



#5 – What if it was today?

Nacer Zorgani: Hi, I am 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”.

If you are listening to us today, you may be curious about the volunteers programme. Or more simply, you want to be a candidate for the opening of the programme in March 2023. Today, we are offering you a real immersion in the life of a volunteer, a "live my life as a volunteer" day to discover the sites, the missions and to talk about the volunteer experience. It's a good thing I have two of my colleagues with me who know a lot about the subject. Mathilde Vignes, Glenn Le Gall good morning.

All: Hello!

Nacer Zorgani: Mathilde, first of all, what do you do at Paris 2024 and, above all, what is your relationship with the volunteers?

Mathilde Vignes: I'm in charge of the operations of the volunteers' programme, i.e. all the logistics linked to their mobilisation, such as knowing how they are transported, how they are going to eat, and so on. I have been working for several years in the field of volunteer programmes for sports events. And today, I'm trying to adapt what I know to the world of the Games and to the scale of the Games in particular.

Nacer Zorgani: And if you had a definition to give to characterise what voluntary experience is, what would it be?

Mathilde Vignes: Being a volunteer is first and foremost a unique experience to live behind the scenes of the event, but for me, what speaks to me the most is that I find it a rare opportunity to bring together people who never meet in real life, to live a unique experience, that's the magic of volunteer programmes.

Nacer Zorgani: Glenn, what are you doing at Paris 2024? Same questions and more importantly, do you agree with this description?

Glenn Le Gall: So, at Paris 2024, I work in the volunteers programme team as well and I am in charge of receiving all the applications and guiding the volunteers towards the mission that seems to suit them best. I can identify with Mathilde's definition of a volunteer experience. I have been a volunteer for several years. I like to help people, to be at the heart of an event, to participate in its success and to see everyone involved with a smile.

Nacer Zorgani: Thank you very much Glenn and Mathilde for this introduction, I propose to allow those who are listening to us to immerse themselves in a typical day during the Games. It is 30 August 2024, the Paralympic Games have been underway for two days. We are going to go to the Paris La Défense Arena, the venue for the para-swimming and swimming events during the Olympic Games. You are both volunteers. I'll turn to you first, Mathilde. You are a press crew member on site, what are you going to do?

Mathilde Vignes: First of all, let me rewind for two minutes, if I am busy today, it means that. I applied in March 2023, Paris 2024 selected me and sent me an offer to volunteer in the autumn of 2023, which I obviously accepted!

Nacer Zorgani: Glenn, you receive the applications, you confirm that she has sent her application.

Glenn Le Gall: I can confirm that we received Mathilde's application and following this application, Mathilde received several pieces of information, in particular to find out about her mobilisation dates and the outlines of her mission, and she also followed and participated in several training sessions. A general training session on Paris 2024 and the volunteer programme, a training session to find out about her mission and what she will have to do. And finally, a last training session on site at the Paris la Défense Arena so as not to be lost on the first day and to meet the team leaders so as to know who to contact.

Nacer Zorgani: And it's 8 o'clock, you have an appointment at 9 o'clock in Paris la Défense Arena. Where are you dear Mathilde?

Mathilde Vignes: So at 8 o'clock, I'm still at home, I'm getting ready to go out, I've put on my uniform, my nice uniform, and I'm also going to carefully take my accreditation to leave home.

Nacer Zorgani: So what is accreditation?

Mathilde Vignes: So the accreditation is in fact a sesame that allowed me to get my uniform back and that will allow me to access my mobilisation site. It contains all the personal information, name, first name that I gave when I applied. And it will also allow me to really access particular areas.

Glenn Le Gall: That's it, that's his identity card for the whole period of the Games!

Nacer Zorgani: Mathilde, here we are, what are you doing?

Mathilde Vignes: It's OK, I can leave my house. Head for the nearest public transport station. For me it will be the Gare de Lyon to take the RER towards Paris la Défense Arena. I will be able to use one of the public transport tickets that Paris 2024 provided me with before the mobilisation. Now I realise that I'm not the only volunteer. There are several of us, we look at each other, we start to talk about our missions, believe it or not. I see that there is also my pharmacist, who is also a volunteer and obviously, as we are all in uniform, we are quite visible, so we quickly start to be noticed by the passengers of the train who start to ask us questions about our missions. We even find spectators who want to show their tickets! We get off at Nanterre and there is the first slap, there are people everywhere! Spectators speaking many languages, volunteers, people on mission. All I have to do now is go to the security checkpoint to show my accreditation and then enter the site, the idea is to do my check and my briefing.

