



Equal access for migrant volunteers to sports clubs in Europe

A baseline study

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Publisher

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Our thanks to

Annette Schmaltz, Berlin (Translation), Matthäus Zinner, Vienna (Layout) and all the experts from Berlin, Budapest, Dublin, Helsinki, Lisbon, Rome, Vienna and the interviewees from the sports clubs Liberi Nantes (Rome), Mahatma Gandhi FC (Budapest) and SG Egelsbach 1874 e.V. (Egelsbach).

Selected photographs by JMÖ (Vienna), fairplay-VIDC (Vienna), MGHRO (Budapest), Liberi Nantes (Rome), Iris Jaron and Thomas Geiß (Egelsbach) and IKEB (Vienna).

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The ESPIN project is co-funded by the European Commission under the ERASMUS+ Sport Programme. This publication reflects only the author's view and the Agency and the Commission are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contains.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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Introduction: objectives and methods

The first part of the present study investigates in how far migrants and ethnic minorities have equal access to the structures of organized sports in Europe, exploring above all to which extent they commit themselves as volunteers and hold honorary positions in sports clubs – as coaches or board members, for instance. It covers the large area of grassroots sports, excluding the professional sector.

With this focus on volunteering, the active engagement of migrants in sports is examined: From this perspective, they are not so much regarded as a target group for offers (such as sporting activities for migrants promoting inclusion), but rather as active members of society who shape social processes as well as organizations.

The first part of the study provides an analysis of the current situation and identifies existing barriers impeding migrants' access as well as different types of strategies to eliminate such barriers. The significance of migrant sports clubs within the context of volunteer work is also discussed. This part is based on a review of pan-European surveys, nationwide surveys and documents of the European Commission. In addition, ten qualitative interviews were conducted with experts from seven countries, either via Skype or on the phone. The experts had been recommended by the organizations participating in the project and maintain close ties with the respective organizations. In two cases, representatives of the organizations themselves were interviewed. Interviewees were recruited from various social spheres (science, politics, sports clubs, sports associations, migrant organizations), covering a broad range of different perspectives.¹ Due to the small number of interviews per country (one or two), they can only provide a glimpse of the respective local situation. Therefore, the national studies prepared within the context of the previous SPIN project were consulted for more information. The second part of the study focuses on case studies from three different European countries, which are analyzed in order to extract conclusions regarding successful strategies and recommendations. They are based on face-to-face interviews with the members of the sports clubs in Budapest (Hungary), Rome (Italy) and Egelsbach (Germany) and participant observation during events or sport activities of the clubs. To conclude this study, recommendations for the inclusion and participation of migrant volunteers and athletes are presented.

The study was prepared within the context of the "European Sport Inclusion Network – Promoting Equal Opportunities of Migrants and Minorities through Volunteering in Sport" (ESPIN)², co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The following organizations participate in the project: the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (VIDC/fairplay) from Austria, sports umbrella organization Liikkukaa from Finland, sports association Unione Italiana Sport Per Tutti (UISP) from Italy, the professional football players' union SJPF from Portugal, Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organization from Hungary, the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) and Camino from Germany, dedicated to social science research and further education (Camino – Werkstatt für Fortbildung, Praxisbegleitung und Forschung im sozialen Bereich gGmbH).

¹ The interviewees are listed in the annex.

² <http://www.sportinclusion.net>, 13.10.2016



Framing the study

● Definitions

In different EU member states, different terms are used with reference to volunteering (e.g. volunteer work, civic engagement, honorary post), depending on the aspect of the phenomenon that is emphasized in a given context.

In general, “volunteering” refers to an activity undertaken as a result of one’s own intrinsic motivation, based on one’s own decisions, unpaid³ and not for financial gain. This work is assumed for the benefit of society, a local community, the environment or non-relatives, by supporting a non-profit organization or an initiative launched by a local community, for instance (cf. BMASK 2009, 12, Angermann/Sittermann 2010, 2).

Ideally, voluntary commitment benefits both society at large and the volunteers themselves. It has to be distinguished from gainful employment and should not replace the latter. Some studies differentiate between formal and informal voluntary commitment – the first being found in organizations, the latter provided within the context of neighbourly assistance, for instance.

³ Reports state that in some countries, the notion of unpaid commitment seems to be losing ground to allowances.

Since the present study examines the structures of organized sports, it focuses only on formal voluntary commitment. A further distinction has to be drawn between regular volunteer work, which often means accepting a certain honorary position, assuming the corresponding responsibility within the organization, and the occasional assumption of volunteer tasks, such as providing assistance when it comes to organizing large sports events (cf. GHK 2010a).

The term “migrant” is used to describe people who live in another country than they were born in, referring to the experience of international, cross-border migration (cf. Reinprecht 2009, 138). Sometimes the meaning is extended to include the first- and second-generation descendants of



“Migrant” is applied to a wide range of very diverse groups with different cultural, linguistic, religious and social backgrounds and does not provide any information as to a person’s nationality.

those who migrated a new country, sometimes their descendants are described as having a “migration background” (the latter is common practice in Germany, for instance). Such a wide understanding can be useful when it comes to discussing issues such as equal opportunities or exclusion. It can, however, also be stigmatizing

and contribute to the perpetuation of people’s sense of non-belonging (cf. Reinprecht 2009, 138), particularly if the term “migration background” is still applied to the third generation to characterize these people as “being different”. In the present text, “migrant” is generally used to describe those who migrated from one country to another themselves; expressions such as “second generation” are used to draw further distinctions. The use of the term “migration background” is mostly limited to those cases in which the quoted studies use it.

The term “(ethnic) minority” is particularly popular in the Anglo-American area. For several reasons, it has not (yet) become prevalent in other countries, including Germany. It refers to those who can be distinguished from the majority with regard to certain external, linguistic or cultural



“Minority” emphasizes the fact that (ethnic) minorities command less resources and less power to impose their interests than the majority population. When it comes to describing people who do not share the privileges of the majority population, this term appears to be more appropriate than that of the “migration background”.

characteristics, such as colour. Ethnic minorities do not necessarily have to have a migration background (an example in case are the Irish Travellers, an indigenous group living in Ireland, distinct from the majority population, with a history, language and culture of their own). In some countries, the term is primarily or exclusively applied to officially recognized national

minorities that have been granted a special, legally recognized status and certain minority rights, regarding, for instance, education and measures promoting their languages. In 1998, the Council of Europe officially recognized them in its Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities⁴.

● Migration in context

Framing the study, one must also point to the fact that the political circumstances and the social context vary by country, including aspects such as each country’s particular history of migration: Ireland, for instance, had a long history of emigration and it was only in the mid-90s, due to its economic growth, that it began to experience an increase in immigration. Germany and Austria, by

⁴ <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Reports/Html/157.htm>, 10.07.2015.

contrast, have a longer history of immigration, as these countries began to recruit migrant workers, literally called “guest workers” in German, as early as the 60s and 70s.

Migration rates, based on the number of newly arrived migrants in relation to the population as a whole, vary greatly among the different European countries: In 2011, Austria recorded 12.4 newly arrived migrants per 1,000 inhabitants, Germany 6.0 and Portugal only 1.9.⁵

However, a large proportion of migrants living in a specific country and a long history of immigration do not automatically entail equal opportunities for migrants and their children and grand-



Studies find that discriminatory attitudes and a general rejection of migrants are widespread in Europe. A study conducted in eight European countries by the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation revealed that approximately half of its respondents agreed that there were too many migrants in their respective countries (Zick/Küpper/Hövermann 2011, 62). In its latest report, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights states that “[i]t was observed that the impact of the economic crisis, high unemployment rates, fears relating to the arrival of migrants and a gradual loss of trust in democratic processes fuel racism, xenophobia and related intolerance in the European Union” (FRA 2014, 4f).

children or for ethnic minorities in general. The national SPIN study from Austria, for instance, laments that the country has hardly developed a culture of inclusion, a fact reflected in an educational policy that sustains a highly selective system which in turn limits migrants’ educational success and the corresponding chances of social advancement (SPIN study Austria 2011, 1). This does not only concern Austria: Several studies reveal that migrants find themselves at a disadvantage within educational systems across Europe.⁶

Disadvantages also exist within the labour market: A pan-European study finds that migrants tend to be offered lower-paid jobs than non-migrants, work longer hours, are more often exposed to unhealthy working conditions and offered less opportunities for career development. At work, they are often exposed to discrimination by colleagues and superiors.⁷

⁵ <http://de.statista.com/infografik/1957/einwanderung-pro-1000-der-gesamtbevoelkerung-im-jahr-2011/>, 10.07.2015.

⁶ <http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/newsletter/203246/chancengleichheit>, 10.07.2015.

⁷ http://www.epo.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2713:migranten-in-europa-leiden-unter-massiver-benachteiligung&catid=17&Itemid=87, 10.07.2015.



Volunteering, sports and migration: assessing the situation

● Volunteering and sports: results of pan-European surveys

The White Paper on Sports⁸ the European Commission published in 2007 emphasizes the significance of sports for an active civil society. The strategy paper states that “[p]articipation in a team, principles such as fair play, compliance with the rules of the game, respect for others, solidarity and discipline as well as the organization of amateur sport based on non-profit clubs and volunteering reinforce active citizenship” (European Commission 2007a, 13). The Commission estimates that approximately 70 million people are members of sports clubs across Europe. However, membership rates vary greatly from country to country within the European Union: According to the Eurobarometer survey “Sport and Physical Activity”, 25% of all players and athletes in the Netherlands and

⁸ The White Paper on Sports “is the first large-scale European initiative on sport. It sets strategic guidelines on the role of sport in the European Union”, cf. http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/sport/l35010_en.htm, 10.07.2015.

19% of their German counterparts play sports within a sports club, but only 3% of those active in Italy and Hungary, respectively (European Commission 2010, 19ff.).⁹

Volunteering forms the basis for the organization of sporting activities within the European Union: The European Commission assumes that approximately ten million act as volunteers in more than 700,000 sports clubs. In more than half of all EU countries, it is the sports sector that the majority of all volunteers pertain to, the largest share of them being found in football, the second largest in basketball (GHK 2010b, 6; GHK 2010a, 188).

According to the document accompanying the White Paper on Sport, voluntary commitment in sports “must be considered as one of the cornerstones of the characteristics of sport in Europe” (European Commission 2007b, 14). The mentioned Eurobarometer survey confirms that a significant number of people across the European Union supports sporting activities by way of voluntary commitment, although major differences seem to exist between the different member countries.



In the Eurobarometer survey “Sport and Physical Activity”, a comparatively large proportion of respondents from Finland (18%), Austria (15%) and Ireland (14%) state that they serve as volunteers to support sporting activities, whereas respondents from Portugal (2%) and Italy (3%) rarely do so (European Commission 2010, 64ff.).¹⁰ Although based on data from different national surveys that can only be compared to a limited extent, a meta-study also reveals considerable differences between individual countries (GHK 2010a, 176).

If sports is ascribed such crucial role when it comes to imparting values, promoting social inclusion and, in particular, in activating young people, as programmatically done for the European Union in the White Paper on Sports, one can conclude that “the accessibility of sport activity needs to be ensured for all citizens” and that “[f]or this purpose, the specific needs and situation of under-represented groups must be addressed, and the special role that sport can

play for disabled persons and gender equality must be taken into account” (European Commission 2007b, 16). The endeavour to ensure equal access to sporting activities for different social groups should, however, not only include men and women as well as people with physical disabilities, but also people of different origin, language, colour and religion. This is at least implied in another section of the strategy paper that underscores the significance of sports for the inclusion of migrants and its function of promoting intercultural dialogue (European Commission 2007a, 15).

But what does the social reality in the European Union look like? What is the current state of affairs regarding equal access to sporting activities for migrants and ethnic minorities? Which role are they playing as volunteers in sports clubs?



The Eurobarometer survey also reveals significant differences between men and women when it comes to volunteering in sports, i.e. that the majority of sports volunteers in the EU are men: 9% of male respondents say they volunteer, as opposed to 5% of female respondents (European Commission 2010, 59). Another pan-European study on volunteering that is partly dedicated to the sports sector substantiates this finding, concluding that “volunteering in the sport sector is largely dominated, at all levels, by men” (GHK 2010a, 180).

The mentioned Eurobarometer survey does not provide any data to answer these questions. What it does reveal, however, are remarkable differences between men and women, which could be relevant regarding the sub-issue of equal access for female migrants: The survey reveals that 13% of the male, but only 8% of the female respondents who play sports do so in clubs. This difference is particularly pronounced in the 15 – 24 age bracket, in which 25% of the

male respondents state that they are active members of a sports club, whereas only 11% of the females do (European Commission 2010, 23).

⁹ The European average amounts to 11%.

¹⁰ The European average amounts to 7%.

Moreover, the Eurobarometer survey finds that people who stay in education for longer are more likely to volunteer. Again, this is confirmed by the GHK study, which also assumes that people who obtain a higher degree or reach a higher level of vocational training “are more likely to volunteer in the sport sector than people with lower education or vocational training levels” (GHK 2010a, 180). This could indicate that socially disadvantaged groups, which include a disproportionately large share of migrant communities, encounter difficulties when it comes to gaining access to voluntary commitment.

A comparative study focusing on racism and discrimination based on ethnicity in sports, conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), also deals with the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in the sports sector. This study’s focus, however, is not on volunteering, but on the general opportunities of participation at various levels. Being broader in scope, it takes both professional and amateur sports into account. The study notes that comparable pan-European data are lacking, although some member states have conducted isolated studies on the subject (FRA 2010, 45). Nevertheless, it emphasizes that “the under-representation of minorities in many sports, particularly in positions of authority, but also as players/athletes, club members or spectators, is an ‘open secret’ in European sport” (ibid.). Regarding amateur sports, the study points out that data from five member states (Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland and Sweden) reveal an underrepresentation of migrants, and particularly of migrant girls and young women, in sports.



The study conducted by FRA further observes that differences exist between different sports (although no precise data were collected): Migrants and ethnic minorities “seem to be better represented in football” (FRA 2010, 47). This, however, is only true for men and boys, whereas some evidence indicates that migrant women and girls are underrepresented in women’s football. Moreover, the “participation of migrants” is understood as referring to the football players’ level only and does not include management positions in the clubs.

Although focusing on professional football, another, more recent study prepared by the anti-discrimination network Football against Racism in Europe (FARE) found that “95.8% of all senior governance positions at elite level clubs, national league associations, national federations and UEFA were held by white men” (FARE 2014, 9).

● The underrepresentation of migrants in sports: results from national surveys

Reliable data from pan-European surveys on the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities as players or athletes and/or volunteers in organized recreational sports are not available. The quantitative studies mentioned above differentiate along the lines of age and gender, but not between migrants and non-migrants. For very few EU member states, however, quantitative data on the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in sports do exist. Some of these findings are presented below by way of example.

Regarding Germany, one can point to an expert report (Braun/Nobis 2012) based on an analysis of the 2004 and 2009 volunteer surveys, two of the largest representative surveys undertaken in the country, involving 2,300 and 2,700 respondents with a migration background¹¹, respectively. Among other things, it reveals that no other social sphere can rely on as many volunteers with a migration background as the sports sector. Yet, at 6.8%, the proportion of those who assume volunteer work

¹¹ The study uses the generic term “migration background” to subsume non-German nationals, persons born outside Germany and those with at least one parent born outside Germany. In the 2009 survey, people who were not German nationals from birth were also regarded as having a migration background. However, respondents included only persons with a good command of the German language.

is significantly lower among people with a migration background than it is among non-migrants (10.8%; Braun/Nobis 2012, 10). In comparison with the non-migrant population, barriers seem to be particularly high for people with a migration background, if they belong to one of the following groups: women (particularly those with little school education), elderly people (aged 65 and over) and first-generation migrants (Braun/Nobis 2012, 12 – 17).

These results appear particularly interesting in relation to the pan-European studies mentioned earlier, which revealed that women and people with lower levels of education are generally underrepresented in sports: These barriers seem to reinforce each other.

On the other hand, the quantitative survey also finds that the general potential for voluntary commitment, i.e. the readiness of those who are already active players or athletes, but have not (yet) volunteered, is very high. In this respect, only minor differences can be found between people with and without a migration background, which substantiates the notion that certain barriers must exist within the organizations.



However, an analysis of the data from the German Shell Youth Study 2013 by Hoorn et al. (2010, 40ff.) produced different results for the adolescent age bracket. According to these, the proportion of adolescents with a migration background who volunteer in sports clubs almost equals that of their non-migrant peers; however, adolescents with a migration background show a significantly lower tendency to become members of sports clubs. The authors conclude that the crucial barrier consists in gaining access to a sports club in the first place. Once adolescents are members, differences concerning the issue of volunteering cease to exist. The decisive factors for voluntary commitment consist in the members' identification with the club and the emotional bonds forged within the sports group or team, not in any socio-structural characteristics (Hoorn et al 2010, 42).

Concerning Ireland, one should mention the Irish Sports Monitor. The 2007 report finds marked differences between players and athletes of different origin: "Non-Irish nationals from outside the EU and the English-speaking countries were approximately half as likely to play sport as Irish nationals" (Irish Sports Council 2007a, 4). Unfortunately, neither the 2007 report nor the latest report from 2013 (Irish Sports Council 2013) include any information regarding the voluntary commitment of non-nationals. They do, however, point to the same empirical findings that became apparent from the pan-European studies mentioned earlier: "There is a clear divide across genders with males more likely to be

club members, more likely to volunteer and more likely to take up roles that are directly involved with the running of the sport... Those with higher levels of education or income are more likely to participate in sport than lower education or income groups." (Irish Sports Monitor 2013, 6 – 7).

In a press release, Volunteer Ireland, the Irish volunteer development agency, states that 30% of all volunteers registered in 2014 were migrants or overseas visitors from 136 different countries.¹² It can be assumed that this surprisingly large proportion is due to a large number of visitors from abroad rather than to migrants living in the country; however, this cannot be verified. Unfortunately, it is impossible to deduce the proportion of volunteers who engage in the sports sector. Meanwhile, the agency has responded to the new challenges and developed "new training courses for charities and community groups on how to best engage, recruit and involve migrant volunteers".¹³

In Austria, the first report on volunteering ("Freiwilligenbericht", BMASK 2009) identifies the sports sector as an important area of volunteer commitment on the part of migrants. The analysis of an additional survey pertaining to the 2006 micro-census found that within formal structures, migrants from Turkey (25% of respondents) and the former Yugoslavia (14%) engage considerably less in volunteer work in than Austrian natives do (42%; Reinprecht 2009, 144). In the report, the term

¹² <http://www.volunteer.ie/>, 10.07.2015.

