

INSPIRE TOOLKIT TO WORKING WITH REFUGEE WOMEN THROUGH FOOTBALL



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network
fare



INSPIRE
Integration through Sport
and Inclusion for Refugees in Europe



INSPIRE TOOLKIT TO WORKING WITH REFUGEE WOMEN THROUGH FOOTBALL

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1. INTRODUCTION

Football has always been a migrants' sport. It has been spread across the globe by migrants, today's elite football is an industry of professional migrants. At grassroots level, the sport has always been an important space for community organising and a meeting place for migrants. However, the sport has also had a long history of racism, sexism and homophobia - something that becomes even more evident in times when migration dominates media reports and public policies.

As the global situation of refugee movement is constantly evolving and, legal frameworks are considerably different in each country, this is very much a work-in-progress. Nevertheless, and especially in this context, it is important to share experiences and help each other.

By focusing on what people have in common, rather than their differences, football can be a powerful vehicle to contribute to the inclusion of refugees¹ in their new countries. The potential of sport as a tool for social inclusion and integration has been widely acknowledged.

However, often sports clubs, NGOs, associations and other sport providers find it difficult to offer sport programmes that take into account the specific needs of refugees, females in particular, and the barriers that exist preventing them from participating.

This toolkit addresses these barriers and offers recommendations, documenting how working with refugees - especially women - through football can be a win-win situation for both the host communities and people looking to settle in new countries. It provides guidance, best practice examples and recommendations to sports clubs and anyone interested in creating inclusive sessions or adapting existing ones to welcome more refugees.

The toolkit takes into account and addresses the mixed abilities, competences, experiences and expectations of refugees arriving in the EU and seeks to show clearly how sport organisations and refugees can benefit from each other.

THE MAKING OF THE TOOLKIT

FARE developed and initiated the "INSPIRE project – Integration through Sport and Inclusion for Refugees in Europe" to identify refugees' needs and barriers to participation in local sport activities. Fare and its project partners Les Dégommeuses and Fundacja dla Wolności carried out consultations and, with two questionnaires that targeted sports providers and refugees, we collected information about barriers to sport for refugees in Europe. The toolkit was developed based on this information and numerous conversations with those who arrived in Europe over a year-long period of work.

1. In this document the term "refugee" is used to refer to people who have obtained a refugee status in their host country and also to asylum seekers and undocumented migrants as a collective group.

The methodology proposed in the toolkit has been tested and implemented by INSPIRE partners, Les Dégommeuses in France, who mainly work with lesbian and trans asylum seekers and refugees, and Fundacja dla Wolności in Poland, who both offered sports sessions for refugees over a five-month period and contributed their experiences to the document's development. INSPIRE has been funded by the European Commission.

FARE NETWORK is an umbrella organisation that unites individuals, groups and organisations driven to combat discrimination in football and use the sport as a means for social change.

Fare combats all forms of discrimination, including racism, far-right nationalism, sexism, trans- and homophobia and discrimination against disabled people. The strength of the network lies in the diversity of its members, including fan groups, NGOs and amateur clubs and grassroots groups, among others, who contribute with their expertise and act in a concerted effort to make discrimination in football a thing of the past.

DISCOVER FOOTBALL (DF) is a network that uses football as a tool to advocate for a world in which girls and women can do sports without being discriminated against for any reason. They use sport as a tool to empower women and promote intercultural understanding, organising international exchanges, conferences and tournaments where women and girls build skills and share knowledge that will help them gain autonomy, mobility and power.

DISCOVER FOOTBALL brought together women football players who are working with refugees from different countries around the world to the HOME GAME festival. They explored how involvement in sports and football can help to overcome difficult experiences for refugees in host societies like isolation and lack of aspiration, and provide a homely environment for all. During matches, training, workshops and panels the participants shared ideas and experiences and jointly worked on strategies for how to use football for the promotion of women refugee rights.

LES DÉGOMMEUSES is both a football team and an association that campaigns against discrimination in sport and through sport. Its actions target sexism and homophobia in particular. One of the core activities of Les Dégommeuses is a program aimed at encouraging refugee participation in sport. Initiated in 2015 by a grant from Fondation de France, it allows, among other things, to buy sports equipment and meet the costs of public transportation for refugees and other members of the team who do not have adequate resources.

FUNDACJA DLA WOLNOŚCI

Fundacja dla Wolności is a non-profit organisation based in Warsaw that aims to promote cross-cultural values and empower migrants, refugees in particular. It uses football to seek a common language for different groups. Since 2010 Fundacja dla Wolności has run Etnoliga – the biggest grassroots cross-cultural amateur football league in Eastern Europe for hundreds of people from 100 countries. The methodology is based on the deep penetration of the communities, culture- and gender-mixed conditions of games, and combining sports with cultural and other activities. The project was shortlisted for the Beyond Sport Global Awards (2017).

The foundation has vast experience in using sport for the wellbeing and integration of refugees. Besides including them in Etnoliga, the organisation has delivered football workouts to children for many years, as an element of wider education programmes in one of the local centres for asylum seekers. Occasionally, they deliver sessions of other sports to refugees of all ages.

CHAMPIONS OHNE GRENZEN (CHOG) was founded as a place for refugees and Berliners to play organised sports, exchange ideas and share resources in order to create discrimination-free environments to play and live. Core work areas are CHoG's football teams that cater to the need for non-bureaucratic sport activities for refugees, as well as their "Nachspielzeit", the time after practice for mediation and counseling, but also team building activities, city trips and joint visit to job fairs. Since 2013, two women-only training sessions have been running every week, one focusing exclusively on football, the other introducing participants to a variety of different sporting activities, with elements of football included. CHoG aims to contribute to the wider sector by trialling new and innovative approaches, as well as collaborating to develop tools for already-existing approaches that can be used by everyone in the field of sports and beyond.

2. WHY WORK WITH REFUGEES?

The Fare network and DISCOVER FOOTBALL, with input from CHAMPIONS ohne GRENZEN e.V. (CHoG), Les Dégommeuses and Fundacja dla Wolności, developed a number of key ideas that have emerged from the INSPIRE project and the Festival that will be shared in this toolkit.

Many refugees live lives separated from their host communities, with a lack of shared experiences and little scope for active involvement in the society of their new countries. Many are not permitted to work; they do not have contacts within the host community other than through NGOs or social workers and have no social network of friends that they can rely on. Daily life often revolves around dealing with bureaucracy, waiting and passing time. Problems commonly faced by refugees such as mental health issues, post-traumatic stress and poor physical wellbeing can further contribute to feeling isolated and disconnected from one's host community.

Sport has been found to significantly improve these aspects of one's life. Sport can be a social tool that provides an opportunity for people of different ethnic and social backgrounds to mix, given its low threshold, uniform character and internationally standardised rules.

Sport can cushion the negative impact that a forced sedentary life with no freedom of movement inside the host country can have on health, and help tackle excess weight gain that is seen as one consequence a lack of money can have on diet.

