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Volunteering for sports mega events: A non-host region perspective

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Despite a plethora of studies focussing on sports mega event volunteering, little is known about volunteers who live outside of the host city. This exploratory research makes a novel contribution by focusing on a group of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games volunteers from a non-host region. Within this context, the study explores volunteers' motives, the utility of using financial subsidies to support volunteering participation, and their attitudes towards post-event volunteering. Semi-structured interviews with twelve volunteers were conducted, accompanied by interviews with key local stakeholders. The findings suggest that Olympic-related factors and altruistic feelings were central motivations to volunteering. Some previous volunteering experiences increased confidence levels to volunteer at the Olympics. The financial scheme was perceived as an impetus further enhancing Leicestershire residents' confidence to volunteer. Program participants also indicated positive attitudes towards future volunteering intentions.

Keywords: volunteers; non-host region; the Olympic Games; community support

Introduction

The importance of volunteers to the delivery of sport and recreation services is pervasive

(Davies, 1998; Smith, Leonie Lockstone-Binney, & Baum, 2014; Taylor, Shibli, Gratton,

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& Nichols, 1996). For example, it has been acknowledged that volunteers enable cost reduction and service quality enhancement in leisure organizations (Jago & Deery, 2002). Moreover, volunteering is linked to the generation of social capital and in fostering a sense of citizenship (Putnam, 2000), as well as a sense of community (Dickson, Hallmann, & Phelps, 2017).

Research suggests that understanding and analyzing the motives, perceptions and behaviour of volunteers can potentially contribute to improved volunteer recruitment and consequently, a more successful event (Fairley, Kellett, & Green, 2007; Green & Chalip, 1998). Volunteers are an integral component for the delivery of sport mega events (Chalip, 1999; MacAloon, 1999; Moreno, Moragas, & Paniagua, 1999). For example, at the London 2012 Olympic Games, there were an estimated 70,000 official volunteers (50,000 at the Olympics and 20,000 at the Paralympics) working for eight million hours (Hirst, 2012). Lord Coe, Chairman of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG), commented during his speech at the London 2012 Paralympic Closing Ceremony that the London 2012 volunteers "stand among the heroes of London 2012".

Despite a plethora of studies focused on volunteering at sports mega events, most studies treat volunteers as a homogenous cohort (Bang & Ross, 2009; Farrell, Johnston, & Twynam, 1998; Giannoulakis, Wang, & Gray, 2008). More specifically, there is an underlying assumption that volunteers are recruited only from the host community. In these studies, volunteers from non-host regions (i.e. volunteers from outside of the host city but within the same host country) are rarely differentiated from host community volunteers. What therefore remains unknown are non-host region residents' motivations for sports mega events and their attitudes towards post-event volunteering.

Examining non-host region residents' motivation and experiences of volunteering for sports mega events has significant implications. As highlighted by several scholars, the staging of sports mega events relies on a significant number of volunteers (Cuskelly, Hoye, & Auld, 2006; Green & Chalip, 1998, 2004). Such a large amount of labour may be difficult to source if the host city has a relatively small population (MacAloon, 1999). Although existing research highlights the utility of sports mega events in attracting volunteers from outside of the host city (Downward & Ralston, 2005), engaging people from non-host communities remains a challenge for event organizers. Therefore, understanding non-host region volunteers' motivation would be potentially useful for organizers of future sports mega events to more effectively recruit volunteers from outside of host community and to support their needs. Moreover, if volunteering for sports mega events can provide a platform for public participation (MacAloon, 1999; Moreno et al., 1999), investigating of non-host region volunteers' engagement at sports mega events would be instrumental in effectively broadening the volunteer base.

Recent research reveals that volunteers from non-host regions perceive event volunteering to be difficult (even if they were given the opportunity to do so). In terms of barriers or constraints, non-local volunteers face elevated travel and time costs (Fairley, Cardillo, & Filo, 2016). Although some scholars (Fairley et al., 2016; Fairley, Lee, Green, & Kim, 2013; Handy, Cnaan, Brudney, Ascoli, Meijs & Ranade, 2000) suggest that travel subsidies would induce people living outside of the host-community to volunteer, little is known about how these subsidies actually impact the decision to volunteer. This article addresses this significant knowledge gap.

