

Roundtable discussion on Promoting Equal Opportunities of Migrants through Volunteering in Sport.

Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organization, partner in the Erasmus+ ESPIN (European Sport Inclusion Network), has successfully organized a national roundtable discussion in "Migrant Volunteering in Sport"; thanks to the participation of 22 members of several Hungarian organizations.

The aim of the roundtable was to share opinion, experiences and suggestions on the inclusion of migrants through sports and volunteering.

As emerged in the discussion volunteers activities comprehends, among others, coaching or training, sport events organization, networking, fundraising and training: language courses, migrants cultures.

The benefits for migrants who volunteer their time are quite easy to predict; in facts inclusion in sport activities facilitates integration through the learning of the language, the establishment of friendship relations and network. These in turn increase the possibilities to get information about job or education opportunities. At the end sport activities enable not only healthy life but also psychological uplift and self-confidence.

On the other hand migrants' inclusion in sport activities leads to practical benefits for clubs and sport structures too. Indeed new talents and new skills shall bring to the teams that at the end raise their standard and quality.

Although clubs and sport structures shall be more interested on the practical results, we cannot undermine the cultural and social benefits from the presence of migrants, such as making the club more tolerant and aware of other cultures.

Therefore in order to establish an efficient volunteering context with migrants, sports structures/club shall have good information about the background of migration and cultural diversities and on the legal and living conditions of migrants and refugee in Hungary.

At the same time migrant volunteers require information about the host-country sport culture, which is fundamental to interact successfully in a culturally diverse environment, and the accessibility of sport clubs and structures.

Indeed a good level of mutual understanding and knowledge is unavoidable in order to succeed an efficient relations building scenario. Therefore training about cultural diversities, migration backgrounds and fair-play is important for both the actors and indispensable for defusing conflicts

However prejudices and language barriers affect the possibilities of migrants volunteering who in addition struggle to sustain themselves

economically and hardly have time for volunteering.

At the same time grassroots clubs suffer from lack of funds, information and support from government organizations.

In order to overcome these limits the roundtable discussion recognizes that a handbook can be an important resource. It should contain all the relevant information about volunteering and its benefits and it should be accessible anytime from anywhere.

Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organization looks forward a further cooperation in order to transform the theoretical reflections into practical achievements.

Finally the
Organization thanks all the participants involved for the constructive contribution.
Budapest, 8th May, 2015