

Our GIRLS Can



PROJECT
Report


STRIDE
ACTIVE

SUPPORTED BY

CHILDREN
IN NEED

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The 'Our Girls Can' project took place accross the 2025-26 academic year. Rural schools were selected for the project due to limited opportunities girls living in these areas receive.

5 SCHOOLS WERE SELECTED, BASED ON RURAL DEPRIVATION CRITERIA

74
Participants

Ages
10-13

18
sessions

PROGRAMME FORMAT

Participants took part in two sessions each term.

Sessions included:

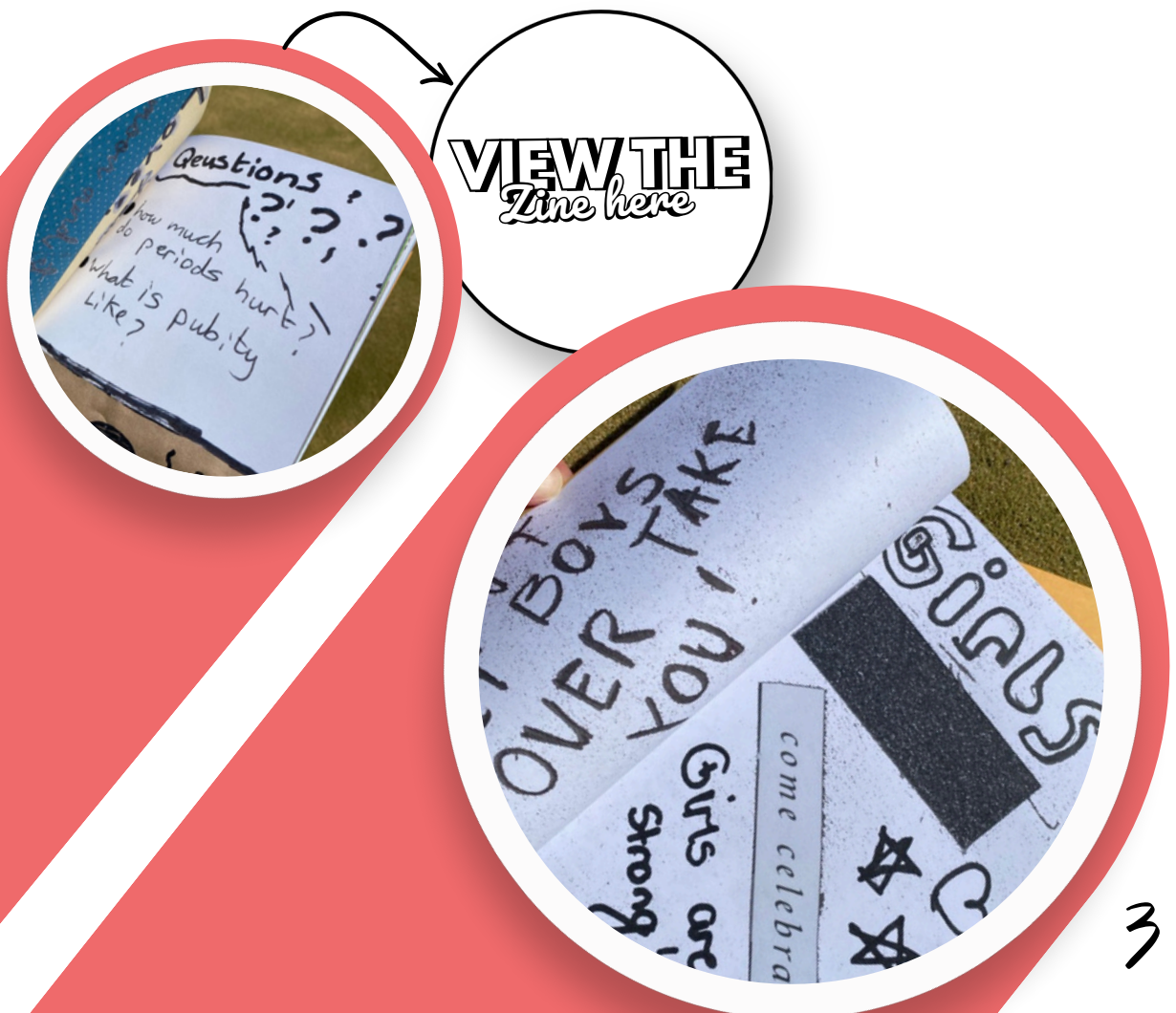
- 'Girl talk', including period education
- Cheerleading
- Martial arts
- Yoga
- Zine making - 'finding my voice'
- Silent disco
- Dance

