



#2 – Bienvenue, Welcome, Yokoso !

Nacer Zorgani: Hi, this is Nacer Zorgani, I work at Paris 2024 for the volunteer program. What is the volunteer program? What do the volunteers do? What is their role, what are their objectives ?To answer these questions, to talk about the program, volunteer experience, meet me with those who have done, are doing and will do the Games. Welcome to “In the uniform of a volunteer”.

In an Organizing Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games such as Paris 2024, the employees are used to say that when they organize the Games, they welcome the world. Today, I am with a person who welcomes the world because she is in charge of the volunteers assisting the Olympic and Paralympic family. In addition, we are also lucky to have with us a former volunteer of this family. A family of which we will discuss about today. Eva Baldessin, Marine Petit, good morning!

Eva Baldessin and Marine Petit: Hello Nacer!

Nacer Zorgani: Eva, I'll turn to you first. Before we get to the heart of these volunteer roles and responsibilities what is the Olympic and Paralympic family?

Eva Baldessin: It's about 10,000 people, meaning a lot of people. And those people are the top international leaders of the sports world.

Nacer Zorgani: And what is their special status?

Eva Baldessin: They are the leaders of these bodies. That means that during the Olympic and Paralympic Games, they work to accomplish a mission of their own.

Nacer Zorgani: It is important, since there are personalities involved to be welcomed. So does the volunteer cover a role of ambassador with them?

Eva Baldessin: More than ever! He/she (the volunteer) is an ambassador, already, he/she is an ambassador of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, he/she is an ambassador of Paris 2024. The volunteer will be the first person that the member of the Olympic family will see when arriving in Paris.

Nacer Zorgani: Marine, you work at Paris 2024 in the volunteer program team, and you were a volunteer in Rio 2016 as an assistant to the Olympic and Paralympic family. Can you tell us more

about what that was like/ what that experience was like? And above all, did you feel like an ambassador of the Games?

Marine Petit: Yes, exactly Nacer. I, indeed, was a volunteer during the Rio 2016 Games. And my role was to accompany a member of the IOC (International Olympic Committee). More precisely, I had to make sure that from her arrival to the country, until his departure, everything went well. For everything to go as planned, it meant that he/she had the right information about the city, about the competitions and that she was on time to all her different appointments, especially the medal ceremonies.

Nacer Zorgani: Did you, at least, slightly feel as an ambassador of the Games then?

Marine Petit: I really felt like an ambassador of the Games. But, what was great, was to see my fellow Brazilian volunteers really feeling like ambassadors for their country and their city. And that was really incredible to see.

Nacer Zorgani: I imagine that they must have been very proud. So, Marine gave us a first portrait of what she was able to do in terms of responsibilities. Eva, could you complete more examples: what will the volunteers of this famous family be doing during the Games?

Eva Baldessin: I will start from the example of Marine, involving distributing medals. The IOC members give medals to the athletes on the competition sites/venues. The volunteer has to make sure that they arrive on time, that they receive all needed information, that they know where to go. This is just an example, and well, it involves already a lot of responsibilities: transportation, the level of information, knowledge of the competition site to be able to guide the member to the site. This is one of the missions of the volunteer.

Nacer Zorgani: When I was able to discuss with my colleagues, or some former volunteers present here at Paris 2024, I was often told that the volunteer really contributes to the success of the Games, of an Olympiad or Paralympiad. Do you have this feeling from your experience?

Eva Baldessin: Definitely! It is the face of the Games. What the volunteer will give off in terms of energy and the fact that he/she is happy to be there, to smile, to be available and to listen, will be essential. This is what it means to be an ambassador for the Paris 2024 Games.

Nacer Zorgani: Marine, do you share this feeling?

