the research objectives.

3.1 Research Design

This research utilizes a qualitative research design to explore in-depth and comprehend the views, experiences, and contributions of residents in the community within the context of sustainable event planning. A qualitative research method is best for achieving richer and more descriptive insights into the social and cultural spheres of community participation to allow researchers to investigate how people interact with, shape, and are influenced by sustainability initiatives in event management. By considering the richness of human behaviour, motivations, and interpersonal relationships, this method presents a holistic image of the factors behind community engagement and long-term support for sustainable events.

By directly interacting with individuals either actively preparing or directly affected by community events, researchers can obtain rich, descriptive information that picks up on the diverse perception, concerns, and visions of the local population (Gearin and Hurt, 2024). This method allows a deeper understanding of the social structure and shared values that underpin effective sustainable initiatives. In addition, qualitative inquiry like interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic observation allows for more interactive and reflective analysis of how community-organised event strategy fosters long-term inclusivity, trust, and commitment. By foregrounding narratives and storytelling, this study seeks to amplify stakeholders' voices and make sure their observations have meaning in terms of influencing event planning practice that is not just environmentally responsible but socially meaningful as well.

This study utilizes a mixed-method design, combining qualitative case study analysis and semi-structured interviews to examine the role of community participation in sustainable event planning. The two-method design allows deep understanding of the topic by studying real-life cases (case studies) and combining spontaneous feedback from event organizers and stakeholders (interviews). This is the approach which ensures both richness in theory and application, in agreement with empirical objectives of finding the best challenges, practices, and strategies within community-based event planning.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

The research applies two primary data collection methods to ensure comprehensive research of the study topic, in this research a rich qualitative method and in-depth interview analysis were used. The application of this approach improved the findings' reliability through minimizing biases and combining different opinions. Individual accounts were provided by in-depth interviews, which allow participants to report their motivations, experiences, and concerns reflectively.

In addition, case study analysis yielded concrete applications, which is an efficient sustainable event planning procedure across contexts. By comparing procedure across contexts in various settings, this research established best practices in reaction to challenges. This multi-method design gave an interdisciplinary perspective on sustainable event planning, with emphasis on community engagement in long-term social and environmental gains (Hall, Silverio and Sandall, 2022).

3.2.1 Semi Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the primary data collection tool for this study due to their unique ability to balance structured inquiry with adaptive dialogue. This approach ensures that key research themes are systematically addressed while allowing space for participants to introduce new perspectives, elaborate on critical points, and share unforeseen insights. Unlike rigidly structured interviews, which may constrain responses, or entirely unstructured discussions, which risk losing focus, semi-structured interviews provide a framework for consistency without sacrificing depth or flexibility (Bryman, 2016).

The interview guide for this study consisted of eleven open-ended questions (see Appendix 1), strategically organized into three thematic sections to ensure comprehensive coverage of the research objectives. The first section, Background and Role (Q1-Q2), aimed to establish the interviewees' professional context by gathering details about their positions, organizational responsibilities, and years of experience in event management. This foundational information was crucial for

assessing the credibility of their insights and understanding how their roles influenced their perspectives on community engagement.

The second section, Community Engagement (Q3-Q7), explored the practical and philosophical dimensions of involving local communities in sustainable event planning. Questions in this segment probed the perceived value of participation, the methods employed (e.g., public workshops, social media campaigns, volunteer programs), and the observed impacts on environmental sustainability, social cohesion, and economic benefits. By examining these factors, the study sought to identify best practices as well as potential gaps between theory and real-world implementation.

Finally, the third section, Challenges and Solutions (Q8-Q11), encouraged interviewees to reflect on the obstacles they encountered in mobilizing community involvement—such as stakeholder misalignment, budgetary constraints, or lack of public interest—and the strategies they adopted to overcome these barriers. This section was particularly valuable for uncovering adaptive measures that could inform future event planning, such as improved communication frameworks, incentive structures, or policy adjustments.

