

## Foundations for the actions conducted by sports organizations regarding mega event volunteer programs

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Sports organizations that hold sports mega events are composed of managers “(...) about their responsibility go from the strategic planning to the execution and control of various parts of the event, including the management of people, finances, accounting, public policies, sports marketing, knowledge, and other such fields” (CISM, 2011).

To evaluate the actions of a sports organization regarding volunteer programs, we divided the analysis categories as follows: 3.1 Sports volunteer program management indicators; and 3.2 Profile of sports volunteers and volunteer leaders in Brazilian sports mega events.

### 3.1 Sports volunteer program management indicators

Regarding the indicators, we identified three that stand out as essential in the management guidelines for these programs. 3.1.1 Duration; 3.1.2 Training methods; and 3.1.3 Training content.

For a theoretical background, we will return to chapter 2 as use law 71 of November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1998 as a base, since it has to do with volunteers' rights:

*“To have access to initial and continued training programs which aim to perfect volunteer work”*, considering this, we will analyze this “training” regarding its duration, methods, and content.

#### 3.1.1 Duration

At this point, we will analyze the duration of general and specific training stages, as well as the workload for volunteer actions.

To analyze training duration, we must highlight the following expression from law 71/98: *“initial and continued training”*. These two stages, if we understand correctly, mark the two dividing points of volunteer training management: **general training** and **specific training**.

By “initial training”, we mean general training, which has a varied workload depending on the event. An example of this would be the 2007 Pan-American Games and the 2011 Military World Games, which provided 16 and 60 hours of general training, respectively.

As for “continued training”, it can be understood as specific training, which involves a larger workload, divided into theoretical and practical workloads for applying the knowledge that was acquired.

Law 71/98 does not contain any specifications pertaining to volunteers' daily workloads. Normally, the workload can involve up to 10 hours per day, and the volunteer must be available for the entire event.

### **3.1.2 Training management methods**

For management methods, we will consider the general training format and the specific training format, as well as the method used for selecting the candidates for volunteer work.

As for the training methods, the *“initial and continued training”* mentioned in law 71/98, that is, the general and specific training, can happen **in person** or **virtually**.

Among volunteers, there is the perception that when general and specific training are conducted virtually, they are not well-evaluated. An example of this is cited in the study conducted by Nakane (2012), who statistically analyzed the results of general and specific training, both of which were conducted virtually with the volunteers from the 2011 Military World Games. The results indicated that: 37% of the volunteers evaluated the training as “average” and 18% considered it “insufficient”, which means that less than 50% of the volunteers gave the virtual training a positive evaluation.

As for the manner of selection, the candidates can specify their preferences. However, during the selection process, each individual profile is evaluated, as well as each volunteer's abilities. It is important for everyone to know that each job requires knowledge, abilities, and a certain availability and, when offering opportunities, this information is cross-checked to reach the best results.

The selection process involves various stages and, depending on the event, it can happen in person and/or virtually, normally through the following sequence: website sign-up, group dynamics, online or in-person general training, allocating candidates in work sectors, individual in-person interviews, English tests, and online or in-person specific training.

We will now analyze each of these stages separately:

#### **1<sup>st</sup> stage: Website sign-up**

The candidates can sign up once the enrollment period begins. They must inform their personal data and their experiences.

This information is given by the volunteers on a form provided by the website itself, which touches upon issues such as time availability for the event. Filling in the form is mandatory. It is important to fill in the form very carefully, as it is based on the data that is provided that each person's work schedule will be assigned. If the volunteer does not specify their availability to work, they are automatically eliminated from the selection process, as it is understood that they are not available to participate in the event.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> stage: Group dynamics**

Once selected by the program's management, the volunteer, who is still considered a candidate, must schedule their participation in a group dynamic in one of the time slots provided by the organization. In this stage, the volunteer's behaviors, attitudes, and individual abilities will be evaluated. Ideally, this stage should be conducted in person.

However, for volunteers from other states or countries, the interview can be conducted over Skype, with no need to be present in person. This stage is eliminatory in nature.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> stage: General training**

All candidates approved in the group dynamics go through general training, which can be held virtually or in person. This training has the goal of passing on general information about the mega event and other topics, which will be further discussed in the next chapter. Normally, all candidates are tested regarding their acquired knowledge at the end of this stage.

In this stage, candidates undergo mandatory English testing, which helps the organization determine where to place them, since English is only needed for parts of the event. Tests for other languages are optional.

This stage is eliminatory. Thus, all candidates, foreign or not, that passed the dynamics, must participate in this stage of the process.

## **4<sup>th</sup> Stage: Candidate allocation**

This is an internal stage involving the volunteer program management. At this moment, the management cross-checks the information provided by the volunteers. The factors that are considered include volunteer profiles, availability, preferred allocation, general training results, language test results and their allocation in a certain area and job.

