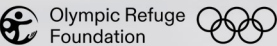


CITIES, SPORT AND INCLUSION

A Policy Plan to Support Displaced Communities



This policy brief was conceived and developed under the guidance of the ORF Think Tank



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1

WHY SPORT?



For those trying to rebuild their lives in a new city, sport is an opportunity to meet new people and make new friends, connect with a city's public spaces, improve physical and mental health, learn the language or dialect of a new host community, and access employment opportunities. Sport is also known to be a protective factor against negative coping mechanisms for those who have experienced crisis or adversity.¹

Displaced young people² who join a sports team, ride a bike to school or work, or participate in activities such as running, yoga or hiking experience benefits that can help determine their future health, livelihood and independence.

Combined, these factors make displaced young people's participation in sport and physical activity an effective determinant of inclusion in their host communities.

¹ Goodram et al. 2015; IASC 2020

² For the purpose of this policy brief, displaced young people include refugees, internally displaced persons and asylum seekers aged 15-24. Migrant youth are an adjacent demographic with many overlapping needs and circumstances.

2

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY BRIEF



This policy brief highlights common municipal opportunities to leverage sport to enhance existing settlement and inclusion processes. It offers practical guidance on how cities can best enable displaced young people and local residents to benefit from engaging with sport, resulting in better outcomes for the whole community.

For cities considering hosting a major sporting event (MSE), this brief also examines the intersection of MSEs and displacement, as well as the role of legacy in shaping positive community outcomes.

3 THE CHALLENGE



Globally, and contrary to many perceptions, a substantial majority of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), often more than 60%, reside in urban areas, as opposed to camp-based settings^{3,4}, although the exact proportion can vary by region and crisis. Cities and municipalities play a critical role in fostering cohesion, equity and opportunities.

Despite the accepted benefits of participation in sport and physical activity, young people with lived experience of displacement often face barriers to such participation. These may include unemployment, prejudice and discrimination, poor mental health (such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety and substance misuse), social isolation, economic disenfranchisement, gang involvement, rules and regulations for sports participation, and a lack of support

from immediate or extended family for their participation. As a result, cities are often not benefiting from this evidence-based approach to foster inclusion, and achieve intended outcomes for young people in their communities.



Figure: This policy brief aligns with and supports several SDGs.

For more information on the intersection of sport and the Sustainable Development Goals, see: Kazan Action Plan | UNESCO and Olympism365.

³ [City residents and urban refugees: from shared living to shared futures | The Global Compact on Refugees | UNHCR](#)

⁴ [Refugee camps versus urban refugees: what's been said – and done - World | ReliefWeb](#)

4

INTENDED AUDIENCE



The brief is intended for those in positions of responsibility in district and city governance and management, including within relevant city departments (such as community development, parks, design, social and civic planning, education, etc.) whose decision-making capacity can enable better inclusion of displaced young people within their host communities.

The brief may also be of value for national governments, regional sporting bodies and line ministries, as well as athletes, sports clubs, community-based organisations and young people with lived experience of displacement engaged in implementation and advocacy around inclusion in and through sport.

5

HOW TO USE
THIS POLICY
BRIEF

The brief provides five recommendations for cities, municipalities and local government representatives seeking to use sport and physical activity to support the social inclusion of young people affected by displacement. Each recommendation includes specific suggestions for action, or concrete steps that local and municipal governments can take to implement the recommendation.

Actions are organised into three levels, corresponding to the capacity required to carry them out. Actions should be locally contextualised and built upon; they are not prescriptive “one-size-fits-all” solutions.

Recommendations are accompanied by examples to demonstrate how they can be implemented and where this has happened before. Decision-makers can choose a “pathway to win” that follows one of the three levels across the recommendations, or choose to use different levels of action according to context and capacity in each recommendation area.

An organisational self-assessment is provided at the end of the document (Annex 1) to aid decision-makers and advocates in assessing capacity and opportunities in each area.



Resources may include funds, time, people (with relevant skills, experience and knowledge and/or who are responsible for sport or for the inclusion of displaced young people), and integration with a city corporation’s values, mission, vision and strategies.

Definition: This brief uses the terms displaced young people, young people with experience of displacement, and young people affected by displacement. These terms encompass refugees, non-registered and registered asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and those who have been repatriated to their home country (fewer than 5%). Young people affected by displacement can also include host community members.

6

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT



In 2023, an estimated 41 million young people aged 15-24 were forcibly displaced or stateless globally. Of these, around 11.4 million were internally displaced within the borders of their country of origin.^{5,6} Based on these figures, young people make up approximately 35% of the total number of people forcibly displaced worldwide, which is highly disproportionate when compared to the overall proportion of young people in the general population (approximately 16%).

“YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED BY FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND FACE CHALLENGES IN ACCESSING EDUCATION, DEVELOPING SKILLS AND ACHIEVING SELF-RELIANCE.”⁷

- (ILO 2024, p.2).⁸

INSIGHTS:



⁵ <https://www.unhabitatyouth.org/en/migration-and-displacement/>

⁶ International Labour Organization Office for the United Nations. (23 September 2024). Concept Note: Young Refugees' Participation, Leadership & Self-Reliance: The Future We Cannot Afford to Ignore, A Dialogue & Reception at the Summit of the Future. <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/child-and-young-migrants>

⁷ International Labour Organization Office for the United Nations. (23 September 2024). Concept Note: Young Refugees' Participation, Leadership & Self-Reliance: The Future We Cannot Afford to Ignore, A Dialogue & Reception at the Summit of the Future. <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/child-and-young-migrants>

⁸ <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2023> (page 3)

THE ROLE OF SPORT IN SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY DISPLACEMENT

Young people in these varied situations share common needs, including safety, access to basic necessities, healthcare, an opportunity to receive education, livelihood prospects and social belonging. For displaced young people in urban environments, their inclusion in society will determine whether they successfully complete schooling and whether they find meaningful employment⁹, setting them up to be engaged self-reliant members of their communities.¹⁰

Among young people affected by displacement, participation in sport is shown to improve mental health (including reducing stress and anxiety and improving overall well-being), as well as fostering social inclusion through opportunities for social connection, cultural understanding, and a sense of belonging.¹¹

Learning through play and sport-based activities can promote imagination, cooperation, confidence and inclusivity among displaced young people.^{12,13} Such benefits may extend to multiple generations within communities, as these young people influence their social networks and family contacts, who become secondary beneficiaries of sport and physical activities.

Ensuring that host community members can access the same services and activities as displaced young people helps foster mutual understanding, builds trust, breaks down cultural barriers, and encourages inclusive relationships. This shared access also reduces the risk of resentment and promotes equitable opportunities. Ultimately, inclusive approaches can strengthen resilience and support long-term integration for the entire community. When considering the implementation of the recommendations within this policy brief, ensure that host community members are included, alongside their counterparts affected by displacement.



⁹ [Evidence of the Link Between Inclusive Education and Social Inclusion: Final Summary Report](#)

¹⁰ [Local Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees: A Gateway to Existing Ideas, Resources and Capacities for Cities Across the World | Refworld](#)

¹¹ Global IRTS -Scientific Report (2025) available online [Integration of Refugees Through Sport](#)