There is also a link between social wellbeing and playing sport. Apart from the well-known physical health benefits, the distraction sport provides from everyday worries is beneficial to refugees suffering from mental health problems.

Meeting peers and locals to play sport together helps create new social networks that refugees need to live an active and positive life in their new home countries. Regular sport sessions help refugees structure their new lives that can otherwise often be very monotonous. The benefits provided by sport can act as a solution to exclusion, isolation, and poor mental, physical and social wellbeing of refugees and pose an essential pathway for successful long-term integration of refugees into host countries.



3. WHAT DO REFUGEES NEED?



BEST PRACTICE:

THE PROCESSES OF HOW ONE CAN JOIN A FOOTBALL CLUB DIFFER FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY. THE ENROLLING PROCESS MIGHT SEEM CONFUSING AND INFORMATION DIFFICULT TO FIND. CHAMPIONS OHNE GRENZEN HAVE PUBLISHED AN EDUCATIONAL VIDEO ON HOW TO JOIN A TEAM IN GERMANY. THE ANIMATION IS SIMPLE TO UNDERSTAND AND AVAILABLE IN GERMAN, ENGLISH, FARSI AND ARABIC.
[HTTPS://ITINYURL.COM/HOWTO JOINAFOTBALLTEAM](https://itinyurl.com/howtojoinafotballteam)

Social interaction and bonds: Refugees live isolated lives, isolated from their host communities and often separated from family and friends. Social interaction is often limited to support workers, local authorities and other refugees. A team sport like football is ideal to overcome this situation. Not only do participants get to know other people, it's also an incentive to interact with others and take pleasure in the game together. The social bonds formed during play often last beyond the games themselves; friendships develop, networks develop, team mates help running errands or dealing with bureaucracy, and refugees can better understand the customs of the host community.

Safety and stability: The importance of routine and familiarity in the lives of refugees must not be underestimated. Repetitive activities can help offset the vulnerable nature and chaotic lives of refugees. Weekly sessions of football have the ability to become a constant in the lives of refugee participants, providing comfort, a feeling of continuity and a sense of permanence. Those are vital factors in helping to develop relationships and aid wider integration.

Distraction: The fact that refugees are obliged to spend a lot of time in one place, often in centres far away from the amenities of a town or city, links in with the escapism associated with playing sport. Boredom and lack of opportunities for work, study and play in refugees' day-to-day lives have been recurring themes in consultations. Football sessions provide an outlet and activity to focus on for refugees, who despite having inevitably chaotic lives, often have a lot of free time.

Solidarity and Empowerment: Everyone needs to feel a sense of belonging and being part of a team can provide these emotions. To become part of a team, and the positive social interaction this can invoke, helps to remove the negative feeling associated with being labelled a refugee - in particular if the team is mixed between refugees and host community players.

Mental and physical wellbeing: Often the bodies and minds of refugees have gone through a traumatic experience. Re-investing in their own bodies in a positive way can contribute to their own healing process and change society's perceptions of them as refugees.

Accessibility: Half of the refugees consulted stated that they have not participated in a sports activity since settling in their host country. One of the main reasons behind the lack of participation in sport for refugees is that they do not have enough information about activities taking place within their local area, and how to access them. Sport-providing organisations interested in working with refugees, on the other hand, might struggle to approach and recruit refugee players for their sessions.

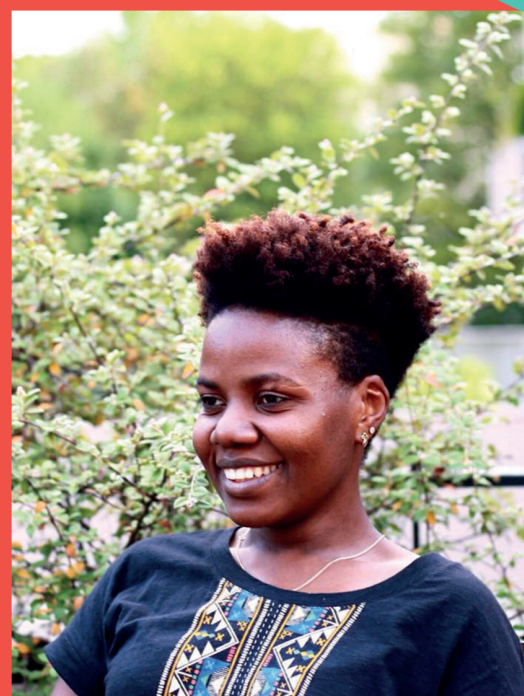
Language skills and cultural knowledge: Being able to communicate and understand the local culture helps finding a place and being active in society. Sport sessions on their own can help refugees learn basic elements of language in the host country. Combined with language courses, the importance of taking part in sport becomes even more valuable to an individual's development. Consultations have shown that of the twenty-two sport providers who stated they work with refugees, eighteen have incorporated an element of language into their sessions.



4. WHY ADDRESS WOMEN REFUGEES IN PARTICULAR?

Many football associations and clubs are currently engaged in involving refugees in their training sessions or in special projects. This is one avenue to enable refugees to take part in the social life of their new home country. However, most sport programmes currently offered primarily focus on boys and men, often overlooking the demand for exercise among women and girls and their particular needs. Girls and women are regularly ignored as a result of the general perception that sport, and football in particular, is something for men. This is reinforced by cultural and racist prejudices, which are especially strong towards women who are perceived to be from ethnic minority backgrounds.

In the same way as women of ethnic minority backgrounds, lesbian and trans women face multiple discrimination. In 2018, homosexuality remains criminalised in nearly 80 countries in the world. To escape prison, ostracism, and violence in their everyday life, hundreds of homo- or bi-sexuals and trans people are fleeing their country hoping to find refuge elsewhere. Unfortunately, arriving in Europe does not always lead to renewed confidence. Indeed, they often find it very difficult to obtain documents and protection. They are also regularly victims of discrimination in their host countries, as migrants and/or as LGBT people. This double discrimination, and the particular management of secrecy in their life, can be very stressful. This is why it is important to offer them safe spaces, which includes safe sports spaces, where they can express their identity with no fear of repercussions.



EMELINE
(27, FEMALE, PARIS)

EMELINE IS A REFUGEE FROM RWANDA. SHE ARRIVED IN FRANCE AFTER HAVING SPENT SEVERAL YEARS IN RUSSIA.

What does your daily life look like in this country?

I've been to school for the last 3 months – I spend most of my time there, and preparing documents to receive my permits as soon as possible.

Why do you play football?

I had no friends, so I decided to find a place to play football and meet new people and make friends, a place I can feel safe and not alone. Without knowing the language well, I also use the opportunity to practice and learn it there.

Has anything changed for you through football?

Yes. I have met people with whom I can share thoughts and experiences and who can help me anytime I'm in need. I feel better myself in general.