Literature review

Since the Olympic volunteering programme was first implemented at the Lake Placid 1980 Winter Olympics, volunteerism has developed rapidly not only for the Olympic Games, but also for the successful implementation of the event (Giannoulakis et al., 2008). Previous Games present compelling evidence that volunteering as an integral element of the overall success of major sporting competitions in general (Farrell et al., 1998; Williams, Dossa, & Tompkins, 1995) and in the production of an Olympic Games in particular. The impact of volunteering is multi-dimensional - economic, social, cultural and political (Chalip, 1999; MacAloon, 1999; Minnaert, 2012; Moreno et al., 1999; Nichols & Ralston, 2011). Moreno et al. (1999) argued that, while volunteers reduce the costs of event production, from the political point of view, "it represents the uniting of individual energies into a common project, a new form of participation and the expression of a great public momentum" (p.151). As added by MacAloon (1999), the moral values and social aspirations associated with the Olympic Movement and Olympic spirit can be possessed and disseminated by volunteers, because volunteerism involves basic education in multi-culturalism and solidarity. Furthermore, there is the ability of volunteering to enhance social sustainability and ameliorate social inclusion (Minnaert, 2012; Nichols & Ralston, 2011).

The specific characteristics and motivations of being a volunteer at a major sporting event have been critically analysed through various empirical studies conducted by a number of authors (Bang, Alexandris, & Ross, 2008; Downward & Ralston, 2006; Farrell et al., 1998; Giannoulakis et al., 2008; Kemp, 2002), while others have demonstrated concerns on the evolution and development of Olympic volunteering (Chalip, 1999; MacAloon, 1999; Moreno et al., 1999). The Special Event Volunteer

Motivation Scale developed by Farrell and her colleagues (1998) contains four factors, i.e. purposive, solidary, external traditions and commitments. Giannoulakis et al.'s (2008) investigation on Olympic volunteer motivations, satisfaction and management surveyed 146 Athens 2004 volunteers, suggesting three predominant motivation factors: Olympic-related motivation (including the desire to associate with the Olympic movement, being involved in the Olympics, and meeting Olympic athletes), egoistic (relating to individuals' needs for social interaction, interpersonal relationship and networking), and purposive (e.g. doing something useful and contributing to society).

During the same period, there has been a series of research projects carried out by Bang and her colleagues across different types of sporting events (Bang et al., 2008; Bang & Chelladurai, 2003; Bang & Ross, 2009; Bang, Won, & Kim, 2009), employing the Volunteer Motivations Scale for International Sporting Events proposed in a study of the 2002 FIFA World Cup (Bang & Chelladurai, 2003). The original scale included six factors (i.e. expression of values, patriotism, interpersonal contacts, personal growth, career orientation and extrinsic rewards), with the additional factor of love of sport following their study of the Athens 2004 Olympics (Bang et al., 2008).

More specifically, in the context of the Olympics, there is a general consensus that gaining Olympics-related experiences and being associated with the Olympics movement are key motivational factors for volunteering (Alexander, Kim, & Kim, 2015; Dickson, Benson, & Terwiel, 2014; Giannoulakis et al., 2008; Nichols & Ralston, 2014). However, there is limited analysis of the management of mega sporting event volunteer programmes (Lockstone & Baum, 2009), particularly in relation to the experiences of non-local volunteers at the Games.

In the field of volunteer research and management, the literature distinguishes between episodic volunteering and long-term, or steady volunteering (Hall, McKeown, & Roberts, 2001; Handy & Scrinivasan, 2002; Macduff, 1995, 2004). More recently, creating a sustainable volunteering commitment and encouraging volunteers to continue with volunteering activities in and out of sports sectors in the long term have also received considerable academic interest. In examining the paths to volunteer commitment, Green and Chalip (2004, p. 49) suggested that volunteers' "commitment to an event is important not merely for the duration of the event, but also as a means to build a pool of volunteers who will be available for future events". Reeser et al.(2005) observed a positive correlation between motivation and satisfaction based on their research on volunteers serving the Salt Lake City 2002 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. When studying the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games, Downward and Ralston (2006) analysed factors affecting volunteers' interest, participation and volunteering in and out of sport in the aftermath of the event, and observed some evidence that volunteering at a major event can raise interest, participation and volunteering in sport in general, although extra effort is required to capitalize on these triggers for change.

Concerning volunteering engagement after the event, for example in the case of London 2012, Koutrou, Pappous and Johnson (2016) highlighted the fact that there is a lack of local or national volunteering schemes that advertise and communicate about volunteering opportunities to the London 2012 volunteers. They found that an understanding of the underlying motivation of the volunteers would impact on future volunteering engagement and be likely to create a volunteering legacy. In relation to the

sustainability of volunteering after the Olympic Games, Lockstone-Binney, Holmes, Shipway, and Smith's (2016) most recent report to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) suggested that, although the Sydney 2000 Olympics Games encouraged Games volunteers to participate in episodic and event volunteering, there was limited evidence of such an increase in post-Games volunteering in the case of the London 2012 Games.

