



Sports as a Tool for Empowerment of (Dis)AbleD & Displaced Youth **STEADY**

Recommendations Manual on social inclusion of Displaced Youths with Disability through sports



Sports as a Tool for Empowerment of (Dis)Abled & Displaced Youth



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About the manual

This manual was elaborated under the project “Sports as a Tool for Empowerment of (Dis)Able & Displaced Youth – STEADY” (www.steady-project.eu) with the aim to highlight the positive relation between sports and social inclusion and present good practices of social inclusion of migrants and refugees in and through sports.

In this Manual, good practice examples are gathered on the inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities in and through sport as well as the inclusion of person (including youth) with Disabilities. It also presents examples of corporal strategies for inclusion in and through sport on the national or the regional level and it analyzes different Participation Models.

It endeavors to highlight the challenges to be taken up by sport initiatives and the decisions required to remove the systemic barriers and counter the negative attitudes and social exclusion which prevent displaced children and young people with disabilities from developing their potential, improving their quality of life and participating in social life.

The migration crisis that began in 2015 has led to a large debate at the European level on the measures that need to be taken in order to facilitate the settlement of the refugees and migrants and promote their social inclusion. Such an effort is a great challenge for the EU Member States, but its reward will be communities that are enriched with diversity and strong social bonds. As one of the pillars of European society, sports have an important part to play in making society more inclusive. Sports’ exceptional ability to bring people together, to help them connect and to learn new skills makes them one of the most potent community-building tools.

Concerning the content of the manual, it is structured as follows: in the first section, we present briefly the current influx of refugees and migrants in the EU, the lack of evidence regarding the situation concerning migrant and refugees with disabilities, as well as the EU legal and policy response in relation to migration and asylum seeking.

In the second section, we highlight the role of sports in promoting the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, as well as in promoting the social inclusion of refugees and migrants. In the third section, we present the key elements that we consider of high importance when designing and implementing projects and initiatives for the promotion of inclusion of migrants and refugees with disabilities in and through sports, as well as



relevant indicative good practices. Moreover, we propose recommendations concerning the sports policies and strategies that need to be adopted for the inclusion of migrants and refugees, and in particular for the inclusion of displaced persons with disabilities, in and through sports. The recommendations refer to various level and areas that are considered important for creating a safe and inclusive sport environment, removing the barriers and challenges that migrants and refugees are facing, and enhancing their participation in social life and sports.

The information presented in this manual has been collected through a desk research and is based on the relevant literature as well as on evidence from other projects and initiatives undertaken at local, regional and national level. The good practices selected are indicative and does not constitute an exhaustive list of good practices.

Overall, it should be pointed out that the Manual aims to provide valuable information to sports organisations, clubs and relevant authorities in order to promote the participation of displaced young people with disabilities in sport activities.

Brief presentation of the project

The vision of the STEADY project is to increase sports participation of Displaced Youth with Disabilities (DYD) by promoting volunteering and equal access of migrants and minorities to organized and grassroots sport. The project focuses on changing the paradigm, bringing migrants and refugees with disabilities from the margins to become integral members of the sporting community. In this respect, the project will promote voluntary activities in sport, together with social inclusion, equal opportunities and awareness of the importance of health-enhancing physical activity, through increased participation in, and equal access to sport for all; and tackle cross-border threats to the integrity of sport, in that case, violence and all kinds of intolerance and discrimination.

The STEADY Project has a duration of three years (2019 – 2021) and is funded by the Erasmus+ Sport programme of the European Commission.

The partnership is composed of:

- Hellenic Paralympic Committee (Coordinator)
- Agitos Foundation
- GEA
- Centro Social de Soutelo
- Equal Society
- Footura
- Play and Train
- Serbian Paralympic Committee
- Vienna Institute for the Development and Cooperation.



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Introduction

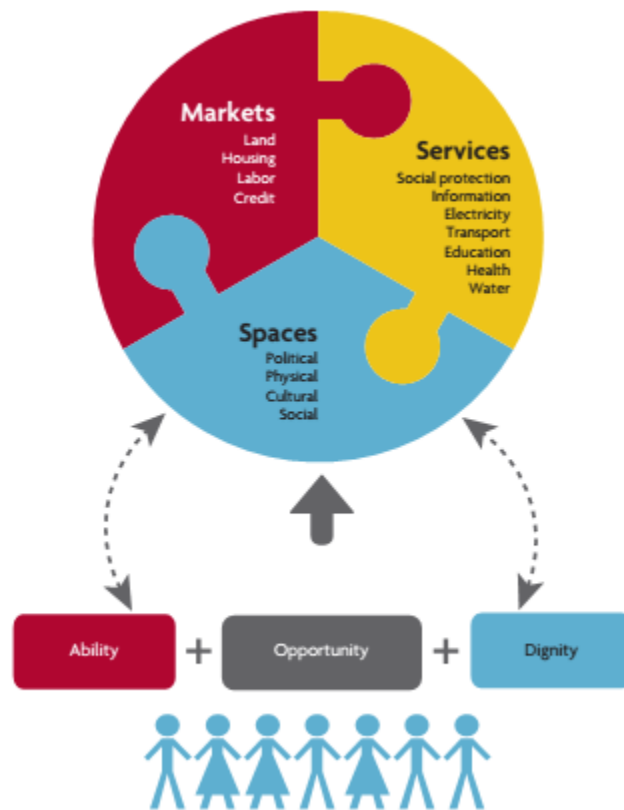
The current refugee and migration crisis represents one of the greatest challenges for European Union countries so far. According to Eurostat, during the period 2015-2016, over 2.5 million people applied for international protection in the 28 EU Member States, while more than 80% of those were below the age of 34, including nearly 540,000 girls and young women.

Concerning the migrants and refugees with disabilities, and although there are no systematic and accurate data, it is estimated that they constitute a significant portion of the migrants' and refugees' community. Yet persons with disabilities remain among the most hidden, neglected and socially excluded of all displaced people. Persons with disabilities are often literally and programmatically "invisible" in refugee and assistance programs and thus they do not receive specialized and targeted services.

The settlement and integration of refugees and migrants, including of the persons with disabilities, into the host societies is a key junction in creating diverse communities. Failure to integrate the newly arrived people can result in a massive waste of resources, both for the individuals concerned themselves and more generally for our economy and society. This realization has led the EU and the Member States in setting the recent influx of refugees and migrants high in the political agenda and several initiatives have been implemented with the aim to facilitate their social inclusion/integration in the host countries.

Social inclusion has been defined by the World Bank as “the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society”¹. In the report “Inclusion matters: The foundation for shared prosperity”, the World Bank acknowledges that “social inclusion is about human well-being, shared prosperity, and social justice” and that its promotion is of utmost importance. In this respect and with the aim to promote social inclusion, it is imperative to achieve an inclusion in the three interrelated domains a) markets, b) services, and c) spaces.

Figura: Impulsar la inclusión social: Un marco de trabajo



¹ World Bank (2013), *Inclusion matters: The foundation for shared prosperity*, New Frontiers of Social Policy , p. 51-53, available at: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/114561468154469371/pdf/Inclusion-matters-the-foundation-for-shared-prosperity.pdf>

Yet, despite the efforts made thus far, several challenges remain unaddressed and discrimination appears to be persistent. A recent Eurobarometer survey clearly highlighted the negative attitudes of a large number of European citizens towards migrants and refugees.

Sport has been an important aspect of civil life and its use to educate, share values and help the participants to gain self-confidence and abilities has been officially recognized by the United Nations in 1993 with the acknowledgement about the role of the Olympic Movement. Later on, the establishment of the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace and the adoption of a number of relevant resolutions by the UN Member States have also facilitated the recognition of the sport's role in this respect, as well as for its contribution in achieving the Millennium Goals (MDGs) and later, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In this context, sport has been proposed in particular as a possible way of assisting migrants and refugees to settle in the host countries and contribute to dealing with numerous challenges and barriers they face as newcomers. Indeed, it is highly accepted that sport can be extremely valuable not only for participants' physical and mental health, but also in the context of their social inclusion and integration. Sport activities can break down cultural barriers, assisting in building links and trust both within refugee communities, and between refugees and the broader community. In addition, it can provide the opportunity to find and show their talents and challenge commonly-held stereotypes. Sport projects can increase the participation of migrants and refugees into interventions that provide also educational outcomes and qualifications and enhance a wide range of skills such language, teamwork and self-confidence.

