



Football Welcomes Good Practice Guide for Refugee Women's Football



FOR ALL

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



FOOTBALL WELCOMES

The Football Welcomes programme was launched in 2017 to celebrate the contribution players from a refugee background make to the beautiful game, and to highlight how football can bring people together and create more welcoming communities. Everyone wants to live in a place where they feel safe and welcome. Because football clubs are at the heart of communities across the UK, they can unite people on and off the pitch and give many a sense of belonging.

In April 2019, a record-breaking 177 clubs – from Premier League and The Barclays FA Women's Super League giants to grassroots teams – took part in our annual Football Welcomes weekend. Players wore 'Football Welcomes Refugees' T-shirts, and clubs gave local refugees and people seeking asylum free tickets, stadium tours and the chance to meet players, and organised matches and training sessions.

The three-year Football Welcomes Community Project, launched in that year and inspired by

Germany's Welcome to Football programme, builds on this success. Through this project, which is supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery, Amnesty International UK works closely with four club foundations – Aston Villa, Leicester City, Middlesbrough and Club Doncaster – and Liverpool County FA, which has partnered with Liverpool FC. They have set up 'community alliances' with other organisations such as refugee charities, fans' groups, schools, and local businesses. Each project provides weekly football sessions for refugees. Coaches also run or help out with English classes, and there are opportunities for participants to complete coaching and refereeing training.

Our aim is to create a more welcoming environment through football working with refugees and people seeking asylum to create a sense of belonging as they settle into new communities in the UK.

Contents

Introduction	3
Key terms	4
How to use this guide	4
1. Getting started	5
2. Building trust	7
3. Being inclusive	9
4. Promoting health and wellbeing	11
5. Seeing is believing	13
Conclusion	14
Acknowledgements	14
Resources	15
Key contacts	15

Football Welcomes Activity Pack for schools

If you work in schools, Amnesty International UK's free [Football Welcomes Activity Pack](#) for 7-14 year olds is designed to encourage discussion about refugee rights and celebrate the contribution people from refugee backgrounds have made to football in the UK.



Introduction

You're likely to be reading this because you want to use football to break down barriers and make your community more welcoming to refugees and people seeking asylum. You also want refugee women and girls to be at the heart of this work but perhaps you're not sure where to start. This guide provides all the information you need to get your project up and running, and to make it successful and sustainable.

Football clubs are at the heart of many communities in the UK. Playing and watching football can bring together people from different backgrounds in a way that arguably no other activity can. Amnesty International UK launched its Football Welcomes programme in 2017, encouraging clubs across the country to put on events and run activities to welcome refugees into their communities. There has been an excellent response, with matches, tournaments, free tickets, player visits and weekly football sessions for refugees and people seeking asylum.

But most of these activities have been targeted at men and boys. This guide will help coaches, clubs and their foundations, County FAs, and others to set up football sessions for women and girls, too. After all, roughly half of all refugees around the world are female. Many women and girls find it difficult to get involved in football, but the barriers are often greater for those who are refugees or seeking asylum. In this guide you will find advice on how to ensure refugee women and girls in your community have the chance to benefit from everything football has to offer.

Refugees and those seeking asylum are some of the most marginalised people in society. After fleeing conflict or persecution, and often undertaking traumatic journeys to reach safety, they have to rebuild their lives in a new country. Although community groups and charities provide some support, learning a new language, getting to grips with a different culture, and navigating unfamiliar legal, housing, health and education systems are huge challenges. Many experience racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination. Moreover, many refugees and people seeking asylum are separated from their families at



Left to right: Naomi Westland and Tasneem Tawil (Amnesty International UK) with Rachel Pavlou (FA)

the time they need them most, leading to increased loneliness, isolation and mental health struggles.

Our Football Welcomes initiative has shown the vital role football can play in helping refugees and people seeking asylum settle into their new community, make friends and connections, and learn English. Playing football boosts mental and physical health and provides a sense of purpose and belonging. Participants often say that when they're on the pitch they forget the stresses of everyday life.

Women and girls, just as much as men and boys, have the right to rest and leisure, and to the potentially life-changing benefits that participation in recreational football can bring.

