



Girls on the Move Impact Statement

2005–2011



The Identified Need

The importance of physical activity to health is now well established. People with physically active lifestyles are less likely to suffer from chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, osteoporosis, depression and hypertension.

Yet, Scotland's physical activity strategy: *Let's Make Scotland More Active* 2003, based on Scottish Health Survey data, highlighted "an alarming level of inactivity among children and young people", particularly girls. Research showed female participation in physical activity was lower than males at all ages. Girls' levels of physical activity declines sharply into their teenage years. At age 10-11, two-thirds (66%) of girls take part in the recommended levels of physical activity (60 minutes of moderate levels of physical activity most days of the week), but by age 14-15 this has dropped to a little over one-third (35%).

Research investigating girls' lower levels of physical activity participation has identified that many girls and young women dislike competitive sport and physical education for various reasons. These include a perceived lack of choice, fears about personal safety as well as practical barriers to participation such as access to facilities and equipment, cost implications and transport. Girls from socially and economically disadvantaged areas, those from ethnic minority groups, young mums and those with disabilities are also found to have lower participation levels compared with the overall population.

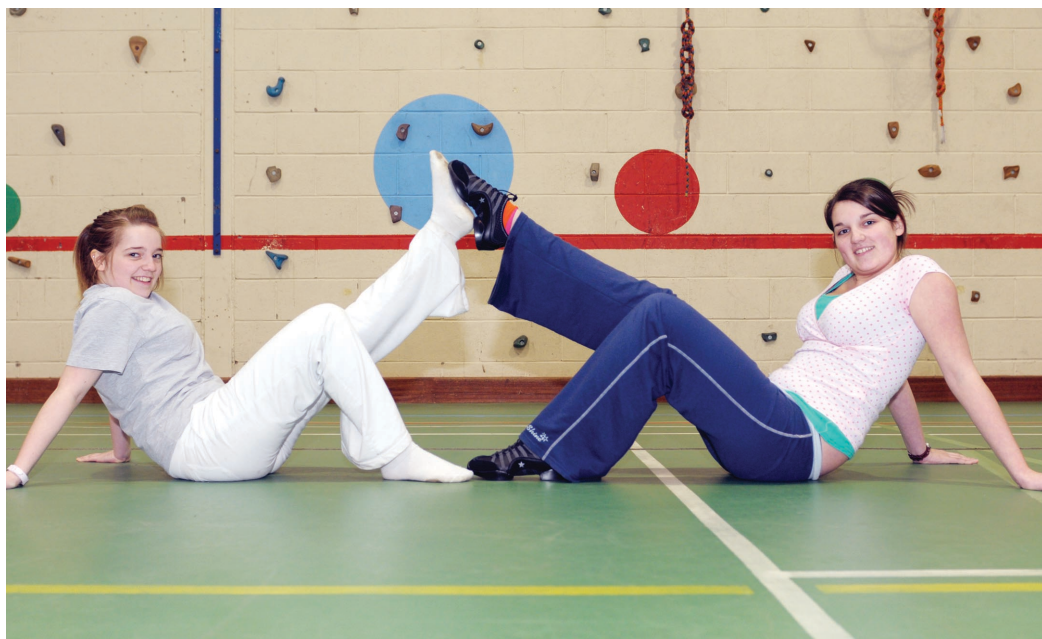
The Girls on the Move programme

'Girls on the Move' was launched in 2005 to increase girls and young women's physical activity levels by addressing barriers that prevent their participation. The Programme, supported and delivered by Youth Scotland in partnership with a range of organisations including the Scottish Sports Association, Sports Leaders UK and NHS Health Scotland, was funded by The Robertson Trust and the Scottish Government over a six year period with £975,000.

The Anticipated Outcomes

'Girls on the Move' has two distinct programmes: the Participation Programme and the Leadership Programme. The primary target group was inactive or sedentary girls from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Key outcomes were to:

1. Improve the physical activity levels of girls and young women participating in the programme.
2. Engage harder to reach groups in physical activities, including girls displaying "at risk" behaviour, girls with disabilities or mental health issues, young mothers and girls from ethnic minorities.
3. Involve more young women as leaders in physical activities for girls.



The **Participation Programme** provides grants of up to £2,000 (reduced from £5,000 after Year 2) to voluntary and community groups to fund projects aimed at: increasing physical activity levels among girls and young women; increasing girls' enjoyment of physical activity and raising awareness of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Since 2005, 154 projects have received a Participation Programme Award.

- Projects delivered a range of activities including dance, boxercise, canoeing, mountain biking, yoga, badminton and basketball.
- Projects lasted from one week up to six months with weekly sessions lasting one to two hours although some included day long activities.
- Projects took place across Scotland in inner-city and rural locations.
- All projects were 'girls only - no boys allowed' to address the often dominating attitude of boys in physical activity and sports contexts.
- Funding criteria meant girls had to be involved in designing the project resulting in few competitive sports projects.



Participation

Jogging Buddies Mums on the Run, Paisley Pilot Project - Funded in 2006

"It was amazing to see them think 'hey, I can actually do this'."

Back in 2006, Girls on the Move funded a small project for young mothers called Mums on the Run.

