

South African volunteers' experiences of volunteering at the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ South Africa

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Abstract

In 2010 the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) hosted the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa™, which is commonly referred to as the 2010 FIFA World Cup. With such a mega-sport event the focus is usually on the football players and their teams. However, there are various other role-players (e.g., volunteers, journalists, spectators) that contribute to the success of such a mega-sport event. The purpose of this research was to study the phenomenon of volunteering through South African volunteers' experiences of volunteering at the 2010 FIFA World Cup, specifically in the City of Tshwane (COT) in the Tshwane Metropolitan Area (TMA). A qualitative research design was employed, with specific reference to descriptive phenomenology. Five female volunteers voluntarily participated in the research project. Two data gathering methods were used in the research, being a written essay and a personal interview. The data were analysed by means of the Duquesne Phenomenological Research Method (DPRM). The findings indicated that polarization was the essence of the volunteers' experiences with reference to the application process, the preparation phase and their participation in the 2010 FIFA World Cup. However, the polarization was absent in the volunteer's personal reflections on the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Keywords: Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), 2010 FIFA World Cup™, volunteers, descriptive phenomenology, Duquesne Phenomenological Research Method (DPRM), essence, experience.

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Introduction

FIFA was established on 21 May 1904 in Paris, France. Robert Guerin was the first FIFA president. In 1908 and 1912 football was an event at the London and Stockholm Olympic Games, respectively. On 28 May 1928 the decision was made by the executive committee of FIFA to host the first FIFA World Cup. The host for this event was Uruguay and it was held in 1930 in Montevideo (Fédération Internationale de Football Association [FIFA], n.d.a). Egypt was the first African team to participate in the 1934 FIFA World Cup in Italy (Fédération Internationale de Football Association [FIFA], n.d.b). Although South Africa

joined FIFA in 1909, the South African national football team only participated in the 1998 FIFA World Cup in France (Fédération Internationale de Football Association [FIFA], n.d.c).

South Africa was unsuccessful in bidding to host the 2006 FIFA World Cup, which was awarded to Germany. Despite this setback, South Africa once again bid to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Arguments that were put forth by the bidding committee included the infrastructure in South Africa, the stable economy of the country and South Africa's ability in hosting international events, such as the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the 1996 Africa Cup of Nations, as well as the 2003 Cricket World Cup. South Africa made the final proposal on 15 May 2003 and received the winning number of 14 votes. The 2010 FIFA World Cup began on 11 June 2010 and ended on 11 July 2010. There were nine host cities namely, Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Mangaung (Bloemfontein), Nelson Mandela Bay, Mbombela, Polokwane, Rustenburg and Tshwane (Fédération Internationale de Football Association [FIFA], n.d.d).

The Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup are recognised as mega-sport events due to the large scale of the event, the international attention that a host nation receives during these mega-sport events, as well as the atmosphere of the event (Cornelissen, 2008; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006; Van der Merwe, 2009). During a FIFA World Cup the attention is usually on the football players, as well as their teams. Often, very little is mentioned about the other role-players (e.g., volunteers, journalists, spectators), who make the FIFA World Cup a success and an unforgettable experience. As this study focused on the phenomenon of volunteering at the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the volunteering structure is depicted in Figure 1.

FIFA received 67 999 applications from 170 countries for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, while there were only 15 000 Sport Event (SE) volunteer positions (FIFA, n.d.a). SE volunteer was a broad term that consisted of Local Organising Committee (LOC) volunteers and Host City (HC) volunteers, which were further categorized as general and specific volunteers. The LOC and HC specific volunteers had expert knowledge and skills, for example, language and technology skills. The LOC general volunteers worked in the stadiums, while the HC general volunteers were representatives of the respective host cities and worked in the areas surrounding the stadiums. They worked in the functional areas of transport, media, rights protection services, spectator services and logistics (Fédération Internationale de Football Association [FIFA], n.d.e).

