



The Journey to Glasgow 2014: Exploring Volunteer Involvement with Mega-Sports Events

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Overview

- ❖ Research questions
- ❖ Relevance to existing literature
- ❖ The metaphorical volunteer journey
- ❖ Individual and Group-Based Story-Sharing Sessions
- ❖ Insights from the data
- ❖ Anticipated contribution and avenues for future research

Research Questions

1. How do individuals get involved with mega-sports event volunteering?
 2. How do volunteers' paths cross through mega-sports event volunteering?
 3. How do volunteers anticipate the future as a result of mega-sports event volunteering?
- ❖ Gain insights into volunteer involvement at mega-sports events with regards to past, present and anticipated future
 - ❖ Gain insights into the dynamics of groups of mega-sports event volunteers

Context: Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games

Focus: Frontrunner Volunteers

Timeframe: Pre-event

Mega-Sport Event Volunteers: An Important Group

- ❖ Increasingly important economic and cultural component of mega-sports events (Ingerson, 2001)
- ❖ Success of mega-sports events dependent on volunteer contributions (Kemp, 2002)
- ❖ An opportunity for 'reflexive volunteering' (Harrison, 1995)

Numbers of volunteers required for recent mega-sports events:

Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games: 15,000

London 2012 Olympic Games: 70,000

Beijing 2008 Olympic Games: 100,000

Athens 2004 Olympic Games: 45,000

Delhi 2010 Commonwealth Games: 30,000

Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games: 10,000

Traditional Approach to Volunteering

Collective and Community
(Hustinx and Lammertyn, 2003)

Expression of Belonging
(Ralston et al., 2004)

Regular Involvement
(Meijs and Brudney 2007)

High Availability
(Meijs and Brudney 2007)

Long-Term Involvement
(Rehberg, 2005)

Tradition of Altruism
(Rehberg, 2005)

Reflexive Volunteering

Social and Cultural Transformations
(Hustinx, 2010)

Change : old to the new
(Hustinx and Lammertyn, 2003)

“Present-day volunteering is entrenched in the active re(design) of individualized biographies, identities and lifestyles” (Hustinx et al., 2010 p.426)

Difficulty building a sense of community
(Meijs and Brudney, 2007)

Episodic and ‘revolving door’ volunteering
(Hustinx, 2010)

