



CROSSSPORT

Crossing the Boundaries through Sport

newsletter **03**



RAISING AWARENESS ON REFUGEE'S INCLUSION THROUGH SPORT

Refugees are defined and protected under international law, specifically by the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. According to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is someone who "Owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."

Faced with the fear of persecution in their home country, refugees who are relocated in a new country faces enormous challenges in adapting to their new reality. For this reason it is utterly important to prepare host countries and communities to strengthen a process aimed at allowing arriving refugees to feel a sense of 'belonging in a new place' and fully integrate in the host society.

Sport is considered to be a powerful instrument for the integration of refugees in the European Union as it is a conducive vehicle for social inclusion, promoting health, building communities, and improving mental well-being.

To effectively implement a project aimed at the social inclusion of refugees through sport within host communities, raising awareness on the importance of the theme and dissemination of all project-related actions are essential: a sound strategic planning in outreach and communication is key to reaching out the largest possible number of stakeholders in the sport-for-inclusion ecosystem and the public at large. This effort has been central in all the phases of the Crossing the Boundaries through Sport (CrosSport) project.

The premise of this endeavor consisted in a constant involvement of the target group in all project activities: since its outset, the project intended to (co)-produce knowledge with refugees and take an active stance vis a vis their status, problems and aspirations in sport as an instrument for social inclusion. Through this engagement refugees assume ownership of the project: this is fundamental step to change the paradigm revolving around refugees while promoting a positive image of inclusion and countering negative narratives concerning their status.

CrosSport's awareness raising actions embedded the above premise as they were operationalized with the intent to promote its core message – the central role of sport in amplifying opportunities for integration of refugees in our communities, both online and with concrete actions on the ground.



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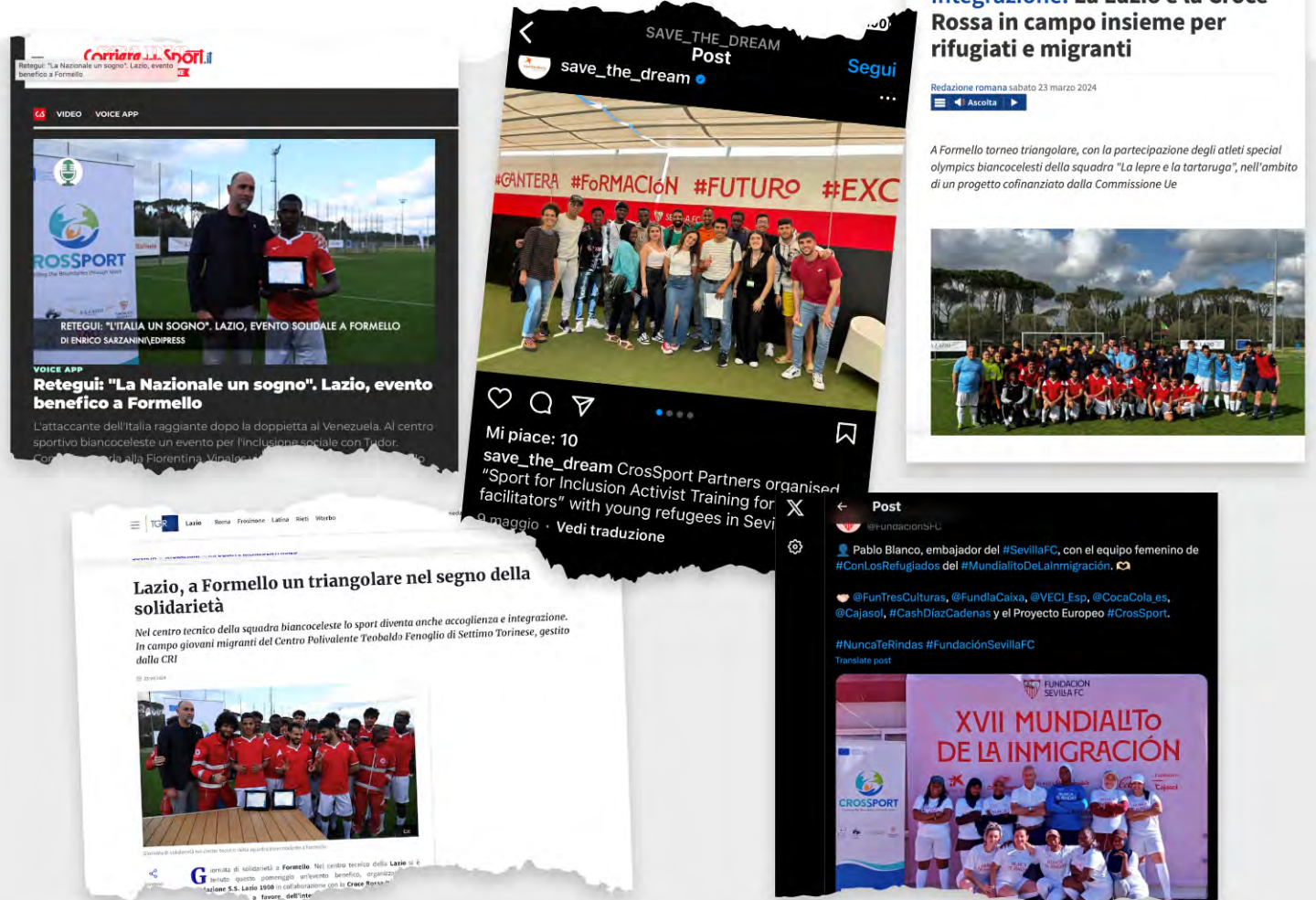
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PROJECT STATUS AND MILESTONES

The project's dissemination revolved around a clear awareness raising strategy. Along the project's lifetime, a set of awareness raising actions were operationalized with the intent to promote the core message on sport as a conducive vehicle for the social inclusion of refugees.

