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# Sport Welcomes Refugees

**A Guide to Good Practice in Europe**

Publisher

Camino – Werkstatt für Fortbildung, Praxisbegleitung und Forschung im sozialen Bereich gGmbH  
Boppstraße 7  
10967 Berlin, Germany  
Tel. +49 30 610 737 20  
Fax +49 30 610 737 229  
mail@camino-werkstatt.de  
www.camino-werkstatt.de

Author: Victoria Schwenzer (Camino) with the contributions of all SPIN partners  
Translation: Barbara Orth (Camino) and Annette Schmaltz, Berlin  
Layout: Matthäus Zinner (typothese.at), Vienna

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Contact to Sport Welcomes Refugees Project:

Sport Inclusion Network (SPIN)  
Kurt Wachter | Coordinator  
c/o fairplay - VIDC  
Möllwaldplatz 5/3  
1040 Vienna, Austria  
wachter@vidc.org  
Tel. +43 1 713 35 94 90  
www.sportinclusion.net  
www.facebook.com/SpinProject

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# INTRODUCTION:

## REFUGEES AND SPORTS IN EUROPE

Recent refugee and migratory arrivals in Europe constitute the biggest movement of displaced people since World War II. In 2016, more than 1.2 million asylum seekers<sup>1</sup> applied for protection in one of the European member states.<sup>2</sup>

Following the White Paper on Sport (2007), a key objective of European sport policies is that everyone should have access to sports. Sport not only benefits mental and physical health, it also promotes social skills. Playing sports with other people also fosters new connections across language and cultural barriers.

For many refugees and asylum seekers a sports club is often the only opportunity to meet locals outside of their interactions with officials, authorities, and the police. Hence, sport can play a positive role in creating inclusive societies, and affects a number of other areas in people's lives.

How to best integrate newly arrived migrants through sport, and how to promote mutually beneficial interactions of different cultures and communities? Sport can act as a catalyst for positive social transformation, but it can also reproduce destructive patterns in social interactions. It therefore requires well-guided and socially responsible interventions in order to be effective in creating inclusive programmes.

This Good Practice Guide has been developed within the Sport Inclusion Network (SPIN) partnership. SPIN implements the 'Sport Welcomes Refugees – Social Inclusion of newly arrived migrants in and through sport' project in 2017/2018, co-funded by the Erasmus + Programme of the European Union. The overall objective of the project is to enhance the social inclusion and participation of newly arrived migrants and refugees at different levels of sport through trainings, awareness-raising, and capacity-building for sport stakeholders.

The SPIN project brings together a mix of experienced organisations in the field of inclusion in, and through, sports:

- the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (fairplay-VIDC),
- the Italian Sport For All Association Unione Italiana Sport per Tutti (UISP),
- the Football Association of Ireland (FAI),
- the Professional Football Players Union (SJPF) of Portugal,
- the migrant-led Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation (MGHRO) from Hungary,
- the Greek NGO FAROS, which provides support for unaccompanied refugee children,
- the multicultural Finnish sports umbrella organisation Liikkukaa,
- as well as Camino from Germany, dedicated to social science research and an expert on practical-oriented research on youth and sports.

The Good Practice Guide includes examples from different European countries and describes strategies, activities, consequences, and challenges of integrating refugees and asylum seekers within the structures of organised sport activities. It is based upon the experiences and research of the different network partner organisations as well as independently researched examples from the UK. The guide has been compiled and finalised by Camino. Its aim is to deliver ideas and impulses to sport associations, clubs, and initiatives as well as political decision makers on how to include refugees in and through sports.

The guide ends by introducing the quality criteria the project has developed. These criteria are meant for self-evaluation of sport projects and suggest ways on how projects can be further developed in accordance with these quality criteria.

<sup>1</sup> As legal questions of status are not the focus of this guide, the terms 'refugees' and 'asylum seekers' will be used interchangeably throughout this guide to refer to everyone who has experienced forced migration or displacement.

<sup>2</sup> Eurostat news release, 46/2017 – 16 March 2017.





# SPORT AS A TOOL FOR INTEGRATION: SITUATION IN DIFFERENT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

**H**ow is sport employed in different countries as a means to integrate refugees and asylum seekers? What are the difficulties and challenges? The following paragraphs offer an insight into the situation in different European countries and highlight different issues. The European comparison shows that national strategies for integrating refugees greatly differ, and, in some cases, do not even exist so far. What is more, the prevalent anti-immigrant sentiment in politics does not only mean that some countries lack national integration strategies and project funding; but also that civil society initiatives are actively obstructed or destroyed in some places - Hungary is a point in case.

## Finland

The Finnish government recognises the importance of supporting immigrants' participation in leisure activities. As stated in the government's Integration Programme for 2016–2019, sports and youth work have an important role in immigrants' integration and fostering a sense of community. Youth work and sports can flexibly offer meaningful leisure activities and encounters with the majority society and local population. This is also true for asylum seekers and immigrants who are not enrolled in formal education, vocational training or paid work. To highlight three measures related to youth work and sports:

- For a fixed term, the degree to which national youth centers offer targeted activities for young asylum seekers and/or, more generally, for young immigrants, is one of the priorities when allocating funding.
- The Ministry of Education and Culture will make grants available that foster equal opportunities to exercise and join organised sport activities. A particular focus will be on attracting women and girls and the most marginalised groups. The Regional State Administrative Agencies will support the creation and development of sports activities that promote asylum seekers' mental and physical well-being at asylum centers.

- In 2016 and 2017, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment funded projects to coordinate voluntary work that promotes integration and support the activities of grass-roots level organisations.

In response to recent demographic shifts, and to promote the social inclusion of minority groups, there are now a variety of funding opportunities for both local authorities and other organisations, whose activities have an emphasis on sport for integration of asylum seekers and immigrants.

In Finland, the high membership and material costs at private sports clubs are a barrier for immigrants as well as low-income families in general. This financial exclusion presents high barriers to asylum seekers, who are likely to face tighter financial constraints than the locals. A number of organisations aim to tackle this problem by focusing on accessible sports activities for both adults and children.

## Portugal

The Portuguese government is committed to supporting refugees and has built infrastructures and refugee integration programmes. The Portuguese Council for Refugees, for example, offers counselling on all aspects of life, including sport activities. In Portugal, sports, and football in particular, are an important tool used by several organisations working with migrants, refugees, and marginalised populations. The Portuguese High Commissioner of Migration has a strategic programme to include youngsters from difficult social backgrounds into society using sports as a tool for integration. Other non-governmental organisations are working on specific programmes to develop the social inclusion of minorities and marginalised populations through sport at different levels.





## Ireland

It is a common belief in Ireland that sport can play a role in helping to meet some of the challenges faced by new arrivals and ensure the safe integration of individuals into communities. This belief is central to the development of the Irish formula, which encompass the utilisation of sport as a bridge to welcome and actively integrate refugees and asylum seekers into their new communities often in conjunction or collaboration with state policies and mechanisms. According to the Football Association of Ireland, changing demographics provide an opportunity for growth and development of sport through increased participation and new expertise. At the same time, integration and racism are challenges to be reckoned with.

A matrix of national, regional, and local strategies tackles these challenges with a common goal: the creation of a bridge for refugees and asylum seekers' involvement in sport clubs or mainstream sports structures, their active and long-term participation and development within those structures, as well as support and long-term sustainability where relevant.

Over the last 20 years, this synergy of proactive stakeholders has achieved a lot to make sport in Ireland a more welcoming, inclusive, and safe space for minorities; especially, refugees and asylum seekers. However, it is not possible to conclude that the Ireland Integration through Sport initiatives have been a quintessential integration plan (especially from the viewpoint of refugees and asylum seekers), in this context sport can't work alone with respect to integration. Yet, they may serve as the springboard for providing and promoting pathways to effective integration if current standards continue to be developed and evaluated.

## Germany

In Germany, sport is generally regarded as an important and successful tool for integrating newly arrived migrants, especially refugees and asylum seekers, as well as socially disadvantaged minorities into mainstream society. This belief has led to a number of government programmes at the national and regional level, funded by the respective federal and state-level ministries. An example is the Integration Through Sports programme, initiated by the Federal Government and established in 1989 by the German Olympic Sports Committee. Integration Through Sports has focused more on refugees since 2015. Many state sports federations play an important role in these national programmes, but also in regional programmes managed at the state level. The German Football Association is also a dedicated actor and has developed a programme specifically for refugees.

Evaluations of these programmes have showed that integration through sports does not work without adequate additional opportunities, e.g. spaces for encounters, support with finding employment and apartments, mentoring and language support. Many sports clubs now recognise this and try to combine their sport programmes with informal counselling services and advice.

Moreover, there is lots of volunteering at the grass-roots level, i.e. at the level of civil society initiatives, refugee initiatives, and local clubs that develop and run particular exercise programmes with the help of volunteers in their local area. One of the main challenges with this form of organisation is how to support the volunteer coaches and instructors, especially with regards to emotional stress, pedagogical competences, and the bureaucratic challenges created by immigration law. Material costs for transportation and equipment are another issue. In order to support volunteers and clubs, sports associations have developed information material and it is possible to join specialised workshops, trainings, and events.

Within organised sport, the most salient question is how to make newcomers feel welcome and create intercultural openness within sports clubs. The newly developed qualification programmes for refugees are a first step in this direction since these qualifications allow them to become coaches and instructors themselves. However, given the heated and highly polarised debates on migration in German society, there is a lot that still needs to be done.





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## Greece

The multifaceted benefits of sports as a tool for inclusion of refugees at the European level, both unofficially as well as institutionally, are broadly accepted in Greece. However, Greece lacks specific national directives or guidelines to ensure that refugees have access to, and are encouraged to, participate in sports.

While there are few government programmes that promote the inclusion of refugees with funding from the European Union (Erasmus+), most activities are currently initiated by civil society. Consequently, initiatives are ad hoc and short-term. Furthermore, even though there are UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) co-coordinated working groups on several issues related to refugee protection and integration in general, there are no such groups for integration through sports specifically.

