



SPORTED ENGAGE HER

Changing attitudes in grassroots sport

March 2019



Department for
Communities





ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Engage Her aims to strengthen community sport groups and sporting governing bodies' understanding of how to engage women and girls more effectively.

The programme combines expert insight and research with one-to-one support from Sported's volunteers to help groups embed change from within and make their respective sports more inclusive and accessible to women and girls.

Engage Her is part of Sport Northern Ireland's Active, Fit and Sporty initiative, funded by the Department for Communities. The initiative seeks to strengthen sporting structures in Northern Ireland, enabling more women and girls to participate in sport and physical activity. The Engage Her programme shares research and insight from across the UK, including Women in Sport, the only organisation in the UK that researches sport purely from the perspective of women and girls.

Now in its third year, having successfully piloted in 2016/17 and rolled out in 2017/18 and 2018/19, we're delighted to share our key learning to date.



THE NEED

Only...

18% of Sported Northern Ireland members state they work with women and girls¹

But...

38% said they could and would want to do more to attract female participants²

However...a lack of confidence is holding them back.

Sported respondents rated their confidence in engaging women and girls at

47%³

We want to attract more female participants but also to educate ourselves better on how their needs and goals may differ from male participants.

Erne Boxing Club (Engage Her 2018)

ENGAGE HER'S GOALS



Improve the confidence and change the attitudes of grassroots groups in engaging women and girls.



Build groups' capacity to engage more women and girls in their activities.



Increase leadership's knowledge and insight, empowering them to generate change within their organisation.

1 Sported membership database. 2 Sported 'Game Plan' survey of 160 members
3 The University of Ulster: Active, Fit and Sporty partnership survey (leaders, pre) - Sported respondents rated lower (47%) compared to 63% and 70% in other subgroups.

PROGRAMME MODEL



One-to-one volunteer support

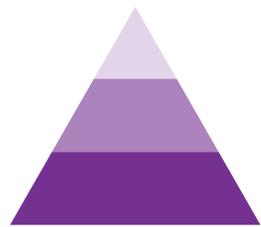
Building capacity

Each group receives one-to-one support from a trained Sported volunteer. Through sharing insight and learning, the group: identify areas where they could improve engagement; create a bespoke women and girls engagement plan; and embed the insight and methodology into their wider organisation.



'Alumni' check-in

Groups and governing bodies that participated on Engage Her in 2016 and 2017 ('Alumni') had post-programme one-to-one check-ins with Sported to evaluate their progress and identify any further areas for support.



Supporting governing bodies

Top-down, bottom-up

Engage Her provides a top-down, bottom-up approach by providing support to a number of sporting governing bodies alongside grassroots groups from their respective sport. The programme's insight, training and support enables the organisation to support its clubs and disseminate best practice across their sport.