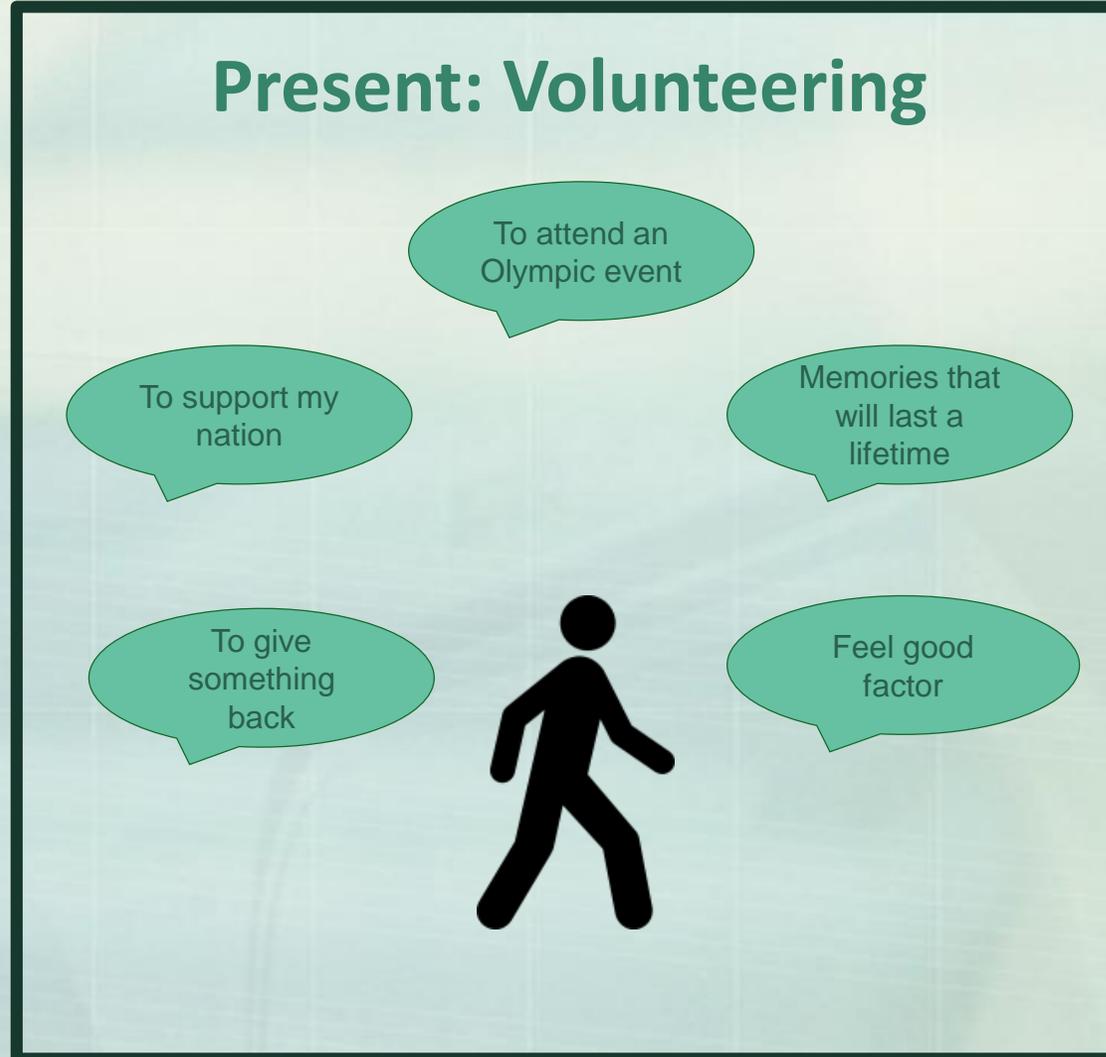
Mega-sports events offer reflexive, episodic volunteer opportunities

Volunteer Motivations

- ❖ Dominant approach to researching volunteer involvement
- ❖ Volunteers typically viewed as a homogenous group
- ❖ Distinct motives of mega-sports event volunteers (Farrell et al.,1998)
- ❖ Plurality of motives (Batson and Shaw, 1991)
- ❖ Long lists of motives (Lockstone-Binney et al.,2010)