As can be seen from the above discussion, although there has been a large body of literature examining volunteer motivations, research focusing on investigating motivations of non-local volunteers is relatively sparse. As recognised by Alexander et al. (2015), one of the limitations in their study of the London 2012 volunteers was that they failed to examine the differences in motivations between London volunteers and visitor volunteers. Nonetheless, there are some scholars that have recently directed their research attention to the group of non-local volunteers. For example, Fairley et al. (2007) identified motives for a group of Sydney 2000 Olympic volunteers who were planning to travel to Athens to volunteer for Athens 2004. Their conclusion is that volunteering abroad is mainly propelled by four factors: nostalgia, camaraderie and friendship, Olympic or subcultural connection, and sharing and recognition of expertise. Such findings conferred distinctiveness on event-based volunteer tourists *vis-à-vis* other volunteer tourists and other event tourists. In Fairley et al.'s (2016) recent study on the 2018 Commonwealth Games, the perceptions of residents from a non-host city towards the event were explored. They identified some potential challenges faced by non-host residents: hypothetically, if they were volunteering for the event, these challenges include for example travel constraints related to time, costs and distances. The study further suggested that offering subsides and incentives for engaging volunteers from outside of

the host region can be a useful strategy. However, it remains largely "enigmatic" as to whether such a financial subsidy, regarding engaging a wide range of volunteers from outside of the host borough, would motivate non-host region volunteers to work for the events.

Although there have been a number of studies examining the motivation and satisfaction of volunteers working at sports mega events in the past two decades (Alexander et al., 2015; Bang et al., 2008; Dickson et al., 2014; Downward & Ralston, 2006; Elstad, 1996; Fairley et al., 2007; Farrell et al., 1998; Giannoulakis et al., 2008; Kemp, 2002; Koutrou & Pappous, 2016), nearly all studies use a quantitative research approach to identify motives. Such an approach has some limitations including being too simplistic (Rochester, 2006) and reliability issues (Musick & Wilson, 2007). As Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) noted, the questionnaire checklist approach offers little in-depth information about volunteering behaviour, because surveying volunteers often give standard answers to the pre-designed motivational scale.

Research context

This study investigated UK volunteers from outside the host borough (i.e., Leicestershire) – a non-host community approximately 100 miles from London. The official volunteering programme of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games was referred to as *Games Makers*. Led by the LOCOG, the programme was developed to support the delivery of the Games.

The selection of Leicestershire represents a notable case: local authorities and other partners (e.g., Inspire Leicestershire[1] and Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport[2]) established the Leicestershire Games Makers Grant scheme, to encourage people from

Leicestershire to volunteer for the London 2012 Games. The grant was a local initiative, not connected to any of the national legacy schemes. As early as 2010, there was a general recognition by both Inspire Leicestershire and Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport that Leicestershire citizens' interest in volunteering for the Games would be constrained by accommodation costs (Inspire Leicestershire, 2012). Accordingly, £15,700 was committed to a Grant scheme to subsidise the cost of accommodation. The scheme also assisted volunteers to find accommodation in London; and host networking events to celebrate volunteers' engagement with the Games (e.g. Pre-Games the Grant Scheme Award Celebration Event, and After-Games "Our Games Our Legacy" event). The grant was promoted via social media, local London 2012-related events, and Inspire Leicestershire website.

There were 91[3] initial applications. After assessing their Games Maker positions and confirming their Leicestershire citizenship, 62 applicants were funded (£250 each) to cover travel and accommodation expenses.

Research method

This paper sought to explore 1) the motivations of non-host community volunteers for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games; 2) the impact of the Leicestershire Games Makers Grant scheme on facilitating Leicestershire engagement with the Games, and 3) Leicestershire Games Makers perceptions of post-event volunteering engagement. Given that there is a dearth of research in the field of volunteer research and management with a focus on non-host region volunteers, this paper was exploratory in nature (Blaikie, 2007). Because of some limitations of a quantitative research approach to assessing motivation (as discussed earlier), this study adopted a qualitative approach for data collection to

allow volunteers to share their feelings and experiences flexibly and to provide more in-depth responses. In specific terms, semi-structured interviews were used as they are "ideally suited to experience-type research questions" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 81).

