

A photograph of two men embracing on a football field. The man in the foreground is smiling and wearing a black long-sleeved shirt. The man behind him is wearing a bright yellow-green high-visibility vest over a grey shirt. They are standing in front of a blue football goal net under a blue sky with light clouds.

# WORLD REFUGEE DAY

GUIDEBOOK

Social Cohesion  
Through Football

Photo: John Crozier

Presented by The Sports Effect  
& Fare network

**THE**  
**SPORTS**  
**EFFECT**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome	2
Structure of the guide	3
What is World Refugee Day?	4
Integration and SportIntergroup Contact Theory	5
Your World Refugee Day event	7
Before - Planning ahead of the day	7
During the event – Running activities on the day	13
After the event – Create a legacy	19
Conclusion of the guide	21
Annex A – Checklist	22
Annex B – Risk Assessment Checklist	23
Annex C – Photo and media consent form template	25
Annex D – Further Resources	26

# WELCOME

**Wherever I go, my first question is: “Where is the pitch?” My name is Degol, I am a refugee from Eritrea, now living in the UK. As I crossed Africa and Europe, I always tried to play football. Whether I stayed five days or five years, I would always look for somewhere to play.**

For me, football helps me understand a place. It helps me make friends and feel at home. When I play, a place feels brighter and more familiar.

I now live in East London. When I was in refugee accommodation, my roommates used to complain because I stayed up late kicking a small ball against the wall. But whenever someone went to play football, they would always knock on my door—even if we didn’t share a language.

Football is like medicine for me. When I step on the pitch, I feel strong and free. I remember playing in Finsbury Park in North London without even two matching shoes but still enjoying every moment.

To those of you organising a World Refugee Day event or starting a refugee team, thank you for creating space for us. It is not always easy to find a ball or a safe place to play, especially in expensive cities in Europe. I used to get £9 a week for transport and living costs, so spending it on football was not really possible. In many places I played barefoot or borrowed shoes, but that was okay—I just wanted to play.

My best football memory was two years ago. I was part of a refugee team going to a tournament, but a storm called “George” hit London and the manager couldn’t take us. I was living in a homeless shelter at the time, and we weren’t allowed to stay there during the day, so I went to the tournament anyway.

There I met Ben from I Speak Football, who was very friendly and put me into another team. We had a great day, even though it rained all day. My new team won the tournament, and I was named best player. I took my trophy back to the shelter and kept it under my bed. I still have it with me now.

Today, I have my own room and I am a coach for the I Speak Football Refugee Programme in the UK. I help others learn English through football, and I still learn every day myself.

Football brings people together. It doesn’t matter where you come from or what language you speak—what matters is teamwork, respect, and love for the game.

Good luck with your World Refugee Day event. See you on the pitch!

Degol

## STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDE

**This guide is designed to help organisations, clubs, community groups and practitioners plan and deliver meaningful football events for World Refugee Day. It can be used by those already working with refugees and displaced people, as well as by those who are new to this work and want to create a welcoming, inclusive and respectful event.**

It begins by explaining the purpose of World Refugee Day and why football can be a powerful tool for welcome, connection and social cohesion when activities are inclusive, safe and carefully designed.

It then introduces key principles for bringing people together through football, including participation, safeguarding, consent, accessibility and shared ownership. The practical guidance is structured around three stages: before, during and after the event, helping organisers think through planning, delivery, communications, reflection and legacy.

The guide ends with templates, checklists and further resources to support organisations that want to create a meaningful event and build on it beyond a single day.



### Register Your Event

To Register your World Refugee Day event please go to [this free form](#) and enter your details. **Help us make this World Refugee Day Football Event, the biggest one yet!**



# WHAT IS WORLD REFUGEE DAY?

World Refugee Day is an international day designated by the United Nations to honour refugees around the world, recognise their strength and resilience, and raise awareness of the realities faced by people forced to flee conflict, persecution and violence. It is observed every year on 20 June and is marked globally through campaigns, cultural events, education programmes, advocacy initiatives, sport activities and community gatherings. The day aims not only to highlight the challenges refugees face, but also to celebrate their contributions, talents and potential within host communities.

## Integration and Sport

For refugees and displaced people, integration is not simply about adapting to a new country; it is a two-way process in which both newcomers and host communities learn to live together, and build a shared future.



Sport provides opportunities for people to meet regularly, work towards common goals, develop social networks, and experience positive interactions with individuals they might otherwise never encounter. These opportunities are particularly important for refugees, who often face barriers such as language differences, limited social connections, discrimination, and unfamiliarity with local systems and cultures.

Football is especially well suited to this role, as it is the world's most popular sport, played in nearly every country and understood across cultures.

However, participation in sport does not automatically lead to integration. Research consistently shows that simply placing different groups together in the same space is insufficient. In some cases, poorly designed programmes can reinforce stereotypes, create competition between groups, or even increase tensions.


Sport reflects the societies in which it operates and can reproduce existing inequalities relating to race, gender, disability, religion, or migration status. For refugees and asylum seekers, there are additional considerations. Many participants may have experienced displacement, loss, trauma, or prolonged uncertainty regarding their future. Some may have limited trust in institutions or authority figures. Others may face practical barriers such as transportation costs, language difficulties, childcare responsibilities, or concerns about discrimination.

Effective programmes therefore require a trauma-informed and participant-centred approach. This means creating environments that are welcoming, safe, predictable, and inclusive, while recognising participants' strengths and agency rather than defining them solely by their refugee status.

# INTERGROUP CONTACT THEORY (IGT)

To design those programmes effectively, it is important to understand what research says about bringing different groups together. Intergroup Contact Theory provides a widely used framework for understanding how to create meaningful interaction that reduces prejudice and supports inclusion.

