

# ORGANIZATION AND IMPACT OF THE SALESIAN MARATHON OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF PARAKOU IN BENIN

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**Abstract:** *The organization of a major sporting event directly influences the economy of the host region through increased local economic activity triggered by the arrival of new sources of income. Based on the impacts of a major sporting event, this study focuses on the management and impact of the organization of a major sporting event: the marathon of the Municipality of Parakou. The study aims to analyze the strategies put in place by the actors to organize this marathon and determine its impacts on the Municipality of Parakou. Based on documentation, questionnaires and interviews, this study shows that the implementation of this marathon required a frank collaboration of the actors involved in this organization. In addition, this marathon, by causing an increase in the number of overnight stays and attendance at tourist sites has generated positive economic effects and growth in the financial resources of the Municipality of Parakou.*

**Key Words:** *Municipality of Parakou, organization, sporting event, impact*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

The organization of a major sporting event such as the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup directly influences the economy of the host region. Along with the unfolding of the event is an increase in local economic activity brought about by the arrival of new sources of income. Local businesses thus saw their turnover increase during the event. The influence on the region's economy is not limited to the direct effect of visitors' purchases. It is in this context that the State, regions, departments, cities and inter-municipal structures have taken an important place in the direct organization and / or funding of events, whatever their level of influence, from local internationally (Callède, 1998).

In recent years in Benin, structures offering physical and sports activities have become increasingly aware of the need to develop on an entrepreneurial model (Deguenon, 2004). Thus, they try to diversify their sources of income as much as possible by expanding and diversifying the offer of physical and sports activities, in order to increase their income and thus consolidate their financial situation. Sporting events can also have lasting (or long-term) effects by contributing to a permanent increase in the level of economic activity in the host city or region. At the same time, physical and sporting activities and in particular sporting events have become real economic opportunities in relation to development trends and complementary to the tourist offer (Pauline, 2016). This phenomenon may result, for example, from the improvement in knowledge of the region thanks to the extensive media coverage that accompanies large-scale sporting events. The construction and improvement of general infrastructure, roads, telecommunications, accommodation, equipment.... accompanying the organization of major events also have a long-term impact on the local economy, thanks to better accessibility and reduced communication costs. It is for the organizing regions to implement strategies to maximize long-term benefits (Gil and Pierre, 1999). The success of an event requires not only the definition of objectives, but also the definition of indicators of measures to achieve these objectives.

In the field of individual sports in Benin, the example of the marathon appears to be convincing. Thus it is through a religious congregation of the Roman Catholic Church, the Oblates of Saint Francis de Sales (OSFS) living in Parakou, that a motivated and devoted religious to running, organizes this marathon in February 2017 for the first edition. It is no longer an event designed only for the residents of Parakou Commune. It refers more to an event of a national, even international character that can bring together all ethnicities, cultures, languages, faiths and beliefs, ages, sexes and even people with disabilities. Consequently, this event by its atmosphere endowed with unifying power, is of such a large scale that it mobilizes the action of all the organs of the State and all the institutions: the ministries, the prefecture, the town hall, the police, the army, health, the media, as well as the various sponsors and volunteers. All these bodies from different sectors play a very important role in the organization, the realization and

the closing of this event. So what is the strategy of the organizers for the success of this event? So what are the impacts (socio-economic and environmental) of this marathon on the development of the city of Parakou? We asked ourselves these questions, the answers and understanding of which are all the more important as they condition to a large extent our global problematic approach to sports events in Benin, mainly by taking the example of the Salesian Marathon of the Municipality. from Parakou. The objective of this study is to analyze the structure put in place to organize the Salesian marathon and the socio-economic and environmental impacts of this marathon on the development of the city of Parakou.

From the perspective of this thematic, this study then gains its rigor of scientific research as soon as it brings together the reference frameworks that successively suggest the work in sociology of organizations of Crozier and Friedberg (1977) then the model of analysis proposed by Barget (1997). Thus, the strategic analysis developed by Crozier and Friedberg (1977) is a model of organizational analysis which revolves around understanding the relationships between interdependent actors within a concrete action system. This model should allow us to understand the management of the organizational committee of the Parakou marathon. Barget's (1997) analytical model is a model that distinguishes not only three different groups of agents who bear the costs and benefit from the benefits of the sporting event - the event organizers, visitors and society as a whole - but also which determines, for each group, what the profits or losses are. We present below the methodology used to achieve the results.

