



YOUTH SPORT TRUST

Youth Voice Case Studies





Context:

Through a Koboca Survey into PE and Sport, the School Sports Manager from Archbishop Holgate's School in York identified that a proportion of year 9 girls indicated they had low resilience and were lacking in confidence. They did however, want to be involved in sports leadership. Their low resilience led to self-doubt around sports leadership ability preventing them from taking up sports leadership opportunities.



Youth Voice Case Study

Building Resilience Through Leadership

Aim:

To train and develop a group of girls with low resilience, as sports leaders, by co-designing ways to overcome their barriers to sports leadership.

Activity:

1 The project lead created a series of PE lessons for year 9 girls from Joseph Rowntree School, which developed communication skills, confidence and resilience. They also covered how to adapt practical activities to ensure they were inclusive and fun.

2 During each lesson the girls were consulted about their fears around youth leadership and together they co-designed solutions to overcome barriers and build their resilience.

Barrier: Lack of confidence to be able to deliver a good session.

Solution: The girls were trained in how to lead simple activities with limited equipment, applying the STEP model to adapt. This developed their skills and confidence to lead.

Barrier: Unwilling to coach or lead pupils from their own school or age group.

Solution: Deliver sessions in their old primary schools for familiarity.

Barrier: Fear of the session going wrong and not being able to 'fix' it

Solution: Developed small 25-minute sessions with a carousel rotation. If something went wrong, they could adapt for the next session. They also developed a bank of simple, tried and tested activities.

Barrier: Fear of being left on their own.

Solution: Deliver sessions in groups of 4 sports leaders for peer support.

3 Desirable leadership opportunities, which resulted from consultation, took place as **'Active Afternoon'** sessions (carousel of fun activities) at the chosen primary schools. 16 leaders were chosen to attend and worked with Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils on different days.



Impact:

- The biggest success was that the girls increased in confidence and positivity. Staff noticed positive changes in attitudes towards school attendance and improved behaviours. Due to concerns being addressed through co-design, the sports leaders became better at communicating and making decisions, able to engage and include younger people in fun, physical activities.
- Joseph Rowntree School and the wider community now have a group of girls who are confident, competent sports leaders who originally had low resilience. They have developed personal skills which will support them to flourish as citizens.
- Feeder schools are now engaging with the local secondary school due to the sports leader activities.



Challenges:

- The school were reluctant to release individual pupils from different classes to create a focus group. Also, running sessions at lunch or after school relied on the commitment of the girls who, as they were less resilient, were also less willing. To overcome this, it was decided to work with a year 9 group in PE which had a high percentage of girls with low resilience. Once a relationship was developed with the project lead, and training started, the girls became motivated and keen to be involved.



Sustainability:

- The secondary school PE department want to increase leadership opportunities. The primary feeder schools are keen for this to become an annual project. Both parties understand the strong year 6 feeder/transition link the programme develops.

Top Tips:

1. Utilise the information gained/gathered from surveys which pupils complete. This allows schools to impact on those that need it most and is great evidence for Ofsted.
2. Ensure any training is meaningful and pupils understand the **'why'**. Keep it practical!
3. Act on ideas, suggestions, concerns of the young people to develop trust. Be honest if something isn't achievable.
4. Follow up with the leaders at the end of each delivery session, **'What went well' (WWW)** and **'Even better if...' (EBI)**.





Youth Voice Case Study

Changing Behaviour through Sports Leadership

Context:

The Partnerships Development Manager from Liverpool School Sport Partnership (SSP) wanted to address the anti-social behaviour and risk of involvement in youth violence and gangs present among disengaged adolescent boys in the area.

The SSP learnt that according to Glasser's Choice Theory (1998), like schools, 'gangs' have the potential to meet all the basic needs of young people; self-worth and power, survival and health, love and belonging, fun and enjoyment, and freedom. In the eyes of some boys, the power and freedom of being a gang member, surpassed that which school or indeed, their family offered. Schools were at times, competing with gangs.

Aim:

To engage targeted boys in meaningful sport and physical activity. To develop their positivity and self-belief through pupil voice by co-designing purposeful, strategic projects which they would respect and value.

