

Volunteers in social enterprise events – Triple bottom Line benefits

By

James Bostock

“We want to mutualise the local economy through the support of everyone together and then being able to make things happen... like local communities and volunteers putting on events. They need the support of people that know what they are doing or want people who want to volunteer.”

(Julia and Gareth – Founding members of Regather Trading Cooperative)

INTRODUCTION

Social enterprises (SEs) are well established providers of some key public services such as housing, social care and mental health with the ‘sector’ playing an increasingly important role within the UK economy. For example, research has shown there are over 15,000 SEs in the UK with a combined turnover of over £18billion, with a workforce of over 775,000 people that includes 300,000 volunteers (Defourny and Nyssens, 2008). However, as a consequence of local authorities looking to contract out public services due to funding cuts, SEs are being put under increased pressure as they are being tasked with the delivery of more and more public services. This requirement is a response to a range of public policy objectives, such as achieving social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits from the delivery of local community events (Haugh, 2005; Foley et al, 2011). The use of SEs, particularly cooperatives, is part of the UK government agenda to reform local authorities and

innovate public service provision. When assessing the impact of SEs delivering community based events, it is still early days, and therefore unclear as to the potential negatives or unintended outcomes of contracting out local community events to SEs. More significantly it is uncertain whether the SEs are 'equipped' to act in a sustainable manner (DEFRA, 2007; LOCOG, 2010; Cumming and Pelham, 2011).

SEs are coming to the fore because they exhibit characteristics of both non-profit and for-profit organisations (Johnson, 2001). This ability to 'blur the boundaries' by adopting the market based practices of the for-profit organisation, tempered with the social purpose and moral legitimacy of not-for-profits means that SEs have gained recognition for their capacity of meeting multiple objectives – a combination of social goals with a community focus, aligned to financial stability that is not based on an over-reliance on grant funding (Doherty et al, 2009). The ability of SEs to tackle wider social, environmental and economic problems within a given community has enabled them to gain legitimacy within the eyes of government, with the UK Strategy Unit (2002) seeing SEs as a tool to achieve not only financial objectives but as a key mechanism to also build socially inclusive and sustainable local economies (DTI, 2002). Indeed the government is employing SEs where the public sector cannot provide a service, and where it is not financially viable for private sector involvement. The government view is that SEs can provide a sustainable alternative to these traditional delivery patterns, in so much that SEs are “Businesses with the specific purpose of addressing ‘social’, ‘community’ or ‘environmental’ aims through a business structure that allows them to be sustainable” (Bull and Crompton, 2006: 10).

This chapter seeks to explore the role of volunteers in the delivery of events through the structure of a social enterprise, drawing on the limited research into this field, a primary research study conducted into a social enterprise called "Regather" and the volunteers that support the events they deliver. Regather are a co-operative trading organisation based in Sheffield (UK) that has been created for people to work together, support each other and trade goods and services to deliver specialised local community projects. Through a series of interviews with board members and volunteers, the study examines Regather's commitment to social, economic and environmental sustainability issues and highlights the different experiences of the volunteers who deliver events within this structure.

WHAT ARE SOCIAL ENTERPRISES?

At the core of SEs are principles, beliefs and values that are fundamentally based on the moralities of ethical behaviour, voluntarism and a mission that is focused on a specific social cause (Chell, 2007). However, to view SEs as having the same structures, values and beliefs as traditional 'not-for-profit' organisations would be misleading. This is because at the heart of a social enterprise is a keen focus on a social purpose/issue within a local community. However, while many SEs share the same non-profit distributing characteristics of traditional 'not-for-profit' organisations, such as seeking to create positive externalities for the collective benefit of the community, they also seek to achieve these social goals through the use of innovative 'market mechanisms' in the delivery of these community based social programs (Laville and Nyssens, 2001). Pomerantz (2003: p.26) states SEs seek to "maximize revenue generation from

programs by applying principles from for-profit business without neglecting the core mission – their social purpose”.

The key defining organisational trait about SEs, as compared to other third sector organisations, is that their survival is more reliant on the generation of surplus from its trading activities, than how effective they are in bidding for governmental grants. However, crucial to this trading activity is who they engage with. If they engage and trade with the local community in a manner that seeks to achieve their social purpose, then the organisation can be defined as a social enterprise (Pearce, 2003). This distinction is vital as Pearce (2003) goes further, and explains that not-for-profit organisations that simply trade in order to raise funds are voluntary organisations – there is no direct link to their social purpose through their trading activity. Why this is important is because the social enterprise model offers a more bottom up approach to project delivery (meeting the needs of the community through trading), which in turn can lead to sustainable benefits through event development (Getz and Anderson, 2009).

Social enterprises and volunteers

Volunteers and the event organisers who co-ordinate them are coming under increased pressure from a variety of sources. This is because community based organisers are becoming more reliant on the volunteer to achieve social outputs as their financial resources are increasingly being threatened and the challenges of managing a positive volunteer experience increase (Carlsen and Anderson, 2011).