Participants and procedure

A stratified purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) was employed to capture the experiences of Olympic, Paralympic, and Trailblazer[4] volunteers. Leicestershire Games Makers facilitated the recruitment process. After obtaining university ethical approval for the study, the 62 funded Leicestershire Games Makers were divided into three sub-groups (i.e. Olympic volunteers, Paralympic volunteers, and Trailblazer volunteers). For the Olympic volunteers, a stratified random sampling strategy (Teddlie & Yu, 2007) was adopted for participant recruitment. In this instance, every fifth person from the list was invited to participate. For the Paralympic and Trailblazer volunteers, every volunteer on the lists was approached given their limited sample sizes. Twelve interviewees were successfully recruited (the sample of interviews is summarized in Table 1), including Olympic (n=7) and Paralympic Games Makers (n=6) (two of whom volunteered for both the Olympic and the Paralympic Games), and Games Maker Trailblazer (n=1). Pseudonyms were used to protect interviewees' identities.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

The interviews with Leicestershire Games Makers were carried out in the weeks after the completion of the London 2012 Games (i.e., between August and October 2012), except for one Trailblazer interview completed prior to the Games[5]. The

interviews were conducted immediately after the Games because 1) it was considered that people were more likely to take part in the research when there was still some excitement about the Games and their volunteers, and 2) participants were more likely to remember their experience. It is acknowledged that, in so doing, the responses might be influenced by a feeling of euphoria (Nichols et al., 2016), especially with regard to post-event volunteering attitudes. To enhance the reliability of responses, the participants' previous and on-going volunteering engagements were both explored. Attention was subsequently paid to those respondents who tended to answer overly positively towards their post-event volunteering attitudes, by incorporating some extra probing questions, for example, "Could you tell me more about that", "How come?", and "Is it achievable?". The interviews ranged from 50 minutes to 90 minutes.

To supplement the Leicestershire Games Makers interviews, a series of interviews with key local stakeholders in Leicestershire (including Inspire Leicestershire Director, Volunteering Manager at Voluntary Action LeicesterShire[6], and a Volunteering Officer at Leicester-Rutland Sport) were conducted before, during and after the London 2012 Games. These interviews aimed to ascertain the strategic intentions and plans for supporting local volunteers, as well as to access the sponsored Leicestershire Games Makers.

An interview guide was used for these preliminary exploratory interviews, including the following key elements (1) the motivation and experiences of the engagement in the London Games as Games Makers, (2) their attitudes towards voluntary work, (3) their perspectives of the support they received (both nationally and locally), and (4) their future volunteering engagement. While a range of research reviewed earlier is

particularly instrumental in assessing volunteer motivation, most volunteer motivations can be categorised as either intrinsic or extrinsic (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991; Duchesne, 1989). Therefore, to avoid providing interviewees with any motivational checklist, a series of open-ended questions appropriate prompts explored the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Examples of interview questions included: "Why were you interested in becoming a Games Maker?", "In becoming a Games maker, did you get any support or training from LOCOG or local authorities?", "What did the support mean to you?", and "What is your volunteering plan (if there is any) after London 2012?". All interviews were digitally recorded and verbatim transcribed. Interviewees were informed that their status and personal information would not be exposed when quoted.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis (Patton, 2002) was employed. After being familiar with the data, transcription and re-reading, both descriptive codes and inferential codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were identified by using NVivo 10. Specifically, themes were identified based on the following elements suggested by Ryan and Bernard (2003): research questions, repetitions, indigenous typologies or categories, metaphors and analogies, transitions. First level coding was subsequently developed to summarize segments of data, echoing the main research questions (1) motivation behind volunteering for the Games; (2) the impact of local (financial) support on engagement with the Games; and (3) future volunteering engagement. Next, the second level coding identified pattern codes, from which the salient features of the data were systematically specified and reported (Braun & Clarke, 2013). For example, in relation to the first research question of volunteer motivation, although factors such as "love of sport" and "interpersonal

contacts" were sporadically mentioned by some participants, they were not deemed as prominent across the dataset and therefore not treated as main sub-themes; whereas, the factor of "past volunteering experiences" (along with "increased volunteering skills and confidence") emerged during this stage was defined as a sub-theme based on its weight in the dataset and on a return to the literature (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

Moreover, several factors (e.g. the branding of the Olympics and Olympic spirit) associated with the nature of the event were grouped together under the overarching theme "Olympic-related motives"; similarly, the sub-theme of "a mixture of feelings" included elements such as "nationalism" and "giving back to the community" to demonstrate a community or nationalistic motivation. The clustering of the factors was congruent with previous research (Dickson, Benson, Blackman, & Terwiel, 2013). This process led to the construction of three main themes and six sub-themes in total. To overcome the challenge regarding the analysis and interpretation of interview data, transcripts were subjected to numerous readings until themes emerged (Devine, 2002), and interview materials were also discussed with other researchers to ensure the coherence and consistency between the data and themes identified (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

Results and discussion

The following sections explore volunteers' motives, the effects of the grant scheme on stimulating interest in volunteering for the Games and their attitudes towards post-event volunteering.