## 2. METHODOLOGY:

The quantitative and qualitative studies seem to us to be the best suited to measure the impacts related to the organization of the marathon in the city of Parakou.

As part of our study, we defined three types of target population. These are the actors in the organization of the Salesian marathon, the beneficiaries of this marathon (athletes, tourist guides, hotel promoters, and local residents) and finally the sponsors of the event.

To constitute our sample, we used the non-probabilistic method with the reasoned choice technique because we could not evaluate all the effects of this marathon. Our questionnaires as well as our interview guides were therefore sent to certain municipal authorities, to the organizers of the marathon, to the athletes, to the sponsors, to the hotel promoters, to the tourist guides and to part of the population. From our mother population made up of the entire population, we chose 157 subjects on the basis of different criteria: for the athletes, having participated five times in succession in the Salesian marathon; for marathon organizers, be a member of the organizing committee; for hotel promoters, to be in partnership with the organizing committee and finally, for tourist guides, to be resident in Parakou. Sample size and subjects are summarized in Table I below

Table I: Sampling

N°	Subjects	Number	Sexe
1	Population riveraine	50	M / F
2	Guide touristique	4	M
3	Comité de l'organisation et les volontaires	25	M
4	Promoteur d'hôtel	4	M
5	Marathoniens	70	M
6	Sponsors	4	M
	<b>Total</b>	157	

For our investigations, we opted for documentary analysis, questionnaire survey and semi-structured interview as data collection techniques.

The questionnaire survey was used to collect information from the target population that we identified. This technique allowed us to go directly to the beneficiaries in order to determine the effects of the marathon that we are studying on the population of the Municipality of Parakou. Given the quantitative nature of this part of the study, we used a questionnaire grid previously developed on the basis of our research objectives. To be able to address all the aspects relating to the effects of this marathon, we have developed two questionnaire grids. The first grid intended to know their different opinions on this marathon. The second grid is intended to identify the impacts of this marathon on the Municipality of Parakou.

The interview survey allowed us to collect information from our target population. Each of the subjects of this target population was subjected to a semi-structured interview with open questions. This type of interview has also been defined by Lincoln (1995) as "a data collection technique that contributes to the development of knowledge favoring qualitative and interpretative approaches relating in particular to constructivist paradigms". To get detailed

information, we have developed two different interview guides. The first maintenance guide for local residents, athletes and managers of hotels and tourist sites. It provided reliable data on the economic and environmental impact of this marathon. The second guide was used to interview the actors of the organization of the marathon to obtain reliable information on the stages of the organization of this marathon, the strategies used to seek sponsors, and the difficulties encountered during the organization of this marathon athletic event. The direct observation technique was used to supplement the interviews conducted. Its objective is to study the actors in action and to observe in the field the achievements in terms of management. This technique makes it possible to go beyond the speech of the actors to observe closely and study the dynamics of their behavior. The actual survey took place in the commune of Parakou and more precisely the districts crossed by the marathon circuit of the Commune of Parakou on the basis of questionnaires and pre-established interview guides. The data collected through the questionnaires are processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 21 software.

As for the data collected through the interview, they are transcribed, analyzed and then processed. Transcription consists of "listing the information collected and putting it in the form of a text called "verbatim" which represents the raw data of the survey, in other words it organizes the survey material in a format directly accessible to analysis rather than directly processing audio or video recordings"(Auerbach, 2003). It is developed on Microsoft Word 2013. The information gathered through the interviews is therefore transcribed without any modification. As for the analysis which consists of "building an analytical instrument" (Andreani and Conchon, 2003), it has led us to develop an analysis grid based on our specific research objectives. Finally, data processing enabled us to significantly study the comments collected.

