



**Participating as an event volunteer:
the perspective of the cast at the 2014
Commonwealth Games in Glasgow**

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Acknowledgements

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The photographs of the volunteers at the Ceremonies by Abi Rogerson are used with permission.

I am grateful to all the volunteers who participated in the survey, and for their time to provide insights to their experiences as members of the cast. This report includes the views expressed by them, including specific comments they offered. The volunteers formed a vital part of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the XX Commonwealth Games held in Glasgow between 23 July and 3 August 2014. I hope that this report reflects these experiences and their opinions, and that it will assist future event organisers who seek to bring together a cast of volunteer performers.

Introduction

During the summer of 2014 at the XX Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, more than 3,000 people took part in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies that marked the formal start and finish of the event. Most of those involved were volunteers and had applied individually to participate, responding to a public call for cast volunteers. For them, their commitment was not only at Games time but also in the rehearsals in advance and for some at pre-recorded film sessions. Uniquely at the Glasgow 2014 Games, the volunteers were not expected to have experience of performing or of dance, and were drawn from applicants more because of their enthusiasm and commitment, helping to create a more inclusive cast than had been gathered together at previous Commonwealth Games or indeed other major sporting events.

This research has sought to identify why these volunteers got involved, reviewed their experience of being part of the event, identified the impact this has had on them in terms of future volunteering and sought to gain insights from their experience of how to improve further their contribution to ceremonies. All of the cast volunteers were invited by Glasgow 2014, the Organising Committee, to participate in an online survey, and 497 have responded. This report examines the responses from these volunteers.

The research is significant for a number of reasons.

First, the study is to date the only research conducted on this group of 'Games volunteers' and thus provides insights which may assist event organisers who in future wish to use volunteers as part of cast or ceremony teams. All the respondents were asked to comment on their experience of rehearsals, the contributory factors to their overall satisfaction in the role, and those areas which they believed could be improved.

Second, being the first time that volunteers have been used extensively in the ceremonies it allows an examination of how this experience is translated in to the lives of those involved and in particular whether it encouraged them to get more involved as volunteers in future. The survey also explored how they Games experience impacted on the volunteers individually in terms of their confidence and knowledge.

And thirdly, the study forms part of a wider research project exploring the Games experience and impact on volunteers involved in Glasgow in different capacities – as those volunteers recruited to assist in the organisation and delivery of the event, the Clyde-siders; as Host City Volunteers assisting the public within the city; as Queen's Bator Relay bearers in advance of the Games; and as staff from the City Council who had the chance to undertake different roles linked to the Games. This therefore provides the opportunity to compare the results from the cast volunteers with the other groups; the results of which form the basis of a separate report.

1. The headline findings

The volunteers involved in the Ceremonies found it to an overwhelmingly positive experience, with 88% (430 respondents) were satisfied overall with their role as a Ceremonies Volunteer, and 97% indicated agreed that they had been proud to have been a ceremonies volunteer.

The best things about the experience was 'meeting people' (34%), being part of the event (25%), making friends (18%) and performing (16%)

By being a cast volunteer, respondents felt more connected with Glasgow (73%) and having more pride in the city (74%), as well the majority (64%) being confident as individuals

30% of respondents were not involved as volunteers in other groups and organisations before volunteering for the cast, but amongst these 151 people, half indicated they volunteer at another event in Glasgow, 41% they would get involved in a local community event and 38% would volunteer at a local club or organisation if asked.

The key finding is that this group of volunteers found the experience of the ceremonies one that was rewarding personally, helped to feel part of a group, and is likely to encourage them to increase their future involvement in communities.

The experience however was also one where respondents felt more could have been done to

- Provide recognition of their contribution to the ceremonies and the Games, both at the time of the event and in providing them with a lasting memento of their role
- Better organisation of them as volunteers, reducing the overall time spent unproductively in rehearsals and at performances, and with more support during this in terms of catering and sustenance, and at the end with transport from rehearsals and venues

And there was some disappointment in relation to the quality of the performances and their contribution to the Closing Ceremony and more generally in the televised coverage, with this failing to portray the vision that the producers and the cast had worked together towards.

2. The Ceremonies volunteers: some background essentials

Recruitment

In a unique development, the organising committee (OC) Glasgow 2014 Ltd and their partners in Glasgow and nationally sought to bring together volunteers to create a cast of nearly 3,000 people for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. Applicants were invited to apply before 14 February 2014 and if selected randomly would be invited to auditions which were held in Glasgow during March 2014. The application process was an open call with volunteers having to be aged 18 or over by March 2014. Additional applications were sought from groups in Scotland who were involved in dance and performing including those aged under 18 years.

In creating this cast, emphasis in the recruitment process was placed on “enthusiastic individuals willing to contribute their passion, talent, energy and positive spirit to the Ceremonies” rather than on individuals with previous experience in dance or public performing. As a result, the volunteers – termed ‘ceremonies volunteers’ in this report – have been drawn from sectors of society, mainly in Scotland, and with different aspirations and motivations as to why they wished to be a member of the cast.

Roles

For the majority of the ceremonies volunteers, their roles were linked to performing live at the Opening and Closing ceremonies of the Games. For some, however, their role involved being filmed in advance for sequences used at the ceremonies, but pre-recorded. As part of the role, each

volunteers was asked to commit time to attend rehearsals –with approximately 2–4 rehearsals per week on evenings and weekends, with each session lasting up to 4 hours but also number of full-day and evening rehearsals held during the three weeks leading up to each Ceremony. Attendance at the rehearsals was mandatory.