During 2015 and 2016, when a million people crossed Greece to reach Northern Europe, some sport organisations engaged in activities that cannot be characterised as sports projects, but are more generally civic and humanitarian in nature: the Greek Cricket Federation, for example, handed out cooking sets, blankets, jerry cans, sleeping mats, sanitary items, and shelter material. They now hold events to inform and encourage adults and minors to join local cricket initiatives.

In professional teams, integration is practically impossible due to the lack of the required documents such as birth certificates. However, the Hellenic Football Federation (HFF) currently discusses how professional players' certificates can be issued. While no concrete or long-term solution has been identified, HFF has committed to admit five players per year without the necessary documents.

The lack of a national directive or framework also means that persons involved in the training of refugees, or in their integration into sports, are not always qualified to coach; there is a distinct lack of professionalism and guidelines. The lack of understanding of the legal framework around refugee status also further discourages local sports clubs from welcoming refugees.

## Italy

In Italy, some institutions have produced guidelines or recommendations for the use of sport as integration tool (in general). For example in 2012, the Italian Olympic Committee signed an agreement with the Association of Italian Municipalities to encourage and facilitate access to sport for minors, asylum seekers and refugees. The Olympic Committee also published a manifesto on the importance of sport for integration projects. However, there are no official strategies for inclusion of refugees through sport at the level of regional or national ministries and governments.

Despite the lack of a formal inclusion strategy, local bodies and ministries offer grants for the inclusion of refugees and migrants, and usually sport is one of the eligible actions. The National Office Against Discrimination, attached to the National Department of Equal Opportunities, also promotes and finances projects involving sport.

In practical terms, the work of associations and NGOs that promote sports is crucial, and some of these even have national strategies for the inclusion of refugees in sport: The sports organisation Italian Association of Sport for All (UISP) for example does not require a residency permit for people to join in its regular sport activities and tournaments. For the majority of sport federations, however, this document is required.

In Italy, sport is one of the main areas where institutional discrimination affects migrants and second-generation migrants without citizenship: for example, there is a limit to the number of non-European players in any given team, even in amateur sports. For asylum seekers and refugees the situation is complicated because of the lack of, or incompleteness of, their official documents. Furthermore, FIFA has a rule that a player needs to obtain the approval of their home federation to join a new association – a rule that is a source of enormous stress for refugees and asylum seekers. Grass-roots sport associations, NGOs promoting sports, and civil society organisations are very active in this area, and try to both exert pressure on sport institutions and to promote activities that include migrants and refugees through sports.



## Austria

An important aspect of society's engagement with migrants happens at the level of organised sports. There are projects run by sport associations at the national or federal state level, and even the smallest municipalities may have initiatives that work on joint sport projects with refugees.

At the same time, the issue of migration featured heavily in political debates throughout the Austrian presidential and legislative elections in 2016 and 2017, respectively. Both campaigns showed that political actors and parties are willing to employ populist tactics to gain more votes by playing on existing fears and reservations within the general population. A study commissioned by the Austrian Integration Fund in 2016 reveals immigration as the number one concern of Austrians.

Representatives of the governing coalition have announced budget cuts and restrictions in migration law, as well as changes in asylum and integration policies. These cuts have already been partially implemented in the areas of education and integration.

On top of political restrictions and funding difficulties, integrationist sport projects also face the threat of imminent deportation of their players. While deportations are first and foremost a psychological burden for those directly affected, they also effect the social dynamic and fabric within the sport club, especially in team sports. Thus, an imminent deportation often weighs heavily on all members of a club or project, even people that primarily serve as instructors for sport activities face unusual psychological strains.

## Hungary

For the past two years, the Hungarian government has been internationally scrutinised for its regressive policies towards refugees and migrants. As a relatively new member of the EU, Hungarian policy around refugees and migrants has caused much controversy as it specifically denies the entry, support, and assistance of refugees, whether they are merely travelling through the country or are seeking asylum there. The Hungarian government has closed all refugee camps and converted them into detention centers. These detention centers are shipping containers, where asylum seekers and refugees are held until their cases have been heard via video link. The public sector has not only retracted funding, but also any other kinds of support for refugees and migrants, whether concerning their settlement or entrance.

In line with its restrictive policies and right-wing rhetoric, the government actively sanctions organisations working in the area of migration, refugee and asylum seeker assistance by levying a higher tax on any funding they receive. This has caused significant problems for the stability and future of these organisations and initiatives.

The Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation (MGHRO), based in Budapest, has been conducting sports activities, specifically focused on the inclusion of migrants and refugees and the awareness of the Hungarian community. The Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ) has assisted MGHRO with financial and technical support over the years. It was therefore crucial in building a local migrant/refugee team even though it was not directly involved in the team's inception and sustainability. However, this support has been discontinued as a result of the intensifying political and policy climate; a discourse that completely rejects the presence, assistance and support of refugees.





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## SPECIFIC NATIONAL OR GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMMES

Refugees and asylum seekers have different needs for support compared to EU migrants who migrate for work. At the same time, refugees are a heterogeneous group of people that differ greatly in terms of their social, cultural, and/or ethnic background.

The previous chapter introduced national strategies in general terms and highlighted the situation in different European countries. This chapter looks at specific programmes and projects that are not only aimed at migrants in general, but also, or even exclusively, at refugees and asylum seekers. What these programmes and projects have in common is that they have been initiated and funded by national governments (for example by a ministry of sport

or a national ministry for migration), and/or that they have received funding by the EU. Most of these programmes are implemented by large sport associations, for example the Irish Football Association or the German Olympic Committee.

The programmes and projects also reflect the importance political actors give to the topic integration of refugees and integration through sports. At the other end of this, a lack of programmes for the special target groups refugees shows there are no national approaches to leverage the potential of sport for integration.





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## Germany

### German Olympic Committee:

#### Welcoming Through Sports

For the past 25 years, the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) as well as the Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) have promoted the federal programme Integration Through Sport. This programme reaches out to all migrants, and is complemented by a project specifically for refugees since 2015: the Welcoming Through Sport project is implemented by the German Olympic Committee in cooperation with thirteen state sports federations. The project, which is financially supported by both the IOC and the German Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration, includes over 200 sports clubs in Germany. These clubs offer a great variety of sports and fitness activities: rugby, cricket, volleyball, basketball, and gymnastics, among many others.

The activities are open to all refugees, regardless of their origin or their prospects of remaining in the country. Refugees' needs and their prior athletic experiences inform the variety of sports and activities clubs and associations offer. In addition, coaches in clubs receive training to strengthen their intercultural skills. At the beginning, the main aim was to make sports accessible for refugees and offer low-level exercise opportunities for refugees. Some of these took place at refugee shelters. Later, the programme focused on fostering refugees' active participation in developing new training opportunities and empower them to become volunteers within their sports clubs. Right now, the programme focuses on reaching more women and girls.

For further information, please visit:

<https://integration.dosb.de/inhalte/projekte/wis-willkommen-im-sport-fuer-gefluechtete/>

[https://cdn.dosb.de/user\\_upload/www.integration-durch-sport.de/Projekte/WiS/WiS\\_report\\_e.v\\_final.pdf](https://cdn.dosb.de/user_upload/www.integration-durch-sport.de/Projekte/WiS/WiS_report_e.v_final.pdf)

[https://cdn.dosb.de/DOSB\\_Broschuere\\_1.pdf](https://cdn.dosb.de/DOSB_Broschuere_1.pdf)

The integration project of Ireland's Football Association aims to forge alliances with local initiatives and thus emphasises that it takes joint efforts of partners of different areas of life to foster integration. While some projects target only refugees, this project wants to include both refugees and non-refugees in their sport activities.

## Ireland

### Football Association of Ireland:

#### Integration Through Football Project

The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) is leading other stakeholders on the sport scene in developing and implementing nationwide strategies/programmes aimed at social inclusion and integration of refugees and people with other migrant backgrounds. One such nationwide good practice example is the FAI's Integration Through Football Project supported under the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund & administered in Ireland by the Department of Justice and Equality (DJE).

The target groups for the Integration Through Football Project are refugees and asylum seekers, third country nationals, as well as clubs and community partners at all levels of the game. The programme seeks to involve these target groups in football along with the host population, and not in isolation, wherever possible.

The project is designed to develop and support football and community alliances. The project sits within the frame of the FAI's Intercultural Football Programmes, and is also in line with national integration policy/Strategy for Migrant Integration ('A Blueprint for the future'). The range of community partners is broad and can include NGOs, schools, local authorities, local area partnerships, refugee or asylum seekers accommodation centres etc. The list is not exhaustive and all potential community partners are considered.

Starting in May 2017, the programme is scheduled to run for a three-year period. It seeks to foster and support 17 local club and community alliances annually to encourage increased participation in football. The outreach strategy involves a national call for community groups and football clubs to form collaborative alliances. Follow-up meetings are then held with clubs and community groups to discuss steps, roles and actions for each alliance. This enables the design of best-fit programmes or events for the community/club alliances, based on needs and available resources in the local areas. Funding support is provided by the FAI to alliances to run their actions.

The programme annually provides for the running of 17 open days or open training sessions, 24 afterschool programmes, eight volunteering in football information evenings or club open houses, eight futsal league programmes for adults and





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four KOWELS (Kicking Off With English Language Skills) football programmes.

There are significant operational challenges for refugees' participation, e.g. transportation to events. These operational challenges are made even more difficult in places where people are fairly remote. Low female participation rates is another issue, more so for women than for girls.

In terms of impact, the aims for sustainability beyond its project cycle and sees its collaborative approach and funding mechanism as key to achieving this goal.

For further information, please visit:

<http://www.fai.ie/domestic/take-part-programmes/amif-applications>

[http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Migrant\\_Integration\\_Strategy\\_English.pdf/Files/Migrant\\_Integration\\_Strategy\\_English.pdf](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Migrant_Integration_Strategy_English.pdf/Files/Migrant_Integration_Strategy_English.pdf) (The Migrant Integration Strategy)

The Austrian Ministry of Sport's Working Group on Sport and Integration supports strategic cooperations between political actors and actors from the organised sport sector. However, the programme focuses on integration in general, and not on refugees in particular. The Portuguese Choices Programme has an even broader target group: it reaches out to all children and adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds, including refugees.