### 3. RESULTS:

#### 3.1. Descriptive analysis of the marathon of Parakou:

Oblates of Saint François de Sales are an association recognized and declared in Benin by decree of the Minister of the Interior and Public Security (MISP) published in the Official Journal of August 1, 2008. Because of their recognized legal status, they are called to be educators. The Salesian Marathon of Parakou is, in fact, the idea of this religious congregation. It is then organized for a very specific purpose that we can formulate as follows: to put Man back on his feet with all his dignity. Indeed, these religious live in community and have the charism of living and spreading the spiritual and humanist thought of Saint Francis de Sales. The coordinator of this marathon, Father Guillaume, during an interview with the magazine "VRAI" affirms that: "the Salesian way opens up to welcoming oneself, the other, the event and even the improbable there is harmony there". This assertion is reinforced in another interview in which he further clarifies the underlying charisma of MISP. He adds that: "the spirit of Saint Francis de Sales is to welcome the talents of each member for the promotion and the integral development of the human being, with my colleagues, we are committed to the adventure of 'organization of this marathon to better communicate with the men and women of our time".

In addition, the marathon organized for nine years by the community of the Oblates of Saint Francis de Sales, now attracts several runners from Africa. The Parakou Salesians marathon is a race of love, peace and joy, concludes the prelate (high dignitary of the church). For the OSFS, thanks to this event, the human being can recognize his dignity, which also implies the recognition of the dignity of his body. Through training for the marathon, men can therefore take care of their entire body, and (re) find a physical but also psychological balance. The goal is not to win everyone, but to involve them; this is in line with the idea that Pierre de Coubertin had when he organized the Olympic Games. This idea is: "the main thing is not to win, but to participate". The other goal behind this event is to elevate the practice of athletics that appears to be. In each edition, the organizers retain a thought from Saint Francis while keeping inscribed each medal the mother thought of the life of their Saint "All for Love, Nothing by Force". These Salesian thoughts, while being consistent with the teaching of the Church, are addressed to everyone regardless of these beliefs and their confession.

#### 3.2. System of actors and stakeholders:

The organization of a sporting event is based on coordination between the various protagonists while respecting spatio-temporal constraints and using means and tools that are specific to it.

**Preparatory phase:** In June or July there is the preparation of the press kit which is at the same time the sponsorship request documents. Once the case is established, the OSFS forward it to potential sponsors. At the end of July, the request for authorization to organize is made and sent to the mayor, the prefecture and the gendarmerie. In October, OSFS hold their first organizational meeting to prepare for the launch conference. This conference took place the first week of November. During this meeting the participation fees are fixed (one thousand francs for the pupils, one thousand five hundred for the students and two thousand francs for the adults). In December the OSFS sends a committee to the sports fields to educate and inform students of the event. It is in this month that there is training of

volunteers and the distribution of roles to each volunteer. The communication team goes through the communication channels to inform the population of Parakou and the population of Benin about the holding of this event.

**Operational phase:** At six o'clock, there is a small meeting for the reminder of roles. The starting signal is given to Tchatchou in the presence of the authorities (the prefect, the president of the Benin athletics federation. Note that the presence is made at 07h and any athlete who is not in uniform will not participate in this marathon. .

**Post-event phase:** With a view to perpetuating the event, the Oblates of Saint Francis de Sales of Parakou take stock. This debriefing focused on organizational, financial, commercial, public, sports, communication and political aspects. They sought to highlight the successes and weaknesses of the organization in order to improve and / or innovate for the next edition. So who are the actors who are involved in the organization of the Parakou marathon?

### 3.3. System of actors and stakeholders in the organization of Parakou marathon:

Table II: Actors involved in the organization and running of the marathon

The players in the organization of the marathon	Number
Major active players	6
Minor active actors	38
Total	44

Reading this table II, it emerges that the marathon represents an event that involves almost all state bodies as well as the majority of public administrations. Thus, we distinguish two categories of actors for the success of this Salesian marathon of Parakou: they are "major active" actors and "minor active" actors. The "major active" players include the very organizers of the marathon. They are five in number and perform different functions. They are all priests from the same congregation. The "active minors" are the actors whose organizers have studied their service delivery file (doctors and security agents) and the 25 volunteers (physical education and sports teachers and students). These actors number 39 people.

