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Historical Aspects, Activities and Role of Volunteers during Multi-Sport Events

Abstract:

The Volunteer Movement has become integral to organising and conducting multi-sport events such as the European Games, the Olympic Games, and the World Beach Games for decades. Volunteers are people of different ages, professions, and faiths who, by their vocation, sacrifice some of their strength, skills, and time for the sake of public interests and achieving a common goal. The study aimed to consider the historical aspects and basic principles of the volunteer movement at international multisport sports events and its components to determine the main areas of activity of volunteers and their motivation to volunteer. The study subject was aspects of volunteer activity in organising sports events. The study object was volunteering to organise and conduct multisport events. Such research methods as analysis and generalisation of sources of unique literature found on the Internet, historical cognition, structural and functional analysis, and observation were used. The scientific novelty of the work consists of substantiating the organisational and methodological foundations for attracting sports volunteers to conduct multisport events, determining the main activities of volunteers and their motivation for this activity. The work's practical significance substantiates ways to attract volunteers to organise and conduct international mass sports events in Ukraine and disseminate information among the population.

Keywords: volunteer, volunteer activity in sports, volunteer activity in multisport events, Olympic

Games.

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Історичні аспекти діяльності та роль волонтерів під час проведення проведення мультиспортивних заходів

Анотація:

Волонтерський рух протягом десятиліть став і є невід'ємною частиною при організації та проведенні мультиспортивних заходів, таких як Європейські ігри, Олімпійські ігри, Всесвітні

пляжні ігри. Волонтери — люди різного віку, професій, віросповідання, які за власним покликанням жертвують частиною своїх сил, вмінь, часу задля суспільних інтересів та досягнення загальної мети. Метою нашого дослідження було розглянути історичні аспекти та основні засади волонтерського руху на міжнародних мультиспортивних заходах та його складові, визначити основні напрямки діяльності волонтерів та їх мотивації до волонтерської діяльності. Предмет дослідження — аспекти волонтерської діяльності в організації мультиспортивних заходів. Об'єктом дослідження було волонтерство у організації та проведенні мультиспортивних заходів. Використовувались такі методи дослідження як аналіз та узагальнення джерел спеціальної літератури, викладених у мережі Інтернет, історичне пізнання, структурно-функціональний аналіз, а також спостереження. Наукова новизна роботи полягає в обґрунтуванні організаційних та методичних основ залучення спортивних волонтерів для проведення мультиспортивних заходів; визначенні основних напрямків діяльності волонтерів та їх мотивації до цієї діяльності. Практична значущість роботи полягає в обґрунтуванні шляхів залучення волонтерів до організації та проведення міжнародних спортивно-масових заходів в Україні та поширення інформації серед населення.

Ключові слова: волонтер, волонтерська діяльність у спорті, діяльність волонтерів у мультиспортивних заходах, Олімпійські ігри.

Abbreviations:

EOC is European Olympic Committee

IOC is International Olympic Committee

Volunteering as an International Social Phenomenon

The volunteer movement has a long history that goes back to ancient times. From simply helping one person or family, it has become an international movement regulated at the legislative level by states and large, world-famous organisations (IOC, EOC).

In modern society, volunteering is a global process that unites people who have the right to benefit from it both in their own country and internationally.

Most people have always been willing to help others by pursuing self-realisation, self-improvement, and activities that benefit others (*Lyakh, 2004*).

Volunteering is inextricably linked to the development of civilisation as a social and cultural phenomenon characterised by voluntary and selfless assistance.

The volunteer movement is a humanistic and socially significant activity aimed at helping others. Volunteering is based on the principles of charity, on a gratuitous basis, does not provide for career growth in the principal place of activity and is aimed at the well-being and prosperity of society as a whole (*Vainola et al., 1999; Traktat, 2016*).

Individuals and organisations can perform volunteer activities (French “volontaire” is volunteer, the free expression of will; volō-desire, intention).

The volunteer movement is an integral part of many social processes worldwide, including those in sports.

Volunteer activities are now becoming increasingly popular and crucial in almost all countries. At the same time, today, volunteers are significantly expanding their assistance areas.

