

Us Girls Wales: Peer Research

STREETGAMES AND SEWSCAP COLLABORATION

What does an attractive sport and physical activity offer look like for girls and young women, in a post pandemic world?



Introduction

A lack of engagement in sport amongst girls and young women aged 11-18 is a growing concern. New insight from Women in Sport suggests 43% of girls who thought of themselves as sporty at primary school lose interest in physical activity as teenagers; deemed as a missed opportunity as they have positive opportunities to leverage. In comparison, 64% of boys aged 11 to 18 continue to perceive themselves as sporty and 24% of boys who thought of themselves as sporty in primary school have lost interest in physical activity as teenagers.

Project Overview

In 2021-22 StreetGames and SEWSCAP (South East and Mid Wales Collaborative Construction Framework) joined together to develop a collaborative Peer Research and Social Action Project in five low-income communities throughout South East Wales (Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Powys).

The overall aim of the project was to build upon and update learning previously gathered via StreetGames' led Us Girls activities. To help tackle key barriers to participation that girls living in low-income communities typically face in taking part in sport/physical activity and as a result, provide them with a safe, friendly, engaging environment and more importantly with activities that they have an interest in taking part in.

The project set out to engage young Peer Researchers from 5 locally trusted organisations (LTOs) to upskill and support them to undertake consultation with their peers – i.e., other girls in their community around what an attractive sport and physical activity offer could look like in a post pandemic world. From this consultation the Peer Researchers were tasked with planning a social action project, alongside a business plan to pitch to SEWSCAP in a Dragons' Den style event.

The project ran between September 2021 and February 2022, with funding being awarded to each LTO that participated. **In total £78,157.23 was awarded** to enable each group to take forward the Peer Researchers' proposed plans for a period of 12 months - demonstrating just how important and impactful peer consultation and youth voice can be in local communities.

Our Approach [Methodology]

To deliver this project, SEWSCAP provided StreetGames with £20,000 of funding, which enabled the provision of dedicated staff time, equipment, branding and kit, training opportunities, research and insight and most importantly, project funding to support consultation in their communities and delivery. Each LTO was awarded £1,500 to help them to be creative and innovative with their research methods and enhance the quality of the data.

StreetGames developed a Peer Researcher Training Module that was delivered to support each cohort of Peer Researchers to prepare for their consultation.

The training shared the importance of peer research and how this differs from traditional research. It explored the power of peer research as a tool, as young people acting in a peer research role are best placed to draw out open and honest feedback from their peers. The StreetGames Youth Voice Toolkit, available in our M&E Kitbag, provided each Peer Researcher with a variety of different methods and ideas for gathering feedback, using creative and innovative ideas.

Although the training module can be delivered virtually, we found it was more successful when delivered face to face as it enabled the facilitators to engage with the group more effectively and practise the consultation activities 'live'.

The second phase of the model allowed the Peer Researchers to utilise this learning to consult with girls and young women in their community; gathering everything they needed to know, to create a successful business plan to pitch to SEWSCAP at the Dragons' Den event.

Each LTO received regular support visits and then offered more support from StreetGames throughout the process.

Once the consultation process was complete, StreetGames provided the cohort with further training workshops, focusing on 'how to create a successful business plan'. This workshop included the tools and information needed to create a plan, including organisation information, project details, in-depth budget plans and potential social action projects they would like to generate if funding was successful. This also included how to deliver a pitch to prospective funders, for instance, how to present, create presentations, provide clear and concise information and advice on how to improve public speaking.

The final phase of this project was for the Peer Researchers to present their pitch at the Dragons' Den style event, where each cohort of Peer Researchers delivered their business plans to request funding. Each cohort was successful in obtaining their requested amount, which collectively, totalled over £78,000.

SEWSCAP were hugely supportive of the work. They recognised the need for financial support in these areas and the impact it can have on young people and their communities. Moreover, one cohort was awarded additional funding as SEWSCAP recognised the lifechanging impact the Peer Researchers' plan could have on the community.

Each cohort of Peer Researchers then set up their project within their local community, allowing them to take leadership and ownership of their project.

Throughout the process, the Peer Researchers have grown in confidence, expanded their experience and gained valuable new skills. Every Peer Researcher involved has been empowered throughout this process and is now actively making an impact in their community. Without the peer consultation element of their project, this would not have been possible, as they were able to obtain real, honest answers to the research question (see below).