Table III: Profile of those involved in the Salesian marathon

Actors	Effective
Priests	5
PE Teachers	7
Doctors	2
Students	18
Security agents	12
Total	44

According to our investigations into the profile of the organizational structure, PSE teachers play the role of officials. They are supported by some two students from the Sports Institute who have a background in athletics. The other students are responsible for distributing water. Among the students, those who have their First Aid Certificate (three in number) supported the doctors who take care of the health aspect of the participants. Security guards throughout the event. The five priests are the members of the marathon organizing committee. They play a purely administrative role. They are respectively: Coordinator, communications officer, organizer, secretary and manager of volunteers. The "major active" actors and the "minor active" actors work in symbiosis. But there are times when some do implement the acting system. What then are the different roles played by its actors?

Table IV: Role of the different actors involved in the organization of Parakou marathon

Functions	Roles
Coordinator	Coordinates all activities of other members. He manages all questions related to sponsorship. He is assisted by an accountant who takes care of financial matters ... etc.
Secretary	He deals with letters in general and the drafting of contracts

	between sponsors and the organizing structure. Manages the list of participants and the list of hotels available for the event.
Communication officer	He takes care of the communication in a way of the event and contacts the various presses involved in the event ... etc.
Organizer	It generally ensures the safety of and the property of the marathon course. He takes care of the actual organization of the event. He is assisted by 3 people... etc.
Volunteer Manager	He manages everything relating to volunteers, doctors and security agents... etc.

Organizing an event requires participatory management: indeed, there are so many actors involved at different skill levels; including permanent state employees (PSE teachers), but also students, generally essential that the sharing of work, knowledge, power and information is essential. It allows an increased fluidity of the implementation processes correlated with the most direct communication possible (Table II). After selection, these volunteers receive a small training (especially students) on the organization of the marathon before the definition of objectives and the distribution of tasks. These volunteers are thus in contact with a generally motivating project. They learn new skills and tackle new challenges. This training in the heat of the moment contributes to regional dynamism and to better social integration of those involved, especially students. All this is supported by comments collected during our interviews: "I am very happy with the official training that I have undergone; I thought that the athletics lessons obtained at the sports institute could make me a good official in this marathon; practice is very important after theory". It is the same for those who assisted the doctors: "Having the First Aid Certificate is not the most important thing. You have to go into practice to experience the difficulties on the ground. The upgrade that we have done with the doctors is very important and we are very proud to be able to handle the most extreme cases of this marathon".

The distribution of tasks and the management of human resources are effective (Table IV), which is the basis for achieving the set objectives. It is in this perspective that Ferrand, Chanavat and al (2006) state that: "the human resources management process is the necessary condition for achieving the set objectives. It consists of managing over a period and in a given context the human resources endowed with the required skills by acting on their personal expectations and motivations in order to achieve a specific goal ". As part of the organization of the marathon, the OSFS kept in mind that the performance of "its" volunteers is linked not only to their ability to carry out their mission, but also to the level of commitment and effort they are willing to put in the execution of their mission. For the Salesian Marathon Coordinator, "the strength of a team corresponds to the individual skills (technical, linguistic, etc.) of each member and to their collaboration around a collective project. Successful organizations are not only made up of talented people, but have capable people with common values and language". It is necessary that each member of the organization feels that his balance of distribution and redistribution is balanced without whereby its mobilization for the organization may be reduced (Ferrand, Nicolas and al, 2006).

Table V: Distribution of tasks and human resources management

	Effective	Percentage
<b>Effective</b>	25	100%
<b>Less effective</b>	00	00%
<b>Not effective</b>	00	00%
<b>Total</b>	25	100%

The distribution of tasks is 100% made according to our investigations. We can therefore deduce that the distribution of tasks is done rather and it is effective.

