



Girls on the Move: Overcoming the barriers for hard to reach, inactive, teenage girls

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Background



Girls on the Move was commissioned by the Scottish Executive Health Department and the Robertson Trust in response to “Let's Get Scotland More Active: A Strategy for Physical Activity” (Scottish Government, 2003).



Target Groups



The Primary target groups are inactive and sedentary girls from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds who face the biggest health inequalities









Objectives and key activities



- To increase physical activity amongst girls and young women in Scotland - removing barriers to physical activity
- To engage harder to reach groups of girls and young women - from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds
- To involve and train more young women as leaders in physical activities for girls





Key Activities



The **Participation Programme** provides support and grants of up to £2000 (reduced from £5000 after year 2) to voluntary and community groups to fund projects aimed at: increasing physical activity levels among inactive and sedentary young women aged 12-18;

The **Leadership Programme** provides opportunities for young women aged 16-25 to gain the leadership skills and experience needed to lead activities within their own community, youth group or school. The courses also enable these young women to gain nationally recognised qualifications.







Outcomes and Evaluation results



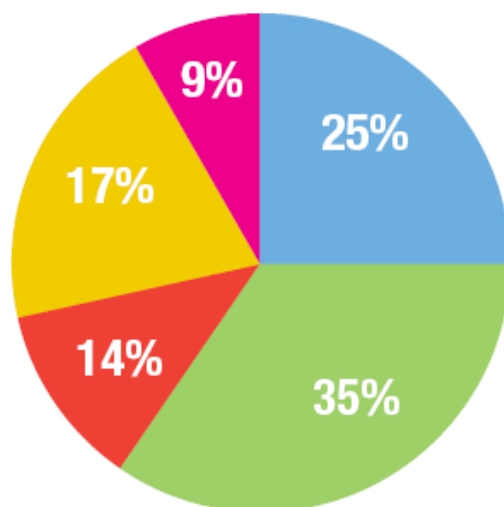
Did it reach the target groups?

Participation**

- Over one-third (34%) of girls were from the 20% of most deprived areas.
- 26% of girls were at primary schools, 61% at secondary school, with 13% no longer at school.
- 4% were young mums.
- 14% of girls were of BME origin.
- 12% of girls indicated that they had an illness or disability that affected their ability to take part in physical activity – this affects 3% of girls 'all' or 'most' of the time.

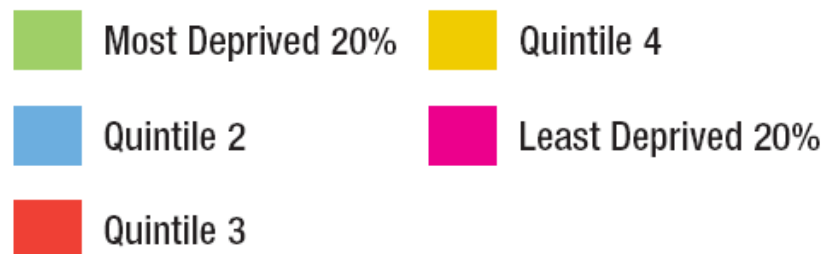
“It was lots of fun and I enjoyed being in a group with my friends. I didn't think we'd be able to do it at first, but we did.”

Girls home address by area of deprivation (SIMD)



Leadership**

- One-quarter (25%) of girls on the course were from the 20% of most deprived areas.
- 80% of leadership course participants were aged 18 years or under.
- 8% were young mums.
- Girls from the least deprived areas were more likely to lead activities before (55%) and after (64%) the course. However, girls from the most deprived areas leading activities more than doubled from 26% to 56%.
- 38% of leadership course participants were no longer at school and approximately one-fifth (18%) of this group were unemployed.
- 8% had a disability or illness that affected their involvement in physical activity some of the time.



Outcome 1: Increase physical activity levels of girls and young women participating in the programme

Participation Programme

Scale of Programme

- 154 groups throughout Scotland received an award ranging from £500 to £2000 (Project awards were up to £5000 in Years 1 and 2)
- c.3000 girls and young women participated.
- Average of 20 girls and young women per group.

“It was magic” Participant

Impact on Participants*

- 35% of girls reported only taking part in physical activity one or two times per week prior to this programme.
- 16% were not physically active prior to this programme.
- 62% of girls reported that they were more physically active at the end of the projects than they were at the beginning.**
- Girls were more willing to try physically challenging fitness tests at the end of projects (e.g. 1 mile walk/run; sit ups; sit & reach) and showed significant improvements in their ability.**
- 75% of girls indicated they would definitely continue the activity they tried through Girls on the Move.
- By the end of the project, 89% of girls enjoyed taking part in physical activity “a lot”, compared with 65% at the start of the project.