Beyond the cast roles, some of the ceremonies volunteers were involved in back of house support roles - such as makeup, costumes, chaperone for flag bearers and youth groups- whilst a smaller number had more specialist roles. These included being involved with the parade of Commonwealth teams at the Opening Ceremony such as the training and handling of the Scottish terriers which accompanied each of the teams and flag bearers.

Organising the volunteers

Responsibility for the design and delivery of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Games was led by Jack Morton Worldwide, who won the tender to produce these aspects. Oversight was provided by a joint team from Glasgow Life, on behalf of Glasgow City Council, and the OC. The ceremony team from Jack Morton had overall responsibility for deploying and training the volunteers for the cast, organising rehearsals in Glasgow prior to the Games. The security and accreditation processes required to allow the volunteers to be cleared for access to Games venues was organised by the OC.

Supporting the volunteers

Associated with the rehearsals and with the performances at the Ceremonies, the logistical support was coordinated by the OC. Catering was provided at rehearsals, and during the Games transport within Glasgow was provided free for the cast volunteers.

To support those who might struggle financially to fulfil their commitments as cast volunteers, the Spirit of 2012 Trust made funding available to those on low income, with disabilities and with carer responsibilities. The fund – the Volunteer Support Pot – was available only after volunteers had confirmation of their role. A total of £100,000 was allocated for this purpose, and in total 205 individuals and 7 groups were assisted to complete their roles in the ceremonies.

3. Report context and structure

Given the uniqueness of the context for this research, the report is structured to offer a profile of the survey respondents who were involved in the cast as well as an assessment of the insights each respondent has provided. This report is divided into 4 sections:

- A profile of the survey respondents, in terms of their demographics and their backgrounds as volunteers (section 4)
- an analysis of the key drivers or motivations for them to have applied for and participated in the roles (section 5)
- an assessment of their experience during the Games (section 6); and
- a review of what they believe the impact of the Games role has been on them and their aspirations for the future (section 7).

The final sections of the report (sections 9 and 10) stand back from the views expressed by each respondent to provide an overview of the ways in which the cast volunteers as a whole contributed to the values and ethos of the Games.

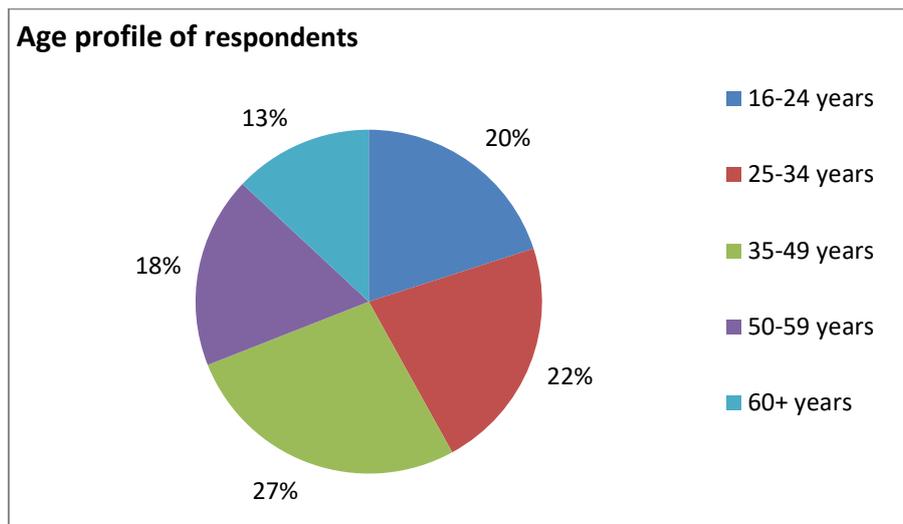
Throughout the report, comments made by individual respondents are shown in italics. An outline of the survey is provided in Appendix 1.

4. The Cast volunteer respondents

The profile of the respondents to the survey suggests that the vast majority were recruited through the open application process as individual members of the cast, performing at one or both of the Ceremonies. 86% applied and were selected through auditions as individuals, and a further 6% were recruited through groups, including as representatives of Glasgow City Council. The remaining 43 people were divided between those involved in support roles (4%) or other functions (5%)

Across the whole group, 132 (27%) people had also applied to be a volunteer at the Games as a Clyde-sider, with 3 in 5 of these not being invited for an interview in this role. 19% had been interviewed but then not been offered a place as a Clyde-sider, and 20% had been offered such roles but had not taken it.

Respondents were divided proportionally by age, reflecting closely the overall profile of the Ceremonies volunteers.



Of those respondents who indicated their gender, there was a predominance of female respondents (75%) with 105 male volunteers, and geographically they were an overwhelming proportion from Scotland (95%) of those indicated their place of residence, with this proportion split evenly between residents in Glasgow and in the rest of Scotland.

5% (26 people) of those taking part in the survey indicated they had a disability, health problem or long-term illness, with visual/hearing (5 people), mobility/physical impairment (5), and mental health (5) disabilities being indicated.

Of the 497 people who took part in the survey, the majority were involved as a volunteer in groups within communities or nationally, with the largest proportions taking part in groups with young people/children (33%), supporting sports/exercise groups (25%). Musical groups (21%) and

hobbies/social clubs (24%). However just over a quarter (27%, 132 people) did not indicate any involvement as volunteers.



5. Why get involved?

The publicity associated with the recruitment of individuals to the roles had suggested that “volunteering to join the Ceremonies cast will be a hugely rewarding experience” providing a once in a lifetime opportunity to be involved with the Games, a chance to gain some valuable skills and to make new friends¹.

