Scottish Tech Army Introduction

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By the end of day one, we had 150 People who had signed up as volunteers, it was clear that there was a groundswell of enthusiasm, because

I'm sure people will remember that. At that time, there were a lot of people who were trying to find a way to help to do something. I think one of the things that appealed was the fact that it was giving people an opportunity to use their specialist skills that they had spent years or decades developing, put those to work.

Knowing that the stresses that a lot of organisations on the frontlines were under, there was an opportunity to use the digital skills that they had to help create solutions to support those who were on the frontlines. We tried to get things going as quickly as we could, because you know, it's obviously an emergency situation. And so, from that conversation to launch was about three weeks in the end. And the mantra was that we wanted to deliver things in days to weeks, not months to years. So very much trying to make sure that we we identify things that we could deliver with a pool of volunteers get it done quickly, and get it out there to help people who were on the frontlines.

So the number of active volunteers, you know, is a few 100. At any one point in time,

we've worked with about 250 different organisations to give them support so far.

What became very apparent to us in those first few months was that, although a lot of the things we were hearing about were either caused or exacerbated by the pandemic, actually, there was a much deeper

underlying problem of organisations, particularly in third sector, not really having access to technology, and really struggling sometimes to be as effective as they could be. And so all that was what really was the catalyst for us deciding that there was a longer term role that we could play with this kind of taxonomy. So we've transitioned from what was very much a COVID Response Initiative, in the first instance to an organisation that has a much broader remit around Tech for Good more generally, very often, these initiatives are relatively disconnected, they're not that well coordinated. So one of the things that we're keen to do is to help play a part in trying to coordinate some of that and to build the Tech for Good ecosystem. receiving notification that we've been nominated for an award of the news honours list was a huge surprise, to be honest, you know, We'd only been around for by that point about eight months. It was it was something of a surprise, obviously, very gratifying. And it really,

for me, it was a huge acknowledgement of all the work that all the volunteers that had signed up had done, because you know, if it hadn't been for them, it would have been just being this friend of mine, two guys with a crazy idea that never went anywhere. One of the things that is quite sobering, is the fact that during the pandemic, charitable organisations last that's I saw was going to be something like a 12 point 4 billion pound gap in funding for charities, but for me, personally, I think

being able to provide some financial support is a useful thing to do. But it for me, it's much more personal to be able to get involved actively in working in some of these projects, you know, and being able to see directly the fruits of what you've been able to do.