¹² *ibid*

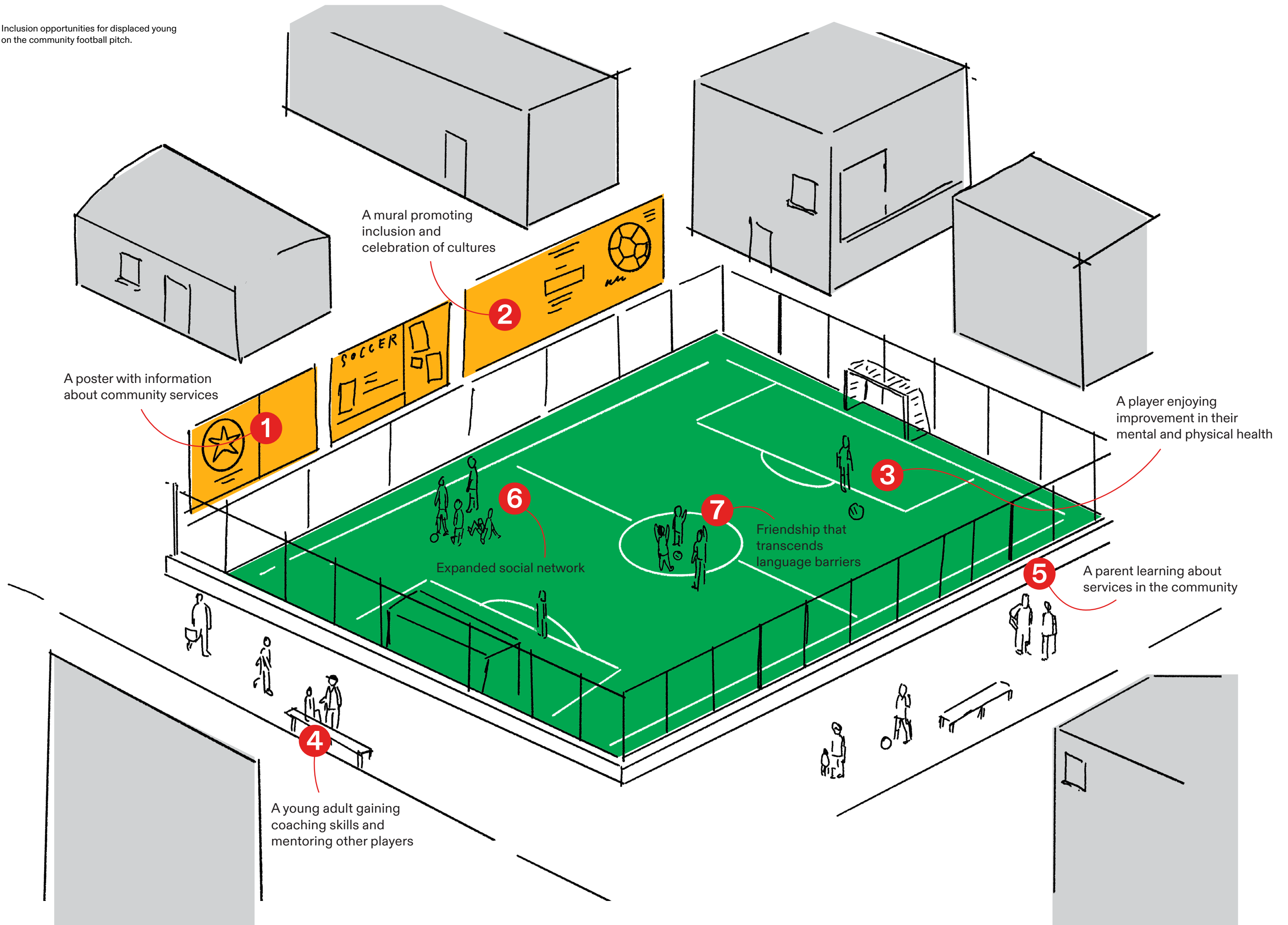
¹³ Lego Foundation. (2017). Learning through Play: a review of the evidence. Retrieved from: [learning-through-play_web.pdf](#)

“ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH ARE A VITAL POSITIVE FORCE IN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE. THEY HAVE WIDE-RANGING CAPACITIES AND UNIQUE NEEDS, BUT THEY OFTEN GET LOST BETWEEN PROGRAMMING FOR CHILDREN AND PROGRAMMING FOR ADULTS.”

- Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2020



Figure: Inclusion opportunities for displaced young people on the community football pitch.





EXAMPLE

A displaced young person with a sports background, in a context with robust services:

Gerald carried his passion for football with him when he made the perilous journey by boat from Cameroon to Italy aged 17. Thanks to the keen intuition of his settlement worker, who was aware of his passion for football, Gerald was introduced to a team of athletes with intellectual disabilities at a local Special Olympics football club. There, Gerald found himself warmly welcomed by the players in a way he had not yet experienced in his host community. Football transcended language, race and (dis-)ability and allowed him to embrace his new role as an assistant coach and advocate the rights of refugees and people with disabilities.

“FOOTBALL WAS AN ELEMENT THAT REALLY BOOSTED MY SELF-CONFIDENCE AND ENABLED ME TO INTEGRATE INTO THE WHOLE CITY WHERE I WAS LIVING [SETTIMO TORINESE...]”

-Gerald Mballe



SPORT PROVIDED ME A NATURAL WAY TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS, AND TO BUILD A SENSE OF BELONGING IN A NEW HOST COUNTRY, AND ALSO PLAYED A ROLE OF REFUGE TO MY PAINS.”

-Gerald Mballe

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES TO INCLUSION AND THE USE OF SPORT FOR CITIES IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

Countries and cities in all parts of the world may face challenges in integrating displaced populations, as existing systems are often under pressure.

While cities in high-income countries typically have larger municipal budgets and systems in place for formal recreation activities and facilities and to help accommodate and welcome new residents, challenges to inclusion in sport for displaced young people can nonetheless arise from the scarcity of open and safe public spaces, overcrowded formal facilities, stretched human resources or a need for cultural sensitivity training, as well as the broader social attitudes around welcoming displaced people.

In lower-income settings, financial challenges facing urban centres may represent a more significant barrier when it comes to providing services to newcomers, especially when municipalities are struggling to meet the needs of their already established residents. Sprawl and informality in urban centres create barriers to accessing services for displaced communities. Traditional city services are often not readily accessible, and options such as free or subsidised public transport can be limited or absent.

During times of political or economic fragility, host countries can face even more challenges when it comes to accepting refugee communities. This can arise in cities in all high-, middle- and low-income countries when the political climate is tense or unstable, for example during elections, recessions and regional or domestic conflicts.

However, in urban environments across the globe, embracing inclusion presents an opportunity to view this integration not only as an ethical and human rights imperative, but also as a way to enrich communities through cultural diversity and expanded workforce capacity.

In practice, a city or country's resources alone do not determine how effectively they can support displaced young people. Several factors are at play, and these span economic and social considerations.

MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS AND DISPLACEMENT

Major sporting events (MSEs) bring excitement, economic opportunity and space to accelerate social innovation and inclusion programmes that benefit host communities and capture global attention. But they can also lead to unintended consequences, one of which can be the displacement of local populations and vulnerable communities. It is important for event organisers and city planners to recognise and consider this reality, taking proactive measures to mitigate harm by using a rights-based approach to event planning.

KEY ACTIONS:

Community collaboration: Engage local residents in decision-making processes to balance event needs and future opportunities with community welfare, ensuring the voices of those affected by displacement are included

Inclusion: Create employment or volunteer opportunities in and around the sports event, specifically for people affected by displacement

Legacy: Consider how displaced communities can influence the planning of and access the event's legacy programmes

If you're interested in learning more about how MSEs can contribute to displacement and ways to prevent harm, please consult:

- [Frontiers | Sport Mega-Events and Displacement of Host Community Residents: A Systematic Review](#)
- [The displacement effects of sports mega-events and large-scale tourism infrastructure development](#)
- [Mega-sporting events must not undermine human rights | OHCHR](#)
- [Child Rights and Mega-Sport Events Toolkit | Centre for Sport and Human Rights](#)



7

DEVELOPMENT OF THIS POLICY BRIEF

This policy brief highlights common municipal opportunities to enable displaced young people to benefit from engaging with sport, and offers practical guidance on leveraging sport to enhance and support existing settlement and inclusion processes.

The recommendations were developed from a comprehensive desk review and a series of semi-structured interviews with 16 key informants in low-, middle- and high-income countries. Five of these interviews were with people with lived experience of displacement.¹⁴

The key informant group was composed of programme implementers, public servants working for municipal governments, practitioners from sports federations and sport for development programmes, athletes, advocates with lived experience of displacement, and members of the [ORF Think Tank](#). A glossary of key terms can be found in Annex 2.

ENGAGEMENT OF PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

This project was guided by two advisors with lived experience who provided pointed feedback at key junctures in the policy brief development process. In alignment with guidelines for an equitable research process, key informants and advisors with lived experience were compensated for their time at an hourly rate commensurate with that of the project consultants.

¹⁴ Interviews were conducted in English, recorded and then transcribed in September and October 2024. The Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF) selected key informants from its networks.

8

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.

Integrate sport, physical activities and cultural programmes into the settlement process for displaced young people.

3.

Provide sustainable support for locally managed initiatives to use sport as a tool for inclusion for displaced young people.

5.

Commit to strategic partnerships, frameworks and regional or international agreements that support displaced young people in participating in sport and physical activities.

2.

Support welcoming, accessible public play and sporting spaces in host communities to better include displaced young people.

4.

