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How Sport Governance Impacted on Olympic Legacy: A Study of Unintended Consequences and the 'Sport Makers' Volunteering Programme

Abstract

This paper focuses on Sport England's Sport Makers programme — which aimed to generate new sports volunteers as part of a 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games legacy — as an illustration of the unintended consequences of a 'top down', managerialist governance system. Interviews with County Sport Partnerships, programme partners and workshop facilitators show that performance indicators imposed by Sport England distorted the programme: CSPs were obliged to meet targets — the process forcing a focus on 'soft' targets and incentivising double-counting with existing programmes —instead of using their autonomy to promote volunteering most effectively. The paper contributes to the critique of new managerialism of public services by showing how this style of management proved counterproductive to achieving the programme aims, and failed to deliver sport policy nearer to the end-user and with relative autonomy from the state; which appears, paradoxically, to be more in command than in the era of 'top-down' government.

Key words: 2012 Olympic Games, volunteer, legacy, Sport Makers, managerialism.

The importance of sports volunteering and an Olympic legacy of increased participation

Historically there has been an increasing emphasis on Olympic Games legacies (Leopkey & Parent, 2012), culminating in 2005 in 'legacy' becoming one of the formal criterion for awarding the Games (Weed, 2012). London's primary ambition as part of this bid was to inspire the youth of the world to choose sport, and this ambition has been seen as the key to the bid's success (Masterman, 2013). Thus the bidding process, it can be claimed, was likely to lead to exaggerated expectations. This effect was compounded by the length of time between awarding and delivering the Games, by the change of Government in 2010 with associated reductions in public expenditure, and by the well-documented difficulties in attributing a legacy to an event (Gratton & Preuss, 2008; Preuss, 2004; Weed, 2014).

In England sports participation is underpinned by volunteers. Approximately 85,000 volunteer-led sports clubs in England are supported by 24 volunteers per club, who also take roles from county to national governing body level (Nichols & Taylor, 2015). The Active People Survey 2012/13 shows that over 9% of the population participated in sport in a sports club in the last 4 weeks. The importance of these clubs and volunteers was recognised in Sport England's strategy to increase participation (Sport England, 2012a). For example, the aim of establishing 6,000 new satellite clubs on school sites by 2017 to provide links with the existing club structure will require more community volunteers (p. 7). Thus Sport England's Sport Makers programme recognised the link between increasing volunteering and increasing sports participation.

Claims to a sports participation legacy from 2012 have been criticised as political rhetoric (Bloyce & Lovett, 2012), and Weed (2014, p. 282) claims that the efficacy of a legacy strategy became a 'political project' to justify the £9.3 billion public investment. The governance of the Games (Girginov, 2013) effectively separated responsibilities for delivery from those of legacy. Within a framework of 'regulatory capitalism', and as a private company, the London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games'

(LOCOG), was only responsible for delivery. The opportunity to adopt a volunteering strategy designed by a committee of experts in 2005/6 (Nichols, 2013) was sacrificed as a consequence of prioritising the delivery of the Games over potential legacy effects (Nichols & Ralston, 2014; 2015). As noted above, the change of government and economic policy during the seven or more years between bid and delivery also played a part. Weed (2012, p. 94) chronicles a series of documents produced by the Government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) between 2007 and 2010 which lacked clarity on funding and delivery of a legacy, and led him to conclude that 'as the clock ticked past the two-years-to-go landmark in August 2010 there were no politically legitimate legacy plans in place'. Thus, as no other national programme was designed to develop a volunteering legacy, Sport England's Sports Makers programme, which aimed to engage 50,000 new volunteers in sport between 2011 and 2013, could have played an important role in developing volunteers to support sports participation.