¹³ *ibid.*

“formal structures” refers to volunteering within the framework of an organization, including sports clubs (and many more organizations, such as charities, voluntary fire brigades and social interest groups). Yet, the report also observes that Turkish-born inhabitants engage more often in informal contexts, e.g. neighbourly assistance, than Austrian natives do (39% and 36% of respondents, respectively; Reinprecht 2009, 144).

Although the author emphasizes that these results cannot be regarded as representative and although the survey is not limited to the sports sector, these findings could still have interesting implications with regard to the subject of the present study. In particular, they raise the issue of identifying the barriers that restrict migrants’ voluntary commitment within organizations (such as sports clubs), while they engage in increased informal activity. As the German volunteer survey quoted above observes, migrants who already play sports are largely prepared to assume volunteer work as well. Therefore, it seems logical to examine the structures of organized sports with regard to possible barriers limiting migrants’ access.

● The participation of migrants and minorities in sports clubs: the experts’ view

The experts from the seven countries participating in the ESPIN project were asked how they assessed the degree to which migrants serve as volunteers in amateur sports clubs. The vast majority of them assume that migrants are underrepresented or even almost completely excluded in this context. Some of the experts were reluctant to answer the question; instead, they emphasized the fact that no valid data are available for their respective countries.

Distinctions were drawn regarding the type of voluntary commitment and the type of sports. A German and an Austrian expert, for instance, report that in amateur football, (male) members of the first and second generation of migrants held volunteer positions as coaches and training supervisors, but far less frequently reached the management level. Another German expert confirms

that football clubs are still dominated by “*white men*” at the management level. A Finnish expert from the management board of a football club notes that in her club, it were mostly young people from the second generation of migrants who volunteered to become coaches or training supervisors. Besides, male second generation migrants were very well represented as players in the youth teams, a fact also observed in German and Austrian football clubs.

In the interviews, experts from Finland and Germany emphasized that there were no general structural barriers restricting migrants’ equal access to sports clubs.

However, the situation appears to be very different in Italy, at least in football, according to what the corresponding experts report: Due to the strict regulations of some sports associations, access to sports clubs is severely restricted for non-EU nationals.

It becomes obvious that playing sports in a club and volunteering are closely related, just as indicated by the already mentioned results of the German Shell Youth Study 2013, which revealed similar rates of volunteer commitment in all adolescents, irrespective of their origin, once they had become



The national SPIN study from Austria even perceives men with a migration background to be significantly over-represented among amateur football players in urban areas, such as Vienna. Regarding other, nationally popular sports (e.g. skiing and curling in Austria), the experts report hardly any participation on the part of migrants as players or athletes, meaning that they are also absent as volunteers. This absence is due to certain biographically influenced factors as well as socio-economic barriers. In general, migrants, at least those of the first generation, tend to participate more frequently in sports that are also popular in their country of origin, as players or athletes and as volunteers (SPIN study Austria 2011, 2).

members of a sports club. Besides, the example from Italy indicates the existence of barriers that fall within the responsibility of the sports associations. Or, as an Italian expert put it: *"The opportunity to play sports is a way of bringing people to consider volunteering in a sports club. If migrants are excluded, they will perceive sports as a world closed to them, in which voluntary commitment would not be worthwhile."*

● Differences regarding the concepts and the significance of sports and volunteering

According to the experts, the significance society ascribes to sports varies by country, as well as the concepts connected with it. An Italian expert, for instance, pointed out that Italy is generally regarded as a country with a "sedentary lifestyle". The data from the Eurobarometer survey on sports and physical activity he alludes to confirm this (European Commission 2010, 13).



According to the data from the Eurobarometer survey on sports and physical activity, 71% of the Italian respondents never played sports or did so less than once a month, as opposed to 72% of the Finnish respondents who reported to play sports at least once a week. Besides Greece and Bulgaria, Italy is one of the EU countries with the lowest proportion of citizens who play sports at least five times a week (3%). In Finland, the same group comprises 17% (European Commission 2010, 13).

A Finnish expert emphasized the significance of sports for the Finnish society. In Finland, sports is largely based on voluntary commitment and, according to the mentioned Eurobarometer survey, the country has the highest rate of volunteer commitment in sports in Europe (besides Sweden; cf. European Commission 2010, 65). Recently, the expert notes a growing tendency towards allowances being expected and paid for volunteer work. Moreover, there is a tendency of

large Finnish sports clubs to employ full-time youth supervisors and grassroots players or athletes. The national SPIN study from Finland reports that sports is often competitive in Finland; at the grassroots level, opportunities and resources are relatively limited (SPIN study Finland 2011, 1f.). Due to climatic conditions, many types of sports have to be played indoors for most of the year, which requires the construction and maintenance of sports facilities. Due to increased costs for the clubs, membership fees are comparatively high, which in turn constitutes a significant barrier for families with lower incomes. National or local authorities offer free alternatives for children and adolescents, but they cannot provide the same options as sports clubs that participate in competitions (ibid.). In 2010, the Finnish Ministry of Education established a programme aimed at the inclusion of migrants through sports, which indicates that the subject has been included in the political agenda.¹⁴

By contrast, one of the interviewed Italian experts complained of a lack of investment in the sports sector as a whole and in the area of sports and inclusion in particular. According to this expert, sports is not regarded as a model for integration and inclusion the way it is in other countries, not even by the sector's umbrella organizations. Three years ago, for instance, the Italian National Olympic Committee published a study (Arosio et al. 2012) that attributes the low level of sporting activity among the Italian population to the presence of migrants (among other things) – which implies that migrants do not play sports.

In contrast to Finland, volunteering is not so much associated with engaging in sports clubs, as one of the Italian experts observes: *"In Italy, there is no cultural recognition of volunteering in sports"*. For Italy, the Eurobarometer survey reveals a rate of volunteer commitment of only 3% (as opposed

¹⁴ A short summary of the objectives of the programme can be found at http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2010/Kehittamisohjelma_maahanmuuttajien_kotouttamiseksi_liikunnan_avulla.html?lang=en, 25.06.2015.

to 18% in Finland; cf. European Commission 2010, 65). According to one of the Italian experts, the political and economic crisis makes it difficult to convince people, and particularly young people, to volunteer in Italy. This concerns migrants to an even greater extent and particularly those who do not hold Italian citizenship, including many young people of the second generation, whose residence permit depends on whether they are able to fulfil specific conditions (such as earning a certain income).



Experts from other countries also mention considerable difficulties when it comes to recruiting volunteers in the sports sector. Both experts from Germany, for instance, emphasize the fact that it is always difficult to find volunteers prepared to assume the work to be done in sports clubs, whether dealing with migrants and minorities or not. They attribute this to potential volunteers' fear of being overburdened with too many tasks, to the real workload in a sports club, which is often high, and to the fact that in many cases, tasks and responsibilities are not clearly delimited by the clubs.

Yet, Ireland has developed a culture of volunteering that is highly organized, characterized by a network of 22 volunteer agencies all over the country. They serve as contact points for organizations and people prepared to volunteer. Sports clubs, however, tend to advertise vacant volunteer positions via their own networks rather than cooperate with volunteer agencies, as one of the Irish expert reports. According to the Dublin Volunteer Centre, 59% of the 2,700 volunteers registered in 2014 were non-Irish

nationals. Whether this large proportion is mostly due to language students and highly qualified migrant workers rather than marginalized migrant groups remains unclear.

● Summary of the intermediate results

In summary, quantitative data from pan-European surveys on the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities within the structures of organized sports are not available. Yet, existing pan-European studies reveal that women are underrepresented in sports, both regarding their access to sports clubs and the activities they offer and voluntary commitment. Besides, access to volunteer positions in sports is restricted for those with lower levels of qualification and education. It is also noteworthy that the proportion of voluntary commitment in sports varies strongly from country to country within the European Union.

Data from individual national surveys on the subject of volunteering and sports, however, exist for a small number of member states. They indicate that in principle, the sports sector is one of the spheres in which migrant volunteers are in comparison to other social spheres rather strongly represented. The findings of the individual surveys are difficult to compare, since they deal with different issues and examine different groups. Nevertheless, they reveal differences between migrants and non-migrants at various levels of the sports sector and of voluntary commitment. Different studies find that migrants are underrepresented regarding sporting activities, membership in sports clubs, voluntary commitment in sports and/or voluntary commitment within formal structures in general. Further results indicate the existence of access barriers within the structures of organized sports (e.g. the observed general readiness of migrants to engage and their large proportion of informal volunteer activity). With regard to all of these results, it is important to remember that in-depth empirical studies have yet to be undertaken; these would have to consider different criteria such as people's origin, context of migration, gender, education and occupation as well as different types of sports, structures of sports organizations, extent and practice of the volunteer work (cf. Reinprecht 2009, 143).

The interviews with the experts reveal differences regarding different types of sports and voluntary commitment. Some evidence indicates that in specific countries, migrants and minorities are quite present as voluntary coaches and training supervisors in men's football (at least in multicultural urban areas), but not in other types of sports. The interviews attest that migrants and minorities are still underrepresented at the management level, even in sports that boast a large number of migrant players or athletes. An analysis of the interviews with the experts also highlights differences regarding the significance ascribed to sports and volunteering in their respective countries. In addition, general difficulties in recruiting volunteers for the sports sector, regardless of their origin, are reported from some countries.

On the whole, the available research appears to indicate the existence of a number of barriers severely restricting migrants' and minorities' access to volunteer positions in sports. Therefore, one has to question whether equal access for migrants and minorities to the structures of organized sports in Europe – as proclaimed in the European Commission's White Paper on Sports quoted at the beginning of this study – is really ensured.



Benefits and barriers affecting migrant volunteers in sports

● “Migrant” as a container term

With regard to barriers limiting or even completely preventing migrants' access to sports clubs as players or volunteers, one has to emphasize that – as detailed at the beginning – the term “migrant” is highly heterogeneous, comprising different groups. Barriers and social discrimination affect them to a different extent, which is why participation in sports clubs could possibly benefit them to a varying extent as well.

Language barriers, for instance, can be a major obstacle for recently arrived migrants and prevent them from volunteering in a sports club; for the next generation, born and educated in the country of destination, however, they will be less relevant. Even if still exposed to structural disadvantages and discrimination, second- and third-generation migrants feel as an integral part of society and actively invoke their participation rights in many countries.

Refugees and asylum seekers from crisis-ridden regions and war zones increasingly seeking protection within the European Union form a totally different group. Due to a lack of legal immigration opportunities, many of them reach European coasts only after a perilous crossing of the Mediterranean.¹⁵ The interviewed experts described them as a particularly disadvantaged group for which special strategies would have to be developed in order to encourage these people's participation in sports clubs. Since precarious living conditions and an uncertain residence status make it difficult for refugees and asylum seekers to fulfil some of the requirements pertaining to certain forms of volunteer work (such as continuous long-term commitment), it is far easier to recruit them as players than as volunteers. In addition, many refugees are severely traumatized as a result of persecution and escape from war and conflict.

The Roma, exposed to severe discrimination across Europe, can be regarded as another particularly disadvantaged group that is excluded from many spheres of social life. A recent report by Amnesty International finds that Roma often face eviction and harassment on the part of the authorities or become victims of violent attacks in the EU (cf. Kalkhof 2014). According to UN figures, 40% of all Roma live in poverty (cf. Arbutina 2013). If the survival of one's family is at stake, there is no time for volunteering.

Migrant women and girls, by contrast, face special challenges. As the quoted studies observe, both European sports clubs and the volunteer structures in sports are dominated by men. A German study finds that only one fifth of all girls and young women with a migration background plays sports within organized structures, most of them opting for football or martial arts (Boos-Nünning/Karakaşoğlu 2005). According to other estimates, only between 1 and 3% of all women with a migration background are members of sports clubs in Germany (Kleindienst-Cachay 2007). Thus, these groups are strongly underrepresented in German sports clubs, also in comparison with women and girls from non-migrant families.

● Benefits: equal opportunities and social recognition

Before the individual barriers that restrict or prevent the participation of migrants and minorities in sports clubs are examined, this chapter will briefly address in how far these (heterogeneous) groups can benefit from volunteering in sports clubs.

First of all, one has to point out that volunteering encompasses certain benefits and advantages for everyone, irrespective of their origin or possible migration background. These include the development of social and professional skills, personal growth, new contacts and friendships, access to certain resources and supportive networks and gains in terms of social recognition and appreciation.

In order to make these benefits available to migrant groups, barriers that limit their access must be removed. So on the one hand, participation in sports clubs is a question of equal opportunities, meaning that equal access must be ensured to allow migrants to reap the benefits of volunteer commitment and contribute their skills and experiences for the good of society at large, just as much as non-migrants do.

On the other hand, migrant groups and minorities, no matter how different, generally have one thing in common: They share experiences of exclusion and discrimination. Therefore, they can

¹⁵ Pan-European studies find that the number of initial asylum applications and second claims has increased by approximately two thirds between 2009 and 2013. The number of asylum applications filed in the first half of 2014 was the highest in a decade, cf. <http://www.migration-info.de/artikel/2014-09-04/europa-ungleiche-verteilung-asylsuchenden>, 14.07.2015.

benefit to a far larger extent from the social recognition and appreciation they receive for their volunteer commitment – provided that sports clubs manage to ensure the latter. Since in comparison with non-migrants, they are more often exposed to social disadvantages, access to resources and supportive networks and increased career opportunities have a special significance for them as well. In addition, participating in a sports club provides newly arrived migrants with an opportunity to learn and actively use the country's language and to gain basic insights into its society (concerning organized sports, for instance).



In the case of particularly disadvantaged groups, voluntary commitment can even lead to a paradigm shift – on the part of the migrant volunteers just as much as regarding the way they are perceived by society at large: Initially people who receive assistance, they turn into persons who offer their support to others and whose assistance others rely upon.

As a matter of course, sports clubs also benefit from volunteers, irrespective of their origin. First of all, they gain new members and supporters, which means an infusion of new skills and fresh knowledge, as well as access to additional networks (for sponsoring, for instance). If they incorporate migrant volunteers in their structures, clubs can also make new intercultural

experiences, expand their horizon and sharpen their intercultural awareness.

A diverse club reflects social reality. However, the benefits of diversity are not limited to its internal structures; diversity can also become a crucial aspect of its public image. In view of the demographic problems evident in many regions, sports clubs must increasingly rely on migrant volunteers in order to maintain their structures.

● General barriers

As is the case with the benefits, the issue of the barriers is, up to a point, of a general nature, although the finding that migrants and minorities are underrepresented in sports clubs indicates the existence of further barriers that affect them in particular.

General barriers that can prevent a person from assuming a volunteer position include potential volunteers' fear of assuming responsibility, fear of making mistakes and fear of rejection, doubts regarding their qualification for the task, fear of excessive demands, lack of time, the necessity of earning one's sustenance and, in situations that involve major changes, a lack of planning security.

On the part of the clubs, barriers might involve a general lack of appreciation regarding the treatment of volunteers, generational differences and lacking contact persons for volunteers. Further barriers might comprise a lack of clearly delimited tasks, an overburdened management (often consisting of volunteers as well) and a traditional club culture which often implies a lack of openness towards newcomers.

Some of these barriers affect migrants and ethnic minorities to a larger extent than members of the majority population. Other barriers concern migrants and minorities in particular. For this reason, the barriers that affect them most are detailed below, based on and expanding a system originally developed for the national SPIN study from Austria (cf. SPIN study Austria 2011 und Witoszynskyj/Moser 2010).

● Legal and administrative barriers

Certain legal and administrative barriers effectively prevent or at least limit migrants' equal access to competitive sports. A study compiled by the European Agency of Fundamental Rights reveals that quota regulations and further administrative restrictions concerning citizens from other EU countries as well as third country nationals are very common within the European Union, not only in professional sports, but also in the amateur sector (FRA 2010, 50). In combination with a restrictive immigration policy and an equally restrictive legislative framework on naturalization, they limit the participation and representation of migrants in competitive amateur sports (FRA 2010, 50f).



The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance criticizes the existence of these barriers as well, assuming that legal and administrative restrictions can cause problems for young migrants and lead to a feeling of rejection, which can become a fundamental obstacle to inclusion (ECRI 2009). Due to the connection between playing sports in a club and volunteering in a club described earlier, such barriers can prevent foreigners from even considering volunteering in a sports club in which they cannot participate as players: Volunteering does not appear worthwhile where equal membership is not possible.

The following section takes Italy as an example to describe administrative barriers in detail.¹⁶ In this country, football players under 16 who do not hold EU citizenship have to present a number of valid documents in order to obtain membership or be granted permission to play in a sports club, e.g. a residence permit, and they have to do so every year. Difficulties often concern adolescents who have entered Italy without their parents or those who do not have a birth certificate (which is often the case for

Roma children, for instance). The fact that some documents (such as proof of school enrolment) are only available after the football season has begun means that affected adolescents can only enter training with a delay of two or three months. Further delays can be due to missing certifications from the national associations in the country of origin, which have to confirm that the players are not registered there – a process that usually takes several months.

In addition, the number of foreigners without EU citizenship who are allowed to participate in the clubs is limited; a complicated quota system regulates this, taking different cases into account (such as international transfers, transfers within Italy and newcomers). This means that migrant football clubs with a majority of non-EU players cannot participate in official competitions and have to turn to alternative leagues organized by national associations such as UISP¹⁷, which advocate everyone's right to play sports.

The Italian umbrella organizations for football, swimming and golf are the ones with the most rigid regulations regarding foreigners. Other sports, such as athletics and hockey, are not governed by such strict rules, making it easier for migrants to play sports and to volunteer in clubs.

● Social barriers

As mentioned above, migrants face disadvantages on the labour market and live in precarious conditions more frequently than non-migrants in Europe. They tend to work longer or irregular hours more frequently, often have several jobs and have to focus on sustaining their families.