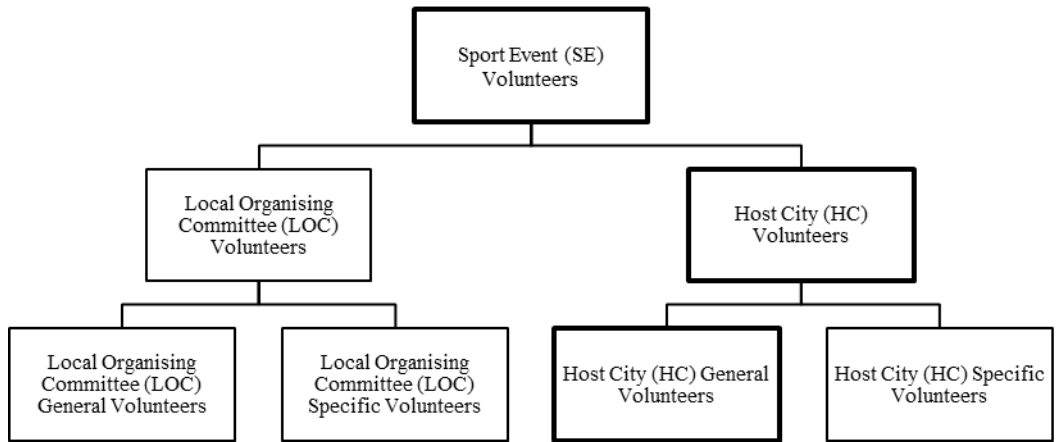


Figure 1: 2010 FIFA World Cup Volunteer Structure

In this study the focus was on South African COT general volunteers' experiences of volunteering at the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

A volunteer can be described as someone who makes a decision to engage in an activity sacrificing his/her time and financial compensation. The volunteer participates in the activity in order to benefit the community as well as him-/herself (Clohesy, 2000; Cnaan, Handy & Wadsworth, 1996). From a literature overview it seems that research on volunteering has been done in health contexts (e.g., Hospice, Rape, HIV/AIDS)(e.g., Beatty, Oxlad, Koczwarra & Wade, 2008; Held & Brann, 2007; Rath, 2008), as well as sport contexts (e.g., Hamm & MacLean, 2007; Lockstone & Baum, 2009; Shaw, 2009). However, research on volunteering at mega-sport events, such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup, appears to be limited.

Studies on volunteering at the Olympic Games were done by Karkatsoulis, Michalopoulos and Moustakatou (2005), Baum and Lockstone (2007), Fairley, Kellett and Green (2007), Du (2008), Giannoulakis, Wang and Gray (2008) and Bang, Alexandris and Ross (2009). These studies employed quantitative and qualitative research approaches in studying volunteering at the Olympic Games. Bang et al. (2009), Giannoulakis et al. (2008) and Du (2008) employed a quantitative research methodology, while Fairley et al. (2007) and Karkatsoulis et al. (2005) employed a qualitative research methodology. Baum and Lockstone (2007) proposed a research framework for studying volunteering at mega-sport events. Male and female participants participated in the studies of Du (2008), Giannoulakis et al. (2008) and Bang et al. (2009), while Karkatsoulis et al. (2005) and Fairley et al. (2007) did not depict the characteristics of the participants. The findings of these studies indicated that the volunteers wanted to be a part of something unique, to help make the event a success and for patriotic

reasons (Bang et al., 2009; Fairley et al., 2007; Giannoulakis et al., 2008). The findings also indicated that mega-sport event volunteers were interested in learning new skills and indicated volunteer satisfaction levels with the volunteer experience (Du, 2008; Karkatsoulis et al., 2005). The study conducted by Baum and Lockstone (2007) posed questions regarding the motivation of mega-sport event volunteers, their roles and responsibilities, as well as their economic contribution.

One study focused on volunteering at a FIFA World Cup, specifically the 2002 FIFA World Cup (Haruo, 2004). The purpose of this study was to understand the participants' motives for volunteering. A mixed methods approach was followed in this study with 1760 Korean and Japanese volunteers. The Japanese participants were motivated to volunteer due to their interest in the 2002 FIFA World Cup, as well as their desire to make the event a success. The Korean participants were motivated to volunteer as they wanted to make a contribution to society. Both Japanese and Korean volunteers were motivated by a desire to apply their knowledge to their volunteering, while also being motivated by a need to gain new experiences through volunteering. Furthermore, the Japanese and Korean volunteers did not indicate an interest in being paid for their volunteering. The Japanese volunteers also wanted to have fun during the 2002 FIFA World Cup, while the Korean volunteers took their duties more seriously.

