

Dallaire, Christine

University of Ottawa

Steph MacKay

Insight Grant 2017

Reciprocation and Responsibility – “Giving Back” to Children and Youth in Community Organizations

The Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa (BGCO) and the *Société des Jeux de l’Acadie* (SJA) are two Canadian organizations working to help children and youth become active participants in society. The BGCO provides programming for children and youth in need while the SJA organizes the *Jeux de l’Acadie* to strengthen the Acadian Francophone minority throughout the Canadian Maritime Provinces. While they have distinctive missions, participant profiles and operate in different geographical locations, a key similarity is that BGCO and JA sports activities are run by former participants that continue their involvement as employees or volunteers to “give back” to their communities. Drawing on interviews with twenty-nine (29) young adult leaders and with seven (7) adult managers we explore these former participants’ impetuses for “giving back”. Findings suggest that the two most common motives were believing it was their duty (occasionally driven by guilt) to give to others in order to pay for what they received as participants and feeling a sense of responsibility towards future generations and/or for the survival of the BGCO or the SJA. The analysis was complicated when interviewees drew on both discourses (and/or others) to explain their experiences. Research exploring peoples’ motivations for “giving back” helps us understand how community organizations are contributing to the governance of individuals and whether they are offering employees and volunteers a space in which to reflect on their actions and their place within their communities.
