

Us Girls East London

YEAR 1 - IMPACT REPORT



Background to the Us Girls programme

Young women in East London often face financial, social and cultural challenges when it comes to accessing sports and fitness activities, including:

- Limited access to affordable facilities
- A lack of female-only programmes
- Insufficient representation of female coaches and role models
- Competing priorities such as education and family responsibilities
- Safety concerns
- Issues around body image and a fear of peer judgment

Us Girls Programme Objectives

StreetGames' award-winning Us Girls programme is designed to increase and sustain young women's participation in sport and physical activity in underserved communities. Our Us Girls programme supports the StreetGames network in offering year-round Doorstep Sport, creating safe spaces where young women thrive with trusted mentors and tailored activities.

Us Girls aims to increase sports participation by working with local, trusted community sports organisations to address some of the barriers above. These organisations are embedded in the community, with strong track records of creating and facilitating effective and popular sports provision. Coaches, youth workers and programme managers are often based in the area, grew up in the area or work in local schools, and as a result offer a wealth of experience in terms of the challenges faced and the optimal solutions.

StreetGames selected and supported five of these organisations across Tower Hamlets and Hackney, with whom we have developed longstanding relationships, to work on this project.

Who delivered the programme?

Laburnum Boat Club, Hackney

A community-based boating project in South Hackney, the club 'aims to provide opportunities for the personal development of local children, young people and their families through participation in a range of water-based activities'. Their Us Girls sessions consisted of a female-only session on a Tuesday evening, which included rock climbing, enrichment and discussion activities before the main Tuesday evening water sports session.

SkyWay, Hackney

A well-established Hackney youth organisation, this club offers free-at-the-point-of-access youth engagement programmes including youth club evenings, personal development sessions, youth volunteering, holiday programmes, employment support, and sports and wellbeing sessions. Their Us Girls session built on an existing female-only session taking place on a Tuesday evening. The Us Girls component allowed for a focus on sports, stress management and general wellbeing.

Ocean Youth Connexions, Tower Hamlets

Providing various youth and community activities since 2002, Ocean Youth Connexions run a variety of sport and SportPlus programmes year-round for a range of ages in the local community. Their Us Girls programme is a taekwondo class which takes place on a Saturday morning. This is a well-attended class with experienced instructors that caters to a range of ages and abilities.

Sporting Foundation, Tower Hamlets

A longstanding grassroots football charity, Sporting Foundation worked with several local, female-run football and basketball groups to create an additional football session based at Central Foundation School for Girls in Bow for their Us Girls programme. The new Monday evening group grew quickly and soon developed a waiting list!

Olive Tree Education, Tower Hamlets

As well as offering year-round personalised tutoring, Isle of Dogs-based Olive Tree Education run holiday programmes and sporting activities, aiming to ‘support both academic and personal development in a fun and engaging way’. The Us Girls programme was a new addition to Olive Tree’s range of programmes, which saw the recruitment of new female members of staff including a police officer and a teacher to help support this enrichment programme which took place on a Friday evening, and later a Saturday morning.

Programme Impact



148

**YOUNG WOMEN
AND GIRLS ENGAGED**



186

**NEW SESSIONS
CREATED**



18

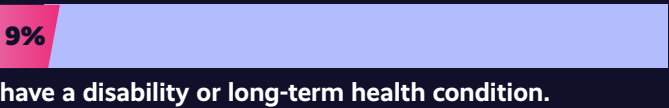
**TRAINING OFFERS
ACCESSED**



4,397

**NEW OPPORTUNITIES
CREATED**

PARTICIPANT PROFILE



PROGRAMME BENEFITS



100% of the organisations confirmed the Us Girls programme enabled them to offer **more opportunities for young women and girls to be active.**

100% of the organisations say the project has helped them to **attract new participants.**