As a result, several programmes and initiatives have been implemented and are currently under implementation at European and national level. These programmes and initiatives have been funded by both national and European financial instruments and promote the participation of refugees, migrants, members of ethnic minorities as well as persons with disabilities in and through sports. Yet, although sport has increasingly recognized as a useful tool in assisting refugees to settle more effectively, there are still many barriers which limit refugees' participation in organised social life and especially in sports. As to the challenges, it is noted that refugees and migrants are facing numerous barriers when accessing and participating in sports. These include cultural barriers, practical and financial constraints and a lack of culturally-appropriate programs.

Concerning the cultural barriers it is especially noted that refugees and migrants have a diverse range of cultural needs, traditions and expectations which may be entirely different from these in the host communities. As such, the operations of sport programmes, particularly of the mainstream ones, may be completely unfamiliar to refugees and migrants, while language can also be a major barrier to participating in sport.

Regarding the practical and financial constraints, it is noted that refugees usually arrive in the host country with no possessions or financial assets. As such, the costs of participating in sport are often prohibitive for refugees, while limited has been their access to sporting facilities, due to difficulties in both accessing transport and meeting transport costs.

Moreover, a significant barrier in accessing and participating in sports is the lack of culturally-appropriate programmes, as in many cases, sport programmes does not take into account the unique cultural needs of the refugees and migrants.

As regards persons with disabilities, it is noted that they are still facing barriers with regard to the accessibility of sport playgrounds, sport equipment and other sport resources. Infrastructural and technical barriers, as well as social barriers, such as stereotypes and prejudice, continue to affect their engagement in sport activities.

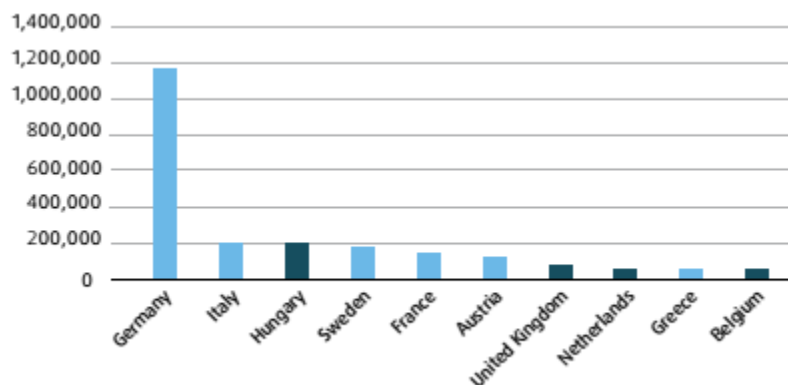
Overall, the programmes and initiatives which attempted over recent years to overcome these barriers, and in particular the barriers that displaced persons with disabilities are facing, are rather limited in number and have not met yet the needs of the target group in the European countries. As a result, more coherent and systematic interventions are needed to be implemented at the European, national, regional and local level.

Section 1: Refugees and migrants in Europe

The recent refugee crisis has been characterized as one of the greatest challenges that the European Union countries have experienced since the Second World War. Indeed, the influx of migrants and refugees which started in 2015 is unprecedented, obliging the EU and the Member States to respond to a situation which strained the Union’s solidarity and the Member States’ social protection systems.

According to Eurostat, during the period 2015-2016, over 2.5 million people applied for international protection in the 28 EU Member States. Most reached Germany, Sweden, France and Austria, while many remained in Italy and Greece, their first countries of arrival. From 2015 to 2018, 1.9 million people received international protection in the EU, either as refugees or as beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, or received a humanitarian residence permit. It is noted that more than 80% of those were below the age of 34, including nearly 540,000 girls and young women².

Figure 1: Asylum applications in 2015 and 2016 (top 10 EU Member States)



Source: FRA (2019), *Integration of young refugees in the EU: good practices and challenges*, p. 18.

The above numbers clearly indicates why the recent migration crisis has become a highly sensitive political issue and has prompted the need for an urgent EU and Member State level response towards not only resettling individuals and families, but also

² FRA (2019), *Integration of young refugees in the EU: good practices and challenges*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, p. 18, available at https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-integration-young-refugees_en.pdf

towards ensuring their longer-term inclusion and integration into society. The integration and social inclusion of refugees and migrants into European society, therefore, represents one of the greatest challenges facing the EU taking also into account that nearly four in ten Europeans think that immigration is more a problem than an opportunity³. This challenge has been clearly highlighted in the 2016 Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals, in which the European Commission pointed out that failure to integrate the newly arrived people can result in a massive waste of resources, both for the individuals concerned themselves and more generally for the European economy and society. In particular, the Action Plan clearly states “We cannot afford to waste this potential..... As shown by recent research, fully integrating migrants into the labour market could generate large economic gains, including fiscal profits, contributions to national pension schemes and national welfare in general”⁴.

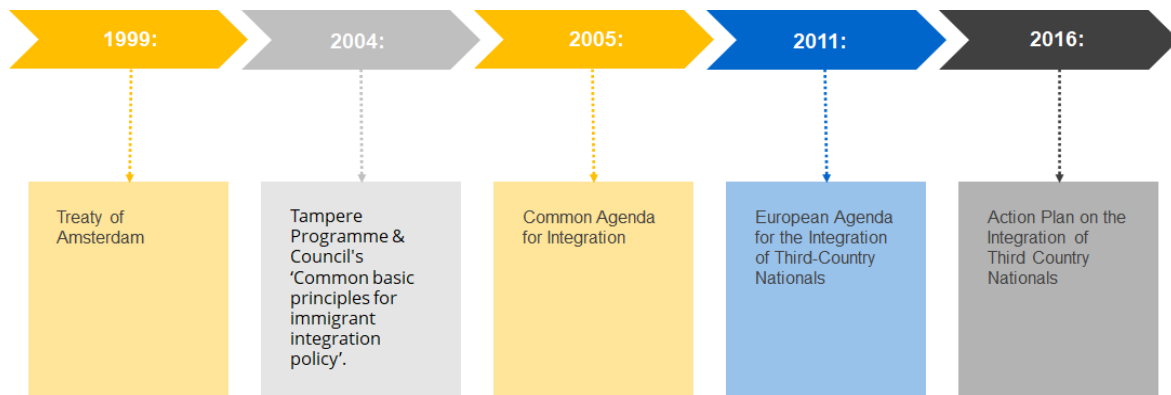
³EC (2018), *Integration of immigrants in the European Union*, Special Eurobarometer 469, p. 7, available at https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a0fb4f0c-97c0-11e9-9369-01aa75ed71a1/language-en?WT.mc_id=Selectedpublications&WT.ria_c=41957&WT.ria_f=5706&WT.ria_ev=search

⁴EC (2020), *Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027*, COM(2020) 758 final, Brussels, p. 2, available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration/integration/action-plan-integration-third-country-nationals_en

The EU legal and policy response to migration and asylum seeking

The EU has periodically set priorities and goals to drive EU policies, legislative proposals and funding opportunities. A timeline of the most important steps towards the development of a policy response to the influx of migrants and refugees at the European level is presented below.

Figure 2: Key dates for the development of an EU policy response in the area of asylum and migration



Refugees and migrants with disabilities: an “invisible” group

Persons with disabilities constitute a very large minority. According to the Council of Europe, persons with disabilities consists of between one sixth and one fifth of the general population of most countries⁵, while the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that between 7 and 10 percent of the world’s population live with disabilities. Taking the above into account, it follows that a significant percentage of the world’s displaced persons also live with disabilities.

However, persons with disabilities remain among the most hidden, neglected and socially excluded of all displaced people, being often literally and programmatically “invisible” in refugee and assistance programs. In particular, migrants and refugees with disabilities are not identified or registered as persons with disabilities; they do not have access to mainstream assistance programs and do not receive specialized and targeted services; and they are ignored in the appointment of camp leadership and community management structures⁶.