Table VI: Effectiveness of communication within the structure

	Effective	Percentage
<b>Very effective</b>	00	00%
<b>Effective</b>	25	100%
<b>Not very effective</b>	00	00%
<b>Total</b>	25	100%

Our investigations on communication show that communication within the structure is effective, ie 100% of the people interviewed. This communication would not only be the basis for achieving the objectives but also to draw in enough people to make the sponsors more visible. As for internal communication, it is effective (Table VI) and is characterized by formal verbal exchanges (precise and determined), which motivates the volunteers to give their all to the organization of this marathon. For this marathon, the actors involved are interdependent and despite the frank collaboration between these actors, each actor seeks to take advantage of his position, which is consistent with the idea of Crozier and Friedbeg (1977) who affirm that: "every author has objectives which are specific to it and structured in a formal system coupled with an informal system, but which is influenced by the environment and brings together various individuals constantly mixing their own objectives and strategies with those of the organization "

### 3.3. Methods of financing and communication of the marathon:

Table VII: Sources of funding

	Effective	Percentage
State	3	12%
Partners	10	40%
Sponsors	12	48%
Total	25	100%

The table above shows that 48% of respondents say that the main sources of funding for this marathon are sponsors. The Salesian marathon is 75% funded by sponsors. This could mean that this marathon drains enough people and that each company wanted to position themselves strategically in the region. Public support for the organization of the marathon is extremely low, which prompts the OSFS in Parakou to seek other sources of funding to enable the organization of the marathon. Note that this expense being all the same significant on the budget, it will be necessary to find additional funds. These must be found with the sponsors who may eventually allocate an envelope or offer rewards to athletes or volunteers. It was proposed during the meetings of the organizers of the marathon to write requests for assistance to certain banks and insurance companies and to certain institutions which would see the possibility of a good advertising showcase through this marathon. This aid would be in money. Note that the OSFS have external sponsors who act either directly (material or financial donation) or indirectly (invitation of the best athletes) in the organization of this marathon. These external partners are numerous. Among which there is an international press group which domiciles the site, there are sports clubs in Haute Savoie, France and Johannesburg, South Africa. The medal manufacturing company should also be equated with the partners as it offers its support in reducing the cost of manufacturing the medals distributed to each athlete. Despite the communication around this event, the athletes do not pay the participation fees on time. Let us also add that, the OSFS seek to develop a feeling of belonging to empower all stakeholders (unit manager, volunteers, etc.) to establish a climate of trust and to identify the motivations and personal expectations of each voluntary in order to retain them. It is along this line of thought that Sordet and Bouchet (2006) assert that: "The promotion and empowerment of volunteers are strategic means that can promote loyalty. The involvement of all members of the organization in the integration program is fundamental in order to "set the tone" for the event and motivate the volunteers ". Finally, this marathon is opportune for the organizers, because they were able to organize this event thanks to the operating income.

Table VIII: Objective of the sponsors

	Effective	Percentage
Increase the reputation of the city	1	25%
Improve its image, its notoriety and increase its profit	3	75%
For pleasure	0	0%
Promote Athletics	0	0%
Total	4	100%

It can be seen from this table that companies sponsor an event for a particular, individual and company-specific objective.

Table IX: Sponsor satisfaction

	Effective	Percentage
<b>Yes</b>	4	100%
<b>No</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

From this table, it emerges that all the sponsors are satisfied with this marathon. So their goal of funding this marathon has been reached.

Communication related to the Parakou marathon

Table X: Communication made around the event

	Effective	Percentage
<b>Very effective</b>	00	00%
<b>Effective</b>	70	100%
<b>Not very effective</b>	00	00%
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

Communication around this event is 100% effective, so all participants are informed of the date of the event. In addition, the event is covered by local, national and international press. Footage of the marathon is broadcast on local private and national public television. We note the participation of athletes from Burkina-Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, Ghana, Togo, Gabon, Côte-d'Ivoire, Cameroon and all the departments of Benin. Communication around the event is ensured mainly through the internet, print media, radio and newspapers which allows marathon runners to be informed of the date of the marathon and the marathon participation fees

### 3.4. Economic benefits and territorial development

When we talk about territorial development through a sporting event, we first think of economic and tourism development. The organization of this marathon filled hotels and restaurants during its course.

