

Journal of Rural and Community Development

The Rural Giving Difference? Volunteering as Philanthropy in an Irish Community Organization

Authors: Maria L. Gallo & Louise Duffy

Citation:

Gallo, M. L., & Duffy, L. (2016). The rural giving difference? Volunteering as philanthropy in an Irish community *The Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 11(1), 1-15.

Publisher:

Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

Editor:

Dr. Doug Ramsey

Open Access Policy:

This journal provides open access to all of its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge. Such access is associated with increased readership and increased citation of an author's work.



**BRANDON
UNIVERSITY**

Founded 1899



The Rural Giving Difference? Volunteering as Philanthropy in an Irish Community Organization

Maria L. Gallo

National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland
St Angela's College, Sligo, Ireland
mgallo@stangelas.nuigalway.ie

Louise Duffy

National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland
St Angela's College, Sligo, Ireland
glasloughTT@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper presents a recent case study of a community-based sporting organization in the rural north east of Ireland with activities driven by volunteers. While community-based volunteering is not particularly unusual in rural Ireland, this case demonstrates volunteering as philanthropy: long-term volunteer commitments; regular and sustained donations; a means to transform the organization and community. The organization does not recognise this volunteering as philanthropic, despite the fact that this action aligns with the key values of the One Percent Difference Campaign— Ireland's national giving campaign—espousing a spirit to the commitment to their organization and their sporting cause. The findings suggest a need for training and support for community volunteers in fundraising and philanthropy. Although this paper concentrates on one case study, the findings may resonate with other rural community and voluntary organizations that aim for commitment to the local activity that may have a transformative impact on rural vibrancy and social inclusion.

Keywords: philanthropy, Ireland, volunteering, community-based fundraising, diaspora fundraising, One Percent Difference Campaign

1.0 Introduction

In 2013, a national giving campaign was launched in Ireland—the One Percent Difference Campaign—as an attempt to bring philanthropy into the public consciousness. While the campaign garnered great patronage from high profile individuals and received support from the Irish Government, the diffusion of this campaign to rural Ireland encountered a stumbling block. Irish community and voluntary groups remain under extreme financial pressure and strategic, long term philanthropy is viewed as low priority. This paper outlines a recent case study of a voluntary community-based sporting organization in the rural North east of Ireland that initially fits this description, unaware of the national campaign and concentrated wholly on the funding needs of their organization. However, an in-depth study of the organization actually reveals insight into philanthropic practices consistent with this national philanthropy campaign, ideals without acknowledgement or understanding of this activity taking place and its transformative effect on the local community. The organization's knowledge and perceptions of philanthropy meant that although they engaged in a vast array of philanthropic activity—long-term volunteer commitments; regular and sustained donations; a means to transform the organization and

community—they were unaware of this work as philanthropic activity and did not demonstrate the ability, or capacity, to leverage this success towards a significant expansion. At the same time their volunteering spirit and actions espouse the key values of the One Percent Difference Campaign—as a spirit to the commitment to their organization and their sporting cause. The findings suggest a need for training and support for community volunteers in fundraising and philanthropy. Although this paper concentrates on research from one case study, the findings may resonate with other rural community organizations, that aim for commitment to the local activity that may have a transformative impact on the rural vibrancy and social inclusion. Moreover, this paper offers an intriguing platform to consider recommendations to create a support system for the sector thus building capacity for a thriving philanthropic infrastructure.

1.1 Community Voluntary Organizations in Ireland, Fundraising and Philanthropy

Following the Celtic tiger, the onset of a recession and subsequent recovery, community voluntary organizations (CVOs) in the Republic of Ireland experienced challenges to their sustainability from state and market forces. With reduced funding streams and support from both government bodies and the private sector, many CVOs endure financial uncertainty, insecurity and vulnerability. This article presents a unique case study on an athletic organization in the north east of Ireland (pseudonym ‘Athletica-Og’) with philanthropic practices instrumental in sustaining the organization over many years. This success is achieved through volunteer leadership after deferring to the government funding challenges and maximising the market opportunities in their rural location. The core research question of the study is: How could philanthropic activities in a rural community CVO contribute to building sustainability and financial security? This paper addresses the first component of the study: identifying philanthropic activity and understanding its placement for the organization and in the wider Irish community and voluntary sector.

One of the strengths of the CVO sector in Ireland, especially in rural areas is its ability to identify and address community needs through volunteer-led initiatives. However, concerns over sustainability and volunteer fatigue in the sector together with reduced funding from both the public and the State over the last number of years (The Wheel, 2014) present serious issues of sustainability. Broadly, CVO sustainability refers to the ability of administrators to maintain the organization over the long term, whereas financial sustainability refers to the ability to maintain financial capacity over time, including funds to grow the organization (Bowman 2011).

The Wheel, an organization that represents and supports the CVO sector in Ireland, conducted a recent survey to show that 53 per cent of the income for the average non-profit organization comes from grants or funding directly from the State (The Wheel 2014, p.11). During the time of economic austerity following the Celtic tiger period, between 2009 to 2012, 60 per cent of non-profits experienced a decrease in income, resulting in the need for these organizations to reduce service provision or seek efficiencies in offering such provision (The Wheel 2014, p.11-12). In addition, many funding streams supported by the State, such as capital growth programmes or initiatives to support sports and recreation were dramatically reduced during this recession resulting in organizations such as Athletica-Og, opting against pursuing state funding streams.