The targeted boys were pupils at risk of disengagement from education (through exclusion or unauthorised absence) and/or involvement in youth violence and gang membership due to poor self-regulation, impulsivity, and risk-taking behaviours.

Activity:

- 1** The SSP implemented the Youth Sport Trust Boys Move programme, designed to equip educators with the principles of using sport and play to address the mental health and behaviour issues of adolescent boys and increase belonging. A group of key stage three boys who lacked coping skills for everyday life situations such as managing frustrations and anger were targeted and given the opportunity to co-design a new programme of physical activity for themselves.
- 2** Positive relationships had to be developed between the SSP team and the students. Non-threatening, fun activities were introduced to support the boys to be open about feelings and frustrations. Building trust was core to establish confidence. Students didn't think they would be listened to, or any change would happen from their ideas, but as a result of staff acting on their suggestions, relationships were built, and trust developed.
- 3** The boys co-designed programmes involving activities of their choice; boxing pad work, combat fitness, high intensity fitness, yoga and meditation. Students committed to improving both their mental and physical health by undertaking 90 minutes of physical activity in school, plus 1 hour at an after-school club. Developing an understanding of why these activities improved wellbeing was built into the programme to ensure value was given to increase engagement.





Impact:

- Life skill improvement; courage, confidence, honesty, self-belief, communication, responsibility, and respect for others. Attendance has improved. Boys have matured and now understand the impact their behaviour has on others.
- Post project survey results indicated a positive change in behaviours including a small increase in the percentage of boys indicating they were always able to keep their feelings under control.
- Some boys have been invited, alongside senior leaders and PE staff, to attend the SSP annual conference to share their experiences in a mini keynote covering the journey they have made to turn their lives around.
- **"He no longer hangs round on the streets because he won't be able to box if he gets in trouble" Boys Move participant**
- **"The young people are more engaged, are more focused, listen and intentionally take part" Project Mentor**
- Following participation in Boys Move, some of the boys have gone on to support a nurture club to create a supportive environment for less active, more vulnerable younger boys. A further project called 'I Am' has been implemented where boys are consulted on how lessons/school can be structured to help them manage emotions leading to the development of 'sport sanctuaries' as calming/time-out areas in school.



Challenges:

- The target group were at risk boys who struggled with self-worth, self-belief, and anger management. Mindsets had to be changed which took time and facilities needed to be readily available for physical activity.
- Some headteachers were unconvinced by the project until they saw the positive impact on attendance attitudes and behaviours.



Sustainability:

- Wider community sectors have become involved, community leaders, Street Games, boxing / Mixed Martial Arts / fitness coaches as mentors and local Police.
- The SSP want to embed a certified leadership programme for at risk boys. They intend to offer twilight training sessions to upskill school staff on the value of open relationships developed by pupil voice and co-design opportunities.
- They are now working on intervention programmes across 13 schools. A government funded taskforce programme called SAFE (support, attend, fulfil, exceed) supports this.

Top Tips:

1. Use a 'customer' focus approach to engage boys.
2. Develop pupil voice for feedback and act upon it.
3. Develop community links for use of facilities and mentors.





Youth Voice Case Study

Co-designing an Inclusive Sports Festival

Context:

In the Christchurch and The Isle of Purbeck Partnership, the School Games Organiser (SGO) identified that primary aged pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) were lacking positive sports festival experiences. He wanted to address this through facilitating youth voice and developing sports leaders.

Aim:

To develop sports leaders in secondary schools who would create a fun, friendly and positive festival environment, enabling primary pupils to have an enjoyable experience, trying new sports and activities, with some element of competition and personal best.