The project used physical activity, complemented with educational workshops to help support wellbeing.

PROJECT CONTENT

Physical activities were selected based on consultation with participants, whilst the two educational sessions were pre-determined. A range of physical activities were chosen to cater for different interests, whilst supporting approaches to wellbeing. For example, cheerleading provided an alternative non-traditional activity to encourage teamwork, whilst yoga and martial arts focused on calm, controlled movements, focusing on connecting the mind and body.

The 'girl talk' sessions provided a safe place for girls to discuss their motivations and barriers to physical activity. Period education was covered as part of this session, using resources from [Period Education UK](#). The zine making session involved girls making mini magazines (zines) through crafting. It encouraged them to use their voices and know that their voice is valued. They expressed thoughts and feelings, shared messages and advice in their personal zine. Pages from each participants' individual zine were used to form one overall zine that was published, thanks to [Girls To The Front](#).



PROJECT OUTCOMES

Throughout the project, participants were asked to complete their own project journal. The journal encouraged girls to consider how they felt, what they wanted to gain from being part of Our Girls Can, alongside any reflections they wanted to share. NB: not all participants completed their journal, so data sets vary in this evaluation.

PROJECT
journal

Participants were asked to baseline confidence levels, knowledge and attitudes across a range of areas before they started the project and again at the end.

76%*

of participants reported an improvement in at least one area by the end of the project.

61%*

of participants reported an increase in confidence in at least one of these areas:

- Trying new activities
- Working in a group
- Speaking up / sharing ideas
- Being active
- Believing in myself

*based on 62 participants

“

Miss, I think that our girls can has really helped out my confidence and being myself and at the start of the year I was very nervous coming into high school and scared and I'm so happy that this project made me feel more confident and happy in school and with myself. This project has really helped me. Chloe, participant

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CONFIDENCE TO TRY NEW ACTIVITIES

Girls' confident to try new activities increased from **56%** at the end of term 1 sessions, to **69%** by the end the programme.*

*based on 61 and 55 responses

"I am brave and tried stuff that I haven't tried before."

CONFIDENCE TO BE ACTIVE OR SPORTY

At the end of term 1 sessions, **58%** of girls said they felt more confident to be active. This increased to **75%** by the end of the programme.*

*based on 62 and 55 responses

"I'm getting a bit more confident with sport."

CONFIDENCE TO WORK IN A GROUP

Very little improvement was made in this area, improving by just **4%** (from 45% at the end of term 1 to 49% by the end of the programme. This may be because the activities selected were more individual and focused on girls achieving their personal best.*

*based on 62 and 55 responses

CONFIDENCE TO 'BELIEVE IN MYSELF'

A small increase of **7%** occurred from the end of sessions in term 1 (53%) through to the end of the programme (60%).*

*based on 62 and 55 responses

"When the sessions ended I felt more confidence in myself and I believe in myself a lot more than I have ever done."

