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London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: Including Volunteers with Disabilities, a Podium Performance?

Simon Darcy

University of Technology, Sydney, Lindfield, NSW, Australia

Tracey J Dickson

University of Canberra, Bruce, ACT, Australia

Angela M Benson

Eastbourne Campus, University of Brighton, Eastbourne, United Kingdom

Author Notes:

Corresponding Author #1: Simon Darcy, Professor, UTS Business School and Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Centre, University of Technology, Sydney, PO Box 222, Lindfield, NSW 2070
Australia; Tel: +61 2 9514 5100; Fax: +61 2 9514 5195; Email: Simon.Darcy@uts.edu.au

Tracey J Dickson, Associate Professor, Centre for Tourism Research, Faculty of Business, Government and Law, University of Canberra, University Avenue, Bruce, ACT, 2617, Australia; Ph + 61 2 6201 2465; Fax +61 2 6201 5239; Email: Tracey.Dickson@canberra.edu.au

Corresponding Author #2: Angela M Benson, Principal Lecturer, School of Sport and Service Management, Eastbourne Campus, University of Brighton, Darley Road, Eastbourne BN20 7UR, United Kingdom; Tel: +44 (0) 1273 643621; Fax: +44 (0) 1273 643949; Email: amb16@brighton.ac.uk

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Abstract

This paper presents an examination of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games' volunteers who identified as having access needs and/or disabilities. The methodology draws upon data collected as part of a larger quantitative mixed method research design through an online survey that included open ended questions. The quantitative element of the online survey was framed by the Special Event Volunteer Motivation Scale together with sociodemographic questions supplemented by disability and access specific questions. The qualitative analysis of the open ended responses of the experiences of people with disability was framed using the UK government's Office of Disability Issues (ODI) policy conceptualization of the barriers affecting the access and inclusion of people with disability. A small number of volunteers related feedback consistent with the principles of the ODI best practice through good staff support and overall positive experiences. However, other experiences indicate significant organizational, environmental and structural issues faced by volunteers with a disability in the program. The implications of these findings for future event planning processes and broader macro policy considerations are discussed.

Key words: Mega events; Volunteer management; Disabilities; Inclusion; Sports; Legacy; Organisation behaviour

London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: Including Volunteers with Disability, a Podium Performance?

In the midst of a growing legal and societal expectation that people with disabilities be included in an equitable way across society access and inclusion has been a topic of debate for many years across a diverse range of contexts. These have included sport and leisure participation (Aitchison, 2003; Bailey, 2005; Darcy & Dowse, 2013; DePauw & Gavron, 2005; Devas, 2003; Smith, 1985; Tregaskis, 2003; Veal, Darcy & Lynch, 2013); tourism (Buhalis & Darcy, 2011; Veitch & Shaw, 2011); facility access (Landy, 2007; Lyberger & Pastore, 1998; Petersen & Piletic, 2006); and accommodation preferences (Darcy, 2010; Kim, Stonesifer, & Han, 2012). Additionally, while typically people with disabilities may be perceived as recipients of volunteer services, more recently there has been discussion of the inclusion of people with disabilities as volunteers, thus as providers of services, rather than recipients of volunteer services (Balandin, Llewellyn, Dew, & Ballin, 2006; Mjelde-Mossey, 2006). However, in the events industry there has been little research on access and inclusion (Darcy & Harris, 2003), leading to a recent call to include access and inclusion in the agendas for events research and practice to support the equitable participation of those with diverse access needs (Darcy, 2012).

Mega sport events, such as the Olympics and Paralympics, provide high profile, well-resourced and often green-field development opportunities that could showcase the effective design and delivery of an accessible and inclusive event. Considering the cost to host such an event it is understandable that communities, sponsors and governments may also seek an enduring social legacy for their communities, including for those with a disability (East London Research Institute for the London Assembly, 2007; Weed & Dowse, 2009). The official discourse of London 2012 spoke of diversity, equity and inclusion with respect to opening minds, changing lives, creating new opportunities, improving access for people with

disability (PwD)[1]. This is evident when examining the broader context of the Games, for example: PwD being part of the torch relay and actively engaged in the opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympics and Paralympics; as part of the Cultural Olympiad, there were many events that embraced PwD as performers including a 10 day festival at South Bank that showcased the work of around 200 artists with disabilities; 7% of the London 2012 workforce who were recruited through organizations working with PwD and of those who identify and register as disabled the Olympic Park housing was designed to be easily adaptable and accessible for elderly and PwD; and former Paralympians became TV presenters, such as Ade Adepitan**,** Channel 4 presenter and former Paralympian who said "Good TV has the power to open people's minds. Brave and cutting edge TV has the power to change people's lives – as it has done for me" [Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), 2012, p. 58]. An example of the cutting-edge TV also initiated by Channel 4, the Paralympics' broadcaster, was Adam Hill's *Last Leg*, which provided a daily commentary and a place for humor and discussion of disabilities, of the daily events of the London Paralympics through the eyes of well-known comedians who also had disabilities. This show continued beyond London 2012 to provide commentary through to Sochi 2014 that was broadcast in the UK as well as Australia.

