



Development of a Volunteer Motivation System for the Sports Club Kloten-Dietlikon Jets

*Organisational Summary and Implementation Recommendations
for Kloten-Dietlikon Jets*

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1. Why This Research Was Conducted

The operational stability of Kloten-Dietlikon Jets depends fundamentally on voluntary engagement. Across game days, youth development, administration, communication, and club events, the majority of organisational functions are carried out by volunteers. While this structure reflects the strong community culture of the club, it also creates structural vulnerability. A limited number of highly committed volunteers carry significant responsibility, and fluctuations in engagement levels directly affect operational reliability.

In recent seasons, patterns have emerged that indicate increasing coordination pressure within the organisation. Responsibilities and shifts are not always distributed evenly, role expectations are not consistently clear in all areas, and long-term engagement levels vary - particularly among helpers and younger volunteers. Together, these factors create structural strain that affects operational stability over time.

These patterns do not indicate a lack of motivation. On the contrary, the club benefits from strong intrinsic commitment and identification with the Jets community. However, the research question underlying this thesis was whether existing motivation is being translated into sustainable engagement through a sufficiently structured system. The central objective of this research was therefore: To analyse the motivational drivers and engagement patterns of Jets volunteers and, based on the findings, recommend the establishment of a structured volunteer motivation system that strengthens long-term stability.

This research was not conducted to evaluate individual performance, but to assess structural alignment between volunteer motivation, organisational support mechanisms and engagement sustainability. Understanding this alignment is essential for ensuring that Jets can maintain operational continuity while preserving its community-based identity.

2. Who Participated

The research was based on responses from 115 volunteers of Kloten-Dietlikon Jets. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, allowing respondents to provide honest feedback about their motivation, experience, and intentions to continue their engagement. The participants represented the different structural roles within the club, including both: Functionaries (Funktionäre) and Helpers (Helfer) The age range of respondents started at 16 years, reflecting both younger volunteers and long-standing members of the club community.

The survey focused on three central areas: what motivates volunteers to engage at Jets, how emotionally connected they feel to their work, and how likely they are to continue their

involvement in future seasons. In addition to structured questions, volunteers were invited to share open feedback. These qualitative responses offered valuable insight into perceived strengths within the organisation as well as areas where structural improvements are needed. The sample size and diversity of roles provide a reliable internal picture of the current volunteer landscape at Jets and allow for meaningful structural interpretation.

