



BATAVIERENRACE

The Largest Relay Race of the World



**UNIVERSITY
OF TWENTE.**



MCAST



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Project: Fostering Student Engagement through AI-driven Qualitative Quality Assurance Practices

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Title: Batavierenrace: The Largest Relay Race of the World

Organization: University of Twente

Country: the Netherlands

Authors: Jeroen Vonk

One liner – essence of the case study: Students organize and participate in the largest relay race in the world

Short summary: The Batavierenrace is a relay race of 170 kilometres from the centre of Nijmegen (Radboud University) to the campus of the University of Twente. On average, 8.500 athletes who are mostly students participate. It is organized by an organizing committee consisting of nine students from Radboud University in Nijmegen and the University of Twente in Enschede. The participating students are organized into around 350 teams, where they take part in 4 to 11 legs. At the end of the race, a big party is organized in Enschede which is joined by usually 13.000 students.

OVERVIEW

Short description

The University of Twente is a public technical university located in Enschede, Netherlands. It had 11.740 students in 2019, and in 2021 over 3.600 were international students. It has five faculties and offers 20 bachelor programs and 34 master programs.

Background information

The race is organized to get students from two major universities in the eastern part of the Netherlands together. It was founded in the 1970s in Nijmegen and co-organized with the University of Twente. The latter was founded in the late 1960s, so the Batavierenrace helped to integrate this new university and its students with the academic environment of the Netherlands.

Aims and motivations

In general, a relay race did not exist in the Netherlands yet before the Batavierenrace. A group of students from Nijmegen went to Sweden and witnessed a relay race there. Then they figured it would be nice to organize such a race in the Netherlands too, as such a thing did not exist yet. The event has multiple benefits for socialize better with their fellow peers and participating in such an exciting race. Secondly, participating takes preparation and this gets students to exercise and do sports. Thirdly, the race is partially organized to raise money for good causes, such as Beat Batten. This is a charity that collects money to combat Batten's disease.

Stakeholders

The primary stakeholders are the students that organize the Batavierenrace, so those who are on the committees. Then come the students who participate in teams in the race. Then the students who join the final party in Enschede (around 13.000). Stakeholders are also the companies that support teams who participate, sometimes to raise funds for good causes, and sometimes because they are related to the study group of a team.

IMPLEMENTATION

Inputs

Financial: organizing the Batavierenrace takes some costs, and there is a 'Kascommissie' (Cashier Committee) that takes care of paying bills and making sure the finances are on point. Other committees that are facilitating the race are: the radio communication service, the Bata4life committee, the medical advice organ, and the information committee, and participating in these committees are 700 volunteers.

Strategies and activities

The initiative was set by the students who wanted to implement a relay race in the Netherlands. All the strategies are based on gaining attention from students at universities.

Coordination with the target groups

The level of communication was maintained through the radio connection service during the race, the information committee outside of the race, and the Bata4life committee for charity.

Deliverable outputs

The deliverable outputs are the income for charity generated by the race. Students have contributed to them because they have aligned their teams with charities. Furthermore, through the Bata4life charity, which was set up by students, money was collected.

Intangible outputs

Students have gained the experience of participating in a team activity, and a relay race in general. That is an experience on its own. Furthermore, the students who were involved in organizing have achieved new skills and knowledge on how to organize such a thing.

EVALUATION AND IMPACT

Strategical initiatives for evaluation & monitoring

The finances are monitored by the Cashier Committee (Kascomissie) and need to be approved by the Organization Committee and the Foundational Board of Directors. Moreover, the Organizational Committee performs an evaluation of the race for that year.

Impacts

For students, the Batavierenrace is a great opportunity to learn how to organize a relay race.

SUPPORTIVE AND INFLUENCING ASPECTS

Major strengths and weaknesses

The strengths of the Batavierenrace are that it increases the engagement and participation of students in sports activities. It has benefits for both the students who partake in its organization and those who participate in the race itself or surrounding activities. This contributes to team building and awareness and it also helps further charity work. The weakness is that it is organized by students. This means that, although organizational continuation is pretty strong, the organizers differ from year to year.

Further challenges

Possible challenges could be a decreasing student interest in the future. Some study associations have struggled with active membership because of the COVID lockdowns, in which students stayed home for a long time and did not get involved in their study associations. Hence, it could cause a decreasing participation rate in the future.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Sustainability factors

The main sustainability factor is student input from the students of Radboud University and the University of Twente who are eager to participate in a sports event and raise money for charity. Since it is a big phenomenon, there is a constant supply of new students each year willing to participate, keeping the event alive and well. Another sustainability factor is the fact that it is a sports event. In recent years, there has been a great push to get people moving, because of rising obesity rates. Especially among students, who often drink alcohol. Participating in a race requires preparation, meaning they get students to exercise and be active.

Further information

- Nijmegen News. (April 29, 2022). Batavierenrace 2022 start vanavond op de Grote Markt: <https://nijmegen.nieuws.nl/sport/23760/batavierenrace-2022-start-vanavond-op-de-grote-markt/>
- Batavierenrace. (21-04-2020). Over de batavierenrace: <https://www.batavierenrace.nl/50/organisatie/over-de-batavierenrace.html>

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