The candidates can work in general areas for which there are no specific requirements, or in specialist areas, for which volunteers must possess specific characteristics and abilities.

Those who are selected will receive job offers in the areas that best fit their profile. They will also receive information on their required workload during the event.

## **5<sup>th</sup> Stage: Individual interviews and English test**

Candidates who are allocated in specific areas will be invited to an interview, which is conducted in English (conversation), as well as a specific interview. This stage is eliminatory.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Stage: Specific training**

After they have accepted their job offers, the candidates undergo specific training, which can happen virtually or in person, pertaining to the area in which they will work. This will be their first contact with their jobs. This stage's duration varies from event to event. During this training, they will encounter theoretical content and a practical experience moment in which they should apply the knowledge they acquired. In this stage, it is best if there are theoretical and practical tests to evaluate each candidate's performance.

In this stage, the candidates meet the leader for their area and the whole work team. They can ask questions about their jobs and adjust their work schedules if needed.

#### **3.1.3 Regarding training contents**

To discuss the ideal content for a sports volunteer management program, we may use article 6 from Law 71 of November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1998, which is discussed in chapter 2 and touches upon some topics pertaining to the basic tenets of volunteering: solidarity, participation, cooperation, complementarity, gratuity, responsibility, and convergence. These must be included in general training.

To remember:

**Solidarity:** A responsibility of all citizens while fulfilling the objectives of volunteering.

**Participation:** The intervention of volunteers and promoting entities in areas of social interest.

**Cooperation:** The cooperation between efforts and projects of the promoting organizations and those representing the volunteers.

**Complementarity:** The Volunteers must not replace the promoting entities' human resources.

**Gratuity:** The Volunteers are not paid for their volunteer work.

**Responsibility:** Volunteers are responsible for the activities they committed to perform, considering the expectations created by the recipients of this work.

**Convergence:** Harmonization of the volunteers' actions with the culture and goals of the promoting entity.

Besides discussing the rights, duties, and principles present in Law 71/98, general training must also touch upon the history of the games, sports modalities,

facilities, the organizing committee's organizational structure and that of the volunteer department, workforce composition and general guidance regarding expected conduct.

As for the specific training, the name says it all: it must be specifically tailored to the work activities. There are numerous work sectors within the organizational structure, such as: trademark management, hospitality, food, doping, refereeing, spectators, financial, workforce, hotel, cleaning, uniforms, communication, trademark protection, sponsor services, medical services, transportation, press, technical operations, and many others.

The manuals that are generated based on both types of training are usually directed towards the volunteers. However, in some events, such as the V Military World Games (2011), the technical manual was the same for the entire workforce (volunteers and paid workers) and there was not any specific material for the volunteer group.

The indicators for analyzing sports volunteer program management will be further discussed in the next chapter.

## **3.2 Profile of sports volunteers and volunteer leaders**

### **3.2.1 Volunteer profile**

Law 71/98 does not mention a minimum age for volunteering. However, for sports volunteers, the minimum age for participating in volunteer programs is 18 years.

Good volunteers are proactive, punctual, cheerful, helpful, and they possess availability, commitment, and leadership. The profile for these volunteers is: university students, women, and middle-aged people. This statement agrees with the results found by Tadini (2008), who demonstrated that in the 2007 Pan-American Games, most of the volunteer force was composed of women aged between 19 and 34 years with a college education. It also agrees with findings from the study conducted by Nolasco (2008), in which the dominant profile was that of women (57%) aged between 21 and 30 years (41.59%), with 67.7% fitting in the graduate category and 19.23% in the post-graduate category, demonstrating that more than half of the volunteers had a college education.

In Nakane's (2012) study, the volunteers were mostly women (78%), aged between 18 and 24 years (54%). The educational profile is expressive, similarly to the 2007 Pan-American Games: 68% of the volunteers had a college degree and 17% had post-graduate degrees.

Another indicator for being a good volunteer is having strong language abilities, since the training includes a language test, but no language teaching. For instance, the 2007 Pan-American Games had an English course as a sponsor, but they merely tested the volunteers to verify their level of knowledge.

In theory, paid workers tend to be more responsible, but in practical situations the volunteers show more commitment. For the most part, volunteers arrive earlier and do

not have a fixed time to leave. The event does not function without them, especially because they correspond to around 90% of the mega event's staff (HERNANDEZ, 2007).

To understand candidate profiles, we must consider the main motivations for people to apply as volunteers.

Volunteers generally want to get a job, see, interact, and exchange belongings with athlete, and help with whatever is needed.