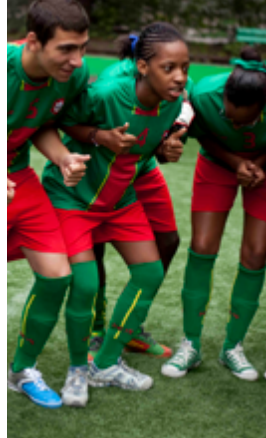
Developed in sociology since the 1950s, this theory explores how different groups interact. Research shows that meaningful contact can reduce prejudice, build trust, and strengthen social cohesion, but only under certain conditions.



**Principle 1:**

**Frequent and Sustained Contact**

Positive relationships are more likely to develop when people from different backgrounds interact regularly over time, rather than through one-off encounters.



**Principle 2:**

**Equal Status Within the Group**


Activities are most effective when participants feel respected and valued equally, regardless of background, identity or social status.



**Principle 3:**

**Working Together Towards a Common Goal**

Shared objectives- such as playing for the same team, solving problems together or contributing to a community initiative- help create a sense of collective identity and mutual understanding.



**Principle 4:**

**Support from Authority Figures**

Inclusive environments are strengthened when leaders, coaches, teachers, clubs and institutions actively support and reinforce values of respect, inclusion and belonging.



## 1. Empathy

The aim of empathy in the football context is not to make local people pity refugees. Pity can reinforce unequal power relationships: “we are helping them.” Good contact should instead encourage mutual recognition: “we are playing together, learning from each other and sharing this space.” Refugees are not only vulnerable people in need of support they are as players, organisers, coaches, volunteers, leaders, parents, students, workers, fans and neighbours.

## 2. Anxiety reduction

Support social cohesion by reducing anxiety between people who may not normally meet. Many participants may feel nervous, uncertain or unsure how to interact. A well-designed football activity creates a shared focus, clear rules and a welcoming environment, allowing people to build confidence through simple, positive contact before deeper conversations take place.

## 3. Perspective-taking

Create situations where people meet as teammates, neighbours and equals. Shared play through football, informal conversation and refugee-led storytelling can help participants see each other as individuals with skills, hopes, humour, memories and contributions.

## 4. Friendship formation

Football can support friendship formation when participants have repeated, positive and relaxed opportunities to meet. Friendships are unlikely to form through one-off contact alone, especially if the activity is overly competitive or rushed. Create a space before and after games for informal conversation, mixed teams, shared food, volunteering roles and follow-up sessions. The aim is not only for refugees and local residents to play in the same event, but for them to recognise each other, learn each other’s names and want to meet again.

## 5. Extended contact

Extended contact means that people can benefit not only from direct contact, but also from knowing that others in their group have positive relationships with people from another group.

In simple terms: if a local player sees their coach, teammate or friend warmly interacting with refugees, they may become more open themselves. Similarly, if a newly arrived refugee sees another refugee already trusted and respected within a football club, they may feel safer joining.

## 6. Negative contact

Bringing people together through football does not automatically produce positive outcomes. Contact can be negative if participants experience abuse, exclusion, humiliation, discrimination or unsafe behaviour. In some cases, a poorly managed event can reinforce fear and mistrust rather than reduce it. Organisers should therefore treat safety, respect and facilitation as central parts of the activity, not as administrative extras.

# YOUR WORLD REFUGEE DAY EVENT: BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER

World Refugee Day events can be powerful opportunities to bring refugees and host communities together, but their impact depends on careful planning, sensitive delivery, and honest reflection.

A small football event cannot solve the global displacement crisis, but it can create an important moment of welcome. For small organisations, World Refugee Day does not need to mean a large tournament or expensive event; a five-a-side game, family football session, community picnic or regular social activity can make a difference. What matters most is that the event is safe, welcoming and shaped with refugees, not only for refugees, with clear consent around photography, respectful communication, mixed teams,

informal conversation and a pathway for people to stay connected after the day itself.

Poorly designed or one-off events can sometimes reinforce barriers rather than break them down, so it is important to think beyond a single day and create opportunities for meaningful connections to continue.

This guide will support you in designing a World Refugee Day event that is inclusive, engaging, and meaningful for everyone involved.

## BEFORE PLANNING AHEAD OF THE DAY

### 1. Decide Your Aim for the Day

Before planning activities, be clear about what you want the event to achieve. Different aims require different approaches. Possible aims may include:

- **Social Mixing and Connection:** Bringing people from different backgrounds together in meaningful ways, encouraging interaction, teamwork, and relationship-building.
- **Access and Participation:** Helping refugees and displaced people discover local clubs, services, programmes, or opportunities they may not previously have known about or felt comfortable accessing.
- **Community Fun and Celebration:** Creating a welcoming, positive environment that celebrates diversity, culture, and community through sport, games, food, music, or shared activities.
- **Awareness and Education:** Raising awareness of refugee experiences and challenging stereotypes through storytelling, exhibitions, workshops, or dialogue.



- **Long-Term Engagement:** Using the event as an entry point into sustained programmes, volunteering, coaching, leadership, or ongoing community participation.

Being clear on your purpose will help shape the design of the day, your partnerships, communications, and how success is measured.

## 2. Understand your participants

**Refugees:** Refugees may face different opportunities and challenges when settling into a new community. Work collaboratively with trusted community organisations and participants to design welcoming, inclusive, and culturally sensitive activities that reduce practical barriers to participation, foster social connections, celebrate diversity, and support a sense of belonging, while ensuring involvement is voluntary and not focused on personal migration experiences unless individuals choose to share them.