Table XI: Trend in turnover of hotel and restaurant promoters and street vendors

	Effective	Percentage
<b>Increases</b>	4	100%
<b>Constant</b>	0	0%
<b>Decreases</b>	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	4	100%

From this table, we can deduce that during the marathon period, the promoters of hotels and bar restaurants experienced an increase in their turnover. This is said to be due to the arrival of a large number of participants, tourists and others. It should be noted that this event creates a village of markets (influx of markets) at the start line, along the course and at the finish line. These markets are essentially made up of water sellers commonly called "pure water", sellers of pineapple juice, oranges, biscuits, yoghurt, and so and so. The sellers interviewed, maximize their turnover during the day of the marathon. Note that the increase in turnover depends on the product "I am very happy with my recipe today, because it represents three times what I earn in a day" says a saleswoman. Finally, let us add that motorcycle taxi drivers also maximize their income on the day of the marathon. Indeed, the motorcycle taxi drivers interviewed said that they increase their income on the day of the marathon: "I am very satisfied with the impact of this marathon. During the three days, Friday evening and the weekend of the race I double my turnover, to explain better, I drive several athletes and visitors to the scene per day. For this reason, I have supported this marathon for several years".

Table XII: Rate of increase in turnover in this period

	<b>Hostel 1</b>	<b>Hostel 2</b>	<b>Hostel 3</b>	<b>Hostel 4</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Rate</b>	7%	6%	10%	3%	6,5%

This table shows that three hotels experienced an increase in their figure which is on average 6.5%. The fourth hotel alone has a sales increase of less than 6%. This is due on the one hand to the great distance between the location of this marathon and the hotel and on the other hand to the prices of the rooms and the (luxury) condition of the hotel.

Marathon runners from far away have accommodation and catering needs. These needs cause an increase in the number of overnight stays in hotels during the period of this marathon (Table XII). In terms of expenditure, available surveys on hotel occupancy show an increase in revenue. According to a hotel promoter, "Take advantage of this event because the whole world will be there; this is an opportunity for us to be visible and to start exporting ". These comments perfectly illustrate the fact that this kind of event represents an economic and commercial gateway for many companies and not only for the host country. The promoters of hotels and bar restaurants are satisfied with their receipts during this period. As the managers of some refreshments say: "We are very happy with the benefits of the refreshment bar, which brought us 150,000 FCFA of recipes in an afternoon". Tourism circles are also the first to support sporting events, regular or one-off. It is with this in mind that the tour guides interviewed state, "Every time you have to organize this marathon so that I can earn money. Because what we find in terms of income during the day exceeds twice our salary"(Table XII).

Table XIII: Rate of turnover in tourist sites during the marathon period

	<b>1*</b>	<b>2*</b>	<b>3*</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Rate</b>	10%	25%	12%	15,66%

1 \* Parakou Open Air Museum

2 \* The royal court

3 \* The Parakou Beekeeping Center

From the interview with the tour guides, it emerged that the marathon is a very important event that attracts many people and promotes an increase in the turnover of tourist sites. In addition, in February 2017, the 10th edition of the MSFS in Parakou welcomed French people who took advantage of the event to visit the tourist regions of Benin. So, after participating in the marathon, they explored in the Royal Court of Parakou, the open-air museum of Parakou, the beekeeping center, the Pendjari Park, then the Cascades de Tanougou, a walk in the W park. During this period tourist sites experienced an increase in attendance by visitors who injected new funds into the local economy, which increased the economic resources of service providers, and therefore increased revenues for these sites and guides (Table XIII). This increase in income confirms the assertion of the guide of the royal court of Parakou: "I am happy when I am told that the Parakou marathon is approaching, because I am making a lot of money. Europeans come to visit our palace. They are shown around the courtyard and told about the history of this palace; in return they find us something that I take to feed my little family. If this marathon could be organized every day, I would be super-rich".

#### **Environmental impacts:**

Table XIV: Creation and development of road infrastructure

	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	0	0%
<b>No</b>	50	100%
<b>Total</b>	50	100%

From this table, it appears that no sports and road infrastructure has been created for this event. So the city has not experienced any change in terms of image and infrastructure.