Governance of sport

This paper interprets the impact (or lack of it) of the Sport Makers programme as a consequence of its governance. In the public administration literature one view is that there has been a shift in British politics and public policy delivery from 'government' to 'governance', from unitary Government to governance through networks, a wide array of 'partnerships' and Government arm's length bodies (Marinetto, 2003; Rhodes, 1996). The change to governance is said to have led to the erosion of central Governmental power and with it, the state's ability to determine and deliver policy (Bevir & Rhodes, 2006; 2008; Skelcher, 2000). Goodwin & Grix (2011) identify that interpretation as the central proposition in orthodox governance theory. A key associated idea behind the shift is that the expression and locus of power is no longer hierarchical, with top-down delivery of policy: instead governance takes shape through a series of networks in which a wide variety of interests are represented. As such, policy-delivery is thought to be more autonomous from the state and closer to the people it impacts most. The shift to 'governance' was a direct consequence of the Labour party's 'modernisation' programme, put in place to make policy delivery more accountable and efficient (see Houlihan & Green, 2009). On the surface, the UK 'sportscape' indeed seems to reflect a shift away from central government power and towards a wide range of bodies delivering all levels of sport. Within this view the 49 County Sport Partnerships (CSPs) allow for local responses to locally defined problems by bringing together key actors in sport policy delivery, including local authorities, universities, members of the business community, national governing bodies and local sports clubs (Harris & Houlihan, 2014).

An alternative view, however, is that within a culture and practice of 'new managerialism', public services can be run along the lines of the private sector (Farrell & Morris, 2003, p. 136). Although managerial strategies are often criticised as measures of 'creeping privatisation', their objectives are mainly achieved through the use of language and style, rather than handing services entirely over to market forces (authors, 2011). New managerialism is associated with the use of monitoring, the integration of business principles such as cost-efficiency and increased productivity, external accountability, prioritising output over process, the wide-spread use of performance indicators, target-setting, benchmarking, performance management (Deem, 2001, p. 11; Deem & Brehony, 2005) and 'explicit attempts to alter the regimes and cultures of organisations and the values of staff, so that they more closely resemble those found in the private for-profit sector' (McEldowney, 2003, p. 80). Thus, while there may be a wider range of actors and organisations involved in the delivery of sport policy, the state — through a system of new managerialism — appears paradoxically

to be more in command than they were in the era of 'top-down' government that we have supposedly moved away from (authors, 2015). Nevertheless, leading textbooks on public administration continue to herald 'governance' as an autonomous form of policy delivery (Hill, 2009).

Thus the purpose of this paper is to show how the imposition of performance indicators on CSPs through Sport England's monitoring of the Sport Maker programme was an example of new managerialist, top-down target setting and performance management. This obliged the CSPs to deliver the programme in a way that met the targets imposed on them, rather than using their autonomy to promote volunteering in the most effective way. Therefore the key question driving this project was 'To what extent did the state-led governance of the Sport Makers programme (Sport England is, after all, funded by government) impact on (the possibility of) its successful implementation?' In addition, and as a sub-question, 'What were the unintended consequences of such a governance approach to policy delivery?'.

Description of the Sport Makers programme

Sport Makers was part of Sport England's 'Places, People, Play' programme to promote sports participation as a legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games (Sport England, 2011). The programme to promote volunteering in sport was predicated on the assumption that the Olympic Games would provide a catalyst for interest in volunteering through a 'festival effect', engendering enthusiasm, in the same way as was anticipated for sports participation (Weed et al., 2012). The programme was monitored through performance indicators. Key performance indicator (KPI) 1 was that 40,000 new volunteers would attend an orientation workshop and each would be deployed, through county sport partnerships, to opportunities to give 10 hours of volunteering. These volunteering opportunities would be formally through sports events, sports clubs, or to act as individual animators who would promote sport in an informal manner. Key performance indicator 2 was for 20,000 volunteers to continue to volunteer after the initial 10 hours. The programme started recruiting in October 2011, was originally due to finish in March 2013 but was extended to September 2013.

Sport Makers was delivered through the Country Sports Partnerships (CSPs) as an extension of their work. CSPs are effectively the end of a delivery chain at the regional and local level and are principally funded by Sport England. The management of the delivery chain – for both elite and grassroots sport – from the Treasury to CSPs, is through a range of Government targets (for example Public Service Agreements and Key Performance Indicators). These targets must be adhered to as a condition of an organisation being in receipt of Government funding.