**“Local” Population / Host Community:** Frame the event as an opportunity for mutual learning, community building, and shared experiences rather than as a charitable activity. Encourage active participation and collaboration with newcomers through mixed teams and shared goals.

**Elderly:** Provide accessible venues, seating, rest areas, and opportunities for participation that do not rely solely on physical activity. Value the experience, knowledge, and stories older participants can bring to discussions and community-building activities.

**Differently Aabled People:** Design activities using a universal and inclusive approach so people with different physical, sensory, cognitive, or communication needs can participate meaningfully. Consult participants and disability organisations in advance to identify reasonable adjustments and remove barriers wherever possible.

**Women and Girls:** Consult women and girls during planning to understand any cultural, practical, or safety considerations that may affect participation. Consider factors such as:

- **Consultation:** speak with women and girls before the event to understand what would help them feel safe, welcome and able to participate.
- **Privacy:** check whether changing areas, toilets, prayer spaces and rest areas offer enough privacy and comfort.
- **Kit and clothing:** make clear that participants can wear what they feel comfortable in, including sportswear, modest clothing or religious dress, as long as it is safe for activity.
- **Separate or mixed activities:** consider whether women-only, girls-only, mixed or family-based activities are most appropriate for the local context and participant preferences.
- **Female facilitators:** involve women coaches, volunteers, interpreters or safeguarding leads where possible.
- **Childcare and family needs:** provide family-friendly activities or childcare options so caring responsibilities do not prevent participation.
- **Leadership roles:** create opportunities for women and girls to act as coaches, team captains, organisers, volunteers, speakers, referees or activity leaders.
- **Visibility and consent:** do not photograph, film or publicly identify women and girls without specific consent, especially where this could create family, community, legal or safety risks.



### 3. Understand Your Partners

Strong partnerships are essential for inclusive and effective World Refugee Day events. Different organisations bring different strengths, relationships, expertise, and responsibilities. Successful partnership working means understanding not only what each organisation can contribute, but also how to engage with them appropriately and respectfully.

**Take time to understand:**

- Their experience working with refugee communities
- Their safeguarding and inclusion practices
- What support they can realistically provide
- Their goals and expectations for the event
- Potential barriers their participants may face
- Their capacity and limitations
- Whether they are refugee-led or community-led

**REFUGEE SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS:**

These organisations often have trusted relationships with refugee and asylum-seeking communities and may provide housing, legal, welfare, education, language, or integration support.

**How to engage effectively:**

Partnership working should be collaborative rather than extractive. Refugee-led organisations and people with lived experience should be involved in shaping the event wherever possible, rather than only being asked to recruit participants.

**COMMUNITY GROUPS:**

Community groups often have deep local knowledge and trusted networks. They may include neighbourhood organisations, grassroots initiatives, volunteer groups, or resident associations. They may not have worked with refugees before but will have often, they often have a sensitive and inclusive approach built in to how they work.

**How to engage effectively:**

- Attend existing community activities where possible. Don't create something that conflicts with an activity already underway, learn how your event can bring something new.
- Recognise that informal groups may not operate like larger organisations, they may rely a lot on volunteers, or on other elements that take a long time to organise. However, they can also move quicker than large bureaucracies.

**SPORTS CLUBS AND FEDERATIONS:**

Sports organisations can provide facilities, equipment, coaches, volunteers, and pathways into ongoing participation. They are often the ones most reliable in setting up an event around sport, but may lack knowledge of how to create a sport for development activity. Many clubs and federations have tried and tested ways to create sports events, and can find it hard to tailor their approach.

**How to engage effectively:**

- Clarify expectations around refugee inclusion and conflict-sensitivity early
- Discuss affordability, accessibility, and long-term opportunities
- Prepare coaches and volunteers for diverse participant needs
- Promote welcoming environments rather than a performance-focused event



Photo: Dana Rösiger

### ACADEMIA (SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES):

Educational institutions can be valuable partners for venues, volunteers, awareness-raising, and youth engagement. They have access to resources, facilities, and often volunteers. They can move slowly, and without internal ambassadors their buy-in can be limited. However, when a university fully commits to an event or programme they can support in a large variety of ways.

#### How to engage effectively:

- Align the event with educational or community engagement goals
- Provide clear safeguarding and supervision structures
- Give a lot of notice and consider school calendars, exams, and holiday periods. Although June is not an ideal time, some students are free over the Summer than other times. Of course for faculty semester breaks can also be a more flexible time.
- Create opportunities for student leadership and volunteering, universities see creating experiences as an integral part of their role

### LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

Authorities may support through funding, venues, promotion, safeguarding guidance, or strategic coordination. Their support can be crucial, however, if unsupportive they can shut down events, discourage participation, and actively create hostile environments. Each location and authority is different, and the extent to which you coordinate with them should be tailored to their potential support and with the safety of the participants First and foremost in your mind.

#### How to engage effectively:

- Understand local priorities and policies related to inclusion or cohesion
- If you are not well-known to the authority consider working with partners or event hosts that have more trust and experience with them, especially for the first time
- Communicate clearly and professionally



Photo: Dana Rösiger

#### 4. Contact Partners Early

No matter the partner, successful inclusive events often require more time and coordination than traditional sports events. Contact partners early to allow enough time for relationship-building, participant recruitment, and joint promotion. If you have not contacted these partners early it will make this harder, however not contacting them at all can create long-term damage to your ability to have future events and programmes. If you have to contact them late, be apologetic, and ensure that next time the invite will come earlier.

#### 5. Plan an Inclusive and Safe Day

Planning allows for the event with inclusivity and social mixing at the core. Inclusion should be designed into every aspect of the event, not a nice “add-on”.