Further, for the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), events such as the Paralympics provide a means and an opportunity to leave lasting legacies related to accessible infrastructure, sporting structures, attitudinal change towards PwD and increased opportunity for PwD (International Paralympic Committee, 2007b). As such, the experiences of the volunteers with disabilities at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

[1]There are inconsistencies in the literature as to how to address people with disability. In this paper we adopt the language of the UN's *convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* by referring to the person first, e.g. 'volunteer with disability' not 'disabled volunteer' except where quoting from documents where the language of the original source is used.

(London 2012) may provide an insight into the expected access and inclusion legacies sought and desired, not just in policy but also by organizations such as the IPC. The understanding of Paralympic legacy has been amplified with, calls for recognizing the opportunity of incorporating Paralympic legacy (Weed & Dowse, 2009), a recent publication investigating legacy across predominantly summer Paralympic games (Legg & Gilbert, 2011), and then placed within the context of Olympic legacy through an thematic review of the empirical literature (Misener, Darcy, Legg, & Gilbert, 2013).

For the London 2012 volunteers, the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) implemented a strategy to recruit and support PwD as volunteers at the Games. Lord Sebastian Coe, chair of LOCOG said that, "The one thing I have always said that is the difference between a good games and great games, apart from the competitors, is the quality of the volunteers … we want that volunteer workforce to be completely diverse. We want people with disability to feel that this is open to them. The fact that we are making a lot of effort to make sure that that happens " (Channel 4, 2010b). To support the aim of being a great Games especially for volunteers with disabilities, recruitment deadlines were arranged so PwD could apply up to seven weeks earlier than other volunteers, from 27th July 2010. By January 2011, 8000 PwD had volunteered (Disabled News, 29/1/2011), some of whom were volunteering for the first time (Channel 4, 2010a). From those applications, 3500 were selected, a 44% success rate. Ultimately, PwD represented approximately 5% of all *Games Makers* (volunteers) for both the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Despite LOCOG's efforts, this was still well below the estimated 19% of the United Kingdom population who identified as living with a disability (Department for Work and Pensions, 2012a).

Accessibility and inclusion is not just about disability as accessibility and inclusion benefits many in society, such as an ageing population, families with young children who use

prams (i.e. buggy), and participants and employees requiring good access for equipment and resources (Darcy, 1998; Darcy & Dickson, 2009). The involvement of volunteers with disabilities at events is just one example of accessibility and inclusion forming an important part of active citizenship (Darcy, 2003; Darcy & Taylor, 2009). Yet, little research has examined disability in a volunteer context of major sport events (Darcy, 2003; Darcy & Harris, 2003).

Within this context, the aim of the paper is to analyze the experiences of volunteers with disability at the London 2012 Games with respect to the official government policy that identified barriers and responses that would inform their operational management of the volunteers with disability. To achieve this, we examine PwD in terms of their profile, allocation of roles, their satisfaction, access and experiences during London 2012. The paper explores: the wider context of disability in the UK; the underlying philosophy of social approaches to disability identified by the UN *Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities* (United Nations, 2006); how this was implemented through the UK government approach generally and to the London 2012 Games; and finally the perceptions of the International Olympic Committee and International Paralympics Committee related to access and inclusion. The overall research design is then discussed prior to outlining the findings, discussion and conclusion.

Disability within the UK Context

The UK legislative framework under which disability sits and within which London 2012 operated, has seen several major changes during the London 2012 preparation period. Until September 2007, securing the civil rights for PwD came under the Disability Rights Commission. With the passing of the *Equality Act 2006* (changed from *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* and later updated to the *Equality Act 2010*) these responsibilities were transferred to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which commenced on 1st

October 2007. The statutory remit of this Commission was to promote and monitor the rights across the nine areas (protected grounds), one of these being PwD. This framework is underpinned by the UN *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (see Figure 1) that was ratified by the UK government in 2009. The following quote highlights the UK government's position:

> The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (sic) requires us to work towards equality of rights for disabled people, and to formulate and implement policies to combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices around disability. This together with the Equality Act 2010 gives a strong legislative framework. However, changing the attitudes and behaviours of individuals and organisations towards disabled people is much more difficult and will take place over a long period of time. This is not something Government alone can fix but together we can use the 2012 Games to provide catalyst for to a fairer and more inclusive society for us all (ODI, 2011, p. 4).

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

A guidance note was written by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010b) introducing the UN Convention to inform people within disability and disability organizations of its implications for disability and diversity. However, even though the UK government had been promoting the importance of volunteers for London 2012 and beyond, this document indicated that volunteers under British Law had little protection, regardless of whether they are disabled or non-disabled. This changed with the introduction of the *Equality Act 2010* and protection is now acknowledged by the Commission. Although this Act does not explicitly mention volunteers,

it would appear they are nonetheless protected under the remit of service users (HRBird, 2010).