While it is believed that event volunteers can achieve social outputs through a contribution to “community involvement and cohesion agenda” (Barron and Rihova, 2011: 204), event organisers face increased expenses in terms of recruiting and training the volunteer. In addition they also face increased competition to attract volunteers due to the decline in their numbers and more importantly, the complexities of retaining the services of the volunteer (Bang and Chelladurai, 2009). If event organisers are to achieve sustainable benefits by engaging with volunteers and investing into their development (recruitment, training, etc.), they need to improve volunteer retention by ensuring that episodic volunteers become continuous volunteers and remain within the organisation over a long period of time (Hallmann and Harms, 2012).

SEs have an enhanced ability to be able to turn the episodic volunteer into a continuous volunteer and achieve sustainable benefits due to their focus on the community and their drive to challenge social issues. It is important for the event organisers to give the volunteer the opportunity to gain new skills and experiences, and the SE can allow the volunteer to support their local community group to tackle an issue/problem that the volunteer not only finds fulfilling (a key motivation for engagement with the SE), but can also lead to a long-term commitment to the SE (Costa et al, 2006; Barron and Rihova, 2011). Research (Gaskin, 2003; Ellis-Paine et al, 2010) has recognised that key to this engagement is an acknowledgment that the ‘volunteer experience’ can be negatively affected by a variety of factors such as overly complex managerial structures, bureaucratic practices, a lack of inclusion during

decision making and most importantly attempts to formalise volunteers roles that destroy the social opportunities which volunteers cherish. These are all important factors in determining future volunteering and need to be minimised within the planning stage of the event.

SEs are able to meet the challenge of matching the values of the event organiser with the volunteer, but without creating a positive and satisfying experience for the volunteer the sustainable benefits of a long term volunteer may be lost (Hallman and Harms, 2012).

SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FRAMEWORK

Sustainability is not only a key concept that affects the delivery of events, it is also a key concept in the formulation and development of SE policy within the UK (Wallace, 2005; Bowdin et al, 2010). The perception of sustainability within events has moved away from one of simply 'greening' the event to make it more environmentally friendly, to one that adopts a Triple Bottom Line (TBL) perspective – environmental, economic and social objectives. This drive to a multi-bottom line approach has been formalised through governmental involvement through the creation of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy (DEFRA, 2011) and sustainability targets that were developed for the London 2012 Olympic Games (LOCOG, 2010). This has led to a greater demand for sustainable events from local government (Sheffield City Council, 2011) so that they can meet the demands of central targets. The problem here is not that the events sector is unwilling to adopt sustainable practices, but that the sector is

unclear as to what sustainability actually means (Pelham, 2011). So why are SEs more appropriate to achieving sustainable benefits than traditional voluntary/not-for-profit organisations?

The reason why SEs can hit multiple targets and achieve sustainable benefits is directly linked to their organisational aims. One of the key strengths of the SE is that its “assets and wealth are used to create community benefit”, which makes the SE accountable not only to its members, but to the wider community as a whole (Thompson and Doherty, 2006: 361). While most voluntary/charity organisations support one specific marginalised group, 63% of SEs stated that “a broad range of groups benefit from their services under the heading of ‘community’”, compared to only 36% of more traditional voluntary sector organisations (Social Enterprise Coalition, 2009: 20). Indeed, research by the Social Enterprise Coalition (2009: 18) found how closely SEs “favoured social, community or environmental benefit in either abstract or explicit terms”. This ability to meet social and environmental objectives is laudable, but the SE cannot ignore the need to be financially sustainable. Their very existence depends on their ability to produce goods or services that are consumed within a market, with their long term financial survival dependant on market share (Allan, 2005). This has led to the emergence of a ‘double or triple-bottom line paradigm’ whereby SEs that achieve financial, social and environmental returns are actually more efficient and effective in the pursuit of their mission goals (Thompson and Doherty, 2006). By having the SE based in actual location it serves and having commercial aims and objectives as well as a social purpose, Spreckley (2008) concludes that SEs inherently adopt a Triple Bottom

Line because their emphasis is not solely on economic profit but on personal, environmental and social benefit.

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL)

As already discussed Smith (2009) has implied that to achieve sustainability there is a requirement of economic, environmental and social considerations, often referred to as the 'The Triple Bottom Line' theory. The concept of the TBL was devised as it was considered that economic benefit was the main focus of sustainability, while other aspects were often ignored, "the TBL focuses corporations not just on the economic value they add, but also on the environmental and social value they add—and destroy" (Elkington, 2004: 3). Elkington's argument is that organisations should achieve a certain minimum performance in all these three areas in order to be identified as a 'sustainable' business (Cramer, 2002). Dwyer (2005) suggests that the TBL is a planning and reporting tool that can contribute to designing a decision making framework that can be used to attain sustainable improvement. McDonough and Braungart (2002) indicate that TBL can be a valuable tool for incorporating sustainability into a company agenda. However, when exploring which businesses uses the TBL approach, it can be seen that limited amount of organisations have incorporated Elkington's theory (Jones, 2010).