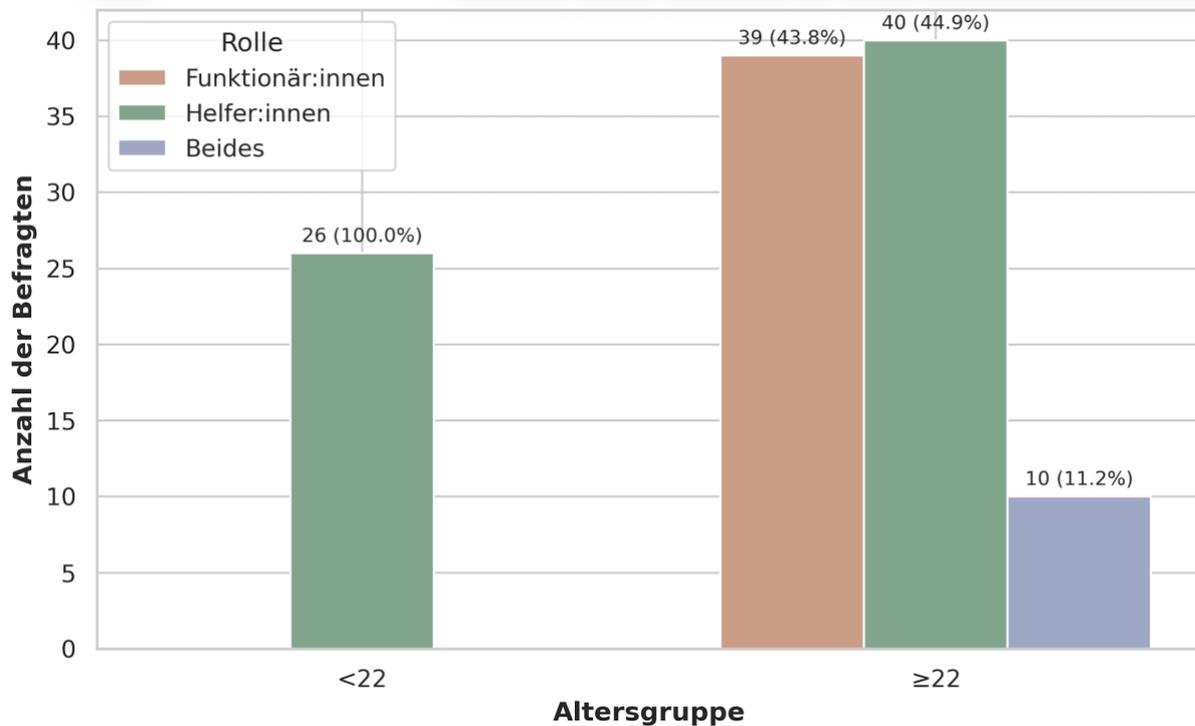


Figure 1. Age Distribution of Volunteers by Role, Number and Percentage Within Each Age Group, 2025 (n = 115)

3. Key Findings

3.1 Engagement Patterns Within the Club

The analysis shows clear structural differences in engagement between volunteer roles within the club. Across all three engagement dimensions, energy, enthusiasm, and immersion, functionaries demonstrate consistently higher levels of emotional involvement in their activities. Their responses indicate stronger identification with their roles and a more stable sense of connection to the club’s operations.

Helpers, by contrast, show greater variability in their engagement levels and lower median values across all dimensions. While many helpers are highly committed, the overall pattern suggests that emotional attachment is less consistently established in this group. This

difference does not indicate lower commitment. It highlights structural gaps in integration, responsibility allocation, and role clarity.