Volunteer motivation for the London 2012 Games

Olympic-related motives

The glamour and branding of the London 2012 Games appealed strongly to the non-host region volunteers. Volunteering allowed the Leicestershire Games Makers to be part of the Games directly, and to gain first-hand experience of the Games atmosphere. Statements such as "once-in-a-life-time opportunity", "[UK hosting another Olympic Games] will not going to happen", and "I think it is everybody's aspiration", revealed a strong Olympic-related motive amongst the Leicestershire Games Makers.

In comparison with previous Olympics hosted abroad that non-host region volunteers were "never able to afford to go to see any Olympics elsewhere in the world", London 2012 provided an *affordable* opportunity to "just be part of the whole thing, in a very small way… [but] … just to be able to say 'I was there!'". A strong *pull* effect (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977) of the Olympics seemed to arise by the destination, rather than exclusively by passion for the event. Many Leicestershire Games Makers without any prior attendance at an Olympics also concurred on this view. But what seems slightly different is that some of the Leicestershire Games Makers who had some previous Olympic live experiences, were primarily motivated by volunteering spirit of the Olympics. As explained by one Leicestershire Games Maker:

> Me and my parents were actually travelling to Athens in 2004 to watch the Olympics when I was really young – about 15-16. To be honest, for me, the volunteers have made the most memorable bit. I remember going to an event to watch. It was the travelling between venues; whoever you asked the question, they (volunteers) knew the answer or they could quickly get the answer sorted. So this sort of enthusiasm

was given by the volunteers that made me think I definitely want to be involved in that thing. (Joanne, London 2012 Olympic volunteer)

A mixture of feelings

The altruistic feeling was constantly referred to in the discussion. For example, one Leicestershire Games Maker put it "I think I should do something for my country!". Another said, "I think if they [the country] wanted the Games to be a success, they'd need somebody to say "yes, I will do it; and I want to do it". In fact, the altruist effects for volunteering in sports in general have long been referenced in the literature (Cuskelly, McIntyre, & Boag, 1998). In this study, the perspective of "giving something back" was reported as a key motivation for engaging with both community-level volunteering work and the Olympics by all the interviewed Games Makers. One participant suggested that the London 2012 Games was just "something" in which she could get involved so that she could "give something back to the community". Another said, signing up to Games Makers was a "natural" thing to do, because:

> I have done quite a lot volunteering work … I feel proud of doing the Olympics stuff
> … just being helpful. Perhaps, that is just natural to me, I think I just have to do that
> to be me. It is just something that I have always done since I was younger. (Vicky,
> London 2012 Olympic volunteer)

Such a volunteer commitment for the Games can be seen as a sustained or continuous volunteering behaviour which was derived from longstanding community volunteering experiences. Thus, this might be considered as an example of experience transfer whereby the decision to volunteer at London 2012 was attributable to positive volunteer experiences acquired locally. For some, volunteering at the London 2012 Games was in

part to "do something different" to their normal volunteering experience. As one Leicestershire Games Maker explained: "I just want to try different work and have different experiences through volunteering work. I always deliberately choose various kinds of volunteering work, be different as I volunteered last time" (Jon, London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic volunteer).

A key point emerged from the data for this research in relation to volunteer motivation was that other factors such as solidarity (e.g. social interaction, networking, and friendship) and personal growth (e.g. career development, personal skills and knowledge development) were only sporadically mentioned by some participants. As explained by some respondents, these factors were significant to their engagement with community-level of voluntary work, but not so much for them to travel to the host city and to volunteer for London 2012. Such differences in volunteering motivation between engagement in community-based work and that at a sports event are indeed highlighted in the literature. As underscored by Getz (1991), event volunteering, often termed as episodic volunteering, differs from continuing club-based volunteering with open-ended commitments (termed as systematic volunteering, Shibli, Taylor, Nichols, Gratton, & Kokolakakis, 1999). This suggests that the development of different volunteer recruitment strategies need to be context-specific, treating event volunteers and community volunteers separately.