Inspire service providers across multiple sectors to be inclusive and supportive of young people with lived experiences of displacement, in and through sport.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Integrate sport, physical activities and cultural programmes into the settlement process for displaced young people.

LEVEL 1

fewer resources and one part-time or full-time person

LEVEL 2

some resources and a dedicated team or committee

LEVEL 3

significant resources and coordination among departments

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Sport and physical activity can support displaced young people at each step of the settlement process in a host community, whether formalised and managed by a particular government department or organisation, or through an informal process where the young person exerts their own agency and takes centre stage in their own inclusion.

Language learning is usually a priority for cities when people are being received or resettled, and sport can play a valuable role as a natural language-learning forum.

Young people with experience of displacement need information about what opportunities exist for them to get involved, whether these are free, and how to get to the location where the activity is taking place.

“I think when we talk about integration, it’s not only the language and the culture, it’s also having a network. If you play a team sport such as football, there in your team you could meet the real estate agent who will find your flat. You will meet a lawyer or legal expert who will help you solve some administration issues.”

- Sébastien Griesmar, Director, Lausanne, Olympic Capital Foundation, Switzerland.

HOW DOES THIS WORK IN PRACTICE?

LEVEL 1

Share information about available sports and recreational opportunities for displaced young people, in clear, accessible language and in age-sensitive formats

- Encourage settlement agencies and support services to inform displaced young people about existing opportunities to access and participate in sport and physical activity in their communities.
- In deciding the medium of communication, consider those living with disabilities, and those who are hard to reach (due to internet connectivity barriers, remote locations, language barriers, a lack of devices, etc.). Consider advocates and spokespeople, SMS notifications, business cards or brochures, and posters. Advertisements on public transport, radio and TV can inform people about opportunities to get involved in sports or physical activity as participants, volunteers or spectators.
- Ensure terms used in communication materials are relevant to displaced young people. Instead of using general terms like “games”, “exercise” or “physical activity”, be specific about which sports and activities people are being invited to join to appeal to the widest group. Consider which types of sport may be more familiar to the population(s) you are working with.
- In higher-resource settings, a social worker or liaison can take on the role of connecting the individual with sport and physical activity opportunities. In lower resourced settings, mass communication and advertising can help people exert their own agency and self-select for participation.

“My whole life is physical activity – everywhere you go is uphill – you can’t really talk to someone and say ‘do more sport.’”

- Grace Gatera, Lived Experience and Mental Health Advocate, on the importance of adapting communication on sport and physical activity to suit cultural contexts.

In the community – Recommendation 1; Level 1

City: Paris

The Maison des Réfugiés (Refugee House) in Paris serves as a welcoming communal space dedicated to supporting marginalised individuals in finding or regaining their place in society. As part of the [Terrains d’Avenir \(TdA\)](https://www.maisondesrefugies.paris/) consortium—supported by the City of Paris, the French Ministry of Sport, and the Olympic Refugee Foundation—the Refugee House hosts a sport information desk and webpage. This service provides details about free, open-access sports sessions offered by TdA partners at various venues across Paris. By promoting these opportunities, the desk helps young people discover and choose to take part in activities that encourage inclusion and personal development.

https://www.maisondesrefugies.paris/Sports_a645.html

LEVEL 2



Enhance formal settlement processes by equipping community organisations and government agencies with guidance on best practices for including displaced young people through sport and taking steps to level the playing field

- Provide guidelines to settlement agencies and support services on how to use sport in the settlement process as a mechanism for inclusion. Intake processes can include plans for joining sports teams or doing physical activity, as well as identifying a person's hobbies and interests. Include suggestions of best practices for inclusion around gender, LGBTQ+ identities and people with disabilities (see also Recommendation 3).
- Take extra steps to support displaced young people to accessing sports opportunities, including subsidising club fees and uniform fees, or providing transport stipends. (Cf. rec. 4 level 2).
- Some young people experiencing displacement may form their own teams upon arrival. Inclusion advocates emphasise that governments should also facilitate and provide opportunities to participate in sport directly alongside members of the host community. The city can partner with settlement agencies to help introduce such opportunities.
- Outdoor and informal activities such as group running, hiking and nature-based play can be accessible entry points that require few resources to initiate when people have access to safe pathways with no cars or well-controlled traffic.

In the community – Recommendation 1; Level 2

City: Various

Following the onset of the crisis in Ukraine, the International Judo Federation (IJF) created the No Borders initiative – an online platform where local judo associations ready to welcome refugees fleeing Ukraine could apply to be registered. Following a validation process, the clubs were displayed on a map with all necessary contact information. Based on their capacities, the clubs offered a range of support to fleeing families, from free judo sessions to full accommodation.

For more info, visit: www.sportforukraine.org/files/IRTS_Ukraine_initiative_4.pdf

Cities: Erbil, Duhok and Sinjar, Iraq

With support from Free to Run, girls and young women athletes ages 15-24 in host communities, refugee and IDP camps in Erbil, Duhok and Sinjar participate in running, hiking, camping, strength training, life skills through sport sessions, and volunteering. These Free to Run members are leaders and role models in their communities.



LEVEL 3



Actively involve displaced young people in the planning and delivery of sports activities to foster meaningful participation and integration

- For those cities with the ability to do so, consulting and co-creating sport and physical activity initiatives with young people with lived experience of displacement can be effective to ensure services address their needs, talents, interests and barriers to participation.
- When engaging with displaced young people, make the process enjoyable and accessible, with as few steps as possible. It is okay to begin with some uncertainty, let go of perfectionism and be comfortable with learning along the way.
- Consider establishing steering committees, advocacy roles and working groups composed of displaced young people and other experts and practitioners. Youth-led, participatory approaches and other community feedback mechanisms can support ongoing adaptation and improvement of services.
- It is important to note that those with lived experience should not be asked to speak for everyone. Cities should compensate those with lived experience of displacement for their time when consulting and otherwise engaging with them.
- To support meaningful engagement in the delivery of services, cities can identify employment and work experience opportunities in the community or government sports and recreation departments for displaced young people with sports experience. Positions can be employed or volunteer-based roles. Volunteer stipends should be provided for those with informal status or no work permit.
- Displaced young people can take on a variety of roles, including coaching, dance instruction, joining teams as professional athletes, providing interpreting and liaison services for the community, administration and facility maintenance, as well as coordination, programme design and supervision.

In the community – Recommendation 1; Level 3

City: Bogotá

Baseball and softball were historically never played in Bogotá, but displaced young Venezuelans brought with them a talent for the game that has strengthened the Colombian national team. Local authorities recognised this talent and soon offered jobs in the City of Bogotá's elite sports league, sponsored by the district institute for recreation and sports. Example from the Instituto Distrital De Recreación y Deporte – IDRDR.

City: Paris

Zakia Khudadadi, the refugee Paralympian who won bronze in taekwondo at the Paralympic Games at Paris 2024, is employed as a coach and mentor with the Taekwondo Humanitarian Foundation (THF) as part of the Terrains d'Avenir consortium in Paris.

City: Rochester

In the city of Rochester, NY, USA, displaced young Afghans use skateboarding skills they picked up working in sports programmes under the Afghanistan National Olympic Committee. These young people are now employed coaching skateboarding for children at the city's recreation centres in spaces that have a smooth surface for learning on, with funding raised by Friends of the Roc City Skatepark.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Support welcoming, accessible public play and sporting spaces in host communities to better include displaced young people.

LEVEL 1

Identify existing spaces where displaced young people can gather for informal play and self-organised sports activities, ensuring safe spaces for all genders



LEVEL 2

Improve the safety and usability of sports facilities to ensure accessibility for displaced young people



LEVEL 3

Build dedicated spaces for organised sport; designing public spaces with accessibility and inclusivity in mind

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Local authorities can help to establish a stronger sense of place and build social ties by organising activities and harnessing public and green spaces and facilities for the purpose of cross-cultural connection between displaced people and host communities (UN-Habitat and UNHCR (2020).

Host communities and the general public can benefit from messaging that promotes peaceful coexistence, the value of a diverse society, and the role each person can take in making their community inclusive.

Public art can also be a powerful way for displaced young people to tell their stories, fostering understanding and compassion, making them feel seen and allowing them to exist proudly in shared spaces.

Figure: Inclusion opportunities for displaced young people do not require much infrastructure in a natural setting with safe pedestrian pathways, Image credit: Chat GPT



Figure: Inclusion opportunities for displaced young people do not require much infrastructure in a natural setting with safe pedestrian pathways.

