

Integration Of Ethnic Minorities Through Sport

International experiences and new initiatives

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Introduction: The current situation

Integration of ethnic minorities has become one of the most demanding social-political challenges in our European societies. The quantitative relation between native citizens and foreigners changed dramatically. More and more foreigners stand against less native citizens. The number of migrants increased by more than 2.5 million persons in Germany within the last ten years. More than 10 mill. migrants currently live in Germany (2 mill. of them are Muslims). In 2050 we expect that 16 mill. migrants will live in Germany. Already now one quarter of our youngsters (under 15 years old) have a migration background.

A lot of bad incidents make us aware nearly every day, that in our European societies a smoothly running, peaceful and constructive living together with people coming from different ethnic origin, from different cultures and from different religious background is not at all natural until now, but still in deficit.

- Only some weeks ago an emergency call from teachers in one of our secondary schools in Berlin –asking for police protection to prevent damage, violence and contempt for other humans forced by young students of the school (more than 80% of the students at that particular school are migrants) – set off a political debate all over Germany about violence at school and about the behaviour of migrant-students.

- You may also remember dreadful pictures last year in France: young migrants from North Africa set cars on fire, plundered shops, attacked policemen and injured uninvolved people.

- Or you may remember that 1½ year ago in the Netherlands young migrants carried out violent rioting.

And on the other hand nearly every day you can read about attacks against people with different colours by Skin Heads or people with nationalistic conviction. Xenophobia is progressing.

Such extremely bad incidents make us aware that the process of integration of minorities needs still big efforts, even if we would be able to list a lot of good examples for successful integration. Searching for

reasons why the process of integration is so difficult and fails so often, we can find that the unequal social chances of migrants seem to be one of the most reasonable one. Many of them are underprivileged in respect

- To education opportunities
- To gainful employment
- To meaningful perspectives of living.

The efforts towards a better integration need a multiple, networking strategy on different levels:

- Language acquisition
- Increase in level of education
- Participation in working life
- Participation in meaningful leisure activities (e.g. culture; sport)

Challenges for sport organisations:

Just at this last point the challenge for organised sports begins to contribute to the process of integration partly in a very practical and direct way. But we should be aware that organised sport can and should be only one platform, that sport activities can only give a part-payment to succeeding integration.

Sport activities had been used already since a long time successful for the aims of integration in many projects and programmes. But why is sport a suitable medium for integration?

- Mutual experience through and with our bodies makes it easier to get known of each other and to come close together.
- Sport follows rather uniformed rules and norms.
- Language is less important for communication than in other parts of our social life.
- Jointly experiencing victories, defeat and emotions create a feeling of community. Nationality, colour and philosophy of life lose in importance.
- Sportive values of fair play, respect, international understanding creates an atmosphere of familiarity.

But we should also be aware, that those positive effects of sport in regard to integration is not a matter of course, is not coming automatically. The effects need to be strived for. The activities have to be arranged methodically in an appropriate way by experienced instructors. And we know as well that sport can provoke negative, racist effects, hate, violence, and xenophobia. We can find plenty of examples mainly in regard to soccer.

For some of our ISCA members the topic of “Integration through sport” has been already on the agenda and they launched different project and programmes in this field of action.

- UISP in Italy carry out the international road race <Vivicitta< dedicated to integration of different culture and many immigrants take part in this race. UISP organise as well a “World Soccer Championship against racism” in July this year.
- NKS and NCSU in the Netherlands take part in integration programmes through sport.
- Also DGI is involved in this topic in different ways.
- DSB carries out a long-term programme in this field of action since 10 years, strongly supported by our Federal Government by 5 mill. € per year.

Outline of the DOSB programme:

1. Organisational structure
2. Practical measures for migrants
 - 2.1 Regular activities/course in base-clubs
 - 2.2 On the spot (selective) activities
 - 2.3 Camps / weekend courses
 - 2.4 Big events / festivals
3. Services
 - 3.1 Education of instructors
 - Qualification as “start-helpers”
 - Qualification of migrants as instructors
 - 3.2 Knowledge transfer and PR
 - Web: www.integration-durch-sport.de
 - Media partnership
 - Awards : « The real stars of sport » ; « Sport without borders »;

Even if this programme is running already since ten years, even if the government is still supporting it strongly, we’ve not succeeded to evaluate it seriously. We’ve still a good feeling, based on positive feed back from different organisational levels. But we are not able to show real facts from longitudinal studies, how many migrants have got a substantial support by the programme and about the importance of our initiatives for the total process of integration.

Perspectives for ISCA initiatives:

We know from our national experiences: to manage programmes on “Integration through sport” is a difficult and challenging task. But in ISCA/ECC we feel the obligation to put this topic into our agenda. We’ve had already some discussions about that and agreed to start with rather soon beside our 2 main programmes “Health Care and Health Promotion” and “Active Seniors”.

The main overall objectives of this programme will be:

- To rise awareness for this topic in our member associations and to motivate them to become engaged in this field of action.
- To exchange knowledge and experience within those entities who are already involved.
- To offer practical support to develop projects and programmes (fund raising; providing of teaching material etc.)
- To get involved in international networking (UN0, WHO, etc.)

First steps:

- Mapping of projects and programmes within our organisation.
- Internat. Conference to exchange knowledge and experience.

We hope to be able to encourage more <Sport for All> organisations to take the challenge of “Integration through Sport” on their agenda!