

#SPIN WOMEN CONFERENCE



OBSTACLE COURSE

INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION OF MIGRANT WOMEN & GIRLS IN SPORT

Conference Report



About the project

“Sport Inclusion of Migrant and Minority Women:
Promoting sports participation and leadership capacities” (SPIN Women) (2019-2021)

The objective of this pan-European project is to encourage social inclusion and equal opportunities of women and girls with an immigrant or ethnic minority background through increased participation in sports and recreational physical activities.

Looking at society at large, migrant and ethnic minority women are belonging to the most excluded and vulnerable groups in Europe. That’s why SPIN Women is designed to show the different perspectives of migrant and ethnic minority women and to develop strategies to increase their involvement in sports.

For more information, visit www.sportinclusion.net

Contact

Sport Inclusion Network (SPIN)
c/o fairplay Initiative
Tel. +43 17133594-90
info@sportinclusion.net
www.sportinclusion.net
facebook.com/SpinProject

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Conference Partners:





SPIN Women Conference

“An Obstacle Course–Inclusion and Participation of Migrant Women & Girls in Sport”

31 May–1 June 2021 – Vienna

Day one (Monday, 31 May): In-person event, venue: Chamber of Labour, Vienna

Day two (Tuesday, 1 June): Online webinar

fairplay – Initiative for Diversity and Anti-Discrimination, the Chamber of Labour Vienna and the SPIN network hosted this event in the framework of the ERASMUS+ project „Sport Inclusion of Migrant and Minority Women” (SPIN Women).

Executive Summary

We look back on two exciting conference days. First, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all speakers and participants for their contributions and active support.

From 31 May to 1 June 2021, the conference “An Obstacle Course - Inclusion and Participation of Migrant Women & Girls in Sport” took place at the Chamber of Labour in Vienna, Austria. Until just before the conference, it was not clear whether the current Covid situation would allow for a face-to-face event. In the end, however, we were able to set up a hybrid event, which was new territory for us!

Themes

A male-dominated field such as sport leaves little room for women and girls. Not only in the media, but also in terms of participation, infrastructure and financial support. This is even more true for those who do not belong to mainstream society such as women athletes with a migration or refugee background, those belonging to minorities, or BPoC (Black and People of Colour). These women are confronted with racism and sexism in sport. The SPIN women conference discussed how barriers can be broken down and women empowered to open up sport to all.

DAY 1

The first day took place as a presence event with almost 60 guests and speakers at the Chamber of Labour Vienna and was broadcasted live on YouTube. The conference was opened with introductory words by Renate Anderl, president Chamber of Labour and Nikola Staritz from the fairplay team.

At the opening talk “is the Inclusion of Migrant Women & Girls on sport’s agenda” Renate Anderl, Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek (President of VIDC, former Minister for Women’s Affairs), Dieter Brosz (Federal Ministry of Arts, Public Service and Sports) and Mirna Jukić-Berger (former European Champion and Olympic medalist in swimming) met at the podium. Mari Lang (journalist, ORF Sport) was responsible for the moderation.

The second point on the agenda was the discussion Sport as a Workplace: Issues of Equality? Asiye Sel (AK Vienna, Women’s Department), Liu Jia (professional table tennis player, participant Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games) and Sarah Gregorius (FIFPro, Head of Global Policy and Stakeholder Relations - Women’s Football) discussed the daily challenges in the working field of sport. The moderation was done by expert Mareike Boysen (We women in sport).

At the end of the first day, the traveling exhibition [in] visible - herstories of minority and migrant women in sport was opened, which tells the story(s) of women in sports who do not belong to a so-called majority society: Women with migration or refugee history, minorities, BPOC’s (Black & People of Colour). Some of the faces of the exhibition were present in person, which made us especially happy: Liu Jia, Vera Dumser, Sarah Anulika Nweremizu and Helia Mirzaei!

DAY 2

The second day of the conference ran entirely online in the form of Zoom webinars and an interactive workshop. This day was also additionally available live via YouTube!

It opened with the discussion Racism and Sexism in sport: Double exclusion of migrant women, in which Hala Ousta, Diversity & Accessibility Manager at FIFA and Elisabeth Lechner, author of the book “Riot, don’t diet!”, talked about the confluence of racist and sexist mechanisms in sport. It was moderated by Des Tomlinson (Intercultural Programme National Coordinator, FAI).

Finally, in the workshop Action research for inclusion of migrant women and girls in sport: how to produce empowering knowledge, things got interactive. After input from Victoria Schwenzer (Camino & SPIN Women), participants were sent into breakout rooms to work and discuss together! Workout facilitators Lulu Sabbiti and Kayra Hohmann assisted with the implementation.

The final panel discussion of the conference was on Clubs as Gatekeepers: Opening grassroots sport for girls.

It brought together online a range of experts and practitioners including Pearl Slattery, women’s football development officer for the Football Association of Ireland, Marijke Fleuren, president of European Hockey Federation and member of the High-Level Group on Gender Equality in sport, Anna Ressmann, chairwoman of the Women’s Committee at the Vienna Football Association, Merlina Linke, Youth Worker at the Association of Vienna Youth Centers and former Nigeria International Ayisat Yusuf, now coach and activist with Monaliiku - Well-Being and Sports for Multicultural Women in Finland and, finally, Nikola Staritz from the fairplay Initiative, who took over the role as moderator.