Norman and McDonald (2004: 255) have challenged Elkington's 'stance' by arguing that "the concept of a TBL in fact turns out to be a good old fashioned Single Bottom Line plus vague commitments to social and environmental concerns". Within the SE

this vagueness is not an option because although financial stability is needed in order to grow the business, the social remit cannot be ignored if the long term survival of the company is to be ensured (Haynes, 2009). Norman and McDonald (2004) believe that the environmental and social bottom lines will only be applied when financial benefit has been secured. As Somers (2005) suggests if the financial obligations of the SE cannot be met, there is little chance of it delivering social and environmental impact. Indeed, economic criticisms have been levelled at SEs as they tend to lack strategic financial planning skills and generally have an inability to create meaningful employment with coherent career pathways (Smallbone et al, 2001). However, the clear distinction here is that the SE can perform equally well at all three levels of the 'triple-bottom line' as there is a greater philosophical imperative underpinning these practices. Wallace (2005: 80) takes this viewpoint even further by stating "the rhetoric of social enterprise demands that enterprises achieve a TBL of financial, social and environmental goals."

CASE STUDY: REGATHER

Regather is a co-operative trading organisation for people to work together, support each other and trade goods and services. It provides goods and service based support for individual and groups to deliver their own projects that draw upon the skills and resources of its members, with the benefit of the local community central to the heart of the project (Regather Trading Cooperative, 2012). It specialises in the delivery of local community events and has been contracted by Sheffield City Council to manage and deliver a range of event related services such as local fairs, community events and

small festivals since 2005. Regather has also delivered the Sheffield Food festival in cooperation with Sheffield Hallam University, as well small theatrical productions and ancillary support functions at large music events.

The organisational and trading structure of Regather is formalised within mutual cooperation and is legally categorised as an 'Industrial and Provident Society – Co-Operative'. This legal distinction is important because by adopting this structure Regather, under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965, has been registered as being a 'benefit for the local community'. The most overt way that Regather meet this legal obligation is by serving its members interests through its trading operations, by supplying them with goods and services they need. This trading provides its main source of income but other sources of income can include government grants, membership fees, people's time and even bank loans (Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2011). It also means that it has a truly democratic structure, where one member (no matter if they are on the board) has one vote, which is central to the redistribution of any surplus gathered, as the members decide where this money is spent. Regather currently has 26 full members, 150 expressions of interest and over 120 volunteers who have supported their events.

Methods employed

Regather is well known within the Sheffield area for its delivery of local community events and was therefore selected for this initial study (Long, 2007; Brotherton, 2008). Once Regather had been selected, an interview schedule was created evaluating

specific themes related to the model of an SE operating within an events context (Fielding and Thomas, 2001). These themes were based on the concept of the triple bottom line, were enhanced through analysing key literature within this field of study and were specific to the individual interviewed (See table 1 below).

Table 1 – Key research themes

- Regather Board Members
 - Community based impacts of Regather events
 - How Regather creates 'communities of people'
 - Trading model of Regather
 - The impacts of adopting a Social Enterprise framework – entrepreneurial consequences
 - The supply chain – local produce and resource implications
- Regather Volunteers
 - Why do you volunteer for Regather?
 - Volunteers within a community event context
 - Long term benefits for the volunteer – sustainable benefit
 - Volunteer experiences

Interviews were conducted with two of the part-time founding members of Regather and four volunteers that have been with Regather for several years. These interviews lasted on average 45 minutes, with further communications followed up via email. The aim of these interviews was to analyse whether events delivered through this structure can achieve social, economic and environmental sustainable objectives and to 'draw out' the volunteers' experiences of delivering events within an SE (Saunders *et al*, 2012). This interview technique allowed the interviewee to 'discuss' their own experiences of sustainability and for the researcher to 'home in' on topics of relevance (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984).

Once the interviews had been completed, verbatim transcriptions of the audio recordings were created to ensure that the word-for-word reproduction was an accurate representation of the conversations undertaken (Poland, 1995). Using this method of transcription enabled a thematic analysis to take place, which sort to construct a conceptual framework that identified the key issues of volunteers operating within a SE organisational structure, through adopting a coding technique that was loosely based on the concept of 'triple bottom line' and the key themes of the research – see table 1 (Saunders et al, 2012). This technique was used to identify and attach one or more keywords to a text segment in order to understand its meaning and to place the statement within the wider context of research (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009).

Content analysis was used alongside the coding technique above to highlight issues that are specific to an individual and seeks to place these issues within the wider context of the interviews undertaken. This conceptual analysis again used coding in order to categorise the emphasis placed by the interviewees on certain words, sentences or situations they had experienced (Thomas, 2004). This process of coding the data allowed for greater importance of key words that were associated with the overall aims and objectives of this research, by neutrally comparing and linking with interviewee comments and responses to other statements and viewpoints to derive a meaning (Richards, 2005).

Preliminary Findings

Economic – The danger of over commercialism

From the interviews it became evident that economic sustainability is at the heart of the Regather business structure. One of the benefits of the SE model for Regather is that it gives them the opportunity to reinvest any surplus it creates, not only back into the business structure but into its members as well. While the adoption of this approach is beneficial to the long term economic sustainability of Regather, it should to be balanced against its social objectives (Alter, 2007). This approach may make Regather financial more sustainable, however SEs can exhibit overly aggressive commercial characteristics and a sense of 'Mission Drift' may occur whereby the aims of the internal and external stakeholders separate from the objectives of the SE (McBrearty, 2007). When asked why this structure is beneficial to all its members and its key stakeholders, one of the Regather board stated "the money is going back to the business to keep it going and back to its members to keep them going. That is a good reason as to why it would be very sustainable as well."

