

****Fans and anti-racism in European football****

Report. Doidge, M. (2014). How does anti-racist activism by fans challenge racism and xenophobia in European football. University of Brighton

Link. [Doidge-UEFA Anti Racism in European Football Report \(1\).pdf](#)

Aim. Racism remains a significant problem in European football, taking many forms rooted in local rivalries, historical contexts, and wider societal prejudices. This research report, drawing on studies of fan groups in Germany, Poland, and Italy, explores how fans are actively working to combat this issue, and what makes their efforts successful. The studies highlight that simply punishing racist behavior isn't enough; understanding the specific culture of football fans and addressing the underlying causes of prejudice are crucial.

Key findings. Effective anti-racism work often involves fan-led initiatives – particularly ‘fan projects’ – that build trust with supporters through consistent engagement and offer educational opportunities. These projects are most successful when they are well-funded, have strong support from football clubs and authorities, and are tailored to the specific local context. However, the research also cautions that these projects can be co-opted by extremist groups, highlighting the need for careful oversight and a commitment to challenging all forms of discrimination. While some initiatives focus on direct action and education, others emphasize bringing people from different backgrounds together through shared experiences like football tournaments. The quality of these interactions is key – simply playing football isn't enough; programs need to actively promote understanding and challenge stereotypes. This underscores the potential of football to be a force for positive social change, and the importance of supporting grassroots, fan-led efforts to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all. Ultimately, tackling racism in football requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses both the symptoms and the root causes of prejudice within the sport and in society as a whole.

Limitations. The research acknowledges limitations, including the focus on only three countries and the difficulty of measuring the long-term impact of anti-racism initiatives.