## Austria

### The Austrian Ministry of Sport:

#### Working Group on Sport and Integration

In 2010, the Ministry of Sport established a permanent Working Group on Sports and Integration. The Working Group is made up of several organisations, including ministries and the Federal Sports Fund (BSFF), various sport for all umbrella federations, the Austrian Integration Fund, the initiative fairplay as well as the Institute for Children's Rights and Parents' Education, who coordinate the Working Group.

The Working Group aims to foster participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities in sports. The Ministry of Sports funded integration projects during a pilot phase between 2011–2014. Since 2012, the Working Group organises workshops on intercultural competences in sports; in 2016, there was a series addressing questions surrounding refugees in sports.

For more information, please visit: [www.sportintegration.at](http://www.sportintegration.at)

## Portugal

### High Commission for Migration:

#### Choices Programme

One of the most recognised social programmes to support youngsters in particular is the Choices Programme promoted by the Portuguese High Commission for Migration. It aims to provide monitoring and tools to prevent young people's segregation. According to an external evaluation, the Choices Programme has been successful since its start in 2001, because it uses an empowerment strategy that does not address children and adolescents as victims of difficult circumstances, but as protagonists that can be supported by enhancing their own resources. In a new edition of the programme, the Portuguese Player's Union works to support migrants and refugees through football practices in an inclusive football league called Liga Escolhas. Those who work within this programme pay special attention to the players' education and supervise them at school as well as in their family homes.

For more information, please visit:  
<https://www.programaescolhas.pt/>



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## ACTIVITIES OF SPORTS CLUBS

The work of sport associations is crucial for implementing regional, national or governmental programmes. At the same time, the grass-roots level of organised sports, the sport clubs, also work towards integration of refugees, and this is especially important when a country does not have national or regional programmes. Many sport clubs across Europe develop their own projects and specific training sessions. It may be the personal interaction with a refugee that leads to a particular initiative - as in the case of

Northern Ireland's Simple Judo club; in other cases, it may be the desire for civic engagement and helping the new neighbours. However, those who want to initiate these projects sometimes face opposition within their own club. What can help in these situations is to point to the clubs code of conduct and to the fact that volunteering with and for refugees is in line with the values of respect practiced by the club.





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## Belfast / Northern Ireland (UK)

### Simply Judo Club:

#### Simply Judo Connects

Simply Judo in Northern Ireland, a British Judo Association member club, launched an integration initiative in the beginning of 2017 that seeks to connect refugee families with the local community. A visit of refugee children to the head coach's fire station in Belfast sparked the idea of the Simply Judo initiative. Shortly after, the judo club got in touch with the primary school the refugee children attended in West Belfast. The initiative now works with 60 children, half of whom are locals, and half come from various countries including Syria, Somalia, Sudan, China, the Congo, and Nigeria. The children take part in two classes every week. The sessions are run by the two head coaches and three support coaches, and are split into two levels. Instructors aim to mix refugee and local children into even teams. After a few weeks the children began to spend time together even outside the judo class and have now become friends. For the parents of the refugee children, the lessons are also an opportunity to get to know local parents, share information or to become interested in judo themselves. Sport Northern Ireland, the Department of Communities, and two sport companies support the initiative. Funding secured through the Department of Communities, and time volunteered by coaches has ensured the club can provide classes and judo suits, as well as licenses for each of the children on the initiative free of charge for the coming year. The project has won a national award for its work and was short-listed for the 2017 UK coaching awards. The clubs plan to continue the work with refugee children and make the initiative sustainable.

For more information, please visit:

<http://simplyjudo.com/>

<https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/sport/other-sport/simply-judo-club-connecting-refugee-13117307>

<http://www.sportni.net/news/belfast-sports-project-shortlisted-for-uk-coaching-award/>

Initiatives often start out as small volunteer projects supported by a club's own funds or additional donations. By giving out awards and accolades for this work, this voluntary work is validated and rendered visible in society.

This has a positive impact on the volunteers because they feel appreciated, and because the project's additional publicity may lead to new donations and sponsors. For these reasons, giving out prizes and awards is an important strategy to promote volunteering and civic engagement amongst civil society and political actors.

## Brighton / England (UK)

### Brighton Table Tennis Club:

#### Refugee Integration Work

In 2007, two ex-England internationals established Brighton Table Tennis Club (BTTC). It started out as a small project with two worn-out tables in the Brighton Youth Centre. Now the club counts about 1250 members who join the weekly sessions. It has its own centre with ten tables, and runs 100 tables across the city in parks, squares, schools, sheltered housing schemes, a centre for homeless people, sports centres and a psychiatric hospital. It also works in two prisons outside the city.

The mission of the club is to improve health, celebrate diversity, and build community. There are sessions for young people of all ages and backgrounds, those aged 50+, adults with learning disabilities, and children in care.

BTTC is a recognised Club of Sanctuary, an award that recognises cities and schools that welcome refugees and asylum seekers. The club turned into a place of shelter and integration especially for unaccompanied minors. Now 15 to 20 boys from Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea, Kurdistan, and Algeria, come several times every week, for table tennis lessons and friendship.

The programme has been so successful in teaching the boys English and fostering friendships between the young asylum seekers and local children that BTTC has also been given substantial grants from Sport England to support its refugee integration work.

For more information, please visit:

<http://brightontabletennisclub.co.uk/home>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/26/turning-the-tables-the-ping-pong-sanctuary-for-young-refugees>

<https://cityofsanctuary.org/awards/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMBcRp2TcE>



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## Vienna / Austria

### Rugbyclub Union Donau Wien:

#### Rugby Opens Borders

The Rugby Open Borders initiative was established by the Viennese Rugby Club Donau Wien, and offers weekly training sessions for young refugees and migrants. In addition to sport activities, the project coordinators also organise joint trips, parties, and cooking sessions. The club prioritises intercultural exchange and collaboration, dissolving borders, and living diversity in order to make Austrian society more accessible for youth from different parts of the world.

The Rugby Open Borders team consists of volunteers of different national and professional backgrounds, including athletes, lawyers and social workers in a supervising capacity. The core team includes 35 athletes. Those who are talented are given the opportunity to also join the established youth teams within Donau Wien and other collaborating clubs.

Rugby Open Borders is funded by donations and project funding, and has won a national prize for its work in 2015.

For more information, please visit:

[www.rugbyopensborders.com](http://www.rugbyopensborders.com)

It is important to take refugees and their interests into account when developing sport training opportunities. This may also lead to structural changes in sport clubs and to new types of sports as shown by an example from southern Germany: a club that offers many grass-roots sports started a new cricket training because refugees were interested in it. In the end, the club established its own cricket division because of the great response.

## Göggingen / Germany

### DJK Göggingen:

#### Cricket Division

The sports club DJK Göggingen has been volunteering with refugees since 2015, and is part of the federal programme Integration Through Sports. As of 2016, it has admitted over 200 refugees as members.

In collaboration with the volunteer centre in nearby Augsburg, the sports club DJK Göggingen developed a training schedule and mentoring scheme specifically for unaccompanied minors that is also open to adult refugees. The plan not only included swimming lessons, football, table tennis, bowling, and gymnastics, but also cricket.

Cricket is not well-known in Germany, but very popular in countries like Pakistan or Afghanistan. The cricket training was a huge success: it was so popular that the club established its own cricket division with several teams. The club actively involves young refugees in its work, for example as referees. Refugees also participate in first-aid courses and take on voluntary roles within the club.

One of the remaining challenges is to find a playing field that is large enough for cricket since cricket fields are larger than the more common football playing fields. As of now, the club also does not own its own cricket equipment and needs to borrow it.

Another issue is deportations that weigh heavily on players and their families, as well as the volunteers within the club. In addition, the club faced challenges from outsiders, who were sometimes jealous of the club's success, as well as insiders who were not happy with the club's commitment.

For further information, please visit:

<https://djk-goeggingen.de/abteilungen/cricket>

[https://cdn.dosb.de/DOSB\\_Broschuere\\_1.pdf](https://cdn.dosb.de/DOSB_Broschuere_1.pdf)





© MGHRO

Another important factor when developing new exercise opportunities is accessibility; not only in terms of making the training sessions themselves accessible, but also in terms of providing for different athletic levels. The following project of the rowing team in Würzburg, Germany is doing precisely that by having experienced club members support the newbies.

#### Würzburg / Germany

##### Olympos Würzburg Rowing Club:

##### STAR Project

After a sometimes traumatic flight across the Mediterranean, children and young adults can experience a new positive approach to water in the rowing boats of the rowing club Olympos in Würzburg, Germany. In 2016, the club developed the STAR project, which also offers swimming lessons, general fitness, football, volleyball, as well as language trainings in addition to rowing. Volunteers support refugees with bureaucratic matters as well as finding an apartment or a vocational training placement.

The project teaches Syrian, Afghan, Kurdish, Eritrean, Ukrainian, and Somali girls the basics of swimming and rowing. Some have passed the first level of a three-level national swimming certification for minors. Boys from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Eritrea and Kurdistan also row, swim, and participate in indoor sports. There are also groups for biking and running. In the club's experience, it is easiest to retain members if single-sex trainings for girls are on offer.

To ensure accessibility, trainings are free of charge and the threshold of required skills is very low. However, rowing is a sport that requires a lot of technical skill and balance; to address this challenge, Olympos has developed a training programme that is based on imitating members that are more experienced. That way newbies can enter the rowboat within ten minutes. After another ten minutes, they are able to move the boat forward independently. The joint practice with older members and newbies helped both sides to develop intercultural competences and established interpersonal relationships beyond the training sessions.

About 200 refugee youth have participated in the sport trainings since 2015, and over 60 participants have learnt the basics of rowing. The project receives funding by the German Ministry of Migration through a programme of the German Sports Youth.

