



# FREE TO DANCE



**Free to Dance 2008-2011  
End of Programme Review  
By Catch the Light**

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## Why YDance and Free to Dance?

YDance : Scottish Youth Dance (YDance) was funded by NHS Health Scotland to run Free to Dance (F2D) is an initiative with a vision to:

*Enable teenage girls (13-19) to become more physically active and to realise their potential as individuals through a positive dance experience.*

F2D ran in North/South/East Ayrshire, Orkney and Glasgow from September 2008 to August 2011. It is intended to support the Scottish Government<sup>1</sup> to achieve the following targets by 2022:

- *80% of all children will have met the minimum recommended levels of physical activity*
- *Focus on getting inactive people to be active, and on preventing people from reducing the amount of activity they do*

This is a summary report on the impact the national pilot made.

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<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Government, 2009, National Physical Activity Strategy, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/Introduction>

## Why is F2D needed?

A key concern for improving health in Scotland is that the numbers of those meeting recommended levels of physical activity reduce dramatically with age. Key secondary research findings are as follows:

- **Young people identified as doing less than 5 hours physical activity per week are not meeting minimum recommended levels** and girls in this category are the primary target group for the F2D programme.
- The 2008/9 Scottish Health Survey shows that **79% of 8-10 year old girls meet recommended weekly physical activity levels, however this falls to 41% once girls reach the ages of 13-15** [Scottish Health Survey -2008/9<sup>2</sup>]
- **There is a lesser rate of decline for dance as 60% of girls took part in dance at least once a week in P7 declining to 53% by S4** (Inchley et al 2008<sup>3</sup>).
- **Almost half of primary school-age girls perceive themselves as 'very healthy' however less than one fifth feel the same way in secondary school and one tenth aged 16 to 21**(Girlguiding UK 2011<sup>4</sup>).
- **Increased competitiveness in sport in later years influenced many girls to drop-out especially among girls who don't think they are good at sport. Those who view sport in school as too competitive tend only to participate because it is compulsory rather than choosing to take part. Only one in four girls believe 'it's cool' to be sporty and find team sports especially male dominated** (Sportscotland 2006).
- **Four out of five girls prefer to have a friend with them when doing physical activity.**
- **Girls from ethnic minorities, those with disabilities and those from families with lower income and parental education all report even lower levels of participation in physical activities than their female as well as male counterparts.**

<sup>2</sup> The Scottish Government (September 2010) 'Scottish Health Survey 2009 – Volume1: Main Report' [Web: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/09/23154223/0> ]

<sup>3</sup> Inchley, J; Kirby, J Curry, C 2008 'Physical activity among adolescents in Scotland: final report of the PASS Study', Child and Adolescent Health Research Unit, The University of Edinburgh [http://www.education.ed.ac.uk/cahru/publications/reports\\_downloads/PASS\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.education.ed.ac.uk/cahru/publications/reports_downloads/PASS_Final_Report.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Girlguiding UK (2011) Girls Attitude Survey 2011 Published by Girlguiding UK. © The Guide Association 2011 [Web: [http://girlsattitudes.girlguiding.org.uk/2010\\_survey.aspx](http://girlsattitudes.girlguiding.org.uk/2010_survey.aspx) ]

## What was evaluated?

The evaluation was formative providing quarterly and annual reports throughout the project. The evaluation was conducted independently by Catch the Light<sup>5</sup>. The target groups are categorised as *primary* and *secondary* target groups.

**Primary Target Group – Physically inactive young people** – those not reaching the weekly recommended physical activity (RPA) levels of five hours or more per week.

### Secondary Target Group – Hard-to-reach young people

For the purpose of this programme hard-to-reach groups of young people can be any group which experiences particular barriers to taking part in dance or physical activities.

There were three main types of programme delivery. These were:

**Schools programme:** introductory sessions marketed in schools which lead onto after school sessions, community-based sessions or a rolling programme in Special Educational Needs schools.

**Community programme:** working in partnership with a wide range of community-based organisations from the statutory and voluntary sector to offer a range of introductory sessions and tailored follow-up programmes according to needs and demands.

**Training & additional activities:** a series of leadership courses, performances, events and mentoring opportunities to build the skills and experience of participants, support workers/teachers and YDance staff and to reflect on and improve practice.