Marine Petit: Yes, totally. I put myself in the shoes of the people who were listening and I said to myself, well, this mission seems simple. This makes me think of an anecdote that happened to me at the very beginning of my mission in Rio. It was the first medal ceremony the person I was accompanying was attending. So, the story is: we are in the car, we are on time, there is the driver on my left, I am sitting at front and the person I am accompanying is behind. Suddenly, the driver takes on a right turn instead of going straight. Would you believe it was a simple mistake? No. It turns out that we embarked on a bridge; a bridge of about ten kilometers which crosses the bay of Rio and there we found ourselves completely stuck in the traffic jams. At that moment, I totally panicked because they had not told me that it was possible that something like this could happen and I did not know what to do. Even though I knew the city well, in traffic, it was not possible. I thought " now I have 2 solutions: On one hand, I could get angry at the driver, which is clearly not a good solution, and relates to what Eva mentioned regarding the correct state of mind needed for this. It was not the one we expected. On the other hand, my role at that time was really to just call the person of the site in question and to tell him that we were going to be late, and to try to find a backup solution hoping

that we would arrive on time. It turns out that we did arrive on time, and she was able to hand over the medal. And I must admit that, at that moment, I told myself that I had just saved the Games.

Nacer Zorgani: Thank you very much Marine. Let's say, for example, I would like to be a volunteer for a member of the Japanese IOC. What are the prerequisites, what do I have to do? And how will my day look like concretely?

Eva Baldessin: Well, there are many prerequisites. But I'll give you two: the first one, you were talking about a Japanese IOC member. Well, it's the living languages...

Nacer Zorgani: Yes, we have to keep that in mind: you can be a volunteer if you speak French or English.

Eva Baldessin: That's it! English is a prerequisite to be an assistant of the Olympic family because our IOC members speak mostly English and come from all over the world. If the assistant is assigned to a Japanese IOC member and they want to have fun practicing their Japanese because they know it, that's the right time. We're going to look for people with those language skill. Then we're going to look for people with the correct mentality/state of mind. You were talking about the smile, Marine. The availability, the desire to be there, the dynamism, the desire will also be extremely crucial for the assistant to the Olympic family and the volunteers in general.

Nacer Zorgani: And so, how does the day go for example? So, what does the day of a volunteer look like?

Eva Baldessin: It is very similar to the one of the IOC member. He has an extremely constrained and precise agenda because of his functions, because of the nature of his position. So, there is going to be a very particular focus on transportation, to allow IOC members to be on time in the different places, but also for those who have diplomatic skills, for example dignitaries, they will have to go to their embassies, etc. They have an agenda that is very specific, and the assistant must make it work.

Nacer Zorgani: I imagine that knowing the city, whether it is Paris, Marseille, etc., means knowing the place where you are working, where you carry out your mission, can be a plus for the volunteer?

Eva Baldessin: It is an added value. Having the little tips, knowing the good addresses, whether it is Marseille, Lille or Paris, will definitively be a plus

Nacer Zorgani: Marine, obviously, once again, I'm asking for your opinion on what Eva says, since you were on the field. Is this what your days can look like ? Did you have any tips for the person you were accompanying?

Marine Petit: It's true that I had the chance to live in Rio for a year and I think that my role was also to help the person I was accompanying to understand the city. I remember that one day she had to have a rather important dinner meeting with a person, and she asked me to recommend a very good restaurant, and I was able to do it quite quickly so...

Nacer Zorgani: Thank you very much Marine. Eva, I know that through your career you have been, "in contact with volunteers". What could you say to the future volunteers of the Paris 2024 Games to make them want to come and join us as a volunteer of this famous family, assisting the Olympic and Paralympic family, since I would like to remind our listeners: the application platform for the volunteer program opens in March 2023. Eva what would you like to tell them?

Eva Baldessin: Be part of the family. Come join us! It's going to be great; it's going to be fantastic, it's a unique experience. We're going to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2024, it happened

100 years ago, neither you nor I were there. It won't happen again, at least not soon. It's going to be exceptional. Come and practice your languages, come and offer everything you have to offer to the world that will join us in the summer of 2024, we are waiting for you.

Nacer Zorgani: Thank you Eva, and of course Marine, you have the last word. What could you say to these future volunteers who will perhaps take the same path as you?

Marine Petit: Well, I would like to say the same thing, I remember that on the day of my training to prepare for this mission, I had an exchange with a former volunteer who said to me: "Listen Marine, we explained to you a lot of nice things, but in fact you are not ready". And I said to her: "What do you mean? And she told me: "Well, you will understand what it is only once you have lived it", so go ahead and live it!

Nacer Zorgani: Thank you very much Eva, thank you Marine for these beautiful stories

Eva Baldessin and Marine Petit: Thank you Nacer!

Nacer Zorgani: As for us, we'll see you in our next episode and don't forget: we will see you in March 2023, ready to apply. See you soon!