The Jogging Buddies Mums on the Run Project

The aim was simple: to provide young, new mothers with somewhere they could meet others in similar situations and take part in a manageable level of physical activity. The original group was delivered by Jogging Buddies and was set up in Ferguslie Park – a housing estate in Paisley which was considered to be one of Scotland's most deprived areas.

Who took part?

The project involved young women aged between 16 and 21, who all had babies or small children. Funding enabled the group to provide crèche facilities and a space at the local community centre where participants could have cups of tea and a chat after their session. Starting by leading brisk walks, the group leaders supported the young women to build up to regular jogging once a week.

"It wasn't just about physical activity," said Ann Davidson, jogscotland Programmes Co-ordinator and one of the original group leaders. "The girls could focus on the instructions, like the stretches and exercises, which meant there wasn't a pressure to engage with each other from the beginning. As they relaxed, they became more open and started to make friends. They started to believe in themselves. They were able to create goals for themselves and plan ahead to events and activities they could do together."

Growing impact

As the young women became more involved in the project, they started to organise events in their local community such as a Big Toddle event with their children and a Christmas event at the local nursery. A few of the young women trained for, and completed, a women's 10K race for charity.

"You know, it was like the young mums developed a self belief which then spilled over into other things," said Ann.

"They became more open to thinking about education and work, and what possibilities were out there. It was a psychological thing. Their horizons, and their confidence, had been lifted."

We brought in professionals to deal with some of the other issues, and now as part of the Mums on the Run pack we provide advice sheets for leaders such as getting help with finance, alcohol, smoking cessation, drugs and well being."

The ripple effect - Mums on the Run today

The Mums on the Run Project demonstrates how a small piece of funding can lead to much bigger things. Since Girls on the Move funded the pilot project in 2006, this project has grown rapidly but also organically and the future for the Mums on the Run project looks as strong as ever.

The programme has now been rolled out nation-wide by jogscotland. It is accompanied by a comprehensive resource pack for volunteer leaders.

There are now 12 groups running across Scotland, led by volunteers who are trained and supported in their role. While some groups closely follow the initial model of the Paisley project, jogscotland has ensured the programme is flexible enough to fit the specific needs of different communities.

"We are trying to support more and more girls and women that think that jogging 'so isn't them'", said Ann. "If you can reach girls like that and support them to come along, you can make such a difference".

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.

“Before I joined... I didn’t do a lot of activities. Since I have joined, I am experiencing new activities I have never done before”

“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.”

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.”

“As a worker with groups for almost 15 years, this has been one of the most action and solution focused projects that I have had the honour of being involved in.” Project Organisers

Outcome 2: Engage more girls from harder to reach groups in physical activities, including girls displaying “at risk” behaviour, girls with disabilities or mental health issues, young mothers and girls from ethnic minorities

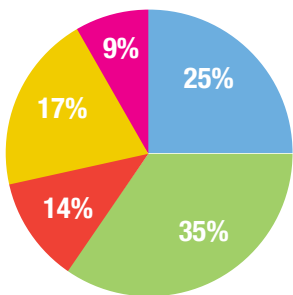
Did it reach the target groups?

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.

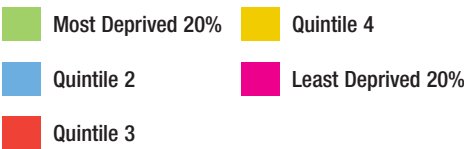
“It was lots of fun and I enjoyed being in a group with my friends. I didn’t think we’d be able to do it at first, but we did.”

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 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.”

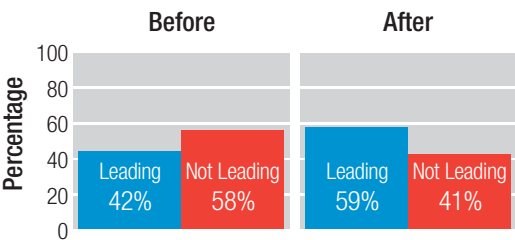
Impact on Participants*

- 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.
- 84% of participants surveyed had no instructor certificates/qualifications prior to completing the course:
 - 22% of those surveyed obtained further certificates or qualifications in the 6 months following their course;
 - 80% want to obtain further certificates/qualifications
- Some course graduates have identified leading activities as a future career option.

“ The leadership programme gave them [the girls] the motivation and confidence to become leaders, some of the girls are now youth workers”

“ On the back of the GOTM programme we are now looking to signpost the girls to local leadership opportunities”

Percentage of course participants leading activities in the 6 months before and after the course



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”



Over the past six years, the **Leadership Programme** has provided 37 leadership training courses for 548 young women aged 16-25 to enable them to increase the number of opportunities for girls to take part in organised physical activities in their local communities.

- Most courses were intensive 5-day residential courses to complete the Sports Leaders UK Award in Dance Leadership.
- Residential courses provided opportunities for focused learning, away from 'distractions back home'. The 24-hour nature of the experience offers opportunities to learn vital social skills such as team work, communication and planning.
- Courses at various locations including Orkney, Western Isles and Skye attracted participants from across Scotland.
- Youth Scotland has created a number of partnerships to help young women access locally based support to continue their development after their course.