The idea for this guide came about after a visit to Freiburg FC in 2018, and builds on work by the Welcome to Football programme in Germany and a toolkit published by the [FARE Network](#) the same year. I have carried out extensive research, interviewing a variety of teams and individuals across England about their experiences. As Women's Football Officer – an innovative new role at Amnesty International UK, funded by the English Football Association (The FA) – I have worked closely with the Football Welcomes Community Projects, supporting them to develop programmes for refugee women and girls. Case studies of each project are used here as examples of best practice to help get you started.

**Tasneem Tawil, Women's Football Officer,
Amnesty International UK**



Key terms

Who is a refugee?

A refugee is any person who 'owing to 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 [their] nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail [their self] of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of [their] former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.' (Article 1A(2) of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention)

A refugee is someone entitled to seek and receive protection in a country other than their own country.

Who is a person seeking asylum?

A person seeking asylum is someone who is seeking the protection to which every refugee is entitled in a country other than their own country. They may be on a journey to reach a country where they will be safe or where they wish to make a claim for asylum. They may have made a claim for asylum. To make a claim for asylum in the UK, it is necessary to get to the UK first. The Home Office does not permit

asylum claims to be made from outside the UK. Nor does the Home Office permit travel to the UK to make an asylum claim. People who make an asylum claim in the UK are generally not allowed to work and have no access to social security payments. They receive a weekly payment of £39.63, which amounts to less than £6 per day.

What's the difference?

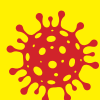
A person seeking asylum is someone who is not officially recognised as a refugee and receiving the protection to which a refugee is entitled. A person seeking asylum may or may not be a refugee. If they have made a claim for asylum, the authorities responsible for determining that claim are responsible for ensuring that if the person is a refugee that this is recognised and the protection to which they are entitled is provided.

In the UK, most refugees are people who have at some time had to make an asylum claim to the Home Office in the UK. Official data indicates that most people who make asylum claims in the UK are refugees and it is vital that the UK Home Office recognise them as such, as quickly as possible.

How to use this guide

The five sections in this guide are interlinked: they form a holistic strategy, so try to use all of them together, rather than just one in isolation. Each section has a set of practical suggestions and a case study from a Football Welcomes Community Project illustrating how a club foundation or County FA succeeded in engaging refugee women and girls.

The suggestions make good starting blocks but as our case studies show, every community is different and it's important to understand and respond to the local context. So talk to refugees and people seeking asylum in your local community and use what you learn to tailor your sessions to their needs. Good luck!



Covid-19

When setting up your sessions, please make sure you follow government and The FA's advice to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. This is especially important as most participants will be from Black and minority ethnic communities,

which have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. You can find regular updates on football and Covid-19 on [The FA website](#) and a useful guide on organising sport safely on the [London Sport website](#).



1. Getting started

Map your community and build relationships

In communities across the country, there are lots of activities to support refugees and those seeking asylum. The organisations involved in them can be key partners when you develop your work with refugee women and girls. They can talk you through the relevant issues and help you establish the best way to approach the work locally. Collaboration is vital, and the more closely you can work together, the more sustainable and impactful your programme will be.

- **Map your community.** Identify organisations that work with refugees: local charities, advice services, hostels, food banks, councils and faith organisations, for example. There are also local

‘One of the most important things about running a good session is building rapport. I learnt at least one thing about every player – they identified with me and I identified with them.’

Iqra Ismail, founder and coach of Hilltop Women’s FC



Amnesty groups across the UK that are often well connected to refugee organisations. Find your nearest local [Amnesty group online](#).

- **Build relationships.** Get the name of a person in the organisation and introduce yourself. Explain what you want to do and ask if they can help and would like to be involved. A phone or video call can go a long way.
- **Collaborate.** Organisations that work with refugees have invaluable knowledge and expertise to share. Take into account any issues they raise – for example, around participants being unable to travel to the venue or lacking appropriate clothing (see also the ‘Top tips’ throughout this guide). Look at where your sessions can overlap with work they’re already doing – for example, you could put on a football session after a local charity’s coffee morning or English lesson.

Knowledge is power

The more you know about the experiences of refugees, and specifically refugee women, the more your programme can meet their needs. As well as talking to local organisations, how about doing some online research? [Women for Refugee Women](#), the [Refugee Council](#), the UN’s refugee agency [UNHCR](#), and [Refugee Action](#) all have reliable information about refugees and displacement. [Amnesty Academy](#) – our education arm – has a

very informative [course on refugee rights](#). Several football club foundations and County FAs work with refugees, and many are represented in The FA’s Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Football Network. The network is a good way to get to know others doing similar work, and share information and expertise – to sign up, see the Contacts section on page 15.