CSPs are made up of a 'partnership' of organisations, ranging from Universities, NGBs (National Governing Bodies of Sport) and local businesses. The CSPs in this case study effectively acted as brokers between volunteers and opportunities. Volunteers might become involved by two routes: they might register their interest directly via the national Sport Maker web site or via an organisation working in partnership with the CSP to recruit volunteers. These organisations might include sports clubs, universities, colleges, National Governing Bodies (NGBs), businesses or any organisation which wanted to promote sports volunteering.

From whatever source they were recruited, prospective Sport Makers then attended an 'inspiration' workshop. There were two types of workshop: those open to any potential Sport Makers, or 'closed' workshops run for a single organisation that recruited the Sport Makers directly. Workshops were coordinated by the CSPs but were delivered by Press Red, a consultancy commissioned for the purpose, using over 100 nationally distributed facilitators.

Press Red is ‘a consultancy that helps organisations get people active through sport and physical activity’ (Press Red, 2016, p.1).

The format of the workshops was open to development by the facilitators but had to cover 5 key sections: Olympic and Paralympic values (for example, fair play and drug free competition); leading from within (participants’ leaderships skills); having fun and keeping safe (including personal safety while organising activity); helping others (identifying ways in which participants could help); deployment (identifying volunteering opportunities and organisations). Thus the sections were designed to lead participants from an awareness of the skills and capabilities they could offer to an identification of practical volunteering opportunities. Additional elements might be added by facilitators who wanted to adapt the workshops for different audiences. Workshops were originally scheduled to run for three hours, but could be delivered in as little as 30 minutes for an audience with a short attention span, although such attenuated sessions were not recommended.

Following the workshop, Sport Makers were linked to volunteering opportunities either directly through a representative of the organisation who attended the workshop, through deployment sub-brokers, or through the CSP web site. For example, South Yorkshire CSP ran an open event at which volunteering with the local English Table Tennis Association (ETTA) Ping programme was promoted. It also ran a closed event at a local table tennis club, promoting the same opportunity. At both of these events volunteers were able to meet the local ETTA officer who could then deploy them to help deliver the Ping programme. In contrast, at the end of a workshop run for the National Citizenship Programme participants were directed to the CSP web site for volunteering opportunities.

Monitoring of the programme was through a designated web site. Prospective volunteers either registered themselves on the Sports Makers web site directly, or the CSP registered them at the workshop. The Sports Makers themselves were required to go online to register their hours of volunteering. Up until June 2012 any Sport Maker registering 10 hours or more was entered into a draw for Olympic tickets. After this date CSPs introduced local incentives.

Sport England measured the performance of CSPs by using the web site information to monitor workshop attendees, Sports Makers deployed for ten hours, and those retained three months after recruitment after they had completed ten hours. Individual CSP targets were set in relation to the national targets, proportionate to the percentage of the population aged over 16 resident in that county. For example, South Yorkshire CSP was expected to deliver 1,023 volunteers deployed for 10 hours each, and 511 continuing volunteering beyond the initial 10 hours, and 64 workshops.

Methods

This study was situated within a ‘hard’ interpretivist framework which guided the questions asked, the data collected and manner in which the data were analysed. This underpinning places our work ‘on the border’ between the epistemological positions of ‘foundationalism’ on the one hand, and ‘anti-foundationalism’ on the other (see Grix, 2010; Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Research on the border between these positions consists of an incremental move towards one of the epistemological approaches, depending on the direction of travel. The distinctions between epistemological positions are often too stark (either ‘positivist’ or ‘interpretivist’). In real-world research, there are in fact gradations between positions. In terms of how scholars undertake research, an interpretivist position that is nearer to the border with post-positivism (the position we take in this article) would indicate an acceptance of, or an appeal to, a greater role of structures and institutions in an explanation of how and why the Sports Makers programme functioned as they did, than would a ‘regular’

interpretivist approach. Hence, both structures and the participants' constructed meanings of the programme are of interest to us. Thus we opted for the interview technique as the best tool to explore our research questions in terms of both structures and meanings.