Summer and Winter Olympic Games, summer and Winter Youth Olympic Games (*The International Olympic Committee..., 2021; The European Olympic Committees..., 2024*), European

Games, European Youth Olympic festivals (*The International Olympic Committee...*, 2021; *The European Olympic Committees...*, 2024), other multisport competitions, and even municipal races can not be imagined without the activity of volunteers, their number is constantly growing from games to games, their work is gaining a new quality, some volunteers are already becoming permanent participants in this movement, passing on their skills to newly involved volunteers.

Estimating volunteers' activities, economic, cultural, or political impact is difficult. Significant experience in such activities positively affects the volunteers and the city/state that conducts such sports competitions, which determines the relevance of this work (*Dikhtyarenko et al.*, 2024).

Ukraine, we can say, for the first time, attracted large-scale volunteers during the 2012 European Football Championship Euro 2012, which was held in Kyiv, Donetsk, Lviv, and Kharkiv, as well as in the largest cities of the Republic of Poland. Volunteers from Ukraine and representatives of the Ukrainian Diaspora acted as volunteers at the Olympic Games of different years together with representatives of other countries.

Historical Milestones in the Development of Volunteering at the Modern Olympic Games

Analysis and generalisation of data from specialised literature suggest that the history of Olympic volunteering is as old as the most modern Olympic Movement (*Lerkov & Makuts*, 2013). The first volunteers are considered sponsors of the Athens Games of 1896, revived after a break of almost one and a half thousand years. Since the beginning of the modern Olympic Games, a person's contribution to developing the Olympic movement has been very diverse: selling tickets for sports competitions, participating in a solemn procession, working with athletes and spectators, etc. (*Olihb & Matviychuk*, 2013).

One of the first volunteers could be considered military, and scouts were responsible for spreading information about the games, ensuring order in stadiums, and helping to conduct competitions (in 1907, British Colonel R.S. Baden-Powell founded the World Youth Scout Movement).

In 1924, at the Olympic Games in Paris, Scouts first participated in the opening and closing ceremonies with the honorary mission of flag bearers.

After the end of the Second World War, new areas of activity were added, including assistance in preparing for competitions, providing athletes and spectators with information, restoring order on the field after competitions, assisting the police, working as translators, etc., which has already defined volunteers as an integral team of Olympic Games organisers.

At the 6th Winter Olympic Games of 1952 in Oslo, volunteers began participating in ticket verification, monitoring the situation during competitions, and technical work in various areas.

At the 16th Olympic Games in Melbourne in 1956, 250 female scouts accompanied and provided services to female athletes, and volunteers performed the duties of couriers, security guards, and drivers.

At the 18th Olympic Games in Rome in 1960, recruiting volunteers as translators was rigorous. Only young people with excellent command of French, English, and other languages were selected, and many volunteers contributed to the work of media representatives.

At the games of the 17th Olympic games of 1968 in Mexico, the duties of volunteers were added personal service on the principle of “one to one” of members of the NOC, heads of the Mexican Olympic organising committee, members of international sports organisations, heads of sports and cultural delegations, essential guests, and assistance to media representatives and others.

The official report on holding the 13th Winter Olympic Games in Lake Placid in 1980 stated: “If there were not 6,700 volunteers, the 13th Winter Olympic Games would not have ended” (*Levkov & Makuts, 2013*). The volunteers were people of various specialities, not only from the United States but also from other countries (*Spanoudakis, 2004*). Volunteers worked as translators, stopmasters, couriers, postmen, scribes, proofreaders, secretaries, etc. The work of volunteers was already regulated, uniform uniforms, food and accommodation were provided, and at the end of the Games, volunteers received certificates confirming their participation in the preparation and holding of the Games. It is safe to say that the scheme of volunteer work at the 1980 Olympic Games in Lake Placid later became widely used, especially at the subsequent 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo.

About 30,000 volunteers worked at the 23rd Olympiad in 1984 in Los Angeles. The games largely depended on volunteers’ activities.

The organisers of the games of the 29th Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008, among their other achievements, consider the work of the “volunteer team” brought to perfection. Here, the record for the number of volunteers was broken, involving almost the entire Chinese capital population: 70,000 worked at the Olympic Games and 30,000 at the Paralympic Games (*Brettell, 2001*). About 100,000 university students in Beijing, Hong Kong, Aomen, and Taiwan aged 18-25 were selected from 1.2 million applicants, older people and 22,000 foreigners. The main requirement for volunteers was knowledge of a foreign language, especially English, which has always been a big problem for the PRC.