When planning please consider:

- Where is the event? What resources will be needed to come, play, and return safely? Have participants received clear information about the event beforehand, including timings, location, transport options, and what to expect on the day?
- Are activities suitable for your audience are different ages, genders, abilities, and confidence levels all able to take part? Are the activities creating opportunities for mixing or just competition?
- Have you considered childcare or family-friendly activities that may enable greater participation?
- Have the refugees been consulted on the activities?
- Will all participants have the right clothes and equipment to attend?
- Are interpreters or translated materials needed?
- Is food culturally appropriate and inclusive of dietary requirements?
- Are safeguarding procedures clear? Is there a clear process for reporting concerns, discrimination, bullying, harassment?
- Do staff and volunteers understand conflict sensitive/trauma-informed approaches?
- Are there opportunities for participants to socialise informally before, during, and after football activities?
- Is there a plan to help participants stay connected after the event if they wish to do so?

These questions help us to create a safe place for your participants and allow the potential to make an impactful World Refugee Day event. A safe space is not only about physical safety. Participants should feel welcomed, respected, and free to participate without pressure, judgement, or unwanted attention.

## 6. Develop a Social Media and Communications Plan

A strong communications plan can help increase participation, visibility, community support, and long-term impact for your World Refugee Day event. However, communications should be approached carefully and ethically. The goal is not simply to create content, but to communicate in ways that are respectful, inclusive, accurate, and community-centred.

Social media and communications should help participants feel represented, welcomed, and valued. Bad communications can make participants feel exposed, stereotyped, or used.

Check with your participants before taking/uploading photos or mentioning their name as this might put them in danger.

The best ways to avoid creating an event that exploits instead of celebrates is:

- Co-design where possible
- Communicate clearly, and where possible, have stakeholders check communications before publishing.
- Do not rely on participants to self-promote the event, that is not their job, and they should only do if they want to.
- Tailor your communications for different groups and different platforms.
- Prioritise consent over content.

If you do decide to have a social media plan, then we also ask you to add the hashtag #footballAndRefugees, this will allow FARE to track the global events and help amplify world refugee day events.



## DURING RUNNING ACTIVITIES ON THE DAY

### 1. How to start your event:

#### Ice breakers

Ice-breakers help reduce barriers when people do not know each other. Bringing people together in one space does not automatically create mixing. Where possible try to create fun and interactive starts to your event. Consider running ice-breakers throughout the day, not just at the beginning.

- **Musical Footballs:** have more people than footballs, have music playing, and have a controlled tight space. When the music stops there begins a 10 second countdown to have your own ball. The players without a ball after the time stops are out of this round. Reduce the amount of balls as quickly or as slowly as you want. The musical element is a great opportunity to get people moving, but be careful that it doesn't get too physical or competitive too early.
- **Icebreaker balls:** Some balls have space to write questions on, some others can have a number placed on different patches. These numbers can relate to classic icebreaker questions such as: Where are you from? What's your favourite sports player? What's your favourite sport? etc. Keep questions open and not too personal. Avoid questions about someone's migrant status.
- **Football Bingo:** Print a page of questions on a grid (3x3, 4x4, 5x5). Players must then find someone that can answer that question yes. Once they have filled their grid fully they can give the sheet to organisers and score points or be put in a raffle to win a small prize- if resources allow. Questions can be adapted each time but are typically:
  - "Speaks more than two languages"
  - "Has played football in another country"
  - "Supports a team in red"
  - "Has coached or volunteered before"
  - "Is a goalkeeper"
  - "Prefers another sport more than football"



### 2. Core activities - Tournament Style

If you are creating a tournament-type event for World Refugee Day, then you can use a normal small or large side tournament approach, of which there are many examples online to follow from. To make it a true World Refugee Day event we would suggest some adaptations that can help reflect the theme of the day and celebrate social mixing.

#### • Mixed Teams Approach

Rather than teams arriving and staying in their previously organised teams, they can come in groups that are then sorted randomly, or by skill-levels, to create mixed teams. This allows people to meet new people and forge bonds through teamwork. It also reduces reinforcing a "Them v Us" mentality which is a risk within football contexts. It also allows people who are not arriving as part of an existing team to be easily integrated into the tournament.

**Picking teams on the Pitch:** Although a common practice and normally a way of creating balanced teams. Having "Captains" select people one-by-one can suffer from biases, especially when working with people you haven't played with before. We suggest a random allocation by numbers, or if there is someone who knows people's playing levels, these can be grouped together for fairness. At all times reinforce the fun and non-competitive values to help manage expectations.

• **Football 3 Methodology<sup>1</sup>**

The methodology is specifically built around three halves:

- Pre-match discussion
- The football match itself
- A Post-Match discussion
- Extra Points/Goals for sportsmanship

Similar to the football 3 approach, you can also award points for non-football elements. These can be for sportsmanship, integration of players, rotation of team, etc. As long as these are agreed before the tournament they can create opportunities for positive reinforcement of values that your day represents.

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<sup>1</sup> The “Football3 methodology” was developed in the late 1990s in Colombia by social entrepreneur Jürgen Griesbeck. Working in communities affected by armed conflict, the programme sought to use football as a tool for peacebuilding, dialogue, and reconciliation among young people from different backgrounds. The methodology was built around the concept of football being played in “three halves”: a pre-match discussion, the match itself, and a post-match reflection. In 2002, Griesbeck founded streetfootballworld, which helped refine, promote, and scale Football3 internationally through a global network of sport-for-development organizations. The third half is therefore embedded directly into the football3 methodology: [www.sportanddev.org/latest/news/football3-interactive-learning-tool-both-and-pitch](http://www.sportanddev.org/latest/news/football3-interactive-learning-tool-both-and-pitch)

• **Self-refereeing**

If resources are restricted then most football games around the world are self-refereed. This means the players themselves decide on what a foul is or isn’t and if a rule has been broken. This common feature of amateur football can be adapted as a social cohesion skill showcased during your tournament. However, self-refereeing one-off events with teams that have not played together before and may not play together again in the future has its risks. Please consider this when organising your event.