SPIN partners launch Sport Inclusion Network

As a finale of the event, the audience was introduced by Layla Mousa (UISP) to the SPIN Women project and its results so far.

This was followed by the launch of the international Sport Inclusion Network (SPIN). SPIN coordinator Kurt Wachter and David Hudelist (both fairplay) retold the successful story so far. SPIN started in 2010 as a project and evolved over the years into a key European actor on social inclusion through sport

The founding organisations underwent an in-depth discussion process and agreed to formalize the network. Finally, they drafted statutes which were presented to the potential future member organisations. The SPIN network will be registered as a Non-profit association according to Austrian law.

In conclusion, representatives of the founding organisations including Victoria Schwenzer (Camino, Germany), Des Tomlinson (FA of Ireland), Joana Libertador (Sindicato dos Jogadores Profissionais de Futebol, Portugal), Jean-Marc Alingue (Liikkukaa – Sports for All, Finland) and Gibril Deen (Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation, Hungary) took the floor and explained why the network is important and why they join.

A nice, rounded conclusion for two exciting conference days!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all participants, partners and sponsors. Another important step has been taken to further establish the Sport Inclusion Network (SPIN).

The fairplay team



Conference DAY ONE

(In-person event & livestream)

Welcome & Introduction

Nikola Staritz, fairplay-VIDC & SPIN Women project

Opening Session: Is the Inclusion of Migrant Women & Girls on sport's agenda?

Renate Anderl, president, Chamber of Labour Vienna

Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek, former Minister for Women, president of VIDC

Dieter Brosz, Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport

Mirna Jukić-Berger, former European champion and Olympic medalist in swimming

Moderation: **Mari Lang**, journalist, ORF TV Sport

Opening Session

In the opening session, the contributions revolved around the following question: How are girls and women doing in sports if they do not belong to mainstream society? How can they and their concerns become more visible? What do you need for that? How is the situation of women and girls with a migration background in sports?

Renate Anderl

– President of the Austrian Chamber of Labour

The Chamber of Labour (Arbeiterkammer) understands itself as the House of Justice. It is the legal representation of the interests of employees in Austria. We want to create fair working environments where discrimination has no place, diversity is desired and the particular interests of

employees are taken into account. And just like in the world of work, it must also be fair in other areas of society. In a recent qualitative survey of the Chamber of Labour Vienna on the topics work, education, housing and health, it was asked how discrimination is experienced subjectively. It has become clear that discrimination is still an everyday problem and leads to exclusion, disease and social disharmony.



Nikola Staritz

– coordinator of the SPIN Women project at fairplay-VIDC



The Sport Inclusion Network (SPIN) initiated by the VIDC tries to counteract everyday problems when it comes to sport participation and equality. It was founded in 2011 by seven organizations and raises awareness that people with a migrant background and People of Colour (POC) are highly discriminated against, and that athletes

receive far too little recognition for their achievements.

In this respect, SPIN attempts to give those with discrimination experiences in sport a voice and there has been intensive collaboration with associations and federations to break down racist and sexist stereotypes. Because in sport it doesn't have to matter where someone comes from and what gender the person is. Women and girls in sports are often confronted with sexist stereotypes, especially migrant girls are hindered in playing football, with the argument that they will not find a man in the future. Nikola Staritz stated: "Girls should feel good about sports." In general, SPIN is about overcoming barriers that hinder women and girls from entering sports and exercising. Sport clubs sometimes pay lip service, when they say "Of course you can come", but this is not enough, declared Staritz.

Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek

– President of the VIDC



Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek traces the male domain sport to the fact that work is still unequally paid. The unpaid care work of women is reflected in the field of leisure and in the voluntary work in associations. This can be dealt with using the following questions: Who has what time for what? Who's at the voluntary

fire brigade? Who did the main job in the pandemic?

Women often have neither the time nor the energy to engage in politics or to do sports. "A good approach to force the integration of girls in football is through the school," said the former Minister for Women. To break stereotypes as early as possible, children should be approached with

innovative curricula, suitable pedagogues and sufficient financial resources. This is especially important now, as a *backlash* for women is noticeable at the moment.

Dieter Brosz – Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport



The sport in this country is a historically grown system, where the big players, the sport governing bodies have always been well represented. Currently, there is a high federal sport budget, with specific priorities, such as sustainability. There are also subject areas where the promotion of girls are explicitly mentioned.

Particularly in the field of gender equality, a great deal is currently being done, EUR 8 000 000 are available for the professionalization of women's sports. This allows new and wider focal points to be set. The ministry of sport is currently calling for innovative sport projects in the areas of gender equality, integration, inclusion and sustainability. New project ideas and submissions should also come from institutions that are not yet active in sport. "The concept must already include perspectives on how to proceed sustainably with the project, so that it can be self-sustaining," Dieter Brosz explained.

With regard to female athletes and the media, it appears that women are weakly represented quantitatively and qualitatively. In Austria, the exception is athletics, which is currently on the rise and which is dominated by women in reporting. An emphasis in women's football is also noticeable at ORF. This is because the public broadcaster ORF has lost its rights for men's football, which in turn is a new opportunity for women's football. "The audience ratings at the last UEFA Women's EURO in France were fantastic," Dieter Brosz said.