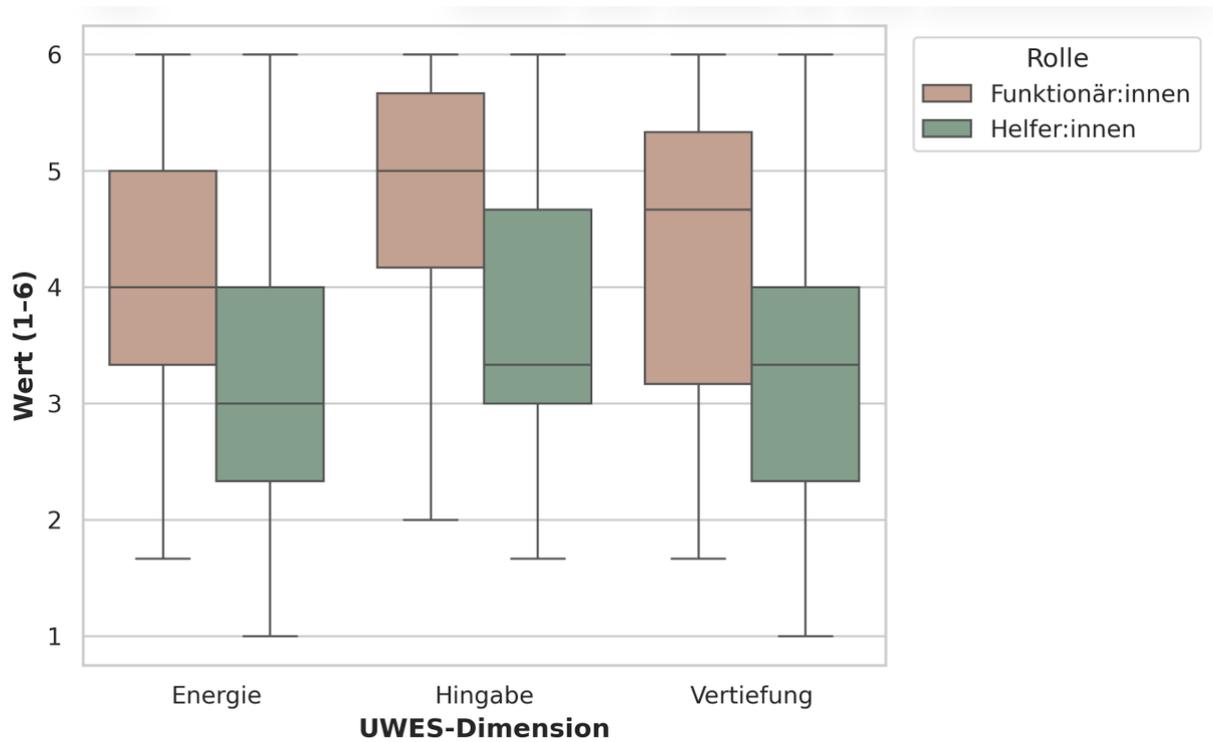


Figure 2. Differences in Engagement Dimensions Between Functionaries and Helpers in the Jets Volunteer Sample, 2025 (n = 105)

Engagement within the club is strong overall, but it is not evenly distributed across roles. This uneven distribution creates structural imbalance and long-term stability risks if not addressed systematically.

3.2 What Drives Volunteer Motivation and Engagement

The results clearly indicate that Jets volunteers are primarily driven by internal motivations. The strongest patterns reflect identification with the club and its values, a strong sense of belonging and community, and the desire to contribute in a meaningful way. Personal growth, development opportunities, and the responsibility associated with trusted roles further reinforce their commitment.

External incentives play only a secondary role. Volunteers do not engage primarily because they “have to” — they engage because they want to be part of something meaningful.

Importantly, growth-oriented motivations show a particularly strong connection to engagement. Volunteers who experience development, responsibility, and meaningful contribution report higher levels of emotional involvement.

Recognition and perceived impact also play a stabilising role. When volunteers feel seen, valued, and trusted with responsibility, their attachment to the club strengthens. Engagement rises when volunteers experience growth, responsibility, and clear purpose. Motivation is already strong within Jets - the structural task is to support it consistently.

3.3 What Volunteers Themselves Say

(Content Analysis – Volunteer Voice)

In addition to the quantitative analysis, volunteers were given the opportunity to express their views in their own words. A total of 111 responses were analysed regarding personal motivation to continue volunteering, and 96 responses regarding organisational improvement.

This qualitative perspective provides a direct insight into what sustains engagement and where structural adjustments are needed.

What Motivates Volunteers to Continue (111 volunteer responses)

Six central motivation themes emerged. The most frequently mentioned drivers were:

- 1. Supporting the Club and “Giving Back” (28%):** The strongest theme was the desire to support Jets and contribute to the club that has provided opportunities to their families. Many volunteers expressed a sense of responsibility and gratitude toward the organisation.
- 2. Supporting Their Own Children (20%):** A significant portion of engagement is family-driven. Parents volunteer to support their children’s participation and ensure the club environment functions well.
- 3. Club Environment and Social Belonging (20%):** Volunteers repeatedly highlighted the positive atmosphere, community feeling, and social connections as a reason to continue.
- 4. Youth Development and Meaningful Contribution (16%):** Many respondents emphasised the importance of enabling children and young people to develop socially and athletically.
- 5. Joy of Floorball and Personal Goals (13%):** Personal interest in sport and individual goals also play a motivating role.

Recognition and organisational support were mentioned less frequently (3%), but this low frequency should not be interpreted as low importance. Rather, it suggests that appreciation is expected to be part of the club culture and becomes visible mainly when it is missing.

Jets volunteers are driven by community, family involvement, youth development, and personal meaning. Motivation is multi-dimensional, but strongly rooted in internal and relational factors.

