Volunteering in Sport: Analytical Essay

Introduction

My task is to develop a 12month structured intervention to improve rates of volunteering within the student population. To do this we must first knowledge ourselves of the field through data and theory.

What is sports development?

It is important to understand the role we play in sport and society, as our responsibility is to promote positive behaviour change and help individuals achieve their potential through and in sport, all within a supportive environment.

One factor that I will be discussing further is the recognition of voluntary work and the involvement of local people.

Volunteering

Understanding what volunteering is and why it is important will help define and shape the intervention protocol, as a tailored strategy can be made rather than using generic objectives.

What is it = “Any activity that involves spending time, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone; relatives and or others. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.”

There are many types of volunteering. Some major ones include:

1. Formal = these are long-term, structured and supervised programs. Such as volunteer official/referee for sport season.
2. Governance = volunteers provide leadership and direction to the organisation. For example: member of board of directors for non-profit sport organisation
3. Non-formal = this is done in local communities in unfunded and unstructured settings. Some types are: match day canteen duty volunteer, or providing transport
4. Social action = these volunteers are joined together by common advocacy or goal. Prime examples are: lobbying for gender sport equality, protest for equal pay
5. Project base = volunteers provide specific skills and knowledge for projects that have defined time frames. Example: committee member planning the sporting fair

Another perspective we can look at is Three Perspective Model – Rochester et al. (2010). This looks at three dimensinos of volunteering:

‘Unpaid work’. it involves activities operating in a similar way to paid work providing similar rewards, apart from a wage (mountain rescue crew).

‘Activism’ = is the same as social action – coming together to mutually support each other. This is seen through ‘grass-root’ organisations with volunteers being seen as leaders rather than helpers.

Serious leisure = this is very similar to formal volunteering with long-term commitment, offering a sense of identity and much more.

Why volunteering

In the field of volunteering research, understanding the underlying psychological factors that contribute to the reasoning of participation has been of focus. This is in particular to Clary and Snyder (1991) with their development to a Functional Approach, explaining how individual’s reasons to volunteer, based on personal and social motivations, are being satisfied by the act of volunteering. This approach proposes six functions:

1. values (to express important values)
2. understanding (to understand the population being helped)
3. enhancement (to enhance oneself psychologically)
4. career (to gain career-related experience)
5. social (to enhance social relationships)
6. protective (to reduce negative feelings or personal problems) (Clary & Snyder 1999).

Clary and Synder’s approach suggest that volunteering will achieve multiple combinations of these functions: one person benefiting from at least one, and the same volunteer position satisfying different needs depending on the person (Clary et al. 1998)..

As second model we can look at is: Haidt, (2001)

Dual-process method which is the most acknowledge framework for decision making. This method describes two systems for this psychological process:

- System 1 – Primal Thinkers – being Influenced by contextual factors. Overall this is about a set of factors that can impact on behaviour. Firstly, Heuristics: this is cognitive shortcuts which means we have mental processes that make cognitive thinking easier, through educated guess, common sense, intuition. Secondly external factors – our decisions being influenced from our surrounding environment including but not limited to: who communicated the information, incentives, social norms, commitments, and ego.
- System 2 - Rational Choice Thinkers – Cost and Benefit. This system organises the factors that influences our decisions into groups. This is most easily seen as 1) extrinsic vs intrinsic motivation, and 2) materialistic and non-materialistic. We weigh up the cost and benefit depending on where our motivation lies.

Examples include performance vs reward.

To put this framework in a real-world context it can be used in sport marketing and advertising, sporting success measure, and how we approach each situation and challenge.

Rates of Volunteering

Sport England survey give light into the rates of volunteer in the UK

Uk: 4% of the population volunteer at least twice per year, of which 21% is 16-25 yr olds. Volunteer in sport and activity sector take up the majority with 22%, and of this ¾ are in sporting clubs.

At Leeds, 9.1% (of 3,500students) volunteer for local, regional, national projects

- · 374 students on the volunteer sport register, with 182 regularly active
- · Biggest component is Get Out Get Active with 40 regular volunteers

Sporting bodies and strategies in UK

In 2015 Sport England revamped their strategy in a variety of ways. They redefined what success in sport is, redistributed funds, placed focus in different areas and much more. Within this volunteering was recognised as an important element that needed more representation. From this 'Volunteering in an Active Nation' was produced.