How important is it that the sessions take place regularly?

When I have one week without football sometimes I get a headache because my life is quite stressful. Football helps me to fight stress. To be more motivated.

What is the best thing about the sessions?

That I can meet different people with different interests. That we have not only on the field but also, we have a lot of activities outside the field.

What can be improved?

The visibility of the association. I think not many refugees know that there is a safe place where they can play football and find new friends.

5. WHAT MAKES PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL SPORT DIFFICULT?

Sport is one way in which citizens can get involved in society, meet new people and feel part of a community. However, refugees often face difficulties with participating in local sports. There are a number of initial barriers that prevent their full involvement in society and sport. Raising awareness among sport providers of such barriers is the first step towards reducing and eventually removing them. To be able to use the full potential of sport and integrate new arrivals in sports organisations and, eventually, within society, it needs fully inclusive sport sessions.

The barriers identified through consultations and existing research include:

Financial constraints: Paying membership fees, buying equipment and having to use public transport (if activities take place away from reception centres or where refugees live) can make sports unaffordable due to refugees' limited access to economic opportunities in their host countries.

Long distances between accommodation and sports facilities: If refugees do not have the financial means or the local knowledge to get to and from the sports activity, this can prove to be a difficult physical and psychological barrier to overcome. Many of the refugees who were consulted stated that the sports activities they knew of were between 30 to 60 minutes away by public transport as they are often placed in deprived areas on the outskirts of cities. With limited financial resources it would be unrealistic to encourage refugees to participate in sport but make them travel such lengthy distances to get there.

Cultural differences: Many sport providers present themselves as being open to all, bringing together a melting pot of different cultures. However, cultural differences between players of the same and opposing teams, such as different religions and attitudes towards minority groups, can result in tension.

For example:

Western approaches towards inclusion of the LGBT community might not be appreciated by everyone in the same way.

The acceptance of religious dress, particularly concerning women who wear the hijab, has split opinion for many years. To engage refugee women in sport, sports providers should not force them to choose between their religious beliefs or taking part in sports. Today there is a variety of sportswear available that gives women the freedom to be active and follow their religions without raising concerns over health and safety, too.

Language barriers: To take part in an activity where you do not know the local language can be a daunting prospect for refugees. Twenty out of the thirty-one refugees consulted agreed that one of the main benefits of taking part in sport is that you learn the language. With many of the sport providers consulted providing

NAME: KATIA

(FEMALE, 23, PARIS)

KATIA FLED FROM RUSSIA TO PARIS IN AUGUST 2017. IN HER COUNTRY SHE RECEIVED DEATH THREATS BECAUSE SHE IS A LESBIAN. IN MAY 2018, SHE JOINED LES DÉGOMMEUSES IN PARIS, TO PLAY FOOTBALL AND PARTICIPATE IN OTHER ACTIVITIES AGAINST LGBTPHOBIA.

What does your daily life look like in this country?

I wake up at 7 am. Go to school. Afterwards I go home and cook dinner. I watch a TV series. I study French. I walk before going to bed, take a shower and go to bed. I stick to this regime, apart from Mondays and Wednesdays when I can play football. My dream day is when I can play and meet with friends from the team.

Why do you play football?

I love football with a passion. I like to feel part of the team, part of something bigger.

Has anything changed for you through football?

Football helps me release unnecessary emotions. Thanks to football, I have found many new acquaintances. I have found my football family.

How important is it that the sessions take place regularly?

Very important. At least 3 times a week. Regular training contributes to a better game and to my wellbeing.

What is the best thing about the sessions?

The best thing is that you can be yourself. See how your team has fun and support each other.

What can be improved?

More regular training. And add to this activity other indoor sports.

language assistance to participants it is clear that language elements within sports activities is key in the successful integration of refugees into their new surroundings.

Racism and other forms of discrimination: In recent years the far-right in Europe has been growing in popularity. It is unsurprising that refugees fear they will not be welcomed and there is a possibility that if they do join a sports club, they may be subjected to abuse by opposing players. It is the responsibility of the organisers to ensure that all players are protected from such incidents.

Lack of information: Eleven out of the sixteen refugees who stated they have not participated in sport since arriving at their host country also said they need more information about the opportunities available to participate in sport. The results highlight a strong interest in participating in sport, but if refugees have no information as to when and where activities take place this barrier will continue to prevent refugees from getting the necessary stimulation they need by participating in sports.

Flight and resettlement experience: Most refugees have endured a long and depletive journey impacting their physical and mental health. Some may have experienced war, persecution, loss of friends or relatives, torture. The system in place for resettlement often results in the refugees who play sports in a club not being able to stay there for an indefinite period. The lack of stability in their lives caused by financial and housing insecurity, as well as the loss of social identity, has a significant impact on the mental health of refugees adjusting to life in their host country.

WOMEN OFTEN FACE ADDITIONAL BARRIERS THAT RESTRICT THEIR PARTICIPATION:

Lack of appropriate facilities: Ensuring that women have access to suitable changing facilities and a safe space free from harassment and, if required, free from other male users occupying the facility at the same time, is important.

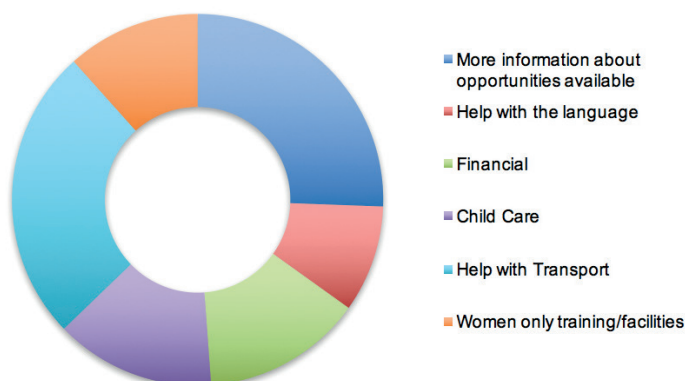
No access to childcare: Refugee women with children often have less free time for themselves as they are often looking after their families. A lack of access to childcare can leave mothers isolated from social interaction opportunities like sport, which they need to feel part of a community.

Lack of cultural awareness: Some female refugees follow a strict religious dress code. A lack of cultural awareness among sport providers or regulations that prohibit religious dress such as a hijab can discourage refugee women and their children from participating in sport. Activities that force them to abandon their religious and cultural beliefs will naturally discourage.

Difficulty finding female only teams/clubs: There continues to be a disparity in the number of female teams and clubs compared to the number currently available for men. It is even more difficult to find female-only clubs if that's referred. If refugee women find themselves in an area where there are no female sports clubs it makes integration into local host communities much more difficult, denying the opportunities for social interaction that being part of a sports club provides.

The chart below highlights the support that the refugees who were consulted stated they need to participate in sport.