Nacer Zorgani: So stop, what is the checking and briefing Glenn?

Glenn Le Gall: So the check-in is the moment when the volunteer notifies his presence so that the team leader can know who has arrived and the briefing. This is a key moment of the day. It's a moment of cohesion that allows all the volunteers to get together and it's also a moment when the team leader can give the instructions for the day to come and I imagine, as Glenn says, that the team leader will coordinate all this.

Mathilde Vignes: Exactly, all the volunteers will be attached to a team leader and this will be a real link for them to organise themselves throughout their mission.

Nacer Zorgani: So let's get on with our day. Glenn, you, today you are going to be a volunteer for those who are listening to us. What are you doing?

Glenn Le Gall: So I'm an anti-doping chaperone, which means that I will follow an athlete after his competition and I will follow him, stay with him until he goes for his anti-doping test.

Nacer Zorgani: How is your day going?

Glenn Le Gall: I arrived a little earlier, we met up with volunteers at the volunteer centre.

Nacer Zorgani: And what is the volunteer centre?

Glenn Le Gall: So the volunteer centre, as its name indicates, is a space dedicated to volunteers so that we can take breaks, have a little coffee, meet the other volunteers, participate in the team, and it's also a place where we can meet a member of the volunteer programme team to ask a whole range of practical and logistical questions.

Glenn Le Gall: I have friends who volunteer at other sites, such as airports, train stations or off-stage sites like the marathon, and they too have a dedicated break area.

Nacer Zorgani: Mathilde, Glen, you're ready to take up your mission and you're meeting up with the volunteers and I think Mathilde, I'm meeting Glenn for lunch at noon. But how do the meals work?

Mathilde Vignes: Well, I meet him at the site's canteen, where all the members of the organisation meet for a meal, whether it be the staff, the service providers or the volunteers. Each volunteer will be entitled to one meal a day during his or her mobilisation.

Nacer Zorgani: Mathilde, just now, was telling us that there are missions outside the stadium, such as the training grounds for example. How are the meals there?

Mathilde Vignes: Basically, for each volunteer, we will provide meal vouchers that they can consume in places like restaurants and bakeries around these sites.

Nacer Zorgani: Glenn, I'll come back to you, how is your day as a page-holder going?

Glenn Le Gall: The last athlete I had to follow was a swimmer who finished second in his final, so a medallist who gets a lot of attention in the mixed zone. I followed him all the way to his medal ceremony. I met various athletes, as well as his staff, right up to his anti-doping test. Then my mission ended.

Nacer Zorgani: I'd like to take this opportunity to tell those who are listening to us that the mixed zone, well, it's a zone where there will be journalists and I invite you to listen to the podcast which is called mixed zone with Nelson Monfort, among others, who will explain Mathilde's mission in particular. And so, Mathilde, I turn to you this first day, how did it go?

Mathilde Vignes: Listen Nacer, I was a bit stressed this morning, but it went rather well. I still found a lot of things that I had learned during my training. My team-mates were very nice, I met journalists from all over the world, so now I'm looking forward to tomorrow.

Nacer Zorgani: Thank you Mathilde! Glenn, are you coming to the end of your mission? This is the last day. How is it going?

Mathilde Vignes: So I've just finished my mission and now, with all the volunteers in my team, we're at the volunteer centre. Mathilde has also just finished all her mobilisation days, so we are all together and now, Nacer, I can't tell you everything because you have to apply as a volunteer to find out what happens next, it is a surprise!

Nacer Zorgani: Thank you Glenn! The last word, dear Mathilde. I am going to ask you to share a professional or personal experience with volunteers. Would you have an anecdote to make those who are listening to us want to apply? I remind you that the mobilisation platform opens in March 2023. What would be your anecdote Mathilde?

Mathilde Vignes: I think that the memory that stuck with me the most was during the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2019. We had to organise a football match between volunteers on the lawn of the Parc des Princes just before the start of the tournament, to help test video refereeing. So we had to find 22 players to put on their boots and come and play in the best conditions. I think that day I had never seen such happy people and it was a really great moment!

Nacer Zorgani: That's it, we've reached the end. Thank you for having been with us, for having played this role by becoming a volunteer for a day. I hope that it has made those who listened to us want to apply for the job.