Volunteer Legacy: Stories from the London 2012 Paralympic Games

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Aims:

To present two volunteer case studies to explore the volunteer legacy of the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

To utilise the conceptual framework of collective and reflexive forms of volunteering (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003) to help explain the different types of volunteering undertaken.
Volunteer Legacy

- Importance of volunteers to the staging of sports events.
- “It may be indicated by increased volunteer support for other special events in the community and enhanced volunteerism in the community in general, in terms of positive attitudes towards volunteering, an increased rate of volunteering, and increased level of involvement.” (Doherty 2009:187)
- Existing research tends to focus on intentions to volunteer in the future rather than actual behaviour.
- Majority of research utilises quantitative surveys to explore volunteer intentions (Downward & Ralston, 2006; Doherty, 2009; Hallmann and Harms, 2012).
- Few studies explore volunteer legacy in the context of the Paralympic Games (Dickson, 2013).
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London 2012 Games Policy Context – a new culture of volunteering?

“The Games has long depended on the dedication of volunteers. At London 2012, we’re looking not only to celebrate this Olympic spirit, but use it to get more people volunteering in future.” Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister (DCMS, 2012)

“Those volunteering at London 2012 will leave their mark on the event – what’s important is that they make a commitment to volunteer beyond 2012, so we can leave a mark on communities for years to come.” Sir Charles Allen Chair, Nations and Regions Group, LOCOG (DCMS 2012)

“The Government and the Mayor’s team are working to ensure that the spirit of volunteering continues to grow and can benefit large events, local communities and the volunteers themselves.” (HM Government, 2013)
Theoretical Background
Hustinx & Lammertyn (2003)

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<tr>
<th>Collective Volunteering</th>
<th>Reflexive Volunteering</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Altruism</td>
<td>• Individualism</td>
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<td>• Charity</td>
<td>• Personal interest</td>
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<td>• Long term commitment</td>
<td>• Short term commitment</td>
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<td>• Loyalty</td>
<td>• Reciprocal relationship</td>
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Adapted from Hustinx & Lammertyn (2003)
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London 2012 Paralympic Games
Research was approved and supported by the IPC

Longitudinal Qualitative Semi Structured Interviews

Before
25 interviews

During
16 interviews

After
25 interviews

12 months after
23 interviews

15 Games Makers completed all 4 interviews
Meet Freya – the reflexive volunteer?

- Volunteered at both Olympics and Paralympics
- Event services team member at basketball and wheelchair basketball
- Inspired by Manchester Commonwealth Games
- Previous episodic volunteering prior to the Games
### Freya – intentions to volunteer and actual volunteering 12 months on

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| • Student volunteering  
  • Manchester Commonwealth Games  
  • Shine | • World Police and Fire Games  
  • Manchester Volunteer Bureau  
  • 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games | • World Police and Fire Games  
  • National Badminton Championships  
  • Manchester International Festival  
  • National Cycling  
  • Manchester Literature Festival  
  • 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games (Interview) |
Freya – collective and reflective forms of volunteering?

“...it’s not altruistic in anyway, I’m having a good time so then I want to do more of it you know so yeh definitely.” (Freya, after the Paralympics)

“I didn’t see it like I was doing anything for anybody else, I wanted to do it because I knew it would be fun and I knew I would enjoy it.” (Freya, after the Paralympics)

“...things like the Literature Festival and the arts you know the theatre festival I’m just really interested in those things anyway, I go to the theatre a lot...I really love the International festival because I loved the theatre that I saw, I love the art that I saw...” (Freya, 12 months after the Paralympics)

“I suppose it’s my hobby, it’s a hobby, only it’s a really good hobby it’s you know, it’s because I get to meet lots of people, I get to have lots of fun.” (Freya, 12 months after the Paralympics)
Freya – collective and reflective forms of volunteering?

“I’ve never done anything long term commitment partly because of my job, I really struggle with doing anything long term and I’d love to do it, I’d love to be part of a group or a club that does it but I would be the worst person.” (Freya, after the Paralympics)

“…I mean the short term things really fit in well because I know I can say yes I can do those three days, I will block them out. I will call them holiday, I will tell everybody that I’m on my holiday, don’t bother me for those three days.” (Freya, 12 months after the Paralympics)
Meet Penny – the collective volunteer?

- Volunteered at both the Olympics and Paralympics
- Athlete Services Team Leader at the Aquatics
- Volunteered since she was 14
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Penny – intentions to volunteer and actual volunteering 12 months on

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<td>• Adult special needs group</td>
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Penny – collective and reflective forms of volunteering?

“I kinda figure you have to give something back haven't you because some people aren't as privileged as you are so you know.” (Penny, before the Paralympics)

“Through Brownies and Guides I've had it drilled into me do everything to the best of your ability and erm I've gained so much out of it that I think if I can give back what I've received...I'm like I'm not a materialistic person I'd rather help people” (Penny, before the Paralympics)

“I would say a volunteer is someone who wants to give back to their local community or erm society as a whole for example is someone volunteers at like a cancer charity then that’s a national thing whereas if it’s, like my local guide unit I want to give back to my local community.” (Penny, after the Paralympics)
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**Introduction**

**Background**

**Method**

**Case Studies**

**Discussion**

**Conclusion**
Implications for Sport and Volunteer Management

- Accommodating the needs of diverse volunteers?
- Can reflexive episodic volunteering encourage individuals to engage in more traditional forms of volunteering?
- Unique nature of mega-events?
References


