

Sport: Integration, Development and Peace

A Commitment to Action – A Call for Sport

The Conference on "Sports: Integration, Development and Peace", held in the NOC of Portugal, on May 3, 2016, provided an unique opportunity to debate examples of good practices for refugee integration through sport, envisioning a multi-approach to tackle this overriding issue based on guiding principles, recommendations, guidelines and an action plan established on a statement reflecting their common position and engagement.

This Statement, reflects the testimony of National Olympic Committees, as well as institutional and private stakeholders looking forward to optimizing the use of resources available, preventing duplication of efforts and enhancing the impact of these actions both in the new life of refugees and their hosting communities.

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This statement underlines that **sport has an overriding role in the process of social integration and in bridging political, religions, racial and socioeconomic cleavages.**

Sport has a magical impact on people! In fact, it is a natural human activity that has the capacity to involve. Expressed as universal language, sport requires and demands respect for the rules and equal conditions of participation. It also requires fair play, an open mind, persistence, willingness to challenge, and a desire to interact.

The United Nations recognises sport as inspired by Olympic values, through which it shares a mission: the maintenance of international peace and understanding. By embodying the universal principles of the Olympic Movement it is possible to create plans of action to boost the added value of sport as a key driver in the process of social integration of those in need of international protection. Sport doesn't solve problems of the world but it can provide a new perspective in solving them!

Faced with growing migration in Europe associated with the recent wave of refugees, nations need to foster collaborative partnerships in the framework of the relevant institutions in order to drive an action plan for education and social inclusion for refugees through sport. The participants to the conference advance the following observations and recommendations:

- The universal nature of sport as language understood by all people makes it a perfect platform to promote integration;
- The fair nature of sporting competitions provides an arena for peaceful cooperation and participation, and the opportunity for young people to express themselves;
- There is a tidal change in thinking about the way in which sport can achieve developmental objectives, away from charity and monetary donations toward specific and direct engagement;

May, 3rd,
2016
Auditorium NOC
LISBOA
Portugal
9:30 – 17:00

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- Sporting initiatives used to achieve integration or developmental goals must have specific aims with clear and measurable outcomes combined with long term commitment strategies;
- Clear and continued engagement with local communities and authorities is essential to the success of any sports initiative. By promoting the integration of refugees, with initial projects directed at welcome centres, there must also be adequate follow up initiatives that ensure longer term integration;
- Wider cooperation between public sector bodies, NGOs, sports federations and charities are essential in ensuring that services are not duplicated and efforts in this area are concerted and mutually reinforcing;
- Specific expertise is imperative in assuring that projects and initiatives meet the required objectives, particularly creating employment of migrants or refugees, and take into account cultural perspectives of refugees as well as their new regional home;
- Specificity must be combined with an overarching holistic approach that looks to the refugee crisis in an international and global context;
- If what sport offers as part of the overall process is successful in creating better integration and lifestyle – then sport must be accepted as a positive part of the objective and should be an integral part of solutions that are developed.

Therefore, adherents to this statement exhorts individuals, organizations, public institutions, civil society associations, educational institutions, and other social networks to spread the Olympic values of respect, friendship and excellence for the service of humanity's development through the unique potential of the universal language of sport in promoting social integration and combating all forms of discrimination.

Adherents to this statement also pledge to influence policies, and to foster public debate, to support refugee's integration, remaining mindful of the enormous threats we faced, acknowledging that only with our collective effort we will create a better world for future generations.



List of entities

Comité Olímpico de Portugal – NOC of Portugal

Save the Dream

Alto Comissariado para as Migrações – ACM (*High Commission for Migration*)

Conselho Português para os Refugiados – CPR (*Portuguese Refugee Council*)

Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados - PAR (*the Refugee Support Platform*)

Olympic Council of Ireland – NOC of Ireland

The Cyprus National Olympic Committee – NOC of Cyprus

Proponents

José Manuel Constantino, NOC of Portugal

Rosa Mora, *Olympic Champion*, NOC of Portugal

João Paulo Almeida, NOC of Portugal

Maria Machado, NOC of Portugal

Alessandro Pinto, Save the Dream

Dermot Henihan, NOC of Ireland

José Antunes Fernandes, ACM (*High Commission for Migration*)

Mário Ribeiro, CNAI/ACM (*National Immigrant Support Centre /High Commission for Migration*)

Teresa Tito de Morais Mendes, CPR (*Portuguese Refugee Council*)

André Costa Jorge, PAR (*the Refugee Support Platform*)

Hicham Yahyaoui, *resident CACR/CPR (Reception Center for Refugee Children, Portuguese Refugee Council)*

Honey Thaljieh, *Communications & Public Affairs of FIFA*

Ossama Al Mohsen, *International Projects of the National Soccer Coaches Education Center, GETAFE, Spain*

Zeid Al Monhsen, Spain

Graham Walsh, Quest Global

António Mateus, *Reporter RTP*

Manuel Brito, Panathlon Clube de Lisboa

Joaquim Evangelista, SJPF (*Union of Professional Footballers*)

Assunção Fernandes, Assomada (*Association of Social Solidarity*)

Sara Carmo, *Olympic Sailor*