Being socially established and able to make long-term plans are preconditions for volunteering. Reports from Italy state for instance that many refugees only spend a short period of time in these

¹⁶ The details stem from the interviews with the Italian experts. On the situation in Italy, cf. FRA 2010, 54.

¹⁷ <http://www.uisp.it/nazionale/>, 10.07.2015.

countries and leave as soon as possible, seeking better working opportunities and living conditions in Northern Europe.



The Austrian report on volunteering states that, when asked for their reasons for not volunteering, migrants often mention indicators of social marginalization, including material poverty and a lack of structural opportunities. The report concludes that these survey results support “the international research that found that social marginalization causes non-participation and social withdrawal while also reducing the individual and collective ability to act” (Reinprecht 2009, 146). In this sense, volunteering can be regarded as a luxury that becomes possible once basic human needs are met.

Membership in a sports club also costs money and this alone can constitute a barrier. In some countries (such as Finland), these costs can be very high. In addition, some sports (such as skiing) require further investment in equipment, special clothes and expensive courses. If such barriers affect people's opportunities to play a certain type of sports, they will also limit the number of volunteers in clubs, because many clubs recruit volunteers among their own members.

● Language barriers

Not only does language constitute a means of communication, but also a resource. The fact that newly arrived migrants often face language barriers is evident. Basic language skills are indeed a prerequisite for certain positions, e.g. for becoming a coach or assuming administrative work. However, they are less relevant or do not even play a role at all when it comes to completing other tasks, such as catering or serving as a driver. Migrants who speak the language of their country of destination with a strong accent or have not fully mastered its grammar are often regarded as incompetent or unwilling to integrate. This often leads them to avoid using the language, because they feel ashamed of their poor language skills. With regard to volunteering, this can mean that they do not even consider assuming certain volunteer tasks, since they harbour doubts regarding their own skills or fear discrimination. This in turn means that they lose the chance to improve their language skills.

● Barriers due to biographical factors and sports culture

On the one hand, some groups of migrants may not know certain sports that are popular in the country of destination from their own experience or original environment and therefore find them hardly attractive (cf. SPIN study Austria). On the other hand, sports that are popular in their country of origin might hardly be offered in the country of destination. This can result in self-organization, i.e. the foundation of migrant sports clubs that fill such gaps in the sports sector, as the example of cricket in Italy demonstrates.

But not only types of sports can constitute barriers. Differences might also concern the fundamental understanding of sports, for instance, the question of what a sports clubs' aims should be. According to statements from Portugal, the country's amateur football clubs are highly competitive, which means that they care less about social and societal issues and are hardly interested in promoting sports at the grassroots level. Instead, they tend to focus on finding new talents. Recruiting migrants as volunteers for the clubs is not a priority (recruiting them as successful players is).

A Finnish expert also described her country's grassroots sports sector as being very competitive, an aspect that migrants in her club often consider strange or less important. The strongly competitive

sports sector also reflects the considerable importance the Finnish society attaches to sports and to volunteering in sports, which entails certain obligations on the part of volunteers as well as on the part of players and athletes. If, by contrast, players, athletes or volunteers attach a higher priority to family activities or religious obligations, they will have less time for continuous and time-consuming volunteer work in sports, e.g. as a football coach with several training units per week and games on weekends. Such different priorities can cause conflicts between the requirements of the sports club and the players' or volunteers' views.

Further differences regarding the fundamental understanding of what a sports club is for can also play a role. Is the sports club regarded as a service provider that receives a membership fee and in turn offers children the opportunity to play sports? Or is it seen as a community based on its members' commitment? In this context, it is important to know that the "culture of volunteering" has developed to a different extent in different countries. At a workshop held in Germany within the context of the ESPIN Project, second-generation migrants who engage in volunteer work reported that a "culture of volunteering" as it exists in the German sports sector was almost completely unknown in Turkey, their parents' country of origin.

● Gender-specific barriers

As mentioned above, women and girls are underrepresented as volunteers in European sports clubs. Figures from 2015 published by the Berlin-Brandenburg branch of the Federal Statistical Office ("Statistisches Bundesamt Berlin-Brandenburg") reveal an enormous gap between the respective proportions of male and female sports club members in Berlin.¹⁸

A sports club whose ambience is characterized by sexist allusions will hardly attract female members and one whose important positions are all held by men will hardly encourage women to volunteer.



A male-dominated club culture implies further obstacles, particularly for female migrants. Strict rules on gender segregation in traditionally oriented communities can constitute barriers, preventing, for instance, a woman from coaching a male sports team or vice versa.

Further difficulties mentioned by the experts can arise from religious dress codes for women and girls. This concerns their participation as players or athletes in certain types of sports (such as swimming) rather than volunteering, and particularly women and girls from devout Muslim families, in which religious rules

stipulating that women must cover their body play an important role. Conversely, visible signs of religious faith being greeted with explicit incomprehension or the strict insistence on non-Islamic sportswear can keep Muslim women and girls from becoming sports club members and from engaging in volunteer work.

If women and girls are largely bound to the family and the domestic sphere and burdened with corresponding tasks and responsibilities, this can prevent or at least complicate volunteering outside the home. For traditionally oriented families, time their girls spent at a sports club would also mean time spent beyond their control, which can constitute a problem.¹⁹

¹⁸ Cf. https://www.statistik-berlin-brandenburg.de/publikationen/Stat_Berichte/2015/SB_B05-01-00_2015j01_BE.pdf, 10.07.2015.

¹⁹ In this context, Kleindienst-Cachay identifies three requirements that can constitute barriers for girls from Muslim families and prevent them from playing sports in a club: the requirement that women cover themselves in public, mandatory gender segregation and the requirement to supervise unmarried daughters, cf. Kleindienst-Cachay 2006, 20f.

On the other hand, if they can be recruited, women and girls from traditionally oriented families can possibly reap particular benefits from volunteer work, since it enables them to experience self-efficacy outside the family context and to expand their freedom to act. Therefore, qualifying women and girls with a migration background for volunteer positions appears to be particularly significant with regard to creating role models and removing barriers.

● Barriers due to club culture

Further barriers can be rooted in the traditional “culture” of the sports clubs themselves. According to statements from Portugal, the country’s sports clubs are historically grown organizations, most of them founded long before the first wave of immigrants reached the country in the 1980s and 1990s. An Austrian expert also described traditionally evolved sports club cultures as characterized by a tendency to isolate themselves against external influences, particularly in rural areas, and to fill vacancies from within their own ranks. The legacy structures and social networks typical of sports clubs in rural areas can even result in positions (such as board seats) being “inherited”, i.e. “handed down” to a family member or relative. The clubs’ isolation can also mean that they might have lost their awareness of the social realities outside.

Moreover, organizations tend to fill vacancies with people who have similar values, similar lifestyles and a similar origin as the ones already occupying management positions, as a German expert emphasized (cf. FRA 2010, 52). In view of this, it appears difficult to achieve change within an organization, since positions of responsibility are usually filled with persons who embody what the majority of the members stand for. This also means that mainstream clubs face difficulties with regard to providing (enough) migrant contact persons who could act as role models or make volunteer commitment more attractive for other migrants.

People will engage in environments in which they feel accepted and at ease. In order to even begin to develop an interest in engaging beyond their participation as players or athletes, they must be able to identify with the club’s values and perceive its ambience and forms of communication as pleasant.



In Germany, sports clubs, and traditional football clubs in particular, are often characterized by a special form of conviviality that includes beers after games and (pork) sausages at festivities, an ambience that can, for instance, discourage Muslims from volunteering. Generational differences can also play a role: According to statements from Portugal, an ageing management makes many of the existing sports clubs unattractive to the younger generation of migrants who rather begin to found their own clubs, not so much in football, but in basketball or rugby. The fact that the older generation often has reservations towards younger people of different origin aggravates the situation.

Here, the question of a club’s fundamental orientation, of whether it is really interested in promoting diversity and social inclusion, comes into play again, as well as the outreach strategy it uses when it comes to finding potential volunteers. A Portuguese expert elaborates this: *“Most of these associations do not outreach for migrants in a way I would consider effective or I would consider a way to promote social cohesion or social participation.”*

● Barriers due to discrimination and a lack of intercultural openness

A number of socially integrative effects have been attributed to sports clubs (cf. description in chapter 4.2). Nevertheless, several studies (DOSB 2014) identify them as environments in which migrants also experience discrimination and in which processes of demarcation between “natives” and “strangers” can occur, e.g. by way of exclusive language and cultural attribution. An expert from Austria reported that ambivalent attitudes exist in clubs: On the one hand, migrants are valued as players, because they are needed in order to enable clubs to form teams, particularly in view of the shrinking population. On the other hand, they are abused and certain negative forms of behaviour are often attributed to the group as a whole (e.g. *“The foreigners always leave the locker room dirty”*). Islamophobia and the corresponding stereotypes, affecting, for instance, women and girls wearing headscarves, can be another problem. The resulting ambience does not encourage migrants to engage beyond their participation as players or athletes and volunteer.



Diversity as a club value can also be reflected in the club's external representation (mission statement, statutes) and PR (in the form of a multilingual approach). Clubs whose positions of responsibility are all filled with non-migrants do not encourage migrants to volunteer.

Apart from explicit discrimination, a fundamental lack of intercultural openness also plays a role with regard to barriers limiting migrants' access. A lack of intercultural openness means that the appreciation of diversity does not form part of the club culture. This is reflected in the members' general attitude (regarding their ap-

preciation of other cultures) and communication (i.e. their awareness of discrimination), but also in the way club festivities and gatherings are organized (regarding food, drinks and music, for instance).



Migrant sports clubs

● Opportunities of migrant sports clubs

A migrant sports club is defined as a club “whose members are predominantly migrants, that is mostly run by migrants and whose self-conception and image are associated with the migration background of its members” (Stahl 2009, 25). With regard to the subject of volunteering, it follows that volunteer work is mostly or exclusively done by the migrant members themselves, resulting in a strong sense of empowerment among them.

The motivations that lead to the foundation of migrant sports clubs are manifold. In any case, they can be regarded as a strategy of self-organization and self-determination aimed at overcoming aforesaid obstacles, including language barriers and barriers due to discrimination, club culture or a diverging understanding of sports.

Public opinion tends to regard migrant sports clubs as an indication of segregation processes, i.e. migrants separating themselves from the majority population. However, a German study on the subject concludes that these clubs have an inclusive effect, since they manage to include people in the sports system who would otherwise find their access barred (Stahl 2009, 125). Their incorporation into official competition structures creates opportunities of encounter for migrants and non-migrants – provided that it is not restricted by the regulations of sports associations.

Furthermore, many migrant clubs consciously pursue a multicultural approach and provide opportunities for people from all over the world to engage and play sports together. In order to build bridges with the country of destination and to receive assistance regarding bureaucratic and language issues, they also offer non-migrants the opportunity to volunteer.

According to statements from Portugal, young migrants are beginning to found sports clubs, open groups and initiatives that introduce new or less common sports in the country, along with fresh input and ideas, offering, for instance, “urban” sports such as skateboarding and parkour.

As the example of the African Stars, a football club founded by the migrant Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organization in Hungary in 1994 whose members are mostly migrants and refugees, demonstrates, migrants’ sports clubs can also facilitate particularly disadvantaged groups’ access to organized sports. Not only do the African Stars aim to give refugees an opportunity to participate in sports, but they also use the club to counter racism and discrimination in the Hungarian society, as the expert from the same country explained: With this aim, they organize anti-racist campaigns, African culture festivals, conferences and educational projects in schools.

Another Hungarian football club pursues a similar objective: The international Club de Football, whose members are mostly African refugees, aims to further the social inclusion of migrants and refugees (by providing legal advice, for instance) and to improve their public image in Hungary (cf. FRA, 18).

● Challenges and problems

Migrant sports clubs face a large number of challenges and problems. First of all, one has to mention the structural discrimination due to regulations that govern official competitions and restrict or prevent the participation of migrant sports clubs, at least if their players are non-EU nationals (an aspect already described in chapter 4.4).



If migrant clubs cannot participate in official competitions due to legal hurdles designed by the sports associations, this can lead them to found their own leagues or competition systems, which then exist parallel to the associations’ official leagues. Alternative sports associations or church organizations can be active in this field. One example in case is the sports community of the diocese of Vienna (“Diözesansportgemeinschaft Wien”)²⁰ which organizes football championships in several leagues and offers further sporting activities, such as athletics and table tennis.

Even if no barriers limiting their access to official competitions exist, migrant clubs consisting of inexperienced volunteers unfamiliar with the established structures of the sports sector will still encounter difficulties in understanding how the corresponding associations work, how sports clubs are organized and which requirements they have to fulfil. Regarding Germany, the interviewed experts explained that obstacles often consist in bureaucratic structures within clubs and associations.

Moreover, the experts mention difficulties in gaining access to resources: First of all, this concerns the acquisition of financial means and the corresponding knowledge necessary to obtain access to public funding and sponsoring. What is lacking is experience on the part of the volunteers, but possibly also appropriate networks providing access to sponsors. But lacking access to resources also includes access to sports facilities, which are often already occupied by long-established clubs or just too expensive for a migrant club’s budget.

²⁰ <http://www.dsg-wien.at/ueber/willkommen.shtml>, 10.07.2015.



According to accounts from Italy, migrant clubs that have no access to proper sports facilities often resort to using public parks or gardens. Here, however, they find themselves exposed to the local residents' racism. Racism is a problem that migrant clubs often face in official competitions as well. A Hungarian expert from a football club consisting mostly of African refugees and migrants stated that its players had to endure racist abuse on the part of spectators as well as discriminatory referee decisions. Violent attacks motivated by racism were also reported. It can be assumed that this is not an exclusively Hungarian experience.

The study conducted by Stahl (2009), which examines the situation in Germany, demonstrates that escalations of conflicts between migrant and non-migrant clubs are to a major extent caused by discrimination and racist provocations by coaches, players and fans of the opposing team.

A report compiled by the Berlin Football Association ("Berliner Fußballverband", BFV) notes that within organized football in Berlin, "mutual

distrust and resistance against the activities of the ethnic clubs still exist, which can easily make the ethnic clubs feel that they are disadvantaged and lack equal opportunities" (BFV, 17).

If migrant sports clubs have many refugee members without valid documents, another difficulty they often face consists in the fear of arrest and deportation – which "forms a serious obstacle when it comes to participating in sports events" (SPIN-Länderstudie für Österreich 2011, 8).



Strategies to remove barriers and recruit migrant volunteers

This chapter describes strategies aimed at reducing aforesaid barriers and at encouraging migrants to engage within the structures of organized sports. Thus, it focuses on migrants' active participation in society by way of volunteer work rather than dealing with sport offers that promote social inclusion.

● Intercultural programmes at the national level

The implementation of national programmes depends on the degree of awareness that has been developed at the political and at the umbrella organizations' level. The FRA study finds that national stakeholders are less aware of the underrepresentation of migrants and ethnic minorities in sports than they are of racist incidents. Besides, the "participation of migrants and ethnic minorities" is often used with reference to the function of sports as a means to promote their inclusion rather than the active engagement that volunteering involves (cf. FRA 2010, 45). Moreover, the study notes that

the umbrella organizations' degree of awareness regarding discrimination and exclusion is higher in football than it is in other sports (FRA 2010, 46).

Some national associations have developed intercultural awareness programmes, which they implement actively, and have also appointed special officers responsible for all issues concerning migration and inclusion.



In 2006, the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) established an intercultural programme²¹ with certain strategic objectives, overseen by a full-time coordinator. The programme forms part of the National Action Plan Against Racism funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. It mainly aims to counter racism, promote social inclusion and increase the participation of ethnic minorities in football. Individual projects and measures, most of which are intended to increase migrants' participation as players, were developed on the basis of this strategic programme. However, there are also approaches aimed at gaining a larger number of migrant volunteers. The programme defines three different levels of intercultural standards (preliminary, intermediate and advanced); sports clubs receive assistance in implementing them. Even if most of the standards are intended to counter racism, some (such as a diversity-sensitive PR approach) also comprise measures aimed at increasing the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in sports clubs.

German umbrella organizations, such as the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB), the sports associations of the federal states (Landessportbünde, LSB) and the German Football Association (DFB), were reported to be very aware of issues related to the subject of migration and inclusion, which is reflected in the fact that they have launched appropriate activities. The DOSB programme Inclusion through sports²² ("Integration durch Sport") is being implemented since 2001, targeting certain groups of migrants with the aim of furthering their inclusion in the sports sector as well as their inclusion in society at large. Increasingly, the focus is being expanded to include the recognition and promotion of voluntary commitment on the part of migrants as an explicit objective. Besides, the programme specifies increasing the clubs'

intercultural openness as another objective, which includes increasing the presence of migrants in the structures of organized sports: "Not least, an increased representation of people with a migration background in full-time and volunteer positions in organized sports is necessary to ensure that their needs and interests are adequately taken into consideration" (DOSB 2010, 8). The programme is funded by the German Ministry of the Interior and by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF).



An external evaluation of the Portuguese Programa Escolhas²⁴, which received the Juvenile Justice without Borders International Award in 2014, attributes its success to its empowerment strategy, under which children and adolescents are not approached as victims of the prevailing social conditions, but as protagonists of change who have the necessary resources and skills at their command.

The Portuguese government's Programa Escolhas²³ ("Choices Programme"), coordinated by the High Commission for Migration, constitutes another example for a national programme. In 2015, it has entered its fifth funding period. This programme is not specially designed to deal with intercultural issues, but targets children and adolescents threatened by social exclusion,

many of them from migrant or Roma families. Objectives include their success at school, inclusion in the labour market and participation in local communities.

21 The intercultural programme is described in detail on the website of the association: <http://www.fai.ie/domestic/take-part-programmes/intercultural-programme>, 10.07.2015.

22 <http://www.integration-durch-sport.de/de/integration-durch-sport/>, 19.08.2015.

23 <http://www.programaescolhas.pt/apresentacao>, 19.08.2015.

24 In an online interview, Pedro Calado, High Commissioner for Migration and National Coordinator of the Choices Programme, points to the results of an external evaluation of the programme, cf. <http://www.oijj.org/en/interviews/pedro-calado-high-commissioner-for-migration-and-national-coordinator-of-the-choices-prog> and the website of the programme at <http://www.programaescolhas.pt/>, 10.07.2015.

Projects are implemented locally with the assistance of local network partners, such as sports clubs, schools, migrant organizations, local authorities and companies. Some of them cover the subject of sports and volunteering.