CASE STUDY

Aston Villa



The Aston Villa Foundation had already established a successful football programme for refugee men, which included a weekly hour-long English class followed by an hour of football. But Partnerships Manager Pete Ezard found it more challenging to reach women and girls interested in taking part in a similar scheme. So he identified local charities and spoke to Birmingham City Council to develop a more effective approach to recruiting female participants.

Pete contacted two local hostels that provide temporary accommodation for people seeking asylum. After getting to know the hostel managers, he discussed a plan to set up women's sessions. They agreed to spread the word among residents and encourage people to sign up. With help from the council and some of the participants from the men's session, Pete also had flyers for the sessions translated into different languages.

Initially, turnout was rather low because the

session clashed with school pick-up times. After talking to the participants, the session was moved to a more convenient time. Soon the number taking part increased to around 20. Pete also saw it was difficult for participants to travel to the sessions at Villa Park because of the cost of public transport. He got in touch with National Express, with whom the Aston Villa Foundation already had a relationship via the coach operator's Access Transport programme. The company agreed to provide free transport to and from Villa Park for the scheme's participants.

Building these relationships and connecting to a wider network during the set-up phase of the scheme also enabled Pete to direct some of the women to local charity Birmingham Settlement for support and advice on their asylum or welfare claims.

- Find out more about [Aston Villa's](#) work



2. Building trust

Listen to participants and take your lead from them

In certain football settings, women have been excluded. Thankfully, this is starting to change but many women still feel playing and watching are activities that are not open or welcoming to them. This is particularly true for women from countries where access to sport in general, and football in particular, is even more limited.

To overcome these barriers, spend time getting to know potential participants: listen to what they want and their ideas on how the football sessions could work for them. This helps to build trust and gives them confidence that taking part will be a positive experience.

- **Meet potential participants in a familiar place they feel comfortable in.** A drop-in English class

‘Meeting Comfort and playing football helped me out a lot. I’m currently in a difficult position but at the sessions I can just forget for a bit. I’ve met other women who I can talk to, they can help me, direct me, they’re like my family.’

A participant in the Liverpool County FA scheme



run by a local charity, for example. Talk to them informally to find out if they have played football or other sports before, their experience, and if they have any worries about participating.

- **Involve participants in decision-making.** This gives them a sense of control – something that may be lacking in other areas of their lives – and a greater sense of ownership, making your project more sustainable in the long run.
- **Wear your club’s kit.** This sends a strong signal that the club, an important and influential community institution, is a welcoming place.
- **Be consistent.** When putting on the first session, you could organise it around a coffee morning or lunch at the venue to help familiarise participants with the space in a relaxed way. Sessions should be at the same time and in the same place every week to provide a sense of structure and routine that is often missing from participants’ lives. But remember people may not be able to attend every session and that’s okay.

Be encouraging

Your project exists to ensure refugee women have as much opportunity to play football as their male counterparts. You’re not trying to win the World Cup (although you may well find a hidden gem or two). Focus on creating a warm, welcoming and supportive environment where people feel free to be themselves and have fun.

Take your lead from participants: at first they may only want to play informally but after a while might (or might not, which is fine) develop the confidence for a game against another team. You

may need to provide a female coach and a female-only space.

With participants’ consent, create a WhatsApp or social media group so everyone can stay in contact and share information, and so you can remind people of session times and dates. During the coronavirus pandemic, with restrictions on activities likely to continue through local lockdowns, having a group chat to post activities such as workouts and fun challenges is a great way to stay in touch.



CASE STUDY

Liverpool County FA



Nigerian footballer Comfort arrived in the UK in 2002 aged 17, having been promised a career in the game she loved. But the man who brought her over turned out not to be a scout and she found herself imprisoned in a stranger's house for months. She describes that period as '[one of the most frightening and challenging](#)' times of her life.

When the ordeal was finally over and Comfort started to get back on her feet, she began playing football again. She tried out for Tottenham Hotspur and won a place in the squad. It was the camaraderie of her teammates that finally made her feel welcome, gave her a sense of belonging, and helped improve her English. After being recognised as a refugee, she moved to Liverpool and was keen to help other refugee women experience the positive side of football.