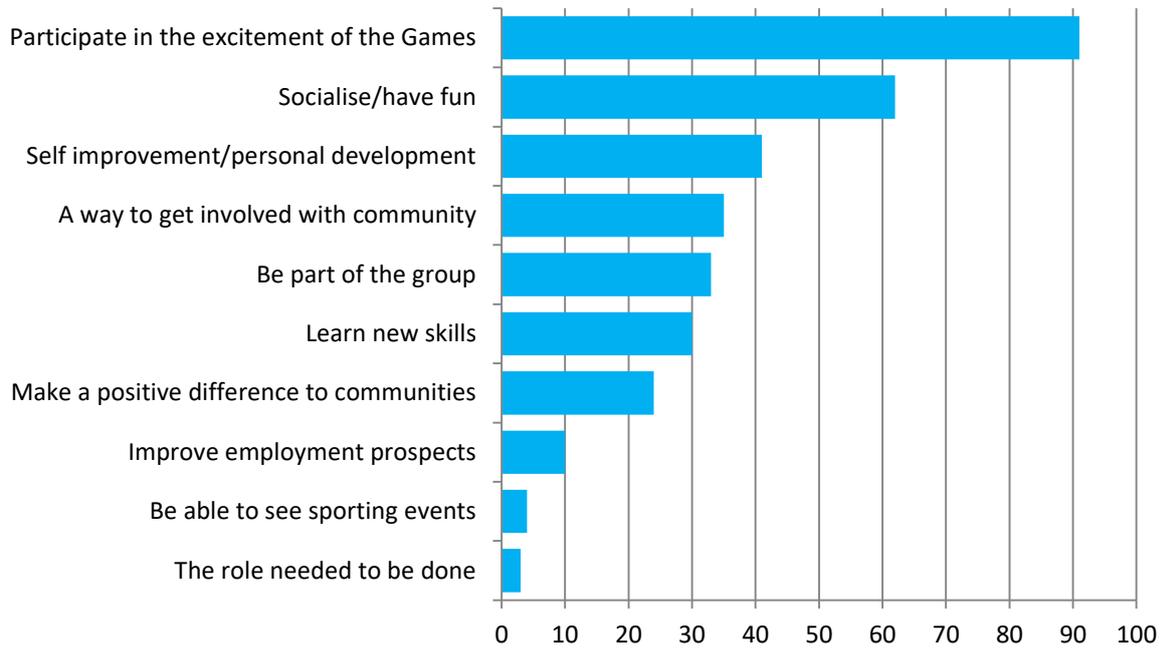
For the vast majority of respondents the chance to participate in the excitement of the 2014 Games was the key motivator. More than 90% cited this amongst the reasons for getting involved, being of greater importance than any other factor, although 62% cited the desire for fun and socialising as a key factor too.

The survey suggested that skills and employment factors were much less significant to the majority of respondents, although the study did underline that for many of those involved the role was an opportunity to gain new skills. Those motivated to learn new skills were divided evenly across all pre-retirement age groups.

Significantly the survey results underline the effectiveness of the publicity associated with the recruitment of volunteers that they had little expectation to be able to see the sporting events as a result of being a Ceremony Volunteer.

¹ Ceremonies volunteer cast performer, FAQs

Motivations to get involved in role

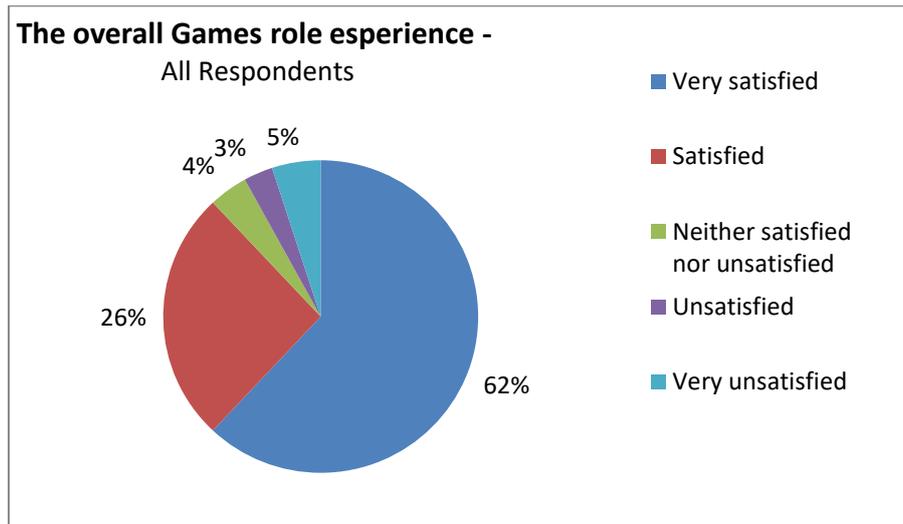


Beyond these motivators asked of all respondents other factors were identified by individuals, reflecting their own specific skills – “to make use of my talent (skating)” and “They needed Scottish Terriers” – and requests to take part by other groups – including “was asked by The Kennel Club to take part”. But most comments were more personal, such as “to carry on a family tradition - my parents performed at Edinburgh in 1986” or “something to do”.



6. A positive experience

The overwhelming view of ceremony volunteers responding to the survey was that their role was a positive experience which engendered high levels of satisfaction. More than 88% (430 respondents) judged their overall experience to be very satisfactory or satisfactory and only 40 respondents (8%) identified their Games-related role experience as unsatisfactory. In addition, 98% indicated that they had been proud to be a ceremonies volunteer with only 5 respondents disagreeing with the sense of pride in the role.