CONFIDENCE TO SPEAK UP

Results fluctuated throughout the project; 29% of girls reported an increase in their confidence to speak or share ideas at the end of term 1 sessions; this increased to 30% at the end of term 2 sessions and declined to 27% by the end of the programme.*

*based on 62, 52 and 54 responses



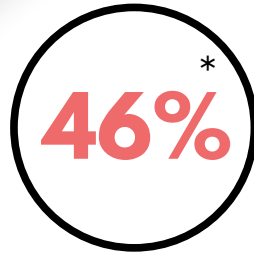
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I loved this girls can because I learnt lots and became more confident.

Matilda, participant

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Girls reported feeling proud of their increased confidence.



of participants reported an improvement in being aware of how they feel and knowing what they can do to help themselves.



of participants reported an improvement in confidence and knowledge talking about periods.



of participants reported an improvement in their attitude towards physical activity, though many had a high baseline for this; 57% said they felt 'happy' when being active.

*based on 50 participants

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It's really fun and you get to talk about things and express yourself.

Ally, participant

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It helps a lot with anxiety.

Emma, participant

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Teachers were asked to observe participants throughout the year to help identify any changes in behaviour. Teachers reported if they had noticed: no difference, some positive difference, notable positive difference or a significant positive difference across a range of categories.

According to teachers' perceptions:

CONFIDENCE TO DISCUSS PERIODS

50% of participants showed a notable or significant difference in their confidence to discuss their period with peers or staff.

LESS ISOLATED / NEW FRIENDSHIPS

82% of participants had a notable or significant difference in feeling less isolated or ability to form new friendships.

IMPROVED OVERALL WELLBEING

85% of participants appeared to show a notable or significant difference in their wellbeing.

IMPROVED ATTITUDE TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

80% of participants had a notable or significant improvement in their attitude to physical activity.

It should be noted that there is a difference in teachers' perceptions compared to self-reported scores from participants in certain categories, such confidence to discuss periods. Both sets of data should therefore be reviewed when drawing conclusions on the project outcomes. However, the perceived improved attitude to physical activity does correspond with 75% of participants reporting to feel more confident about being 'active or sporty' by the end of the programme (see page 5).

PARTICIPANT STORIES

Shared by teachers of participants.

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“One particular student is a very quiet, shy and timid student. They barely speak to adults and has a small selection of friends within their cohort. This student is within a forces family and has moved around school. They came to us as the only student from their primary school.

They enjoy PE and sport, but very quiet and doesn't express enjoyment. I could not believe the difference of this student from the first session to the last. They were so quiet barely joining in, to dancing around the sports hall showing the others particular moves to certain songs. I couldn't believe it was the same student!

There was definitely a change of attitude, personality and mood. It was incredible to see the difference through school in all workshops and lessons.”

“C lacked confidence in herself when coming into year 7. She was shy, timid and struggled to make friends. In PE, I could see she had potential but due to her lack of confidence, she was not as willing to give things a go. C started taking part in the Our Girls Can sessions and she really bought into the different activities. She applied herself and felt safe to give things a go, even if they did not go to plan the first time. I noticed over the course of the different sessions that she was more willing to apply herself. This then fed into her PE lessons where she started stretching her abilities and pushing her personal boundaries. She even represented to school in rugby and achieved the player of the series for our school. Since this, she has joined a rugby team and has formed numerous new friendships.

On reflection when talking to C, she expressed that she felt safe to be herself in the Our Girls Can environment and this gave her the confidence to trust herself to push for more. She has thrived off this experience and has developed intrapersonal and interpersonal skills.”

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A is in Year 5 and joined the school in Year 3. She has always enjoyed PA but hasn't been the most confident or outgoing with it. A was always very quiet about puberty, periods etc before the sessions and was worried about starting her periods. She is a quieter member of the class but with a strong, small friendship group. Year 5 is a large, very boy heavy class which I think A can find challenging at times. A faced lower confidence in speaking out in class, PE or outside of her small friendship group if she needed to make her point known. As she joined the school more recently, she found it challenging to 'branch out' into original friendship groups or have the confidence to show what she was truly capable of in PE.