Meanwhile, Liverpool County FA (LCFA) Equality Officer Stuart Carrington wanted to set up football training sessions for refugee women to run alongside similar sessions he had arranged for male refugees. A mutual acquaintance put Comfort and Stuart in touch and they decided to speak to potential participants to design a session that would work for as many refugee and asylum-

seeking women as possible. The sessions – on a weekday evening, 6pm-7pm, at a city centre location participants can get to easily – regularly attract 12-14 players and are so popular that LCFA has introduced another weekly slot. Players with children can bring them along if they don't have childcare.

One participant said playing football is the only time in the week when they are not defined by being someone's mum, sister, wife or daughter. On the pitch they can simply be themselves and forget their troubles. Some players have also completed refereeing or coaching training. 'Building trust was key to the success of the project but this takes time,' said Stuart. 'Don't just dive in, take the time to understand the dynamics at play and what the best approach is.'

Comfort is now captain of Amnesty FC, a 23-strong squad of players from all over the world. The team describe themselves as a 'family' off the pitch, regularly meeting up for coffee mornings and social outings, and also helping each other settle into the local community.

- Find out more about [Liverpool County FA's](#) work



3. Being inclusive

Understand obstacles to participation and find solutions

It may be a cliché but football really does have the power to bring people together on and off the field. Individuals from all walks of life, from different countries and cultures, can bond over a shared love of the beautiful game.

Football is often described as a universal language but racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of discrimination mean not everyone feels welcome in the sport. By making your sessions inclusive, you'll ensure some of those who have traditionally been excluded have the chance to play. It will also ensure they benefit from everything football has to offer – improved mental and physical health, a sense of belonging, and the chance to make friends and connections in the community. This can make a huge difference to people who are trying to rebuild their lives.

- **Language can be a challenge but it doesn't need to be a barrier.** During sessions, as well as verbally explaining the drills, demonstrate them physically so participants understand what you're asking them to do.
- **Refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls often have caring responsibilities.** Organise sessions at times that don't clash with these or consider providing a creche, supervised by volunteers in line with your safeguarding procedures, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Also think about including children in the sessions with their mothers, if appropriate.



- **Plan sessions around religious obligations.** For example, Friday prayers for Muslim participants or Sunday church services for Christians. The FA and Kick it Out's [calendar of religious festivals](#) will help you plan.
- **Women from some cultures and faiths may feel uncomfortable taking part in mixed environments.** You may need to create a female-only space. Take into account any windows or doors that might allow other people to look in. Some players may need sports hijabs to take part.
- **Inclusion should be intersectional.** A person can have more than one '[protected characteristic](#)' and face multiple barriers to participation as a result. Organisations like [Kick It Out](#) and initiatives like [Stonewall's Rainbow Laces](#) and [Football v Homophobia](#) offer useful guidance on inclusion. Some participants may be unable to play because of injuries or disabilities, so provide alternative drills and activities, with a reduced physical element. Consider collaborating with coaches running other inclusion sessions, such as those for people with disabilities, and draw on their expertise.

Making sessions accessible

Participants are likely to be of varying abilities and group sizes may change from week to week. Plan your sessions to accommodate this, with drills that can be adapted for different numbers of people. Think about how you can use activities to promote language learning. For example, have participants repeat the instruction before attempting a drill, or share the instructions with half the group, then have them explain it to their partners in English.

You can also allocate a certain amount of time within a session where participants can only communicate in English. Sessions will need to be free of charge – people seeking asylum and those recently recognised as refugees live on very low incomes and are unlikely to have money to pay subs. Local or national funding bodies may be able to cover or subsidise your costs.



CASE STUDY

Leicester City in the Community



Leicester City in the Community (LCITC) works with After18, a local charity supporting refugees and people seeking asylum aged 18-25, to run weekly football sessions for a group of young women.

LCITC Community Engagement Coach Sarah Jones initially met participants at a weekly informal get-together organised by After18. Most had never played football before: they were interested but hesitant, with some feeling that cultural expectations or religious obligations prevented them from joining in. For example, Noura, 20, had only ever seen men play football. She felt it was not a sport for women and that, for her as a practising Muslim, the kits were unsuitable to wear in public. Most were also at school or college, so any sessions would need to be in the late afternoon or early evening so they could all make it.