The purpose of the present research was to study the phenomenon of volunteering at a mega-sport event, with specific reference to the 2010 FIFA World Cup. This was done by focussing on South African COT general volunteers' experiences of volunteering at the 2010 FIFA World Cup. This study will therefore attempt to add to the limited research on volunteering at mega-sport events, with specific reference to the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup.

Method

Design

This research employed a qualitative research approach, with specific reference to phenomenology (Wertz, 2005; Willig, 2008). Phenomenology is the study of a phenomenon, such as volunteering at a mega-sport event, through people's experiences of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 1997; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Conducting research from a qualitative research approach is in line with calls by Dale (1996, 2000), as well as Smith and Sparkes (2009), for more qualitative research in the field of sport psychology.

There are different variations to phenomenology, such as heuristic phenomenology, descriptive phenomenology, interpretive phenomenology and

relational phenomenology (Finlay, 2008). Descriptive phenomenology is used as research position in the present study, which can be traced back to the work of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)(Lopez & Willis, 2004), while currently Amadeo Giorgi is a prominent figure in this field (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). Descriptive phenomenology as research position allowed the researcher to investigate the essence of South African COT general volunteers' experiences of volunteering at the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

The main characteristics of descriptive phenomenology are reduction, analysis, intuiting and description (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Firstly, reduction is practised through bracketing with the purpose of achieving researcher neutrality (Wall, Glen, Mitchinson & Poole, 2004). Secondly, analysis of research material is done with the purpose of discovering the essence of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 2005). Thirdly, intuiting is the process whereby the researcher tries to "live in the participants' skin" while engaging with the research material (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007, p. 176). Lastly, description entails providing a description of the phenomenon being studied (Tymieniecka, 2003).

Participants

Criteria: The inclusion criteria for this study were:

- The participants had to be South African citizens.
- The participants had to be COT general volunteers during the 2010 FIFA World Cup.
- The participants had to be residents in the TMA as the researchers had to conduct interviews with participants after the 2010 FIFA World Cup.
- Only participants 18 years and older who were part of the "2010 FIFA Volunteer Programme" were allowed to apply to participate in this study.
- Participants had to be competent (able to describe their experiences) in English as this was the language in which the researchers were proficient.

Method: Purposive sampling was used and involved selecting participants based on specific criteria (see Criteria). The most important sampling guideline for a descriptive phenomenological study is that the participants must have first-hand experience of the phenomenon being studied (Starks & Brown-Trinidad, 2007). In the case of this research, it was imperative that the participants had experience of volunteering as South African COT general volunteers at the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Participants: All the volunteers who were part of the "2010 FIFA Volunteer Programme" in the COT in the TMA were invited to participate in the research. Five volunteers voluntarily participated in the research project. Table 1 depicts the research participants in terms of gender, race, age, volunteer functional area, qualifications and occupation.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Participants

Participants	Gender	Race	Age	Functional Area	Qualification	Occupation
Volunteer 1 (V1)	Female	Coloured Person	20	Spectator Services	Matric	Administrator & Part-time Student
Volunteer 2 (V2)	Female	Caucasian Person	19	Rights Protection Services	Matric	Full-time Student
Volunteer 3 (V3)	Female	African Person	28	Spectator Services	Matric	Administrator & Part-time Student
Volunteer 4 (V4)	Female	Coloured Person	32	Rights Protection Services	Matric	Secretary
Volunteer 5 (V5)	Female	African Person	22	Spectator Services	Matric	Unemployed

Data

Two sets of data were generated after the 2010 FIFA World Cup, being written essays and personal interviews.

