ENABLING SUSTAINABLE EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING: WORK PACKAGE 2 – CHANGING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
UPDATES FROM OUR LAST TELECONFERENCE MEETING

- Finalised the SES Cultural Assessment Tool (CAT) 2018-19 survey report
- Finalising the follow-up SES 2019-20 survey
- Presenting and participating in the AFAC19 conference
- Tested and developed SES recruitment materials
WHAT HAVE WE DONE SINCE THEN?

- Presented and participated in the AFAC19 conference
- Further developed and tested SES recruitment materials
- Finalised the follow-up SES 2019-20 survey and analysed the findings
- Started developing final CAT survey and user guide instructions
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Access our AFAC19 conference paper from our project page!
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RECRUITMENT STUDIES

Using real data to create some content for SES recruitment materials that:

- Are attractive and appealing to potential recruits
- Accurately represents the SES volunteering experience
- Promotes the diversity of roles and opportunities to potential recruits

I want to give back to the community and make our area safer.

Other volunteers are my family now!

It’s just good to get out and feel that you’re valued!
RECRUITMENT STUDIES

Part 1 ("Reality Check")
- Testing recruitment messages
  - 112 Current SES volunteers
  - Accuracy
  - Attractiveness

Part 2 ("External Road Test")
- Community members (potential volunteers)
  - 453
  - Attractiveness
  - Expectations

- 61 quotes
- 40 photos
- 28 photos

Spreadsheet showing messages and expectations:
- Message No.: 1
  - This organisation has provided an opportunity to learn skills outside my normal life and work life, and also to improve my own self-confidence.
  - Most highly rated expectation: E14 - Gain various skills

Website: bit.ly/wafes19
RECRUITMENT STUDIES: MOVING FORWARD

Main aims:
- Test effectiveness of recruitment messages in example recruitment posters
- Test poster effectiveness and attractiveness
- Test how expectation setting and fulfillment affects retention outcomes

Part 3

("Verify Expectations")
Completed pilot test with 4 posters
4 expectations (i.e., be part of a team, do something useful, learn new skills, and help my community)
Verified (with approx. 100 responses per poster) that posters/brochures set the right expectations

Part 4

("Test Poster Effectiveness in Shaping Expectations and Effects on Retention Outcomes based on Expectation Fulfillment")
Show participants 1 of 2 posters
(Measure expectation set and attractiveness of opportunity)
2 x 2 vignette design:
“Simulate first day experience”
(Expectations met/not met)
Measure outcomes: Expectation fulfillment, psychological contract, intentions to remain, and satisfaction with experience.
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Cultural Assessment Tool (CAT) 2019-20 Survey Findings

From September 2019 to mid-February 2020, the University of Western Australia and Curtin University collaborated with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) to conduct a follow-up survey to obtain information on the current state of volunteering in Western Australia (WA). The survey focused on State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers and investigated on 4 key areas: recruitment, retention, wellbeing, and diversity.

**Participant Information**
- Number of Participants: 226 (11% response rate)
- Average age: 56 years
- Gender breakdown: Males (35%), Females (43%)
- Prefer not to say (2%)
- Ethnically: 66.5% identified as Europeans
- Average SES tenure: 100 years
- Average tenure in current unit: 10.8 years
- Different roles: Unit Manager (16.5%), Non-managers (83.5%) across 32 SES Units in WA

**Survey Themes**
- Reasons to Stay
- Volunteer Needs
- Volunteer Role and Identity Fit
- Volunteer Wellbeing
- SES Unit Environment
- Intentions to Retain

Based on key findings, the list of key implications are presented below:

**Key Areas of Strength**
- Volunteers are thriving through their learning experiences.
- Volunteers overall feel valued and respected for their individual differences.
- Unit leaders are seen very positively in their behaviour towards volunteers, during and outside of callouts.
- Volunteers had strong social support from team members who are non-leaders.

**Key Opportunities to Improve**
- Investigate targeted recruitment to attract members from specific groups.
- Facilitate activities to allow more volunteer autonomy.
- Improve volunteers' identification with DFES.
- Improve feelings of psychological safety, autonomy, and competence for women and volunteers who are non-leaders.
- Improve volunteer inclusivity in unit decision-making processes.
- Increase how energetic volunteers feel about their roles.

Findings from the CAT 2019-20 survey was also compared to findings from the 2016-19 survey to assess which volunteering areas have improved, are in need of improvement, and which areas have stayed relatively the same.

**Key Areas Maintained**
- Volunteers felt equally as competent and as socially connected with other volunteers.
- Identified strongly with their role and SES unit.
- Had high levels of role satisfaction.
- Perceived their leaders' behaviour as positively, and
- Felt valued and respected for their individual differences.

**Key Areas that Improved**
- Volunteers indicated improvements in:
  - Their motivations to continue volunteering (e.g., volunteers felt that they were learning new skills).
  - Their identification with DFES.
  - Their learning and development (although it was still high the previous year), and
  - How much they would recommend the SES to others as a place to volunteer.

**Opportunities to Improve**
- Volunteers across both years:
  - Indicated low levels of autonomy.
  - Reported that they did not feel energetic about their roles.
  - Had relatively low levels of psychological safety (i.e., not feeling safe about speaking up), and
  - They did not feel included in unit decision-making processes.

*Note: The complete survey report will be released on our project page (scan QR code) in August 2020.*

Scan the QR code to access CAT survey reports from our project page!
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FINAL CAT SURVEY AND USER GUIDE INSTRUCTIONS

Purpose:
Empower and assist end-users (e.g., volunteer managers, district officers) in being able to assess the state of volunteering in their individual BGUs and/or districts via the Cultural Assessment Tool (CAT) survey.

Final CAT survey
- The full survey (as seen online and on paper)

User guide instructions
- Survey measures
- Tips on survey set-up and administration
- Ethics

CAT Data Analytical Tool
- Survey items
- Data analysis
- Overview of the results
- Result interpretations and recommendations
NEXT STEPS!

- Finalise the CAT user guide instructions and data analytical tool
- Present and participate in the AFAC20 conference
- Deliver an integrated report on effective onboarding
- Submit journal article on volunteer recruitment
THANK YOU!

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