Ms. Anderl points out that the language of communication and channels for progressive ideas are crucial for their sustained radiance: Already in the pandemic, official security precautions have been poorly translated into other languages. Women with a migration background should be addressed in the first language. In addition, work must be done on the structures of trade unions, whose presidents are usually white men. Such positions should be doubly occupied to create space for new job profiles. In addition, the pay gap in top sports between women and men is blatant. Here, too, the political influencing factors had to be considered.



Renate Anderl further stated that “as a society we need versatile media images. Especially women and girls with a migration background need role models. However, the media images that are currently being transported abroad are very one-sided. The image of the footballer is still very present. At the same time, every girl can play football just as well as any other boy. “

Ms. Heinisch-Hosek suggested that it could be considered whether, for example, “Clubs of the Austrian Bundesliga only get a license if there are women’s and men’s teams.” Because “not only women’s visibility on national television is important, but also sufficient public funding and money for women’s sports”.

Mirna Jukić-Berger

– Former swimmer, bronze medalist at the Olympic Games 2008



Ex-top swimmer Mirna Jukić-Berger emphasized that women with a migrant background are well represented in high-performance sports, but not in grassroots sports. Mirna Jukić-Berger explained: “In grassroots sports, it is difficult to get a foothold when coming from a family where sports are not a matter of

course. But I come from a sports family. It’s never been an issue that I’m a girl. It was always clear to me that we were doing sports. My career has given up so much. At the age

of thirteen, I came to Austria from the former Yugoslavia. The beginning was not easy for me. However, due to the sport and the results, I found it easy to integrate - in sports, no one asks you where you come from, if you perform well, you’re great. Sport is a great integration tool.” In this sense, clubs and associations must connect with the parents and convince them of the positive effects of sports on children. Schools my facilitate links between sport organisations and parents.

Renate Anderl added that women in the world of work and sports face the same hurdles: “Not only in the days of Corona, but many women with a migrant background also often work in low-paid industries, and that, even though they are performers and keep our lives running.” work at the limit and have given up their jobs during the crisis, because to do Home Office, to school your children at and to cook at the same time is simply not possible. In addition to these tasks, there is no time left for sports. In addition, certain sports with a gender cliché would be adhered to, according to the motto: “Football is for boys and dancing is well suited for girls.” These gender-differentiated ascriptions in sport indicate that there is a lack of socio-political rethinking.

In addition, the gender-separation of training groups from a certain age is particularly difficult for girls. Often they have to play elsewhere than before due to lack of girls’ teams, which again is an organizational and logistical problem for many parents.

“Overall, there are enough proposed changes, but the political will must also be present,” Ms. Heinisch-Hosek concludes.



Panel Discussion: **SPORT AS A PLACE OF WORK: Where is the Equality?**

Liu Jia, professional table tennis player, Olympic athlete Tokyo 2021

Asiye Sel, women's department, Chamber of Labour Vienna

Sarah Gregorius, Head of Global Policy and Stakeholder Relations - Women's Football, FIFPro (online)

Moderation: **Mareike Boysen**, journalist, Association „Wir Frauen im Sport“ (We women in sport)

Jia Liu's life depends on athletic performance. When she came to Austria from China in 1997, she was initially well received by her club: "But over time, as I have played in the Austrian national association and internationally, I have earned more and more. In addition, I was in the armed forces. Sponsorship agreements are not always the same, men earn more", Liu gave insights into her earnings. In general, wage transparency in table tennis is not always given. For example, Jia does not know how much former world champion Werner Schlager earned from their joint double.

Sarah Gregorius is a former professional footballer from New Zealand, who earned 100 caps for the national team. However, her professional career began in 2011 in Germany, as this path in her country of birth would not have been possible at that time. In the meantime, women's football has established itself there - there are even *role models*. Especially in Europe and the USA there are meanwhile good opportunities for female talent.

"However, we know little about the employment conditions of female athletes. The transparency of salaries resp. Prize money is not available," explains Asiye Sel. It is also a dilemma that female athletes in Austria are not female employees in the classic sense, labour law does not apply to them. As a result, there is no guarantee for female athletes after completing their sporting careers. Trade union representations, such as the FIFPro, the only global representation for professional footballers, can provide assistance in this, however, athletes should not be forced. At the moment the Austrian FIFPro member, the Association of Footballers has only a handful female members.

"Unions are often misunderstood by female athletes," explained Sarah Gregorius, "and this, although the current status of women in sport does not make it possible for women to be considered as workers: Often female players are also not recognized as professionals, their legal status does not allow much. The fewest are insured. "It should be noted that there are no tailor-made solutions for everyone. It is important and crucial for the union's work that the socio - cultural environment of the athletes is considered.



Liu further argued: “A star ski racer like Marcel Hirscher does not have to worry about the future. But people like me can, as an active athlete, make a good living from it, but after the end of their career no longer. Now, I can only talk about top sports in marginal sports. I myself was with the armed forces for fifteen years and thus financially secured. This is a good conveyor system. However, if I no longer have a chance to win medals, then I have to learn another profession. “

According to Sarah Gregorius , it is important to recognize that “sportswomen are pursuing a profession.” However, it is not easy for women athletes to claim labour rights, as they are extremely dependent on their profession.