Essay: The participants were requested to write an essay on their experience of volunteering as South African COT general volunteers during the 2010 FIFA World Cup on 12 July 2012. Requesting participants to write an essay is a form of bracketing, which has the intent of minimizing the researcher's personal biases and prior knowledge of the phenomenon being studied on the descriptions of the participants (Giorgi, 2005, 2010; LeVasseur, 2003). The following statement served as a guide for the participants in writing the essay: "Can you please write an essay, in as much detail as possible, describing your experiences of volunteering as a South African COT general volunteer in the TMA during the 2010 FIFA World Cup."

Analysis: The essays were analysed according to the DPRM (Giorgi, 1970, 1985, 1997):

Step 1: Whole: The researchers read the entire essay of each participant to get a sense of the whole.

Step 2: Units: The researchers delineated the meaning units in the essays of each of the participants.

Step 3: Transform: The researchers transformed the participants' descriptions into psychological language.

Step 4: Synthesis: The researchers synthesized and integrated the meaning units in order to describe the universal essences of the phenomenon being studied.

The purpose of the analysis of the essays was to uncover the essence of South African COT general volunteers' experiences of volunteering at the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Interview: Individual interviews were conducted between 28 September 2010 and 2 October 2010 with each participant after the analysis of the essays. The purpose of the interviews was not to collect new data, but to explore the themes identified through the analysis of the essays. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the researchers for purposes of analysis. The transcription process allowed the researchers to get acquainted with the research material (Easton, McComish & Greenberg, 2000). Thereafter, the transcribed interviews were analysed by means of the DPRM (Giorgi, 1970, 1985, 1997). Once again, the purpose of the analysis of the transcribed interviews was to uncover the essence of South African COT general volunteers' experiences of volunteering at the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Results

Four themes emerged from the data regarding the South African COT general volunteers' experiences of volunteering at the 2010 FIFA World Cup. These themes were application, preparation, participation and reflection.

Application

Applying to be a South African COT general volunteer at the 2010 FIFA World Cup emerged as a theme amongst the participants.

The participants had a positive experience of the volunteer application process. V1 "experience[d] applying for the volunteer programme as quite easy and efficient as the application forms were not complicated," while V2 described the application process as being "very basic and quick." V3 experienced the application process as "an easy process. I applied online and the next thing I got a call and that was it, wasn't hectic, it wasn't difficult, it was as easy as that."

However, there were some minor negative experiences amongst the participants regarding the volunteer application process. V2 experienced difficulty in understanding the application form, as "on the application form it is not indicated whether you would like to work for the LOC, or what the HC is about, or what the LOC is about" and V4 mentioned "a bit of, I uh, IT related problems, the system was slow so it didn't take all my information immediately. I managed to get through after some time."

It seems that the participants on the one hand experienced the application process as being an effective one, while on the other hand they also experienced minor dilemmas during the application process.

Preparation

Preparing to volunteer as a South African COT general volunteer at the 2010 FIFA World Cup appeared to be a theme amongst the participants.

The participants experienced the training as professional and informative. V1 described the training as “done in a very professional way as the COT contracted companies that are familiar to the tourism market (companies that specialize in customer care and marketing),” while V2 mentioned that the “training helped as everything was clearly explained to us, and we were given information booklets to inform us on what was expected of us and this helped us to do our work when we had been asked.” V4 “enjoy[ed] working with the Volunteer Training Manual and enjoyed training a lot. I feel the Volunteer Training Guide helped me to be efficient” and V5 explained that “as for the training during the World Cup, it really assisted us in a huge way because we couldn’t have done a great job that we did without it.”

Besides the training being professional and informative, the participants sometimes experienced the training as too cumbersome and didactic in nature. V2 stated that she “feel[s] that we could have had a basic overview of Pretoria specifically than doing all host cities and all the major tourist attractions. That dragged and most people were glad when it was done” and V5 “expected real training with some huge space just to be busy, if you know what I am saying, but it wasn’t like that, we were on our chairs. The management did the talking and we listened.”

It appears that on the one hand the participants experienced the volunteer preparation process as empowering, while on the other hand they also experienced moments of boredom during the preparation phase.

Participation

Participating as a South African COT general volunteer at the 2010 FIFA World Cup entailed interacting with various role-players, being fellow volunteers, supervisors and tourists, while working shifts also featured as a theme.

