



**CROSSPORT**

Crossing the Boundaries through Sport

newsletter **04**



# MAKING THE NETWORK WORK “Crossing the Boundaries through Sport” Project

## Final Conference

On the 28th of June 2024, ICSS and its partners in the EU ERASMUS+ Crossing the Boundaries through Sport “CrosSport” project the International Olympic Truce Centre (IOTC), Spanish Fundación Sevilla Fútbol Club, and Italy's Fondazione Lazio 1900 hosted the final conference of the project held at Centro Desportivo Nacional do Jamor in Lisbon, Portugal.

CrosSport was designed to support young refugees in Europe by using sport as a tool for their integration and social inclusion. After two years of work, this support is now tangible thanks to a concerted efforts of more than 80 organizations that have joined forces with a constant effort and work ethics based on three principles:

- *work collaboratively and “well” together*
- *dedication to the refugees cause*
- *shared belief in the transformative power of sport.*



These “like-minded” partners expressed a continued commitment and embraced the spirit and vision of the project since its start: espousing such spirit and vision has meant that during the project each participant has “walked the talk” and done its best to collaborate for a shared purpose.

The Conference represented an opportunity to look back and take stock of this work in light of future initiatives (a project proposal was submitted based on the results of CrosSport): in the first part of the conference, CrosSport partners addressed how the project was implemented in their respective country; in this regard, it was stressed that CrosSport was a pilot action, that is the testing of new working methodologies that were adjusted to each country's specific conditions. In the second part, the conference focused on an insight-sharing debate where project partners, participating organizations, Community Leaders for Sport Inclusion (CLIS), and Sport for Inclusion Activist (SIA) who actively participated in the project and representatives of the refugee community reviewed CrosSport's key issues such as its results and challenges while reflecting on its future perspectives, with a focus on the benefits for refugees and the stakeholders supporting them.

The event represented an opportunity to commemorate the World's Refugee Day by sharing a positive message of integration, inclusion, cohesion, tolerance, and solidarity.



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ programme  
of the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

# SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

CrosSport project is a trans-European partnership that fosters inclusion and integration of youth refugees through sport by establishing collaborative mechanisms and peer to peer platforms with the aim of empowering sport organizations and connecting them with integration-focused social development organizations.

It was designed and implemented to support young refugees in Europe by using sport as a transformative tool to offer opportunities for their integration and social inclusion while tackling the challenges that migration flows pose to the four selected countries: Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain.

The 24-month EU-funded project established a national and European collaborative mechanism and a network of key “like-minded” players in the sport-for-inclusion ecosystem while building the capacities of sport and social development organizations.

During the project's implementation, all partners, stakeholders and refugees worked together to create national focus groups and collect good practices; design and implementation of new educational tools aimed at empowering committed stakeholders and refugees alike – the CLIS and SIA are now ready to embark on future challenges to act as agents of change and make the difference (these tools are freely available on [www.crossport4refugees.eu](http://www.crossport4refugees.eu)).

Project partners elaborated a Methodology Handbook on how to achieve a strengthened cooperation between sport organizations and integration-focused social development organizations and to increase community participation of youth refugees through the attractiveness of sport activities (this tool is available in English, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian).

The project also raised awareness about actions aimed at promoting the inclusion of refugees and migrants in their new communities across the four selected countries. Noteworthy is the Mural of Videos of testimonials from refugees and like-minded partners.



# HIGHLIGHTS



*“A ball can change the world. This is my motto. Thanks to my sport team I feel more powerful and encouraged not to fear the new society I have joined, continued in my life without giving up. Sport helped me be where I am today. Today I am in Germany, where I started a training in an IT company, and I feel very good there”.*

**Shakiba Shaeedi**, refugee from Afghanistan, playing football at Team Hestia in Greece, Champion of the Global Goals World Cup Europe 2019.



*“After five years from the beginning of the war, I started looking for my inner peace and I found it with sport. I knew archery and since 2016 my life changed. Sport for me was like a bubble where I could live a good life during the war. I participated in national competitions and then I got the chance to apply for a scholarship outside of Syria. With sport, I had that chance that other people wouldn't have. Thanks to the Save the Dream scholarship I participated in the TASEM project and then I went on with my studies and made a life in Portugal”.*

**Bushra Shehadah**, refugee from Syria, and archery athlete.



**Massimiliano Montanari**, Save the Dream CEO, said:

*“CrosSport project sent a clear message that sport is a significant tool for inclusion, integration, and socialization among young refugees. This final conference marks the culmination of years of collaborative effort between partners dedicated to using sport as a platform to promote physical and mental health among refugees in host countries. I wish to thank the European Union for having believed in our vision and helping us in restoring hope and create new opportunities in the lives of young refugees living in the countries targeted by the project”.*



**Paolo Casilli**, Save the Dream Senior Manager and CrosSport coordinator:

*“CrosSport has been a project about strengthening the capacities of dedicated people, “like-minded” organizations and the relationship between them, which ultimately leads to sustainable, lasting and effective networks”.*

