



CROSSPORT

Crossing the Boundaries through Sport

newsletter **02**



TRAINING SPORT AND NGOS WORKERS TO ACT AS AGENTS OF CHANGE – REFUGEE'S INCLUSION THROUGH SPORT



The inclusion of refugees through sport presents unique opportunities for fostering social cohesion and providing psychosocial support. However, NGO workers and sports organizations' staff often face several barriers, particularly in terms of knowledge and (soft) skills, that can hinder their effectiveness in this role. Addressing these barriers through targeted training programs is crucial for empowering these individuals to act as agents of change.

Training programs should be participatory, allowing staff coming from a variety of sectors to share experiences, challenges, and best practices. Collaboration with experts in refugee integration, and refugees themselves can enhance the quality of these programs. Moreover, ongoing support should be provided to ensure the continuous development of staff competencies.

Overcoming these barriers was at the core of Crossing the Boundaries through Sport (CrosSport)'s effort as it contributed to building capacity and know-how of these organizations through the development of new educational tools that have been applied to empowering their staff.

This represents a necessary step directed at investing in the training and development of NGO workers and sports organizations' staff, as it allows these key stakeholders to enhance their ability to work effectively for the inclusion of refugees through sport in Europe, turning sports programs into powerful platforms for social inclusion and change.



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PROJECT STATUS AND MILESTONES

The CrossSport project aimed to create a collaborative network of local authorities, sport and social development organizations to instigate community participation of young refugees through their involvement in sport activities. This collaborative approach, exemplified by the work of the Focus Groups, was instrumental to fostering dialogue between these organizations and to the identification of the Community Leader for Inclusion through Sport (CLIS):

The “Community Leader for Inclusion through Sport (CLIS)” is a reference person identified in the host community who is equipped to use all the potential that sport has to impulse the social inclusion of youth refugees who are relocated from one country to another through a dedicated training program”.



In order to develop the skills of the CLIS, CrossSport established the CrossSport Autumn School, through a four-step methodology:



The educational package was developed by the CrossSport Autumn School through the CrossSport Scientific Committee, which was established by three organizations that put into practice those principles that make them “like-minded organizations”:

- **work collaboratively and “well” together**
- **dedication to the refugees cause**
- **shared belief in the transformative power of sport**

ICSS Europe, the University of Porto's Observatory of Sport, Education and Communities (ODEC) and the Sports Confederation of Portugal (CDP) constituted the Scientific Committee with a clear distribution of tasks: ODEC took up the role of scientific partner, leveraging on the academic staff engaged in sport-related research. As the Portuguese sport's umbrella representing 63 sport federations CDP played the role of sport advisory partner while ICSS Europe was charged with the coordinating role, in representation of the project consortium of partners.



CLIS educational package is freely available after a simple registration at:
<https://crosssport4refugees.eu/clis-training-course/>



HIGHLIGHTS ON PARTNERS' ACTIVITIES



CLIS training's summary table

Sport has the power to change the world, it has the power to inspire, it has the power to unite people in a way little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand.

Nelson Mandela (video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1-7w-bJcTY>

- ➔ Some 25 participants (on average per session) from some 30 different organizations
- ➔ 15 hours in-class (online) theoretical modules: 6 modules of 2,5 hours each
- ➔ Additional home-based work based on previously defined tasks ("challenges")
- ➔ Provision of 2 CTS certificate upon successful completion
- ➔ Participation in a wider network on sport for the inclusion of refugees

The CLIS training program was launched on the **10th of November 2023** and ended on **January 26th 2024**: 6 modules encompassed themes spanning from the international laws on refugees integration to social innovation in sport.

The underlying philosophy of the CLIS training is to "walk the talk": the different sessions alternated different interactive formats – presentation, brainstorming, role plays, etc. – all focused on one idea: all participants – speakers and trainees – coming from leading partners in the participating countries (and not only) **illustrate and share examples and experiences of projects and initiatives that tear down barriers through sport.**



Wrap-up and lessons learned concluded each session.

→ A personal account from a social worker from CEAR, Spain



CEA(R)

Comisión Española
de Ayuda al Refugiado

Juan Doforno Díaz-Carralero

“Personally, I have been using sport as a tool for social inclusion many times in my past experience with marginalized neighborhoods’ vulnerable groups, although not much with refugees, in order to enrich them with values. In this context, when we say values we refer mainly to respect, discipline, teamwork. If you bring values, you show respect; because in these places, many times, there is no respect, there is fear. If they respect that one family or person is because you fear them, maybe because they are related to gangs, drug traffickers and those kind of things. They usually confuse fear with respect, so we show them real respect: I respect you because you are a human being, that is it. We try to work with examples, we try to be rights models. And sometimes we change the way of speaking: they speak in a violent way and sometimes we do it as well...why? Because we want to say “I can talk the way you talk but I dare you talk the way we talk”. We challenge them and they like it. We strive to inculcate that the way we do thing is politely, not in a violent way, which is often the normal practices in those contexts.

My experience related to sport basically relates to this, and not specifically with refugees, because I had not many chances, but I would like to. Where I work, we do practice sport with refugees, and we do it in an initial phase: when refugees are first accommodated in a shelter or shared houses, then social workers who work with integration have the chance to work with refugees in an open environment, provide support, such as labour counselling, and during the free time through sport. But I realized that football was only practiced between them, there was no inclusiveness, and it was only a way to spend time and promote good habits. Now, with these new projects from Football Mas, Real Betis, CEAR sport practices include local people from the local communities, and the approach is inclusive”.