Key Impact

The Project has impacted both those involved and their communities:



As a group, the peer researchers reached over **250 young people** across Wales; enabling their voices to be heard.



Business plans that were developed in line with the research findings, mean that the young people consulted have had a **direct impact on how the funding will be used**



SEWSCAP awarded **£78,157.23** in total to enable the peer researchers' plans to become a reality within the community and reduce the barriers girls and young women face.



A range of **new activities for young women and girls have been provided** within each community.

Group feedback and survey data shows that the Peer Researchers not only enjoyed taking part, but also developed personally, in terms of confidence, teamwork and gained valuable transferable skills including undertaking research and making presentations. In taking part the Peer Researchers also reported positive well-being and feeling a strong sense of belonging to their community.

Impact

This project has had an enormous impact on the young people in the communities involved. An amazing £78,157.23 of funding has been secured to provide tailored and appealing sport and physical activity offers for girls and young women within their local communities.

Most importantly, the offers being developed have been based on what girls and young women wanted as they were given the opportunity to share their views and ideas through the process. Meaning that the project has allowed young people to voice their opinions and overcome barriers they have previously faced.

Peer Researchers also considered the sustainability of their proposals ahead of the Dragons' Den pitch, allowing this funding to continue having an impact in the communities as more attractive offers are available. Moreover, the Peer Researchers involved have been upskilled in consulting young people going forward, meaning the sustainable offer will continue to reflect what is needed in their area.

The project has also had a significant impact on the young people who took on the Peer Researcher roles.

In the broader sense, this project will also have a wider impact on young people and underserved communities as StreetGames' commitment to champion peer research continues. StreetGames prides itself as an organisation embedded in learning, therefore our Peer Research Offer will be developed and progressed as we move forward.

Impact on the Peer Researchers

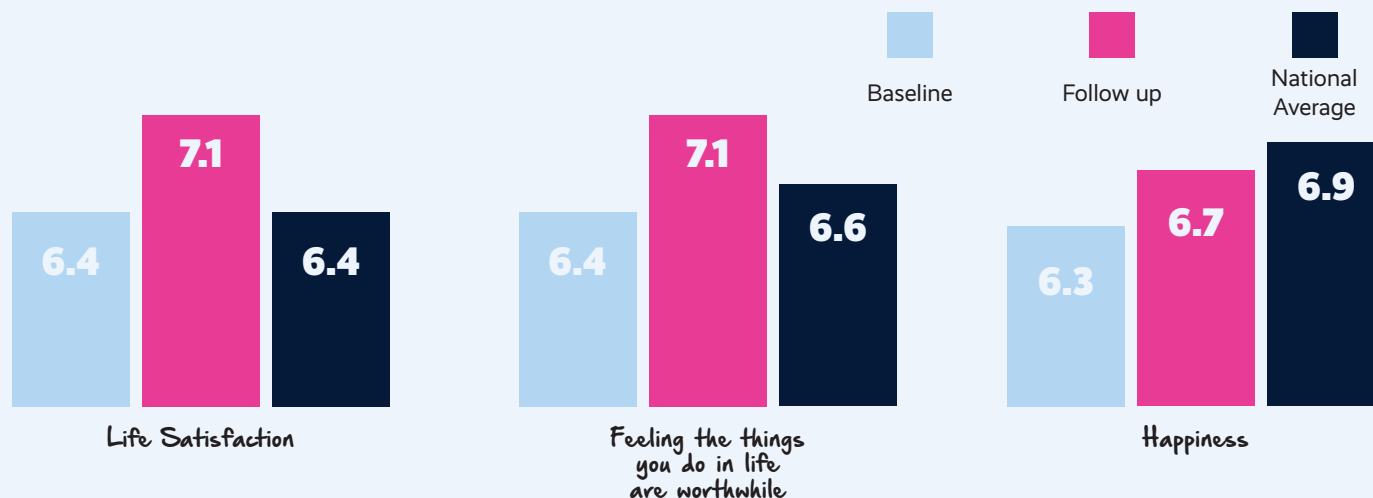
The Peer Researchers involved were integral to the success of this project. To track the journeys of these young people StreetGames utilised surveys to monitor their progression from their initial engagement at the training to the Dragons' Den event. The survey included validated 'marker' questions from national surveys, such as the Office of National Statistics (ONS) Wellbeing questions. Using these questions, the Peer Researchers' results can be compared to the national average for young people. A researcher from StreetGames also conducted focus groups to further explore and understand the Peer Researchers' reflections on the project at the Dragons' Den event.