Required Support for Refugees



6. WHY OFFER FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES?

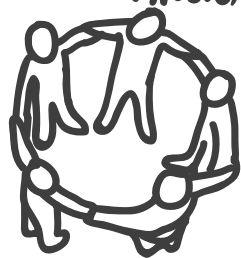
In European host countries the everyday life of a refugee is dominated by a feeling of waiting around or going to tedious, time-consuming bureaucratic appointments, resulting in a chronic lack of movement and exercise which can, and often does, lead to related health problems.

PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS PROGRAMMES OFFERS A VARIETY OF POSITIVE EFFECTS, SUCH AS:

FUN 

GETTING A FEEL FOR YOUR OWN BODY,
BECOMING STRONGER AND FITTER

HEALTH IMPROVEMENT –
PHYSICAL AND MENTAL



ESCAPISM – FORGETTING ABOUT
DESPAIR, TRAUMA, WORRIES

GAINING SELF-CONFIDENCE
AND SELF-ESTEEM

MEETING NEW PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY LOCALS



GETTING OUT OF THE SHELTER,
EXPLORING OTHER PARTS OF THE CITY
OR REGION, INCREASED MOBILITY

MAKING NEW FRIENDS



LEARNING OR IMPROVING THE LANGUAGE
OF THE HOST COUNTRY IN AN INFORMAL SETTING

EXPANDING ONE'S NETWORK
OF PEOPLE WHO CAN PROVIDE SUPPORT

**DOING SOMETHING
JUST FOR ONESELF**



How long have you been playing football?

In Iran, I sometimes played badminton or handball. I watched football on television, and sometimes at a picnic I would play with friends and family. I've played football in Berlin for about 8 months now.

Why do you play football?

I was really alone here in Germany; I knew almost no one. I was really exhausted and almost always staying in the house. My husband played football with ChoG and heard that there was also a women's team. I tried it out and really like it. Best of all, there were so many other women there.

Has anything changed for you through football?

I have a lot of fun playing football. Through football, I know so many other women and have met people to talk to and made friends. We do a lot of things together. At practice I get new information every week. If I have a problem, there are people there who can help me. It's great once a week to relax and do something just for myself, without worrying about my husband or my son or the household. Now there are a lot of new women at practice, and I'm helping with translation.

SHIRIN

(25, FEMALE, BERLIN)

FLED FROM IRAN TO GERMANY
IN 2015. PLAYS FOOTBALL ONCE A
WEEK WITH THE CHAMPIONS OHNE
GRENZEN LADIES TEAM.
FAVOURITE POSITION ON THE
FIELD: DEFENCE

KARINA

(FEMALE, 16, WARSAW)

KARINA FLED CHECHNYA TO POLAND IN 2006 WITH HER MOTHER AND BROTHER. SHE LIVED IN A REFUGEE CENTRE 30 KM FROM WARSAW. RECENTLY SHE WAS DENIED PROTECTION STATUS AND WAS FORCED TO LEAVE POLAND.

What does your daily life look like in this country?

Everyday I take the bus to school. We are in the class with younger children and we learn to write in Polish. I like the school; I have many friends there. I have learned to make origami recently and we often do it after school. I like books about history as well. Now it is summer break so I sit here in the centre all day, sometimes I go shopping with my mother.

Why do you play football?

I like sport. In school we sometimes play volleyball. Here in the centre it is boring and I wanted to do something. I didn't play a lot football before but it is fun. Except dribbling – the coach teaches us dribbling but I just want to play more.

Has anything changed for you through football?

It is just a good way of spending free time with friends.

How important is it that the sessions take place regularly?

It is important we know that coach is always here.

What is the best thing about the sessions?

They are fun.

What can be improved?

I would like to play on a better pitch and I wish we could play in a tournament against other teams.



ABU

(43, MALE, WARSAW)

ABU FLED HIS TOWN OF ERBIL IN IRAQ AFTER HE WAS INJURED AND WITNESSED THE DEATH OF HIS UNCLE. HE WENT TO GERMANY BUT WAS DEPORTED TO POLAND. SINCE THEN HE HAS BEEN LIVING IN A REFUGEE CENTRE 30 KM FROM WARSAW.

What does your daily life look like in this country?

I like Poland very much. I learn the language, and would like to be a good Polish speaker. I spend a lot of time at the centre; we sleep, read and talk. I also talk to family in Germany a lot on Skype. It is very comfortable here, they even have halal food but I would like to move closer to the city.

Why do you play football?

I love football. In Erbil, I played in the top league many years ago. Football was my passion from childhood.

Has anything changed for you through football?

I met a lot of good people. And it helps improve physical condition as well.

How important is it that the sessions take place regularly?

The workouts must take place regularly. I wish you could prolong this programme.

What is the best thing about the sessions?

The best thing is that I can play football again!

What can be improved?

I wish there were more people playing regularly so we could make a team.

7. HOW TO FIND PARTICIPANTS?

OUTREACH WORK AND FINDING FEMALE PARTICIPANTS

It is best to target local multipliers, individuals or organisations working with women, in existing structures for women. This could be in shelters or other places where women are already organised as groups.

Get in touch with people running the shelters or the social workers looking after refugees there. Particularly good points of contact are language classes for women and advice centres. Personal contacts are very important. It is crucial to gain trust and a sense of security in the first place. Also, create a flyer and/or poster to advertise the training session. It is advisable to not just use the local language but also at least advertise in English and/or the language most spoken by local refugees.

It is advisable to address and invite women refugees in a very personal manner and create a personalised offer, whether this applies to existing sports opportunities that are available to them or sessions that are new.

VISIBILITY AND INTEGRATION IN THE WIDER SPORTS COMMUNITY

How can you make these teams, groups and activities visible in the local neighbourhood or the wider sports community? Considering that many people do not know any refugees personally and are just talking about a group of people that they – or the media – are constructing in their minds, it is important to contribute to creating a positive narrative and fostering solidarity to break down prejudice and tackle common misconceptions about refugees. Such a homogenous group does not exist – women who have arrived as refugees are as diverse as, for example, German or French women are.

Still, to a lot of western Europeans it seems strange, impossible and unacceptable to see Muslim women playing football. Therefore, it is vital to make these teams visible through (to give just a few ideas): public tournaments, active participation in larger events or friendly matches with established clubs. This helps deconstruct the stereotype of the one type of refugee woman and helps provide a space for the topic of asylum and refuge in Europe, and the often-unfair politics that are connected to it.

While national regulations vary, many of Europe's football governing bodies still require a number of documents from refugees should they wish to obtain a player passport to participate in competitive football. These measures are intended to prevent trafficking of young foreign players, but in reality it disadvantages young unaccompanied minors, who are almost never in possession of all these documents and consequently are excluded.