● Pursuing intercultural openness in sports clubs

Sports federations should act as role models: Only if they are culturally diverse (i.e. their staff includes migrants) and address the subject (by way of appointing special migration or intercultural officers, for instance), can this concern be “passed down” to the individual clubs.



But what does an intercultural opening process mean at the level of the individual sports club? The concept encompasses the aim of reviewing and changing the conditions that form a club's basic framework, inducing a learning process based on self-reflection within the organization (cf. Schroer 2007, for instance). With regard to the development of the organization, pursuing intercultural openness means a strategy to reflect upon prejudices and mechanisms of exclusion and to systematically remove barriers limiting access for migrants and ethnic minorities. Only if diversity is perceived as an asset and a resource, can it be successfully implemented.

Whereas intercultural opening processes are primarily being debated and implemented in the areas of public administration, geriatric care, healthcare and further social services in Germany, the intercultural opening of sports organizations receives relatively little attention among experts, although initial strategies for sports organizations (dsj 2010) have been developed as well as guidelines for sports clubs' everyday routines (BMI/BAMF 2009). On the part of the sports clubs, difficulties consist in conceiving ways to make their intercultural opening

strategy implementable under the conditions of volunteer work. In order to succeed, they need assistance on the part of the sports associations, which can, for instance, take the form of further education and the provision of materials.

The following structural and human resources aspects play a crucial role with regard to intercultural opening processes in sports clubs:

- **Debate regarding values, mission statement, statutes:** The appreciation of diversity as a core value of the club forms the basis for the initiation of intercultural opening processes. This is a question of the members' attitude and of the organization's preparedness to address the subject. It is necessary to engage the members in a debate on the club's values and to reach a result that is at best acceptable to all of them. Apart from the appreciation of diversity and the promotion of inclusion as core values, taking a clear stance against racism and discrimination plays a crucial role. Results of the debate with the club members can include a mission statement that is published on the club's website, an amendment of its statutes, a positive statement promoting inclusion on the website or a code of values each new member signs.
- **Recruiting migrants and members of ethnic minorities:** Pursuing intercultural openness means that migrants should be present at the club's different levels, e.g. as coaches and training supervisors, but ideally at the management level as well. Apart from the aspect of participation, this has a symbolic effect within and without the club. If candidates lack experience and/or specific skills, further education measures or mentoring by others who are prepared to share their own experience can be a solution.
- **Appointing intercultural officers and mentors:** For larger sports clubs, it can be useful to create the position of an intercultural officer, a contact person for migrant volunteers and players or athletes who provides support (in case of discrimination, for instance) and develops

ideas for the promotion of inclusion. The club could also provide migrant volunteers with mentors or advisors. In Finland, for instance, positive experiences were made with a system that provided each migrant volunteer coach with an assistant coach to support them in linguistic and organizational matters.

- **Organizational culture/welcoming ambience:** Before developing further strategies aimed at enlisting more migrants as players or athletes and as volunteers within its structures, the club should critically review its organizational culture in order to identify and remove inherent barriers. The following questions could play a role: How are new members and volunteers approached and introduced in the club? How much interest are people with a different cultural background met with? How do members react to linguistic problems? What is done to ensure the participation of all members? Which food is offered at club festivities (e.g. alternatives to pork)? Which types of drinks are provided and how do members react if someone refuses to drink alcohol? Which music is played at the clubhouse? How does the club react to racist incidents or discrimination? Are new volunteers continually exposed to cultural attribution placing them outside the club community due to perceived cultural differences? The development of a positive attitude and a welcoming ambience should be undertaken in collaboration with migrants; obtaining a feedback on the club's ambience from outsiders with a migration background can be useful.
- **Further education on intercultural awareness:** The systematic reflection of their own prejudices and the development of intercultural awareness within the context of workshops, initially offered to board members, but also to further members at a later stage, is an important aspect of intercultural opening processes.
- **Diversity-sensitive PR:** The club's PR approach should reflect its diversity. The photographic self-portrayal on its website should, for instance, include migrants and minorities, allowing them to identify with the club. When it comes to announcing events and festivities, the club should cooperate with media used by different groups, including "ethnic" radio stations, magazines, websites, blogs and social media. Multilingual PR material seems inviting, even if it includes only welcoming words of a largely symbolic nature. The same applies to announcements in the clubhouse or next to the playing field.
- **Cooperation with migrant organizations:** Cooperation involving, for instance, migrant organizations from the club's social environment, plays a crucial role in intercultural opening processes. Since this aspect is examined in a chapter of its own, no details are given here.

● Outreach strategies

The question of how potential volunteers are approached is essential: If inappropriate channels are chosen to disseminate information or if the information provided is incomprehensible to migrants, it might not reach those it is intended for, despite intense efforts undertaken by the club.

The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) uses the acronym KIC to analyze where problems lie and to improve the corresponding outreach strategy²⁵:

- **Knowledge:** Which groups of migrants do we intend to reach and what do we know about them?

²⁵ These details stem from an interview with a FAI expert.

- **Information:** How is the club's information disseminated and which media/information channels do our target groups use?
- **Contact opportunities:** Which ways to approach the club exist? Which additional options can the club create?

As a first step, the club's knowledge on the target groups has to be expanded, for instance via contact persons from these communities. Then, the issue of how information is disseminated has to be resolved. In addition to diversity-sensitive PR (detailed above), establishing direct contact with potential volunteers is a strategy sports clubs have made particularly positive experiences with. In order to achieve this, however, contact opportunities have to be sought and/or created. Opportunities for a direct approach arise within the social environment of potential volunteers, e.g. in neighbourhood centres, at intercultural festivals, at refugee homes or within the wider communities of mosques or churches. Thus, it is crucial to analyze where the target groups spend their time and to visit these places.

Another approach pursued in Ireland involves going from door to door in order to introduce the club and explain its concern. This can also be achieved within the context of an open day, which the neighbourhood is invited to via cooperation partners (e.g. schools). At events, such as parent-coach meetings for parents whose children play sports in the club, it can be useful to provide interpreters to ensure that information is exchanged correctly and completely (depending on the parents' command of the country's language). Potential volunteers should not be overwhelmed by too much information.

Outreach strategies have to be adapted depending on the target group. Regarding some groups, particularly minorities and members of the second and third generation of migrants, a separate approach can be unnecessary or even counterproductive. An interviewed German expert and second-generation migrant underscores that she and her children did not require a separate approach or any special strategies in order to volunteer in a sports club. She explains that she is prepared to engage in volunteer work, if she feels welcome – an aspect that generally applies to all people willing to volunteer, irrespective of their origin. In such cases, a special treatment would rather cause fresh feelings of exclusion and of being perceived as culturally different. For this expert, it is not the approach that matters, but what the club represents within and without, how diverse it is, how it reacts to discrimination and how inviting it seems to people of different origin.

● Assistance from migrant key players and mentors

Migrant key players are essential with regard to approaching and to supporting migrant volunteers, which is why this aspect is discussed in a chapter of its own. Migrant key players are members of the ethnic community in question who are widely known and, as the case may be, enjoy a good reputation. A club's knowledge on its target groups can be improved by approaching migrant key players from these groups: On the one hand, they can recommend the best ways to reach and approach the respective groups; on the other hand, they can also make use of their contacts and networks to reach out to potential volunteers themselves, drawing their attention to the club and the opportunities it offers to play sports and to volunteer. Since they are able to build bridges between heterogeneous social environments and the sports club, it is convenient to cooperate with them when it comes to developing strategies for recruiting migrant volunteers.



Different groups need different contact persons: If the objective consists in reaching women and girls, female key players should be approached and recruited, if the target group consists of refugees, key players who are also refugees can be useful, etc.

Apart from approaching and recruiting volunteers, migrants also play a significant role in supporting volunteers. If they are already members of the sports club, they can assist and advise new migrant volunteers by explaining club structures, but – provided that they share the same language and culture – also by serving

as translators or interpreters or by acting as mediators in case of intercultural conflicts and misunderstandings. As a matter of course, they can also provide assistance to volunteers without a migration background. On the whole, they act as role models due to their mentoring role.

● Networking and cooperation at the local level

If a sports club perceives itself as an integral part of the local community, this can play a decisive role in reducing access barriers. Networking with organizations and institutions from the same social environment entails valuable opportunities for recruiting volunteers, e.g. by leaving advertising material, via informational events or just because it facilitates new contacts and a direct approach. Schools, neighbourhood centres, youth clubs and local companies, for instance, can be important partners when it comes to recruiting volunteers. If a sports club is seeking migrant volunteers in particular, networking activities should target migrant organizations as well as projects, initiatives, organizations and institutions working with migrants (such as women's organizations and refugee initiatives), religious organizations, anti-racist initiatives and human rights organizations, language schools, ethnic shops and restaurants, bilingual schools, universities and student organizations. Moreover, establishing long-term cooperation with selected organizations can be useful. Both sides can benefit from such cooperation, for instance, if a migrant organization is allowed to hold its own training sessions on a sport's club's playing field and in turn supports the club when it comes to recruiting volunteers or translating flyers.



If sports associations initiate appropriate programmes or projects, they can also act as an intermediary. The "My Club After School Programme"²⁶ run by the FAI, developed to direct children and their parents to local football clubs, in which they can engage as players and/or volunteers, is a good example: After six training sessions held at school over the course of six weeks, participating children and their parents are invited to the club for a one-day "taster session", which allows the club to introduce itself and its offers, including opportunities to volunteer, to both parents and children. However, fewer migrant families than hoped for have so far participated in the programme. Possible reasons are still being analyzed, but it can be assumed that the training sessions after school are incompatible with the parents' – or rather the mothers' – time resources, because they are burdened with caring for further young children.

In Ireland, positive experiences were made with the cooperation with volunteer agencies, which serve as intermediaries between volunteers and organizations. Meanwhile, some of them offer special courses for migrants and provide assistance in finding suitable volunteer positions for them.

Refugee initiatives can also function as intermediaries connecting sports clubs and refugee homes. This is what the association "Champions without borders" ("Champions ohne Grenzen")²⁷ does in Berlin, offering football training for refugees and asylum seekers in cooperation with a number of local sports clubs. Special training sessions are offered for women, children and

adolescents. In the Berlin-based project, people of different origin serve as volunteers with the

²⁶ <http://www.beyondsport.org/project/s/social-inclusion-and-integration/>, 10.07.2015.

²⁷ http://championsohnegrenzen.de/2_D.html, 10.07.2015.

aim of offering refugees and asylum seekers new perspectives and ways to leave isolation behind. Long-term volunteer engagement is possible for refugees; however, this is not the main objective.

● Intercultural sports days and festivals

According to the interviewed experts, organizing intercultural sports days and festivals constitutes a crucial strategy that allows sports clubs to pursue several objectives: In practical terms, possible volunteers of different origin can be approached; on the other hand, the events also aim to provide opportunities for encounter between people of different origin and to promote intercultural understanding and exchange. The following two examples were given by the experts:

Staged for the first time over eight days in March 2015, the Polish-Irish "Festival Polska Éire"²⁸ included cultural and sports events across Ireland; it had been organized by the FAI, the Ministry of New Communities, Culture and Equality and the Polish embassy in Dublin. As a part of the programme, the FAI encouraged clubs to host an open day for Polish families in particular and migrant families in general in order to recruit them as players and volunteers.

Each year at the end of the football season, the Hungarian Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organization and its African Stars football team arrange an African festival, inviting, among others, all of the 16 clubs playing in the same league. The festival has a varied programme featuring African music, dance and food. It is organized by volunteers.

On its website, the organization describes its cultural programmes as follows: "With these activities, we involve as many participants as possible to show and share our experience and knowledge of African culture, traditions, values, music, dance and food, trying to promote the idea of an inter- and multicultural society."²⁹ In the context of the racist discourse common in the Hungarian public, these cultural programmes are highly significant. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe has harshly criticized Hungary after finding that hate speech targeting migrants, refugees, Roma, Jews and homosexuals occurs "all across the political spectrum".³⁰ In the summer of 2015, the Hungarian government itself organized a propaganda campaign against refugees based on posters and questionnaires.³¹

● Education and qualification of volunteers

Education and qualification measures are crucial, both with regard to generating an understanding for the situation of migrants in general and for the situation of refugees and asylum seekers in particular, and with regard to removing the different types of barriers restricting their access to volunteer positions in sports clubs.

The interviewed experts from Italy and Hungary described educational measures their organizations offer in schools, whose strategy consists in using the subject of sports to arouse the pupils' interest in the situation of migrants and raise their awareness of the issue and of the legal and adminis-

28 <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Polska%C3%89ire%202015%20The%20Polish%20Irish%20Festival%20Programme.pdf/Files/Polska%C3%89ire%202015%20The%20Polish%20Irish%20Festival%20Programme.pdf>, 10.07.2015.

29 <http://www.gandhi.hu/>, 10.07.2015.

30 <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/ungarn-europarat-prangert-rassismus-in-ungarn-an-a-1037824.html>, 10.07.2015.

31 <http://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article142264895/Orban-hetzt-auf-Plakaten-gegen-Fluechtlinge.html>, 10.07.2015.

trative barriers migrants face in this sector. The Italian sports organization UISP runs this project in cooperation with clubs of the Lega Serie A.

Qualification measures for volunteers target different groups, which can result in different objectives. Those meant for migrant volunteers (or migrants considering to become volunteers) are often aimed at empowerment. The FAI project “Active for Help”, for instance, encourages young refugees to become coaches, enabling them to obtain an entry level coaching certification (Kick Star One). Once certified, the new coaches are offered volunteer positions in one of four local clubs. The programme is quite popular, although mostly male refugees have been trained. Due to the close cooperation, the newly certified coaches can also be successfully placed.

Other qualification measures target primarily, but not exclusively, migrants and ethnic minorities. The Berlin Football Association, for instance, has developed a programme called “Inclusion through qualification” (“Integration durch Qualifizierung”)³², which provides a special range of courses, both for volunteer board members with a migration background and volunteer board members from clubs with a large proportion of migrant members. The measures are aimed at enhancing their understanding of the structures that characterize sports clubs and associations. They have been developed to counter insecurities on the part of migrant volunteers in dealing with bureaucratic structures and regulations and cover subjects such as organizational management, marketing and financial administration in sports clubs.

The intercultural German sports project “SPIN – Sport interkulturell”³³ targets children and adolescents, primarily girls and young women with and without a migration background, explicitly combining objectives pertaining to the area of inclusion (such as improving their educational opportunities and their prospects) and objectives regarding the promotion of volunteer commitment in sports clubs. Girls and young women are trained as training supervisors and placed in volunteer positions in clubs. At the same time, sports clubs receive assistance with respect to intercultural opening processes and initiating cooperation (with schools, for instance).

Finally, there are qualification measures primarily targeting members of the majority population. Compared with the other examples, they focus much more on developing the volunteers’ intercultural awareness. One example is “Sport interkulturell”³⁴, a series of courses offered across Germany as a part of the programme “Inclusion through sports” (mentioned above). These measures serve to teach coaches and training supervisors what intercultural awareness can mean within the context of their work in sports clubs.

● Campaigns

Within the context of migration, campaigns often aim to raise awareness for racism, discrimination and further grievances; as a rule, volunteering in sports hardly plays a role. However, there are campaigns that address the exclusion of migrants from the structures of organized sports and identify cases of structural discrimination.

32 http://berliner-fussball.de/fileadmin/Dateiablage/public/Publikationen/IdQ_Infolyer.pdf, 10.07.2015.

33 The project is run by the youth division of the sports association of the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (“Landessportbund Nordrhein-Westfalen”), the Mercator Foundation and the Heinz Nixdorf Foundation, cf. <http://www.projekt-spin.de/projekt/zielgruppen-und-ziele/>, 10.07.2015.

34 http://www.integration-durch-sport.de/fileadmin/fm-dosb/arbeitsfelder/ids/files/downloads_pdf/downloads_2012/Fortbildungskonzeption_Sport_interkulturell.pdf, 10.07.2015.



In Italy, a national campaign implemented by a grass-roots sports organization, which organizes affordable sports sessions open to everyone, used the slogan "I want to play, too!" to advocate everyone's right to play sports and volunteer in sports clubs and to expose the structural exclusion migrants face. The campaign was successful at least in so far as that Italian sports associations eliminated some particularly rigid regulations that were limiting migrants' access.³⁵

The "Football People Action Weeks" that have been organized and coordinated by the anti-racist network organization FARE (Football against Racism in Europe) since 2001 constitute the most important series of anti-racist campaigns in the football sector.³⁶ The Action Weeks, which in 2014 comprised more than 2,000 events held in 59 countries, aim to increase awareness for discrimination in football, develop new ideas

and practices to prevent exclusion, and promote solidarity among people, irrespective of their origin, their place of residence and their interest in the game.

The amateur football campaign that is currently being implemented by the German Football Association (DFB) is an example for a campaign with a special focus on volunteering. It aims to highlight the fascination of amateur football and to pay tribute to its volunteers, acknowledging their hard work. It also emphasizes the social responsibilities of the sector with respect to inclusion and imparting values.³⁷ In its videos and on its posters, the campaign shows faces of people engaged in amateur football, including at least a few who represent minorities.

● Supporting participation and empowerment on the part of refugees and asylum seekers

As a consequence of the strongly increased influx of migrants and asylum seekers reaching Europe in the course of 2015 and 2016, numerous new offers aimed at facilitating the inclusion of the newly arrived have evolved in different social spheres in some European countries.

Sports organizations are among those who have responded to the new social challenges. In Germany, a country especially affected by the wave of immigration, model projects and new funding programmes have been created with a view to furthering the inclusion of refugees in particular. Besides, sports clubs have set up a large number of individual initiatives with the same aim, including sporting activities, intercultural tournaments, refugee teams and cooperations with refugee shelters or migrant organizations.



In Germany, the Hessian Ministry of the Interior and Sports has initiated the special funding programme "Sport und Flüchtlinge (sports and refugees)"³⁸, which cooperates with the youth division of the state's sports association ("Sportjugend Hessen") to assist towns and municipalities in their efforts of offering sports and exercise for refugees in sports clubs.