CONSIDER THIS:

Major sporting event (MSE) facilities – legacy and accessibility

When creating or refurbishing facilities (including accommodation spaces) used for MSEs in your city, it is important to consider what their legacy will be. Consider how these facilities and spaces can be made accessible to displaced and vulnerable communities afterwards. This can be done in the following ways:

Design spaces with post-event use in mind. Consider how these facilities could serve as multifunctional spaces, such as community centres, schools or recreational facilities that cater to local needs.

Include plans for subsidised or free access programmes for displaced and other vulnerable community groups, ensuring they can benefit from the infrastructure after the event.

Establish partnerships with local organisations to ensure these spaces cater to under-served groups, including displaced and other vulnerable communities.

Consider where these facilities are located and if they are in proximity to under-served populations or high-income areas.

Include outreach initiatives to actively involve displaced communities in decision-making processes regarding the design and use of these facilities during their creation.

HOW DOES THIS WORK IN PRACTICE?

LEVEL 1



Identify existing spaces where displaced young people can gather for informal play and self-organised sports activities, ensuring safe spaces for all genders

- Encourage stakeholders to work together to identify existing green and public spaces and make them accessible for sport for displaced young people and their peers in the host community.
- Promote inclusive messages in the form of slogans, posters, banners, murals or sculptures in sports and play spaces frequented by displaced young people. Public art that conveys messages of support and solidarity from the community can demonstrate that displaced young people are welcomed in their new locations.
- Promote gender inclusion in sport through safety messages and the promotion of women-led sports and physical activities.

In the community – Recommendation 2; Level 1

City: Bogotá

In Bogotá, an inclusive public policy for “Reception, Inclusion and Development for New Bogotáns (International Migrant Population) 2023 - 2025” encourages athletic facilities to be welcoming and accessible for displaced Venezuelans.

City: Paris

The City of Paris played a central role in enabling Terrains d’Avenir (a programme using sports – such as dance, taekwondo and football – to support displaced young people and those from the host community in the lead-up to the Olympic Games Paris 2024). The City’s support included promoting the project through the city’s media, communications platforms and networks; and enabling the use of facilities (gyms, sports halls, swimming pools, sports venues, etc.) for programme activities and events, free of charge.

LEVEL 2



Improve the safety and usability of sports facilities to ensure accessibility for displaced young people

- Update/upgrade existing facilities or provide grants to organisations to improve their accessibility. Safety considerations can include lighting, security if appropriate, CCTV if suitable, and refuse disposal in public spaces, as well as volunteer or paid park monitor or “ambassador” positions that help to maintain the peace and encourage the fun, inclusive and responsible use of spaces and facilities. Once a space has been identified, engage with community stakeholders to put it to use.
- Advertise on public transport, radio and TV and social media in relevant languages. These are all effective mediums to spread messages about inclusive values and let people know what spaces and activities are available to them.
- Expand the opening hours of facilities to ensure people can attend before or after work and school, and in recognition of cultural and religious activities.
- Offer childcare at the facilities.
- Ensure there are women-only areas and times, and that spaces provide enough privacy so that girls and women can play sport away from public view if they prefer.

In the community – Recommendation 2; Level 2

City: Amman

In 2014, a partnership between a non-profit, a local skateboard company and the City of Amman paved the way to build a 650sqm public skatepark for use by displaced young people and Jordanian youth. A group of organised young skateboarders saw the potential to develop a disused public park, between a busy road and a hillside, and approached the city to talk about the possibilities for activating the space. The city responded with permission to develop and care for the land. Today, the youth-led 7Hills organisation runs weekly lessons in skateboarding, arts and vocational skills, providing meaningful employment in the sports sector to local and displaced young people.

CONSIDER THIS:



Active Design to Promote Physical Activity in Cities

The IOC’s Move More: Cities Toolkit - Impact & Legacy promotes active design in schools, public spaces and workplaces to encourage physical activity. Active design integrates spontaneous movement into public spaces, making physical activity more accessible. The toolkit provides local authorities with practical strategies to implement active design, enhance Olympic and Paralympic legacies, and inspire people of all ages to be more active through simple, accessible methods.

View the Move More: Cities Toolkit here:

[Move More Cities.pdf](#)

LEVEL 3

Build dedicated spaces for organised sport; designing public spaces with accessibility and inclusivity in mind

In addition to those actions noted for Level 2, cities can also consider:

- Developing regulatory changes that allow for new spaces to be developed.
- Engaging displaced young people with community workshops, co-designed sessions and advisory groups, and safety audits and exploratory walks. These are participatory ways to engage community members in the planning and design of spaces, networks, services and initiatives or programmes that directly address their needs.
- Sharing guidance on budgeting for safe play and sports spaces, and sharing rationales for asset holders to distribute infrastructure development resources effectively to include displaced young people.

In the community – Recommendation 2; Level 3

City: Various across Colombia

In Colombia, the government has supported 29 Houses of Peace (previously known as “Casas Lúdicas”) to provide protective environments to children and youth through the promotion of sports education and culture. The Houses are located in different municipalities across the country and are accessible to both displaced people and local host communities.



Image credit: Casa Lúdica (Acandí, Colombia) / UNHCR Colombia



Image credit: Bogotá Mayor's Office

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Provide sustainable support for locally managed initiatives to use sport as a tool for inclusion for displaced young people.

LEVEL 1

Encourage communities to set and meet specific and ambitious goals for the inclusion of displaced young people in sport and physical activity



LEVEL 2

Provide sustainable funding specifically to support the inclusion of displaced young people in existing community sports clubs, programmes and initiatives



LEVEL 3

Support the development of new programmes and initiatives focused on the inclusion of displaced young people. Support can take the form of technical or financial assistance

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

“Sustainable” support means the support matches the intention and long-term outcomes for the intervention or initiative. This matters because it allows new initiatives enough time to build value from initial investments, learn from the community and demonstrate results. Sustainable support can help steer community initiatives in directions that align with the municipality’s own strategy and vision for refugee inclusion. For example, a grant favouring initiatives that demonstrate a commitment to anti-discrimination can prompt community-based organisations to put in place anti-discrimination policies.

CONSIDER THIS:

Major sporting events – community engagement initiatives

Major sporting events often implement community engagement programmes to generate excitement, build support, initiate or accelerate local projects, and ensure events leave lasting benefits for the host community. These programmes foster connections between the event and local communities, contributing to both short-term momentum and long-term benefits.

When planning and developing community programmes ahead of an MSE (or for the post-event legacy initiatives), consider the following:

- Collaborate with local organisations to create or support existing sport-based programmes that involve displaced young people in pre-event activities.
- Allocate a percentage of event-generated funds to local initiatives that are working to support people affected by displacement and their host communities.
- See the City of Paris case study in Section 4 for further examples of cities using MSEs to support displaced people through community engagement initiatives.

HOW DOES THIS WORK IN PRACTICE?

LEVEL 1

Encourage communities to set and meet specific and ambitious goals for the inclusion of displaced young people in sport and physical activity

- At city/municipality level, set or recommend goals for including displaced young people in sport and ensure these reflect statistical demographics for race, gender (50%) LGBTQ+ identities (about 10%) and people with disabilities (about 20%).
- Establish mechanisms to engage communities directly and meaningfully – for example, a steering committee to apply assets-based community development (ABCD) (or another locally suitable participatory approach) to identify assets, aspirations and a strategy for inclusion and support, involving displaced and host communities.
- Together with displaced young people, set goals and choose indicators for their inclusion in sport and physical activities.
- Consult displaced young people on which sport or physical activities would be most useful, enjoyable or culturally fitting.

EXAMPLE OF A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH: ABCD

ABCD is a strategy for community-driven development in which communities can drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilising existing, but often unrecognised assets, thereby responding to and creating local opportunities. An ABCD approach can provide a city with a framework to enable the effective social inclusion of displaced youth where they are situated.

“We need to create the scenarios where people can meet each other. Sport and recreation are perfect for that. Sports institutions have a strong culture that we can build on to improve our capabilities.”