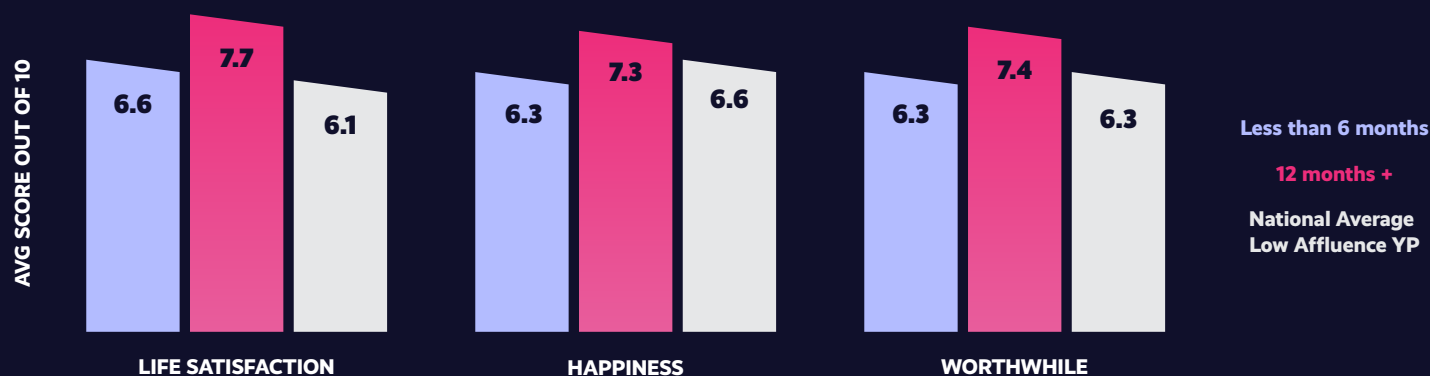
80% of the organisations say they have been able to **support more young women and girls to volunteer or take on leadership roles.**

60% of the organisations say it has enabled them to **upskill individuals** within their organisation.

60% of the organisations have found that the programme has enabled them to **develop new relationships/partnerships with other organisations.**

From the **participant feedback surveys**, we saw a shift in responses from mid-term to end of programme. Subjective wellbeing was measured using the ONS well-being measures, which ask respondents to select a 'score' between 0-10 on a range of aspects.

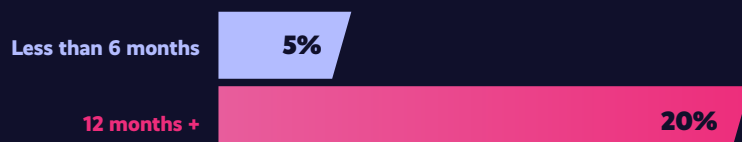
The chart below shows the average scores across the 4 ONS wellbeing scores for the young women and girls, highlighting not only are the **well-being scores for the participants higher than those for young people nationally** from low affluence families, but also that the **scores were higher for participants who had been attending for longer** – indicating a strong positive association between taking part and higher mental well-being.



WELLBEING AND SELF-EFFICACY

The majority of the participants indicated that their health was good/excellent, and as the data below shows, a higher proportion of those that had been attending sessions for longer indicated that their health was 'excellent'.

In general, would you say your health is (excellent):



As can be seen below, a larger proportion of participants who had been attending sessions for 12+ months strongly agreed with this statement – which is a ‘marker’ question for self-efficacy.

How strongly do you agree with the statement, “I can achieve most of the goals I have set myself” (strongly agree)



Similarly, as the data below shows, a larger proportion of respondents who had been attending the sessions for 12+ months had positive feelings towards sport/exercise.

