

UK Sports Volunteering Research Network

Research Seminar

Thursday 19th March 2015: 10.30am-4.00pm

Sport England Offices, SportPark Loughborough University
(3 Oakwood Drive, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3QF.)

10.30-11.00 Registration and Coffee

11.00-1.00 Presentations

11-11.40 Geoff Nichols (University of Sheffield) and Tony Veal (University of Technology, Sydney): Explaining the negative relationship between income inequality, volunteering and sports participation in Europe.

11.40-12.20 Angela Benson (University of Brighton): Gamesmakers at 2012.

12.20-1.00 Will Watt (Join In): Join In's strategy to promote Sports Volunteering.

1.00-1.45 Lunch and networking time

1.45-3.30 Presentations

1.45-2.10 Alex Thurston (Loughborough University): 'Clubmark' implementation, policies and volunteers.

2.10-2.50 Richard Davis-Boreham and Rachel Waterman (Sport England): Volunteers in Sports Clubs

2.50-3.30 Clare Holdsworth (University of Keele): Student volunteering.

3.30-4.00 Tea and Coffee and Panel Session with Speakers

All attendees at the Seminar have been added to the UKSVRN mailing list.
A delegate list for today's event is attached.

UKSVRN Research Seminar March 2015 is supported by Sport England.

Abstracts for the papers are on following pages.

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Explaining the negative relationship between income inequality, volunteering and sports participation in Europe.

A. J. Veal: University of Technology, Sydney, Australia tony.veal@uts.edu.au

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Wilkinson and Pickett's (2009) influential analysis has shown a strong relationship between inequality in societies and a set of measures of social welfare. Their study did not, however, include volunteering or sport participation. This paper replicates this analysis by examining the relationship between income inequality, and volunteering and sports participation, across Europe. Inequality is found to be correlated with lower levels of volunteering and sports participation. It is however, found that high GDP per head is a stronger predictor of high levels of volunteering and sports participation, so income inequality may not be the most important factor. The paper explores explanations for this. Three explanations are found in the literature. Social status-related explanations argue that greater inequality, or a move towards it, result in status anxiety and erosion of social capital, such as levels of trust, and people's lives become more individualistic. Resource-related or neo-materialistic explanations argue that more equal societies are characterised by higher levels of public services, facilitating higher levels of participation. Cultural explanations argue that the level of income inequality in societies reflects distinct cultures which also determine other phenomena such as community participation. A further explanation related directly to volunteering and leisure participation relates to the possibility that more unequal societies experience increased levels of time pressure because they are more competitive. The findings have implications for understanding different levels of sports participation and volunteering across Europe.

Wilkinson, R. and Pickett, K. (2009) *The spirit level: Why more equal societies almost always do better*. London: Allen Lane.

Researching Volunteer Legacy at the Olympic and Paralympic Games: London 2012

Dr Angela M Benson (*Research in association with Dr Tracey J Dickson; Prof. Deborah A Blackman; Prof. Simon Darcy and Anne Terwiel*).

Volunteers are an essential component of the operation of many sport events from local community sport clubs to international mega events, with volunteering being part of the discourse on legacy from the latter, particularly in their contribution to social capital and social inclusion. Consequently, research was undertaken to understand the 'who, why and will they do it again' at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Therefore, this presentation will discuss 'edited highlights' around the concept of legacy; where this research contributes to and expands upon the literature; the challenges of research design; London 2012 findings, in particular the LOCOG initiative of targeting volunteers (Games Makers) with disabilities. The presentation will also offer some reflection on the similarities and differences of the Vancouver 2010 findings. This research is aimed at informing future mega sporting events on how best to manage volunteers and how to maximise the volunteering legacy for hosting communities and organisations.

Join In's strategy to promote Sports Volunteering

Will Watt (Join In)

Join In is a London 2012 legacy charity set up to put more volunteers in community sport in order to create happier, healthier people and communities. The talk will be about what we do, how we do it and the results we achieve. We will then run through our new and innovative way of valuing volunteers in sport.

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Volunteers in Sports Clubs – R. Davis-Boreham and R. Waterman (Sport England)

Sport England has recently launched a unique and innovative £3.6 million resource for sports clubs. 'Club Matters' provides clubs with engaging, flexible and easy to use support on all aspects of running a club whether it is large, small, formal or informal. Bringing together all of Sport England's existing support - Club Leaders, Clubmark and Help for Clubs - into one simple resource, Club Matters has been carefully designed to give volunteers and sports leaders what they want, when they need it, in a simple, bite-size way. From Sport England, Richard Davis-Boreham, Head of Clubs and Rachel Waterman, Head of Volunteering will talk about the resource and how Sport England supports volunteers who run sport clubs.

'Clubmark' implementation, policies and volunteers - Alex Thurston (Loughborough University)

Policy makers are predominantly centrally located often a distance from the point of delivery where, it is argued, the environment is highly variable, pressured and political, often requiring negotiation and interpretation during the process of implementation. The aim of this study was to analyse the relationship of National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and community sport clubs in the process of policy implementation of Sport England's generic Clubmark framework (a quality mark accreditation). Within the overarching Clubmark framework, other policies (such as safeguarding) that must be adopted by clubs working towards the accreditation (or re-accreditation) standard were also examined.

This research adopted a qualitative approach using case studies from three sports: swimming, rugby union and boxing. Data collection consisted of document analysis (from both clubs and NGBs) plus interviews with club officers and NGB officials. Two clubs from each sport were examined (one urban, one rural) which, yielded interview data from between eight to twelve club officers per sport. Two to three NGB officials from each sport provided data for the top-down perspective of policy implementation.

The (preliminary) main findings from the research are: a) implementation is not straightforward; NGBs have to be flexible with their strategies and be willing to adapt certain Clubmark criteria due to the varying capacities of clubs; b) NGBs need to be aware of the constraints of a club's environment in an attempt to ensure successful implementation; c) accreditation prestige, hence a clubs' motivation, varied across sports; and d) the role of club officers (volunteers), as implementing agents, is fundamental in the policy process.

These findings are consistent with the literature: the role of street-level bureaucrats (club officers at the point of delivery) that bottom-up theorists suggest should be the focus for analysis, is crucial for implementing Clubmark; top-down implementation, assuming a perfect rational process, is unattainable (as acknowledged by the top-down theorists); and applying a synthesis of the two major schools of thought proves effective in developing the understanding of implementation in this particular context. Furthermore, this research has added to our knowledge by demonstrating how the complex and heterogeneous nature of clubs affects the implementation process in sport.

Volunteer or Voluntold? Choice and youth volunteering - Clare Holdsworth, Keele University

The social and individual benefits of youth volunteering have received considerable policy endorsement in recent years and increasingly young people are encourage to volunteer in order to enhance their development and, in particular, their future employability. Yet this promotion of formal volunteering may also potentially undermine the very nature of volunteering if young people no longer feel they have a choice about getting involved, or the kinds of activities that are available. Moreover the promotion of formal volunteering opportunities may also undermine more informal forms of engagement and service. The presentation will explore the challenges and paradoxes of promoting volunteering for young people and will focus on the consequences for sports volunteering. A key question to consider is the extent to which more established practices of sports volunteering are congruent with the development of more formalised, career-orientated volunteering opportunities.

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There may have been some last-minute changes to this list.