We opted for in-depth, semi-structured interviews (n = 14) of key personnel along the policy chain (i.e. from policy conception to street-level delivery) (see Blaikie, 2000, on types of interview). These consisted of seven CSP managers, two 'Sports Makers' workshop facilitators and five partner organisations. Interviews ranged from 20 minutes to over an hour, those with CSP managers being the longest. CSP interview transcripts were written up verbatim, edited, and summaries approved by the interviewees. In other cases, notes were taken during and immediately after the interview. To supplement interviews, 2 additional workshops were observed by the authors. Further, this research benefited from one of the author's roles as a Further Education Sports Coordinator which allowed for observation of workshops and made possible the relationship between the college and the local CSP.

The first interviews were conducted with CSP managers. Interview questions were based around eliciting the "meaning" of the Sport Makers programme to participants and the processes and actions that shaped its development, and were pursued throughout the study. A semi-structured framework of questioning covered how partners were selected, how the programme was delivered, opportunities and barriers in the development of volunteers, and the influence of Sport England's targets.

Consistent with inductive exploratory research and the semi-structured nature of the interviews, this structure allowed space for CSP managers to describe in depth their perceptions of the programme. Generic prompts were used to explore the tension between imposed targets and local flexibility, but also the new opportunities represented by the programme. Summaries of interviews were exchanged among the research team allowing further prompts to be produced as understanding developed. These summaries were then used to inform the semi-structured interviews and prompts used with workshop facilitators and the five partner organisations.

These interviewees were selected as significant partners from the interviews with CSP managers. While interviews were the main data collection method, observations were also utilised. Preliminary observations made by one of the research team working in a college that offered the Sport Maker programme informed the initial interview schedule. However, observations of two other workshops later in the research process were designed to explore impressions from the interviews; notes were recorded immediately after the workshops. For example, workshop observations were able to confirm if they were being delivered to people who would have been expected to volunteer irrespective of the workshop because of the programme they were on, and the extent to which the workshop may have facilitated this volunteering. Thus, an iterative process of learning from observation, initial interviews, evaluation of data and the informing of subsequent interviews enabled the team to 'triangulate' a range of sources to learn more about the Sport Makers programme (see Yin, 1994, p. 92).

After interviews, transcripts were distributed among the research team (4 people) and each team member was charged with identifying some broad, recurrent themes. Each researcher highlighted passages that represented possible themes. In subsequent meetings the team crystallized these themes into what they felt were the most salient to help answer our research questions, and we have used them to structure this article.

Following our research we were able to compare results with the CFE evaluation commissioned by Sport England, which reported in 2014 (Adamson & Sprong, 2014). This

distributed an on-line questionnaire to 74,086 Sports Makers 3 months after their registration (sampling point A); and 73,911 Sports Makers 7 months after registration (sampling point B) to measure demographic characteristics, motivations and plans. The low response rates of 4.6% and 3.0% respectively do not take account of 'undelivered emails, which were considerable in number' (p. 11). Of those responding at point B, 41.7% had also responded at point A. These responses suggest only a very small proportion of Sport Makers were disposed to respond to the emailed questionnaire, and that for a large number the emails on the data base were invalid. This reflects our findings of reasons for Sport Makers under-reporting of volunteering. CFE also interviewed 16 Sports Makers and, for 8 of these, generated case studies by also interviewing CSPs and organisations in which the Sport Makers were deployed. Despite this, our research provides a more detailed understanding of how the programme operated.