While Regather does engage in mutually advantageous relationships to create community benefits, such as Sheffield Council, it also has an extremely strong sense of entrepreneurial independence that seeks to ensure Regather's long term survival through not being reliant on a single source of funding. Research has traditionally shown that most social enterprises seek to create social benefit by employing alternative funding schemes, not based on for-profit motivation (Mair and Marti, 2006). However, the problem of adopting this funding model is that SE's become too reliant on limited sources of funding (usually local authorities) which have the effect of

making the SE overtly political in nature. What this means is that to ensure its long-term survival the SE has to meet the terms of conditions of the funding body, usually resulting in the SE providing a narrow range of benefit, to only a specific portion of the community (Ridley-Duff and Bull 2011). If we accept Mair and Marti's (2004: 38) viewpoint that social entrepreneurship broadly, is "a process involving the innovative use and combination of resources to pursue opportunities to catalyze social change and/or address social needs", then Regather can be seen to adopt these characteristics as it actively seeks a variety of funding streams:

"What we'd be concerned about is being perceived as just yet another funded organisation and in the current economic climate that tends to be a negative perception so we are just aware of that and then there's this entrepreneurial bit, you know being entrepreneurial you kind of try and stand on your own two feet financially."

(Regather Board Member)

Adopting a market-based approach to the delivery of events is a key strength of Regather, however it still needs to maintain mutually beneficial connections with its volunteers/stakeholders to ensure it remains engaged with the social cause that is at the heart of a SE otherwise its ability to deliver events may become severely affected (Reid, 2011). The clear advantage for Regather is that although it promotes an entrepreneurial sense of independence, what is fundamentally different about this trading arrangement is that when Regather seek to deliver local community events

they solely engage with local trades people to ensure that the benefit remains within the local community, thus attempting to achieve their social purpose. These perceptions are vital, as generally the vast majority of volunteers who help Regather will be motivated by their desire to express their support for a community social cause or issue – financial gain for either themselves or the event are relatively minor motivational factors (Bang and Chelladurai, 2009).

With Local Authorities seeking to avoid economic leakage from their activities (Foley et al, 2011), Regather can feel confident when tendering for projects because they seek local volunteers and people/businesses to trade with them “to get the work done” (Regather Board member). It is important for Regather to retain this stance, because if perceptions do change, and stakeholders lose confidence in their ‘business’ operations, it will need to spend more time, energy and resources showing how they are maintaining their social commitments and achieving their community based targets (Dees, 1998; Burns, 2007). By having this approach enables Regather to harness the time and enthusiasm of its volunteers by having a more ‘community focus’ which benefits the local community:

“Regather is an organisation made up of members of the community who are interested in, and have experience in, organising events themselves for their own communities. This is very different to paid national companies or local councils attempting to organise events as they must first get to know the

community before trying to organise an event for them. Regather is the community!”

(Regather volunteer)

Social - Community engagement

Central to the creation of many SEs is the identification of a gap in community provision or a social need that is specific to a local community, rather than the opportunity to gain economic benefit – community based events is a prime example (Cramer, 2002; Shaw, 2004; Dwyer, 2005; Sherwood, 2007). This is particularly true of Regather as they are an important part of the events delivery process within its local community which helps them to build a sense of cooperation and togetherness. This ability to act in a more socially acceptable manner is vital for event providers, because public judgment may be the most significant determinant to alter behaviour in the events industry (Cramer, 2002; Wood, 2005; Smith, 2009). Regather’s volunteers felt this was a core benefit of their experience because they were able to come into contact with people from their local community that they may never have encountered before. Porter and Kramer (2006) propose that there is an expectation for service providers to meet local community priorities and that they must make improvements to that community through community engagement, training and improved employment practices – improving their social commitment. The volunteers actually see the wider benefits of the events they deliver in this format, for example one volunteer commented:

“Regather have benefited the local community by providing free events that are inclusive and accessible to all in the local community, which will have boosted morale and community spirit. It has created opportunities for people to expand their skill base.”

(Regather volunteer)

One key experience that emerged from this study was how volunteers are exposed to increased levels of responsibility within the SE framework. All the volunteers commented how Regather enabled levels of 'involvement' that they had not experienced within other types of volunteer events (particularly with the council), which made these events much less personable. By ensuring a high level of involvement and giving volunteers levels of responsibility they have not experienced elsewhere, Regather can challenge the overly formalised roles that have volunteers assume within most voluntary organisations (Gaskin, 2003). This ensures that Regather can offer a wide range of experiences for its volunteers, while at the same time enabling it to provide its volunteer with on-the-job training in different settings by building on the experiences of its volunteer and creating a culture that is inclusive.

“I liked the ethos of the events Regather was able to offer me involvement in - Peace in the Park and the Folk Forest are two such examples. I have volunteered for... music events in the past and these experiences tended to be much less personable and I was given less responsibility as a result.”

(Regather volunteer)

With the events they deliver representing the values and beliefs of the local community, this in turn generates greater volunteer commitment due the social nature of the event, and leads to greater value to the actual event due to the volunteers gaining “skills, knowledge and experience” which can produce higher levels of the community involvement and cohesion (Nichols and Ojala, 2009; Barron and Rihova, 2011). The volunteers gained skills sets they would probably not be able to achieve elsewhere. While the volunteers understand their skill base has expanded and this additional experience could help their employability, they still see the wider community as the main beneficiary. This is still fundamental to the experiences they have gained, even though they might not sometimes see the entire benefits of their volunteering experience.