The organising committee of the 21st Winter Olympic Games 2010 in Vancouver (VANOC) attracted about 25,000 volunteers from all Canadian provinces through the online campaign Callforvolunters launched two years before the start of the Games in Canada. The age of 19 as of September 01, 2008, has become mandatory for the selection of volunteers, “flexibility”, diligence and enthusiasm, which corresponds to the slogan of these Olympic Games: “with burning hearts”. They were involved in the maintenance of sports facilities, ticket sales for competitions, provided service in the Olympic Village, worked as guides for guests of the country, translators and technical staff of the press centre, and so on. About 1% of the volunteers were foreigners.

The organisers of the 30th Olympic Games 2012 games in London selected volunteers “from 18 and older”, and the upper value did not matter. The management of the organising committee stated that the composition of Olympic volunteers fundamentally reflected the social and age diversity of residents of the United Kingdom, including the involvement of people with disabilities. All candidates must be familiar with the work of the PC, have oral and written communication skills, experience in a team, internal motivation (the embodiment of “passion, enthusiasm and energy of games”), experience in medicine, working at sports facilities, service, modern technologies, media, logistics and accreditation.

At Pyeongchang's 23rd Winter Olympic Games 2018, almost 42,000 volunteers, including 16,200 residents, were selected. In the Olympic Village, nine assistants (volunteers) worked directly with the Ukrainian team: five Koreans and four Ukrainians.

The number of volunteers involved in the 32nd Olympic Games 2020 games in Tokyo was significantly less than expected. This is due to the introduction of quarantine measures in the land of the rising sun due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the inability of most foreign participants to get to Japan, and the refusal of about 10,000 Japanese people to volunteer. Despite this, the Games were held in 2021 and became a real celebration of Olympism.

The 24th Winter Olympics in Beijing employed more than 18,000 volunteers, of whom 94% were under 35 years of age. Volunteers from China worked with the Ukrainian team in three Olympic villages.

Until 1994, the Winter and Summer Olympic Games were held in Olin in the same year. After this date, the games are held every two years – winter and, two years later, summer (a four-year cycle for the Winter and Summer Olympic Games).

About 40,000 volunteers worked at the games of the 33rd Olympic Games in Paris in 2024.

The number of volunteers ([Table 1](#)) is approximate and rounded because different sources interpret different numbers.

Summing up the above, we can say that the volunteer sports movement has become very important since the 20th century. Volunteers began to work in a broader range of directions, and their number increased with each Olympic Games. The age of volunteers can be considered significantly younger in percentage terms, but the requirements do not determine the upper age limit of volunteers.

Stages of Selection and Distribution of Volunteers by Work Area

The organisation and success of multisport events largely depend on volunteers' comprehensive and professional activities.

Several parameters can determine the mission directions of the Olympic movement's volunteer activities. Researchers M. Moragas, A. Moreno and R. Paniagua focus on the following ([Tomenko, 2016](#)):

- political (unity of actions of subjects united by a common goal, which is a form of participation of citizens in a significant public event);
- economic (the work of volunteers helps to reduce the cost of organising the Olympic Games, and trained volunteers will be able to work in other sectors of the economy);
- cultural (solidarity and cooperation of different people with different cultural frameworks);
- sports (promotion of sports, communication with athletes motivates young people to play sports, in turn, volunteers directly support athletes).

Volunteers make up a massive part of the additional force in all areas of the event's work, significantly affecting any sporting event's success.

The involvement of sports volunteers in organisations is preceded by careful preparation and analysis. The planning allows the event organising committee to fully formulate and specify its vision and expectations from the work of volunteers. This makes it possible to understand the goals of attracting volunteers, predicting and eliminating potential risks in advance, and

responding most adequately to emerging problems and ambiguities while minimising the amount of additional resources spent (*Dikhtyarenko et al., 2024; Lyakh, 2004*).

Of course, before you start working on attracting volunteers, you need to develop a clear plan. What age, qualifications, work areas to be responsible for, what time to work, training, selection of volunteers, uniforms, and so on? Also, an important role is played by identifying team leaders who will keep in touch with the Organising Committee of the games, convey the necessary information, and be responsible for the activities of the team's members.