CASE STUDY

Leadership

Cheryl, previous Leadership Course Participant and current Girls on the Move Intern

"My life has totally changed. I'm in my element when I'm teaching."

Cheryl, 21, is from Kilwinning in Ayrshire. In June 2009 she attended a residential Girls on the Move Leadership course at Loaningdale House in Biggar.

The aim of the course

The course was designed to equip young women with the techniques, skills and confidence to lead dance sessions in their own communities. Bringing together young women from across Scotland, the Award in Dance Leadership courses offer an intensive and jam-packed timetable, involving dance and choreography sessions alongside planning, reflection and evaluation workshops.

Cheryl had been attending dance classes at her local community centre with youth dance agency YDance, and had found it was something she really enjoyed. However, at the time she had a young child and the thought of going away for a week on a residential course with no-one she knew was daunting.

"I was quite wary at first, but I absolutely loved it" she said. "I don't think I realised how hard it was gonna be, but I still loved it."

Moving Forward

Inspired by her experience, Cheryl continued to run classes in Ayrshire with youth dance agency YDance. She now teaches on a weekly basis, working with different age groups of young women and teaching various styles.

"Some girls will be really, really shy, and it's not about singling them out. You have to do it with them, and find out what they're into. It's about how you present it to them, and making sure they have ownership.

"It really makes your day, when you have a breakthrough. It's such an amazing feeling."

An Internship with Girls on the Move

Cheryl has maintained strong links with the Girls on the Move programme and in 2011 successfully applied for the Girls on the Move internship. The interns are involved in all aspects of the leadership courses, including providing support to the course staff, helping participants and leading evening sessions.

"Being an intern is something different," says Cheryl, "It's another step forward. It is more hands-on than I expected, but it's amazing. The hardest thing is leaving my two children for a whole week, that's really tough."

Cheryl is determined to continue to teach and gain further experience of working with young people. "I feel like I'm taking things to new levels, and I am just going to keep trying to get as much out of it as I can. I want to teach more girls, and I want to be a youth worker too, so I can do it all."

"I never thought this would be what I would be doing. It's been a long journey, but it's been worth it. And it's not over."



2005-2011

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.

Reasons for our success...

- Targeted support for girls and young women, with small amounts of accessible funding to meet specific community needs.
- Youth Scotland's reach into communities across Scotland and adopting a youth work approach in fun, informal community settings.
- Working with a range of partners at national and local levels to develop opportunities for young women to develop their leadership skills.
- Participation in residential leadership training courses which stimulated and motivated young women.
- Leadership programme is responsive to participants' needs.
- Youth focussed communications strategy.

Key learning points for the future...

- Small amounts of funding and support can make a significant difference.
- Exposing participants to positive role models has influenced activity behaviours, resulting in an increase in enthusiasm for, and engagement in, physical activity as well as an increase in willing leaders.
- Girls and young women should be involved in designing programmes and choosing activities that they want to do.
- Girls from socially disadvantaged backgrounds can have more complex needs which require higher levels of expenditure and intensive staff support to enable their participation.
- Engage with youth work organisations and other partners already working with girls and young women.



Programme Costs

- The average subsidy per participation programme participant (excluding central programme costs) was c.£85, although this was higher in Years 1 and 2 (c.£151, when the maximum project award was £5,000.).
- Reducing the maximum award from £5,000 to £2,000 from Year 3 did not adversely affect the number of girls attracted to the projects or the number of sessions delivered.
- The average subsidy per leadership programme participant was £821.
- Due to the targeted nature of the leadership courses, the costs include funding to address barriers such as childcare for young mums and transport costs as well as partnership working with keyworkers to support and facilitate young women's participation in leadership courses.

In their own words...

The 'Girls on the Move' Programme has made a positive contribution to the groups, organisers and participants. Few respondents or interviewees expressed any negative comments about the programme. The comments below express the impact of the Programme from the perspective of those that took part.

"The Cheerleading has been talked about for many years and was the catalyst for getting many girls involved who previously weren't taking part in any activities" (Project Organiser)

"It has been very enjoyable. I have become more physically active throughout the programme; going out running and I have lost weight from it and feel better all round" (Participant)

"Our Girls on the Move project still continues to this day and we as a project provide activities to over 200 children and young girls" (Project Organiser)

"I now have more self-confidence and more friends, and I like physical theatre as a fun way to exercise" (Participant)

"Due to the success of this project the head teacher has agreed to create room on next year (sic) timetable to include dance as a Higher subject" (Project Organiser)

"I really enjoyed the course. My confidence in teaching people as well as my motivation to this has very much increased." (Leadership participant)



For more information about the Girls on the Move Programme, please contact:
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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.

The Evaluation Team would like to thank all the stakeholders, project organisers, leaders and the girls and young women for their contributions to collecting the data and sharing their experiences with us.

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Evaluation notes:

* Statistics as reported in 2005-2008 evaluation report and appendices

** Statistics as reported in 2008-2010 evaluation report and appendices

These reports can be downloaded from

www.girlsonthemove.org.uk



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