

Project Impact Summary
October 2018 – March 2021

Girls Unite

SPORTED
GIRLS
UNITE

SPORTED

LONDON MARATHON
CHARITABLE TRUST

INSPIRING ACTIVITY



Girls Unite is a Sported project funded by the London Marathon Charitable Trust.

The project aimed to get more girls (aged 11-18) from socially deprived areas of the UK, participating in sport and physical activity.

This was to be achieved by giving community groups the knowledge, understanding and support to better engage and tailor their activities, on and off the field.

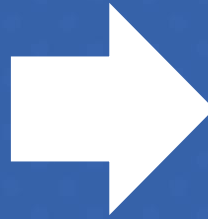
Project Outcomes

1. Increased understanding of Sported members and Sported volunteers on **how to deliver effective services to engage and retain female participants.**
2. Increased sustained participation in physical activity of **women and girls facing disadvantage** by reducing barriers to participation in **community groups across the UK.**
3. **Young women and girls** feel better equipped to support others to participate regularly in sport and activity.

Project Outputs

20

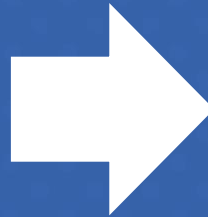
Sported staff and volunteers upskilled **on working with women and girls**



Women in Sport delivered training to **Sported staff, volunteers and community group leaders**

30

Sported community groups upskilled **and receiving 1:1 volunteer support**

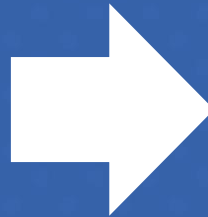


Groups attend training and **work through women and girls curriculum 1:1 with volunteer**

Groups embed learning to produce an engagement action plan **and apply for Grant funding**

50

Sported community groups receiving **light touch volunteer support**



Light touch volunteer support / attending Women in Sport webinars focused on specific elements including **Consultation, Programming and Marketing**

Project Outputs

Online curriculum **developed**
in partnership with **Women in Sport**

Development of 6 online modules
and associated resources



300

**Sported groups accessing
modules**

Work through modules at
their own pace

Interactive videos and tasks

30

**Future Female Leaders
accessing training**

Specialist training

Opportunities to develop
personal skills



Key Achievements

 **232**
members

from across the UK engaged
in the project

38

Received 1:1 volunteer
support

21

Received light
touch volunteer support

40

Attended live training
webinars

133

Accessed the online
resources

775 new girls aged
11 – 18 years

participating in sport and
physical activity

25

groups received
grant funding

to implement action
plans to engage and
retain girls in their
activities

19

Sported staff and volunteers
trained to support members
with women and girls
development

SIX

module online
curriculum
developed

covering each part of the journey to
better engage women and girls

25

female leaders
trained

95



engaged in face-to-face learning
and networking sessions

Successes and Challenges

SPORTED
GIRLS
UNITE

Member training event
at Wembley Stadium

Successes

- **Virtual volunteer support**

The pandemic forced a move to 100% virtual support. Virtual volunteering has enabled much more flexibility in the matching process and groups and volunteers are becoming comfortable to work this way.

- **Group engagement and excitement**

The project offered tangible support around a specific theme. We selected members who had both the capacity and appetite to work with women and girls and offer them learning, support and funding.

- **Engagement during lockdown**

We were able to continue supporting groups remotely during lockdown. Our wider membership were eager to learn and upskill, accessing webinars and online resources during periods of lockdown.

- **Member networking opportunities**

We had a hugely positive response to the networking events and guided webinars. Groups have enjoyed the face to face engagement both in person (pre Covid-19) and virtually. Online delivery has enabled us to be more responsive to delivering needs led training and learning.

- **Themed webinars**

Group leaders have become comfortable with online learning. It gave us the opportunity to upskill many more members with expert delivery from Women in Sport.

- **Grant giving**

We have continued to refine our processes to deliver grant giving programme with easy member access at the heart.

- **Partnership with Women in Sport**

Complementing each other with combined strengths of insight / training and network / delivery.