Regather are extremely conscious of the needs of particular user groups unlike many larger organisations who view impacts assessments as a matter of process rather than outcome. The volunteers interviewed saw the events that they deliver as opportunities for not only the people to come together, and more importantly create communities, but for likeminded volunteers to work together to create community benefit – a key part of successfully retaining volunteers (Andrew, 1996). The key to these experiences within Regather appeared to be that the volunteers felt a sense of ‘ownership’ towards the events and saw “Volunteering for Regather as a way of gaining experience for possible future employment which has got to be beneficial to the wider community” (Regather volunteer). This helps Regather to be more accessible and approachable for

the local community, and in turn will lead to greater community in event planning and deliver – key to social sustainability (Kent and Anderson, 2003).

Research indicates that SEs can identify and tap into the broader communal and social values that exist within the community it serves, and create greater opportunities for community engagement (Kent and Anderson, 2003). The volunteers all acknowledged that the events they deliver are temporary and as such the benefits might also be limited, however, they also felt it might spark a group to come together in other, more permanent ways. The volunteers saw the events that they deliver as opportunities for people to come together, spend time with each and more importantly create communities that work with each other. Derrett (2003: 52) supports this viewpoint of Regathers volunteers and extols the ability of events to achieve a ‘sense of community’ through creating “connections, belonging, support, empowerment, participation, and safety”. The other key benefit is that through the SE framework the events that are delivered represent the values of the community, making the local populace more “willing to contribute to the solutions of community based problems” (Derrett, 2010: 52). As the events are delivered within a specific location and identify the explicit characteristics of a community, Regather will be capable of not only meeting public expectations but also supporting the community to create a sense of place (Derrett, 2003).

Environmental pragmatism?

As consumers become more and more aware of the environmental impacts of their own actions, as well as the impacts of the businesses they trade with, research has recognised that there is an increased moral obligation placed on businesses to act sustainably and to protect the environment (Kilcullen and Kooistra, 1999; Porter and Kramer, 2006; Dolnicar and Leisch, 2007; Mair and Jago, 2010). Regather, although not in a formal sense, does demonstrate a clear commitment to acting in an 'environmentally friendly' manner, as their ethos is to minimise the impacts of all its events on the local environment. Central to this commitment is the use of local labour and suppliers where possible, but as a trading organisation they cannot be obsessive about their environmental impact. This commitment is also shared by its volunteers as they both operate from a sense of 'environmental pragmatism' which sometimes leads to them struggling to justify their environmental 'credentials' to customers, traders and new volunteers alike. Although this commitment is not 'formal' Regather may still be able to gain competitive advantage by having a greater awareness of environmental sustainability (Jones, 2010).

Regather's positive environmental behaviour can lead to positive local publicity that may heighten the image of the event or give it a better marketing position (Presbury and Edwards, 2005; Raj and Musgrave, 2009). Local communities are more likely to support a SE to achieve its social purpose, because they are more likely to engage in environmentally sound practices and contribute to positive community regeneration (Smallbone et al, 2001). This explains Regathers specialism and general focus towards small community events. Regather and its volunteers stated they have an "underlining

philosophy that reflects a different set of values” which attracts volunteers from the local community by showing themselves as being as ‘green’ as possible. Research has shown that member of SEs operate with greater levels of moral integrity, and volunteers are more attracted to this kind of structure due to the morals and values they exhibit (Hougland and Christenson, 1982).

While they will embrace environmental issues when they can (for example the refurbishment of their headquarters) at times they view these issues from a practical perspective, where the volunteers and members seek to minimise some of their environmental impacts in a more informal sense. This positive environmental behaviour on behalf of Regather can lead to positive local publicity that may heighten the image of the event or give it a better marketing position (Presbury and Edwards, 2005; Raj and Musgrave, 2009). Regather focus their event delivery on venues that give something back to the community by being based in heart of community and with a local focus. By making use of local resources, the volunteers felt that any time they gave would benefit the community itself, which in-turn benefits Regather. Participants said that any venue they use will be monitored and evaluated to ensure that local community projects are supported and local people are given employment:

“I expect people would feel more comfortable approaching them than the council. Regather work closely within the community, they use local resources (venues, services, volunteers etc) and provide a 'grass roots' approach to their events, which in turn would make them more of a user friendly organisation.”

CONCLUSIONS

While most organisations see sustainability as challenging their profits, cash flow and reserves, Regather don't view sustainability as a method to not only generate financial gain – as they view the social need as being equally as important. While this approach goes against accepted research, which views financial gain as a motive to adapt sustainable practices, (Dewhurst and Thomas, 2003; Presbury and Edwards, 2005; Smith, 2009) it does enable Regather to tap in the value sets of its volunteers. The volunteers that help Regather see this as a particular benefit as it fundamental shapes their experiences. By not being reliant on external grant funding, this allows Regather to give volunteers a different experience, one that is focused on involvement and more importantly the social needs that the local community has. This model of financial sustainability enables Regather to tackle social needs that to the volunteers are central to the local community and therefore worthy of their support, something which Shaw (2004) feels is vital to future volunteer commitment. As such, Regathers' financial sustainability is achieved through mixed funding and long-term volunteer loyalty, with any surplus re-invested back to its members and by default, the local community (Chell, 2007).