Previous volunteering experiences, relevant skills and improved confidence

In this study, all the interviewed Games Makers have volunteered either for club-based activities or at sporting events. Particularly, four interviewed Leicestershire Games Makers had volunteered for the same sports event, namely the Leicester 2009 Special

Olympics – a national event that is held every four years supported by approximately 750 volunteers. It is a four-day multi-sport event contested by around 2600 athletes with intellectual disabilities (Special Olympics GB, 2017). Three years after the Leicester 2009 Special Olympics, positive volunteering experiences gained from the event served as a motive to volunteer for London 2012. As noted by the following Games Maker:

> Three years ago, we had this Special Olympics in Leicester; I was volunteering the Venue team manager for that; and that was my first major experience of big volunteering thing. That is really why we want to go for the Olympics. (Rachel, London 2012 Paralympic volunteer)

The positive experiences of the Leicester Special Olympics', combined with the knowledge that they had contributed to a major event, provided sufficient confidence to "go to a bigger thing" (i.e. volunteering for the London 2012 Games). One participant elaborated:

> I suppose, the Special Olympics in Leicester was quite big at the time. But having been part of that, [….] I think it gave me the confidence; if I can do that, why can't I go to something bigger. And I am really glad that I did it. I think if I hadn't started the Special Olympics, I probably would not have done the London Games. (Rachel, London 2012 Paralympic volunteer)

In fact, the value of previous volunteer experiences in propelling voluntary work at London 2012 outside of their living areas has been noted by all the Leicestershire Games Makers interviewed.

Furthermore, having had the experience of working with disabled people, some respondents gained the confidence to be Paralympic Games Makers, and developed

relevant skills when servicing disabled people from the Special Olympics, which assisted

their work at London 2012.

> Having done the Special Olympics, I learned quite a lot about people with
> disabilities, so I was quite pleased that I was on the Mobility Team for the 2012
> Games. Because of the skills I learned from the Special Olympics, I practiced them
> and helped people with disabilities. (Emily, London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic
> volunteer)

These findings resonate strongly with Fairley et al.'s (2007) research that a key

motive driving individual to repeat sports mega event volunteering was underpinned by

the intention to re-live the experience and the opportunity to use the knowledge and skills

developed by volunteering in a similar event setting.

The impact of local (financial) support on engagement with the Games

Leicestershire residents' engagement with the Olympics via volunteering was restricted

by the geographic living location; reported problems include finding appropriate

accommodation during the Games within commutable distance, time and cost constraints

associated with travel to the events. This range of challenges is consistent with Chalip's

(1999) and Fairley et al.'s (2016) identification of problems with which volunteers may

be confronted. As introduced earlier, a local boost was proffered to Leicestershire Games

Makers by local authorities and other partners to promote and financially support

volunteers' engagement with the Games. Leicestershire Games Makers highly valued this

financial support. The financial scheme seemed to be helpful for facilitating this group of

Leicestershire Games Makers' engagement with the event, as it not only covered a

considerable portion of the financial expenses arising from volunteering for the Games,

but also was seen as local authorities' acknowledgement of the contributions that Leicestershire Games Makers made to the Games.

> I think the financial support meant a lot to me. I mean, it is all down to local authority supporting Games Makers; and because with that support, in this case is the funding support, we can then contribute to volunteering. Otherwise, we will have to try to sort that out by ourselves. But by giving us the money, we will be confident to be able to volunteer. (Mia, London 2012 Paralympic volunteer)

The distinctive value of this scheme was highlighted by Inspire Leicestershire Director who suggested that "we [Leicestershire] are the first of only three in the UK that is providing financial support to local Games Maker volunteers … of which we are incredibly proud" (Interview with Inspire Leicestershire Director, 19 November 2012). As the following Leicestershire Games Maker recalled:

> The financial support means a lot for people who lived outside of London. I spoke with lots of people about this, and I couldn't find anybody else who had a grant from their local authorities. They overall were amazed that we can get some money from the council to help to do it. You know, so all credits to Leicestershire that they actually did something! (Taylor, London 2012 Olympic volunteer)

Some respondents expressed their disappointment towards the lack of support from LOCOG related to the provision of centralized accommodation opportunities; whereas, the financial contributions from local authorities and other partners towards supporting local volunteers' participation in the Games were particularly significant to those who did not have incomes, e.g. students or retired people who rely on pensions.

