

A toolkit for making youth physical activity leadership more accessible, inclusive and supportive for girls and gender diverse young people.

Welcome to Leaders Like Us

Leaders Like Us is a toolkit for those who design, fund, manage, or deliver physical activities and leadership opportunities for girls and gender-diverse young people.
This is not a program to give directly to young people. Instead, it helps practitioners assess if their programs are truly accessible, relevant, inclusive, and realistic for the young people they aim to reach.

The toolkit is based on a simple idea: young people are more likely to participate, stay engaged, and grow as leaders when programs reflect their real lives, not just assumptions about what they need or want.

This means going beyond whether a program is technically “open to everyone.” A program may seem open in theory but can still feel difficult, unsafe, irrelevant, unaffordable, or inaccessible in practice. This toolkit aims to help you spot those gaps and make practical changes.



Who is the toolkit for?

This toolkit is for anyone involved in physical activity or leadership for young people, including:

- community organisations
- youth workers
- coaches and activity deliverers
- program managers
- funders and commissioners
- schools, colleges, and training providers
- voluntary sector organisations
- sport and activity partners
- researchers, evaluators, and public health teams

You don’t have to work in a formal “leadership program” to use it. If your work helps young people participate, build confidence, influence others, shape activities, develop skills, or feel more visible in physical activity, this toolkit is a good fit for you.



What is Leaders Like Us?

Leaders Like Us is a practical toolkit for people who design, manage, or deliver physical activity leadership programmes.
It is for programmes that support young women and gender-diverse young people aged 16 to 25, especially those who may have fewer chances to take part or lead.

The toolkit is based on what we learned from working with young people and practitioners. It turns those ideas into guidance that people can use, adapt, and apply in their own programmes.
It can help practitioners to:

- create more leadership opportunities
- offer different ways for young people to lead
- understand the whole picture of young people's lives
- value young people's lived experience
- support young people before, during, and after a programme
- change how programmes are designed and delivered so they work better for young people

The aim is to help more young women and gender-diverse young people take part in physical activity leadership in ways that feel relevant, realistic, and welcoming.



What does the toolkit help with?

This toolkit can help you:

- check whether your programme feels welcoming, safe, and relevant to young people
- spot practical challenges that may stop young people taking part
- understand how trust, culture, relationships, and power affect participation
- think about leadership as more than coaching, qualifications, or being the loudest person in the room
- design activities around young people's real lives
- avoid expecting young people to fit into programmes that were not designed with them in mind
- understand why young people may experience the same opportunity in different ways
- avoid treating any group of young people as all the same
- turn broad inclusion ideas into practical programme decisions



How should you use it?

You do not need to read the whole toolkit from start to finish.
Use it in the way that works best for you. You can:

- start with the 11 principles to review your overall programme design
- use the profile library to think about the young people you work with
- combine different profiles when young people's lives and experiences overlap
- use the tools and templates when you plan, review, or adapt a programme
- return to specific sections when an issue comes up during delivery
- use the questions and prompts in team meetings, planning sessions, or conversations with partners

The toolkit is here to help you ask better questions. It is not a fixed script.



This toolkit is a support not a prescription

This toolkit is here to help you think, ask questions, make changes, and keep improving.

Some sections will be more useful for your work than others. Some ideas may confirm what you already do well. Others may help you notice something that could work better.

You do not need to do everything at once. Start with the section that feels most useful. Choose one or two practical changes, try them out, and keep learning from the young people you work with.

You are not expected to get everything perfect straight away. Good inclusive practice grows through listening, trying, reflecting, and adapting. Even small changes can make a real difference to whether young people feel welcome, safe, and able to lead.

