

**Cardiff Metropolitan University**  
**Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd**  
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**The '5x60' Initiative: Illustrative Case studies**

**2007-2009**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AL - Anna Leyshon (researcher)

HoPE - Head of PE

HoY - Head of Year

HT - Headteacher

LA - Local authority

PC - Point of Contact

PE - Physical Education

PESS - Physical Education and School Sport

SSSP - Secondary School Sport Pilot

SM - Senior Manager

SCW - Sports Council for Wales now known as Sport Wales (since April 2010)

SW - Sport Wales

## Introduction

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The physical, social and psychological benefits of participating in physical activity have been well documented in recent years (Fulton *et al.*, 2004; Strong *et al.*, 2005). At the same time public health has been of growing concern to the Westminster Government and devolved administrations (Health Education Authority [HEA], 1998). In particular, obesity has been identified as one of the greatest health challenges in the 21st century (World Health Organisation, 2007). Increasing physical activity amongst adults and young people is proposed by the Welsh Assembly Government [WAG] as one strategy to help address the obesity problem (WAG, 2005; 2008a; 2008b). Some studies show that physical activity when young may impact on physical activity levels later in life (Kjønnisken *et al.*, 2008; Kjønnisken *et al.*, 2009). The current recommendation for children and young people age 5 -18 years is to engage in moderate to vigorous intensity for at least 60 minutes every day (Department of Health, 2011). In 2001, only 24% of young people in Wales achieved this target, but by 2008 this percentage had increased to 35% overall – 42% of boys and 28% of girls (SCW, 2009; WAG, 2008a; 2008b). The current recommendations by the Department of Health and Welsh Government also include the need for 5-18 year olds to undertake vigorous intensity activities that strengthen muscle and bone at least three days a week (Department of Health, 2011). Over the last decade attempts have been made to provide physical activity pathways for all young people as well as targeting specific groups such as hard to reach young people. For disaffected, potentially deviant or delinquent young people, sport and physical activity have the potential to help combat behavioural problems which (amongst others) may include crime, truancy, alcohol and drug abuse (Department of Culture Media and Sport [DCMS], 1999; Sandford *et al.*, 2008).

Schools were identified as one key setting to provide physical activity pathways for young people (Houlihan, 2000; SCW, 2003). In Wales, Physical Education and School Sport (PESS) was set up in 2000 by Sport Wales (SW) to improve the quality of PE in primary schools and to bridge the gap as children make the transition from primary to secondary school; Dragon Sport was also set up by SW as an extracurricular initiative in primary schools (SCW, 2005). The need to promote adequate extracurricular provision was the main driver for developing the Secondary School Sport Pilot (SSSP) which later became the '5x60' initiative. This extracurricular aspiration played a central part in the vision statement of SW:

To create schools where a broad range of sports and physical activity is offered in extracurricular time, particularly week-nights and weekends, to all children regardless of their ability. Non specialist staff, parents, Year 13 pupils, students and local coaches will work together to organise and provide this activity. The scheme will particularly target opportunities for children who

currently do not take part and seek to address some of the factors which discourage less able youngsters from participating. (SCW, 2003, p.1)

Following a successful pilot in 2004-05 (Bolton *et al.*, 2007) the '5x60' initiative was launched in September 2006. It was designed to sit alongside (but not replace) traditional extracurricular PE activities and for young people to be central in the programme. Its objectives were (and still are) to:

1. Provide additional physical activity extracurricular opportunities by targeting those currently not involved in school sport, school team sport and / or PE.
2. Recruit, support and retain volunteers i.e., parents, and develop young leaders.
3. Establish partnerships with the community, local clubs and further / higher education colleges (SCW, 2006).

By the end of the academic year in 2009 / 2010, 98% of secondary schools in Wales were involved in the initiative. The most recent SW management data (in August 2010) that relate to pupils and schools that have been involved in '5x60' activities from 2006-2009 are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Number of schools and pupils participating in '5x60' (2006-2011)**

	Number of '5x60' schools	Number of pupils who have participated in '5x60'	Mean number of pupils per school	% of the pupil population involved in '5x60'
2006-2007	37	9,688	262	5%
2007-2008	133	41,828	314	20%
2008-2009	218	81,586	374	39%
2009-2010	226	87,854	389	50.94%
2010-2011	227	92,173	406	54.54%

(Source: SW, 2011)

Delivered through '5x60' Officers who have flexibility to co-ordinate their individual school programme (SCW, 2006), the provision of activities is mainly based on pupil consultation through audit and informal conversations and the availability of activities within the locality (SCW, 2006).

The '5x60' Officer is based part-time at the school (20 hours per week) and managed by the Local Authority (LA) but also has a school point of contact (PC). The PC is normally a member of the school's senior management (SM) team, or a member of the PE department. However, there are several possible modes of employment. For example, officers can be employed part-time and assigned to one school for 20 hours, or full time and assigned to two schools (SCW, 2006). The intention was also for the '5x60' Officer to be the interface between the community and the school providing a valuable stepping stone to build local capacity for successful partnerships and networks (Bolton *et al.*, 2007).

## Case Studies

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The following narratives are drawn from a large-scale national research project focusing on young people's perceptions of extracurricular sport, physical activity and the '5x60' initiative (Leyshon, 2011). This project was undertaken in three phases over an accumulated twelve month period of fieldwork. The main aim of the first phase of the research was to explore the '5x60' initiative and the young people's perceptions of physical activity at six secondary schools geographically located across Wales from December 2007- May 2008. A variety of methods such as focus groups, interviews, observations and reflections were used. The main purpose of the second phase was to explore the leisure lifestyles of the young people in greater depth through using additional methods such as classroom activities and imaged-based drawings of pupils' personal interests, hobbies and activities. In this phase ten weeks were spent at two of the initial six schools visited. They were:

- 1) Ysgol Rhyd Y Fro<sup>1</sup> – a Welsh language school situated in a rural area of West Wales catering for pupils aged 11 to 18. A quarter of the 800 pupils were from small towns and three quarters were from rural areas. There was a strong emphasis on the Eisteddfod, a traditional a Welsh cultural festival of literature, music and performance. In 2009, the '5x60' programme had been running at the school for three years and was particularly successful. This was (at least in part) because of the proactive and approachable '5x60' Officer and the wide variety of activities including fencing, aikido, street dance, golf, mountain biking, gorge walking and girls touch rugby, as well as more accessible activities such as tennis, cricket and football.
- 2) Valley High School – an English language school for 11 to 18 year olds situated in a socially deprived area of the South Wales valleys. Free school meals were received by 28% of the pupils, a figure well

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<sup>1</sup> Pseudonyms are used for school and pupil names throughout.

above the county and national average. The '5x60' initiative was a successful initiative at the school as part of an extensive extracurricular community programme intended to engage pupils by providing a range of sports clubs, cultural groups and hobby activities. Financed by the local authority (LA) alongside European funding, there was free access to clubs as well as the provision of some transport.