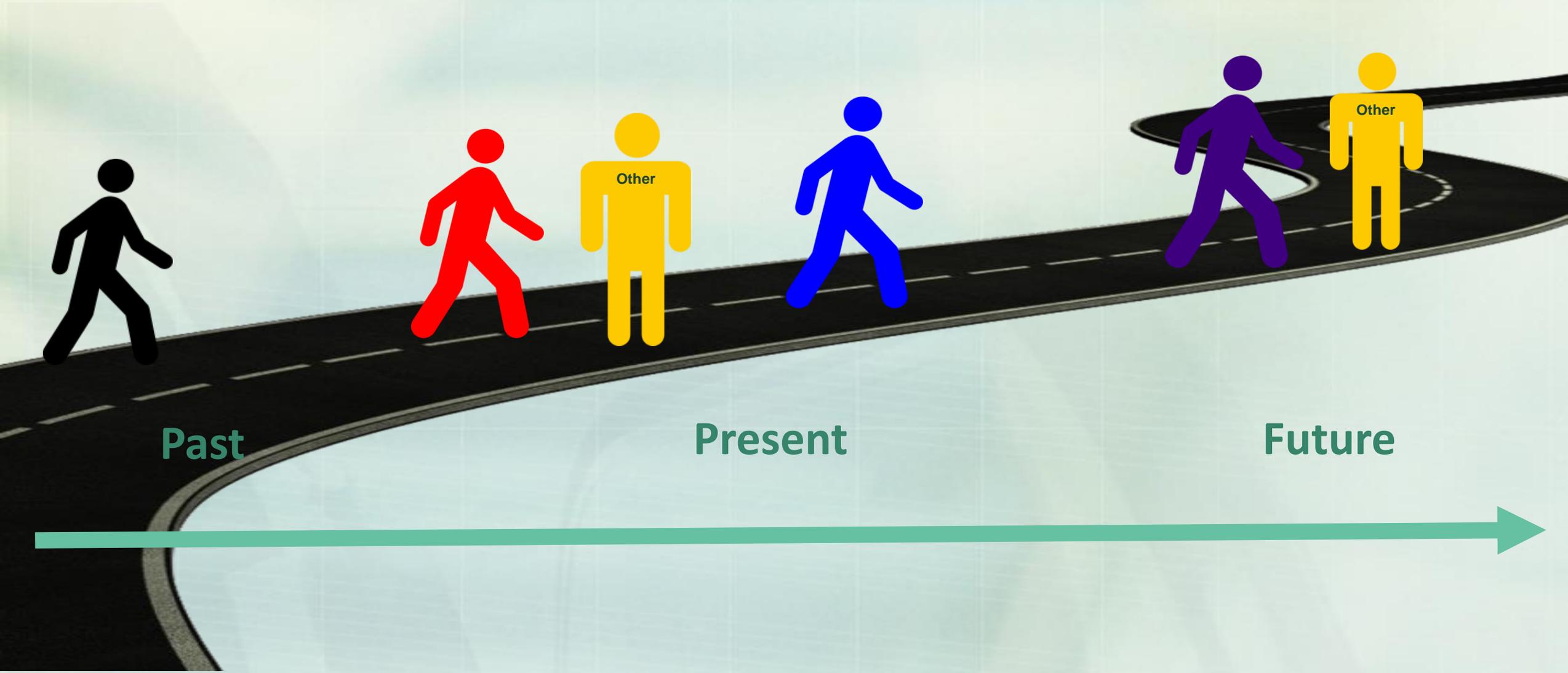
Typical Perspective: 'Why are you here?'

Past...?



Future...?

The Metaphorical Journey: 'How did you get here and where are you going?'



Narrative Inquiry

“Experience is the stories people live. People live stories, and in the telling of these stories, reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.xxvi)

- ❖ Influenced by Clandinin and Connelly
 - ❖ Temporality is a key feature
 - ❖ Focus: inward, outward, forward, backward
 - ❖ Best way of representing and understanding experience
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- ❖ Focus on particular
 - ❖ Smaller number of participants

Methods

Individual story-sharing sessions (ISS)



Group-based reflexive story-sharing sessions (GRSS)

14 Frontrunner Volunteers

Group 1 – 6 participants

Group 2 – 5 participants

Individual Story-Sharing Sessions (ISS)

“Two persons seeking knowledge and understanding in a common conversational endeavour” (Czarniawska, 2004, p.47)

- ❖ 14 conducted
- ❖ Approximately 45 minutes
- ❖ Topic guide
- ❖ Audio recorded
- ❖ Transcribed

Group-Based Reflexive Story-Sharing Sessions (GRSS)

- ❖ Draws upon focus group and listening post methods

Focus group:

Use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group (Morgan, 1988 p.12)

Listening Post:

Potential to surface the collective (and possibly unconscious) assumptions, hopes, anxieties and desires of members of this population in a way that more structured and individually orientated surveys and interviews would be unlikely to reveal (Bolden et al, 2013 p.4)

A three stage, group-based interactive session, focusing on story-sharing and reflection upon these stories to uncover differences, similarities, individual and shared-meanings and potential reasons for their emergence.