According to a FRA monthly report (August 2016)⁷, overall, there is little information available on the situation of migrants and refugees with disabilities recently arrived in the EU, resulting in anecdotal evidence and individual reports of particular challenges faced.

⁵ CoE (2014), *Major Hazards and People with Disabilities - Their Involvement in Disaster Preparedness and Response*, p. 7, available at:

https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/majorhazards/ressources/pub/MajorHazards_Disability_2014_en.pdf

⁶ Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children (2008), *Disabilities among refugees and conflict-affected populations: Resource Kit for Fieldworkers*, p. 2, available at:

https://www.miusa.org/sites/default/files/documents/resource/WRC-%202008-%20Resource%20Kit%20for%20RwD_fieldworkers%20kit.pdf

⁷ FRA (2016), *Monthly data collection on the current migration situation in the EU Thematic focus: Disability*, August 2016 monthly report, p. 6, available at:

<http://statewatch.org/news/2016/aug/eu-fra-monthly-migration-stats-8-16.pdf>

Overview of the main findings of FRA regarding the situation of the migrants and refugees with disabilities⁸

- There is a lack of formal procedures to identify migrants and refugees with disabilities, which affects the provision of targeted support and assistance;
- The high number of arrivals and limited resources has reduced the opportunities for timely identification during health screenings. Individuals can wait up to a year for a health screening in some areas;
- Identification of persons with disabilities often relies either on information provided by individuals themselves, or on the presence of a 'visible' disability. Impairments which are not immediately noticeable often remain undetected until later interviews or medical examinations, or beyond;
- Identification of and support for persons with disabilities relies heavily on the expertise and knowledge of individual staff, but there is a lack of relevant training;
- There are no systematic data on the numbers of persons with disabilities among arrivals and the breakdown per type of disability. Anecdotal evidence suggests that mental health issues, and notably post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), are particularly prevalent;
- Identification as a person with a disability is crucial for accessing specialised support;
- Some form of psychosocial support and treatment is offered in reception and detention centres, often by NGOs. The limited capacity however leads to long waiting times for support, in many cases, and a lack of adequate interpretation services.

⁸ FRA (2016), *Monthly data collection on the current migration situation in the EU Thematic focus: Disability*, August 2016 monthly report, p. 8, available at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-august-2016-monthly-migration-disability-focus_en.pdf



Thus, migrants and refugees with disabilities constitutes a hidden problem which needs particular attention and action from the side of the Member States. Identifying migrants with disabilities is an essential step for ensuring that special care is provided where required.

On the basis of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the European Parliament requested the Commission and the Council to provide for special care for persons with disabilities when making proposals for resolving the refugee issue⁹.

⁹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2016-0203_EN.html?redirect



Section 2: Sports as a means for promoting social inclusion

As stressed in the previous section, persons with disabilities constitute a very large minority. According to the available data, in 2016, about 24.1% of persons aged 16 and over declared a disability (activity limitation)¹⁰ in the EU, while the respective percentages for the EU Member States (% population aged 16 over) were the following: 41% in Latvia; 36% in Slovenia; 35% in Estonia; 34% in Finland and Austria; 33% in Croatia and Portugal; 32% in Slovakia; 31% in the Netherlands; 30% in Denmark and Lithuania; 28% in Romania, the Czech Republic and Luxemburg; 26% in Hungary; 25% in Belgium and France; 24% in Greece, Italy and Poland; 22% in Germany; 20% in Cyprus; 19% in Spain and Bulgaria; 17% in Ireland; 13% in Sweden; 12% in Malta. In addition, the percentage for the United Kingdom was 24%.

Taking into account that disabilities impact on people's lives in many areas, for example in terms of: mobility and the use of transport equipment; access to buildings; participation in education and training, the labour market and leisure pursuits; social contacts and economic independence¹¹, the international and European community has taken significant steps over the last decades in order to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities and have concentrated much of their efforts in promoting their social inclusion and well-being.

Yet, several challenges remain and further efforts are needed. In this respect, sports can contribute significantly in improving further the lives and the participation of persons with disabilities in social activities.

¹⁰ Grammenos S. (2018), *European comparative data on Europe 2020 & People with disabilities*, Final report ANED, p. 18, available at:

<https://www.disability-europe.net/downloads/995-task-1-2018-2019-statistical-indicators-eu2020>

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics_introduced

The benefits of participation in sports and its role in the promotion of social inclusion

Literature has extensively indicated the health benefits of participating in sports, both physical and mental ones¹². In particular, sports can play a dual role: on one hand it improves the fitness and decreases the risk of chronic diseases and on the other hands it can contribute to building self-esteem and counteracting stress and depression¹³, contributing thus to positive mood changes. Yet, apart from the abovementioned benefits, researchers have also highlighted the important role of sports in the promotion of social inclusion and/or integration, acknowledging that the social space of sport provides an excellent platform for eliminating cultural, social and linguistic barriers¹⁴. Sports play an important role for social cohesion by providing opportunities for meetings and exchanges between people of different gender, abilities and nationality or from different cultures, strengthening thus the culture of “living together”¹⁵. In this respect sports is commonly acknowledged as a means of inclusion since it brings people from all parts of society together. As stated in a UNICEF report “Sport, in particular, has helped overcome many societal prejudices. Experiences in a number of countries have shown that access to sport and recreation is not only of direct benefit to children with disabilities, but also helps to improve their standing in the community¹⁶”.

Over the last decades there has been an increasing focus, both in academic research and policy debates, on the role of sport in promoting social inclusion¹⁷ and in reducing stereotypes and discrimination especially of persons with disabilities as well as of refugees and migrants. One of the most interesting theories in relation to reducing the stereotypes and discrimination is the Contact Theory introduced by Allport¹⁸.

¹² Match project, Sport & Youth work: Bridging the gap for social inclusion, p. 13 – 14, available at: <https://cesie.org/en/resources/match-manual-sport-inclusion/>

¹³ Morgan L., The Role of Sport in Assisting Refugee Settlement, Refugee Council of Australia, p. 10, available at: <https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/2018-11/The-Role-of-Sport.pdf>

¹⁴ Kamberidou I, Bonias A. & Patsantaras N., (2019), Sport as a means of inclusion and integration for “those of us with disabilities”, European Journal of Physical Education and Sport Science, Volume 5, Issue 12, 2019, p. 112, available at: <https://oapub.org/edu/index.php/ejep/article/view/2658/5295>

¹⁵ CoE (2016), Sport for all: a bridge to equality, integration and social Inclusion, Resolution 2131 (2016), p. 1, available at: <https://www.icsspe.org/system/files/CoE%20-%20Sport%20for%20all%20a%20bridge%20to%20equality%2C%20integration%20and%20social%20inclusion.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://www.sportanddev.org/en/article/news/promoting-inclusion-through-sport>

¹⁷ ENGSO (2012) Creating a Level Playing Field: Social inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities in Sport, ENGSO – European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation.

¹⁸ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229661937_Allport's_Intergroup_Contact_Hypothesis_Its_History_and_Influence/link/571ac82108ae408367bc9007/download

"Contact Theory" focuses on social interaction that aims at decreasing stereotypes and discrimination, and for this reason it is widely used as a method for changing attitudes towards individuals with Special Educational Needs (Allport, 1954). Contact between individuals of different races, ethnicities or religions can have an impact on the improvement of attitudes towards each other. According to Allport (1954), there are four conditions that contribute significantly to the occurrence of this impact:

- I) the individuals involved must be on the same level in terms of recognition of social status;
- II) the community must support the difference;
- III) the individuals must have common goals; and
- IV) the connection between them must be intimate, genuine and profound.