Some Key Focuses from this new strategy include

- More Money and rescores on tackling inactivity
- Work with wider range of partners
- Encourage innovation
- Putting customers at the center

… with all of this linking to the outcome of physical + mental wellbeing, individual, social and economic development

Programs (current and new include

- Volunteering in Active Nation 2017-2021– where everyone should FEEL they are able to engage – not just the ablity
- Street Games (started in 2003 giving opportunities to deprived communities of sport leagues and competitions)
- New allocation of Funding (16million to volunteering
- This Girl Can
- Active Lives survey – in replacement of Active People

Sport Strategy Leeds UNI

In 2018 the universtyi provided a new sport strategy lasting until 2020. It had the vision of putting sport and physical activity at the heart of the strategy, aiming to develop skill and broaden horizon and Improve health and wellbeing. They strive to be customer focused and work as one team with the Overall impact goals being to enriching student experience and creating positive impact on the city.

Volunteering in Leeds UNI

At Leeds, There are programs in which where sport volunteer is already a strong option. They can be based on campus and off campus.

ON is generally more intensive, with weekly commitments. It is more appealing to already sporty students as involve coaching, umpiring and developing sport.

- Netball Umpires
- Social Sport Activators
- Media Assistants
- Lifestyle & Wellbeing volunteers
- NGB roles: non governing bodies
- University Lacrosse Officer

OFF – generally wider appeal involving softer skills and not necessary sporting skills

- Get Out Get Active guide
- Gryphons into Schools

By 2022, Leeds Sport hopes to successfully see 10% of active participation in academic, leadership and volunteer offers across sporting community

Do Good Stuff Campaign

The latest campaign Leeds Sport put out for volunteering is the Do Good Stuff. It challenges viewers to see volunteering in a new light – that anyone can participate. It is a strong concept that focuses around intrinsic motivations.

Challenges of volunteering

There will always be challenges facing volunteer rate. To combat them data from surveys and questionaries need to be analysed to create better strategies.

The British Active Student Survey 2018 saw findings of student challenges:

- Being too busy with studies at almost 80%
- Bang 2015, mentioned that Young people may face barriers to volunteering where they are perceived as lacking the necessary skills and feel they are not wanted by volunteer seeking organisations

A literature review report done by Leeds Beckett university found substantial data supporting evidence that a combination of norms and values gathered from friends, family and schooling explain reasons why some do and not volunteer (Southby and South, 2016). This is an indirect influence of volunteer rates that required high detail and multiple stakeholder engagement to create a strategic plan to combats this factor; something the university may not necessarily have the ability to do.

Proposed intervention – only state

After the background research I have designed a strategic intervention.

Aim = to expand the engagement of the student population within Leeds University in sport volunteer sector

Objectives

- =Provide more opportunities to volunteer;
- = Improve perspective of volunteering
- = Gather, identity and evaluate student's feedback on sport volunteering
- = Maintain monitoring and evaluation of strategy throughout implementation

The Logica Model Approach

Inputs

- = Proposed activities and recruitment plan
- = Stakeholder engagement

Outcome

- = Greater diversity of roles
- = Increase inclusion of other areas of student life

Outputs

- = Start and maintain sessions with Leeds Union to create collaboration
- = Revamp of campaign and marketing
- = Greater use of social media

Proposed activities.

In my intervention I will outline 3 strategy areas I believe will make an impact to volunteer rates at Leeds University.

1) How to sell volunteering: Evidence from Dean (2014) qualitative study of youth volunteering shows how young people are turning towards volunteering as a primarily route into improving their employability. The university can use this for their recruitment, 'selling' volunteering as a sound opportunity to gather experience.

If this perspective is implemented, a new direction and outlook of volunteering can be campaigned to the students, attracting attention from more diverse backgrounds throughout.

