



**HERA**  
EVERYDAY GODDESS

# ***Case Study:*** ***The Voice of SOUL - Papatoetoe***

Through a relationship with Papatoetoe High School's Sports Coordinator, HERA engaged with a group of girls at the school who expressed an interest in dance following engagement in an initial physical activity session. Sources Of Unconditional Love (SOUL) offered to support the girls and welcomed them to be a part of the SOULsquad programme. This offers girls an opportunity to create dance performances that are performed at the 'Voice of our SOUL' event, which was open to the public to enjoy.



## Goal/Objective

The event and programme looked to provide the girls with a dance experience that aligned with interest they noted during a HERA focus group. The team at SOUL reflected the HERA values and provided participants with an opportunity to showcase a dance performance that focused on the message of empowerment through a combination of physical activity and the arts.

## Challenges

- ◆ Decision on whether to include boys in the event. Despite traditionally operating with a female only approach, boys were requesting to be included in the programme following positive word of mouth
- ◆ While rehearsals were completed locally, transport to the final event was a challenge for many of the participants. This was identified at the beginning of the programme.

## Solutions

- ◆ Consultation with the girls regarding male participation was held, giving girls 'a voice' consistent with HERA's values. There was overwhelming feedback to include the boys as a part of the all-inclusive philosophy of the programme and so this was implemented on a trial basis in 2017
- ◆ Providing transport to and from the event eliminated a barrier to participation. This meant participants were able to showcase the work they had been putting in throughout the programme.

## Impacts

- ◆ 130 participants took the stage in 'The Voice of SOUL' event 2017. The cast has more than doubled heading into 2018 following large scale retention of the participants, including members of the original HERA group.
- ◆ Feedback from the girls indicated initial nerves and hesitations; however, the support from the 'community feel' that was established encouraged them to push through these fears.
- ◆ Effort and time spent creating the community feel around the event, a 'safe space' for participants to express themselves and participate in new activities out of their comfort zone.
- ◆ The participants had the opportunity to express themselves and showcase their dance performance in a public forum.