Together with the Federal Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration, the German Football Association (DFB) has published the brochure "Willkommen im Verein! Fußball mit Flüchtlingen (welcome to the club! football with refugees)", providing information and ideas for daily club routines and for volunteer work with refugees and asylum seekers with a view to eas-

ing their entry into club sports. The brochure covers issues such as the right of residence, insurance cover, club membership, permits entitling foreign players to participate in official games, volunteer

³⁵ Details taken from an interview with an Italian expert.

³⁶ <http://www.farenet.org/campaigns/football-people-action-weeks/>, 10.07.2015.

³⁷ <https://kampagne.dfb.de/unsere-amateure/#!/respekt>, 10.07.2015.

³⁸ <http://www.sportjugend-hessen.de/gesellschaft/sport-und-fluechtlinge/das-programm-sport-und-fluechtlinge/>, 18/8/2016

commitment and fostering a positive attitude towards migrants within a club (cf. DFB/Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration 2015).



Via its Egidius Braun Foundation, the German Football Association also provides funding support for football clubs committed to supporting refugees: In 2015 and 2016, up to 600 football clubs will receive €500.00 each, if they cooperate with collective centres to create options to play sports, organize transport, provide sports clothing or offer free membership for refugees.

An UEFA presentation lists further projects and initiatives run by UEFA member organizations; at least some of these target refugees in particular and are aimed at furthering their inclusion in sports clubs (UEFA 2016).

Clubs that were specially founded for refugees by native volunteers in order to provide them

with opportunities to play sports without being exposed to discrimination do not fall under the definition of “migrant sports clubs”, even if they are colloquially referred to as such. These clubs constitute offers of solidarity and assistance that can provide perspectives and contacts for refugees and asylum seekers, particularly since many of them are excluded from the labour market due to restrictions on their employment and live isolated in collective centres, sometimes under restrictions on their freedom of movement. Such clubs aim to allow refugees some of the social participation that they are essentially barred from in other social spheres.



The RFC Lions Ska Caserta³⁹ is an example from Italy for a club supporting the participation of refugees and asylum seekers. Organized by Italian volunteers in the town of Caserta, the club understands itself as part of a movement and propagates solidarity and anti-racism as core values. In addition to an Italian-Senegalese football team, it organizes cultural and music events.

The association Champions without borders, already mentioned, constitutes an example from Germany. Serving as an intermediary between refugee homes and various football clubs, it is run by volunteers of different origin and does not only offer football training, but also sees its role in networking at the nexus of political and social commitment and engagement in sports. In

contrast to the club mentioned above, it does not participate in official competitions.

It is noteworthy that the striking majority of the clubs' offers concerning sporting activities aimed at the inclusion of refugees either target males only or reach males only. There are hardly any mixed-gender options and hardly any activities for women and girls only that would take their sporting as well as their cultural needs and preferences into account. On the one side, this perpetuates the underrepresentation of women and girls – and of female migrants in particular – in organized sports in Europe. On the other side, female refugees are denied any opportunity to exercise and any opportunity to benefit from contacts that could arise in sports clubs. In view of the inclusive effects of migrants' involvement in sports clubs, this must be considered a serious problem. Precisely because many families have a traditional understanding of gender roles, it means perpetuating the bonds that keep women within the domestic sphere and denying them opportunities to establish contact with the host society.

In this context, however, one has to keep in mind that sports clubs are not socio-educational facilities with a special social mission of facilitating the inclusion of marginalized groups, but organizations leveraging limited resources to create such offers. This leads sports clubs willing to support refugees to primarily create offers for those groups that are relatively easy to reach – such as young men. In contrast, female refugees do not constitute an “easy” target group.

³⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/rfclions/>, 10.07.2015.



Case studies

This chapter presents three good practice examples, i.e. clubs from Germany, Italy and Hungary promoting the active participation of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in organized sports. Their activities, results and successes are examined as well as the difficulties and challenges they face, with a focus on those results and experiences that seem to be of particular interest, since they might be transferable to clubs in other countries.



SG Egelsbach 1874 e.V., Germany



Liberi Nantes, Italy



Mahatma Gandhi FC, Hungary

SG Egelsbach 1874 e.V., Egelsbach/Germany

***Facilitating access and active participation:
a traditional sports club that trains refugees as volunteers***

SG Egelsbach 1874 e.V. constitutes an example of a club that has implemented measures to initiate an intercultural opening process and that actively encourages the involvement of migrants and refugees. The presentation of the club is based on interviews with two board members, the two employees in charge of its office who also serve as volunteers, the head of the cricket section and the former youth leader of the football section, who is in charge of the midnight football sessions and has served the municipality as a “sports coach”.

● **Presentation of SG Egelsbach 1874 e.V.: new challenges for a traditional club**

SG Egelsbach is a sports club with approximately 3,080 members playing sports ranging from badminton to volleyball in 15 different sections (as of December 2015). It is the largest sports club in the Offenbach district and attracts people from well beyond the municipality of Egelsbach. Established in 1945 as one of the first public clubs with several sections in Germany, it arose from the merger of several traditional workers' sports clubs that had been founded in Egelsbach in the 19th century.

Located at approximately 20 kilometres' distance from the city of Frankfurt on the Main, the municipality of Egelsbach forms part of the Offenbach district and has approximately 11,400 inhabitants (as of September 2015). The Frankfurt/Rhein-Main metropolitan area constitutes an economically significant region with a long history of immigration, characterized (among other things) by the influx of migrant workers from Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey that began in the mid-fifties of the last century. In 2011, almost one third of the inhabitants of the Offenbach district (which forms part of the metropolitan area) had a migration background.⁴⁰

This diversity is reflected in the composition of the sports club: In 2015, 31% of its members had a migration background. Recently, the club celebrated the fact that it had reached 3,000 members – the latest one came from a Syrian family.

The club has five full-time employees: two in the office, one janitor and two in its own fitness studio. In total, 120 – 180 adolescents and adults are involved as volunteers, some of whom receive a small allowance, particularly those who serve as coaches.

Recently, the club's traditional functions in the areas of youth work, grassroots and competitive sports have been complemented by new challenges concerning health-related exercise as well as the integration and inclusion of different social groups. Above all, the club supports refugees. Approximately 140 of them live in Egelsbach, most from Somalia, Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. Further refugees are housed in neighbouring municipalities.

Key aspects of the club's work aimed at the inclusion of different groups, and of refugees in particular, include the following projects, activities and measures that form part of its intercultural opening process:

- **Development of a mission statement:** In 2014, the club adopted a mission statement based on its traditional values and its democratic, social history: It understands itself as a sports community open to all, promoting cultural as well as sporting diversity. The mission statement includes values such as fairness, respect and tolerance (Sportgemeinschaft Egelsbach 1874 e.V. 2015, 2f.). A positive wording was chosen deliberately; a clear dissociation from negative terms (such as racism) was not deemed necessary. The mission statement reflects the club's attitude and conduct, but also influences its culture, since it constitutes a set of guidelines that remains in place, independent of specific individuals, e.g. after changes in the management. All members were encouraged to participate in the process that led to its creation: A questionnaire was used to conduct a member survey, which was complemented by personal discussions in the different sections. Together, both yielded the fundamental aspects to be included. The extended board developed a draft based on these ideas, which was then discussed with the heads of the different sections. The final version was presented and

⁴⁰ <http://www.kreisoffenbach.hemona.de/index.php/daten/bevoelkerung>, 15/8/2016.

adjusted in the context of a general assembly. The creation of the mission statement was a long process that involved all levels of the organization. It was professionally supervised and took roughly two years to complete.

- **Individuals with a migration background in management positions:** People of different origin are present at all levels of the club, also among the board members and the heads of the different sections. The cricket section, for instance, was established by migrants from Pakistan and Afghanistan in 2012 with the aim of promoting a sport hitherto hardly known in Germany and of making it more popular.
- **Celebrating inclusion:** Under the slogan “Egelsbach moves”, the club held a big event on its premises in August 2015, welcoming all inhabitants of the municipality, and especially the refugees and asylum seekers among them: The 15 sections offered a total of 50 open training sessions for everyone to try. Members of the cricket section demonstrated their skills in a game and provided visitors with culinary delights from Pakistan.
- **Further education:** The club forms one of the “bases” involved in the programme “Integration durch Sport (inclusion through sports)” run by the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB), which promotes the active participation of people with a migration background in sports. Within the context of the programme, the club’s integration officer and office staff regularly attend further education workshops on intercultural and socio-political issues. The results of these workshops are reported back to the management and the heads of the sections.
- **Special projects (such as “Judo ganz bunt (multicolour judo)”):** Several of the sections are engaged in activities aimed at facilitating the inclusion of refugees living in Egelsbach and the surrounding area. The judo project offers free training sessions for a group of male and female refugees. Funded by the judo section, it includes the provision of judo uniforms free of charge. The decision to support the project was jointly taken within the section. A separate group was created in order to allow refugees to settle in slowly and smoothly within the host society. The team does not focus on competition, takes participants’ physical condition and limitations into account and attempts to break down language barriers playfully, e.g. by explaining and jointly repeating words during sessions. In the long term, after roughly six months, participants are supposed to be incorporated into regular training groups. Further projects and activities, organized by other sections, will be presented in the following chapters.
- **Cooperations:** When it comes to supporting refugees, the club’s main partner is the organization Christliche Flüchtlingshilfe Egelsbach/Erzhausen (“Christian refugee aid Egelsbach/Erzhausen”, CFEE), which runs the decentralized housing facilities for refugees and asylum seekers and provides qualified assistance during asylum procedures. The organization has been active in this field in Egelsbach for 25 years. Its qualified staff facilitate access to refugees and its psychologists and teaching staff also serve as experts providing advice in difficult situations. For instance, emotional responses with underlying causes due to the flight experience have occurred in training sessions. In such situations, it is crucial for the club to know that it can rely on professional assistance.
- **Graded membership fees:** In order to allow members with different social backgrounds to play sports, membership fees range from €2.00 – €12.40 per month. Among others, spouses, families, pupils, unemployed people, pensioners and asylum seekers pay reduced fees. For some types of sport, additional fees are due once or twice year. In the long term, it is crucial for the club to incorporate refugees as regular members paying regular fees, even if these are reduced. This is understood to be an important signal to the refugees, as it allows them to feel accepted as regular members and identify with the club.
- **Multilingual PR:** So far, advertising and promotion exist only in German. However, the office has announced plans to publish its advertising material at least in English as well.

● **The club’s attitude and motivation to engage: making a contribution instead of passively consuming offers**

SG Egelsbach 1874 e.V. is a club with a considerable number of members; to a large extent, it has to rely on volunteers to engage in the 15 different sections so as to be able offer a large number of different sporting activities. However, volunteer

work is not only a necessity to run the club, but also constitutes a social value the club wishes to promote. Thus, it focuses not only on creating offers for refugees and asylum seekers to make use of, but also on encouraging them to become involved and participate actively.

Irrespective of their origin, the club wants all members to weigh in and contribute to shaping the sporting community. This is described as a core principle by the board members.



"We treat people with respect and we want our offers to be respected, too. We expect something in return. This does not necessarily mean sporting performance, but rather that we expect people to engage for the benefit of the community. The fact that members become involved in shaping the club, that they want to be part of the club's success and contribute to it, is an effect of volunteer work that is crucial for us, especially since we go beyond the limitations of sporting activities and host important social events, too" (a board member).

The club wants to give different groups opportunities to play sports and to engage: *"We open doors, but we do not push" (a board member).* According to the interviewees, providing access to all means continuing a tradition of a club that arose from the merger of several older clubs with partially diverging interests. Asked for the reason behind the club's support for refugees, one of them responds as follows, again underscoring the club's principle of active participation:



"This is part of the club's history, being open for all and allowing everyone to participate, not just passively, but actively as well. We see their interest and their potential and we want people to engage as soon as possible. It is about people not just making use of existing offers, but also contributing something for the benefit of the club" (an office worker and volunteer).

Supporting refugees, the club meets its social responsibility, formalized in the mission statement. At the same time, interviewees emphasize that they regard this assistance as nothing out of the ordinary. To the club, the latest wave of immigration has *"... nothing exotic about it. We deal with it rationally. It is something that simply happens, it is a social and a societal challenge, which the club confronts with its commitment" (a board member).*

Apart from continuing a tradition and from the voluntary commitment laid down in the mission statement, there are further motivations for the support: People who came to Egelsbach with their families in the 1960s and 1970s have played an important role in the club's development.



"Many in our club have roots from other countries, parents and grandparents who moved to Germany, or they came here as kids, so they know what it is like. If you have made positive experiences yourself, you feel responsible for passing that on. I have been very well received here and I would like to pass on the feeling of being welcome" (an office worker and volunteer).

Their own experience of immigration and their feeling of having been well received by the German society are key to their commitment. One interviewee states that she feels obliged to hand down the positive experiences she made as a migrant in Germany.

● The model project "Sport und Flüchtlinge (sports and refugees)" in Egelsbach

Egelsbach was one of three "model municipalities" that participated in the model project "Sport und Flüchtlinge (sports and refugees)", run by the youth division of the Hessian sports association ("Sportjugend Hessen"), funded by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) within the context of a federal programme until the end of 2015. Meanwhile, a statewide programme of the same name has been initiated, continuing the successful work of the model project at the federal state level. It is funded by the Hessian Ministry of the Interior and Sports and also implemented in collaboration with the youth division of the state's sports association.⁴¹ Thus, the projects and activities initiated in Egelsbach can be continued as well.

⁴¹ <http://www.sportjugend-hessen.de/gesellschaft/sport-und-fluechtlinge/das-programm-sport-und-fluechtlinge/>, 18/8/2016.

The municipality of Egelsbach has appointed two volunteer “sports coaches” whose task consists in facilitating communication between the sports club, the municipality, the refugee shelter and the refugees themselves and in coordinating the creation of sporting activities for the latter. The club has received a special budget for the project, to be used to equip refugees with an initial set of sports clothing, for instance. The “sports coaches” had to be well-connected within the community; however, being a member of the sports club was not a prerequisite. They understand themselves as door openers who establish networks between the different parties. In Egelsbach, one of the two “sports coaches” is a former youth leader of the football section of the sports club, which he still serves as a volunteer. The second “sports coach” works for CFEE, so that immense synergies could be created by liaising between the two organizations.

As one of the first steps, the “sports coaches” spoke to refugees and asylum seekers in order to identify the types of sport they were interested in. The women asked for a gymnastics group, the men wanted to play football. The “sports coaches” then met with representatives of the club to consider different options of fulfilling these wishes. They also discussed the club’s need of assistance and the issue of how refugees and asylum seekers could be encouraged to become actively involved from the beginning, if possible. While offers were being created, the refugees were also given certain tasks, such as compiling a list of translators. Volunteers had to be found for the preparations and for tidying up before and after the sports sessions, respectively.

The sessions of the women’s gymnastics group took place in the afternoon. It was crucial to allow the women to bring their children along; childcare was offered during the sessions. Adolescent girls who were migrants themselves, but had already lived in Germany for a while assumed this task. In total, 7 – 14 women from Eritrea, Syria, Ethiopia and Iraq attended the training regularly. A volunteer from the club coached the group. Special emphasis was put on communication, combining sports and language training.



Visiting the midnight football training in Egelsbach

One Friday evening at the beginning of December 2015, the midnight training is more than well-attended: Today, not just 20 young men have come (as usual), but in the course of the evening, 40 of them find their way into the gym in Egelsbach, causing the volunteer of the football section to consider offering an additional session during the week. The players form teams on their own: They play six against six. The mood is cheerful and exuberant. At the same time, everyone plays highly concentrated. Players come from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Somalia, among other countries. Approximately one third are already club members. New players settle in without any difficulties. At the end of the session, some participants tidy up together. The „sports coach“ explains that this is something that has developed within the context of the training: Some feel responsible for this and take good care of the equipment. Since everybody stays to talk and joke after the game, it is long after midnight, when he locks the gym.

Details regarding the form the offer would take were discussed with the women. It was important to them that the sessions took place in a closed room no men had access to. The training supervisor picked the women up at the refugee home and accompanied them to the gym. According to her, initial reservations slowly gave way to a relaxed and cheerful mood and the women began to talk more among themselves. Meanwhile, the sessions are no longer offered; unfortunately, the aim of incorporating the women into one of the club’s regular gymnastics groups could only be reached in two cases. However, a new group is planned within the context of the new funding scheme. It is supposed to meet in the morning, while the women’s children attend school or kindergarten, so as to ensure a calmer and quieter ambience.

The wish to play football was fulfilled in the form of midnight football sessions, i.e. the indoor football training takes place once a week, from 10.00 – 12.00 p.m. on Friday nights.⁴² Since no other gym times were available, the problem was solved creatively, offering the training during late evening hours. A volunteer from the club who also serves the municipality as a “sports coach” organizes the training. Even he was surprised to see how popular the training sessions became. The time slot proved to be very attractive for adolescents and young adults, since Egelsbach has little else to offer in the late evening.

⁴² Meanwhile, a second training is offered from 8.30 – 10.30 p.m. on Saturdays; it is mostly refugees who have been participating since 2014 and have begun to organize themselves who make use of this additional session (as of August 2016).

The midnight football sessions were promoted by way of personal invitations and by word-of-mouth. Since almost all refugees use smartphones to stay in contact with families and friends in their countries of origin, text messages and WhatsApp proved to be suitable means of communication to maintain regular contact.

The offer targets refugees and asylum seekers, but also former refugees who have been living in Germany for a while and are able to bridge gaps between their newly arrived peers and the host society. Some participants have begun to play in the club's regular teams and have become regular members, but still attend the midnight sessions as an additional offer. The additional group is supposed to be a trial option that allows players to get their bearings in a protected space. New participants continue to arrive, not only from Egelsbach, but also from the surrounding municipalities, even from Frankfurt. The midnight football training, initiated within the context of the model project, enjoys such popularity that it has meanwhile become a fixture within the club's standard programme: It is now a permanent offer.