Results

In its publicity, Sport England continually referred to progress against its national targets. In a December 2012 update Sport England reported that, 'We go into the year with 62,410 registered Sport Makers, 38,786 of whom have attended an event and 13,439 of whom have recorded more than 10 hours of activity' (Sport England, 2012b). Thus the numbers attending a workshop was close to the overall target of 40,000 new volunteers. The 13,439 presumably represented key performance indicator 1, those who had given 10 hours of volunteering each – so this was well below the original target of 40,000. The words used by Sport England in the December 2012 update might imply that the '13,439 of whom have recorded more than 10 hours of activity' represent progress towards 'key performance indicator 2' — 20,000 volunteers continuing to volunteer after the initial 10 hours. However, as we will go on to argue, that is unlikely. Similarly, Sport England's October 2012 update stated that: 'We are approaching 10,000 Sport Makers who have recorded 10 or more hours of activity also' (Sport England, 2012c). This statement is ambiguous as to whether those people had recorded 10 hours, or more than ten hours; and how close the total is to 10,000. This may also be ambiguous because Sport England's own performance against the funding of Places, People, Play by the Department of Culture Media and Sport would be measured by the same targets.

CSPs were all aware of their exact performance targets and felt under pressure to meet them. For example, one reported 'I have to get 763 people logging ten hours, that's my KPI-1. And then our second KPI is retention of those people start logging twenty hours and that's half of 763.' Running Sport Makers had become a very big part of their work, and for some their role had become dedicated to this programme.

Sport England ran a series of Sport Makers training sessions for CSPs on planning and development sessions, but did not go as far as providing specific guidance; this is consistent with allowing local flexibility. A positive outcome was the number of new partnerships and innovative approaches to sports development that CSPs reported establishing through the programme. These were a valuable, although unmeasured, outcome. For example, one CSP reported new partnerships with six new organisations, including (1) local volunteer promoting organisations in local authorities, (2) hospital trusts working with Mencap patients and other groups with special needs, (3) colleges, (4) teaching hospitals where the staff were enrolled, (5) police cadets, and (6) organisations delivering the National Citizenship programme. Another reported an innovative scheme linking the Table Tennis Association 'Ping' programme with a factory, to allow the development of a lunch time table tennis club:

> … the thing that comes out positive for us is to identify some new partners that we can work with. We've got workplace people who have been quite strong

> and proactive and are keen to be involved but then you've also got a workable database of people who genuinely are interested in sport…. (CSP manager)

The pressure to meet targets was reflected in the way CSPs responded to under- and over-recording of performance within the monitoring system, and the temptation they felt to aim the scheme at 'easy' targets and exaggerate their performance. We found that the performance targets affected the way CSPs reacted to inherent under- and over-recording in the programme, the selection of 'soft targets' as partners, and the sizes of workshops.

Under and over-recording performance

The records of those attending workshops can be considered accurate as the CSP manager could collect the e-mail addresses of those attending and ensure they were recorded appropriately on the relevant web site. Given that the Sport Makers volunteers had to record their own hours by logging-on to the web site, there appeared to be widespread under-recording of hours volunteered. Explanations for why hours were not logged range from volunteers not seeing the need, or not being incentivised enough, to give up more of their time to record their hours; some simply forgot; some did not have convenient IT access or they were not IT literate:

> If you're doing it every week, why would you go and say, I play badminton for an hour with my friends? You know, that's not on, the only incentive in doing that is to get rewards. (CSP interview)

The recording of hours online was not straightforward: one of the research team himself had to contact his CSP for guidance on using the web site). Under-recording was a significant problem for CSPs and for Sport England which evaluates its own performance using these figures. This logic continues up the feedback chain to DCMS who evaluate Sport England on the targets it has or has not met.

While instances of fraudulent logging of hours were not identified in the research, the incentives for reaching targets, or penalties for not doing so, could have induced CSPs to log 'extra' hours for volunteers. And it would have been possible to do so: one interviewee commented:

> They [Sports Makers] have a profile, and you can log into that profile and update it, and we can masquerade as … a sport maker, and log their hours for them. (CSP interview)

In some cases, CSPs had legitimately to log volunteers' hours on their behalf — for example, when working with Mencap clients, once the deployment broker had informed them of the hours completed. We are not suggesting impropriety in any case, simply that the system is incentivised to increase numbers to hit specific targets and technically open to the possibility of miss-reporting.