• **Adaptations**

Adaptations can range from the deliberately silly, such as 3-legged players, with socks keeping a pairs legs tied together, to rule changes like, each player of the team must touch the ball before scoring. These types of adaptations can reinforce the themes of teamwork, or can be used to simply increase the fun elements and reduce the competitive nature of matches.



**3. Fun Day Event**

If you decide to have a fun-day type event we suggest creating stations with different soccer and social mixing based themes. A bingo type card can show how many stations you’ve been to and help manage crowd flow to different places. Or you can have scores given at each and an overall points board.

Once again the competitive element should be secondary, and social mixing better suited if this is done in pairs, or small groups of mixed players.

• **Refreshments/Foods of the world**

One element that can even challenge sports for bringing people together is food. Think how your refreshments plan can also reinforce the values of the day. Please consider working with caterers who are owned, or who employ refugee workers. These are more common than at first glance might be visible, as refugee and migrant communities often support themselves in this way. Whomever is selected to provide refreshments make sure they know the dietary requirements of working with this participant group.

**EXAMPLE 1: CONES HANGING FROM GOAL (DIFFERENT POINTS)**



**EXAMPLE 2: LABELLED AREAS ON GOAL**



**EXAMPLE 3: CLASSIC CROSSBAR ONLY**



Adjust the points to suit your activity.  
Encourage fair play and celebrate effort!



Aim, have fun  
and score points!

**Station Ideas**

• **Shooting Stations**

Shooting at targets with a ball is a normal part of football training, however to make it more interesting for a special event consider adding challenges, points, or adaptations.

If you have cones, these can be tied to hang from different parts of the goal with different points for different cones hit. If you don't have cones and string then different parts of the posts can be labelled with different points, or the classic crossbar only can be used.

This can be adapted to be shots from the penalty spot to further out, to shots on the volley, or with weaker foot. A popular adaptation is to have players spin round a central cone a number of times and then attempt the activity- make sure you have someone ready to guide the disoriented player!

• **Races**

Normal football dribbling races are a great way to create competition, and if you have a timer on your phone a leader board can be created. However for a special event some changes can create a more fun and inclusive set of races.

Using a ball and a small cone you can balance the ball on the cone and run from one side of the pitch to another. Even balancing a ball on the back of your hand, rather than the palm, can make the challenge harder.

Adding obstacles like slaloms, balls to jump over, or players to beat add extra fun to these race games. Include a challenge half way through of putting on a football top or goal keeper gloves, or oversized items. This not only increases the silliness, but makes the races even more enjoyable for spectators.

To reinforce the social mixing element consider having paired games or team games where combined scores means supporting team members is valued more than individual wins.

# BALL BALANCE CHALLENGE

Using a ball and a small cone you can balance the ball on the cone and run from one side of the pitch to another.

Even balancing a ball on the back of your hand, rather than the palm, can make the challenge harder.

## HOW TO PLAY



Balance the ball on the cone (or on the back of your hand).



Run from one side of the pitch to the other.



If the ball drops, return to the starting line and try again.



First player to reach the other side wins!



## MAKE IT MORE FUN



Use different types of cones or objects to balance the ball (e.g. flat disc, small cup).



Add obstacles or slalom cones to weave through.



Race in pairs or teams.



Add a time challenge or turn it into a relay.

## Random Stations

Often the most enjoyed stations are the ones different to a normal training practice session. Our research has found some very different options that may or may not be useful to your world refugee day.

- **Football Fruit Machine**

Have 3 selectors sit next to each other but divided by screens (or pieces of paper). They then select an item from their box (football, boot, cone, shirt, etc.) and hold it up on the count of 3. The player gets 3 attempts to “pull the lever” and if all 3 selectors select the same item they win a prize or points. The more items the selectors have to choose from, the less likelihood of winning. This doesn’t require any skills and can be a great family event for all ages.

# FOOTBALL FRUIT MACHINE

A fun game of luck! Three selectors each choose an item at the same time. If they all select the same item, the player wins!

## HOW TO PLAY



1. Three selectors sit next to each other, separated by screens or pieces of paper.



2. Each selector has a box with items.



3. On the count of 3, selectors choose an item and hold it up for everyone to see.



4. The player gets 3 attempts to pull the lever.



5. If all 3 selectors pick the same item, the player wins a prize or points!

## SETUP EXAMPLE



**3 ATTEMPTS TO HIT THE JACKPOT!**

Match all 3 selectors and win!