> It [the financial support] made a lot of difference! I received that money; and that money actually paid almost all the accommodation when I was in London. So it helped out immensely, really … with the accommodation thing. It meant that I don't

have to commute; it meant that I can go and enjoy the Games as well. You know,

without being too sheltered from home, it helped greatly, really! I was very

privileged to receive that. (Ellie, London 2012 Olympic volunteer)

Although most of the respondents indicated that they would still have finished the

volunteering even without the financial support (but it would be much more difficult

without this support), the following statement revealed a potential boosting effect of the

scheme[7] on encouraging local citizens who were outside of London to be involved with

the Games:

When the Games Maker thing was announced, a lot of people thought "oh, it is just

the Londoners that can be involved". You know, Charnwood helped me out. It gave

me an impression that, even though it was all the way down South, it is still going to

be sort of respected in this area. (Joanne, London 2012 Olympic volunteer)

As the above respondent further elaborated, if the scheme were provided by the central

government, rather than her local authority, she would have instantly "distanced" herself

from the scheme and would not perhaps have the "supportive feeling" to go down to

London for the event. This range of discussion is useful because it highlights potential

possibilities to support a larger group of residents from a non-host region to engage with

the event, if similar initiatives could have been offered by other non-host regions.

Attitudes towards post-event volunteering

The underlying assumption of the Leicestershire Games Maker programme was that

volunteers would apply their volunteering experience and stories to the community and

subsequently raise the aspirations of volunteers in the region. This would create a legacy

in the form of trained and motivated volunteers (Interview with Inspire Leicestershire

Director, 19 November 2012). Interviews with Leicestershire Games Makers found little evidence to support the claim that one-time event volunteering changed this group of Leicestershire Games Makers' perceptions of volunteering engagement, in terms of volunteering *more* for their communities. This is perhaps because most Leicestershire Games Makers were already highly committed to the community or club volunteering. As Emily elaborated:

> Like I said I am involved with lots of volunteering things already, I don't think I would do more. but there were lots and lots happy memories telling people about it. I think, a lot of people said it might be good to have my insights, so I was sending my friends emails, photos of me in my uniform. I think some of people felt that they understood it even more what was going on because I was sort of telling them what was what, what was the atmosphere like. (Emily, London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic volunteer)

From Emily's point of view, the emphasis, in terms of post-event volunteering, was therefore on actively promoting volunteering in her local community, and inspiring more people to volunteer. Similar responses were provided by Vicky:

> Because I have done quite a lot of volunteering now, I think I would more like to get the message out to people. I would like to show my children; let them understand the importance of it. And hopefully, it is getting pass on to their friends, and you know, just talking to people about it really. I think it is all about making people aware of what volunteering is all about, and why we need it, how good it can make you feel from helping people. (Vicky, London 2012 Olympic volunteer)

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the financial support directed by local authorities had encouraged the respondents to *continue*, if not more, volunteering for the communities. Ellie explained:

Actually, after receiving that money, it then made me feel more inclined to do volunteer(ing) in my area. You know, … I would certainly continue doing voluntary work within the local area. (Ellie, London 2012 Olympic volunteer)

The "feeling more inclined to do volunteering in the community" after receiving monetary rewards, was evident in most of the interviewees. This was not required by the scheme. Participants indicated that they would keep volunteering for their communities, volunteering particularly in a sporting context.

Furthermore, the positive volunteering experience of the London 2012 encouraged some Leicestershire Games Makers to volunteer at future sporting events. For example, a few respondents made reference to volunteering at the next Olympic Games and the Glasgow Commonwealth Games. This resembles what is underscored by Bang et al. (2009) and Koutrou and Downward (2016): positive volunteering experience has an impact on continued volunteering. As shared by Joanne:

It was a great experience! Even thought, at a time it was not all a glamour job… you know, sometimes you were just standing at the corridor and waiting for people to come in. [But] It is definitely something that I want to do again in the future. I have got my brother and sisters in law who are from South Africa, and we (have)_already start to talk about 'you know, do you think Rio might be a possibility?' and I like 'Yes, yeah, that will be good!' For me, personally, I think it definitely inspired me to get more involved in mega sports events, and more organised sport. I love to be involved in sort of big event volunteering again, we got commonwealth Games in two years' time. Yes definitely. (Joanne, London 2012 Olympic volunteer)

Conclusion

This study is one of the few that focused on examining the motivation of Olympic volunteers from a non-host region. The purpose of the study was to explore 1) the

motivations of non-host community volunteers for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games; 2) the impact of the Leicestershire Games Makers Grant scheme on facilitating Leicestershirian engagement with the Games, and 3) Leicestershire Games Makers perceptions of post-event volunteering engagement.