If local authorities wish to make use of SEs to deliver events to achieve local community benefit, then the SE model has clear advantages over other organizations, including charities (Wood, 2005). With their survival based on better community engagement, Regather purposely seeks to engage with all of the community and to

engage volunteers through building communities through their events (Moscardo, 2007). The volunteers consciously believe that SEs are better suited to event delivery because they understand Regather can deliver events specifically for the community. This enhanced reputation within the community, according to Bang (2009), is essential to the current and continued support of the volunteers and stakeholders alike. With the SE not limited to providing benefit for one social group but for the whole community, they achieve much wider social objectives than other organisational structures (Alter, 2007). So, as according to Rogers and Anastasiadou (2011), if long-term event viability and sustainability are directly attributed to their ability to attract volunteers and engaged with the local community, SEs are a viable option compared to local authorities and more traditional third sector organisations because they have the capacity to meet these demands and offer an alternative, sustainable option to event delivery. However, if local authorities continue to make use of social enterprises they may need to provide support services to help the SE compensate for any lack of expertise (Smallbone et al, 2004).

From the literature reviewed, it is clear that event providers see themselves as having a moral, rather than a legal obligation to act sustainably in order to protect the natural environment - Regather are no different (Kilcullen and Kooistra, 1999; Porter and Kramer, 2006; Dolnicar and Leisch, 2007; Hede, 2007). At times they struggle to meet these commitments, however Regather show a greater obligation to sustainability mainly because its members share a commitment to the environment and do not see

this as merely 'fad' to generate custom. It is ingrained into the members and volunteers alike and is seen as being part and parcel of what they do, not as a bolt on to achieve higher levels of market share (Darby and Jenkins, 2006). SEs are well placed to achieve 'sustainable' objectives as these objectives are 'hardwired' into their organisational ethos, however as their role in the delivery of local community expands it is still unclear whether they will be able to meet these increased demands.

Within the organisational structure of Regather, the volunteer 'experience' is important and is enhanced through creating an inclusive environment for volunteers through the social and work experience opportunities it creates. By making volunteers feel valued and giving them a multitude of 'experiences' Regather is creating an environment that promotes the long-term retention of its volunteers (McCurley and Lynch, 1998). With the volunteers being organised within a structure that is not overly rigid, bureaucratic, broadly inclusive and does not seek to formalise the roles that volunteers will seek out, Regather is managing its volunteers through Zimmeck's (2001) 'home grown' model where it can overt/covertly express its core values and beliefs through its engagement with its volunteers (p.19). Regather need to understand that a rigid structure does carry benefit in terms of formalised volunteer training, and need to be able to adapt their structure in order to creates opportunities for different volunteer experiences, but to also ensure they meet formal requirements - health and safety training comes to mind (Holmes, 2004). While this investment in their volunteers is to be commended, Regather must to be careful not to invest in their

volunteers to such a degree that it actually damages their ability to 'trade' as they are inherently competition with other event providers.

The volunteer experience within the social enterprise model offers sustainable benefits because of the level of involvement it offers, the level of community engagement it promotes and the unique community trading opportunities it fosters. While there is a plethora of research that places the event volunteer within different public and not-for-profit organisations, what this research seeks to demonstrate is that the SE structure can bring benefits above and beyond the more traditional structures that event volunteers inhabit. Indeed, the existing research centres around organisations adopting a modern, top-down management approach to volunteer. What this research highlights is that this 'formalised' approach may actually be counterproductive and actually alienate the volunteer and weaken their resolve to participate. As Getz and Anderson (2009: 3) identify this bottom-up method is central to sustainability and will advocate a "community based approach". Too little consideration has been given to understanding the event volunteer 'experience' within different structures and further research is needed if we are to understand how organisational structures can lead to alternative models of volunteer management that produce long-term sustainable benefit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allan, B. (2005) "Social enterprise: through the eyes of the consumer," Social Enterprise Journal, 1, (1), 57-77.

Alter, A.K. (2007) Managing the Double Bottom Line, San Francisco California: Save the Children.

Andrew, J. (1996). Motivations and expectations of volunteers involved in a large scale sports event. Australian Leisure, 3(20), 21-24.

Bang, H. (2009) "The direct and indirect influences of sport event organisation's reputation on volunteer commitment," Event Management, 13, 139 –152.

Bang, H. and Chelladurai, P. (2009), "Development and validation of the volunteer motivations scale for international sporting events (VMS-ISE)," International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing, 6, (4), 332-350.

Barron, P. and Rihova, I. (2011) "Motivation to volunteer: a case study of the Edinburgh International Magic Festival". International Journal of Event and Festival Management, 2, (3), 202-217.

Bowdin, G., Allen, J., O'Toole, W. and Harris, R. (2010) Event Management 3rd ed, London: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Brotherton, B. (2008) Researching hospitality and Tourism: A student guide, London: Sage.

Bull, M. and Crompton, H. (2006) Business practices in social enterprises, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Burns, P. (2007) Entrepreneurship and Small Business, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Carlsen, J. and Andersson, T.D. (2011) "Strategic SWOT analysis of public, private and not-for-profit festival organisations," International Journal of Event and Festival Management, 2, (1), 83-97.