Challenges

The Jam Place

- **Sensitive subject area** - delivering training and offering advice on puberty and gender stereotypes can be difficult and uncomfortable. Ensuring attendees feel they are in a safe space
- **Engaging with young female leaders** – highlighted need to engage with young people personally rather than through their community groups
- **Light touch support does not often correlate with an increase in participation** - we need to work closely with groups to have a real impact on the way they work and attribute changes to our support
- **Heavy training / workload** - lengthy training and follow up work is too much for groups often solely volunteer led. Online learning, flexible / virtual volunteer support and short, sharp learning opportunities are needed
- **The Covid-19 pandemic** - an incredible impact with many groups having to suspend delivery of all activities. The delivery of virtual activities brought a new way of working to many groups

Group Impacts

07

Feedback from Sported groups was hugely positive and recognised the difference that the learning and funding had made to their delivery and engagement with girls.

Many groups reported being able to engage with girls who would not typically have chosen to be active or seen themselves as 'sporty'...

'We were able to set up a regular club for girls where they felt safe and secure. Girls that would not have stuck to an after school club, kept coming and enjoyed the interaction.' Streetz Ahead

"Engaging young women who do not participate in physical activity was challenging. We found other ways to attract them and make them feel confident and more comfortable to join in.

We focused on sports journalism, heritage, film and photography plus other industries that surround it such as fashion, marketing and management. We took students to various sporting events and created opportunities for them to hear from sports related professionals.

Alongside these activities we then introduced physical activity that was fun and different!' London Stadium Learning

One group reported how they used the learning to start consulting with girls, and the importance of developing them as leaders and decision makers....

'We have developed a trusted relationship with our service users and are constantly identifying future leaders in our younger audience to take on leadership roles and participate in shaping and implementing our service delivery.' Step Up 2 Fitness



Participant Impacts

In addition to group leaders recognising the importance of the project to their organisations, they also highlighted how it has supported the personal development of some participants.

From a physical health point of view, one group noticed the detrimental effect that lockdown had had on its young people leading less active lifestyles. After taking part in funded activities, participants noted:

'You changed my life. I used to be puffed out and didn't like sport, but now I can go for a bike ride without being puffed out and I now enjoy exercise.'

Motiv8 Sports & Fitness

'The Teen Bikers Smiles and Miles challenge was fun to take part in. It encouraged me to get fresh air during lockdown and reminded me to take care of my fitness and mental health. I did this by discovering new, more challenging and stimulating routes, as well as having the opportunity to cycle through nature. It motivated me by creating a competitive spirit- I was not only competing against my own personal best, but also aiming to beat others on the Teen Biker leaderboard.' Cycle Sisters

Many groups continued to deliver activities despite the pandemic, moving to a virtual platform...

'During lockdown, students can still be introduced to role models who talk about their own stories. Through online activities mental health and well-being can still be promoted which we will now continue to use alongside physical activities.' London Stadium Learning

'I feel energetic and confident, and hope to continue to do something like this again!'

This was a participant who pre programme was **'anxious about the future and exams'** and has been an ever present part of the project since.

Motiv8 Sports & Fitness

Participant Impacts

The increase in confidence of participants was reflected across several of the groups, with many girls thriving from the social element of playing with like-minded individuals...

'Having fun at the roller discos had helped me build my confidence and enjoy keeping fit, without realising I was. I am looking forward to continuing next year, and hope to be able to volunteer with RollaDome, so I can continue to learn to skate better, and learn some new work skills.' Rolladome AllSkate

London Stadium Learning noted girls developing new friendships and having better aspirations for their future...

'I enjoyed taking part and making new friends and would like to try out some new sports. I have also seen ways that I could work in the sports industries in the future.' Girl B

'I'm pleased that my daughter attended this scheme, it's boosted her confidence and she has thoroughly enjoyed herself.' Parent of Girl B

'So much is focused on academics, but allocating time for students to discuss friendship issues can do wonders in helping them make new friends and learn a different perspective.' Teacher for Girl B



London Stadium
Learning



Case Studies

London Stadium
Learning

Cycle Sisters 'Teen Bikers' project

This funding has been vital in enabling us to launch our Teen Bikers project.

Cycle Sisters had this project idea to complement our rides for adult Muslim women. The funding from Sported has enabled us to test out the idea, find out it's popular and that our model can work and strengthen us to take this forward for the future! We have a dedicated Teen Bikers Coordinator in place and very hope we can expand this project into other boroughs.

The Teen Bikers Smiles and Miles programme successfully engaged 18 girls despite challenging circumstances during the pandemic.

