

# Global IRTS Consensus statement

At the end of 2024, 123.2 million people were forcibly displaced, including 42.7 million refugees. As this number continues to rise, there is an urgent need for effective ways to support refugees and displaced persons in rebuilding their lives — and sport has proven to be a powerful tool. Research shows that sport can foster health, well-being, social cohesion, resilience, a sense of belonging, and more. It can also be a cost-effective way to improve the lives of refugees and forcibly displaced persons (FDPs), as well as host communities. However, many face serious challenges in accessing and experiencing the benefits of sport - which we believe is a fundamental human right: the right to move.

Let's  
change  
this now!

## There is a critical need to:

**Increase awareness and advocacy** – recognise sport as a vital tool for inclusion, mental health and well-being, social cohesion, and the reduction of discrimination and stigmatisation.

**Close resource and policy gaps** – integrate sport into refugee and forcibly displaced persons' support policies, and address the lack of safe spaces (both physical and psychosocial), gender- and culturally responsive resources, trained staff, and sustainable funding.

**Develop tailored programmes** – ensure that initiatives are co-designed with refugee and forcibly displaced populations and adapted to their diverse needs, taking into account age, gender, cultural background, and specific vulnerabilities, to enable truly inclusive and effective responses.

**Increase youth leadership and participation** – ensure the involvement of youth in leading and designing sport activities, rather than just participating. It is important that young people with a refugee and/or forcibly displaced background are seen as leaders—creating, designing, and following up on the implementation of activities that support the development of empowerment and engagement skills.

**Deliver training and education** – local sports organisations should be supported to develop intercultural competences, trauma-informed approaches, and inclusive coaching practices. Clubs, coaches, volunteers, and municipal authorities should be equipped with the skills and knowledge to actively engage refugees and forcibly displaced persons in a sensitive and empowering way. National and regional sports federations should embed inclusion into their strategic frameworks, with clear benchmarks for refugee and forcibly displaced persons' participation.

We urge the need for collective action and recognition across a wide range of stakeholders to ensure sport reaches its full potential as a force for inclusion and belonging.



- We call on Governmental and Public Institutions** to integrate sport into national refugee and FDP response policies, development plans, and economic strategies as a preventative, effective intervention with long-term social returns.
- We call on Private Sector** to support access and the development of sustainable funding mechanisms and impact-driven sport initiatives.
- We call on Donors** to invest in grassroots, refugee/FDP-led and community-led sport-for-inclusion programmes, and to prioritise long-term funding for research and evaluation to demonstrate impact, share best practices, and scalable models across regions.
- We call on Universities** to conduct applied research, map and evaluate programmes and best practices focused on the specific sporting and social needs of forcibly displaced persons, and train inclusive professionals in methodologies that promote equity and integration, and engage students in community sports initiatives with social impact.
- We call on Civil Societies** to enhance collaboration among stakeholders through knowledge sharing and joint programme design and delivery of initiatives, and ensure the meaningful participation of forcibly displaced persons in the creation, planning, and implementation of relevant programmes.
- We call on Sport and Physical Activity Organisations** to develop comprehensive strategies and strengthen organisational capacity to enable coaches and leaders to implement inclusion initiatives.
- We call on Communities** to encourage and engage active participation in the organisation of inclusive events and sports activities in shared spaces, tailored to the specific needs and aspirations of forcibly displaced populations.

## Human Right to MOVE

A world with inclusive access to sport and physical activity as a fundamental right and a powerful tool for the social inclusion of refugees and forcibly displaced persons. A world where empowered women, youth, and men engage through sport to foster resilience and social cohesion. Through the collective efforts of governments, public authorities, civil society, and local communities, we create inclusive spaces that build mutual respect, understanding, and solidarity - helping to bridge divides and promote intercultural exchange