Activity:

- 1** The SSP worked collaboratively with the YST Inclusion Lead to plan two Step into Sport festivals.
- 2** The first step was to recruit a group of young leaders from The Grange School (secondary) in Christchurch, who could represent the views of pupils with SEND. The project lead (SGO), worked alongside the SENDCo and Head of PE to select eight young people sensitive to the needs of others. Half of these had a Special Educational Need or Disability.
- 3** A 'focus group' approach was taken to develop student confidence in sharing views and co-designing. The expectation that the group were to take ownership of the project was established from the start. Three youth leadership coaching sessions were delivered by the project lead prior to the first festival which covered: leadership skills, teamwork, communication, planning, being a role model, listening to and accepting others.
- 4** During these sessions the young leaders were tasked with co-designing two positive experience events for a group of year 3 - 6 primary pupils with SEND. '**Design with Intent**' was their focus. They chose a range of varied activities and learnt how to adapt them using STEP principles to make them accessible and enjoyable for all.
- 5** At the first festival, time was allocated for the leaders to gain feedback from participants, so they could make the second festival even more inclusive for them. The evaluation process provided new ideas, including having a safe space, a time-out option and a sensory space for participants who might become overwhelmed.





Impact:

- Holding two festivals with the same leaders and participants created positive bonds. The young leaders were respected for asking participants for feedback and acting on it by making relevant changes. Participants and leaders knew each other which lessened anxiety and nervousness. Behaviour change was apparent, pupils who attended were proud of their achievements and loved being chosen to take part; **"I never get picked, this is fun!"**, **"When can we go again?"**.
- Staff comments: **"The activities were excellently chosen to get them all involved and were supported by young leaders"** *Primary School SENDCo*
- **"The excitement and smiles on the children's faces while taking part in the sports were the best reward of all"**. *Primary PE Lead*



Challenges:

- Student release from school to attend the festivals was a challenge. The benefits to the young leaders and wider community of primary schools had to be communicated to overcome this.
- Developing a culture with primary schools to establish a participation intervention opportunity for a targeted group of pupils.



Sustainability:

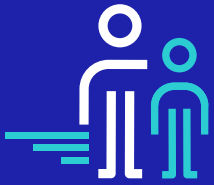
- Due to the positive impact, the events will be replicated in the next academic year.
- A wider community leadership training day has already taken place with students from secondary mainstream, special and alternative provision schools attending. The intention being for these students to learn to co-design and lead similar events.

Top Tips:

1. Carve out structured time to develop leaders to take ownership through co-design.
2. Two events with the same leaders and participants increased impact.

"We loved taking part (in) all the activities, particularly archery and we wanted to thank you for your help. Your hard work has not gone unnoticed and thanks to you we had a brilliant day!"

Thank you letter from the young event participants.



Youth Voice Case Study

Coach education and the co-curricular offer

Context:

The PE department at Whitburn Church of England Academy in Sunderland wanted to address a lack of student leadership in the sixth form; and a lack of engaging activities for younger students within the co-curricular programme. It was evident through survey results that a more pupil centred co-curricular programme was required which would need leadership development to increase delivery capacity. Led by the Head of PE, they decided to develop a Coach Education Programme for year 12 students.

Aim:

To work with sixth formers to develop a group of leaders and role models. To consult and utilise student voice, empowering students to take ownership of a new and relevant co-curricular sports programme for younger students and develop their co-design skills.

Activity:

- 1** Consultation was the first step to establish how they could improve the co-curricular offer; what was lacking and what initial training support they needed? The young coaches had access to the school PE annual survey which included a question on how the provision of sport and physical activity could be improved; 30 students responded with **"more choice"**.
- 2** Regular co-design meetings, with the sixth formers, either within PE lessons, or at scheduled breaks, provided the opportunity for the development of ideas and solutions. These resulted in a timetabled co-curricular programme designed to meet the needs of all students. However, the introduction of new sports/activities required the young coaches to have relevant NGB certification. They were given choices about which sports and took the opportunity to gain coaching qualifications.
- 3** The PE department reinforced the value of youth voice using the motto **"you spoke, we listened"**.