Volunteers: During the 2010 FIFA World Cup the participants experienced interaction with their fellow volunteers. V1 stated that the “interaction amongst volunteers was a great experience because we are all from different walks in life but because we joined a programme with one goal we became united, we became

like a family,” while V2 mentioned that “every single person in that group of ours came from a different area ... you know different ages, different races, different backgrounds, different everything. So it was very interesting just to get to know them and everything.” V5 explained that for her “it was hard at first, but as time went on I got used to it. We were mix race and I'm usually so shaky when speaking with whites...but that thing was in me but, not any more ...we as the volunteers did a good job together, no one judged anyone, no one didn't want us to speak to anyone.”

Supervisors: Besides the interaction with fellow volunteers, the participants also made mention of interacting with their supervisors. V1 experienced the supervisors as treating the volunteers “like adults and we had a very professional relationship. It wasn't just delegating work through the different volunteers; they asked us what we would like to do and vice versa” and V3 stated that “the supervisors were friendly, very friendly to my surprise. I didn't expect such friendliness, but they were friendly, warm and very helping. They were informative and were very approachable.” V4 experienced the interaction with the supervisors as one of “open communication. I enjoyed the meetings we held every morning just to inform us. I communicated well with my volunteer supervisors. I enjoyed the experience...I learned a great deal about working.”

Tourists: The participants also interacted with tourists in the capacity as COT general volunteers. V1 stated that “some of them we had a challenge interacting because we didn't speak the same language. We were trained accordingly as to how to approach those tourists and how to deal with them ... it was great meeting new people,” while V3 mentioned that “we got to interact with tourists, now that was fun and seeing how they loved and appreciated South Africa. There were times when there was a bit of language barrier, but it was not that bad.” V5 explained that the “World Cup was okay, but at some point it wasn't. Every person feels confident when speaking his/her own language ... I was assisting tourists with information in case that they were lost or don't know which directions to go.”

Shifts: During the 2010 FIFA World Cup volunteers were expected to work shifts, which seemed to cause some dilemmas. V1 experienced the working of shifts as “a little rough when it came to scheduling shift. We were told to fill a form that indicates which days we were available, but we weren't scheduled accordingly” and V4 experienced working shifts as a “terrible experience especially during the big matches. I had to work in rural area sometimes; I had to come home late.” V5 preferred working with the same group of COT general volunteers and she was disappointed when there were new group members during each shift. This is evident as she stated that “the volunteer management packed us accordingly, but not as always as the some of us before.”

It seems that on the one hand the participants' experienced their participation as volunteers in the 2010 FIFA World Cup as meaningful with reference to their interaction with fellow volunteers, supervisors and tourists, while on the other hand they also described encountering some problems, with reference to language and working shifts.

Reflection

Reflecting as a South African COT general volunteer on volunteering at the 2010 FIFA World Cup emerged as a theme amongst the participants.

V1 mentioned that "the 2010 FIFA World Cup has helped unveil some of my hidden talents and I have learnt a lot about myself during this period. Without being exposed to this calibre event I wouldn't have been pushed to reach my full potential." V2 stated that "the experience has made me realise a lot about myself and my capabilities. It showed my strengths and weaknesses which benefit me in my day-to-day life as I understand that I'm good at certain things and other things I battle with." V3 learnt that "even if I had thought that I am team player, I think the whole experience just validated that perception about me." V4 mentioned that she "learned to be more outgoing. I learned to be more challenging. I learned to be more open to new ideas. I learned that just listening and participating I can become better and I can achieve more." V5 "experience[d] or realise[d] some of my abilities as well. That if I really put my mind in to something and be positive about it I can really do it. Socialising with new people is no longer an issue."

The participants' experiences of the application process, the preparation phase and their participation in the 2010 FIFA World Cup, culminated in their reflections on the event. These reflections all contained personal value-judgments in terms of what the 2010 FIFA World Cup meant to each participant.