- Andrés Felipe Segura, Manager of Migration Affairs for the Bogotá Mayor's Office

LEVEL 2



Provide sustainable funding specifically to support the inclusion of displaced young people in existing community sports clubs, programmes and initiatives

- Provide grants or budgets on an ongoing basis to overcome the barriers to access that displaced people and their host communities have identified as local priorities, such as translation or inclusion training for staff/volunteers.
- Provide subsidies for membership fees, equipment and apparel, transport fees or stipends for displaced young people to participate in sport, pursue training and/or gain work experience as coaches and organisers (cf. rec 1 levels 2 and 3).
- Reduce barriers to access by financially subsidising sports clubs and facilities to focus on sports and physical activities which include displaced young people.
- Partner with (I)NGOs and corporate sponsors to fund the achievement of the goals.

In the community – Recommendation 3; Level 2

City: Paris

Coordinated through the City of Paris and the Paris 2024 Organising Committee, Impact 2024 provided funds to projects that use sport as a social impact tool to benefit displaced people. Through this fund, associations such as Kabubu and Up Sport ran sports projects promoting the inclusion of refugees. Kabubu, for example, focused on professional training for refugees in the sports sector, while also promoting gender inclusion through its “Potenti’elles” programme, which organises sporting activities for female refugees.



Image credit: Bogotá Mayor's Office

LEVEL 3



Support the development of new programmes and initiatives focused on the inclusion of displaced young people. Support can take the form of technical or financial assistance

- Offer examples of inclusion policy as templates to help grantees include displaced young people in sport and physical activities. Policy and principles for the inclusion of displaced young people in sport can be reinforced with training videos and webinars.
- Provide funding for programmes and initiatives focusing on the use of sport to promote the inclusion of displaced young people, either by financially supporting the continuation of work by established organisations or supporting the development of new targeted activities.
- Partner with civil society groups/NGOs with a strong track record in delivering sport-based programming for the inclusion of displaced young people. This expertise in co-designing can help to build additional capacity and sustainability within the municipality and community.

In the community – Recommendation 3; Level 3

City: Various, Germany

Funded by the German government, the federal programme “Integration through sports” ([Integration durch Sport, IdS](#)) was set up in 1989 and gives financial and other support for sports clubs. The aim is to encourage refugees and migrants to join sports clubs, enhance their self-reliance, and help them integrate into the local community. The programme provides local sports clubs and sports associations with much of what they need for integration work. The programme managers of the sports confederations in Germany’s 16 federal states advise and support clubs and associations, and offer intercultural qualifications and appropriate funding. This enables several thousand sports clubs across Germany to provide specific, customised and low-threshold services to refugees and people with an immigrant background. These services go beyond sports courses or training groups. The programme also strengthens intercultural competences in the sports clubs.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Inspire service providers across multiple sectors to be inclusive and supportive of young people with lived experiences of displacement, in and through sport. (e.g. sports coaches, physical therapists, social workers, youth workers, doctors, nurses, teachers and transport operators.)

LEVEL 1

Offer awards to recognise service providers who are innovating and leading in inclusion, in and through sport



LEVEL 2

Offer culturally responsive training and MHPSS training for service providers, including best practices for gender and disability inclusion through sport for displaced young people



LEVEL 3

Develop city-level mandates and policies for embedding access to sport and physical activity across existing systems and activities that displaced young people may access, such as education, healthcare, public health initiatives, city festivals, language schools and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

A multi-sectoral and transdisciplinary approach brings experts together to share knowledge and identify opportunities for meaningful impact. If service providers across multiple sectors are supported with knowledge of the value of sports participation and the capacity to link displaced young people to sport as a launch pad for improved health, language acquisition, employment prospects, school retention and social support, displaced young people will find their way to sport faster and more often.

Similarly, the sport and physical activity workforce can be encouraged to provide safe, supportive and inclusive sport for displaced young people by building their awareness of refugee rights and well-being needs.

See the 2025 WHO Guidelines on Mental Health: Human Resources and Workforce Development for more details on multidisciplinary workforce task sharing, training and support.

HOW DOES THIS WORK IN PRACTICE?

LEVEL 1

Offer awards to recognise service providers who are innovating and leading in inclusion, in and through sport

- Awards can take the form of certificates or financial support, depending on resources.
- Ceremonies and events can help showcase successes.
- Local media coverage can help amplify the positive impact message and examples.

LEVEL 2



Offer culturally responsive training and MHPSS training for service providers, including best practices for gender and disability inclusion through sport for displaced young people

- Recognise and encourage equity and inclusion training credentials or qualifications across the sport and physical activity sectors.
- Enable practitioners and service providers across multiple sectors (e.g. sports coaches, physical education teachers, social workers, youth workers, doctors, nurses, teachers, transport operators and childcare providers) to play a referral role, be aware of opportunities and proactively think about where and how sport could support a young person.
- Share evidence and promote recognition that healing and recovery can happen through sport and physical activity.

In the community – Recommendation 4; Level 2

City: Various, Europe

Sport Coach+ is an initiative of the Olympic Refugee Foundation and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement MHPSS Hub. Sport Coach+ training and resources provide coaches (and others engaged in the delivery of sport and physical activity) with the knowledge, skills and techniques to understand how stressful experiences, such as displacement, have an impact on young peoples' behaviour and development; how to create safe and supportive sports environments for young players who have experienced displacement or other adversity; and how to respond to young players in distress in trauma-informed and healing ways. Sport Coach+ connects sport, mental health and social service professionals to strengthen the safety net around young people affected by displacement and maximise the positive role of sport in their protection and inclusion. Sport Coach+ training details and resources are available at:

<https://www.sportcoachplus.org/>

City: Sydney

Addi Moves is an inclusive exercise facility tailored to the needs of people from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds. In partnership with Mindgardens and [Addison Road Community Organisation](#), UNSW Sydney co-has designed a free, mental health informed exercise facility within the Community Centre. The facility supports people already utilising services (such as the food pantry) to engage in meaningful physical activity. The exercise service is co-facilitated by exercise physiologists and people from similar backgrounds as their clients, to ensure cultural as well as physical safety.

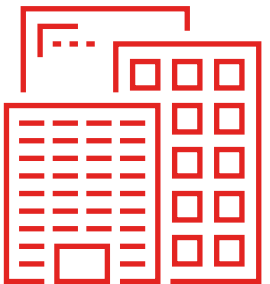


LEVEL 3



Develop city-level mandates and policies for embedding access to sport and physical activity across existing systems and activities that displaced young people may access, such as education, healthcare, public health initiatives, city festivals, language schools and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)

- Support city-level policies for inclusion with committees, learning communities or working groups.
- Develop partnerships with other levels of government to support the vision. Make sport a cross-cutting theme across all departments/sectors to enhance their intended outcomes and show how physical activity/sport can be an additional cost-effective tool.



In the community – Recommendation 4; Level 3

City: Various, Jordan

The Jordanian Ministry of Education, in cooperation with Generations for Peace, has mandated 45 minutes of primary education class time per week for sports-based peacebuilding activities in all schools across Jordan, which extend access to host communities and refugee populations alike. Since 2011, and as part of its Inclusive Education Policy, the Jordanian government has waived tuition fees to permit Syrian refugees to enrol in primary and secondary education. This initiative was expanded by the Ministry of Education in 2023 to cover refugees from all nationalities. To accommodate the large refugee population, the government implemented a “double shift” for more than 200 public schools across the country.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Commit to strategic partnerships, frameworks and regional or international agreements that support displaced young people in participating in sport and physical activities.

LEVEL 1

Make a commitment to the Global Refugee Forum Multi-stakeholder Pledge on Sport for Inclusion and Protection¹⁵, and/or the Multi-stakeholder Pledge on Localisation, a cities call to local action for migrants and refugees¹⁶

LEVEL 2

Actively participate in networks and partnerships to develop commitments to shared impact that use sport for the inclusion of displaced young people

LEVEL 3

At the regional level, take the lead in convening organisations for the purposes of sharing knowledge and best practices, and aligning policy approaches for including displaced young people through sport

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Joining and supporting existing partnerships, frameworks and networks helps to build momentum to improve the inclusion of displaced young people through sport. Municipalities and local governments that join or sign on gain a wealth of resources, capacity and support to encourage their own localised efforts to reach common goals.

¹⁵ [Multi-stakeholder Pledge: Sport for Inclusion and Protection | The Global Compact on Refugees | UNHCR](#)

¹⁶ [Multi-stakeholder Pledge: Call to Local Action and Solidarity in Secondary Cities & Local and Regional Governments | The Global Compact on Refugees | UNHCR](#)

HOW DOES THIS WORK IN PRACTICE?

