

**The Vancouver 2010 Winter Games were undoubtedly a success. One only has to remember the throngs of crowds lining up to have their photo taken with the Olympic Flame, the new urban developments that showcased Olympic events in the centre of the city, and the incredibly beautiful backdrop to the events of mountains, sea and glass-filled urban landscape that characterises one of the most beautiful cities in the Western hemisphere.**

As London 2012 draws ever closer, what lessons can we learn from Vancouver to ensure that our Games are as successful as possible?

Lord Sebastian Coe relayed his enthusiasm soon after the Games had drawn to a close:

*'The Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games are drawing to a close and with them the last opportunity for London 2012 to learn first hand from an Olympic Games. And we have the Paralympic Games to learn from next month, too. Because it will be our turn in just 882 days' time.*

He went on to comment:

*We will fly home this weekend and start our internal debrief first thing next week. We will share information on sport, transport, accommodation, the athletes' village, venue operations, communications, marketing, technology, ceremonies and city operations. We'll discuss the innovative Vancouver Cultural Olympiad and the programme the Vancouver organisers delivered to engage the city and the nation. Although the Games got off to a difficult start, with the tragic*

*death of Nodar Kumaritashvili, they will leave enduring memories of how athletes, organisers and the people of Vancouver went beyond their personal best to deliver to the rest of us experiences of a lifetime'*

Coe likened the staging of the Games as equivalent to the staging 26 World Championships that involve more than 200 countries, over 16 days...twice! He drew upon many reasons as to why the Games were a success. One of his observations included Vancouver's provisions of 'Live Sites' – big screens located across Vancouver that allowed regular non-ticket holding Vancouver residents and sports tourists to watch the action unfold in an exciting and partly-like atmosphere. Such a strategy is undoubtedly useful for London, particularly given the reports that many Londoners are likely to be unable to secure tickets to their favoured events. This would also provide excellent marketing and PR opportunities for Games sponsors if they were to sponsor these events.

LOCOG would have also observed that Vancouver relied – successfully – on a burgeoning army of volunteers who played an integral and central part in delivery of the Games. Logistically, no Olympic Games would be conceivably possible without volunteers. LOCOG are hoping to secure 70,000 volunteers for the London Games and already have partnerships with McDonald's and strategies in place to recruit qualified volunteers and to train the unemployed to gain skills that will allow them to volunteer.

LOCOG Chief Executive Paul Deighton explained that whereas Beijing 2008 had offered LOCOG the

chance to learn about the sporting side of hosting the Games, Vancouver 2010 had given them a window into issues associated with logistics, transport, the Athlete's Village, accommodation and accreditation.

**START THE DISCUSSION**

- Lord Sebastian Coe has been pivotal in helping London win the bid and develop the Games successfully. What kind of a leader is Coe and do you think this great feat would have been achievable with someone else at the helm?
- During the bid, Barbara Cassani was originally leading the bid. Who was she and why did she step down?
- How did Lord Coe handle the Panorama scandal successfully during the bid process?
- What role did his team (for example the Communications Director Mike Lee) play in helping Coe secure the bid?
- Do you think LOCOG is doing as good a job as the bid team?
- What can we learn from Vancouver 2010?
- What issues do you think London will face that did not occur in Vancouver 2010?
- Do you think that the Vancouver 'Live Sites' initiative will work well in London and could it also be used across the UK to promote feelings of involvement in the Games?

**FIND OUT MORE**

**Lee, M. (2006). The Race for the 2012 Olympics.**

Virgin Books.

**London Olympic Games Website**

<http://www.london2012.com>

**Gold, J.R., Gold, M.M. (2008). Olympic cities: regeneration, city rebranding and changing urban agendas. Geography Compass. 2/1; pp.300–318.**

***CREDITS***

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