For this large majority of cast respondents, the descriptors that were frequently used to capture their enthusiasm were 'enjoyable', 'wonderful' and 'rewarding', and descriptions of what this meant to them including:

"I had an absolutely amazing time, the people I met, the experience I got was something I will never forget. It was such an honour to be a part of the whole experience....it was emotional and exciting and I loved every minute even the challenging ones because it all came together in the end"

"A wonderful experience. I would recommend that everybody volunteers. Did wonders for my confidence and also my health and fitness"

"One of the best things I have done. Met loads of new friends".

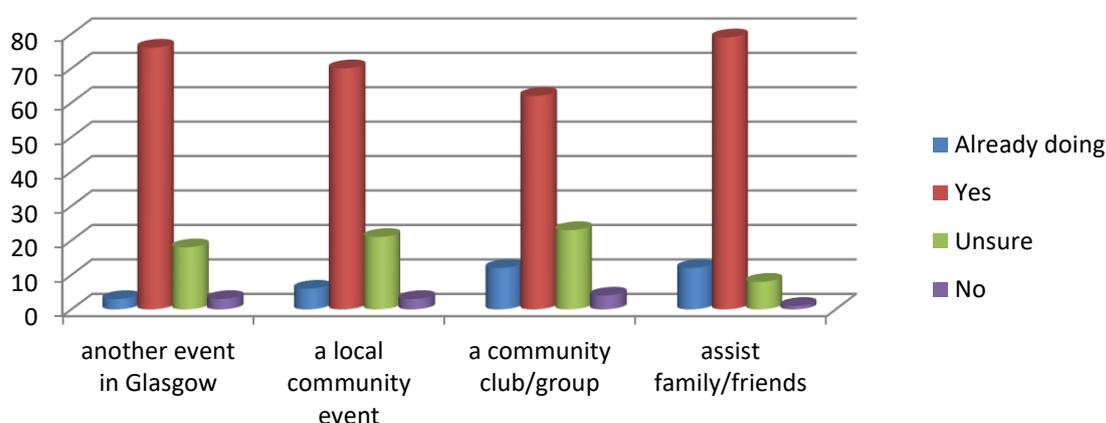
The 40 cast members whose Games' time experience was viewed as dissatisfactory were divided between a group of 24 who felt 'very dissatisfied' and the remainder who indicated some dissatisfaction. Most of these 40 respondents offered some explanations for their feelings of discontent when they outlined areas of improvement and in their additional comments at the end of the survey. It was evident that three main factors contributed to their dissatisfaction: communication with them about roles and expectations; too much time waiting around inactive;

and lack of formal recognition. As these factors are raised across all of the respondents, they are considered in more detail below under recommendations (see sections 9 and 11).

7. Having a volunteering impact

One of the key legacy outcomes from the Commonwealth Games has been the desire to increase involvement in volunteering within communities and groups. Although as noted above (section 4) the majority of respondents were already involved as a volunteer, the survey explored with them the likelihood that their role in the cast would change their involvement. Each respondent was asked to consider whether, if offered the chance to get involved as a volunteer, they were more or less likely in future to assist with events, community clubs or family.

Across all respondents who responded to the questions, the vast majority signalled their desire to continue to volunteer in future events and in their community.



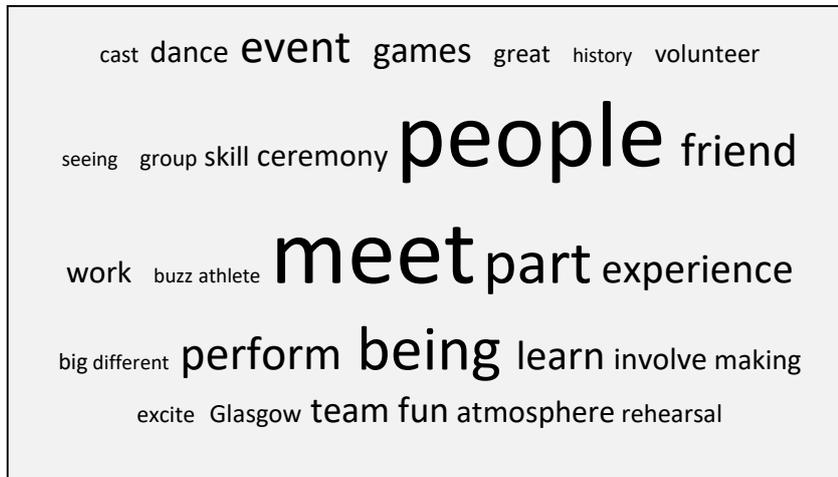
Significantly, for those who had indicated that they were not already involved with local volunteering, the experience of being a cast volunteer was equally positive. Of the 132 people (27% of all respondents) in this category, more than half (52%) indicated that in future they would like to take part in another event in Glasgow and 40% said they would take part in a local community event or community organisation. A small percentage (less than 20%) remained unsure whether they would be involved in future as a volunteer and only a few people (between 4 and 7 for each type of volunteering) indicated they would definitely not volunteer.

8. Getting it right – the best aspects of the experience

Almost all the respondents to the survey provided comments on what for them individually were the best aspects of the overall experience as a Ceremony Volunteer. Of the more than 1270 comments, the vast majority reflecting on the active aspects of their role – in meeting people, in taking part, in being involved, in making history, in learning new skills, in performing, in seeing people and events. In contrast, there were very few comments on the organisational and process aspects of the role, except in terms of helping them to be part of the event through the choreography and rehearsal processes.