The semi-structured format proved especially effective in this study because it allowed participants to express their views in their own words, providing richer qualitative data than fixed-response surveys could yield. Additionally, the flexibility of the method enabled the interviewer to probe deeper into unexpected yet relevant themes, such as the influence of cultural norms on participation rates or the role of digital tools in modern community outreach. This adaptability ensured that the collected data was not only aligned with the research objectives but also reflective of real-world complexities that may not have been fully anticipated during the study's design phase.

Participants

The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique widely used in qualitative research to select participants who possess specialized knowledge or experience directly relevant to the research objectives (Hassan, 2024). This approach ensured that the interviewees could provide in-depth, context-specific insights into community engagement strategies in sustainable event management.

Two key stakeholders were interviewed, each occupying leadership roles in event planning and possessing substantial experience in organizing large-scale, community-involved events. Their professional backgrounds and interview details are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Participant Profiles and Interview Logistics

Interviewee	Role	Organization	Experience (Years)	Date	Duration	Method
A	Main Organizer	Cultural Event Organizer	7	4 May 2025	50 min	Microsoft Teams
B	Event Coordinator	Event Company	2	5 May 2025	55 min	Zoom

The use of semi-structured interviews yielded rich, detailed, and reflective responses, which is allowing the researcher to go deeper into the perspectives and experiences of each participant. The flexibility of this method also enabled follow-up questions to explore interesting and relevant tangents. However, the small sample size (n=2) represents a limitation, as it restricts the range of perspectives captured and limits generalizability. Moreover, the absence of representatives from governmental or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is acknowledged as a gap, which future studies could address to provide a more comprehensive understanding of institutional involvement in community engagement.

Characteristics of Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-structured interviewing is quantitative research with high rigour that achieves a keen blend between structure and flexibility. Processing through a pre-agreed series of guide questions with space for spontaneity in questioning and follow-up probes, semi-structured interviews grant researchers' freedom to explore intricate issues in-depth but within bounds of primary research objectives (George, 2022). The power of the method lies in the fact that it produces rich, rich data because the participants define for themselves their experience and opinions using their own language, tending to create unanticipated effects which would be missed through more structured interview formats.

The advantages of the semi-structured interviews are particularly effective in exploratory research such as this investigation into sustainable event community involvement. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher not only to discover what the respondents think, but also why and how they think that way. This extent of knowledge is particularly required for researching complex social events where individual experience, emotion, and environment shape outcomes. The relaxed tone of the interview engenders rapport and is likely to produce more reflexive and spontaneous responses than may be obtained with the more structured methods (Ruslin, 2022).

However, the approach does have some disadvantages in terms of to whom researchers must report. The time it takes to conduct, transcribe, and analyse such interviews can be impractical. The validity of the data relies to a significant extent on the interviewer's capacity to ask interesting but unloading questions and to manage the pace of the interview. Besides that, generally small sample sizes exclude statistical generalizability, but results can provide valuable theory information. In the present research, although both interview sets provided adequate qualitative data, under-representation by the NGOs and government is a flaw that must be addressed by greater participant recruitment in subsequent work.

The application of semi-structured interviews within this study was purposeful and methodologically effective. More formal interviews would have limited participants to providing their complete thoughts, while less formal discussions might have drifted from the core research questions (Ruslin, 2022). The semi-structured approach was effectively equipped to examine how event planners consider and enact community engagement strategies as it provided guidance as well as direction to probe this complex problem. The extent of understanding offered by this approach adds richness to case study analysis, and the two combined offer a more integrated and richer understanding of sustainable event management practice than. Additional research would be capable of drawing on these results by generating a larger quantity of stakeholder perspectives with the methodological sophistication of semi-structured interviewing.

3.2.2 Case Study

The five case studies were selected based on geographic/cultural diversity and success of community participation as shown. Pushkar Camel Fair (India) is rural stakeholder coordination, and Notting Hill Carnival (UK) is urban cultural inclusivity. Cross-case analysis revealed participatory decision-making patterns and challenges (rural lack of resources).