According to Donoghue, Prizeman, O’Regan & Noel (2006) there is a degree of informality that exists in Irish CVOs. Moreover, there is a dependency on fundraising to merely exist and remain viable. Smaller organizations rely on

volunteers to manage fundraising whilst larger organizations are more likely to have dedicated fundraising staff (The Wheel, 2014). McGee and Donoghue (2009) acknowledge that many organizations are resource-constrained and need to engage in fundraising to attract financial resources, even more challenging for rural organizations (Kahe & White, 2013). Robinson (2003) insists many rural CVOs rely heavily on local volunteers, limited resources and smaller donor potential. With this limited capacity for revenue generation the focus is covering operational costs (Lysakowski, 2004). In response, fundraising events such as race nights, village fetes and church gate collections are examples of fundraisers organised on an ad hoc basis, often unconnected to a formal fundraising plan or strategy (Gallo, 2005; Quebral, 2004).

Weiner and Solomon (2007) describe philanthropy as a love of humankind which is expressed through acts of charity and benevolent goodwill, especially toward the needy or suffering. Philanthropy Ireland defines philanthropy as “a particular kind of charitable giving...focused on the root causes of problems and making a sustainable improvement, as distinct from contributing to immediate relief” (Forum on Philanthropy and Fundraising, 2012, p.3). While we may generally associate philanthropy in a financial context we must not discount other philanthropic acts such as the giving of time and talent, through volunteerism (LeMay, 2009; Grace, 1997).

Philanthropy has existed in Ireland for centuries, largely associated with religious traditions (Gallo, 2013), with no specific literature pointing to rural philanthropy in an Irish context. Unlike the United States, many donations to charity in Ireland are unplanned, spontaneous and often small monetary amounts commonly designated to address an immediate need instead of addressing large-scale, systemic issues. This prevailing attitude to giving reflects a culture in which philanthropy is not an embedded characteristic (Forum on Philanthropy and Fundraising, 2012) and the development of this culture is a requirement to see the expansion of philanthropy in Ireland (Gallo, 2014).

Daly (2012) asserts that philanthropy is a contested concept, noting the complexity in its definition and its grounding in cultural uses, understanding and application. The position of philanthropy in wider society in the United Kingdom (and one could argue in Ireland) is the association of philanthropy with wealthy individuals and foundations. Therefore, the use of philanthropy as an everyday concept, like is purported in the One Percent Giving Campaign and indeed in the case presented shows the philanthropy has a multiplicity of descriptions, as argued by Acs and Phillips (2002).

1.2 One Percent Difference Campaign (1% Campaign)

Launched in 2013 and led by Philanthropy Ireland, the One Percent Giving Campaign was a promotional and marketing campaign aimed at raising the profile of philanthropy in the general public. With the endorsement of Irish celebrities, the campaign was also a recommendation from a government supported Forum on Philanthropy and Fundraising report (2012). The overall aim is stated in the report:

The Campaign will increase awareness and understanding of the value of Philanthropy and Planned Giving amongst all sections of Irish society (high net worth, business, and the general public), through demonstrating their contribution to improving Irish society and the development of community in Ireland (p.12).

The report also set out an ambitious plan for the actions to follow the 1% Campaign and the ambitions for a private-public partnership in its implementation. In practice, the resourcing and the implementation of the campaign were driven by Philanthropy Ireland. The campaign was underpinned by bright red branding that clearly asked the public about giving their own one percent—of their time or money—with a Web site and mobile app to allow the public to calculate their own one percent based on their income. In the early weeks of the campaign, community and voluntary organisations were encouraged, through various media and network platforms to sign-up to the campaign, and over 900 CVOs and public sector agencies presented their support to the campaign and their willingness to be the beneficiaries of this one percent giving from the public (The 1% Difference National Giving Campaign Web site, 2013), with most of these organisations located in urban centres. The measurement tools on the impact of the campaign or indeed the opportunity to measure the effectiveness of the campaign is unclear.

Despite the dearth of research on the campaign, this article aims to draw on the materials related to the campaign to generate a framework for analysis of a case study that was unaware of the national giving campaign existence.

1.3 Purpose of the Research

This research presents an intrinsic case study of a small, rural voluntary community organization to uncover and explore philanthropy in rural Ireland. This philanthropy could be described as hidden, because it is not articulated by such a term as philanthropy; however, it is consistent with the criteria of key themes drawn from the One Percent Difference Campaign key themes. The aim of the paper is to show that the two occur in parallel, the campaign aiming to promote philanthropy in its broadest sense and the case study putting into practice many of these same tenets. One is not aware of the other, but together the merging of these two allows for an opportunity for a discussion on the future of philanthropy as a publicly active concept in Ireland. Moreover, this research adds to a limited body of knowledge on philanthropy in rural communities and indeed the extent to which this philanthropic activity hidden from the view of volunteers themselves engaged with the organization and even from the wider public unconditional to recognise philanthropic success.

2.0 Methodology

The case study was a community sports organization established in 1945 in rural north east Ireland (pseudonym *Athletica-Og*). The CVO had no paid personnel and relied entirely on volunteers including 12 executive volunteers (members of the Board), 15 club coaches, eight volunteers dedicated to fundraising for a new facility along with approximately 150 members, both children and adults. While weekly training was organised at three locations in the rural community, members participated in sporting competitions and events, regionally, nationally and even internationally.

The case study was conducted using a qualitative research approach to explore the main research question: How could philanthropic activities in a rural community CVO contribute to building sustainability and financial security? The research strategy involved using semi-structured interviews, focus group and documentary analysis as the research instruments. This was an intrinsic case study because of the uniqueness and the interest in the particular case itself (Stake, 1995) and what insights it may yield for fundraising, philanthropy and volunteerism, though not generalizable to the wider CVO sector.

Participants were asked questions to ascertain their knowledge, understanding and perceptions of philanthropy which uncovered significant hidden philanthropy and lack of knowledge on accessing philanthropic funding from foundations or trusts. Participants were also asked about their involvement with former members, donors, volunteers and networks, for fundraising, donations or grant opportunities. Overall, the research data showed an overwhelming lack of knowledge and understanding around philanthropy or philanthropic practices such as giving of time in coaching children, organising athletic events. Athletica-Og participants noted identifying a need to train someone specifically to carry out philanthropic activity, demonstrating the perception that philanthropy focuses on fundraising, or, as something for the rich or larger organizations. Furthermore, despite the significant funds raised from 32 recurrent donors (local businesses), this CVO did not associate these annual donations as philanthropy.

The data was gathered between January and April 2014 through five semi-structured interviews and one focus group with key Athletica-Og board executive volunteers, members (athletes), coaches and stakeholders. This is timely as the information was gathered at a time only months after the launch and promotion of the 1% Campaign in Ireland. The participants were chosen due to their endurance, commitment and dedication to Athletica-Og, from reputable business owners and volunteers renowned for their knowledge and responsibility in sustaining the organization for many years. Purposive sampling was employed to select those with in depth knowledge or engagement with fundraising and volunteering (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The interviewees included the long-standing volunteers with the organisation, those volunteers with experience ranging from ten years to fifty years of service. Data was also collected through documentary analysis, with 46 documents consulted including internal planning documents, communication materials, newspaper editorials and Athletica-Og's 50th anniversary publication. Data analysis included the emergence of themes from the data, building step-by-step a picture of the research findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The philanthropic practices of time, talent and treasure as defined by LeMay (2009) is the lens to identify and analyse these themes. This article focuses on the attributes of volunteers demonstrated through the CVO's philanthropic practice.

3.0 Findings

3.1 Overview

The 1% Campaign resources can be synthesised into five key themes: giving as a commitment to the cause; giving as a universal activity; giving as collective responsibility; giving as leadership and transformation; giving as a challenge (to give even more). These themes allow for a lens in which to view the findings from the case study. The same publication acknowledges the support of long-standing volunteers and donors to the organization. The findings demonstrate that Athletica Og is a community voluntary organization that is not reliant on state support and has applied the spirit of philanthropy to remain viable for decades. The findings demonstrate philanthropic tendencies percolating to the surface through volunteers committing to the giving consistent with the 1% Campaign.

“Philanthropy, what’s that?” and “Isn’t it something to do with charity?” are the sentiments that encapsulate the reaction of the Athletica-Og research participants. While many participants could associate philanthropy in a financial context, beliefs that philanthropic acts such as the giving of time, talent or treasure are not understood by research participants, consistent with the findings

of Grace (1997). With most volunteers giving of their time for decades in many cases, not one considered their actions as philanthropic. Furthermore, surprisingly members spoke of having no knowledge of accessing philanthropic funding yet this research revealed over thirty local businesses give annual donations to Athletica-Og cultivated by the organization's volunteers.

3.2 Giving as Commitment to the Cause

This sense of 'giving back' has sustained the CVO for decades. Volunteer involvement in Athletica-Og began or was sustained due to connections with family or friends, as one volunteer/former member stated: "I am here for the love of the club...what it can do for the children. All my children have been members of Athletica-Og and been given great opportunities." This philanthropic support demonstrates the inherent determination of the volunteers, members and supporters that exists in the CVO's culture. Drezner (2011) insists that philanthropic giving does not only help the recipients but the donors and volunteers often benefit as well. At Athletica-Og, philanthropy is personified through numerous ways to engage in such volunteerism: at committee level, as athletes (members), as fundraisers or as coaches, with many individuals engaged in two or more of these activities within the organization.

Despite the lack of understanding by Athletica-Og volunteers of their work as philanthropic, the instincts to conduct this work are very strong, with the key attributes identified by the group as people with a great commitment to the organization and the tenacity to seek out the work that needs to be done for and by Athletica-Og, regardless of the financial or situational challenges. The testimonials of past members in the focus group accentuated the volunteer commitment, "The people in Athletica-Og put their life into the club and that is my club, they took me training when I was 15 years old, and to races... the work they do is tremendous." The volunteerism required for the core sports operations of Athletica-Og is immense, and the findings suggest that this volunteer commitment is recognised by the members as a crucial resource, as essential as funding for the long-term sustainability of the organization. The study reveals Athletica-Og boasted frequently in the findings of their impressive record of longevity among volunteers, many contributing their time and skills for decades.

Many of rural CVOs experience financial vulnerability and fundraising dependency, often leading to a response that is an ad hoc approach to fundraising (McGee & Donoghue, 2009; Zappala & Lyons, 2006). However, the approach to address financial needs by the volunteers and members of Athletica-Og diverges from this standard response. The result, as the research findings suggest, is that this shared vision at Athletica-Og is understood and mobilises the volunteers percolating down to the community. Athletica-Og volunteers communicate a strong case for supporting its activity through fundraising, a strategy reinforced by McKinsey & Company (2009).

Moreover, Athletica-Og have a tradition of inviting families and former members to annual races and encouraging their participation. According to one coach, "We have always tried to remember our former members and our custom of naming each race after either deceased members or a major achieving member. This strengthens our relationship with families." Schervish (2005) states that the definitive criteria of philanthropy is a "self-identification with others or the cause" (p. 46). The evidence of this Athletica-Og affinity is crucial to funding success as the treasurer stated "About 90 per cent of our local businesses give every year and they have been loyal to us down through the years." On several occasions the research respondents also noted how past members of the organization return to volunteer or as supporters of Athletica-Og.

3.3 Giving as a Universal Activity

Like most rural groups, Athletica-Og must fundraise to exist, thus becoming reliant on the local market for sustainability. However, unlike many CVOs they are aware of their main dependencies and attempt to address these challenges. For example, by the introduction of the training fee the treasurer stated “We collect one euro a night from every athlete now, we started that about two years ago and it has proved to be very successful.” The research findings suggest Athletica-Og is dependent on four main fundraising events: annual church gate collection, annual road races, donations from local businesses and the nightly training fee. The PRO expressed concerns about the aspects of saturation of fundraising in such a small area stating:

It is such a small area and all the clubs are asking the same people and they just don't have the money to give to everybody. We have our facility fund committee who are separate from us [main committee], who are raising money to get us our own premises.

When participants were asked about what they were most dependent on in the organization (if anything) the unanimous answer was “fundraising”. The treasurer elaborated by stating “It takes anything from 16,000–17,000 euro annually to run the club, which is really our priority and we cut our cloth in terms of what we spend [on competition entries] now to match that.” Competition entry fees were noted as the largest expenditure of the CVO, consistent with the Sontag-Padilla, Staplefoot & Gonzalez Morganti, (2012) theory noting the challenges of balancing financial viability with organizational mission. The general tone regarding fundraising was positive and it appeared that many enjoyed participating in fundraisers, welcoming the challenge. This analysis illustrates how dependency issues are managed through planned fundraising which according to Gallo (2005) reduces a CVO's dependency on its operating environment, including the State for funding.

Athletica-Og volunteers, according to the findings, tend to be connected through family or friends and in many cases were former members themselves, as members explained, “All my children are actively involved in the club and I feel it is really my obligation to be involved and to help out, especially when I see how much they get out of it.” and “My family were volunteering so I hadn't really got a choice!” This emotional impetus for the sustained volunteerism at Athletica-Og is linked directly to the value of the affinity individuals have for the organization. This is consistent with Gallo (2012) who contends that building relationships includes a stage of fostering the affinity that individuals have for an organization, which contributes towards attracting long-term and sustainable philanthropic support.

The stewardship of stakeholders linked with the organization has created, according to the data, a deep sense of affinity amongst volunteers in the organization. Coupled with a convincing vision, this affinity for Athletica-Og is contagious, and volunteers have managed to maintain high levels of retention of financial donations from 32 local businesses. Historical links to the organization do assist in this donation success. For example, the findings reveal that in 2014, 80 per cent of the longstanding business donors were connected to Athletica-Og by family or were former members. The volunteers see value in exploiting this affinity in Athletica-Og when requesting a renewal of contributions. As noted in minutes to an Athletica-Og meeting, “One member and owner of a local business has been sponsoring prizes and donating funds in excess of 1000 euros annually for over 20 years.” The findings contend that pre-existing relationships with donors maintained over time has an accumulative effect of attracting new

members and donors, consistent with Breeze & Wilkinson (2011). These historical links were found to be crucially important when seeking support for their major fundraiser in 2012 (Lakelands Challenge) with many local businesses donating substantially when approached by volunteers.

The data revealed that letters were sent out to former members living outside of Ireland seeking financial support. This communication highlighted organizational strengths and past sporting achievements at Athletica-Og, aiming to create nostalgia amongst the largely American and Australian diaspora of former club members. While this initiative demonstrated some small scale success, translating into some donations to the organization, Athletica-Og recognises that further stewardship of these donors is needed to sustain this diaspora support, a strategy reinforced by Frumkin (2006). Diaspora philanthropy is a relatively new term with many variations (Johnston, 2007). Although in Ireland there is a poorly developed indigenous philanthropic infrastructure (Ancien, Boyle & Kitchin, 2009; Gallo, 2014), Athletica-Og volunteers strategically engage with their former members abroad which demonstrates the potential for long-term philanthropic support. By identifying the diaspora as a potential market for communicating the Athletica-Og vision, the organization is beginning to capitalise on the funding potential of this 'alumni' group. This is consistent with Weinstein who states that "People give to people to help people, they make their decision to give based on relationships and to what degree the appeal responds to their interests" (Weinstein, 2009, p.17). Embedding the need for this diaspora philanthropy at Athletica-Og—even if it is not named as such by the volunteers—is, the organization's way of fostering voluntary giving to achieve public good.

3.4 Giving as Collective Responsibility

The data suggests that this strategic approach to fundraising at Athletica-Og increases members and community confidence in the CVO. For example, many promotional documents for fundraisers encourage the entire community to participate (not only members) and communication on the success of their fundraisers in their newsletter and online communications show a great transparency on the funds raised and how they are employed in the organization. The volunteers involved in fundraising are the stewards of the organization taking great care of the resources for the members. While Aitken, Cairns & Thake (2008) present evidence on the stewardship of community physical assets such as land, in this case study it is the act of stewardship as an attribute focuses on the taking care of the philanthropic resources, volunteers, fundraising activity and the donors, that enable the organization's activity to take place, akin to the advancement definition of stewardship, as a relationship-building tool towards the advancement of an organization (Tromble 1998).

Without their own facility, Athletica-Og relies on renting two other facilities to operate. This was expressed by research participants as a real barrier to sustainability. However, as the Chairperson explained, "We are committed to purchasing our own facility whatever it takes and I know we have the people here on our team to make that happen." This key fundraising vision was also integrated into the organization's overall vision, reiterated in the findings, articulated by the Chairperson as:

Firstly, Athletica-Og needs our own proper facility, secondly we want to have the commitment of as many athletes and volunteers as possible and finally our vision is to grow Athletica-Og to inspire donors and interest in sport from different angles.

This clear, consistent message noted in newsletters, reports, and communications in newspaper articles and social media postings show that securing a facility for this CVO was the top priority and the vision for long term sustainability. In addition, Athletica-Og leadership is also focused on the goal of sourcing the larger grants to realise this vision as the secretary explained, “There is a big pot of money being allocated in the sports capital and if we could tap into this it would really help us achieve our aim together with our facility fund.”

These findings are consistent with Low, Butt, Ellis Paine & Davis Smith (2007) which demonstrates that a key motivation for volunteering is the connection of the family to the organisation, in this case children who are participating in the AO sporting activity. The long standing nature of volunteers in AO—even beyond familial responsibility—for decades show a dedication for a wider ‘family’ of giving to the community.

3.5 Giving as Leadership and Transformation

The findings show that Athletica-Og executive committee members provide the key leadership for the fundraising efforts. Notably, these leaders recognise the need to be more engaged directly in fundraising activity, showing the importance of this activity to the wider organization’s membership by leading by example. As one member describes the Chairperson’s commitment to fundraising, “It takes a certain calibre of person to ask for money... confidence in their own ability... Our chairperson is fantastic at it.” Although Athletica-Og set up structures for fundraising, including a separate committee for this activity, the executive members continue to play a key role in requesting donations and participating in fundraising initiatives.

Athletica-Og is well established in the community and the research participants attribute much of this success to the past leadership and the perseverance of a few former members. A few names repeatedly emerge in the data as ambassadors for the organization, as the secretary noted, “These people put their heart and soul into Athletica-Og and really sow the seeds for the future, for the rest of us.” A poignant sense of nostalgia was palpable, demonstrating a genuine respect for these predecessors.

The executive leadership of Athletica-Og, displayed a real passion for developing the organization, as one member explained, “We have a great group of seven or eight committed members who are highly motivated and dedicated to the cause.” The cohesion among volunteers signified a real sense of unity and dedication to communicating their philanthropic message. The importance of everyone having a role in raising funds for the organization was described by the Chairperson, “We really are lucky that our people are willing to put their shoulder to the wheel to get the job done.” Leaders exhibit philanthropic ways of thinking, for example, thinking ten years into the future for Athletica-Og, which is consistent with Dietlin (2010) stating that philanthropy aspires to do something more radical and lasting. Falk (2005) recognises the link between philanthropy and leadership to build an organization stating: “Philanthropy needs leadership to help develop organizations’ capacity...it demonstrates the faith society places in an institution and the willingness of the donor community to affirm your mission” (p. 3). This case highlights the key role leadership plays in developing Athletica-Og and sustaining momentum for this fundraising work at this CVO.

3.6 Giving as a Challenge (to Give Even More)

Many of these volunteers also participate in raising funds for the CVO. For example, Lakeland Challenge, an ambitious fundraising campaign, raised €50,000 in five months, while another, Fit for Life fundraiser both has a secondary aim of broadening the appeal of membership, additional volunteers and fundraising support, to a wider geographic area. As the Public Relations Officer (PRO) volunteer noted, “We know it is such a small area and all the clubs are asking the same people who just don’t have the money to give to everybody.” Thus, the creativity of fundraising campaigns to widen their market—both in terms of demographic and geographic appeal—demonstrates the tenacity of volunteers to gain support for the organization. Klein (2006) states that fundraising in rural areas is much harder than in urban areas with higher costs and complex relationships. This study revealed the volunteers’ commitment and reported success to raising funds, despite the widespread unemployment and emigration in this rural location. The commitment of these volunteers to give of their time and then be challenged to also identify and secure additional funding—through new events or identifying new corporate/business donors—shows how the organisation takes difficult circumstances and continues to focus on meeting the growing needs of the organisation. Moreover, the addition of health and well-being programmes as both a fundraising activity and also a community support measure draws even further on volunteers’ talents to organise and support these initiatives.

Community-based fundraising activity common in Ireland is organised for the short-term viability, piecemeal fundraising initiatives such as bag packing at supermarkets or pub quizzes on an ad hoc basis with the hope to raise some funds, instead of the long-term sustainability of an organization (Gallo, 2005; McGee & Donoghue, 2009). The findings of *Athletica-Og* are largely consistent with this approach, however, this case study has particular fundraising management practices and volunteer attributes that underpin much of the fundraising success, towards a long-term sustainable strategy unique in the sector. The funding required for *Athletica-Og* operations are compiled annually and a complementary fundraising strategy is then produced as the secretary explained:

We sit down at a committee meeting in January and go through the list and add new ones [fundraisers] if necessary, we find many of them [members], they volunteer themselves to help out, they know the importance to the club.

As the secretary of *Athletica-Og* stated, “The development fund committee display smart fundraising ideas and have an excellent array of skills and versatility at their disposal.” The introduction of a new subcommittee for developing membership while another committee focuses on fundraising means there is a diffusing of volunteers working on managing aspects of sustainability.

The research participants displayed a sense of confidence and contentment regarding their credibility and trustworthiness of the organization in the sporting community and local community. The CVO has developed a fundraising reputation that is, as noted by one volunteer, the “envy of many other local groups.” The longest serving volunteer member in *Athletica-Og* said “People just know about us, sure we have been around for nearly 70 years.” There was an overwhelming sense of nostalgia on the sporting and organizational funding successes indicated in many of the organization’s documents and media articles on *Athletica-Og*. When questioned about publicising events or recruiting new members the Secretary said:

People just come, we used to go out to the schools to get the children involved but this hasn't happened for years, we don't really need to advertise for members anymore, we find they just know through connections.

Athletica-Og also considers a strategy for creating sustained volunteerism. When asked how leaders would like to see the club develop over the next five years the Chairperson said "We have been assessing the 20 to 30 year olds in the area who have young children, and whose future lies in the community, with a view to bringing them on board." Almost all volunteers interviewed acknowledge the importance of motivating and developing interests and relationships with parents of athletes in the hope that the parents will become involved, and attempting to maximise the talents available of new and potential volunteers as a component of philanthropy.

This demonstrates a great stewardship and relationship building that Athletica-Og has fostered through its fundraising and membership activities. These attributes focused on giving of talent and skills to the organization and the careful and respectful caring of the resources of the organization towards the advancement of the organization. As the PRO said, "We know that resource constraints can be an issue for some groups but we spend a lot of time building relationships, especially with members and parents."

4.0 Analysis and Discussion

The One Percent Difference Campaign challenged people to give one percent of their time or money 'to a cause you believe in' (The 1% Difference National Giving Campaign Web site, 2013). The idea is that 'it doesn't matter who you are or what you do, we all give the same one percent' (The 1% Difference National Giving Campaign Web site, 2013). The themes drawn from the 1% Campaign demonstrates a holistic view of philanthropy that includes time, talent and treasure towards securing the sustainability of the case study organization, despite the limited State funding available to the CVO and indeed a creative maximisation of the wider community as a key market for this fundraising activity. Thus, Athletica-Og, like many wishing to thrive, enacts, almost instinctively, a number of the campaign themes in its volunteering spirit to become more market-facing in its activity showing that the values of the 1% Campaign are indeed active across Ireland.

This case study demonstrates the potential for philanthropy—both in sustained volunteerism and fundraising—to impact the work of the community voluntary as a key market force. There is an overlap in the attributes meeting all aspects of the time, talent and treasure aspects of philanthropy. For example, the volunteers show a long-standing commitment to and shared vision of the organization while encouraging those with talent—both in athletic terms and for fundraising—to actively participate in contributing to the organization. This strategy has enabled a consistent treasure, in monetary terms, to accumulate, built through key relationships and stewarding through appeals to the local market—in a rural community, this is the immediate community and also a wider Irish diaspora with a long-standing affinity to the organization. While this may be the analysis based on the research findings, the most fascinating aspect was how hidden this philanthropic work was from the organization itself. Changing thinking and attitudes around philanthropy in Ireland—and perhaps across the whole voluntary sector—are needed along with a comprehensive educational and training programme (Donoghue, O'Regan, McGee, & Donovan 2007; Gallo, 2014; McGee & Donoghue, 2009). As Bekkers and Wiepking (2010) contend,

the first tenet of philanthropy is the awareness of need. Keenan (2008) repeatedly highlights the absence of an overall body in Ireland to represent the community voluntary matters especially in support of philanthropy, fundraising and State resource dependency (Gallo, 2014; McGee & Donoghue, 2009).

Schervish, (2005) states that the “largest portion of giving and volunteering takes place in one’s own community and helps activities from which the donor is directly associated” (p 101). This case study reveals an altruism motivated by personal values and aspirations for the CVO provoking instinctive, unrecognised philanthropic behaviours. The findings demonstrate that the foundation for successful fundraising is underpinned by volunteer commitment and tenacity towards Athletica-Og’s activities. As the volunteers build relationships and engage stakeholders in the organization through a stewardship plan, as Davis, Schoorman and Donaldson (1997) contend, the focus is on the overall benefit of the organization not on the individual. In this case, Athletica-Og volunteers are committed to the organization’s values and in working with stakeholders—including potential donors to the organization—they espouse these values first over individual needs. The research suggests that Athletica-Og volunteers share these stewardship attributes along with sharing and communicating a common vision for the future of the organization—such as building a new facility. Athletica-Og remains tenacious and turns to the market to provide for their long-term development.

Despite this recognition, the research data suggests the Athletica-Og has limited knowledge and understanding of philanthropy as a concept or within the Irish context. Athletica-Og is diligent in seeking and securing funding and by engaging a variety of key stakeholders, including members of the club and former members of the club’s diaspora. With very ambitious fundraising targets—including securing funding for a new athletics facility—Athletica-Og was both strategic and creative in leveraging its board and volunteers towards acquiring funding for this ultimate goal. The organization acknowledged a number of challenges in its fundraising endeavours, including the competition from other CVOs in the rural community also vying for a limited pool of funds available from local businesses and community members. The findings suggest that despite the hidden nature of their philanthropic practices, Athletica-Og demonstrates a number of key attributes through its volunteer leadership that may be of benefit for other CVOs considering successful philanthropic and fundraising practices.

5.0 Conclusion

The challenges of funding restrictions to CVOs in Ireland by the State has enabled organizations such as Athletica-Og to adopt resourceful practices to engage the market in funding and supporting their activity. Despite the success and long-term sustainability shown by Athletica-Og to apply ingenuity through attributes to counterbalance voluntary failure, that philanthropic insufficiency of inadequate resources for their community operations. Athletica-Og shows resilience and creativity in their philanthropic practices—shows the time, talent and treasure of philanthropy—despite the challenging forces at play in their rural community. Whilst volunteers in this case study organization had a limited understanding of philanthropy and the 1% Campaign, their determination through their activities and fundraising practice are exemplified through these five national giving campaign themes. By viewing this rural setting as a place to offer their community sporting activity and to expand their philanthropic practice, Athletica-Og focused on building on the commitment of volunteers and on their relationships within the community towards achieving shared goals.

Other CVOs may wish to reflect on whether the same attributes are in place, or could be in place over time, within their own organization to bring variations of this philanthropic practice—long-term volunteerism, acquiring sustainable funding—for the advancement of their organization.

References

- Acs, Z. J., & Phillips, R. J. (2002). Entrepreneurship and philanthropy in American capitalism. *Small Business Economics*, 19(3), 189–204.
- Aitken, M., Cairns, B. & Thake, S. (2008). *Community ownership and management of assets*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Retrieved April 29, 2015, from <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/2322-community-organizations-assets.pdf>
- Ancien, D., Boyle, M. & Kitchin, R. (2009, January). *Exploring diaspora strategies: Lessons for Ireland*. Paper presented at Exploring Diaspora Strategies International Comparison Workshop, National University of Ireland Maynooth. Retrieved from <http://eprints.maynoothuniversity.ie/2054/>
- Bekkers, R. & Wiepking, P. (2010). A literature review of empirical studies of philanthropy: Eight mechanisms that drive charitable giving. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*.
- Drezner, N. (2011). 'What guides the study of philanthropy and fundraising.' *ASHE higher education report: Special issue: Philanthropy and fundraising in American higher education*. 37, (2), pp.47-63.
- Bowman, W. (2011). Financial capacity and sustainability of ordinary nonprofits. *Nonprofit management and leadership*, 22(1), 37-51.
- Breeze, B., Wilkinson, I., Gouwenberg, B. & Schuyt, T. (2011). *Giving in evidence: Fundraising from philanthropy in European universities*. Brussels: European Union, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation.
- Cohen, L., Mannion, L & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*, 6th edition. London: Routledge.
- Daly, S. (2012) Philanthropy as an essentially contested concept. *Voluntas* 23(3), 535-557.
- Davis, J. H., Schoorman, F.D., & Donaldson, L. (1997). 'Towards a Stewardship Theory of Management.' *Academy of Management Review*, 22:1, pp.20-47.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.). (2005) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dietlin, L. M. (2010). *Transformational philanthropy: Entrepreneurs and nonprofits*. London: Jones and Bartlett.
- Donoghue, F, Prizeman, G., O'Regan, A. & Noel, V., (2006). *The hidden landscape: First forays into mapping nonprofit organizations in Ireland*. Dublin, Ireland: Centre for Nonprofit Management School of Business, University of Dublin, Trinity College.
- Donoghue, F., O'Regan, A., McGee, S. & Donovan A.M. (2007). *Exploring the Irish fundraising landscape: A report on the practice and scale of charitable fundraising from the public in Ireland*. (A Report for Irish Charities Tax Research Ltd.). Dublin, Ireland: Centre for Nonprofit Management School of Business, University of Dublin Trinity College.

- Falk, S. C. (2005). Maximising fundraising's strategic contribution. *New Directions for Philanthropic Fundraising*, 2005(49), 3-12.
- Forum on Philanthropy and Fundraising (2012). *Report of the Forum on Philanthropy and Fundraising*. Dublin: Forum on Philanthropy and Fundraising.
- Frumkin, P. (2006). *Strategic giving: The art and science of philanthropy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Gallo, M. L. (2005). *Creating community change: A fundraising guide for community groups in County Donegal*. Lifford, Ireland: Donegal County Council.
- Gallo, M. L. (2012). Beyond philanthropy: Recognising the value of alumni to benefit higher education institutions. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 18(1): 41-55.
- Gallo, M. L. (2013). A third master?: Examining the road to alumni philanthropic giving at an Irish Catholic college. *Christian Higher Education*, 12(4), 266-281.
- Gallo, M. L. (2014) Creating a culture of giving in Irish higher education: An education in direct(ing) philanthropic giving in Ireland. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 4(4), 373-387.
- Grace, K. S. (1997). *Beyond Fundraising*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Johnson, P. D. (2007). *Diaspora Philanthropy: Influences Initiatives and Issues*. Boston and Cambridge: The Philanthropic Initiative and The Global Equity Initiative, Harvard University.
- Kahe, V. & White, C. (2013). *Fundraising in rural communities: Special considerations for rural fundraising*. USA: Centre for Participatory Change.
- Keenan, O. (2008). Relationships and representation: Challenges and opportunities for the voluntary and community sector in Ireland. *Centre for Nonprofit Management Discussion Paper Series*. Dublin, Ireland: Centre for Nonprofit Management School of Business, University of Dublin, Trinity College. Retrieved October 26, 2013, from <https://cnm.tcd.ie/resource-library/>
- Klein, K. (2006). *Rural fundraising: success stories for CASA/GAL programs*. Seattle: Grassroots Fundraising Journal.
- LeMay, K. (2009). *The generosity plan: Sharing your time, treasure and talent to shape the world*. New York. NY: Atria Paperback.
- Low, N., Butt, S., Ellis Paine, A., and Davis Smith, J. (2007) *Helping Out - A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving*. London: Office of the Third Sector. Retrieved July 29, 2016 from <http://www.ivr.org.uk/Migrated+Resources%2fDocuments%2fH%2fOTS+Helping+Out.pdf>
- Lysakowski, L. (2004). *Building an Effective Board of Directors*. Arlington, VA: The Association of Fundraising Professionals.
- McGee, S. & Donoghue, F. (2009). The conundrum of fundraising in nonprofit organizations: A story from Ireland. *Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing*, 21(4), 367-383.
- The 1% Difference National Giving Campaign. (2013). Retrieved July 29, 2016, from <http://www.onepercentdifference.ie/>

- Philanthropy in the Republic of Ireland: An assessment of the current state and future potential of philanthropic giving in the Republic of Ireland.* (2009). Dublin, Ireland: McKinsey and Company.
- Quebral, M. G. (2004). Nongovernmental organizations and fundraising: Why people equals power.' *New Directions for Philanthropic Fundraising*. 2004(46), 77-90.
- Robinson, A. (2003) 'Looking Beyond the Locals' *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*, 22(2). Retrieved from http://www.cdsfunds.com/rural_fundraising_looking_beyond_the_locals.html
- Schervish, P.G. (2005). Major donor, major motives: The people and purposes behind major gifts. *New Directions for Philanthropic Fund Raising*. 2005(47), 59-87.
- Sontag-Padilla, L., Staplefoot, B. L., & Gonzalez Morganti, K. (2012) *Financial sustainability for nonprofit organizations: A review of literature*. USA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved November 19, 2013 from <http://www.rand.org/>
- Stake, R.E. (1994) Case Studies. In Denzin, N. K. & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 236-47.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- A portrait of Ireland's nonprofit sector.* (2014). Dublin, Ireland: The Wheel.
- Tromble, W.W. (1998). *Excellence in Advancement: Applications for Higher Education and Nonprofit Organizations*. Gaithersburg, MD: An Aspen Publishers.
- Weiner A. S., & Solomon, J. R. (2007). Historical overview of philanthropy and aging. *Generations*. 31(2), 12-16.
- Weinstein, S. (2009). *The complete guide to fundraising management*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Zappala, G., & Lyons, M. (2006) Factors associated with fundraising dependency among nonprofit organizations in Australia. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*. 41, (4), Summer: 399-417.