Table XV: State of the city after the marathon

	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Clean</b>	0	0%
<b>Dirty</b>	50	100%
<b>Total</b>	50	100%

Our investigations on the state of Parakou city after the marathon show that the city is dirty after the marathon (100%). It would be very important to set up a city cleaning committee after the marathon

#### 4. DISCUSSION:

The marathon is a very intense and stressful event for the body, which can completely deplete its sugar reserves, the main fuel for physical and intellectual effort, it thus becomes an effective and efficient preventive measure for the individual. Note that some athletes, especially young people, participate in the marathon because of the money and the medals. For some of the athletes questioned, the marathon is an effective and efficient preventive means to fight against diseases or to maintain good health. It is in this vein that (Djanguede 2012) states: "In general, physical activity acts on what is called well-being. It allows you to discover your body and its limits, facilitates the acquisition of a sense of balance. ". Also, several studies show that physical activity improves stress management and mental activity (decision making, forecasting, short-term memory), that it reduces anxiety and promotes healthy sleep rhythms. This marathon allows athletes and visitors from afar to get to know the Parakou region. With this in mind, the athletes interviewed affirm that they do not regret having participated in this marathon, because it allowed them to know the city of Parakou and its surroundings.

In principle, the organization of a sporting event allows the construction of modern transport or communication networks and sports facilities, from which the less developed areas generally benefit the most. The construction of a new airport could help develop tourism (Baeumin and Besson, 2012). It should also be noted that the improvement of transport infrastructure which generally accompanies the organization of a large-scale event also allows, thanks to better accessibility to the region and a reduction in transport costs.

Through table VIII, it can be seen that companies sponsor an event for a particular, individual and company-specific objective. But some public and private companies fund the events to improve their images or their notoriety. The positioning of partners such as the municipality and the State through the Departmental Sports Directorate (DDS) is to promote sport and more specifically this marathon. Local elected officials and political party leaders also appear to make sport a political activity. These results corroborate with the conclusions of the work of Akouété, (2012).

Sports sponsorship can achieve many goals. Becoming the sponsor of an event helps strengthen the brand image by conveying strong values such as surpassing oneself, willpower, and emotion. It is essential for a company to identify its objectives in order to prioritize and retain the sporting activity that corresponds to its media strategy. Increasing visibility and therefore notoriety is generally the main objective of sponsors (Table VII). And if the goals are met, companies are happy with the event (Table VIII) and can sponsor other events. It is with this in mind that a sponsor of this event says: "As a sponsor I will definitely come back, nothing for the atmosphere is great, it is interesting in terms of the fallout".

#### 5. CONCLUSION:

Sport is a social, global phenomenon that plays a role in the development of men. The marathon is one of the most practiced athletic physical activities in Africa and the one that has made the continent proud on the international scene, especially during major sporting events (the Olympic Games). At the end of a methodology that is both massive and specific, it appeared very clearly in our work that the organization of the Parakou marathon allows the city of Parakou to benefit from a positive economic impact thanks to the important accompanying media coverage. This enables the city or region to be known to a considerable number of people in most countries of the world. The Salesian marathon then becomes a unique opportunity to discover the city or the region of Parakou. The sporting event is indeed a very effective vector of communication and is used by the host cities or regions as a real advertising tool. In addition, if an event of international dimension relies primarily on its media coverage, its success depends on good management of human resources by the distribution of tasks and the recognition of the volunteers involved in the organization of the event. The organization of a sporting event generates costs and benefits of different types: material (development), symbolic (image recognition), or pecuniary (financial) .... and if organizing an event helps raise awareness of a region and results in a large influx of tourists, the region as a whole has a real advantage. So this 42.195 km race can, on certain sites, become a real lever for tourist and economic development, supported by local authorities. Indeed, depending on the mass of participants, the involvement of private and public actors and budgetary choices, tourist flows can take on considerable importance. But it is clear that despite the strategies put in place to seek sponsors and the size of this event, state aid is very minimal to organize this marathon

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