The article provides critical overview of best events, that have managed to attract participation within communities on sustainable grounds. Together with the presentation of the case study, the article provides comprehensive hands-on evidence of best practice, that illustrates directions towards support for participation and green care. They are fine examples of achievement and implementation and organisational issues. Lessons from these issues of implementation and success allow yet more sophisticated strategy to be developed that can also serve as a blueprint for future organizers and can be adopted to further sustainability without dampening dynamic people's passion.

Case studies used in this study differ both in urban and rural settings, comparative in that they analyse how the type of settings influences the level of participation and sustainability impacts

between communities. Urban activities are mainly managed through large groups, heterogeneous resources, and institutions, and hence, participation programs are more integrated in character. Bureaucratic issues and logistical issues exist. But rural action has its basis in robust, inter-personal structures that accommodate additional one-to-one contact and community bonding. Even with the advantage of mergers and capital found in rural communities, these are more likely to come with high community participation that can be channelled into lengthy periods of commitment to sustainability initiatives.

The report provides precise explanations of most activities that have included human involvement in sustainable action. Case studies give explanations of best practice in actual contexts and consider attempts to attain the engagement and accountability with nature. These activities are good examples, success, and failure in performing and facilitating them. Both success and failure are embraced, so more open, bigger strategies are created which other coordinators can utilize to implement insofar as optimal sustainability but not to the expense of successful community engagement.

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

Thematic analysis, the most prevalent type of qualitative dataset instruction generation, seeking, and interpretation, was utilized while analysing qualitative data gathered under this study. It compelled the researcher to develop sequential and reasonable themes and conclusions about data such that conclusions could be observed to understand perspectives and experience of participants. After conducting interview transcription and case reading, data were hand-coded by the researcher into broad categories as a way of giving systematic interpretation of findings. Systematic coding provided brief statements and emotions under received undivided attention.

Themes were situated within the context of motivation, community participation, challenges faced, perceived contribution, and sustainability practices involved. Elaborated theme development was utilized, and in this way, research contributed importantly to determinants of participation in sustainable event management. Thematic analysis enabled detailed understanding of participation of individuals in sustainability initiatives within their communities to guide long-term strategy for engagement.

Content analysis within the study enabled cross-case comparison of case study results across event models and measures of community engagement. Through content analysis of participant words, documents, and observations, studies sought to explore good practice and issues from different communities' viewpoints. This cross-case study created a dynamic portrait of what could happen in the future for different kinds of events, and its findings are transferable to event

managers and social and environmental policymakers who might benefit from enhanced environmental and social performance in the future.

3.4 Ethical Considerations and Research Reliability

Ethical principles were upheld during the research in a manner that all the interviewees were dealt with in an equal manner, respectfully, and in a dignified manner. Both the interviewees were approached individually separately and were properly explained about the purpose, objective, and possible benefit of the study before interviewing them. They consented willingly without any coercion.

Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to the participants. Their personal details were safeguarded and dealt with in a manner consistent with relevant data protection law. Interviewee B's confidentiality, for instance, has been preserved as required. The participants had the liberty to withdraw from the research at any point without any negative repercussions, having their autonomy in research. Aside from this, it also received ethical approval from its institution before data collection to facilitate transparency and accountability in study design and conduct.

All and any ethical issues were tackled accordingly to protect the research participants and research validity and integrity.

Research Reliability

To promote the validity of outcomes, this study utilized a mixed-methods strategy, combining qualitative case study examination and semi-structured interviews. Utilizing greater than one source of information in this way, by a method known as triangulation, reduced bias, and improved conclusions. Them-atic analysis was treated with care on interview data and case study information. Themes and codes were double-checked, triple-checked, and even quadruple-checked to guarantee that they were dependable and valid.

Interviews were conducted with a standard guide (Appendix 1), which provided for congruence across the two interviews but was general enough to pursue avenues of thought or themes that had occurred unexpectedly. Even though there were only two participants interviewed, they represented different environments one from the Finnish Nepalese Society and the other from a leadership position within event organization offering good comparisons between environments.

To make the transparency of the research process easier, this thesis clearly delineates how data were collected, hand-coded, and cross-case compared. Transparency allows for ease with which others can understand or reproduce the study. The research also clearly indicates its limitations,

e.g., the absence of government or NGO views, and suggests that subsequent studies include more stakeholders in the study.