To summarise, in response to research question one, our findings suggest that whist Leicestershire Games Makers were motivated by Olympic-related factors (e.g. Olympic spirit, once-in-a-life-time opportunity to be part of such a prestigious event and making the event a success), the perspective of "giving something back" was recognised as another key motive. Particularly, it is identified that some volunteering experiences (either club-based or sporting events-based) were also important in boosting self-confidence to serve at the Olympics. Thus, concerning volunteer recruitment, future event organizers might find it relatively easier to target non-host region citizens with some volunteering experiences than without.

In relation to the impact of the Grant scheme, the results indicate that the provision of financial support can facilitate volunteer interest far beyond the host community. The Grant scheme accelerated Leicestershirian's momentum and confidence to go down to London for the Games; it also had positive impact on encouraging sponsored Leicestershire Games Makers to continue volunteering for the communities after the Games. While existing studies emphasize both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for volunteers engaged at the Olympics, this research thus suggests that support provided at the local level may have a positive impact on engagement with the event.

The last aim of this study was to investigate Leicestershire Games Makers' perceptions of post-event volunteering engagement. This study revealed the likelihood

that the Games Makers can transfer volunteering activities to a sporting context (e.g. future sports mega events) because of the engagement with London 2012. Another noteworthy result in relation to future voluntary engagement at a community level is that, given the characteristics of the interviewees (i.e. actively committed to local volunteering work), their future intentions may not further increase significantly (but certainly to continue) their volunteering behaviour; rather, they were more likely to actively promote volunteering and spread volunteering spirit throughout their communities. This was different from a national research (Grant Thornton, Ecorys, Centre for Olympic Studies & Research Loughborough University, & Economics, 2013) which noted that 45% of London 2012 Games Makers expected to increase their volunteering levels following the Games. Event organizations are therefore encouraged to pay more attention to understanding volunteer characteristics and differentiating host and non-host volunteers for the purpose of capitalizing on a positive volunteering legacy after the event. Non-host local authorities are advised to coordinate showcasing events and to create social media platforms, through which event volunteers could be invited to share their experiences, in order to facilitate the communication of volunteering importance and opportunities.

The study advances the understanding of how non-local communities can engage their residents to volunteer at sport mega events in other places. However, a few limitations of this study need to be noted. First, the Olympic Games is a special event to study volunteers from non-host region, because of its history, impact and social significance (Roche, 2002). Thus, an understanding of the findings presented should be context-specific, which necessitates cautions in applying these findings to other contexts. Second, because the study was carried out immediately after London 2012, the longer-

term impact of the Games experience and local support on contributing to local volunteering or community activities post-event were not included in this study; yet such an investigation is valuable to the research field and should be under careful scrutiny into future. It will therefore be useful to conduct longitudinal research that trace volunteering behaviour before, during and after the Games, which would further and enrich the understanding of volunteering engagement after the Olympics.

Notes:

[1] Inspire Leicestershire was a local partnership programme, comprising Leicestershire local authorities working collaboratively to maximise the benefits of London's hosting of the Olympics.

[2] Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport (LRS) are a County Sport Partnership for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.

[3] According to the Inspire Leicestershire Director, there in excess of 150 people from Leicestershire who volunteered for the Games.

[4] Trailblazers were part of the pre-Games volunteer programme and were responsible for recruiting Games Maker volunteers.

[5] As explained in Note 4 above, Trailblazers was part of the pre-Games volunteer programme. This particular interview was carried out immediately after the Trailblazer volunteer finished her work at London.

[6] Voluntary Action Leicestershire is a charity organization that encourages people to volunteer.

[7] In fact, the potential impact of the Leicestershire Games Makers scheme might be underestimated because the Leicestershire scheme was initiated and advertised after the Games Maker application was closed.

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Table 1. The sample of Leicestershire Games Makers.

Interviewees	Olympic or Paralympic volunteers	Role	Interview date
Mia	Paralympic	Event Service	4 September 2012
Taylor	Olympic	Mobility Team	28 August 2012
Ellie	Olympic	Way finder	25 September 2012
Rachel	Paralympic	Way finder	23 August 2012
Sarah	Paralympic	Paralympic Opening Ceremony Performer	10 September 2012
Vicky	Olympic	Risk Assurance	27 August 2012
Helen	Olympic	Event Service	14 September 2012
Emily	Both	Mobility Team	13 September 2012
Jess	Games Maker	Selection Event Volunteering	20 June 2012

	Trailblazer		
Laura	Paralympic	Paralympics Family Assistant	4 October 2012
Joanne	Olympic	Gymnastic Field of Play	17 September 2012
Jon	Both	Print Distribution Team	20 August 2012