LEVEL 1

Make a commitment to the Global Refugee Forum Multi-stakeholder Pledge on Sport for Inclusion and Protection, and/or the Multi-stakeholder Pledge on Localisation, a cities call to local action for migrants and refugees

- Decide on goals for including displaced young people in city-level strategies and policies on sport, recreation and leisure. Setting these goals is a vital first step to sustainably support access to and benefits through sport and physical activity for displaced young people.
- Make a commitment to a relevant Global Refugee Forum multi-stakeholder pledge, either as a local government entity or in partnership with local sports clubs/organisations or a refugee-led organisation. For more information about the Global Refugee Forum pledging process, visit the [Global Compact on Refugees multi-stakeholder pledges for 2023 website](#) or contact: contact@sportcoalition.org.

By signing on to the [Multistakeholder Pledge on Sport for Inclusion and Protection](#), organisations commit to delivering a specific output in one or more of the five commitment areas:

1. Promote an enabling environment, including policy, that delivers access to safe sport for displaced young people.
2. Promote and provide inclusive, safe sport and play-based initiatives.
3. Promote and provide opportunities for enhanced skills and pathways in and through sport.
4. Use targeted communication, evidence and advocacy.
5. Strengthen partnerships and coordination efforts.

In the community – Recommendation 5; Level 1

City: Paris

Securing a legacy from Paris 2024, the City of Paris made a commitment to the Global Refugee Forum Multi-stakeholder Pledge on Sport for Inclusion and Protection, committing to:

- Map all refugee accommodation centres to inform sport associations and social workers of their location, allowing them to provide better access to sport facilities.
- Provide sport associations with better access to city facilities and promote the inclusion of refugees in sport.
- Support the creation of new local sports initiatives for refugees.
- Raise awareness among various stakeholders (sports associations, sports professionals, , users) of issues relating to exiles/refugees and integration through sport

LEVEL 2



Actively participate in networks and partnerships to develop commitments to shared impact that use sport for the inclusion of displaced young people

Seek to become a member of networks such as:

- The Sport for Refugees Coalition: The SfRC is the coordinator of the Global Refugee Forum Multi-stakeholder Pledge on Sport for Inclusion and Protection. The Coalition brings together entities from the world of sport, civil society and the public and private sectors to extend access to and benefits through sport to refugees and displaced people around the world, by providing a platform for members to connect, share and learn. The Coalition also acts as a focal point for joint communication and advocacy efforts, promoting sport as a valued contributor in holistic responses to displacement.
- The Mayor Migration Council: The Council helps mayors and cities access and unlock resources to accelerate and scale localised solutions on migration and displacement by providing mayors with support to influence policy decisions connecting city governments to the resources they need.
- SmartCities and Sport: A network of cities, international sports federations, and institutions working to use sport as a catalyst for change. The SmartCities and Sport Summit is hosted annually and offers opportunities for members to connect and learn.



Image credit: Bogotá Mayor's Office

LEVEL 3



At the regional level, take the lead in convening organisations for the purposes of sharing knowledge and best practices, and aligning policy approaches for including displaced young people through sport

- Engage in a coordinated sports-based city-level approach that uses budgets to support the establishment of shared impact models for inclusion, particularly for displaced young people, using sport.
- Be a thought leader in your region, inviting other municipalities to align their goals, policies, indicators and strategies for including displaced young people through sport.

In the community – Recommendation 5; Level 3

City: Globally

The IOC and UN-Habitat are collaborating with city authorities to support the mainstreaming of sport, physical activity and active recreation in sustainable urban development processes. This global collaboration will help harness sport and active recreation as drivers of sustainable development in targeted cities. This will be achieved through integrating sport and physical activity metrics more substantially into cities' analysis and planning tools; delivering capacity-building and training for municipal authorities and sporting bodies; providing seed funding for urban sports infrastructure and inclusive sports participation programmes, focusing on urban communities that are most left behind; and producing tools and guidelines to help local authorities integrate sport more actively into urban development processes.

City: London, United Kingdom; Delhi, India, and many more globally

The Laureus Sport for Good Cities model provides localised funding for local initiatives, using needs assessments to support organisations to determine their own priorities and direction. Laureus helps convene private and public sector actors, and creates links between communities and government bodies, to advocate for inclusive and accessible sports policies and to mobilise funding. There are currently eight Sport for Good Cities, and hundreds of organisations supported because of these city-level initiatives. Laureus has ambitions to expand the reach of its model, and meanwhile the best practices developed in these eight initial cities provide plenty of inspiration and opportunity for replication.

9

CASE STUDIES

- PARIS, FRANCE
- BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA
- AMMAN, JORDAN

PARIS, FRANCE

The City of Paris works in partnerships to provide technical support and funding to accelerate and amplify the work of local organisations that proactively use sport to better include young people experiencing displacement. The Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris 2024 provided a platform for this work, which the city hopes to sustain.



Image credit: ORF/Amandine Lauriol

City of Paris, France/city-level initiative and partnerships

Recommendations 2, 3 and 5

With the staging of the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, the city used the power of sport to build connections across multiple organisations serving displaced young people in ways that it hopes to sustain beyond the period of the Games.

CONTEXT

UNHCR has estimated that, as of 2024, over 680,000 refugees and 70,000 asylum seekers are hosted in France, with a significant proportion of these individuals concentrated in the Paris region. Over 14,000 young people reported as unaccompanied minors were integrated into the national system for childcare protection in 2022. In response to the growing needs of displaced populations, the City of Paris, capitalising on the platform of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, adopted a comprehensive approach harnessing the potential of sport as a tool to foster social inclusion among displaced people and host community members.

Image credit: Nike / Protein



INITIATIVES

Terrains d'Avenir:

Recommendation 1, levels 1 and 2

Recommendation 2, levels 1 and 2

Recommendation 3, levels 1, 2 and 3

Terrains d'Avenir was a EUR 1.8 million programme that used sports – such as dance, taekwondo and football, amongst many others – to support displaced young people and those from the host community based in the Île-de-France region of Paris. The goal of the programme was for young refugees and asylum seekers in the greater Paris region to develop a sense of belonging and a new positive “life project” in their host communities, through sport.

The City of Paris played a central role in facilitating Terrains d'Avenir, which was co-financed by the French Ministry of Sport and the Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Olympic Refugee Foundation. The programme was delivered by Kabubu, PLAY International, Emmaüs Solidarité, Ovale Citoyen, Fútbol Más and the Taekwondo Humanitarian Foundation, with support from the Paris 2024 Organising Committee, the French National Olympic and Sports Committee (CNOSF) and UNHCR France.

The City of Paris supported the programme in a number of ways:

- Fostering exchanges and collaboration with representatives from several City of Paris departments.
- Promoting the project in the city's media, communications platforms and networks.
- Engaging with local stakeholders within the city's network: NGOs, community-based organisations, sports clubs and elected representatives who had signed up to support the programme's actions.
- Providing the use of facilities (gyms, sport halls, swimming pools, sports venues, etc.) for programme activities and events, free of charge.
- Inviting consortium members and programme participants to sporting and cultural events.
- Co-financing the programme's activities, including mixed gender and 100% women's-only sports and vocational training.

IMPACT 2024

Recommendation 3, levels 1 and 2

Coordinated through the City of Paris and the Paris 2024 Organising Committee, Impact 2024 provided funds to projects that use sport as a social impact tool to benefit displaced people. Through this fund, associations such as Kabubu and Up Sport ran sports projects promoting the inclusion of refugees. Kabubu, for example, focused on professional training for refugees in the sports sector, while also promoting gender inclusion through its “Potenti'elles” programme, which organises sporting activities for female refugees.

TOUS EN PISTE AND 1,2,3 NAGEZ!

Recommendation 3, level 3

The City of Paris Department of Solidarity - Social Action Centre, and the Paris 2024 Organising Committee provided funding for the “Tous en Piste” (Cycling for All) and “1,2,3 Nagez!” (Ready Steady Swim) initiatives, which provide free cycling and swimming lessons to refugees in welcome centres in Paris. The “Tous en Piste” project benefitted 350 people in two years (bike lessons, cycling trips and bike repair workshops). The 1,2,3 Nagez ! project benefitted 300 people in socially vulnerable situations between 2022 and the Paris Games. Some 180 beneficiaries are now expected every year from 2025 onwards.

CULTURAL OLYMPIAD

Recommendation 3, level 2

The Cultural Olympiad in Paris extended inclusion beyond traditional sports by incorporating cultural activities linked to the 2024 Olympics. Refugees were invited to participate in dance workshops and artistic projects, offering them a platform for self-expression. Initiatives like La Louve Aimantée’s “A pas de louves” project, supporting female survivors of sexual violence, and dance workshop/community breakfast collaborations by La Permanence Choréographique and P’tits Déj’s Solidaires, further promoted social inclusion.



Image credit: ORF/Amandine Lauriol

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PLEDGE ON SPORT FOR INCLUSION AND PROTECTION

Recommendation 5

Securing a legacy from Paris 2024 and building on key learnings from the above-mentioned initiatives, the City of Paris made a commitment to the Global Refugee Forum Multi-stakeholder Pledge on Sport for Inclusion and Protection, undertaking to:

- Map all refugee accommodation centres to inform sports associations and social workers of their location, allowing them to provide better access to sports facilities.
- Provide sports associations with better access to city facilities and promote the inclusion of refugees in sport.
- Support the creation of new local sports initiatives for refugees.
- Raise awareness among various stakeholders (sports associations, sports professionals, social workers, users, etc.) of issues relating to exiles/refugees and integration through sport

BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

Bogotá, Colombia, uses its Sport, Recreation and Parks Department to support displaced and host communities across the city.

Bogotá, Colombia – City-led initiative

Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4

CONTEXT

Colombia has long faced challenges of displacement, whether in addressing the needs of IDP communities during a civil conflict that lasted many decades and was resolved with a peace agreement in 2016, or more recently, in accommodating those fleeing the political situation in Venezuela. As of 2022, there were an estimated 8 million displaced people across Colombia. In the city of Bogotá alone, it is estimated that there are 600,000 Venezuelans as of 2024.

“We are building a road-map where there are routes to other worlds to make their lives easier. We need the opportunities on that map to be the same eventually; that’s real equity.”

- Andrés Felipe Segura, Manager of Migration Affairs for the Bogotá Mayor’s Office

Due to the large numbers of international migrants, the city has had to take an integrated approach to meeting the needs of its population of displaced young people, focusing on the provision of a range of accessible services to promote health, education and recreation, among other things, for all of the city’s residents, with a special focus on the needs of women and children.

Leveraging years of innovation in promoting physical activity and shared public spaces with cycling, sports and walking initiatives, Bogotá has used sport, physical activity and inclusive policy to create a welcoming environment for displaced young people.

INCLUSIVE PUBLIC POLICY

Recommendation 1, level 1

Recommendation 2, level 2

Recommendation 3, level 2

The city upholds recreation as a fundamental right for all and actively includes specific groups for inclusion in public spaces with its public policies. It uses “Deporte para la Paz” (Sport for Peace) initiatives that foster social inclusion for migrants, displaced people and LGBTQ+ people through sport. Building on its inclusive history of public spaces and programmes, Bogotá has adopted a public policy that supports city departments like the District Institute of Recreation and Sport (IDRD) in promoting the inclusion and advancement of international migrants through sport and recreation. This strategy has two main aims: developing public services to better meet the needs of both Bogotáns and the international migrant population, and making these services as accessible as possible, through decentralised models of service delivery and targeted communication campaigns.

INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMES

Deporte para la Paz (Sport for Peace)

Recommendation 1, level 1

The IDRD operates 23 health centres across the city, and puts on sports activities and festivals in outdoor recreational spaces and parks for all citizens, including international migrants. The aim is to reach 9,000 young people each year through sport. Using public signage and digital platforms, the IDRD easily communicates to Colombians, Venezuelans and other displaced people regarding the sports and physical activities on offer.

“We have migrants, displaced people and some excluded groups (LGBTQ+) who we want to give access to recreation, which is a fundamental and essential right.”

- Daniel García Cañón, Director of the District Institute for Recreation and Sport (IDRD).

INTEGRATION CENTRES

Recommendation 1, level 1

Bogotá operates three centres, providing general information for migrants in parts of the city where the majority of displaced people are located. In these centres, displaced people can obtain information about the services available to them in the city. The IDRD uses these centres to provide details on how to access physical activity programmes such as gymnastics, Zumba, fitness and aquatics, as well as activities in recreational spaces outdoors in parks.

CICLOVÍAS AND CICLORUTAS

Recommendation 2, level 3

The city’s renowned “ciclovía” (cycle path) system was established in 1976, and has become a safe public space that transcends ethnicity, class and age. On Sundays, the main avenues close from 7am to 2pm, opening 200km of roadway for 2 million pedestrians, cyclists and runners. In 1988, the then-Mayor added “ciclorutas” (cycle routes) to the system, opening another 100km of pathways to the public for non-motorised transport. Bicycles are an important equaliser for the city, making both fitness and transport widely accessible and affordable.

FESTIVALS

Recommendation 3, levels 2 and 3

The Summer Festival (Festival de Verano) and the Panas y Parces Festival, named after the words for “friend” in Venezuelan and Colombian dialects of Spanish, promote cultural sharing and inclusion for the whole community, celebrating diverse foods, music and games from Venezuelan and Colombian traditions. Panas y Parces specifically aims to challenge xenophobia by building empathy and solidarity between cultures. These festivals also provide employment opportunities for displaced young people.

CASAS DE LA PAZ (PEACE HOUSES)

Recommendation 3, levels 2 and 3

Peace Houses where anyone can access support to deal with human rights abuses, legal issues as well as basic social services, operate in the city. Four of these are dubbed Happiness Centres, with recreation and sports facilities for all ages to promote healthy living. One of the centres is specifically designed to meet the needs of young migrants, with daycare, early childhood development and mental health support for children and their parents.

CARE BLOCKS

Recommendation 4, level 3

Care Blocks are especially important for the inclusion of young women, who are at risk of gender-based violence and marginalisation. This is the first city-level care system in Latin America, and it aims to address the chronic issue of time poverty affecting women, who take on most of the unpaid labour of childcare and housework. This initiative provides young women with the time to pursue their goals, pursue higher education and participate in leisure and sports activities. In the last five years, Bogotá has created an effective network of centres for women and children called Care Blocks. The international migrant population and the women from the host communities all use these spaces. There, young women who have responsibilities for their families receive support with daily housekeeping tasks, washing clothes, mental health issues, and cultural activities. These act as a safe and supportive space for women and children living in vulnerable neighbourhoods. About 10 Care Blocks exist already, and the city has plans to open 20 in total, with a focus on refining their services and increasing their accessibility.



AMMAN, JORDAN

In Jordan, the municipal government of the capital, Amman, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth provide space and time to use sport and physical activity for peacebuilding purposes to benefit host communities and displaced young people.

Amman, Jordan – NGO-led initiative; youth-led initiatives

Recommendations 1, 2, and 3

CONTEXT

With over 700,000 refugees of different nationalities living in Jordan, 50% of whom are children and 80% of whom live outside camps in urban centres, Jordanian municipal and national government bodies, in collaboration with organisations at multiple levels, cooperate in innovative ways to promote inclusion.

MUNICIPAL IMPLEMENTATION

Recommendation 2, levels 2 and 3

In Amman, the non-profit 7Hills is a youth-focused skateboarding and vocational training organisation. The city of Amman provides a rent-free public park to operate free sports and art programmes for children and young people through a five-year memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which is regularly reviewed. Under the MOU, the city provides the land, and the organisation is responsible for investing in sports infrastructure and maintenance to provide a clean, safe and fun environment. The park has become a meeting place for Jordanian and displaced young people to participate in physical and social activities together, including pathways for young refugees to become coaches and develop job skills to help support self-reliance. While children and young people skateboard, their parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles of Sudanese, Syrian, Eritrean, Palestinian and many other nationalities watch on and talk together, sipping tea brought by the young people from a nearby cafe.

REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

Recommendation 3, level 3

Recommendation 4, levels 2 and 3

In a more formalised approach to inclusion, in 2019 the Jordanian Ministry of Education allocated 20% of the school day (45 minutes per week of class time) to “extra-curricular” activities, which can include play-based peacebuilding initiatives like Generations for Peace’s Nashatati programme, which uses physical activity and games to promote social inclusion between host communities and children or young people with experience of displacement. Thanks to this policy-level support for peace education in all schools nationwide, the implementing partner, Generations for Peace, has been able to successfully scale its approach to capacity-building for youth development and violence reduction. These play and sport-based programmes, aimed initially at supporting Syrian refugee youth, have ultimately been expanded to meet the needs of both host and displaced children and youth, showing the potential for scalability and impact.