● Qualifying refugees and asylum seekers as voluntary training supervisors

The football section of the club relies on roughly 60 persons to act as coaches and training supervisors for a total of 719 members, 158 of them women and girls. Since football is very popular and in great demand, the club is looking for further volunteers, especially for youth teams. With a view to enabling refugees to actively participate as volunteers in line with the club's core principles instead of just allowing them to make use of existing offers, the idea of a qualification course enabling participants to serve as voluntary training supervisors was born. The "sports coaches" set to work with great enthusiasm and commitment to make this project a reality. Funding could be obtained under the programme "Zi:EL (meaning "target" or "objective")", which promotes the commitment of young people in sports.⁴³ Thus, catering and travel expenses could be covered as well as costs incurred in connection with equipment, rent and allowances paid to instructors. Although the project did not target men only, it reached only male refugees, primarily due to the type of sport.⁴⁴

Mostly young male refugees interested in becoming engaged as volunteers were prepared for future volunteer tasks within the club, regarding language skills and regarding subject matter. The course combined sports and language acquisition, as the "sports coach" elaborates.



"If someone has developed an affinity for something, it will help them learn the language faster. At the moment, language classes are difficult to get for asylum seekers, so we, the football club, discussed what we could do. Those who have not yet been granted asylum cannot participate in language classes. But the language is essential for communication, in daily life and within the club. Our language classes are based on football, participants learn football vocabulary. This is how we can create the conditions that allow regular encounters and volunteer commitment in the club" (a "sports coach" and volunteer).

Special terminology and idiomatic expressions used in football were explained and revisited in theoretical and practical training sessions. Participants also received a "vocabulary box" explaining fundamental football terms and vocabulary necessary to understand the rules, club and association structures and the tasks of a coach, supervisor or referee in simple pictures. The "sports coach", who is a professional graphic designer, had created the box as a part of his voluntary work.

The course was attended by 16 young men between the ages of 15 and 28. It comprised eight evening sessions and three further sessions on Saturdays, spread over two months. The prerequisites for taking part consisted in football enthusiasm and a basic German vocabulary. Some of the participants were recruited via the midnight football training. Since the course was organized in collaboration with another football club, this club also sent some participants.

⁴³ <https://www.dsj.de/handlungsfelder/junges-engagement/konzeption/>, 18/8/2016.

⁴⁴ Most of the refugees living in Egelsbach are young men. A qualification course targeting women would have to take their specific needs into account, e.g. concerning the type of sport.



Participating in a module of the qualification course

On 5 December 2015, the last module of the qualification course is taught on the premises of SG Egelsbach. Participants have already received their certificates; this last session comprises final exercises concerning football rules. The competent speaker, no older than most of the participants, is a state league referee. He explains football rules and the complex role of the referee with the help of YouTube videos showing referee mistakes. When asked for his plans after completing the course, one participant from Eritrea states that he would like to work as a training supervisor and assist the club's youth coach in his work with children. Another plans to begin a further course and become a referee.

Three tests were taken and discussed, so participants could assess their own progress. They were also given a copy of the current set of rules to be used by referees, published by the German Football Association. Those who regularly attended the course received a certificate. Participants commented enthusiastically on the qualification, particularly on the combination of theoretical and practical sessions. The course enables them to assist football coaches as supervisors and it can serve as a preparation for attending further courses to reach higher levels of the qualification system of the German Foot-

ball Association, e.g. to become a referee or obtain a coaching license. The club also plans to have mentors accompany future referees during their initial games.

● Obstacles and challenges

Patience and persistence are among the main challenges interviewees mention in connection with their work with refugees. They underscore that it is crucial not to be disappointed if things do not go as planned. In that case, one should *"not complain, but address the problem and try and make the best of the situation"*, as one volunteer phrases it. Patience, sensitivity and a careful approach are essential, since volunteers do not know what the young people and families may have endured and in how far they might be traumatized due to their experience of war and flight. Moreover, they have to develop an openness towards diverging ideas and a sensitivity for different needs, e.g. regarding physicality, physical contact and shame. Difficulties have to be dealt with in a constructive way. For instance, the club did not succeed in incorporating the majority of the women of the refugees' gymnastics group into regular groups. However, the idea should not be abandoned as a consequence. Instead, the club should consider a different strategy: The *whole* refugee group could visit the regular groups and get to know them at an early stage, for instance.

Some further challenges have to be confronted within the club itself and vis à vis the general public. Intense debates within the club were necessary to remove concerns and reservations, before some activities could be realized. In this regard, clear agreements and compromises had to be made, with the janitor, for instance, or in order to avoid rivalries with other groups within the club, e.g. concerning gym times. Resistance within the club's own ranks must be overcome with good reasoning, e.g. by reminding members of their own family history of flight and displacement in order to create an understanding for refugees and their situation. This is another context in which committed volunteers should not be easily discouraged.

It is important to highlight the club's commitment in its PR work; in order to refute possible criticism before it is voiced, however, the club must also emphasize that this does not mean losing touch with its roots, but acting in accordance with its mission statement. Again, an awareness for competing interests is key, as one interviewee explains.



"The question is: How do I win acceptance among the citizens? Many people have no idea what the whole fuss is about. It comes down to mutual inclusion, proceeding very gently. You always have to ensure that everybody gets his piece of the cake, allow no rivalries to emerge, that is"
(an office worker and volunteer).

Another challenge that was mentioned concerns the amount of red tape involved in dealing with funding programmes: According to the interviewees, the administrative work, which is done on a voluntary basis, is often immense, even if the funding is relatively low.

● Results and impact

Concerning the output of the intercultural opening process, the joint elaboration of the mission statement, which serves as a basis for the club's conduct and remains valid, no matter who might be in charge, is one of the key aspects. Another output of the club's commitment and support for refugees consists in the different offers (the judo, gymnastics and midnight football training) that have been created based on actual demand in order to facilitate their access. This concerns, first of all, their access as players or athletes. However, activities facilitating their active participation as volunteers were also initiated, i.e. the course qualifying them as such or the small tasks they were assigned at an early stage within the context of the sports sessions.

Additional outcomes include effects observed in the participants. For instance, the volunteer who ran the gymnastics group reports that the women gained more and more confidence in the group and became more relaxed. They were able to do something for themselves, freed from their supervisory duties thanks to the accompanying childcare service. CFEE staff report that the women were able to establish close contacts among themselves and that they continue to meet outside the gymnastics group, now at the organization's women's café (cf. Sportjugend Hessen o.J., 19). Thus, significant opportunities of encounter have been created for these women, many of whom do not normally leave the refugee home on their own, and their radius of action expanded.

The social workers also observed positive effects in the men taking part in the midnight football training, as one interviewee recounts: The way they treat each other at the refugee home has changed in positive ways, while communication among the very diverse group with different social and cultural backgrounds has increased. The sporting offers also have an inclusive effect, since participants are able to establish contact with regular club members and to obtain access to new networks. Some of them could even be placed in internships. Participants of the midnight football sessions were also incorporated into existing football teams.

The qualification course allowed participants to acquire language skills as well as a high level of practical and theoretical knowledge on football, enabling them to volunteer in the club. At the end of the course, they had already developed ideas on how they could become involved or pursue a further qualification.

However, effects cannot only be observed in those who participated the sporting sessions, but also within the club. Interviewees describe how the janitor's concerns regarding the midnight football training could be refuted and rivalries with other teams dissolved. A change of perspective can be observed in many club members: Whereas in the beginning, the refugees were perceived as a group, they are now seen as individuals. The volunteer who organizes the midnight training describes this very clearly.



"At the beginning, they would say: 'One of your refugees was here'. Meanwhile, it is Ahmad who came. Individual refugees get a name, they are no longer strangers" (a "sports coach" and volunteer).

Thanks to the commitment of the volunteers, new offers have been created. The midnight football training is no longer a project, but has even become a standard activity.

According to the interviewees, a number of factors were beneficial for the implementation of the projects and activities: Egelsbach is a small municipality, where distances are short; the question of transport does not arise, since everything can be reached on foot. The refugees live in the centre and the sports facilities are close by. Immigration is not something the community has not seen before: CFEE has been working to facilitate the inclusion of migrants for more than 25 years; the community is well aware of the issue. Finally, the club is a key player due to its size, pools a great deal of expertise and has an enormous potential. To conclude, SG Egelsbach 1874 e.V. manages to perpetuate its values and its tradition as a workers' sports club, while continuing to evolve in accordance with these values, confronting new social challenges with great dedication and enthusiasm. Its focus on the active participation of refugees is crucial for this process.

Liberi Nantes, Rome/Italy

Everyone has the right to play sports: a sports club as a means of empowerment for newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers

This chapter presents a Rome sports club that targets refugees and asylum seekers in particular, offering activities aimed at their empowerment. The description focuses on the club's hiking section and is based on interviews and discussions held with its president, its vice president, the head and three volunteers of the hiking section and with participants of a hiking tour outside of Rome in March 2016.

● Presentation of the club Liberi Nantes: "The aim is to be normal"

Liberi Nantes is a Rome sports club that aims to offer everyone the opportunity to play sports. It targets refugees and asylum seekers in particular and attaches a political message to its activities: The objective is to claim the refugees' right to play sports and to draw the attention of the majority population to racism within and without sports structures. This is why PR and networking play a major role among the club's activities, as its president states.



"Sport can struggle against racism; whenever it is possible, we participate in debates about integration, conferences, actions like the FARE action week. We are building a network not only with sports associations, but with other anti-racist associations, too" (the president of the club).

In 2007, the club was founded by a group of Italian football fans who used to attend football games together and met with racist fan chants. They decided to engage against racism in a way that would make a mark beyond their home stadium: They rented a football pitch and began to train together with refugees and asylum seekers. In the second year, the club's team was already participating in regular tournaments.

However, Liberi Nantes is forced to play its official amateur league games without being able to score points: The Italian amateur league allows only two players on the pitch who are not EU citizens, but the Liberi Nantes team consists almost exclusively of Non-EU nationals. Theoretically, it would be possible to have all players registered, but according to the president, this would be a very complicated and time-consuming process. The fact that the composition of the team keeps changing makes it impossible to obtain the necessary permits entitling foreign players to participate before the season begins.

Currently, Liberi Nantes has approximately twenty Italian members, who pay a membership fee of €30 per year and work for the club as volunteers. All further members are refugees and asylum seekers, mostly from Sub-Saharan countries (Senegal, the Gambia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Nigeria etc.). So far, they do not pay any membership fees.

The clubhouse and training facilities are located in Pietralata, a working class district in the northeast of Rome. In order to participate in training sessions, players come from all parts of the city. The club is also involved in community work and enjoys a good relationship with community organizations in the neighbourhood, which appreciate its commitment. For instance, a path was cleared of rubbish and the club backed a move for better street lighting.

All the work of Liberi Nantes is done on a voluntary basis, driven by the enormous dedication and the idealism of the volunteers. The club's main objective is not sporting success; it aims to spread an understanding under which refugees and asylum seekers are seen as a normal part of society.



"Success in the league is not the aim! The aim is to be normal, to be a normal team" (the president of the club).

Currently, the club's main activities include:

- **The Liberi Nantes football team:** The football team plays in the lowest Italian amateur league and consists of thirty – forty players who are almost exclusively refugees and asylum seekers. Due to close contacts with refugee homes and efficient word-of-mouth, interest in the club has risen sharply, so that during the 2015/2016 season, approximately

200 players came for a trial session, but only a fraction could be accepted (since the rush exceeded the club's volunteer resources). Five volunteers are in charge of the team: a coach, an assistant coach, two further aides who help with the training and a team manager responsible of maintaining contact with the football association. The composition of the team changes every year, since many players either (have to) leave Italy or find a job in Rome, which leaves them little time for football training.

- **The Liberi CamiNantes:** The second pillar of the club's sporting activities consists in the hiking section, the Liberi CamiNantes. Hiking tours are organized twice a month in order to show refugees the city and the region they live in. One of these tours takes place in the surrounding area, the other within the city itself so that the refugees can become acquainted with its cultural heritage.
- **The rehabilitation of the football pitch:** The club has only recently been granted permission to host official league games on its pitch, which had fallen into disrepair due to a long vacancy. At the same time, Liberi Nantes was given permission to rehabilitate the pitch. A group of refugee volunteers, the "work team", is now in charge of the rehabilitation of the pitch and the exterior areas: With the support of an Italian architect and an engineer, they are completing a training course to learn the relevant manual skills (and they will also receive a certificate for this). This "core group", which currently comprises nine young men, has already built furniture for the exterior areas from recycled material, for instance.
- **Language classes:** Twice a week, Liberi Nantes offers language classes free of charge; these are taught by two certified Italian language teachers who work on a voluntary basis. A volunteer from Burkina Faso who has a good command of the Italian language and used to work as a teacher in his country of origin serves as an assistant teacher, supporting the two teachers and helping with translations.
- **PR and networking:** As mentioned above, the club places major emphasis on PR and networking activities in order to advance the political objective of allowing everyone to participate in sports. For instance, banners on the pitch are used to get anti-racist messages across to audiences and teams. Networks with friendly teams supporting the work of Liberi Nantes and with anti-racist organizations from beyond the sphere of sports are being established. Liberi Nantes is involved in conferences, events and campaigns on the issues of flight and asylum, inclusion and anti-racism. Apart from the club's website, which is always kept up to date, Facebook and Twitter are important PR channels. Meanwhile, the work of Liberi Nantes is widely known and receives the corresponding recognition – recently, for instance, within the context of a reception by Pope Francis in April 2016.

● The idea of the Liberi CamiNantes: "Nature gives you peace of mind"

The hiking section of the club was established by some hiking enthusiasts among the Liberi Nantes members. The fundamental idea consists in the notion that hiking has positive effects on a person's physical and emotional well-being – which generally holds true for everybody, but might be particularly relevant for those who find themselves facing a difficult situation. The section's hiking tours are open for all, allowing people from very different backgrounds who would not otherwise meet to come together and get to know each other. The interviewed volunteers describe these encounters, which arise from the tours outside of Rome in particular, as an opportunity for both sides to revise their ideas and prejudices and to develop new ideas. New contacts and, possibly, new friendships can be established. The hiking tours provide access to the support structures the club offers refugees. Conversations develop easily while hiking, away from the hustle and bustle of the city, surrounded by the peace and quiet of nature. The tours serve to broaden the horizon of all participants and create shared experiences and memories.



"To me, the idea behind the hiking section is to share the beauty of nature with someone who is new to this country. It is a pleasure to show people places they would not otherwise have access to. Nature is important, because it gives you peace of mind" (a volunteer of the hiking section).

A further aspect, the connection between experiencing nature and developing a sense of belonging, is underscored by a further volunteer. The aspect identified by this interlocutor is particularly relevant for migrants:



"Nature is capable of welcoming you, even in a place where you have not been born. Nature helps you feel at home, even if you are not" (a volunteer of the hiking section).

The hiking tours are organized by a total of six volunteers, each of whom assumes different tasks. A tour guide chooses the routes, procures maps and describes the requirements and the level of difficulty of each tour. Others are in charge of organizing the tours at the local level (including questions of transport, for instance), of the contact with refugee homes or the corresponding PR work.

Meanwhile, the section has established excellent contacts with social workers in the refugee homes. Since the number of participants is limited, the social workers are informed of the number of available slots. The decision on who can join a tour is taken by the refugee homes, which make sure to send especially those who lack social contacts outside their collective centre. Meanwhile, the refugee homes have agreed to cover the costs that arise in connection with train fares and provisions for “their” participants. The nine members of the work team currently completing the manual skills course with Liberi Nantes regularly participate in hiking tours. Italian participants are recruited via social media and personal networks. If the starting point of a tour cannot be reached with public transport, transport is organized with private cars.

● Accompanying a hiking tour: “It helps me to envision a future”



A hiking tour to Canale Monterano

On 20 March 2016, the Liberi CamiNantes meet outside Rome’s Valle Aurelia metro station. A train brings them to Manziana, approximately 50 km northwest of Rome. Nineteen participants have been sent by twelve different refugee homes. They are all men, most of them well below thirty. At the Manziana train station, they are all provided with hiking boots. The refugees are joined by approximately the same number of Italian participants, men and women of different ages, even a few children. The circular trail in the Canale Monterano Nature Reserve is 13 km long and has been rated as “easy”. The tour guide provides information on the history and culture of the region. Conversations between participants are easily started. They are held in English, French, Italian and a few more languages. At midday, all participants share a picnic and a picture of the whole group with the Liberi Nantes flag is taken. After six hours, participants are back at the train station, all equally exhausted, but also exhilarated.

The conversations that could be held with many of the participants during the hike clearly show that they attach great importance to the tour. For the refugees, it is first of all about spending a nice day together. It is significant to feel part of a group and to do or achieve something together. Their fascination with nature and the joy of exercising surrounded by nature play an important role. Members of the work team state that they regularly join hiking tours in order to meet old friends and to make new ones; together with their interest in the culture of the host country, this is described as a part of an integration process (*“This helps people integrate and become part of the society”*). What matters is gaining a better knowledge of the country they now live in and of its people (even if some of the participants regard Italy only as a

temporary abode). They can practise their newly acquired Italian in casual conversations, discussing cultural or societal issues at the same time. One volunteer explains that she uses the hiking tours to discuss different values or women’s rights in particular.



“I also see the tour as an opportunity to discuss gender roles, my attitude towards marriage and child-bearing and the way women and girls live and want to live in Italy. This means that the refugees are – possibly – confronted with values and attitudes different from their own, they are presented with new input, new ideas and the opportunity to reflect” (a volunteer).

Moreover, the refugees understand the offered tours as a way of supporting people who find themselves in difficulties: The encounter with nature and with other people of a totally different origin allows them to gain some distance from their problems, at least for a while. This, in turn, affects their future and their ability to plan ahead.

When asked to define the significance of the tour more closely, one participant summarizes as follows: *“Taking part in the tours helps me forget the past and envision a future” (a participant of the hiking section).*

● Obstacles and challenges

As mentioned above, the club’s activities are largely based on the dedication of its volunteers. These are club members themselves, but generally participate in the sporting activities to a lesser extent. Some of the activities of Liberi Nantes have had

to be temporarily discontinued, because a volunteer coach could no longer serve as such due to relocation or occupational changes and a successor had not yet been found. This has affected the touch rugby, a type of sport with which the club had managed to reach women and girls as well, and the open football training. In general, finding volunteers prepared to reliably commit themselves in the club for a longer period of time proves difficult. The interviewed club representatives explained that Italy lacks a pronounced culture of volunteering in sports and that in comparison with other European countries, volunteering is less recognized within the society (and plays no role in CVs, for instance, whereas in Germany volunteer work can definitely be an advantage for an applicant).