Individual project case studies can be found here. These case studies share information about the young people involved, the work they undertook and feedback about how being involved made them feel.



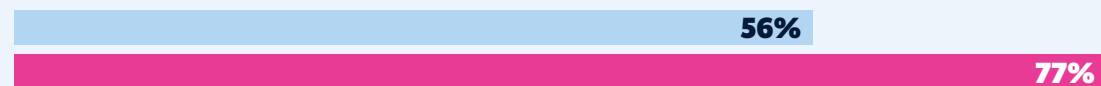
Survey Analysis

Data captured in response to the ONS Wellbeing questions (which act as 'markers' for subjective mental well-being) revealed, that on average, the Peer Researchers mean scores for life satisfaction were slightly higher than for young people in general – scoring 7.06, compared with 6.4. This is deemed as 'high' by the ONS, compared to 'medium' at baseline. The Peer Researchers also perceived the things they do in their lives as worthwhile as 'high', compared to 'medium' at baseline. However, happiness was rated at a 'medium' level at both baseline and follow up, although increasing from 6.28 to 6.65 on average. The graphs below highlight these scores at baseline and follow up, compared to the national average.

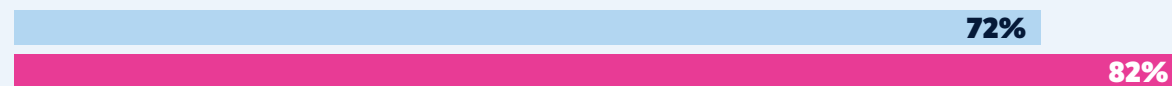


The survey also asked the Peer Researchers to what extent they agreed with a set of statements around the challenges they faced, which act as 'markers' for self-efficacy and resilience.

I can achieve most of the goals I set myself



I can usually solve my own problems

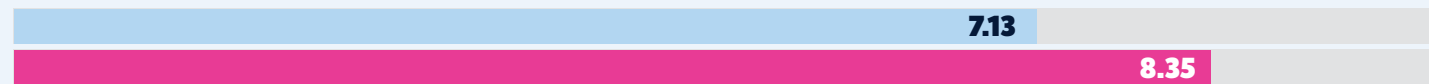


Peer Researchers were then asked a series of questions about their skills, knowledge and behaviours, as well as their views on community involvement and volunteering.

I feel like I belong to this community



How confident are you in your ability to make a difference to girls in your community



At follow up, **94%** of the Peer Researchers said their **volunteering levels had increased** and they all **expressed an interest to continue volunteering in the future**.

All Peer Researchers rated their confidence levels to conduct research and analyse findings higher at follow up, compared with baseline. This included using research methods and questioning research findings, as well as having the self-awareness and maturity to conduct sound research.

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely...'

How much do you agree that this peer research opportunity has been challenging and enjoyable?



How much do you agree that your involvement as a peer researcher has had a positive impact on other people?