Gregorius declared: “It is their passion, they want to pursue the sport, to achieve goals on which their existence depends. If they oppose the common system, then they must be aware that in the worst-case scenario they are threatened by an exclusion from sports, for that reason it takes a lot of courage and perseverance to oppose common practices. Also, in the case of sexual harassment, especially in the coach-athlete relationship. “

Sarah Gregorius reiterated: “Being a victim and a protester at the same time is a difficult situation. But in precisely such situations, the union can very well act as a buffer between the fronts in view of the short-lived nature of sports careers. Athletes should have institutions that protect them so that they can unleash their potential. “





OPENING of the „[in]visible – herstories of minority and migrant women in sport“ Exhibition & Talk with Role-Models

Liu Jia, former European champion in table tennis, competes at Olympic Games in Tokyo

Helia Mirzaei, Kicken ohne Grenzen, football player

Vera Dumser, football referee, Vienna

Moderation: **Mari Lang**, journalist, ORF TV Sport

Three pioneers, who are themselves depicted in the exhibition, lead the opening on female minorities in the sport. They told about their own biographies.

Footballer Helia Mirzaei introduced: “As an Afghan growing up in Iran, I did not possess a citizenship.” There I could not do everything I wanted, but I always tried. Although there are always people who wanted to keep you small. But I do not let myself be stopped. I have often heard that I am not allowed to play football, nor do I know any female Iranian footballer. But I always wanted to be a kicker from the bottom of my heart, so I tried and made it here in Austria. In the beginning, I had difficulties with my family and friends. But I simply don’t care what the others say. I find it important to pursue my own dreams. I’m proud of myself.”

Football referee Vera Dumser said: “I belong to an older generation from the former Yugoslavia. Back then,

everything was forbidden for girls. When I wanted to play football, my father thought we should go to the doctor together. Even after my arrival in Austria, I found the same bad relationship between girls and football again. A long time later, after I no longer had a school-aged child at home, I thought to myself: Enough joking and I’m doing what I want now! To start immediately as a footballer, I felt too old, but as a referee I still managed a career in football, even though I encountered a lot of resistance. Many did not understand my decision. At one point, I just wanted to encourage girls. Following the motto: “If it works for the elderly, I can do it too. I am the oldest woman in Austria who is still active as a referee.”

Liu Jia began her story with memories of her childhood: “My parents sent me to table tennis, where I completed the hard training without questioning it, even though I almost collapsed in China. That was not a good time then. At the age of fifteen I moved to Austria, here for the first

[IN]VISIBLE
HERSTORIES OF PROMINENT AND PROMISING WOMEN IN SPORT

VERA DUMSER

FOOTBALL REFEREE,
AUSTRIA,
BORN IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Managed 548 games for the Austrian Football Association to date (2021)



ONLY MEN? THAT'S JUST NOT RIGHT!

How did you get into football and become a referee?

I never played football myself, I wasn't allowed to. I grew up in a very patriarchal family where football was a man's thing. And then the war in Yugoslavia drove me out of the country. In Austria I began to be a referee at a slightly advanced age. I am a justice fanatic and wanted to prove that women are just as good as men.

What barriers do you see for women in sports?

It was incredibly hard for me – and it still is today. There is less support for women in football than there is for men. You always have to be better, more present, more assertive, you always have to prove yourself. Women often lack self-confidence, which is understandable when there is no one backing you and you are the only woman on the pitch. If you look around, it's all men in football. That's just not right.

As a woman of migrant origin, who speaks with an accent, what have you had to listen to on the pitch?

People often asked why I do this to myself. A common experience is Austrians speaking to me in a foreign accent. And yelling things like "Go home!", "Woman belong in kitchen", "Where is your wooden spoon?"

HERSTORIES OF PROMINENT AND PROMISING WOMEN IN SPORT

LIU JIA

TABLE TENNIS PLAYER,
AUSTRIA,
BORN 1982 IN CHINA

European Champion 2005,
Olympic athlete at five Olympics



NO RESPECT FOR GIRLS

Have you encountered racism?

As a girl I didn't start playing at the early on, but on your part conforming went to Austria.

What was it like?

It was a culture shock. It was schnitzel, roast pork, chopsticks. I struggled, but I understand.

Racism too?

Definitely racism. I encountered a group and would get off the bus. But back then I was a chance. For months about it, I was ashamed of these days.

Where did you always go? I got scared! I fight back! German... no one will anyone else no more.

time I had freedoms, in that I owe a lot to the country. Here I learned to love the sport and got international playing opportunities. I want to convey this joy in sports, because as a top athlete we have a high responsibility in communication, we live in a powerful media world, in which we can send important appeals. For example, already in schools

children can be motivated to move, there you can even be rewarded for sporting achievements. Currently necessary resources for this are lacking in Austria. Children and teenagers are even punished rather than rewarded when they go to tournaments and the children have to catch up on many things afterwards. “



[IN]VISIBLE
HERSTORIES OF PROMINENT AND PROMISING WOMEN IN SPORT

FATNA MARAOU

ATHLETICS, LONG DISTANCE
RUNNER, ITALY
BORN 1977 IN MOROCCO

Three times winner of the Italian "Gran Fondo" Championships, twice winner of the IAAF World half-marathon Championships

INTEGRATION MEANS TO LIVE WHERE YOU ARE

What barriers have you encountered in your career as a sports woman?