While undertaking the qualitative research with young people there emerged seven particularly interesting case studies that highlighted one or more of the '5x60' objectives (see above). From April-May 2009 additional evidence (formal and informal) that gave real insight into issues associated with the young people themselves and/or with the '5x60' initiative was obtained from Ysgol Rhyd Y Fro and Valley High School. In some instances the focus was on an individual child/young person whilst others were more about a group of youngsters involved in a specific activity.

Informed consent from parents or guardians and assent from the young people themselves was obtained and the individuals involved in the case studies were met between three and six times. Conversations and interviews were recorded and explored the nature and causes of behavioural change, as well as the barriers and resistance to such change. In some cases (such as The Street Dancers) the activity or event took place away from the school premises and this afforded the opportunity to meet pupils' parents and friends and in some cases conduct additional interviews with some 'significant others' (e.g., parent/s, guardian/s, siblings, etc.).

A summary of the case studies are presented in Table 2 and are presented according to the '5x60' objective addressed. The aim of the case studies presented is to reveal individual / group narratives that help to demonstrate some specific issues and experiences of the '5x60' programme and present five key themes for practitioners and policy makers involved in physical activity initiatives.



**Table 2: The Case Studies**

Case study	M / F	Age	Brief summary	'5x60' Objective
Tommy	M	16 yrs old	Disengaged from school life and never brought his PE kit to lessons. As a result of his active involvement in the '5x60' activities of mountain biking, aikido and fencing demonstrated a changed attitude towards sport and physical activity.	1
Bethany	F	12 yrs old	A pupil with 'Asperger's syndrome' who had a negative previous experience of sport and physical activity, but was a proud member of the '5x60' touch rugby club.	1
The Street Dancers	F	12-14 yrs old	Non-sporty pupils who were active members of the '5x60' street dance but did no other form of sport and physical activity.	1
The Girls' Touch Rugby Club	F	12-18 yrs old	A successful '5x60' female club with a range of sporty and non-sporty members.	1 & 2
Billy and Sammy – Young Leaders	M	14 yrs old	Foundation set in school responsible for lending sport equipment to pupils (in the Zone 2) and active members of '5x60' clubs.	1 & 2
The Fencers	M	13& 15 yrs old	Steffan (yr 8) active member of '5x60' fencing, aikido, football and gymnastics. As a result of his fencing experience joined the community fencing club and then successfully went on to represent Wales. Lloyd & Ben (yr 10) – active members of '5x60' fencing and successfully made the link to the community fencing club. Both did no other form of physical activity.	1 & 3
The Primary school Dance Leaders	F	14-16 yrs old	Disengaged pupils in school who had made the link from their Year 10 Dance Leaders Course to become leaders of dance clubs such as '5x60' and primary school clubs.	2 & 3

**Key** M = Male; F = Female. The '5x60' objectives 1) Provide additional physical activity extracurricular opportunities by targeting those currently not involved in school sport, school team sport and / or PE; 2) Recruit, support and retain volunteers i.e., parents, and develop young leaders & 3) Establish partnerships with the community, local clubs and further / higher education colleges (SCW, 2006).

## Tommy

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*Before (the '5x60') I wasn't into sport, I didn't really do PE because everybody picked on me all the time because of my size. And now, since '5x60' I take part much more in the PE lesson, I'm much more into sport and people start to accept the way I am because I work hard<sup>2</sup>.*

Tommy was a 16 year old (year 11) overweight pupil who attended Ysgol Rhyd Y Fro. To some involved in the '5x60' activities Tommy seemed cooperative, polite and in control; but many of his teachers had a different perception. He was a well known character in the school staff room, most staff sighed, 'tutted' or rolled their eyes at the mention of his name. He'd been on the verge of being suspended for his unruly and inappropriate classroom behaviour.

Mr. Jones was the one teacher who got on with Tommy, and was his personal mentor. Tommy liked Mr. Jones – *"He is like my Dad, he is the only teacher I get on with and has time for me... My own Father has got so much respect for Mr. Jones"*. Mr. Jones had spent many lunch breaks and time after school talking with Tommy and his parents attempting to sort out various problems and difficulties. As a result, they had a good working relationship. Mr. Jones described Tommy as: *"a young man who was keen to please, middle to low ability pupil, a day dreamer, had some issues in school, had attended some anger management sessions and found difficulty in making friends"*.

Four themes emerged from Tommy's participation and development in '5x60' clubs: (a) his need to please and to feel important; (b) the social contact with the '5x60' Officer and other pupils; (c) his fascination with fitness and losing weight; and (d) his interest in outdoor activities, particularly with bikes. His experiences of socialisation into physical activity through the '5x60' are enlightening.

Tommy often sought attention and tried to be 'somebody'. His comment to the '5x60' Officer in the school corridor confirmed his willingness to please: "I promise I'll be there this Tuesday, Scott". He liked being associated with '5x60' and enjoyed the social contact with the '5x60' Officer. Mr. Jones observed that '5x60' had given Tommy a vehicle to assert an identity and that the role of the '5x60' Officer had been crucial:

*Scott, the '5x60' Officer, has been great with Tommy, he has given him the time and attention that he has been looking for... by completing the '5x60' mountain bike course Tommy proved to himself, and to others that he could do it and not just talk about it..*

Scott also explained, 'when we went mountain biking, the boys from both schools (on the trip) were very good and they really encouraged him.'

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<sup>2</sup> Here and throughout, all quotations denoted in italics have been translated from Welsh.