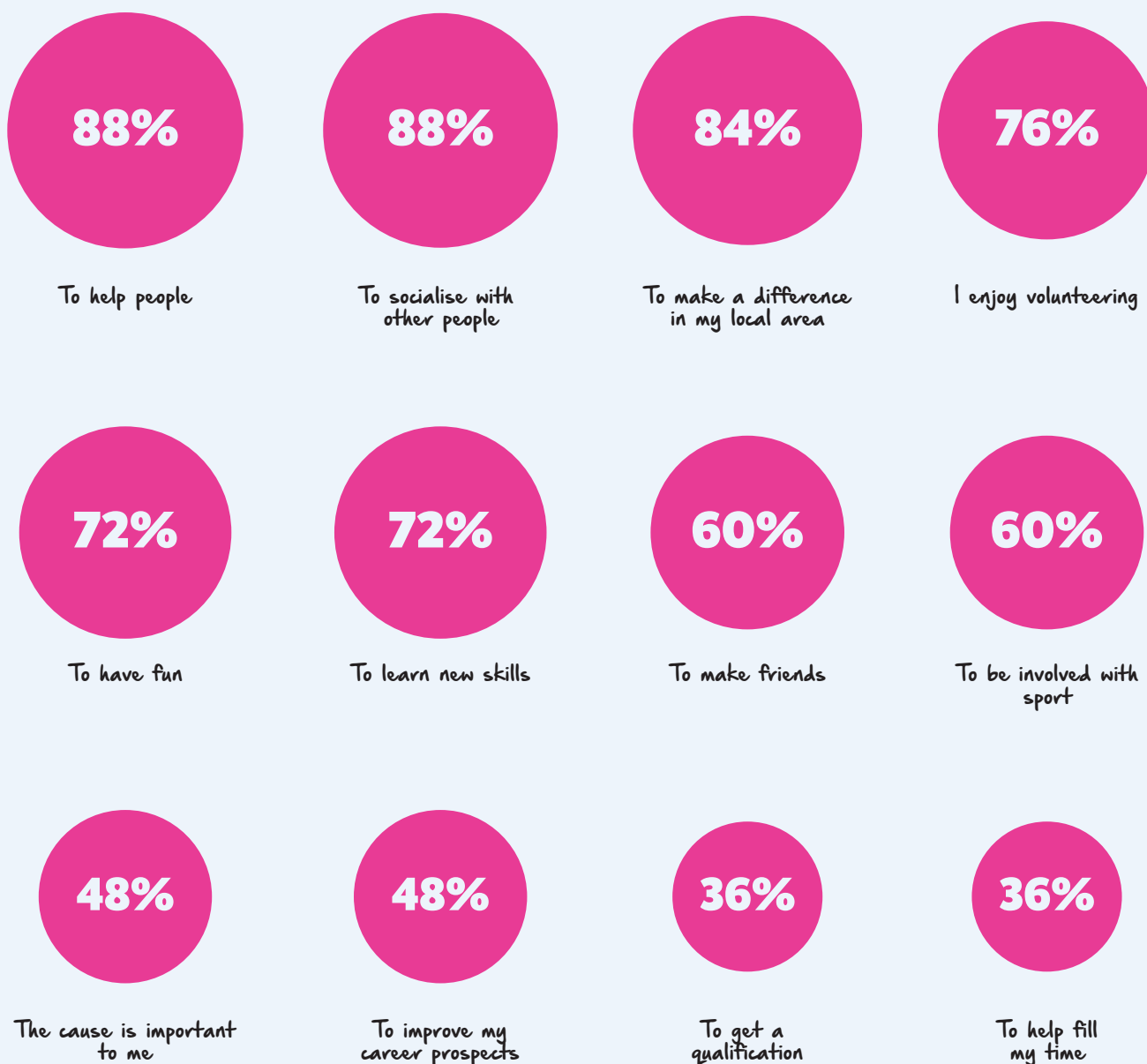


Overall, how satisfied were you with the support you received throughout the project?



Finally, the Peer Researchers were asked to share their reasoning for taking part in the project.

What are the main reasons for your participation in this peer research project?



Based on the responses at the end of the project, most of the Peer Researchers were able to achieve all three motivations for participating in the project. These responses included 'skills on how to talk to people,' 'socialising with new people,' 'being more confident speaking in front of people' and 'the ability to encourage girls and young women into sport and physical activity.'

Summary

Due to the Peer Researchers' focusing on sustainable projects being developed from the research findings, the impact of this project will continue to be felt in the communities. Moreover, some Peer Researchers involved are now embedded within their LTOs to ensure the projects are being delivered and continuing to develop individuals as a result.

Learning

Moving forward, the learning gained through this project will be embedded in our future peer research offers across England and Wales. This learning includes:



The content delivered during training will provide a basis for future peer research projects to be based upon, with room to adapt based on the topic and the individuals involved.



To ensure the research remains focused on the topic and provides in depth findings, specific to the communities involved further support from StreetGames was needed following the training.



The addition of social action funding is hugely important. Where funding allows, we would encourage this to be included in all peer research projects to ensure findings are utilised and the communities involved benefit directly from the research. Extending the offer to peer researchers to participate in business planning training, Dragons' Den pitches and following through with plans proved invaluable. Their confidence levels have increased and some young people involved have taken up further opportunities as a result, for example, one young person is now employed by their organisation to deliver their proposed project, an opportunity which would not have been available to them without this work.

StreetGames will utilise this learning to ensure our Peer Research Offer remains insight-led, to drive change and win institutional support for Doorstep Sport through empowering young people to collate evidence within their local communities.