Impact on Programme organisers**

- The Programme was almost universally liked by project organisers.
- 86% of groups indicated that the Programme was responsible for them continuing to deliver activities for girls and young women.
- Three-quarters of organisers ‘strongly agreed’/‘agreed’ that:
 - The group had a more positive attitude to physical activity;
 - Staff/volunteers and girls at their groups were more willing to try new activities;
 - Girls were more active than they were before.
- 55% of groups still deliver “girls only” activities.
- 91% of organisers agree that ‘Girls on the Move’ has left a legacy (long-term impact).
- Projects challenged girls’ perceptions of physical activity - many girls have taken part in activities in and out of the groups since their projects finished.

“They [the girls] regarded sport as hard work, not at all as fun. It is a hard job to change this attitude, but we managed to do it. They have changed a lot.”

“ — — — — — ”

Outcome 3: Involve more girls and young women as leaders in physical activities for girls

Leadership Programme

Scale of Programme

- 37 courses delivered
- 548 participants

“[I learnt] to use my imagination, good leadership skills and built my confidence.”

Impact on Participants*

- 42% of participants surveyed reported having led physical activities in the 6 months prior to completing the leadership course.
- 59% of participants surveyed have been active as leaders since attending the course.
- 74% of these participants led physical activities in the last 4 weeks.
- The self-esteem of participants increased between the before course survey and 6-month follow-up survey
 - Increases in self-esteem were highest in those who had taken on a leadership role within their community.

Broader impact**

- The leadership programme increased the number of young women leading physical activities.
- 51% of leaders lead activities in after school clubs and 38% in youth clubs.
- Course graduates were active as leaders for an average of 3.1 hours per week in the six-months following the course.
- 88% of active leaders undertook unpaid voluntary leadership roles after attending their course.
- Each active leader made an estimated £800-£1,200 economic contribution to their local community in the 6-months following the course.
- 96% of participants surveyed, who are active leaders, lead physical activities for other girls and young women.

“young mothers are still enthusiastic about physical activity and have continued to be involved as volunteers and sessional workers in various activities, in particular climbing”



What's changed?

- Increased opportunities for girls and young women to try out a variety of physical activities.
- Project organisers' have increased knowledge, willingness and capacity to deliver activities specifically for girls, to increase their levels of physical activity.
- More youth groups are delivering physical activities for girls and young women with increased delivery of physical activities for girls and young women outwith school hours.
- More girls, including those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, enjoyed being physically active and their levels of physical activity increased. The greatest improvements in health can be obtained by getting sedentary people active.
- More girls and young women are now leading physical activity in their communities and active leaders have increased levels of self-esteem and leadership awareness.



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The evaluation of the Girls on the Move programme was undertaken by a team from the **School of Sport at the University of Stirling** including John Taylor, Sabine Radtke, Adrienne Hughes and Pelagia Koufaki. The evaluation was undertaken over two time periods 2005-2008, and 2008-2010



Key lessons in engaging these groups





A **Youth Work approach** has been key to engaging these groups:

- Supportive environment, where young women feel at ease
- Inclusive and flexible; all types of achievement and ability are recognised
- Consultation with target group ensures a needs-led approach. Meet interests and motivations of these young women, ensures programme remains relevant
- Youth Work approach aims to build the self esteem and confidence of young women
- Workers develop supportive relationships with young women, able to encourage and motivate them to take part, and to address stereotypes around physical activity and personal barriers





Main Partners and Funding



Youth Scotland is the network of youth clubs and groups across Scotland. Youth Scotland is the largest non-uniformed youth organisation in Scotland.

The funders are: the Scottish Government (Health Improvement) and the Robertson Trust, an independent Scottish grant-making trust.

NHS Health Scotland -supports Girls on the Move, and other Government funded national physical activity projects with the strategic and evaluation elements of projects.



Consultation of Target groups



Girls on the Move have begun a new area of work helping **Cornton Vale (Scottish Women's Prison)** achieve their offenders outcomes and contributes to the health and wellbeing agenda.

- The Girls on the Move programme builds confidence amongst the women offenders who take part, increases their communication skills, gives them a sense of self esteem and prepares them better for release.
- It gives them life skills that they can use and develop on release from prison





Longer term prospects



Youth Scotland will motivate young women to become involved in **The Movement**, a new programme developed from our experience and evaluation of Girls on the Move. The Girls on the Move programme will continue as a key part of this.