According to Nakane (2012), 49% of the interviewed group were motivated to sign up for the volunteering program to obtain **professional experience**. This information contributes to the theoretical basis of a more extensive training model; that is, "continued training" as mentioned in Law 71/98, contributing to professional guidance and to discovering talents during the sports mega event.

The results from Nolasco's (2008) study regarding the motivations behind people volunteering reinforce the statement above on the need to provide continued training to the volunteers. The three main motivations that stand out are: "being part of an international event"; "having the opportunity to work in a unique experience" and "being part of the Olympic movement".

Moreno (1999) points out the following motivations in his study: the spirit of solidarity and peace present in the Olympic philosophy; individual challenge; feeling like a member of the Olympic group and, as a citizen, a member of a nation.

As for the correlation between volunteer profiles and their jobs, there are some jobs that possess very specific requirements, needing specific abilities and knowledge. This leads to the creation of an organization based on two groups: specialists, and generalists, as mentioned before.

- Specialists work in areas such as press, medical department, language services, etc.; they already have professional training or are students.

- Generalists fulfill all other demands and focus on the general public.

It is important to remember that volunteer jobs are, many times, "limited". According to Law 71/98, article 6, the tenet of complementarity assumes that volunteers should not replace the human resources considered necessary for the promoting organizations' activities. For instance, a volunteering doctor cannot work as a doctor, even as a specialist, because that responsibility belongs to a doctor who is paid to work at the event. However, said volunteer, depending on their professional experience, can help, in agreement with the aforementioned tenet of Law 71/98.

It is very important to analyze a volunteer's profile because this can cause or reduce problems. Some conduct problems that happened in the 2007 Pan-American Games, for instance, had to do with the volunteers' profiles and their actions. Some of them sold the tickets they had been given, others cursed while using the general coordination's communication radios, etc.

Regarding volunteer profiles for the next mega events in 2014 and 2016, according to the mentioned studies (TADINI, 2008; NAKANA, 2012; NOLASCO, 2008), we can predict that most of the volunteers will be women aged up to 34 years with a high education level.

The volunteer program coordinators must guarantee that people with disabilities have equal access to the volunteer program.

To be efficient in any jobs performed during the sports event, volunteers must follow some rules and possess certain basic qualities (FIFA, 2013)\*<sup>1</sup> such as commitment, good humor, good interpersonal relationships, proactivity, having good negotiation skills, patience, communicating clearly, being good at teamwork, discretion, and exhibiting leadership capacity. Let's take a look at each one:

### **1- Being committed**

Volunteer work is vital for daily operations during the event. Thus, commitment to schedules and assiduity are extremely important for the event to go smoothly.

### **2- Good humor**

Performing any activity in a good mood makes work easier. Also, a cheerful person is always welcome in a group.

### **3- Good interpersonal relationships**

Maintaining a good relationship with people while working will help volunteers succeed at their tasks. It is important to emphasize that when there is a worldwide event which includes people from various nationalities, every volunteer must be respectful of the different cultures present at the event.

### **4- Proactivity**

Proactive initiatives are extremely valuable for the smooth operation of whatever area in which a volunteer is working. It is important to be proactive, but also to understand that there are some rules that must be followed. Before taking any sort of action, volunteers must consult with the leader or director of their work sector about what to do in each situation.

### **5- Having good negotiation skills**

In certain areas, when dealing with different people, volunteers must know how to bargain in order to get what they want. Thus, they must be patient, listen to what others have to say, and present their points of view clearly and concisely.

### **6- Being patient**

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<sup>1</sup> \*FIFA, FIFA 2014 World Cup.

During mega events, days tend to be hectic. Being patient, listening to people and responding politely and kindly is vital!

### **7- Communicating clearly**

Clear and concise communication is important for a volunteer to be understood and be able to say what they want without any sort of misunderstanding. It is important to make sure the person with whom one is speaking truly understood what was said.

### **8- Teamwork**

Knowing how to work with a team is important for the objectives in the area to which a volunteer has been allocated to be fulfilled. Treating one's work colleagues well, being kind, knowing how to listen and expressing one's opinions when needed is also important.

### **9- Being discreet**

Discretion is a major ally for volunteers. When seeing stars, players, or members of technical committees, volunteers must be as discreet as possible, performing their work with excellence so that the stars of the event feel comfortable. Volunteers are not allowed to take pictures or ask for autographs.

### **Exhibiting leadership capacity**

Volunteers who consider themselves leaders must make an effort to set a good example, committing to their responsibilities and to their roles within their teams. The team will reflect whatever attitude its leader takes regarding it.

## **3.2.2 Volunteer leader profile**

As for the profile of volunteer leaders, said leaders must love the cause and, for this, it is desirable for them to have volunteered first, before leading a group of volunteers. They must like people and motivate them to overcome their expectations.