For more information, please visit:

[www.row2015.de](http://www.row2015.de)

[https://cdn.dosb.de/DOSB\\_Broschuere\\_1.pdf](https://cdn.dosb.de/DOSB_Broschuere_1.pdf)





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## COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND GRASS-ROOTS INITIATIVES/NGOS

Grass-roots initiatives outside of organised sports have sprung up across Europe to help those newly arrived on the continent. At the same time, established NGOs, including migrant-led groups and organisations that work in the area of migration, have added new projects to their portfolios. They often combine these efforts with various other offers such as discussion groups, counselling services, and support with finding an apartment and employment.

Often, sport is regarded as a means to get in touch with refugees in order to then offer additional support. At the same time, sport is also a tool of empowerment to strengthen refugees' confidence in their own abilities and resources. An example of such an empowerment project is the Berlin based initiative, Champions Without Borders, which actively involves refugees as interpreters or coaches.





#### Berlin / Germany

### Champions Without Borders

Champions Without Borders is a non-profit organisation that offers football trainings to children, men, and women throughout the city – adjusting each training to the needs of the particular group. Athletes can train without being subject to prejudice, bureaucratic barriers, or pressure to perform. After training sessions, the team stays for an informal gathering to reflect on the previous session, share experiences, and to offer counselling. At these gatherings interpreters are available, so all players can be reached and heard. Experienced players pass on their knowledge and thus build capacity in the newer team members.

The international teams participate in tournaments and friendly games at regular intervals. They also join anti-racist events and thus raise awareness on the situation of refugees in Germany. In the long-run, the goal is to refer players to regular football clubs in Berlin. To this end, Champions Without Borders advises regular clubs on how to interact with refugee athletes, for example with regards to dealing with player identification cards and permissions.

Champions Without Borders also offers a variety of other activities including cooking sessions, workshops at schools about asylum and human rights, guided tours around the city by refugees, as well as workshops and certification courses for refugees. The club is one of the central actors at the intersection of refugees, sport clubs, and local communities, and thus adds an important contribution to integration. It has won several national prizes for its work.

For further information, please visit:  
<https://www.championsohnegrenzen.com/>

The following Finnish project also uses empowerment as a tool and focuses on individual support and the values of respect and dignity.

#### Helsinki Region / Finland

### Helsinki Sports International

Helsinki Sports International (HSI) is a non-profit organisation with a long history in the Helsinki Region. Its main objective is the improvement of the situation of newly arrived refugees and migrants through integration into sports. The sporting activities take place in Helsinki but also in other cities. The project has various outreach strategies to get in touch with its target group. These include campaigns, open days, guided tours of refugee and youth centres, direct contact through refugee centers and finally through social networks offering free activities like football, futsal, floor ball and also cultural activities like guided tours, discussion groups and educational programmes. HSI takes into account that each individual is unique and has different interests and needs. The work is based on the values of dignity and respect for the individual cultural background of every person. All activities are aimed at empowering the newly arrived refugees or migrants.

The project receives government funding, private donations as well as EU funding. HSI also uses voluntary structures and co-operates with other social organisations such as the Finnish Red Cross, Liikkukaa Sports for All – Ry, Monaliikku, the African Association of Central Finland and the City of Helsinki.

For further information, please visit:  
<https://www.facebook.com/Helsinki-Sports-International-545284439181324/>

The following project started by a Greek NGO has founded its own team comprised of refugee players. By playing against teams of amateur leagues, the refugee team is connected to organised sports.



© Camino

## Athens / Greece

### Organisation Earth: Hope Refugees FC

Organisation Earth is a Greek NGO founded in 2010 and based in Athens that involved refugees in sport related events and matches upon their arrival at the Port of Piraeus.

In July 2016, they started organizing sports activities in Skaramangas and Lavrio refugee camps and soon saw a positive impact on the refugees. Their next step was to organise events outside of the camps, by sending an open call to all camps and squats in Athens.

After tryouts, Hope Refugees FC was set up as a team comprised entirely of refugee players. In November 2016, FIFA and an operational manager funded the project to start an independent championship. During that period, 110 players from 16 different countries played on the team.

Hope Refugee FC decided to help their best players to earn a living through football. Several of these players had previously played professionally in their countries of origin. In October 2017, Hope Refugee FC held new try-outs, and the team now plays against 2nd and 3rd division teams.

In May 2017, the Barcelona Foundation approached Hope Refugee FC to organise a training of the trainers in order to teach children values of sportsmanship, including effort, ambition, team work, humility, and respect. A girl team was started in July 2017, and 150 children are now registered and participate in bi-weekly trainings.

For further information, please visit:

<http://www.organizazionearth.org/en/>

<https://www.facebook.com/EarthRefugee/>





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## EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Support training sessions for refugees can only promote equal opportunities if they take gender into account. Experiences from various European countries show that refugee girls and women have, so far, not been reached sufficiently through sports activities. For this reason, a gender-sensitive approach means in this case, above all, to consider the needs of women and girls. On the one hand, this can be done by designing mixed-gender training sessions appropriately. However, it has proved to be particularly useful to develop special session for girls and women, because these can then be better tailored to the sporting desires and previous sporting experience of girls and/or women, i.e. by designing the framework according to the target group.

Since sport projects designed for refugee girls and women are not well recognised in current sport structures, the following section will give ample examples from different

European countries that show that it is, in fact, possible to reach refugee women and girls with the right strategies.

Certain conditions need to be considered if girls and women are to be reached. One example can be transportation to and from the gym if refugee hostels are remote, and women do not feel safe enough to travel through a city after sunset. Another condition can be childcare so that women are not distracted while exercising. Another important factor is to plan social activities in addition to sporting activities, for example time for conversations and joint meals.

Gender stereotypes and community expectations as well as the challenge to settle into a new life mean that many refugee women tend to be busy with taking care of their family and are hesitant to take time out for themselves by playing sports. Muslim girls and women can face challenges both from within their communities as well as



mainstream society when it comes to exercising without prejudice or islamophobic stereotypes and overcoming patriarchal barriers to women playing sports. If a project wants to reach Muslim girls and women, it is important that participants are able to adhere to religious dress codes and can use appropriate sport outfits.

In general, it is helpful to employ female coaches to reach women and girls. Female coaches can make the trainings more accessible and can serve as a role model. The following swimming project from Italy illustrates how this can be done.

#### Turin / Italy

##### **UISP Turin: Women's Swimming Pool**

At the Massari sports complex in Turin, two hours of sport are dedicated to women in the pool every Sunday morning. The project is conducted by the sports association UISP in Turin. It involves three swimming activities: a beginner and an advanced swimming course for girls and women, free swimming, and an aqua gym.

Only females are present at the activities, including all users of the pool and the instructors. The facility's support staff also ensures that no man can attend the activities or have access to the changing rooms and the pool. With this set-up, the women's pool allows all women, including veiled women, to participate in activities, in total freedom, without violating any religious codes of conduct.

The project also organises social gatherings, such as walks and communal meals, where women have the opportunity to learn about each other's customs and dishes in their respective countries of origin. All women attended the traditional UISP race Vivicità in the town of Turin. A very similar project is conducted in the city of Emilia region.

In 2018, the UISP Committee collaborated with the local Valdese Church, to host seven Syrian women, who had newly arrived under a humanitarian quota. This was part of an agreement to give sport opportunities to women, who had just arrived and have no recreational opportunities.

For further information, please visit:  
<http://www.uisp.it/torino2/#>

The following project from England that caters to Muslim girls and now actively reaches out to refugee girls, employs positive female role models to challenge islamophobia and stereotypical gender roles. The project from Ireland also caters specifically to Muslim women. Both projects successfully offer sports that are regarded as male dominated, such as football or martial arts. One of their goals is also to make women from religious and ethnic minorities more visible in sports usually dominated by white men. This strategy seeks to change the club from within and make it more diverse; but it is also used for PR to make a particular type of sport more attractive for women and girls of colour.

#### London / England (UK)

##### **Maslaha: Muslim Girls Fence**

In the UK islamophobia has a strong gendered dimension that Muslim Girls Fence seeks to address. The project is a collaboration between the NGO Maslaha, based in East London, and British Fencing that was established in 2011. Maslaha currently runs its fencing project in schools and in communities in London, Doncaster, and Birmingham. Currently four girls from Syria, who recently came to Britain as refugees, take part in a fencing project in Doncaster run by Maslaha.

Schools working with the initiative receive ten weeks of weekly fencing classes combined with creative workshops exploring identity and self-expression and challenging stereotyping. The participants can maintain their involvement after the initial training. They also have the opportunity to gain leadership qualifications accredited by British Fencing and to start their own community or school-based fencing clubs. Maslaha also features the Ambassador Scheme, where girls can act as advocates for the project at events and in the media.

By catering to young Muslim girls, the initiative fosters equality through fencing with a strong effect on education, employment, and health. Furthermore, the initiative challenges perceptions of fencing as a white-dominated, elite sport that is not accessible to young people of all backgrounds. Maslaha wants policy-makers and leading national sports organisations to create awareness of the needs and experiences of Muslim





© Lea Peic / fairplay

women. They are currently developing a nationwide programme to involve more Muslim women and girls in sport and physical activity across the UK.

For more information and articles, please visit:  
[www.maslaha.org](http://www.maslaha.org)  
<https://maslaha.org/muslim-girls-fence>  
<http://www.muslimgirls-fence.org/about.html>

#### Dublin / Ireland

##### **Sport Against Racism Ireland: Hijabis and Hat-tricks**

SARI (Sport Against Racism Ireland) is an Irish NGO based in Dublin with keen interests in integration and the general welfare of refugees, asylum seekers and people of ethnic minority backgrounds in Ireland. Hijabis and Hat-tricks is a collaborative project involving SARI, the refugee hostels, the local councils and local sport clubs. The programme offers multiple sporting activities, come together tournaments, and after school activities. It provides football, martial arts, and cricket trainings for Muslim female refugees, one session a week for every activity. It has an average participation of 15 women per week. The programme recruits participants through leaflets and posters left in local mosques, as well as via social media, word of mouth, youth centres and refugee hostels. The increasing numbers of participants and palpable improvement in confidence levels is a mark of success of the programme.