Sarah took this into account and held the first session in the same venue at the same time as their weekly get-together. It was an enclosed space, with no windows, and they put a 'women only' sign on the door. This meant participants

felt comfortable taking off their headscarves if they wanted to. Sarah used [Soccercise](#) – which combines fitness exercises with football – to provide a gentle introduction.

The sessions were a hit, and after a few months the girls had grown in confidence so much that they asked to play five-a-side games. The five-a-side pitches are outdoors, so the coaches raised money for sports hijabs so the girls could play in a more public setting. The girls were also able to train in whatever clothing they felt comfortable wearing. They have now played in a number of matches and tournaments, and had a match-day experience with Leicester City Women, including a penalty shoot-out at half time and meeting the players. When Noura finishes college, she wants to be a footballer, alongside studying dentistry.

- Find out more about [Leicester City in the Community's](#) work

TOP TIP

Minimise transport costs by ensuring sessions are local and easy for participants to reach. Local charities and businesses may be willing to subsidise or provide free transport.



4. Promoting health and wellbeing

Boost mental and physical health

Many women and girls who are refugees or seeking asylum have had traumatic experiences in the countries they've fled or on their journey to the UK. They may have been separated from their family, and may be depressed, lonely and isolated. They often have fewer opportunities for social interaction than their male counterparts and, due to caring responsibilities and cultural expectations, may feel they don't have the right to take part in leisure activities. Read more about this in the [Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health](#) and a [European Parliament report](#).

Refugee or asylum-seeking women may have a sedentary lifestyle, according to the [FARE Network](#). They may also have faced [gender-based violence](#) – including sexual violence – which often has long-term psychological and physical effects. For more information, see the section on 'Sexual Violence and Abuse' in the report [Will I Ever Be Safe?](#) from Women for Refugee Women.

- **When advertising sessions, highlight the benefits of physical activity, particularly as a stress reliever.** Focus on how playing football is a way to keep healthy and fit: some women may be discouraged if they feel they need to be sporty or athletic to participate.



- **Keep the sessions light-hearted, social and relaxed.** Participants need the opportunity to have fun and make new friends.
- **Football is a contact sport: be mindful of the potential triggers physical contact can have on those who have suffered trauma or violence.** Alternatives such as [Soccercise](#), which don't involve person-to-person contact, may be needed.
- **Find out what free local counselling services are available and tell participants where to access them, if necessary.** Your charity partners may know about these, so make them your first port of call for advice.
- **It can be difficult for people to stay healthy when they have little money to spend on nutritious food.** People seeking asylum may have to access food banks and other similar services due to tight finances. Consider hosting sessions on how to eat healthily on a budget.

Periods, childbirth and menopause

Topics such as periods, the menopause and issues arising from childbirth are viewed as taboo in many cultures. They can affect how and whether a woman or girl feels able to join in sport. Provide female coaches or staff members for your sessions to make it easier for women to discuss these issues. Be flexible about participation. Make sure participants know to sit out when they need to.

Women and girls from refugee or asylum-seeker backgrounds often face period poverty, which can greatly affect their participation. Read more about the impact in this report, by [Bloody Good Period and Women for Refugee Women](#). Consider holding regular sessions with a female health professional, so participants can ask about sexual and reproductive health issues.



CASE STUDY

Middlesbrough FC Foundation



Middlesbrough FC Foundation (MFCF) had been running very well-attended football sessions for male refugees through a partnership with a local charity, the Methodist Asylum Project. One early participant, John, later set up his own football team, which now competes in a local league.

His wife, Tatiana, wanted to play too. Working with MFCF coaches Paul South and Amy Campbell, she set up weekly sessions open to all women in the community. John became a volunteer coach at the sessions and Tatiana and her friend Hazel spread the word among their networks, handing out flyers at drop-in centres for refugees and people seeking asylum in Middlesbrough and Stockton.

Tatiana and Hazel say the asylum system is 'dehumanising' and takes a toll on people's mental health. But football sessions give women in their situation 'a chance to be heard and in

control' and relieve stress. They say the sessions are a 'good way to keep fit and burn some calories', while also building strong social bonds with people in the area they otherwise would not have met.

