



# FOOTBALL INCLUDING REFUGEES

IN EUROPE

➤ **The FIRE pilot intervention report:**  
a methodological approach for  
successful grassroots interventions.

“

# 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 partners.

Migration has become a highly sensitive topic across the European continent, regardless of 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 displaced newcomers.

Local initiatives, multiplied across the continent, are key to answering a European-wide phenomenon.

And partnerships and alliances are essential for doing so, just as they are the foundation of the FIRE consortium.

## Acknowledgment

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# Introduction

## 01 CHAPTER

As part of the Football Including REFugees (FIRE) project, this methodological approach for successful grassroots interventions supporting the integration of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers has been developed and tested. The work on this methodological approach included the organisation of four pilot interventions, held in Belgium, Romania, Scotland and Spain.

In this report the complete processes of recruitment, selection and the organisation of the pilot interventions is reviewed. The document offers some background information on the FIRE project, before it provides the details around the pilot interventions, and finally concludes with lessons learnt and recommendations.

# Deliverables and Objectives

The FIRE project is articulated around 4 main objectives:

- > **To support** - grassroots football organisations, cross-sector partnerships and capacity building related to promoting inclusion through football;
- > **To foster** - grassroots local pilot interventions, based on employing football as a tool for social inclusion and development;
- > **To develop** - share and exchange good practices of football promoting social inclusion;
- > **To raise-awareness** - around sport, physical activity, volunteering and non-formal education as tools for social change.

**FIRE's main objective is to support grassroots football organisations and to foster cross-sector partnerships between all involved sectors, by creating a network for mutually enriching participants. FIRE will be creating a freely accessible MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) specifically elaborated for grassroots football clubs and organisations who seek some support and guidance to implement their very own initiative, or programme, which strives to include refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers. This tool will ultimately outlive the project's lifespan, as it will remain freely accessible online. In order to do so, the project is broken down into the following activities and productions:**

- > **The publication of a 'State of the Art' of current resources, strategies and stakeholders;**
- > **The organisation of national conferences to discuss the publication and gather further insight from stakeholder participants;**
- > **The launch of a call for pilot interventions, the consequent selection of four pilots, and the publication of a review of the entire process (this document);**
- > **And, the publication of a special edition of Sport and Citizenship's quarterly journal.**



# FIRE's Methodological Approach

## 2.1 Outline of the Methodological Approach

As the designer of European football's largest campaign for social change (FootballPeople weeks), Fare network (Fare) has been the lead partner on the pilot intervention activities. As stated above, this has included activities such as writing and disseminating a call for pilot interventions, the consequent selection of four pilots, and the publication of this review. Together, these tasks have spanned over just under a year in time.

This Methodological Approach aims to provide stakeholders and interested actors with a deepened understanding of the entire process, and more specifically, with further insight over lessons learnt and recommendations for the future.

The key activity of this process has been the organisation and support of four pilot interventions that took place during the **Fare FootballPeople weeks\*** (October 2019). The pilot interventions are a very hands-on mechanism, to test some of FIRE's findings and learnings, in real situations and are deemed a highly relevant way to test the credibility and relevance of the approaches. The results, learnings and conclusions of the pilot interventions are presented in this report.

## CHAPTER

**The workflow of the pilot interventions consisted of nine specific tasks, starting in May 2019, and ending in 2020 with the publication of this report:**

- 1 — Development of a selection criteria for potential successful organisations to conduct a pilot intervention;
- 2 — Redaction of the call for applications;
- 3 — Dissemination of the call for applications;
- 4 — Selection procedure of the successful pilot intervention groups;
- 5 — Liaison with the selected groups;
- 6 — Monitoring and evaluation of the selected and organised pilot interventions;
- 7 — Development and explanation of guidelines for the selected pilot interventions;
- 8 — Implementation of the pilot intervention;
- 9 — Publication and dissemination of the pilot intervention report.

\* <https://www.farenet.org/campaigns/footballpeople-action-weeks/>

## 2.2 The Methodology

In 2019, the key milestone to achieve was: select four pilot interventions proposed by four different local organisations, that employs football to socially include the target group-refugees, migrants, and asylum-seekers.

The four pilot interventions were to take place in Belgium, Romania, Scotland and Spain. The choice of countries reflects the four countries of respective FIRE partners- Belgium for the Royal Belgian Football Association (RBFA), Romania for the Romanian Football Federation (RFF), Scotland for the Scottish Football Association (SFA), and Spain for LaLiga Foundation (LaLiga).

This choice of focus came down to several reasons. Firstly, the idea was to enable close and active collaboration between the partner and the selected pilot intervention. Secondly, the FIRE project aimed to assess how the cooperation between grassroots organisations and their corresponding national governing football bodies could work and, evaluate what could be improved in the future. Thirdly, all four countries have refugee and migrant populations, although the exact context varies per country. Similarly, the structures of grassroots organisations and of grassroots football differs in each country. Hence, it proves interesting to investigate the transferability of methods developed in a European, multi-national, consortium.

The selection of these four partner countries does not imply that this methodological approach is limited to the four said countries. The FIRE consortium believes that the methodological approach is transferable.

In order to implement the pilot interventions, the FIRE consortium made a maximum of 3,000 EUR available per intervention, following co-financing rules- totalling in a maximum of 12,000 EUR. The pilot interventions were designed to take the form of one-day grassroots events during the FootballPeople weeks, organised each year by Fare over two weeks in October.

As lead partner, Fare oversaw the successful implementation of the pilot interventions.