Where Volunteers See Room for Improvement (96 volunteer responses)

Five central improvement areas were identified:

1. Onboarding, Local Organisation, and Professionalism (25%): Volunteers reported insufficient introduction to tasks, unclear instructions, and inconsistent coordination during operations. This theme highlights the need for clearer task guidance and structured onboarding.

2. Communication, Planning, and Clear Structures (24%): Many respondents described late or unclear information flow, lack of structured planning, and insufficient transparency in coordination.

3. Recognition and Material Support (23%): While financial compensation is not expected, volunteers expressed the desire for visible appreciation, symbolic recognition, and small practical gestures (e.g., refreshments, family tickets).

4. Fair Workload Distribution Among Helpers (21%): Perceived imbalance in shift allocation between families creates tension and reduces motivation.

5. Youth Integration and Belonging (8%): Some volunteers see potential in more actively integrating young members into club responsibilities to strengthen long-term identity and sustainability.

The qualitative results reinforce the quantitative findings. Volunteers are strongly motivated by internal drivers such as belonging, contribution, and development. At the same time, structural weaknesses in communication, onboarding, and workload management directly affect engagement levels, particularly among helpers.

There is no indication of declining commitment. Instead, the pattern suggests that engagement levels vary depending on how clearly volunteers are integrated, supported, and recognised. When motivation is structurally supported, engagement stabilises. When structure is unclear, engagement becomes uneven and concentrated among the most committed individuals. This insight provides a clear direction for organisational development.

4. Recommended Volunteer Motivation System

The proposed volunteer motivation system is not a theoretical addition to the club's work. It is a direct response to the patterns identified in the analysis.

The findings show three important structural realities:

- Jets volunteers are primarily driven by strong internal motivation: values, belonging, contribution, and development.
- Engagement levels differ between roles and age groups, particularly between functionaries and helpers.
- Structural weaknesses in onboarding, communication, recognition, and workload distribution directly influence emotional involvement.

This means that the club does not face a motivation deficit. It faces a structural alignment challenge. The system is therefore designed to do the following: convert existing volunteer motivation into stable, long-term engagement through consistent organisational support.

The structure of the system is built on three foundational inputs identified in the analysis: the dominant motivational needs of Jets volunteers, engagement levels as an indicator of structural strength or risk, and the differences observed between volunteer roles and age groups. By integrating these elements, the system forms a practical framework designed to strengthen organisational stability, promote fairness, and support long-term volunteer retention.

The recommended system is designed to ensure stable seasonal operations, promote fair workload distribution, increase emotional engagement, and strengthen long-term volunteer retention while taking into account the differing needs of volunteer groups. It is conceived as a coherent organisational framework rather than a collection of isolated measures, ensuring that individual improvements reinforce one another and contribute to overall structural stability. The system consists of five interconnected blocks. Each addresses a specific structural need identified in the analysis. A more detailed description of the system blocks and their implementation elements is provided in the thesis appendix.

- 1. Onboarding and Training Block:** The analysis revealed role uncertainty, inconsistent task introduction, and lower engagement levels among helpers and younger volunteers. To address this, the onboarding and training block establishes a structured integration pathway for new volunteers. It provides clear explanations of responsibilities, practical task guidance, early mentoring support, and clarity around role boundaries. By reducing uncertainty from the outset, this block enables

volunteers to feel confident in their responsibilities and supports the development of emotional attachment from the beginning of their engagement.