Over-recording the numbers of volunteers signed up to Sport Makers was apparent. In several instances a Sport Maker workshop was added to an existing programme. Examples include the National Citizens Service programme for young people and college BTEC courses in which the students would have been expected to volunteer anyway. A specific example was the Coventry Ambassador programme, a programme developed independently of Sport Makers to provide volunteers to support the Olympic Football games held in Coventry (CSP interview). (Similar programmes were run at other Olympic venues out of London). In this

programme 249 ambassadors attended Sport Maker workshops, and presumably their further volunteering counted towards KPI-1. One can argue that the Sport Maker workshop was an addition to these other volunteering programmes; however the Ambassador programmes would have existed irrespective of Sport Makers. So this is double counting of existing volunteers, not the creation of new ones. It is unlikely that additional volunteers attended the workshops because they were labelled as part of the Sport Makers programme. In the case of the Coventry Ambassadors, if they had attended a Sport Maker workshop after the Games it might have made them aware of different volunteering opportunities, but they would still not have required the workshop training for their Ambassador roles.

There also appeared to be double counting of time. In some cases the three hours for which Sports Makers participated at a workshop were also counted as part of their ten hours volunteering, as encouraged by the leader: 'Remember the 3 hours that the Sports Maker is at the Convention counts for 3 hours that can be logged' (workshop facilitator). This further inflated the volunteering hours — especially where the workshop time had been reduced to less than three hours for some groups who the facilitator judged could not sustain their attention for that long, but still three hours were 'logged'.

Inducements

The low rates of individuals recording the hours they volunteered led CSPs to offer inducements to attend workshops and log hours. The original programme incentive of entry into a draw for Olympic tickets was reported to have had a positive effect on recruitment, but had to be replaced once it was not applicable. One CSP offered £10 per student who logged 10 hours of work. Other inducements included t-shirts and bags, coaching bursary funding for a qualification after 2 months of volunteering, Amazon vouchers, and a hoody. A respondent reported that:

> I've met quite recently a couple of CSPs who actually are on target, for people logging out, and they all just have a really strict incentive scheme, if you get to ten hours you get this offer, like hoodys, … bags, table tennis [bats], those sort of things, or Amazon vouchers … so they're basically paying ten pounds for logging some hours, whether they are actually doing that or not …, you go to a workshop and they say, 'oh just go onto this website and put in ten hours and do this.' (workshop facilitator interview)

It was confirmed that it was not possible to verify that the Sport Makers had actually volunteered for the ten hours they had logged, or if they had just logged the hours to gain the incentives.

Inducements were also made to the deployment organisations — one CSP provided £10 to partners for each student who logged 10 hours of volunteering. Presumably these financial incentives were weighed against potential financial losses anticipated as a consequence of not meeting Sport England targets.

The imperative to log hours was so great that some CSPs employed staff 'ringing round every Sport Maker that we'd had on a workshop to see what they've been doing'. But even this approach had limited results:

> Out of about two hundred people she got one person who said yeah, I've done this but you know — the phone wasn't answered, she was hung up on, you know, or excuses were made … Even offering to do it [log the hours] for them doesn't necessarily mean much. (workshop facilitator interview)

So considerable resources of incentives and staff time were allocated in an attempt to collect records of Sport Maker's volunteering, with results that could be inaccurate, or at worst, fabricated. One CSP partner, off the record, indicated that such resources ought to be put into establishing solid, long-term links between volunteers and sports clubs, rather than chasing 'meaningless' targets. In effect, resources were allocated to achieving the targets rather than to delivering the programme aims.

Soft targets

The KPIs incentivised CSPs to focus on 'soft targets', so partners with easy access to large numbers of volunteers were approached, especially colleges and universities. These student groups had a strong incentive to volunteer to improve their CVs; they are IT literate – so were more likely to record their hours on the web site, and have an email address that could be recorded. These groups also tended to be more responsive to inducements such as free t shirts. A large workshop attendance was more likely if it was part of a college course. It is possible that the manager of the targeted group might have recorded the hours for the student, or passed them on to the CSP, who could then have entered them directly if he had the student's email address. This type of group were likely to be successfully deployed if they have the support of their college. As a facilitator put it (facilitator interview):

> I think what has happened in FE sector is whole groups have been put forward so you will have a whole BTEC group put forward and it will be offered as a bit of additionality and I would say that for every group of 20 about 5, so a quarter, actually go on and do some sort of volunteering, and of those 5 those were probably the ones who were doing it already. A lot come along because they get told to come along for their CV and for the free kit — definite draw — and they might log a few hours but then I think it just tails off unless we stay on their case. [our emphasis]

Thus, such 'soft targets' also resulted in a considerable amount of double counting, in that most of the volunteers and much of the volunteering would have occurred irrespective of Sport Makers. However, 'stacking up the numbers' at these workshops allowed resources to be allocated to more effective work.

Sizes of workshops

It was tempting for CSPs to work with partners who could deliver large numbers at workshops, but working with smaller numbers was usually more effective in helping new volunteers identify the right deployment for them, and the support they needed. For example, one workshop for a local authority volunteer broker organisation in a socially deprived area only had 7 participants, but led to volunteer deployments taking associates to a local community run programme, which might have been sustainable in the long term. Big workshops might have helped volunteers find deployments if the partner organisation did follow-up work with the participants (as noted above). But in these cases the partner would probably have been doing the work anyway, and all that had been added was a new set of opportunities. Big workshops also led to deployments if the participants themselves were motivated and confident enough to act on the information provided at the workshop. But in such cases the volunteer probably did not need the workshop content. As CSPs were aiming at an average of 20 people per workshop, the big workshops could be off-set against the small ones. For example, one reported that by 'stacking up the numbers' at workshops he could create opportunities for working more intensively with smaller groups which might have a greater impact.

The CFE Sport Maker evaluation results

The CFE Sport Maker evaluation (Adamson & Sprong, 2014, p. 6) concluded that the programme contributed to a strong volunteering legacy:

> 8 out of 10 Sport Makers indicated they planned to continue to volunteer; each Sport Maker recruited 14 people to take part in sport or physical activities; and each Sport Maker recruited 3 people to volunteer in sport or physical activities.

However, in interpreting these figures one has to bear in mind the very low response rate for the on-line questionnaire used in this study. Given that the CFE report also acknowledges the under-reporting of logged hours by Sport Makers, one has to wonder whether those who responded to the questionnaire were untypically enthusiastic about volunteering. This factor also limits generalisations about whether the Sports Makers were in fact new volunteers or had merely been displaced from other activity: note that 86% of respondents had undertaken volunteering/leadership activities in the 12 months before taking part in Sport Makers (p. 35). The CFE report appendix does not include the research questionnaire that would have allowed comparison with how the question about volunteering activity had been asked in other surveys; but the Community Life survey found that in 2013/14, 27% of people had volunteered once a month in formal organisations and 41% in the previous year (Civil Exchange, 2015).

Thus either Sports Makers tended to be people who had volunteered previously, or the CFE sample over-represents Sports Makers with previous volunteering experience.. Our evidence of the programme suggests the latter. We question the CFE conclusion that the programme contributed to a strong volunteering legacy. Although there may also be over-reporting of hours, we grant that the system of recording Sports Makers hours of volunteering probably under-reports the number of Sport Makers completing ten or more hours because people do not always go online to log the hours of activity they have completed (Adamson & Sprong, 2014, p.6). But we disagree with the conclusion that one can extrapolate the amount of under-reporting from the responses of the CFE sample, because this sample is unrepresentative.

Discussion

Running Sport Makers became a large part of CSPs' work. Thus it must have displaced previous activity. Interviews did not explore the work which had been displaced, but it is clear that extra staff were required to administer Sport Makers, including maintaining the local web site and attempting to maximise reporting of hours. These resources might have been more effectively used to generate more sports volunteers.