Volunteering and Disability

"Can Do! Volunteering" (Moore & Fishlock, 2006) is one of the few documents that brought together volunteering and disability in the lead up to London 2012. The guide aimed at making organizations that engage volunteers more inclusive with a focus on young disabled people. The spirit of this document was reflected in *London 2012: A Legacy for disabled people: A report for 2011* (ODI, 2011), within which volunteering is mentioned in the three sections (transforming perceptions, supporting opportunities and promoting engagement). 'Access to Volunteering' (p. 33–34), refers specifically to the Government's £2m funding for the Access to Volunteering Funded Programme (2009–2011) that aimed to increase the involvement of PwD in volunteering prior to the Games. The evaluation of this scheme (Freshminds Research, 2011) indicated that the fund supported nearly 7,000 volunteers with disability, of these approximately 67% were new to volunteering. Additionally, volunteers expressed an increased sense of wellbeing, confidence and self-worth. Some 11% of organizations involved outlined volunteers had found jobs as a result of being involved in the program, thus demonstrating that inclusion of PwD as volunteers is efficacious for the volunteers and for society as a whole. This human capital outcome of volunteering is consistent with some other mainstream volunteer experience in sporting contexts (Darcy, Maxwell, Edwards, Onyx, & Sherker, 2014; Day & Devlin, 1998).

When considering the development of opportunities for PwD it is worth recalling the insights of the Equality and Human Rights Commission who recognized the importance of developing research and information systems to better understand volunteers with disabilities, however, they also realize the difficulties in that,

> "…we have some information about different groups, but it is not always sophisticated enough to allow us to draw useful inferences. We have some data about disabled people's experiences, for example, but in most cases the way the data are collected does not make a distinction." (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010a, p. 41)

The report continues by calling for more sophisticated data collection techniques. While these documents provide a broader context for London 2012, there are two other significant players that provide direction and expectation, regarding the inclusion of PwD - the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympics Committee.

International Olympic Committee and International Paralympic Committee Access Guidelines

As Darcy and Taylor (2013) identified, an operational partnership has been established between the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), where the IPC has sought to strategically plan to ensure that bidding cities are required to provide accessible facilitating infrastructure across the Games' sites [International Paralympic Committee (IPC), 2012]. The IPC has developed accessibility guidelines, and employed a manager of strategic projects who has a disability and extensive experience in access consultancy in the private sector, and through involvement in the Sydney, Beijing and London games (IPC, 2009). As Darcy & Taylor go on to state, "Critically, the guidelines recognize the importance of host cities creating an accessible experience for not only athletes and officials but the spectators and tourists attending the Olympic experience" (2013, p. 113).

While the accessibility of infrastructure has been broadly considered, Misener et al. (2013) identified that it wasn't until 2007 that the IPC (2007a) specifically identified legacy and legacy planning as important considerations in staging the games. This includes "Opportunities for people with disability to become fully integrated in social living and to reach their full potential in aspects of life beyond sports" (p. 331). With this recognition, access and inclusion are articulated in the IPC's charter as,

> Every resident of the city and every visitor must be able to fully enjoy all activities that constitute the "Paralympic Games experience". In order for this to be possible, the conditions that form barriers need to be removed. Such barriers may not be only architectural, but also attitudinal, political, economical and educational barriers may affect the chances of individuals to fully engage in the Paralympic Games.
>
> Therefore, the host city already from the candidature phase needs to demonstrate a commitment to accessibility and inclusion. The main principles of such commitment are Equity, Dignity and Functionality (IPC, 2007b, p. 31).

To support the creation of environments that are accessible and inclusive, the IPC suggests that the organizing committees and host cities use a combination of four technical and operational approaches:

- Strategic and operational - establishment of guiding principles, choices and operational approach in the direction of an environment without barriers, accessible by all.
- Technical - implementation of internationally accepted design standards and adoption of inclusive practices in all areas of construction.
- Organizational - establishment of co-ordination structures assigned with the

responsibility to ensure accessibility and inclusion in the host city and the venues of the Games, including expert consultation and a well-defined sign off / approval process.

- Educational - ensuring that appropriate education programmes are in place for the general public and especially for youth to foster understanding about inclusion and equal opportunities. (IPC, 2007b, p. 31)

Disability, Disability Studies and Barriers to Participation

As the British government stated in the lead up to London 2012, "The Government's vision is of a society that enables disabled people to fulfill their potential and have equal opportunities to realize their aspirations" (Department for Work and Pensions, 2012b, p. 19). The Minister for Disabled People is supported by the ODI who has a strategic advisory group, *Equality 2025*, predominantly publicly appointed people with disabilities. This office is the lead in driving the delivery of the government vision for PwD with an agenda of being inclusive and reducing barriers to social participation and citizenship.

The underlying philosophy of the ODI promotes a move from an approach dominated by the medical model of disability to the social model of disability. The social model of disability seeks to understand the lived experiences of the group, focus on the barriers PwD experience and seek transformative solutions to placing the issues identified on the social, economic, cultural and political agendas (Oliver, 1996). Medical approaches regard disability as the deficit caused by an individual's health condition or impairment, which sees the focus of activity on 'normalizing' their bodies. Social approaches to disability, which underpin the United Nations' (UN) *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, 2006) shifts the focus from the individual's 'personal tragedy', to the disabling environment and social attitudes that recognizes that a person's impairment only becomes a disability

when social, economic, cultural and political practices are not inclusive and, hence, "disable" the individual (Barnes, Mercer, & Shakespeare, 2010; Darcy & Buhalis, 2011). The approach is to encourage the removal of disabling environmental and attitudinal barriers and to create enabling environments and social attitudes, which is clearly reflected in the IPC's legacies focus.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been adopted by over 150 countries (United Nations, 2011) including the UK. Incongruence to social approaches to disability, the Convention in its preamble states, "Recognizing that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (United Nations, 2006, n.p.). The ODI (2011) adopts a social approach philosophy and seek to reduce the barriers to social participation. They identify the barriers through the following three categories, that reflect those identified within the IPC's charter:

1. **Environmental** – physical barriers, access, equipment, inflexibility of arrangements
2. **Organizational** – inflexibility in policy, practices and / or procedures. Lack of financial support, travel costs due to not being able to use public transport, availability of alternative formats (Braille, large print, sign language).
3. **Attitudinal** – general lack of understanding and awareness which may incite stereotyping, discrimination, prejudice and / or insensitive treatment.

