

FOOTBALL AGAINST RACISM PROGRAM IN HUNGARY

The Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation was founded in 1992. The primary objectives of the movement are the defending of the refugees' human rights as well as - by organising cultural programs - the establishment of a more tolerant, more friendly atmosphere in the society. Corresponding to these objectives, in one hand we give legal assistance to the asylum seekers, organise integrating projects in the field of education and sports, while in the other - with cultural programmes and campaigns - try to shape the Hungarian mentality and ease the adaptation of the foreigners arriving to the country.

We see sports as the most effective mode of prevailing over the communicational difficulties between members of different national groups. It is being the occasion for everyone to prove his own talents and potential, in the field of sports racism cannot gain ground. It was a unique initiative in Hungary when our organisation founded the African Star Football team in 1994.

When communism fell in 1990 in Hungary, the acceptance of other cultures and the people from other countries declined.

There are many minority groups in Hungary, such as refugees, students from around the world, and group like the gypsies. During this time in the early nineties these people did not have much tolerance from Hungarians, so to try and reverse this we formed this football team.

The team is formed of refugees and other strangers in Hungary. The team is supported - both morally and financially - by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Hungary and the South African Embassy in Budapest, among others with the help of television ads, the awareness of this program is spread.

Thus, through playing football matches with other Hungarian teams, a better tolerance, and even friendship, is formed.

The Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation has already held two special football matches aimed at creating this harmony and co-existence between Hungarians, refugees, and people of African and Asian decent. The results of these efforts, and also the results of research on "Adj piros lapot a rasszizmusnak! - Show Red Card to Racism" published (we continue the campaign with new handouts).

These matches have been creating harmony among people who are from different cultures and backgrounds. This has been an important event in destroying the barrier between what would otherwise be opposing cultures. This has given the opportunity for all to participate in football matches regardless of colour or background. There was an attack of one of the players after one of the matches strictly based on his skin colour. The attack was reported and appeared on television. Our goal is to stop such attacks and create a harmonious atmosphere. We would greatly appreciate further help from other Hungarians as well as other organisations.

We know that we will have continuous success with such help from all those who will offer a helping hand.

The 10 points of the UEFA are very important and we are careful to observe all the points. These points address the behaviour of both fans and players against racism during football matches as well as in the surrounding area.

These points should be used along with the slogan "Adj piros lapot a rasszizmusnak" to fight against racism and uphold human rights.

Migrants are a particularly vulnerable group and see their rights routinely violated, not only as workers, but as human beings.

They commonly face discrimination and xenophobic hostility. According to the IOM migrants "are more and more targeted as the scapegoats for all manner of domestic problems facing societies today, particularly unemployment, crime, drugs, even terrorism." United Nations Special Reporter on the human rights of migrants "This is especially true in the case of the many migrants who are undocumented or in an irregular situation, including the victims of trafficking in persons, reported and appeared on television. Our goal is to stop such attacks and create a harmonious atmosphere. We would greatly appreciate further help from other Hungarians as well as other organisations. We know that we will have continuous success with such help from all those who will offer a helping hand.

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Ms. Rodriguez Pizarro says in her report to the UN Commission on Human Rights, "people whose colour, physical appearances, dress, accent or religion are different from those of the majority in the host country are often subjected to physical violence and other violations of their rights, independently of their legal status."

Her report notes that in the last decade, there has been an alarming upsurge in intolerance, discrimination, racism and xenophobia in the form of outright violence against migrants in practically every region of the world. The report notes that racism may be aggravated by inequitable distribution of wealth, marginalisation and social exclusion.