Another difficulty consists in the fact that the composition of the group of refugees who participate in the offered activities keeps changing, since they find themselves in a state of transition and their situation changes. Once they receive a work permit, many refugees attempt to find work in Northern Italy, others move on to Northern Europe, so that for them, Liberi Nantes is more of a first stepping-stone in their attempt of finding a foothold in Europe.

Engaging refugees and asylum seekers in volunteer work is also difficult, since their biographical situation is hardly compatible with the reliability and the binding commitment the club requires on the part of those who assume volunteer tasks. Apart from the assistant teacher mentioned above, (only) one further refugee holds a volunteer position, serving as a groundskeeper and janitor. After a period of six months, the refugees are allowed to leave the collective centres and receive a work permit; from this moment, their efforts are focused on finding work and on building a future. From this perspective, volunteering seems a luxury they have no time for. The former coach of the open football team, who comes from Afghanistan, for instance, has started his own catering business, which is why he has no time and energy to spare for an unpaid commitment.

However, the club succeeds in assigning smaller or temporary tasks, such as the gathering of the training clothes or clean-up efforts, to all. A new idea consists in including the work team in the preparations for future hiking tours, when it comes to choosing routes, for instance. If voluntary work is combined with the acquisition of a qualification (as arranged with the work team), it will be easier to convince refugees and asylum seekers to assume volunteer work for the club.

Another challenge lies in encouraging women to participate in the offered activities: To date, participants are almost exclusively male. The mixed touch rugby training and special gymnastics sessions for women only had to be discontinued due to the retirement of the coach and due to a lack of participants, respectively. The special refugee homes for women are very far from the club's grounds, resulting in very long journeys for women. Female refugees are often traumatized and have experienced violence, so that they are no longer willing to move about in public after dark. This, in turn, impedes activities that take place in the evening throughout most of the year.

Among other things, the objective of "being normal", as expressed by the president, entails the participation in regular competitions. Although a few organizations from the social sector are offering sporting activities for refugees and asylum seekers in Rome, their teams are not prepared to participate in real competitions and do not form part of the official amateur league. Forming part of the football sphere means, of course, being exposed to the corresponding conflicts, including racism on the football pitch. This is why common values and club principles based on mutual respect are crucial, as the president explains.



"The biggest challenge consists in participating in a real competition. There are conflicts with other teams and conflicts with the referee. As a club, you need common values. Our core value is respect: respect towards the pitch, the team and the opponent. It is not easy to face the reality of the league. But we want to claim everyone's right to play sports! We do not want to take part in a fantasy competition, because reality tells a different story" (the president of the club).

A constant challenge consists in finding sponsors for the work of Liberi Nantes, since money is always lacking and revenue from membership fees is very low. Currently, the club does not receive any public funding, so that it depends on donations and sponsors. Creative approaches are also embraced, including crowdfunding or a fundraising dinner for the hiking section, for which refugees had prepared dishes from their countries of origin at a refugee home and in which friends and acquaintances had been invited to participate for a donation. The amount that was raised and fees from Italian hikers who participated in the tours allowed the club to make some purchases for the hiking section, e.g. walking boots.

● Results and impact

A tangible result of the work of Liberi Nantes ("Output") consists in the fact that newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers find an existing support structure that helps them integrate into Italian society, building on their strengths (in the football team and the work team) and allowing them to further develop these skills.



"In the homes, refugees spend most of the time doing nothing, since they have to wait six months until they receive a work permit. When they join Liberi Nantes, they can show their skills in football or in manual work" (the president of the club).

The club's activities, aimed at empowering refugees, are based on an attitude under which they are perceived as partners and treated on an equal footing. The results of the joint efforts of the work team are clearly evident to outside observers: Social workers from the refugee homes report that the participants of the qualification course have become more self-confident, more communicative and more open-minded. A carpenter from the Gambia who forms part of the work team underscores the great significance that learning new manual skills and actually using them has for him, since methods, materials and tools differ a lot from those a carpenter would use in his country of origin.

In Italy, refugees can be granted a residence permit on humanitarian grounds, even if they are not accorded refugee status. A prerequisite for this consists in providing evidence of their integration efforts. The certificate that the refugees of Liberi Nantes receive after completing the manual skills course is very useful when it comes to obtaining this type of residence permit. Moreover, the networks and contacts created by Liberi Nantes have already helped refugees find smaller assignments.

Each member and each player is given a document that summarizes the club's values. Mutual respect is the basic value that characterizes interaction within the club. This is why the football training encompasses discussions on self-control, fair play and the question of how to react to offensive behaviour without being aggressive. The Lazio region keeps a fair play ranking, for which all teams are awarded fair play points during games. Of the sixty-three football teams in the Region, Liberi Nantes is currently leading this ranking (as of March 2016), which is an enormous success for the club, as it shows how seriously the club principles are taken by everyone involved. So far, Liberi Nantes has won the fair play competition twice.

Further tangible results of the work of Liberi Nantes ("Outcomes") include the opportunities refugees and asylum seekers are given to better orient themselves in the city and in the region, to improve their language skills (in the language classes and during hikes), to establish new contacts, with people in the same situation as well as with Italians, and to practise their language skills.

The interviewed refugees and asylum seekers describe the hiking tours as an opportunity to better deal with their problems and difficulties or at least forget them for a while. Besides, they believe that the tours have a potential for integration, which they actively attempt to make use of.

The shared experience of nature and the relaxed mood of the tours offer countless opportunities and triggers for conversation. Discussions on societal issues confront participants with different ideas and provide new perspectives, as one volunteer reports.

The club has a whole series of plans for its own future. On the one side, they constitute challenges, as it would have to chart new territory, on the other side, new activities certainly hold new opportunities for the club, which could receive new input and evolve. One of these plans consists in founding a club-owned construction company that would be run as a cooperative, with refugees and Italians as partners. The company revenue could then be used to rehabilitate the football pitch. Another project being prepared by a team including refugees, Italian journalists and students of journalism is the creation of an online magazine to serve as a forum for refugees to tell their stories. In order to facilitate contact between refugees and Italians from the area, the club also aims to open up and welcome the neighbourhood to its grounds; this could mean building a library and an intercultural sports centre. These plans and ideas, developed to a different degree, are another result ("Impact") of the work of a club that fosters an ambience that allows such innovative and creative projects to be conceived in the first place.

In conclusion, Liberi Nantes is a very lively and creative club that pursues unusual new strategies when it comes to combining specific measures aimed at the support and the inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers, based on the empowerment approach, with political objectives.

Mahatma Gandhi FC, Budapest/Hungary

Achieving social acceptance via sporting success: an intercultural sports club as a message to the Hungarian society

This chapter presents a sports club run by a migrant organization (the Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation) that advocates inclusion and equal opportunities in sports and in society at large. The description is based on discussions held with four representatives of the MGHRO and with the coach and four players of the Mahatma Gandhi FC.

● **Presentation of the MGHRO: promoting human rights**

The Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organization (MGHRO) is a migrant organization founded in 1992, located in the centre of Budapest, the capital of Hungary. Objectives include claiming the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, fighting racism and discrimination and facilitating social inclusion at all levels of society.⁴⁵

The MGHRO has approximately 200 members all over Hungary. Currently, six volunteers are working for the organization on a permanent basis, at times assisted by interns. The volunteers include native Hungarians as well as migrants and former asylum seekers who have lived in Hungary for a long time. They apply their specific skills and their set of experiences, including legal expertise, language, computer or teaching skills, not to mention the experiences made as refugees and/or migrants, which play a significant role in some cases.

The human rights organization's main activities include:

- **Providing legal advice and legal representation for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers:** The MGHRO offers legal counselling and assistance with applications (such as asylum claims) free of charge as well as support regarding every-day problems, such as the search for housing or for a job. Once or twice a week, a lawyer works for the organization and the rest of the week, dedicated volunteers attend the clients, who can knock on the door any time. They are attended individually and personally, as one volunteer explains: *"Migrants are not cases, but human beings: They are writing, calling, waiting at the door."* The MGHRO also visits refugees and asylum seekers in jail and assists in case of human rights problems, such as an imminent deportation.
- **Raising awareness and implementing anti-racist campaigns in football stadiums:** In 2008, the MGHRO signed an agreement with the Hungarian Football Association (MLSZ) in order to fight racism in the stadium. Since then, the MGHRO has been implementing anti-racist campaigns in football stadiums, particularly within the context of the FARE Action Weeks. The founder and president of the organization is also a member of the football association's minority committee, tasked with ensuring that foreign players are not exposed to discrimination in the Hungarian league.
- **The Tolerance Education Project:** The MGHRO cooperates with five partner schools – elementary as well as secondary schools –, which participate in a program that provides an education in tolerance: Once a month, a unit (a "tolerance education class") is taught at one of the schools. Based on the pedagogical programme "Football for Development" (VIDC 2011), the units combine human rights education and the topic of sports. The MGHRO focuses on partner schools whose pupils come from less privileged social strata.

⁴⁵ http://www.gandhi.hu/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1



Attending a tolerance education class

On 21 January 2016, a volunteer of the MGHRO teaches a tolerance education class at the Lakatos Menyhért secondary school. Located in a marginalized district of Budapest, the school has many pupils from Roma families. Seven pupils of the 11th grade attend the class. One of the players of football team, the founder of the MGHRO and a further volunteer are present to provide support. Beginning with the person of Mahatma Gandhi, the volunteer holds a lecture on human rights, engaging the pupils with the help of questions. By way of examples, such as the anti-racist activities of the FARE network and the MGHRO's intercultural football team, the pupils are encouraged to reflect on the role human rights play in sports. A short film on human rights, specifically developed for adolescents, also forms part of the class, which ends with a picture of the whole group being taken in front of a brought banner that reads: „Football welcomes Refugees“.

● **Sports as a means of inclusion: the football teams of the MGHRO**

The organization makes use of sports to promote acceptance for the inclusion of migrants and refugees, within the structures of organized sports and within society at large. As a rule, Hungarians are passionate about sports, especially about football, which is very popular, one volunteer explains.

Within the context of the sports-based work of the MGHRO, the intercultural football teams of the African Stars FC, founded in 1994, and the Mahatma Gandhi FC, founded in 2000, play a crucial role. Both are male amateur teams coached and run by volunteers only. The players include migrants and refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Cameroon, Nigeria, the Gambia, Uganda and Brazil as well as native Hungarians. Some of them play in both teams. Whereas the African Stars FC plays indoor football on a small pitch, the Mahatma Gandhi team forms part of the Budapest league. In comparison with the African Stars, the Mahatma Gandhi FC is much more performance-oriented and currently attempting to make its entry into the intermediate league. Apart from the official league, friendly games and competitions in the Pest region, which has up to forty football teams, form part of the team's agenda. Games of the Mahatma Gandhi FC attract a mixed crowd of approximately one hundred, including both spectators with and without a migration background. The team's objective consists in informing the Hungarian society on human rights, inclusion and racism.

Due to his persistent commitment, the president of the MGHRO has become an important key figure for Budapest's African community. As a multiplier, he has access to wide networks both within the sports sphere and within the African community. This is why he plays a crucial role when it comes to recruiting new players for the team: He often discovers new players or is contacted by interested individuals. In the wake of the huge surge in immigration during the summer and early autumn of 2015, the team has been able to gain several new players. Currently, it consists of approximately twenty-five male players. A female football team does not yet exist.

The close contacts the Mahatma Gandhi FC has established with many other clubs in the Pest region allow the team to pursue their aim of raising awareness for the issues of racism and inclusion, for instance, by inviting them to intercultural festivities or conferences on inclusion or by employing banners with anti-racist messages on the pitch. Personal contacts with individual spectators emerge from time to time, as well.

● **“It is really important to have a common goal”: the significance of the Mahatma Gandhi FC from the team's point of view**

The analysis of the discussions held with members of the football team and with members of the parent organization, the MGHRO, shows that the team facilitates inclusion on several levels. As an intercultural team, it constitutes a strong message to the outside world, i.e. the Hungarian society: The Mahatma Gandhi FC stands for the harmonious coexistence of different cultures and for migrants' equal access to sports clubs and sports structures in general. As successful football players, team members are role models showing society that sporting success does not depend on a person's origin. Being good players, they earn recognition and respect from the audience. Sporting success is a key element of this strategy of achieving social

acceptance for an intercultural team, as the president of the MGHRO confirms. This is why the organization regards it as paramount and makes an effort to recruit talented players.

Internally, the intercultural character of the team has a positive effect and facilitates inclusion as well. Some of those who were the first generation to play football for the Mahatma Gandhi FC had come to Hungary as unaccompanied minor refugees. Meanwhile, they are adults and, due to the experiences they have made in Hungary, able to provide support, advice and information for newly arrived peers, facilitating their inclusion in the host society. The club also organizes joint leisure activities, e.g. music events. Hungarian members play an important role, since they establish connections with the majority population and make use of their networks and language skills to assist their non-native team-mates.

To begin with, these Hungarian players also have to grasp the idea of intercultural exchange and to go through a process of socialization to become part of the team. This becomes evident during a discussion with a newly admitted young player of Hungarian origin who answers the question of why he plays for an intercultural team saying there was no special reason for this, apart from his desire to play football, and that playing in a team with migrants and refugees was “no problem” for him: He does not describe the intercultural character of the team in positive terms, but rather distances himself from a negative discourse prevalent in society, which perceives interculturality as a problem.

A player who has lived in Hungary for six months and who has just received a negative decision on his asylum claim emphasizes how important it is for newly arrived refugees to have a place to turn to in the host country, to be able to feel part of a team and to receive recognition for their sporting performance. He regards it as “a great honour” to be able to play for the Mahatma Gandhi FC, and since he has received considerable support from the MGHRO, he wishes to give something back to the team and to the organization, which he does by putting his football talent to use. Since he had been a professional football player and a member of the national team in his country of origin, he hopes to be able to use the Mahatma Gandhi team as a stepping-stone back into professional football.



“Being part of the team means to love one another as a family, because that we are different colours, it does not matter, the most important is love. If you want to build your team, love is first, not discrimination. When I joined the team, people encouraged me. My joining encourages other people, too” (a player of the Mahatma Gandhi FC).

Between the MGHRO and the players, the support is mutual. The MGHRO assists them by paying for language classes or by organizing hostel accommodation, for instance. In turn, the players support the organization assuming volunteer tasks concerning its further activities, e.g. office work or their participation in tolerance education classes. Sometimes, a tolerance education class is followed by a football game with players of the Mahatma Gandhi team, which gives pupils an opportunity to initiate conversations with the players and to revise possible prejudices against refugees.



„I am from Cameroon and I have lived in Hungary for seven months. I serve as a volunteer and I play football for the Mahatma Gandhi team, because I love football. In Cameroon, I played in the second league. This team gives me the opportunity to meet people of different origin who speak different languages, to get to know different cultures and to find friends. These are very positive experiences I make with the team, because I can integrate, which is an advantage, we discuss things, we talk to each other, this is feels good to me. Sometimes I help out as a volunteer in the office. I am an IT specialist, so I take care of the computer system.” (a player of the Mahatma Gandhi FC).

The volunteer coach of the Mahatma Gandhi FC, who came to Hungary as a refugee from West Africa himself some years ago, explains that the team principles are centred on mutual respect, within the team, which comprises people of different ethnic origin, from different social strata and with different experiences of flight and migration, as well as towards opponents, especially if they provoke or offend the team. The coach regards it as his task to create an ambience of respect that leaves no room for discrimination, but room for discussion and allows people to acknowledge their mistakes.



"The team is multicultural, full of different cultural and educational backgrounds. It is really important to have a common goal: to create a peaceful environment. How? The first thing is: You come for training, you greet everybody. You respect everybody, also the opponent. You have to be in a position of forgiveness, no matter the aggression of the other one" (the coach of the Mahatma Gandhi FC).

One strategic decision has proven crucial with regard to the team's objective of furthering the inclusion of its players while also sending a clear message to the Hungarian society: the admission of native Hungarian players. The coach reports that Hungarian players support their team-mates with a migration background and that they bring their families to the games; as a result, these lose their reservations and prejudices concerning players of different origin.

Moreover, an intercultural team means an alleviation for the club when it comes to dealing with Hungarian authorities.



"When there were only foreigners in the team, there was this wall between the club and the authorities. When we started to mix it, things were getting easier. This was an important change of strategy" (the coach of the Mahatma Gandhi FC).

Its approach of including native Hungarians is also applied to volunteer positions: The interviewed coach shares responsibilities with a Hungarian colleague.

● Obstacles and challenges

Interlocutors identified different challenges and obstacles they face with regard to their work.

At the time of the interviews, in January 2016, the main challenge consisted in the tense political situation in Hungary concerning refugees. In spring 2015, a nationwide survey (the "National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism") had linked issues of flight and asylum with terrorism. It was sharply criticized by opposition parties, NGOs and international organizations, regarding its methods as well as its content. At the same time, the Hungarian government had begun a poster campaign using large lettering to address newly arrived refugees in Hungarian, demanding that they should not deprive Hungarians of their jobs and adhere to the rules of the Hungarian society, among other things. Ahead of World Refugee Day, UNHCR responded with a poster campaign portraying former refugees living in Hungary (cf. Thorpe 2015).

According to volunteers of the MGHRO, the Hungarian media coverage on the refugees and asylum seekers arriving along the Balkan route during the late summer of 2015 – most of whom continued their journey to Austria or Germany – had a very negative tenor. The government policy that culminated in sealed borders had a strong impact on political sentiment in the country. Since then, it has been difficult for the MGHRO to address the issue of "refugees" directly with government institutions, but also with football clubs. It has become almost impossible to offer teaching units concerning flight and asylum in schools or to organize events covering these topics in football clubs. A professional club, for instance, was prepared to host an event on racism, but unwilling to use the term "refugee" in the title. A series of teaching units at a Hungarian elite school had to be cancelled after the MGHRO had invited an imam as a co-lecturer who had introduced his religion touting interreligious exchange.



"A huge challenge is the acceptance of our topic: If you call a school or a football club, it is difficult to say we work with refugees, because it is a sensitive issue. We say we talk about human rights in general, that is much more accepted. The challenge is to talk about the issue and not talk about the issue of refugees at the same time. We can talk about it, but only in a very diplomatic way" (a volunteer of the MGHRO).