While qualitative research design guarantees that findings cannot be taken to hold in all cases, the careful methodology and careful testing-including, for instance, comparison with relevant theory such as Stakeholder Theory-tends to make the findings more dependable. Additional research can build on this research using more subjects or through collecting data for a more extended period.

4 Findings and Results

This chapter provides the results of the case studies and two qualitative interviews of professional event planners who have organized community and youth events. The analysis relies on thematic themes from their responses and data on the case studies accessible on the internet. It seeks to examine how sustainable event planning emerges from local community involvement.

4.1 Community Involvement Practices in Sustainable Events

Pushkar Camel Fair has also evolved as mega culture festival from a traditional stock fair. Locally staying pilgrims, farmers, and traders, actively engaged, are directly contributing towards sentiments of identification and belongingness towards society. Eco-message spreading workshops and waste management with focus on sustainable travels and tourism and eco-travels are also organized (Rajasthan Studio, 2023).

Notting Hill Carnival is grass roots carnival and introduces Caribbean culture and diversity. There has been a shift in eliminating waste with the same style that renewable power has been applied in powering sound systems and cleaner transport. They are intended to preserve cultural significance of the carnival but do this for the advantage of the environment (DiversejobsMatter, 2024).

Pori Jazz Festival is an excellent example of social responsibility and well-being. It is certified Eco Compass, and with this comes a guarantee of recolonizing the festival. What it has done is reduce the consumption of natural resources, reduce the impact on the environment, and maximize the well-being of individuals when they are present to visit or reside (Visit Pori, 2024).

Inti Raymi attempts to preserve Andean culture that incorporates nature and human being. Eco-tourism and pride among the Quechua-speaking people are being promoted by the festival with the creation of society and making it eco-aware (Peru.travel, 2020).

Sapporo Snow Festival not only gives back to society economically but is also doing tremendously well on the activity in the society. Greener than the greenest can be, new systems such as new sources of power in terms of hydrogen testing with power and sun power are being introduced to try to bring down the carbon deposit level and slow down events of global warming (Japan Endless Discover, 2025).

4.2 Perceptions and Attitudes of Stakeholders

Pushkar Camel Fair is also of such huge significance to native people as cultural heritage and economic survival. Further commercialisation, however, has brought fears that it's strangling ancient

custom, an open invitation for others to observe traditional elements lost beneath tourist-inducing growth (Memsahib in India). And the organisers and attendees both benefit from the Notting Hill Carnival as a traditional presentation of multiculturalism and inter-community relations. Despite momentum secured on sustainability, e.g., for waste management, crowd and logistics are challenges, particularly the scale of the event notwithstanding.

Pori Jazz Festival has been extensively acclaimed for its two-dimensional strategy of local area wellbeing and sustainability. Its stakeholders value its commitment to local area wellbeing in intercultural activities and volunteering, and creativity in the manner of green energy provision and local partnering as the benchmark of good event management.

To the Indigenous people, Inti Raymi Festival represents a reaffirmation of Indigenous culture and identity. Ecologically sustainable tourism interventions such as green infrastructure and community-based tourism generated the largest economic benefits without causing any drastic harm to the environment, serving as an outstanding example of culturally based sustainability.

The economic value and value as a neighbourhood-scale snow-sculpture event capable of bringing citizens together are the stakes considered by the stakeholders. Aspects of sustainability in the environmental sense such as energy-saving lights and recycling wastes are viewed to be key considerations for long-term festival sustainability as the world demands climate change adjustment.

4.3 Comparative Analysis of Case Studies

Comparison of the five festivals is used to teach important things about how different festivals apply to participation and community sustainability. In every case, participation of the community matters but to an extent from grass-roots level planned-involvement all the way to more standardized volunteer schemes under implementation. All festivals are more sustainable but to extents ranging from very formal to lower extents. Pori Jazz Festival stands out as having undergone Eco Compass certification in a methodical way while Pushkar Camel Fair demonstrates that unplanned, grassroots sustainability practices can also work. Cultural conservation is the biggest issue of festivals like Inti Raymi and Notting Hill Carnival, which may involve traditional expressions of culture and contemporary issues of the environment. The economic dimension provides highly favorable outcomes in cases like the Sapporo Snow Festival, when high local economic return is achieved and in an environmentally sustainable manner. This comparative evidence presents that good sustainable event management is about weighing a succession of conflicting demands cultural authenticity, community ownership, environmental sustainability, and economic viability against the specific strategy necessary to meet the specific context and stakeholder environment of each event.