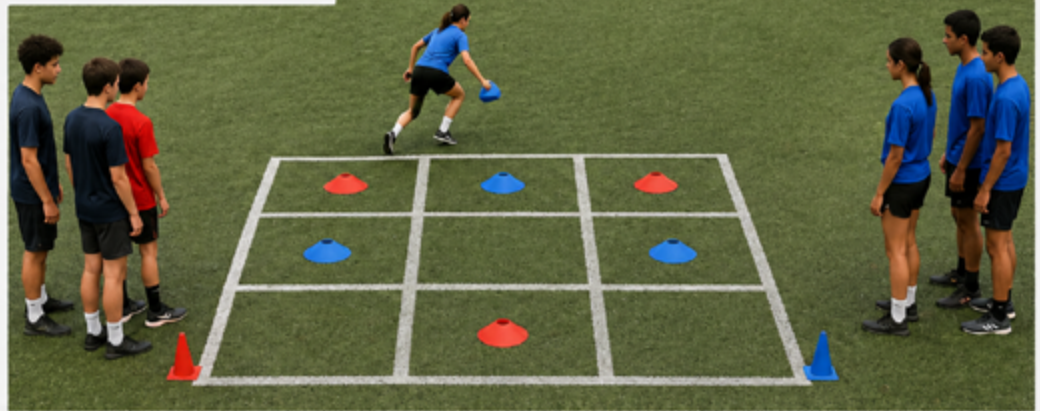
### • Tic-Tac-Toe/ Noughts and Crosses

A Tic tac toe (3x3 grid) is set up. Each team must then run up and place a coloured cone, shirt, or vest in the boxes. The first team with 3 in a row wins. This can be adapted to perform a task before they can place the item, or you can also have a player being able to remove and/or place an item, making the game last longer.

# TIC-TAC-TOE / NOUGHTS AND CROSSES

A Tic tac toe (3x3 grid) is set up. Each team must then run up and place a coloured cone, shirt, or vest in the boxes. The first team with 3 in a row wins.

EXAMPLE SETUP



## HOW TO PLAY



Players run to the grid.



Place your team's cone, shirt, or vest in any empty box.



First team with 3 in a row (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal) wins!

## WAYS TO ADAPT



Perform a task before you can place your item (e.g. 5 push-ups, a lap, a skill challenge).

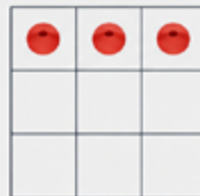


Allow players to remove and/or move an item before placing another.

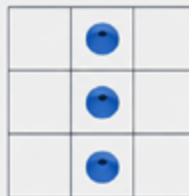


Set a time limit or points system to make the game last longer.

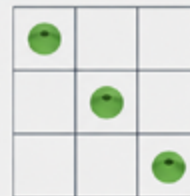
## WINNING EXAMPLES



HORIZONTAL



VERTICAL



DIAGONAL

## EQUIPMENT



Cones / shirts / vests in 2 colours



Tape or markers to create the 3x3 grid



Whistle (optional)

- **Beachball football**

Changing the shape or the ball (larger or smaller) can slow down or speed up play. Especially in enclosed pitches large or multiple balls can create a chaotic situation that many enjoy.

- **Football bowling**

Depending on space set up a set of pins like cones or balls balanced on cones and then have players kick or roll footballs towards the pins. The most pins knocked down after two goes wins.

## AFTER CREATE A LEGACY

As well as following up logistical elements mentioned in the checklist the after part of the event should serve as an opportunity to thank partners, reflect on the event, and potentially create a legacy.

**Thanking partners:** This does not have to be a formal letter, but a text or email can really help show support. Sharing of photos, and giving them mention in social media should also be considered. For those donating resources, ask them if they have any comments or improvements. Be open to their criticisms if they have them, and make them feel they are contributing to improving the event. If they feel they are co-producing with you they are more likely to support you in the future, and repeat partners are the key to successful events.

**Reflection:** As well as a quick wrap-up on the day, try and hold a “wrap-up” call with stakeholders. This could be preceded with a short survey online to anonymously surface comments that can be dived into when all together. These guiding questions will support your reflection and help inform future events:

- **Participation data:** total participants, number of refugees/asylum seekers involved, number of local residents, number of women and girls, children, disabled participants, volunteers and staff.
- **Planning involvement:** how many refugees, asylum seekers or refugee-led organisations were involved in designing the event, not only attending it.
- **Partner engagement:** number and type of partners involved, such as football clubs, refugee organisations, schools, local authorities, women’s groups or disability organisations.
- **Quality of participation:** whether participants felt safe, welcomed, respected and able to take part meaningfully.

- **Participant satisfaction:** simple feedback on what people enjoyed, what felt uncomfortable, and what should change next time.
- **Safety and safeguarding learning:** whether any incidents, concerns or near misses occurred, and how they were handled.
- **Desire to stay involved:** whether participants want future football sessions, another community event, a WhatsApp group, training, volunteering or leadership opportunities.

When creating reflection sessions it is important to set ground rules like:

- People’s experience of the day will be different. Therefore someone cannot be right or wrong if they are talking about their own experience. Listen carefully and ask open questions to find out more.
- Challenge ideas not people- if others see someone being respected and a moderator genuinely eager to learn they will become more open to express their opinions.
- One person speaks at a time. This is very important when dominant voices, or those with better language skills may speak more.
- Participation is voluntary. Speak out loud, type in chat, or don’t contribute at all- that’s your choice.
- Keep the space positive and forward-looking. Nothing will change the past, but will hopefully improve the next event. If the comment feels that is focusing too much on the past, try and rephrase the conversation to “knowing this now, what would we change for the next event?”
- Keep it confidential. Don’t record the session and try to only use stories about other people with their permission.

With this session you can then create a final wash-up report, or just record a voice note of the most important things to remember for next time- good and bad.

## Legacy- What next?

This guide is designed to support those creating a one-off event, but we hope these events will inspire a longer response. Some longer term options include:

- **Create an informal communications group** (eg. WhatsApp group) where people can post about football opportunities and events, organise social gatherings. This can help maintain connections and make it easier for people to continue engaging.
- **Set up a weekly or monthly get together around football.** This can be an informal kick-about, or a session if resources allow, or could be a watch party. With watch parties try to choose venues where people feel comfortable. In many countries watching football is associated with drinking alcohol, this can be exclusionary to some.
- **Consider watching live local football together,** depending on the country lower level football can be affordable and a great opportunity to share the game, away from the high prices of top-division football.
- **Collect stories and document the event** Encourage participants to share their experiences (written, photo, or video). This can strengthen belonging and also help attract support for future activities.
- **Organise small tournaments or seasonal events** Instead of one-off large events, create recurring smaller tournaments to maintain engagement throughout the year.