The most cited positive aspects were 'meeting people' and 'being part' of the event. More than 170 people referred the opportunity the cast roles provided to meet with new people, work together

and for many create new friendships. And more than 150 included the taking part and being part of the event as one of the best aspects of the role.



In addition to these personal benefits which resonated across the survey respondents, others mentioned more individual and specific aspects which helped to make the volunteer role better. For some, the unique of the occasion was recognised – either because it gave a special opportunity to be in a venue, to meet special people or to perform in front of people who mattered:

“Getting to meet John Barrowman and Tom Dale and getting to meet different athletes and performers”

“Performing in front of 40,000 people at Celtic park”

“dancing with the Ugandan team at opening ceremony”

“Filming In George Square with Amy Macdonald”

“Nice for the family to see me on TV”

For many more, it was the array of experiences and emotions that were aroused by the overall experience:

“The different experiences and memories I had at every rehearsal”

“Feeling involved in such a unique, magical and memorable experience - one that I will treasure forever”

“Sharing a unique experience with people I may never have met in real life”.

Beyond the special atmosphere of the Ceremonies which dominated the overall assessment of the role, there were many positive comments made in relation to the organisation of the volunteers into delivering their roles. In particular than 30 comments were made about the high quality of the choreography team in leading the volunteers, summed up by one respondent:

“Steve and the choreography team made every single moment hilarious and I have no idea how they managed to get people with no dancing skills to do what they did!”

Together the survey evidence pointed to all 452 respondents who commented (91% of those taking the survey) having positive experiences, fond memories and a sense that their contribution had a lasting impact on them, and in some cases created friendship and relationships which have been fostered by their shared roles as Ceremony Volunteers.

In order to explore more deeply some of the organisational and practical aspects of the role, each respondent was also asked to identify up to three aspects of the rehearsals which were most helpful to them in supporting their contribution to the ceremonies. 400 respondents took the opportunity to identify these elements.



Three aspects stand out from the comments, both in terms of the frequency of mention by respondents and by the significance of them in relation to other comments provided.

First the enthusiasm, confidence and friendliness of the staff involved ensured that many people felt rehearsals were *“fun”* and *“friendly”* but also *“helpful”* and *“clear”* about roles. Together this helped to overcome nerves and an initial lack of instructions and information about roles. Particular mention was made by many of the value of the warm-up routines – both in terms of raising levels of fitness and being fun.

Second more than 20% of respondents felt the organisation of the rehearsals was positive, with particular praise of the leaders and choreographers and dance coaches and the other staff involved. As a result there was a sense of learning and getting to know routines, moves and gain confidence. As one respondent summed up the rehearsal experience, the main benefit was

“mostly the constant positive reinforcement, constant positive feedback and constant positive {message of} how to improve”.

Third a wide range of comments pointed to a growing sense of confidence by individual volunteers in their ability to contribute to their roles and collectively that they were becoming a team. To achieve this some noted that :

“everyone was fitted into a part suited to their capabilities”

“flexibility of planners to change show to meet the skills of cast”

whilst others felt supported

“if something wasn’t working well or we were not happy with anything we were listened to and changes were made”.

Together this meant that rehearsals *“were a great help for bring us on and encouraging us”* and as several respondents noted *“we improved with each rehearsal”*.

Beyond the performative and training elements of the rehearsal, positive comments were made by many people on the wider support offered to them. 19 people mentioned the benefit of the free travel passes and the organised transport, and there were a few positive comments on the provision of free food – but in both cases see below (section 9) for alternative viewpoints. The investment in earpieces and radios for the cast was viewed as excellent, helping not only to improve communication but also to engender team working. And of particular significance was the clear and easy instructions provided verbally and in writing about the routines. As one comment indicated:

“When they emailed out instructions/reminders of what was covered this really helped in the first few days as you felt a bit more confident and had something to practice with”

Overall, the more than 900 comments suggested that the rehearsals had achieved their primary objectives of enabling the volunteers to train effectively for their roles and to move from being individual performers to be part of a ‘cast’. Respondents underlined the value of the rehearsals in team building, in developing their confidence and knowledge of the role, and to value of enjoyment of the process. The organisation of the rehearsals and the commitment made by staff were acknowledged as critical to this achievement, ensuring that the Ceremonies captured the enthusiasm of volunteers. The success in these respects was noted by some respondents who felt that there was a real buzz when the dress rehearsal for the Opening Ceremony was held in Celtic Park.

9. Moving forward: recommendations for improvement

The above analysis points to the generally very positive outcomes for most the ceremonies volunteers and to their pride in being offered a chance to get involved with the once in a lifetime event. However it is also clear that for them a number of aspects of the organisation, the experience and the impact have reduced their overall feeling of satisfaction in a ‘job well done’.

In the survey, the volunteers were asked to identify up to three aspects of the overall experience which they felt could be improved, and also to provide the same in relation to the rehearsals. Although there are differences in the level of detail provided to each question between the two sets of responses - with more specific examples drawn in relation to the rehearsals - the main issues

were evident across both questions. Analysis of the feedback from more than 330 of the respondents suggests that there are lessons to be learnt in relation to the organisation of them as a group of volunteers. The comments clustered around three main themes:

- Recognition of their contribution as a group;
- Supporting them during the experience; and
- Communicating expectations of them as volunteers.