An open call for projects was developed by Fare through a public document. It provided background information about the FIRE project, the call's objectives, eligibility criteria for applicants, expected timeframe of activities, and rules.

The call was published on the project's and partners' websites and was further disseminated widely among each partner networks (e.g. among Fare and partner members). The call served to identify which grassroots organisations should be selected, and further be mentored and supported in the implementation of their intervention.

After a thorough selection process four grassroots organisations were selected, informed, and supported with their implementation of the pilot interventions during the FootballPeople weeks. The selected organisations received practical support to develop, implement, assess, and self-evaluate their pilot interventions.



## 2.3 The FootballPeople weeks

The FootballPeople weeks, annually organised by Fare over two weeks in October, is the largest campaign for social change and diversity in global football. The FIRE project and Fare decided to join forces and integrate the timeframe of the pilot interventions into that of the FootballPeople weeks.

### About the FootballPeople weeks

The FootballPeople weeks unite supporters, clubs, players, minority groups and communities affected by discrimination to stand for equality and inclusion. During the two-week period over 150,000 individuals from over 60 countries organise and participate in events and activities to bring about social change and take a joint stand against all forms of discrimination and racism.

The FootballPeople weeks are open to everyone regardless of who you are or what your role in football is. Supporters, players, clubs, ethnic minorities, LGBT+ organisations, women's groups, human rights activists, schools and NGOs all take an active role. FootballPeople activists are united in their love for the game and their belief that football belongs to everyone and can be used to create positive change.

The campaign offers two types of grants (small grants of up to 500 EUR and event grants of up to 2,500 EUR) to said applicants, to organise activities during this period. In the 2019 edition, Fare supported over 250 groups in over 60 countries with a FootballPeople grant.



Fare is a social partner of UEFA and during 2019 FootballPeople weeks UEFA actively promotes the campaign through dedicated UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League and UEFA Nation League matches. In this way, the professional world of football joins to take a stand for social inclusion. Last year around 200 professional clubs have shown their support.

The wide reach and support, of both grassroots and professional football, have made the FootballPeople weeks an established campaign in European football, providing a fantastic opportunity for the FIRE pilot interventions to be active participants of the campaign, hence increasing their impact and visibility.



## 2.4 Criteria and Guidelines

Fare network developed both the application guidelines to assist groups in the application process, as well as those for selected successful applicants.

A successful application matched the following criteria.

The applicant preferably:

- > Is a (small) NGO, fan group, informal group, (grassroots) football club and/ or a community group;
- > Works with refugees/ migrants/ asylum seekers in the pilot intervention;
- > Organises activities with a focus on female refugees/ migrants/ asylum-seekers as an added value.

Furthermore, the activities are in line with the principals, aims and objectives of both the FIRE project and the FootballPeople weeks. Activities also focus on football as a tool for inclusion.

The activities that would be considered for the FIRE grant were:

- > Football tournament + (tournament including workshops)
- > Workshops
- > Panel discussions
- > (Small) conferences
- > Roundtables

All applicants had to complete an online application form, in which they had to include a detailed description of their proposed activity, a description of their organisation, and an estimated direct number of participants (including those with a refugee background). Each application was to include a clear description of deliverables, outcomes and expected impact of the proposed activity, a list of partners involved in the organisation of the event as well as a detailed event budget, including other sources of income.

The selected pilot interventions received more detailed guidelines that laid out publicity, visibility and communication instructions, which reflected both the FIRE consortium and the FootballPeople weeks. Lastly, successful applicants were also provided with reporting guidelines (both narrative and financial reporting being mandatory). Once all documents had been consulted by the successful applicants, an agreement was signed with the aforementioned details.

### Communication and Visibility

Prior and during the event, applicants were encouraged to share their event materials and pictures on their social media channels, and with the FIRE consortium. Each selected applicant received the aid and support of Fare, *Sport and Citizenship* and their corresponding national partner.

At the end of each event, the applicant was required to complete an online report and evaluation form. The online report included a description of the organised activity, the number of participants (including refugees), an overview of (social) media links and a financial budget (including proof of expenditure). The four pilot interventions were also asked to complete an online survey for organisational feedback, and to include feedback and testimonials from the intervention organisers and participants.

## 2.5 Applications

The call for FIRE pilot interventions was linked and embedded into Fare FootballPeople weeks' call for Event Grants. The latter was launched early July and was open until 11 August 2019. A separate call highlighting the FIRE project and the specific criteria for the pilot interventions was also launched during July. In both cases the same application link was used.

> <https://farenet.org/news/fares-footballpeople-weeks-grant-initiative-joins-up-with-eu-project-fire/>

Fare received over 500 applications for both small and event FootballPeople weeks grants. The total number of 536 applications does however include applications from the whole of Europe and, in some cases, from countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Received applications came from a total of 71 countries. They included applications for small grants (activities that are funded with a maximum amount of up to 500 EUR) and applications from organisations that did not focus on the inclusion of refugees.