Environmental barriers are often addressed through approaches such as building codes and Universal Design. From an organizational perspective, this approach clearly identifies barriers to social participation and citizenship that the host organization would seek to

eradicate for all those working for them, volunteering, spectating and participating in the Games themselves. The policy approach then needs to be operationalised through Games training and operational phases so that volunteers identifying as having a disability would be able to have the same volunteering experience as those without disability. This operationalisation may also be able to impact attitudinal barriers through strategies such as information, skills and awareness training. This paper uses the government's own framework to examine the experiences of volunteers with disabilities at the London 2012 Games.

Research Questions and Design

With this background, and in a first for major sport event and volunteer research, the research presented here seeks to understand:

1. The demographics of those volunteers who were PwD;
2. The satisfaction of PwD with their London 2012 volunteer experience;
3. The extent to which their access needs were met during London 2012; and
4. The experience of PwD volunteering at London 2012.

The research was approved and supported by the International Paralympic Committee, approved by the Ethics Committee of the host Universities and supported by LOCOG. The research presented in this paper was part of broader research study based on the 70,000 Games Makers (volunteers) of London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The focus of this research paper utilizes the data sets on volunteers with disabilities embedded in the larger study. The quantitative research design was framed by the Special Event Volunteer Motivation Scale (SEVMS) together with sociodemographic questions supplemented by disability and access specific questions. The qualitative analysis of the open ended questions examined the experiences of volunteers with disability who volunteered at the Games framed using the UK government's ODI policy conceptualization of the barriers affecting the access

and inclusion of PwD. Both studies were conceptualized, designed, operationalised and analysed by the authors and, hence, is primary rather than secondary data analysis (Veal & Darcy, 2014).

The research design was therefore mixed methods in its approach, which can be defined as 'the type of mixed research in which one relies on a quantitative, post positivist view of the research process, while concurrently recognizing that the addition of qualitative data and approaches are likely to benefit most research projects' (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007, p. 124). Two days after the completion of the Paralympics an on-line questionnaire was sent out to the target population of all 70,000 volunteers inclusive of those with disability. The on-line survey was distributed via email by the Research Department of LOCOG as part of their overall games evaluation process and closed just five days later. The survey received 11,451 responses, a response rate of 16.4%. The larger research program aims to build upon a body of research seeking to understand the motivations and experiences of event volunteers that may support enhancement of social legacies across a variety of sport event contexts (e.g. Dickson, Benson, Blackman, & Terwiel, 2013; Dickson, Darcy, Edwards, & Terwiel, 2014; Farrell, Johnston, & Twynam, 1998; Giannoulakis, Wang, & Gray, 2008; Khoo & Engelhorn, 2007, 2011; Twynam, Farrell, & Johnston, 2002). This paper discusses the sample of 786 (6.9% of the responses) who self-identified as either having a disability or mobility, vision or hearing access needs.

The survey design also included an open-ended question to provide respondents with the opportunity to comment upon the questionnaire or their experiences. While not specifically designed to elicit responses on the disability experience and access inclusions, 17 respondents felt strongly enough about their experience to provide feedback. The level of interest, of those 17, on their access experiences in the open-ended question may reflect the

location of the open-ended question two questions after those that explored their satisfaction with access.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data was exported into SPSS 21.0 for descriptive analysis, while the qualitative responses were exported into NVivo, where initially a grounded approach to content analysis was used to analyze the responses as very few similar studies have been undertaken. Content analysis is the process used to analyze records, documents, letters, transcribed conversations or any textual item and is primarily a strategy of analysis rather than a data collection strategy (Henderson, 1991; Veal & Darcy, 2014). The procedures of analysis for the content analysis were undertaken using NVivo qualitative software (QSR International, 2012). Each respondent's information was prepared in standardized NVivo format. Both the electronic and hard copy data sources were used in the process of analysis and interpretation. Freehand coding was first undertaken where categorizations considering volunteer and disability experiences were conceptualized through reading of the text. Once some broad categorizations were determined, they were refined through two more rounds of analysis.

Through this process it became apparent that the categorizations and associated sub themes could be interpreted through social model conceptualizations that underpinned the UN *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. While there were broadly positive or negative experiences, the positive experiences fell into good staff practice of direct line managers and supervisors, and PwD regarding the experience as a positive one personally. The negative experiences, or the barriers to a positive volunteering experience, could be further analyzed through the ODI (2011) environment, organizational and attitudinal barriers examined earlier in the paper. This conceptualization of barriers became the frame for analyzing the negative experiences of the volunteers. Hence, a grounded approach was

replaced with the ODI (2011) barriers conceptualization. The data were then worked and reworked where sub-themes began to emerge. This iteration of coding, re-coding and working the data continued until all the final sub-themes evolved. These processes were facilitated by Nvivo quantitative and qualitative tools where content relevant to each emergent theme could be retrieved in one action across all transcripts. Once this text was retrieved, direct quotes were selected as representative of the emergent themes and discourses presented.

