The Olympics is such a special and unique event, it comes around every two or four years depending n if its summer or winter and essentially most people are going to the games to volunteer are doing it as a one off special event ; some go because they have an affinity with the sport or their connected or involved with community sport they might be a president or a volunteer or an official in sport and they’ll go on and officiate or be apart of the Olympic officiating team if you like- in terms of helping the vent run on the sporting field, those people who are peripheral to that in terms of support roles, are people from all walks of life professional , non professional who go there just to experience something quite unique and a once in a life time experience.

Some are professional volunteers who are fulfilling quite specialised roles in the media centre of athlete support for the actual Olympic team- they may well be volunteering their services as a doctor, a physio , allied health professional , psychologist, ect.

Some of them are paid by the institute of sport or the federation, but the majority are unpaid and are giving up their time freely- and that’s usually because they have had a long term, the athletes themselves in getting them to the games, so putting in that effort to the actual event is one of the spurs that gets them to devote their time and energy to do it.

The type of people who volunteer at the Olympics is pretty much a representation of society. I mean there is the people who actually have the means to get there and volunteer their time to travel to go an volunteer at an overseas event, there are probably those people who have the means to do that, but those people who are local volunteers who are UK based will come from all walks of life, all types of background to volunteers so its not exclusively for just those of the professional realm but for people from all walks of life who want to volunteer.

The games is seen as a commercial product but h e IOC and organising committees for these games really rely on volunteers quite extensively because the actual cost of hosting these games is enormous and they usually go over budget as you have probably seen in the papers recently so having 40k volunteers if you had to pay for their time would be a for the 16 days of competition it is a considerable impost, there lots of cost already involved with managing volunteers, there are the giving them a uniform, training them vetting applications and actually managing them through paid staff, so there is huge investment of actually getting the volunteer labour work force there, but at the same time it is a huge cost saving for the Organising Committee t have them there and they are absolutely central and part of the legacy if you like, of the Olympic games – leaving behind volunteers that got involved and build a little social capital amongst themselves but also having some expertise to leave in the home country for running events in future years.

Volunteers get a lot of benefits not just from getting involved in large scale events like the Olympics but also in community sort or any other non-profit community organisation. They get some personal connections that they build through working with other volunteers, they may get some skill development – in terms of fulfilling a role which is outside their professional role or work environment, they might build their cv looking to get some experience and volunteering is one way of doing that, they also get to contribute back to the community which gives a sense of esteems and sense of achievement in the community and a lot of the people I interview who are volunteers really talk about the individual benefit they receive by giving their time and energy to cause- its quite considerable.