Frankie Hunter, head of academy sport science and medicine at Middlesbrough FC, the only female lead sports scientist in the top two divisions of men's football in England, was invited to take a session. She led drills and a small-sided game, and afterwards spoke about her career, listening to the women's stories and answering their health and fitness questions. 'It was great to see so many women from different backgrounds exercise with smiles on their faces,' she said.

- Find out more about [Middlesbrough FC Foundation's](#) work

'It was something to do for fun and to help relieve the stress involved in the process of seeking asylum.'

Tatiana



5. Seeing is believing

Provide role models and representation

The saying ‘if you can’t see it, you can’t be it’ sums up how important it is to see people who ‘look like you’ doing a particular job or activity. Many women think football is not for them simply because they have never seen women who look like them playing it.

It is important to see women represented and participating at all levels of the sport, from grassroots to professional. Bear in mind that diversity among the people running and representing the project will encourage a wider range of women to join in. Remember you must have informed consent from participants taking part in communications: for more information, see [How to Talk About Football Welcomes](#).

- **Provide opportunities for participants to train as coaches or referees.** They can then become role models and help attract new participants.
- **Create opportunities for participants to tell their own stories.** This can be through interviews, blog posts or social media. For example, ask them to take photos of their football experience to share via the club’s social media accounts, or publish an interview in the match-day programme
- **Shout about success.** Be proud of your project and let others know about it through the media and on social media. This can raise the profile of your work and inspire others to do the same.
- **Create flyers and posters for your sessions with positive images of women from different backgrounds.** These can go a long way to encouraging people to think football is ‘for them’ too.
- **If there’s a women’s team affiliated to your club, appoint a player as an ambassador to represent and champion the project.** This also shows participants that football could be a career option for them.

Don’t forget the supporters

If you’re a football club or foundation, among your fans there may be people who would be interested in supporting your work, as well as taking part in initiatives like boot drives. Remember, your work will be a source of pride for supporters so share it with them and show them how they can help. If transport is an issue, does one of your fans’ groups have a minibus they could offer? Are there supporters who could offer work or training opportunities to your participants? Link up with your club’s [Fans for Diversity](#) group if there is one. Ensure any arrangements comply with your safeguarding policies.

CASE STUDY Club Doncaster



Club Doncaster worked with a local charity, the Doncaster Conversation Club, to set up a regular football session for refugees and people seeking asylum. From the start, the club sought to have equal involvement from the men’s and women’s first teams – the Rovers and the Belles – in promoting the project, both in club and local media.

Eva Madarang, Belles midfielder and a striker with the Philippines national team, was appointed as an ambassador for the programme and helped to promote a boot drive. This involved asking fans to donate good quality boots they no longer needed so participants could have the appropriate kit to play in.

Having a woman of colour from a migrant background as an ambassador shows female refugees and people seeking asylum they’re welcome in the football community – and shows others that women have the right to play. It normalises the idea of women playing football no matter their background, which in turn helps to make it a more inclusive and welcoming sport for women.

- Find out more about [Club Doncaster’s](#) work

Conclusion

In towns and cities across the UK, football clubs are at the heart of the community and have a unique ability to bring people together. Even if people speak different languages, playing football together can give them a sense of belonging, on and off the pitch.

For women and girls who have fled conflict or persecution only to find themselves isolated in a new country and culture, becoming part of the local football community can be a life-changing experience. As a participant from the Liverpool County FA Football Welcomes Community Project said: 'Playing football gives us the opportunity to do more and learn more for ourselves. It connects us with women who have been through the same process, who we can learn from, and women who have lived here their entire lives.'

It may seem challenging at first but this is a brilliant opportunity to make a long-lasting and impactful change in the lives of refugee women

'Football is just the starting point, it opens up the doors to so much more, you can get a coaching qualification and learn English, you can meet so many new people, you can get to know your new home and your new community can get to know you.'
Comfort, Liverpool County FA

and girls. There's no such thing as hard to reach. If you follow the steps in this guide, you can be a part of a wider movement to create a more welcoming environment, and set the precedent for including women and girls from all backgrounds in football and in the community.