'My grandfather and Dad taught me how to ride a bike when I was 7 and I enjoyed going on short rides. As I got older, I did not ride as much and lost confidence in doing longer routes and cycling on roads. I wanted to go on bike rides with friends, however many didn't know how to cycle.

When my Mum joined Cycle Sisters and became more confident on a bike, she took us on more rides, along new routes. When Teen Bikers started, I was hesitant, unsure if the ride would be too long or if I would know anybody else. The ride I attended was to the Olympic Park. It was refreshing due to the exercise, but also because of the opportunity to make new friends with the common hobby of cycling. The ride was smoothly run and very enjoyable. I liked the social aspect of the rides, encouraged by the coffee break, as well as the comfortable environment created by the experienced ride leaders.

I really enjoy cycling as it gets me out of the house, away from the screen and schoolwork, and allows me to spend quality time with my family. Teen Bikers allow me to do all of that but with my friends as well, and I truly look forward to many more rides with Teen Bikers.' Zainab Vawda

Step Up 2 Fitness 'Gazelle Move'

This project focused on increasing and widening participation of girls from BAME communities into fitness and sport.

We have developed a trusted relationship with our young people and are constantly identifying future leaders in our younger target audience to take further leading roles and participate into the shape and implementation of service delivery.

One coach commented 'it's really motivating to witness the journey of so many different personalities coming together with such good spirit, that keeps me going and want to do more with the girls'.

Step Up 2 Fitness were able to increase participation by 70 girls aged 11-18 years. They also secured an additional £6,000 from This Girl Can and £2,300 from Wembley Stadium National Trust.

Fitzrovia Youth in Action

Aerobics, martial arts and yoga were popular, and space in the programme where girls shared thoughts and feelings and supported each other.

The second lockdown made the project go online which was really successful and high numbers achieved. We are keeping some sessions online for the future as we found this was a good way to engage the hard-to-reach girls.

Many of the young people we work with do not have their own garden and may not have easy access to a park. It was important to support them to stay fit not only for their physical health but also to support good mental health during these difficult times.

'Taking some exercise really helped with my mood - and talking to others online felt easier somehow. We learnt that when we feel scared, it's our body's way of telling us we need to take extra care to protect ourselves.'

FYA recruited 30 girls in their project and successfully applied for funding from Young Camden for £4920.

Learning and Key Considerations



Future Female Leadership day

Project Learning

- One to one support for groups as a guided learning experience, and a fund to commence action and implement change **WORKS for increasing participation.**
- Offering a grant encourages member engagement, provides a tangible offer and **evokes real change.**
- Light touch interventions and remote member engagement **do not have the same impact** on organisational change and participation levels.
- Engaging potential young leaders needs to be done with **a direct and personal approach.** We need to build relationships with the young people directly rather than through their groups, to get their **understanding, trust and commitment.**
- A curriculum of six modules was **too much information and too much time** for voluntart groups.

What might we do differently?

Work with a smaller number of groups - providing direct support and grant funding. We know this works!

Increased visibility of the girls themselves – representation of girls facing disadvantage participating and in leadership roles.

Less focus on participation, more on cultural change - We want to embed the learning within each organisation. This will have a positive impact on participation levels in the future.

Develop one learning webinar and one downloadable resource - covering headline research, insight and key principles to working with women and girls.

Consultation

The importance of consulting with your audience. Don't assume you know what girls want, ask!

Girls aren't one group, different girls will want different things. Turn consultation into action – show them you have listened and put what they want in place.

'Lockdown has been a curse and a blessing. In not being able to deliver the remaining discos, we have had a chance to talk with young people about how to move forward in 2021 - what they would like to see us do and how. It has allowed us to plan and review how the organisation can deliver, based on the findings from our young people.' **Rolladome Allskate**

Experience

First impressions count...the welcome, a friendly face, pairing them with a buddy, bring along a friend, the follow up.

It's important for women to feel comfortable and confident and imperative for retention.

Representation

Ensure they know that the activity is for them. **Show women and girls like them** in the marketing materials, on the website, in the membership.

'We have learnt that our advertising and planning of projects, needs to show clear diversity and inclusion to ensure that it is clear everyone is welcome at our events and clubs.' **Rolladome Allskate**



We help community groups survive, **to help
young people thrive.**

www.sported.org.uk

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