4.4 Analysis of Interviews

These two interviews in the study revealed common values and diversity in community-engaged event planning practice that were context-specific. The two organizers emphasized the core significance of community engagement to sustainability. Their methodologies were, however, framed in diverse cultural, institutional, and operating contexts.

The event coordinator at the Cultural Event Organizer underlined community ownership as being most central to achieve logistic success and social bonding. He elaborated, "When the people in the community are included in the process, the event feels closer to them." It also becomes easier in resources, i.e., getting access to volunteers or local partners. His utilitarian approach relied heavily on organizing diaspora networks, allowing for promotion of sustainability through local purchasing and volunteer donations. The organizer also mentioned the growth in the size of their events from year to year, stating, "Every time we had more community members, the events grew bigger and better." This is proof of the effect of repeat attendance in creating momentum and growing influence.

At the same time, the chief of the Nepalese youth uprising was more extreme in the way he appealed to people. He believed that involvement was the force for reform in institutions, which otherwise, "Without participatory action on the part of the community, an event threatens to become an isolated incidence of little effect." His movements were less likely to be highlighted in the form of institutions such as Lumbini Engineering College to directly target the students. He went on to say, "Students weren't visitors; they were active participants. That made them feel like they were a part of the mission." In contrast to the Finnish planner working in networks within society, the youth leader worked within systems of institutions, describing, "We collaborated closely with student unions and faculty to co-construct the event instead of presenting it."

Both organizers identified the same implication that building trust in the long term was at the core. As the Nepalese coordinator succinctly put it, "When people feel connected to the purpose, they carry the message beyond the venue." The practices are simple theoretical underpinnings. Stakeholder Theory is present in working with pluralistic groups, and Social Capital Theory is present in building trust. Besides, their co-design process accords with Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) and is centred around joint planning among local stakeholders (Patzner and Scherer, 2011). The findings prove that theory models function optimally when customized in line with the conditions of the site rather than applied across.

Overall, the interviews indicate that staging successful sustainable events involves coordination of participation strategies with specific community contexts in terms of overall standards of

inclusiveness and collective responsibility. Both interviewees called for increased finance, reward systems for volunteers, and inter-sectoral coordination as a mobilization strategy for participation. Their practice aligns with more advanced theoretical models: Stakeholder Theory in their co-formal interaction among groups, Social Capital Theory in their co-operation-facilitated trust-building, and Community-Based Participatory Theory in their emphasis on co-creation rather than against top-down design. These lessons learned add depth to the richer case studies by demonstrating how theoretical models of community participation are implemented at field level within multicultural and organizational contexts. Sustainability in event management by event organizers ensures event management that is not recipe based but rather community empowerment based and yet has the capability to plan events relative to their own special values, interests, and visions.

4.5 Key Success Factors and Obstacles

One of the interviews determined success factors was early and intensive involvement. Both coordinators underlined the importance of local people engaged in the planning process starting point to invoke the feeling of ownership and raise the quality. For the Finnish coordinator from cultural event organizer, "We started from the starting level involving the local groups." By doing this, the event became more interactive and possessed a nearer human-like relation. Similarly, the leader of the youth campaign put participatory planning first, where students "are involved in every step from conception to implementation," which led to increased commitment and participation.

The second crucial factor was the congruence with the community sense of identity and values. Activities that were congruent with society or cultural values had a higher likelihood of being successful. Finnish cultural events were one mechanism to maintain diaspora identity in Finland, and the Nepalese youth campaign was driven by a sense of national responsibility, as reflected in the motto "Ma Nagarik, Ma Banaxu Nepal" ("I am a citizen, I will develop my country").