More information, please visit:  
[www.sari.ie](http://www.sari.ie)

Sport and exercise sessions for women and girls aim for empowerment: sport is about strengthening women's self-confidence and promote their right to self-determination and independence. Mobility is often a salient issue.

#### Berlin / Germany

##### **#BIKEYGEES**

The cycling training for refugee women is a grass-roots initiative started in Berlin in 2015, implemented by volunteers and funded by donations.

Berlin is a bike city and a lot of people use their bike as a daily means of transportation. Cycling can be an easy way of (re) gaining individual mobility for refugees and newcomers to Berlin. Women in particular need this support. Many newly arrived women have to walk to get anywhere. They feel isolated in their accommodation.

BIKEYGEES seeks to expand the mobility of female refugees in town and their independence with a free means of transportation. While biking supports their physical abilities, the main aim of the project is empowerment. The project offers open training sessions and exclusive training sessions at refugee hostels. It combines physical activity, relaxation, and fun with the use of a newly acquired language. The common goal fosters a sense of community and friendship.

Volunteers are mainly female, some have a family or personal histories of migration, some do not. The project also offers training in German traffic rules and bike repair workshops. Cycling graduates are actively involved in the project, for instance for language mediation and by helping the others. After a training featuring six units with practical and theoretical lessons, the cycling graduates will get a bike for their own use. So far, 500 women have learnt how to ride a bike in 70 trainings. Over 100 bike sets were handed out to cycling graduates. The project won the German Bike Prize in 2018.

For more information, please visit:  
<http://bikeygees.org/de/>

In order to reach women without or little prior experience in playing sports, it is also important to have accessible trainings that do not focus on competition. This allows women to learn to enjoy sport and exercise without feeling pressured.



## Austria

### Mamanet Austria

The Association Mamanet Austria was founded in Vienna in late 2015 as a sport association for mothers and all women over the age of 30. There are weekly cachibol training sessions. Cachibol is a game similar to volleyball that is very accessible to those who have never played any sports before.

The project is for refugee and migrant women and collaborates with Caritas and various youth centres. Child care is offered at all events. The organisers support women to found their own teams and these teams may compete in an amateur league if they wish.

The main goal of the club is to minimise the barriers to exercise for all mothers and women above the age of 30, whether they are just starting out or have previously played a sport. It also aims to reach those groups that tend to be excluded from sports. In the autumn of 2017, there were 23 weekly courses across Austria and Mamanet won several prizes.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.mamanet-austria.at](http://www.mamanet-austria.at)

The approach to combine sports with exercise and general well-being and health has proven to work well, as the following Finnish example illustrates. The Irish example also focuses specifically on nutrition combined with sports. Some projects also consider women's mental health for their trainings by cooperating with women's shelters and domestic violence counsellors since some of the women may have experienced flight and violence. If participants are traumatised, sport projects need to be sensitive to their special needs, for example with regards to physical boundaries. It is crucial to seek out experts when dealing with mental health issues and trauma since coaches and supervisors are not trained, or qualified, in dealing with those. For these reasons, cooperating with the respective social service providers is very important.

## Helsinki Region / Finland

### Monaliiku Ry: Fit4Life

Fit4Life incorporates an innovative approach to help refugee and migrant women change their lifestyle, and take care of their health through physical exercise and group learning on related topics. The elements in the Fit4Life project are continuously developed further. Fit4Life uses social media as well as partner organisations, social and employment services, and word of mouth to reach out to the target groups.

The activities offered include physical exercise, health check-ups, and consultations on health risks and changes of life style. There are group discussions on resources and opportunities to improve one's health and general well-being, lectures about healthy nutrition, and interactive cooking classes, which the participants can contribute to. All of these weekly group activities take place mainly in the Helsinki region, but also in other municipalities in Finland, and are free of charge. During the three-hour sessions, sport activities and discussions on various topics related to the project are combined, and the participants get assistance with translation and childcare.

Participants have improved their health and knowledge on health related matters, they have included sport activities into their daily life routine, and have increased their personal networks. Finding appropriate spaces for closed group sessions remains a challenge as does the communication across cultural barriers.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.fit4life.fi](http://www.fit4life.fi)





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#### Loughrea and Tuam / Ireland

##### **Galway County Council: Syrian Women's Exercise and Nutrition Programmes**

The Galway Sports Partnership works in conjunction with the Galway County Council's Social Inclusion Unit who have regular contact with the Syrian refugee communities in Galway. Twelve Syrian women, who are housed in Loughrea and Tuam areas, participated in the programmes. The indoor programme provided a one hour per week exercise session, followed by nutrition workshops and lasted for eight weeks. The indoor programme was circuit-based with an element of dance and core strength development.

Participation and commitment were the major challenges faced with the Tuam-based Syrian refugee group. Inconsistent attendance due to family commitments and the religious or cultural beliefs of the women also restricted outdoor participation. The women reported that they have developed great friendships as a result of the programme and a greater sense of community.

For more information, please visit:  
<http://www.galway.ie/en/services/more/localsportspartnership/contactus/>

#### Cardiff / Wales (UK)

##### **Welsh Refugee Council: Women Get Active Project**

The Welsh Refugee Council, an NGO linked to the British Refugee Council initiated the Women Get Active project in collaboration with YMCA and Sport Wales. It started at the end of 2015 and was to be a 12 months pilot programme.

At the beginning, about 15 refugee women attended the women's only Women Get Active sport class at YMCA Cardiff funded by Sports Wales. Later on more than 60 women actively took part in the classes. Many of them were survivors of very difficult situations. The class provided an opportunity for them to escape, to get back in touch with sport, and to make new friends. The project has helped the refugees to cope with mental health problems, especially depression.

The project coordinators decided to open these sessions to local women as well. The latter were charged money for the course, and this contribution went back to the project as a donation. The other positive effect was that it supported the attendees to mix and mingle in a social setting.

For further information and articles, please visit:  
<https://welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk>  
<https://welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk/news/25092015-1118/wales-cares-about-refugees>  
<http://www.jomec.co.uk/intercardiff/social-justice/refugees-get-fit>  
<https://welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk/news/18032016-0645/asylum-seeking-women-get-a-sporting-chance>



© Antonio Cinquegrana

## ORGANISATIONS LED BY MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

In the past, the public discourse on migrant-led sport clubs has often been one of migrants' self-segregation from mainstream society, and thus perceived as a lack of interest or effort to integrate into mainstream society. However, the opposite is the case: migrant-led organisations aim to make it easier for their members to integrate by gathering people from different backgrounds and different histories of migration. Those newly-arrived can benefit from the advice of those who have been in the country for

a longer time, who may have faced similar challenges at the beginning and now feel settled. The latter can pass on their knowledge on integration and support those newly arrived in the country.

Community groups led by migrants and refugees play an important role for advocacy. They can, for example, raise awareness on racism. And in xenophobic societies, a team almost solely comprised of refugee players is a political statement in and of itself.





© MGHRO

## Budapest / Hungary

### Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation: African Star Football Team

Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation (MGHRO) is a humanitarian organisation based in Budapest. MGHRO fights for the rights of migrants and refugees, combats racism and discrimination and encourages social inclusion. MGHRO's African Star Football Team, founded in 1994, has always aimed to provide a platform for a multi-ethnic team in order to prove that positive interaction between people from different ethnic backgrounds is possible.

The team consists predominantly of African players, as well as some Asians and South Americans. Everyone on the team is either a former refugee or a migrant. This has created the opportunity for the players to share their experiences, both good and bad, with integrating into the communities they now live in. The players are able to lean on each other and the process of acclimating and integrating becomes a bit less difficult for them. At the same time, they have a space where they are understood and seen as allies as opposed to being perceived as threats in local Hungarian communities.

The African Star Football Team has football practice every week and matches every weekend; so everyone interacts twice a week. The team participates in Hungarian amateur league tournaments.

The growing social tension and racist climate in Hungary is making it increasingly hard to get funding and maintain the status quo. As a result of the socio-political tensions, players begin to be demotivated and feel helpless, which in turn influences their attendance and participation. This makes it harder to participate in the local and regional tournaments.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.gandhi.hu](http://www.gandhi.hu)

Sport clubs whose members are mainly asylum seekers are more publicly visible, and they can use that to contribute to raise awareness about their lives in mainstream society. This is especially true when they participate in regular training sessions and matches and thus participate in organised sports, at least formally, on equal terms. At the same time, these clubs face bureaucratic and financial difficulties and problems of getting access to training facilities. Therefore it is especially important for these clubs to acquire and use contacts and networks that can help with the necessary know-how to reach sponsors and donors, and to help administer the club.

## Innsbruck / Austria

### FC Sans Papiers

In November 2012, seven refugees of an asylum seeker home in Innsbruck founded a club that was then known as FC Flüchtlingsheim (FC Refugee Home). At the beginning, the club struggled to find a field to train on. The team also lacked the necessary sport equipment. Despite these initial challenges, the founding team was set on maintaining its own club. Eventually an Austrian woman, who is now the club's president, was able to support the club with her contacts to sponsors, the municipality of Innsbruck, and the regional government of Tyrol. The team has since then almost exclusively included players who have applied for asylum in Austria.

The club is now called FC Sans Papiers Innsbruck, and offers German classes and support for doctor's appointments, bureaucratic appointments and help with finding an apartment in addition to its football sessions. The club wants to raise awareness on integration matters with this work. The team plays in a lower league of the Tirol Football Association.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.sanspapiers.at](http://www.sanspapiers.at)



© Liikkukaa

## Finland

### African Association of Central Finland

The African Association of Central Finland is an NGO aiming to bring Africans and people interested in African culture living in Central Finland together. They run short-term projects between one to six months in the field of sports and culture. The target groups for the sporting activities are men, women, and children from diverse backgrounds and origins, mainly from Africa. These include newly arrived refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants who have moved to, and settled in central Finland, and Finland as whole.