The recruitment strategy depends on the expected volunteer work types and the organisation's programme/project specifics. If this is the holding of the Olympic Games or the European Games, then it is necessary to maximise internet resources and attract the media. This is the most effective way to attract volunteers instead of directly contacting potential candidates, especially regarding international multi-sport events.

Planning the company's start time plays an important role, with the announcement of recruitment of candidates for volunteers, questionnaires, determining their abilities and wishes for areas of work, creating certain groups and their distribution, identifying leaders, etc.

Usually, such work at multisport events, such as the Olympic Games, begins no later than two years before the event starts. Information can be found through search sites, on the official websites of the IOC, EOC or organising committees. The next SVT event will be the 25th Winter Olympic Games and the 2026 Paralympic Games in Milan-Cortina (Italy), and the selection of volunteers has already begun. All information can be found on the official website (*The Organizing Committee..., 2024*).

Each organising committee determines its selection stages. For example, the Organizing Committee of the 3rd European Games 2023 in Krakow (Republic of Poland) defined the following stages of volunteer selection (*Figure 1*) (*The Organizing Committee..., 2023*).

Recruitment of sports volunteers is an essential aspect of the organisation's volunteer management. This aims to select potential participants – volunteers of the organisation's program/project, corresponding to the developed and declared functions and qualities. It allows you to identify the applicant's compliance with the criteria of personal specification and professional and motivational suitability for a specific sports volunteer vacancy (*The Organizing Committee..., 2023*).

The selection of candidates involves obtaining sufficient information about them and deciding whether to invite them to an interview or refuse to.

For the selection of candidates for volunteers, the following methods are used:

- (1) observation that can provide visual information about the volunteer candidate, namely the presence of sociability, features of the behaviour and interaction model, and communication style;
- (2) questionnaires are the most common survey method in which communication is mediated by the text of a questionnaire aimed at identifying the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of a volunteer candidate;
- (3) interviewing is an opportunity to obtain reliable examples that allow us to determine the level of developing the necessary competencies of candidates for sports volunteers;
- (4) the interview completes the candidate selection process directly.

For example, volunteers at the 3rd European Games 2023 in Krakow were selected and worked in the following areas: accreditation, Anti-Doping ceremonies, VIP & Hospitality, logistics, marketing, mascot work, Media, NOC Assistant, Medical patrols, sports presentations, promotions, Ticket Sales, Logistics/Transport, venue assistant, Volunteer Center, Welcome desk Information, sports disciplines, Special Tasks, catering (*The Organizing Committee...*, 2023).

So, the volunteer movement needs appropriate organisation, planning, and distribution in areas. Candidates' involvement must be announced in advance due to particular stages in the time and organisation of selection. Each organising committee works out these issues according to the conditions of the event and many other organisational factors, including the number of participants and sports facilities.

Personality Qualities of a Sports Volunteer and Motivation

I.O. Kogut notes that volunteerism and voluntary choice reflect personal position—this is the basic principle of volunteering. The most crucial distinguishing feature of volunteering is the social significance of the work performed by volunteers (*Table 1*).

Undoubtedly, sports volunteering is one of the most common and popular types of volunteer activities. This activity aims to help organise and conduct sports events, promote the development of physical culture and sports, and attract the population, especially young people, to sports and physical education.

The social component of volunteers' activities implies the presence of such personal qualities that largely determine the effectiveness and success of their work, in particular:

- 1) social activity: a creative, conscious attitude to life, society, and social values, which is reflected in activities that ensure professional self-realisation of the individual;
- 2) tolerance: the desire to achieve mutual respect, understanding and agreement of different interests and views without applying pressure through methods of explanation and persuasion;
- 3) empathy: the ability to understand the inner world of another person, penetrate their feelings, respond to them and empathise;
- 4) altruism: the principle of a person's life orientation, according to which the good of another person is more important and meaningful than their own good and personal interests;
- 5) moral responsibility: manifests itself in the tendency to perform their professional and social duties creatively and effectively;
- 6) tolerance: the ability to correct your negative emotions and feelings, directing them in a constructive direction for positive motivation for further cooperation;
- 7) communication: this is the process of interaction between people during which interpersonal relationships arise, manifest and Form (*Annaeva, 2014; Boyko, 2016*).