From interviews with CSP managers it was clear that they recognised a tension between achieving the targets they had been set and effective volunteer development. As a CSP manager reported, there is a tension between just getting numbers — which as measured at inspiration events could quite easily be achieved by sessions run for Universities — and trying to achieve long-term development which would actually be an Olympic legacy:

> Is the Olympic legacy getting students a free t shirt, or is it challenging yourself and giving people the opportunities to open new doors?

CSP managers were motivated to promote sports participation and sports volunteering – which was presumably a motivation for them choosing to do this work anyway. Where CSP managers discussed the most effective work it was always the more intensive work with

smaller numbers; hitting the measured targets allowed space for this, rather than being a consequence of the targets. It is impossible to measure the extent to which centrally imposed performance targets limited the effective development of volunteers through the targeting of large easy-to-reach groups, who would have been volunteering anyway, and who were likely to record their volunteering on the web based system. Or the extent to which resources allocated to incentives to take part and log hours, and to extra staff time to ensure recording of hours, could have been spent more effectively recruiting and supporting sports volunteers. In effect, the system of monitoring programme led to the 'tail wagging the dog' rather than the CSP manager having the autonomy to best deliver the programme taking account of local circumstances. The managerial implications are clear – CSP managers were not given space to develop their own ideas to grow volunteers, but rather they were hamstrung by set targets that did not — as we have shown — translate into long-term volunteering.

Conclusions

The management of the Sports Maker programme impeded its capacity to contribute to a volunteering and sports participation legacy from the 2012 Olympic Games. The implications of results discussed above can be understood clearly with reference to the currently standard 'governance' theory, which holds that actors involved in policy delivery — such as CSPs — have much more room for manoeuvre away from a meddling top-down government. The idea is that, under governance rather than government, policy will be shaped to best fit those for whom it was made: citizens on the ground. However, as we have shown, when autonomy comes with 'strings attached' in the form of government-led targets and objectives, this skews the actor's response. Thus, the CSPs in our study were not acting in the best interests of increasing volunteers and ultimately sport's participation: they were acting to ensure that targets were met to ensure funding was not reduced or further funding was triggered. The unintended consequences of this governance/management were wasted energy being put into double counting and delivering 'soft targets', rather than longer-term, sustained strategies to grow volunteers in sport.

The last point is perhaps the most pertinent. If top-down Government aims and objectives force delivery organisations (in this case, Sport Makers) to waste their considerable energy on seeking to fulfil the requirements of a feedback loop that contributes little to the intended growth of volunteers, there must be something wrong with the system of governance. Our study not only uncovered wasted energy – it also highlights that the creativity needed to implement well-designed interventions to improve sustained growth of volunteers is being spent on thinking of ways to ensure that funding 'triggers' are reached. The irony of this situation is that resources are not used effectively to meet the programme's aims. The alternative — to trust key actors working at the coal-face of their sports to implement strategies for growth — is likely to be more successful. Thus the theoretical implications of this study add to the growing literature that challenges the 'textbook' understanding of a shift from 'government' to 'governance' and the attendant 'autonomy' that this is supposed to bring actors. The governance literature needs to explain why cases such as that presented here do not fit their 'ideal type'.

Would the programme objectives have been achieved more effectively if CSP management of the Sport Maker programme had not only been able to devise its own policies for delivery but also its own targets to measure their effectiveness, using the ones from Sport England as a benchmark? The CSPs were well-motivated to do this. In a similar way, the England and Wales Cricket Board stopped imposing targets on county cricket administrators, recognising that these administrators are inherently motivated to promote the development of cricket. Such an approach would have been consistent with a system of governance which did

actually devolved power (Skelcher, 2000) within sports governance (Goodwin & Grix, 2011; Harris & Houlihan, 2013). Or is it inevitable that a new managerialism of public services (Farrell & Morris, 2003; McEldowney, 2003 Deem & Brehony, 2005), characterised by a replacement of trust between hierarchies by top-down imposed performance targets, will predominate? In which case, what is the cost of the tail wagging the dog?

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