



# How to... 'deliver **Sports** **events** and **festivals** for young women and girls'



## *Why it's important*

StreetGames delivers a range of different festivals, events and competitions to increase the sporting offer for young people living in disadvantaged communities. Events and festivals are used to effectively engage and retain young people in sport. Through learning from the Us Girls project we recognised, that many young women and girls want a different type of festival to that which is typically delivered through StreetGames neighbourhood festivals and mass participation programme. StreetGames therefore developed Us Girls Rocks!



## What is Us Girls Rocks?

Us Girls Rocks festivals provide young women and girls aged 14+ with the opportunity to **get together** and try lots of different sporting activities. They are **female only** events and are designed to create a **friendly** and **relaxed** atmosphere where young women and girls can have **fun** and enjoy sport and physical activity in a safe environment. The events also provide free access to health and wellbeing services and many offer free or discounted beauty treatments too.

## *Factors to consider*

Our research and experience has highlighted a number of things to consider when planning sporting events for women and girls. These include:

**Fitness Activities & Sports** - The selection of activities matters - Us Girls Rocks festivals try to provide a wide range of sports and activities. The most popular activities have been dance and fitness based such as; street dance, cheerleading, zumba, boxercise and other group exercise classes.

Sports are popular too and can be delivered as supervised taster sessions rather than as coached activities. Taster sports have included: badminton, basketball, boxing, fencing, football, handball, indoor rowing, judo, netball, tennis, rounders and trampolining. National Governing Bodies may be able to help find suitable coaches to deliver sports sessions at your Us Girls Rocks festival.

By providing a wide variety of activities to try women and girls are exposed to new opportunities they may have never experienced otherwise.

**Competitions** - Fun competitions and challenges which encourage participants to try an activity play an important part in Us Girls Rocks festivals. For example setting an indoor rowing challenge to see who could row the furthest distance in one minute, or set up a tennis target game to score points. Keeping leader boards is a great way to encourage participants to come back and have another go to beat their friends' scores. Another suggestion is to challenge participants to try five different activities; when they have completed them all they collect a raffle ticket giving them a chance to win a prize or take a lucky dip from the prize bin.

**Music** - Not only does music create a vibrant atmosphere at sports events but music is also shown to enhance motivation to exercise and has a considerable bearing on how long participants might endure an activity and their feelings during a task. Having a DJ or a pre-recorded soundtrack for an Us Girls Rocks festival is a great way to ensure that music is playing throughout the festival.

**Access to health and wellbeing services and offer of beauty treatments** - What makes Us Girl Rocks different to other sports festivals is the perfect blend of taking part in sport and physical activity while being treated to a free mini facial or manicure and with the opportunity to find out about local health services as well as national campaigns. For example Us Girls Rocks festivals have offered information from Change4Life, Stoptober (Stop Smoking Campaign), British Heart Foundation as well as how to access services local to the festival venue. These additional wellbeing offers make the event feel like a day out for the girls and a time they can dedicate to themselves.

**Female Only Events** - Many females; especially those that would consider themselves as non-sporty would like to be active and take part in sport with other females and not as part of a mixed group. Female only events that can guarantee no male participants, coaches, leaders or visitors will attract many more young women and girls. Female only events are also more suitable for women from some black and minority ethnic backgrounds if they can provide a female exclusive environment.

**Goodies, incentives and freebies** - The attendees loved receiving freebies such as; t-shirts, wrist bands and goodies. Every Us Girls Rocks festival offers a free t-shirt to all participants as well as opportunities to win prizes and goodies through the activity challenges and fun competitions. StreetGames provides access to t-shirts, medals, goodies and other resources if you wish to deliver your own Us Girls Rocks Neighbourhood Festival.

**Childcare** - Providing crèche facilities is a great way to ensure mums can take part too without having to worry about finding childcare. Mobile childcare providers that deliver quality and accessible childcare are often used at events and festival and most cater for children aged 0-11 years.



**Marketing and Communication** - There are a number of different ways to promote your Us Girls Rocks festival. Through Us Girls sessions is an obvious way; make sure your participants spread the word by telling their female friends and family! Posters and leaflets are good too as they can include the important event details; date, time, venue and activities that are going to be on offer. Don't forget to use social media to promote your event and use it on the day to interact with those that come by posting photos and updates. Make sure you have permission before taking and using photographs.

**Volunteers** - Volunteers play an important role at each festival they fulfil various roles from registration, organising competitions and social media updates. Advertise for event volunteers through the StreetGames volunteering programme, Us Girls Alive and also through local volunteering networks.

**Women and Girls Ambassador** - A local sportswoman making an appearance at the festival is a successful way of motivating and encouraging participants to attend. At Eston Sports Academy in Middlesbrough, Rachel Brown, Team GB, England and Everton football star, interacted with the girls about the passion for her sport and the impact football has made on her life.

**Coaches and Leaders** - It is important to brief coaches, leaders and volunteers prior to the event so they are aware of the plan and understand the format for the day. Don't forget to allow time for breaks in schedules!

## *Case studies*

### **Us Girls Rocks Festival London**

300 women and girls took part in the female only event at ExCeL London, trying different sports and activities including Fencing, Zumba, Rounders and Boxing. Plus as part of MOVE Week, the annual Europe-wide campaign week promoting sport and physical activity, the girls got involved with the MOVE Week flash mob dance to Beyonce's 'Run the World'

At the festival, there were health and well-being information stands and a nutritional smoothie-making bike plus the opportunity to have free beauty treatments and sit down and relax with friends in the chill out beanbag area too! Claire Bennett, GB Fencer, delivered Fencing sessions for the women and presented signed Us Girls goodies in the raffle too! The participants were also joined by Nicola Adams, Olympic Boxing champion and Us Girls President, who signed t-shirts and gave brilliant photo opportunities!

'We enjoyed the variety of sessions on offer. It gave us the opportunity to try team sports like Netball and Rounders, along with Dance/Fitness classes and individual sports like Trampoline and Table tennis.'  
– Participants at Us Girls Rocks October.

'I enjoyed all of the activities as it's been a long time since I played the sports competitively. Every sport was brilliant and it was like returning to my younger days.'  
– Participant at Us Girls Rocks October





Us Girls Rocks Festival, London

## *Top tips*

- Consider the venue and environment that the event will be delivered in. Tell people up front if it's a female only environment or if there are going to be male staff members there.
- Ensure there are lots of activities to try at the event; a mixture of dance, fitness classes and sports provides variety and the chance to try new activities.
- Invite health and wellbeing providers to promote their services.
- Advertise the day as an opportunity for women and girls to dedicate some time to themselves.
- Include challenges or fun competitions to encourage participation.

## *Further information*

[www.usgirls.org.uk](http://www.usgirls.org.uk)

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