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Paper Title: Summer on the Island: Temporary, Interim, and Occasional Episodic Volunteering

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Summary of Research

The Inter-Cultural Association of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada manages three community festivals each summer. Recruiting includes some long-term volunteers, but many episodic volunteers. This research report on those episodic volunteers, by discrete categories; temporary, occasional, interim. The report outlines background variables and motivation to volunteer.

Description

Every summer the Inter-Cultural Association (ICA) of Greater Victoria promotes cultural understanding, alleviates racism, and promotes multiculturalism in Victoria since 1971. Every summer ICA holds three festivals that highlight the cultural diversity and richness of Victoria.

Luminara is a one-night event in which around 150 volunteers use the largest park in the city to hold festival of lights. Most of these volunteers come just for that night while one-tenth of the volunteers help for a few weeks prior to the festival. FolkFest is a cultural festival that runs for 10 days. This festival attracts nearly 850 volunteers who are organized into different crews, each crew responsible for different jobs. They generally volunteer at the work on site from 7am- midnight. About half of FolkFest volunteers and crew coordinators come back each year. Open Air is an outdoor concert series and held at the smaller venue. It runs from the end of FolkFest to mid September and also features a Sunday market with cooking demonstrations from star chefs, outdoor movies, noon hour concerts of local performers, etc. It has about 250 volunteers and 90% of who come from FolkFest.

As such, every summer when the sun shines and being outdoors is fun, ICA manages to recruit some long-term volunteers and many episodic volunteers. Some of the people come every year and give a few hours and then disappear forever or till next year. We accessed a large number of the volunteers and administered questionnaires. We were able to categorize them by long-term, and various types of episodic temporary, occasional, interim. We compare their background variables and motivation to volunteer. The presentation will shed new light on this growing phenomenon of episodic volunteering.