In addition, Allport argues that for there to be an improvement in attitudes, the linking of contacts, intercultural education and the approach to cultural pluralism must be achieved. It is important to stress that the proper organization of the curriculum plan and a structured environment are important factors for contact to play a determining role in improving attitudes, and this is the theory that underlies cooperative activities in schools (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006) because direct contact alone does not guarantee such success (Allport, 1954; Slininger et al., 2000). Tripp and Sherrill (1991) state that the theory of contact has demonstrated that the environment and the interaction between peers are important factors to take into account in the inclusion in the environment of physical activity. Thus, this theory substantiates the principles of awareness programs, such as the 'Paralympic Day at School', which through a set of sports activities aim to promote positive attitudes of students without NEE (Special Educational Needs) towards the inclusion of their peers with NEE (Special Educational Needs) in physical education classes. In a recent review study, Lindsay and Edwards (2013) demonstrated that contact with NEE (Special Educational Needs) people can significantly contribute to the promotion of positive attitudes"¹⁹.

¹⁹ Teixeira J (2014), *The effect of a Paralympic Education Program on the attitudes of students without NEE (Special Educational Needs) towards inclusion in the Physical Education class.*

The case of persons with disabilities

Disability evokes negative perceptions and discrimination in many societies and persons with disabilities often face several societal barriers²⁰, being excluded from several areas in daily life, including education, employment and social life. These barriers lead to a deprivation of a range of opportunities which are essential for their social development, health and well-being. In some societies persons with disabilities are considered dependent and seen as incapable, thus fostering inactivity which often causes individuals with physical disabilities to experience restricted mobility beyond the cause of their disability²¹.

However, participation in sport activities can contribute to the reduction of the stigma and discrimination related to disability. Through sport, persons without disabilities interact with persons with disabilities in a positive context, resulting in a shift in the community's attitudes towards them. Sports also empower persons with disabilities to realize their full potential, assisting them to acquire social skills and develop their independence, which is a stepping stone also for other areas in daily life (employment, education, etc). Moreover, sports develop the communication skills of the participants, strengthens their ability to collaborate with others and enhances the respect among the participants.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities²² is the first legally binding international instrument to address the rights of persons with disabilities and sport. According to Article 30, "States Parties shall take appropriate measures to encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities at all levels". Moreover, States Parties should ensure that:

- persons with disabilities have an opportunity to organize, develop and participate in disability-specific sporting and recreational activities and, to this end, encourage the provision, on an equal basis with others, of appropriate instruction, training and resources;
- persons with disabilities have access to sporting, recreational and tourism venues;

²⁰ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/issues/disability-and-sports.html>

²¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/issues/disability-and-sports.html>

²² <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html>

- children with disabilities have equal access with other children to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities, including those activities in the school system;
- persons with disabilities have access to services from those involved in the organization of recreational, tourism, leisure and sporting activities.

In addition to the UN Convention, at the EU level, the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020²³ stresses that Member States should improve the accessibility of sports, leisure, cultural and recreational organisations, and promote participation in sports events, including the organisation of disability-specific ones. In addition, in the 2011 European Commission's Communication regarding the development of the European Dimension in Sport²⁴, it is stated that the Member States should promote the participation of persons with disabilities in European sporting events as well as the organisation of disability-specific events, in particular through supporting transnational projects and networks.

The case of migrants and refugees

The process of settling in a new country can be challenging. Yet, the challenges that refugees and migrants are facing, especially during the first period of their settlement in the host country, can be even more greater taking into account the fact that they might have suffered tortures and traumas²⁵. In this context, the benefits of sport have particular relevance for refugee communities and can be regarded as a valuable tool for facilitating their settlement and integration in the host countries. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) acknowledges "the power and importance of sport,"²⁶ and stresses that sport can play "a particularly important and healing role for refugees"²⁷. Apart from the physical health benefits, sport can provide "a sense of purpose and direction for young people recovering from the traumas of the refugee experience or the impact of racism"²⁸. The 2011 European Commission's Communication regarding the development of the European Dimension in Sport²⁹

²³EC (2010), European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe, COM(2010) 636 final, Brussels, p. 6, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eip/ageing/standards/general/general-documents/european-disability-strategy-2010-2020_en

²⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52011DC0012>

²⁵ Morgan L., The Role of Sport in Assisting Refugee Settlement, Refugee Council of Australia, p. 14, available at: <https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/2018-11/The-Role-of-Sport.pdf>

²⁶ <https://www.unhcr.org/partners/PARTNERS/488edb1b2.html>

²⁷ <https://www.unhcr.org/partners/PARTNERS/488edb1b2.html>

²⁸ Morgan L., The Role of Sport in Assisting Refugee Settlement, Refugee Council of Australia, p. 10-11, available at: <https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/2018-11/The-Role-of-Sport.pdf>

²⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52011DC0012>

acknowledges that sport enables immigrants and the host society to interact in a positive way, thus furthering integration and inter-cultural dialogue.

It is a fact that participation in sport activities can strengthen mutual understanding, co-existence and cohesion among the communities³⁰, by breaking down cultural barriers, building links and trust between refugees and the host community, and facilitating thus the participation of refugees in the community life.

In particular, among others, sports can bring together people from both the migrants and refugees communities and the host community, allowing thus to get to know each other; create a setting where language differences are not so important; contribute to addressing prejudice and discrimination; promote role models; distribute positions, jobs, and voluntary functions in the sports club; connect with other migrants, etc³¹.

Two major European research projects have examined in particular the relationship between sports and the social inclusion of refugees and migrants. The first project titled “Sport Inclusion Network (SPIN) – Involving migrants in mainstream sport institutions”³² was co-funded by the European Union’s Erasmus+ programme and aimed to examine the implementation of measures seeking to promote social inclusion of migrants through sport. The research project concluded that the involvement in a sport club can create particularly favorable conditions for further inclusion processes since sport associations are characterized by the fact that training and practice sessions take place regularly and that sporting activities often take place within the framework of other social activities that provide additional opportunities for intercultural interaction³³.

Furthermore, within the framework of the EU Preparatory Actions in the Field of Sport 2010, the European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO) project “Creating a Level Playing Field” (2011-2012)³⁴ aimed to collect and exchange good practices on the inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities in sporting activities. The project identified a

³⁰ Morgan L., The Role of Sport in Assisting Refugee Settlement, Refugee Council of Australia, p. 10, available at: <https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/2018-11/The-Role-of-Sport.pdf>

³¹ https://www.aspiresport.eu/documents/181208_Training%20Module.pdf

³² https://sportinclusion.net/fileadmin/mediapool/pdf/spin/SPIN_folder.pdf

³³ EC (2016), Mapping of good practices relating to social inclusion of migrants through sport, Final report, p. 7, available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f1174f30-7975-11e6-b076-01aa75ed71a1>

³⁴ <https://www.engso.eu/post/creating-a-level-playing-field-2011-2012>

number of good practice principles for the successful delivery of relevant projects which are presented below³⁵.

Funding	Project-based initiatives require access to sufficient funding to support longer-term inclusion objectives.
Planning	Successful projects understand and approach the notion of social inclusion as a process.
Communication and awareness raising	A dialogue between majority and minority groups and individuals is essential for the effective integration of migrants through sports.
Recruitment and reaching	Recruiting and training of managers and coaches from different backgrounds can be of high importance for the successful delivery of sports activities for migrants and refugees.
Collaboration	Collaboration between all relevant stakeholders (including social partners, migrant and minority organisations, schools, sports clubs and the media) is essential.
Evaluation	Evaluation should be an integral part of the project implementation.

The findings of the two projects concerning the positive linkage among the participation in sport activities and the promotion of social inclusion of migrants and refugees are also confirmed by other research as well. In particular, Makarova and Herzog (2014)³⁶ conducted a research on whether immigrant youths’ participation in sporting activities can facilitate their integration by helping to promote and maintain intercultural contacts between young immigrants and young nationals in a German-speaking part of Switzerland. The research concluded that the frequency of immigrant youths’ contact

³⁵ EC (2016), Mapping of good practices relating to social inclusion of migrants through sport, Final report, p. 7, available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f1174f30-7975-11e6-b076-01aa75ed71a1>

³⁶ Makarova, E. and Herzog, W. (2014) *Sport as a means of immigrant youth integration: an empirical study of sports, intercultural relations, and immigrant youth integration in Switzerland*. Sportwissenschaft, 2014 44:1-9.



with Swiss peers during sports correlated significantly with their feeling of being integrated into Swiss society.