Mountain biking had helped to generate a real sense of excitement in Tommy, and it spilled over into other outdoor activities:

*Gorge walking I didn't know what it was when I went. ...Oh my gosh, it was amazing you walk up and over stones, up rivers and jump off waterfalls. Some people were screaming I didn't ... but doing it definitely gave me adrenaline rush and more confidence in myself and with water.*

Superficially, Tommy's experience of '5x60' (four aikido sessions, three mountain bike trips, numerous multi gym sessions and the '5x60' gorge walking session) were insufficient to make health and lifelong participation gains. Yet together, they helped to change his perceptions about physical activity and were much more significant as part of a process than as an end in themselves. "Before, I didn't know of aikido but now I do. It has helped me to know how to defend myself because I get picked on ... now I'm more confident ... the next club I'm going to do is rock climbing."

Tommy's increased confidence was reflected in his motivation for PE and school multi-gym participation. Under the supervision of the '5x60' Officer, he often turned up for an after school multi-gym session. Physical fitness and weight loss were serious concerns for Tommy and began to feature amongst his aspirations after leaving school.

*Recently I've been busy so haven't done a lot of sport as you can see, I've put on two stone but I promised myself after the exams (GCSEs) I'll go out on the bike every day. I will have four months then to get fit before I go to (Further Education) college ... I am going to do Public Services and maybe then Sports Science ... some of the boys I know that have done Sports Science, they lost a couple of stone and put it on as muscle. Sports Science did that for them so I'm thinking I might do that as well. When I'm older I want to be in the army. I do a lot outside school ... I do Army Cadets, we have done the Duke of Edinburgh bronze already, and we do some archery and cycling ... I don't think nobody believed that I am an officer in the army cadets, so I went into Asda in my full uniform so the boys could see.*

Whether Tommy's belief that exercising caused significant weight loss and turned fat into muscle is real or exaggerated, it is important because it represents his perception.

Tommy's story is interesting as it represents much more than a school physical activity experience. He was positive about sport and physical activity, and intended to continue participating in the future. Moreover this rippled out so that his family's socialisation into sport and physical activity was also a result of his '5x60' participation:

*So now (after being to the '5x60' club) I've had Daddy to do it (cycling) as well... Before I didn't socialise with Daddy but now we socialise more together on the bikes. At home the attitude towards sports has changed a lot ... We go out a lot more, we have been out cycling, we cycle down the pub on a bike ... It also helps my girlfriend does '5x60' dance in the neighbouring school, she is into this type of thing and has been mountain biking.*

The '5x60' had certainly been successful in developing Tommy's confidence. He was interested in bikes and had started working at the local bike shop, He had also bought a £1,300 bicycle – evidence of the importance of '5x60' mountain biking within his personal physical activity repertoire.

## Bethany

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In October 2008, 12 year old Bethany, a year 7 pupil with 'Asperger's Syndrome'<sup>3</sup>, had her first '5x60' experience, and by the following April was a proud member of the '5x60' touch rugby team representing her school in the LA tournament. Moving from primary to secondary school and settling with friends had become an ordeal for Bethany. Her Head of Year (HoY) explained: "Bethany has been diagnosed as Asperger's and coming to a comprehensive school was a big thing for her. (Making) friends is also a big thing for her since she doesn't mix well with other pupils and takes some things literally, she can be a bit of a loner."

On several occasions she felt that she had been bullied and referred to the notebook that she had been given in case it (bullying) happened again. One of Bethany's priorities was friendship and she referred to it in a very creative, poetic, way:

Friendship grows like a flower, or like a flower friendship grows.....all I want is friendship. I did have two best friends and lost two best friends, there was Jane but she is my ex-best friend because she hardly bothers with me for some reason. My true friends are Jo and Claire and are very important to me.

The close bond between Bethany and Jo was evident in their conversations about shared interests in art, swimming and English.

Bethany - I enjoy drawing in my spare time and swimming in the PE lessons. My father used to take me to swimming lessons on Sunday, I can swim 800 m.

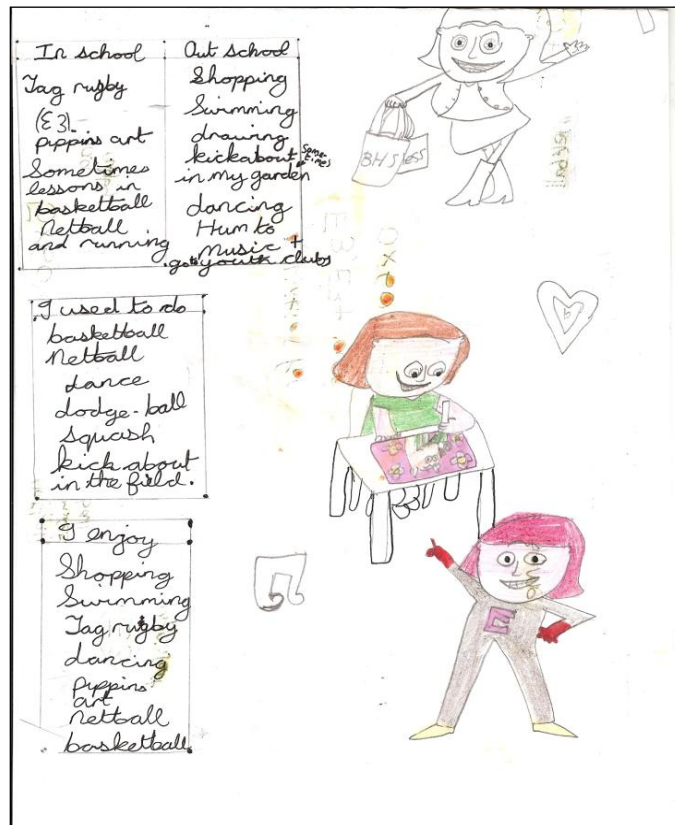
Jo - Yes we both like swimming and drawing. We could be famous artists when we grow up'.

Bethany was also interested in tag rugby, and many other activities as highlighted in her interests, hobbies and activities seen in Figure 1 below.

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<sup>3</sup> 'Asperger's Syndrome' is a developmental disorder, usually of childhood characteristics, by impairment of social interactions and repetitive behaviour patterns.

**Figure 1: Bethany's interests, hobbies and activities**



Despite her personal interest in physical activity she was mainly inactive at home – “I do nothing in the evenings, I do my homework and then play on my *Nintendo* and I eat a lot of fast food because it gives me energy.” As she continued it became apparent that family life was not easy for Bethany:

I’d love to go on a holiday; I have been to Porthcawl once when I was 7. My dream holiday would be Disney (Euro Disney) in Paris but my Mam can’t afford it. If I could afford when I’m older I could take the whole family but I wouldn’t be able to take my mother and father together though they are divorced and my father has got a new wife. I live with my Mam and granddad.