A fully took part in all activities and explained that she really enjoyed it and felt more confident because she didn't feel like the girls would judge or take over like the boys do at school. A also joined in the puberty and periods discussion, was very giggly to begin but had loads of questions for myself in the weeks following back at school. A also started her period the day after the puberty talk but said because of that she felt okay about it and knew where she could access resources in school as needed. A has since been really open about when she is on her period and is confident in discussing how she is feeling and what she needs.

Attending Our Girls can has made a big impact on A's confidence in general but especially towards PA and changes to her body during puberty. During puberty lessons in science she said she felt ready to answer questions and ask her own questions more openly. Although she has not joined any clubs, the improvement in A's confidence around school is noticeable and she seems so much more resilient to anything happening around her. She has gained the confidence to seek out support from a variety of staff and other children as needed and seems generally more settled in school.

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“V joined Year 7 with very low confidence, which had a significant impact on both her social and emotional wellbeing and her participation in physical activity. She was anxious about taking part in PE lessons and group activities, often worrying about making mistakes or being judged by others. This lack of self-confidence made it difficult for her to engage with her peers, resulting in her becoming quiet, withdrawn, and reluctant to contribute in class or social situations. Overall, V's low confidence created barriers to developing friendships, engaging fully in school life, and participating in physical activity.

V took part in the Our Girls Can programme. At the beginning, V was quiet and hesitant to join in, often lacking confidence when trying new activities. Over the course of the sessions, she became noticeably more confident in participating in activities and was more willing to interact with the other girls. Her mood improved, and she appeared happier and more relaxed during the sessions, enjoying the opportunity to take part in activities without fear of being judged.

The supportive environment helped V to build positive relationships with her peers and develop greater self-belief. She became more comfortable trying new activities, contributing to discussions, and working as part of a group. This increase in confidence was reflected in her willingness to take on new challenges both within and beyond the programme.

The longer-term impact has been encouraging. Following her involvement in Our Girls Can, V joined the school's cricket and rounders clubs and has continued to attend regularly. She has also represented the school in competitive fixtures, something she would not have felt confident enough to do before taking part in the programme.

Overall, taking part in Our Girls Can helped V develop the confidence to be more active, build friendships, and become more engaged in school life. The programme had lasting social, emotional, and physical benefits, enabling her to discover activities she enjoys, improve her self-esteem, and gain the confidence to participate in opportunities she would previously have avoided.

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Parents have also reported positive impacts of the project. L is a young carer who was selected to take part in the project to help increase her confidence.

“Just a little feedback - L has enjoyed taking part in Our Girls Can, and thinks it's been good. I think it's been positive for her too, thank you for allowing her to take part in these sessions.”

Mum also expressed on the phone that L was becoming more open about discussing periods too.

OVERALL FEEDBACK

PARTICIPANTS

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It was such a great experience, I would 100% do it again, so many activities to do and so many things I have never done before.

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“

I have loved doing this and I think this should be everywhere. I think all girls should be able to do this across the globe.

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“

I really liked our girls can I feel more confident and stronger in my body and would want to do it again.

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TEACHERS

“

I wouldn't change anything about Our Girls Can. I feel it gave all the girls such a valuable experience to be themselves and understand themselves better in a space they felt safe to share in. Regular feedback from the girls after sessions has been that they wish it could be every half term because they loved the chance to learn new things and not have the boys 'take over'. Thank you so much for all the hard work and time that has gone into this project.

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The silent disco was a particular highlight and encouraged everyone to let go, have fun, and be active without worrying about being judged. One student summed up the experience by saying, "This is the best day ever." This reflected the enjoyment and sense of belonging that many of the girls experienced throughout the programme. It was encouraging to see the confidence gained during the sessions transfer into wider school life, with participants becoming more willing to join clubs, take part in sports, and engage with their peers. If anything were to be changed, extending the programme or offering follow-up sessions would help maintain the momentum and continue supporting the girls as their confidence grows.

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