BEST PRACTICE:
PLAY FOR CHANGE AND THE
BELGIAN PRO LEAGUE HAVE COME
TOGETHER TO CREATE THE
'SCHOOLS CUP'

THE TOURNAMENT INVITES LOCAL
SCHOOLS TO ENTER A TEAM AND
IN 2017 TWO REFUGEE TEAMS
JOINED THE COMPETITION. IT IS
ALSO A RULE THAT A MINIMUM
OF FOUR GIRLS MUST PLAY IN
EACH TEAM. THE AIM OF 'SCHOOLS
CUP' IS TO ENCOURAGE SOCIAL
INCLUSION AND FAIR PLAY
AMONGST CHILDREN.



8. HOW TO SET UP AN INCLUSIVE SESSION FOR REFUGEES?

WHEN SETTING UP TRAINING SESSIONS FOR FEMALE REFUGEES THINK ABOUT YOUR ASSOCIATION, SPORTS CLUB, INFRASTRUCTURE

Facilities: Finding and hiring the facilities to set up football sessions for refugees can pose a challenge in some countries. Prejudice in administration and other stakeholders does exist. Always try to meet local authorities or those who rent out pitches and sports facilities face-to-face. Consider that you might not have to be upfront with the provider about the participation of refugees if you are organising a mixed session and fear that you might be turned down otherwise.

Facilities must be easily accessible and take place in a well-known location in order to encourage more women to take part. It is important that sport providers organise their activities in a safe space located close to where the women are living.

Sport providers who wish to work with this vulnerable group must be aware of the psychological implications of holding activities in an area that could be potentially dangerous for female refugees.

Women-friendly club culture/welcoming atmosphere: Make sure your football or sports club provides a space where women feel comfortable. Are there any women holding key positions within the structure of your club, such as women coaches or managers? Before offering sport programmes to female refugees you may think about organising workshops in diversity training for your staff.

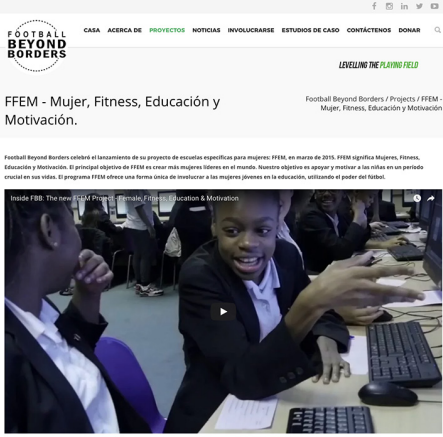
Flexibility/being open for change: Clubs are also caught within their - somewhat rigid administrative structures, which can have advantages such as financial resources, but which limit them in their ability to reach women. Smaller initiatives, which can be more flexible, may have other possibilities to work with women refugees. Clubs and associations need to be able to react with more flexibility to accommodate refugees.

Child care: Many women have children they need to look after. When designing your sports programme make sure you take them into consideration. You can offer childcare during practice time near the grounds or the gym, or try to include the children in the training. Or a parallel training for children might work. Speak with your participants and find out what they prefer. Some enjoy having some free time without the burden of childcare, others prefer to see what is happening with their children during practice, and others may have the possibility to organise their childcare during practice hours themselves. And, of course, there are also female refugees without children.

BEST PRACTICE: LES DÉGOMMEUSES SET UP A WHATSAPP GROUP TO MANAGE THE GROUP AND FOSTER INTERACTION. BOTH REFUGEES AND NON-REFUGEES (52 PARTICIPANTS IN TOTAL) SHARE MOTIVATIONAL MESSAGES AND INFORMATION ABOUT SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN A COOL AND HIGHLY PARTICIPATORY WAY.

BEST PRACTICE:

IN WARSAW THERE IS A PERMANENT LACK OF FOOTBALL PITCHES AND HALLS. PROGRAMMES FOR REFUGEES DO NOT HAVE ANY PRIORITY. RENTING IS EXPENSIVE. FREE SHARING INVOLVES MANY RISKS. PROCEDURES ARE TIME-CONSUMING. FUNDACJA DLA WOLNOŚCI MAPPED OBJECTS IN THE AREA AND HAS ESTABLISHED LONGER CO-OPERATION WITH LOCAL MAYORS, SPORTS AUTHORITIES, FACILITY OWNERS OR MANAGERS (I.E. SCHOOLS) TO DIVERSIFY CHANCES OF ACCESS ON REASONABLE CONDITIONS. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS SOMETIMES SIMPLY NOT POSSIBLE TO GET ACCESS TO A PITCH IN A CONVENIENT LOCATION. SO THAT THE FOUNDATION PROVIDES TRANSPORT AND EXPERIENCED CARERS TO ACCOMPANY THE PARTICIPANTS.



BEST PRACTICE:

FOOTBALL BEYOND BORDERS LAUNCHED FEMALE, FITNESS, EDUCATION AND MOTIVATION (FFEM) IN SCHOOLS ACROSS SOUTH AND EAST LONDON. THE PROJECT HAS AN EDUCATIONAL ELEMENT THAT TEACHES THE GIRLS HOW TO NURTURE SELF-ESTEEM AND BE CONFIDENT WITHIN THEMSELVES, AND THE CLASSROOM ACTIVITY IS ACCOMPANIED BY FOOTBALL SESSIONS. FOUNDATION PROVIDES TRANSPORT AND EXPERIENCED CARERS TO ACCOMPANY THE PARTICIPANTS.

Location and safe spaces: Be thoughtful about a place for your practice. If your infrastructure offers options, ask the refugee women if they prefer practising outside on a pitch or indoors in a gym. It can be more relaxing and comforting to have a closed space - Muslim women might prefer to take off their headscarf in a women-only space. Either way, make sure they feel comfortable and that the space is safe. The participants should not have to worry about insulting comments from bystanders or other people - especially men - disturbing their practice. Think about who might be using the training facilities at the same time when the women session is on. The space should also be safe in terms of minimising the risk of injuries etc. Also think about the sanitary infrastructure. Clean, women-only locker rooms, showers and toilets.

Tackling racism: Being a minority group in any country comes with an underlying risk that individuals may be subjected to racism at some point in their lives. If such an incident occurs to a member of your team during a competition or training session, it is critical that the situation is addressed and resolved as soon as possible. Ensure the victim is protected. Having the right safeguarding processes in place in advance will give coaches and team management the tools to act accordingly. Furthermore, you can report a racist incident either to match officials, local authorities or NGOs who have a reporting system in place to document discrimination in football.

External support: Providing sport sessions for refugee women who can often be traumatised and need professional help due to their experience of war, persecution and flight, can be challenging. The task involves more than planning and running a football session. As a vulnerable group the women will require more encouragement, support and empowerment. Coaches need to understand their own abilities and limits in what support they can offer and when to get professional help from health professionals or local NGOs that work with refugee women.

PROVIDING ROLE MODELS, INVOLVING AND EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH THE SESSIONS

Involvement of refugees: Involve refugees as coaches, referees, interpreters, facilitators, childcare providers or engage volunteers as individual cultural assistants, etc. to make the training possible. Sharing out the responsibility and tasks is great for team building, gives a sense of ownership to the participants and helps organisers offer more efficient sessions. Check what your regional or national association can offer in terms of training and qualification for refugees to become coaches, referees, or to take up (voluntary) posts within the club's or association's structure.

Set up a social media group (e.g. WhatsApp) to manage the group and foster interaction.

If you involve the participants in creating a unique name and branding for the team this also provides opportunities to interconnect and create a sense of belonging.

Role models: Refugee players often rely heavily on the manager/coach for help with any questions or advice, whether the query is related to the session or not. They might prefer the stability of one key individual, a person whom they feel comfortable with and who attends each session. Continuity is key and it is crucial that whoever leads the sessions is suitable for this role. A female coach/manager works best for female groups and demonstrates to the participants what options are available to them.

BEST PRACTICE:

DO YOU KNOW NADIA NADIM? NADIA FLED AFGHANISTAN IN 2000 WITH HER FAMILY AFTER HER FATHER WAS MURDERED BY THE TALIBAN, AND PLAYED FOOTBALL FOR THE FIRST TIME IN PUBLIC IN A DANISH REFUGEE CENTRE. IN 2009, SHE BECAME THE FIRST NATURALISED FOOTBALLER OF ANY GENDER TO REPRESENT DENMARK AND NOW PLAYS FOR MANCHESTER CITY IN THE WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE. SHE IS ALSO STUDYING MEDICINE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AARHUS.

YOUR PARTICIPANTS

Cultural awareness: When working with people who come from different cultures and backgrounds, everyone in the sports club, and the coaches in particular, need to consider their own background and approach in order to develop an understanding for the participants.

Take into account the group's internal, cultural and social differences; try to make your offer suitable for all participants. Consulting participants and giving them the opportunity to voice what works for them will help.

As a sports provider, be aware of any cultural or religious holidays or celebrations that might affect your training plan.

QUICK INFO:

RAMADAN is one of the five pillars of Islam and takes place during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. For those who observe this celebration, they will fast for the month and only eat before sunrise and after sunset. A number of Muslim players might choose not to participate in sports during this time as it puts added physical strain on their bodies. If you have many players who observe Ramadan, planning training and matches for before and after the holy month has ended might be useful.

BEST PRACTICE: START2COACH PROGRAMME

THE PROJECT "START2COACH" PROVIDES REFUGEES WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A FOOTBALL COACH WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES. IN ADDITION TO MIXED GENDER COACHING WORKSHOPS, CHOG OFFERS FEMALE ONLY WORKSHOPS THAT HELP REFUGEE WOMEN OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES THEY FACE CONCERNING SEXISM AND DISCRIMINATION TO PURSUE A COACHING ROLE. THEY CREATE A SAFE SPACE WHERE THESE WOMEN CAN SHARE FEELINGS OF SOLIDARITY AND EMPOWERMENT, DEVELOP THEIR SOCIAL AND LANGUAGE SKILLS THROUGH A PEER-TO-PEER SCHEME AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER THROUGH THE PROCESS OF BECOMING VOLUNTEER COACHES WITH LOCAL CLUBS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PROJECT. THE WORKSHOPS AND MENTORING LAST UP TO ONE YEAR WITH LOCAL CLUBS WHO WANT TO PROMOTE INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND KNOW MORE ABOUT THE CHALLENGES REFUGEES FACE

Conflicts: Conflicts in training sessions may prevent sessions being carried out as planned. If conflicts arise, coaches are required to deal with them accordingly and utilise methods of de-escalation. Depending on the respective situation the same attention should be paid to each party. Coaches should talk to each participant individually and, if necessary, interrupt an exercise.

To prevent conflicts, team-building activities, exercises to strengthen bonding, but also social events off the pitch are helpful.

DESIGNING YOUR SPORTS PROGRAMME

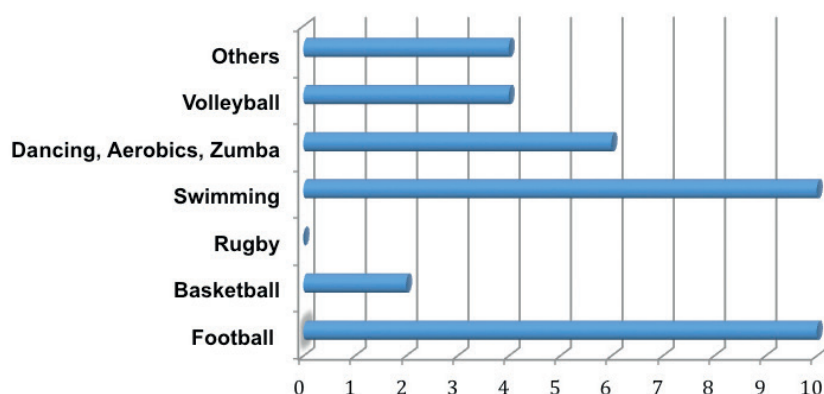
Type of sport: Find out what sport the women would like to do. Tailor offers to their needs and wishes, rather than just providing what an available volunteer coach might happen to offer. Women are very interested in exercise and movement and are usually open to new ideas. In the situation of having arrived in a new, perhaps completely different society, and where the women are still feeling isolated or vulnerable (such as living in a refugee shelter) it is crucial to find out what the women are interested in and what they need. Besides football, there may be other sports they are interested in like self-defence or dance, basketball or yoga. Football training sessions can also be combined with drills from other sports to offer the women involved opportunities to discover different sports.

TIP:

ORGANISING EVENTS WHERE WHOLE FAMILIES CAN PRACTICE TOGETHER, PREFERABLY TEAM SPORTS, OFTEN HELPS WOMEN AND REFUGEES TO BE MORE SELF-CONFIDENT AND GET ACTIVE IN SPORT.

Consultations have shown that while football is the most popular sport, an equal number of refugees who were asked which sports they would like to take part in indicated that they would like to swim. Other popular activities included dance and volleyball.

Sports Refugees would like to take part in

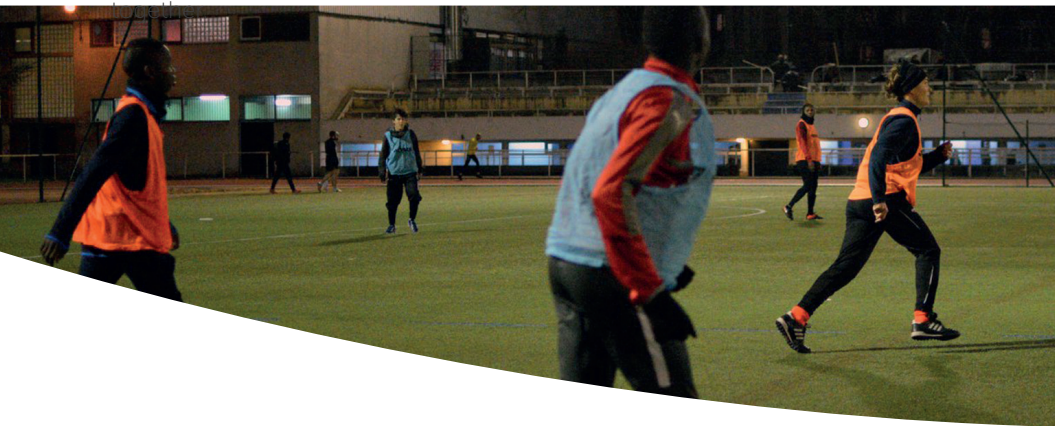


Making it free: If possible, make participation free for refugees. Alternatively, only charge a symbolic amount, to avoid creating a feeling of being treated differently among refugees. Provide equipment or sports clothing, if possible new. This helps instill pride in one's team and can increase motivation. Don't expect women refugees to own football boots or sports gear. Some might prefer to wear their own everyday clothing.



18 INSPIRE

Mobility: Many women are happy to have the opportunity to get away from the shelter for at least part of the day. However, it is important that the sports programme is not too far away. If resources allow it, a good solution could be to offer to pick the women up and bring them back to their accommodation - until they feel comfortable taking public transport. Consider paying for public transport tickets. Living in a new city presents many challenges, including geography and the local transportation system. If offering a pick-up service is no option, meet them at a well-known location that they can easily reach by themselves and continue the rest of the way to the pitch/gym



Mixed teams or not: Experience of the INSPIRE project has shown that refugee women prefer female-only teams, especially if the level of football is very different between men and women. Frustration and disappointment on the field can be the result otherwise, and no real common game.

Free time: As free time may be very limited for women refugees due to family or other commitments, make sure that the football practice really is fun for participants and not just one of the many obligations they have. That includes thinking about how competitive the football sessions are and about voluntary participation vs. participation on a regular basis.

Time restrictions: Find out what is the best time of day to offer your sports programme. Some of the refugee women are responsible for childcare and household work and regularly attend language classes. Find out at what time during the day they are free to join the sports programme.

Language: Understanding of the local language may be low, and football vocabulary unknown. Make sure that you can communicate the most important matters with the participants, as a basic minimum. Find out whether there is a common language that can be used.

Participants who already speak your language might be able to translate for others. If not, maybe someone can help you during the first sessions and, ideally, in the following sessions no translation should be necessary. Use all the resources available. Many training units do not need much verbal explanation and work fine with practical demonstration. You can also use tactics boards, online translation tools or a common sign language.

By including a language element in your activities through the use of visual demonstrations and mentoring schemes, refugees will be able to develop their language and communication skills whilst enjoying the health benefits of sport. Active language learning can also be integrated into the training. Basic training vocabulary, such as terms relating to technique and tactics, colours and equipment can be taught while playing – with an effect that goes far beyond teaching football skills. Some providers have even created a list of useful terms in multiple languages and distribute these aids to participants during sessions. For ideas on how to integrate language elements into a training session, please see the resources section at the end.

BEST PRACTICE: 'KICKING OFF LANGUAGE SKILLS' WAS LAUNCHED BY THE IRISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION AND AIMS TO TEACH REFUGEES KEY WORDS AND PHRASES RELATING TO FOOTBALL BEFORE THEY CAN THEN TEST THEIR KNOWLEDGE ON THE PITCH. EACH SESSION TAKES PLACE AT THE HOME OF BALLAGHADERREEN FC, CONSISTING OF A 45 MINUTE LANGUAGE CLASS AND A 45 MINUTE TRAINING SESSION.

TIP:

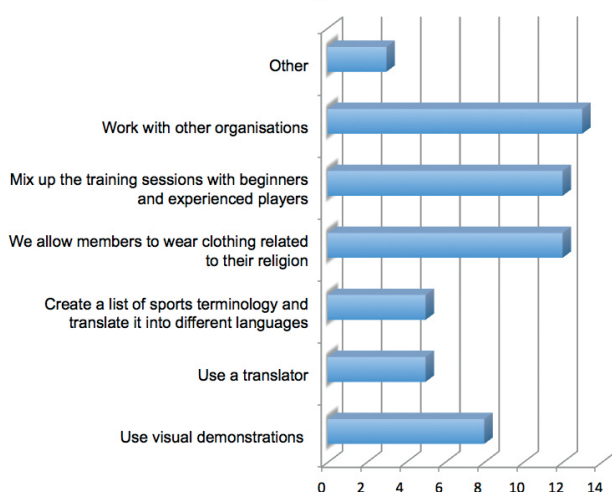
TRY TO ASK YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND TRANSPORT COMPANIES TO PROVIDE FREE SERVICE. LES DEGOMMEUSES MANAGED TO GET GRANTS TO PROVIDE FREE TRANSPORT CARDS TO ALL REFUGEES ON THE TEAM. THE FIRST NATURALISED FOOTBALLER OF ANY GENDER TO REPRESENT DENMARK AND NOW PLAYS FOR MANCHESTER CITY IN THE WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE. SHE IS ALSO STUDYING MEDICINE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AARHUS.



Different Abilities: Playing abilities might differ widely in an open training structure or among teams that do not participate in competitive leagues. Some women might have played semi-professionally in their home country; others may have never kicked a football before. Planning a session that accommodates and supports everyone at the right level can be a challenge but is not impossible. Exercises that can be executed at different levels of difficulty and intensity work well. Make use of different stations to allow players to learn at their own pace. Integrate the players' different levels of abilities during the session. Allocate roles of responsibility to experienced players. They can demonstrate exercises or lead parts of the session. A buddy system, where an experienced player is matched up with a less experienced player for some exercises, can also work well.

The chart below shows the measures that the thirty sport providers consulted have implemented to help refugees overcome the barriers they may face.

Adopted Practices to Support Refugees



BEST PRACTICE:

IN ORDER TO COMBAT THE SPECIFIC BARRIERS ADDRESSED THAT CONCERN REFUGEE WOMEN THERE ARE A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES ACROSS EUROPE THAT HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED TO ENCOURAGE MORE WOMEN TO GET INVOLVED IN SPORTS. RONJA FK BASED IN UPPSALA, SWEDEN IS A FOOTBALL CLUB THAT WAS CREATED TO SPECIFICALLY CATER TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG GIRLS WHO ARE AT RISK OF FAMILIAL AND SOCIETAL OPPRESSION, SUCH AS ARRANGED MARRIAGE. RONJA FK TARGETS GIRLS FROM UPPSALA'S MOST DEPRIVED AREAS, ENCOURAGING THEM TO DISCUSS GENDER ISSUES AND FIND A WAY INTO MAINSTREAM SOCIETY USING FOOTBALL AS A MEANS TO ACHIEVE THIS.

BEST PRACTICE:

ONE OF THE MAIN PSYCHOLOGICAL CHALLENGES REFUGEES FACE WHEN ADJUSTING TO THEIR NEW SURROUNDINGS IS A LACK OF FAMILIARITY AND LOSS OF SOCIAL IDENTITY. THE "COACH - WERDEN" PROJECT SET UP BY THE INSTITUT INTEGRATION DURCH SPORT UND BILDUNG E.V. IN 12 LOCATIONS ACROSS GERMANY AIMS TO ADDRESS THIS BARRIER WITH A FOCUS ON DEVELOPING THE COACHING SKILLS OF YOUNG GIRLS WITH MIGRANT BACKGROUNDS. THE INSTITUT INTEGRATION DURCH SPORT UND BILDUNG E.V. PUTS GIRLS THROUGH THE TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR THEM TO BE ABLE TO ORGANISE THEIR OWN FOOTBALL COACHING SESSIONS. THE AIM BEHIND THE PROJECT IS THAT THE COACHES WITH A CULTURALLY DIVERSE UPBRINGING WILL BE ABLE TO ENCOURAGE OTHER YOUNG GIRLS FROM THE SAME COMMUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS.



9. FUNDING YOUR SPORTS PROGRAMME

There are many funding opportunities for training and support initiatives to include refugees in sports provided by national or EU organisations – check these out!

You can contact your local, regional or national football association. Many of them have grants or funding schemes available that can support such projects. If they don't offer such schemes yet, it's still worth approaching them and submitting a proposal. They might be able to guide you in the right direction or have other means of supporting you.

The European Commission, for example through programmes like **ERASMUS PLUS**, funds cross border projects across the European Union and beyond. Refer to the specific calls for details and be prepared to develop your project well in advance as the application forms are quite complex to complete.

Foundations and trusts can be other sources for funding.



10. USEFUL RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung: All different - All the Same? Developing Training Sessions for Groups of Refugees: https://www.dkjs.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Dokumente/programme/180426_All_different_all_the_same.pdf

“Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world.”

The FA: Ramadan and Football <http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/coach/the-boot-room/issue-37/ramadan-and-football-170518>

German FA: Best Practice Examples Football with Refugees https://www.dfb.de/fileadmin/_dfbdam/123397-DFB_Fluechtlingsfussball_BF_11.pdf

Irish Football Association: Best Practice Example - "Kicking Off with English Language Skills" <https://www.fai.ie/domestic/kicking-off-with-language-skills/videos>

A practical approach to improving English skills for language tutors & soccer coaches: https://www.fai.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/KOWELS_booklet_final_print_small_size_version.pdf



11. INITIATIVES IN EUROPE

The Fare network has created a database of grassroots organisations, teams and football clubs that are actively welcoming of refugees or that organise training sessions and other initiatives to help refugees find a place.

The database aims to give migrants and activists the opportunity to find out about teams near where they live and how they can get involved.

The database can be accessed via <http://farenet.org/campaigns/refugees-football-database/>

Some examples of European organisations and initiatives that opened their football teams for refugee women:

Balon Mondial, Italy: <http://www.balonmundial.it/>

Champions ohne Grenzen Ladies team, Germany: <http://www.championsohne-grenzen.com/fussballtrainings>

Dynama Donau, Austria: <http://dynamadonau.at/>

Easton Cowboys & Cowgirls, England: <http://eastoncowboys.org.uk/>

Kicken ohne Grenzen, Austria: <http://kicken-ohne-grenzen.at/>

Plymouth Hope, England: <http://www.plymouthhope.com/index.asp>

Les Dégommeuses, France: <http://www.lesdegommeuses.org/>

United Glasgow FC, Scotland: <http://www.clubwebsite.co.uk/unitedglasgow-fc/294566/Home>

Fundacja dla Wolności, Poland: www.fundacjadlawolnosci.org

Hisingsbacka FC, Sweden: <https://www.laget.se/hisingsbackafc>

Rampen, Sweden: <https://www.facebook.com/rampenco>

The list is not comprehensive. If you know about a team or club that works with refugees and/or refugee women, or if you want to set up a group or team, please get in touch by sending an email to info@farenet.org.

Useful Contacts in Poland and France:

Fundacja Ocalenie provides support in the integration of migrants:

ul. 6/14a Krucza, 00-537 Warszawa, Poland
www.ocalenie.org.pl

Fundacja Inna Przestrzeń is a sports provider for refugee women and asylum seekers:

ul. Nowy Świat 23/25 lok. 2, 00-029 Warszawa, Poland
<http://www.innaprzestrzen.pl>

Chrząszczyki FC is an LGBTQ+ and refugee friendly amateur women's football club:

ul. Premiera Arciszewskiego 6/1, 02-685 Warszawa, Poland
<http://chrzaszczyki.com.pl>

Alternative Sports Club ZŁY is the only openly refugee-friendly club in Warsaw:

ul. Strubiczów 8/6, 02-136 Warszawa, Poland
www.aks-zly.pl

Partyzant Śródmieście organises annual tournaments promoting refugee and migrant inclusion:

www.partyzant-srodmiescie.blogspot.com

Fundacja Dom Pokoju runs annual tournaments promoting migrant inclusion:

ul. Wł. Łokietka 5, 50-243 Wrocław, Poland
www.dompokoju.org

Never Again Association is a leading Polish anti-racism organisation:

PO Box 6, 03-700, Warszawa 4, Poland
<http://www.nigdywiecej.org>

Aurore is an organisation working with refugees and running indoor football training sessions:

34 Boulevard Sébastopol – 75004 Paris, France
<http://www.aurore.asso.fr/groupe-de-travail-migrants>

Ardhis hosts football sessions for gay refugees: Centre LGBT Paris-ÎdF:

63 Rue Beaubourg, 75003 Paris, France
<https://ardhis.org/WP3/>

Singa is an organization working with refugees and getting them involved in sport:

KIWANDA, 50 rue de Montreuil, 75011 Paris, France
<https://www.singafrance.com/>

BAAM works with refugees and encourages participation in yoga sessions:

<http://baamasso.org/fr/>

Acceptess-T organises volleyball and swimming sessions for transgender people:

39 BIS Boulevard Barbès, 75018 Paris, France
<http://www.acceptess-t.com/>

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LONDON, BERLIN 2018

FARE NETWORK

PO Box 72058, EC1P 1UH London, United Kingdom
www.farenet.org

FUNDACJA DLA WOLNOŚCI

ul. Angorska 19 U-1, 03-913 Warszawa, Poland
www.fundacjadlawolnosci.org

ASSOCIATION LES DÉGOMMEUSES

6, passage Brady, 75010 Paris, France
www.lesdegommeuses.org

DISCOVER FOOTBALL

Richardstr. 43, 12055 Berlin, Germany
<http://www.discoverfootball.de>

CHAMPIONS OHNE GRENZEN E.V.

Rudolf-Seiffert-Str. 50, 10369 Berlin, Germany
www.championsohnegrenzen.com