When I came to Italy in 1998 I had to face many difficulties. I think it is the same everywhere, in Italy you are made to feel "foreigner" when I wanted to participate in a competition, organizers often told me foreign people to quit. It made me feel like they did not want Italian and people feel in Italian language?

On the other hand (often) ask foreign people who contributed to live in Italy? In the sport world, no one's help either.

How did you become these barriers?

I had to make time for my studies, I continued to study. I had to show that I was more than just a "foreigner". I suffered from language barriers. That does not mean learning the language. The same people who did not want me to compete, now called me. Another very important aspect is the support of your club, or my coach.

What advice would you give other migrant girls who want to make their way in sport?

Integration is very important. Sport is not like a private company where you do not work and then leave. Integration means learning the language, making friends. That does not mean learning the language. The same people who did not want me to compete, now called me. Another very important aspect is the support of your club, or my coach.

It is also important that people know that for each sport is a lot more than the competition. There are many things, including barriers after the competition. In Italy, they will probably stay in Italy. If you prevent someone from entering the sport, it is a failure. Especially for girls.

Conference DAY TWO

(Online Webinar)

Welcome & Introduction

Kurt Wachter, founder of the fairplay initiative at VIDC and SPIN network coordinator introduced the day, he said:

“Due to Covid we spitted the SPIN Women conference. Yesterday we kicked off the conference with an in-person event for local participants here in this very building here in Vienna. Today we have an interactive webinar for an international audience. Before we start with our first panel discussion let me introduce briefly the Sport Inclusion Network.

Migrants and ethnic minorities across the EU – in particular women and girls– face barriers when it comes to practicing sport and physical activities. Furthermore, the under-representation of migrants* and their exclusion from positions of authority and the lack of advancement of minorities in non-playing positions is a recurring issue for European sport.

Against this backdrop, the fairplay initiative at VIDC brought together in 2010 a group of NGOs and sport organisations from 7 EU countries to address inclusion issues in sport. They designed the “Sport Inclusion Network (SPIN)” project which aimed to encourage the inclusion and involvement of migrants, ethnic minorities and asylum seekers through and in mainstream sport.

In 2011, the European Commission started to fund our first “SPIN” project. Our current project is “Sport Inclusion of Migrant and Minority Women” (SPIN Women) funded by the ERASMUS+ programme.

Women and girls form an ethnic minority background are almost invisible in the public sphere and evidence suggests that on many markers ethnic minority women are bottom of the pile. Among the groups with the lowest sports participation rates are females with ethnic minority or migrant background.



A study in Denmark showed that 80% of all women are physical active, but only 50% of the immigrant women. However, such a figure does not reflect the heterogeneity of the different immigrant groups. A Swiss survey found out that the rate of physical inactivity of women with Southern European or Turkish background is 45% opposed to 25 % among migrants from Western or Northern Europe.

But despite the lower participation, migrant women and girls do not show any particular lack of interest in sport. Belgian, British and Norwegian studies show that large proportion of female ethnic minorities would be willing to get involved in sports if they had the opportunity. This suggests there are inequalities in accessing sport and physical activities which are linked to the way in which they are organised.

Furthermore, women with a migrant or ethnic minority background are also highly under-represented in non-playing and leadership positions. The under-representation of ethnic minorities and migrants and their exclusion from positions of authority and the lack of advancement of minorities in non-playing positions is an open secret in European sport, this is in particular the case for women.

Against this backdrop the SPIN Women project was designed to encourage social inclusion and equal opportunities and to increase participation in sports and recreational physical activities.

During the closing forum this afternoon we will hear more about the achievement of the SPIN Women project and we will also see the symbolic launch of the formal SPIN network. But now it's time for our first panel discussion”.

Panel Discussion: **RACISM AND SEXISM IN SPORT** – Double exclusion of migrant women

Elisabeth Lechner, Chamber of Labour Vienna, author of “Riot, don’t diet!”

Hala Ousta, Diversity & Accessibility Manager, FIFA

Moderation: **Des Tomlinson**, Intercultural Programme National Coordinator, FAI

Hala Ousta introduced herself: “I am the now working for FIFA to ensure that access and inclusion is part of all our events. But previously to that I was working as the diversity and inclusion manager of the Scottish FA. I am female migrant myself coming from a middle eastern background and I am very active in sports, and I want to ensure that this opportunity is open for other girls with similar background.” She explained that the structure of football tends to suit the “standard person”, which are elder white men. When decisions are being made, even unconsciously, they serve the needs of the “standard person”. Nowadays things are changing, women are striving to be involved in sport. They become more and more represented, based on decisions by women with different backgrounds.

Elisabeth Lechner stated that sport and society are deeply connected, they are being structured in the same way: Women were always struggling to be part of the pub-

lic sphere and confronted with the fact of having less free time than men, being occupied predominately with care work. So, the following deeply political questions about equal opportunities need to be raised: How much time have women got left for sports? How much money does sport cost? Additionally, sport plays with different kinds of gendered stereotypes: „Getting dirty is bad for girls”. Women are constantly told how to dress themselves and to look in a certain way. One could even say that gender norms are not supporting women and girls to do certain things/sports. For women and girls sports is not only about being physical active but also about taking space, to be in a collective and being adventurous.

