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# VOiCE Case Studies

## Reaping the Legacy of the Commonwealth Games

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# Reaping the legacy of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games - Health Impact Assessment Community Engagement

## Overview

Glasgow City is hosting the 2014 Commonwealth Games. As the Games will affect all residents of the city, Glasgow City Council wanted to ensure that local people feel they have ownership of the proposed plans and activities for the 2014 Games thus ensuring a sustainable legacy. To assess residents' perceptions of how they would be affected by the Games, the City Council's Corporate Services Department carried out a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). They used VOiCE as a tool to guide and promote more effective engagement as well as to record the findings from the community engagement aspect of the HIA.

## The Context

Hosting the Commonwealth Games is a huge and complex undertaking. The success of the Games and the legacy thereafter, to a considerable extent depend on buy-in from the people of Glasgow. Residents' participation and involvement can lead to a sense of ownership, pride and renewed confidence in the city. This is in addition to the economic and physical benefits resulting from infrastructure that remains from the Games. Glasgow City officials believed that communities know best what will affect them and therefore sought their views. Such stakeholder involvement is a key component of the HIA process.

It was agreed that engaging more effectively with the residents of Glasgow by implementing the National Standards for Community Engagement during the HIA exercise would bring in valuable information, involve the residents more in the decisions being made as well as provide the opportunity to disseminate accurate information about the plans for the Games as the preparations progressed. VOiCE was used to guide and record the community engagement aspect of the HIA

This exercise which involved residents from across Glasgow led to some recommendations being made in line with residents' views regarding how they wished to see the Games planned and implemented. In addition lessons were learnt and recommendations made about the value of community engagement and how best to do this in similarly complex circumstances.

Independent specialist community development support was bought in from SCDC to provide training and support on the National Standards for Community Engagement and VOiCE; and from the Glasgow East Regeneration Agency Community Health Initiative to support the development of the interactive discussion workshops using Participatory Appraisal Techniques.

## The use of VOiCE

VOiCE was used in two ways, guided by the strong desire by officers to ensure that the National Standards for Community Engagement were observed and practised. It was used in the following ways:

- As a tool to improve practice in community engagement. Using the questions and prompts in VOiCE helped to guide the “analyse” and “plan” stages of the community engagement as the project progressed. Officers were able to decide the nature of information and sessions they should have with residents in advance of and during meetings with the public using guidance from VOiCE. In addition VOiCE was used to review of the whole community engagement exercise.
- As a recording tool. Recording on the VOiCE database was carried out retrospectively, pulling together information gathered from various discussions and events.

## Analyse and Plan

### Level of engagement:

For most residents, the HIA incorporating the community engagement exercise involved informing residents about what was going to take place when the Games came to Glasgow and the plans to date. It was accepted as a given that many decisions had already been made without community involvement and were therefore no longer open to influence (e.g. that the Games will be held in Glasgow, the 17 sports to be included in the competition, the location of the venues and village). However, for some plans, the public could still be consulted where there was a choice between a number of restricted options (e.g. the exact nature of new build facilities). For some areas though, where there were limited or no plans at the time, the residents were being engaged in formulating and considerably influencing decisions. This is mainly around the development of the legacy framework - a strategy document representing the Council’s plans on legacy, and provides details of the strategic outcomes to be achieved in the time period up to 2019 (i.e. planning for the 5 years up to games, and 5 years after). It is intended that the community continues to influence the legacy plans throughout, as now detailed in the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games Community Engagement Strategy document (draft).

### Reasons for engaging:

It was accepted that the Commonwealth Games has a potential impact on a wide range of social determinants of health. Glasgow City Council wanted to find out:

- How much do people already feel engaged in the Commonwealth Games?
- What are the potential health impacts (positive and negative) of the Commonwealth Games?
- Which groups/communities will be affected differently? Will some groups be disadvantaged?
- What actions can/should be taken to maximise the positive and to minimise the negative impacts?
- What can local communities contribute?

The outcomes for the community engagement exercise were arrived at following discussion workshops with stakeholders. There were outcomes for agencies, communities and individuals. These ranged from raising awareness of delivery plans and potential health impacts of the Commonwealth Games; an increased awareness and use of the National Standards for Community Engagement and VOiCE database to promote good practice in community engagement; partnership working on community engagement enabling a broad range of people to take part in the process and individuals achieving an increased sense of ‘connectedness’ to the 2014 Commonwealth Games. A key outcome was to ensure that learning from the community engagement informed the Community Engagement Plan for the 2014 Commonwealth Games and other future mega-sporting events.