Overview of the 2019 FootballPeople weeks applications in relation to the FIRE project:

### Total number of:

- applications
- grant applications in the target countries (20%)
- event grant applications
- event grant applications in the target countries (20%)



### Total number of applications from:

- Belgium
- United Kingdom (including Scotland)
- Romania
- Spain



### Total number of event grant applications from:

- Belgium
- United Kingdom (including Scotland)
- Romania
- Spain



Applicants were further asked to indicate the main focus of their organisation, in addition to the main topic and subtopics of their proposed activities :

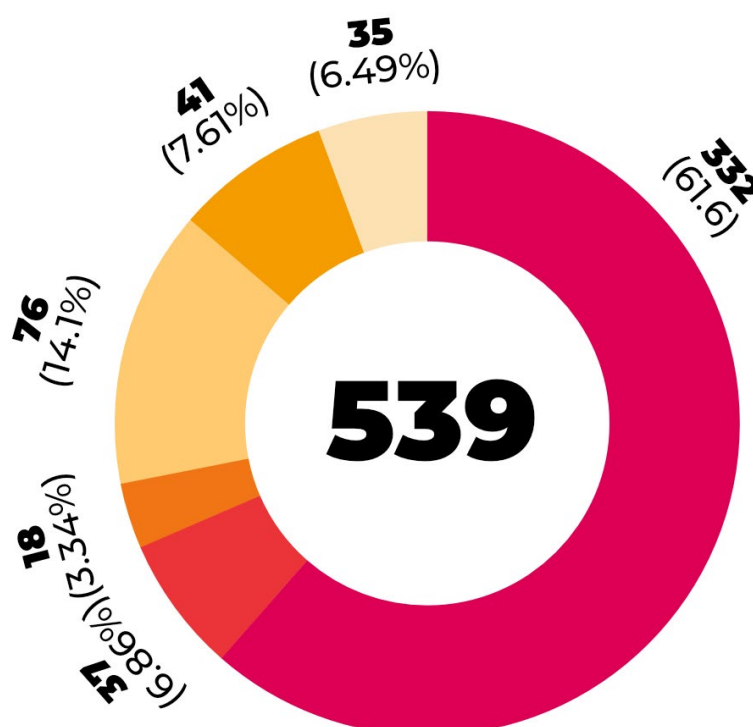
- > A total of 74 organisations (43 small grant and 31 event grant) indicated that their organisation focuses on the social inclusion of refugees;
- > A further 89 organisations indicated that their proposed activities would focus on the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers. From the received event grants 36 groups proposed to organise activities on the social inclusion of refugees;
- > Interestingly, organisations that indicate their main focus to be on other topics such as racism or discrimination do in certain cases organise activities focussing and addressing the inclusion of refugees;
- > 24 applications sought to organise activities on the inclusion of refugees and migrants in the target countries;
- > 10 applications to the event grants sought to organise activities on the inclusion of refugees and migrants in the target countries;

## Type of organisations applying for FootballPeople grants

\*The target countries are Belgium, Romania, Scotland, and Spain

Account : Type of organisation

- Amateur or grassroots team/club
- Community group
- Educational body
- Fan group
- NGO/Not for profit organisation
- Other



## 2.6 Selection process

Following the closing of the call for projects (11 August 2019), Fare pre assessed all received applications to assess whether or not they matched the basic criteria- such as working with refugees and working in the respective partner countries.

Fare then evaluated the overall quality of the applications, the kinds of proposed activities, the natures of applying organisations, the impacts of the proposed activity and finally, assessed the budget proposals. A total of nine applications successfully passed the initial pre-assessment. Three applications from Belgium, one from Romania, two from Scotland and three from Spain.





## 2.7 The jury

An external jury of experts was created and tasked with providing their input on the nine pre-selected pilot interventions. Creating this external group was foreseen to ensure objectivity throughout the selection process. It consisted of the following members:

- > **Tobias Wrzesinski** - Director of the DFB foundation “Egidius-Braun-Stiftung” (Frankfurt, Germany);
- > **Yves Pascouau** - Researcher, lawyer, and migration expert at Alliance Europa (Nantes, France);
- > **Stefan Schirmer** - Founder of the (multiple) award-winning grassroots club “Ente Bagdad” (Mainz, Germany);
- > **Borja Garcia Garcia** - Football researcher and senior lecturer at the Loughborough University (United Kingdom);
- > **Layne Vandenberg** - PhD candidate, and Football and Social Responsibility Intern at UEFA (Nyon, Switzerland);
- > **Albrecht Sonntag** - Professor at ESCCA School of Management (Angers, France).

Each member of the jury assessed 3 pre-selected pilot interventions by looking at the following aspects of each application:

### Positive

*(Describe what are according to you the positive aspects of the application)*

### Negative

*(Describe what you believe are weaknesses of the activity and application)*

### Impact

*(Please mark the expected impact 1 being the lowest, 10 being the highest)*

### Link with FIRE

*(Is there, according to you, a strong link between the activity and the FIRE topic and goals)*

### Overall grade

*Please mark the overall quality of the application 1 being the lowest, 10 being the highest)*

### General comments

*(Please add any comments or remarks you may have)*

\*The jury members were approached, selected, and confirmed by *Sport and Citizenship* think tank.

# Pilot interventions

## 03 CHAPTER

As mentioned above, the aim of the FIRE consortium was to select four pilot interventions in four respective countries. Selected pilot interventions were informed of their successful candidacy and were provided with further information and guidelines regarding conditions and requirements. The selected pilot interventions were submitted by the following:

- > ARCA - Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants (Romania)
- > Glasgow Afghan United (Scotland)
- > Voetbalclub Inter Hasselt (Belgium)
- > CDE Dragones de Lavapiés (Spain)

### 3.1 ARCA - Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants (Romania)

The pilot intervention in Romania was implemented by ARCA, the Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants, and benefited from the support of the Romanian Football Federation.

ARCA is a Romanian NGO/ not-for-profit organisation that promotes the rights of refugees and migrants in Romania, and to further support their integration into Romanian society.

Their objective of the pilot intervention was to to increase the representation of minorities and/ or women in football, particularly refugees, asylum seekers and migrants from outside the EU in vulnerable situations, and to explore and discuss the possibilities of football as a tool for social change, empowerment, education or social inclusion.

## Event description- Including All Championship

ARCA organised an “Including All Championship” football tournament on 24 October 2019 in Bucharest. The football tournament took the form of a one-day grassroots event with a total participation of five teams including one team of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants, and four teams from companies that are openly willing to employ foreigners. The Romanian Football Federation and Decathlon Romania both partnered in the event. The football tournament was combined with talks on supporting diversity and inclusion of migrants and refugees. The day came to an end with a small award ceremony that saw all players receive gifts. The Romanian Football Federation organized with the help of a football coach a team building session at the start of the day. The team building session included all participants, both locals and refugees, in order to facilitate inclusion and to strengthen human bonds.

The day was attended by a total of 45 participants, including 7 refugees—a much lower figure than originally foreseen in the pilot application. Nonetheless, judging by the testimonies and reactions of participants, the event was considered to be a resounding success—players continued to play football for more than an hour after the official end of the program, in makeshift formed teams. Initially, ARCA had also planned to organise a parallel one-day conference, but unfortunately this objective proved to be too ambitious to meet, notably since ARCA successfully navigated the steep learning curve of organising a football event for the very first time.

The backbone of ARCA’s pilot intervention proved to be their ability to work with a variety of relevant communities—refugees, migrants, and local communities.

**Website** - <http://www.arca.org.ro/>

**Country** - Romania

**Type of organisation** - NGO/Not-for-profit organisation

**Focus of the organisation** - Refugee inclusion

**Title of the event** - Including All Championship



### 3.2 Glasgow Afghan United (Scotland)

Glasgow Afghan United was established in 2004 and operates in partnership with local grassroots communities and relevant stakeholders. It is an Afghan community-led organisation seeking to improve the lives of Afghans and a wide range of ethnic minority communities living in Glasgow by promoting sport, health & well-being, social integration, and active citizenship.

Through their pilot intervention event, Glasgow Afghan United aimed to promote inclusion and offer a sense of belonging to the new Scots. Activities were foreseen to benefit everyone, including those benefiting from the organisation's services and who come from around 20 different nationalities (amongst others from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India or Libya).

- > The pilot intervention sought for participants to report on improved communication through involvement with local communities, on increased self-esteem, confidence and psychological and physical well-being, and finally on enhanced active roles in community life and more work experience (more volunteering, taking part into community consultations).



#### Event description- Refugee Inclusion in Football in Europe

Glasgow Afghan United organised a one-day 7-a-side football tournament under the name of Refugee Inclusion in Football in Europe, on Sunday 17 November 2019 in Glasgow (taking part slightly outside the FootballPeople weeks' granted timeframe, but nonetheless officially part of the campaign).

There were 14 football teams representing a diverse multicultural community of Scotland where people came together to say no to racism and promote the inclusion of refugees in and through football.. Glasgow Afghan United encourages refugees and local communities to use football as a means of promoting diversity and promoting the richness that people from many backgrounds bring to Scotland and Europe. The event provided an opportunity for all to play football regardless of race, religion, nationality, age, sexual orientation, or any other factors.

A total number of 150 participants including 70 refugees attended the event. The total number was lower than the 200 initially indicated in the application.

The strength of the organisation, as confirmed by the event, is the successful track record in managing football events inclusive of refugees.

**Website** - [www.glasgowafghanunited.co.uk](http://www.glasgowafghanunited.co.uk)

**Country** - Scotland

**Type of organisation** - Community group

**Focus of the organisation** - Refugee inclusion

**Title of the event** - Refugee Inclusion in Football in Europe



### 3.3 Voetbalclub Inter Hasselt (Belgium)

**Voetbalclub Inter Hasselt is an amateur grassroots organisation, which does not solely focus on organising matches and tournaments. Their aim is to play a role in the community through organising socio-cultural activities.**

**The Hasselt based grassroots football club aims to achieve the following outcomes as part of their activities:**

- > Improve social cooperation between different nationalities;
- > Help players with a refugee background to learn the basic of Belgian football;
- > Support players with a refugee background to learn Dutch football vocabulary.

#### Event description- Inter Meet Up Cup

Voetbalclub Inter Hasselt organised their event on 12 October 2019 in Maasmechelen, Belgium, which was a one-day football tournament. A total of eight teams signed up for the tournament, unfortunately only four showed up. The participants of the four teams came from four different asylum-centres for refugees. The day evolved around matches and social activities. This being said, Voetbalclub Inter Hasselt experienced difficulties in organising the proposed activities- including a reduced number of participating teams, and not being able to deliver the planned workshop on job opportunities in sports. However, a total number of 60 participants including 50 refugees attended the one-day event. The total number was lower than the 100 indicated in the application.

The strength of the organisation was their close cooperation with asylum-seeker centres to involve a high percentage of refugee participants in the football activities. Despite several unlucky setbacks, they still managed to organise a tournament.



**Country - Belgium**

**Type of organisation - Amateur or grassroots team/club**

**Focus of the organisation - Playing/offering/governing football**

**Title of the event - Inter Meet Up Cup**

### 3.4 CDE Dragones de Lavapiés (Spain)

Dragones de Lavapiés is a neighbourhood initiative, set up by a group of parents in 2014. It was founded to provide the community with its own 7-a-side football club. The mission of Dragones de Lavapiés is to weave, through sport and competition, bonds of solidarity, respect and community, promoting dialogue between people of very different cultures, from all corners of the world.

The Madrid-based community club grew into a well-established grassroots organisation that presently does much more than 7-a-side football matches. In their work, and specifically in the pilot intervention, Dragones de Lavapiés strive to achieve the following outcomes:

- > To empower participants and foster volunteering opportunities;
- > To create unexpected links between culture and football to provide new learning opportunities;
- > And to maximize impact through social media and press.



#### Event description- The MNA Festival

Dragones de Lavapiés organised their activities on 21 September and on 26 October 2019- the first activity took place outside the initially indicated time frame of the Fare FootballPeople weeks and the FIRE pilot intervention framework but was nonetheless part of the initiative. The main event took place during the former date and was called 'The MNA Festival (National Museum of Anthropology Football Festival)'.

Dragones de Lavapiés organised three activities, making them the only grassroots organisation to not solely organise a one-day football tournament. In addition to the latter, Dragones de Lavapiés organised several cultural workshops and an Urban Music Festival.

First of all, the three workshops took place at the National Museum of Anthropology in which 25 kids developed the rules of coexistence and play, and designed banners. The aim of the workshops was for the participants to discover different values applicable to team play and the value of cultural diversity. Then, the football tournament took place, before closing with the music festival.

In total 825 people attended the events of which 250 were refugees- number which, although impressive, are not able to specify if the total number includes the same participants in the different activities. The football tournament saw 500 participants, the workshops 25, and the Urban Music Festival 300.

The strength of the organisation lies with their strong position in the local community, reaching a high number of participants, as well as attracting media attention.

**Website** - <http://www.dragonesdelavapiés.com>

**Country** - Spain

**Type of organisation** - Amateur or grassroots team/club

**Focus of the organisation** - Human Rights

**Title of the event** - The MNA Festival  
(National Museum of Anthropology Football Tournament)

# Outcomes

# 04

## CHAPTER

### The FIRE project's pilot interventions set out several goals.

As mentioned previously, the aim was for grassroots organisations to implement football activities to include refugees. They were also the opportunity to establish cooperation between national football governing authorities and grassroots organisations. Finally, the pilot interventions were foreseen to aid the FIRE project keep close contact with and understanding of grassroots initiatives answering a European-wide challenge that of boost local social inclusion of refugees, migrants, and asylum-seekers. The insight gained thanks to the monitoring and evaluation of the interventions feed into FIRE's knowledge, which consequently contributes to shaping the content of the FIRE MOOC. This experience will help provide other grassroots organisations with guidelines, tools and tips to implement their own activities.

### Types of organisations

A first striking point was the diversity of organisation profiles, that successfully delivered their respective pilot intervention. In Belgium, Voetbalclub Inter Hasselt is a grassroots amateur football club in the traditional sense that is already active with refugee and migrant populations. In Scotland, the grassroots football club was actually created by the Afghan community itself. Dragones de Lavapiés is no standard football club it can be classified as a community organisation offering sport and football activities as part of their overall work. Their DNA was clearly reflected in the diversity of activities they offered during their pilot intervention, including cultural ones in addition to football ones. ARCA is a NGO dedicated to upholding and representing the rights of migrants and refugees, and who initiated themselves in the organisation of football activities in order to contribute to their own goals.





## Types of activities

All four organisations organised a football tournament with a focus on playing activities. Dragones de Lavapiés set themselves apart by also organising cultural activities. All four organisations successfully managed to include the target group (refugees and migrants) in their activities, which was essential as the main criteria of the pilot interventions. The number of refugees differed significantly among the groups though. ARCA's pilot (Romania) included the participation of seven refugees (15% of the total number of participants), while Voetbalclub Inter Hasselt (Belgium) saw 50 of their 60 participants from the target group (83% of the total number of participants). Glasgow Afghan United (Scotland) reported the participation of 70 refugees out of 150 participants (47%). Dragones de Lavapiés (Spain) reported the highest number of participants with a refugee background with a total of 250 out of the 825 participants (30%). The highest proportion of target group presence was however, with Voetbalclub Inter Hasselt.

### All pilot interventions

- > Total number of participants = 1080
- > Total number of refugee participants = 377

### ARCA

- > Total number of participants = 45
- > Total number of refugee participants = 7

### Voetbalclub Inter Hasselt

- > Total number of participants = 60
- > Total number of refugee participants = 50

### Glasgow Afghan United

- > Total number of participants = 150
- > Total number of refugee participants = 70

### Dragones de Lavapiés

- > Total number of participants = 825
- > Total number of refugee participants = 250

## Overview

The four pilot interventions organised a total number of **7** activities



Over a total of **36.5 hours**

during which

**1080**

individuals participated



**34%**

377 participants were part of the refugee, migrant and asylum-seeker communities



## Feedback

The four grassroots organisations and the four football governing bodies involved in supporting the implementation provided feedback on the experience and on the pilot intervention. A survey was included in the reporting form looking at, among others, communication, positive aspects and challenges met. Each stakeholder completed a narrative report, from which the following elements have been drawn.

### 4.1 Pilot Intervention Feedback

The FIRE consortium received a narrative report from each pilot intervention, including testimonials and feedback from participants. Participant feedback was overall positive: they praised the organisation of the events, enjoyed the opportunity provided to participate and were generally pleased with the programme.

The organisers were also asked how satisfied they were with the support, communication, and visibility they received from the FIRE consortium, in addition to their overall feeling towards the experience.

All organisers shared an overall satisfaction with the communication and support from the FIRE consortium.

Two groups rated the support received from FIRE as excellent (5 out of 5) and the other two rated it at 4 out of 5. Most groups were also satisfied with the communication with the FIRE consortium.

The grassroots organisations also provided valuable feedback and recommendations, mainly revolving around communication and financial support.

While communication between the organisers and FIRE was rated positively, the former conceded communication could be improved by the narrowing down the number of channels and points of contact.

Another essential point was that of funding, with one organiser requesting to receive funding prior to the event- and avoid advancing the costs themselves. Another organiser significantly underspent, and finally, the other two organisers shared no such request. Despite the latter, flexible funding rules and pre-funding prove to be essential when collaborating with small grassroots organisations- provided they respect certain guarantees.

Almost all organisers proved to be very active in communicating about the event, be it through social media and in some cases even through traditional media- Dragones de Lavapiés for example managed to receive media attention from a radio station. While the majority were positive about the visibility of the project, it is noteworthy that heavy communication requirements are met with difficulty from small grassroots organisations.

## 4.2 Partner Feedback

Looking within the FIRE consortium now, the four most active partners also provided their own perspective and feedback on their role, the implementation phase, the cooperation with the grassroots organisation and with the consortium.

The four partners in question (LaLiga, RBFA, RFF and SFA) actively disseminated the call, supported the grassroots organisations before, during and after the event, and boosted the FIRE project's visibility. The partners' main role remained to support the organisers with the implementation of their event, however the form of support was not specified and open to deliberate interpretation so as to allow the four football governing bodies with the most flexibility possible in their approach. The downside of flexibility is that the grassroots organisations were not always clear on what they should expect.



> **In Scotland**, the Scottish Football Association (SFA) only had to offer light support to Glasgow Afghan United since they bear extensive experience in organising football events and tournaments, such as the annual Refugee Festival Football Tournament. The SFA donated a value of 400 GBP. As the SFA put it, to see a first generation 'new Scot' from Afghanistan deliver this pilot intervention to promote the inclusion of refugees in Scotland is in itself one the most positive aspects of the event. The main recommendation the SFA shared was to play an active role in the selection procedure of the FIRE pilot interventions.

> **In Belgium**, the Royal Belgian Football Association (RBFA) supported the pilot intervention by increasing its visibility and by scheduling several meetings with the organiser. Some difficulties were met during this collaboration since the organising grassroots organisation faced internal challenges and did not designate a lead coordinator responsible for the pilot intervention. The lack of a (small) project team led to delays and communication difficulties. It is therefore advised that grassroots organisations set up a small project team involving several members of the club and divide tasks among them in order to guarantee a more effective and successful event organisation.

The RBFA nonetheless attended the event and held an evaluation meeting, where it notably assisted the organiser with the reporting procedures. The RBFA felt the main challenge of the entire exercise was to proactively support without taking over the pilot intervention's lead- which would not help empower the grassroots organisation.. Following the experience, the RBFA hence recommends playing a more active role in the section procedure of pilot interventions and to co-organise the event with the grassroots organisation.



- > **In Spain**, Fundación LaLiga had already worked before with Dragones de Lavapiés over different events and reported that communication and cooperation with the organisers as positive. LaLiga played an active role in supporting the grassroots organisation to implement (extra) activities in order to meet the target and requirements of the FIRE project. During the event, they were able to actively share both their work and learning experiences with participants and their families. Fundación LaLiga praised the communication capacity of this entity, which with limited resources was able to position their events and interventions in general news outlets, thus achieving highly important media focus. LaLiga's main recommendation for improvement is to have a more direct role in the design of the call and in the choice of the successful and selected projects.

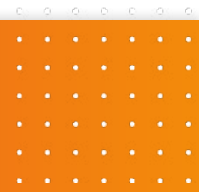
- > **In Romania**, the Romanian Football Federation (RFF) played an active role in disseminating the call for projects. For the pilot intervention itself, the RFF was the main operational partner of ARCA and provided them with crucial support to organise and implement the pilot intervention, notably by facilitating access to the football field in the sports complex. The Romanian Football Federation also provided the event with in-kind donations such as badges as honorary awards for participants.

A particularly positive outcome of this pilot intervention is a continued cooperation between ARCA and the Romanian Football Federation. Both organisations successfully submitted a joint bid to UEFA receiving 50.000 euro for organizing football programs for the integration of refugees and asylum-seekers across 6 regional centres in Romania (to be implemented from 01.04.2020 – 31.03.2021). Both organisations have also working on a project proposal for the European Commission. The project will allow ARCA and the Romanian Football Federation to develop a positive and sustainable environment to sustain the integration of refugees and asylum-seekers through football in Romania.

**FIRE partners' feedback following the pilot intervention experience may be summarised in two main points:**

- > **To involve in the selection procedure of received proposals the partners that will be supporting the latter in the organisation and implementation of events;**
- > **To define more specifically the role of the said partners.**

Fare network was responsible for pre-selecting the received pilot interventions, which was consequently followed by the external jury's final assessment and selection. Following the FIRE project's experience with pilot interventions, it is recommended to involve the entities, that will be acting as mediators and as support givers (in this case LaLiga, RBFA, RFF, SFA), in the selection procedure for two reasons. First, by disseminating the call for projects among their networks, these entities therefore bear greater insight and knowledge about the applicants. Second, as these entities will be the ones to directly collaborate with the selected pilot interventions, their understanding of the application and assessment procedures will bring added value to the cooperation. Together with a clearer definition of the role of these entities, these recommendations should lead to smoother organisation, implementation, and collaboration of the projects, while allowing for less confusion.



### 4.3 Participant Testimonials



“Football is one of my favourite things. I love to play and even if I don’t have a lot of experience in playing, I felt very comfortable with my team; I might say it felt like a real team in a real football game. For me was a great experience, when we will do it again?”  
– Participant, Including All Championship (Romania)



“Nice to have an activity outside the centre and to meet new people that are in the same situation. Thanks to the tournament I found a grassroots club where I can continue to play football.”  
– Participant, Inter Meet up Cup (Belgium)



“It’s great for us to participate in events in which, in addition to the strictly sporting aspects, the promotion of values also plays a leading role, as it’s a perfect mix to encourage the development and training of young people”  
– Participant, The MNA Festival (Spain)



“Football got us all united. I enjoyed playing and meeting with different players from different places and countries. I loved to see such great team-work in such a great environment.”  
– Participant, Including All Championship (Romania)



“The football championship was a success and a great thing to do on a Thursday. Everything went perfect, the players really enjoyed the games, the participants had a lot of fun. From my point of view, the event was a delight for everybody, and I would love to do it again.”  
– Organiser, Including All Championship (Romania)



“Good and professional preparation and nice place to play football. It was good to see there were also refugees that helped as a referee during the tournament.”  
– Asylum-centre representative, Inter Meet up Cup (Belgium)



# Challenges and Lessons Learned

# 05

## CHAPTER

The FIRE project's pilot interventions were successfully carried out. All events and activities included the presence of the target group. They also directly involved the direct participation of over 1,000 individuals. The FIRE consortium and the grassroots organisations monitored and evaluated the workflow. This chapter includes the successes, the challenges faced and advice for improvements as concluded from the reporting received from all involved stakeholders.

### 5.1 Implementation

All groups managed to organise a one-day grassroots football tournament and playing activities including refugee participants as initially required. However, the preparation stages, the timeframe, the budget and in some cases the program had to be adjusted.

In all groups, we found discrepancies between the application and the delivered pilot intervention. Expecting these discrepancies is something that should be considered when assessing applications and adjusting or tempering expectations. In 3 of the 4 cases we for example noticed that the indicated number of direct participants in the application was higher than the actual participants in grassroots pilot interventions. Only Dragones de Lavapiés reached more direct participants than originally foreseen, but this could be due to the fact that they organised multiple activities over several days. In two cases, organisations did not manage to organise all proposed activities- ARCA aimed to organise a conference as outlined in their proposal, while Voetbalclub Inter Hasselt aimed to organise additional workshops. One of the elements to take into consideration is that grassroots football clubs are likely to have limited capacity over the summer period (June and July), consequently affecting planning activities and/ or work on submitting applications.

Working with volunteer operated grassroots organisations means the time frame in which activities are to take place must be clearly defined. A structured cooperation between the consortium and the grassroots organisations, between the closing of the call and the actual organisation of the event, is essential to make sure realistic time frames are set out and respected.

Another challenge that surfaced was the different working methods of the professional stakeholders (in this case the four national football governing bodies) and the grassroots organisations. There is a difference between full time and part time working hours for example. In one case the time frame was altered significantly, with Glasgow Afghan United delivering their activity in November. As previously mentioned, the FIRE project decided to integrate the pilot interventions into the Fare FootballPeople weeks, which explains the strict time window in which the pilot interventions were initially scheduled to unfold.

Furthermore, when working with grassroots organisations it is essential to take into consideration their varying financial capacities. Volunteer driven grassroots amateur clubs are not always in the position to have funds immediately available to deliver the event. One possible solution could be to provide the possibility of advance funding, depending on the co-financing rules and regulations, and provided they respect a certain number of guarantees. Another option could be to enforce stricter rules on other sources of funding available to grassroots organisations. Fare advises that a maximum of 80% of the total event costs should be funded, and that the remaining 20% are met by the organisers or other third-party funders.

## 5.2 External partners

A positive result of the pilot interventions was the involvement of external partners in contributing to the organisation through either co-organising, attending, or sponsoring the activities. All four grassroots organisations managed to work with external partners during the implementation phase. Of equal interest was the broad range of external partners, ranging from commercial partners in the case of ARCA (Decathlon), to political support in the case of Glasgow Afghan United (Scottish Parliament and local city council), to support from the cultural sector in the case of Dragones de Lavapiés (Museum of Anthropology) and last but not least the support of regional asylum-seeker centres in the case of Voetbalclub Inter Hasselt. This wide range of support is a positive sign that mirrors the broad interest, from a variety of stakeholders, in contributing to the local social inclusion of refugees, migrants, and asylum-seekers. Furthermore, these collaborations reflect tangible cross-sector cooperation.



## 5.3 Communication stakeholders

The implementation of the FIRE project's pilot interventions saw the involvement of seven project partners and four external grassroots organisations, each partner assuming a different role. It would not come as a surprise that clear communication between all stakeholders is of crucial importance.

The internal communication between the FIRE project was streamlined by setting out a clear division of tasks, however upon evaluation we noticed some improvements could be made. For internal communication (FIRE consortium) the main lesson learned is to involve the partners responsible for direct support of the grassroots organisations more in the selection process.

For external communication (between the consortium and the pilot intervention organisers) the realities proved to be more challenging. We hence advise to limit the number of partners communicating with the grassroots organisations- too many different points of contact lead to confusion. On the other hand, we also advise more strict communication requirements with the grassroots organisations, both with their FIRE contacts and externally about their event(s). Basic or passive communication will lead to unnecessary difficulties, certainly when it concerns adjusting the elements of the selected project proposal.

## 5.4 Visibility

Organising pilot interventions as part of a new project (FIRE) is challenging at the best of times. Disseminating an open call for proposals under a yet to be recognised branding leaves room to general disinterest. FIRE managed to tackle this challenge by linking the pilot interventions to the well-known FootballPeople weeks, and by further leaning on project partners' networks. This being said, a certain amount of confusion remained.

As concerns the pilot interventions themselves, one of the requirements for the selected proposals was to create visibility and include high quality photos and videos of the event in the reporting phase while considering how to ensure the privacy of involved participants. We therefore advise against taking or using pictures of minors without the written consent of their guardians or parents, and further advise to share and have guidance in place to safeguard children participating in the project.

## 5.5 Reporting

Whether a funding or participating entity the importance of monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the produced work cannot be overstated. It enables to assess the relevance and effectiveness of followed methodologies and implemented activities- the FIRE consortium focused on the number of refugee participants in the pilot interventions and the latter's link to the core topics of the FIRE project. Reporting further strengthens monitoring and evaluation, while also providing details and a clear structure to ensure established rules have been respected and requirement been met.

For monitoring and evaluation purposes a more detailed insight about the participants could be useful, for example distinction between male and female participants, existing and new members of the club, and maybe even a distinction between refugees and other migrant groups. To do so it would however be necessary to not increase the workload and reporting requirements for grassroots organisations, which are mostly voluntarily operated.

Another idea could also be to add more concrete targets such as requiring a certain percentage of participants to have a refugee background, or a certain number or percentage of participants to be new to the organisation or the project.

The FIRE consortium refrained from setting such concrete targets in order to avoid creating too many barriers and deterrents for grassroots organisations to successfully apply and implement their activity. However, adding these criteria could be an incentive for organisations to put perhaps more effort into reaching out to new participants and communities.

In the pilot interventions we witnessed a broad range of different types of grassroots organisations as well as different angles of focus on refugees and migrants in general. The diversity of the organisers of the pilot interventions is seen as a strength and a positive result within the FIRE project. It shows a broad interest from civil society organisations in the matter and further illustrates the broad willingness of different organisations to actively contribute to the inclusion of refugees through football.

For reporting and monitoring purposes it is important to clearly define the target group as well as to be clear on the use of employed terminology, such as refugee, migrant and/or asylum-seekers. The different reference or use of terminology can and will lead to confusion.

Working with grassroots organisations may pose some challenges that should be addressed. First, it is important to find a good balance between accountability and reporting. The FIRE consortium aimed to keep the reporting format as accessible as possible in the form of a financial report and a narrative report including photos and stats. The consortium was able to offer support to the groups, yet some financial issues were faced and issues of communication between all stakeholders involved.

Another aspect to consider with the reporting is the possible language barrier. In most countries English is not the first language of use, thus creating difficulties for grassroots representatives to following the given guidelines and complete the report. Here, the local partners could play a role in offering an assistance service in translating guidelines or reporting forms. We advise that application forms and reporting forms are still completed in English when operating in a European project.



# Recommendations

## 06 CHAPTER

Based on the experience and lessons learned from the FIRE pilot interventions, here are seven recommendations for entities or groups seeking to enable, fund or foster grassroots events:

- > **Aim** to organise follow-up events or regular playing activities for applying grassroots organisations. In case of more consequent available funding, it would be more feasible for grassroots organisations to organise a series of smaller events than a larger one-day grassroots event.
- > **Keep** reporting mechanisms easily accessible to and understandable by grassroots organisations.
- > **Establish** a clear line of communication with grassroots organisations.
- > **Offer** grassroots organisations clear support for reporting, monitoring, and evaluation activities.
- > **Provide** the opportunity to partially transfer the awarded funds in advance to grassroots organisations, in order to guarantee delivery.
- > **Allow** (preferably) three months to grassroots organisations between their successful selection (possible partial transfer of funds) and implementation of the activities.
- > **Open** the call to larger organisations, such as national Football Associations, professional clubs and/ or NGOs, under the condition they partner up with at least one grassroots club.

# Conclusion

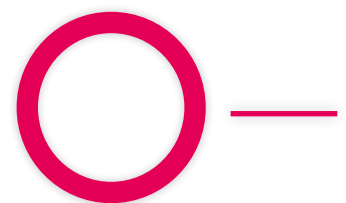
# 07

## CHAPTER

Throughout the process of the pilot interventions it became clear that, in 2019, the need to multiply social inclusion activities for refugees, migrants, and asylum-seekers across Europe, remains. This is evidenced by the fact that Fare received applications to organise activities on this particular topic from 30 different countries across the European continent. It also shows a high demand for support by non-profit organisations and grassroots organisations prevails.

Supporting and organising one-day grassroots events is a great way to bring members of the local community together with members of the newcomer communities. One-day events are a fabulous start, it is however important that grassroots organisations follow up on the latter and continue to reach out and actively include the local refugee community in their regular year-round activities. It is also evident that national football governing bodies can play a structured role in cooperating with grassroots organisations.

In order to optimise the impact of organising activities it is important to focus on clear support, guidelines, and instructions for grassroots organisations, based on their expertise and including the needs of both the grassroots organisations as well as the needs of the refugee and/or migrant community. It is of crucial importance to allow enough time for grassroots organisations to implement their activities. Especially so since voluntarily run grassroots organisations often maintain a different workflow compared to professional organisations.





# FIRE

FOOTBALL INCLUDING  
REFUGEES IN EUROPE

[www.footballwithrefugees.eu/](http://www.footballwithrefugees.eu/)

#foot4all

Photo by  
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