Furthermore, financial barriers do exist for migrant girls and women to participate in sports. If you are coming into a new country and being then a minority you are (not) expected to take part in certain parts of the society because





of racialized patriarchal power structures. Meaning, that there are different barriers for women with migration background to be active in sports. Also coming from a stressed situation, your first thought must not be to actively seek for sport opportunities. Therefore, an important question is, how to get new minorities involved in sports and overcome stereotypes and financial barriers. For certain is, that there should be a lot of initiatives to change individual attitudes and behaviors, so a club which is aware of and sensitive towards religious and cultural power structures is needed to be welcoming to “new ones”. It is important to raise questions such as: When are games and tournaments scheduled, are they around Ramadan?

Further, there is a need to understand the differences resulting of double exclusions based on sexism and racism. There are some girls without football experience in their countries, who live nowadays in new countries. Therefore, you need to give them confidence and get the rest of their family involved in their children’s activities, because often parents do not have access to these structures. Hence, the problem in sport with minorities is not only about visibility but about getting those people in positions where they get to decide certain things about the structures of sport and the organisation of sport. It is important to have those people in positions, where decisions are being taken, such as in board meetings or in ministries. Real participation is needed on all levels of sport. Also, it is not only about allocating money somewhere, but really going into neighborhoods and communities, to show how sports is easily accessible.

There should also be partnerships with schools and NGOs to develop trust with these different communities, which can lead to positive actions and engagement. In this context, Hala Ousta underlines that it is important to raise awareness about these opportunities/barriers: „The

dialogue is important. We need to have a common understanding and be able to change attitudes of behaviour, towards not being racist or sexist. Also, we should be aware of racialized and sexualized stereotypes in our society and break them down as a collective approach in a further step for a better future.”

In this sense it is important to start with the stories we tell through e.g. children’s books. Diverse stories need to be told, where girls are active people as well as resistant and unruly in a good way. Further Elisabeth Lechner states that: „We need to reclaim the sports, to see it as a form of freedom within a hierarchical structure. For me personally it took a long time to get rid of my whole body shaming.” It is important to make sure that people feel comfortable in sport and get rid of slimness ideals, because if you are fat, you get nasty looks. Also, then you are constantly told to lose weight, do sports and not to be a “lazy person”. Sport is about making space for everyone, being inclusive, not only just for the fit ones. This theme is even evident in sport’s wear: The sport industry needs to produce bigger sizes.

Additionally, Hala Ousta points out that: „We can use sport as a tool to explore health opportunities and to increase it in certain social areas. It depends on the goals and expectations that you have, what you get out of sport.” Also looking back into history, one can see that sport is dominated by men. The same is true for many other parts in the society, but those fields can be made accessible for others.

Consequently, football should play a central role in today’s society and give young migrant women the opportunity to find their self-affirmation in this way. Organised tournaments and matches strengthen the cohesion of the teams and encourage growing together.

Workshop: ACTION RESEARCH for Inclusion of migrant women and girls in sport: How to produce empowering knowledge?

Input: **Victoria Schwenzer**, Camino & SPIN Women

Workshop facilitators:

Lulu Sabbiti, researcher Finland

Kayra Hohmann, researcher Germany

Victoria Schwenzer introduced the audience to the „Action Research“ approach, which is an approach based on the ideas on the German social psychologist Kurt Lewin from late 1930s and known as a method which strives for social change. The underlying idea is that those who are affected by a situation /a problem come up with a solution for the situation through their own empirical research. Therefore, it constitutes a participatory, practice-oriented approach that allows affected individuals to assume an active role in research. This approach differs from traditional research as it significantly reduces the hierarchical separation between the researchers and their subjects of investigation. All three researchers used that methodology.

Instead of the Austrian researcher Nuria Karimi who couldn't participate because of connectivity issues, Martin Kainz from the fairplay Initiative at the VIDC presented the main findings of Ms Karimi's Action Research in Austria. Karimi conducted eight interviews with young migrant women aged 14-19 in Graz. More than a half came from Afghanistan, the others from Syria and Bulgaria. There have been three main outcomes:

- Body image and shame play an important role, especially in Muslim communities, for example, when it comes to wearing a headscarf or the subject of the hymen in connection with sport. These topics can only be addressed with education and inclusion, not only for the young women, but also for their mothers.
- The role of the head of the family deserves explicit consideration. If fathers will allow their daughters to do sports, sport is a very empowering tool that could lead to new role dynamics in the family and consequently to conflicts. Sensitive interaction with fathers and brothers, possibly with insiders from the community are recommended.
- Young migrant women engage in sports more likely if they have role models. In general, the importance of role models and the participation of local (autochthonous) youth in association have a positive effect on the language and social participation of migrant women.

The Finnish researcher Lulu Sabbiti gave insights about her research done to the topic challenges that migrant women face in sports. She carried out 25 interviews with young migrant women (20-25 years) with an open question-methodology. Her results showed that the female responsibility of childcare often prevents involvement of women into sports. Also, some women do not practice sport in their culture of origin like in Finland, there is a big difference in sport culture between countries.

