



How to... 'make your project activities sustainable'



Why it's important

Funding for projects is often time limited and so it is important to consider how to address the sustainability of project activities once the funding comes to an end. Knowing a block of sessions is only going to last a few months can put some people off and therefore being able to offer longer-term opportunities is important.

Engaging with this target group is often a difficult and a resource-intensive task and so sustaining the project activities to ensure women continue being active is crucial. Sustaining project activities is only one way of encouraging continued participation. Participants should also be equipped with the skills, confidence and knowledge to enable them to 'make their own way' in sport – either by joining a local gym, club/team or continuing activities independently.



Chesterfield College Us Girls
Activity Programme

Factors to consider

By considering some of the following principles at the start of your project, and by exploring a number of different opportunities, this will increase the likelihood of your activities being sustainable longer term:

Encourage participants to pay

Introduce a small fee for the sessions so that the participants cover the costs of running the activity including venue hire and coach/instructor. If activity costs are likely to increase during the programme, notify the participants as soon as possible.

Use volunteers

Provide leadership and volunteering opportunities for participants to help with delivery of activities. This can help to reduce costs if volunteer leaders/coaches can be found.

Work with local clubs and NGBs

Link to local clubs and national governing body officers who may be able to help provide coaches and equipment as well as provide other support. Where applicable join local leagues to keep participants interested.

Work with local leisure centres

In leisure centre settings, offer Us Girls/female only sessions as part of an inclusive monthly membership option providing access to a wider range of fitness sessions, swimming and fitness studio use.



Imbed Us Girls

Explore whether the Us Girls brand can be mainstreamed across your organisation – for example across local authority leisure facilities, across a college or workplace or across a geographical area. This will ensure other partners support the work also.

Identify local partnerships

Work with partners to negotiate free or discounted facility hire. Some colleges and schools may provide facilities for free if their students are encouraged to attend.

Stats can tell a story

Monitor and evaluate your project! Ensure that you can demonstrate the value of your project and how it is achieving its objectives and what outcomes it is hitting – this will be very important when approaching potential partners for financial support to continue with project activities.

Collect case studies

Gather case studies and inspirational stories which will enable you to 'bring to life' the outcomes you are achieving.

Case studies

Us Girls Trafford and Tameside

Tameside and Trafford Leisure Trusts offer reduced price student/Us Girls memberships which has increased the affordability of taking part in regular fitness classes and swimming sessions. Membership advisors also support participants to identify the best pay as you go or monthly health and fitness offers for them. Both projects have gained approval from their organisations to maintain these offers indefinitely. Tameside also ran a successful Groupon deal for their fitness offer which sold over 300 vouchers. A large proportion of people redeeming vouchers are female.

Us Girls Solihull

Us Girls Solihull, which is coordinated by the local authority, works in partnership with their local leisure facility provider Parkwood Leisure to deliver their Us Girls programme. North Solihull Leisure which is operated by Parkwood is located in one of the most underserved areas of Solihull. They currently deliver a number of Us Girls specific sessions at the centre including netball, trampolining, boxing and fitness. In order to retain participants and ensure sustainability of their project they have worked up an agreement with Parkwood Leisure to include Us Girls within their Student Membership offer.

This comprises:

- Targeting male and female students (but with greater emphasis on the female target group than previously)
- 6-month membership at £15pm
- Marketing aimed towards females
- Dedicated member of the sales team
- New member packs
- 6-weekly check ups and assessments
- Monthly report on sales and throughput attendances (that fit the Us Girls target group).

Parkwood Leisure are committed to continuing the offer.

Top tips

- Consider introducing small participant fees in order to build sustainability into the project.
- Provide training and leadership opportunities to participants so that they can lead future programmes.
- Link to local clubs and NGB officers who may be able to help find coaches, equipment and other support.
- Where possible offer Us Girls/female only sessions as part of an inclusive monthly membership option.
- Explore whether the Us Girls brand can be mainstreamed across your organisation.
- Monitor and evaluate your project activities and gather case studies and inspirational stories so that you can demonstrate the value of your project to others.

Further information

www.usgirls.org.uk

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