Chell, E. (2007) "Social enterprise and entrepreneurship: towards a convergent theory of the entrepreneurial process," International Small Business Journal, 25, (1), 5-26.

Costa, C.A., Chalip, L., Green, B.C. and Simes, C. (2006) "Reconsidering the role of training in event volunteers' satisfaction," Sport Management Review, (9), 2, 165-82.

Cramer, J. (2002) "From financial to sustainable profit," Corporate social responsibility and environment management, 9, (2), 99-106.

Cumming, P. and Pelham, F. (2011) Making Events more Sustainable: A guide to BS 8901. London: BSI.

Darby, L. and Jenkins, H. (2007) "Applying sustainability indicators to the social enterprise business model - The development and application of an indicator set for Newport Wastesavers, Wales," International Journal of Social Economics, 33, (5/6), 411-431.

Dees, J. G. (1998 January–February) "What do you do when Traditional Sources of Finance fall Short? Enterprising non-profits," Harvard Business Review, 76, 55–67.

Defourny, J. and Nyssens, M. (eds) (2008) "Social Enterprise in Europe: Recent Trends and Developments," EMES Working Papers Series, No 08/01.

DEFRA (2007) Sustainable Events Guide. London: Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs

DEFRA (2011) Sustainable Development, London: Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs

Derrett, R. (2003) "Making Sense of How Festivals Demonstrate a Community's Sense of Place," Event Management, 8, 49–58.

Dewhurst, H. and Thomas, R. (2003) "Encouraging sustainable business practices in non-regulatory environment: A case study of small tourism business firms in a UK National Park," Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 5, (11), 383 -403.

Doherty, B., Foster, G., Mason, C., Meehan, J., Meehan, K., Rotheroe, N. and Royce, M. (2009) Management for Social Enterprise, London: Sage.

Dolnicar, S. and Leisch, F. (2008) "Selective marketing for environmentally sustainable tourism," Tourism Management, 29, (4), 672-680.

DTI (2002) Social Enterprises, A Strategy for Success, London: Department of Trade and Industry.

Dwyer, H. (2005) "Relevance of triple bottom line reporting to achievement of sustainable tourism: a scoping study," Tourism Review International, 9, (1), 79-93.

Elkington, J. (2004) "Enter the Triple Bottom Line" in A, Henriques and J, Richardson (eds) The Triple Bottom Line: does it all add up. London: EarthScan, 1-16.

Ellis Paine, A., Ockenden, N., & Stuart, J. (2010) "Volunteers in hybrid organizations: A marginalised majority?" in D. Billis (eds) Hybrid organizations and the third sector: Challenges for practice, theory and policy. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan 93–113.

Fielding, N. and Thomas, H. (2001) Qualitative Interviewing. In Researching Social Life 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Foley, M., McGillivray, D. and McPherson, G. (2011) Event Policy: From Theory to Strategy, London: Routledge

Gaskin, K. (2003) A choice blend: What volunteers want from organisation and management, London: Institute for Volunteering Research.

Getz, D. and Anderson, T.D. (2009) "Sustainable Events: On Becoming an Institution," Event Management, 12, 1–17.

Hallmann, K. and Harms, G. (2012) "Determinants of volunteer motivation and their impact on future voluntary engagement: A comparison of volunteer's motivation at sport events in equestrian and handball," International Journal of Event and Festival Management, 3, (3), 272-291.

Hagh, H. (2005) "A research agenda for social entrepreneurship," Social Enterprise Journal, 1, (1), 1-15.

Haynes, B. (2009) "Growing the social enterprise – issues and challenges," Social Enterprise Journal, 5, (2), 114-125.

Hede, A.M. (2007) "Managing Special Events in the New Era of the Triple Bottom Line," Event Management, 11, (1-2), 13–22.

Holmes, K. (2004) The impact of professional volunteer management on the volunteer experience: an exploratory investigation using the 'Volunteers Management Orientation Score (VMOS), Voluntary Action, 6, (2), 73-93.

Hougland, J.G. and Christenson, J.A. (1982) "Voluntary organizations and dominant American values," Journal of Voluntary Action Research, 11, (4), 6-26.

Johnson, S. (2001) Social Enterprise Literature Review, Edmonton, Alberta: Canadian Centre for Social Entrepreneurship.

Jones, M. (2010) Sustainable Event Management, London: Earthscan.

Kent, C.A. and Anderson, L. P. (2003) "Social Capital, Social Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Education," in M. L. Kourilsky and W. B. Walstad (eds) Social Entrepreneurship. Birmingham and Dublin: Senate Hall, 27–45.

Kilcullen, M. and Kooistra, J.O. (1999) "At least do no harm: sources on the changing role of business ethics and corporate social responsibility," Reference Services Review, 27, (2), 158–178.

Kvale, S. and Brinkman, S. (2009) Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing, 2nd ed, London: Sage.

Laville, J. and Nyssens, M. (2001) "The social enterprise: Towards a theoretical socio-economic approach," in C. Borzaga and J. Defourny (eds) The emergence of social enterprise. London, New York: Routledge. 312–332.