- 2. Communication and Structural Clarity Block:** Volunteer feedback repeatedly highlighted weaknesses in information flow and planning transparency. This block therefore focuses on standardising communication channels, clarifying role allocation, improving shift planning processes, and ensuring timely information distribution. By creating predictable and transparent coordination mechanisms, the organisation reduces friction, strengthens trust in decision-making processes, and limits avoidable structural inefficiencies.
- 3. Recognition and Support Block:** Although intrinsic motivation within Jets is strong, volunteers expressed the need for more visible and consistent appreciation. The recognition and support block introduces structured acknowledgement practices, clearer feedback opportunities, and symbolic appreciation measures that reinforce belonging. By ensuring that contributions are regularly recognised, this block protects long-term internal motivation and reduces the risk of volunteers feeling taken for granted.
- 4. Workload and Fairness Management Block:** Both qualitative and quantitative findings indicate imbalances in shift allocation and engagement distribution across roles. This block introduces transparent workload monitoring, clear expectations per role, and fairness principles to prevent responsibility from concentrating among a limited group. By making workload distribution more visible and balanced, the organisation reduces burnout risk and supports sustainable engagement across volunteer groups.
- 5. Youth Integration and Belonging Block:** Family involvement and youth development are central motivational drivers within Jets. This block focuses on gradually integrating younger members into volunteer roles, strengthening early identification with the club, and creating long-term volunteer pathways. By embedding volunteer culture early, Jets builds a sustainable multi-generational engagement base and reinforces long-term organisational continuity.

The five blocks are designed to function as an integrated system rather than independent measures. Together, they establish the core components of effective volunteer management: clear role definitions, consistent organisational support, transparent communication, and a strong community culture. By aligning these structural elements with volunteers' motivational

profiles, the system reduces engagement gaps between roles and strengthens long-term organisational stability.

Importantly, the system is designed as a dynamic mechanism. Regular feedback, volunteer input, and engagement monitoring allow continuous refinement. It is not static, it evolves with the club's needs.

The system does not aim to create motivation where none exists; Jets already benefits from a highly motivated volunteer base. Its purpose is to ensure that this motivation is consistently supported, structurally anchored, distributed fairly, and translated into sustained engagement. When implemented coherently, the system is expected to increase volunteer satisfaction, stabilise seasonal participation, balance workload distribution, reduce overload risks, and strengthen long-term retention.

5. Five Priority Implementation Actions

1. Unified Onboarding and Training Programme (*“Welcome to Jets”*)

Jets should introduce a standardised onboarding programme for all new volunteers before the start of the next season. This programme should include a concise digital introduction guide explaining hall procedures, key responsibilities, role boundaries, and contact persons, complemented by one to two practical training shifts alongside an experienced functionary. A short follow-up conversation after the first assignments should ensure clarity and address uncertainties early.

The thesis findings show that helpers and younger volunteers demonstrate lower engagement levels and report insufficient role clarity. By formalising the integration process, Jets reduces early insecurity, strengthens understanding of responsibilities, and supports more consistent emotional engagement from the beginning.

2. Volunteer Roles and Process Handbook (*“Jets Handbook”*)

Jets should develop a clear and accessible handbook outlining all core volunteer roles, responsibilities, and standard game-day procedures. The document should be available digitally and in a simplified printed version in the hall, covering essential operational processes such as time schedules, coordination flows, and role-specific task descriptions.

The research indicates that fragmented process knowledge and unclear responsibilities increase coordination pressure and reliance on informal expertise. A structured handbook strengthens transparency, supports onboarding, and reduces operational ambiguity.

3. Structured Volunteer Recognition Programme (“*Jets Thank You*”)

Jets should establish a structured recognition programme. This should include a seasonal volunteer appreciation event, regular public acknowledgements through club communication channels, and symbolic forms of recognition such as small tokens of appreciation or an annual distinction for both functionaries and helpers.

Although volunteers do not expect financial compensation, the qualitative findings highlight the importance of visible appreciation. Formalising recognition practices strengthens belonging, reinforces internal motivation, and reduces the long-term risk of disengagement, particularly among those carrying higher responsibility.

4. Transparent and Fair Workload Distribution Model (“*Jets Equal Work*”)

Jets should introduce a clearly defined workload distribution model before the next season. This model should specify expected shift contributions per role or family, establish transparent substitution rules, and utilise a digital tracking mechanism to monitor distribution across the season.