Results and Discussion

Profile of Volunteers with Disability

Of the 786 volunteers who self-identified as having a disability or access needs, 58% were female, with about two-thirds aged over 45 years (Table 1). The Olympics drew most respondents (63.5%), with less than half of the respondents volunteering only during that time (41.5%), 25% just at the Paralympics, and 22% for both events. Nearly a third also volunteered in the lead up to the Games (31.5%). Most (85.0%) had previous volunteering experience, including 19 who had volunteered at the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Nearly 60% of respondents indicated that they were in some kind of paid employment (full-time, part-time or casual) and 21.6% indicated they were retired (Table 1). This reflects the older age profile of the respondents. With 42% employed Full-time respondents were employed at three times the national average for adults with disabilities (Department for Work and Pensions, 2012a). Information on PwD is limited, however it has been suggested that ‘in 2011, the average hourly wage rate for a disabled person was £11.78, nearly 10% lower than a non-disabled person (£12.88)’ (Papworth Trust, 2012, p. 10). In contrast, while the median gross annual income in the UK for 2011 was just under £22,000 p.a. (Office for

National Statistics, 2012), nearly 55% of respondents were from households with household incomes higher than this (Table 2).

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Most respondents were born in England (78%), followed by Europe (4.5%) and Africa (4.3%). Predominantly respondents lived in London (31.8%) followed by the South East of the UK outside of London (24.0%), the East of England (8.1%), and the South West of England (7.5%) (Table 3).

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Allocated Volunteering Roles

There were 50 team or functional areas identified by LOCOG where volunteers may be tasked. For the Paralympic Games the main areas where PwD were assigned were in Transport (24.6%), Event Services (16.9%), and Security (10.5%). The work areas were similar for the Olympic volunteers: Event Services (26.3%), Transport (19.2%) and Sports (6.4%). For those volunteering prior to the Games it was also Event Services (29.6%), Transport (16.8%), Security (7.1%) and Sports (6.8%).

Satisfaction of Volunteers

To explore their level of satisfaction across 16 areas, including their overall volunteer experience, a five point Likert scale was used (1= Very satisfied to 5= Very dissatisfied) (Table 4). The areas of greatest satisfaction were their overall volunteer experience (mean=1.6), recognition of their efforts, the uniform, and support from the volunteer leaders (mean =1.9), with the latter having a mode of 1 (i.e. very satisfied). Those areas with the lowest levels of satisfaction, though still more satisfied than dissatisfied, were leadership training (mean = 2.5), efficient use of time, and shift briefings (means =2.4)

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Where more than 10 people were allocated to a functional areas, those most satisfied with their job assignment were in *National Olympic Committee & National Paralympic Committee Services* (93.8% satisfied or very satisfied). Satisfaction with shift allocation was greatest in *Accreditation* (95.9%), while satisfaction with the use of their time was greatest in the *Sports Functional Area* (88.8%). Those least satisfied with their job allocations were in *Olympic and Paralympic Family Services* (28.6% were dissatisfied). Those least satisfied with the number of shifts allocated were in *Opening and Closing Ceremonies* (25.0% dissatisfied), while those most dissatisfied with the use of their time were in *Olympic and Paralympic Family Services* where 43% were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Meeting of Access Needs

Respondents were asked to evaluate the extent to which their access requirements were met during their London 2012 Games volunteering experience across 12 access domains using a four point Likert scale (1=a lot, 2=a little, 3=not very much, 4=not at all). The access domains, across the three main areas of access needs, emphasize the ODI's organizational barriers and the IPC's technical adaptations that may be applied to overcome barriers to access and inclusion (Table 5). Many identified as having a disability, but they did not consider that they had access needs (n=619). For those with access needs their main needs related to mobility support such as accessible transport, accessible toilets and accessible parking. Mobility support received the best mean score (1.5) with accessible parking having the poorest mean score under mobility support (2.4). Vision support, while least needed, received better mean scores (2.4 to 2.8) than hearing support (2.9 to 3.7), though poorer than the aforementioned mobility support (Table 5).

TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

Experiences: Positive and Negative

This section draws on the findings from the qualitative research. Table 6 presents an analysis of qualitative data from the open-ended question. Firstly, experiences identified by the volunteers with disabilities could be broadly categorized as either positive or negative.

TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE

The positive comments were largely related to practices of staff support for their volunteering and disability experiences, and whether they enjoyed the experience or not. Staff support was demonstrated by team leaders and/or managers being willing to reassign job roles from one that was inappropriate to their disability to a role that considered their disability. For example, the willingness of team leaders and managers to accommodate a person's disability made all the difference to their volunteering experience, which directly relates to those that commented on how enjoyable or beneficial the experience was,

> *I did have a very good time even if I'm disable [sic], and I was over tired every day, they did trying to accommodate me as much as possible every day, I was walking very slowly, but they were very patient with me and some days they did offer me an electrical scooter which it was great because I did help me to cope with the pain that I do experience every day as I need to take pain killers every day (Respondent 7, female 45-54 years).*

Yet, this was not the volunteering or disability experience of the majority of the respondents. For those who had negative experiences these experiences could be categorised through the social approach of the Office of Disability categorizations. These categories are:

environmental (staff mobility vehicles; specific inclusive practices); organizational (lack of strategic human resource management (HRM); general day to day administration and information; inaccurate volunteer data; lack of detailed LOCOG disability information; and attitudinal (role not suited to disability; disability awareness; no support/not valued member).

As outlined in Table 6, both strategic HRM practice and day-to-day general administration and information accounted for a great deal of the negative volunteering experiences. This began through the recruitment process involving communication with the volunteers from LOCOG right through to their day to day deployment and response from their immediate supervisors. Central to this was a lack of follow-up on communication that the volunteers had been sent about their disability as it related to the roles that they would be able to fulfill. This was manifested in the inaccuracy of the volunteer information held on the database no matter how many times the volunteers tried to have it corrected. Further, a number of volunteers commented that the disability information on the LOCOG website was inaccurate or not operationalised, while others noted the lack of disability training offered by LOCOG. This contrasts with the Vancouver 2010 Games where there was a specific disability module that was required to be completed by all volunteers as part of the *Service* Excellence training and also imbedded into *Venue Specific* and *Job Specific* information (VANOC, 2009a, 2009b, 2010).

At the environmental level, the provision of staff mobility vehicles created a great deal of anxiety for all the volunteers whether they had mobility or hearing disability. Not being able to be transported to and from their assigned positions was a significant barrier to positive volunteering experiences particularly at the end of the evening shifts. Transport was compounded if people required specific environmental inclusive practices such as a wheelchair or scooter provision/use or inclusions for hearing impairment. Further, these issues became exacerbated with access to food and breaks where many PwD need to maintain

hydration and nutrition as a way of alleviating fatigue and other health considerations of their impairment. The culmination of these considerations could be the difference between continuing to volunteer or not as suggested by respondent 15,

> *With having a disability, I was unable to fulfil my shifts. I use a wheelchair and was expected to catch a bus and train on my own. Also finish shifts [sic] when they were not running. More access arrangement are needed to get people to where they need to be (Respondent 15, female, 35-44 years).*

Not surprisingly, where there are organizational and environmental barriers to positive volunteering experiences, a great deal of the origin of these barriers can be traced back to attitudinal considerations. While there is a great deal of overlap and interdependency that makes it difficult to separate organizational, environmental and attitudinal barriers, a great deal of the organizational and environmental barriers would have been alleviated if the organization had an attitude steeped in social approaches to disability as espoused by the ODI, the UN Convention and disability studies academics and advocates. One of the significant attitudinal outcomes of the organizational practices was the assigning of roles not appropriate to a person's disability. Respondents were flabbergasted that after providing all kinds of official information to LOCOG, identifying their disability needs and following up or trying to follow up with LOCOG that they were given inappropriate roles. In a worst-case scenario a person with mobility issues was assigned and,

> *Found that despite informing staff at each stage of the selection process of a new disabling condition meaning I can't stand or walk for long, I was in the mobility team, expected to push wheelchairs. Due to this, I had to withdraw early from the games as was physically unable to cope (Respondent 5, female 35-44 years).*

As a number of respondents pointed out they were concerned at the lack of disability awareness from LOCOG generally, the administration of the volunteers specifically and even more concerning, their direct supervisors who seem to be oblivious to the requests that they were directly making to them. What became apparent in reading through the volunteers with disability experiences was that this left a significant number of the volunteers feeling that they had no support and they were not valued member of the volunteering team. As one volunteer suggested,

> *My experience was not at all good but this was mainly down to the manager of the team who was told numerous times that I had a disability this was never taken into account also the emails either never arrived or came weeks later for training or I would get a call out of the blue asking me where I was and telling me to get down to London the day after. I also don't know why I was given the job that I had I just felt as though I was just shoved in a corner and that everyone was doing me a favour just being there (Respondent 11, female, 35-44 years).*

While the volunteer experience for many may have been positive, for the respondents that provided an open-ended response to the questionnaire there was evidence of systemic failure at an organizational, environmental and at the attitudinal level. These volunteers were left with very negative experiences of their involvement in the Games where it was not just a single poor episode but a series of systemic failures that culminated in their observations being serious enough to want to tell somebody. Reflective of this group are the experiences of one such volunteer which serve here to finalize this section of the paper:

> *Very disappointed with catering - appalling food, small portions and imbalance diet. Very late changes with shifts, failure to acknowledge emails or text messages. Failed to take in account of my deaf disability with no provision at VST or during work. No*

evidence of deaf awareness from medical team even returning to help clear out after the Games was over was a bad experience - I was left waiting at gates when VMM did not turned up at gates as arranged. I was left at Medical Room at training tracks that has no refreshments or running water and no toilet facilities for nearly four hours. That left a very bad taste! (Respondent 15).