Together these dimensions suggest that there was a tension between the priorities of the organisers of the event and those of the volunteers. For most of the volunteers and for much of the time, as noted above, the overall experience of working with to meet the production team's needs was positive, and the collaboration of volunteer and professional achieved the desired outcome in relation to the ceremonies. However there was some divergence too.

For the production team from Jack Morton Worldwide and the OC, there was a requirement to deliver the Ceremonies in time and on budget, and in the designing and producing of the sections of the Ceremonies involving the volunteers having to respond to changing demands on them. Their focus was on ensuring that the volunteers knew their roles, were suitably trained and performed to the required standard. Less attention was given to ensuring the volunteer enjoyment of the process and to meeting other needs.

In contrast, for the volunteers they were motivated to be part of the event, but had made commitments of their time to achieve this, giving up other aspects of their lives. As noted in section 5 they were motivated too by the need for fun and socialising, and for their own personal development.

These differences became most apparent in relation to three dimensions.

Recognition as volunteers

At times in the process many of the volunteers responding to this survey felt that the production team and the OC took them and their contribution too much for granted. This was perhaps most acutely underlined at the end of the Closing Ceremony and thereafter. The lack of recognition of the role the cast volunteers had played – and especially in comparison with the praise given to the Clyde-siders – at the ceremonies was viewed critically, as was the lack of any formal memento or certificate, and the absence of a formal end to the cast's role at the ceremony. As one respondent aptly summarised the views of over 50 respondents (more than 11% of all respondents),

“At the end of the show, we were dropped like hot bricks!! Majorly disappointing, having been so well looked after throughout. Shuttle buses were impossible to find – no-one we asked knew anything about them, so eventually we simply had to make our own arrangements to get home. Many of us were simply furious.”

Or as two other people commented the comparison with the recognition for the Clyde-siders made the lack of any formal ending worse:

“the cast have been treated as not as important as the Clyde-siders. The Clyde-siders got thanks, CPD certificates and thank you gifts. The Volunteer cast got nothing.”

“it would have been nice to receive some sort of recognition for what we did, many other people who volunteered as Clyde-siders got certificates and some games

memorabilia, we got nothing other than the opportunity to keep our outfit...and I supplied my own”.

Although the Closing Ceremony ended in a party atmosphere, many of the cast volunteers felt the lack of an ‘end of show’ gathering for them undermined the feeling of being part of a group who had delivered – it *“was like ok your done now”* with no memorabilia to have as recognition of their participation. As one respondent astutely noted the organisers could have capitalised on this desire – the lack of *“official merchandise for volunteers {was an} opportunity missed to make a fortune”*.

Supporting them as volunteers

With the OC indicating the significant time commitment expected of each volunteer prior to application, it is unsurprising that the volunteers felt that this time should be valued by the organisers of the rehearsals. One of the most common complaints in the survey – with more than 70 people making specific reference to it – was the large amount of their time spent *“sitting around”* *“left hanging around”* or *“not used”*. Whilst many acknowledged that some time was inevitably going to be inactive as part of the process of training and developing the programme, for most of those who noted this an area of improvement, it was the imbalance between the total time they committed and the time active that irked:

“Timings for people attending weren't best organised - a lot of hanging around when people were giving up their own time”.

For some there was a sense that less time could have been allocated to rehearsals or as one respondent summed up the sentiment that more productive use of everyone’s time was possible through

“Better time management with regards rehearsal schedules as we found we were called to rehearsals that we did not need to be at”.

For others this time was expressed in term of the personal cost to them:

“I work for the NHS and had to use annual leave for rehearsals”

“it was a big commitment – took a week’s annual leave from work to be able to participate”.

In addition, given the length of time at rehearsals and at venues, there were many critical comments on the sustenance provided. More than 80 people felt that the organisers had given too little thought to the catering needs of the volunteers. The absence of hot food, limited choice, lack of available water, and in their view poor quality food provision all contributed to a sense that they were not being valued during the rehearsals when they were devoting considerable amounts of time to be there.

And this was reinforced by considerable criticism being raised in relation to the organisers not offering sufficient support to help them to arrive at and depart from rehearsals and the Ceremonies. For some this related to the cost to get to rehearsals, with suggestions made that *“Free travel earlier before {the} Games for volunteers would have helped costs.”* For others, especially those with disabilities or access needs, the lack of information about available parking and access was raised. However, most comments were in connection with the lack of provision of transport after late rehearsals and the feeling that the volunteers were being *“abandoned”* with limited assistance. This

was reinforced by the location of rehearsal spaces, when were perceived by many as distant from public transport and accessible parking.

With over 100 comments being made about the length of time waiting around, and the perceived involvement in performances that were not fully utilised, there was a sense of a lack of overall organisation. This detracted from the positive aspects noted above, and led to more than 50 respondents raising concerns about organisation of rehearsals.

Communicating expectations of volunteers

This absence of information of travel plans spilled over into wider issues about the quality of overall communication from the organisers. One of the most consistent areas of complaint was in relation to communication with the volunteers.

Comments covered almost all aspects - from the delays in identifying whether they had been selected after auditions, to information on the timing of the rehearsals, and on the functions and tasks being undertaken during the rehearsals. However by far most critical comment was made in relation to the short notice provided of changes in schedules and rehearsal times. Not only did this reinforce an impression of poor organisation by the production team, but it suggested a lack of professionalism in dealing with volunteers. The following comments are typical of the experience mentioned by more than 65 people:

“Unclear timetable at the start, rehearsals were cancelled and new ones inserted, often you did not know if you had a rehearsal the next day or not!”