The offered sporting activities include football in summer time, futsal in winter time, and different forms of exercises in the gym for men, women, and children. There are monthly meetings and social gatherings. All members are registered members in the association and communicate through mailing lists, WhatsApp, and other virtual forums. These forums are also used to disseminate information about the activities. The main challenge for the work of the African Association is to deal with the lack of funding. Despite this, the sporting activities have boosted both the mental and physical health of their members. Through this, many have found paths to socialise and integrate better into the country.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/African-Association-of-Central-Finland-Keski-Suomen-Afrikkayhdistys-ry-613766901986354/>

Even if migrant-led organisations mainly cater to first and second generation migrants, many of them are also open to locals. Sport can be a means to put migrants and locals in touch, who would often not meet otherwise. It is a special feature of migrant-led initiatives that these interactions are initiated by the migrants themselves, instead of being sought out by representatives of the majority society. This can help to thwart majority-minority dynamics.

## Häme / Finland

### Heritage Hämeenlinna: Sport and Leisure Group for Migrants

Hämeenlinna is a city and municipality of about 68,000 inhabitants in the heart of the province of Häme in the south of Finland. Sport is one of the tools among others used to encourage people to join the group. Most of the participants are interested in meeting people and find a place where to relax and to forget about their daily situation.

The Sport and Leisure Group for Migrants is open for everyone and activities include volleyball, rugby, sauna evenings, skiing, ice fishing, forest walking, cooking, football, barbecue, and week-end gatherings. Renting an indoor hall during the long winter period is a challenge for the group so they organise different activities such as skiing, ice fishing, sauna evenings, etc. They have used the network from their partner Liikkukaa, and also cooperate with Tervakoski Pato football club. Social media applications, Sunday church gatherings, and community associations are used to reach the target group. Each participant contributes financially to the events and activities. To run the organisation good faith is considered more important than dealing with formalised administrative structures.

The Sport and Leisure Group for Migrants also set up an online live TV programme called NANA's TV where the voices of migrants living in Hämeenlinna find an expression. Through this network, issues regarding work conditions, living in Finland, and the positive contributions migrants can have in the region are discussed. Through NANA's TV, the association is able to reach people as far as Africa and also share their living condition with the rest of Finland.

The Sport and Leisure Group for Migrants is built on volunteering. When it first started, the volunteers received support from Liikkukaa – Sport for All. Heritage Hämeenlinna has been participating in several activities organised by Liikkukaa – Sport for All, and benefits from the association's expertise and structure.

For further information, please visit:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLYd8\\_sYxQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLYd8_sYxQ)





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## COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Many volunteers in sport clubs and NGOs find that there is a lack of communication between refugee shelters and those who offer sport training sessions. The shelter's employees have little knowledge about the opportunities refugees can access through sport. What helps is to identify and establish personal contacts with one particular employee.

For many projects, cooperation with different local partners such as community centres, migrant organisations, and local authorities is often key to reaching refugees. Various projects try to work closely with refugee hostels and shelters, and invite the refugees who live there for open days, taster sessions, and friendly matches. The sport clubs aim to include refugees into their club structures in the long run. This is more effective than joining a single training session now and again, because continuous exer-

cise also means establishing stronger social bonds. These then in turn can open up opportunities in terms of new contacts and networks.

One of the challenges these projects face is transport as some of the shelters and hostels are very remote and not well connected to public transit networks. Some programmes therefore provide explicit funding for transportation costs.

Cooperations are also helpful when the aim is to connect refugees to experts, e.g. for psychological support for traumas, psycho-social counselling, and support in dealing with their legal status. It is important that sport coaches know their limits in this regard. Referring people to experts is an important strategy to not be overwhelm their own and their club's capacities.



© Antonio Azevedo/ASF

## Ireland

### Show Racism the Red Card (SRTRC): Club Welcome Programme

The Club Welcome Programme invites refugees from refugee hostels & accommodation centres to engage with local sports clubs by participating in team sports and utilising local sport resources.

The activities involved include an open football coaching evening with the Football Association of Ireland and regular access to local football clubs and local Gaelic games clubs (GAA). Under the Club Welcome Programme, five clubs to date have carried out a programme of sustained work in their varied individual sports, which has contributed to the integration of refugees within Ireland.

- Booth Road Celtic Football Club hosted an open coaching evening, inviting residents from a refugee hostel, and also engaged with residents of the refugee hostel to identify and accommodate access for children in the centre to participate at different levels of the club.
- Sligo Rovers delivered coaching sessions freely accessible to residents in a refugee hostel, once a week over 20 weeks. Sligo Rovers not only offered training sessions for residents of the refugee hostel but also organised fully qualified coaches and friendly games for the residents against local grass root clubs in Sligo.
- Emo FC have provided free access to their all-weather facilities to residents in a refugee hostel and also made a policy decision to allow free membership to their club to children of asylum seekers, in recognition of financial barriers.
- Ballinacurra Gaels GAA club in Limerick engaged with the local support agency and have organised 'Have a Go' days specifically with children of refugees.
- Ballaghaderreen GAA club organised a trip to the All-Ireland football final. The club now has Syrian refugees training with the under 18's football team.

Show Racism the Red Card witnesses a visible increase in the diversity and active participation of refugees in the participant local sport clubs.

For more information, please visit:

<http://theredcard.ie/2018/01/16/3653/>

[www.youtube.com/theredcardire](http://www.youtube.com/theredcardire)

<http://farenet.org/campaigns/refugees-football-database/>

The project Living Sport – Embracing The Future of the Portuguese Olympic Committee uses Olympic athletes as ambassadors for Portuguese sport and collaborates with governmental and non-governmental organisations to promote sport as a tool for integration:

## Portugal

### Portuguese Olympic Committee: Living Sport – Embracing the Future

Living Sport – Embracing the Future is a project of the Portuguese Olympic Committee with the support of the International Olympic Committee. To implement the project, the Portuguese Olympic Committee established partnerships with the High Commissioner for Migration and civil society partners.

The project carries out the following activities:

- facilitation and/or provision of regular sporting activities for refugees in the host centres and host families,
- support for individuals who are particularly passionate about sports to join the federal sport system,
- promotion and awareness of the values of sport and Olympic ideals with the participation of Olympic athletes and ambassadors of Portuguese sport,
- facilitation of professional training for monitors of sports activities,
- organisation of sporting activities for refugee children and young people with children in partnership with local authorities and sports associations,
- participation in sports activities and events organised by the Portuguese Olympic Committee, namely the Olympic Day celebrations and the organisation of seminars, congresses and training activities.

For more information, please visit:

<http://comiteolimpicoportugal.pt/viver-o-desporto-abracar-o-futuro/>





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## Galway / Ireland

### Galway City Partnership: **BRIDGE**

The BRIDGE (Building a Receptive, Integrated and Diverse Galway of Equals) Project is co-funded by the EU under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and Galway City Council. It is coordinated by the Galway City Partnership (GCP). The objective of the project is to promote the effective delivery of reception and integration, the provision of support (including advocacy and capacity building interventions) to asylum seekers and third country nationals living in Galway City and County. The programme offers a wide range of sport activities, such as football activities, futsal tournaments, training sessions with clubs, volunteering with clubs (coaching), walking groups, swimming classes, fitness & nutrition training and charity walks. The target groups are refugees in refugee hostels in Galway City and County. Information about the project was disseminated to the target group in Galway via information sessions including public launching of the BRIDGE project, information leaflets and Facebook page notifications, weekly clinics at the direct provision centres and county, connections with various sports groups and clubs, social inclusion events and finally, through sports related volunteering in the community.

The programme has improved relations with the community and stakeholders. There is improved awareness about the plight and presence of refugees. Through the BRIDGE project advocacy programme, the refugees' awareness of the resources in the community has also improved.

Changes in status remain a challenge as eligibility for, or access to, service may be revoked. This is a major problem because even though status may change, the needs for services may not.

For more information, please visit:

<http://gcp.ie/programmes-supports/support-for-communities/asylum-migration-integration-fund-a-m-i-f-the-bridge-project/>

Municipalities can be important partners in implementing sport training sessions because they have the necessary financial means, infrastructure, and overview of what is on offer in their municipality. They can also facilitate contact with various different local actors, including sport clubs, refugee shelters, community centres, sport initiatives etc.

## Iraklion / Greece

### Municipality of Iraklion, Crete / Post Deputy Municipalities of Sports and Social Policy: **Fit for All**

The Municipality of Iraklion in Crete implemented an Erasmus+ Project Fit for All with the aim of utilising sports to make people come together and socialise to support the long-term integration of refugees.

The project also involves local sports clubs, and networks, and implements various activities of other initiatives with the participation of other municipalities in Crete. The municipality reached out to refugees residing in apartments funded by UNHCR and informed them about the sports activities available in municipal sports centres and at local sports clubs which had expressed their interest in the project. Adult refugees were integrated into these where possible, and all minors were integrated into sports activities.

The project activities included athletics, swimming, rowing, tennis, table tennis, gymnastics, boxing, wrestling, archery, fencing, basketball, football, badminton, trampoline and judo.

For further information, please visit:

<https://www.heraklion.gr/municipality/diakratika/fit-for-all.html>

The following programme developed in the federal state of Hesse/Germany uses the role of the municipality strategically by putting an emphasis on connecting different partners: cities and municipalities can apply for funding to establish local networks between refugees, shelters, sport clubs and non-profit organisations active in refugee support. These are initiated and guided by volunteer sport consultants. This is a way to establish demand-based sport sessions in municipalities that are supported by different partners.



## Hesse / Germany

### Sport Youth Association Hesse: Federal State Programme Sport and Refugees

Sport and Refugees is a programme established by Hesse's Ministry of the Interior and Sports. The programme collaborates with Hesse's Sport Youth Association to support cities and municipalities in their efforts to initiate sport and exercise opportunities for refugees.

As prior programmes have showed, networking is crucial for establishing successful sport projects. Within this programme, so called volunteer 'sport consultants' serve as connectors. They put refugees, social workers and local sport clubs in touch, and accompany refugees to training sessions for a while. Cities and municipalities can apply for funding from the programme to pay compensations to volunteer coaches and sport consultants as well as material costs for workout clothes, gear and transportation.

Various training opportunities that cover a broad range of activities have been established this way. The best case scenario is if a participating club initiates new trainings, and then runs them long-term. An example for this is the club Egelsbach 1874 e.V. that established a midnight football training session as a regular offer.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.sportjugend-hessen.de/integration/sport-und-fluechtlinge/das-programm-sport-und-fluechtlinge/>

Another programme that is implemented across Germany initiates local Welcome Alliances that include the previously mentioned local partners as well as professional football clubs of the 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> division of the Bundesliga. The professional clubs can enrich local partnerships with their contacts, resources, and PR work. They provide networks and promote the local alliances.

## Germany

### German Children and Youth Foundation: Welcome to Football

The programme Welcome to Football was initiated by the Bundesliga Foundation and implemented by the German Children and Youth Foundation. The programme is also supported by representatives of the Federal Ministry for Migration, Refugees and Integration.

The Welcome Alliances seek to make sports accessible for young refugees under the age of 27. Nearly 100 organisations work together under the Welcome to Football umbrella. Currently, 24 alliances bring together a range of different actors: professional clubs, amateur clubs and organisations from civil society. In addition to football trainings and matches, the Welcome Alliances also provide opportunities in the fields of culture, education, qualification and networking. These may include language courses and trainings in career counselling for volunteers and supporters.

The local alliances receive financial and technical support, and are guided throughout the process. The project developed a best practice guide for coaches that aims to help them train diverse groups. It is not only the refugees who benefit from the programme but also the sport clubs. By now, nearly 100 refugees are actively involved as volunteers in the Welcome Alliances. They use their skills to serve as instructors, co-coaches or interpreters, and thus pass on the support they have been given.

In 2018, the programme focused on supporting volunteering and vocational counselling. In addition, the programme wants to establish specific training opportunities for girls that have so far not benefited very much from the alliances.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.dkjs.de/themen/alle-programme/willkommen-im-fussball/>





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## EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATION

Language acquisition and vocational trainings are important factors for societal participation and inclusion. Sport can help to foster education and qualification in different ways.

Sport is a means to develop skills that are relevant for other areas of social life such as teamwork or following jointly agreed rules and values, such as fairness and respect. In addition to these soft skills, sport is also a way to reach refugees to then offer additional support, i.e. combine trainings with additional vocational or language qualifications. The training sessions themselves are a very accessible way to practice a new language and career counselling can take place right after a training session.

Lastly, organised grass-roots sports is in itself a sector that depends on volunteering, and needs qualified volunteers. Appropriate trainings can empower refugees to take on responsibilities as coaches and instructors and thus be active members of a club. This strengthens their self-confidence and help to changes their roles within society: from someone who needs help to someone who support others.

The following projects describe these different approaches in combining sports and qualifications. They show how sport can be used successfully as a way of empowerment of refugees.



## Berlin / Germany

### Berlin Football Association: Football Without Borders

In April 2016, the Berlin Football Association launched the project Football Without Borders to support refugees through football. A special feature is the opportunity for refugees to attend coaching courses.

A lot of clubs are looking for volunteers who want to support the training sessions. The project offers an introduction into a formalised coaching–certificate as a 4–day–course. So far, the project has had about 60 participants (all male) and offered language mediation during the sessions. Through this qualification course, refugees are included in the organised sport system as regular coaches or sport instructors. Their potential and their interest in volunteering is used in order to integrate them as active members in Berlin's football clubs.

Using criteria such as motivation, reliability, knowledge of German, and understanding contents, 12 of these participants have been selected to acquire the regular UEFA Grass–Roots Licence in a special workshop. Afterwards, they participated in the regular qualification course of the Berlin Football Association together with local participants. That way refugee participants get to meet local participants and both sides learn from each other. Finally, participants are linked to clubs, which are looking for new volunteers.

More information, please visit:

<https://berliner-fussball.de/soziales/integration/fussball-grenzen-los/>

## Longford / Ireland

### FAI in collaboration with Longford Sports Partnership: KOWELS

KOWELS (Kicking off with English Language Skills) is an English language programme that uses football as an adjunctive medium of education to improve the English language skills of its participants.

The programme is implemented for refugees in refugee hostels in County Longford. The group enrolled in the programme meets twice a week and is composed of men (both young and old). KOWELS is designed as an 8–week module. Each module lasts for 90 minutes. Part 1 consists of a 45–minute language class delivered by trained tutors. Part 2 consists of a 45–minute football skills training session delivered by trained coaches and mentors.

Apart from the training in language skills, the participants enjoyed access to clubs and their facilities on a regular basis, which would have been otherwise out of their financial reach. Participants showed improved club membership and training attendance after the programme.

More information, please visit:

[http://www.fai.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/KOWELS\\_booklet\\_final\\_print%20small%20size%20version.pdf](http://www.fai.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/KOWELS_booklet_final_print%20small%20size%20version.pdf)

<https://www.shannonside.ie/news/local/longford/fai-language-soccer-skills-programme-help-longford-asylum-seekers/>

<http://www.longfordcoco.ie/Services/Economic-Community-Development/Documents/Longford-Sports-Partnership/>





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## Vienna / Austria

### Kicking Without Borders

The football project Kicking Without Borders has weekly training sessions for young refugees. Around 120 youth participate and are supported in founding their own teams and joining tournaments. There are two men's teams, one women's team, and a children's team. These teams are not part of any league, but join friendly matches against other clubs.

All teams now have co-coaches who are refugees themselves, and refugee players participate in regular club management meetings. The project offers its athletes a lot of additional support, for example through the Job Goals programme, which provides the young adults with opportunities to try out and experience jobs in different sectors. Together with collaborating businesses, the project organises shadowing and open days that help athletes to understand a particular vocation and have first on-the-job experience. The second part of the educational programme is #BeASkillCoach: in three consecutive modules, players develop soft skills in addition to their sport skills to enable them to conduct workshops in their own communities. Activities such as communal cooking for a community centre and a shelter for the homeless in Vienna aim to involve the young players even more in the project and society at large. In spring 2018, the club started an additional project, Chess Without Borders, that helps players to practice their focus, problem-solving and decision making.

The project has won several national awards in 2016 and 2017.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.kicken-ohne-grenzen.at](http://www.kicken-ohne-grenzen.at)

## Berlin / Germany

### State Sport Federation Berlin:

#### SPORTBUNT – Clubs Live Diversity!

SPORTBUNT – Clubs Live Diversity! is a project of the State Sport Federation Berlin funded by Berlin's city council. Berlin sport clubs can apply for financial support for their integration activities and in setting up new sport classes for refugees. The main strategy to reach out to the clubs and refugees is to connect refugee shelters and hostels with nearby sport clubs. Project members initiate a first get together, where refugees and sports clubs establish personal contacts and draft a training schedule together.

The project also highlights specific clubs and trainings suitable for refugees in different languages on the SPORTBUNT website and on flyers. The website also includes an interactive map of Berlin for refugees who are actively looking for a sports club. Another aspect is the project's empowerment strategy: once a year, refugees can join a coaching training in order to become certified coaches or sports instructors. Once they attain this official certification from the German Olympic Sports Committee, the project connects them to sport clubs in Berlin, where they can start working. The coaching certification helps refugees to gain first work experience in the field of sports in Germany. Gaining a high quality certificate also boosts CVs and improves their chances on the general job market.

A major challenge for the project is refugees' volatile living situation as many refugees are forced to move from one shelter to another hostel, often at opposite ends of the city. This frequent moving from one hostel or flat to another makes it difficult for them to continue training with one particular club. Refugees are also often very busy with finding jobs or participating in the mandatory government 'integration courses'. These preoccupations make regular participation in training sessions difficult.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.sportbunt.de](http://www.sportbunt.de)



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## ANTI-RACIST EVENTS AND MULTICULTURAL TOURNAMENTS

The following examples illustrate how public sport events can raise awareness on topics such as integration, forced migration, asylum, racism, and discrimination. In addition, these events serve as an opportunity for very efficient networking between people working towards a common goal. One of the most well-known examples of these events is

the Mondiali Antirazzisti in Italy that draws teams from all over Europe. Among these are also Italian teams comprised entirely of refugees; refugee teams from other parts of Europe, however, cannot join the tournament because of travel restrictions.



#### Castelfranco Emilia / Italy

##### UISP:

##### **Mondiali Antirazzisti**

The Mondiali Antirazzisti is the biggest and most long-running sport event against racism. Every year this anti-racist tournament continues to grow in terms of popularity and numbers. The festival features sport, music, meetings, and cultural activities.

The Mondiali Antirazzisti is organised by UISP to raise awareness on the different types of marginalization that still exist in our society. For 21 years, this annual event has run on the belief that friendship and mutual knowledge among people of different cultures or religions is not only possible, but also beautiful. Playing sports together is a way to establish a new community.

During five days in July, associations, anti-racist supporters, migrant communities, civil society organisations, meet at the Bosco Albergati park in the town of Castelfranco Emilia (Modena province). Overall, 6.000 participants from all over the world celebrate diversity by playing football, basketball, volleyball, touchball or touch rugby together. The event also features street bands and artists engaged in social activities through their music. They do it participating in debates about the most important news of the year, covering issues such as fandom, migration, right of citizenship, sexual orientation and gender equality, and the environment. All participants and staff camp together, creating over a few days a real village. All the Mondiali Antirazzisti tournaments are non-competitive, mixed (women and men play together), all teams are invited to exchange players, and there are no referees (matches are self-refereed). The most important trophies are the ones dedicated to Fair Play and for associations which work all year long on anti-discrimination projects (Mondiali Antirazzisti Cup). Of the 170 teams that attended Mondiali Antirazzisti in 2017, an average of 40 teams were composed by refugees. Unfortunately is not possible to involve asylum seekers from other parts of Europe because of travel restrictions.

For more information, please visit:  
<http://www.mondialiantirazzisti.org>

International or domestic events such as world Refugee Day or the International Weeks Against Racism can be leveraged to gain media attention for sport events. It requires innovative and creative ideas to identify these occasions. The following example shows how an international bike race is used to develop a community-oriented project that brings locals and refugees together for joint bike trips.