Group-Based Reflexive Story-Sharing Sessions (GRSS) in Practice

❖ 3 stages:

1. Story-sharing and discussion (30 minutes)
2. Reflection and formation of key themes emerging from stories (30 minutes)
3. Analysis and reflection on key themes emerging from stories and suggestion of possible reasons for their emergence (30 minutes)

- ❖ Permissive environment
- ❖ Refreshments and snacks
- ❖ Self-managed group (Morgan, 1988)
- ❖ Researcher acts as 'facilitator'



Analysis and Presentation

- ❖ Thematic Analysis
- ❖ Themes used to emplot re-presentation of volunteer stories

Stories

- How individuals get involved with Frontrunner programme
- How Frontrunner paths cross
- How Frontrunners anticipate the future as a result of volunteer experiences

Insights from the Data

Stories from 3 participants

1. David – 21 year-old politics student
2. Claire – 35 year-old recruitment professional
3. Heather – 66 year-old retired nurse

How do individuals get involved with mega-sports event volunteering?

How did David get involved with the Fronrunner programme?

David is a 21 year old Glaswegian who has just come to the end of his Politics degree. Outside of academia, he loves sport, “Just mad about sports. Like any kind of sport I’ll sit and watch. That’s kind of how I got involved in all this kinda thing” he says.

Last year, David volunteered at London 2012 and spent 3 weeks in London as a Medal Bearer for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. He has some great memories from the experience. “Oh it was phenomenal! The real kind of big moment for me was just looking out the tunnel at Wembley in front of 90,000 people and hearing the place totally erupt!” he recalls. This experience made him determined to volunteer more. “I think it was after that women’s final at Wembley I went and signed up for the Fronrunners programme. It took me hours to kind of calm down from that!” he laughs.

Although London 2012 encouraged David to apply for Glasgow 2014 volunteering, he always intended to be involved with the Games in his home city in some way. David is now a Fronrunner interviewer and has completed 100 hours of volunteering. He will also spend two weeks in the protocol team, showing guests around the city he feels passionately about. “These guests are coming to Glasgow, it might be the first time they’ve ever been to Glasgow and just wanting to show them kind of the best that Glasgow’s got to offer basically. As I say I’m passionate about Glasgow as a city.”

How do individuals get involved with mega-sports event volunteering?

How did Claire get involved with the Frontrunner programme?

Claire is a 35 year old Glaswegian and has a passion for all things Glasgow, “I'm proud of my city, I love my city. And I think that people only see one side and it would be nice for them to see this other side. I mean it's very, em, cultural city, it's full of art, it's full of architecture, it's beautiful” says Claire.

Claire was very pessimistic in the run up to the London 2012 Olympics. She surprised herself by getting really caught up in the moment and watching sport at all hours during the Games. Her attention was drawn to the Games Makers. “During London you saw how an amazing time the Games Makers had and they were the faces of the Games. And the people had fun and they seemed to be having a great time and I thought, ‘Wouldn't that be brilliant to actually be a part of that in Glasgow!’” Claire then researched volunteering at Glasgow 2014.

This proactive approach is quite new to Claire. Until a couple of years ago, she always planned to do things but didn't get round to doing them. After a health scare, she changed her lifestyle. However, being a Frontrunner was not initially on Claire's horizon. One day, she visited the Glasgow 2014 webpage and saw an advert for Frontrunner interviewers. With 17 years of experience in the recruitment industry, Claire felt this was a fantastic opportunity to put her skills and experience into practice. She currently gives up two to three days a week to her Frontrunner role.

How do individuals get involved with mega-sports event volunteering?

How did Heather get involved with the Frontrunner programme?

Originally from the north east of Scotland, Heather is a retired nurse and has lived in Glasgow for 30 years. Retirement took a bit of getting used to. “I retired about 4 years ago now. And I found retirement very difficult. When I first retired I *really, really* missed my work, I hated it. I didn’t feel ready to volunteer and I went on a lot of holidays and things like that.” Before retiring, Heather explains that she was always too busy with work commitments to volunteer.