In addition, often well-established sport centers are being funded, while multicultural organisations do not get any funding, so many people are being left out. Moreover, there is only low pay in regard to female athletes, so women are forced to give up their sport. To sum it up, there is a lack of funding, sport culture and low pay that prevents migrant women from exercising sports in Finland.

The German researcher Kayra Hohmann stated that she only had a low number of interviews done through phone because of the pandemic. She had a focus on non-mainstream or alternative sport clubs in Berlin. Her results showed that there is a huge potential in non-mainstream sport organisations, as migration self-organisations are particularly appealing to newcomers and children of migrants and descendants share same social realities (collective experience), but there is the need for more funding. These organisations are also trying to build safe spaces, which is for some an important reason to participate in sports. Anti-discrimination is one of the priorities those sport clubs, which are therefore political: Athletes protest against injustice. In addition, workshops are done in their clubs to topic like, how to apply gender equality in the field. To sum it up, to choose a non-mainstream sport organisation, implies the potential of creating safe spaces. Further the researcher Kayra Hohmann points out that „SPIN shows, how the production of knowledge is done, in a way we think it is necessary from a political science perspective.”

Breakout room session with Lulu Sabbiti – researcher Finland

The workshop presented by Lulu Sabbiti started with an introduction of the research methodology and presentation of the outcomes. The focus was to describe about strategies to overcome barriers. During the presentation Lulu has presented two successful strategies develop in Finland. The Monaliiku organisation is especially involved in women and girls' sports activities. The NGO is organizing sport trainings for girls and arranging training times and childcare for mothers so that they can practice as well. Another positive initiative is taken by the company Nike and the Finnish Football Federation, who are providing sport hijabs to female players and athletes.

The floor was then opened to the participants to share their own experiences with successful strategies to overcome barriers. The "Show Racism the Red Card" project in Ireland has developed educative programmes and teaching materials for schools, sports clubs and coaches to welcome migrants and refugees in their teams. The project also developed methods to deal with cultural misunderstandings. In Italy, UISP has produced several videos and materials to explain the different barriers female migrants can face in sport when arriving in a new country. There is also a welcoming project in Matera in Southern Italy taking place in refugee camps; UISP is providing sport activities and support to migrants and refugees. The experience from Germany comes from the Brandenburg youth sport organisation. The association is organizing events and activities for migrants together with local sport clubs. They have organized cooperation with refugee centers, 7-a side games for disadvantaged youth and done some educational efforts for inclusion of migrants.

Breakout session with Kayra Hohmann – researcher Germany

„Migrant women told me why they chose their non-mainstream club,” summarized Hohmann her research's agenda.

Hohmann's results show, that in a mainstream sport club, migrant women felt, that they needed to justify themselves constantly: Their daily experience of being the "migrant" and/or the "other" was transported into their sport's activities. Often the "headscarf question" occurred there too. Therefore, Hohmann's conclusion was that sport should be for migrant women a way to leave behind the stress they face in daily life. They need to feel just like the others.

Furthermore, the researcher found out, that there were not enough bonding activities in mainstream sport clubs, very few team activities took place beyond the pitch. The football was just practice, a fitness duty that had to be fulfilled, but unfortunately, nothing happened beyond the field. There is no support in their clubs that is not related to sport, like German classes or problems of housing. The sport club was not the platform to raise that kind of questions and had not enough understanding for the life situations of migrants. However, more support and assistance with day-to-day worries would help female minorities to have more time to practice sport.

Further language was a huge problem for migrant women as well. Some of the women wanted to play in a mainstream football club but had only weak German skills, so they were often overlooked. They had no opportunity to develop adequate language skills in adequate period of time. In total, mainstream sport and football clubs lack political and cultural awareness of the specific needs of migrants and anti-discrimination policies that protect minorities are missing.



Panel Discussion: **CLUBS AS GATEKEEPERS**–Opening grassroots sport for girls

Marijke Fleuren, president, European Hockey Federation (EHF) and member of High-Level Group on Gender Equality in Sport

Anna Ressmann, chairperson of women's committee, Vienna Football Association

Merlina Linke, youth worker, Association of Vienna Youth Centers

Pearl Slattery, women's football development officer, Football Association of Ireland (FAI)

Ayisat Yusuf, Monaliiku-Well-Being and Sports for Multicultural Women (Finland), football coach & former Nigeria International

Moderation: **Nikola Staritz**, fairplay-VIDC

Marijke Fleuren, president, European Hockey Federation

Marijke Fleuren stated that there is a certain conservatism in sports, in terms of gender and sports. If you look at girls, you often see that they are lacking confidence. You need to educate them, that sport is open for girls and women. You need to get the girl to clubs. Cities and schools have an important role to engage people into sports. They need to welcome new people, with the esprit that sport is fun and relaxation, which could help to bring diversity on and off the field." It is important to show optimism and new opportunities., for instance through open days at clubs. There is that social responsibility to raise awareness and show that every sport is structured in a bit different way. The expert stated, that „We need to explain e.g. what hockey means: It is a family game, when the kids come in, the parents come in too. That is what we try to explain to parents. There are many girls in hockey, because all their friends are there."