The analysis identified uneven workload allocation as a central structural risk. Perceived imbalance directly affects motivation and increases burnout risk. By formalising fairness principles and making shift allocation transparent, Jets reduces tension, distributes responsibility more evenly, and protects long-term engagement stability.

5. Youth and Junior Integration Programme (“*Jets Next Generation*”)

Jets should implement a structured pathway for junior involvement, starting with a pilot phase in one or two teams next season. From an appropriate age onward, junior members should gradually take on light volunteer responsibilities alongside parents or experienced volunteers. Volunteer engagement should be integrated into team culture, reinforcing the idea that contribution is part of club identity.

The findings show that family involvement and youth development are central motivational drivers. By embedding volunteer culture early, Jets builds a sustainable long-term volunteer base and strengthens multi-generational continuity.

These five measures were prioritised because they directly address the structural weak points identified in the analysis: onboarding gaps, fragmented process clarity, limited recognition structure, workload imbalance, and insufficient youth integration, while reinforcing the strong internal motivation already present within the club. Additional supporting measures are described in the thesis appendix and can complement implementation over time.

6. What Jets Gains by Implementing This System

Implementing the recommended volunteer motivation system represents more than an operational adjustment. It is a strategic investment in the long-term stability and resilience of the club.

First, clearer onboarding processes, defined roles, and transparent workload allocation strengthen day-to-day operational reliability. When expectations are predictable and responsibilities are distributed fairly, coordination pressure decreases and dependence on informal problem-solving is reduced.

Second, the system addresses existing engagement imbalances between volunteer groups. By strengthening integration, recognition, and fairness mechanisms, engagement becomes more evenly distributed. This reduces overload on highly committed functionaries while strengthening attachment among helpers and younger volunteers, improving sustainability across age groups.

Third, formalised workload management directly mitigates burnout risk. Concentrated responsibility within a limited group of volunteers is one of the central structural risks identified in the analysis. A transparent distribution model protects key contributors while maintaining long-term participation stability.

Fourth, consistent structural support increases the likelihood that existing intrinsic motivation translates into multi-season engagement. Higher retention reduces recruitment pressure, preserves organisational knowledge, and lowers operational vulnerability over time.

Finally, embedding volunteer engagement more deliberately within youth and family pathways strengthens the club's multi-generational continuity. By reinforcing belonging and

responsibility early, Jets ensures that volunteer contribution remains part of its cultural identity rather than a temporary obligation.

In strategic terms, Jets does not need to generate motivation, it already possesses it. The task is to protect, structure, and sustain that motivation. A coherent volunteer motivation system strengthens operational stability, fairness, engagement consistency, and long-term resilience, allowing the club to evolve from a motivation-driven culture into a structurally supported and sustainable volunteer system.

7. Conclusion

The analysis confirms that Kloten-Dietlikon Jets benefits from a highly committed volunteer community driven primarily by internal motivation: shared values, belonging, responsibility, and the desire to support youth development. Engagement levels are strong, particularly among functionaries and long-standing volunteers, representing a significant organisational asset.

At the same time, the findings indicate that existing structures do not consistently support this motivation across all volunteer groups. Differences in engagement levels, role clarity, workload distribution, and recognition practices reveal structural gaps that may affect long-term stability if not addressed systematically.

The central challenge for Jets is therefore not to generate motivation, but to structure and sustain it. By establishing a coherent volunteer motivation system built on structured onboarding, clearly defined roles, visible appreciation, transparent workload management, and youth integration, the club can convert its existing motivational strength into stable and evenly distributed engagement.

Such a system reinforces, rather than replaces, the club's culture. Implemented consistently, it protects highly committed volunteers from overload, strengthens integration of helpers and younger members, improves operational reliability, supports long-term retention, and reinforces Jets' identity as a community-driven organisation.

This is not a short-term adjustment, but a strategic step toward ensuring that volunteer engagement remains stable, fair, and sustainable across future seasons. Jets already possesses the motivational foundation; the next step is to secure it through structure and long-term organisational resilience.