



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.

Success

- ◆ The creation of a supportive and inclusive culture with as many of the participants as possible. There was a sense of community and belonging from participants in the programme.
- ◆ High engagement and support of the programme that has seen growing participation, as well as participants returning to the programme in the following year.

Learning

- ◆ Facilitation of a story telling session with sharing from each participant eliminated judgement from the group and encouraged acceptance of each other.
- ◆ Merchandise and social media groups were developed, providing a sense of community feel and belonging.
- ◆ Encouragement for participants to invite peers to join their performance created ownership and sense of community and encouraged participation.

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.