



SHIFT

CASE STUDY

—
IMPROVING YOUNG WOMEN'S
HOLISTIC WELLBEING THROUGH
CO-DESIGN AND EMPOWERMENT.

SHIFT



For so long we've been stuck on this idea that we need to educate to empower, that imparting knowledge and words will be the key to creating behaviour change. If young women know the benefits of physical activity they'll participate right? Wrong. It is through co-design and providing opportunities to engage, creating feelings of connectedness and fun which ignite the spark for behaviour change."

- FRAN MCEWEN, SHIFT FOUNDER (AND NOW YOUNG PEOPLE STRATEGIC LEAD AT SPORT NZ)

Operating in the Wellington region since 2016, Shift designs and delivers programmes and services to improve the wellbeing of young women aged 12 to 20 years.

It operates under the umbrella of the Shift Foundation and achieves its goals by:

- increasing awareness of wellbeing through education and role modelling
- reducing barriers to participation by providing fun, social, low cost physical activity and sport opportunities, and administering financial support
- empowering young women by inspiring and growing leaders to create change in their own communities.

Shift now delivers its physical activity, wellbeing and leadership programmes to 23 secondary schools across the region. It also runs courses outside of school hours and during weekends and holidays.

In 2017, the programme actively engaged with more than 3000 young women and had an even greater reach through its online presence, school-based wellbeing days and social media channels.

GETTING STARTED



It was clear that the current approach of using sport to increase participation in physical activity was not addressing the complex barriers faced by inactive young women, and that new approaches needed to be taken to address this audience and their needs."¹

- FRAN MCEWEN, SHIFT FOUNDER

Sport New Zealand's Young People's Survey (2011) identified that 16.9 per cent of 15 – 18 year-old New Zealand women do not regularly take part in physical activity and, by Year 13, almost half of girls (47 per cent) are spending no time in organised sport.

Further research was conducted in 2014, to better understand the causes of this drop in participation. The Young Women's Views and Experiences of Sport research showed that, although the physical, social, economic and mental benefits of participation in sport are well documented, sport can be perceived as irrelevant by young women who do not consider themselves as "sporty".



THE INITIATIVE



To this day, we don't do anything that the young women aren't telling us they need. They are the train drivers of this programme and we just stay one step ahead building the tracks."

– CHLOE BRYAN, SHIFT NATIONAL OPERATIONS MANAGER

Leading a small team, Shift founder Fran McEwen initially undertook a project, funded by Sport Wellington Kiwisport and supported by Wellington City Council, looking into the importance of teenage girls engaging in physical activity to improve wellbeing outcomes.

Further insight for the youth-based project came from working with Lifehack (a Prime Minister's youth mental health project), and included gaining an understanding of the importance of collaboration, a holistic approach and co-design.

A human-centred framework

To help better understand the needs and barriers to physical activity for young women, the team took an inclusive approach – going directly to the target audience to see what they wanted, before formatting their plan of attack.

They liaised with students from four Wellington City schools and gathered insights through:

- one-on-one interviews
- group reflection sessions
- surveys
- a literature review.

From these insights, the team formulated their thinking and designed programmes to deliver what the young women told them they wanted.

Ongoing participant feedback is central to Shift's success. This feedback is used to evaluate and evolve programmes or activities to best suit the needs of young women.

Programmes

Shift runs a range of programmes, including the following.

- **Just Shift It:** which provides young women with a range of physical activity opportunities and a way to connect with others. This runs in schools and in the community. To remove identified cost barriers, activities are either free or at a maximum cost of \$5.00.
- **LeadHERship:** which offers senior and junior tailored programmes that are both school- and non-school-based leadership mentoring, with a focus on physical activity and wellbeing.
- **EmpowHER:** which gives a committee of young women aged 15 to 20 the opportunity to create and run an annual hands-on conference for other young women to grow their confidence as wellbeing leaders in their communities.

Shift firmly believes in collective impact. It often partners with other like-minded youth-oriented organisations and helps them introduce their support services to schools and the wider community.

Reaching the target audience

While the programme's target audience is secondary school students (12–20 years of age), to bridge any gaps, they include those in their last year at intermediate school or first year at university.

To effectively reach this audience, the team (all of whom have experience in youth development) works hard to build relationships with school staff, demonstrating the gaps the Shift programme can help fill and support it can offer.

IMPORTANT SUCCESS FACTORS



The first day I came to Shift was really memorable. Everyone was so friendly. There were so many girls from different years from the school all coming together having fun, just doing something together.”¹

– 14-YEAR-OLD WOMAN

Right from the very beginning ... we talked about collective impact. No one can do it alone, we all have different skill-sets and we all bring things to the table and we need to be working together to share what we know to collectively improve young women’s wellbeing.”¹

– FRAN MCEWEN, SHIFT FOUNDER

The young women we spoke to very quickly let us know that it couldn’t be a solely physical activity-focused project... We had to look at the young women’s wider wellbeing sphere and take a holistic approach.”

– CHLOE BRYAN, SHIFT NATIONAL OPERATIONS MANAGER

Put your target audience at the centre of everything you do

- Recognise that the members in your target audience are experts in their own needs. Better outcomes result when you co-design opportunities alongside them and continue to check that their needs are being met.
- Build whanaungatanga (close relationships) with your audience and provide safe spaces before asking them to share their ideas and participate; it is equally important to recognise that this takes time.

Be agile and prepared to change

- It is important to listen and be agile and quick to respond.
- Due to the fast-paced, ever-changing world in which young women live, be prepared to adapt and build on insights from feedback and evaluation forms.

Build strong partnership

- Build meaningful connections with a network of other like-minded organisations to support better outcomes and sustainability.
- Understand the school environment and the pressures staff are under, and tangibly show how you can help.

Recognise that sport is only one way to improve wellbeing

- Nothing happens in isolation; a wide range of influences affect wellbeing or prevent participation at different times in a young person’s life. Recognise these influences and be holistic in your approach.

People power

- You need to find the right people to put in a room to engage your target audience and create a safe space, otherwise you lose your audience.
- Empower staff because they are the role models for, and connectors with, your target audience.

OUTCOMES



I only started playing hockey this year. I’ve wanted to play before, but I’ve always been really shy about being on sports teams because I know that I’m not good at sport. But then, going to the Shift things and feeling accepted and it was OK if you weren’t good at it, as long as you gave it a go, I was like, well, I’ll try hockey. And it suited me really well.”¹

– 16-YEAR-OLD WOMAN

In just under two years, Shift’s reach has grown rapidly, from initially making contact with four secondary schools in Wellington City to now working actively with 23 secondary schools from the greater Wellington region.

In the past year, Shift has actively engaged with more than 4000 young women, many of whom have not been involved in traditional sport or recreation since primary school. Plus, via its online presence and social media channels, it reached an even wider audience, encouraging and empowering young women to take part in movement activities. The programme was the winner of the Community Impact Award in the NZ Sport and Recreation Awards in 2018.

More importantly than the number of schools or young women reached is the impact Shift has had on young women’s lives. Shift allows the space for social connectedness to flourish, body confidence and self-belief to grow, opportunities to move and laugh – all of which lead to increased wellbeing and engagement in community sport.



¹ The Shift Foundation (2017). Shift the Trend: A case study of initiatives aimed at getting young Wellington women moving. Retrieved 10 April 2018 from <https://drive.google.com/file/d/19QG9Nvz7oV5qHRvNz4QRFOxSBJHWgsQ/view>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sport NZ would like to express special thanks to the organisations that developed these initiatives, for their willingness to share their stories, and for supporting more communities to benefit from sport and active recreation in Aotearoa.

The *shift* Foundation