Impact:

- The biggest success was a more varied, diverse, co-designed programme of extra-curricular clubs led by Year 12 role models, who are now qualified Level 1 or Level 2 coaches in their chosen sport. They schedule, promote, organise, and deliver the activities. In 2023, 14 Year 12 pupils applied to be part of the schools Coach Education Programme. In 2024, 30 applied due to the changes made.
- The young coaches felt valued, and developed a sense of pride co-designing with the PE department. Taking a leadership role has enabled them to share their passion for sport and physical activity. Younger students respect them and have said they enjoyed being led by senior students instead of staff. They like the variety on offer.
- Teachers noted that some young coaches improved academically. School now has added purpose and as a result, some have become more responsible and focused.
- Whitburn Academy and the wider community have benefited as the programme has become a selling point for student recruitment and a marketing tool for the school.
- The headteacher praised the programme due to it developing independent students who use their initiative. It has developed resilience and increased participation. Listening to, and acting upon student voice, has improved some staff/student relationships. Parent comments have been positive.
- Some of the young coaches have gone on to deliver co-curricular clubs at local primary schools and some are coaching at community clubs.



Challenges:

- Some students were less confident to share their opinions, to be critical about current co-curricular offers. Consultation meetings with a teamwork approach and progressive steps enabled confidence and trust to grow. Sixth formers motivation to give up free time improved as they began to see the value of the programme. Club attendance improved when the young coaches promoted the offer instead of staff.



Sustainability:

- The programme will continue with the present coaches taking more ownership to introduce it to upcoming sixth formers. Engaging local community stakeholders will support with funding.

Top Tips:

1. Meet regularly as a group to ensure transparent communication.
2. Take a solution focused approach which students learn to apply.
3. Ensure a reflection process throughout.
4. Students flourish when given the opportunity to be part of a co-design process. They become more responsible, independent young adults.





Youth Voice Case Study

Creating Active Schools, Dragon's Den

Context:

The Redcar and Eston School Sport Partnership CIC (SSP) identified high levels of physical inactivity in their primary schools. Data collected using Moki band activity trackers highlighted the issue. For example, in January 2024, Pennyman School's Year 2 class average daily moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) was only 14 minutes and no children achieved 30 minutes. The Partnership Manager determined to seek the views of the pupils to enable them to address inactivity within their own school, challenging them to influence the change.

Aim:

To develop a consultation process, with year 5 and 6 pupils taking ownership. To use co-design as part of a whole school approach to increase physical activity.

Activity:

- 1** The SSP joined with Tees Valley Sport (Active Partnership) and applied for funding through a Sport England Place Based Partnership, to collaboratively develop a local pilot project for schools in underserved areas. They decided to develop a 'Dragon's Den' opportunity, to motivate, create excitement and gain commitment from the pupils to increase physical activity in their school.
- 2** Primary schools were targeted by the SSP and headteachers invited to a meeting which explained the opportunity. 12 schools submitted an expression of interest and were chosen to take part. Each school identified a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils (Activators) to attend an SSP led session covering:
 - The importance of physical activity in our daily lives and the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines
 - How to consult with peers – the process, and how to collate results
 - Decision making and presentation skills
- 3** The Activators were told they could bid for £3,000 to increase physical activity in their school via a Dragon's Den style presentation. They were tasked with consulting with their peers to create a sustainable model for physical activity. This would be embedded across the whole school, providing positive experiences of PE and Sport for all pupils.



4

An example of innovative consultation and co-design practice by Pennyman Primary School Activators:

Theme: “To give every child a chance every day”

To generate interest, the Activators spoke of the Dragon’s Den opportunity in assembly. They investigated what activities and equipment the school didn’t have, then brainstormed what the pupils at school might like. The Activators visited every class, consulting pupils and implementing a voting system as they wanted to be democratic in their approach. Votes were collated and the winning activity was table tennis, due to it being accessible for all and played indoors and outdoors.

5

Co-designing the Dragon’s Den Presentation

One of the Activators is a community club table tennis player. A video was made of her playing, and she interviewed her coach about the benefits of playing table tennis. The Activators understood they would have to present on the importance of physical activity and how table tennis could contribute to their school being more active.

Written enquiries were sent to equipment companies for purchase cost quotes. The intention was to bid for 2 table tennis tables on wheels. The Activators researched; cross-curricular links; how to adapt play to include all ages and abilities; a range of fun table tennis activities; how to plan a scheduled rotation of classes (to be displayed on noticeboards); and safe areas for the tables to be accessed depending on the weather. Throughout this process they consulted with the headteacher and PE lead.



Impact:

- The Activators developed a sense of pride due to their voices being heard. They took responsibility, ownership and valued the freedom they were given to use their initiative. Staff have noticed a change. During a practice OFSTED PE deep dive, the Activators spoke with confidence and knowledge about their project and the importance of being an Active School.
- As part of a wider Creating Active Schools Project, physical activity levels are increasing and it is hoped that once the table tennis project is fully implemented, this will increase further.



Challenges:

- The Activators thought their biggest challenge was ensuring their voting system was democratic and included the whole school. They had to negotiate time with their class teachers so they could visit every class and have meetings to co-design the offer.



Sustainability:

- This was the first time the school had empowered young people through Youth Voice. The level of success, and competence demonstrated by pupils, has ensured the process will be utilised again, especially co-design for PE curriculum development.

Top Tips from the Activators:

1. Be confident.
2. If you believe in yourself, you can do it!
3. Listen to the ideas of others and work as a team.





Context:

The Arches School Sport Partnership (SSP) in Sheffield identified a significant drop in sports participation by girls as they transitioned from primary to secondary school, particularly among girls with low levels of confidence. Driven by the desire to tackle inequalities and provide equal opportunities the recently appointed School Games Organiser (SGO) was inspired by the SGO Youth Voice Coaching Circle to use Youth Voice as the tool to address both.



Youth Voice Case Study

Improving Key Stage 2 Girls Relationship with PE and Sport

Aim:

To develop the confidence and competence of low active girls in Key Stage 2 to take part in regular physical activity so they establish 'healthy habits' before transitioning to secondary school. To trial using co-design as a tool for achieving this.

Activity:

1 The SGO worked with one of her junior schools to identify 10 Key stage 2 girls with low confidence in PE, who did not attend co-curricular clubs or sports competitions. The girls were invited to take part in a pupil voice session during a lunchtime to discuss what they would like from a school sports club. The SGO wrote a short survey and went through each question with the girls giving them the option to talk about it or simply fill in the paper survey to remove any pressure to speak out loud. She laid out pictures on the floor to illustrate the sports given as choices within the survey, and emojis to establish feelings towards them. The questions asked included:

- How do you feel about PE?
- How do you feel about extra-curricular sports?
- How do you feel about sports competitions and events?
- Would you like to/not like to attend them?
- How does sport make you feel?
- What sports/activities would you like to try?

2 In response to the girls feedback the SGO agreed to lead a girls-only lunchtime sports club delivering their top 3 chosen sports – bench ball, tennis and dance.

3 After running the club for several weeks, the SGO surveyed the girls again to understand the impact on them and gain further insight. The questions asked included:

- How did Girls Club make them feel?
- What was their favourite/least favourite part?
- Would they be more/less likely to take part in an extra-curricular club or competition as a result of attending?



Impact:

The Key Stage 2 Girls Club had 100% attendance throughout, all the girls indicated the club made them feel 'happy' and 'excited' and 90% said they were more likely to attend a club or competition since attending the Girls Club. It also resulted in a 60% increase in the number of girls who felt positive about PE lessons.

In addition to the survey, the SGO consulted with the girls throughout the delivery of the club and established the factors which contributed to its success. Being a girls-only environment was important as they felt emotionally safe and physically safe i.e. no balls flying around in the sports hall. The girls chose what they did with a high degree of consensus and continued to be involved in making decisions about what they did throughout e.g. co-designing and leading dance routines. As a result, they felt included, and that Girls Club was their club.

Follow-up activity:

Following the positive impact of the Girls Club and insight gathered, the SGO wanted to create an event for the original 10 girls and extend the reach to other low active girls across the School Sport Partnership. She set up a leisure centre-based Girls Day delivering trampolining, gymnastics and dance as these were all highly rated sports in the survey. The aim was for the girls to have an enjoyable and unpressured experience. Opportunities to deliver a girl's tag rugby event and a girl's cricket festival arose at the same time and it was decided to evolve Girls Day into Girls Week covering events targeted at differently skilled and motivated girls.

Follow-up impact:

In total 240 Key Stage 2 girls took part in the Girls Day supported by 15 secondary school aged Young Leaders and local coaches. 120 Key Stage 2 girls attended the tag-rugby event and a further 120 took part in the cricket festival. Impact was evaluated by using tins with emoji faces on them for the girls to show how they felt about the events by 'voting'. The most popular feelings expressed by the girls were 'proud' and 'happy'.



Emails from teachers following the event highlighted the positive impact it had on the girls.

"Thank you so much for today. If you'd have seen the girls faces when they came back to school today, you'd have been amazed!"

"All girls engaged!"

(They) "came back into school beaming"



Sustainability:

The male PE lead from the junior school plans to take over from the SGO to run the Girls Club lunchtime activity sessions. He had concerns that the girls may not want a male teacher running their Girls Club, but the girls were happy for him to do so as long as they would continue to have a voice and choice.

The SGO will continue to run a Girls Week, making it an annual event in the competition calendar. She is planning to work collaboratively across Sheffield with the other SGOs to open this up to more girls in 2025.

Top Tips:

- 1.** Youth Voice doesn't have to take a great deal of time and can be a quick win to gathering valuable insight.
- 2.** Talk and listen to the young people you want to work with.
- 3.** Take the role of activity 'facilitator' rather than leader with low active groups.

"The impact we got from such a small amount of input was incredible"

***Lauren Donnelly,
SGO, Arches School Sport Partnership***



Context:

The School Games Organiser (SGO) from St Bede's Bristol identified that many secondary school students eligible for free school meals lacked opportunities to access meaningful leadership development through sport. In addition, children with SEND in Key Stage 2 (KS2) were identified as facing significant challenges in developing self-esteem, resilience and a sense of belonging. Local SEND data indicated that a significant proportion of students attending North Bristol schools had learning support needs ranging from mainstream schools with between 15% and 30% and special schools with 100% of students with SEND.



Youth Voice Case Study

Collaborative KS3 Sports Leadership: Creating Positive Experiences for KS2 SEND Participants

Aim:

To provide positive experiences of sport and tackle inequalities for key target groups by:

- empowering and developing the leadership skills and confidence of KS3 young leaders eligible for free school meals by supporting them to co-design and lead sports activities
- improving the self-esteem, mental resilience and well-being of KS2 children with SEND through participation in engaging, inclusive and adapted sports activities.

Activity:

- 1** Working with KS3 young leaders, the SGO used guidance from Youth Sport Trust's Youth Voice resources webpage to understand their preferences for sports leadership and their leadership support needs. Utilising the 'Talk Tag' activity from the Youth Voice Activity Cards the young leaders were asked why they wanted to be involved in sports leadership and any challenges they anticipated facing by taking on the role of young leader. This was followed by a focus group with year 8 students (eligible for free school meals) from several secondary schools who expressed a strong desire to deliver sports coaching in primary schools. By sharing their thoughts, feelings and ideas using sticky notes they indicated a willingness to develop their leadership skills by working with children with diverse needs. Including providing 'support to those who need more help'.
- 2** As a result of this consultation a project was established to develop the leadership skills of the targeted KS3 young leaders by supporting them to lead sports activities with KS2 children with SEND from mainstream and special primary schools.
- 3** The 45 targeted young leaders from across 3 secondary, 1 special school and 1 alternative provision school in North Bristol were organised into 5 mixed groups to help foster new friendships. Each young leader participated in 2 training sessions across 4 hours led by the SGO, National Governing Bodies of Sport and local community organisations including Bristol Bears Community Foundation. The training focused on developing leadership, teamwork and confidence by equipping them with the skills to:
 - deliver activities safely
 - use effective leadership strategies
 - be confident in engaging and inspiring younger children.

- 4** Young leaders who demonstrated greater confidence in sports leadership undertook additional training to better understand the support needs of children with SEND. These young leaders were assigned to work with the special schools where the support needs were greatest.
- 5** All the young leaders were assigned to 2-3 primary schools, where they delivered coaching sessions for children with SEND over 2-3 one-hour sessions. 12 primary schools were visited engaging 156 young people with SEND in activities including golf, rugby, dodgeball, boccia, target games and cricket in ways designed to help them boost their self-esteem and mental resilience through the support and role modelling of the young leaders.
- 6** The project concluded with the young leaders delivering a KS2 multi-sport festival for young people with SEND from across North Bristol.



Impact:

- **Young leaders**

Through the project, 45 KS3 young leaders, all eligible for free school meals including 16 with SEND, were trained and given the opportunity to develop their leadership experience. They gained valuable leadership skills, boosted their confidence and developed a deeper understanding of how to adapt sports for children with diverse needs, including those with SEND, positively impacting their personal growth and development. These young leaders felt empowered to make a difference in their communities by taking on leadership roles, fostering a sense of purpose and responsibility. In addition, the Heads of PE in North Bristol indicated that some of the young leaders showed improved behaviour in lessons due to the greater sense of responsibility gained through the leadership training.

- **KS2 participants**

The project involved 12 primary schools engaging 156 young people with SEND. The KS2 participants reported increased confidence and self-esteem through positive experiences of engaging in inclusive sports activities tailored to their needs. These activities also provided a sense of inclusion and achievement.

- **Partner organisations**

The project positively impacted partner organisations, including Bristol Bears Community Foundation and Gloucestershire Cricket. Their involvement allowed them to extend their reach and contribute to the development of young leaders and children with SEND. This collaboration strengthened the local community's support network for inclusive sports and leadership development.



"I am so grateful to have the opportunity to support the younger children in schools." – Young Leader

"I loved it when Riley came to my school and delivered a golf session, I enjoyed the different challenges!!" – KS2 participant



Challenges:

Some young leaders initially struggled with confidence and needed more experience in leadership or sports. To address this, the project provided targeted training in the STEP model to give them the skills to make activities accessible, while receiving mentoring from coaches and partners to provide encouragement. This graduated support helped the young leaders build their confidence with many reporting significant improvements in their abilities.

Coordinating the leadership training sessions, primary school visits and partner involvement presented logistical challenges, particularly due to scheduling conflicts among schools and organisations. Detailed planning and communication with flexible scheduling were essential e.g. scheduling training sessions on different days to accommodate the young leaders' availability. Schools were provided with clear timelines and expectations which helped facilitate the smooth delivery of the coaching sessions.

The involvement of a diverse range of schools resulted in varying expectations and needs, ranging from requirements for different learning environments to varying levels of support for children with SEND. Therefore, flexibility in session planning was crucial. Each group of young leaders worked closely with their assigned schools to tailor activities to meet specific needs.

To overcome the challenge of co-ordinating schools transporting young leaders to venues, the SGO took on this responsibility using a minibus to collect the young leaders from their various schools, supervise them during the events and return them back to their schools afterwards.



Sustainability:

The project concluded with a Multi-Sport Festival where all the sports delivered by the young leaders were played in a SEND-focused event. The primary SEND children were reconnected with their secondary school sports leaders, providing an opportunity to showcase their progress and feel confident representing their schools in a supportive environment.

To make this work sustainable the SGO aims to promote leadership and coaching training being integrated into the curriculum or extracurricular programmes to ensure the project becomes a lasting part of school life. This should include regular leadership workshops, physical activity sessions and inclusive initiatives for students with SEND - not only developing the leadership skills of often overlooked young people but fostering a whole school culture of inclusion.

The next steps are to select and train a new cohort of young leaders to continue the work initiated by the current group creating a self-sustaining leadership cycle, where new young leaders are trained and empowered to take on inclusive leadership roles. This will ensure a sustained positive impact on both themselves as young leaders and the younger participants with SEND.

Top Tips:

Top tips to develop a similar project:

1. Build strong and diverse partnerships
2. Provide ongoing support and training for leaders
3. Focus on inclusivity and flexibility in activity design for target groups

The project reinforced the importance of creating an inclusive and supportive environment where young leaders and children with SEND can thrive. They learn from each other, grow in confidence and feel valued.