LOCOG (2010) Sustainability guidelines – corporate and public events 2nd ed, London: London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games.

Long, J. (2007) Researching Leisure, Sport and Tourism: The Essential Guide, London: Sage.

Mair, J. and Jago, L. (2010) "The development of a conceptual model of greening in the business events tourism sector," Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 18, (1), 77-94.

Mair, J. and Martí, I. (2006) Social entrepreneurship research: A source of explanation, prediction, and delight. Journal of World Business, 41, (1), 36-44

McBrearty, S. (2007) "Social enterprise – a solution for the voluntary sector?" Social Enterprise Journal, 3, (1), 67-77.

McCurley, S. and Lynch, R. (1998) Essential Volunteer Management, London: Directory of Social Change.

McDonough, W. and Braungart, M. (2002) "Design for the Triple Top Line: New Tools for sustainable commerce," International Journal of Corporate Sustainability, 9, (3), 251 – 258.

Moscardo, G. (2007) "Analysing the role of festivals and events in regional development," Event Management, 11, (1/2), 23–32.

Nichols, G. and Ojala, E. (2009) "Understanding the management of sports events volunteers through psychological contract theory," Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations, 20, (4), 369-87.

Norman, W. and McDonald, C. (2004) "Getting to the bottom of 'The Triple bottom line,'" Business Ethics Quarterly, 14, (2), 242-262.

Pearce, J. (2003) Social Enterprise in Anytown, London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Pelham, F. (2011) "Will sustainability change the business model of the event industry?" Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes, 3, (3), 1-8.

Poland, B. (1995). Transcription quality as an aspect of rigor in qualitative research. Qualitative Inquiry, 1(3), 290–310.

Pomerantz, M. (2003) "The business of social entrepreneurship in a 'down economy'," In Business, 25, (3), 25-30.

Porter, M. and Kramer, M. (2006) "Strategy and Society the link between competitive advantage and cooperate social responsibility," The Harvard Business Review, 84, (12), 78-92.

Presbury, R. and Edwards, D. (2005) "Incorporating sustainability in Meetings and Event Management Education," International Journal of Event Management Research, 1, (1), 30-45.

Raj, R. and Musgrave, J. (2009) Event management and sustainability. Wallingford: CABI.

Regather Trading Cooperative (2012) About Regather. [on-line] Available at: <http://www.regather.net/about> [Accessed 1 January, 2013].

Reid, S. (2011) "Event stakeholder management: developing sustainable rural event practice," International Journal of Event and Festival Management, 2, (1), 20-36.

Richards, L. (2005) Handling Qualitative Data: A practical Guide, London: Sage

Ridley-Duff, R. and Bull, M. (2011) *Understanding Social Enterprise: Theory and Practice*. London: Sage Publications Ltd

Rogers, P. and Anastasiadou, C. (2011) "Community Involvement in Festivals: Exploring Ways of Increasing Local Participation," Event Management, 15, 387–399.

Saunders, N.K., Thornhill, A. and Lewis, P. (2012) Research Methods for Business Students 6th ed, London: Prentice Hall.

Shaw, E. (2004) "Marketing in the social enterprise context: is it entrepreneurial?" Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, 7, (3), 194-205.

Sheffield City Council (2011) Interview with Community Events Manager.

Sherwood, P. (2007) A Triple Bottom Line Evaluation of the Impact of Special Events: The Development of Indicators [online] PHD, Victoria University, Last accessed on 05th March 2011 at: <http://eprints.vu.edu.au/1440/1/Sherwood.pdf>

Smallbone, D. Evans, M., Ekanem, I. and Butters, S. (2001) Researching Social Enterprise: Final Report to the Small Business Service, Middlesex: Centre for Enterprise and Economic Development Research.

Smith, L. (2009) "Sustainability of industry: Green buildings and events," Journal of Green Buildings, 4, (2), 63-89.

Social Enterprise Coalition (2009) State of Social Enterprise Survey 2009. London: Social Enterprise Coalition – The Voice of Social Enterprise.

Somers, A.B. (2005) "Shaping the Balanced Scorecard for use in UK social enterprises," Social Enterprise Journal, 1, (1), 43-56.

Spreckley, F. (2008) Social Audit Toolkit 4th ed, St Oswalds Barn: Local Livelihoods Ltd

Taylor, S.J. and Bogdan, R. (1984) Introduction to Qualitative Methods: A search for meaning 2nd ed. New York: Plenum.

Thomas, A. S. (2004) Research skills for management studies, London: Routledge.

Thompson, J. and Doherty, B. (2006) "The diverse world of social Enterprise - A collection of social enterprise stories," International Journal of Social Economics, 33, (5/6), 361-375.

UK Strategy Unit (2002) Private Action, Public Benefit: Review of Charities and the Wider Not-for-Profit Sector. London: Strategy Unit Report, Cabinet Office.

Wallace, B. (2005) "Exploring the meaning(s) of sustainability for community-based social entrepreneurs," Social Enterprise Journal, 1, (1), 78-90.

Wood, E, H. (2005) "Measuring the economic and social impacts of local authority events," International Journal of Public Sector Management, 18, (1), 37-53.

Zimmeck, M. (2001) The Right Stuff: New Ways of Thinking about Managing Volunteers. London: institute for Volunteering Research.