“The role had been changed every week during the rehearsal. That's made many volunteers confused on what to do.”

“Communication from co-ordination team could have been better, was slightly haphazard”.

And more widely the comments suggested that whilst communication about the roles at application stage was clear, there was less clarity during the rehearsal and performance stages. As a result, expectations of the volunteers were not always met.

This was most acute in the differences between the casts' roles and what was viewed externally on television. Many comments were made about the lack of visibility of their routines in the television coverage, the disappointment that their efforts in pre-recorded sections were never aired, and especially in relation to the Closing Ceremony the lack of organisation of the performances. Typically, comments highlighted:

“the dances we worked on where lost in the stadium and not shown on TV”

“clearer vision of who should be doing what in order to avoid rehearsing stuff you wouldn't be doing”

But perhaps these criticisms were best summed up by two volunteers who felt,

“The organisers should have had a dress rehearsal for us all at the venue so as they could see how it was actually going to come across on TV. As we didn't from the TV”

coverage it just looks like a huge crowd of people at a concert. Our dancing was not visible. The TV coverage of the mass cast dancing was also extremely poor."

"Probably due to lack of access to Hampden for rehearsal, on the actual day a lot of things went wrong or were missed. This showed up quite a chasm between the director's plans and reality."

Overall too there was a sense amongst the volunteers that for the organisers, the Opening Ceremony was given a much greater priority than the ceremony at the end of the Games. Limited rehearsals, poor organisation of the volunteers, and the poorly choreographed dancing all led the volunteers to suggest that:

"The closing ceremony was a disappointment compared with {the} opening {Ceremony} with regards to rehearsals and actual participation".

Specific comments highlighted that the

"Closing Ceremony rehearsals involved a lot of hanging around. Opening rehearsals were definitely more engaging/fun"

"Closing rehearsals not as well organised, different team, therefore different experience"

"The difference in the level of information provided for the opening and closing ceremony roles during rehearsals"

with the general descriptions of the rehearsals for the Closing Ceremony including "chaotic", "poorly organised", and "unstructured". Several respondents felt that the management team responsible for the Closing Ceremony did not respect volunteers and other respondents felt the Closing Ceremony spoilt the overall Games experience for them

The opinions of those respondents raising this issue was aptly summarised by one volunteer who noted in relation to the rehearsals that:

"Opening {Ceremony} was ran professionally and was well organised. Closing {Ceremony} felt much more chaotic and, was a markedly different experience from the Opening. The choreography team at the Closing {Ceremony} appeared stressed most of the time with conflicting information from different team members. The opening choreography team in contrast gave the impression of a unified approach working towards a clear vision".

Other improvements

Three other sets of comments appeared throughout the list of areas for improvement mentioned by the respondents to the survey.

First, there was criticism over the **costumes**, including their poor quality, the poor fit and the need for some volunteers to provide their own. And everyone who commented on the costumes felt that the overall appearance was poor. More than 20 people noted that they used their own clothes as those provided were inadequate and poorly sized.

Second, there was a sentiment that the filming and **television coverage** of the ceremonies undervalued the role of the volunteers. Aspects of this has been noted above in relation to elements of the performance not being visible in the television coverage, but there was a wider sense of disappointment that from the volunteers' perspective the coverage failed to portray the essence of the Ceremonies. As one volunteer noted they felt

“big disappointment with the TV coverage. {it} did not do justice to directors' vision”.

Third, and reflecting the overall experience of some of the volunteers, there were comments on the desirability of **more funding** being made available to assist some people – particularly towards travel but also for a few who travelled from remoter parts of the country towards accommodation costs. As already noted, only 16% applied to the Volunteer Support Pot.

In capturing the constructive criticism made by respondents to the survey, the above also underlines the importance of those managing the volunteer cast in viewing them professionally. With the majority of participants having little prior experience of performing on a stage or knowledge of what was expected, it is clear that the comments underscore the desire of the vast majority of the volunteers to deliver a high quality performance, worthy of the time and effort they had committed, and which is faithful to the vision set out by the Ceremony directors. Their desire to be kept informed, to be used wisely and efficiently, and to be suitably trained to deliver their roles was clear. In short, most respondents wanted to be treated professionally and with respect. The criticisms largely reflect where, in their view, the organisers failed to deliver this rather than reflecting demands for more attention or support.



10. Ensuring learning from the Games – some recommendations

In bringing together a cast of volunteers with limited experience of performing in public and with no experience of being part of a major event of the size and complexity of the Commonwealth Games inevitably was going to be challenging – for the OC, for the producers of the ceremonies, and for the volunteers. As a unique development of previous event ceremonies, there was no directly comparable experience to draw upon.

The overwhelmingly positive experience for the volunteers was testimony to their enthusiasm, their commitment to make the most of the opportunity, and the time and effort they contributed to support each other. The generally positive assessment of the Ceremonies in the media and in the public also highlighted that the organising team, from the OC and Jack Morton Worldwide, achieved their goal of delivering with the volunteers suitable opening and closing ceremonies for the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

However, this research in delving below this overarching assessment has highlighted both why such success was achieved and aspects which in future could be improved – to improve the experience for the volunteers and the overall quality of production.

This final section takes this learning and presents a set of recommendations. Whilst reflecting the uniqueness of the Games in Glasgow, the recommendations are provided to assist future event organisation where the use of large scale cast volunteers is envisaged.