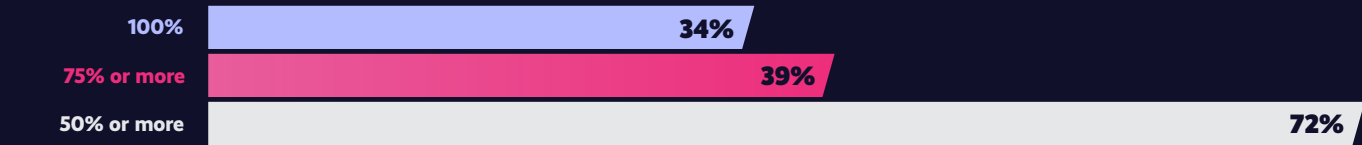
“I find sport/exercise enjoyable and satisfying” (strongly agree)



THE GROUP AND COMMUNITY

For many of the participants, the majority of their physical activity takes place at these sessions, highlighting how important these sessions are - as illustrated below.

In the past week that you took part in sport or physical activity, what % days were at this group?



Thinking about your friends - how much can you rely on them if you have a serious problem? (a lot)



How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement - ‘I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood’? (strongly agree)



Challenges and lessons learned

The challenges faced by the Us Girls organisations in East London highlight the ongoing need for sustained funding to support and expand female sports initiatives. High demand for sessions is met with limited access to venues, scheduling conflicts, and resource constraints, making consistent financial support essential for both medium and long-term programme stability.

A shortage of qualified female instructors has also been a barrier to growth, reinforcing the need for investment in recruitment, training, and career sustainability for coaches and fitness professionals. Additionally, logistical challenges - such as oversubscribed sessions, venue availability issues, and temporary closures - have impacted programme delivery. Addressing these barriers requires a strategic approach that ensures reliable funding, accessible facilities, and a workforce equipped to meet the growing demand.

Future development of Us Girls

The creation and development of the Us Girls Coaching Academy and the Us Girls Coaches Club is currently underway.

Year 1 of the Us Girls programme introduced us to experienced local coaches and organisations who are well placed to join these programmes. Our aim is for the Coaches Academy and Coaches Club to be youth-led and sustainable. To achieve this, we've involved young coaches and community partners in shaping the concept, ensuring it is shared, developed collectively, and upheld over time. We need to ensure we don't appear to be imposing external solutions on communities, but are instead committed to working alongside our community partners.

StreetGames have also been developing multiple partnerships to support and progress the Us Girls Coaches Club, including initiatives with the Football Association, L&Q Housing, and London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

These initiatives include a Priority Area Delivery Group to identify participation gaps; a Workforce Development and Capacity Building network to identify and provide employment opportunities, and the implementation of free training programmes with the local authority to encourage more young women to gain sporting qualifications.

We've spoken with our community partners about the challenges they face within their teams, so we can create a development programme that meets their needs. This has included a range of training opportunities, which contains behind-the-scenes (BTS) and frontline delivery sessions, as part of a pilot for a wider training offer.

As part of Us Girls, the StreetGames team also formed the Tower Hamlets Women and Girls Collective with London Borough of Tower Hamlets Sport and Physical Activity Team, Youth Sport Trust and London Sport.

This is an opportunity to bring individuals and organisations together to meet quarterly to learn more about the provision on offer locally for young females, and how this can all be supported and promoted. For example, at our most recent Women and Girls Collective event, we facilitated an Us Girls coaches panel, which elevated some outstanding female coaches. Through answering questions, offering guidance, and sharing insights, they helped to inspire both fellow coaches and organisations.

For Year 2 of Us Girls, we are looking to support both our existing and new organisations, prioritising:

1. Those that have displayed a high level of competency and effectiveness working with SEND participants, who have successfully tailored their Year 1 programme to make it fully inclusive.
2. Those who currently employ and support informal female groups for the project, who will also encourage them to establish themselves independently.
3. Those who have a specific sport from Year 1 they would like to pursue in shorter, more focused programmes, with the sport having previously proven effective in boosting physical and mental wellbeing.

We look forward to our continued partnership with suppliers developed through the MPS Supplier Giving Programme, the impact on the lives of girls and young women in East London has been significant over the past 12 months, yet we know there is more work required to sustain and continue to respond to the needs of young people in these communities. We look forward to partnering with you on this important work in the future.