Overall, sports can be a very valuable resource in supporting migrants and refugees. But evidence suggests that their real value is only realized when they take place in a space that is safe and secure for all participants; are implemented along with other supporting activities; support refugees and migrants in decision-making which assist them in taking back the control of their life³⁷.

³⁷ Barker S., Bailey R., Stugovshchikova A, Jaeger T., Koennen K. & Lindell I., (2018), *ASPIRE Training Module*, p. 14, available at: https://www.aspiresport.eu/documents/181208_Training%20Module.pdf

Barriers concerning the participation of refugees/migrants and persons with disabilities in sports

Despite the fact that the role of sports in the promotion of social inclusion of refugees and migrants has been acknowledged by organizations and institutions around the world and that effort has been made to increase the number of initiatives in this direction, there are several societal and practical barriers that prevent the participation of migrants and refugees in sports.

Research into the sport barriers facing newly arrived populations suggest that they experience barriers that are different from those experienced by the general population, such as social isolation and language constraints³⁸. According to a qualitative study which was conducted in Melbourne, Australia³⁹, there are a number of barriers for refugee background young people joining mainstream clubs such as lack of knowledge of systems, gender norms, and competing family priorities (such as parents preferring their children to focus on education), while costs and transportation were seen as the key barriers to participation.

Furthermore, Oliff (2008) and Spaaij (2013) highlighted a series of personal, mediating and structural barriers that constrain the participation of refugee/asylum-seekers in sport, especially during the first period of their settlement in the host country, and influence the choices and preferences of those who are already participating. These barriers are presented below. Additional barriers have also been included.

³⁸ Blanchard A., (2018), More than a game? exploring sport's role in refugee and asylum-seeker settlement in Glasgow, Scotland, p. 39, available at: https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10315/35844/Blanchard_Alexandra_2018_MA.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y

³⁹ Block K. & Gibbs L. (2017), Promoting Social Inclusion through Sport for Refugee-Background Youth in Australia: Analysing Different Participation Models, Social Inclusion, Volume 5, Issue 2, p. 92, available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318031897_Promoting_Social_Inclusion_through_Sport_for_Refugee-Background_Youth_in_Australia_Analysing_Different_Participation_Models

Structural barriers

- Limited financial resources, which migrants and refugees consume, especially during the first period of the settlement in the host country, for meeting basic and more urgent needs;
- The costs for sports equipment (e.g. special wheelchairs, prostheses) are very high which hinders the participation of persons with disabilities in sport activities;
- Limited access to transportation, as well as to public spaces and facilities;
- Programmes are, in several cases, designed without taking into consideration the needs of the refugees and migrants, being characterised by a generic, non-inclusive and non-accessible approach and strategy;
- Projects cannot meet the long-term needs of the target group. The specific duration within which the activities of the project are being implemented and the lack of sustainable funding cannot support the sustainability and long-term impact of the project's results;
- Unclear referral mechanisms for linking refugee youth with sport activities;
- Lack of linkage between targeted one-off community events and sport clubs.

Mediating barriers

- Practices of sport providers can be non-inclusive and culturally insensitive;
- Resettlement difficulties;
- Lack or limited parental or guardian support;
- Lack of knowledge for certain sports;
- Experiencing racism and discrimination.

Personal barriers

- Lack or limited time commitment as a result of the need to allocate a significant portion of their time to work and other activities for meeting the needs of their family/improving their living standards.

Sport activities can only begin to have a real impact to the lives of refugees and migrants once such barriers are addressed, allowing for full participation in sport but also helping to facilitate fuller participation in society at large.

Concerning persons with disabilities, it is noted that despite the efforts made over recent years, they are still facing barriers with regard to the accessibility of sport playgrounds, sport equipment and other sport resources. It is a fact that infrastructural and technical barriers, as well as social barriers, such as stereotypes and prejudice⁴⁰, continue to affect their engagement in sport activities. According to the 2018 Eurobarometer “Sport and Physical Activity”⁴¹, 14% of the respondents replied that their disability or illness prevent them from participating in sport or physical activities. The greater difficulty appears to be the access to sports facilities and to clubs.

Inclusion is a challenge for the entire community and as it becomes obvious, more targeted action from all relevant stakeholders and authorities is needed to overcome these challenges and facilitate the access of persons with disabilities to sport activities.

⁴⁰Quintanilla C. (2016), *Sport for all: a bridge to equality, integration and social inclusion*, provisional version, Council of Europe, p. 10.

⁴¹ EC (2018), Sport and physical activity, Special Eurobarometer 472, p.5, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/2018/new-eurobarometer-sport-and-physical-activity_en

Section 3: Key elements for the inclusion of migrants/ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities in and through sport

Over the last decades, several efforts have been made and are currently underway with the aim to increase the participation of refugees, migrants, ethnic minorities as well as persons with disabilities in and through sport activities. These efforts concerns programmes and projects implemented (or are currently under implementation) by various relevant stakeholders, including national, federal, regional and local organisations, as well as sport clubs/organisations and organisations of the civil society.

Yet, the implementation of projects and initiatives targeting specifically migrants and refugees with disabilities, and in particular young people with disabilities, is still very limited and much work is needed to be made in this direction. Projects which targeted refugees, migrants, ethnic minorities as well as persons with disabilities can provide evidence as to the key aspects that need to be taken into consideration when designing or implementing projects and initiatives targeting refugees and migrants with disabilities, and in particular young people with disabilities. The section aims to present examples of corporal strategies at regional and/or national level and a number of key elements that are necessary for the design and implementation of relevant programmes, projects and initiatives, which contributed to the promotion of the social inclusion of migrants and refugees with disabilities in and through sports.

Overall, one of the most important aspects of these programmes and initiatives were the development of partnerships and networks, as a means for increasing the engagement of refugees and migrants in sport activities. Such collaborations allowed the adoption of a more holistic approach. Indeed, a key factor for the success of these programmes and initiatives was the cooperation and mobilisation of organisations offering not only sport activities to the target groups, but also services which facilitated their inclusion in the host society. This inclusion process aimed to give the opportunity to migrants and refugees to participate in club-based sporting activities, but also to build their competences and social networks, which eventually will enable them to interact with greater meaning, understanding and success in other contexts within the host society, e.g. in school, family and employment. Thus, sports are used as part of a broader and more complex set of processes designed to engage, “empower,” and integrate refugees and forced migrants.

Additionally, the exchange of experiences among various stakeholders and the implementation of dissemination activities with the aim to combat discrimination, raise

awareness as to the challenges faced by migrants and refugees and the role of sports in facilitating their inclusion, was also an important part in several relevant good practices.

- **Cooperation among stakeholders**

Research suggests that in order to increase the participation of migrants and refugees in sport clubs and organisations, it is essential to foster the cooperation among various stakeholders, including social partners, migrant and minority organisations, sports clubs and the media. A lack of cooperation among stakeholders can lead to fragmented initiatives and interventions, without achieving the desired sustainable results. Good practices in the field has showed that a close collaboration among stakeholders, engaged in different areas, would allow overcoming the multiple barriers that migrants and refugees are facing, including the widespread discrimination.

One of the more characteristic barriers that migrants and refugees are facing is the lack or limited knowledge of the native language. This is a particularly important obstacle in their involvement as a trainer or volunteer or when they are interested to assume administrative or managerial roles in which a very good knowledge of the native language is required. Thus, collaboration of sports clubs and organisations with other partners, such as language schools or organisations offering language courses to refugees and migrants is essential in this respect. Another example of the importance of collaboration is among the sports clubs/organisations and the migrants' and refugees' related agencies and organisations, which facilitates the information sharing and the process of attracting migrants and refugees in sport activities.

Such practices have ensured the collaboration of umbrella sports organisations with local clubs, as well as the collaboration of sports clubs and organisations with a wide range of stakeholders, including national, regional and local agencies working in the area of inclusion of migrants and refugees, NGOs and other social partners, schools, etc.