Recommendations

- Much greater recognition needs to be given to the volunteers for their role and contribution. At a minimum this needs to be of a similar level to that provided to other volunteers associated with the Games and to be made publicly to the volunteers at the end of the Ceremonies or Games.
- The transformation of the volunteers into a ‘cast’ performing as a team is most likely to be achieved by appealing to the volunteers’ main motivations for involvement. Alongside being part of the event, the desire to have fun and enjoyment, to socialise and meet new people, and to feel some self-fulfilment is important. The enthusiasm of the production team and their fun-filled approach worked well in Glasgow in harnessing these elements.
- Recognition of the major time commitment and expense made to attend rehearsals could be improved through ensuring that rehearsal locations are more accessible, providing support to assist travel to rehearsals and not just during the Games, which need not be free travel but does include information on post-rehearsal travel options and providing higher quality and greater quantity of refreshments appropriate to the timing of the rehearsal and commensurate with the length of time of commitment expected of the volunteer
- The opportunity to provide merchandise for purchase by the volunteers would assist in meeting their desire for some tangible memento of their role as cast volunteers, and assist the OC to meet its income targets.
- Creating mechanisms to offer the Ceremonies Volunteers other volunteering opportunities is important to ensure a volunteering legacy. Although an already committed groups of volunteers, the volunteers were encouraged by their experience as part of the Games to be more involved in volunteering in future.

Appendix 1 : Online Survey

The survey will take less than 10 minutes to complete. Your reply will be anonymous and cannot be connected back to your application or any information that you may have given to Glasgow 2014 Ltd. If you would like to talk to someone about this study, please contact Dr Robert Rogerson at the University of Strathclyde by email at r.j.rogerson@strath.ac.uk

"I understand that this research is being undertaken to inform future volunteer support. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from this survey at any time, without having to give a reason and without any consequences. I understand that all information I provide to the research team is anonymous but may be used in a public document."

Please select the appropriate option below to continue to the questions or, if you prefer, to exit the study.

- I consent to take part in this survey
- I have decided not to take part in this survey

Q1. Please indicate which ceremonies you were involved in?

- Opening Ceremony only
- Closing Ceremony only
- Both Opening and Closing Ceremonies

Q2. Were you involved as a volunteer or in a paid capacity?

- Volunteer (ie unpaid)
- Paid role

Q3. Did you apply for, or get support from, the Volunteer Support Pot?

- Yes, received funding
- Applied but did not get funding
- Did not apply

Q4. What role did you play as a Ceremony Volunteer?

- Cast member recruited through the open cast programme i.e. I applied as an individual
- Cast member recruited as part of a group/organisation e.g. Glasgow City Council staff representatives
- Support volunteer - undertook back of house support e.g. makeup, costumes etc
- Other (please specify)

Q5a. Had you originally applied to be a Clyde-sider?

- Yes
- No

Q5b. Following your application to be a Clyde-sider, were you

- not invited for an interview
- interviewed but not offered a role
- offered a role after interview but did not take it
- offered a role and was a Clyde-sider at the Games

Q6. What motivated you to be involved as a Ceremonies Volunteer? (please tick all that apply)

- Self improvement/personal development
- To improve my employment prospects
- To make a positive difference to the community
- As a way to get involved with the community
- To socialise/have fun
- To learn new skills
- The role needed to be done
- To be able to see sporting events
- To participate in the excitement of the 2014 Games
- To be part of the group
- Other (please specify)

Q7. Overall how satisfied were you with your overall role as a Ceremonies Volunteer?

Very dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neither satisfied or
dissatisfied Satisfied Very Satisfied

**Q8. What would you say were the BEST things about your time as a Ceremonies Volunteer?
(Please list up to three)**

**Q9. What, if anything, would you say needed to be improved about your time as a Ceremonies
Volunteer? (please list up to three)**

**Q10. Please use the scale below to indicate your view on each of these statements reflecting on
your experience as a Ceremonies Volunteer**

I am proud to have been a Ceremonies Volunteer	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
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I know more about Glasgow having been a Ceremonies Volunteer	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel more connected to Glasgow having been a Ceremonies Volunteer	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I have more pride in Glasgow having been a Ceremonies Volunteer	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel more confident having been a Ceremonies Volunteer	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel more valued having been a Ceremonies Volunteer	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Q11. What were the MOST HELPFUL or USEFUL aspects of the Ceremonies rehearsals? (please list up to three)

Q12. And what aspects of rehearsals would you like to have been improved? (please list up to three)

Q13. Please indicate if you have been involved as a volunteer with any of the groups listed below? (please tick all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> adult education groups | <input type="checkbox"/> local community group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> book club | <input type="checkbox"/> musical groups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> environmental/wildlife groups | <input type="checkbox"/> other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> groups for children/young people | <input type="checkbox"/> political groups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> groups for older people | <input type="checkbox"/> religious groups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> health, welfare, disability groups | <input type="checkbox"/> sports/exercise groups (eg as coach, assistant) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hobbies/social club | <input type="checkbox"/> trade union groups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |
-

Q14. Thinking of all the unpaid help you give to organisations, how frequently do you do this?

Several times a week About once a week At least once a month At least 5 or 6 times a year A few times a year Less often Never

Q15. Thinking of the future, if offered would you get involved as a volunteer in:

Another event in Glasgow	Yes	No	Already involved in	Unsure / Don't Know
a local community event	Yes	No	Already involved in	Unsure / Don't Know
a local community group or club	Yes	No	Already involved in	Unsure / Don't Know
assisting family/friends	Yes	No	Already involved in	Unsure / Don't Know

Q16. Please add any further comments in relation to your role and experience as a Ceremonies Volunteer: