FOOTBALL INCLUDING REFUGEES IN EUROPE

STATE OF THE ART:

- What has been done so far ?
- What needs to be done ?

FIRE
FOOTBALL INCLUDING REFUGEES IN EUROPE

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

ABOUT
the FIRE Project

The Football Including REfugees project (FIRE) is a 2-year initiative led by Sport and Citizenship Think Tank, and funded by the Erasmus + programme of the European Union. The project is supported by a consortium of 7 European partners.

Migration has become a highly sensitive topic across the European continent, regardless of the cause. While migration has been brought under the spotlight in recent years, the social inclusion of refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers has unfortunately not attracted as much public interest. Founded on the belief that sport is a universal language that can be harnessed to enable social progress, FIRE strives to foster local intercultural openness through football. The project intends to provide grassroots football organisations with the tools and insight that will enable them to implement their very own social inclusion initiatives and programmes aimed at the displaced newcomers. Partnerships and alliances are essential for doing so, just as they are the foundation of the FIRE consortium.

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Sport and Citizenship / Sport et Citoyenneté

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Marc **Tarabella**,
Belgian MEP of the S&D Group

Solidarity and Civil Society

Three questions addressed to Marc Tarabella, MEP for Belgium in the S&D Group (Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats) elected in 2004, and three times re-elected in 2009, 2014, and 2019. During his 2014-2019 mandate at the European Parliament, Marc Tarabella was an active member in the foundation of the Sport Intergroup and its governance through his role as Co-President, together with MEP Santiago Fisas Ayxela.

— **Looking back on your time as co-president of the 2015-19 Sport Intergroup, how would you evaluate the European Union's integration initiatives in response to the "migration crisis"?**

The European Union has globally been very pro-active on this matter, however the same cannot quite be said for all Member States. Throughout this period, we have witnessed a very unequal investment from all 28 countries that have showcased extremely diverging values and priorities. Solidarity is a value that should never be overlooked in politics or in society at large. Of course, some Member States demonstrated exemplary attitudes, but we truly lacked a common response.

This being said, there are some actors who are to be recognised for their pro-active investment in response to the 'crisis' – and they come from civil society. Citizens, associations, small organisations have again shown how essential they are when it comes to delivering concrete initiatives.

— **How do you think sport has helped the integration process across the continent? What has appeared to be missing up until now?**

Sport effectively embodies an international language, a way of expressing oneself. Regardless of your origin or communication abilities, if a football is pulled out of a bag most people, if not everybody, will know the basics of the game and will therefore be able to start interacting with others. Sport has the power to establish a safe environment enabling social interactions to take place when words are missing. I remain absolutely convinced that sport, and art for that matter, are exceptional transnational vehicles – they deserve to be further utilised.

Sadly, an increasing number of Member States are leaving their share of solidarity behind, but let us not forget that the challenge of socially including refugees and migrants will remain – no matter whether it is addressed or not.

— **How can greater integration through sport be fostered in the future?**

Regardless of whether Member States are taking on their share and proving their solidarity, we must strive to multiply the number of programmes and initiatives that aim at facilitating social integration and inclusion. Again, civil society is essential in this process through its concrete hands-on actions. Therefore, we need to facilitate the implementation of such initiatives across the Union, notably by fostering the exchange of good practices and experiences. Great ideas and fantastic programmes have already been implemented and continue their fruitful work. Let us focus on establishing networks of exchange and council for these stakeholders and providing them with the rudiments of social inclusion and integration via sport.

Football and migration

01 CHAPTER

1.1 Football and migrants an old story

Football has always been closely linked to the phenomenon of migration. Since the invention of modern football in England in 1863, humans have been "moving with the ball", as Matthew Taylor and Pierre Lanfranchi recall in the title of their book published in 2001[1]. And the ball moved very quickly itself, in the suitcases of businessmen and engineers, entrepreneurs and teachers from the British Isles, but also very soon from Switzerland and Central Europe, who spread the game around the world[2].

The fast dissemination of football was greatly helped by the globalisation wave of the end of the 19th century. International business underwent a massive expansion, for a good part directly linked to the economic and human flows generated by colonialism, but also facilitated by innovations and cost reduction in the field of transport, and by an increasing number of free trade agreements.

In the 150 years of its existence, football has never ceased to be a profoundly cross-cultural social practice, both on the "glamorous" labour market of professional football and on the grassroots level, where it provided an avenue for social integration of different migrant communities:

- As soon as the game was professionalised over the first half of the 20th century, the international circulation of players became a major issue too, especially in Europe, to which foreign players tended to converge. The current figures provided by the CIES Football Observatory in its latest *report on expatriate players* are impressive and continue to grow.[3]

- All over the 20th century, labour migration – often, but not exclusively, in the direction of Western Europe – raised the question of the social integration of these migrants and their families in the host societies. There is a consensus today that football, together with other sports and cultural activities on the local level, was one of the major fields of everyday culture in which such integration could be successfully negotiated over longer periods of time.[4]

  Today, we live a different age of globalisation, and European countries – many of which had been emigration countries for centuries – encounter a very different kind of human migration flow.

  Since 2015 the sudden, massive increase of migration influx to Europe from a large variety of countries of origin, both over the Mediterranean and the so-called "Balkan route", has confronted the Member States of the European Union with an unprecedented challenge. This is now almost systematically referred to as "the refugee crisis", which is a somewhat misleading term, since it implicitly blames refugees for the political crisis that their arrival provoked in a Europe that was politically unprepared and not up to the challenge.

1 Matthew Taylor and Pierre Lanfranchi, Moving with the Ball, Oxford: Berg, 2001.

2 Paul Dietschy, Histoire du football, Paris: Perrin, 2010.

3 Raffaele Poli, Loïc Ravenel, Roger Besson, "Les footballeurs expatriés dans le monde : étude globale 2019", Rapport mensuel de l'Observatoire du football CIES, N°45, mai 2019.

4 See for instance Dietmar Hüser and Ansbert Baumann, "Fußfassen durch Fußball in der Fremde? Arbeitsmigration und Amateurfußball im Frankreich und Westdeutschland der langen 60er Jahre", Lendemains, Vol. 41, No. 161 (2016), pp. 7-18; or Daniel Huhn and Stefan Mezger, "Von Kuzorra bis Özil. Der Ruhrgebietsfußball als Aushandlungsort von Zugehörigkeit", Lendemains, Vol. 41, No. 161 (2016), pp. 38-50. See also Diethelm Blecking, "Integration through Sports? Polish Migrants in the Ruhr", Germany, in: International Review of Social History Vol. 23 (2015), pp. 275–293, and in the same publication, Marion Fontaine, "Football, Migration, and Coalmining in Northern France, 1920s–1980s", pp. 253–273. For the importance of football fandom for 2nd and 3rd generation migrants, see the excellent book by Nina Szogs, Football Fandom and Migration. An Ethnography of Transnational Practices and Narratives in Vienna and Istanbul, London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2017.

1.2 The current state of migration to Europe

Between 2015 and 2018, according to figures published by *Eurostat*, around 4 million people applied for asylum in a Member State of the European Union.[5] Since not every newly arriving individual applies for asylum, it is estimated that in 2015 alone, *more than two million people were counted as "illegally present"*, a figure that has decreased again to 600,000 in 2018.[6]

The vast majority of these recently arrived migrants – please see below in Chapter 2 the different terms and categories that are used in order to relate to this heterogeneous social group – will not be in a position to relocate to their country of origin in the near future. To EU Member States who have welcomed significant numbers of individuals, these continuous arrivals of human beings represent an enormous logistical and financial challenge. But beyond such material issues, the situation also raises questions around the social integration of these new, temporary or permanent, inhabitants.

For national governments and European policy-makers, the engagement of civil society in favour of the integration of migrants is indispensable. As a recent *Eurobarometer* survey confirmed, attitudes vary widely across the 28 Member States. The overall results confirm that some attitudes remain problematic:

- Europeans tend to largely overestimate the number of non-EU immigrants as a proportion of the population of their country – which is not without effect on general attitudes.
- Around four in ten Europeans think that immigration is more a problem than an opportunity, but this varies significantly by country: figures oscillate between 63% in Hungary, 38% in France (EU average) and 19% in Sweden.
- Just over half (54%) of Europeans agree that the integration of immigrants has been a success in their local area, city or country, but again, this figure varies widely between member-states: from 80% in Ireland to 50% in Germany, 40% in Italy, and only 26% in Bulgaria.

On the other hand, the same survey also highlights some rather positive attitudes towards migration: over 50% of Europeans feel comfortable with immigrants, and around six in ten of respondents interact with them on a weekly basis, while nearly seven in ten Europeans say that integrating immigrants is a necessary investment in the long-run for their country.[7]

The survey also showed what citizens identified as the most important barriers to the successful integration of migrants. Among these, the insufficient integration efforts by immigrants themselves (65%) were closely followed by difficulties in finding a job (63%), discrimination against immigrants (62%), limited interactions with local citizens (53%), as well as the negative portrayal of immigrants in the media (53%), and limited access to education. In this context, it is not surprising that football, with its immense network of grassroots clubs and other football-related associations, has been identified by many policy-makers as a potential major actor in facilitating the welcome and integration of newly arrived migrants.

5 http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyappctza&lang=en

6 http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyappctza&lang=en ("illegally present" not only refers to illegal entrants, but also to failed asylum seekers and over stayers, and children born to non-regularised migrant couples).

7 https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/results-special-eurobarometer-integration-immigrants-european-union_en, see also http://www.europeanmigrationlaw.eu/en/articles/news/eurobarometer-survey-integration-of-immigrants-in-the-european-union.html

1.3 Football's contribution to social inclusion

Football is a simple game that is accessible to almost everybody and that provides joy and pleasure to participants of all levels. It does not require significant linguistic competences and has a long history of inclusion across all socio-economic layers of society.

On the basis of this rather intuitive experience, both policy-makers and civil society actors, as well as the football community in its largest sense, never tire of pointing out that football has an unequalled potential for facilitating the integration of recently arrived migrants in their new host society. As Aydan Özoğuz, Commissioner for Immigration, Refugees and Integration at the German Chancellory between 2013 and 2018, summed it up.

> *Football has the special power of bringing together people across cultural differences and thus strengthen social cohesion. It fosters encounters, creates understanding, and breaks down reciprocal prejudice in a common experience.*[8]

While the enthusiasm about football's qualities may vary between countries, it becomes clear in such statements that football, rather than an end in itself, is perceived as a means in the process of achieving the objective of social integration. The terms that are most commonly used for this purpose are "vehicle" or "tool", as in the preface to this report or in the recent *Inspire toolkit* published by the Fare network:

> *By focusing what people have in common, rather than their differences, football can be a powerful vehicle to contribute to the inclusion of refugees in their new countries. The potential of sport as a tool for social inclusion and integration had been widely acknowledged.*[9]

Beyond these general positive effects of football, what are the specific benefits that practising the game can bring to newly arrived individuals with a migration background? The most obvious benefits, confirmed in numerous statements of individuals concerned, are the following:

- **Social interaction** – engaging in a leisure activity allows to discover the host society and its ordinary social life, as well as develop a first network of contacts;
- **Language skills** – in addition to regular language classes, football is a field of application of colloquial communication skills and acquisition of a specialised vocabulary;
- **Intercultural adaptation** – with the help of a seemingly universal practice, football allows to get a grip on the socio-cultural codes and behavioural norms of the host society;
- **Distraction** – a football training is a welcome escape from daily worries and the boredom that characterises the daily life of migrants that the authorities have taken charge of;
- **Movement** – playing football contributes to physical well-being in providing a slot of healthy exercise in the very sedentary daily life of newly arrived migrants;
- **Structure** – a regular (weekly) training session and/or matches can be an anchor of stability and continuity in an existence that has undergone a traumatic break with old habits;
- **Solidarity** – football conveys not only a feeling of welcome by ordinary citizens of the host country, but also, in its quality as team sport, a spirit of group cohesion and solidarity.
- **Self-confidence** – many migrants report that football, with its competitive elements, helped them gain self-confidence in actively contributing to a constructive team experience.

8 Deutscher Fussball-Bund (DFB), Willkommen im Verein! Fussball mit Flüchtlingen, Frankfurt:2016, p. 3.

9 Fare network, Inspire toolkit to working with refugee women through football, London: 2017, p.3

1.4 Football and social inclusion

But what does scientific research say about these presumed benefits? Social scientists are skeptics by nature, always eager to verify positive assumptions through critical in-depth fieldwork.

While the role of football in the integration of migrants has not been the object of a vast body of academic literature, it turns out that a concise review of scientific publications, whose empirical observations are grounded in theoretical frameworks, do actually confirm the positive effects mentioned above. Below we will concentrate on three relevant approaches to the topic.

Football – a shared sense of belonging

This is the title of the ethnographic *Report on the Role of Football in the Lives of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers*, written by the British cultural sociologist Chris Stone following a three-year study (2010-2013) in Sheffield on behalf of the NGO *Football Unites, Racism Divides (FURD)*. In his key findings, he encapsulated the benefits of football in five major concepts (echoing, in a more elaborate academic vocabulary, the points listed above). These can be succinctly summarised as follows:

- **Routine** – football provides a consistency in lives, a connection between the past and the present. Its sheer banality offers a sense of regularity and normality.
- **Catharsis** – evacuation of stress and relief from the pressure of managing lives that have become complicated; positive emotions allow to develop positive thinking and anticipation.
- **Sociality** – football provides an alternative channel of interaction, in which identity is not reduced to ethnicity or political/legal status, as well as moments of strong in-group cohesion.
- **Empowerment** – regardless of the level of performance, football is an activity in which it is possible to exert some control in lives that are otherwise completely powerless.
- **Plurality** – football stages difference and sameness, repetitiveness and unpredictability, challenge and comfort, frustration and success; it's a space where things appear possible.[10]

For Chris Stone, the "sense of belonging" that football can generate should be seen as "the interconnection between cultural, communal and personal aspects of life that make people feel able to express themselves freely and see themselves as an equal" (page 75).

> **Social scientists are skeptics by nature, always eager to verify positive assumptions through critical in-depth fieldwork.**

10 Chris Stone, Football – A shared sense of belonging, Sheffield: 2014. See also Chris Stone, "Utopian community football? Sport, hope, and belongingness in the lives of refugees and asylum-seekers", Leisure Studies, 2018, vol. 37, no 2, p. 171-183.

Connectedness

Australia is an interesting benchmark in terms of inclusion of migrants through football. Over the last ten years, there have been a series of publications on the topic. The work of Ramon Spaaj, from the Victoria University in Melbourne, draws on the concepts of "habitus" and "capital" coined by Pierre Bourdieu. Findings from this research point to the following conclusions:

- **Relief** – something as simple as kicking a ball has the potential to alleviate, even if only momentarily, feelings of exclusion, hopelessness, alienation and depression.
- **Connectedness** – The notion of competition makes football 'meaningful' and provides a crucial step in move from a state of isolation to one of connectedness and group solidarity.
- **Self-esteem** – football gives individuals, who have lost most of their initial social and cultural capital, an opportunity to acquire new symbolic capital as players and team members.
- **Transferable benefits** – playing in a football team very often connects individuals to other positive outcomes such as employment, education, and other non-football related spaces.[11]

Spaaij and his co-authors also insist on the ambiguity of sport's capacity to foster social integration of migrants, which is always "conditional and context-dependent". For them, "any attempt to use sport to promote social inclusion must be informed by a critical awareness of its strenghts and limitations as a social practice and cultural form".[12]

Forms of capital

A more modest, but rather revealing, research working paper based on fieldwork conducted in Glasgow by a collective of master students from the Oxford-based Refugees Studies Centre,[13] explicitly draws on Robert Putnam's theory of social capital , differentiating between "inward social capital" (emotional resources and ability for capacity building in the social environment) and "outward social capital"[14] (which includes both the capacity of bonding within a social group and bridging between different groups).

- **Inward social capital** – football provides a combination of factors strengthening well-being in providing newcomers with trust in themselves and members of the host society, and also in hinting at the two-way character of a successful integration process.
- **Social bonds and bridges** – football is a space where it is easier to establish bonds, not only among migrants, but also bridges across different social groups. These bonds and bridges need not necessarily be close friendships but are marked by a high level of trust.

Football's contribution to the integration process – and its limits

What different research approaches on football and the integration of migrants have in common is the insistence on the fact that football, despite its remarkable multiple benefits in the integration process, also has limits. Participation in football activies do "not inherently lead to the desired impacts and outcomes" in terms of inclusion, as the ENGSO report Creating a Level Playing Field prudently pointed out.[15]

Football is never sufficient on its own, but only one contributing element in a complex process that also relies on many others. This is a fundamental message for citizens who volunteer in activities including migrants, whether in clubs or associations: they need to realise that they can make an important contribution through the wonderful tool that is football, but that they need to do so with the required humility in front of a very complex issue.

11 Brent McDonald, Ramón Spaaij & Darko Dukic, "Moments of social inclusion: asylum seekers, football and solidarity", Sport in Society, Vol. 22, Issue 6 (2019), pp. 935-949. See also Ramón Spaaij, "Refugee Youth, Belonging and Community Sport", Leisure Studies, Vol. 34, Issue 3 (2015), pp. 303-318; and Sport Inclusion Network (SPIN), Inclusion of Migrants in and through Sports. A Guide to Good Practice (2012), p. 2.

12 Ramón Spaaij, "The Ambiguities of Sport and Community Engagement", Ethos Vol. 21, Issue 2 (2013), pp. 8-11.

13 Olivia Booth et al., "United Glasgow Football Club. A pilot study in sport's facilitation of integration", Refugees Studies Centre Working Paper No. 99, Oxford University, April 2014.

14 Robert Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital", Journal of Democracy, Vol. 6 (1995), pp. 65-78.

15 ENGSO, Creating a Level Playing Field: Social inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities in Sport, 2012, p. 12. (ENGSO stands for European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation. It is based in Stockholm).

What are we talking about ? Categorisations and definitions

02 CHAPTER

Words have meanings. But in complex social situations, they sometimes lack conceptual clarity, are misunderstood and misused, most often without bad intention, but now and again also for ideological purposes.

Football as a tool for the social integration of migrants brings together two semantic fields – "integration" and "migration" – which are far from being crystal clear, and are characterised by a good deal of uncertainty. Both are in principle international words borrowed from Latin, yet, they have very different connotations and nuances in different national environments.

2.1 Migrants, refugees, asyium-seekers

Migrants

This document has so far mainly used the term "migrants" as an umbrella word for individuals who, for whatever reason, have moved to another country than the one they were born or brought up in.

"Migrant" is supposed to be a perfectly neutral term, since it does not refer to reasons for which the individual has moved to another country, but it is important to take into account that today it does carry, in various political and linguistic contexts, a negative undertone. This is particularly true when the term is used with adjectives such as "economic migrant" and, of course, "illegal migrant". In Italy, for instance, the adjective "clandestini" (referring in principle to illegal entrants into the national territory) is now used by the government parties as a pejorative shortcut for all foreigners seeking refuge in the country, whatever their reason or status.

Even perfectly legal work migration – like EU nationals working in any of the 28 member states – may have, in specific national contexts, a negative connotation. In the UK, for instance, a big part of the Brexit referendum debate of 2016 focused on the number of intra-European migrants.

If one adds the national perspective, it is possible to speak of "immigrants" and "emigrants". Strangely, in most European countries, the term "emigrants" is rather positively perceived: these are seen as individuals who were brave enough to make their fortune in a foreign and difficult environment. The most successful among them are celebrated as historical role models. At the same time, the "immigrant", who is nothing else than an "emigrant" from elsewhere, is often perceived as a potential threat. It is also revealing that the term "expats" (short for "expatriates") is used in English-speaking countries without any negative undertone – as long it refers to (mostly highly qualified) nationals who have decided to work or live in another country.

Overall, "migrant" remains a useful categorisation, but it does not have any legal meaning and nor does it make a person eligible to any judiciary status. And it is definitely a word that needs to be used with a high sensitivity for the local context.

Refugees / Asylum-seekers

As pointed out above, the term "refugee crisis" has imposed itself in reference to the peak and follow-up of the sudden and massive influx of individuals to Europe since 2015. This is mainly due to the fact that a large part of these migrants were known to be escaping situations of war, civil war, famine or persecution.

The official definition of the Geneva Convention of 1951 refers indeed to

> *"Any person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."* [16]

In order to obtain "refugee status" these individuals will apply for asylum, which is why the term "asylum-seeker" (and its variations in different languages) is also very commonly used. A recent guide published by the Sport Welcomes Refugees project, for instance, uses both "interchangeably to refer to everyone who has experienced forced migration or displacement".[17]

In European law, individuals who fail to be eligible for being recognised as "refugee" may benefit from what is called "subsidiary protection", if there are good reasons to believe that the person would face a real risk of suffering serious harm upon return to their country of origin. Both these categories are officially named "beneficiaries of international protection".

It is worth noting that even the term "refugee", which in principle simply describes a human being in need of protection, may be subject to interpretations depending on the local environment and dominant media discourse. In some contexts, the sheer number of refugees or the fact that a large part is of Muslim faith, may lead to conflations of categories. On a different note, in Germany, the suffix "-ling" in the word "Flüchtling" was perceived as adding a condescendant undertone, and it is sometimes recommended to speak of "Geflüchtete" (literally: "people who have fled").

Ethnic minorities

Several documents published prior to the peak of refugee influx in 2015 prefer to speak more generally of "ethnic minorities" in order to include other, not necessarily migrant, social groups whose exclusion may be addressed with the help of sport. While it may make sense for some actors to focus "on broader community inclusion rather than a focus on migrant groups per se" (Scottish FA), the term is problematic on a European level, since its understanding varies significantly between countries, depending on recent national histories.

For the FIRE project, clearly focused on recently arrived migrants, the expression "ethnic minorities" is of little help, if not misleading.

Focus on heterogeneity

It is clear from the above that a clear terminology is lacking. How are we supposed to speak about these categories of human beings as we deal with potential partners from politics, business or civil society?

In some contexts, differentiating between legal categories is not helpful or useful in the implementation of concrete projects. As Krzysztof Jarymowicz from the Fundacja dla Wolności sums up, "in our projects we try to include all these groups and Polish citizens, and then offer special support to those who are in specific need." It therefore makes sense, with almost all interlocutors, to insist on the large heterogeneity of personal situations and backgrounds that are encountered among migrant groups of different types. The one thing they have in common is that they are in need of help and assistance to establish contact with their host society.

16 https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/StatusOfRefugees.aspx (United Nations High Commission for Refugees).

17 Victoria Schwenzer (Camino), Sport Welcomes Refugees: A Guide to Good Practice in Europe. Berlin: 2018, p. 5.

2.2 Inclusion, integration, social interaction

There is also a good deal of semantic confusion when it comes to describing the ultimate objective of using football as a gateway to a new society. Words like "inclusion", "integration", or "assimilation" have a sensitive history and give way to multiple interpretations.

Integration

"Integration" into a society is in principle a process we all undergo in our culture of origin, in acquiring the codes and socio-cultural norms and values that make life in society possible. This primary process, undergone early in life and in large parts unconsciously, is generally referred to as "socialisation".

A later, secondary and conscious process of "integration" into a new and very different host society is a highly complex, stressful, and long process that requires a considerable amount of energy and patience. Working with migrants in a football context usually (but not exclusively) takes place at the very beginning of this process, which is why some activists refer to a "pre-integration" period, a phase which allows newly arrived individuals to benefit from others who are already more advanced.

Some social scientists or NGO activists are not very comfortable with the word "integration", for historical reasons. The term may indeed be associated to the concept of "assimilation", which refers to a process where an immigrant fully embraces the norms and values of the host society, losing large parts of his/her culture of origin (some scientists actually prefer the term "acculturation"). While the term "assimilation" as such is perfectly neutral, the concept is today considered not only counter-productive, but also closely linked to colonialist or neo-colonialist ideologies and should therefore better be avoided.

There is, however, a certain consensus today in the understanding that successful "integration" is a two-way process engaging both the newcomers and the host society, implying rights and obligations on both sides, and necessarily having an effect on both sides.

While many refugees or "beneficiaries of international protection" will wish to return to their home country once the situation will have improved, they nevertheless are likely to live for several years in the host society, which makes "integration" efforts on both sides both desirable and inevitable. As Laurent Thieule, President of the Sport and Citizenship think tank, anticipates, "the cost of non-integration will by far exceed the investment of resources required for successful integration".[18]

> **"Integration" into a society is in principle a process we all undergo in our culture of origin, in acquiring the codes and socio-cultural norms and values that make life in society possible.**

18 At the first transnational project meeting of the FIRE project, Brussels, 14 February 2019.

Inclusion

"Inclusion" and the derivated adjective "inclusive" take on their full meanings when considering that newly arrived migrants find themselves per definition in a state of social "exclusion" in their new host society. The dimensions of exclusion are manifold: spatial or territorial (with regard to accommodation and lack of mobility), linguistic and cultural (local language and social norms), but also relational (sense of belonging, feeling of acceptance) or psychological (lack of control over one's life).[19] In short, "exclusion" refers to the inability to participate in activities available to the majority of society, whether in the economic, social, cultural or political sphere.[20]

"Inclusion" is therefore a perfectly appropriate term to describe an entire process that reduces all these forms of "exclusion" and enables individuals to take part in society. It starts with the simple action of making contact with an individual and inviting him/her to join a local community – if only a football community – and ideally leads to full participation and equality.

Obviously, "inclusion" and "integration" are partly overlapping. For instance, the Inspire project coordinated by the Fare network refers to a project title that uses both terms: "Integration through sport and inclusion for refugees in Europe". Many non-scientific texts actually use them almost interchangeably. Others, like the ASPIRE project's review of "key terms" insist on the distinction made by some socials scientists, according to whom "integration" is "merely allowing people into a community ", while "inclusion" is the respectful two-way process, leading to real participation and belonging.[21] As often in the sciences, definitions are open to debate.

"Inclusion", as a relatively recent word, lacks the historical bias that may be attributed to "integration" and might therefore be less sensitive. One of the most prominent initiatives, the "Sport Inclusion Network" (SPIN), run by the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (VIDC), uses the term explicitly in its name.

Its only drawback is that it may be perceived by some interlocutors as a rather "academic" or "intellectual" term, the concrete meaning of which is not immediately clear to everyone. In which case the expressions "participation" or "social interaction" might be an interesting alternative.

Participation and social interaction

As Hedeli Sassi from the Royal Belgian FA puts it, "inclusion is something you do, it's about participation and social interaction, nothing less, nothing more."
Indeed, if the ultimate goal of reaching out to migrant populations through football is being inclusive in order to allow participation in a social activity of the host society, the terms "participation" or "social interaction" are perfectly appropriate (and perhaps less intimidating than others).

Welcome and tolerance

When dealing with newly arrived migrants, two words that are used over and over again are "welcome" and "tolerance". Both have strong positive connotations, but both obviously fall short of the ultimate objective of engaging with a refugee population. "Welcome" can only be a very first step on the road to "inclusion" or "integration"; and while "tolerance" is mainly used in a sense of open-mindedness in favour of ethnic and cultural diversity, it may also convey a hidden meaning of "temporary acceptance in social separation". An attitude of simple "tolerance" may thus actually be counter-productive to actively engaging with cultural diversity.

Overall, there is nothing wrong and little risk with using the terms "inclusion" and "integration" or "participation" and "social interaction". It is, however, highly recommended to take into account local or national sensitivities and understandings of these words. More importantly, it is essential to be able to argue about the word of one's choice and if necessary explain to an interlocutor what is meant by it.

19 Richard Bailey, "Evaluating the relationship between physical education, sport and social inclusion", Educational Review, Vol. 57, Issue 1 (2005), pp. 71-90.

20 Ruth Levitas et al., The multi-dimensional analysis of social exclusion. Bristol Institute for Public Affairs, 2007.

21 Richard Bailey et al. (ICSSPE), Aspire Literature Review – Key Terms, Berlin: 2017.

Good practices

03 CHAPTER

The FIRE project is not the first project on social integration through football and does not ambition to reinvent the wheel. It makes sense, however, to take stock of the large variety of actions in this field. Many of these actions have been prompted by the peak of the massive arrival of refugees in 2015, but a large number of them have existed for a longer period.

3.1 Available reports, inventories and mappings

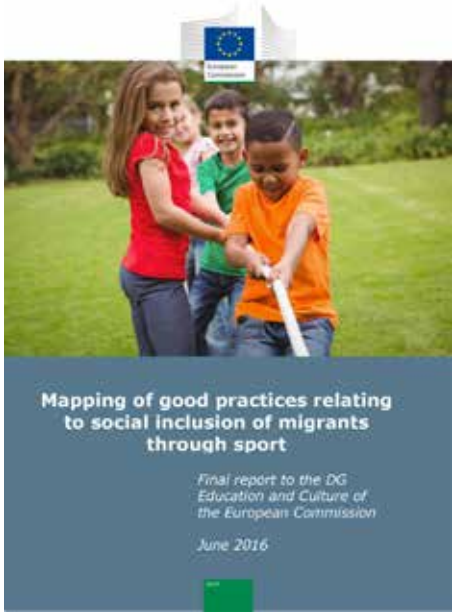
Mapping of good practices relating to social inclusion of migrants through sport (2016)

This report, commissioned by the DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission, was delivered by the ECORYS consultancy based in Rotterdam.[22]

Based on a short literature review and some stakeholder interviews (including Maxime Leblanc from Sport and Citizenship), the report assesses 63 projects and interventions carried out between 2008 and 2016 that aimed at the social inclusion of migrants, with a strong focus on the link between sport and employability (educational and vocational training, personal and social development, or volunteering capacity building in sport).

The report (30 pages + 60 pages of project descriptions) identifies a range of "success factors" in the implementation of sports-related projects. These are:

- **A positive societal context** – strong political support for initiatives, open-minded population, general positive climate and public opinion.
- **The creation of ownership** – engaging the target group(s) in the design and implementation of the programme (empowerment).
- **Opportunities for cultural exchange** – engagement with locals in a safe and regulated place; breaking down prejudice and establishing social contacts.
- **The development of pathways** – introducing and qualifying migrants to coaching and administrative functions in clubs, thus producing role models and mediators.
- **Sustainable funding structures** – diversification of funding streams in teaming up with other actors (church and community organisations).
- **The enhancement of cultural sensitivity** – support and capacity building for inter-cultural skills and know-how for coaches; cultural integration guides or classes for migrants.
- **The build-up of administrative capability** – capacity-building for volunteers and simplification of funding applications.
- **The transferability of projects** – careful assessment of contextual factors before adapting good practices in a different environment; capacity-building in monitoring and evaluation.



22 Ecorys, Mapping of good practices relating to social inclusion of migrants through sport. Final report to the DG Education and Culture of the European Commission, Brussels: 2016.

UEFA report *Football and Refugees. Addressing key challenges* (2018)[23]

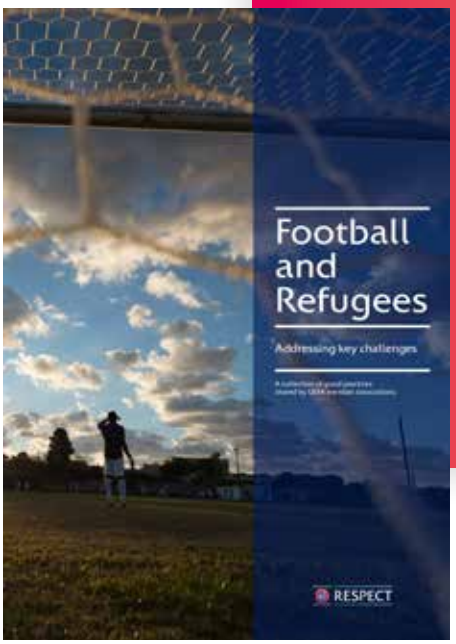
This report, published during the Fare network's #FootballPeople action weeks 2018, is the outcome of a seminar held in Ireland by a UEFA Study Group Scheme on the issue. It presents, on 45 very dense pages, 33 good practices from a total of 14 member federations (all of which, it must be noted, from Western European countries plus Malta and Greece).

The most interesting aspect, beyond the remarkable quality and impact of some of the initiatives presented, is the report's structure. It is divided into 8 different sections, each of which actually responds or corresponds to what is perceived as the most pressing needs by actors of the field. Unsurprisingly, these needs are also among those identified by the partners of the FIRE project (see Chapters 4 and 5). This is coherent with the fact that the initiatives and programmes presented emanate directly from the different federations, most often in response to needs formulated at grassroots level (i.e. in the clubs).

For each initiative, there is not only a concise description of why it may be considered a "good practice", but also a brief summary of the "lessons learnt", in other words "useful takeaways".

The report will be most useful for grassroots clubs from the national federations concerned (two of which are partners of the FIRE project), especially in case they were not already aware of some of the opportunities described.

It must be said, though, that while this compilation offers excellent examples of actions, some of the advice remains superficial. For example, it is probably not enough to simply recommend "Do not be shy of taking the advice, help and support that is on offer from external groups", when it comes to partnering with other actors from civil society.



Sport Welcomes Refugees: A Guide to Good Practice in Europe (2018)[24]

This guide was authored by the Berlin-based NGO Camino on behalf of the partners of the Erasmus+ Project *"Sport Welcomes Refugees"* coordinated by the *Sport Inclusion Network* (SPIN). Through 40 pages, it provides insight into the political context of the project partners' home countries (Finland, Portugal, Ireland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Austria, and Hungary), before presenting 33 good practices from these countries, a third of which includes football.

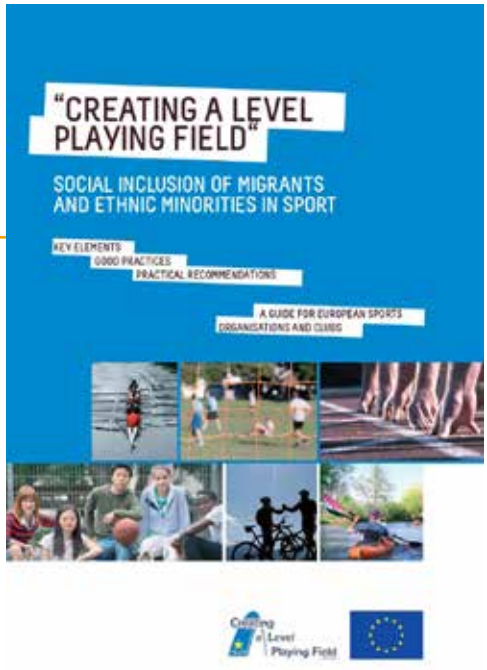
Beyond the description of the very heterogeneous sample of initiatives, the document also provides a concise "checklist" that lists critera for successful attempts to "include refugees in and through sports", meant to "serve as guidelines for high-quality sports activities" (p. 39-42). These criteria clearly give priority to participation rather than performance and include issues such as:

- **Project conception** – objectives, target group(s), planning, anticipation of support needs;[25]
- **Cooperation and networking** – with other social organisations and external partners;
- **Qualification** – concerning skills (development) of coaches and training supervisors;
- **Gender sensitivity** – tailoring offers (and sportswear!) to women/girls, involving female coaches as role models;
- **Inclusion and active participation** – encouraging refugees to get actively involved, aiming at permanent incorporation in the club;
- **Intercultural awareness** – qualification of coaches, anti-racism statements, open-minded atmosphere, non-discrimination guidelines;
- **Communication and transparency** – addressing concerns of other club members, promotion of the sports offer, general transparency with all stakeholders.

23 UEFA, Football and Refugees. Addressing key challenges, Nyon: 2018.

24 Victoria Schwenzer (Camino), Sport Welcomes Refugees: A Guide to Good Practice in Europe. Berlin: 2018.

25 For advice on project management issues, the detailed handbook (in French only) published by the Erasmus+ project FAIRES (focused on Badminton, but perfectly transferable to other sports) may also be highly recommended: IRIS, Manuel technique pour la création de projet d'inclusion sociale des réfugié(e)s par le sport, Paris: 2019.



ENGSO – *Creating a Level Playing Field* (2012)

This guide on the "Social inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities" was published as the result of a transnational project conducted within the framework of the EU Preparatory Actions in the Field of Sport between 2011 and 2012. The document is based on a survey by questionnaire, interactive workshops and interviews with stakeholders.

The guide identifies half a dozen of "key elements of successful diversity management" and illustrates them with a total of 13 different projects that are presented as examples of good practice (p. 14-39):

- **Funding** – one of the major challenges for actors, marked by lack of long-term vision by authorities and other funding sources and sharp heterogeneity of local/national contexts.
- **Planning** – emphasis on clearly defining goals, expectations and target group; being "customer-oriented" rather than "curriculum-centred" (i.e. giving priority to participants' needs rather than to the "ideal" contents of the training); formulating a strategy; being able to adjust, if necessary, the planning to the environment.
- **Communication and awareness raising** – involving all stakeholders, stimulating dialogue between majority and minority groups ("inter-actor learning"); raising awareness on intercultural competencies; developing "narrative explanations" on the benefits for all.
- **Recruitment and reaching** – reaching out effectively to the target population and addressing the issues of transport and costs; developing diversity within sports organisations and proactively providing opportunities for volunteering and skill acquisition by migrants.
- **Collaboration** – establishing dialogue between stakeholders (especially on the local level).
- **Evaluation** – trying to measure the success of a project, ideally through external evaluation, but also through participant feedback, and self-evaluation (of motivations and methods).

The analysis of these key elements is then broken down in a list of concrete recommendations for sports organisations and sports clubs (p. 40-44), with the aim of raising awareness on possible pitfalls in setting up activities targeted at migrant populations and finding the most appropriate sources of information and collaboration partners on different levels (from European to local).

The *Sport Migration Integration Platform* by the Council of Europe (since 2016)

Following its 2016 annual conference, the *"Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport"* (EPAS) of the Strasbourg-based Council of Europe identified isolation and lack of promotion as pressing concerns for many projects working with newly arrived migrants. In response to this need, it decided to set up an online platform with the aim of indexing and sharing knowledge on good practices at a pan-European level, and of bringing together project owners and other stakeholders concerned.

The platform currently lists 54 different project descriptions from 20 different countries, which are listed in alphabetical order. 25 of them are linked to football. Entries can be sorted according to sports disciplines and countries. New entries can be easily made via a simple online form.

Given the networking purpose of this platform, there is no evaluation of the different projects presented.

The Refugees and Football Database of the Fare network

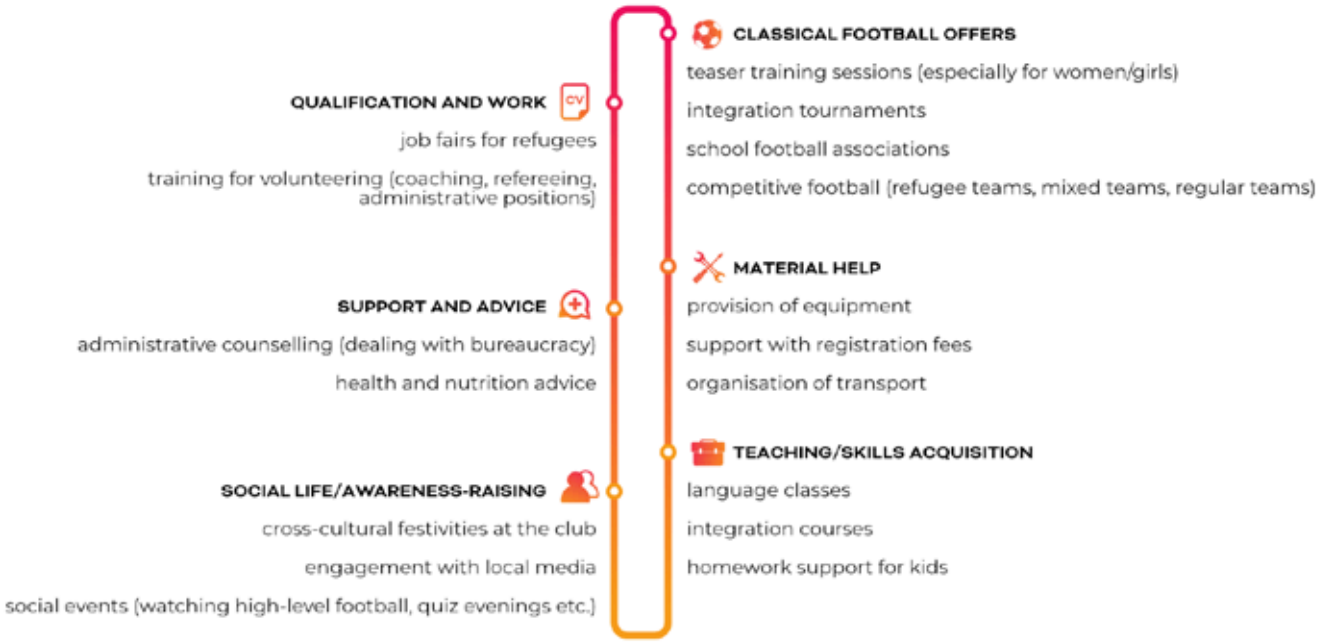
On its website, the Fare network has dedicated a page to a "mapping", in the very literal sense, of grassroots organisations or football clubs that are actively engaged in refugee-related football activities.

This *database* aims to give both migrants and activists the opportunity to find out about nearby teams and how they can get involved. It currently lists over 250 different teams or activities, which can be sorted by country or conveniently searched on an interactive map.

3.2 Typology of practices

The review of the different good practices guides and platforms shows a remarkable variety of activities provided by grassroots actors who have engaged in projects aiming at the inclusion and/or integration of migrants with the help of sport. A very large part of them focuses on football.

In order to have a more systematic overview, it makes sense to establish a tentative "typology" of practices that may be drawn from these many examples. In the graph below, the actions implemented by football clubs and sport associations have been grouped in six major categories:



The fundamental and most important action remains, of course, the "classical" football activity, which, after all, is the reason of being of football clubs. All other actions are "grafted" on this basic link established between civil society actors and newly arrived migrants.

While there are many commonalities across Europe, especially in terms of motivations and engagement by sport civil society actors, it is important to realise that every single type of initiative included in the above graph are

- strongly impacted by the national context and discursive environment;
- and at one point confronted with obstacles and barriers of different kinds.

These are addressed in the following section.

National contexts

04 CHAPTER

The possibilities of action for civil society actors are strongly dependent on the national environment in which they evolve. Some may be in line with the mainstream of society and enjoy the support of both local and national authorities. Others may face an uphill-struggle against a political and social environment that is rather hostile to their very reason of being. In some countries, as one of the sources for this report pointed out, there is a real divide between grassroots actors and public opinion.

The national environment matters

As shown in the introductory pages (see section 1.2), attitudes towards the recent migration waves that peaked in 2015 differ widely across European countries, oscillating between humanistic imperatives of providing help, pragmatic adjustment to the phenomenon, and deeply rooted fears of cultural change.

Despite some punctual fluctuations, such attitudes are firmly grounded in rather stable sets of common values and fundamental beliefs. While there may be some regional differences, the extent to which attitudes about socio-cultural phenomena like migration are shaped by the national environment is striking. The political debate, the media discourse, the strength or weakness of civil society, and most of all past experience (historical choices and collective memory) both result from and contribute to, this national context. In the words of political science, they are "path-dependent".

While "path-dependence" explains fundamental value frameworks – like the ones established and permanently refined by the *World Values Survey*[26] – public opinion is, of course, also impacted by the current political environment (party spectrum), the evolution of the legal framework, and demographic tendencies (birth rate, previous waves of immigration, current mass emigration, etc.). It is important to realise that more often than not, the political discourse and the dominant vocabulary are not entirely dominated by the political parties, be they currently in government or in opposition, and that among all participants of the public debate, the discourse is simultaneously based on sincerely held convictions and spineless, opportunistic positions.

Commonalities and discrepancies within the FIRE project consortium

In addition to two distinctly pan-European actors with a supranational field of activity, the FIRE project brings together five civil society actors that are firmly rooted in their national environment in Belgium, Romania, Poland, Scotland, and Spain. Comparing their analysis of the local context is a very helpful illustration of the observations made above.

The table on the following page sums up how these actors interpret their respective national context, how they perceive the attitude and role of the national "football community" against this backdrop, and what needs and wishes spontaneously arise from this analysis.

26 The World Values Survey, created in 1981, is a global network of social scientists studying changing values and their impact on social and political life. Its most recent wave of surveys was carried out in 2017-2018.

	General societal context	Football context	Most needed in this context
Belgium	> Long-term experience with migration. > Today: right-wing populism on the rise but authorities still open to positive communication on football's role in integrating migrants.	> Belgian football system highly compartmentalised, like Belgian politics, which makes processes complicated.	> Role-models on every level, in society, and in football (amateur football, semi-pro, referees, coaches, assistant-coaches, board members, etc.). > Provide an environment which can give confidence, knowledge, and skills, in order to enable participation. > Increase girls' participation. > Make training more accessable for non-native speakers.
Poland	> Long mono-ethnic tradition. > Government policies currently clearly anti-migration (funding cuts, non-respect of asylum law, public anti-refugee campaign). > Result: shift in public opinion from 75% pro to 75% against refugees within only five years. > Other context: mass emigration to Western Europe and immigration from Ukraine.	> Social integration through sport is hardly a topic. > Only individual grassroots initiatives – little support from clubs or federation.	> A more welcoming host society. > Increased interest in integration projects (and in CSR in general) from professional clubs and the federation. > Professionalisation and increase of the organisation's potential (number of projects, employees, networking, etc.); more sports and refugees-related local donors.
Romania	> Migration impact blown up by media and politically instrumentalised. > Result: fear of terrorism or extremism. > Also: severe drain of workforce (mass emigration to the West).	> High diversity on top level (30%, 28 nationalities). > More role models (naturalised players) would help. > Good zero-tolerance policy against xenophobia. > Football seen as positive force, actors supported by the authorities.	> More communication support for activities. > Better networking between football programmes to help integrating migrants. > Resources to make integration programmes sustainable. > Overcome the mentality barrier and the reluctance of Romanians to run integration projects.
Scotland	> Long-term experience with migration. > Commitment from Scottish Government and public bodies in promoting equality of opportunity and social justice. Authorities still open to positive communication on football's role in integrating migrants.	> Positive perception towards "people of any race". > However, diversity barriers in organised football.	> Greater focus on equality within football structures. > Higher level of parental buy-in for children's activities. > Increasing girls' participation. > Better communication of achievements.
Spain	> Traditionally positive attitude towards humanitarian emergencies that require action. > Today growing concern among population, migration has reached the political agenda.	> A few clubs have some initiatives in social inclusion. > Football-related employability or skills acquisition is currently underexploited. > No common strategy of the football community (despite immense role in Spanish society).	> More tailor-made developing of proposals in complicated contexts. > Better training of the personnel in charge of executing projects. > New strategic alliances that help us to work in a coordinated way, avoiding the accumulation of resources in specific areas, and the lack of projects in other equally relevant locations.

Needs assesment

05 CHAPTER

As can be seen from the table showcasing the FIRE project partners' input, the various and multiple obstacles that civil society actors face when engaging with migrants in a football context diverge according to their specific national environment. When they express their most urgent needs, however, both specificities and overlaps are noticeable – which remains in line with what can be filtered from the literature.

In addition to previously quoted publications and input from project partners, this section also draws on some recently published documents:

- A particular wide-reaching and pertinent needs inventory was carried out by the Sport Welcomes Refugees project and published by the Camino NGO in 2017 in a concise booklet named *Sports for Refugees: Challenges for instructors and their support needs.*[27]
- On a very practical and administrative level, two brochures (in German language) issued by the German football federation (Deutscher Fussball-Bund)[28] , draw on the feedback from the immense echo to their 2015 initiative "1:0 für ein Willkommen" ("1-0 for a welcome"), which offered a dedicated seed-funding programme for grassroots clubs. In the meantime, the initiative has been aptly re-named "2:0 für ein Willkommen", in order to *highlight the need for sustained engagement*, rather than one-off actions. Over 3,600 German clubs have seized the opportunity to obtain some kick-start funding for local projects.
- In responding to some of these needs, the detailed *training module developed in 2018 by the ASPIRE project* ("Activity, Sport, Play for the Inclusion of Refugees") led by ENGSO[29], also provides relevant feedback about the priorities that have been identified by the consortium of 15 partner organisations.
- In a similar manner, the *ISCA "Integration of Refugees Through Sport" online course*, provides help and expert advice on some of the typical needs of sport grassroots actors willing to engage with refugees. In four completely downloadable modules, enriched with expert interviews on video and reference to numerous good practices, questions such as "how to start", "how to acquire intercultural understanding", or "how to find partnerships" are addressed, including an extensive glossary that confirms the necessity of conceptual clarity outlined in chapter 2 above.

The top-ten needs of civil society actors may be summarised, somewhat subjectively, as follows:

1. **To escape isolation and engage in partnerships with other actors.**
2. **To reach out successfully to refugees and attract them to the club.**
3. **To improve project management skills (including evaluation and dissemination skills).**
4. **To raise perennial funding (for activities, equipment, membership fees, transport, etc.).**
5. **To reduce linguistic barriers.**
6. **To break through cultural walls.**
7. **To reach out to female refugees.**
8. **To facilitate the integration of refugees into regular (and competitive) football.**
9. **To engage refugees themselves in volunteering activities.**
10. **To fight against prejudice and rejection in society.**

These are briefly developed in the following sub-sections.

27 Victoria Schwenzer, Sports for Refugees: Challenges for instructors and their support needs, Berlin: 2017.

28 DFB, Willkommen im Verein! Fussball mit Flüchtlingen. Frankfurt: 2016; as well as DFB, Im Fussball zu Hause! Flüchtlinge im Fussballverein. Frankfurt: 2016.

29 ASPIRE project consortium, Aspire Training Module, Stockholm: 2018.

5.1 To escape isolation and engage in partnerships with other actors

One remarkable feature of the many initiatives, programmes, and actions led at a grassroots level is their incredibly diverse and fragmented character. While it makes utmost sense to do things in one's familiar local environment, a feeling of isolation seems to be inevitable at some stage. Volunteers in sport have tight timetables, between their commitments, their professional duties and their family obligations. But contacting and engaging with other actors or stakeholders, from different sectors of society, is both time and energy consuming.

Nonetheless, engaging in partnerships with other actors is not only beneficial for all involved, but indispensable for meaningful actions, and almost automatically leads to other contacts that may be helpful in the future. In other words: the required time and energy must be found somewhere. They may be found through additional human resources that do not necessarily cost much.

- In many countries, national volunteering schemes exist, and not-for-profit organisations are ideal beneficiaries.
- Also, some training institutions – from social sciences universities to vocations schools for social work – are delighted to offer meaningful internship opportunities to their students.
- Even for an undergraduate business school student (or team of students), it might be a very rewarding mission to draft a "business plan" for an initiative related to football and refugees.

Time for the search of suitable partners may also be found through a more efficient delegation of tasks within the club or organisation, thus liberating time for the project initiator. That's where the added value of professional project management skills lies, which is another need that is repeatedly expressed.

Engaging in partnerships with other actors is not only beneficial for all involved, but indispensable for meaningful actions, and almost automatically leads to other contacts that may be helpful in the future.

5.2 To reach out successfully to refugees and attract them to the club

A good idea for a football initiative targeting a migrant public is not a guarantee for success. It is also important to find suitable participants and convince them of their offer's added value. Reaching out to refugees is still mentioned by many volunteers as a challenge, also for geographical reasons (many refugee homes or centres are located in the periphery of towns).

As often in life, personal contacts are key. It is important (and sometimes, it must be said, a question of luck) to identify the individual in a refugee centre who is open to the idea of providing structured football opportunities with the help of an external partner. In some cases, locally based associations that deal with migration and asylum issues may be helpful intermediaries. These associations generally know well how to reach migrants, who they are, what their needs are, etc. It is also important to prepare a good argumentation about the tangible benefits for everybody and one's own motivation, (always, of course, with sufficient sensitivity for the terminology issues raised in Chapter 2).

Punctual offers without further commitment may be best suited to establish first contact (asking for regular commitment right away is intimidating, especially for individuals who might be forced to move again to another location).

From numerous reports it appears that during this period of reaching out to refugees, frustration management is also an essential skill for all volunteers! It is necessary to be mentally prepared for a lack of reliability or assiduity, for fluctuating respect for a common set of rules that seems perfectly "normal" to the instructor, or for unrealistic self-evaluation in terms of performance level. The Sport Welcomes Refugees booklet repeatedly warns of inevitable "disappointment on the part of the sports instructors, who might feel that their offer is underappreciated" (p.7). It therefore makes sense to be prepared for these emotions.

As the DFB brochures point out, when reaching out to refugees it is of great importance, to promote the idea within the club or association (pointing to both humanistic arguments and concrete benefits for both sides).

5.3 To improve project management skills

Many highly motivated volunteers rely on their remarkable improvisation skills and experience. Setting up a successful project aimed at a very different target group requires, however, a more systematic approach. The FAIRES project[30], for instance, identified project management skills as one of the most pressing issues, and provides guidelines for all different steps of running even modest projects:

1. Precise definition of the project's objectives, target public, and resources required.
2. Realistic budgetary planning (and close monitoring of resources and expenditures).
3. Securing infrastructure access.
4. Appropriate communication to both target group and internal stakeholders.
5. Monitoring and evaluating of the project's progress and impact.
6. Effective dissemination to all stakeholders and the general public.

Providing compact training sessions in project management skills, with the aim of "professionalising" initiatives and actions, would definitely be helpful, even if only to serve as a "refresher" for experienced volunteers.

5.4 To raise perennial funding *(for activities, equipment, membership fees, transport, etc.).*

Funding is a permanent issue for volunteer-driven initiatives. There are several distinct difficulties, starting with the lack of "bureaucratic" know-how to develop successful funding applications. As the ECORYS report for the European Commission rightly states, the "lack of time to engage with and gather knowledge about possible funding opportunities" is a real problem, as is "the relatively short-term nature of funding sources available for projects, (...) which leaves smaller organisations vulnerable when funding expires" at the end of a cycle of one or two years.[31]

As a result, sustainable initiatives are in need of multi-channel funding, in order to bridge periods, in which one funding stream may expire before another one can replace it. This is of course easier said than done.

Like many other aspects of successful engagement, sustained networking, lobbying (in the best sense of the word), and fundraising require specific skills, time, and energy. They are therefore closely linked to points 5.1 (partnerships) and 5.3 (project management). In consequence, the first remedy for lack of funding opportunities and lobbying know-how is to increase the available human resources, which may not be as difficult as it often seems (see also Chapter 6).

30 IRIS, Manuel technique pour la création de projet d'inclusion sociale des réfugié(e)s par le sport, Paris: 2019.

31 ECORYS, Mapping of good practices relating to social inclusion of migrants through sport. Final report to the DG Education and Culture of the European Commission, Brussels: 2016, p. 24-25.

5.5 To reduce linguistic barriers

Coaches and instructors are sport enthusiasts, but they cannot be expected to be language teachers. They are used to giving their instructions in a fast and efficient way and may therefore face difficulties to communicate with participants who have little to no command of the local language.

Including participants across linguistic barriers requires particular competences. Rather than proceed by "learning by doing", it could be helpful to provide coaches with some basic training in non-verbal communication methods. It is just as important to use efficient "ice-breakers" as it is to know what pitfalls should be avoided (talking speed, complicated explanations, exclusive focus on participants with language skills to the detriment of others, etc.).

The ideal scenario would be to be able to ask volunteer translators from different ethnic communities for help. More realistically, sport instructors (but also club administrators) would greatly benefit from acquiring, in short training sessions, tools for overcoming frustrating language barriers.

At the same time, linking training sessions to genuine language classes has proved to be a very beneficial combination, both in terms of skills and "perception of welcome and goodwill". The main difficulty consists in finding qualified volunteers with language teaching competences and suitable infrastructure in or around the club grounds.

linking training sessions to genuine language classes has proved to be a very beneficial combination

5.6 To break through cultural walls

In all evidence, cultural obstacles and pitfalls are particulary numerous and potentially harmful. Culture is based on beliefs and norms, which translate into behaviour patterns ("habits") that become unconscious and are extremely difficult to change. The very detailed chapter on *"Intercultural dialogue"* within the ASPIRE project's training module provides an in-depth introduction into how culture functions as an orientation system for human beings.[32]

It begins with migrants' perception of the place of sport in everyday life. Football enthusiasts may be surprised to find among some migrant groups a certain disregard for the benefits that sport can bring and that seem so obvious to Europeans. Certain parents may consider football wasted time for their children; and certain men may have not very constructive views about the suitability of football for women and girls.

Role models and mediators (who are not necessarily sportspeople themselves, but trusted in the migrant community) are extremely helpful in opening up some loopholes in the cultural walls.

Concerning the repeatedly made observation that many cultures of origin do not have the same idea of commitment to social groups outside the family (not to mention perceptions of punctuality and reliability which already differ widely within Europe), it appears that social media like Whatsapp or Facebook groups or other trending networks seem to be tailored to cross-cultural use and increase "commitment pressure" in a gentle and engaging way.

On a general note, in order to break through such cultural walls, grassroots volunteers need inter-cultural competences. This starts first and foremost with a keen awareness of one's own cultural "straightjacket" – cultural sensitivity starts with self-awareness. Compact workshops on intercultural competence (as well as some fundamental "do's and don't's") are an excellent tool and may not be too complicated to arrange. Moreover, there are interesting digital tools available for free, like the ASPIRE module mentioned above.

The overall aim of intercultural competence is "empathy" for refugees' situations, heterogeneity, and cultural imprint. Patience, persistence and humour are the best pre-conditions for acquiring these competences. Just as important is to have realistic expectations about one's role and the extent to which one may contribute to the very long integration process. There is so much that one can do, and it does not act in anybody's favour to become overwhelmed by the difficulties or by the psychological burden some situations may provoke.

32 ASPIRE project consortium, Aspire Training Module, Stockholm: 2018.

5.7 To reach out to female refugees

In the most welcoming countries, many migrants who have obtained official refugee status make use of their right to family reunification. As a result, the number and percentage of women and girls among refugees across Europe is likely to keep increasing. At the same time, experience from good practices reports shows that it is more difficult to reach out to potential female participants, for a variety of reasons:

- culture-based reluctance, as mentioned above (5.6);
- suitable infrastructure (including changing rooms) and regular access to it;
- lack of female instructors;
- appropriate training hours (ideally before dark);
- obligations of childcare and therefore lack of availability.

Again, the presence of role models is of invaluable help. In the absence of "cultural ambassadors" who have the clout to convince potential participants (or their fathers and brothers), even digital testimonials that are easily spread may be an asset.

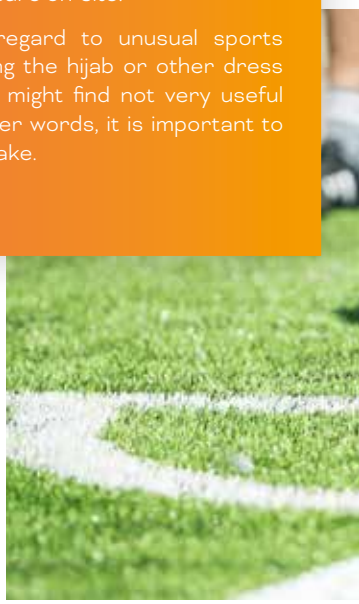
In more concrete terms, three recommendations are repeatedly advanced by the literature:

- It might be useful to start a football offer with female-only groups, rather than mixed ones.
- A childcare solution should be offered right away, ideally in the form of parallel offers for both women and their children, otherwise with childcare on-site.
- Tolerance is needed with regard to unusual sports clothing, especially concerning the hijab or other dress codes European instructors might find not very useful for sporting purposes. In other words, it is important to remember the priorities at stake.

5.8 To facilitate the access of refugees into regular football

Recruiting talented players among refugees for the competitive teams of a football club is of course an excellent means of integration. There are, however, some issues to be considered:

- Such integration requires a minimum of geographical stability and therefore only makes sense with officially recognised refugees who are not "in transit" for another destination.
- It is important to be well informed about possible restrictions to freedom of movement for refugees in the country concerned.
- It is also necessary to gather information about health insurance and liability issues, which in most countries do not pose a problem to recognised refugees.



5.9 To engage refugees themselves in volunteering activities

It is obvious that successfully recruiting individuals, with a migrant background, for any kind of position in a football club (coaches, referees, administrators) is a major step in favour of sustainable inclusion and participation:

- The keyword in this context is, of course, "responsibility", which is based on commitment and is bound to increase confidence and self-esteem.
- Even more importantly, each individual who takes over some responsibility within a club or association becomes at the same time a role model and multiplier of the integration message.
- And the change from a "passive" beneficiary to an "active" provider of a relevant social service changes perception on both sides – among the migrant community and among the locals.

This need has already received close scrutiny by several in-depth analyses within the framework of previous projects on sports and migrant groups. In 2016, The European Sport Inclusion Network (ESPIN) published both a conference report on the *Equal Access and Volunteering of Migrants, Minorities and Refugees in Sport*[33] (32 pages) and a *Handbook on Volunteering of Migrants in Sport Clubs and Organisations*[34] (56 pages). Both provide helpful information, background reflections, and concrete recommendations. The SIVSCE project led between 2015 and 2017 by the Syddansk Universitet also worked on *Social inclusion and volunteering in sports clubs in Europe (SIVSCE).*

5.10 To fight against prejudice and rejection in society

Stereotypes, prejudice or outright xenophobia are not the preserve of extreme right wing ideologists. They can come to the surface in everyday situations, often unwillingly. Football, as a contact sport where emotions fly high, is a context, in which sudden interpersonal conflicts are prone to breaking out. These can, in turn, lead to racist insults or discriminatory behaviour.

Instructors should be aware of this risk and, ideally, benefit from a training in how to resolve such conflicts appropriately. The Sport Welcomes Refugees project suggests that grassroots football clubs formulate "guidelines outlining the club's and/or the association's coordinated approach towards such incidents, enabling them to handle corresponding situations quickly, appropriately and in accordance with the club's and/or the association's stance."[35]

Beyond such internal incidents and anticipations, grassroots football can, in all modesty, also contribute to challenging a skeptical or hostile public opinion, in disseminating effectively about positive case studies and humble "success stories" of integration initiatives that are beneficial to society. Getting in touch, if possible, with sympathetic or at least neutral local media, can open opportunities to tell such stories. Organising local public events that provide information – with the help of an academic expert or community official – about the exact benefits a refugee status entails in one's country. This may counteract, at least partly, the "fake" information that is circulated on such matters.

It is not a football club's mission to engage in a fight against massive social and political trends. But that does not mean that it should not take a stand for its principles when speaking to media or other civil society groups.

33 ESPIN, Equal Access and Volunteering of Migrants, Minorities and Refugees in Sport. Vienna: 2016.

34 ESPIN, Handbook on Volunteering of Migrants in Sport Clubs and Organisations. Vienna: 2016.

35 Victoria Schwenzer, Sports for Refugees: Challenges for instructors and their support needs, Berlin: 2017, p. 11.

Intermediate conclusion and outlook

06 CHAPTER

From the needs developed in the previous chapter, a strong demand for guidance clearly emanates. There seems to be a strong wish for both concrete instruction on "how to go about things" and more strategic recommendations and background knowledge.

The FIRE project's final deliverable aims to actively contribute to this demand, by launching a training tool that will take the shape of a freely accessible MOOC (Massive Open Online Course).

The present report is meant to be a concise and compact digest of what has been done, researched and written so far on football's potential in coping with the unprecedented societal challenge that consists in facilitating the integration of a large number of newly arrived migrants in Europe. A challenge that is no doubt here to stay.

Inevitably at this stage, such a report raises more questions than it can provide answers. By summarising what has been accomplished so far, it implicitly wonders what needs to be done further, what could be done better, what new ideas or practices may emerge.

By way of an intermediate conclusion, a personal word from the author of this report may open a tentative outlook.

As a university professor with over twenty years of interdisciplinary research on international football and thirty-five years of teaching experience in foreign languages, social psychology, intercultural communication, and European politics, he is well-placed to know the reserve, reluctance and hesitancy of many grassroots actors (as well as professional clubs and football federations) to engage with academics and their eternal "abstract theories" and "complicated vocabulary" that appear "disconnected" from the realities of everyday life. And he recognises that such misgivings are not entirely unfounded.

Still, after compiling this compact literature review and conducting an internal project survey and some informal exchanges, he is convinced that teachers and researchers from higher education are a potentially rich and comparatively untapped source of help for many grassroots actors. Many academics, especially from the social sciences, are delighted to engage in collaboration with civil society, test their theoretical approaches in empirical fieldwork, and simply make themselves useful to society.

In particular, the need for the training of grassroots football actors armed with goodwill but faced with a new, complex challenge – be it in intercultural competence, project management, or communication skills – opens avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation between the football community and higher education. Grassroots actors should also be aware that higher education does not only resume itself to silver-haired professors. There is also a large number of young and dynamic students on various levels, always keen on finding meaningful missions for internships or group projects (and on average just as football-crazy as the rest of the population).

One of the FIRE project's objectives is to help actors make the best possible use of the "eco-system" in which they are evolving. Attempts at networking beyond the "usual suspects" of the football community or organised civil society may broaden the pool of possible partners and increase the variety of forms of support.

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