Spread the message

CrossSport has implemented a constant communication through social media by extensively using the social networks and press.



Make your voice heard

A Mural of Videos of testimonies is an ongoing effort to raise the voice of refugees as it represents a collection of their experiences and aspirations as a full member of the hosting community through sport.



“ Put your foot on the ground”

CrosSport organized large public awareness raising and dissemination actions with a considerable impact for the public at large, such as on the occasion of the World Youth Day (WYD).



PORTUGAL

GREECE

“ Put your shoes on the pitch

ICSS EUROPE, the Portuguese Red Cross and Seixal Clube 1925, a sport club that distinguishes itself for playing an active role in the integration of youth refugees in the Portuguese society, were the organizers of the Football Game between Refugees and Partners on 29th of September 2023 at Estádio Municipal do Bravo, home of Seixal Clube 1925.

On 23rd of March 2024 Fondazione S.S. Lazio 1900 organized at the Lazio training centre in Formello, Rome the Triangular Football Tournament between Lazio Under 17, the Special Olympics team "La Lepre e la Tartaruga" and a team of young immigrants and refugees from the Teobaldo Fenoglio Multipurpose Center in Settimo Torinese, Turin.

On 7th of June 2024 Fundación Sevilla celebrated the completion of the 17th Immigration World Cup (Mundialito de la Inmigración), a tournament aimed at promoting tolerance, coexistence and the integration of immigrants in Spain through football. The event featured the participation of two teams made up of refugees, thanks to the collaboration of entities such as UNHCR, Red Cross, CEAR and CEPAIM, within the framework of CrosSport.



ITALY

SPAIN

HIGHLIGHTS ON PARTNERS' ACTIVITIES

Raising the awareness of students and social operators at Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Seville, Spain.



On 31st of October 2023, Fundación del Centenario del Sevilla FC organized an awareness raising and dissemination conference at Universidad Pablo de Olavide in Sevilla. This event, which was opened by the General Director of Migration Policies – Ministry of Social Inclusion, Youth, Families and Equality (Director General de Políticas Migratorias – Consejería de Inclusión Social, Juventud, Familias e Igualdad – Junta de Andalucía) gathered more than 60 participants including students from sport and social science faculties as well as representatives from civil society, sport, and public sector organizations.

The event consisted in a roundtable moderated by Fundación Sevilla that brought together ICSS EUROPE, in representation of the CrosSport partners, and the Spanish organizations CEAR, Cruz Roja, Fundación CEPAIM and Fútbol Más España for a debate on the challenges of connecting reception and integration of refugees with sport activities. The discussion was also participated by students and youth representing the refugee community who could share their view, concerns and experiences.

During the event the discussion highlighted the importance to pilot investments, public or private, for the realization of leisure or sport activities, to foster processes of inclusion and social cohesion. Also, it was stressed the need to manage language and cultural factors within the refugee community while addressing these barriers in a professional and well-targeted manner. There was a general consensus that achieving impactful social inclusion strategies can be channeled through the promotion of collaboration between entities in the social and sports sector, as well as the coordination and alliances with the local public administration to multiply the positive impact of the actions individual entities carry out: all parties, be they individuals public entities or private companies, have a role to play and need to be proactive in taking a step forward. These statements were welcomed by the attending representatives of the public administration who confirmed that it is in the interest of the Andalusian Government to promote the use of sport as a tool for social inclusion, and therefore, the allocation of budget for these initiatives in the future.

Another topic of the debate focused on the opportunities that sport can represent for the youth and refugees alike: it is widely recognized that sport generates safe spaces for refugees and therefore builds trust and opportunities; during moments of leisure a flow of information is generated and shared among the participants of the activity such as a job opportunity, a tip or recommendation, a contact with other people who can help others. Recognizing that the importance of the practice of sport in creating these “social inclusion networks”, in Spain, the inclusion of sport in work protocols regarding social integration measures is increasingly being used, which is a positive advancement that can also represent a perspective job opportunity for young people who are currently in training and education.



Fondazione Lazio and the Italian Red Cross together for refugees and migrants.



Language, nationality and disability barriers were broken down on the 23rd of March 2024 at the Training Center of the Lazio Sports Club in Formello, Rome with a Triangular Football Tournament between the mixed formations of two Biancocelesti teams (the Under 17 and the Special Olympics team " La Lepre e la Tartaruga ") and a team composed by a group of young immigrants and refugees from the Teobaldo Fenoglio Multipurpose Center in Settimo Torinese, Turin managed by the Italian Red Cross. The event was organized by Fondazione S.S. Lazio 1900, S.S. Lazio and the Italian Red Cross, within the CrosSport project.

Cristina Mezzaroma, president of the Fondazione Lazio, affirmed that the event testifies the true role of sport which can create real social bonds. She also stated that Lazio, the sports club at the head of the European Multisport Club Association (EMCA) could guarantee with its 85 sports disciplines the maximum realization of the specific talents of each person, even more so of those fleeing from dramatic living conditions.

Before the sporting moment the spontaneous interaction and acquaintance among the youth created an opportunity to forge relationships: putting oneself in a humble position of real listening and understanding the needs of the youth refugees, and then playing with them so as to make them feel an integral part of the Italian and European society was an important message of solidarity and hope for the future generations.

The three 40-minute games encapsulated the true essence of sport: a vehicle for knowledge exchange and socialization as well as an excellent way to overcome discrimination and remove all sorts of social and cultural prejudices.