A good practice of collaboration among various stakeholders was the project "Empower Refugees with Para Sports" which was funded under the Erasmus+ programme. The project aimed at developing further the Paralympic awareness program for refugees and asylum seekers and asylum seekers with disabilities. The key activities were as follows:

- Communication and cooperation with other National Paralympic Committees and organization of a seminar for exchanging knowledge;

- Networking with national agencies related to refugees and asylum seekers; with sport agencies related to sports and para sports; and agencies related to volunteers;
- Organization of meetings with refugees with disabilities;
- Implementation of Paralympic awareness programs targeting refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities;
- Organization of para sports training programs for refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities;
- Participation of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities in national and international sport competitions.

The experience of the implementation of the project indicated that the involvement of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities in para sports can be improved through the cooperation of relevant stakeholders and the active engagement of the target group. The project resulted in an increased numbers of refugees and asylum seekers involved in para sports and the accumulation of knowledge and "know how" for European NPCs to organize similar future projects in their countries.

Two additional good practices of cooperation among various stakeholders are presented below.

Title	Willkommen im Fußball (Welcome to Football)
Implementing organisations	Bundesliga Foundation
Target group	Young refugees up to the age of 27
Content	<p>Under this programme, professional football clubs build alliances with local amateur clubs as well as with organisations offering social and educational services. In these alliances, migrants can join amateur football clubs in open football trainings. Professional football clubs provide general assistance to the amateur clubs, while organisations provide social and educational services to the refugees such as language classes, tours and entertainment activities.</p> <p>Overall, the participation of refugees in the sport, social and educational activities enhances their social inclusion in the local community.</p>
Source	https://www.sportanddev.org/en/article/news/sportanddevorg-attend-willkommen-im-fussball-conference

Title	Sport with Muslim girls and young women
Implementing organisations	Youth Sport Lower Saxony
Target group	Migrants / ethnic minorities / Women
Content	<p>The project has been developed and implemented through the cooperation of representatives of the mosque, the advice centre for inclusion and migration issues and the sport club.</p> <p>In particular, the project foresees a regular sport programme which takes place in an area in the mosque after the Saturday Quran lessons. The participants are divided in groups and engage in the following activities: gymnastic warm-up exercises, self-defense techniques, body awareness, dance, fitness and strength training.</p>
Source	https://www.lsb-niedersachsen.de

RECOMMENDATION 1: Development of a National Framework and strategies for the inclusion of migrants and refugees in and through sports

In order to overcome the fragmented nature of the efforts implementing to attract and increase the participation of migrants and refugees in sports activities, we propose that all key stakeholders and actors involved in the sport sector need to achieve a higher level of interaction and networking through different forms of collaboration. In this context, Member States need to develop comprehensive National Frameworks for the inclusion of migrants and refugees in and through sports, which will make specific reference to persons with disabilities, including young, and be coherent with the EU legislative framework, Recommendations and guidelines in the related areas. Such a Framework could include the establishment of multi-agency working groups that will promote cross-disciplinary planning of and collaboration, consisting of representatives from relevant government departments, sports organisations, voluntary bodies, disability organisations and migrant and refugees' organisations. In addition, it could include guidelines for the design and implementation of relevant policies and measures, establishing or proposing funding mechanisms and linking sports with other national, regional and local policies.

- **Raising awareness on the importance of sports in the promotion of social inclusion**

As research suggests, discrimination and intolerance against migrants and refugees is still persistent in the European society, impacting significantly their daily life, including their participation in sport activities.

Taking this into account, it becomes obvious that implementing raising awareness activities for combatting discrimination as well as raising awareness activities concerning the role of sports in promoting the social inclusion of refugees/migrants and of persons with disabilities is crucial. Such activities need to target both sports clubs/organisations and the migrants' and refugees' communities as this will make the sport environment more accessible and integrative on one hand, and on the other it will facilitate the attraction of more refugees and migrants, including persons with disabilities in sports.

A review of projects and initiatives implemented or are currently under implementation for promoting the inclusion of refugees and migrants in and through sports clearly indicates that specific emphasis is given on the organization of raising awareness activities targeting not only the refugees' and migrants' communities but also related stakeholders. An indicative good example of raising awareness among relevant stakeholders and the target group is the project BOSSI implemented by Liikkukaa⁴². Liikkukaa started implementing the project in 2005 by collecting and distributing information about migration and sports in Finland. Initially the project was funded by the European Refugee Fund but later on was funded also by the Ministry of Education and Culture. It addresses three target groups, i.e. a) (municipal) administration, b) sport clubs and federations, and c) migrants and their own sport clubs. The aim of the project is to increase the knowledge regarding the benefits of participation in sports in the integration of migrants, as well as the challenges of multicultural sports.

⁴² <https://www.etnoliga.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Sport-For-Dialogue.pdf>

Another good practice of raising awareness is presented below.

Title	SPORT CLUB FC ENTE BAGDAD (DUCK BAGDAD)
Implementing organisations	Sport Club FC Ente Bagdad (Duck Bagdad)
Target group	People with migrant backgrounds, especially women
Focused on migrant and refugees with disabilities	No
Content	<p>Sport Club FC Ente Bagdad (Duck Bagdad) is a base camp sport club of the German Olympic Sport Confederation in the federal program “Integration Through Sport”. The project aims at the promotion the equal treatment of all people. In this respect, the sports club developed its own set of rules which contribute to the intercultural learning and mutual understanding among groups with different cultural background.</p> <p>Moreover, the club also participates in public events, promoting the value of diversity and the respective role of sports and other social organisations.</p>
Source	https://www.ente-bagdad.de/

RECOMMENDATION 2: Adopting inclusive strategies and approaches for increasing participation and quality experiences

Sport should be considered an environment in which both disabled and non-disabled people can gain opportunity for participation, friendship, enjoyment and success, as well as develop other skills that will enhance many areas of daily life. In this respect, sport organizations and clubs need to adopt an inclusive approach/strategy which will facilitate the attraction and participation of refugees and migrants with disabilities in the activities of the club/organisation. Below are some proposals on how to become an inclusive club:

- Be aware and respectful of different cultures and religions;
- Be open to diversity and learning: learning about the countries of origin, the sports that are most common in these countries, etc. can facilitate the design of inclusive activities such as mini world cup tournaments, multicultural club open days;
- Provide raising cultural awareness, diversity and inclusion training to club leaders and club members;
- Make the organization/club a safe, welcoming place: Foresee rewards for inclusion practices and penalties for anti-inclusion and discrimination practices;
- Include migrant and refugees as volunteers as well as on managerial positions;
- Ensure that the club reflects the diversity of the wider community;
- Organise cultural events, as well as community activities which will strengthen the understanding among refugees and migrants and the host community;
- Adopt and apply a flexible uniform policy;
- Provide sports equipment as well as other support (e.g. transportation) to refugees and migrants.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Implement raising awareness campaigns

It is crucial to implement wide awareness and information campaigns at national, regional and local level. These campaigns should:

- reflect the diversity of the population; highlight the challenges faced by refugees and migrants and in particular by persons with disabilities; and promote the role of sports in the inclusion of refugees and migrants, with a particular focus on persons with disabilities.
- provide information regarding sport facilities and opportunities. In this context, informational kiosks in the Reception Centers could be established, which will provide all necessary information to the target groups on where and how to participate in sport and physical activities.
- increase the awareness of sport systems and organizations of their local/grassroots organizations and clubs and ensure that information about the sport organisations and programmes are easily accessible and available in different formats and languages.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Use the media for raising awareness

The lack of disability awareness, information and knowledge accounts for many of the barriers that persons with disabilities are facing. In this context, media can play a vital role in changing stereotypes and attitudes. The organisation of workshops and seminars targeting journalists focusing on the challenges and barriers that migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (and in particular the displaced persons with disabilities) are facing, along with guidelines on the use of appropriate language without prejudice when describing the athletes of various cultures, can be of particular importance in this respect.

Coverage in mainstream media could:

- cultivate inclusion, promote and reproduce role models and mentors;
- promote players and champions with a disability.