There were other constraints on Bethany’s leisure, “I’ve got to get a taxi home after school so I can’t make netball and basketball club after school”. The opportunity to participate in ‘5x60’ lunchtime activities was therefore vitally important to her.

Held at the beginning of the school year, the inter-form lunchtime basketball tournament was an attempt to encourage all year 7 pupils to be involved in a physical activity environment as players, match organisers, referees, scorers or photographers. Points were awarded for getting the greatest number of students involved. The HoPE remarked about Bethany:

Straight away Bethany got introduced to this environment and I believe that the set-up of the '5x60' inter-form basketball tournament gave her the confidence to join in some other '5x60' activities. I don't think she'd experienced that before and I think it was quite a buzz for her. Looking back in September her mindset was that she wasn't good enough and she couldn't do it.

As a result, Bethany joined the '5x60' touch rugby club and her efforts were rewarded by her selection to represent the school in the LA touch rugby tournament. "It was the first tournament that I had ever been to a tournament in my whole life and the first time I had ever represented the school. I felt nervous but enjoyed it". Her HoY also explained: "Going to '5x60' touch rugby tournament was a big thing for her and it really helped her confidence. I think it was a very positive experience for her to go on the school mini bus and she was mixing with quite popular girls." Her friend Jo also noticed a change in Bethany as a result of her '5x60' touch rugby experience. "I'm over the moon with Bethany going to tag rugby and being picked for the team. It keeps her fit and has helped her confidence".

This new found level of confidence had also been taken into her PE lessons, and Bethany's self esteem had been boosted.

I went to practices for teams in primary school but the favourites always got picked. I don't think it was fair I never got a chance. Once I was meant to be a reserve but I never went to the competition, but with the '5x60' competition this was the first time I had ever been to a tournament... it was amazing.

## The Street Dancers

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*The dance girls do nothing else so it is brilliant that they are involved. Although you might think that 15 committed girls in the club is not that many, but they are 15 girls that don't do any other activity or extracurricular activities (The '5x60' Officer, Rhys).*

The year 7 and 8 '5x60' street dance club took place once a week after school at Ysgol Rhyd Y Fro. The fifteen street dancers who attended on a regular basis were all from the same feeder primary school in West Wales which had a strong commitment to dance. Their HoY commented, '*all the street dancers are friends together, they all live in the same village and went to the same primary school that has a strong reputation of dance*'. Two of the street dance girls were not selected for the disco dance team at primary school and preferred the ethos of '5x60' where all pupils had the opportunity to participate.

The girls in the street dance club enjoyed leisure activities such as going to the cinema, socialising, texting and going on MSN and Facebook. Dancing was their main form of physical activity. Their HoY explained: "*All the girls don't do any other extracurricular activities such as the school choir, musicals or sports teams so it is nice that they have taken an interest to do something.*"

One key feature of the group was the opportunity to socialise with their friends. The girls mentioned that they had made some new friends through dance, but more importantly, they had been able to consolidate the friendships they had and get closer to their existing friends. Naomi explained: "*Two of my friends went first and they said it was good so we went then and we don't want to stop now. It is good because it has given us more reason to meet up and practice in each other's house.*"

Dance was seen by the girls as a 'cool' activity that fitted in well with their leisure lifestyles. Danielle commented, "*Street dance is really good it is quite cool and fashionable, it is like show off dance, we do handstands and things like that.*" The '5x60' dance coach, Nadine, was in her early twenties. She was employed by the LA to provide '5x60' and primary dance sessions and was popular with the girls. Suzy explained, "*She is cool, fashionable and more like a friend. Nadine understands and gives you flexibility because I enjoy wearing our own comfortable clothes to the '5x60' dance club.*" Sally added, "*You can speak your mind and say what is on your mind and if you have got ideas Nadine will let you put them in. She gives you 8 beats to work out your own move. It feels like your dance then.*"

Performing in dance festivals or competitions was an important part of the street dance culture. During November 2008 the year 7 and 8 girls had their first competitive experience of this at the '5x60' LA street dance competition. Jane and Lisa recalled their emotions and feeling at the event.



Jane - *The dance competition was in front of everybody so it gave you confidence. To start off I was nervous but once you are on the stage you enjoyed it.*

Lisa - *Yes it was our first time on stage we were scared but once the music went on we really enjoyed it.*

The group didn't get through to the national finals in Cardiff, but seeing the older year 10 and 11 girls from their school progress certainly gave them a boost and set a target to emulate the following year. Nadine appreciated the importance for then girls of having a clear purpose, "*What I have found is that there has got to be some sort of end product. Everybody needs some sort of focal point.*" As a result, she organised a dance concert at the village hall for the primary and secondary schools at which she worked.

By May 2009 the girls were ready for that concert. They'd had a reason to practise and had 'borrowed' some new moves from their older role models in school. In aid of breast cancer and with a pink and black theme, the girls went shopping for their concert costumes and helped younger pupils with their make-up. It all added to their excitement as the day of the concert approached – they were also very impressed at Nadine's organisation and her stunning pink and black dress for the evening.

For Nadine herself, the most rewarding aspect was to see the girls improve and take part in a professional and dynamic performance. Hayley and Lucy were two friends who were present at the concert and positively commented.

Lucy - *I was very impressed. I didn't realise the girls would have the guts to do that.*

Hayley - *Yes I have seen an increase in the girls' confidence and they are much more bouncy now.*

The parents who attended were pleasantly surprised at the change they detected in their daughters. One of them remarked, "I feel that through the '5x60' dance and concert my daughter has regained her confidence that she lost after primary school."

The concert turned out to be a positive experience for the girls in different ways:

Lucy - *The concert turned out really good because there were so many people there and we didn't think there would be that many people. I enjoyed the concert more than the competition because everybody could appreciate all dances and participants. There was a disco also after the concert which was really good and our parents also joined in.*

## The Girls' Touch Rugby Club

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On a wet Friday afternoon it was an impressive scene to see thirty five girls and young women aged from 11 to 18 on the Rhyd y Fro playground for the '5x60' after school touch rugby club. On other evenings when the weather was better there had been as many as 45 to 50 of them.

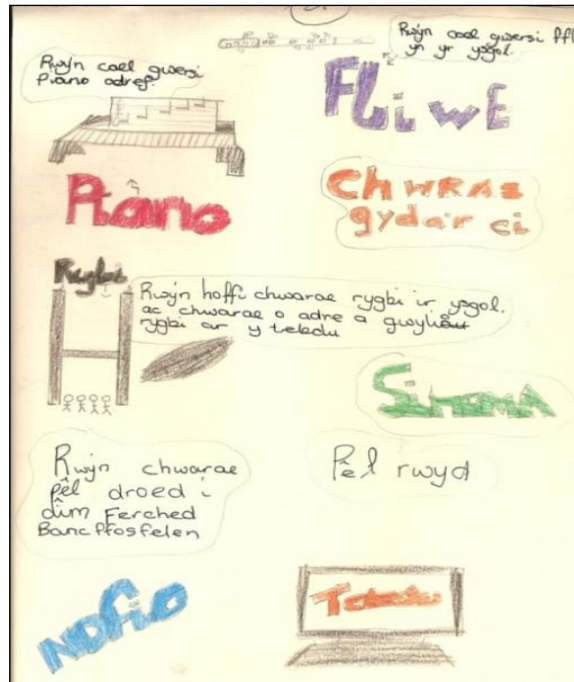
The school had a strong culture of playing and supporting male rugby (union) but there was also an ever-growing interest amongst the girls and young women. The club was also structured to provide numerous competitive opportunities in a fun environment – including the regional touch rugby tournament and Rosslyn Park National Sevens Tournament. By the time some pupils reached year 10, they sensed that there were fewer opportunities for them to stay actively involved in some sports, and as a result the girls' touch rugby club attracted some of the more 'sporty' pupils. The Sixth form male leaders commented:

*For the older girls, even the more sporty ones have less opportunities and practices to attend. They have no teams so it is important to keep them engaged. Having the older girls present also helps keep the younger girls involved and is the key to drop off & drop out of activities.*

Rhys the '5x60' Officer also commented that the younger girls looked up to older girls:

*It is good because in some of the sports when the girls get to year 10 and 11 they are a little bit too cool to do the club but if the girls see that with the touch rugby the older ones go off to compete in Llanelli, Cardiff and even Rosslyn Park in London and stay overnight it tends to keep the girls. For the younger girls the Local Authority girls tag rugby competition is good, it is a competition but the aim is to have fun. Yes, it would be nice to win but as long as the girls are having fun that is the main thing.*

The emphasis on fun in a competitive environment contributed towards the success of the club and provided a target and motivation for the girls. The sixth form leaders noted that the club attracted a lot of non-sporty pupils "some of the girly girls who we wouldn't necessarily anticipate coming actually participate in the touch rugby". The club also attracted some of the pupils more interested in music and drama who also enjoyed participating in physical activity but were too busy (with other practices) to participate in '5x60' or physical activity clubs during lunch times (see below).



**Key:** Ffliwt = flute; Piano = piano; Chwarae gyda'r ci = play with the dog; rygbi = plays touch rugby; sinema = cinema; Nofio = swimming.

**Figure 2: A girls' touch rugby participant's interests, activities and hobbies**

Having a group of sixth formers delivering the activities provided an opportunity for the leaders to work collaboratively and to socialise. They shared the responsibility of the sessions with two leaders in charge of the warm-up and drills whilst others set-up the next activity – and there was plenty of good-natured banter amongst them. The '5x60' Officer valued their contribution: *"I have a good relationship with the leaders where they trust me and I know they will turn up"*.

The sixth form leaders also had a 'laugh' with the pupils who perceived the sixth formers as their role models and friends around school. Sian explained, *"You can talk to the sixth formers better than teachers. I like the sixth formers because they are young"*. In addition to the pupils feeling that they could relate to the leaders, the sixth formers also felt that it was easier to coach girls because they had no preconceptions of rugby and started completely from the beginning and as a result was very rewarding to see them girls develop and play a good standard of rugby. The girls certainly valued the leadership qualities and skills of the sixth formers

Sian - *'The sixth formers help us develop but they are nice all the same time. They are strict but also funny and they help us... they know what we are looking for'*

Carys - *'Yes they are really nice. They know what they are looking for. They are organised, knowledgeable, strict, confident and full of fun'*.

When asked about their leadership skills the sixth formers had, it was clear that they were: able to relate and communicate with the young people, effective organisers, knowledgeable about the activity, able to share their passion for physical activity, and proud of their school. The sixth formers were also provided with an extensive array of leadership opportunities including, for example, preparation for the Eisteddfod, 'buddy' reading with year 7 pupils, '5x60' girls' touch rugby, and the year 7 and 8 variety club.

Attending the rugby leaders' course was an important experience that helped prepare the leaders, and some had also been involved in sports teams, the choir and participating in dance competitions. Together, these experiences gave them confidence in their ability to perform in front of people and to develop into 'well rounded' and mature individuals. For some, leading the '5x60' touch rugby club gave them a taste of teaching and coaching, and stood them in good stead if they chose to pursue either of these further.

## The Primary School Dance Leaders

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Two of the three '5x60' Dance Leaders used to be quite difficult characters in other subjects and they were in detention quite a lot, but going through the Dance Leaders role and looking how they have ended up, they became far more pleasant young adults - really they're quite nice people and you can have a sensible conversation with them (HoPE).

The Dance Leaders' course offered at Valley High School was a vehicle for female pupils who had become disengaged from PE to become involved again in physical activity. One of the PE teachers explained:

The Dance Leaders has been really successful I have had girls in year 9 who were bringing letters regularly but come to year 10 and in Dance Leaders they have been involved in every lesson and been totally motivated. There has been a massive change around in personality and commitment to PE. I think a lot of them didn't like the PE and games side of things but they really enjoyed the dance and step aerobics. I think it really motivates the girls for several reasons: they have ownership of the course and select their dance, the course is more relaxed, and they work towards a qualification and going out into primary schools, which gives them a bit of self importance.

Amy, one of the Dance Leaders, agreed:

We enjoy PE more in year 10 only because of Dance Leaders – we really want to do it. Last year we had to do swimming, hockey in PE and we didn't enjoy it. I didn't even take part and would have a note but when we do dance now in year 10 it is really good you get to listen to your own music and fetch your *ipod* in, and make your own dance that suits you best. We are excited because we are having our own Dance Leader's tops. We will also be wearing them to teach dance in the primary school.

Most of the Dance Leaders were attracted to dance because it fitted well with their general lifestyle priorities – fashion, make-up, socialising, MSN and Facebook (see figure 3 below).



**Figure 3: Georgina's interests, hobbies and activities**

The same PE teacher described how the three Dance leaders re-engaged with physical activity.

Three girls in particular were totally disengaged in PE in year 9 they didn't take part and we had letter after letter. The one girl, Georgina, was initially on Sport Leaders course and came to me to see if she could swap to Dance Leaders and she has had a massive positive effect on the group. Amy was another one who was disengaged in PE but has made up an excellent cheerleading style dance and she is actually going out to a primary school delivering now. Claire was totally disengaged in school, so the school put her on a hair dressing course and sorted out for her to come to school for Maths, English, Science and Dance Leaders and she even delivers dance in the primary school now which is super.

Claire confirmed how just having Dance Leaders on her timetable helped turn around her school attendance.

I don't come to school on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. I'm on work placement in the beauty shop down the village because I didn't like school so I stopped coming. I had a meeting then with the welfare officer and my father came into school for a meeting. They sorted out if I came to school for two days, the days I have got Dance Leaders in PE and also English, Maths, Science and Public Services I would have a work placement of the other days. I feel better now for coming to school just two days a week.

However, not all Dance Leaders had disengaged from PE. Some pupils, like Annabelle, were conscientious students who excelled at dance and had a positive effect on the other girls: "I did the individual dance in Eisteddfod every year and other dance competitions. When I performed in the

show it helped show other girls not to be scared because it is confidence and that, I know it helped a lot of the girls with their confidence.”

Having completed her Dance Leaders course Annabelle and her friend (both from year 11) delivered dance at the local primary school. The end product of their work was a performance by the pupils at the LA dance celebration festival:

Dancing is something I love and I was inspired to do more of it and because I enjoyed it so much I wanted to help other people know about it. I also love children so going in and leading dance at the primary school was really good. Heather and I prepared them for the LA dance festival. The show went very well a lot of people liked it and I felt proud watching them. All the children really enjoyed it which was rewarding and made me feel good.

Sarah, Emily and Kelly were three year 11 girls who made the transition from the Dance Leaders course to lead a ‘5x60’ dance club. James, the ‘5x60’ Officer, recalled:

Pretty much they come up to me and said we would like to take the ‘5x60’ dance. I went to watch them do one or two shows – they were fantastic really and I thought straight away that there was a bit of ‘wow’ factor there for the young girls now who are going to come along now to these sessions. You know they were street wise, they were cool and all those things that those young girls want to aspire to really. They’re very good dancers and have won a lot of competitions.

Although these girls were passionate about dancing it wasn’t until year 9 when they were selected to be part of the dance for the school Eisteddfod that their interest for dance was rekindled from primary school. They then progressed to represent the school in the LA dance festival, joined a freestyle external dance club and recently won the regional freestyle dance competition. As a result they went on to represent the region in the national final. These girls weren’t particularly academic pupils and were thought to be ‘difficult’ by some members of staff. Emily, for example, didn’t get on well with her form teacher and refused to follow any of her instructions.

Yet through the ‘5x60’ dance club they had shown that they could be well behaved and reliable young people. The HoPE remarked that,

Two of the three ‘5x60’ Dance Leaders used to be quite difficult characters in other subjects and they were in detention quite a lot, but going through the Dance Leaders role and looking how they have ended up, they became far more pleasant young adults really they’re quite nice people and you can have a sensible conversation with them. They also appreciate what’s being done for them. In year 11 they have wanted to achieve and do a full course GCSE which probably in year 9 they probably wouldn’t have opted for.

Two out of the three were planning on returning to school to do BTEC PE and A levels which was an unlikely scenario two years previously.

Sarah, Emily and Kelly had benefited from leading the '5x60' club in different ways. They had official Dance Leaders kit that helped them to assert their identities. The '5x60' Officer explained, "it is just chipping away at the Dance Leaders to try and make it as cool as possible with '5x60' leader hoodies and things like that. It gives them a bit of importance in that people can see that she has a pink top on and so she is a '5x60' Dance Leader."

They had become more confident: "I was quite shy, only now since we have taken Dance Leaders we've been more confident" (Claire). Their PE teacher had noticed this too: "It has given the girls confidence, it is nice to see some of them since they are not the best behaved girls around school but when their up in the dance studio they're like different people."

Georgina's recollections encapsulated how the girls themselves were aware of how they had changed.

I didn't use to have any respect but doing Dance Leaders helped me develop respect for people. When leading you have somebody else's point of view and you see things from a teacher's point of view. I used to be a bit naughty but now before I start ignoring teachers' I think I what I felt like teaching in front of the class and I didn't like it.

They had also developed some empathy for the difficulties encountered by younger dancers, as well as some children with disabilities. "We had to do easy moves when teaching year 7 and it was good getting experience working with disabled children because we started to understand how hard it was for them" (Sarah).



## Sammy and Billy

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Sammy and Billy were two 14 year old boys who attended Valley High School. They were good friends and considered as something of a double act around school, Sammy normally took the lead and Billy followed. As indicated in the short dialogue below, they didn't like school work that involved writing.

Sammy – “Does this (chat about ‘5x60’ experience) involve writing because we don't like writing?”

AL – “No boys, don't worry.”

Billy – “Yes can it take the whole lesson?”

Both had difficulty concentrating and Sammy was dyslexic:

Billy – “We don't like writing... I thought why do writing for a GCSE option next year when there are other options like Prince's Trust course where you don't have to write.”

Sammy – “Yes so we are doing the Prince's Trust course... In some classes we have to copy this amount of writing (referring to about two sides of A5 paper) and we don't have much time to do it. Some of us have dyslexia and we are really slow, we need more time.”

Billy – “Yes I try and do it but when I sit down and write I need the toilet and then I can't concentrate for that long and every time I concentrate on writing I seem to need the toilet. We are the foundation class and I think some of the teachers forget. Some teachers stay cool with our class if somebody swears accidentally and they just remind them. They (the class) can't help it as the foundation class since it is the way we are brought up.”

Sammy and Billy both agreed that ‘the way they had been brought up’ meant that inappropriate language was integrated into everyday language at home without necessarily intending to cause offence.

When asked about their behaviour in lessons, Sammy agreed with Billy, “we are good in lessons but it all depends on what teacher and subject it is”. This was an improvement for Sammy who had a history of being disruptive.

Sammy and Billy's common interests included a love of sport (though not necessarily in the same activities) and the opportunity to participate in the ‘5x60’ programme and talk to the Officer. Sammy

was sportier than Billy and especially enjoyed the '5x60' Champions League football tournament<sup>4</sup>. He was also a proud member of the '5x60' water polo and mountain biking club. He explained what each of these meant to him,

'5x60' Champions League football – it's good because you are communicating with other people who you haven't played before. With water polo I have got to know more people and learnt how to tread water better, to throw a ball with one hand and to jump up high in the water the only thing is you have to learn to swim without goggles, so that is me. I enjoy being in goals because I can't swim without goggles. I love mountain biking because it is really muddy, fun, enjoyable, challenging and an opportunity to meet new friends. I'm good going up the hill and it is such a thrill coming down the mountain.

Both boys enthusiastically recalled amusing '5x60' stories, not least episodes associated with mountain biking. In one of their discussions Sammy commented, "One time when we were mountain biking I looked back and all I saw was Billy flying through the sky." Billy replied "oh gosh, yes, I hit the jump and just went woohh and went doosh and had a bit of a bruise. But I rolled about laughing".

Billy also participated in the '5x60' Champions League football final and occasionally participated in the '5x60' water polo club but wasn't a regular participant like Sammy. "I have been to water polo but find it hard because I can't swim without goggles. I can't swim perfect so it's difficult."

Except for canoeing one evening a week Billy did no other physical activity outside school. He occasionally went to the youth club, watched TV and admitted to being a bit of a PC 'nerd' explaining, "The times I love is up at my friend's house having a party and having a drink."

However, for both boys the most important aspect of school life was their PE lessons and their involvement with '5x60'. Both boys enjoyed a chat and social contact with the '5x60' Officer, and for Billy this was probably his main reason for participation. He also enjoyed making posters advertising '5x60'. Furthermore, when the boys learnt that the year 11 girls were leaving they suggested to the '5x60' Officer and HoPE that they could deal with the administration of some of the '5x60' clubs – opening up the locker, lending equipment and filling in the register on a daily basis. The boys were given the opportunity (a major responsibility for year 9 pupils) and grasped it with both hands.

Some pupils who borrowed equipment from the store were from the Special Educational Needs Unit and this required change in attitude from Sammy and Billy:

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<sup>4</sup> The 'Champions League' tournament at Valley High School was a '5x60' lunch time football 5 a side tournament. Pupils normally entered a group of friends as a team from the Champions league.

Billy – When we were in year 7 we used to make fun of the unit and we didn't care but since they have come into the store and get equipment like bean bags or hula hoops, I have seen loads of things happen like kids falling and crying and I feel sorry for them. One of them fell yesterday and he was crying his eyes out so we took him to the teacher. I can't tease or make fun of people because of their speech because I have a lisp and people make fun of me.

Sammy – And I got difficulties in a different way I'm dyslexic so I can't make fun of people either and it is important that we help them.

Both boys had grown up in several ways. The HoPE was very clear, "They are far more responsible now and they're far more caring especially with the special needs students, they make sure that those students are cared for and looked after". James, the '5x60' Officer, agreed, saying,

I'd like to think that the programme has helped them a little bit. I can honestly say that their behaviour has never been an issue in anything that I've put on. I've only seen these boys in a positive way really so when I got told about Sammy pushing a chair at a teacher last year I couldn't believe it really. Over the holidays we had a trip up to Arsenal and Sammy's behaviour was impeccable. He was very helpful and he actually won an Arsenal shirt for his good behaviour and being a model pupil.

Others had noticed the improvement in their behaviour, especially the HoPE, who was clear that the '5x60' had made an important contribution:

Through the skills they've acquired within the '5x60' programme then that's made them realise how they should be behaving and its made them far better and more responsible really so that's been a big success story. Definitely from a behaviour point of view especially. Sammy, because he's a bit of a live wire, he manages his behaviour much better now just on the area of management alone, he's not being referred. Some other staff have started to see that now. Speaking to their English teacher, she's seen a big improvement in Sammy's concentration level, before he found it difficult to sit still for anything longer than five minutes but he's far more engaged now. Billy is a different type of person, he's far softer but he did lack confidence but now he's become quite independent and confident.

This enhanced confidence had been recognised by Sammy, 'I feel more confident, I talk more in class to the teachers and I have more confidence with my friends'. Likewise, was the same and had also noted an improvement in his physical condition:

I thought I had asthma before coming to secondary school because every time I ran from my house to the park, which is only a short distance, I would be panting and it would get on my nerves and I was sure I had asthma but I never. Since I came into this school, I have been doing all the activities and '5x60' I am fitter and more confident.

As a result, the boys were congratulated by their HoY and the PE staff for their efforts and responsible attitude and were rewarded with a blue '5x60' hooded sweatshirt with their names on and their pictures up on the school's plasma screen. They wore their tops proudly around school and

enjoyed the praise associated with this recognition. Sammy described the way his self-esteem had been improved. “Miss Jones has told us that we are doing a really good job and that makes us feel really good”. Importantly, he also explained approval that he received from his father:

My dad thinks it is really good that I’m doing it. He said it is really important because he had problems dyslexia like me. My Dad never went to school because he couldn’t do the work and everybody else was working and then he got picked on. Yes he is really pleased because he never did anything like that.

## The Fencers

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*"I started in the '5x60' school fencing club, then moved on to the local club before representing the Welsh district in fencing" (Steffan).*

*"I wanted to do some sort of sport to impress Mr. Jones our PE teacher so I started '5x60' fencing. I like rugby and sometimes I will play it in the yard but I don't think I am good enough and I don't get much of the ball" (Ben).*

*"I've got no interest in rugby or sport really, but I went to the '5x60' fencing because I'm interested in history and the historical link with fencing" (Lloyd).*

Steffan (aged 13), Ben and Lloyd (both aged 15) attend Ysgol Rhyd y Fro and made the transition from the school's '5x60' fencing programme to their community club. Lloyd and Ben were from the same rural area and were good friends. Prior to the '5x60' initiative they were fairly inactive except for occasional bike rides. Lloyd studied history, music and geography as GCSE subject options; he played the trombone and enjoyed reading and watching the TV. He was also dyspraxic<sup>5</sup>. Ben, on the other hand, was more outgoing and mixed well with all types of pupils. He studied geography, business and information technology as GCSE subject options and enjoyed computer games and watching TV.

Steffan lived in a small town, was more physically active and took part in kayaking, football and kick-boxing prior to the '5x60' initiative. In 2008 he was the recipient of the school's Mr. '5x60' award for attending the greatest number of '5x60' clubs - including fencing, aikido, football and gymnastics. He proudly wore his *Mr 5x60* sweatshirt around the school and to the '5x60' clubs he attended.

Members of the PE department referred to Steffan as someone who did his best, tried everything, but never quite made it into the school's sport teams. His HoY confirmed this and added some additional background:

*Steffan tries everything from extracurricular sports, to '5x60' activities and the school show, it is really good he has found something with the '5x60' that he is good at. He also tries very hard in lessons and is in the middle sets. He is good orally but finds written work more difficult.*

But what was it that attracted these three youngsters (as well as others) to the '5x60' fencing club?

Rhys, the '5x60' Officer, had noted that the club attracted different type of young people: *"I have noticed that some of the pupils participating are the loners perhaps they haven't got many friends in*

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<sup>5</sup> Dyspraxia is a neurological disorder of motor coordination associated with difficulty in thinking out, planning and or executing movements or tasks.

*school. The fencing group has their own little clique now. It is the only thing that most of them do in school."*

All three males were attracted to fencing because they thought it was a 'cool' activity that they had seen on TV, in films and in the Olympics. From a young age Steffan had liked the idea of fighting with swords so he was keen to take up the opportunity provided by '5x60'. *"I started fencing from a taster session (in school) in year 7 and then went to the '5x60' club in school and then progressed to the local club because I really enjoyed it."*

Ben was keen to attend to be part of a sports club *"I wanted to do some sort of sport to impress Mr. Jones our PE teacher. I like rugby and sometimes I will play it in the yard but I don't think I am good enough and I don't get much of the ball."* Ben was also partially responsible for persuading Lloyd to join; but Lloyd also had an interest in fencing inspired by his fascination with history: *"With fencing, if it is linked to history or something, then for me that is interesting."*

Within two months of beginning the school club Steffan was captivated and as a result decided to join the local exit route community club run by the '5x60' coach.

*I started in the '5x60' school fencing club, then moved on to the local club. When I went to the local club I was nervous because in school I would fight against people I'd know but in the club there were a lot of people I didn't know and they were really good but after a few weeks I was in the club then and everybody knew everybody, I have made new friends, and I improved in the skill.*

Lloyd and Ben made the school-club link a little later when the fencing club temporarily stopped at the school to make space for the summer exam desks. Making this link required a big commitment from the boys and their parents who lived a forty minute drive away from the club. This was even more significant considering that the pair had never taken part in any school or community club previously. Lloyd described his initial impression when walking into the club: *"I thought it would be hard to be like them because they were really good the outfit are also exciting you have to wear an under jacket and then a big jacket and mask as well and special gloves because if you don't wear that the sword might go through the skin."*

When asked how they thought they'd benefited from the '5x60' activity and community club experience all three boys commented on an improvement in their confidence. Ben was happy that he was involved and part of a sports team and club which he hoped had impressed his PE teacher. Lloyd felt he'd developed *"More hand eye co-ordination because you have to think about it and I think it has made me develop my mental skills."* Whilst Steffan commented, *"I have seen I've got*

*more confidence and friends. Before I was nervous to try anything new but now I just go and try anything new, I am more confident talking to people.” One of Steffan’s friends confirmed, “Since he’s been fencing Steffan’s confidence has improved he speaks and answers more questions in the classroom.”*

Steffan specialised in the ‘epee’ and his sporting career made rapid and inspiring progress:

*I was very nervous for my first ever tournament the Welsh regions. I then went on to represent the Welsh regions in the British competition and that was really big, it was in England somewhere. With all the categories there were 1,000 competitors and loads of judges. I really liked the atmosphere it was exciting.*

His parents were understandably pleased and proud of his achievements. They bought a sword for his birthday and what had started as a ‘5x60’ fun club had now become a ‘serious commitment’ involving representative honours.

## Summary

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In summary, these case studies have highlighted many positive features of the '5x60' programme. This aim of this initiative is to reach out and attract young people to engage in sport and physical activity, many of whom had become disenfranchised from typical PE activities. There are five important key messages: (i) the impact of previous / primary school experience; (ii) the nature of the '5x60' experience and activities; (iii) the social aspect of participation; (iv) the influence of peer leaders; and (v) the importance of competitions and festivals.

Firstly, primary school experience played an important role in establishing an interest and nurturing the habit of participating in physical activity. Although negative primary school experiences did not automatically lead to non-participation, officers should develop positive '5x60' transition experiences (from primary to secondary) particularly targeting those less likely to participate.

Secondly, the '5x60' activities and clubs resonated well with the young people's leisure lifestyles and behaviours, such as the opportunity to assert independence, the latest fashions and opportunity for choice (Green, 2002; Roberts, 1997; Smith *et al.*, 2009). The young people relished the element of choice and ownership provided by the exciting and different activities like fencing, outdoor activities, gorge walking, mountain biking. However, there were clear gender differences, for example, street dance and Dance Leaders were extremely popular and appealed to many females because the activity related to femininity associated with their lifestyles more generally (Scraton, 1992; Foster *et al.*, 2005). Consequently, an awareness of the different lifestyles between the sexes is essential to engage all young people in physical activity initiatives.

Thirdly, the narratives demonstrated that the social process and social interaction between the officer / leader and young people along with the participants' need to please others (i.e., teachers, officers and peers) was paramount for participation. An implication from this is that initiatives should promote the development of social interaction and rapport between the adult facilitators and the young people.

Fourthly, some pupils (including some hard to reach pupils) benefited from leadership opportunities to develop skills such as responsibility, independence, self-confidence and good communication. Peer leaders empathised well with the young people, acted as role models and as a result were important drivers and motivation for participation. Therefore, suitable and credible leaders are important in delivering physical activity projects and initiatives (Martinek & Hellinson, 1997; Sandford *et al.*, 2008).



Finally, the experience of introducing a club atmosphere created other spin offs including competitions and festivals. Although the emphasis was on social engagement, these experiences were extremely valuable to provide opportunities for young people to represent their school. An implication is therefore that initiatives should provide adequate opportunities for competitions and / or festivals for all young people.

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