## Do

Residents’ views were gathered using a range of methods starting with information giving, online questionnaires through to focus groups and the participatory appraisal methodology used in workshops. Examples of these are:

- A scoping event to engage with key 2014 decision makers on priorities, concerns and timelines and to consider all the potential health impacts of the Commonwealth Games, the size of the impact, the groups most likely to be affected and the potential to influence the decisions that affect this, in order to prioritise issues for further assessment.
- Glasgow Household Survey -The survey is carried out every six months. For the autumn 2008 survey, there was a boosted sample of an additional 200 people in East and North East Glasgow. Specific questions were asked on thoughts and concerns about the Games.
- Web and paper questionnaire - questions specific to the HIA were developed, based on the themes emerging from the scoping event. These questions were designed to help identify the most important issues within a number of categories. There were open questions to ask what respondents felt the biggest impact would be on them personally and also what one action the organisers should take to make sure there are lasting benefits for the people of Glasgow.
- Interactive discussion workshops designed to provide an opportunity for people to contribute to the community engagement process in a different and more participatory way using Participatory Appraisal and data collection methodology. Following these, local residents/workers facilitated discussions with existing groups in their own communities with various degrees of success in follow through.
- Feedback events designed to provide an opportunity to present the combined findings and proposed recommendations of the process to people who had participated for verification, ahead of finalising the report.
- Summary Report Publication - Once the HIA Final Report was published and approved, a summary version was produced for the public and distributed widely.

## Community engagement review

VOiCE was used to review the HIA community engagement. Review sessions were carried out by SCDC with some of the stakeholders who had been involved in the process. The review sessions included face-to-face discussion with staff involved in using Participatory Appraisal methods; discussion with the HIA steering group; telephone and face-to-face interviews with community members and agency staff involved in either delivering workshops or organising them and distributing information; and a reflection session with the “keeper of VOiCE” from Glasgow City Council (the team member responsible for inputting information into the VOiCE database) to get feedback and insight on experiences of using the tool.

The review sessions noted key successes and areas for improvement. The HIA steering group review identified the following key lessons for improving community engagement practice within the Council:

- Strategic buy-in must be there from the start and sustained – senior officers are gatekeepers for community engagement and need to be involved sooner in directing the process.
- On reflection, the total lack of community involvement in the Commonwealth Games Bid impacted on the starting point of the HIA community engagement process.
- Meaningful engagement takes time and needs to be adequately resourced.

In addition, as a result of using VOiCE to improve practice in HIA community engagement, some unanticipated outcomes were realised. These include:

- Senior staff grew to understand and appreciate the value of good community engagement for HIA
- A clear shift was achieved in how people moved from being consulted to more involvement and collaboration
- Subsequent City-wide projects such as the Health Commission work coming after the HIA engagement process revealed the community’s perceptions of genuinely being engaged rather than just informed suggesting that levels and effectiveness of community engagement are gradually improving.

Reflection on the use of VOiCE by the “keeper of VOiCE” indicated that VOiCE:

- Supports purposeful dialogue with communities. It effectively embeds and is very helpful for working towards achieving the National Standards for Community Engagement.
- VOiCE is very effective for planning the community engagement process and for recording the project. Careful consideration should be made about having the database on site in the community so as not to stifle debate and discussion at events.
- Supports a collaborative approach to community engagement. It helps with identification of stakeholders/ partners to meet the Involvement Standard, though it is necessary to take care to think more about how to engage them in the process at “Analyse and Plan” stages.
- Provides structure for involving stakeholders in analysing and planning the engagement; sets clear outcomes and criteria for assessing engagement performance against the National Standards.

A lesson in improving efficiency in the application of VOiCE arising from the HIA community engagement is that, in order to ensure the efficient use of VOiCE, it is a good idea to understand the VOiCE tool well before embarking on the engagement and to record information as the engagement progresses, rather than pasting information into VOiCE from other documents at a later date.

From the sustained experience of using VOiCE in the Commonwealth Games HIA the steering group concluded that:

- VOiCE enabled capturing and sharing of learning.
- The process of using VOiCE helped to improve the quality of community engagement more than the database itself.
- VOiCE can be used to improve the design and delivery of future services within the council (though integrating VOiCE with an existing consultation data-base is an outstanding issue to be addressed)
- The ability to produce reports is a big selling point for the database.

The “keeper of VOiCE” in the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games concluded that VOiCE “is completely useful in supporting the engagement process, e.g. partnership working and expectations; clear and agreed standards; is good for engagements that have multiple methods, flexible and constantly changing and provides centralised recording and presents a real challenge to mere consultation”.