- **Sport activities and accompanying services**

It is widely acknowledged that refugees and migrants have multiple needs and several barriers have to be dealt in order to promote their inclusion in and through sports. In particular, as stated in the previous section, factors such as the lack of knowledge concerning the sports opportunities and the sports clubs, the requirements and process to be registered in the sports clubs/organisations, the lack/limited knowledge of the native language, etc, hinder the participation of refugees and migrants in sports. However, over recent years, projects and initiatives have identified such challenges and attempted to overcome them by designing and implementing activities that will provide support to refugees and migrants at various areas, such as language courses, legal assistance, information and raising awareness campaigns for promoting the role of sports in social inclusion, information concerning welfare issues, etc.

A good practice of providing sport activities and accompanying services is the “Refugee Cricket Project”⁴³ which is being implemented by the Refugee Council and Cricket for Change (part of The Change Foundation) in the United Kingdom. In particular, the initiative aims at enhancing/building cricket skills, while it also offers a space where migrants can interact and develop their social network. Additionally, alongside cricket, the initiative provides support and advice to children throughout the week in relation to their asylum claims and welfare needs. Advice is offered about relevant processes while staff accompanies clients to meetings with solicitors and social workers. Staff also attends asylum appeal hearings and provides support on other issues as well such as securing places in schools or colleges.

Moreover, the initiative offers a range of activities designed to support children and young people’s wellbeing and development, such as support with homework, preparing communal meals, access to further and higher education, using the internet and social media safely, form completion and safety in the streets.

⁴³ <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/projects/refugee-cricket-project/>

Another example of provision of multilevel support is presented below.

Title	Sport Integration Qualification (SIQ)
Implementing organisations	Caritas Styria
Target group	Migrant youth: refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (aged 5-21)
Content	The programme implements leisure and sports activities (e.g., sports tournaments, adventure days) and provides assistance in qualifications or jobs in sport. It also provides the opportunity to young people to participate in other activities as well which improves their language skills and expand their social networks. Finally, the programme organizes workshops and panel discussions on themes which are related to social integration.
Source	https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f1174f30-7975-11e6-b076-01aa75ed71a1

RECOMMENDATION 5: Adopting participatory approaches

Participatory approaches for the development of policies and strategies are needed, as it will allow refugees and migrants with disabilities not only to express their needs but to take active role in the design of relevant activities. Consultation with the local communities, with people with disabilities, disability organisations and migrants and refugees' organisations can lead to the design of activities that meet the specific needs of the target groups and of the local community. Such activities can bring together people with and without disabilities and have a real impact in the lives of the target groups and in the promotion of their inclusion.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Take into account the personal challenges of refugees and migrants with disabilities

- Persons with disabilities face more barriers to participation than non-disabled people. Their level of attendance may not be a matter of choice but may be limited by factors such as access to transport, availability of a personal assistant, etc. In this context, it would be beneficial to design supportive activities.
- The possibility of traumatic experiences should be taken into consideration and supporting mechanisms and procedures should be taken in place; cooperation with relevant professionals and organisations should be established as part of such procedures and mechanisms.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Provide additional support where and when necessary

Apart from sport activities, it may be necessary to provide additional, supporting activities which will facilitate their participation in sport activities. These could include:

- Provide accompanying services such as language courses, job related support or other activities that the community consider important for the facilitation of their settlement and inclusion.
- Collaborate with interpreters who will attend games and programs, meetings and trainings.
- Provide support related to the participation fees, transportation costs or means, etc.
- Connect families with organizations that provide sports equipment.
- Make subsidy information accessible by sharing it with all families; inform them about municipal and other state programmes that provide subsidies to residents in financial need so as to access recreational programs.
- Offer free programs when possible.
- Provide support to initiatives/projects proposed by migrants and refugees' communities aimed at the promotion of inclusion of persons with disabilities in and through sports.

- **Volunteerism and membership of migrants and refugees in sports clubs/organisations**

Overall, Europe has a strong tradition of volunteering. However, despite the fact that voluntary activities in sport are among the most popular forms of social activity in Europe, migrants and refugees are underrepresented in volunteering positions in sports. According to a survey conducted in 10 European countries under the project “Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe” (SIVCSE), only 4.1% of volunteers in sports clubs are migrants. In addition to this, it is noted that the same applies when it comes to their membership in sports clubs.

Two of the main reasons for this are the lack of knowledge concerning relevant opportunities and the discrimination that refugees and migrants are experiencing. Discrimination can be either direct, i.e. rejecting someone’s application, or indirect as is the case of existence of the ‘glass ceiling’. The latter prevents migrants and refugees from participating in sports clubs/organisations in managerial positions (at least to a certain extent).

Yet, volunteering in sports and acquiring managing positions can have a positive impact on the inclusion of migrants and refugees, and in particular of persons with disabilities, in and through sports.

Several initiatives and projects have identified this positive impact and facilitated the participation of refugees and migrants not only in volunteering positions but also in administrative positions. Such an example is presented below.

Title	SPORT CLUB URANIA E.V. WOMEN SPORT INTERNATIONALLY
Implementing organisations	Sport Club Urania e.V. is a base camp sport club of the German Olympic Sport Confederation.
Target group	People with migrant backgrounds, especially women.
Content	<p>The initiative aims at the provision of special bike and swimming courses to women with migrant background, as a means for enabling their active participation in life.</p> <p>One of the most important aspects of the project is that it involves migrant women in the club’s work, while women can also become members of the club’s board. Through these activities and engagement the women get new contacts and opportunities for their start in Germany.</p>
Source	https://www.scurania.de/

RECOMMENDATION 8: Make use of role models and volunteers

- Promote the participation of refugees and migrants in volunteering positions. Professional training to volunteers should also be provided as an option.
- Promote the role of ‘advocates’ (i.e. those who have taken part and benefitted from the activities) with the aim to advertise programmes and attract people which are difficult to reach.

- **Capacity building of coaches, professionals and volunteers**

The role of coaches and facilitators for the successful participation of refugees and migrants with disabilities in sports, and in particular for young persons with disabilities is of high importance. Indeed, well-trained coaches, professionals and volunteers are the cornerstone for the successful implementation of sport activities and the retention of the target group in the activities.

However, bibliography suggests that there seems to be a lack of essential competencies such as intercultural (knowledge, skills and attitudes) among coaches, professionals and volunteers. To this end, research has indicated that recruiting coaches, professionals and volunteers from the local community can ensure to a higher degree the success and sustainability of the outcomes of relevant initiatives and programmes. Overall, the ideal characteristics of coaches can be summarised as follows⁴⁴:

- Approachability;
- Ability to communicate well;
- Ability to show the way forward in the sport and in life;
- Professionalism in their work;
- Integrity;
- Knowledge and training in psychosocial and life skills.

Especially with regard to the latter, it is important to understand that coaches usually play a dual role: on one hand the role of trainer and on the other hand the role of social worker. Therefore it is crucial that coaches possess the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfil this dual role. Coaches' ability to identify and support young people who need personalised attention is critical to achieving the desired outcomes.

In the case of coaches, professionals and volunteers working with refugees and migrants in particular, it is noted that capacity building programmes are implemented with the aim to develop their intercultural skills. Such a good practice is the programme "Fit for Diversity", which is a part of the Integration through Sport framework in Germany.

The programme "Integration through Sport" is implemented at federal level by the federal states sports federations. In 2015 the programme extended its target group

⁴⁴ UNHCR, Sport for Protection Toolkit: Programming with Young People in Forced Displacement Settings, p. 69, available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/manuals/5d35a7bc4/sport-for-protection-toolkit.html>

beyond migrants and refugees could also benefit from the programme. The goal of the programme is to promote integration in sport, integration through sport into society; provide support to sports organisations; promote voluntary commitment and intercultural opening; and strengthen the role of sport as a means for the promotion of social inclusion.

The programme increases the knowledge of sports organisations and facilitators on the issues related to intercultural diversity using the well acknowledged tool “Fit for Diversity” which pursues the following objectives⁴⁵:

- awareness-raising of trainers,
- training supervisors and managers of sports organisations for cultural differences
- extension of intercultural competences
- transfer of experiences in daily activities of sports clubs
- integration of family members of target groups.

⁴⁵ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/sport-migrant-integration-directory/federal-programme-integration-through-sport->

Another good example of providing capacity building to relevant professionals is the “ASPIRE Sport” project.

Title	ASPIRE Sport
Implementing organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ENGSO – the European Sports NGO ○ ENGSO Youth ○ European Lotteries ○ International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE) ○ Council of Europe / Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) ○ European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE) ○ Bulgarian Union for Physical Culture and Sports (BUPCS), Bulgaria ○ Catalan Union of Sports Federations (UFEC), Spain ○ Finnish Olympic Committee, Finland ○ German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB), Germany ○ Serbian Olympic Committee, Serbia ○ Swedish Sports Confederation (RF), Sweden ○ Caritas akademie, Austria ○ Minor-Ndako, Belgium ○ Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sport (General Secretariat of Sport), Greece ○ Sport Vlaanderen, Belgium
Target group	Migrants/ ethnic minorities
Focused on migrant and refugees with disabilities	No
Content	<p>The aim of the project was to establish how sports clubs can support the inclusion of migrants and refugees by creating opportunities to participate in sport activities and community life through sport. To achieve this aim, a specialised Training Module for people that wish to make their sport or their sports setting more inclusive to people from different backgrounds was developed.</p> <p>The Training Module gives a general description of the situation regarding migration, talks about</p>

	<p>the benefits of conscious conversations between cultures, and describes some of the psychological issues that refugees may face and how sport and sports settings can help them deal with those issues. Finally, the module presents how sports clubs and organisations can start the journey towards being more inclusive. The manual consists of practical tips and exercises, along with basic facts and theory.</p> <p>After having been tested by the project partners, the Training Module was implemented through National Training Sessions in 9 European Countries – Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Serbia, Spain and Sweden.</p>
Source	https://www.aspiresport.eu/project/details

RECOMMENDATION 9: Organise capacity building activities for coaches, professionals and volunteers

Taken into account the importance of the role of coaches, professionals and volunteers in the successful delivery of sports activities in refugees and migrants with disabilities, it is proposed that capacity building activities should be organized for meeting the needs, challenges and potential expectations of the target groups. In this respect the following could be made:

- Development of disability and intercultural awareness modules which should be included in education and training programmes targeting those who design and deliver sport programmes.
- Implementation of formal and informal education and training for organisations, sports associations, public authorities and individuals on the basis of the disability and intercultural awareness modules.
- Organisation of cooperative training initiatives between Disability Sport Organisations, ‘Mainstream Sport Organisations’ and Organisations of/for migrants and refugees with the support of training providers and public authorities.
- Delivery of educational courses on sports that is common in the countries of origin of the migrants and refugees. Organisation of information and training sessions targeting the communities of migrants and refugees, and in particular for the newcomers, with the aim to help families understand the sport system and opportunities.

- **Funding**

Funding is a crucial factor for all types of interventions and projects, especially when it comes to achieving sustainable results. In the area of sports, funding can have a significant impact not only on the amount of activities that can be implemented but also on the type of activities, taking into account that vulnerable groups and in particular refugees and migrants might not be able to contribute financially for their participation in the sports activities.

Overall, thus far, the implementation of sports activities has been funded by various sources. State funding is an important source for all types of sports activities, especially for sports activities targeting persons with disabilities. Another significant source is European Union grants which, over recent years have supported numerous projects targeting refugees and migrants. The increased amount of EU funding over recent years can be attributed, at least to a certain degree, to the differences among the EU Member States as to the level of the national funding of interventions for refugees and migrants. In Central and Eastern European countries for example, opportunities are rather limited due to the small allocation of resources in the sports area and the social inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities. Thus, in countries where national policies and programmes for promoting the social inclusion in and through sports are limited or missing, one can identify a dependence on EU funding. The above mentioned clearly highlight the need for sustainable, multi-channel funding which will ensure better and sustainable results.

A good example of multi-channel funding is the FEFA (Football – Studies – Families – Anderlecht) project in Belgium⁴⁶. The project started in 2005 with the aim to promote the development, integration, and coexistence of young people from different origins through the practice of football and the implementation of the values that underpin this sport. In addition, the project provides academic support for young people and psychosocial support for them and their families.

Concerning its funding, which amounts at approximately €200.000 per year, it is noted that several stakeholders support financially the implementation of the project. In particular, the salaries of the employees and operating costs are provided by the Municipality of Anderlecht; the administrative costs (for the Belgian Football Federation) are covered by RSC Anderlecht Football Club; the “Homework school” is supported and organised by Athénée Royal “Leonardo da Vinci” school and the

⁴⁶ <https://fefab.be/?lang=en>

operating costs of the “Homework school” (teachers volunteers, material, books, etc.) are provided by COCOF.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Multi-channel funding and evaluation

The design and implementation of relevant policies and strategies need to foresee sustainable funding. Funding is clearly linked to the continuation and long-term sustainability of interventions and thus it plays a crucial role in succeeding tangible long-term results. Whether programs are delivered through community, settlement or sporting bodies, a funding stream should be created for grants that support different participation models (e.g. improved access to mainstream, ethno-specific clubs, settlement workers delivering programs in partnership with sporting bodies, or multicultural programs).

Such a funding stream should take into consideration the realistic resources required to plan, develop and deliver effective programs. In this context, consultation with key stakeholders at a national, regional and level to consider the most appropriate funding model should be taken into consideration.

The evaluation of any relevant intervention, both in terms of technical and financial implementation, is also crucial. The evaluation throughout the life course of the intervention is necessary as it will allow the identification of potential risks and provide the evidence for the design of appropriate mitigation steps. In this context, the role and contribution of all those involved in the implementation of the interventions is essential. The participation thus in the evaluation activities of the target groups, of the implementing organizations as well as of the managing authorities is essential. In this context, it is also proposed the establishment of cooperation with Universities and research centers for the purpose of designing and conducting specific research, creating tools for planning and evaluation of the interventions, training personnel, and producing documentation and other tools for production and dissemination of knowledge.

Concluding remarks

Research suggests that sport plays a significant role and is a highly appreciated tool to favour the inclusion of refugees in Europe by relevant authorities and organisations⁴⁷. It provides a safe and supportive environment which helps the refugees to build relationships, share values, transmit knowledge, and enhance the sense of belonging. As a result, several efforts have been made and can be identified at national, regional and local level by national authorities, sports organisations, NGOs, as well as volunteer bodies.

A rapid review of the relevant research and literature suggests that many European countries apply a centralized approach when it comes to the design and implementation of relevant interventions, while other Member States have adopted a decentralized approach. As to the content of these interventions, a significant number of the good examples presented in this manual, includes not only sport activities, but additional activities such as raising awareness, training, educational course, etc, aiming at the provision of a more holistic support to the target groups. In addition, it is worth mentioning that in several EU Member States, nationwide initiatives have been undertaken by national sport associations with the aim to increase the participation of refugees and migrants in football.

Yet, regardless of the type of approach that each Member States adopt, and the positive impact of the initiatives presented in this manual, it is noted that further efforts are needed. With regard to refugees and migrants with disabilities, it is noted that the lack of relevant data hinders any effort to design and implement activities that will promote their inclusion in and through sports. The identification of persons with disabilities at the reception centres is essential as is the case of the dialogue with them which will provide the evidence concerning their particular needs and the respective interventions that need to be designed.

⁴⁷ De Fraguier N. (2018), *Sport as a vehicle of social inclusion for Refugees in Europe*, p. 34, available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324773739_Sport_as_a_vehicle_of_social_inclusion_for_Refugees_in_Europe



This manual aims to highlight the positive relation between sports and social inclusion and present good practices of social inclusion of migrants and refugees in and through sports.

In this Manual, good practice examples are gathered on the inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities in and through sport as well as the inclusion of person (including youth) with Disabilities. It also presents examples of corporal strategies for inclusion in and through sport on the national or the regional level and it analyzes different Participation Models.



WEBSITE <https://www.steady-project.eu/>

MAIL steady@paralympic.gr

FACEBOOK | TWITTER | LINKEDIN

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