

**LESSONS LEARNED:  
RECRUITING, TRAINING, AND RETAINING  
ABORIGINAL VOLUNTEERS AT SPORT EVENTS**

Prepared by:  
Larena Hoeber, Kaija McKague,  
Harold Riemer, Kim Dorsch, University of Regina  
Dale Kryzanowski, Sask Sport Inc.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>HIGHLIGHTS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
MOTIVATIONS TO VOLUNTEER .....	4
RECRUITMENT .....	5
TRAINING .....	5
RETENTION .....	5
<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT.....	6
1. <i>Planning</i> .....	6
2. <i>Recruitment</i> .....	7
3. <i>Selection</i> .....	7
4. <i>Orientation &amp; training</i> .....	7
5. <i>Supervision &amp; evaluation</i> .....	7
6. <i>Recognition &amp; retention</i> .....	8
ABORIGINAL VOLUNTEERS .....	8
<i>What do we know?</i> .....	9
<i>Volunteering – what does it mean?</i> .....	10
SPORT EVENT VOLUNTEERS .....	10
<b>RESEARCH SCOPE &amp; OBJECTIVES .....</b>	<b>12</b>
SCOPE.....	12
OBJECTIVES.....	12
OUTCOMES .....	12
<b>RESEARCH PROJECT .....</b>	<b>15</b>
DATA COLLECTION METHODS.....	15
<i>Round table sessions</i> .....	15
<i>Interviews</i> .....	16
<i>Challenges</i> .....	17
DATA ANALYSIS .....	17
<b>CASE STUDIES.....</b>	<b>19</b>
2005 JEUX DU CANADA SUMMER GAMES .....	19
2006 SASKATCHEWAN FIRST NATION WINTER GAMES .....	19
<b>REASONS FOR VOLUNTEERING .....</b>	<b>20</b>
LESSONS LEARNED.....	22
1. <i>Circle of volunteering</i> .....	22
2. <i>Volunteering contributes to sport development</i> .....	23
3. <i>Pride in one’s community</i> .....	24
<b>RECRUITMENT .....</b>	<b>25</b>
RECRUITMENT TECHNIQUES: SASKATCHEWAN FIRST NATION WINTER GAMES .....	25
RECRUITMENT TECHNIQUES: CANADA SUMMER GAMES .....	25
<i>Challenges with Recruitment</i> .....	26

LESSONS LEARNED.....	27
1. <i>Targeted recruitment works best.....</i>	28
2. <i>Develop and use meaningful recruitment messages .....</i>	28
<b>TRAINING.....</b>	<b>30</b>
LESSONS LEARNED.....	32
1. <i>Provide opportunities to help out or fill in .....</i>	32
2. <i>Allow volunteers to select a venue or a sport .....</i>	32
3. <i>Subsidize or cover training costs .....</i>	32
4. <i>Provide cultural awareness training.....</i>	33
<b>RETENTION.....</b>	<b>35</b>
LESSONS LEARNED.....	36
1. <i>Aboriginal volunteers are committed to their community.....</i>	37
2. <i>Provide opportunities to volunteer with other Aboriginals.....</i>	37
3. <i>Meet their basic needs.....</i>	38
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>43</b>
APPENDIX A: EXPERIENCE OF SASKATCHEWAN FIRST NATION WINTER GAMES VOLUNTEERS...	43
APPENDIX B: EXPERIENCE OF CANADA GAMES VOLUNTEERS .....	45
APPENDIX C: ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.....	46
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	47

## HIGHLIGHTS

Canada's growing Aboriginal population offers many potential volunteers for sport events (Riemer, Dorsch, Hoerber & Bell, 2003). In fact, more Aboriginal people are getting involved in such events, inspired by values such as community ties, mutual support, and helping. Given the wealth of knowledge that Aboriginal volunteers have to offer (Volunteer Alberta, 2004), increased involvement can significantly enhance these events.

Aboriginal peoples face numerous challenges to participating as volunteers, including issues of racism and cultural insensitivity, costs of volunteering (e.g., transportation, childcare), and a lack of awareness of opportunities (Riemer, et al., 2003). Recently, the 2006 Saskatchewan First Nation Winter Games, an Aboriginal sport event, and the 2005 Jeux du Canada Summer Games, a non-Aboriginal sport event, were held in Saskatchewan. These events involved a significant number of Aboriginal volunteers in games-time positions (500 and 350 respectively). These successes suggest that organizing committees are addressing those previously stated challenges and are involving Aboriginal individuals as volunteers in the events. Speaking to Aboriginal peoples who volunteered at either of these events helped us better understand the factors that contributed to the recruitment, training, and retention of Aboriginals as volunteers and volunteer leaders.

The purpose of this project was to identify key lessons for successful recruitment, training and retention of Aboriginal volunteers based on their experiences at two major sport events held in Saskatchewan.

Data were collected from round table discussions with Aboriginals who volunteered at one of two sport events, and from interviews with individuals who were responsible for recruiting, training, and retaining Aboriginal volunteers.

### **Motivations to Volunteer**

From the motivations of Aboriginal individuals to volunteer at sport events revealed we learned three important lessons:

- 1) volunteering is understood as a circular process
- 2) volunteering contributes to sport development
- 3) Aboriginals are proud to support activities that impact their communities

## **Recruitment**

From the experiences of the volunteers and the volunteer coordinators, we learned two important lessons about recruiting Aboriginal individuals:

- 1) targeted recruitment works best
- 2) meaningful recruitment messages must be established

## **Training**

From the experiences of the volunteers and the volunteer coordinators, we learned four important lessons about training Aboriginal individuals:

- 1) provide opportunities to help out or fill in
- 2) allow volunteers to select a venue or a sport
- 3) subsidize or cover training costs
- 4) provide cultural awareness training

## **Retention**

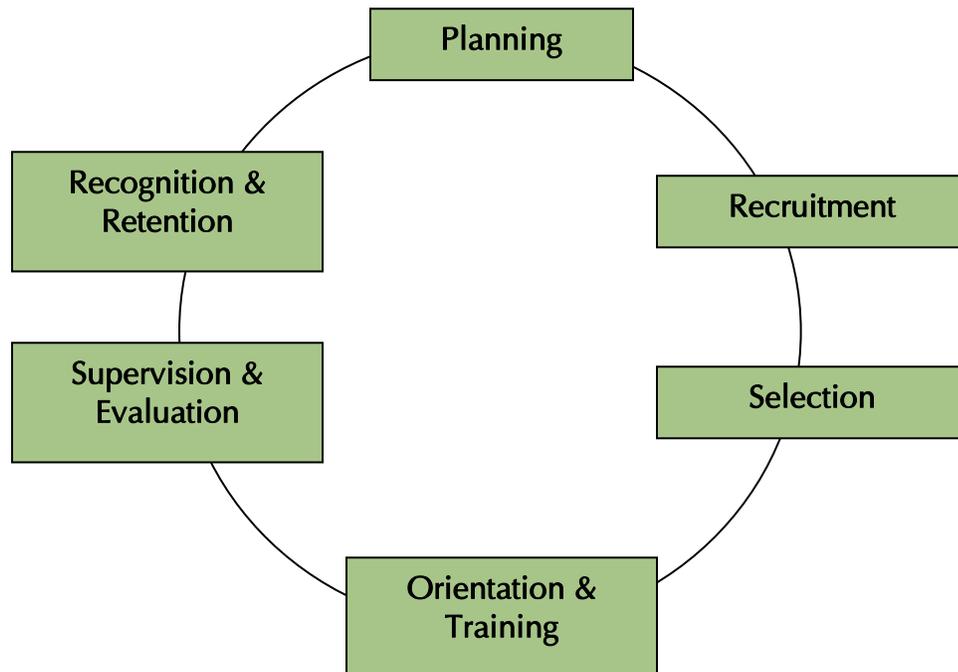
From the experiences of the volunteers and the volunteer coordinators, we learned three important lessons about the retention of Aboriginal individuals:

- 1) Aboriginal volunteers are committed to their community
- 2) provide opportunities to volunteer with other Aboriginals
- 3) meet their basic needs

The findings from this research provide valuable information to sport organizations, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, on key processes of volunteer management. In addition, the findings contribute to an evolving understanding of volunteering and volunteerism in Canada's multicultural society.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Volunteer Management



The model highlights the connections between six stages of volunteer management for sport organizations and events:

#### 1. Planning

Before volunteers can be involved in organizations and events, senior staff or volunteers must determine where and why volunteers are required. Some components of this planning process include identifying the needs of the organization, determining the skills, experiences, qualifications required to fulfill those jobs, creating volunteer positions or jobs, as well as developing policies to guide, support, and govern the volunteers.

## **2. Recruitment**

The recruitment process involves developing appeals to attract the necessary number and types of volunteers. In this stage, it is important to determine where and how to best locate potential volunteers. There are two types of recruitment processes: warm body and targeted. The warm body approach is often used for large events and / or for positions that require little training or supervision. In this approach, an open invitation is extended to a large number of people. Targeted recruitment is used when a limited number of individuals with specific capacities or traits are required.

## **3. Selection**

Depending on the size and type of event and interest from individuals, it may be necessary to select and screen volunteers. For example, for large and popular sport events (e.g., Olympic Games), there are often more applications than volunteer positions. In other situations in which volunteers are working with vulnerable populations (e.g., children, persons with a disability), selection and screening is highly recommended or possibly even mandatory. The purpose of this stage is to determine the suitability between the applicant and the event or organization.

## **4. Orientation & training**

Although individuals may be involved with a sport event for as little as four hours, they want to feel comfortable with their responsibilities, the organization and the event. An orientation provides volunteers with information about the event (e.g., its history, mission, values, policies) and the organization (e.g., supervisors, lines of authority). Orientations can be done in person or online. As well, volunteers can be provided with an orientation handbook or manual. Training provides job specific instruction. Simple tasks such as access control and uniform distribution require little to no training. More specialized tasks including scorekeeper, coach, and first aid typically require some type of training. Common training methods include lectures, presentations, and demonstrations, but may also include mentoring, hands on coaching, or online sessions.

## **5. Supervision & evaluation**

It is often assumed that hands-on event volunteers, because of their limited commitment do not require or want supervision and evaluation. This is incorrect. All volunteers require some level of supervision to provide them guidance and a means of communication. It is also a good idea to engage in a two-way evaluation process. The organization can evaluate

and provide feedback to the volunteer. Likewise, the organization or event can learn from feedback from the volunteer.

## **6. Recognition & retention**

Unlike paid staff who receives financial compensation in exchange for their skills, effort, and knowledge, volunteers often receive little to no compensation. For sport organizations and events, this translates into a significant economic saving. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize the efforts of volunteers to show appreciation for their time, effort, and skills and as means of motivation. This in turn may contribute to long-term commitment. Volunteer recognition can take a variety of forms, ranging from a simple, but effective thank you to clothing, a party, or a small honorarium.

Retention is the outcome of volunteer commitment. It is difficult to ensure 100% retention as volunteers are not required or obligated to stay, however a high retention rate is achievable if the volunteer's needs and expectations are met, they are satisfied with their roles, responsibilities and the organization, and if their efforts are recognized.

For the purposes of this project, three components of the volunteer management cycle were studied. These three were selected for two reasons:

1. It was not feasible to study all aspects of this cycle.
2. Recruitment, training and recruitment, training, and retention are commonly studied, thus comparison between these studies and the experiences of Aboriginal volunteers can be made.

## **Aboriginal Volunteers**

There is a body of literature on the recruitment, training, and retention of volunteers (e.g., Conners, 1995; McCurley, 1994; McCurley & Vineyard, 1988; Phillips, Little, & Goodine, 2002) and specific to sport volunteers (e.g., Cuskelly, Hoye, & Auld, 2006; Doherty, 2005, Dorsch, Riemer, Sluth, Paskevich, & Chelladurai, 2002; Farrell, Johnston, & Twynam, 1998), but much of it is either generic in its approach or has not specifically addressed the Aboriginal community. This omission is significant because it is known that Aboriginal individuals have a unique understanding of volunteering (e.g., Auchterlonie, 2005; National Aboriginal Voluntary Organization, 2002; Volunteer Alberta, 2004) and some face unique situations and barriers with respect to becoming a volunteer (Riemer et al., 2003; Volunteer Alberta, 2004). This suggests that the existing literature on the recruitment, training, and

retention can not be applied to a diverse population of volunteers and thus must be reevaluated.

### **What do we know?**

This study complements recent research conducted on Aboriginal volunteerism in Canada. Riemer et al.'s (2003) work revealed barriers faced by rural and urban Aboriginals volunteering in non-Aboriginal sport organizations in Saskatchewan. Some of these barriers included a lack of awareness of opportunities, challenges in meeting the costs of volunteering, and concerns over racism.

Research conducted by Volunteer Alberta (2004) provided an overview of the variety of roles held by urban Aboriginal individuals involved in the voluntary sector and of the assets that they bring to their roles, such as an appreciation of culture, perseverance, contribution to the workforce, and networking.

One project by the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women investigated the experiences of Aboriginal women who volunteer (Mowatt & Young, 2006a, 2006b). For example, they found that Aboriginal women prefer to be asked personally to help. In addition, showing respect, explaining the benefits of volunteering, and involving Elders are important components of recruiting Aboriginal women. Successful retention of Aboriginal women volunteers is dependent on developing a comfortable environment, showing appreciation, building relationships, and providing support.

In 2004, the Sport North Federation studied the development of sustainable volunteerism in Aboriginal communities in the Northwest Territories. That project provided stories of individual experiences of volunteering (Auchterlonie, 2005), an overview of Aboriginals volunteering in the Northwest Territories (Little, Auchterlonie, & Stephen, 2005), and some recommendations for effectively engaging Aboriginal volunteers (Daitch, Short, Bertolini, & MacPherson, 2005; Little, 2005).

This study will add to the existing knowledge by highlighting the positive experiences of a large group of games-time Aboriginal volunteers in sport organizations. These important research projects are the foundations for developing the knowledge of the volunteer experiences of an important, but often overlooked, segment of the Canadian population.

### **Volunteering – what does it mean?**

Previous research on volunteerism in the Aboriginal community suggests there is some ambiguity about how the term volunteer applies or is understood. It is often noted that the terms ‘volunteer’, ‘volunteering’, and ‘volunteerism’ are not used in Aboriginal communities. Instead, Aboriginal communities have a strong tradition of helping others, caring, and sharing (Auchterlonie, 2005; Little, 2005; Little et al., 2005; Mowatt & Young, 2006a, 2006b; National Aboriginal Voluntary Organization, 2002; Volunteer Alberta, 2004). Much of the ‘helping out’ involves selfless acts to improve the welfare and way of life of their communities.

Another area of ambiguity is on the issue of financial compensation. While traditionally, volunteerism is understood as an act that is done freely without any type of compensation (Cnaan, Handy, & Wadsworth, 1996), some Aboriginal individuals are expecting financial compensation in return for their time and efforts. This has been explained as an outcome of the economic conditions in which some Aboriginals live. Cnaan et al. (1996) argued that there is a continuum of understanding of volunteers. They indicated there is range of ways in which volunteers expect and are compensated. At one end are individuals who do not expect any compensation. At the other end are situations in which volunteers expect and are provided with some level of pay or honorarium. This suggests that the issue of compensation (or lack thereof) is not unique to Aboriginal individuals.

### **Sport Event Volunteers**

Although there is a growing body of literature on sport volunteers, much of this research though has tended to focus on volunteers who have a long-term commitment with sport organizations, such as coaches, officials, and administrators. Another area in sport that requires the assistance of numerous volunteer is sport events. These can include one to two day single sport events, such as ball tournaments, marathon races, or figure skating competitions. It can also include multi-day, multi-sport events such as the North American Indigenous Games or the Arctic Winter Games. With sport events, there are two types of volunteers:

1. **planning volunteers.** Planning volunteers include individuals in senior management positions and those heading up different portfolios, sports, or facilities. These volunteers are involved with planning, organizing, leading, and evaluating the event. Their involvement ranges from a couple of months to many years, depending on the scope of the event.

2. games-time volunteers. Games-time volunteers are usually involved during the actual event, although some may also assist with pre and post-event activities. These volunteers are often assigned particular tasks during the event that require little to no training (e.g., ticket taker, food server, scorekeeper).

This research project contributes to the body of literature on volunteerism in three ways. First, it illustrates how the recruitment, training, and retention of Aboriginal volunteers compares to the strategies and techniques currently espoused in the literature. Second, the findings add to our evolving understanding of volunteering and volunteerism. By listening to Aboriginals, our understanding of volunteering may be expanded and reshaped. Third, the findings of this research shed light on the volunteer management processes associated with games-time volunteers.

## RESEARCH SCOPE & OBJECTIVES

### Scope

There have been some recently funded projects on Aboriginal volunteers, but there is still much to learn about and from the experiences of Aboriginal volunteers in sport events. We do not know if Aboriginal experiences are different depending on the context of the sport events. We do not know what factors contributed to the successful recruitment and retention of Aboriginal volunteers for two major sport events in Saskatchewan. It is imperative to capture the lessons learned, as expressed through the volunteers' experiences, to ensure that Aboriginal voices are heard and to ensure that their capacity as volunteer leaders is enhanced.

This research involved collaboration between faculty members in the Faculty of Kinesiology & Health Studies, University of Regina and staff members at Sask Sport Inc. The Knowledge Development Centre at Imagine Canada, through the federal Canada Volunteerism Initiative (CVI), funded the project.

The aims of the research were to understand the experiences of Aboriginal volunteers at sport events and to highlight the successful practices associated with the recruitment, training, and retention of Aboriginal volunteers.

### Objectives

The objectives of this study were to identify key lessons regarding:

1. the recruitment of Aboriginal volunteers at sport events
2. the training of Aboriginal volunteers at sport events
3. the retention of Aboriginal volunteers at sport events

### Outcomes

The results of this research are useful to practitioners and policy makers, including volunteer managers, administrators, executive directors, and host committee members, who are interested in increasing volunteer participation of Aboriginals at sport events and in sport organizations.

Foremost, it is benefit to Sask Sport and the Aboriginal Sport Advisory Committee. According to 2001 census data, over 130,000 Aboriginal persons live in the province of Saskatchewan accounting for 13.5% of this province's population (Statistics Canada, 2001). Increasing the number and capacity of volunteers from the Aboriginal community is important on several levels.

1. Part of Sask Sport's mandate is to meet the sport-related needs of the public, and thus it would seem critical to also meet the needs of the Aboriginal community.
2. An increase in the number of Aboriginal volunteers would add to the diversity of people and views involved in coaching and sport administration in the province. This increased diversity would also serve as role models for increased Aboriginal participation at the athlete level (Riemer et al., 2003). Part of the mandate of the Aboriginal Sport Advisory Committee is to assist in the development of leadership opportunities for Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan. The findings of this research will assist in achieving their mandate of developing Aboriginal leaders in volunteer positions.

The findings are also of benefit to non-profit sport organizations and host committees of sport events that are looking to develop the profile and capacity of Aboriginals as volunteers and volunteer leaders. From a human capital perspective, Aboriginal volunteers bring a wealth and richness of knowledge and skills that would certainly enhance sport offerings for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sport participants alike (Volunteer Alberta, 2004). This study focused on identifying volunteer management strategies that have been successful and on highlighting the contributions of Aboriginal volunteers to sport events. For example, for some non-Aboriginal sport events, such as the Saskatchewan Winter Games, this study will provide valuable information to assist them in inviting and including Aboriginals as volunteers. These lessons can be applied and incorporated into other sport organizations, such as the North American Indigenous Games or the Dene Games.

The findings from this research are beneficial to those in the local, provincial, and national sport delivery system because it will provide positive messages and strategies that meet some of Sport Canada's (2005) stated goals for improving the capacity and interaction of Aboriginals in sport organizations. By applying the lessons learned from this research, sport organizations are illustrating their commitment to meet Sport Canada's (2005) goal of increasing the capacity of Aboriginal volunteers. This capacity can be enhanced by ensuring Aboriginal individuals are recruited to volunteer, provided with adequate training, and are

motivated to remain with the organization. Additionally, this research sheds light on the experiences of Aboriginals in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sport organizations. From this, practitioners will better understand the connections between the Aboriginal community and sport organizations, which relates to Sport Canada's (2005) goal of improving the integration of Aboriginals in the sport delivery system.

## RESEARCH PROJECT

This section provides a description of the research methods for this project. It outlines the data collection and analysis methods and provides a brief description of the participants. Ethical approval for this research project was obtained from the University of Regina, which is in accordance with the ethical policies of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

### Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods for this project were round table sessions and interviews. Aboriginal individuals who volunteered for at least one of two major sport games hosted in Saskatchewan in 2005 were invited to participate in a round table session. Those two events were the 2006 Saskatchewan First Nation Winter Games (SFNWG) and the 2005 Jeux du Canada Summer Games (CSG), both held in Regina, Saskatchewan.

#### Round table sessions

Round table sessions were selected for three reasons.

1. The round table sessions allowed the participants to provide the researchers with in-depth responses regarding their experiences as volunteers (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).
2. The sessions allowed us to talk with a large number of people (77) in a short period of time.
3. The sessions permit the participants to learn from each other and hopefully take away positive messages and experiences about volunteering.

Participants were recruited through word of mouth and telephone communication. Five round table sessions were conducted; three sessions with volunteers with the Saskatchewan First Nation Winter Games (45 individuals) and two with volunteers (32) with the Canada Summer Games. The number of participants in each session ranged from 13 - 18 individuals. Each participant filled out a sheet outlining demographic information and previous volunteer experience. Information on their previous volunteer experience is available in appendix A and B.

Session	Sex		Age Range				Total
	Men	Women	Under 18	18-25	26-35	36+	
SFNWG #1	7	6	0	2	5	6	13
SFNWG #2	4	10	2	0	5	7	14
SFNWG #3	11	7	8	8	1	1	18
CSG #1	9	6	0	3	1	11	15
CSG #2	9	8	1	3	3	10	17
Total	40	37	11	16	15	35	77

Participants were asked to speak about the following topics:

- their experiences as volunteers at a major sport event
- the processes of recruitment and training
- their reasons for staying committed to the sport event
- see appendix C for a complete list of round table discussion questions

The sessions were conducted by a researcher from the University of Regina and assisted by two research assistants. They lasted between 15 to 60 minutes and were audio-taped. The three sessions with SFNWG volunteers were conducted in the lobby of a hockey arena in their reserve. The two sessions with CSG volunteers were held in a meeting room at an Aboriginal gathering place.

All round table session participants were provided a small honorarium to compensate them for their time and to thank them for sharing their experiences and stories.

### Interviews

One on one interviews were conducted with key individuals involved in the recruitment, training, and retention of Aboriginal volunteers at these two Games. Three interviews were conducted in total: one with the volunteer coordinator for the SFNWG, one with the Aboriginal volunteer coordinator for the CSG, and one with the volunteer coordinator for the SFN Summer Games. They will be asked to describe the recruitment process, their experiences working with Aboriginal volunteers, and the resources provided to them to by the host organization to work with volunteers.

## Challenges

In one round table session, an Elder in attendance provided the group with a talking rock. This helped to moderate turn-taking and gave everyone a voice. I would recommend using this for future round table sessions.

Family members often came together to the sessions. As a result, we often had more people than anticipated. We welcomed everyone and accommodated everyone to the best of our abilities. However, sessions with over 12 people are difficult to moderate and to guarantee that everyone's voice is heard in a 60 - 90 minute session. Extending the length of the session is not advisable; however, having a second moderator and room available to accommodate more individuals would work.

While the hockey arena was a convenient location for the individuals, it was not conducive to conducting a round table sessions. Participants sat at different tables, thus making it difficult to moderate turn taking. In hindsight, the band office, which had a round table and better acoustics, would have been more appropriate. In round table sessions, it is important for participants to see and hear each other and can adequately hear each other.

We planned to conduct round table sessions with volunteers for the 2005 Saskatchewan First Nation Summer Games, however these did not materialize.

## Data Analysis

The tapes from the round table sessions and interviews were transcribed verbatim into word documents, and then converted into rich text files. These files were then linked to Atlas.ti, a computer program used to assist in qualitative data analysis. The transcripts were analyzed to identify major themes regarding the recruitment, training, and retention of Aboriginal volunteers, plus other significant themes that arose, such as motivations for volunteering. The transcripts were first coded, then categorized into the larger themes. Coding required organizing the data into smaller, manageable sections and then assigning words or phrases to those chunks of meaningful data (Strauss, 1994). Categorizing consisted of conceptualizing the data into an organized system of themes (Strauss, 1994). Atlas.ti was used to assist with the analysis process by keeping track of codes and storing memos.

Due to the challenges of identifying individual voices when transcribing round table sessions, quotations are attributed to a general group of people (e.g., Winter Games volunteer or Canada Summer Games volunteers).

## CASE STUDIES

### 2005 Jeux du Canada Summer Games

The Jeux du Canada Games is a national multi-sport event for Canadian youth. The Games were established in 1967 and have been hosted every two years, alternating between winter and summer events. In 2005, Regina hosted the Summer Games, which included over 4,500 athletes, coaches, managers and officials in 16 sports from all ten provinces and three territories. To deliver the Games, over 6,000 volunteers were needed. Of those close to 500 volunteers self-declared as Aboriginal. Unique to the management of these was an Aboriginal Services Division. This division involved 4 staff members, 2 management committee members, 2 Elders, and 55 volunteers (Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation, 2006).



### 2006 Saskatchewan First Nation Winter Games

The Saskatchewan First Nation Games was initiated in 1974 by Chief Tony Cote and the Council of the Cote First Nation and their membership. These Games provide First Nation youth (ages 12 - 18) an opportunity to participate and compete in a variety of sports. The Games are hosted every year, alternating between winter and summer events. The 2006 Winter Games were hosted in Regina by the George Gordon First Nation. These Games involved 300 - 350 volunteers, with the majority recruited from the Gordon First Nation and the remainder recruited from Regina and other communities.



## REASONS FOR VOLUNTEERING

Although not the primary focus for this research project, many of the participants spoke about why they volunteered. Many different reasons were mentioned (see the following table), but they were similar to those mentioned by other Aboriginal volunteers (e.g., Little et al., 2005; Mowatt & Young, 2006a) and non-Aboriginals (e.g., Dorsch et al., 2002; Farrell et al., 1998; Hall, McKeown, & Roberts, 2000).

### Reasons for Volunteering for Volunteering for Sport Events

Reason	Representative quotation (if available)
To give back	“Having played in the games all these past years and not really know[ing] how much work people put into it and ... finally got to see first hand just how much work goes into it makes me appreciate the games more, seeing how many hours people have to put in to make sure the rinks and everything are paid for. It just felt good to give back to it.” (First Nation Games volunteer)
Support children (their own or others)	“I find it important to be volunteering to help other kids.” (Canada Games volunteer)
To ensure opportunities for children	“maybe this will help us get more Aboriginal kids involved in mainstream sports” (Canada Games volunteer)
To be a role model	“My parents are big volunteers. They go out and do everything. So someone would ask her [to volunteer] and she’d turn around and ask us. So we took it.” (Canada Games volunteer)  “Our young people need to see people involved in those capacities of volunteering and putting on those events” (Canada Games volunteer)
To be represented	“One of the reasons I volunteered was to make sure that there was more Aboriginal people involved because there is such a high population of Aboriginal people, we should be represented.” (Canada Games volunteer)

To gain experience	
To support the community	“The most important thing to me about volunteering is we act like a community, we act like a family” (First Nation Games volunteer)
Required to volunteer (work program)	
Part of a legacy	“I think a lot of them were sold on the fact that this was the first time ever that we’ve had this much involvement on this scale and having a physical presence there in terms of the opening ceremonies and in terms of having the cultural tipi village here. It was a big thing as well... And I can’t really speak for all volunteers, but that would be my guess, is just knowing that they’re part of something. And willing to be part of history. It was the first time ever.” (Canada Games volunteer recruiter)
Pride in one’s community	“As hosts of the games, we are role models. The way we do it, if we do something good, they’re going to see it and say, hey! That’s the way we want to do it, and do a good job.” (First Nation Games volunteer)
To make a change	<p>“I didn’t have the support when I was growing up and the stuff I wanted to do, so I basically wanted to make a change for myself and for my kids so that they see that it’s important to volunteer.” (Canada Games volunteer)</p> <p>“I volunteered mostly because I was thinking about [being] part of the solution rather than part of the problem” (Canada Games volunteer)</p>
To change stereotypes	“For us as volunteers each and every one of us I believe that by volunteering for these events we’re slowly killing those stereotypes as to you know getting our voice out there and supporting our kids.” (Canada Games volunteer)

## Lessons Learned

From the motivations of Aboriginal individuals to volunteer at sport events revealed we learned three important lessons: 1) volunteering is understood as a circular process, 2) volunteering contributes to sport development, and 3) Aboriginals are proud to support activities that impact their communities.

### 1. Circle of volunteering

The circle is a sacred and cherished image in Aboriginal communities, symbolizing togetherness, community and life (Pidgeon & Hardy Cox, 2002). This symbol was reflected in many participants' motivations for volunteering. Their comments related to giving back, helping the community, role modeling and mentoring speak to ideas of reciprocity, encouraging others to participate, working together, and selflessness.

There is a belief that the children learn the importance of volunteering by actively volunteering alongside their parents. *"If they see the parents doing it, then they're going to do it and see it as a good thing."* A number of volunteers brought their children along during their shifts. *"I brought him on board because he wasn't in any of the sport events. So I brought him on board and wherever we needed him, he jumped in."* Another volunteer said, *"Lots of time the mother does it, then the daughter [does] it, then the husband volunteers. Then you know it ends up when you do, it's [a] whole family event instead of one person going here."*

Another person spoke about the impact that volunteering has on improving one's community: *"Volunteering is about building the community that you want for your children and for yourself. The more we volunteer, the more the community will be what we want it to be, a safe place, a fun place, a place where young people will feel good about themselves."*

We recommend that the circle symbol be incorporated in many components of Aboriginal volunteer management. Some examples include:

- Use messages associated with giving back, helping others, and improving one's community in recruitment approaches
- Create opportunities for family members to volunteer together
- Invite family members or friends to volunteer
- Illustrate the benefits of volunteering to the community or future generations
- Use a talking circle for orientation and evaluation sessions

## 2. Volunteering contributes to sport development

Aboriginal youth are not offered the same opportunities in mainstream sport as other athletes with the same level of skill. For many Aboriginal volunteers, their efforts to plan and execute Aboriginal sport events are motivated by a need to provide and ensure opportunities for Aboriginal children in sport. One Canada Games volunteer spoke about the marginalization of Aboriginal athletes in the non-Aboriginal sport system:

*I hear time and time again, when I'm in the sporting world, coaches saying that First Nation people aren't gifted athletes. I believe we are. The problem is that we are gifted athletes that aren't given a chance. So I think in order to change that we need to get more First Nation people in the governing bodies of sport to help change that sort of attitude and to give these kids the chance that they deserve.*

One mother spoke about her support, not only for her own children, but the children of her community, *"The First Nation... we love supporting our kids, you know, and this, if they can't be involved any other way, well you know what, I'm going to volunteer so I can sit there and watch and support any of the kids that come out."*

Sport is understood as a positive place for children. It is seen as a healthy place to socialize and to learn positive skills and characteristics, such as leadership and commitment. One elder who volunteered for the Canada Games said, *"Sports is the most important thing for the mind, body and spirit. It helps keep them [kids] balanced. It helps keep us healthy. So if we're constantly involved in sporting events and sports it keeps our kids out of trouble."* Aboriginal volunteers in the Northwest Territories and Saskatchewan (Little et al., 2005; Riemer et al., 2003) also mentioned the importance of volunteering for events or organizations that in turn improved the lives of Aboriginal children. Doherty (2005) also found that sport volunteers (e.g., coaches, officials, administrators) got involved as a result of their children's involvement in the sport.

From this finding, we recommend involving Aboriginal individuals as volunteers in sport events or organizations that benefit Aboriginal children. It is also important to realize that if Aboriginal children are not invited or included in the sport event or organization, Aboriginal adults are less likely to volunteer.

### 3. Pride in one's community

A major motivation for Aboriginal volunteers at the 2005 Jeux du Canada Summer Games was being able to contribute to the legacy of the Canada Games. It was the first time that Aboriginal people had been invited to participate in a formal capacity in the Games. An Aboriginal division in the planning committee was created and Aboriginal individuals were specifically targeted as event volunteers. The opening and closing ceremonies incorporated Aboriginal symbols (e.g., the medicine wheel) and rituals (e.g., prayers). One of the non-sport venues was a Tipi Village located near the athletes' village and other high-profile sport venues.

Given the national exposure of the Canada Games and its mainstream status, many volunteers felt it was important to take this opportunity to showcase their unique culture to Canada. One volunteer noted, *"Canada Games at Tipi Village was all you know showcasing culture. ... It was Canada watching us. They heard about Tipi Village and it was really nice to showcase our culture."* Individuals also mentioned that by being invited to volunteer for this mainstream event, they were visible and formally included and thus could change impressions and stereotypes of Aboriginal people. These findings echoes similar results from Little et al. (2005) who found that Aboriginal individuals often volunteer or help out because of pride in their community.

Pride was also a major motivation for volunteers with the First Nation Winter Games. Individuals spoke about wanting their community to stand out amongst other First Nation communities in Saskatchewan. The volunteer coordinator for those games said, *"We're a very proud community. ... most of us are willing to help in any way possible to make our community stand out."*

Unlike many non-Aboriginal individuals who volunteer for personal fulfillment, such as improving one's resume, gaining experience and skills, or networking (Dorsch et al., 2002; Farrell et al., 1998; Hall et al., 2000), Aboriginal volunteers in this study primarily volunteered to help others in their community. Thus, recruitment messages for Aboriginal volunteers should emphasize the impact that their volunteering has on their community, such as increased visibility and exposure, or improved image and wellness.

## RECRUITMENT

### **Recruitment Techniques: Saskatchewan First Nation Winter Games**

Approximately 250 to 300 individuals were needed to put on the Saskatchewan First Nation Winter Games. The volunteer coordinator for those games recruited individuals through direct contact, telephoning, posters and public appeals through various media. The most effective technique was to identify known and committed volunteers in the host community (Gordon First Nation) and personally ask them to volunteer. *“My first initial step was looking within the community and recognizing what other individuals have always been part of [previous events.] ... I went into recruiting these individuals. I called upon them all.”* These newly recruited individuals were then asked use to recruit other individuals through personal appeal with family, friends, and community members. This technique was successful as the majority of the volunteers for these games said they were directly recruited by family members. A study of Aboriginal women’s involvement in the voluntary sector (Mowatt & Young, 2006a, 2006b) also found that direct and personal appeals were the most effective way to recruit Aboriginal individuals.

The goal for volunteer recruitment at the Winter Games was to identify individuals with previous experience in sport. For example, one of the major sport events was hockey and a number of individuals were required to run that event, including people to run the score clock and supervise the penalty box. The volunteer recruiter specifically asked individuals in the community who had experience running hockey games and tournaments, knowing that little training would be necessary.

### **Recruitment Techniques: Canada Summer Games**

For the Canada Summer Games, 6000 volunteers were needed, with 10% of the total coming from the Aboriginal population in and around Regina. A number of different recruitment techniques were used to specifically recruit Aboriginal individuals. These included presentation made to Aboriginal groups, a volunteer recruitment booth at Aboriginal related events, postings in Aboriginal newsletters, radio ads for northern Saskatchewan, distribution of posters to Regina area businesses, articles for different newspapers, direct contact, and the presence of Aboriginal Elders with the creation of an Elders Circle (Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation, 2006).

According to the coordinator for Aboriginal volunteers at the Canada Games, face-to-face contact and presentations with Aboriginal communities and organizations in and near Regina worked well.

*I think you concentrate more on the direct geographical area around where the Games are, so within Regina you look at all the Aboriginal organizations within Regina. All the educational programs, a lot of them have volunteer specific criteria to their programs ...you hit all the school programs, you hit some of the government agencies that have Aboriginal employees.*

He added that “*We didn’t hit not only Aboriginal organizations, we hit non-Aboriginal organizations as well.*” The “*face to face contact worked the best*” because he could answer any questions or concerns potential volunteers had about participating in a mainstream event. However, he noted that these direct presentations and appeal required a lot of his time.

Like the volunteers for the Winter Games, most of the Canada Games volunteers said they were recruited through personal contact (e.g., the volunteer coordinator, family members). A smaller number said they responded to posters or were approached by their employer to volunteer. Some individuals said that email messages or recruitment through websites was less effective as some Aboriginal individuals do not have ready access to computers or the Internet.

For both events, personal invitation proved more effective than impersonal recruitment methods such as posters, email, announcements in newspapers, radio or television. This is no different than the way most Canadian volunteers become aware of volunteer opportunities, which is through personal or direct appeal by someone from the host organization (Hall et al., 2000).

### **Challenges with Recruitment**

For both events, the volunteer coordinators and some volunteers mentioned some challenges with the recruitment process. Some of these have been mentioned in other studies of Aboriginal volunteers (Daitch et al., 2005; Little et al., 2005; Riemer et al., 2003; Volunteer Alberta, 2004)

- Frustration with the paperwork involved in registration. For example, the application form for the Canada Games was over four pages long. In comparison, with the Winter Games individuals filled out a one page sheet.
- Expectation of payment in exchange for volunteering. This situation was noted by the individual in charge of recruiting, but not the individual volunteers. It is likely that this was an issue for those individuals who choose not to volunteer. This issue has been addressed in other studies and is connected to changing expectations of volunteering as well as the economic status of some Aboriginal individuals and communities.
- Concern about criminal records check. Screening of volunteers is becoming more common, especially when volunteers are working with vulnerable populations, such as youth. One method of screening is using a criminal records check to screen out individuals with significant criminal records that could jeopardize the safety of the participants, other volunteers and the organization. Unfortunately, some individuals choose not to volunteer for fear that any criminal infraction (e.g., unpaid parking tickets, speeding) will be used against them and they will be denied the opportunity to volunteer.
- Being outside the circle. In both events, targeted recruitment processes were used. These rely on recruiting from one's own circle or network. If one is not part of that circle, he or she won't likely get asked.

*Lately a lot of people approach me to volunteer. ... I think in a lot of circles you get asked to volunteer. I think the unfortunate thing is that if you're not part of that circle then you might not get asked. I think that's one thing that organizations and people need to take a look at asking outside of you're normal circle, looking at the different demographics, different cultures ... because diversity is becoming more accepted now than it used to be. (Canada Games volunteer)*

## Lessons Learned

From the experiences of the volunteers and the volunteer coordinators, we learned two important lessons about recruiting Aboriginal individuals: 1) targeted recruitment works best, and 2) meaningful recruitment messages must be established.

## 1. Targeted recruitment works best

Typically for sport events requiring a large number of volunteers, a warm body approach is needed. This is a generic recruitment strategy in which the call goes out to all individuals in the community, recognizing that warm bodies are needed, not specific individuals with specific skills. However, for both games, a targeted recruitment approach was necessary.

At the First Nation Games, targeted recruitment was used to identify individuals with previous volunteer experience with sports. For the Canada Games, direct contact and presentations were used to extend personal invitations to volunteers. An impersonal recruitment campaign would not likely have worked as it was a mainstream sport that primarily supported non-Aboriginal athletes and was run primarily by non-Aboriginals. For mainstream events, we recommend using targeted recruitment campaigns to identify organizations, communities, and programs with many potential Aboriginal volunteers and make personal invitations to Aboriginal individuals to volunteer. This will help to establish a level of comfort and ease concerns about marginalization. For targeted recruitment to work, the event needs someone in charge who is *“not shy to ask people”* and who knows or is well connected with the community (Volunteer Alberta, 2004)

## 2. Develop and use meaningful recruitment messages

Volunteer recruitment messages often provide details about the volunteer positions, qualifications or skills required, and time commitment (McClintock, 2004). Specifically with sport, these messages also speak about volunteering as an obligation to help kids (Doherty, 2005). At these two games, the volunteer coordinators used recruitment messages that identified the meaningful benefits of volunteering, rather than describing the volunteer positions. As one recruiter said, *“You have to do a lot of selling to the volunteers, rather than the volunteers selling to you.”*

Examples of meaningful volunteer recruitment messages include:

- “You will be part of something historical and groundbreaking.”

This message focuses on the historical significance and legacy of their volunteer contribution. It is meaningful when Aboriginals are included in non-Aboriginal sport events, such as the 2005 Jeux du Canada Summer Games. The recruiter for those games often spoke about *“... the historical significance of this initiative ... trying to get inclusion within the games from the Aboriginal population.”* While this message may have limited use as a recruitment strategy, until more volunteer

opportunities become available, strategies could focus on creating a legacy of Aboriginal involvement in mainstream sport events.

- “You are invited to participate as a volunteer.”

This message highlights the significance of being invited, instead of expected or obligated, to volunteer. It also sends a message of inclusiveness, as a personal invitation is extended to welcome potential volunteers.

- “Your involvement as a volunteer will help to make your community a better place.”
- “Your involvement as a volunteer can make it possible for an Aboriginal child to participate in sport.”

Volunteer recruitment messages directed towards Aboriginal individuals should highlight the impact of their involvement on Aboriginal communities (e.g., pride in one’s home community, developing a healthier community, acting as role models for children, ensuring opportunities for children to participate).

## TRAINING

In most articles, papers, and books on volunteer management, it is understood that volunteers need to be trained with respect to the specific skills and abilities required for their volunteer positions. Training leads to increased confidence and clarity in one's role and responsibilities as a volunteer (Dorsch et al., 2002). There are various ways to train volunteers including providing them with specific job descriptions or handbooks, in-person sessions, or opportunities to be mentored (Doherty, 2005; Dorsch et al., 2002).

In this project, however, few volunteers spoke about being trained or needing training. A few who had specialized roles, such as first aid or coach, did mention receiving training. Some did speak about attending orientation sessions. Orientations are different from training sessions. Orientations provide **general** knowledge about the sport event, volunteer positions, or geographic location. In contrast, when volunteers receive training they are provided with **specific** knowledge and abilities related to their particular volunteer position.

There are a number of reasons for the lack of responses to questions about volunteer training.

1. Some had prior knowledge or experience. With the First Nation Winter Games, individuals were often asked to ask to volunteer for sports they were familiar with. The volunteer coordinator said, *"For volleyball I looked at two individuals that are knowledgeable in that area. So each area I looked for individuals that had knowledge of that sport."*
2. Many volunteer positions did not require much training at all. As one Canada Games volunteer said, *"Not everything needs training ... it's important to be out there and to be a body and get stuff done."* When training was required, it was typically offered on-the-job. For example, prior to volleyball matches, volunteers would be trained by other volunteers on how to run the scoreclock. *"They show[ed] me how to run the clock, but that's when I came to volleyball"* (SFNWG volunteer). Mowatt and Young (2006b) found that 27% of Aboriginal women received on-the-job training (for a variety of supportive and leadership positions), and another 29% preferred this method of training, which is consistent with the practices for these two games.

3. The organized and formal structure associated with mainstream events often deters Aboriginal people from volunteering (Little et al., 2005; Volunteer Alberta, 2004). In these environments there is an emphasis on establishing formal roles, drafting job descriptions, and selecting and training individuals to take on particular, specialized roles. However, at both events, most of the individuals spoke about 'helping out' with different tasks at a specific venue or sport (e.g., hockey, Tipi Village) (see Appendix A & B) and "...*did whatever needed to be done*". This finding confirms previous research, which has characterized Aboriginal volunteerism as 'helping out' (Auchterlonie, 2005; Daitch et al., 2005; Little, 2005; Little et al., 2005; Mowatt & Young, 2006a, 2006b). One First Nation Games volunteer spoke about the preference for informality in volunteering:

*...we don't say OK, here's your job description, do that and only that. I think the nice thing ... is whenever someone needs help you go help. ... that's the nice thing about ... the First Nation Games is that the flexibility of just being there and being able to help whether that's your job or not.*

For example, individuals spoke about volunteering with the Canada Games at the Tipi Village doing everything from admissions, to chatting with visitors, clean up and making crafts. "*I was at the Tipi Village everyday ... storytelling and just doing whatever they asked of me*" (Canada Games volunteer). In contrast, few talked of volunteering for a particular job or position (e.g., ticket taker, scorekeeper, chaperone). In situations where individuals are filling in and helping out with a variety of tasks it is not necessary or feasible to conduct job-specific training.

In previous research on Aboriginal volunteers (e.g., Little et al., 2005; Volunteer Alberta, 2004), it was recommended that more support or training be provided. In contrast, few volunteers in this study indicated a desire or a need for more training. The difference in findings might be attributed to time commitment. With long-term volunteer positions, such as counsellor, board member, or coach, training can contribute to increased confidence in one's position. With short-term volunteer positions, such as those associated with sport events, training may be seen as unnecessary and a waste of valuable time.

## Lessons Learned

From the experiences of the volunteers and the volunteer coordinators, we learned four important lessons about training Aboriginal individuals: 1) provide opportunities to help out or fill in, 2) allow volunteers to select a venue or a sport, 3) subsidize or cover training costs, and 4) provide cultural awareness training.

### 1. Provide opportunities to help out or fill in

Volunteer opportunities should be designed such that little or no training is required and that individuals can rotate through a variety of them, if they do choose. In this way, all individuals, regardless of experience or skill, are encouraged to volunteer. This sentiment was expressed by one of the volunteer coordinators who said, *“If this is your first time, great! Come on board, we’ll show you.”*

For example, at a sport event, an individual does not need or even wants to stand at a door for four hours taking tickets. Instead, this individual could take tickets for an hour, do access control at another position in the venue, and then help to clean up the facility at the end of an event. In a large event, this may require more logical planning, however for smaller sport events it is feasible to allow volunteers to rotate through various positions and help out with various tasks.

### 2. Allow volunteers to select a venue or a sport

In both case studies, the majority of individuals spoke about volunteering at a particular venue or sport. In those situations, individuals selected venues that they felt comfortable at and were interested in. Many of them did not require training because they were familiar with the sport and the many tasks associated with it. Others were provided on-the-job training or learned from watching others, because they stayed at one venue.

This suggests that instead of the traditional approach of volunteer recruitment where individuals select a task or position (e.g., scorekeeper, access control, server, chaperone), they select a venue or sport that they have some experience with. This approach does come with some caution, as it is likely that some venues may be more popular than others.

### 3. Subsidize or cover training costs

Although the majority of individuals did not receive formal training, some did. Some were trained as coaches, through the National Coaching Certification Program. Others received

first aid or medical training. These individuals said the training was useful because they could use it in other situations, such as coaching a local team or providing first aid at other community events. Most mentioned that an outside or external agency, such the band paid for the training.

We recommend that clinics and sessions for specialized volunteer positions be offered to Aboriginal individuals and that the costs of the sessions be subsidized. These sessions allow Aboriginal individuals to gain valuable skills and help to increase the capacity of Aboriginal communities to hold sport events (Sport Canada, 2005).

#### 4. Provide cultural awareness training

At non-Aboriginal sport events, there will likely be volunteers from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. As a means to encourage cultural sensitivity, foster inclusivity, and to build up a comfort level, we recommend that volunteers be provided with cultural awareness training. This could be done as part of the orientation session or a separate session. Preferably, the training should be provided to all games-time and planning volunteers.

At the 2005 Jeux du Canada Games, cultural awareness training was made available to all volunteers.

*We did do some training for the Canada Summer Games, and it was through the Medicine Wheel Teaching. ... not only to the Aboriginal Services Division, but basically anyone who was interested that was a volunteer for Canada Summer Games. ... those teaching were to make sure that we were thinking of all different aspects as volunteers and integrating Aboriginal culture ... as we were volunteering. (Canada Games volunteer coordinator)*

Aboriginal volunteers felt that this training helped to build an appreciation for Aboriginal traditions and rituals, which were included as part of the Canada Games.

*When the medicine wheel teachings were integrated ... I think that's when a lot of that [resistance] was alleviated and then it was more appreciated ... why there was Aboriginal representation not only on the division that I sat on but all the other committees. (Canada Games volunteer)*

Along with the cultural awareness training sessions, host committees could elders to provide support during the event, or incorporate Aboriginal traditions and symbols (e.g., opening prayer, medicine wheel) in the event.

## RETENTION

Retention is the outcome of building loyalty or commitment to an event or organization (Connors, 1995). It is reasonable to expect some turnover of game-day volunteers, in part because there is a gap between when individuals initially sign up and when they are expected to volunteer. However, too much turnover can create problems in volunteer scheduling and ensuring there are enough individuals to run the events.

Knowing that some Aboriginal individuals face challenges to participating as volunteers, such as racism, costs of volunteering (e.g., transportation, childcare), and community wellness issues (e.g., crime, substance abuse) that take precedence (Daitch et al., 2005; Little et al., 2005; Riemer et al., 2003), one may expect that their retention would be compromised if these are not addressed.

However, retention of Aboriginal volunteers appeared to be high at both sport events. Both volunteer coordinators indicated that most individuals showed up for their shifts and were committed to the games. The volunteer coordinator for the First Nation Winter Games indicated, *“Out of the whole week I maybe had about four people that didn’t show up”*. She also had to cut back on some people’s shifts, because others put in more time than scheduled. According to the volunteers who participated in the focus groups, few of them ever considered dropping out as a volunteer or not showing up for a shift. When asked if they ever thought of quitting or not showing up for the event, most said no. As one volunteer said: *“It never dawned on me not to show up or quit.”* It is likely though that the individuals who attended the focus groups were the more committed volunteers.

There were many factors that contributed to the high retention rate. Some of these factors are different from what is mentioned in the volunteer management literature. These will be discussed in the ‘lessons learned’ section. Other factors are not unique to Aboriginal individuals, but are still worth mentioning here.

1. Show them they are valued and appreciated. It is important to make sure that the volunteers understand how integral they are to the success of an event. Some strategies that were used included providing refreshments and incentives, such as t-shirts and hats, at volunteer sessions, hosting a volunteer wind-up party, and saying

thank you. As one recruiter states: *“I think you have to sell the human side of it, or you have to sell: Why am I valued as a volunteer?”* According to the volunteers, they felt most appreciated when athletes, coaches, and parents smiled at them or said thank you. One First Nation Winter Games volunteer said,

*...even if you weren't scheduled for an activity ... you would just sit there and watch the games and then all of a sudden eventually ... somebody didn't show up at the rink, [and] you were asked if you could go and help out there. So even though you weren't actually scheduled to take off and go for an hour. I mean there were things that you were able to do to assist in that capacity. Generally the time goes very fast and the participants appreciate it and the boys certainly appreciate getting over to the community, so it's not even something that you really consider not doing.*

2. Regular communication is necessary. The volunteer coordinator for First Nation Winter Games said there were some challenges with retention as a result of frequent changes to the event and volunteer schedules. However, she was able to regularly communicate these changes to the volunteers and keep them informed. Her main way of communicating was through her cellphone. In a larger organization, constant communication on specific issues (like one's volunteer shift) may be difficult to ensure. Nonetheless, it is important to keep volunteers *“in the loop. They need information as to what's going on, and they need to be contacted if need be”* (Canada Games volunteer). Staying in the loop also is important because it shows the volunteers that the organization has not forgotten about them. *“Because a lot of times volunteers don't know what's going on. ... Just letting them know we haven't forgotten about you, you're still volunteers and we appreciate what you're going to be doing”* (Canada Games volunteer coordinator).

## Lessons Learned

From the experiences of the volunteers and the volunteer coordinators, we learned three important lessons about the retention of Aboriginal individuals: 1) Aboriginal volunteers are committed to their community, 2) provide opportunities to volunteer with other Aboriginals, and 3) meet their basic needs.

## 1. Aboriginal volunteers are committed to their community

In Aboriginal cultures helping out and caring for others is highly valued (Little et al., 2005). As a result, they volunteer as an expression of their commitment and obligation to family and community (Daitch et al. 2005; Little et al., 2005). There is sense of commitment to and pride in helping one's community was evident in this study. The volunteer coordinator for First Nation Winter Games indicated that there was good interest from community to volunteer: *"I had everyone else show up. And right until the day of the Games I had people coming in and signing up and asking where they could help."* She added that many volunteers stayed past their shifts to help out later on in the day. Because of this willingness of help out when needed, there was little cause for concern if and when people did not show up for assigned shifts.

With the First Nation Winter Games, many people volunteered because they wanted to ensure the event was a success as this would reflect positively on their community. Some Canada Games volunteers remained committed because it was the first time Aboriginals had been officially welcomed into the event: *"we're proud to be invited and be part of ... a major sporting event in Regina."* Generally, individuals at both games said they were committed to volunteering because, *"I gave my word"* and *"people were depending on me."*

The main lesson learned was that Aboriginals volunteers are committed to helping out at sport events that benefit their community.

## 2. Provide opportunities to volunteer with other Aboriginals

All individuals want to feel comfortable when volunteering. In many cases, this means volunteering with other individuals that they know. This was not a significant issue with the First Nation Winter Games, as many of the volunteers were from the same reserve and knew each other. However, this was not always the case at the Canada Games.

A few individuals expressed concerns about feeling like a minority at the Canada Summer Games. Some did not feel welcomed. The volunteer coordinator indicated, *"We had found that it was very intimidating for some people to come out to a large event where they are really still a minority."* Others indicated feeling resistance from other volunteers (games-time and planning) in regards to the targeted recruitment of Aboriginals and the establishment of an Aboriginal Services division. One way of addressing their concerns was to provide opportunities for individuals to volunteers with people they knew, such as

family members and friends. As one Canada Games volunteer said, *“I was more comfortable ... amongst our own people.”* This is similar to the finding of Mowatt and Young (2006b), who said that Aboriginal women wanted volunteer opportunities that allowed family members to work together or for them to bring their children along.

We recommend that in non-Aboriginal sport events, host committees and/or volunteer coordinators should provide opportunities for Aboriginal individuals to volunteer with other Aboriginal individuals. For example, family members could serve meals to athletes, set up or take down facilities, or take tickets. Friends could work together to greet visitors and dignitaries or to direct traffic.

### **3. Meet their basic needs**

A key strategy in the retention of volunteers is meeting their needs. These needs range from basic needs, such as food and shelter, to more sophisticated needs, such as being appreciated, socializing with others, and achieving a sense of accomplishment. For the most part, the needs of Aboriginal volunteers are no different than other volunteers. However, there are some differences with respect to meeting basic needs.

It is costly to be a volunteer. These ‘hidden’ costs include:

- Transportation to and from the sport event
- Childcare during the volunteer shift
- Food / meals prior to, during, or following the volunteer shift
- Clothing, if volunteers are expected to wear a standard ‘uniform’

For many Aboriginal individuals, these ‘hidden’ costs can make volunteering inaccessible.

The host committee for the 2006 Winter Games provided transportation, meals and accommodations to the volunteers. A unique issue with these games was the location of the events (Regina) relative to the location of most of the volunteers. The Games were hosted by Gordon First Nation and many of the volunteers lived on the reserve located 100 kilometres outside of Regina. Some of the volunteers did not have a driver’s license or access to a vehicle. Others did not have accommodations in Regina. The host committee arranged transportation to and from the reserve, and put people up in hotels in the city.

According to one Winter Games volunteer, *“you have to make sure that you had a place for them to sleep and to make sure they’re fed and washroom facilities and everything.”*

*Then you can make sure they're looked after.*" In doing so, the host committee addressed many of the challenges that hinder the involvement of Aboriginal individuals. While it is not unusual for host committees of sport events to cover some of these costs, usually in the form of a snack, water, and a t-shirt, most do not go to the same extent as did the Saskatchewan First Nation Winter Games.

We recommend that host committees of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sport events take into consideration the basic needs of their volunteers, as not all individuals can afford to volunteer. This may involve providing childcare during the event, arranging transportation to and from the event, or billeting volunteers.

## REFERENCES

- Auchterlonie, S. (2005). *Our stories: Stories about Aboriginal participation in the Northwest Territories' voluntary sector*. Toronto, ON: Knowledge Development Centre, Imagine Canada.
- Cnaan, R. A., Handy, F., & Wadsworth, M. (1996). Defining who is a volunteer: Conceptual and empirical considerations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 25, 3, 364-383.
- Conners, T.D. (1995). *The volunteer management handbook*. New York: John Wiley.
- Cuskelly, G., Hoye, R., & Auld, C. (2006). *Working with volunteers in sport: Theory and practice*. New York: Routledge.
- Daitch, R., Short, M.P., Bertolini, R., & MacPherson, M. (2005). *It's a noble choice they've made: Sport volunteerism in small communities in the Northwest Territories*. Toronto, ON: Knowledge Development Centre, Imagine Canada.
- Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation. (2006). *Building future champions: Canada - Saskatchewan general agreement to advance the Canadian sport policy*. A report prepared by Sask Sport Inc on behalf of Saskatchewan Culture, Youth and Recreation. Regina, SK, 29 pages.
- Doherty, A. (2005). *A study of volunteers of the 2001 Alliance London Jeux du Canada Games*.
- Dorsch, K., Riemer, H., Sluth, V., Paskevich, D., & Chelladurai, P. (2002). *Volunteer motivation: What drives sport volunteers?* Toronto, ON: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.
- Farrell, J.M., Johnston, M.E., & Twynam, G.D. (1998). Volunteer motivation, satisfaction and management at an elite sporting competition. *Journal of Sport Management*, 12, 288-300.

- Hall, M., McKeown, L., & Roberts, K. (2000). *Caring Canadians, involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Industry. Retrieved on September 5, 2006 from [http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/reports/2000\\_NSGVP\\_highlights.asp#foreword\\_e](http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/reports/2000_NSGVP_highlights.asp#foreword_e)
- Little, L. (2005). *Engaging Aboriginal volunteers in voluntary groups with territorial mandates in the Northwest Territories*. Toronto, ON: Knowledge Development Centre, Imagine Canada.
- Little, L., Auchterlonie, S., & Stephen, B. (2005). *Continuing strong traditions: Aboriginal participation in the Northwest Territories' voluntary sector: A research report*. Toronto, ON: Knowledge Development Centre, Imagine Canada.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1999). *Designing qualitative research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McClintock, N. (2004). *Understanding Canadian volunteers: Using the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating to build your volunteer program*. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.
- McCurley, S. (1994). Recruiting and retaining volunteers. In R.D. Herman & Associates (Eds.), *The Jossey-Bass handbook of nonprofit leadership and management* (pp. 511-534). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- McCurley, S. & Vineyard, S. (1988). *101 tips for volunteer recruitment*. Downers Grove, IL: Heritage Arts.
- Mowatt, B., & Young, J. (2006a). *Volunteerism in Aboriginal communities: Volunteer - who me? Report*. Toronto, ON: Knowledge Development Centre, Imagine Canada.
- Mowatt, B., & Young, J. (2006b). *Guidelines for the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal women volunteers: Handbook*. Toronto, ON: Knowledge Development Centre, Imagine Canada.
- National Advisory Voluntary Organization. (2002). *It's our way* [videotape]. Ottawa, ON: Voluntary Sector Initiative.

Phillips, S., Little, B., & Goodine, L. (2002). *Recruiting, retaining, and rewarding volunteers: What volunteers have to say*. Toronto: Canada Centre for Philanthropy.

Pidgeon, M., & Hardy Cox, D. G. (2002). Researching with Aboriginal peoples: Practices and principles. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 26(2), 96-106.

Riemer, H., Dorsch, K., Hoeber, L., & Bell, A. (2003). *Building volunteer capacity in the Aboriginal community*. A report prepared for Sask Sport Inc., Regina, SK.

Sport Canada. (2005). *Sport Canada's policy on Aboriginal peoples' participation in sport*. Retrieved on January 17, 2006, from [www.pch.gc.ca/progs/sc/pol/aboriginal/2005/tm\\_e.cfm](http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/sc/pol/aboriginal/2005/tm_e.cfm)

Statistics Canada (2001). *Aboriginal identity population, 2001 counts, for Canada, provinces and territories - 20% population*. Retrieved on January 17, 2006 at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/highlight/Aboriginal/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo=PR&View=1a&Table=1&StartRec=1&Sort=2&B1=Counts01&B2=Total>

Strauss, A. (1994). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Volunteer Alberta (2004). *Participation of urban Aboriginal peoples in volunteerism in Alberta: Report*. Calgary, AB: Alberta Network - Canada Volunteerism Initiative.

This research was supported by Imagine Canada's Knowledge Development Centre, which is funded as part of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative through the Community Participation Directorate of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Le Centre de développement des connaissances d'Imagine Canada a effectué cette recherche avec l'appui financier de l'Initiative canadienne sur le bénévolat dans la cadre de la Direction de la Participation du ministère du Patrimoine canadien.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Experience of Saskatchewan First Nation Winter Games Volunteers

#### Saskatchewan First Nation Volunteer Experiences - Group 1

<b>Name*</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Positions</b>
Frank	M	Swimming	Participant's helper
Deanna	F	Winter Games	Participant's helper
Ernest	M	Winter Games	Coach/Board Member
Edna	F	Summer Games/Winter Games	Asst. Coach/Chaperone
Leanne	F	Softball/Hockey	Coach/Setup
Sharon	F	Basketball	Organizer/driver
Stacy	F	Badminton	Chaperone/Scorekeeper
Luke	M	Winter Games	Coach/Scorekeeper/Referee
Greg	M	Summer Games/Winter Games	Coach
Steve	M	Hockey/Baseball/Volleyball	Security/Scorekeeper
Dominick	M	Volleyball/Baseball	Scorekeeper/Linesman/Setup
Ronald	M	Basketball/volleyball	Linesman
Gloria	F	Hockey/Volleyball	First Aid/Photographer

Note: Pseudonyms were assigned to each individual.

The table reflects the comments as listed by the volunteer; thus, some components are incomplete.

#### Saskatchewan First Nation Volunteer Experiences - Group 2

<b>Name*</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Positions</b>
Ron	M	Hockey/Softball	Security/Coach/Fundraising
Gloria	F	Canada Summer Games/F.N. Winter Games	Board member/Setup
Bonnie	F	Broomball/Baseball	Driver/Chaperone
Matt	M	Canada Summer Games/F.N. Winter Games	Setup/security
Ida	F	Winter Games/Hockey	Coach
Alison	F	Sask Winter Games/Summer Games	Coach/scorekeeper/chaperone/admissions
Leonard	M	Gordon Winter Games	First Aid
Ashley	F		
Hope	F		
Delphine	F	SK Indian Winter Games/Hockey	Coach/coordinator/Scorekeeper
Farah	F	SK Indian Winter Games/Hockey	Scorekeeper/Linesman
Dorothy	F	FN Winter and Summer Games	Organizer/coach/Board member
Kyle	M	Hockey	Asst. coach/Board member
Billie	F	Hockey/Softball	Security/Coach/Fundraising

Note: Pseudonyms were assigned to each individual.

The table reflects the comments as listed by the volunteer; thus, some components are incomplete.

### Saskatchewan First Nation Games Volunteer Experiences - Group 3

<b>Name*</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Positions</b>
Kia	F	Canada Summer Games/Winter Games	Catering/Scorekeeper/Cleanup
Leah	F		
Jonathan	M	Summer Games	Setup/Cleanup
Brayden	M	Canada Summer Games/Winter Games	Setup/Cleanup
Kole	M		
Justin	M	Hockey/Fastball Canada Summer Games/Indian Summer	Setup/Scorekeeper
Ian	M	Games	Security/Scorekeeper
Lance	M		
Clay	M		
Dillon	F	Hockey	Gate/ 50/50 draw
Jenn	F	Hockey/Baseball	Gate/Setup
Lori	F	Winter Games	Scorekeeper
Joellen	M		
Ben	M	Canada Summer Games	Setup
Michael	M	Golf	
Stephanie	F		
Randy	M	North America Indigenous Games	Fundraising/Security
Brody	M		Coached/Board member/Setup

Note: Pseudonyms were assigned to each individual.

The table reflects the comments as listed by the volunteer; thus, some components are incomplete.

## Appendix B: Experience of Canada Games Volunteers

### Canada Games Volunteer Experiences – Group 1

<b>Name*</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Positions</b>
Larissa	F	Tipi Village	Setup/Takedown
Chelsey	F	Tipi Village	Clean up/ Food distribution
Kris	M	SK Indian Winter Games/ NAIG/SIFC Cup/NAD/Roughriders	Coach/Timekeeper/Coordinator/ Setup
Scott	M		Performer/Pipe handler/Setup
Linda	F		
Archie	M		Elder
Jocelyn	F	Canada Summer Games/First Nations Winter/Summer Games/ White Bear Softball	Committee member/Aboriginal Liaison/Coach/Chaperone
Brian	M		Scorekeeper/Setup
John	M	Kidsport/Canada Games/First Nation Winter Games	Board Member/Setup/Takedown/Games official
Derrick	M	Broomball/Hockey	
Don	M	Hockey	Timekeeper/Goal judge/ Scorekeeper
Margaret	F	Canada Games	Tipi Village
Tosha	F	Canada Games	Tipi Village
Lisa	F	Sask Games/Canada Games	Mission staff/ Tipi Village / Aboriginal Division
Cathy	F	Canada Games	Tipi Village /Odd jobs
Evan	M	Volleyball/Softball/Golf	Setup/Linesman/Security
Gordon	M	Canada Games	Tipi Village /Setup/Grand Entry

Note: Pseudonyms were assigned to each individual.

The table reflects the comments as listed by the volunteer; thus, some components are incomplete.

### Canada Games Volunteer Experiences – Group 2

<b>Name*</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Positions</b>
Devin	M	Broomball/Basketball/Hockey	Setup/Security
Violet	F	Sask Games	Setup
Evan	M	Hockey/Badminton/Volleyball	Setup
Nadine	F	Canada Games	Coordinator/Setup/Elder
Jacob	M	Broomball/Hockey	Committee member
Cary	M	Wrestling/ Treaty days/ Buffalo Days	Setup/Takedown
Kay	F		Accreditation/Registration/Feeding volunteers
Connie	F	Canada Games/First Nations summer/winter games/NA Indigenous games	Coach/Board member/ Administration/marketing
Judy	F		Cooked/Shopped
Jessie	M		Kitchen helper/setup/cleanup
Jeff	M	Canada Games	Aboriginal Recruitment coordinator/coach/ board member
David	M	Volleyball/Hockey	Setup/Takedown/Security
Denise	F	Volleyball	Scorekeeper
Kelly	M	NAIG/First Nations winter/summer games	Coach/ Setup/ Coordinator
James	M	Canada Games/ First Nations winter/summer games/ NAIG	Coach/coordinator

Note: Pseudonyms were assigned to each individual.

The table reflects the comments as listed by the volunteer; thus, some components are incomplete.

## Appendix C: Round table discussion questions

You have been invited to this round table discussion because you were a volunteer for the 2005 First Nation Summer Games and / or the 2005 Jeux du Canada Games.

1. Can you tell us a little bit about what you did at the Games? [what was your role, responsibilities]
2. Have you volunteered for other sporting events before? If so, where have you volunteered and what have you done?
3. How did you get involved in the Games? What process did you go through to become an official volunteer with the Games?
4. If you were trained for your position, what kind of training did you receive?
5. After you signed up or agreed to be a volunteer for the Games, did you ever think of quitting or not volunteering? If so, why? If not, what kept you interested in the Games?
6. What did you like best about your volunteer experience?
7. Is there anything you would like to have changed about your volunteer experience?
8. Would you consider volunteering again for a First Nation Games / Canada Games? Why? Why not?
9. Overall, is there anything else that someone would like to add or discuss further about what we talked about?

## Appendix D: Interview questions

1. What was your role with the 2006 Saskatchewan First Nation Winter Games / Canada Summer Games?
2. How did you get involved with the Games?
3. What has been your previous experience in managing volunteers?
4. How were volunteers recruited for the Games?
  - a. How many were required? What kinds of tasks were they doing?
  - b. What messages were used to recruit volunteers for these Games?
  - c. Where were volunteers recruited from?
  - d. Were there challenges in recruiting individuals? If so, what were they?
  - e. Would you recruit differently if you had the chance to do it over again?
5. Did volunteers for the Games require any training? If so, what kind of training?
  - a. How was it provided?
  - b. Did all volunteers require training?
  - c. Were there challenges in training individuals?
  - d. Would the training be done differently if there was a chance to do it over again?
6. Comment on the retention of volunteers for the Games.
  - a. Were there challenges to retaining volunteers? If so, what were they?
  - b. What was done to retain volunteers (keep them committed)?
  - c. What could have been done differently to retain volunteers?
7. Do you have anything else to add about the management of volunteers for the Games?