Principle 11: Broaded opportunties by recognising different forms of leadership

leaders like us

BROADEN OPPORTUNITIES by RECOGNISING DIFFERENT FORMS of LEADERSHIP



Principle 11: Broaden opportunities by recognising different forms of leadership



Why this matters

Leadership is often treated as coaching, confidence, visibility or leading from the front. This can exclude young people who may lead in quieter, practical, creative, relational or behind-the-scenes ways. When programmes name and value different kinds of leadership, more young people can see a place for themselves. It makes leadership feel more realistic, less intimidating and more connected to their strengths.The aim is not for everyone to do every role. The aim is to widen what counts as leadership, so young people can contribute and progress in ways that fit them.

"Other leadership styles and roles need to be acknowledged. It shouldn't just be about coaching and delivery" (Programme Deliverer)

What this can look like in practice







If you notice:	Try:
Leadership is being framed and treated mainly as coaching or delivery	Name and make available the full range of roles that help physical activity work, such as welcoming, set-up, communication, wellbeing or peer support, adapting activities, social media, planning, officiating or co-leading
Only the most confident, sporty, or visible young people are actively involved	Offer lower-pressure roles and quieter forms of leadership. Use paired or small-group roles so young people can try responsibility without being put on the spot
Young people say they are “not leaders” or do not see leadership as relevant to them	Give examples of different leadership styles, including relational, creative, practical, representative, supportive and behind-the-scenes leadership
Roles feel vague, intimidating or too big	Make each role clear and achievable. Give it a short description, a small set of responsibilities, and two or three skills young people can practise or develop through the role
Young people try a role but then appear anxious, step back or change direction after	Normalise switching roles, development paths and trying new opportunities. Treat stepping back, trying something else, or changing responsibilities as part of the learning journey, and recognise the effort

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What you can do to make space for different kinds of leadership

- Make it clear that leadership is not only coaching, instructing or being at the front.
- Include practical, creative, relational, communication, planning, welcoming, mentoring, welfare and behind-the-scenes roles.
- Give each role a title, a short description, clear expectations and a small number of skills it can help develop.
- Offer trial runs, paired roles, small-group responsibilities or “try then choose” rotations.
- Give feedback and recognition to young people who support the programme in different ways, not only those who lead visibly.
- Show how young people can move from support roles into co-leading, planning, mentoring, delivery or other opportunities if they want to.
- Avoid tokenism. Do not make identity itself a role, and do not expect one young person to represent a whole community.
- Be fair about reward or payment. If leadership is compensated, make sure this is transparent and fair across different types of contribution.

Signs it’s working

- Leadership is shared across the group rather than concentrated in a few confident individuals
- Young people can describe different leadership roles and identify roles they want to try next
- Young people can identify and try out different leadership roles
- Young people who would not usually describe themselves as leaders begin to see their contributions as leadership
- Recognition feels fairly distributed across different roles



Continue exploring the toolkit

Ready to move on? Continue to the next section:
Inclusion and Practical Considerations Library

You can also return to the Leaders Like Us toolkit at a glance page to explore the modules and principles in any order.

Contact us

If you have questions about the Leaders Like Us toolkit, would like to discuss how to use the resources in your setting, or are interested in working with us, please get in touch.

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We welcome feedback on the toolkit, including how you have used or adapted the resources and what you have learned.