The Jordanian government’s support for the inclusion of displaced young people through sports and games demonstrates that policy can be used effectively to support refugee youth and children through sport. Government stakeholders are in an important position to respond to the practical insights of youth-serving organisations and support their vision. These examples show that small policy adjustments and the allocation of small, underutilised public spaces can have a significant sustainable impact. In addition, through collaboration, organisations can focus on programme delivery and youth development through sport, providing alternative pathways for employment, and actively participating in programmes and delivering the to refugee and host communities alike.

Displaced young people and Jordanian youth in Amman stretch together before a skateboarding session at 7Hills skatepark. Photo courtesy of 7Hills.



ANNEX 1

AN ORGANISATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Use this assessment exercise to take stock of how your city, department, organisation or programme uses sport to support the inclusion of young people with experience of displacement. The left-hand column contains key recommendations and actions. Use the middle column to assess your actions to date on a scale of 1 to 4. Use the right-hand column to plan how you could adopt actions and recommendations within a reasonable timeframe based on available resources and capacities. Follow up by communicating and connecting with colleagues and community members who can support the plan.

Recommendation 1: Integrate sport and physical activities and cultural programmes into the settlement process for displaced young people. Performance: How are we doing? 1. This is not present or hardly happening. 2. This has been attempted. 3. This is happening, but more capacity is needed to ensure it is consistent 4. This is happening consistently. Plan to improve: When do we want to make a change?							
Date:	1	2	3	4	Start now	Start this year	Start next year
Completed by:							
Level 1 - Share information about available sports and recreational opportunities for displaced young people, in clear, accessible language and age-sensitive formats.							
Level 2 - Enhance formal settlement processes by equipping community organisations and government agencies with guidance on best practices for including displaced young people through sport and taking steps to level the playing field.							
Level 3 - Actively involve displaced young people in the planning and delivery of sports activities to foster meaningful participation and integration.							

Recommendation 2:		Performance:				Plan to improve:		
Support welcoming accessible public play and sporting spaces in host communities to include displaced young people.		How are we doing?				When do we want to make a change?		
		1. This is not present or hardly happening.						
		2. This has been attempted.						
		3. This is happening, but more capacity is needed to ensure it is consistent.						
		4. This is happening consistently.						
Date:		1	2	3	4	Start now	Start this year	Start next year
Completed by:								
Level 1 - Identify existing spaces where displaced young people can gather for informal play and self-organised sports activities, ensuring safe spaces for all genders.								
Level 2 - Improve the safety and usability of sports facilities to ensure accessibility for displaced young people.								
Level 3 - Build dedicated spaces for organised sport, designing public spaces with accessibility and inclusivity in mind.								

Recommendation 3:		Performance:				Plan to improve:		
Provide sustainable support for locally managed initiatives to use sport as a tool for the inclusion of displaced young people.		How are we doing?				When do we want to make a change?		
		1. This is not present or hardly happening.						
		2. This has been attempted.						
		3. This is happening, but more capacity is needed to ensure it is consistent.						
		4. This is happening consistently.						
Date:	Completed by:	1	2	3	4	Start now	Start this year	Start next year
Level 1 - Encourage communities to set and meet specific and ambitious goals for the inclusion of displaced young people in sport and physical activity.								
Level 2 - Provide sustainable funding specifically to support the inclusion of displaced young people in existing community sports clubs, programmes and initiatives.								
Level 3 - Support the development of new programmes and initiatives focused on the inclusion of displaced young people. Support can take the form of technical or financial assistance.								

Recommendation 4: Inspire service providers across multiple sectors to be inclusive and supportive of young people with lived experiences of displacement, in and through sport (e.g. sports coaches, physical therapists, social workers, youth workers, doctors, nurses, teachers, transport operators.) Performance: How are we doing? 1. This is not present or hardly happening. 2. This has been attempted. 3. This is happening, but more capacity is needed to ensure it is consistent. 4. This is happening consistently. Plan to improve: When do we want to make a change?							
Date: Completed by:	1	2	3	4	Start now	Start this year	Start next year
Level 1 - Offer awards to recognise service providers who are doing innovative work and demonstrating leadership when it comes to inclusion, in and through sport.							
Level 2 - Offer culturally responsive training and MHPSS training for service providers, including good practices for gender and disability inclusion through sport for displaced young people.							
Level 3 - Develop city-level mandates and policies for embedding access to sport and physical activity across existing systems and activities that displaced young people may access, such as education, healthcare, public health initiatives, city festivals, language schools and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs).							

Recommendation 5: Commit to strategic partnerships, frameworks and regional or international agreements that support displaced young people in participating in sport and physical activities. Performance: How are we doing? 1. This is not present or hardly happening. 2. This has been attempted. 3. This is happening, but more capacity is needed to ensure it is consistent. 4. This is happening consistently. Plan to improve: When do we want to make a change?							
Date: Completed by:	1	2	3	4	Start now	Start this year	Start next year
Level 1 - Make a commitment to the Global Refugee Forum Multi-stakeholder Pledge on Sport for Inclusion and Protection, and/ or the Multi-stakeholder Pledge on Localisation, a call for cities to take local action for migrants and refugees.							
Level 2 - Actively participate in networks and partnerships to develop commitments to shared impact that use sport for the inclusion of displaced young people.							
Level 3 - At regional level, take the lead in convening organisations for the purposes of sharing knowledge and best practices, and aligning policy approaches for including displaced young people through sport.							

ANNEX 2

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Asylum seeker: someone who is seeking international protection. Their request for refugee status, or complementary protection status, has yet to be processed, or they may not yet have requested asylum, but they intend to do so.

Cultural activities: in the context of this brief, cultural activities may include dancing, singing, music and traditional games and sports, as well as sharing meals.

Displacement: displaced young people, young people with experience of displacement, and young people affected by displacement; also includes host communities.

Host community: local populations that receive and accommodate displaced people from other regions or countries.

IDP: internally displaced person. IDPs have been forced to flee their homes by conflict, violence, persecution or disasters; however, they remain within the borders of their initial country of residence.

Inclusion: the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or [marginalised](#).

INGO: international non-governmental organisation, typically with a multi-national or international scope of activities, operating as a not-for-profit entity, with a volunteer board of directors.

Integration: the integration of refugees is a dynamic and multifaceted process that requires efforts by all parties concerned, including a preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society without having to forego their own cultural identity, and a corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and meet the needs of a diverse population.

MHPSS: mental health and psychosocial support. Sport and physical activity [can reduce symptoms](#) associated with depression, anxiety, schizophrenia and post-traumatic stress disorder. Sport can also support the development of socio-emotional skills, promote social connection, strengthen support networks, and foster a sense of belonging and community. For populations affected by crisis and displacement, [sport can provide a positive and safe space for releasing tension](#), promoting healing, and building resilience.

Migrant: a person who has moved to pursue economic opportunities, often in informal or “undocumented” circumstances.

NGO: non-governmental organisation, typically with a national or regional scope of activities, operating as a not-for-profit entity, with a volunteer board of directors.

Physical activity: people moving, acting and performing within culturally specific spaces and contexts, and influenced by a unique array of interests, emotions, ideas, instructions and relationships.

Refugee: someone who has been forced to flee conflict or persecution and has crossed an international border to seek safety. They cannot return to their country without risking their life or freedoms.

Repatriation: the personal right of a refugee to return to their country of nationality under specific conditions.

Returnees: refers to a refugee or internally displaced person who has returned to their country or area of origin to remain there permanently. However, they are not yet fully reintegrated into their community. A returnee loses their refugee status once they return.

Safe sport: activities designed to create a protective environment for all people to participate in sport – before, during and after a sports session. Safe sport considers people’s safety when travelling to and from sports activities, reduces risks in the sports environment so that everyone can participate safely, and strives to keep everyone free from harm and abuse while participating in sport. Safe sport also ensures everyone involved can identify their rights, and that they have a remedy acceptable to them if they feel their rights were not upheld.

Settlement: the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another state that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent residence.

Sport: physical activity with structure and rules, performed solo or as a team. This includes any form of physical activity that is structured in a way to safely contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction. It includes play, recreation, organised or competitive sport and Indigenous sports and games.

Sport for development: the use of sport to exert a positive influence on public health, the socialisation of children, youth and adults, the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and states, and the fostering of intercultural exchange and conflict resolution.

Young person: a person between the ages of 15 and 24.





Olympic Refugee
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