Discussion

The essence of the South African COT general volunteers' experiences of volunteering can be depicted as a polarized experience, with specific reference to the application process, the preparation phase and their participation in the 2010 FIFA World Cup. This polarization can be portrayed using the metaphor of "two-sides-of-a-coin". However, this polarization was not prevalent in the volunteers' reflections on the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Application

The volunteers in essence experienced the volunteer application process as polarized. On the one side the volunteers primarily experienced the volunteer application process as effective, while the other side the volunteers encountered minor dilemmas with the process. Previous studies on volunteering at the Olympic Games done by Karkatsoulis et al. (2005), Baum and Lockstone (2007), Fairley et al. (2007), Du (2008), Giannoulakis et al. (2008), as well as Bang et al. (2009) did not report on the volunteers' experiences of the application process. This was also the case in Haruo's (2004) on the 2002 FIFA World Cup.

Preparation

The preparation phase for volunteering at the 2010 FIFA World Cup was in essence experienced as polarized. On the one hand the preparation was primarily experienced as empowering due to it being professional and informative, while on the other hand it was experienced as disempowering due to it being too cumbersome and didactic in nature. However, overall the volunteers experienced the preparation phase as adequately equipping them to volunteer at the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Haruo (2004) also made mention of the preparation phase for the 2002 FIFA World Cup, however, it was found that those volunteers did not make use of their training as volunteers during the event as it did not adequately prepare them for real-life situations.

Participation

The volunteers in essence experienced participating in the 2010 FIFA World Cup as being polarized. On the one side the volunteers had a positive experience interacting with fellow volunteers, supervisors and tourists, while on the other side language barriers and working shifts were experienced as problematic.

Firstly, interacting with fellow volunteers was experienced by the volunteers as unity in diversity, meaning that although they were from diverse backgrounds they all had a common goal. Bang et al. (2009), Giannoulakis et al. (2008) and Fairley et al. (2007), also made mention of fellow volunteers in their studies, but only as a factor that plays a role in a person's decision to become a volunteer. These studies did not report on volunteers' experiences of interacting with fellow volunteers.

Secondly, the participants also experienced interacting with their supervisors as a positive experience, as the supervisors treated them as adults, were friendly and helpful. There was also a functional communication process between the supervisors and the volunteers. This is in contrast to the research done by Du (2008) and Haruo (2004) who reported a lack of communication between

volunteers and supervisors, which resulted in volunteers experiencing dissatisfaction with volunteering.

Thirdly, interacting with tourists was also a positive experience for the volunteers, as they saw the tourists develop a sense of appreciation for South Africa. None of the previous studies on volunteering at the Olympic Games done by Karkatsoulis et al. (2005), Baum and Lockstone (2007), Fairley et al. (2007), Du (2008), Giannoulakis et al. (2008), Bang et al. (2009), as well as the study done by Haruo (2004) on the 2002 FIFA World Cup made any mention of the volunteers' experiences of the tourists.

However, participants referred to dilemmas while participating in the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The one dilemma was the language barrier, which none of the previous studies done by Haruo (2004), Karkatsoulis et al. (2005), Baum and Lockstone (2007), Fairley et al. (2007), Du (2008), Giannoulakis et al. (2008) and Bang et al. (2009) mentioned. Working shifts also posed some problems to the volunteers, which was also reported in the research by Haruo (2004).

Reflection

The volunteers' polarized experiences of the 2010 FIFA World Cup with specific reference to the application phase, the preparation process and the participation phase, were not present in the reflections of the volunteers on the meaning of the 2010 FIFA World Cup for them personally. The participants reflected positively on the value volunteering at the 2010 FIFA World Cup had for them as people. The study done by Haruo (2004) on the 2002 FIFA World Cup, as well as the research done by Karkatsoulis et al. (2005), Giannoulakis et al. (2008) and Bang et al. (2009) on volunteering at the Olympic Games all made reference to the value volunteering had for the volunteers personally.

Limitations

The researchers acknowledge a limitation of this study. In the present study, five South African female COT general volunteers participated in the study. From a descriptive phenomenological position, this can be seen as a limitation, as the study focuses on the essence of volunteering at the 2010 FIFA World Cup based only on female experiences, therefore excluding male volunteer experiences.

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