Human rights education does not form part of the national school curriculum, although in principle, history lessons provide an opportunity to cover the topic. NGOs offer corresponding teaching units or projects for schools. A challenge the MGHRO faces consists in presenting significant and effective subject matter in only one teaching unit (which is the time available in most cases) while still allowing pupils to understand the principles of human rights and global learning.

The challenges and problems the Mahatma Gandhi football team has to deal with include racist insults and chants on the part of the audience, but also racist provocations on the part of the opposing team, which are not always sanctioned by the referee. These incidents have become less frequent, since Hungarian players have been added to the team. The Mahatma Gandhi FC continues to protest unfair referee decisions and ignored racist incidents. According to the coach, what matters most in these situations is to calm down the players so they do not let themselves be carried away due to the other team's aggressive or offensive behaviour and resort to aggression themselves. The correct way of dealing with provocations and conflicts that arise on the pitch forms part of the team meetings the coach holds with the players.

So far, the sports-related work of the MGHR0 targets only men. With regard to future activities, another challenge lies in establishing a female football team or offering other sporting activities for women, and for female refugees in particular. In this respect, the organization's deliberations are still in the initial stages.

● Results and impact

With regard to tangible results ("Output") of their work, the interviewed volunteers of the MGHR0 mention that first of all, refugees and asylum seekers are provided with legal advice and representation free of charge, independent of their origin and current situation, an offer that is widely used. Secondly, schools are provided with teaching units on human rights, a topic they do not cover of their own accord; this gives pupils the opportunity to speak about human rights and to reflect on the topic. Finally, the players of the Mahatma Gandhi FC are given an opportunity to play sports with people of different origin and to support each other regarding their efforts to integrate into the Hungarian society.

The results of this work ("Outcomes") includes effects on the pupils, which are evident from the fact that they react with interest during class, ask questions about the topic, approach the players of the Mahatma Gandhi FC and initiate conversation, especially if the class is followed by a football game. The players have already described the effects the Mahatma Gandhi FC has in terms of facilitating their inclusion, i.e. providing social recognition, an opportunity to find friends and the feeling of belonging to an intercultural group, which can serve as a substitute for family structures. Further significant aspects include the transfer of knowledge and information, particularly to newly arrived migrants and refugees, as well as the players' mutual support, intercultural learning and common team principles based on mutual respect, which serve as a behavioural guideline for team members. The players' volunteer work for the MGHR0 is driven by their wish to give something back and apply their specific skills for the benefit of the organization.

By its very existence as a team comprising migrants, refugees and native Hungarians, the Mahatma Gandhi FC constitutes a strong message in terms of promoting inclusion; adding Hungarian players to the team has reinforced this message. However, it depends on sporting success and thus has its limitations, which could be reached once the team's success falters or when it comes to promoting the social acceptance of refugees regardless of their sporting talent.



"Good players are role models: They promote social inclusion within society and within sports structures. We have one very talented player: His career is good for us and for our team, because good players gain respect and acceptance. The Hungarians are full of respect, when he scores a goal. That is why we choose football players who are talented" (the president of the MGHR0).

In conclusion, the MGHR0 provides crucial impulses ("Impact") within and without the structures of organized sports with the aim of raising the Hungarian society's awareness for racism and exclusion and of promoting the inclusion of migrants and refugees. Thus, it takes a stance against the current government policy by its very existence.

Recommendations for the inclusion of migrant volunteers and athletes

Migrant volunteers and a diverse member base can benefit sports clubs enormously: Not only does the club gain further committed members, but also new impulses and perspectives, allowing it to evolve as a whole. Migrant volunteers, on the other side, can use the sports club to establish new contacts, gain access to local networks, acquire new skills and qualifications and receive social recognition, which they might be refused in other spheres. In this sense, the active participation of migrants and members of ethnic minorities in sports clubs is also a question of equal opportunities, a question of equal access to the structures of organized sports. This does not mean that they should simply take part in sporting activities furthering inclusion; they should also take on an active role and participate in positions of responsibility.

The following recommendations are intended for sports clubs aiming to encourage migrants and members of ethnic minorities to engage as volunteers. To achieve this, a club needs to cultivate an ambience of intercultural openness, which can be furthered by adopting a few crucial measures. Therefore, this text does not only include recommendations aimed at recruiting and supporting migrant volunteers, but also measures aimed at establishing and furthering a general attitude of intercultural openness within the club. Since it is usually easier to recruit volunteers from among a club's members, a diverse member base can translate into a diverse volunteer base.

● General recommendations for building a diverse member base

Developing a mission statement based on diversity and respect

A general appreciation of diversity and mutual respect is a precondition for the initiation of an intercultural opening process. Members should be engaged in a debate on the club's core values and objectives. A mission statement or code of conduct can then be developed on the basis of this debate. Ideally, all of the club's members should participate in the discussion (within the context of team, coach or parent-coach meetings) in order to ensure broad consent and a strong identification with the resulting statement. The mission statement should be published (on the website and the notice board in the clubhouse, for instance) and new members should be given a copy by way of an introduction. It does not have to be a lengthy text, just enough to describe the club's core values and principles of conduct. By way of the mission statement or code of conduct, members, volunteers and the club as a whole make a binding commitment.

Promoting the club's intercultural openness in public relations activities

A club that announces that it welcomes people of different origin, providing a platform to play sports and engage in joint activities, seems attractive to potential migrant members and volunteers. Its PR should be diversity-sensitive, including, for instance, photos of members of different origin on its website. The use of multilingual texts on invitations, posters and flyers can have a positive impact as well, even if it is rather symbolic in scope (comprising welcoming words only, for instance).

Adopting statutes denouncing racism and discrimination

The club's statutes should explicitly denounce any discrimination on the grounds of a person's origin, gender, sexual orientation, age or religion. Any racist, sexist or homophobic remarks must elicit a response. Establishing fair play guidelines may help when it comes to sanctioning discriminatory, unsportsmanlike behaviour.

Engaging in campaigns against racism

With a view to underscoring the significance of its intercultural orientation both within and without the club, it is advisable to participate in campaigns against racism, such as the Europe-wide FARE Action Weeks. It is also recommendable to

document these campaigns and post photographic evidence on the club's website or in social networks. Crucially, any such participation should be discussed with the members to begin with, both to be able to include volunteers of different origin in the preparations and to ensure broad consent and a strong identification with the campaign.

Bolstering the sense of community by way of joint activities and festivities

"No good team without an annual party": This goes for the club as a whole as well as for different sub-groups and teams. Joint leisure activities and festivities strengthen the sense of community, help members to really get to know each other, establish new contacts and exchange ideas. This aspect is especially significant for newly arrived immigrants, who can benefit to a particular extent from such contacts and networks.

Targeting women and girls, offering gender-specific activities

Pan-European studies have found that women and girls are underrepresented in sports clubs, as players or athletes and as volunteers. Thus, sports clubs should target women and girls directly, taking their needs and ideas into account, e.g. by offering gender-specific activities (such as football for girls, swimming for women only). Religious requirements should be respected in order to enable Muslim women and girls to participate in sports; special types of sportswear or the use of enclosed gyms and showers can play a role. Once women and girls have joined a club and participate as players or athletes, it becomes easier to recruit them as volunteers.

Identifying the cultural particularities of all members and taking them into account (whenever possible)

All members should feel taken seriously within the club, including their specific cultural background. If migrant volunteers feel that they are only needed as "someone to fill a gap", but that nobody is really interested in their person and their biographical background, this will have a negative effect on their involvement. It is essential to ensure that all members understand the need of developing an awareness of different cultural, religious and individual needs, ideas and particularities. More specifically, this can mean that not only pork is offered at sports festivals, but that members of different origin are invited to offer different culinary options and that people who do not drink alcohol are not exposed to ridicule. At the same time, the club should not "over-adapt" and act on the basis of assumptions regarding cultural characteristics, but ask members to state their needs.

Cooperating with large sports clubs on inclusion and participation

In some countries, positive experiences have been made with partnerships with large sports clubs, which support grassroots clubs regarding their intercultural objectives, e.g. by procuring sponsors or providing equipment. With their strong appeal, popular clubs are able to advance the objective of inclusion and participation within society at large as well as on the level of collaboration with the grassroots clubs. Making specific arrangements for a long-term cooperation is recommendable. Besides, well-known athletes with a migration background who play for these clubs can serve as ambassadors: They are role models and examples of successful inclusion.

Introducing graded fees based on members' age and income

It is advisable to adopt a system of graded membership fees so that nobody remains excluded from the club for social reasons, particularly in those countries in which membership in a sports club tends to be very costly. A differentiation according to age (children and adolescents versus adults) and income seems sensible.

● Recommendations for the acquisition and support of migrant volunteers

Although the following recommendations explicitly refer to ways of gaining and assisting migrant volunteers, most of them can also be applied to volunteers without a migration background. Furthermore, it is crucial to keep in mind that migrants and members of ethnic minorities form a very heterogeneous group comprising people with diverse cultural, social and religious backgrounds. It is advisable to carefully consider which groups to target.

Consulting migrant experts

When it comes to planning activities aimed at recruiting migrants as club members and volunteers, it is recommendable to consult migrant experts from the community in question. These can be individuals, but also representatives of migrant organizations who have access to specific groups, can provide advice on suitable communication methods and have a better understanding of a group's interests and needs.

Identifying barriers impeding migrants' access and creating opportunities for encounter

With a view to winning volunteers, sports clubs should strive to understand which barriers limit migrants' access. In order to identify these, the club should consult the migrants it has recruited or aims to recruit as volunteers. This includes identifying places frequented by the target group as well as suitable ways of addressing it. A tried and proven approach consists in relying on migrant multipliers from the community in question, who can reach out to persons who might be interested. Further recommendable measures include open days or sports festivals, which are perfect occasions to invite the parents of the children playing sports in the club, for instance. Encouraging parents to become engaged is an important strategy to win new volunteers, since a relation to the club has already been established by their children.

Appointing volunteer officers and mentors for new volunteers

Volunteers need assistance and support, they must be introduced to their new task and to the club's regulations. It makes sense to have somebody supervise the volunteer work and serve as a contact person for volunteers. It is also advisable to provide mentors for new volunteers, i.e. other volunteers who are "old hands" and thus able to support their new peers. One tried and proven approach consists in having a new volunteer team up with an experienced one and perform the task together with him or her for a while. This can be useful to overcome language difficulties, for instance. Once migrant volunteers have become firmly established within the club, they can also serve as experienced mentors for newly arrived peers.

Avoiding excessive demands on volunteers, clearly delimiting tasks

The fear of being overburdened or of being unable to retire once they assume a volunteer position keeps many from accepting one in the first place; this goes for migrants and non-migrants alike. For a club in need of volunteers, it is therefore recommendable to clearly delimit the corresponding tasks. It should also be prepared to look for volunteers willing to engage for shorter periods of time or even during a certain process only; this allows people to grow to the task and postpone the decision of whether they want to commit themselves in the club for a longer period of time.

Furthering the recognition of volunteer work

Voluntary commitment needs to be recognized. This goes for everybody, irrespective of their origin. Since migrants, members of ethnic minorities and people with a migration background are often exposed to racism and discrimination, they stand to benefit to a particular extent from this recognition, which they might be refused in other social spheres. Within the sports club, it can take the form of personal feedback on the work done, birthday greetings or small gifts, an expression of gratitude towards the club's volunteers on its website or at sports festivals, the reimbursement of expenses or the payment of an allowance.

Training migrants as coaches, training supervisors and referees and entrusting them with responsibility

Some volunteer positions require special skills and knowledge taught in certified training courses. It is crucial to inform migrants about qualifications they could acquire and to encourage them to undergo such training to become coaches, training supervisors or referees. Apart from certified courses, the club may also find other ways of transferring knowledge to migrant volunteers, e.g. by organizing courses of its own or in collaboration with other clubs.

Cooperating with (migrant) organizations, initiatives and facilities from the same social environment to recruit volunteers outside the club

Depending on the target group, it can be useful to cooperate with different organizations in order to gain new members and volunteers from outside the club, particularly people of different origin. These can include organizations, initiatives and facilities from the same social environment (such as schools and community centres), volunteer agencies, migrant organizations and – concerning the inclusion of refugees in particular – refugee homes and initiatives. Since personal contacts facilitate cooperation, it is recommendable to establish contact with specific individuals within these organizations.

Including migrant volunteers at all levels

Migrant volunteers should be present at all levels, so that the club can really live up to its claim of having an intercultural orientation, not only at the member base level, but also concerning positions of responsibility. This means that ideally, migrant volunteers should also be represented as board members.

● Recommendations for the inclusion and participation of refugees

The following recommendations are intended for sports clubs aiming to recruit newly arrived refugees – as players or athletes to begin with, but also as volunteers in the long term. There are two basic approaches to achieve this: On the one side, it can be useful to begin with special offers tailored to refugees so as to be able to adapt to their specific needs and their specific situation and to facilitate exchange among them. On the other side, it can also make sense to incorporate them directly into existing groups or teams, since mixed teams facilitate intercultural exchange and can thus further the inclusion of refugees. Moreover, they serve as an example and deliver a distinct message to society at large. In any case, the decision on whether to target either a mixed or a specific group should be taken deliberately, after due consideration.

Developing patience, intercultural awareness and an understanding for the situation of refugees, adapting offers accordingly

For a club that wants refugees to join, be it as players or athletes or as volunteers, patience will be key; each day should be regarded as a new challenge. With regard to offering special sporting activities for refugees, this can, for instance, mean beginning with a small group, which can be expanded at a later stage. Many refugees have been exposed to war and violence in their countries of origin, some have made life-threatening experiences in the course of their flight, have lost family members and friends and are badly traumatized. This must be taken into account when it comes to offering sporting activities: Where bodywork is involved (as in judo warm-ups, for instance), limits must be recognized, which requires some sensitivity. Dangerous situations that may arise (e.g. on hiking trips) have to be considered in advance.

Consulting the refugees and developing special offers based on their requirements

Instead of developing offers that might not even interest refugees, it is advisable to speak to them in advance and to ask them to state their needs and ideas concerning, for instance, the type of sporting activities they would like to engage in. When it comes to planning these activities in detail, volunteers from the club might even find that they have more reservations or see more problems than the refugees themselves.

Persisting in the face of setbacks

Working towards the inclusion of refugees in a sports club, it is crucial not to allow oneself to be easily discouraged. Dedicated volunteers from the club may sometimes lack persistence. One should not be disappointed, if activities or projects cannot be implemented as usual or as imagined or if an attempt to incorporate refugees into an existing team fails.

Avoiding paternalistic attitudes, ensuring that communication takes place on an equal footing

Refugees must be addressed in a normal way, as partners, whom the club deals with on equal terms. A paternalistic, protective approach, primarily based on compassion due to their difficult situation, would deprive them of their freedom to act as independent individuals. It is also imperative to avoid an exaggerated self-portrayal of the club at the expense of the refugees.

Encouraging refugees to engage while recognizing the limitations of volunteer work

It is crucial to encourage refugees to take on an active role as early as possible, i.e. to assume not only auxiliary tasks, but also assignments involving a higher degree of responsibility. Volunteering furthers the volunteers' identification with the club; as a result of their commitment, they feel recognized and acknowledged as skilled and competent individuals. However, it is essential to bear in mind that volunteer work has its limitations and that certain barriers affect refugees in particular – not least among them the fact that many refugees find themselves facing a situation that involves major changes, including financial and occupational uncertainties, which makes it difficult for them to commit themselves for a longer time, since their biographical situation precludes any long-term planning. Instead of assuming unpaid volunteer work, most have to focus on finding gainful employment and on starting a new career in the host country.

Providing transport to and from sports events and training facilities, if necessary

It might make sense to collect people at the collective centres they live in, especially if no public transport connections are available or if dealing with a group that has been exposed to violence (women, for instance). Again, this should be discussed with the people in question before any decisions are taken, so as to avoid restricting their independence unnecessarily.

Providing sportswear and equipment

It will often be necessary to provide newly arrived immigrants with sportswear and equipment (such as a judo uniform or hiking boots) free of charge, either permanently or for the time spent with the corresponding activity, depending, of course, on the type of sports and the equipment they might possess.

Treating refugees as normal members

Regarding the inclusion of refugees, experience from sports clubs shows that it is important to treat them as normal members, i.e. to provide them with a membership card and to have them pay membership fees, even if the latter are reduced to a symbolic amount, since the refugees lack a regular income.

Creating shared experiences

It is advisable to build shared experiences involving the whole group, by way of excursions, for instance, and to document these photographically. Photos can be particularly significant to people who have lost everything. At the same time, they always constitute a trigger for conversation.

Combining sports with educational opportunities

A sports club facilitates physical activity as well as encounters with other players or athletes. Since they are attractive, sporting activities can easily be combined with educational efforts, e.g. by using club facilities to offer language classes or training courses for volunteer positions or by making the acquisition of the language part of the sporting activities themselves. The latter does not even require any detailed concept or tedious preparation, it just means to playfully explain and practice vocabulary together.

Promoting inclusion both within and without the club and avoiding rivalries

The club's commitment to pursue an inclusive approach must be based on broad internal consent. It is crucial to communicate clearly, to compromise and to arrive at agreements in order to avoid rivalries between different groups within the club, regarding time slots for training, for instance. Moreover, the club's PR should promote its stance in public – where it might also be met with racism, prejudices or reservations. It is imperative to explain the reasons behind the club's commitment and in how far they reflect its core values.

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Interviewees

Situation analysis

Two experts from the boards of multicultural football clubs (from Finland and Germany, respectively)

One expert from the board of a club for refugees and asylum seekers (from Italy)

One expert from a human rights organization/migrant organization (from Hungary)

One expert from a volunteer agency (from Ireland)

One expert from a football association (from Ireland)

One expert from politics specializing in migration (from Portugal)

Three social scientists specializing in sports and migration (from Austria, Italy and Germany)

Case studies

Germany: two members of the board, two office staff, the volunteer head of the cricket section and the volunteer leader of the midnight football training of SG Egelsbach 1874 e.V.

Italy: the president and the vice president, the head and three volunteers of the hiking section and a volunteer assistant teacher of Liberi Nantes as well as participants of a hiking tour outside of Rome in March 2016

Hungary: four volunteers of the MGHRO and the volunteer coach and four players of the Mahatma Gandhi FC