The basic requirements for a sports volunteer are:

- proactive, responsible and purposeful,
- available for the entire event period,
- positive and full of energy,
- at least 16 years old (18 years old),
- communication skills,

- willingness to help,
- organisational skills,
- team player,
- sufficient level of knowledge of the English language.

Also, in any volunteer environment, team leaders are specially selected to lead volunteers in the following areas.

To successfully work, encourage and motivate volunteers, they use:

- volunteer starter package (volunteer uniforms, gadgets, accreditation),
- accident insurance,
- training package,
- meals on task/work completion days,
- free public transport in the city where the games are held,
- accommodation for visiting volunteers (can be provided free of charge or on preferential commas),
- the Volunteer Center is responsible for the activities and support of volunteers,
- gift packages may include souvenirs provided by the Organising Committee,
- certificate of working at the Games as a volunteer.

During the closing ceremonies, the president of the International Olympic Committee or European Olympic committees thanks the volunteers for their outstanding role and selfless work in making the multi-sport event successful.

Conclusion

The modern sports volunteer movement is integral to organising and conducting multisport events. It is based on the principles of volunteerism, charity, and humanism and aims to improve the efficiency of sports competitions. The theoretical analysis conducted gives grounds to assert that a “sports volunteer” is a person who has received special training and carries out sports volunteer activities by assisting the organisation and conduct of competitions.

The purpose of the volunteer activity is to provide free assistance to improve the quality of the competition. This means that the unique knowledge, skills, and communication skills of sports volunteers are worth understanding, as are the types of volunteer activities and functions that volunteers perform during the preparation and conduct of competitions.

The number of volunteers involved and the range of their activities expands with each subsequent multisport event.

The content of a sports volunteer’s functions and direction of activity depends on the level of their qualifications, knowledge of foreign languages, organisational skills, sports, and the specifics of competitions, particularly for people with disabilities.

Research on developing the volunteer movement, according to unique scientific and methodological literature and the Internet, shows that volunteers’ activities play an important role because they allow not only to save a significant part of the budget for competitions (about 20%) but also to solve various tasks that the event’s organising committee sets.

The mechanism of attracting sports volunteers to the volunteer movement, based on people's motivation to volunteer free work and the level of their special training, has some features compared to other social activities.

In modern conditions, the main ways to attract sports volunteers are television, websites of organising committees, public organisations, internet sources, social networks, information in public places, educational institutions, etc.

Sports volunteer activity affects the formation of personal qualities such as communication skills, social activity, responsibility, and the ability to plan activities and organise one's time.

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Appendix

Table 1. Winter and Summer Olympic Games, date and city/country, number of volunteers involved

Olympic Games	Summer/Winter	Year	Place	Volunteers
XIII	Winter	1980	Lake Placid, USA	6,703
XIV	Winter	1984	Sarajevo, Yugoslavia	10,540
XXIII	Summer	1984	Los Angeles, USA	28,742
XV	Winter	1988	Calgary, Canada	9,498
XXIV	Summer	1988	Seoul, Republic Of Korea	27,221
XVI	Winter	1992	Albertville, France	10,258
XXV	Summer	1992	Barcelona, Spain	34,548
XVII	Winter	1994	Lillehammer, Norway	9,054
XXVI	Summer	1996	Atlanta, USA	60,422
XVIII	Winter	1998	Nagano, Japan	32,578
XXVII	Summer	2000	Sydney, Australia	50,135
XIX	Winter	2002	Salk Lake City, USA	22,000
XXVIII	Summer	2004	Athens, Greece	50,840
XX	Winter	2006	Turin, Italy	25,500
XXIX	Summer	2008	Beijing, China	100,000
XXI	Winter	2010	Vancouver, Canada	25,000
XXX	Summer	2012	London, United Kingdom	70,000
XXII	Winter	2014	Sochi, Russia	25,000
XXXI	Summer	2016	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	70,000
XXIII	Winter	2018	Pyeongchang, Republic Of Korea	41,350
XXXII	Summer	2020 (2021)	Tokyo, Japan	70,000
XXIV	Winter	2022	Beijing, China	18,000
XXXIII	Summer	2024	Paris, French Republic	45,000



Figure 1. Stages of selection of volunteers for the 3rd European games 2023 in Krakow (Republic of Poland)