2) Diversity of roles: This coincides agreeably with creating a wider range of volunteer roles within the sport field of the university. Currently, the majority roles are based almost purely on sport and physical activity. If we were to make way for roles that combined sport and other fields of academic, the sample population of potential volunteers would greatly increase. For example, in all sporting events there is some degree of technological use – communications, website marketing, data recording, etc. Even though this volunteer role does exclusively involve sport,

this new way of recruitment has substantial benefits. Other areas may include

- Communications – for events, Leeds Sport social media
- Journalist – write about specific matches, and people
- Physiotherapy – allow for developing physio's to help athletes
- IT – any sporting event will require IT for data recording, organising jobs
- Marketing – overall volunteer marketing campaigns
- Accounting – roles with budgets, fundraisers, investments, funding

3) Lastly, promotion and campaigns. From experience in my last 6months being a student the only marketing campaigns and promotion I have seen about volunteering in sport is through my lectures from this module. That is why a big section of this intervention is focusing on campaigns and promotion.

Firstly, increasing the use of Leeds Sport Instagram page. Its current state is mediocre, with posts about some games and their results and has a small following base. If this platform were to include other sporting aspects aside from Gryphons, followers would be introduced and have more awareness about what opportunities are available to them. Additionally, there would be more attractive to non-followers to follow the page as greater variety of content means viewers are more likely to relate to what is being posted. For example, volunteer messages and promotion to join can be posted regularly.

Secondly, From this, there an untapped target area is exchange students. Even with some staying for only 6months, these students are extremely motivated to become part of a social group. Targeting them in the first month of studies in both semesters is of best benefit as they are eager to explore and take part of what's going on in the university.

Thirdly, to strength the collaboration with other areas of the university: University Leeds Union to organise sport events, such as Give It A Go day and R U OKAY day being linked to a popular sport (such as football), and the career centre to promote sport volunteering. The union already does an excellent job in promoting events and using this already strong foothold will decrease workload and boost results.

Stakeholders that will need to be engaged with

- Spectators (those playing a sport which needs volunteers)
- University of Leeds
- Student Counselling
- Sustainability
- Alumni
- Leeds University Union
- Local council
- Funders

= Budget. From the evidence collected around UK and Leeds, approximately >£1m will provide more than enough resources to implement the strategy over 12months. This number was roughly calculated from Sport England data showing their funds towards sport clubs were £3m, from Leeds Uni with their 'other' expenditure (one of which including Leeds Sport £7m, and Leeds Sport 2018 income of £4.5m

Monitoring

Monitoring and evaluating is something that should not be done only once, yet throughout all 12onths.

1month prior to, during, and post strategy implementation we will gather data on the field through surveys and literature review. There will be ongoing research about volunteering and sport across UK during all 12months. There will be 5 sample groups in which data will collect from during the intervention, and all Evaluate data and findings will be put through as a report, shared with members of Leeds Sport, Leeds Union, Careers Centre, Board of Directors

Evaluate of internvetion

Evaluation of information needs to reflect both positive and negative aspects

1) One negative aspect is that there is concern that students volunteering to gain experience pureply for employability is not credible as it suggests their reasoning is based on extrinsic motivations rather than intrinsic, as discussed in previous slides. Factors that are of concern include:

- Commitment and dedication
- Sustaining volunteer numbers
- Compliance of tasks
- Dependability

Despite this negative aspect, we can use the knowledge of knowing their motivations to volunteer to an advantage. Rather than rely on their intrinsic self to maintain said factors, we have the opportunity to provide them with rewards they are more likely to be attracted to. These may include, a letter of recommendation.

2) Secondly, overemphasizing volunteering as an employability factor has the potential to create significant problems to the volunteer-based organisation (Dean, 2014). It has the potential to mould the student population with the notion that volunteering is for easing the transition into the workforce, and not as other beneficial factors.

Some positive aspects include:

1. Students that are part of volunteer roles that have no direct involvment in physical activity means they have a unique opportunity to volunteer off-campus in their leisure time. For example online marketing manager would not be required to be present at a sporting match. This is a breakthrough in combating barriers facing volunteering rates of students being too busy.
2. Targeting exchange students benefits both parties, as their motivations are often linked to gaining a sense of identify and desire to participate in new experiences (Creyton et al., 2010). They are given the opportunity to develop cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal processes (Braskamp et al. 2009).
3. The intervention address the set objectives of:

- providing more flexible volunteer options
- changing the perspective of sport volunteering – do not need to be athletically cability to participate
- Information about volunteer opportunities will become more accessible through social media promotion
- data collection pre, mid and post-intervention will help analyse field, and evaluate strategy