Volunteer leaders are generally hired at least one year before the event begins, so there is enough time to plan all of the program's activities and take any necessary actions.

To be a leader and direct volunteers, most of the time there is a requirement that the person have some sort of degree and/or specialization in Human Resources. In some cases, however, what really counts is experience acquired in past events, as well as the connection made as a volunteer.

Volunteer leaders are responsible for planning, coordinating, and developing all of the previously mentioned stages of the program. They must also work with the leaders of each work post; that is, the work sections, to identify the needs regarding the adequate profile and number of volunteers. After analyzing the database, the leader sends the volunteers to the section leaders.

Before the event, leaders conduct the selection, follow the group dynamics and the training. During the event, they monitor each volunteer's performance and, at the end of the event, conduct evaluations along with the volunteers and the work section leaders.

It is desirable for the volunteer group leader to be a project manager (PMBOK, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, p.13). Project managers are people designated by the event's general direction to fulfill the project's goals. Understanding and applying knowledge and using the tools and techniques that are recognized as best practices are not enough for an effective management. Besides all of the area-specific abilities and required management proficiencies/skills, effective project management requires the leader, that is, the volunteer project manager, to possess the following characteristics (*op. cit.*):

1- Knowledge: The project manager must know about project management (PM). PM best practices are understood as the application of the nine areas of knowledge: Scope, Time, Costs, Qualities, Risks, Communication, Human Resources, Integration, and Acquisitions. Project development involving the nine areas will be discussed in chapter 4.

2- Performance: This refers to what a project manager is able to do while applying their PM knowledge.

3- Personal: Has to do with the project manager's behavior while executing the project or any related activities. Personal effectiveness involves attitude, dominant personality characteristics, and leadership; and the capacity to guide the project team while fulfilling goals and balancing the project's restrictions.

Deepening the discussion on important characteristics, besides those listed for volunteers, for a group leader to be efficient in the jobs that will be performed before, during, and after the sporting event, they must possess:<sup>\*2</sup>

- Planning and Organization: being capable of planning and organizing their own activities, as well as those of their groups, establishing measurable goals and fulfilling them effectively.
- Judgement: having the capacity to reach logical conclusions based on the available evidence.

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<sup>2</sup> Administrators. Management abilities.

- Oral communication: expressing oneself verbally with good results individually and in group situations, presenting one's ideas clearly and convincingly.
- Written communication: the managerial capability of knowing how to express one's ideas clearly and concisely in writing.
- Persuasion: the ability to organize and present one's ideas in such a way as to induce those who are listening to accept them.
- Auditory perception: being capable of obtaining relevant information from oral communications within groups and coming from superiors.
- Motivation: the importance of work to their personal satisfaction and the capacity to encourage the group's motivation.
- Impact: The ability to create a good impression, attract attention and respect, acquire confidence, and receive personal recognition.
- Energy: the capacity to reach a high level of activity (drive).
- Leadership: the capacity to lead a group to accept ideas and work towards a specific goal.

The main management skills can be divided into four areas<sup>3</sup>:

**1- Planning:** In this area, leaders must be able to positively respond to the following points:

- Do you consider your team's experience when formulating your plans?
- Do you know the institutional objectives and, thus, your team's targets?
- Do you program your daily activities?
- Are you successful in reaching your goals?
- Do you interpret and explain operational policies and procedures to your volunteers?

**2- Organization:** In this area, the leader must be able to respond positively to the following points:

- Do your subordinates know their roles?
- Are your subordinates cooperative when performing their activities?
- Do you follow the formal organization established by the event's general direction?
- Do you organize the work in your area according to the institutional goals?
- Do you concentrate on management jobs such as planning, organizing, leading, and controlling?

**3- Leadership:** In this area, the leader must be able to respond positively to the following points:

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<sup>3</sup> Administrators. Management abilities.

- Do you listen to the opinions of other people (colleagues and/or subordinates) before making decisions?
- Do you know about your volunteers' interests, needs, and aspirations?
- Do you systematically concern yourself with volunteer training?
- Do you enact your decisions?
- Do you make sure you understand your work colleagues' and volunteers' points of view?

**4- Control:** In this area, the leader must be able to respond positively to the following points:

- Do you establish performance standards for your subordinates?
- Do your collaborators understand and accept these standards?
- Do you inform your subordinates of their results in time for them to correct their own work?
- Do you meet with your team to review plans and the results that were obtained?

Furthermore, leaders must be capable of adequately transmitting and receiving messages, and obtaining and mediating partnerships that are needed to properly reach their targets, judging and balancing the interests of all those involved. In the next chapter, we will further discuss how to perform this challenging role.

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