#### Trentino / Italy

##### UISP Trentino:

##### **Bicycle Against Racism**

Bicycles Against Racism is a cycling route to encourage the meeting between Trentino citizens and asylum seekers, which ends with the participation of a group of five people at L'Eroica di Gaiole in Chianti, the most important vintage cycling race in the world.

Cycling is not just a means of transport, but the paradigm of a sustainable future that includes well-being, environmental sustainability, and freedom of movement. The UISP Trentino has managed to obtain five entries to L'Eroica di Gaiole in Chianti, which involves five thousand participants from every corner of the world. Three of these will be reserved for in the Province of Trento. The project also initiated collective training with the entire population of Trento, including asylum seekers currently residing on the provincial territory. Refugees participate in a training schedule and gradually train together until the race. These are bicycle tours accessible to all, and facilitate the meeting between people. They also promote alternatives to travelling by car.

For more information, please visit:  
<http://www.uisp.it/trento/pagina/bar-bicycle-against-racism>

#### Dublin / Ireland

##### SARI:

##### **World Refugee Day Fair Play Cup**

Show Racism the Red Card (SARI) organises the World Refugee Day – Fair Play Cup as an integration through football programme. The objective of this programme is to celebrate the contribution of refugees and asylum seekers to communities throughout Ireland and also highlight their plight. The programme is a collaboration between SARI and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and uses contacts within the refugee centres across Ireland to reach prospective participants. SARI also uses mainstream media and social media to inform the Irish public of the event dates and activities. The activities on the day are primarily football oriented. An average of over 200 football players, drawn from refugee and community groups, participate in the event every year. The event is also jointly supported by the local authority (Dublin City Council) and the local police.

For more information, please visit:  
<http://www.sari.ie/world-refugee-day-3/%22>





# HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY INCLUDE REFUGEES IN AND THROUGH SPORTS? – QUALITY CRITERIA

The following quality criteria for self-assessment are intended to help sports clubs or organisations working with refugees in sports (such as refugee organisations, youth clubs, and others working with sports and refugees) evaluate their work and allow those involved in organizing the sports projects to figure out where they stand and in which respect they could or should refine their offer. They are meant to inspire clubs and organisations providing new ideas and impulses. In some areas, the standards may seem to be very high, in other areas, the criteria may constitute an inherent part of a project's daily routines. Even if a club or an organisation does not or cannot meet all of the criteria, they can still serve as guidelines for high-quality sports activities, motivate clubs and organisations to reflect on their work and provide impulses for their further development.<sup>3</sup>

## Project Conception

Before a new project or offer is developed, the club or organisation<sup>4</sup> should elaborate a common conception.

- ✓ The sports club or organisation agrees on the specific objectives to be reached with the new project or activity, apart from inclusion through sports.
- ✓ The sports club or organisation comes to an agreement as to which particular refugee groups the project should target (children and adolescents, adults, women and girls, mixed teams including both refugees and locals etc.).
- ✓ The sports club or organisation agrees on the type of sport they wish to offer and on the specific form the offer should take, while bearing refugees' needs and interests in mind.

<sup>3</sup> The presented quality criteria are based on key results from a focus group survey of the SPIN project.

<sup>4</sup> The term 'Sports club' or 'organisation' could refer to different (governing) levels of the organisation, such as board members, instructors, or sport teams.

- ✓ The sports club or organisation should involve refugees when it comes to developing the new project or offer.
- ✓ The sports club or organisation agrees on the way they plan to reach target groups and promote their new offer. This involves meeting possible partners, identifying locations in which the target groups can be found and/or ways of establishing contact.
- ✓ If necessary, additional support is organised in order to enable refugees to participate (e.g. a transport service, childcare, the lending of sportswear and equipment).

## Cooperation and Networking

Effective cooperation and networks are valuable for all parties involved: They facilitate access to refugees, supply the club or organisation with necessary information and offer the type of assistance that exceeds what the club or organisation can provide.

- ✓ In order to promote the new sports offer and attract participants, the club or organisation establishes contact with projects, initiatives and institutions offering assistance for refugees (such as refugee homes, refugee initiatives and women's groups) and with other social organisations in the neighbourhood.
- ✓ The club or organisation knows whom to turn to, if assistance or detailed information by experts is needed, for instance regarding bureaucratic and asylum-related issues that may arise in connection with refugees' player permits or volunteer placements.
- ✓ When it comes to establishing networks with external partners, the club or organisation will check if migrants or migrant organisations with the corresponding cultural knowledge and language skills could act as mediators and promote new offers.



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## Qualification and Targeting

To be able to reach and properly support refugees, coaches and training supervisors implementing the offer should not only know their sport, but should also possess pedagogical, communicative and methodological expertise and be familiar with possible support networks.

- ✓ Coaches and training supervisors have a sufficiently large methodological repertoire to develop training goals beyond sporting skills and expertise (such as enhancing self-confidence, fostering personal development and promoting social inclusion and team building etc.).
- ✓ Coaches and training supervisors are able to ensure mutual understanding during training sessions. They know how to explain exercises with the help of basic vocabulary or non-verbal methods or avail themselves of the help of others who can interpret for them.
- ✓ Coaches and training supervisors hold meetings with parents in order to explain the significance that playing sports can have for the personal development of children and adolescents. They have the necessary communicative skills to establish contact with the parents.
- ✓ Coaches and training supervisors know the limitations of their competences. They know which experts they can refer refugees to, if they find themselves confronted with problems that require the help of an expert (e.g. psycho-social issues or traumas).
- ✓ Coaches and training supervisors know the limitations of their capacity. They develop a positive relationship with the refugees without making their problems their own.

## Gender Sensitivity

The sports club or organisation should develop measures to ensure that their offers do not only attract male refugees, but that women and girls also gain access to sports.

- ✓ Offers are not exclusively tailored to the needs of male refugees. The interests of women and girls, for instance their constraints regarding training hours, their need for respect for physical boundaries and their need for socializing are taken into account, when new offers are developed.
- ✓ When it comes to choosing coaches and training supervisors, the club or organisation ensures that these positions are filled with both men and women. Female coaches can be crucial role models.
- ✓ In order to facilitate access for women and girls, sports clubs are prepared to accept sportswear that complies with refugees' religious or cultural rules (even if it differs from what their players or athletes would usually wear).





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## Inclusion and Active Participation

The sports club or organisation facilitates the inclusion and active participation of refugees. This furthers their willingness to assume responsibility, strengthens their self-confidence and is a real gain for club life.

- ✓ There is a dedicated contact person (e.g. an intercultural officer) refugees can turn to, if they have any questions concerning the club or organisation and its regular sporting activities. The refugees know the contact person and can easily reach them.
- ✓ Refugees are encouraged to commit and become actively involved in the club or organisation. Their resources are taken into account, so that they can be incorporated in a way that matches their skills.
- ✓ Coaches and training supervisors treat refugees in an appreciative way and on equal terms. Individual initiative of refugees is welcomed.
- ✓ Contact between established members and refugees is furthered, e.g. by combining sporting activities and social activities (e.g. encouraging the refugees' active participation in sports festivals and joint festivities).
- ✓ Coaches and training supervisors are open-minded and show interest, when it comes to dealing with refugees, but do not pressurise them with encroaching questions, e.g. regarding cultural characteristics, the causes or the course of their flight.
- ✓ The club or organisation develops a strategy how to achieve the permanent incorporation of the refugees in the club.

## Intercultural Awareness, Anti-Racism and Non-Discrimination

In order to ensure that all participants can enjoy joint sporting activities without experiencing any discrimination, intercultural awareness and a clear stance against racism and discrimination on the part of the club or organisation are paramount for their work with refugees.

- ✓ Coaches and training supervisors understand the difficult situation that refugees find themselves in. They are prepared to reflect on their own expectations towards refugees and to adapt them to a realistic level, if necessary.
- ✓ Intercultural open-mindedness regarding different approaches and perspectives can be taken for granted on the part of the coaches and training supervisors, as well as a preparedness to question their own prejudices and stereotypes.
- ✓ The club or organisation creates a welcoming social atmosphere and expresses its openness to diversity. This is mirrored in the physical environment (for instance, by taking into account different food and drink habits, by diverse pictures in the club's home etc.).
- ✓ Coaches and training supervisors convey that fairness and respect for others are key values of the sport, mandatory for all players or athletes.
- ✓ Within the club or organisation, there is no room for racism and discrimination. Coaches and training supervisors know how to react in case of racist or discriminatory incidents. Corresponding procedures have been agreed on, including complaint and disciplinary procedures.
- ✓ Coaches and sports instructors get access to intercultural trainings and qualifications, and are willing to participate.



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## Communication and Transparency

Transparent communication regarding the new offer, its objectives and limitations helps avoid misunderstandings and disappointments, defuse potential conflicts of interest and reach new participants.

- ✓ The planned activities and their objectives are broadly discussed within the club or organisation at an early stage so as to be able to address any concerns and criticism from within in a timely manner.
- ✓ The new offer is promoted on the website of the club or organisation and on social media. It is presented in a way that makes refugees feel that they are being addressed, e.g. with the help of a multilingual introduction and photos representing diversity.
- ✓ Coaches and training supervisors explain the structures of organised sports to the refugees, painting a realistic picture of professional sports in the host country in order to avoid disappointment at a later stage.

## Focus on Participation Instead of Performance

Performance may be important in sports, but in order facilitate access for everyone, the club should consider activities for/at all levels and focus also on participation, not only on performance. An ambience that allows everyone to play free of fear or pressure is motivating, shared experiences strengthen the sense of belonging and facilitate contact.

- ✓ The club or organisation provides offers catering to different performance levels, so that refugees with little or no sporting experience are given an opportunity to participate (in open training sessions and festivals, for instance) as well as refugees with a high performance level.
- ✓ Additional activities allowing refugees to play leisure-oriented sports or team excursions are developed. These focus on the shared experience of playing sports and not be geared towards any achievement (including, for instance, fair play tournaments or joint excursions to a high rope course, an ice rink or a bowling alley).










# **SPORT WELCOMES REFUGEES**

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