Effectiveness of resources in their use was yet another strength of volunteerism. Depending on enlisting locals as volunteers and co-workers, they were able to overcome the money limitation as well as gain from expertise. This was emphasized by the Finnish organizer when she stated working with volunteers as "a good way to build skills while keeping costs down." Despite these strengths, the two organizers were constantly challenged. Volunteer and financial resources, in short supply, were a persistent obstacle. As the Nepalese campaign leader put it, "Limited financial and human resources constrain what we can achieve." Even the Finnish co-ordinator referenced the balancing of tradition and innovation, saying, "What worked one year needs improvement the next," reflecting that while preservation of culture is important, it must adapt to meet new needs and demands.

The second issue encountered was coordination among stakeholders, especially where there were conflicting opinions that delayed decision-making. The youth campaign leader explained, "Differences in opinions or expectations can slow down decision-making," explaining how challenging coordinating common processes in groups is.

In responding to these questions, the interviewees lay out a range of pragmatic solutions. The Nepalese organizer requested further institutional support, i.e., training for leadership and establishing communication networks, and stated, "Youth leaders' training should be conducted and improved communications tools would make a big difference." The Finnish coordinator proposed the creation of reward systems to activate and retain volunteers, and proposed, "Schemes for recognizing volunteers" to ensure engagement in the longer term. They also stressed more inter-sector coordination and demanded more coordination with the local government, schools, and businesses to coordinate activities and optimize resources.

In summary, the interviews highlighted that sustainable event management is heavily dependent on adaptive strategies. These need to translate community relations into operational efficiencies and social value, re-highlighting that sustainability is both a means and an end to create lasting impact through events.

5 Discussion

This chapter examines and discusses the result of the previous chapter against broader literature and research questions. This chapter seeks to provide an additional insight into the manner community involvement contributes towards cultural event sustainability within different international contexts. Based on the five international case studies and interview responses from event practitioners, the chapter synthesizes important trends, variations, and lessons acquired.

The discussion is presented under two overall themes: summary of the findings and implications, and practical suggestions and reflections. From this analysis, the study seeks to respond to the main research questions and contribute to the practice of sustainable event management.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The findings of this research validate once more that community is at the center of building sustainable event management. In the five international case studies, the Pushkar Camel Fair (India), Notting Hill Carnival (UK), Pori Jazz Festival (Finland), Inti Raymi Festival (Peru), and Sapporo Snow Festival (Japan) the threads of consistency appeared in the manner host communities facilitate event sustainability. Each festival ensures that participation by the local community enhances cultural authenticity, stimulates local economic activity, and promotes environmental conservation.

Stakeholder interviews also reinforced that successful festivals are founded on good communication, participative planning, and shared ownership. However, resource limitations, political interference, and opposition to change were also widely identified as threats. Comparative analysis revealed that festivals with deep historical roots (e.g., Inti Raymi and Pushkar Fair) benefit from pre-existing community relationships, whereas larger city festivals (Notting Hill) might struggle to balance commercialization and community ownership.

Another of the main conclusions is that sustainability is not a generic model, regions have different priorities of environmental, social, or economic sustainability depending on circumstances. But the key to long-term success is building mutual trust between populations and organizers, as in Pori Jazz and Sapporo.

5.2 Recommendations and Reflections

Based on this research's findings, event managers, government, and all stakeholders involved in hosting and organizing festivals may have some recommendations possible. The recommendations will ensure that events become more effective and sustainable through improved community participation.

The local's involvement must be sought from the planning stage, not when the event is near. This means seeking their ideas, opinions, and recommendations at the designing and planning stage. Advisory committees, town hall meetings, or online surveys are some of the methods by which everyone can be given a chance to be heard. Early involvement creates confidence, and the event will appear as a community event.

It provides the people with a sense of pride and involves them in its success by assigning them specific jobs and responsibilities to undertake when it occurs. If individuals believe the event is theirs, then they are most likely to nurture it, protect it, and return to help in the following years. This can be achieved through volunteering locals, filling roles, contributing local cuisine or stories, or even leadership. Events as a reflection of the actual community identity will be guaranteed a good legacy.