Stakeholder groups identified in the evaluation are listed below:

- **(G)** Girls participating in the programme;
- **(P)** Partner organisations/Support Workers that support the delivery of Free to Dance in their area; and
- **(Y)** The Free to Dance team of Dance Workers delivering dance programmes and instruction in each area with the support of YDance as the organisation responsible for providing Free to Dance.

Specific outcomes were tailored to each stakeholder group in a logic model (see appendix).

<sup>5</sup> See [www.catchthelight.org.uk](http://www.catchthelight.org.uk)

## What was delivered?

The following outputs were delivered:

<p>No of Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Almost 1,000 groups ran in total</b></li> <li>• 305 in 2010-11</li> <li>• 296 in 2009-10</li> <li>• 325 in 2008-9</li> </ul>
<p>No of Sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>More than 5,500 sessions were delivered</b></li> <li>• 1830 sessions in 2010-11</li> <li>• 1971 sessions in 2009-10</li> <li>• 1869 sessions in 2008-9</li> </ul>
<p>No of participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2995 participants have registered</b> since F2D began.</li> <li>• 593 during 2010-11</li> <li>• 753 during 2009-10</li> <li>• 1649 during 2008-9</li> </ul>
<p>Target Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>On average 45% of new participants are in the primary target group.</b> (Range: 42% to 55% ).</li> <li>• <b>57% fall within the secondary 'hard to reach' target group</b> (Range 49% to 75%)</li> <li>• 69% are aged 13-16.</li> <li>• 22% have never taken part in dance sessions before.</li> </ul>
<p>Attendances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The highest number of participants attending in one week was 802.</b></li> <li>• On average 474 girls attended weekly.</li> <li>• There are an average of 10 to 12 girls per group each week.</li> </ul>
<p>Training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 74 girls completed the Award in Dance Leadership (ADL).</li> <li>• 40 of those newly trained leaders went on to receive further mentoring support in exchange for leading dance sessions in their school or community.</li> <li>• 94 partners were trained on the benefits of supporting dance sessions and activities with girls.</li> </ul>

## What did we learn about the primary target group?

Key observations were made when comparing girls not doing five hours or more physical activity in the week prior to joining F2D, with those meeting recommended physical activity levels (RPA), as follows:

- On average those within the primary target group undertook an average of two hours 50 minutes physical activity in the week prior to joining Free to Dance. Whereas those meeting RPA levels undertook an average of 7 hours 34 minutes – 5 hours difference.
- Those within the primary target group are 14% more likely to live in an area of disadvantage and 9% more likely to have a social worker or key worker.
- Girls within the primary target are more likely to prefer activities where they can have fun with their friends than girls that meet RPA levels.
- The primary target group are less likely to find the statement 'I'm good at physical activity' as true for them and are less likely to 'like being competitive' as those meeting RPA levels.
- Those in the primary target group were on average more likely to 'prefer physical activities that are just for girls' than those meeting RPA levels.
- Levels of mental wellbeing are lower among the primary target group when they join Free to Dance. They achieve an overall average WEMWBS<sup>6</sup> score of 49.82 which is three points less than the WEMWBS score of 52.82 for those meeting RPA levels when they first join Free to Dance.

Hence the baseline is lower for girls not meeting RPA levels when they join, and their attitudes and motivations for taking part are different. Consideration of this is required when reviewing the results.

<sup>6</sup> WEMWBS (Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well Being Scale) see further information on page 25 and also Scottish Government (2011) 'Long-Term Monitoring of Health Inequalities: Part 4' [Web: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/10/21133633/4> ]

## What progress has been made on the intended outcomes?

This summary focuses on the longer term outcomes. Each is listed according to its assigned colour and code in the logic model.

### Outcomes for Girls

#### **G9- More girls achieve and maintain the RPA levels**

By the end of March 2011 more than two thirds (68.2%) of the sample group are meeting RPA levels - an increase of 13% on the baseline figure of 55% of participants meeting RPA levels when they join Free to Dance.

#### **G10 – More commitment and desire to continue with dance or other physical activities beyond the programme**

F2D has increased the number of participants sustaining their involvement for 1 year or more from less than 5% at the end of the first year to 60% by the end of year three.

#### **G11 – Evidence of physical, social and mental health benefits that may be sustained in future life**

More than three quarters (76%) noted a big improvement in their ability to perform. More than two-thirds (70%) observed a big improvement in their ability to enjoy physical activity more. Slightly fewer (68%) believe they made a big improvement in learning new dance skills and being better at working in a team (64%). A big improvement in confidence was noted by more than half (58%) of sample group respondents in March 2011. Since F2D began there is an overall positive improvement in the WEMWBS from 51.05 to 53.28 though there are some fluctuations over time and across areas.

#### **G12- Participants can demonstrate skills being transferred to other contexts such as learning or employment opportunities**

Examples emerged where being involved in Free to Dance can lead to connections with wider opportunities and experiences in the home, work, education and the community. As a specialist youth dance provider YDance offers opportunities to join additional activities that are not part of the Free to Dance programme. Examples include more advanced and intensive training sessions, the Elements and Project Y [see below<sup>7</sup>] summer schools and exchange trips. Similarly there are a small but growing number of employment or voluntary work opportunities filled by participants in partner organisations, in YDance or in other NHS Health Scotland funded programmes.

#### **G13 – Participants start to set-up/lead dance or physical activities in their communities**

Free to Dance offers participants aged 16 and over to complete an Award in Dance Leadership, a recognised award for those interested in leading dance sessions. Since Free to Dance began 74 girls have now completed this award. 40 participants entered the mentoring support scheme,

<sup>7</sup> For information on Project Y go to <http://www.ydance.org/ProjectY.html>



available as a continuum of support to young people as they develop their new skills in Dance Leadership.

## Outcomes for Partners

### **P5 – Barriers are removed so that more organisations use dance to address health inequalities and work with target groups**

Almost half (47%) of partners responding to the questionnaire believe that their expectations were exceeded regarding improvements in their own/or their organisation's ability to be fully aware of the benefits of dance and physical activity. The majority (78.8%) feel they better understand the role and purpose of Free to Dance. Almost three quarters (72.7%) find that their commitment to Free to Dance is better.

### **P6 – Partners continue to support girls to remain active by providing a range of suitable activities**

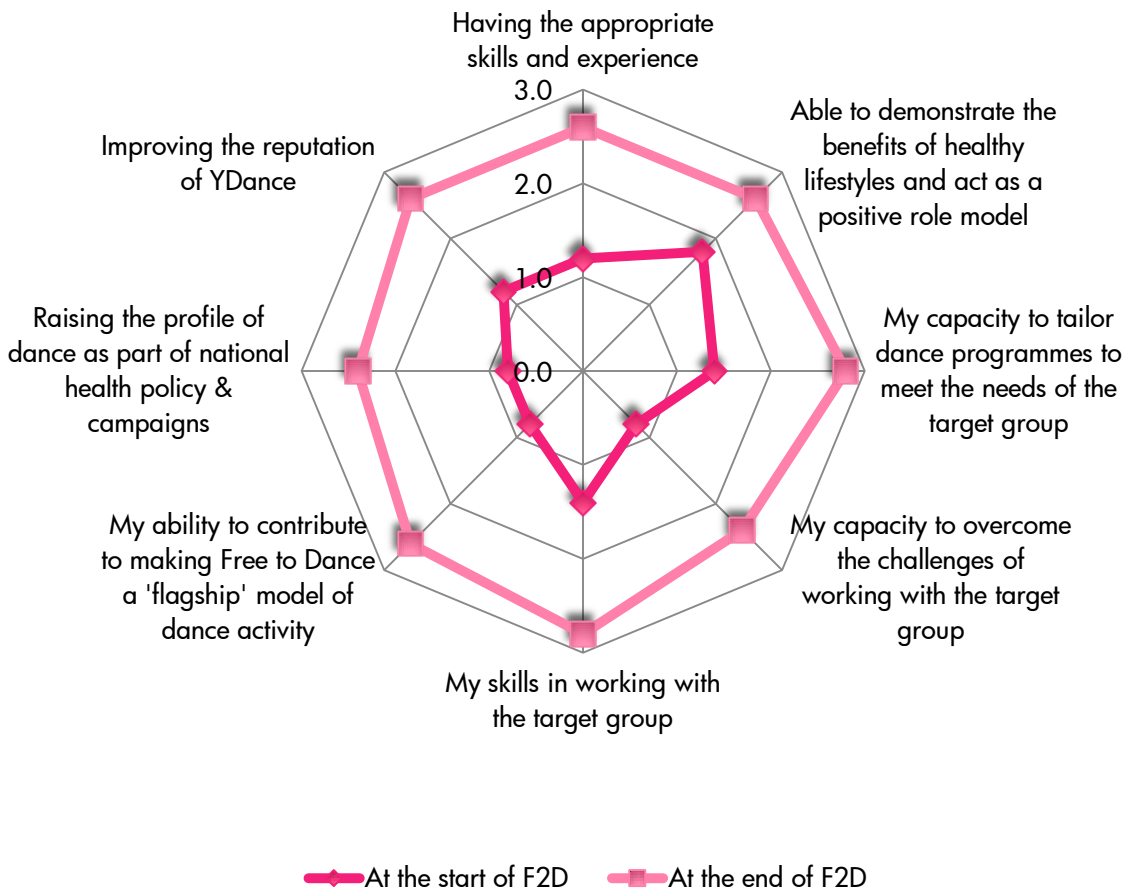
Teachers and Support Workers responding to the questionnaire (48 out of 74) value the opportunity to learn how to support dance in their own schools or organisations. More than three quarters (76%) rated the standard of training provided as excellent. More than two-thirds (69.6%) also rated the dance skills learnt during the training as excellent.

## Outcomes for YDance

YDance's Free to Dance team are surveyed to assess their views of their own development [see figure 1].

Figure 1: Dance Workers capacities - comparison between the beginning and end of Free to Dance

## Average self-assessment score of Dance Workers' abilities at the start and end of F2D



These results are discussed further according to the relevant outcomes below.

### Y4 – Free to Dance becomes a flagship model of dance activity and partnership working that is rolled out Scotland wide

Dance Workers perceive that the greatest improvement they have made over the duration of the Free to Dance programme is in their ability to contribute to making Free to Dance a flagship model of Dance Activity.

### Y5 – Dance gains a higher profile and recognition for its role in addressing national health policies and campaigns

By the end of F2D Dance workers improved their capacity to overcome the challenges of working with the target group and tailor dance programmes to meet their needs.

**Y3 – Improved reputation and track record in providing a range of specialised dance programmes.**

Dance Workers perceive that they increased girls' physical activity levels. Dance Workers also highlight the increasing levels of mentoring support they provide to newly trained dance leaders, as more people took up this offer. Similarly, Dance Workers gave participants a wide range of positive experiences. Arguably, YDance's specialist focus on youth dance and its ability to offer specialised training and support gives added advantages which seem to drive forward the success of F2D. YDance uses its own resources and expertise to good effect and works well with partners to diversify the opportunities and benefits gained. The F2D team has provided strong evidence that the programme contributes to the achievement of national health targets. Equally YDance has increased its capacity to deliver similar programmes with this highly challenging target group in future.

## Feedback on Success Factors

The success factors are summarised below:

### Activities with girls

- Basic to advanced level dance skills
- Social interaction, individual and team-work
- Improving fitness, creativity, confidence and well-being
- Working towards performances - setting challenging goals

### Partnership working

- Working in partnership with girls - developing their capacity to lead dance in their communities
- Working with schools and community organisations to combine resources and extend opportunities
- Effective targeting and support of inactive girls

### Wider opportunities

- Linking with specialist YDance initiatives and training
- Linking with other health initiatives
- Linking with local school and community initiatives
- Connecting with awards, qualifications, further education and employment opportunities

Examples of feedback from girls, partners and Dance Workers are below:

*"There has been such a change in the girls since they started F2D. Their **confidence** has really improved. At that the start they would sit in the corner and be quite insular."* (Partner Case Study)

*"I keep going because all my pals go and the dance teacher is nice and friendly and I really enjoy it. I have new **creative experiences** like dancing using chairs as props, we get involved in bits of choreography and we get to have a say in what we wear. Being involved makes me feel good that I'm doing an extra hour of activity, because if I wasn't I'd just be sitting in the house. We do really good dance exercises like miming how you express your feelings about different things."* (Participant Case Study)

*"It makes you realise that you can achieve things you never thought possible like appearing in public and feeling good about yourself."* (Participant Case Study)

*“Through being involved in F2D I have danced at the Theatre Royal in front of loads of people and raised money dancing in shopping centres. ” (Participant Case Study)*

*“Because of some of the behavioural issues the girls face it would be difficult for them to fit into a regular dance class so this set up is ideal as **it allows them to take part in physical activity with a high level of support.** (Partner Case Study)*

*“Since coming here about eight months ago, **I feel physically fitter and I can keep going longer than I used to do.** As well as coming here I still do PE and I now go to basketball after school so I do about 7 hrs exercise a week now.” (Participant Case Study)*

*“One girl has made significant changes to her lifestyle by stopping binge drinking. **Dance has provided a platform that allows young girls to participate in an activity that promotes a healthier lifestyle, develop team working and peer support.** An important aspect of the programme is that it specifically targets girls and it’s free.” (Partner Case Study)*

*“Now [the girls] get involved in so many community activities; they raise money for local charities, they help with the fete, they were involved in the Christmas Lights switch on and they have organised events like ‘Strictly Kilbirnie Dancing’. The programme has also helped to bridge territorial issues between the communities [through meeting girls from different areas] and they all get on really well.” (Partner Case Study)*

*“The Free to Dance programme has given me fantastic opportunities that I would never have dreamed of having, such as the **German Exchange where we met up with young people from Germany and we were able to share our experiences of living in Scotland and learn about their customs and culture...**I now do about 10hrs active exercise a week and do voluntary work in schools, teaching Basketball.” (Participant Case Study)*

*“The F2D has made sure it **left a legacy in the community** because of the mentoring programme.” (Partner, Case Study)*

*“Since joining F2D **my life has totally changed** I now know what I want to do with my life and it’s to be a dance teacher and this is something that I would never have thought possible before joining F2D...Following the mentoring programme I now teach my own class in school and the teachers treat me differently and are very supportive in what I do. I am going for an interview at Reid Kerr College to get into an HNC dance course. Being part of F2D made it possible to show that I have the potential and the experience to hopefully get accepted.” (Participant Case Study)*

*“Excellent. Really impressed with the games and warm ups, how they lead to actually producing a dance routine - very well thought out. **Much more active, creative and engaging than copying a routine from a dance tutor.**” (Partners’ Training Review)*

*“Free to Dance is used as one option in our IDL (inter disciplinary learning) programme which **teaches pupils to apply their learning to other contexts** (e.g. team work, reliability, commitment, importance of practice).” (Partner Review)*

*“We work with a specific group of young people - young carers. When meeting the young people on an individual basis I encourage them to join in and give the dance group a try...I **highlight what they could get out of it, not just in terms of physical activity but the social aspects, the feeling good and improved confidence and self esteem.** I then get them along to give it a try [and get] a taste of what it's like.” (Partner Review)*

*“We really value the partnership with F2D the tutors are fantastic and the programme has **the full backing of youth services.** My boss thinks it's great and understands the benefits of the programme. We try and provide as much support as we can and this includes – organising the hall let, organising and paying for transport and food if the girls are performing, we also provide sessional youth staff to support the girls when required.” (Partner Case Study)*

*“I am the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Development Officer [for our area]. **Free to Dance has provided an activity for girls who would otherwise not be involved in DofE.** Free to Dance allows these young people to complete the physical section of the award.” (Partner Review)*

*“[To overcome barriers to participation it helps] **having the support of partners to make concessions** (i.e. not being so strict on clothing for sessions - PE kit/trainers). Also, sorting out private spaces in safe, boy-free environments is helpful.” (Dance Worker Review)*

*“Having no previous experience in working with challenging groups and girls with behavioural issues, I **have developed a good understanding of how to communicate with these types of groups and also the level of ability for these groups in general.** Learning how to push them forward without putting them off and learning how to effectively build their confidence to try more dances and engage in class with you and other participants.” (Dance Worker Review)*

*There have been **two new groups with special needs**...Simple things like engaging with the rest of the group, or stretching arms that are normally crumpled and tight have happened and it has taken months to get to this point but it is a huge success and so rewarding to see these results. (Dance Worker Review)*

## What lessons were learnt?

Evidence presented throughout this report is used to reflect on the lessons learnt and their potential impact on future programme developments. In conclusion the key success factors are summarised below [see figure 19]:

Figure 2: Lessons Learnt

### Outputs

- The number of groups remains consistent at around 300 each year
- 45% of new recruits are in the primary target group
- Attendances are fairly consistent with an average of 11 to 12 participants per group and between 450 and 500 girls attending each week.

### Key success factors - Girls

- Free to dance offers a holistic range of physical, social and mental health benefits.
- This is achieved through a unique combination of activities with girls, working in partnership with schools and community/youth organisations and developing the skills of specialist Dance Workers to work with the target group.
- The WEMWBS baseline score rose from 51.05 to 53.28 overall
- 74 girls completed the Award in Dance Leadership

### Key Success factors - Partners

- Since F2D began 94 partners have completed a tailored dance teaching course.
- Almost half of partners believe they exceeded expectations regarding improvements in their/their organisation's ability to be fully aware of the benefits of dance and physical activity.
- More than three quarters of partners taking part, rated the standard of training as excellent. More than two-thirds also rated the dance skills learnt during the training as excellent.
- Organisations or workers experienced in supporting the target group have clearer mechanisms and greater capacity to overcome barriers and address health inequalities.
- More supportive partners enhance the benefits through a wider and more sustainable range of physical activities and tailored support, available to a more diverse range of participants.

### Key success factors - YDance/Dance Workers

- The greatest improvement for YDance is in Dance Workers' ability to contribute to making Free to Dance a flagship model of Dance Activity.
- Working with the target group is now the skill most highly rated by Dance Workers.
- Greater benefits are experienced when engaging with the target groups.
- Working with the most appropriate and committed partners leads to better targeting and enhanced support and benefits for girls taking part.
- YDance's specialist youth dance focus provide unique opportunities and progression routes for partners and participants alike.

## What is recommended for future programme development?

Previous discussion throughout this report is used to answer the final evaluation question by proposing future development areas. The recommendations for Free to Dance are based on the assumption that the Free to Dance pilot will end in March 2012 and that YDance awaits a decision on future funding and a potential roll out of the programme [see figure 20]:

Figure 3: Recommendations based on the findings from year three 2010 to 2011

<b>Girls</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to extend the reach on primary and secondary target groups</li> <li>• Focus on sustaining involvement of existing participants, especially those within the target groups</li> <li>• Continue to offer the successful combination of performances, dance skills, social interaction, fitness and creativity</li> <li>• Continue to engage participants in the additional opportunities such as accreditation, leadership training, mentoring and other positive experiences</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the experience of F2D to identify target areas, strategic networks and other forums where appropriate partners can be identified</li> <li>• Continue to provide training and support to partners to increase understanding and commitment to the programme</li> <li>• Use partners resources and skills to enhance the benefits, opportunities and support available</li> </ul>
<b>YDance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and further develop the specialised capacities YDance has gained and can now transfer to other similar programmes and initiatives</li> <li>• Promote the unique factors of Free to Dance which make it attractive and enjoyable to girls</li> <li>• Implement a smooth exit strategy and progression/transition beyond Free to Dance, trying to retain a positive reputation as the pilot comes to an end.</li> <li>• Share and act upon the achievements and lessons learnt from the F2D Pilot to influence future developments and develop an understanding of how to get more girls physically active.</li> </ul>

Thus Free to Dance clearly demonstrates continued commitment to achieving its ambitious range of intended outputs and outcomes. Impacts have often reached further than anticipated. Free to Dance's holistic package of benefits appears to tap into the intrinsic qualities that appeal to girls and encourage them to sustain their involvement. Increasing and sustaining participation of inactive girls remains a constant challenge for those delivering physical activity programmes. Nevertheless the Free to Dance programme offers a successful approach. To sustain the benefits of Free to Dance into the longer-term future, appears reliant on continuing to build robust partnerships between local organisations, schools, Dance Workers and girls.



## Logic Model