

## **Global IRTS Conference hosted by the MOVE Congress 2025**

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 people 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 people (FDPs), as well as host communities. However, many faces serious challenges in accessing and experiencing the benefits of sport – which we believe is a fundamental human right: the right to move. With Global Integration of Refugees Through Sport (IRTS) as a multi-stakeholder partnership we addressed a challenge of including refugee children and adults into their new communities. The partnership is unprecedented, comprising UN institutions, funding bodies, global networks, humanitarian organisations, and sporting bodies. It also takes the international dimension of the Erasmus+ sport programme to a new level, with a truly global group of partners from both Erasmus+ countries and well beyond.

We firmly believe that the best way to ensure stakeholder engagement is through direct involvement and co-ownership and also by creating the right network opportunities and bringing partners and stakeholders together for planning future activities. This is why we organised Global IRTS forum in Copenhagen from 29 to 31 October 2025. It was hosted by MOVE Congress 2025.

The MOVE Congress is the largest international conference dedicated solely to promoting recreational sport and health-enhancing physical activity. The 2025 Congress was organised jointly by the International Sport and Culture Organisation (ISCA) and DGI (one of Global IRTS project partners). Taking place at the Danish capital's Tivoli Congress Center, the twelfth MOVE Congress placed a strong focus on best-practice knowledge sharing from Denmark and across the world.

A total of 899 participants from 62 countries and 210 organisations came together in Copenhagen from 29–31 October to share ideas, exchange knowledge, connect, and MOVE together.

### **31.10. from 9.00 – 10.30: Integration of Refugees through Sport (IRTS) – Realities and Opportunities**

This session highlighted the vital role that sport can play in the social inclusion and integration of refugees, emphasizing both the individual and wider community benefits it can bring. Refugees shared personal insights and real-life experiences, while an expert panel discussed challenges such as the global aid crisis, the increasing number of forcibly displaced people and strains on host communities. We discussed how we can scale up, strengthen, and sustain our efforts to integrate refugees through sport.

**Moderators of the session: Chiara GHISI, UNHCR, Denmark**

#### **Speakers:**

- Astère Tuyikorere , Burundi / Rwanda
- **Noorzai Ibrahimi, Skateistan, Canada (online)**
- Sofiia Revenko, DFUNK Youth, Denmark
- Gerald Mballe, Special Olympics International, Italy



### **31.10. from 11.15 to 13.00 Safeguarding Sport: Protecting and Empowering Refugee Children**

Refugee children are among the most vulnerable in sports settings—and their safety cannot be an afterthought. This session dived into what safeguarding means in sport and development, identifying who's most at risk and how to shield them effectively. We detailed how to craft sound protection policies without draining the fun from play. More than 100 participants discovered practical strategies for engaging parents, coaches, teachers and stakeholders in inclusive, culturally sensitive safeguarding. They took away ready-to-use steps to build environments where sport protects and empowers every child.

**Moderator: Elena MARIN YANEZ , Laureus Sport for Good Foundation (UK)**

**Speaker: Simone Digennaro, University of Cassino and Southern Lazio, Italy**

#### **Panelists:**

- **Dorota Wilczek Teachers from Poland working with SIMPAL Methodology – coordinate with V4Sport**
- Virginia Abara, FutbolMas, Chile
- Mariia Severynovska, Ukrainian trainer from Let's play together, Ukraine



### **31.10. from 14.15 – 15.30: Building Communities through Integration of Refugees through Sport (IRTS)**

This session examined the ways in which sport and physical activity can support and integrate displaced individuals. We examined strategies to position access to sport as essential for integration, highlighting its role in promoting mental well-being, social cohesion, and community engagement. Participants gained insights into creating inclusive sporting environments that empower refugees and facilitate their integration into new communities. We believe that a collective effort is required, involving governments, public authorities, civil society and local communities. Together, we can create inclusive spaces that support mutual respect, understanding, and solidarity, while bridging cultural divides and promoting intercultural exchange.

**Moderator: Adnan Abdul Ghani, from Save the Children Sweden**

#### **Panelists:**

- Percy Tussamba, pt<sup>2</sup> FITNESS, UK (Refugee)
- Julian Roessler, Adidas Foundation, Germany
- Sima Kamal, from Girls Power, DK
- Katinka Ernstsson, Sweden
- Speakers:
- Joe Smith, CHJS, USA
- Lynn Hajj, Game, Lebanon