No two communities are alike and thus there is no single size in making events sustainable. The organizers must be given time to find local needs, customs, and resources. For example, a rural town event in the countryside will have a focus on the utilization of local food and crafts as opposed to what an event in a large city would have traffic, waste, and energy consumption as the focus. What is appropriate in one case will not be in another, and flexibility and thoughtfulness in planning sustainability measures are necessary.

One of the common problems is that people simply don't know how to help in the right way, even if they would like to. Training or workshop by the organizers to inform people on how to reduce waste, recycle appropriately, use resources, and respect cultural or environmental requirements are essential. They are especially helpful for volunteers, students, and new volunteers. For qualified and well-trained people, they are best placed to help.

Big events place greater significance on profits or tourism. Economic success is acceptable but not at the expense of the residents' convenience or the event's cultural significance. Over-commercialization of an event will cause it to lose the glamour of the local participants or result in issues such as overcrowding and nature degradation. The organizers must balance between raising revenues and protecting those elements which provide the event with its unique character for the people.

One of the most important things that one can take away from this research is that sustainability does not just happen. It is something that happens because there are solid relationships, solid communication, and shared goals. Events are optimal if they are not only "for" the community but also developed "with" the community. Real sustainability is looking after people, culture, and the environment simultaneously. It's all about ensuring today things are fun and can be done again tomorrow.

Author's Reflection

Having the ability to conduct this research has been an eye-opening experience for me on both personally and academically. Having always been interested in tourism and community development. To be able to research how events from all over the world are being planned with a focus on sustainability and community has opened my eyes further to the real-life impact of the event.

Most impactful for me in this experience was the need for community participation not only as theory, but as living experience. Which determines the success and relevance of events. Whether rural India or a modern city like Sapporo, from case studies and interviews, I appreciated the different ways in which communities assert ownership and identity through cultural celebrations. It served to remind me that sustainability is not only about the environment, but about human relationships, respect, and resilience.

The interviews were particularly enlightening. Hearing from people who have spent many years working to develop community-based events immediately enabled me to translate theory into practice. Their testimony provided empathy perhaps not always present in textbooks. It also reminded me of the power of listening to create space for voices too often marginalized in mainstream event planning practices.

Complications did arise in the procedure, such as trying to gather information from international festivals or condensing many cultural contexts into one conceptual model. These challenges somehow taught me patience, flexibility, and the merits of qualitative research. I learned how to handle ethical issues, steer clear of subjectivity, and critically evaluate my own assumptions.

In line with Haaga-Helia's guidelines on the responsible use of artificial intelligence, I would also like to disclose that I used AI tools, specifically OpenAI's ChatGPT for certain supportive tasks on the thesis process. These included help in drafting and refining some parts of the abstract, structuring few contents, generating some ideas for wording and checking grammar and clarity in few sections of the report. However, all core research work, data analysis, critical thinking and final decisions on the thesis content were done independently by me. I hereby declare that the AI was used as a writing assistant and not a source of original research or interpretation.

Most of all, this thesis reminded me of why I wished to pursue sustainable event management and tourism studies to begin with. It has left me wanting to keep working towards more

inclusive, community-oriented, and sustainable regenerative events. I am now better equipped not just in knowledge, but in purpose.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview Questions

1. **What is your role in event planning/organization?**
2. **How many years of experience do you have in event planning?**
3. **How important is community involvement in achieving sustainable event planning?**
4. **To what extent does your organization actively involve local communities in event planning?**
5. **How effective are the following methods for engaging the community in sustainable events?**

Public meetings/workshops

Social media campaigns

Volunteer programs

Partnerships with local businesses

6. **To what extent do you agree that community involvement improves the following aspects of events?**

Environmental sustainability

Social cohesion

Economic benefits

7. **How much does community participation contribute to the long-term success of events?**
8. **How frequently do you encounter the challenges when involving communities and what are the challenges?**
9. **What strategies have been most effective in overcoming these challenges?**
10. **How likely are you to increase community involvement in future events?**
11. **What additional support would help enhance community participation in sustainable events?**