Heather followed Glasgow’s bid for the Games and feels strongly about it. “I thought it was such an opportunity for Glasgow and Scotland and I wanted to be a little bit part of that. Because I’m very interested in sport and I wanted it all to run nice and smoothly. Glasgow gets a very bad press. Although I’m not from Glasgow, but it gets a bad press and I felt quite protective of that.” Being interested in sports, she curls regularly and has played hockey, badminton and tennis over the years. Scotland having its own sports team at the Commonwealth Games makes it more interesting to her than other events. “I never felt like volunteering for other things but the Commonwealth Games really interest me” Heather explains. Initially, she had not realised volunteers would be required for the Games and found out online. Heather is now a Frontrunner interviewer. She has previous experience of interviewing and training students from her nursing career. Usually, she tries to do two or three shifts each week and organises this around the other things in her life.

How do individuals get involved with mega-sports event volunteering?

- ❖ Reasons and motivations may be similar but the paths taken are very different
- ❖ The past experiences of the individual play a large part in the decision to volunteer
- ❖ Varied backgrounds
- ❖ Varied past volunteer experience

How do volunteers' paths cross through mega-sports event volunteering?

How do the Frontrunners' paths cross as a group?

The Frontrunner programme is in its early stages. The interviewees have started and the protocol Frontrunners are soon to start. Already, they have an apparent common goal. Elaine identifies it as, "To do a good job and show Glasgow in its best light". To achieve this, paths are crossing in various ways. While on shift, Frontrunners meet many individuals. "Different people come and go on different days so you do bump into the same people sometimes, but variably, there's a change of at *least* half a dozen, 6 or 8 people every time" Karen explains. The group's diversity allows Frontrunners to meet people they may not otherwise have met. "A lot of these people I would never meet in kind of day to day life, especially the retired people. Yeah and just getting to meet them and network as well" David says. The paid staff have assisted with this, providing them with their own break room. But Frontrunner paths do not only cross at the Volunteer Centre.

It extends to a dedicated private Frontrunner Facebook page. Ian explains its role, "It looked like it was just going to be for information and it's just become this really weird, I mean last night when I was really busy and doing other stuff, they launched a 'What's your favourite old fashioned sweet?' thread. And everybody just went completely mental!" The Frontrunners also use the page to post shifts needing cover. In addition to this, some Frontrunners are organising social events for their colleagues, particularly those who travel from further afield. "We're going to try and do something in the summer months when a lot of people have travelled to Glasgow perhaps. Just something to introduce people to the city. Basically, we want to look after the people that are travelling from London and all over. So we want to let them see Glasgow and to sell it during the Games. If they get a bad experience now, they go on to be a bad volunteer, it's not gonnae show us in the best light" Rosie explains.

How do volunteers' paths cross through mega-sports event volunteering?

- ❖ Paths crossing within and outwith volunteer roles
- ❖ Paths crossing face-to-face and online
- ❖ Development of sense of community
- ❖ Supporting fellow Frontrunners and organisation

How do volunteers' anticipate the future as a result of mega-sports event volunteering?

How does David anticipate the future as a result of being a Frontrunner?

David anticipates his protocol role continuing into Games Time or he could join medal ceremonies based on his experience at London 2012, "It'll be something I've done before either way!" he laughs. Otherwise, the future is quite uncertain for David.

Currently searching for a job, he has had to reassess his volunteering role, "I would still do everything I could to be involved with the Games. I would take annual leave or whatever. Just kind of try and do whatever it takes and still be able to stay in a job!" David laughs. "In terms of my Frontrunners, I might have to kind of consider that one day if a job comes up. It's no competition. If a job comes up I'll be taking the job over doing the Frontrunners stuff." His Frontrunner experience is advantageous to his job search, "It's a good thing for me, particularly as it's recruitment and as a graduate, there's not a vast amount of graduates who have got recruitment experience."

He has considered two career paths. With his degree in politics, he would like to work in the civil service. Alternatively, David would like to work for Glasgow 2014 but is unsure if he has the required experience. Either way, he wishes to volunteer for future sporting events if time allows. He is volunteering for the British Cycling Championships but is unsure if he will volunteer on the scale of the Commonwealth Games again. "None of the big Games coming up I particularly fancy because obviously like, they're reasonably far away and they're all in non-English speaking countries as well. Apart from the next Commonwealth Games is in Brisbane but that's just not a possibility for me."