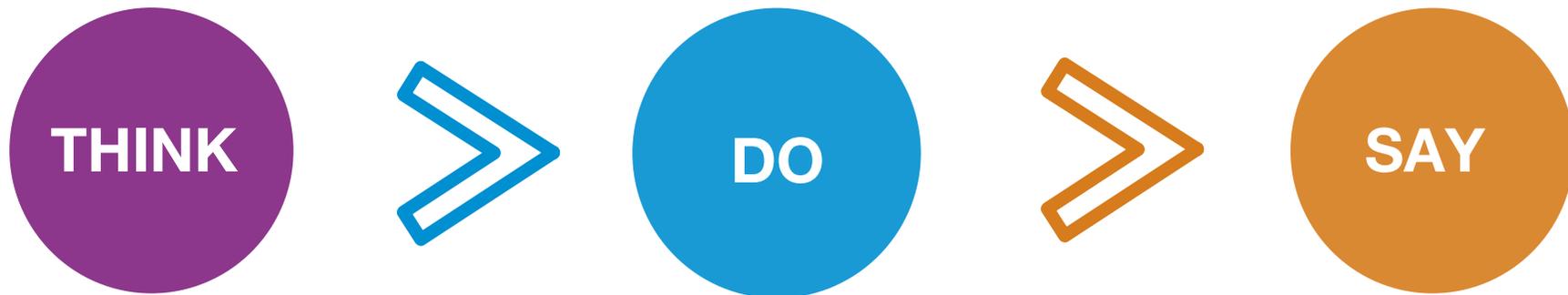
Creating sustainability

Training the trainers

In order to build a sustainable model of support for groups, Sported adopts a 'train-the-trainer' model. We recruit volunteers and provide them with tailored training and resources to guide participating groups through a structured programme of support.

OUR APPROACH CREATING ATTITUDINAL CHANGE

The Engage Her programme is centred around basic 'Behaviour Change' theories that suggest what we **THINK** affects what we **DO** and, in turn, what we **SAY**. Trained Sported volunteers guide groups through this programme:



What was delivered

Two sessions with Sported volunteer to:

-  Share insight and key learning from research
-  Review the needs of women & girls in their local area
-  Consider how the group might carry out consultation

Facilitated session with a Sported volunteer to:

-  Review current women & girls provision (e.g. activities, programmes, facilities)
-  Explore areas for making the group and services more inclusive and accessible
-  Consider how consultation results could shape future programmes

Facilitated session with a Sported volunteer to:

-  Review current marketing & comms
-  Explore how marketing & comms can be made more engaging for women & girls
-  Consider how the programming changes could influence information shared in marketing & comms

Outcomes

- **Increased understanding of the 'core value base' for women & girls**

- **Greater understanding on barriers to participation and solutions to overcome these.**

- **Improved clarity around marketing and communications for women and girls.**

ENGAGE HER DELIVERY

In three years' delivery we've supported...

6 GOVERNING BODIES

28 COMMUNITY SPORT GROUPS



Geographical spread of Engage Her groups

-  **Year 2016/17 (Pilot):**
5 groups, 1 governing body
-  **Year 2017/18:**
9 groups, 3 governing bodies
-  **Year 2018/19:**
14 groups, 2 governing bodies

...with the help of **16** trained Sported volunteers.



Range of sports:

-  **x5** Cricket groups
-  **x5** GAC groups
-  **x3** Boxing groups
-  **x3** Hockey groups
-  **x3** Football groups
-  **x2** Cycling groups
-  **x2** Netball groups
-  **x2** Multi-sport groups
-  **x1** Rugby group
-  **x1** Gymnastics group
-  **x1** Wheelchair basketball group

LEARNING - COMMUNITY GROUPS

Increasing confidence & changing attitudes

We wanted to learn how to engage women into sport and hopefully one day set up our own women's team. Our mentor has been great in helping us think of a strategy about how to get more women and girls into our club and as a result of this we will be setting up women-only taster sessions.

**Knights Wheelchair Basketball
(Engage Her 2016)**



Jenni, our Engage Her volunteer, was great. She posed many challenging questions that has made us think differently about how to develop the club. Our action plan is a working document and it's great to see some of the things we have agreed to do really adding value to our club ethos and attraction.

**Newcastle Shooters
(Engage Her 2018)**

Building capacity



An Ríocht Camogie Club (Engage Her 2017)

"As a result of the Engage Her support, we have a much greater understanding around the barriers to participation for girls in our area. The learning and skills gained from the Engage Her programme and the support of our Sported volunteer has enabled us to successfully engage and retain more women and girls through:

- Encouraging our senior camogie players to act as mentors for younger players
- Increasing our social media presence to continually promote the club
- Running a new winter programme for U14s to ensure that there is no big gap from one season to the next
- Introducing an incentive scheme whereby young players receive a gift when they complete so many training sessions
- Increasing parental involvement at the club. "



Empowering change through insight



Strabane Cricket Club (Engage Her 2017)

Appointed first ever female chair and now has three female members on its Committee



Templepatrick Cricket Club (Engage Her 2017)

Engaged with a local hockey club and ran cricket taster sessions at their club for their girls Under-13, Under-15 and ladies teams.