Conclusion

From the literature presented it is clear that access and inclusion is important, expected, and legally required from an international human rights perspective then operationalised by National governments. People expect to be treated equally whether that be on grounds of age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion or ability. Yet, as the background to the paper shows PwD are continually marginalized by a series of social practices that mean their citizenship and social participation requires overt consideration within organisational practices. More generally, some of the volunteer experiences outlined by PwD point to a general systemic failure to manage volunteers adequately, more specifically PwD volunteer experiences identified further areas of marginalization related to disability and access provision by LOCOG but strategically planned for by the IPC and the UK government (IPC, 2007b; ODI, 2011).

In the context of high profile mega sporting events, such as the Olympics and Paralympics, access and inclusion is especially in focus given the legacy discussion outlined in the background to this paper. This was certainly the case with London 2012, where PwD were a specific target group for volunteer recruitment. However, even with targeted recruitment the proportion of volunteers with a disability (5%) was far lower than the proportion of those PwD in the general population (19%). As shown in the descriptive statistics, the people recruited tended to have low support needs or did not identify as having

a disability but still required access considerations. This suggests that people with high levels of support needs either did not apply, were excluded, or were overlooked in the recruitment process.

Of the 786 respondents presented here who identified as either having access needs or a disability, many were female, most were allocated to Event Services and Transport, with the majority having high levels of satisfaction with job assignments, the number of shifts allocated and the use of their time while on shift. From the perspective of access domains, those with mobility access needs were less satisfied with their transport support than with building and toilet access. Those requiring vision or hearing support indicated that they were less than happy with the support received in general. This indicates that while access and inclusion are concepts that may be understood by organizations the operationalisation or the specifics of each access domain requires more considered attention.

The quantitative survey responses indicate that most respondents were satisfied with all aspects of their London 2012 volunteering experience. The analysis of the qualitative responses highlighted both the positive and negative experiences. Positive experiences were related to staff support and overall experiences, reflected in the quantitative responses. The negative experiences were categorized into organizational, environmental and attitudinal barriers. The barriers were wide ranging with lack of training and organization, general management, mobility vehicles, roles not suited to disability and no support/not seen as a valued member being the most highlighted barriers from respondents. A great number of the organizational considerations had to do with human resource management practices that have been identified as critical to event management, sport management and the intersection of major sport event management (Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy, 2006; Dickson, Terwiel, & Benson, 2011; Doherty, 2009; Taylor, Doherty, & McGraw, 2008). These include planning, recruitment, screening, orientation, training, performance management and recognition. This

research has highlighted, that even where there was a requirement, expectation, desire and a strategy to support access and inclusion of people with disabilities as volunteers at a mega sport event, the number of PwDs recruited were still well below national rates of disability and that environmental, operational and attitudinal barriers still existed impacting upon the experience of the volunteers. The outcome contravened LOCOGs hope of providing a lasting legacy, their own policy documents and arguably contravened the UK and *Equality Act, 2010.*

Many of the organizational barriers could have been addressed through standard human resource management procedures and protocols. Further, as those who had positive experiences identified that these experiences were closely associated with creative and positive attitudes of direct line managers who were able to adjust work schedules and, hence, remove those barriers in the best traditions of social model approaches before they became barriers for those individuals under their control. As identified in the review of policy documents, not all staff or volunteers were trained specifically in disability awareness protocols. Had disability awareness training protocols been put in place, managers may have recognised the reasonable adjustments required for inclusive practice with the outcome being that the issues identified in this paper may not have arisen.

While this study provided a quantitative and qualitative overview of the “Games Makers” satisfaction, access and experiences of volunteer with disability, it was limited in the depth of responses due to the chosen research design. While this is recognized as a limitation of this study, it is the first time that volunteers with disabilities at a major event has been investigated and given a voice. The findings suggest that while there was a level of satisfaction with most Games makers with disabilities, for those who took time to explain their dissatisfaction through open-ended response they have provided valuable insights for future consideration.

The London 2000 Olympic and Paralympic games treatment of the volunteers with disability, while aiming to be what might be termed a gold medal performance might only have achieved a silver or bronze medal performance. More is needed to achieve that gold medal standard in the future given the gaps revealed through the quantitative and qualitative data. If events are to be truly accessible and inclusive for all involved - participants, staff, volunteers and spectators – and beyond as an enduring legacy, then a great deal can be learned from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games. In summary, this would include: detailed knowledge management systems that effectively transfer knowledge between games, including effective access and disability strategies; logistics systems that include reference and work planning for access and disability inclusion; accessible environments (permanent and temporary); and implementation of Universal design principles that support accessible and continuous transport and paths of travel. Further, recruitment and training of service-oriented staff and volunteers in access and disability; marketing and communication to inform all about the access and inclusion opportunities; and an awareness that disability, access and inclusion should be central to all infrastructure and operational processes.

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Table 1.