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to everyone who helped with the research and development of this guide by sharing their brilliant work, knowledge and insight with me:

Amnesty International UK: Design and Publishing Team; Football Welcomes – Naomi Westland; Football Welcomes Community Projects: Middlesbrough FC Foundation – Paul South, Hazel*, Tatiana*; Leicester City in the Community – Marie Widerman, Sarah Jones, Noura*, the girls team; Liverpool County FA – Stuart Carrington, Comfort Etim and the Amnesty FC team; Club Doncaster – Lauren Cuttell; Aston Villa Foundation – Pete Ezard. Eighth Wonder – Charlotte Richardson. The English FA – Rachel Pavlou, Kevin Coleman, Clare Daniels, Dal Darroch, Nick Frith, Steve Smithies; The FA Asian Inclusion Guidance Group; The FA Leadership Training Participants – Diversity and Inclusion Officers and Women's Officers; Hertfordshire County FA – Gemma Smith; Watford FC – Karen Stephanou; London FA – Laura Foster; Amateur FA – Samantha Brown; Sydney University Football Club – Emily Husband; and the NGO's – Football Beyond Borders; Ceylon Andi-Hickman, Youth Sport Trust; Natasha Walker and BUCS; Beth Garner. Freedom Fields – Director Naziha Arebi. Halftime London – Dominika Opalena, Kelly Macbeth Mckay. Herefordshire County FA – Joe Mathias. Hilltop Women's FC (Previously Nur WFC) – Iqra Ismail. The Kaleidoscope Plus Group – Monica Shafaq. Kent Refugee Action Network – Paul Goodwin, Sarah Hagues, and women's session participants, Wasfiya*. Kick it Out Raise Your Game 2020 Event: BBC – Shelley Alexander, Anne-Marie Batson; Panellists: BeIN Media Group – Andrea Ekblad; Brentford FC – Salma Mahamud; Pitch International – Faina Msellem; She's Offside – Lipa Nessa. Muslimah Sports Association – BEM Yashmin Harun, Yasmin Hussain. RhimJim Consulting – Rimla Akhtar. shado magazine – Isabelle Pearce and Hannah Robathan. Staffordshire County FA – Bethan Woolley. Suffolk County FA – Kirsty Smith. UCLan Student Union President – Zuliekha Chikh.

*Refugee participants who would prefer not to share their surnames.



Resources

Notable projects

- [Willkommen im Fussball](#) (Welcome to Football)
- [FARE Network](#) Refugee football database
- [Sport Inclusion of Migrant and Minority Women](#) Promoting sports participation and leadership capacities

Further reading

- [European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies – Female refugees and asylum seekers: the issue of integration](#)
- [The FA – In Pursuit of Progress](#)
- [The FA – Inspiring Positive Change: The FA strategy for women’s and girls’ football 2020-2024](#)
- [The FA – Female Friendly Club Toolkit and Training](#)
- [The FA and Kick it Out – Faith & Football: A calendar of religious festivals](#)
- [FARE Network – Inspire Toolkit to Working with Refugee Women Through Football](#)
- [Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration – Willkommen im Fussball – 11 Top Tips for Engaging Refugee Girls and Women in Football](#)
- [Home Office asylum support website](#)
- [Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health – The contribution of a gender perspective to the understanding of migrants’ health](#)
- [Refugee Action – Facts about refugees](#)
- [Sport Inclusion Network Women – Equal access and participation of migrant women and girls in sport](#)
- [UEFA – Football and refugees: Addressing key challenges](#)
- [UNHCR – Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2019](#)
- [Women for Refugee Women and Bloody Good Period – The effects of ‘period poverty’ among refugee and asylum-seeking women](#)
- [Women for Refugee Women: Will I Ever Be Safe? Asylum-seeking women made destitute in the UK](#)

Training

- [Amnesty International – Human rights: The rights of refugees](#)
- [Amnesty International – Training webinar: Football, women and girls from refugee backgrounds; a welcoming community](#)
- [The FA – Female Friendly Club Toolkit and Training](#)
- [The FA – The FA Playmaker](#)

Key contacts

To find out more about Football Welcomes, please contact:

- **Football Welcomes Team:** football.welcomes@amnesty.org.uk
- **Naomi Westland:** naomi.westland@amnesty.org.uk

To join The FA Refugees and Football Network, please contact:

- **Dal Darroch:** equality@thefa.com

For more information on The FA women’s football development and inclusion contact:

- womens.football@thefa.com or check out www.thefa.com/womens-girls-football



Supported by players of