## CONCLUSION

**World Refugee Day should not be seen as the end point of an activity, but as the beginning of a wider journey. A well-designed football event can create a moment of welcome, but its real value lies in what happens next: the conversations that continue, the relationships that grow, and the opportunities that open up for refugees, displaced people and local communities.**

Football can help people meet as teammates, neighbours, volunteers, coaches, supporters and friends. But this does not happen automatically. It requires thoughtful planning, trusted partnerships, safe and inclusive delivery, ethical communication and a commitment to learning from participants themselves. When events are shaped with refugees and communities, rather than simply organised for them, they are more likely to build trust, reduce barriers and create a genuine sense of belonging.

This guide is intended to help organisers create World Refugee Day events that are enjoyable, respectful and meaningful. Whether your event is a small kick-about, a family fun day, a tournament, a storytelling session or the first step towards a longer programme, the same principle applies: the day should leave people feeling welcomed, valued and connected.

By preparing carefully, listening openly and following up after the event, organisers can turn a single day of football into something more lasting. World Refugee Day can become not only a celebration, but a starting point for stronger relationships, more inclusive communities and continued action through the game we share.



# ANNEX A CHECKLIST

To create a World Refugee Day event it's important to:

## BEFORE

- Decide your aim for the day
- Understand your participants
- Understand your partners and their roles
- Contact partners early
- Plan an inclusive safe day
  - Specifically consider the inclusion of women and girls, and how they can be part of the day.
- Make all logistical preparations
- [Register your day at our WRD Link](#)
- Host a Team call for FAQs
- Social Media Plan and use #FootballAndRefugees

## DURING [ONE DAY BEFORE]:

- Check participants
- Check venue
- Print out registration
- Make sure all activities are ready
- Advocacy event- send out Press Briefing Note
- Check weather

## DURING [ON THE DAY]:

- Check venue, make sure accessible and all signs are correct
- Be available to answer questions around travel
- Set up activities
- Check Volunteers
- Ensure photo consent is given
- Check-in throughout the day
- Advocacy event- send out any communications that are part of the advocacy plan.
- Pass out surveys, or advertise QR codes and links
- Thank participants
- Thank volunteers
- Tidy up
- Record a summary on your phone or voice note on what worked well and what could be improved.

## AFTER

- Thank any stakeholders you did not thank on the day
- Pay any outstanding payments
- Review any feedback surveys you created
- Meet with staff and invited stakeholders on what went well and what didn't
- Discuss if there is momentum to create a legacy event
- Publish final elements of your social media
- Begin planning next year's event!

# ANNEX B RISK ASSESSMENT

This checklist is designed to help organisations plan a safe, inclusive and welcoming World Refugee Day football event.

Event name:

---

Date:

---

Venue:

---

Lead organisation:

---

Safeguarding lead:

---

First aid lead:

---

Completed by:

---

Date completed:

---

## 1. Safeguarding

### Possible risks checklist

- Safeguarding lead confirmed
- Staff and volunteers briefed on safeguarding responsibilities
- Clear reporting process agreed
- Emergency contact details available
- Children and young people supervised appropriately
- Volunteers working with children checked according to local rules
- Quiet or safe space identified for anyone needing support

Responsible person:

---

## 2. Discrimination, harassment and bullying

### Possible risks

- Participants experience racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, ableism or other discriminatory behaviour.
- Participants do not feel confident reporting incidents.

### Checklist

- Event values clearly explained at the start
- Code of conduct shared with staff, volunteers and participants
- Process for reporting discrimination agreed
- Staff know how to intervene safely and quickly
- Activities designed to encourage teamwork, respect and mixed participation
- Clear consequence agreed for discriminatory behaviour

Responsible person:

---

## 4. Other risks to be listed

# ANNEX C PHOTO & MEDIA CONSENT FORM

Event \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Taking part in this event does not mean you agree to be photographed, filmed, named or interviewed. Consent is optional. You can still fully join the event if you say no.**

## Important safety note

Some people, including asylum seekers, refugees, undocumented people or people with insecure status, may face real risks if they are publicly identified. Photos, videos, names, tags or quotes could create safety, legal, privacy or personal risks. Only give consent if you feel safe and comfortable.

## I give consent for:

- Photos/videos of me
- Group photos/videos where I appear
- My first name to be used
- None of the above

Participant name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## For under 18s:

Parent/guardian name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- This participant must not be photographed or filmed

# ANNEX D FURTHER RESOURCES



## REWINS 2.0 Guide to Best Practices and Training course for Coaches (2024):

[Rewins 2.0 Resources - Refugees and Football](#)

The REWINS 2.0 Guide to Best Practices provides insights into effective programmes that support the inclusion of refugee women through sport. Developed by the REWINS 2.0 project, this guide compiles examples from various organisations that use sport to empower women and promote social integration. Featured practices include initiatives such as Free to Run in Iraq and



Afghanistan, which combines outdoor sports with leadership training, and Hestia FC in Greece, a football team for refugee women focused on fostering social integration and psychological well-being.

