



Torriano Primary School

Girls Active Leader Success

 Camden, London

What is the context of your school?

Torriano Primary School is an outstanding two form entry community school located in Camden, London with double the national deprivation indices. The school have developed a Physical Education, School Sports and Physical Activity (PESSPA) programme to have a holistic and inclusive approach, and offer two weekly PE lessons, an extensive extra-curricular provision with over 40 clubs, and a range of opportunities to be active at playtime and during school. As a UNICEF Right Respecting School, there is a deep commitment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, specifically achieving gender equality in sport is a real priority.

Maya attended Torriano Primary School up until Year 2, when she left due to moving out of London and attended a different school. She returned to the area and school 2-3 years later, which is when she appreciated the increased support for getting girls active and opted to get involved herself.

What was delivered?

Maya was an unenthusiastic PE participant who constantly complained of having a stomach ache or injuries, which she admits was because she didn't enjoy PE or want to join in as it "didn't feel like it was the same for everyone with boys doing football and girls doing skipping".

On returning to Torriano Primary School, after having moved away for 2 years, Maya realised the improved opportunities available to girls and decided to give a go trying cricket, rounders and basketball. After attending a basketball tournament, she was asked to become a Girls Active Leader which she was keen to do stating it was "amazing, because not only was I getting to prove that I could do sport just like everyone else could, but I was able to help other people like sport, like my sister."





What was delivered? (continued)

Maya was a successful Girls Active Leader for 1.5 years helping more girls to get involved in sports until she transitioned to a new High School, where sadly she was faced with a very different situation. There was not the same drive to engage girls, with limited opportunities available and staff seeming less interested, so girls' attitudes to PE and school sport were poor. Maya notes that "everyone is pushing the narrative that girls are not interested in sport and never will be so there is no point in trying". As a result, Maya and other former pupils now return to Torriano to participate in a weekly after-school club, and Maya helps to support the running of after-school clubs for younger pupils to help maintain and develop her leadership skills.

What have been the challenges and successes?

A key success has been the turnaround in attitude towards PE and sport, with Maya appreciating the opportunity to have had the same access to sports as the boys, and to have felt an accepted and integral part of school teams. As she noted, "I know we're all a team but if I scored a goal, it helped me realise I can do it, and girls can do it!"

Being a Girls Active Leader who once disliked sport, also provides a unique perspective and empathetic approach to encouraging other reluctant girls to get involved and has ignited a passion in Maya to strive and advocate for equal access. As she states, "when we went out of school to play cricket and other sports that I didn't think I could do, it was excellent to know we could do that, and I would like everyone to be able to experience that!"


Challenges have included feeling marginalised and not encouraged to get involved, especially following the transition to High School. Only 3 after-school sport clubs are available to girls each week at the High School, with places decided on a first come first served basis which restricts attendance and is demoralising. This is an area that Maya would like to improve in future both for her and other girls at the school.





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What are the next steps?

Torriano Primary School intend to keep supporting former pupils and their friends to return to school to participate in an after-school club to support their ongoing movement and engagement. Maya would like to continue to develop her leadership skills within her new school and intends to meet with PE staff to discuss the lack of opportunities available for girls and to recommend new recreational sessions that her and other former Girls Active Leaders could help deliver.

Torriano Girls Active Leaders are co-designing an inaugural Camden Girls Active Festival (March 2025), which will be offered to girls in primary and secondary schools within the Camden Borough, including Maya's new High School. Maya is attending to help deliver the event which Torriano hope will use to help recruit schools and establish a Camden Active Girls Committee with the support of the local School Games Organiser. This will involve 3 local primary schools and 3 secondary schools, with the aim of motivating more girls and supporting transition of opportunities and leadership activities between the schools.