How do volunteers' anticipate the future as a result of mega-sports event volunteering?

How does Claire anticipate the future as a result of being a Frontrunner?

As a result of her positive experiences, Claire wants to be more involved with volunteering in the run up to the Games. "I'm waiting on my audition to go and be a Clyde, one of the mascots. Which will be fantastic! I'd *love* to get that, I think that'd be great fun!" Claire explains excitedly.

Claire also hopes to be involved with Games Time volunteering. She has an interview for the press operations team, not one of her preferred areas, but she is happy with any role. She hopes to positively look back on her experience at Games Time, "Being able to turn round and say 'I did that, I was a part of that. I had a *great* time but I'm so proud I did it!'"

Beyond the Games, Claire is considering continuing volunteering and has expressed an interest in volunteering for the 2015 Rugby World Cup. Seeing many Frontrunner volunteers commuting to Glasgow, she is open to such possibilities. A keen rugby fan, Claire had planned leave from work to go and support Scotland at the event. She explains that Frontrunning has changed this, "Now I'm actually considering *not* doing that. I'm considering being a volunteer where I may not be anywhere *near* the action. I might be in another part of the city or another part of the stadium or whatever where I don't actually see the match. So I think the fact that I love rugby so much shows you just how good the volunteering has been because I'm actually considering *not* seeing the matches."

How do volunteers' anticipate the future as a result of mega-sports event volunteering?

How does Heather anticipate the future as a result of being a Frontrunner?

Heather hopes to be a Games Time volunteer. She has been interviewed for the transport team which came as a surprise. "I can't quite work that out but I *do* drive and in my previous job I drove the children in the mini bus so that's grand." Although not having expressed an interest in transport, Heather is happy to take up any role "apart from cleaning the toilets!" she laughs. Despite her medical background, Heather is avoiding that side of volunteering. "I've done it all my life and I thought 'If somebody collapses at my feet I've done all that bit. I'd rather be doing something quite different'" she explains. She hopes Games Time volunteering will give her a new challenge and broaden her horizons.

After the Games, Heather intends to continue volunteering admitting volunteering is easier than she anticipated. She previously considered volunteering at a hospice but is unsure of what to next. Heather also explains that her husband has recently become a 'Meals-on-Wheels' driver and she may do the same. Her curling commitments could clash with volunteering in future, "When winter comes round I will have to plan it better because as I say I curl quite a bit so I'll be sort of slotting it in between my curling days. So it'll be slightly different then." Despite a busy schedule, Heather thinks Frontrunning is the first of many volunteer experiences for her. "Now I've done that I'm going to do more. You know other things, not necessarily big things but I'll do other things."

How do volunteers' anticipate the future as a result of mega-sports event volunteering?

- ❖ Paths and journeys continue in different directions
- ❖ Frontrunner experience has transformational potential
- ❖ Frontrunners have a desire to continue volunteering

Anticipated Contribution

Theory:

- ❖ Addressing a gap in the extant literature
- ❖ Suggesting an alternative approach to researching volunteer involvement in MSEs
- ❖ Contributing insights into reflexive volunteering at MSEs

Practice:

- ❖ Volunteer stories could be beneficial to recruitment and selection processes
- ❖ Offers initial insights into potential volunteer legacy at pre-games phase
- ❖ Suggests that volunteers may support organisational objectives beyond traditional bounds of role
- ❖ Suggests potential benefit from allowing group space to bond

Avenues for Future Research

Limitations of study:

- ❖ Limited time-frame - longitudinal study
- ❖ Limited sample – wider geographical spread
- ❖ Limited perspective – organisational data

Topics for Future Research:

- ❖ Community dynamics in formation of MSE volunteer groups
- ❖ Role of social media in development of MSE volunteer groups
- ❖ Changing dynamics of MSE volunteer groups
- ❖ Support of organisational objectives beyond typical bounds of volunteer role



Thank you for listening

Feedback and questions welcome

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