Each programme demonstrates methods for engaging refugee women, including culturally sensitive mentoring, leadership opportunities, and tailored training sessions. By showcasing these examples, the guide offers practical approaches for organisations to support refugee women's inclusion and empowerment in both local and international contexts

## REWINS 2.0 - EMPOWER A day of storytelling: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6DaUERnZ3Us20](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6DaUERnZ3Us20)

This film shares lived experiences from refugee women and communities using football and sport to build safety, confidence and connection across different parts of Europe.

Their stories show what inclusion looks like in practice. A welcoming pitch gives people space to move, play, learn, lead and feel part of a community. It helps women and girls take up space with confidence, build friendships and be recognised for their strength, skills and ideas.



The film also reminds organisers that meaningful inclusion starts with listening. Refugee should help shape the activities, messages and follow-up opportunities. Their safety, privacy, dignity, clothing choices, family needs and leadership should sit at the centre of planning.

As you prepare your World Refugee Day event, let these stories guide you. A simple football activity, planned with care and respect, helps people feel stronger, more connected and more at home.





**Shared Goals: The power of football clubs to connect diverse communities- British Future (2024)**

[www.britishfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/British-Future-Shared-Goals.pdf](http://www.britishfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/British-Future-Shared-Goals.pdf)

This report explores how football clubs, league bodies and policymakers can harness this potential to reach across and foster connection in communities.

**UNHCR/UEFA Toolkit (2026):**

[www.uefa.com/refugeesupport/](http://www.uefa.com/refugeesupport/)



The UEFA Refugee Toolkit is designed to provide national and regional associations, leagues, professional and amateur clubs and other football stakeholders with a practical set of resources, to facilitate the

development of refugee initiatives. It aims to provide an initial understanding of forced displacement and suggests how football can act in providing mutually beneficial opportunities for refugees and their host communities.

**Implementation Guide Integration of Refugees Through Sport- ISCA**

[irts.isca.org/pdf/IRTS\\_Implementation\\_Guide\\_Final.pdf](http://irts.isca.org/pdf/IRTS_Implementation_Guide_Final.pdf)

This guide is designed to introduce the reader to the topic of Integrating Refugees Through Sport (IRTS). It reviews the theory, the challenges and barriers that NGOs, sports clubs and other organisations or individuals often face when implementing or running an IRTS programme. This guide also looks at the issue from the perspective of those involved: the refugees.



Therefore, it also includes an overview of the barriers and challenges through the eyes of those displaced, and trying to build a new life in a new land. Potential solutions to these issues are also examined.

**The Power of Sport: Guidance on strengthening cohesion and integration through sport (2020);  
By Belong – The Cohesion and integration Network**

[belongnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Belong\\_PowerofSport\\_V6.pdf](https://belongnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Belong_PowerofSport_V6.pdf)

This guidance is aimed at those commissioning, designing, delivering and evaluating sport programmes with more cohesive and integrated communities as their goal. It does two main things: 1. Explains how sport and physical activity can lead to greater cohesion and integration. 2. Provides a practical guide to support you in the design and evaluation of these activities.



**Growing Together How volunteerism fosters social cohesion between Syrian and Turkish young people (2019)- GIZ and Turkish Ministry of Youth & Sports.**

[www.giz.de/en/projects/strengthening-social-cohesion-between-syrian-refugees-and-turkish-host-communities-multi](http://www.giz.de/en/projects/strengthening-social-cohesion-between-syrian-refugees-and-turkish-host-communities-multi)

A summary of the German and Turkish's work in social cohesion in Turkey. Showcasing sports and cultural events bringing people together, especially refugees and host communities.



**Living Lab Toolkit- Insights from the Sport and Social Cohesion Lab (SSCL) Project- ERASMUS+ Project**

[www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Living%20Lab%20toolkit.pdf](http://www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Living%20Lab%20toolkit.pdf)

The Sport and Social Cohesion Lab (SSCL), an Erasmus+ project, empowers communities by applying a participatory "Living Lab" approach to sport-based programs. It bridges the gap between grassroots projects and structural change, helping organizations design, deliver, and evaluate programs that truly address community needs.



**Joint Pledge on Sport for Inclusion and Protection, Global Refugee Forum 2023: Guidance note**

[www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Joint\\_Sport\\_Pledge\\_2023\\_Guidance\\_Note\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Joint_Sport_Pledge_2023_Guidance_Note_Final_0.pdf)



A Summary of The Joint Pledge on Sport for Inclusion and Protection, facilitated by the Sport for Refugees Coalition (SfRC) presents a refreshed look at the role that sport can play in refugee responses ahead of the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023. The pledge, developed by a reference group of actors from many sectors engaging with sport and refugees in different ways, is born out of the belief that sport can, and does, make a valuable contribution in displacement contexts.



**Voluntary Sport Clubs are no Fast-Track to Refugee Integration Solveig Straume-Hallgeir Gammelsæter (March 2025)**

[link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11266-025-00738-y](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11266-025-00738-y)

Drawing from 41 qualitative interviews with Norwegian voluntary football clubs and local public stakeholders, this paper explores whether voluntary sport clubs (VSCs) are a convenient measure for including refugees in society. The research finds that despite external



expectation, the sport clubs are not fast-tracks to refugee integration because the logic sustaining their existence and practices are at odds with the logic prescribing refugee integration through sport.



**Refugee Sports Profiles- The Sports Effect**

[thesportseffect.org/refugee-sports-profiles/](https://thesportseffect.org/refugee-sports-profiles/)



This project highlights the transformative role of sports in the lives of refugees, and especially women refugees. The research involves creating a series of profiles that document best practices, lessons learned, and practical solutions from 14 leading Refugee and Women's Sports organisations from around the world. These profiles are intended to serve as valuable resources for both existing refugee sports organisations and new clubs interested in engaging with refugee communities, especially women refugees.



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