Demographics

		Female n=454 %	Male n=332 %	Total n=786 %
Volunteering period (more than one response possible)	Pre-Olympics	27.3	37.3	31.6
	Olympics	62.8	64.5	63.5
	Paralympics	44.9	49.4	46.8
Age group	16–18 years	0.7	0.3	0.5
	19–24	8.8	7.2	8.1
	25–34	13.7	9.3	11.8
	35–44	15.6	11.1	13.7
	45–54	23.3	28.9	25.7
	55–64	28.2	27.4	27.9
	>64	9.7	15.7	12.2
Employment Situation	Full time	39.0	44.9	41.5
	Part time	19.6	11.1	16.0

	Casually	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Retired	20.3	23.5	21.6
	Full-time student	6.6	6.6	6.6
	Full-time career/parent	2.4	0.3	1.5
	Looking for employment	5.9	6.6	6.2
	Other	4.4	5.1	4.7
Volunteered in previous 12 months	Yes	86.8	82.5	85.0
	No	13.2	17.5	15.0
Access requirements	Mobility	17.6	13.0	15.6
	Vision	2.0	2.4	2.2
	Hearing	4.6	5.1	4.8
	No access requirements, but with a disability	77.4	81.0	78.8

Table 2.

Annual household incomes and employment status

	£0 to £6,500 %	£6,501 to £22,000 %	£22,001 to £37,000 %	£37,001 to £50,000 %	More than £50,000 %	*Prefer not to say %*	Total %
Employed full-time (incl self-employed)	0.5	5.1	9.3	7.4	13.2	*6.0*	41.5
Employed part-time (incl self-employed)	1.3	3.7	2.3	1.8	4.1	*2.9*	16.0
Employed casually	0.1	0.5	0.6	0.1	0.1	*0.3*	1.8
Retired or pensioner	0.8	4.3	5.9	3.3	2.8	*4.6*	21.6
Full-time student	1.9	1.3	0.9	0.3	0.5	*1.8*	6.6
Full-time career or parent	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.1	*0.4*	1.5
Unemployed and/or looking for employment	1.7	2.0	0.9	--	0.1	*1.5*	6.2
Other (please specify)	1.1	1.7	0.3	0.3	0.1	*1.3*	4.7
Totals	7.6	18.8	20.5	13.2	21.1	*18.7*	100.0

Table 3.

Place of residence

	%
London	31.8
South East (excluding London)	24.0
East of England	8.1
South West	7.5
West Midlands	6.1
East Midlands	5.5
North West	4.7
Yorkshire / Humberside	3.1
Scotland	2.3
Wales	1.9
North East	1.3
Northern Ireland	0.4
I do not live in the UK	3.3

Table 4.

Satisfaction with volunteer experiences

	n	Mean*	Mode	Std. Dev
Recruitment session(s) / experience (including interview)	774	2.0	2	0.97
Orientation session	708	2.2	2	1.04
Role training	764	2.2	2	1.05
Venue training	742	2.2	2	1.05
Leadership training	296	2.5	3	1.09
Information you received prior to the event	784	2.2	2	1.05
The uniform	785	1.9	2	0.93
Your job assignment	783	2.0	1	1.04
The number of shifts allocated	783	2.0	2	0.97
How efficiently your time was used during your shifts	784	2.4	2	1.22
Shift briefing session(s)	757	2.4	2	1.15
Provision of food and drink	781	2.6	2	1.31
The support and recognition you received from paid staff	773	2.2	2	1.14
The support and recognition you received from volunteer team leader(s)	743	1.9	1	0.99
Recognition of your efforts (e.g. pin badges, certificate, baton)	780	1.9	1	0.99
Overall volunteer experience	784	1.6	2	0.81

** 1= Very satisfied to 5= Very dissatisfied*

Table 5.

Satisfaction with meeting access needs

Access domains		N	Mean*	Std. Dev.
Mobility	Accessible toilets	80	1.5	0.8
	Wheelchair access	45	1.9	1.2
	Accessible transport	92	2.0	1.1
	Accessible parking	57	2.4	1.4
Vision	Screen reader	7	2.4	1.1
	Braille reader	5	2.6	1.5
	Guide dog access	4	2.8	1.5
	Captioning	5	3.0	1.2
Hearing	Signing and lip speakers	17	2.9	1.4
	Hearing loop	22	3.3	1.1
	TTY	13	3.7	0.6

** 1=a lot, 2=a little, 3=not very much, 4=not at all*

Table 6.

Categorization and Sub Themes of open-ended responses

Respondent	Positive		Negative Experiences: Barriers										
			Organisational				Environmental			Attitudinal			
	Good staff support	Good experience	Lack of HRM - training and organisation	General Manager admin & info	Disability information	Inaccurate volunteer data	Staff mobility vehicles	Lack of inclusive practice	Food related	Role not suited to disability	Disability awareness	No support /not valued member	Pregnancy not included
1	✓		✓				✓		✓✓	✓			
2				✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	
3	✓		✓	✓✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			
4					✓							✓	
5						✓				✓		✓	
6							✓					✓	✓
7	✓	✓					✓	✓		✓			
8		✓			✓						✓		
9	✓									✓			
10	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	
11			✓✓	✓							✓	✓	
12				✓									
13			✓✓	✓			✓	✓			✓		
14			✓✓✓✓	✓							✓		
15			✓✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
16				✓			✓	✓		✓			
17				✓			✓	✓				✓	
Total	**5**	**2**	**13**	**11**	**4**	**3**	**9**	**7**	**4**	**8**	**5**	**8**	**1**

United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Article 3– General principles:

The principles of the present Convention shall be:

- Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
- Non-discrimination;
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- Equality of opportunity;
- Accessibility;
- Equality between men and women;
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

Figure 1. UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. (Source: United Nations 2006 http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml)