



Dream Big Desi Women Programme celebrating at the Summer Party 2022.

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Over 2,000 more South Asian women now volunteering in cricket as Dream Big programme reaches landmark

- *Dream Big Desi Women* programme has now recruited and trained over 2,000 South Asian female cricket volunteers
- Culmination of a four-year, £2.4 million Sport England-funded programme, delivered by The ECB
- Volunteers deliver cricket programmes for children across urban

- areas, giving opportunities for thousands more youngsters to get involved in the sport
- Celebration of programme's success taking place at Lord's on 24 September as England Women take on India Women

More than 2,000 women from South Asian backgrounds have taken up volunteer roles in cricket in just under four years, thanks to an ECB initiative which is making the sport more inclusive.

Funded by Sport England and a central pillar of the ECB's [South Asian Action Plan](#), the [Dream Big Desi Women](#) programme set out to inspire 2,000 women from South Asian backgrounds to volunteer in cricket through delivering All Stars and Dynamos sessions – two ECB-backed schemes for children – and has hit its target ahead of schedule.

Each of the 2,000 volunteers have been delivering sessions for children and at least 10% have gone on to take up full-time roles in sport in local communities across the UK, with many taking up further qualifications in cricket coaching.

Rolled out in England's most ethnically diverse communities, the programme dismantles barriers faced by South Asian women by taking cricket into non-traditional venues including mosques, temples and gurdwaras. The programme also provides playing kit specially tailored to South Asian cultures, gives participants a chance to build networks in local communities, and has delivered mental health awareness training for over 200 of the participants.

A special celebration of the programme will be held at Lord's on 24 September 2022 as England Women take on India Women in a One-Day International, with fans being able to enjoy traditional South Asian activities including kitemaking, Henna and South Asian food.

Dream Big Desi Women participant Harpreet Kalsi-Virdi said:

“Dream Big Desi Women transformed my life in ways I couldn't have imagined. I went from having no real experience of sport to coaching at three separate cricket clubs in Nottingham and running cricket sessions in a local school alongside my day job. My family have been nothing but supportive

and I am proud to be a role model for my twin daughters and their friends.”

ECB Chief Operating Officer David Mahoney, who was instrumental in creating the programme, said:

“The Dream Big Desi Women programme has been a remarkable project led by an incredible group of women at the ECB. This was an ambitious target, so it is heartening to have reached the milestone of inspiring over 2,000 South Asian women to volunteer into cricket in just under four years.

“The programme, created in partnership with Sport England, has created an amazing team of volunteers that have inspired thousands of children in communities across the UK to play cricket, connecting communities and improving lives, and it is entirely fitting that we will celebrate the volunteers’ achievements on the day England play India at Lord’s.”

Shruti Saujani, the ECB’s Engagement Lead for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, who led the programme from its inception, said:

“The Dream Big Desi Women programme has been central to our South Asian Action Plan by creating more opportunities for the South Asian community to get involved in cricket at every level. It’s been amazing to see the enthusiasm and energy these volunteers have brought to cricket, and how in many cases it has changed their lives. The programme has also benefitted thousands of children in South Asian communities who can now get involved in cricket in ways that didn’t exist before.”

Sport England Chief Executive, Tim Hollingsworth said:

“With thanks to National Lottery players for making this partnership a possibility, it’s with great pride that we can celebrate Dream Big having reached its target of engaging 2,000 South Asian female cricket volunteers.

“Volunteering in sport is a true force for good and positively impacts both those giving up their time and the communities they serve to support. We know the importance of seeing yourself reflected in your local clubs and activities, and that is why *Dream Big* and its impact continues to be so important.”

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Notes to editors

1. The [Dream Big Desi Women Programme](#) is delivered as part of the ECB's [South Asian Action Plan](#), an 11-point plan published in 2018 to better engage with South Asian communities across England and Wales.

2. The ECB has delivered the programme in partnership with Sport England, who provided £1.2 million over the first two years.

3. To date the programme has been located in centres in England with high density South Asian populations: Birmingham, Bradford & Leeds, Leicester, Manchester, Nottingham and London.

4. To qualify as a volunteer, programme participants complete an eight-week course, after which they are fully skilled to lead [All Stars](#) and [Dynamos](#) coaching sessions for children aged 5-11.

5. Dream Big activators available for interview:

(I) Prithy Pillai: Prithy has recently become a fully qualified activator and loves being able to help share cricket within her community in East London. Since becoming involved she says she's "grown massively in confidence and seen both mental and physical health benefits".

(II) Promila Raina: Promila was a full-time mum after arriving in the UK from India, but was inspired to join the Dream Big programme due to her daughter's love of cricket. Having completed the Dream Big programme, Promila now works part-time in a community engagement role for Essex Cricket and is an ECB Level 1 coach.

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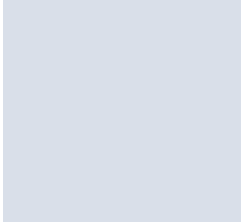
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