LEARNING - GOVERNING BODIES



Increasing confidence & changing attitudes

The support offered from Sported has been invaluable in that it has enabled the governing body (Cycling Ulster) regionally to shape and develop a structured plan going forward on engaging more women and girls, looking at key messages and imagery around participation in the sport.

Building capacity

As part of Engage Her, Cycling Ulster have involved their Women's Commission in developing a new participation and training project called WOW "Women on Wheels".

The programme will see 18 host cycling clubs across Ulster guide up to 200 beginner females through an 8 week cycling specific training programme. This will culminate with the 200 participants gathering to complete a cycling sportive held by Keevan Cycling Club in the orchard county of Armagh in August 2019. This programme will increase the current female membership by almost 14%, bringing the membership in Ulster up to nearly 2,000 females by the end of 2019.

Empowering change through insight

Gary Lavery
Membership Development Officer
Cycling Ireland (Engage Her 2018)

“ Our learning from Engage Her will be included in the new strategic plans for Cycling Ireland currently being developed for 2020-2030 and will ensure there is an emphasis on targeting more women and girls into the sport – not only as participants and lifelong members, but also as cycling officials, cycling coaches and governing body tutors.

”



THE VOLUNTEER'S STORY



“ I was fortunate enough to be partnered with Cooke Rugby Club. Over the past few years, largely through the sheer hard work and determination of the two main co-ordinators, Cooke’s women and girls rugby has grown to two full senior sides, an under-18, under-15 and under-12 team that play on a weekly basis. Engage Her was a chance for Cooke to consider how what they currently do compares with best practice guidelines, and how they can take it to the next level.

From September I met once a month with Cooke’s two main co-ordinators, members of Cooke’s Executive Committee, and players from Cooke’s under-18 girls team. We discussed the research on the values that drive women to play sport, and how Cooke appealed to those. We worked on the importance of consultation, from which Cooke designed and collected a survey on local parent’s perceptions on women’s rugby. We agreed actions on programming, and how Cooke’s current offering could become even more accessible. And finally, we talked marketing, and agreed plans for how Cooke can further spread the word on their fantastic set-up.

Even though I was delivering the sessions, it wasn’t a surprise to me that I’m sure I learned as much as anyone. I was in awe of the commitment of Cooke’s women and girls co-ordinators, who commit most week nights and nearly every weekend to the club out of a love for the game and a passion for growing women’s rugby. I was moved by speaking to some of the junior players on how rugby hadn’t been encouraged at all at their schools, but joining Cooke had massively boosted their self-confidence at a crucial time in their lives. And overall, I was heartened to hear of the general trend of growth in women’s rugby across the country: what better sport than rugby through which to tackle traditional ideas of femininity and masculinity?

It’s been an absolute privilege to work with Cooke over the past few months, and I’ll definitely be supporting the team going forward. Only last week, the Cooke under-18s took to the pitch in front of a capacity crowd at Ravenhill, the home of Ulster rugby, and played at half-time. For a team that didn’t exist just years ago, that is some going, and it shouldn’t stop there.



David Morrow
Spoted & Engage Her volunteer (2018)





Helping community groups survive, to help young people thrive.

Spoted is one of the leading Sport for Development charities in the UK, helping nearly 3,000 community sport and youth groups survive and thrive.

What makes Spoted's members so special is that each and every one uses the power of sport to transform the lives of young people and local communities. The majority of these groups are run on shoestring budgets, relying on the kindness and hard-work of a handful of dedicated staff and volunteers.

At Spoted we support our members by providing much needed professional expertise, resources and business mentoring to help build their capacity and long-term sustainability. Helping to ensure the young people who could benefit most, can continue to access their vital support.





WWW.SPORTED.ORG.UK

Registered Charity Numbers: 1123312 / SCO43161