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**BEST PRACTICES OF SPORT VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT: A
COMPARISON OF MEGA SPORTING EVENT VOLUNTEERS AND
COMMUNITY SPORT VOLUNTEERS**

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ABSTRACT

Rachel O'Sullivan: Best Practices of Sport Volunteer Management: A Comparison of Mega Sporting Event Volunteers and Community Sport Volunteers
(Under the supervisor of Dr. Kristine Toohey, Professor)

The purpose of this study is to find the best practices of managing sport volunteers. A comparison was also conducted between volunteers of community sport organizations and volunteers of mega events. The thesis aims to provide practical advice for volunteer managers, with guidance on what volunteers expect and need to be successful in their roles. The review of literature sets a foundation that is built on quantitative data about the current state of volunteerism and specifically sport volunteerism. This data gave valuable insight to the demographics of volunteers, the hours they participated, motivations for volunteering, training completed and more. Interviews were then conducted to compare with the data found in the literature review and to develop a more holistic understanding of the experiences of sport volunteers. Fourteen people participated in semi-structured interviews, with seven from each type of sport volunteering experience. By observing two distinct types of sport volunteers, a comparison was also conducted to see what the overlaps are in volunteer management best practices between the two groups. Analysis was conducted on the raw data from interviews and knowledge retrieved from the literature to extract the major themes. The discussion section provides details on the four major themes that were developed along with the differences in managing community sport volunteers and mega event volunteers.

Keywords: volunteer management, community sport organizations, mega events, sports management

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABS- Australian Bureau of Statistics

AYSO- American Youth Soccer Association

CSO- Community Sport Organization

FIFA- International Federation of Association Football

FIG- International Gymnastics Federation

FTE- Full-time Equivalent

IOC- International Olympic Committee

LEAP- Leaders in Exercise and Athletics Program

LOOP- locating, orientating, operating, perpetuating

NFL- National Football League

PDCA- Plan, Do, Check, Act

TOCOG- Tokyo Organizing Committee of Olympic and Paralympic Games

USA- United States of America

VSO- Volunteer Sport Organization

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Anyone who has participated in sports has encountered volunteers or their efforts, possibly without realizing it. Volunteers' responsibilities can range from helping people with directions to overseeing a multi-faceted organization that meets a need of the community. Volunteers account for 109 million full-time equivalent jobs globally, with 30% of those volunteers' work associated with an organization (Salamon et al., 2018). That equates to what would be 32.9 million full-time employees at organizations and "if it were a country, the volunteer workforce, expressed as FTE workers, would make this the 5th largest workforce of any county in the world" (Salamon et al., 2018).

Volunteers in sport also have a significant history. Local groups have helped since the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896, and the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid produced the mega event volunteer structure that is common today ("Zoom In," n.d.). Volunteerism is now a mandatory piece of an Olympic Games and is supported widely by the International Olympic Committee. For community-based sport organizations, it is more challenging to pinpoint a beginning of volunteerism. Factors such as varying societal definitions of volunteering and a lack of formal data collection create these challenges. It is likely though, that since the beginning of both formal and informal local sport programs, there was someone there donating their time to support the team. The prevalence of volunteers' contributions led to a natural need for volunteer management techniques.

In 1967, Harriet Naylor published a book that included volunteer management techniques (Honer, 1986). Since then, organizations such as the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, International Labour Organization and national governments have collected data on volunteers. Universities are also offering certificate and degree programs in volunteer administration, non-profit management, and other similar titles that in part teach volunteer management skills. Examples include a Leadership and Volunteer Management graduate certificate at North Carolina State University (NC State University, n.d.) and a Nonprofit Management Graduate Certificate from Harvard's Extension School (Harvard Extension School, n.d.).

Volunteering, like other aspects of life today, is more structured than just helping out at a local club. Volunteers need background checks, up to date information, and organizations should

have strategic management plans for recruiting and retaining volunteers (Anderson & Cairncross, 2005). There is a lack of a widespread, cohesive sport specific volunteer management approach. Similar to employees in different fields, sport volunteers deserve their own management techniques that cater to the unique aspects of them as a group. Sport volunteerism can look different region to region and even more so organization to organization, so an all-encompassing list of best practices would be beneficial. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to learn what management practices work best for sport volunteers.

1.2 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study is to uncover the themes of current volunteer management practices and compare the best practices of community sport volunteers and mega sport event volunteers. The research questions are as follows:

Main Research Question:

What are the best practices of managing sport volunteers?

Sub-questions:

What are the stages of the sport volunteer experience?

How would sport volunteers adjust, if at all, their experiences?

What are the similarities and differences in managing community sport organization volunteers and mega sport event volunteers?

1.3 Significance of Study

This study is significant because of sport's widespread use of volunteers and the subsequent prevalent need of proper management. There are plenty of quantitative data on volunteers regarding their motivations, types of involvement and hours contributed. It is also important to hear from the perspective of the volunteers, as they are the experts of their lived experiences. From in-depth interviews, patterns can be established, and thorough recommendations can be made by volunteers themselves. The overall picture is an important factor, because breaking down the experience only into sub-parts can minimize the connectedness of them all and lead to an incohesive management strategy. Interviews provided the holistic point of view and described the good and bad parts better than only using a quantitative data point.

A comparative study structure was used to determine the similarities and differences between community sport volunteers and mega event volunteers. A research foundation was established through the review of literature followed by analyzing the trends discovered from the semi-structured interviews. Those results were then analyzed using a grounded theory approach and inductive reasoning to determine the best practices of managing sport volunteers. The study was limited to English speaking interview participants with a high percentage from global north countries. The demographics of interviewees was consistent with the quantitative data studied in the literature review.

The research focused on mega sport events and community sport organizations. While findings may be similar to non-sport related volunteers, the research collected and conducted can only be generalized to the realm of sport.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis follows the standard structure and includes five chapters which are summarized below.

Chapter I: An introduction into the ‘why’ of the thesis. The research questions and background information are provided to establish a baseline understanding of the topic.

Chapter II: A literature review of volunteerism and the specifics of sport volunteers are included. Some quantitative data is presented and used to help guide the qualitative research conducted through interviews.

Chapter III: A list of steps taken in conducting research is provided. The methodology described includes research design, data collection and reliability and validity of the data.

Chapter IV: The results of the data retrieved from interviews are presented. The data is organized in a sequential order of broad topics. Each section includes quotes from the interviewees that support the thematic analysis.

Chapter V: The thesis concludes with the discussion and conclusion of the analysis of results. Major themes compiled from the data of both the literature review and interviews form the basis of the chapter’s structure. Sub-research questions are answered followed by recommendations for management best practices of sport volunteers.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction and History of Volunteers

In the present-day global north countries, volunteers contribute labor that would otherwise be a part of paid positions. In Canada, for example, volunteers accounted for 1.7 billion hours of work in 2018, which is comparable to 863,000 full time employees (Hahmann, du Plessis, & Fournier-Savard, 2020). The same study found that about 12.7 million Canadians, or 41% of the population over 14 years old, were involved in volunteering. This data shows that the impact of the work of volunteers can have great significance both in small, specific communities and at the national and global levels.

Merrill and Safrit (2000) defined a volunteer as “anyone who performs volunteerism.” Expanding upon the concept of volunteerism, they gave four criteria for a volunteer: an active involvement; relatively uncoerced into the active involvement; unmotivated by monetary benefits; and working towards the organization’s objectives (Merrill & Safrit, 2000). Similarly, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a volunteer as “a person who voluntarily undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake a service” (n.d.). Low, et al (2007) described volunteers as ‘individuals who spend time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives.’ Based on these definitions, volunteerism is seemingly rooted in altruism. The motivations of a volunteer may not be consistent with what the mainstream labor force is driven by but are still persuasive enough to allow entire organizations to operate on such basis.

A workforce that is unmotivated by a financial income to complete their tasks creates a lapse in the common employee management techniques. Organizations which choose to work with volunteers must be adequately skilled in volunteer management and invest in this workforce (Machin & Paine, 2008). A 2008 study found that 31% of organizations that would like to use volunteers to meet their organizational objectives did not have enough funds to support a volunteer-force (Machin & Paine). The same study found that only 50% of respondents whose organization managed volunteers, were truly educated in volunteer management.

In this thesis, community sport organizations (CSO) refer to locally based organizations that have a significant portion of roles filled by volunteers, or low-paying employees, and a primary function of providing sport opportunities. Some authors categorize these organizations as volunteer sport organizations (VSO), which will be seen in literature references.

This paper also uses data from individuals and organizations primarily in global north countries.

2.2 Studying Volunteerism

In 1967, Harriet Naylor published the first book with resources describing management techniques for overseeing volunteers (Connors, Ed., 2012). Since then, multiple models of volunteer management methods have been created, and three are described below.

One model to understand volunteer management is the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle (PDCA) developed and modified by Deming in 1993. This model is designed to improve upon existing processes and management in an organization. Transforming the PDCA cycle into a volunteer-based management system, the stages in the cycle are assessment and analysis, planning, strategic deployment and implementation, and results and evaluation (Connors, Ed., 2012). Each stage builds upon the next and allows for continuous feedback before moving onto the next phase.

Another model used in volunteer management is the ISOTURE model, created by Dr. Robert Nolan in 1969 and updated by Dr. V. Milton Boyce, specifically for volunteer leadership through the 4-H Youth Development Program (Boyce, 1971). The ISOTURE acronym stands for: identification, selection, orientation, training, utilization, recognition, and evaluation (Connors, Ed., 2012). This model is heavily focused on using volunteers as an asset while trying to place them in a position to appropriately use their skills and knowledge. Connors describes the training section as the “process of stimulating and supporting leaders’ efforts to acquire knowledge and to develop attitudes and skills that will improve the quality of their performance in leader positions” (2012, p. 9). The ISOTURE model focuses on the concept of all volunteers being leaders. The role of the management team in this model is to create a realistic plan and beneficial training so that the volunteers are more likely to achieve success. This highlights a difference in the value of employees compared to volunteers to an organization. Community groups and non-profit organizations usually need volunteers to succeed, while employers at a for-profit company might have an easier time replacing an employee. Therefore, a volunteer manager needs to act according to the labor-force they are working with. The argument for volunteer managers to have a leadership style rather than management style will be discussed in section 2.4.3.2 Leading vs Managing.

In 1991, Kathryn Penrod developed the LOOP model for volunteer management, whose steps include: locating, orientating, operating, and perpetuating (Connors, Ed., 2012). The first step encompasses the recruitment and selection components of volunteer management. It also stresses the importance of understanding the needs of the organization and finding volunteers with complimentary skill sets and goals. Training is covered in the orientating section. Both formal and informal educational training sessions are encouraged. While harder to curate informal training sessions, it is crucial to note that volunteers will absorb organizational attributes that are outside the scope of the training agendas. The operating step's purpose is ongoing and should be used to help show volunteers the impact their work has on the event and community they are serving (Connors, Ed., 2012). In the final step, perpetuating, the volunteer managers should work to receive feedback from the volunteers as well as show appreciation for their efforts. Recognition of volunteers is best communicated when given throughout their time with the organization and when it is in line with the volunteer's needs and expectations for volunteering (Connors, Ed., 2012). In the Olympics for example, recognition efforts have been varied from volunteer parades for volunteers seeking public recognition, swag and uniforms for materialistic motivations, and networking and social time for those striving for the community involvement.

The multitude of management models and lack of linear steps show that there must be continual investment in volunteers in order to run a successful program. For example, training and recognition practices are included in the various models to emphasize the need for volunteer managers to fulfill the training needs of the volunteers while ensuring that organizational expectations are achieved. Organizations that want their volunteers to return must also put systems into place to continue engagement outside of the allotted workspaces, a tactic that would be more unusual for employees of a company. Having a cyclical mindset when managing volunteers will help volunteer managers to continually work with and improve upon the experience of their volunteers and the volunteer's work.

2.3 Volunteer Motivations

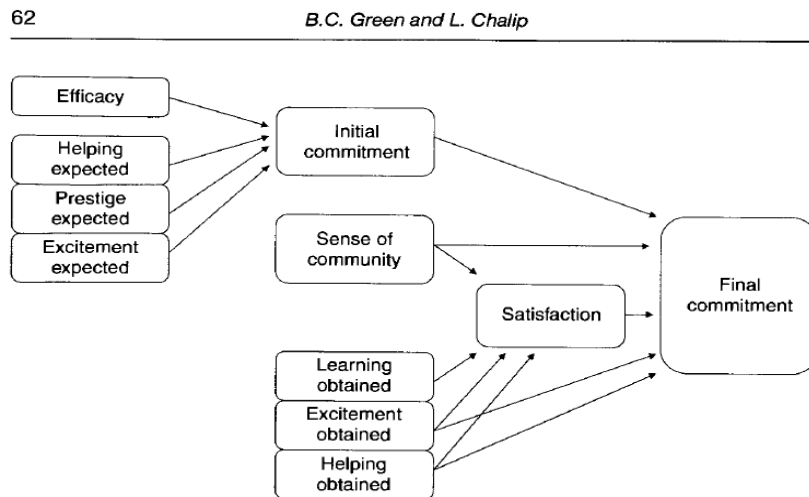
Volunteerism is circumscribed by the assumption that volunteers give their personal resources of time, money and skills purely for altruistic purposes. Research has shown however, that the reasoning is much more complex, and volunteer managers should avoid making

assumptions about their volunteer workforce if they want to have positive effects on the volunteer’s impact to the organization (Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell & Shonk, 2020).

Studies are consistent in findings of the demographics for people who are more likely to volunteer. Higher levels of religious involvement, higher income and higher education level are all indicators of ability and likelihood of an individual to participate in volunteer opportunities (Shye, 2010). The same study also clarifies the difference between the ability to volunteer and the want to do so, and highlights that the two are not necessarily correlated. Shye (2010) suggests looking at what quality of life benefits a volunteer position can offer and formulating the motivations based on those factors. Common factors include, sense of community, career benefits, socialization and participating in unique experiences amongst altruistic reasons. To simply put it, volunteer managers should “find something volunteers are willing to work for” (Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell & Shonk, 2020, p. 60).

Green and Chalip (2004) found that focusing on the intrinsic benefits relating to the volunteer experience would yield a more significant impact on the volunteer’s effectiveness in their role and outlook of the event. In this study, learning obtained, excitement, and sense of community were all classified as intrinsic benefits, compared to external benefits of professional gains, prestige and event expectations. The flow chart developed by Green and Chalip (Figure 1) shows that while the intrinsic benefits played a larger role in overall satisfaction, the extrinsic benefits were imperative in gaining initial interest and commitment from volunteers to participate.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Volunteer Commitment



(Green & Chalip, 2004)

Unfortunately for volunteer managers, intrinsic motivations and the subsequent satisfaction are difficult to translate into tangible data. Creating the atmosphere surrounding an event and the workspace of volunteers needs to be a calculated effort by the hosting organizational team. As Cuskelly (2004) noted, “the rewards for volunteering ‘that seem most important are not under the control of the organization but derive from the participation itself’ [Pearce, 1993, p. 181].” A commonality among volunteer motivation literature is the importance of intrinsic motivations factoring into the success of a volunteer.

2.3.1 Community Sport Volunteers

Sport volunteers tend to have slightly more specific motivations than the general volunteer population. First, the majority of sport volunteers have a connection with the sport for which they volunteer. An Australian study found that 85% of younger aged volunteers, 15-24 years old, participated in an organized sport at the time of their volunteer role while 47% of volunteers aged 35-44 played a sport concurrently (Cuskelly, 2004). The study also found that the transition from player to volunteer can “sometimes increase their knowledge and commitment to a sporting activity or a particular sport organization (Cuskelly, 2004, p.19). This concept falls in line with continuity theory. Cuskelly gives an example of a netball player, who can no longer participate as an athlete, transitions to become a volunteer coach or administrator of the sport. The example explains how an athlete can keep the part of their identity that connects with the sport without having to remain an athlete. Anderson and Cairncross (2005) explain that if organizations have a large percentage of their workforce as volunteers, they need to understand their varied motivations and take action in order to ensure the organization will be able to retain their volunteers and bring in new ones when needed.

Like other volunteers, especially those of CSOs, some individuals may have barriers to overcome before being able to fulfill their volunteer responsibilities. Researchers for Sport England studied volunteers of underrepresented groups and found that there were multiple barriers that a volunteer may have to deal with including lack of confidence, language barriers, limited flexibility, and not enough money or time to be able to commit to the experience (Leonardi et al, 2020). The lack of time or money is consistent with the findings of general demographics of volunteers. Doherty (2005) found that 84% of community sport volunteers in Canada, had a full-time job at the time of their volunteering, compared to the average volunteer labor force which averaged at 67%. The study also determined that sport volunteers are 12%

more likely than the general volunteer to have an annual household income between \$60,000-\$99,000. These numbers reflect the socio-economic barriers that an individual may have to deal with to volunteer for a community sport organization. While the motivation to volunteer may be present, volunteer managers need to be cognizant of the barriers that people may be facing in order to volunteer.

2.3.2 Mega Event Volunteers

Mega event volunteers tend to commit their efforts in a more condensed time frame, than community sport volunteers, because of the nature of mega events. For example, volunteers of the National Football League Superbowl LIII in 2019 were expected to work at least three shifts for a minimum of twelve hours over the week of festivities (Mercedes-Benz Stadium, 2018). 2019 Cricket World Cup volunteers were expected to work three shifts (ICC, 2018) and Olympic volunteers average ten days of service with shifts of about five hours, including early mornings and late nights (Tokyo Metropolitan Government et al., 2016). Volunteers of mega, episodic events are “less likely to volunteer for altruistic reasons” according to Cho, Wong, and Chiu (2020, p. 6). Non-altruistic motivations can include career benefits, social reasons and wanting to participate in a unique experience.

Besides extrinsic reasonings to volunteer, mega event volunteers may also be able to commit more to the shorter time commitment of mega events, compared to community sport organizations that usually require volunteers to participate weekly or monthly for an extended period of time. As Anderson and Cairncross (2005, p. 8) described, “today’s volunteers are often skill rich but time poor.” The lack of consistent available time to volunteer can be considered a motivation for individuals to volunteer for mega events because it may be a more accessible volunteer opportunity for them.

In the case of the Olympic Games, volunteers may have even more specialized motivations. Because of the international regard and reputation that has been cultivated, the volunteer experience of Olympic volunteers can be its own motivation in addition to the other common factors. The camaraderie and prestige of the event can all be attributed to the Olympic Spirit that is an environment specifically fostered by Olympic organizing committees and the International Olympic Committee. The concept evolves from Pierre de Coubertin’s Olympic ideals and values of excellent, friendship and respect and the spirit that is created when the world unites in the festivities of athletics and Olympism (International Olympic Committee, 2017). For

example, volunteers of the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney were keen to volunteer again in 2004 in Athens due to nostalgia and connections they made during their time volunteering (Fairley, Kellett & Green, 2007). Participants in this study mentioned the connection they made with other volunteers and the how tangible connection they now had to the Olympic Movement inspired them to travel internationally to volunteer. Because Olympic volunteers come from all backgrounds and parts of the world, their motivations to volunteer, which are based on their expectations, can be very different. Nichols and Ralston (2012) found that volunteers from Western countries for the 2008 Beijing Olympics had different expectations than Asian volunteers. These motivational differences can cause the “the optimum programme management /membership management balance [to be] culturally specific” (p. 114).

2.3.3 Link Between Motivation and Volunteer Evaluation

How successfully an organization takes efforts to fulfill the motivations of volunteers can have an impact on their commitment to their role as a volunteer. As Green and Chalip’s 2004 study found, “commitment at the end of the Games is, in part, a function of commitment at the beginning of the Games (p. 59). Therefore, it is important to take into regard the motivations at all stages of volunteer management, especially the recruitment and early training. Volunteers who feel a sense of community during their time volunteering are more likely to be more committed to the event (Green & Chalip, 2004). The feeling of belonging and a specific purpose are natural factors of feeling fulfilled, and volunteers who feel fulfilled have a stronger reason to remain invested in volunteering. It was found though, that a volunteer’s level of commitment can vary due to what occurs over the course of their time volunteering (Green & Chalip, 2004).

Part of good volunteer management includes receiving feedback and evaluation from subordinates to improve upon any systems that could be more efficient and effective. Besides finding quantitative results regarding volunteers and their performance, qualitative feedback can give important insights as well. As proven, volunteers that have their motivations met rank their satisfaction levels higher than their counterparts (Green & Chalip, 2004). Volunteers’ external motivations are only found to influence their initial commitment, which ultimately accounts for one-third of overall commitment. Figure 1, from Green and Chalip (2004), also illustrates the unique role that sense of community has in a volunteer’s level of commitment. While a sense of community is not necessarily a motivation that individuals may have come into their

volunteering experience with, through bonding with other volunteers it can become one, especially when nurtured by the volunteer managers.

2.4 Stages of Volunteer Management

2.4.1 Volunteer Recruitment

2.4.1.1 Who to Recruit? The first point of contact between the organization and potential volunteers will be through the recruitment strategies. An organization should also be strategic in knowing before recruitment begins, what roles volunteers will have and how many individuals are needed to complete the tasks. At summer Olympic Games, thousands of volunteers are needed. London in 2012 required approximately 32,000 positions and Rio de Janeiro in 2016 required about 51,000 positions (Tokyo Metropolitan Government & Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, 2016). Before the redesign of the Tokyo Olympics due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (TOCOG) estimated 90,000 volunteers would be working to help the Games run smoothly (Tokyo Metropolitan Government et al., 2016). Acquiring tens of thousands of adequately skilled volunteers is a large task, so recruitment must be cast to a wide enough audience to achieve these desired results.

Volunteer managers should also have a concept of what demographic they want their volunteers to be in. In the planning for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, the TOCOG was committed to having accessible volunteer opportunities for people regardless of their age, gender, disability or nationality (Tokyo Metropolitan Government et al., 2016). To create opportunities for the younger generations, TOCOG was working to create programs for school aged children to work on volunteer projects as school activities and to allow children to volunteer with their parents as City Volunteers. (Tokyo Metropolitan Government et al., 2016). For the adults uninterested in volunteering with their children, the plan was to create childcare centers and encourage employers to allow for time off from work to increase the opportunity for volunteers of Japan. The London Organizing Committee of the 2012 Olympic Games also had a program for youth to help, calling them 'Young Game Makers' and reserving about 1,500 positions for individuals under the age of eighteen (IOC, 2010). The TOCOG was also offering opportunities for groups to volunteer together to encourage participation (Tokyo Metropolitan Government et al., 2016).

Thinking outside the box can help the recruitment process. For example, a successful youth sport program with a unique volunteer labor-force is the Leaders in Exercise and Athletics Program or LEAP, in London, Ontario. It began when Wendy Glover was disappointed with the youth sports in her community. She decided to help make a change, creating a program that uses high school students as volunteers in the programs. The program encourages volunteer managers to “imagine if [they] had a group of passionate, optimistic, energetic individuals ready to help, just waiting to be asked ...quality volunteers that shouldn't be overlooked: teen athletes” (Nematollahi, 2018). The LEAP program was created in conjunction with a local high school, supplying a never-ending source of possible teens to join the program and subsequently become volunteers for the local youth sport programs. Women have also considered an underutilized volunteer force in the sport world (The Aspen Institute Project Play, 2013). Minimizing barriers and reaching out to diverse populations can help achieve an organization’s goals for volunteers.

Beyond the general demographic sectors of gender and age, volunteer managers should be cognizant of a volunteer’s related skills and interests. Volunteers are more likely to have favorable and positive reviews of their experience if they have an interest in their responsibilities and feel that their skill sets match the tasks they are given (Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell & Shonk, 2020).

2.4.1.2 Ways to Recruit. Platforms used to recruit volunteers should be diverse and tailored to the demographic needing to be recruited (Tokyo Metropolitan Government et al., 2016). For example, social media campaigns might be tailored to younger generations and email marketing towards older age groups. As Connors (2012, p. xix) explains, volunteer managers “need to hone program management skills that will enable them to recruit and manage volunteers remotely through such media as social networking.” The more inclusive a campaign is, the more likely it is to attract a wide variety of volunteer to the position. This will allow volunteer managers to have more choice in matching volunteers’ skills to an organization’s needs later in the selection process. Volunteer managers should also be aware of barriers to volunteering that an individual may experience. (Hahmann et al., 2020). The awareness should be developed in the planning phases so barrier-breaking measures can be established once recruiting begins (Hahmann et al., 2020).

Using an organization to provide volunteers is a common method to find willing volunteers. Some companies may offer time off of work, paid ‘volunteer days’ or just include

inter-organizational help as a job requirement. An example includes Salesforce, a sponsor of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee, which offers paid volunteer time off. When partnering with organizations that are encouraging their own workforce to volunteer, it is vital to include detailed plans for the organization and volunteers to understand their role (Kikou, 2001). Building and maintaining a strong relationship through communication between organizations will help to support the volunteers in their efforts and create longevity in the organizations supporting each other.

Studies of volunteer recruitment have found that current and previous volunteers are one of the most common sources of new volunteer recruits (Anderson & Cairncross, 2005). This is significant for volunteer managers because they need to ensure their current volunteers have a positive experience while also fostering opportunities for those volunteers to use their networks to engage possible volunteers. This snowball style of recruitment can be positive but can also lead to a negative reputation if a volunteer is not satisfied with their experience.

2.4.1.3 Screenings and Choosing Volunteers. Following the recruitment of volunteers and submission of applications or interest from the general public, an organization must screen volunteers and finalize their workforce. Screenings can be as simple as a background check to be aware of any criminal activity. Especially for volunteers working with children, any organizations require these at a minimum (Screening Canada, 2021). Lengthier and expansive screening processes also exist for volunteers and can appear similar to a job interview with face-to-face meetings and preferred previous work or volunteer experience (Tokyo Metropolitan Government et al., 2016). Strong screenings help to establish which volunteers can be relied on to fulfill their responsibilities and have positive impact on the event (Kikou, 2001). In some cases, volunteer managers will have to adjust their strategy for finding volunteers that fit the role. Machin and Paine (2008) found that sport and recreation organizations were more likely than other types of volunteer organizations to want to increase the involvement of volunteers. If too few capable individuals apply for a volunteer role, the volunteer manager may look into widening their recruitment demographic, lowering volunteer requirements, or adding more incentives to the position.

2.4.2 Volunteer Training

2.4.2.1 Who to Train. Volunteer training is an important investment in the outcome of volunteers and their ability to successfully complete assigned tasks as well as help create

favorable perspectives of their experience. The training offered to and required of a sport volunteer will be dependent on various volunteer roles that exist in the sporting world. As an example, the planning for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games included the need for volunteer positions in doping control, language translators, city guides, transportation, registration, media centers, medical staff, uniform distribution, in the Olympic Village and more (Tokyo Metropolitan Government et al., 2016). In large events, including the Olympics, volunteers go through a few stages of training. The first training sessions are usually general trainings that are useful to all volunteers. After this, volunteers will move into more specific venue training and other specialized training needed for their individual roles (Kikou, 2001). All volunteer leaders should receive additional training to include not only job responsibilities, but also how to lead others (Kikou, 2001).

Community sport volunteers tend to have less training provided or made mandatory than mega event volunteers. The Aspen Institute Project Play found that in 2019, fewer 30% of youth sport coaches, the majority of whom are volunteers, had undergone training for their role (2019a). Mandatory training has previously been considered a barrier and thought to be a reason for people to not volunteer, because of the additional time commitment it requires. In fact, the opposite has been found and required training is not a hinderance for individuals looking to volunteer and can actually be an incentive to help reduce any fears over what is required for successful performance (The Aspen Institute Project Play, 2013). It is however important for volunteer managers to consider the availability of their volunteers and not over-burden them with training. Nathan Plowman, of Nike, describes his term ‘kitchen table coach.’ He explains that “volunteer coaches have a different approach which is just in time... I wonder whether we can identify the three key things that coaches actually need to know that consistently come up 95% of the time” (The Aspen Institute Project Play, 2013, p. 9). Plowman’s philosophy suggests that volunteer training should focus on the core competencies that a volunteer will need to know in their role. This limited version of training helps to eliminate barriers around time constraints that a volunteer may have. Because of the nature of CSO volunteers, they likely have less unaccounted-for time to be able to go into great depth for trainings, compared to mega event volunteers who usually block out significant time over a shorter period to help with the event.

Volunteers may be recruited for their experience in volunteering or having previous experience in a similar program or event. Training, however, should remain a part of the

volunteer experience for all despite any previous endeavors. Training helps determine the outcome of a volunteer's experience (Green & Chalip, 2004) and can increase their confidence and understanding of their role (Kikou, 2001).

2.4.2.2 How to Train. Training, similar to recruitment strategies, should be inclusive in delivery format. Strong communication from event organizers leads to higher retention among volunteers (Kikou, 2004). Diverse communication in training can include visual and audio components of the subject matter as well as practicing of their role so volunteers can have a comprehensive understanding. Test events are used as a tool for mega event organizers, especially for Olympic Games, to practice before the main event. Olympic host cities will become hosts of multiple large events in the years leading up to the Games. For example, Brazil hosted the FIFA World Cup in 2014, two years before hosting the Summer Olympic Games. Rio de Janeiro also hosted smaller events and Olympic qualifiers to prepare venues and employees in the months before the opening ceremonies. After the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) hosted an event in Rio de Janeiro in April 2016, power outages and equipment failures during the event proved to be useful for the organizers to make adjustments before the Olympics commenced (Dunbar, 2016). Local Olympic volunteers are encouraged to assist at the test events in order to become more familiar with the processes of the specific venue.

For training to be worthwhile for volunteers and the organization putting them on, it should be accessible to the volunteers. Accessibility includes the physical location of a training event as well as the timing. For volunteers, it is important to have training as available as possible to fit within the scope of their other personal commitments. The London 2012 Olympic Games offered training on weekends to their volunteers which allowed those with full time jobs to still participate (Nichols & Ralston, 2012). Considering that a majority of sport volunteer are also employed while they volunteer, efforts made by the volunteer managers to be accommodating will reflect well on the management team.

The impact of training on job performance and evaluation of experience is confirmed by studies in both CSO volunteers and at mega events. Nichols and Ralston (2012, p. 113) found that for the London 2012 Olympic Games, "there was a boost to motivation once volunteers were engaged in practical training for their roles." On the community sport side, few volunteer coaches are given or required to take sport specific training and only 19% are given training in motivational techniques (The Aspen Institute, 2013). These statistics are threatening youth sport

participation because bad experience and poor coaching are primary reasons for athletes dropping out. If a child quits a sport because of a poor coach who was not given proper training, it is a direct failure of the volunteer managers and can have an impact on the future of the organization.

The impacts of a positive training experience can be seen in the evaluation volunteers provide. Building a sense of community and confidence through trainings greatly helps the outcome. For example, Olympic Games volunteers are given the same uniforms and training offerings as volunteers in other disciplines and some staff, which creates cohesion amongst the group (Tokyo Metropolitan Government et al., 2016). Volunteer leaders must also be trained in the value of giving feedback and praise to the volunteers they oversee. Consistent, constructive evaluation is beneficial to both the volunteer leader and volunteers themselves to help provide growth and a stronger volunteer force (Boyce, 1971).

2.4.3 Volunteer Management

2.4.3.1 Organizational Structure. Because volunteers take on numerous roles from what are considered entry level through supervisory and decision-making roles, it is necessary to clarify within an organization what a ‘volunteer manager’ is responsible for. As Connors (Ed., 2012) explained, a volunteer manager can either be a paid employee whose duties include overseeing the volunteer workforce, or a volunteer who is responsible for managing a particular aspect of the organization. This distinction can alter the organizational structure, and for the purposes of this thesis, volunteer manager and volunteer management will describe a paid employee of the organization whose primary responsibilities include the functions of human resource management surrounding volunteers for said organization. A volunteer leader on the other hand, will be the term for an individual who is volunteering their time or skillsets without financial benefit, and whose responsibilities include overseeing other volunteers.

When structuring an organization to accommodate a volunteer work force, a dedicated management plan and strong intraorganizational communication can positively impact the outcome of volunteer retention rate and effectiveness. A study by the Institute for Volunteering Research found that of organizations in the voluntary and community sector, only 7% of organizations had an individual dedicated in spending all of their working hours on volunteer management (Machin & Paine, 2008). Of the same volunteer managers studied, 78% of respondents reported that they spend no more than half of their working time on volunteer

management. To account for the lack of a singular dedicated volunteer managers, 43% of organizations had their volunteer management responsibilities spread out between multiple employees or multiple departments (Machin & Paine, 2008).

The organizational structure can also impact the volunteer and where they fall in the labor force. Tall organizations, such as the IOC include lots of managers with very specific responsibilities (Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell & Shonk, 2014). Tall structures are driven by policy and are detail oriented. This creates a strong bureaucracy and oversight of employees and volunteers. For high-risk events, especially those on the world stage, it would be understandable to have a structure of this nature in order to have high confidence in the volunteers. On the other hand, flat organizations, which are usually smaller in size and function, have a more well-rounded labor force (Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell & Shonk, 2014). Due to the smaller size, it is beneficial to have employees and volunteers able to do more tasks. Consequently, decisions are made more independently than in tall organizational structures (Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell & Shonk, 2014). An example of a flat sport organization would be an adult sport league in which players also act as administrators, financiers, and schedulers.

2.4.3.2 Leading vs Managing. In an interview with Harriet Naylor, one of the early authors of volunteer management, Honer (1986) recounts Naylor's belief that volunteer managers should be striving to be leaders rather than managers of volunteers. Characteristics of a using a leadership style with volunteers includes gaining respect and influence through effective communication and decision-making regarding the roles of volunteers in their responsibilities and as individuals. Leadership in volunteering should also include sharing and advocating for a collective vision (Fisher & Cole, 1993). Management styles are in place to make the organization operate as efficiently as possible with more emphasis placed on the organization than the individual. Including leadership in the position of volunteer manager can create a balance of styles to utilize volunteers most effectively for the organization's benefit.

An aspect of managing, and subsequently leading, volunteers is using their motivations as direction for the volunteer manager to determine strategies to best secure retention and strong performances from their labor force (Cuskelly, Hoye & Auld, 2006). As Connors (2012, p. 19) describes volunteer managers "are learning to be more effective while managing and leading within dynamic, fluid program environments." The dynamics of volunteers can be rooted in their motivations for volunteering. Because many are highly motivated by social connection, a

manager may need to adjust the components of volunteering to account for these motivations. Strategies can include adjusting scheduling, having in person training for people to meet face-to-face, or offering recognition festivities in a group setting. Cho, Wong, and Chiu (2020) also recommend allowing volunteers to be included in relevant decision-making processes. The sense of autonomy and collaboration among their fellow volunteers can help them to feel empowered in their role. An empowered volunteer is more likely to work hard to achieve the organizational goals and be overall more satisfied with the volunteering endeavor. Connors (2012) also warns of the risks of measuring volunteers' success with the same evaluations used for paid employees. Part of the volunteer management process should include the creation of volunteer specific standards and practices.

2.4.3.3 Qualities of a Good Volunteer Management System. Efficient communication is an important component of any working group. For volunteers who are likely not integrated into the organization on a regular basis like employees would be, an organizational chart can be useful to know which department or employee has specific responsibilities as well as who to report to for questions and concerns (Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell & Shonk, 2020). Another key element of volunteer management is strategically using the motivation of volunteers to achieve the desired results of the volunteer position (Anderson & Cairncross, 2005). The volunteers' motivations should not only be leveraged from the first touchpoint, but throughout their entire time with the organization. The recruitment stage is also an imperative step because it sets the tone for the entire program or event (Anderson & Cairncross, 2005). Quality management systems will clearly outline the expectations of volunteers in the recruitment phase as well as be open for further questions. Strong recruitment strategies will likely lead to finding the right demographic of volunteer for the organization (Connors, 2012).

Flexible organizations and volunteer managers also have a better chance at retaining volunteers and gaining new ones compared to rigid structures (Cho, Wong & Chiu, 2020). Pigeon-holing volunteers to fall under one set management style can interrupt the relation and motivations of volunteers to help out. By "considering volunteers' personalities and preferences [an organization can] moderate turnover rate and increase satisfaction" (Cho, Wong & Chiu, 2020 p. 8). Flexible organizations are usually better equipped to retain volunteers when systemic changes are being made within the organization or sport world at large. These mass shifts can disrupt the cohesion that was created between organization and volunteer, posing a real challenge

to organizations (Cuskelly, Hoye & Auld, 2006). The USA Football organization has a list of steps for ways that volunteer managers should treat youth sport volunteers (Meredith, 2018) which promotes communication, organization, flexibility, and training as elements of successfully managing volunteers. The organization also includes strategies such as being grateful, calling (for clearer communication) and only taking what the volunteer can give. When managing volunteers, a good quality program will avoid overextending their volunteers and always show gratitude for the efforts and time they have put in. Only in severe cases should a volunteer be dismissed from their role, as volunteers are not as expendable as employees may be (Meredith, 2018).

2.4.3.4 Qualities of a Bad Volunteer Management System. Volunteers are similar to employees in that they want to be treated with respect and feel dignified in their role. Poor communication and management can have obvious effects on a volunteer's experience. Volunteers who apply and are chosen for a specified job want to be able to use their skillset as an advantage and benefit to the organization. If they are chosen for a role that does not play to their skills or are told they would be using them and do not, a volunteer may feel undervalued, which can lead to a lack of enthusiasm and motivation (Nichols & Ralston, 2012). In addition, if there is "extreme personal inconvenience" that needs to be overcome in order to become a volunteer, such as travel, expenses, or unusual shift hours, a volunteer may choose to abandon their position (Nichols & Ralston, 2012). All of these issues can likely be mitigated through clear and concise communication and upfront notification about changes.

If issues persist, it may be due to differences in expectations and working styles of the organization and the individual. Cuskelly, Hoye and Auld (2006) have found that paid employees working with volunteers in similar roles can sometimes be the root of workplace problems. If one individual is compensated with money and another compensated without financial benefits, or if individuals completing similar tasks are managed with different expectations, complications will arise. Volunteer managers should be clear about where the volunteers fall into the organizational structure and that the expectations of them may be different than employees, due to their volunteer status. Hager and Brudney (2004), however, did find that some vigilant management practices are only beneficial to the organization and not to the individual. According to their study, two thirds of organizations had consistent supervision and communication with their volunteers, but it ultimately led to reduced rates of retention

(Hager & Brudney, 2004). They attribute this to the lack of autonomy that volunteers may feel in their volunteer role because they associate constant supervision by their volunteer manager with their regular employment. Volunteers want to feel like they are contributing on their own terms.

2.4.4 Volunteer Recognition

A study of British organizations which used volunteers for various organizational duties found that 78% of these organizations had some system for recognition and rewarding volunteers (Machin & Paine, 2008). The study also found that individuals in paid volunteer management positions had a higher rate of indicating that they did offer rewards to volunteers.

A ‘thank you’ and recognition for proficient performance cannot be distributed monetarily to volunteers. Because success and social comparison are closely related to personal equity in global north societies (Cummings, 2020), volunteers need to be recognized in creative ways to retain their engagement and elicit positive perspectives of the volunteers. As humans, positive reinforcement and reward plays a significant role in behavior (Cho, Wong & Chiu, 2020). It is important for volunteer managers to understand and implement recognition systems to be able to influence volunteers’ behavior to be favorable to the goals of the organization.

Green and Chalip’s (2004) research found that the experience and emotions tied to volunteering holds greater value to volunteers than accolades (2004). Volunteer managers need to understand that rewards and accolades cannot be used as a band-aid to incentivize a volunteer who lacks intrinsic motivations. It is the responsibility of the volunteer manager to create an experience that encourages intrinsic motivations such as a sense of community and purpose, in their role. These intrinsic motivations can lead to stronger volunteers.

Volunteer managers who gave volunteers recognition and rewards were also rated to have more positive management practices, which is consistent with findings by Fox and Wheeler in 2002 (Cho, Wong & Chiu, 2020).

2.4.5 Volunteer Evaluation, Retention and Transfer of Knowledge

Once volunteers have completed their responsibilities, they may be asked to complete evaluations or give feedback to their volunteer managers, similar to job exit interviews. Survey Monkey, a web-based survey and data analytics platform, recommends issuing surveys immediately after a volunteer’s experience in order to obtain results that are current and which can be distributed to volunteer managers to make changes that will accurately reflect the feedback. The results of surveys and questionnaires can be impacted by their delivery method, so

the process as well as the content need to be carefully designed. An example of this deliberate process plan can be seen in the Australian organization VolunteeringWA and their Steps for Obtaining Feedback from Volunteers. The first three steps center around the who and what of the feedback (as explained below). The organization's instructions explain the importance of narrowing in on what information is needed, who should it be obtained from and how the volunteer managers should reach that specific demographic. Similar to the recruitment process, a variety of communication strategies such as email, interviews, and Facebook polls, can all be options for obtaining the required data. After the method is chosen and data has been collected, steps four and five instruct how to prepare the data for analyzing and follow-up to clarify any information that needs more details. Finally, the data should be categorized, analyzed and evaluations should turn into a plan that will help to address any changes that need to be made. VolunteeringWA recommends constructing a timeline to help ensure changes to organizational policies and practices will be made, while also being practical about what can be accomplished with the resources available.

- a. Step 1 – What do you want feedback on, and from whom?
- b. Step 2 – How will you get this information?
- c. Step 3 – How will you get your target demographic to provide feedback?
- d. Step 4 – Keep track of the feedback
- e. Step 5 – Follow up on the feedback
- f. Step 6 – Evaluating your feedback
- g. Step 7 – Make an action plan. (VolunteeringWA, n.d.)

Using the evaluations as a guide, volunteer managers and organizations can help to improve upon organizational policies and practices for their future events by transferring the knowledge they gained from the feedback into action. In community sport organizations, feedback from season to season or from one administrator to the next can be critical in maintaining the function and continual improvement of the program. Inadequate management of volunteers can lead to lower retention rates, with two fifths of volunteers citing this as a primary reason for not returning to their volunteer position (Hager & Brudney, 2004). Volunteers however can provide insights that regular employees may be hesitant to voice. Naylor, a pioneer of volunteer management, describes this phenomenon as volunteers being more open in their

frustrations and suggestions “because they do not personally benefit by taking a stand” (Honer, 1986). She describes how the issues communicated by volunteers can improve the program. In addition, she explains that volunteers who donate their time and effort want it to be used efficiently, so they can be great resources for providing feedback about the effectiveness of the organizational structure and management. Volunteer managers and organizations should not discount suggestions made by volunteers and rather incorporate them into the strategic planning for improvement of an organization.

2.5 Community Sport Volunteers

2.5.1 Community Sport Volunteer Demographics

Local volunteers play an important role in the functioning of community sport programs. These volunteers account for millions of people involved, hours donated, and dollars saved to keep sports as a stable fixture in the community. In Australia, a study conducted between 1997 and 2010 found that consistently, over 9% of the Australian population had responsibilities in sport organizations yet were not considered to be athletes (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Of these individuals, over 1.3 million, or 81%, were volunteers without financial benefits.

Similarly, in Canada, about 5% of the total population, equaling 1.17 million people contribute to community sports in a volunteer capacity (Doherty, 2005). The province of Ontario reflects these numbers with about 4% of the population volunteering for CSOs (Doherty, 2005). With each volunteer averaging 143 hours annually, Canadians contribute 167 million hours to sports every year.

The United States of America has about 12% of the population volunteering in sport organizations (United States Census Bureau, 2021) and contributing 52 hours annually (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016).

For most sport volunteers, there is a connection either with the sport itself, or with a participant of the sporting organizations. Of the Australian volunteers, 93% had participated as an athlete as a child (ABS, 2012). In Canada, the same question found that 86% of sport volunteers played as a child (Doherty, 2005).

There is also a commonality among the demographics of the average CSO volunteer. In Canada, sport volunteers tend to be university educated, 35- to 44-year-old men who are employed full time and live with a spouse and dependents (Doherty, 2005). Similarly, in Australia (2012), 55% of sport volunteers are males, with 35-to-54-year old's comprising of 40%

of the sport volunteers and the adults in households with school aged children had a volunteer rate in CSOs of 23% compared to other types of families (ABS, 2012). The data from the United States corroborates the Australian statistics of a typical sport volunteer. Of the volunteering opportunities available, helping in sport organizations was the second highest engagement option with 9.3% of male volunteers participating in CSOs (US BLS, 2016). The same study found that parents were more likely to help in activities in which their children participated, such as sports.

2.5.2 Volunteer positions in community sport

Volunteer positions in community sport organizations can encompass all aspects of functionality. For example, Australian CSOs are primarily operated by volunteers. These organizational positions can range from coach and instructor to secretary and treasurer of the group. Sports conducted through organizations that are either non-profit, state-based, or for-profit, all need to go through processes to become established in the business bureaus of the local government. Bookkeepers and finance departments of CSOs also have to be volunteers if the organization is structured to only include unpaid labor. Coaches, referees and sport administrators are also vital roles to an operational CSO (Cuskelly, 2004). A study by Cuskelly, Hoye and Auld found “that coaches are a significant category of sport volunteers who make substantial contributions of their time to VSOs” (2006, p. 124). With volunteer coaches making up 70% of coaches for athletes ages six to 10 in the United States (The Aspen Institute Project Play, 2019b), it is imperative to recognize their contributions and the necessity of these volunteers in the continuation of participation of young athletes. The Aspen Institute (2019a) also found that only 30% of youth sport coaches had any training, ranging from CPR and safety, to sport specific tactics and motivation techniques. A lack of perceived qualifications needed or investment in coaches’ skillsets could be an indicator for recruitment and retention rates of volunteers if compared with volunteer motivation data.

2.5.3 Challenges in Community Sport Volunteering

A main challenge of community sport organization in regard to volunteers is retention over time. In a study of British volunteer managers, half of the sport and recreation organizations surveyed stated that their organization had a problem keeping volunteers, more than any other type of volunteer organizations (Machin & Paine, 2008). At the same time, many organizations have seen an increase in sport participation, especially with youth athletes, over the past few decades. In Australia, volunteer rates from 1993 to 2001 reduced by 9% on average, with the last

three of these years studied seeing a reduction of 17% (Cuskelly, 2004). Encouragement for participation in sport and physical activity has come from health departments, government agencies and private organizations. Examples include, former United States First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign launched in 2010 ("First Lady," n.d.), Sport England chartered in 1996 (Sport England) and National Olympic Committee campaigns throughout the world. The strategy for many of these organizations is to remove barriers to entry, lower costs, and improve or create facilities, but they rarely plan for the infrastructure of personnel.

Another issue in the CSO volunteer workforce is the lack of diversity and representation of the community in the volunteers. The demographic statistics show that educated, middle or upper class, men ages 35-55 are most likely to be volunteering in sport organizations (The Aspen Institute, 2019a). The Aspen Institute (2019a) reported that while female coaches and role models in sport are imperative to retention of girls in in sport, they only accounted for 27% of head coaches. Individuals with lower socio-economic status are already less likely to be consistent participants in sport. As CSO research has shown, parents of a player involved are more likely to become volunteers. Therefore, lower income groups are also an underrepresented group of volunteers. Cuskelly (2004) reported that non-native English speakers of Australia and migrants to the country are less likely to volunteer for CSOs compared to English speaking Australian-born individuals. Multi-lingual volunteers could be a great resource for reaching participants who may have had barriers to participate. This is reflected in Cuskelly, Hoye and Auld's sentiment that "a challenge facing volunteers is the realignment of recruitment practices to ensure that such practices embrace diversity to ensure the VSOs are more comprehensively connected with their local community" (2006, p.151).

Early life exposure to sport participation or volunteering could influence an individual's predisposition to becoming a sport volunteer later in their life. Because of this, volunteer managers could consider participation as a long-term investment for future volunteers (Doherty, 2005).

The current trend of youth athletes specializing in one sport at a young age and turning to travel or elite teams has caused a shift in the mindset of the purpose of youth sports and community sport organizations. The professionalization, or professional level standards for younger players can negatively impact the volunteer labor force and CSOs (Cuskelly, Hoye & Auld, 2006). The same study noted that higher expectations can lead to fewer applications for

sport official positions because the compensations and organizational support do not equate to the standard of performance expected by spectators, athletes and coaches. Officials and administrators are more likely to be affected and volunteers in these positions are declining at rates much higher than coaches (Cuskelly, 2004).

2.5.4 Uniqueness of Community Sport Volunteers

Community sport volunteers are unique to other sport volunteers in their motivations and the perceived value of their role. While most sport volunteers usually have a connection to the sport, it is less likely that sport volunteers have professional training in their sport volunteer role. The recruitment of people with relatively no required experience in the job, combined with little to no training provided beyond basic sport rules, is seemingly only with CSO volunteers (The Aspen Institute, 2019a). As many organizations cite having trouble recruiting and retaining volunteers, (Machin & Paine, 2008), the low levels of investment in these volunteers, both in improving their capability and desire, is counterproductive. It is this conundrum that makes community sport volunteering a unique environment compared to other sport volunteers. Organizations seem to rely heavily on this form of labor, but there is a disconnect in the operational structure of personnel management leading to the volunteers being undervalued. Another factor in the failure to appreciate volunteers is the nature of coaching being undervalued in the professional world as well (The Aspen Institute, 2013). Volunteers doing the work of a professional yet do not yet have the respect they believe they deserve can ultimately lead to skepticism aimed at the volunteer position as well.

Additionally, in youth sports, “some adults ruin it by verbally abusing umpires and officials, resulting in an officiating crisis” (The Aspen Institute, 2019a, p. 9). While it is possible that the public are unaware of volunteers in these roles, it is the responsibility of the organization to educate the public and protect their workers.

2.5.5 Impact of Community Sport Volunteers

Because community sport organizations many times have volunteers built into the infrastructure, it would be difficult for them to continue without the support of their volunteer workforce. CSOs with the most impact are able to determine what the community values and reflect it in their programs while managing volunteers in an effective way to keep sport as a positive permanent fixture in the community (Cuskelly, Hoye & Auld, 2006). The volunteers and their addition to these organizations are “critical in achieving participation growth in community

sport” (Cuskelly, 2004 p. 5). To retain these volunteers and the positive community impact, organizations should focus on creating a “pleasant and user-friendly experience” because people are more likely to help “when the process is pleasant and they feel they’re really helping the team” (Meredith, 2018, p. 1). By giving members of the community an opportunity to feel like they are giving back, can produce a cycle of more volunteers through the positive reputation they have in the community.

A study on volunteers of non-profit German sports clubs estimated the hourly wage of volunteers would equate to between €9.98 and €14.27 (Orlowski & Wicker, 2015). The costs saved in hourly wages can be beneficial in lowering costs of sports participation to the public, which allows for a more inclusive space. This is especially important for communities in which financial barriers to participation are very prominent. In addition, volunteers that receive training as part of their role can possibly use that knowledge to improve their community through their career, other volunteer work or by transferring the knowledge on.

2.6 Mega Sport Event Volunteers

2.6.1 Defining Mega Events

Mega events differ from community events in their purpose, reach and sheer size. Tomlinson (2010, p. 298) defines mega events as “large-scale cultural events that have usually at least a national profile and impact, and often an international one, and that are organized on a larger scale than routine fixtures in the sporting calendar.” The Olympic Games, the Tour de France, and the NFL Superbowl are all examples of mega sport events. Events in the mega event category usually have more volunteer roles to fill but can compensate with the unique appeal of being a part of these unique events. With larger events and subsequently more volunteers, the volunteer management strategies must be more complex and specific to avoid confusion and missteps. The magnitude of volunteers makes for essential work for the volunteer managers to help create a successful event (Cho, Wong & Chiu, 2020).

2.6.2 Volunteers of Mega Events

Volunteer managers require strategies to recruit volunteers for mega events as well as for ensuring sufficient training and longevity of their volunteer experience. The use of smaller events, which can be used as test events in the lead up to the main event, helps to overlap volunteers and get extra training and practice. The 2020 TOCOG was involved in events before the Games, including Japan’s hosting of the 2019 Rugby World Cup, to overlap volunteers and

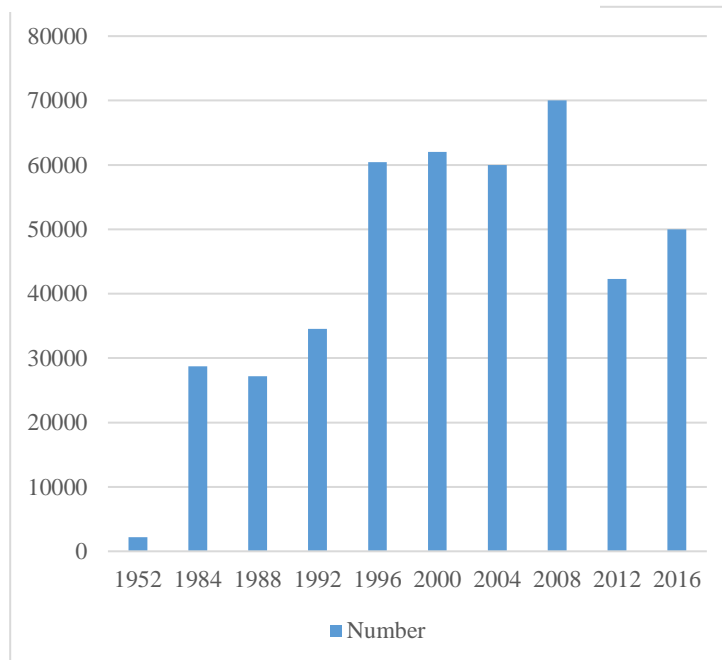
test venues for readiness for hosting the Olympic Games. (Tokyo Metropolitan Government et al., 2016). Los Angeles is in preparation for hosting the Olympic Games in 2028 and is in contention for becoming a host city for the 2026 FIFA World Cup (Boehm, 2021). If granted with hosting football matches in 2026, the LACOG will likely use the World Cup as a test event to refine their plans for hosting competitions two years later as did Brazil and Rio de Janeiro before the 2016 Olympic Games. Volunteers who participate in the World Cup may also be recruited to join the Olympic volunteer team because of their knowledge and recent training for mega sporting events.

2.7 Olympic Volunteers

2.7.1 Demographics of Olympic volunteers

Olympic volunteers were first officially introduced in the 1948 Olympic Games in London (IOC, 2019). Since then, the number of volunteers has increased to the tens of thousands and the applications for those positions reaching over 200,000 for the Tokyo 2020 Games before they were redesigned to accommodate for the pandemic (IOC, 2019). Figure 2 displays the increase in Olympic volunteers of summer Games which follows along with the expansion of the Games in athletes, events, and spectators.

Figure 2: Olympic Volunteers by Year



Part of the IOC's mission and goal of the Olympic Games is to build a better world through sport (IOC, 2017), and volunteers are included in this mindset. They are expected and trained to represent the values of Olympism throughout their time volunteering and hopefully beyond. Their participation and exuberance of the Olympic ideals plays a large role in the environment surrounding the Games (Kikou, 2001).

The roles of Olympic volunteers expand across a wide network of professional fields and skill sets. Those areas include general volunteers, who are responsible for aspects, which do not require specialized training, such as uniform distribution, accreditation checks and spectator assistance. Specialized volunteers have backgrounds in the medical field, press, or speak multiple languages and help those areas run smoothly while reducing stress in the budget and recruiting efforts (IOC, 2010). Olympic volunteers may be inclined to apply to practice or expand upon skills they already have and organizing committees plan for this and can use it as an incentive for recruitment. In Barcelona 1992, the organizing committee created grants for volunteers to study different languages in countries across Europe in hopes of recruiting polyglot volunteers (IOC, 2019). In recent games, including London 2012, Rio 2016 and included in the plans for Tokyo 2020, a sect of volunteers has been included in helping visitors around the hosting city with Olympic and non-Olympic related queries (Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 2016). Volunteer leaders are also recruited by the organizing committee to help lead groups of volunteers in specific areas. These volunteers go through a more extensive application and screening process and are chosen for their strength and history of volunteer management (Kikou, 2001).

2.7.2 Uniqueness of Olympic Volunteers

Volunteers of the Olympic Games are recruited from around the globe and from all walks of life. The uniqueness of Olympic volunteer motivations comes from the desire for a 'once-in-a-lifetime' experience (even though volunteers can apply in following years) and for the grandeur surrounding the Olympic Games. The Athens 2004 organizing committee included recruitment targeting to the Greek diaspora to help them create a unique experience by connecting with their ancestral culture (Kikou 2001). As Fairley, Kellett and Green's 2007 study described, Olympic volunteers can gain a feeling of nostalgia for their experiences at the Olympics. Many of the volunteer programs created for Olympic Games include strategies that hope to capitalize on this emotion and encourage continued volunteering in the local community. Barcelona 1992 created

the Association of Olympic Volunteers; Sydney had the Spirit of Sydney and Athens 2004 started the National Agency for Volunteering. Both organizations were created in response to hosting the Olympics and to continue to foster the volunteering interest that rose from the response of Olympic volunteers (IOC, 2019). Due to political and economic development of Greece in the decades leading up to the 2004 Games, volunteering in the country was transformed from primarily religious and state based to general philanthropy, helping a wide variety of programs (Kikou, 2001). Using the volunteer program created by the ATHOC and the public's views toward the practice, volunteering increased throughout the country.

Even though they are not offered financial benefits for giving their time and energy to help support the games, Olympic volunteers receive other rewards to help keep them engaged and committed to their role (Kikou, 2001). All Olympic volunteers receive custom uniforms designed for staff of the Games, see Figure 3 and Figure 4. Uniforms are usually colorful and later become collectable items, but they also allow for athletes and guests to easily recognize a volunteer who can offer assistance. Training, meals, and transportation to events is also part of the planning for Olympic volunteers, but they are required to find their own transportation to the host city as well as accommodation.

Figure 3: 1984 Olympic Volunteer with Peter Ueberroth



(McCabe, 1984)

Figure 4: 2012 Olympic Volunteer



(Getty Images, 2012)

2.7.3 Impact Post-Games

With the additional stress placed on host committees by the IOC to have a systematic plan for the legacy of the Games, volunteerism is a welcomed topic. The organizations of Olympic volunteers that are created after the closing of the Games can help to keep volunteers in sport in the surrounding communities or in their home country.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The review of literature in the previous chapter gave insight into the management of sport volunteers and the uniqueness of motivation and management steps for community sport volunteers compared to mega event volunteers. However, the literature reviewed did not include a comparative, qualitative study that detailed the best practices of these two different types of sport volunteers. The following sections of this chapter provides insight on the research methodology and design used in this thesis to investigate the overall experiences and perspectives of volunteers in terms of the management techniques used throughout the four major steps of the volunteer experience: recruitment, training, management, and evaluation.

3.2 Research Design

This comparative study used qualitative methods to discover trends in the management and experiences of sport volunteers. The trends were then categorized and organized into themes. The resulting narrative from the themes of the research were analyzed to assist volunteer managers by offering practical ways to improve upon the volunteer experience of sport volunteers through management techniques.

A review of literature was conducted to create a foundation in knowledge of the current practices in volunteer management as well as providing the historical context to help explain how practices have evolved. Statistics found in some of the literature helped provide quantitative context and parameters to the creation of research questions and the subsequent data collection process.

Following the literature review, interviews were conducted to answer the research questions.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected between the 13th of November and 12th of December in 2021 through recordings of video chats using the Zoom platform. All communication between participants and the interviewer were conducted in English. Interviews were semi-structured, and participants were chosen in a purposive sampling by ways of targeted Facebook groups and the researcher's extended network. Participants describing their experience in community sport organizations were also screened to ensure their volunteer work was in a global north, English speaking country to be consistent with data found in the literature review. Because of the comparative

nature of the study, an equal number of participants were interviewed to represent viewpoints from community sport volunteers and mega sporting event volunteers, some of whom had experiences in both areas.

3.4 Nature of the Data

The nature of the data compiled from the literature review was a combination of quantitative and qualitative, and used to create a comprehensive understanding of the general themes in different sectors of sport volunteer management.

The data compiled from the interviews was qualitative and focused on more specific in-depth examples from the perspectives of the volunteer respondents and was analyzed to compare community sport volunteer management with mega sporting event volunteer management. A list of interview questions can be found in Appendix I.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed with the understanding of the history and current general trends of sport volunteer management. Interviews with participants were recorded using Zoom video chat software. They were later transcribed, with initial transcription using the NVIVO software and corrections made by the author. MaxQDA, a qualitative data software, was used to code and sort data. Data was coded using the evolved grounded theory, beginning with an open coding of data (Chun Tie, Birks & Francis, 2019). Axial coding was then conducted to link the themes together to begin to form a larger, more comprehensive understanding. Finally, data was selectively coded to guide analysis and determine the answers to the research questions, which are explained in the discussion section. Inductive reasoning was used to ascertain the commonalities and differences between categories to develop theories and try to answer the research questions. Examples of themes that emerged from coding included the differences in recruitment and training strategies among the two types of volunteers, the desire for quality training, communication challenges, and the value of having volunteer instead of employees in certain roles.

The results were organized in a way to help have a greater insight into the unique qualities of sport volunteer management and to help sport volunteer managers in the future.

3.6 Validity of Data

Interviews were conducted to understand the perspective of the individual and their specific experiences as a sport volunteer. Ample time and was allowed for detailed responses to be given. Follow up questions were asked if required to clarify any misunderstandings.

Interviews were semi-structured to have the same main set of questions for all participants in order to create a baseline for the comparison and to help avoid outliers that may be created by inconsistent interviews.

The interview questions were created to compare to the information discovered from the literature review. They were also developed to answer the research questions. Under the guide of sampling validity, interviewees were asked to respond to questions regarding the recruitment, training, management, and evaluation to fully encompass their experience with volunteer management.

The sample population of sport volunteers was chosen to attempt to reflect the demographics described in studies sourced in the literature review. Because the literature chosen to review for demographics of community sport volunteers was based on English speaking, global north countries, that was reflected in the choosing of interview participants. The original goal of this study was to obtain at least 12 interviews, with at least 6 community sport volunteers and 6 mega sporting event volunteers. Volunteers with experience in both fields were included as well to gain unique insight on the comparison of their volunteer experience.

Table 1 shows the identifier given to each interviewee along with details about their interview and if they volunteered for CSOs or mega events.

Table 1: Interviewee Labels and Demographics

Interviewee	Date of Interview	Interview Type	Volunteer Type	Country of Origin
I-A	Nov. 13, 2021	Video Call	Mega	Azerbaijan
I-B	Nov. 17, 2021	Video Call	CSO	USA
I-C	Nov. 26, 2021	Video Call	Mega	USA
I-D	Nov. 30, 2021	Phone Call	CSO	USA
I-E	Nov. 30, 2021	Video Call	CSO	USA
I-F	Dec. 4, 2021	Video Call	Mega	Australia
I-G	Dec. 4, 2021	Video Call	CSO	USA
I-H	Dec. 4, 2021	Video Call	CSO	Canada
I-I	Dec. 5, 2021	Video Call	Mega	Egypt
I-J	Dec. 6, 2021	Video Call	Mega	USA
I-K	Dec. 8, 2021	Phone Call	CSO	USA
I-L	Dec. 8, 2021	Video Call	CSO	USA
I-M	Dec. 9, 2021	Video Call	Mega	Germany
I-N	Dec. 9, 2021	Phone Call	Mega	USA

3.7 Reliability of Data

Qualitative data naturally have some elements of researcher bias (Salazar, 1990). The following steps were taken to mitigate personal bias. Articles chosen in the literature review regarding data from community sport organizations were restricted to data from global north, English speaking countries, and interview participants speaking about community sport organizations were restricted to the same guidelines. Interview participants were chosen to ensure no direct personal or professional connection. Using a semi-structured interview style was decided to ask the same questions of the participants while allowing for clarification or a more in depth understanding of the responses. While all research was conducted with an open mind, some degree of unintended bias is unavoidable (Salazar, 1990).

The following chapter reports the themes that were developed through coding and analysis, using quotations from interview participants for an in-depth understanding.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The systemic use of volunteers in sports turns these individuals along with their time and skills into an irreplaceable asset for the success of sports of all capacities. The motivation for this study was to learn from the volunteers of these sport organizations and events about their experiences and if any changes should be made to the management of this labor force. Because of the differences in the nature of the community sport organizations and mega sport events, another goal was to compare the best management practices between the two types of volunteers.

4.2 Interview Findings

The interview findings are organized following a similar structure to the chronological order of stages for a sports volunteer reflected in the review of literature. These four stages are: recruitment, training, management, and the closing stage. The themes of each stage centered on the similarities and differences between responses from the CSO volunteers and the mega event volunteers. Table 1 (p. 33) includes the list of identifiers given to each interviewee. A full list of quotes from the interviews that relate to each topic can be found in Appendix II.

4.2.1 Recruitment

4.2.1.1 Recruitment Stages and Strategies. The application and selection process for sport volunteers was very different for the CSO volunteers compared with the mega event volunteers. The mega events consistently used an application process and interview stages with “anywhere from three to six months after that, they let you know the same way, in an email, ‘we invite you to continue the process’” (I-N). Mega event volunteers had to seek out these opportunities on their own. CSO volunteers were more likely to learn about volunteer opportunities through personal relationships, including friends or their kids’ sport organizations. As interviewee I-G describes, “it was just more conversation, and they want to get involved. So it happened organically.” Interviewees with volunteer experiences in recent years, since the advent of widely accessible internet access, all reported online information and applications. Community events and newspaper advertisements were categorized as outliers to the common recruitment strategies.

Only one interviewee could not recall a background check process, having volunteered in the 1984 Olympic Games. All others had some combination of criminal background check and certification process to complete before becoming allowed to carry out their volunteer

responsibilities. Interviewee I-B stated that “even though [he] was there for the 20th year, they still had to do a background check and everything.” Those working with athletes in both community sport organizations and mega events recalled needing various certifications such as child abuse prevention, first aid, CPR, and “a state law that ties into concussion protocol” (I-L). Some of these requirements were also a part of the trainings which will be discussed in the next section.

4.2.1.2 Motivations. Motivations were found to be similar across both sets of interviewees, those involved in community sports organizations and those in mega sporting events. The motivations that were stated by both sets of interviewees include “pitching in, so just trying to be a good example” (I-E) by helping their community, being “passionate about sport” (I-C), positive sport memories from their youth and building personal connections. Interviewee I-H explains “the most important aspect of the curling club to me is the social side of curling with lots of great friends.”

All the CSO volunteers who had children also reported becoming involved because their children participated in the sport and “so [they] go where [their] kids go” (I-E). Youth development in sport was also a strong motivating factor for the CSO volunteers specifically. Some referred to their own positive experiences in youth sports such as interviewee I-B who explained that “it just wasn’t being successful in sport. But I really took to heart about building the confidence and the self-esteem just because that’s what my coaches gave to me.”

Three mega sport event volunteers reported professional development as a reason for volunteering. Interviewee I-F “wanted to use more physiotherapy skills” while other interviewees, such as I-I, developed skills as a volunteer. They explained that they weren’t “that person who was speaking to you, like without fear to five thousand persons. I wasn’t like that before... I was introvert, shy, which is not bad, but it’s changed me” (I-I).

Different responses by interviewees from the above motivations include wanting to be able to represent their community and to fill their time because “it was just an activity to do” (I-H). At an international event, interviewee I-I “was the only Arab. I was the only Arab person so it’s feeling like you’re doing something and the only other person I meet, like in the ministry of sport, is the Egyptian Prime Minister. Like he was so proud of me. He’s so proud that there is only one other Egyptian and he meets him.” (I-I).

4.2.1.3 Challenges and Suggestions. Interviewees listed different challenges for the two volunteer sectors. CSO volunteers mentioned unwanted or unexpected responsibilities, lack of interest and feeling underqualified as deterrent reasons. Interviewee I-L explains that “coaches don’t know either, and are very hesitant, very timid to step up and do it because they don’t want to look like idiots.” Mega event volunteers listed language requirements as a challenge, especially proficiency in English because “English is pretty much a necessity for languages” (I-C). The common challenge between both groups was the time commitment needed for volunteering, though for different reasons. CSO volunteers tend to have a longer duration of duties but with lower weekly time needed and as interviewee I-L explains, “you get the practice at four o’clock. Well, great. So you need somebody who cannot be at their job at 3:00 in time to get there.” Mega event volunteers had shorter, highly concentrated time requirement. For interviewee I-M, it worked because “now that [they’re] self-employed, [they] have the time to do it because [they] can arrange [their] own schedule.”

There were no overwhelmingly consistent suggestions from the interviewees about how to improve the recruitment process. Faster, more transparent communication about the process and understanding the motivations of volunteers were suggested. There were also differing views from mega event volunteers about recruiting new volunteers versus experienced ones.

4.2.2 Training

4.2.2.1 Structure of Training. For interviewees who had to complete training for their experience, about the same amount of time was required, 4-10 hours, for both CSO and mega event volunteers. Four CSO volunteer interviewees and one mega event interviewee reported no training or an insufficient amount of training. The delivery method of the training for mega event volunteers was heavily weighted towards online training at the volunteer’s own pace, beginning many weeks or months before the event followed by some onsite instruction. For example, in training for the 2020 Olympic Games, “Tokyo, had they had everything online, they had lots of little films and little presentations and stuff” (I-M). CSO volunteers reported in-person training sessions, with weekend long commitments close to the beginning of their volunteer responsibilities. Outlier training styles included self-taught or peer-taught unofficial sessions for CSO volunteers. Interviewee I-B “got books, CDs, videos off of YouTube. Anything that would help, I guess, give me some ideas, new ideas.”

4.2.2.2 Training Topics. Training topics were similar for each of the groups of sport volunteers. Mega event volunteers were given the history and culture surrounding their event followed by trainings within smaller groups for details about their specific responsibilities. For the general trainings of mega event volunteers, “they'll give you history and about the culture of the country because they want you familiar with it and then they'll start getting a little bit more detailed. Each country has different little cultures that you know it might be OK in your country, but it's not there or vice versa” (I-N). CSO volunteers who reported having trainings were trained on the role responsibilities and the safety aspect of coaching youth from the physical safety and legal standpoints. Both mega event volunteers and CSO volunteers described their training topics as being primarily composed of material prepared for the newer or uninformed volunteer rather than an experienced one. Four CSO volunteer interviewees also described continual training in the form of resources provided such as packets with information or “a weekly email that came out to the coaches and a lot of times they were like here, that sounds like a helpful drill for their age-appropriate level” (I-D).

4.2.2.3 Challenges and Suggestions. The challenges for trainings included the expectation for amount of time required for trainings and the accessibility of them. On the other hand, a lack of training was also a common challenge for interviewees. For interviewee I-L’s role, “there’s certainly no requirement or formal training.” The language and communication surrounding the trainings was also discussed as a problem for sport volunteers.

Both CSO and mega event volunteers described offering accessible training such as online or multiple in-person offerings as a suggestion. CSO volunteer interviewees heavily reported suggesting training on the unexpected responsibilities of dealing with unruly patrons or children with behavioral problems. Training on the goals and values of the organization, along with “how to understand the aim of volunteering” (I-I) was also suggested. The final major training suggestion was about organization investing in their volunteers and future of their volunteer labor force. For interviewee I-G, that means “one of the goals should be to give people the tools to be successful. So if you're not giving a coach the tools to be successful, then ultimately the league is not going to be successful.”

4.2.3 Management

4.2.3.1 Roles and Responsibilities. CSO volunteers who were involved in youth organizations largely had coaching and team management responsibilities. Referee and board

positions were also other positions in youth sports CSOs that interviewees held. Non-youth sport specific CSOs require volunteers in a wider variety of roles to cover all the operations of the organization. At their organization, interviewee I-H was “the chairman of the bar...the rental chairman...also the kind of a social director there at the club as well.” Mega event volunteers were involved in almost every aspect of the event. The responsibilities of those interviewed included: presenting medals at medal ceremonies, spectator services, part of the medical team, accreditation and access duties, volunteer team leader and delegation assistants.

4.2.3.2 Organizational Structure and Management Style. The organizational structure of community sport organizations usually consists of two levels, one group of board members and another group of volunteers with day-to-day responsibilities. At interviewee I-E’s organization, “there’s the president of the league, from that there’s the board of the treasurer and the chairman and so forth. So I’d say a group of six overseeing the other forty-four.” Mega events have larger, more in depth vertical organizational structures to account for the grandeur of the events compared to CSOs. Volunteers of mega events have supervisors to oversee them and answer questions. All volunteers interviewed were strongly against replacing their positions with paid positions. Interviewee I-B said, “I don’t think it would be better if it was paid. I think you would get more people that would do it, but it might not be the right fit for that particular classification of sport that I guess [the organization] was trying to achieve.” Interviewee I-G also pointed out that “If I look back at AYSO and they were run so well as a volunteer machine, it feels like that’s an example of how that you can have a good organization that’s run with volunteers.” The one outlier suggested was a CSO volunteer in favor of offering a stipend to the regional director of the organization who oversaw multiple sectors and levels of operations. Mega event volunteers also understood the need for paid employees in higher management and to complete specialized tasks. At mega events in upper management, “most of those positions do require event management or sports management experience, and so those just aren’t available to volunteers in general” (I-C).

The management style varied between the two types of volunteers. CSO volunteers reported more of a hands-off approach once their responsibilities began. Interviewee I-B reported that “I was kind of, I guess I was taken aback where no one came down just to talk to me or ask how things were going at it at any point.” The supervisors of CSOs would intervene if a problem became big enough rather than offering tools to in advance to help prevent the problems. Mega

event volunteers reported more interaction with their team leaders or supervisors. Interviewee I-C explained that “I'm somewhat disabled. And so, my manager has always been really good about making sure that I have a place where I can sit and rest or there's a chair available when I when I have time to sit. And that's been very helpful.” A few also were able to switch their volunteer role during the event after requesting changes for various reasons, such as a long commute time to a stadium and personal preference of job tasks.

4.2.3.3 Interactions with Other Volunteers. Both CSO and mega event volunteer interviewees reported a generally positive experience with their interactions with other volunteers. Many friendships and fond memories were described. For example, interviewee I-C “didn't really know that many people to begin with, but I got to know a lot of people. And that's really where I started to develop a group of people that I've kept in touch with over the years.” The challenges and disagreements that come with working with others were just as frequently reported. Most of the conflicts were the result of opposing views about the mission of their organization and the role of the volunteers. Interviewee I-D stated that “most of the people, are good. But I think, like, no matter where you go and you're always going to have those problem people that just want to be a problem.”

4.2.3.4 Surprises, Challenges, and Suggestions. Interviewees reported unexpected additional responsibilities and difficulties connecting with their fellow volunteers as surprises and challenges that they encountered. Mega event volunteers also noted that language proficiencies need to be taken into account and “just making sure the language barrier is, you know, not an issue that you know, that can be overcome.” (I-N). Suggestions, similar to their recommendations for volunteer training, included investing in volunteers and ensuring they have the necessary resources and equipment to complete their responsibilities. In interviewee I-F's experience, “by the time you ask for particular equipment, it was too late to come in.” Mega event volunteers suggested understanding how to work with a diverse group of volunteers and to treat them as an important asset to the organization. That diversity comes in all forms was acknowledged and interviewee I-C suggested that managers “need to make sure that they cater food for all kinds of eaters. So vegans, vegetarians, gluten intolerant, Muslims who needed halal food, or Jews who ate kosher... It also was right in the heart of Ramadan. So I had to make sure that anybody who was fasting were the first people assigned to eat as soon as they could eat.” Both CSO and mega event volunteers suggested quicker and simpler communication. To

summarize, interviewee I-B recommended “maybe treat the volunteers as a as an equal, and just not seeing them just as a volunteer. And help them succeed if they need help.”

4.2.4 Feedback and Recognition

4.2.4.1 Feedback Opportunities. Interviewees noted that formal opportunities for the volunteers to provide feedback regarding their experience were not always available. Interviewee I-K explained that in their organization “every few years you put out a survey and say, you know, what do you think, what would you do differently.” However, the feedback that was given by the volunteers to the organization was not consistently used to create change or volunteers were not aware of any use of their feedback to improve the organization or event. Interviewee I-J said, “I believe we did have some kind of like a survey or something like that. I do think that we did and I'm sure that I filled it out and submitted it. But I don't recall if we ever had anything returned to us that said, hey, you know, ninety-three percent of you had a great experience in this other seven percent, you know, didn't say anything.” Informal feedback opportunities were sometimes conducted by the volunteers themselves, usually through conversations and about smaller issues that could have immediate change. Interview I-I explained that with their organization, “if it's a small thing, we can do it like, OK, it's really good, let's do it. We can do it. But if it's like a major thing then I don't think it will be OK.”

4.2.4.2 Appreciation. All but one interviewee reported some form of appreciation given to them for their efforts from the organization or their supervisors. This ranged from verbal thanks to perks, mementos, celebratory gatherings, certifications and public recognition. Many mega event volunteers also mentioned their access to resources such as bus passes and meals as well as tickets or “a section in the stadium where all the volunteers can sit and you can watch when you're not on shift” (I-M). All interviewees were satisfied with the tokens of appreciation they received, and a common trend was that the appreciation they received was not their motivation for volunteering. Interviewee I-H “was nominated as a volunteer of the year at, the for the curling club and I received it. And I know you said that's obviously not why you do it, but I think it's good to always recognize it.”

4.2.4.3 Future Sport Volunteering. There was no consistency among the volunteers interviewed about if they saw being a sport volunteer included in their future. CSO volunteers reported that they were less likely to return to the organization as a volunteer if they had been involved because their children participated. As interview I-G said, “I don't know if I have the

desire or energy to learn those [new skills]. And I think it would be a little bit weird for me to be coaching the new team without my kids around.” Mega event volunteers planned to continue but understood their limits. When asked about if they would continue volunteering at mega events, interviewee I-N reported that “if I don't volunteer, I'll follow. I will go and watch. I just think at a certain point, you need to back off and let other people have a chance to volunteer.” Most, however, did plan to continue using their time to volunteer, just not always for sport organizations.

4.2.4.4 Suggestions. The interviewees suggested offering feedback for volunteer to input as well as investing in the experience of the volunteers. Interviewee I-F stated that “good feedback or bad feedback is required if you want to be better next time. So, you think that surveys could have been good.” Recognition and appreciation were also recommended, but volunteers varied in how they would like the appreciation to be shown. One example worked previously for interviewee I-E and suggested that “it might be better to do again the adult volunteer pizza party or something like this where everybody can talk.” The commonality, however, was a sense that volunteers don't need a lot of gifts or exaggerated appreciation, but they do not want to feel taken for granted. As interviewee I-M suggested, “To sort of recognize that and act in a way that they're actually, yeah, we do recognize they're doing this for free and which goes back to this point, like make sure they have the breaks and make sure they feel fine with what they're doing and they're not over having to overextend themselves and everything.”

4.3 Conclusion

The results from the interviews conducted show many similarities in management practices in each of the respective organizations. The suggestions offered by the interviewees also had similar themes between both types of volunteers despite the vast differences in motivations, training, and responsibilities. The data gathered from the interviewees showed that volunteers value quick and transparent communication from their managers. Many also wanted communication to be a two-way street for volunteers to provide feedback, but most did not see any of their feedback implemented. CSO volunteers reported fewer trainings available or mandatory while mega event volunteers went through multiple trainings before their roles. Overall, however, the volunteers interviewed reported wanting trainings to be available to them, but recommended making them accessible, flexible, and to be relevant to the actuality of their role and responsibilities. Finally, volunteers heavily reported that they are willing and wanting to

volunteer in these roles for sport organizations, but not having access to necessary resources and not being considered a valuable member of the organization can be off-putting and lower their overall satisfaction of their experience.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This exploratory inductive comparative study of community sport and mega event volunteers sought to discover best practices to manage sport volunteers. While one best way does not exist, many themes became apparent during the interviews with the group. These themes are generalized later in this chapter. As with any generalization, when used to fit the needs of a specific organization, volunteer managers will have to account for any unique qualities of their own organizational values, events and volunteer demographics. For example, while each of the modern Olympic Games has the same general structure, each is individualized to represent and highlight the uniqueness of the region and its culture. Volunteer managers can do the same by using the information learned in this study and adjust to highlight their organization and volunteer labor force.

The research from the review of literature provided insights and quantitative information about volunteerism, sport volunteers, and the types of sport organizations that work with volunteers. The empirical research conducted via interviews allowed for a more personal and in-depth account of each of these segments.

The main research question was, ‘What are the best practices of managing sport volunteers.’ To answer the main questions, first the sub-questions were answered. Therefore, this chapter will follow an inverted triangle format, with the sub-questions being answered first, followed by the main research question.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Stages of the Volunteer Experience

The goal of the first sub-question is to understand the process of the volunteer experience so it could be analyzed for consistencies and possible improvements. From the literature review, four distinct steps were found: recruitment, training, management, and evaluation. While many aspects of these steps can be fluid throughout the entire volunteer experience, such as continual training, the following subsections will highlight the main points of each of the four stages.

5.2.1.1 Recruitment. The recruitment stage is the first interaction directly with potential volunteers and thus should be treated as a first impression. In order to attract the best volunteers, the volunteer managers need to understand both the purpose of the volunteers within the

organizational structure, and the motivations of the volunteers themselves. Community sport organizations, for example, need a continuum of volunteers. As interviewee I-L stated, “just continually feeding the volunteer pipeline is the biggest challenge.” Having the understanding of the purpose of volunteers will hopefully lead to calculated recruitment strategies so volunteers understand what they are signing up to be involved with. Much of this can be achieved through clear and upfront communication which will be further discussed later in this chapter, as communication was consistently discussed in the interviews. The other half of the understanding comes from the volunteers’ motivations. As Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell and Shonk (2020, p. 174) explained, “First, it is important that managers understand the demographics and motivation of volunteers... Second, event managers should seek to identify individual fans and participants who may have an interest in volunteering... Third, it is important for event planners to place volunteers in positions that match their skill and aptitudes.” Especially for mega events, many volunteers are self-seeking the opportunities, but identifying and seeking out a specific potential volunteer demographic can be beneficial and was a tactic used by interviewee I-A to reach a capable demographic that was not as likely to seek out these opportunities on their own. They described the strategy as, “we should reach the universities, they use classes, youth clubs, student clubs to give the information to them or go to their classes and find qualified volunteers.” Volunteers for both CSO and mega sport events all have one thing in common: their connection to sport and the positivity it emits in their life. While altruism, a sense of community and spending time with their children were other commonly referred to motivations, the love of sport should remain the foundation in recruitment strategies.

Sports are special to individuals for a myriad of reasons. On a grand scale, “sport is a microcosm of society. It is not just a passive reflection of society, but it can also be an agent of change” (Eitzen, 2016). Sport reflects the ups and downs of life, but also has an innate feeling of hope. In additions, there are physiological, social, and developmental benefits along with the positive memories that are linked to sport involvement. People tend to want to help the things they are passionate about, so volunteerism and sport have a natural symbiotic relationship. Interviewee I-H describes the relation perfectly, saying “as long as I’m able to participate in those sports myself, and I will continue to be if I’m there, I’m always more than willing to give up my time to volunteer”. The motivation to be involved as a volunteer, however, seems to vary culturally. As interviewee I-M explains their experience in volunteering in different countries

throughout Europe, “Half the people who volunteered with me had absolutely no clue about who these people were and what sports they were in... And so I've never understood this UK sort of version of volunteering because they do, I don't know, motorsports one day, athletics the next and then some community thing. Whereas I mean, in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, it's usually people who are interested in the sport.” The cultural differences in volunteerism need to also be considered when recruiting and planning of a sport organization. As seen with many Olympic Games, volunteering has increased in the host country as a result of the Games, but it needs to be intentionally built into the makeup in order to be a successful long-term goal.

The final point of the volunteer recruitment stage is the completion of due diligence, which if not done correctly, can ruin even the best of recruitment strategies. Background or security checks are necessary from both a legal and ethical standpoint to help ensure the safety of all who are involved with the sport organization or event. Volunteer managers also need to ensure the necessary steps are taken. Interviewee I-A described a situation in which due diligence was not performed which led to possible deportation from their volunteer position in a foreign country. “We started volunteering... And one day, one of the volunteer managers, they came to us to say, like, you know, ‘sorry, we forgot and there was some misunderstanding and we forgot about background checks.’ So that was failure for us. So, we have almost one week here, and we can't understand what that means...So you mean we will be deported from the country or what? So that was the very, you know, unexpected situation.” A more abstract definition of due diligence can refer to the volunteer managers fully putting forth the efforts needed to create a recruitment strategy that leads to accessible volunteer opportunities and the recruitment of targeted population. “Understanding target audiences and the barriers they experience to volunteering is imperative in the project design phase. Each project is engaging with different groups of volunteers that have different motivations and face different barriers” (Leonardi et al, 2020). In conclusion, recruitment strategies should be individualized to meet the needs of the organization and their targeted volunteer demographic.

5.2.1.2 Training. The general consensus among volunteers interviewed regarding training for their volunteer role, was that training needs to be provided and be accessible. Logically, it makes sense to provide training to someone who is “doing something which is not their day job. So, to some extent, you might actually need to give them a little bit more sort of leeway in

certain things. Or you might have to explain things more than once” (I-M). However, budget and timing restrictions can also make the training process more difficult for the organization.

Another common response regarded the accessibility of training. Mega event volunteers interviewed reported online training which they were content with because of the flexibility to progress at their own pace and avoid the complications that come with traveling to meet in-person. Online platforms can also be more easily translated into other languages compared to in-person meetings which could bode well for international events. CSO volunteers reported a preference for hands-on training due to the nature of their responsibilities, but also requested multiple time offerings to allow everyone to be trained. A simple solution, as interviewee I-A states, “you should find the best schedule for them. You should find the solution to, you know, promote your training sessions... ask them and they are flexible.” While one way will never fit all preferences, the more possibility of options or including the volunteers in the setup of trainings, the more likely they will be to complete them. As the Aspen Institute explained in two separate publications, more than 70% of youth sport coaches do not receive training (2019a) and training is not seen as a barrier to volunteer as was previously thought (2013). The evidence demonstrates that volunteers want to understand their roles and are willing to put in the effort to receive training, as long as effort is put in to make it accessible for them too.

The results from this study show that the general training for volunteers was generalized and possibly geared towards inexperienced or new volunteers. Even those that reported receiving more advanced training, such as coaches moving up to work with an older age group, suggested that general training was fairly basic and “somebody who might have more skill, might have been bored or might not want to come” (I-G). Mega event volunteers reported receiving the same training, especially regarding the mission and values of the organization. As interviewee I-M explains, “I’m thinking, yeah, this is quite basic and so on and so forth. But for other people, it’s not basic at all. For other people, this is what they need.” The interviewed volunteers understand the importance of general training, even if it is geared toward newer volunteers. More advanced trainings however, could not only improve the output of returning volunteers, but could also benefit the organization by using the interest and motivation of the volunteers to receive training to increase their longevity with the organization.

An unexpected result from the research was the importance of training provided by a volunteer’s peers along with their own self-taught discoveries. The self-initiative proves that

volunteers have the desire to perform well and succeed in their responsibilities. This aligns with research findings that some volunteers “become involved out of personal commitment. They also gain a sense of gratification and accomplishment” (Anderson & Cairncross, 2005) because of their personal investment in the organization. Volunteer managers should foster this motivation and provide their volunteers with the tools to flourish. Otherwise, volunteers could become intimidated by their responsibilities and not want to continue or feel undervalued. As interviewee I-G explained, they “stopped coaching when the skill level got higher than I could really take it” and would have continued coaching only “if they were like, oh my gosh, we need a coach or whatever. And I would have done it with training, but I don't think I would have been as qualified to do this as somebody else.” To reiterate the Aspen Institute studies mentioned above, volunteers want to be trained. It shows their strong investment to the organization they are a part of, and trainings can be beneficial to both have successful volunteers and expand a volunteer’s time with the organization.

5.2.1.3 Management. The sheer number of organizations around the globe that are run by volunteers indicates there is a benefit in having unpaid labor in organizational operations. In Australia for example, that accounts for about 1.3 million people volunteering annually in various positions (ABS, 2002). Interviewee I-G described their experience as a CSO volunteer, “if I look back at AYSO [American Youth Soccer Organization] and they were run so well as a volunteer machine, it feels like that’s an example of how, that you can have a good organization that’s run with volunteers.” With a minimal headquarters staff and most responsibility delegated to volunteers, AYSO has served over 8 million youth soccer players in the United States, US Virgin Islands and Trinidad and Tobago since its inception in 1964 (AYSO, n.d.). Of the volunteers interviewed, those who mentioned their involvement with AYSO only reported positive things about the structure for volunteers. Organizations such as this prove that large, high-quality sport organizations can have success with a volunteer labor force, especially when the organization invests in their volunteers.

Both vertical and horizontal organizational structures were discussed in interviews, but both CSO volunteers and mega event volunteers reported the need for people at the top to be truly dedicated, have significant knowledge of the organization, and be willing to put in a lot of effort. CSOs tend to have more responsibility delegated to each individual volunteer, due to the smaller pool of help. As interviewee I-H explained, for their organization they are “the chairman

of the bar... the rental chairman... I guess I look at myself as also the kind of social director there at the club as well.” Volunteers interviewed understood the necessity and value in having upper management with the experience and monetary compensation needed to complete their jobs. Interviewee I-C explained that for some mega event jobs, “most of those positions do require event management or sports management experience, and so those just aren’t available to volunteers in general.” On the other hand, all interviewees reported that they do not think it is needed for the organizations they have been a part of to replace their particular volunteer roles and responsibilities with paid employees. As interviewee I-B explains, “I don’t think it would be better if it was paid. I think you would get more people that would do it, but it might not be the right fit for that particular classification of sport that I guess [the organization] was trying to achieve.” This insight perpetuates the idea that volunteering has its own spirit that should be fostered and included in the management plan. This volunteer spirit has been successfully maintained by many Olympic host cities which have created opportunities for volunteers to be involved in even years after the Games. Barcelona, Athens and Sochi all reported an increase in volunteerism throughout the local community or country after they hosted and created a volunteer specific platform to keep volunteers engaged (IOC, 2019).

Volunteers also reported the need for quick and clear communication from their volunteer managers and the organization. Because their volunteer role may not be a top priority compared to other responsibilities of life, making information clear and easily accessible is a simple solution to combat poor retention or miscommunications. As interviewee I-L says, “if you’re open and communicate straightforward, life is just so much easier.” However, a study of charity organizations, not specifically sport organizations, found that volunteer retention rates were lower with organizations that had consistent supervision and communication with their volunteers (Hager & Brudney, 2004). The study explained that this could be due to the supervision feeling too similar to a volunteer’s regular job, thus associating negative feelings with their volunteer role (Hager & Brudney, 2004). Therefore, it is important for communication to be tailored towards volunteers’ preferences. They want information readily available to them so they can be aware of the expectations placed on them, but they also want to feel valued and trusted by volunteer managers to do their job effectively. Another aspect of effective communication is having volunteer managers available for questions. Interviewee I-F explained that during their experience, “by the time you ask for a particular equipment, it was too late to

come in.” The lack of upfront communication caused the volunteers of the medical team at this event to not have the equipment needed to perform their responsibilities. In addition, volunteer managers should be “making sure the language barrier is, you know, not an issue” (I-N). Especially at international events, efforts should be taken to communicate in multiple languages. Language skill requirements should also be upfront and part of the recruitment communication.

The main outlier in the management best practices discussion with interviewees was the understanding and catering towards a diverse labor force. While discussed mostly in the context of catering to a diverse, international labor force, it remains important for volunteer managers to understand. As interviewee I-C explained with their experience volunteering at a mega sport event, “they need to make sure that they cater food for all kinds of eaters. So, vegans, vegetarians, gluten intolerant, Muslims who needed halal food, or Jews who ate kosher... It also was right in the heart of Ramadan. So, I had to make sure that anybody who was fasting were the first people assigned to eat as soon as they could eat.” Providing the basic needs of your volunteers, such as accessible meals, shows the investment in supporting their volunteers that the sport volunteers want from their managers.

5.2.1.4 Feedback and Recognition. The final stage of volunteer’s experience is the feedback and recognition stage. Similar to the other three stages, the factors of this stage can be used throughout the volunteer’s time with the organization but tends to be more prominent at the end. It is natural to thank someone and ask for feedback at the end of their experience so they can respond from a holistic viewpoint. Volunteers had mixed responses regarding opportunities to provide feedback, but those that provided feedback were not confident that it was received or would be used to make change. As interviewee I-J explained, “I believe we did have some kind of like a survey or something like that. I do think that we did and I'm sure that I filled it out and submitted it. But I don't recall if we ever had anything returned to us that said, hey, you know, ninety three percent of you had a great experience in this other seven percent, you know, didn't say anything.” Especially for CSO volunteers who return to the same organization and management more consistently than mega event volunteers, it is important to take into account their suggestions. This finding is reflected in the literature. For example, Honer (1986) suggested that a benefit of eliciting feedback from volunteers is their lack of motivation for financial benefit may make them more reliable and willing to be upfront about the issues they notice. Even

if not all the suggestions can be accommodated, volunteer managers putting into practice ideas generated by volunteers can lead to those volunteers feeling valued.

Showing appreciation to volunteers can attribute to a positive retention rate and higher satisfaction of volunteers in their experience. Gifts or tokens of appreciation do not need to be extravagant, but volunteers do need to feel valued and not taken for granted. For mega event volunteers, their love of sport is a strong motivator and interviewees consistently reported having access to events as a perk of volunteering. Interviewee I-M explained that at an event in Berlin “there is a section in the stadium where all the volunteers can sit and you can watch when you’re not on shift, you can watch whatever you want to watch.” Offering tickets to matches is a great token of appreciation and can even be beneficial from a management perspective. The more a volunteer knows about the events taking place, the better they may be able to perform their tasks. Mega event volunteers also commonly reported bus tickets or their uniforms as tokens of appreciation that they received from event organizers. While uniforms can become a valuable keepsake and easy transportation can be seen as an extra perk, it also a strategic management plan. Offering accessible transportation can help ensure that volunteers will make it to their assigned destination without too much trouble, ultimately lowering the chance for setbacks or a poor experience. If organizers are outfitting volunteers in size-specific uniforms that are tailored to a one-time event, it also makes sense to let them keep it afterwards. Having ill-fitting clothes with minimal event identifiers will not create the extravagant atmosphere that mega events try to achieve. CSO volunteers had simpler tokens of appreciation that made them feel valued. Interviewee I-L shared that “all the kids autograph[ed] me a ball, and they’re all sitting in some cases at the house.”

Ironically, CSO volunteers were less likely to report wanting a sense of community from their volunteer work, but that could be due to the nature of CSO organizations within the community compared to mega event volunteers participating in foreign countries where they do not know the language or many other people. Interviewee I-F described the importance of Darling Harbour as a place to interact with other volunteers at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. They explained that it was “very critical for the continued motivation of all the Sydneysiders to follow the Olympics. It was basically like the harbour meeting point where we all used to come down in the center of Sydney and hang out for the afternoon and evening events and happenings. It was really a party, and everyone enjoyed coming down to meet each other.” CSO volunteers

interviewed were more likely to express their desire for proper training and support while they fulfill their duties rather than team-building opportunities.

5.2.1.5 Overview. It is important for volunteer managers to understand the stages of the volunteer experience in order to provide worthwhile opportunities and a strong management plan. To answer the sub-question, the stages of a volunteer's experience are recruitment, training, management, and feedback and recognition. While there are main processes to each stage, some processes, such as training, communication and showing appreciation, can be used throughout the experience. The stages are also cyclical in nature, and volunteer managers should have that in mind when creating volunteer management plans.

5.2.2 Recommendations for the Volunteer Experience

The second research sub-question is: How would sport volunteers adjust their experience? While each volunteer has their own view of the ideal experience, there were major themes categorized with each stage.

For the recruitment stage, most of the suggestions came from mega event volunteers. The overall trend deals with the ease of finding and applying to volunteer positions. Multiple volunteers interviewed described a platform that lists multiple volunteer opportunities as an ideal standard recruitment practice. Interviewee I-M described a program in Switzerland that offers “a volunteer platform which is called Swiss Volunteers, and basically you register yourself once on that and then people who have any type of sort of events that they need volunteers for, I mean sport events, it's only sports stuff... then you can just say, well I want to do this, I want to do that. But the advantage is, obviously, you have already entered all your details.” Streamlining opportunities for volunteers, whether by adding a volunteer section when parents sign their children up for youth sports, or an online database of larger events all listed in one place. Volunteers also called for transparency in the process, especially when it comes to the timeline and what logistical help will be offered. Especially for mega event volunteers, knowing when they will hear back regarding their application status, training, or housing and transportation assistance can help as they plan for potential international travel. Another theme that was discussed was the balance between recruiting experienced and new volunteers. Especially for CSOs, maintaining the pipeline to fill positions was a key component, so hiring less experienced volunteers can allow them time to develop into future positions. For mega events, interviewee I-A noted, “we shouldn't be afraid of using less experienced people in our team because sometimes

they have to show and sometimes they have a lot to teach us, as from my own experience.”

Especially at mega events, including a diverse range of international volunteers likely will mean a range of experience levels. There were limited suggestions of physical outreach, such as flyers or recruitment events from the organizations discussed, showing that organizations need to prioritize their internal structures of communication and presentation to target demographics.

For the training stage, CSO volunteers were adamant that the inclusion of training in their volunteer experience should be mandatory. The benefits of training Interviewee I-G “would definitely include something about the values and the league and how we want people to be treated.” Having volunteers on the same page about the mission of the organization creates a more unified volunteer force. CSO volunteers also suggested more well-rounded topics included in training because they wanted to be prepared for the unexpected aspects of their responsibilities that were commonly reported. Working with athletes was a specific topic suggested for training volunteers of both types of organizations. As a medical volunteer at the Olympic Games, interviewee I-F said they “could have had a bit more training on how to handle athletes,” especially the diverse injuries of various sports and previous medical and treatment options of athletes coming from different financial backgrounds. CSO volunteers wanted to understand the developmental stages of youth, to ensure the sport was being taught based on those physical, mental, and social stages. Both mega event and CSO volunteers suggested interactive and flexible training options. A group of international volunteers is likely to be more open to online training if given ample time to complete them. CSO volunteers, especially volunteer youth coaches, favored a multi-hour weekend training to learn and practice skills and drills. Volunteer managers should work with their volunteers to understand their availability and preference for training schedules and structures.

Suggestions for management include stronger communication, working to make volunteers happy in their role, and a knowledgeable management team. Communication needs to be quick, clear and transparent so volunteers and managers are all on the same page. Especially for mega event volunteers, they insist that volunteer managers “contact us sooner... like even some idea” (I-N). With the various modes of technology in today’s market, volunteers should be offered a phone number, walkie-talkie or even a communication app to be able to get questions answered or help if needed during their volunteer shifts. Defining which language proficiencies will be needed to volunteer is another big communication requirement for mega event

volunteers. Interviewee I-M suggests that “it should be clear that the language of communication is English unless it doesn’t make sense because you will speak the same language among each other. Anyway, just to make sure that the volunteers are all included.” Just being upfront about language requirements and if any training will be offered will ease any misunderstandings. Reasonable adjustments to volunteers’ roles should also be considered to increase their satisfaction levels. Support and forgiveness should be offered as volunteers are critical to the success of the organization. Interviewee I-C gave the example of their own experience in which they “had five or six or seven different kinds of jobs, and you never did the same thing every day. So, everybody got a chance to do everything, and some jobs were more fun than others.” Finally, a strong management team to help oversee the entire operation can make the difference in a volunteer’s experience. Interviewee I-E wondered “if there were some, maybe not so much president or vice president and so-forth, but if there were a chairman. Somebody that knew all the rules, that goes to the regional meetings for Little League, if there was somebody at that level that was fully immersed and that would have gone a long way.” In CSO organizations with the entirety of roles being taken on by volunteers, a knowledgeable leader is valuable to manage and mentor the rest of the organization.

The final suggestion is that feedback and recognition should both be consistent factors of the volunteer management plan. There were mixed reviews about formal feedback opportunities available to volunteers in interviewees’ experience, but the repeated suggestion made was to include them. Volunteer managers should offer feedback and follow-up by noting that it has been taken into account or is being considered. Interviewee I-F explained that “good feedback or bad feedback is required if you want to be better next time.” While mega events may not feel the need to obtain feedback if they are singular events, the transfer of knowledge to future events or for the volunteer manager’s own future experience. Similar to other aspects, feedback should be available to volunteers in both formal and informal capacities throughout their experience. In addition to feedback, recognition needs to be shown to volunteers. A thank you goes a long way, and the more volunteers give, the more appreciation should be offered. Perks do not need to be extravagant but should be related to the motivation of volunteers. For example, mega events volunteers may prefer tickets to events in their off time rather than random swag items. Volunteers want to know they are a valued member of the team, and as interviewee I-H said, “I think those things are important to recognize. Those people, whether they’re looking for

recognition or not, it's important to be recognized for their value, a valuable contribution to whatever organization they're involved in." Acknowledgement of effort and contributions are important for any organization to keep employees or volunteers feeling satisfied in their role.

5.2.3 Community Sport Volunteers vs Mega Event Volunteers

The final sub-question is comparing the management of CSO and mega event volunteers. While management styles are important to be familiar with, it is also necessary to understand the characteristics of the volunteers that are managed under these techniques. A major similarity that connects all of sport volunteers is value of sport in their life. The specific connection may vary, but sport has impacted all these volunteers' lives, leading them to want to remain involved. It is also very likely that they have a positive relationship with sport if they are willing to donate their time and skill sets to a sport organization. Another common theme among all volunteers was highlighting the necessity of strong communication. There are countless definitions of good communication, but quick, clear, and transparent communication should be the goal. It becomes the volunteer managers' responsibility to determine how that type of communication fits within the volunteers' environment and their role with the organization. Email was a common useful tool, and as interview I-D said "Ninety-nine percent of it was through email. And sometimes if it was last minute, it would be through text or phone calls." Multiple communication forms can be beneficial to keep everyone on the same page. The final theme that is consistent among volunteers interviewed is the need for feedback opportunities. They do not need to be extensive or always in a formal manner, but they need to be acknowledged. In reflecting on their own organization, volunteer I-L states "we probably should do the classic exit interview at the end." Volunteers are generally on the front lines and can be far from the management team that makes decisions. With their unique positioning as hands-on providers of many services sport organizations are trying to offer, they have good insight to both short-term and long-term problems. Volunteers are also not always in a position to understand why decisions are made, so managers should not be always instituting a volunteer's advice. The recognition and thanks, however, show that the organization is appreciative of having volunteers that care enough to even provide feedback.

There were more overall differences in management than similarities for the two types of sport volunteers interviewed. First, the demographic details were clearly divided among interviewees. All but one CSO volunteers interviewed had dependents who were a motivation

behind at least one of their CSO volunteering experiences. Wanting to spend time with their children or being part of the local community was heavily reported. No mega event volunteers had dependents at the time of their volunteer experiences and interviewee I-M acknowledged that they “don’t think it makes things easier” to volunteer internationally at mega events with dependents. A motivational difference of mega event volunteers is that they put an emphasis on the importance of internationalism and exploration of the world through their love of sport. Volunteer managers should be aware of the motivations of their volunteers because it could help to factor in the decision-making of schedules, tokens of appreciation or even the responsibilities of a volunteer position. Trainings also elicited different responses in interviews, with CSO volunteers wanting trainings compared to their usual minimum or lack thereof. Mega event volunteers generally reported having training and found it to be useful, if not repetitive for frequent volunteers. Finally, the other large difference is the type of appreciation and incentives offered to volunteers. Many CSO volunteers reported that they did not take on the role for the praise. However, little items such as a gift card or signed softball from the team went a long way. As interviewee I-L stated, “you wish every once in a while, you got another nod from a parent, but you know, you’re not there for that.” Mega event volunteers reported certifications, bus passes, uniforms and tickets to events as common perks. While many of those can be attributed to management strategies, items such as tickets or volunteer social events seem warranted for the amount of their own resources expended to become a volunteer. All the differences can be accounted for by understanding and working with the volunteers to get their perspective.

5.2.4 Best Practices of Sport Volunteer Management

The purpose of this study was to understand the best management practices of sport volunteers, especially the results that can be applied more generally in practice. The review of literature and analysis of responses from interviewees can be summarized into the following recommendations for sport volunteer management.

- Invest in the volunteer experience and ensure volunteers feel valued at the organization.
- Provide quality training and support.
- Communication should be quick, clear and transparent.
- The stages of the volunteer experience should not be strictly linear, but elements of each stage should be completed throughout the entire experience.

These recommendations are not groundbreaking or difficult to accomplish. The simplicity of these best practices reflects on the nature of volunteerism. For today's volunteers, training and communication needs to be up to date with modern needs and modern technology. Other than that, volunteers just want to feel appreciated, which is something everyone can relate to.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

While there was limited consistency in some of the answers to the questions among those interviewed, the following unexpected results are worth noting for possible future research. When speaking with mega event volunteers, there was much more exuberance in the tone they spoke with when relaying their volunteer experiences. This difference could be due to differing personalities or cultural differences. In addition, CSO volunteers were less likely to continue volunteering for CSOs in the future, compared to mega event volunteers in which all but one reported wanting to return to mega events at the next opportunity they have. CSO volunteers interviewed, however, did report their intention to continue volunteering outside of sport related opportunities. A longitudinal study on individual's volunteer history could contribute insightful knowledge into the motivations and accessibility of volunteer opportunities throughout one's life.

5.4 Limitations

The main limitation of this study was the narrow group of volunteers interviewed. Interviews were only conducted for community sport volunteers of global north, English speaking countries with 13 of 14 being from the United States. Due to this limitation, the types of CSOs discussed were limited. While many referenced AYSO, for example, as a high-functioning volunteer organization, it is strictly a US organization which limited the variety of viewpoints from interviewees. Interviews were also restricted to English-speakers which limited the access of more global viewpoints, especially from mega event volunteers.

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APPENDIX I: THEMED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction

- Please give an overview of your experience as a sport volunteer.

Recruitment Questions

- How did you learn about this volunteer opportunity?
- What were interactions like with the person/people responsible for recruiting?
- Are you aware of any ways that other volunteers became involved?
- Did you have similar demographic characteristics to the rest of the volunteers?
- What was the process to be selected as a volunteer?
- What were your motivation for becoming involved?
- Where there any cons to becoming a volunteer for this organization?
- From your perspective what would have been more productive for the recruitment process?

Training Questions

- How was training conducted?
- What knowledge about the roles and responsibilities did you have going into the trainings?
- What resources were you given to take with you from trainings?
- What was the communication surrounding trainings?
- Do you feel trainings were at an appropriate level for volunteers with different knowledge coming into it?
- What did you take from the trainings and use while performing your volunteer responsibilities?
- How would you improve the training?

Management Questions

- Describe the organizational structure of the organization.
- What were the responsibilities of your volunteer role?
- How did your expectations compare to the actual work, what surprised you about the role?
- What other volunteer positions were in the organization?
- Was there a specific person or group responsible for helping volunteers?
 - Describe their management style
 - What feedback would you give them?
- Describe communication during the time period of you executing your volunteer responsibilities?
- What motivated you to excel in your volunteer position?
- What was it like working with other volunteers?
- Do you think the structure of the organization was properly set up to use a volunteer labor force?
 - How would you adjust the structure of the organization/ volunteer management team to make it better for the volunteer?

- Do you feel your position was suitable as a volunteer position or would be better as a paid employee? Why?

Feedback and Recognition Questions

- What opportunities were you given to provide feedback?
- Was info taken and used to change future management
- What insights did the volunteers have that would have helped the organization carry out their mission?
- How were you recognized for your efforts as a volunteer?
- How would you liked to have received recognition and appreciation for your efforts?
- Were you satisfied with your volunteer experience?

Overview Questions

- What do you see as challenges for sport volunteer managers?
- What specific, practical advice would you give to the volunteer managers you worked with?
- Do you see yourself volunteering with sports in the future?

Demographic Questions

- Age
- Gender identity
- Country of origin
- Familial status
- Employment status

Wrap-Up Questions

- Anything else you think is important that I know about your experience?

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW QUOTES

Recruitment Stages and Strategies

“AYSO [American Youth Soccer Organization] is very strict, it's like if, you know you got to volunteer, you got to do something or your kids won't play. Little League was a little bit softer. The basketball stuff that was totally volunteer.” -I-D

“I think it was just more conversation and they want to get involved. So it happened organically.” – I-G

“They [Olympics] usually have their own websites and they do their own volunteer recruitment. And you have to be aware of it like a year or two before because they usually start recruitment process quite early.” -I-M

“Then anywhere from three to six months after that, they let you know the same way, in an email, ‘we invite you to continue the process’” -I-N

“After you make a video, then you'll have a group in an interview” -I-I

There's no prerequisites to become a volunteer in youth sports, but typically a background check for sure” -I-K

“Even though I was there for the 20th year, they still had to do a background check and everything on everybody” -I-B

“We have a state law that ties into concussion protocol” -I-L

“First, you should get the application, give information so the team could create the database for you to get the background checks and other stuff” -I-A

Motivations

“I was not even something I thought about, it was I was pitching in. So just trying to be a good example. That's the main thing” -I-E

“The first thing is because I have another language, so I'll be able to offer some assistance” -I-F

“I'm a sucker for the, you know, let's make it better. Let's make it work” -I-L

“I've always been passionate about sport. It's something that I love to do” -I-C

“So yeah, it is fun. And to me, as I said to some people last night, for me, I like to curl. But the most important aspect of the curling club to me is the social side of curling with lots of great friends” -I-H

“Half the people who volunteered with me had absolutely no clue about who these people were and what sports they were in. And I was like, I'm looking at the name like, of course you must know this. I mean, she's a steeplechase. I mean, she's like one of the world's best steeplechasers,

one of the Kenyan girls who was there and everyone was like 'uh yes?' And so I've never understood this UK sort of version of volunteering because they do, I don't know, motorsports one day, athletics the next and then some community thing. Whereas I mean, in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, it's usually people who are actually interested in the sport” - I-M

“I played baseball when I was younger. And I got really lucky because during my youth, I had a lot of a lot of good coaches...And I remember the coaches just really, really treated each person, especially in my experience, like I was an individual and not just somebody that was on a team where you were just trying to win everything” -I-B

“I played minor basketball. And I you know, I look back and think of all the time that those volunteers gave selflessly of their time to allow me to play a sport that that I developed a love for” -I-H

“In 1976, I went with my uncle to Montreal, this kind of dates me, and just ever since then, I have always been at awe of the Olympics” -I-N

“I'll occasionally see one of the kids in the store or something like that and they'll still call me coach, which I think is kind of cool” -I-D

“I joined the curling club in 2010 for social reasons to look for a social activity and a sporting activity” -I-H

“Once inside, I figure out, no, it's a really good community. I have friends in all in all countries, most of the countries, most of the year I have a lot of really good friends, like it's true friends” I-I

“Darling Harbour is very critical for the continued motivation of all the Sydneysiders to follow the Olympics. It was basically like the harbour meeting point where we used to come down in the center of Sydney and hang out for the afternoon and evening events and happenings. It was really a party, and everyone enjoyed coming down to meet each other” -I-F

“The primary motivation was to spend time with my kids” -I-D

“So, I go where my kids go” -I-E

“And when you're when you're a parent with young children and your kids sign up for soccer or basketball or hockey or whatever it is. And you've played those sports or even if you haven't, I mean, I think it's important to get involved” -I-H

“So were most volunteers, board and coaches. Most of them still have players in the league at that time” - I-L

“I had a parent tell me, ‘She quit all these other teams, she just hated it. And she came back because of you guys’” -I-L

“In terms of building a team and making sure everybody felt included and felt like they were part of it. Those are the things that are really important to me” -I-G

“It just wasn't being successful in sport. But I really took to heart about building the confidence and the self-esteem just because that's what my coaches gave to me” -I-B

“So, my goal was to understand the whole picture and then to see how this process, how this mechanic is working” -I-A

“I wanted to use more physiotherapy skills” -I-F

“It's made me like a lot of skills. I wasn't that person who was speaking to you, like without fear to five thousand persons. I wasn't like that before. But I wasn't that I was introvert, shy, which is not bad, but it's changed me” -I-I

“I was the only Arab. I was the only Arab person so it's feeling like you're doing something and the only other person I meet, like in the ministry of sport, is the Egyptian Prime Minister. Like he was so proud of me. He's so proud that there is only one other Egyptian and he meets him” -I-I

“It was just an activity to do” – I-H

Challenges and Suggestions

“The coaches don't know either, and are very hesitant, very timid to step up and do it because they don't want to look like idiots.” - I-L

“In 2021 people are standing around with their cell phones and videoing everything. And you who wants to be under that microscope and generally everybody's there trying to do a good job.” -I-G

“Just continually feeding the volunteer pipeline is the biggest challenge, really, whether that's coaches, sometimes whether it's board.” -I-L

“People tend to not want to go to the next level because they don't feel qualified.” -I-K

“You get the practice at four o'clock. Well, great. So, you need somebody who cannot be at their job at 3:00 in time to get there.” - I-L

“If you speak English, other languages help. But English is pretty much a necessity for languages” -I-C

“For one, I mean, absolute transparency about the process” – I-M

“I was accepted for the interview in three months, which was a really long time for me to forget about it.” -I-A

“Another thing is just understanding the motivation of the coaches and what their attempts are like, mine was to go spend time with my kids, have a good time knowing that there's other guys, especially when you get into baseball and football, especially the part where it's just it's all about winning and it's just brutal.” I-D

“We shouldn't be afraid of using less experienced people in our team because sometimes they have to show and sometimes, they have a lot to teach us as from my own experience.” -I-A

“They didn't know anything. You don't know how is my rating, how I was committed... Because I see a lot of talent which is not used. And that's why I'm doing this. There is a lot of talented people who are really committed. They can handle all the jobs. And you are in this venue now and people who don't know anything about the volunteers, who are not even committed. Not that they don't deserve it, but there are people that they invest something.” -I-I

Training

Structure of Training

“So, in four weeks, every week, they are having first to have general training.” -I-A

“Because we had we had a number of our training sessions that were face to face, we had a training booklet, but not really all that much that was done online or that extensively online. And we had I don't know, I want to say four or five in-person training sessions of a couple of hours each. And of course, then you're actually seeing real human beings and you can talk to other volunteers. You can talk to the management.” -I-C

“Tokyo, had they had everything online, they had lots of little films and little presentations and stuff.” -I-M

“You do real hands-on drills with some of the other coaches. That's led by more experienced folks that are certified as trainers and so forth. And they and they teach you to talk about it, right. Demonstrate it and then practice it and correct them.” I-D

“Most of them were like a Saturday. And it was usually like one evening where they went through, like the legal kind of paperwork stuff, rules and regulations. And then a second day on the field.” I-D

“I got books, CDs, videos off of YouTube. Anything that would help, I guess, give me some ideas, new ideas.” -I-B

“There's certainly no requirement or formal training.” -I-L

“Because I guess we didn't really have to do things like the general volunteer escorting people to this seat and you have to know where the seats are and have a handle, because our goal is basically first aid because if an athlete got injured and they don't have a physio or medical support team we have to provide that service. So, there's really no training.” -I-F

Training Topics

“They'll give you history and about the culture of the country because they want you familiar with it and then they'll start getting a little bit more detailed. Each country has different little cultures that you know it might be OK in your country, but it's not there or vice versa.” -I-N

“You're hosting international volunteers, you're introducing your, your sports culture, not the heritage one. And then you show them what you understand from sports. You understand it's

about money. You understand it's about fun. You understand it's about value. It's about respect. So, this is how it should be working for international volunteers as well.” -I-A

“So, by the time the understanding and they start to analyze where they should be based on their skills. At the role specific training, they have to know the venue as home.” -I-A

“But London did a wonderful job of team building. And I think that that was well, that was very, very evident to all the people who participated, to spectators, to athletes, to officials.” -I-C

“There will be the classes are basically the same. They'll give you like the whole history of the Olympics, which I think I have memorized, but the history of the Olympics.” -I-N

“Definitely the psychology and understanding where the kids are at that age range. Their attention span is going to be five minutes long. And then from there then they say about here's the here's like five-minute drills you can give the kids to keep active.” I-D

“A certification for youth sport coach, which is just basics, but it gives them the tools at the ground, at the grassroots level with young kids. The basics how to run a practice, how to organize drills.” -I-H

“Basketball and the football there is they gave you a pamphlet, but again, it was more on what you can do, what you can't do. Although I will say all of them did a really good job like the legal side, how to protect yourself.” I-D

“A course on CPR education and training.” -I-K

“Training behind the bar is probably with me or with just from experience. And it's, there's no training package. There's no school to go to.” -I-H

“Most of it is extremely common sense and ultimately relatively dull because you've done it before. First time is kind of exciting, the second time you've gone, ‘I know this stuff.’” - I-C

“I'm thinking, yeah, this is quite basic and so on and so forth. But for other people, it's not basic at all. For other people, this is what they need.” -I-M

“I would think that somebody who might have more skill, might have been bored or might not want to come. So, yeah, I think they're geared more towards the first and second time coaches.” -I-G

“At least in areas of baseball, there would be like a weekly email that came out to the coaches and a lot of times they were like here, that sounds like a helpful drill for their age-appropriate level.” I-D

Challenges and Suggestions

“But there is something there is something about face-to-face training or if not face to face to face, a group where questions come up and then it might be a question you were thinking of or having even considered somebody else asks.” -I-E

“And I think it should be a smaller group rather than a big hall, twenty-five maximum.” -I-A
“I think it [COVID-19 Pandemic] probably helped in that respect that a lot more is possible online and particularly when it comes to like international volunteers.” -I-M

“So you should find the best schedule for them. You should find the solution to you know promote your training session for weekends, because most of the time we do it on weekends, ask them and they are flexible.” -I-A

“Really having the resources available because there are going to be parents like me who don't really know, that want to participate.” -I-G

“If there was a Saturday training and how to keep your head up and maintain the cooler heads in an adversarial situation. And then from there, making sure that everybody knows.” -I-E

“I would definitely include something about the values and the league and how we want people to be treated, kids and parents, what that looks like.” -I-G

“So the major thing of is how to understand the aim of volunteering.” -I-I

“A succession plan so that when this treasurer steps down and a new treasurer comes in, that they can just give them this. Here's all you need to know.” -I-H

“I think one of the goals should be to give people the tools to be successful. So if you're not giving a coach the tools to be successful, then ultimately the league is not going to be successful.” -I-G

Management

Roles and Responsibilities

“I was a coach and then I was a ref.” -I-G

“If you did sign up as a coach, right, you were that accountable and responsible for recruiting all the other volunteer positions that I so you as a coach and are a part of the team had to go out and do that.” -I-D

“What was a new position we created, which was director of training and really just trying to work with the other coaches and kind of up our game.” -I-L

“The chairman of the bar...the rental chairman... I guess I look at myself as also the kind of a social director there at the club as well.” -I-H

“Short track, speed skating and I worked in the coaches box. So this is kind of the supervising the coaches like they basically knew. Well, they didn't know who was supposed to be and who wasn't.” -I-N

“I was a helpdesk member in one of the team hotels. So you had all these athletes around you the whole time.” -I-M

“And I was a gold medal bearer, and I didn't realize at the time, but I only did gold medals. So there was somebody who did the silver medals on our team and I never did silver medals.” – Ana

“I am a work force team leader in this tournament. I am working in three stadiums.” - I-I

Organizational Structure/Management Style

“There's the president of the league from that, there's the board of the treasurer and the chairman and so forth. So, I'd say a group of six overseeing the other forty-four.” -I-E

“I mean, that's forty-two people that might be just dealing with one person.” -I-B

“I mean, there was a group leader for everybody, and if you had an issue, you went to them first so that that normally works.” -I-M

“I think it was very well organized and it was all in the classes too. I mean, I'm sure I'm probably leaving out some people, but I mean, they give you like a flow chart and they tell you exactly who's going to be there, and you report to.” -I-N

“I think it's always a function of how much money does an organizer actually have, because if there isn't a lot of money, then they just have to rely on volunteers because they just can't pay somebody.” -I-M

“If I look back at AYSO and they were run so well as a volunteer machine, it feels like that's an example of how that you can have a good organization that's run with volunteers.” -I-G

“I don't think it would be better if it was paid. I think you would get more people that would do it, but it might not be the right fit for that particular classification of sport that I guess [the organization] was trying to achieve.” -I-B

“I think it should be volunteers. I don't think anyone should be paid to do it. Even the senior physiotherapists and those head physio again shouldn't be paid.” -I-F

“Most of those positions do require event management or sports management experience, and so those just aren't available to volunteers in general.” -I-C

“The role of the regional commissioner there. That's a big job. I have no problem to that person getting a stipend.” -I-K

“I was kind of I guess I was taken aback where no one came down just to talk to me or ask how things were going at it at any point.” -I-B

“I think we were pretty much on our own I guess, when you get your location, and I think that we got equipment and then we got placed and the coaches have autonomy.” -I-G

“For the president, they only intervened if somebody, if there was some sort of a complaint, a parent upset or if you have somebody, a parent that you have to eject.” -I-E

“The first Olympic experience I had was volunteering at the Rio Summer Games in 2016. I started at the equestrian, and I asked them if I could change just because of the distance. It took about two and a half hours to get there from my Airbnb... but they were actually very accommodating, and they gave me. They asked me, you know, their preferences. And also, sure, I ended up at the beach volleyball and I could just walk like 15 minutes along the ocean.” -I-N

“And so you're now sort of in the media sort of reception with something. I had nothing to do. I stood there for hours and there was nobody and you go like, Yeah. And so I sort of said to the person managing the team is like, this is just the most boring thing ever. And then she basically sort of went well and was also very nice because she sent me to the volunteer coordinator who then said to me, I mean, she gave me a job and she said, well, the only other job I have is like doing some research with spectators and stuff. That was great because I got to go to all like starts and finish areas of the races, and I go to interview people.” -I-M

“I'm somewhat disabled. And so my manager has always been really good about making sure that I have a place where I can sit and rest or there's a chair available when I when I have time to sit. And that's been very helpful.” -I-C

Interactions with Other Volunteers

“I do a lot of friendships and I don't know if that's because longevity. But I mean, I got to know a lot of good people there.” -I-B

“I've sort of become friends with over the years because you see them again and again.” -I-M

“I didn't really know that many people to begin with, but I got to know a lot of people. And that's really where I started to develop a group of people that I've kept in touch with over the years. And that's nice because you're going often to foreign places, places you've never seen before. And it's nice to have some sort of familiarity with somebody there.” -I-C

“Like most of the people, are good. But I think, like, no matter where you go and you're always going to have those problem people that just want to be a problem.” I-D

“But the same it's never easy to work with the with your teammates, most especially for international volunteers and for local volunteers and other stuff. That's not everyone's motivation is the same.” -I-A

“Do you have people there that were genuinely just trying to help did so obviously their kids on the team, but they were looking at, you know, what was best for all of them. And then you had other people that had strange thoughts of their kids becoming a pro.” -I-E

Surprises, Challenges, and Suggestions

“We just need to make it happen, and sometimes you have to do that, you just have to bend over backwards different times.” -I-H

“Make sure they've got a group that's working together, works well together with the sometimes you get some clashes between people's egos, so that would be a big challenge.” -I-F

“Just making sure the language barrier is, you know, not an issue that you know, that can be overcome.” -I-N

“So by the time you ask for particular equipment, it was too late to come in. So that's why it goes back to the fact that it should have been a little bit more than any specific equipment and training for the physiotherapist.” -I-F

“There is a lot of talented people who are really committed. They can handle all the jobs. And you are in this venue now and people who don't know anything about the volunteers.” -I-I

“Management is slightly different because you always have to keep in mind that the people, you're managing are not doing their day job. They're all doing something which is not their day job. So to some extent, you might actually need to give them a little bit more sort of leeway in certain things. Or you might have to explain things more than once.” – I-M

“They need to make sure that they cater food for all kinds of eaters. So vegans, vegetarians, gluten intolerant, Muslims who needed halal food, or Jews who ate kosher... It also was right in the heart of Ramadan. So I had to make sure that anybody who was fasting were the first people assigned to eat as soon as they could eat.” -I-C

“Maybe treat the volunteers as a as an equal, and just not seeing them just as a volunteer. And help them succeed if they need help.” -I-B

“If you're open and communicate, straightforward life is just so much easier.” -I-L

“I would say just make sure that, you know , they're available to be able to, you know help their people, you know, or communicate with them of whatever type of contact it is, texting or whatever.” – I-N

“So, communication. If you're a leader of group, you know, you just kind of have to have the right people and we have people come in and help but don't have the wherewithal to do something different because you have to have been taught how to work with a group of people.” -I-K

Feedback and Recognition

Feedback Opportunities

“I mean, the one where there was a formal feedback request, it was for the Pan Am games, but then we never got any reaction.” -I-M

“I believe we did have some kind of like a survey or something like that. I do think that we did and I'm sure that I filled it out and submitted it. But I don't recall if we ever had anything returned to us that said, hey, you know, ninety-three percent of you had a great experience in this other seven percent, you know, didn't say anything or didn't.” I-J

“But every few years you put out a survey and say, you know what do you think, what would you do differently.” -I-K

“They have one system. That's just what they know, you know, let's just stick with what we know. If you have an idea about where we can put this better in the venue, yes, we can do it. But if you have if you have an idea about the changing the way we make interview for, you know, like if it's a small thing, we can do it like, OK, it's really good, let's do it. We can do it. But if it's like a major thing then I don't think it will be OK.” -I-I

“I know they sent out a survey about how they did. I don't think I've had any other feedback about it.” -I-B

“In the aftermath of each game, we talk things through what went well, what didn't go well, and then how to get better, whether it was the play or management of the of the team.” I-D

Appreciation

“In Berlin, they automatically said, I mean, there is a section in the stadium where all the volunteers can sit and you can watch when you're not on shift, you can watch whatever you want to watch.” -I-M

“The people are friendly, and the food was amazing and really invite all the volunteers. We got to go to a fondue dinner at the International Olympic Committee, they had a house there.” -I-N

“They gave it their certificate for which I did have framed in my office...are our past credentials and things like that, so and our uniforms and all of those things.” I-J

“Each day we have a newspaper to send it to all volunteers. We have, let's say, of a photo for each person talking about what happened yesterday... We have a gift for them, and we have some random gifts. And it's like last time it was like iPad.” -I-I

“We will recognize the volunteer group in particular, very, very well respected by the general public, and we will give them the best possible rewards and regulations. And thank you write ups in the paper, like our minds are written up in the paper and in they go parade through the main street and city.” -I-F

“One of the things that was amazing in London is I managed to get a couple f a couple of tickets to events and I took my mom to one event...If you're a young person who's trying to get a job, they know they can give you referrals.” -I-C

“The recommendation letters or certificate is most important thing for volunteers.” -I-A

“All the kids autograph me a ball.” -I-L

“You have your team parties at the end.” -I-G

“I was nominated as a volunteer of the year at the for the curling club and I received it. And I know you said that's obviously not why you do it, but I think it's good to always recognize it.” -I-H

“Thanks for doing what you're doing. We appreciate the time that you put up with the kids' and so forth. So, we're usually pretty mellow.” I-D

“I don't even recall like that. I don't think I ever got really, a recognition.” -I-B
Future Sport Volunteering

“I then got involved in volunteering again. And from that point on, I just have been a professional volunteer.” – I-C

“And I volunteer for an organization called A Walk on Water where they take they take their handicapped kids for lack of a better term, and they get them out on the water and surf for the day because it's like therapy at the surf.” I-D

“As long as I'm able to participate in those sports myself and I will continue to be if I'm there, I'm always more than willing to give up my time to volunteer.” -I-H

“And I don't know if I have the desire or energy to learn those.” -I-G

“I volunteered in other things, but not in sports.” I-J

“And I probably will. Yeah, I might go back to the league.” -I-L

“So, I don't know. Will they accept the 70-year-old volunteer?” -I-F

Suggestions

“If you can create some future and sustainable options for them that they can contribute by themselves in the future, that will be the most beautiful appreciation for them.” -I-A

“It might be better to do again the adult volunteer pizza party or something like. This is where everybody can talk.” -I-E

“Good feedback or bad feedback is required if you want to be better next time. So, you think that surveys could have been good.” -I-F

“We probably should do the classic exit interview at the end of the season with all the coaches.” -I-L

“So there should be a structured process and probably just some sort of feedback questionnaire like some things that are really important and which are also important for the organizers of the next event.” -I-M

“To sort of recognize that and act in a way that they're actually, yeah, we do recognize they're doing this for free and which goes back to this point, like make sure they have the breaks and make sure they feel fine with what they're doing and they're not over having to overextend themselves and everything.” -I-M

“I think those things are important to recognize those people, whether they're looking for recognition or not. It's important to be recognized for their value, a valuable contribution to whatever organization they're involved in.” -I-H