Anna Ressmann – chairperson of women's committee, Vienna Football Association

Anna Ressmann stated that it is often not known that there are female players in football clubs. This is not on every person's mind and there is a lack of time for motivating girls to engage in sports. There should be more days that are dedicated especially for girls training or tournaments for only girls. In addition, interventions in the public sphere could help: „it might be smart to offer girls soccer in cages and or parks, without forcing them to anything." These approaches can serve as a motivation to support migrant girls' participation in sport clubs.

Merlina Linke, youth worker, Association of Vienna Youth Centers

Merlina Linke stated that girls need to be active. They need to occupy public space and try out new things. This is important to build friendship and teamwork. Sport is not only about having a sports career, but to enjoy what they are doing, being self-aware und having self-esteem. For those purposes' youth centers can be a good threshold, as girls can come to the youth centers

and exercise for free: „Sometimes we rent the gym and do some stuff there. Ping-pong or dart. My coworkers and I myself are role models for female participation in sport: We show that we can have fun and be active. We give girls the opportunity to do such things. We want to make sports accessible to them and to show them, that it is okay to be sweaty. We also need to include girls in planning processes, give them a voice and not only talk about them. That will be very encouraging for them."

Ayisat Yusuf – Sports for Multicultural Women (Finland) and former Nigeria International

Ayisat Yusuf observes that more and more young girls are participating in soccer teams, however: „We are still not there where we want them to be. Also, girls need female coaches." Otherwise, this absence of role models can be an obstacle for girls to play soccer. She explained further that: „there is a lot more money for men soccer in comparison to women soccer." Sometimes the support of the family is lacking. Sometimes it is just too expensive. Some clubs have social programmes. Language can be a problem, but that is not the main problem."

Periods can be an obstacle for the participation of girls in sports. They need to have someone to talk about these. They need inspiration to do what they want to do. Girls need special support to be part of the game.

Pearl Slattery – Football Association of Ireland (FAI)

Pearl Slattery said that role models in terms of „female coaches are persons whom girls can trust. If young girls do not see role models, they are not going to get involved in sports: „In Ireland we run female only courses, which provide a protected environment to learn football. This helps not just have girls at the entry point but support them on the field." We need them to show them what is possible. In general, the game is growing at present, so the standards keep rising, which gets more girls involved. In addition, new opportunities are growing for coaches. Pearl Slattery finalized her input by saying: „We know where we need to go, but we can always achieve better and strive for more."

Closing session

Sport Inclusion Network (SPIN) – The way forward

Outcomes of SPIN Women project

Presentation: **Layla Mousa**, UISP

The SPIN story so far & launch of the SPIN Network

Kurt Wachter and **David Hudelist**, both fairplay-VIDC

Input from founding organisations:

Victoria Schwenzer (Camino, Germany), **Des Tomlinson** (FA of Ireland), **Joana Libertador** (Sindicato dos Jogadores Profissionais de Futebol, Portugal), **Jean-Marc Alingue** (Liikkukaa – Sports for All, Finland). **Gibril Deen** (Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation, Hungary)

As a final of the day, the audience was introduced by Layla Mousa (UISP) to the SPIN Women project and its results so far. This was followed by the launch of the international Sport Inclusion Network (SPIN). SPIN coordinator Kurt Wachter and David Hudelist (both fairplay) retold the successful story so far: „SPIN has started in 2010 as a project and evolved over the years into a key European actor on social inclusion through sport.“ Furthermore, Kurt Wachter highlighted that, „the grassroots orientation is in the DNA of the fairplay initiative. Through real action, real change is taking place. For the future, we want to have an international network that encompasses not just Europe but also the Global South. Our project should not end at the borders of the European Union. In times where more and more call for a fortress Europe, borders are something we need to challenge. We want to create something new in the civil society.“

Further representatives of the founding organisations including Victoria Schwenzer (Camino), Des Tomlinson (FAI), Joana Libertador (SJPF), Jean- Marc Alingue (Liikkukaa) and Gibril Deen (Mahatma Gandhi Human Rights Organisation) took the floor and agreed on the following points why the network is important and mentioned why they joined the network.

- The Sport Inclusion Network (SPIN) gives the opportunity to learn, share and adapt certain things in their work. It is a rich process of collaboration. Further, Des Tomlinson explained, that „it is important to have an international perspective on our national activities. SPIN gives us the opportunity to learn and share and adapt certain things in our work. It enriches the process of collaboration.“
- The SPIN-projects showed that a lot of people can be involved in sports, with whom clubs had not worked before. Jean-Marc Alingue stated that: „it was nice to find another group of organisations who think the same way. The project had a positive influence on us and was good to find new solutions on old problems. SPIN helped us in Finland to gain new experiences, which had positive impacts on our work.
- Camino stressed the importance of research: “Minorities can be reached, if research is done on those topics if the research is followed up, as it helps to reach targets and target groups and shows the real impacts on inclusion and empowerment. Also sport structures can be adjusted according to the research outcomes. E.g.: Creating role models, to get girls and women engaged in sports or mentoring programs and guidelines, which help to keep girls and women engaged in sports. Joana Libertador stated, that „SPIN was able to raise awareness and the participation of women and girls in football. In football we hope to continue to grow together. “Therefore, SPIN education material should be used for future training and research. Additionally, Schwenzer mentioned three points that were important from her point of view:
 1. SPIN is important to gain more visibility for sport as a tool of inclusion. Through the project the potential of sports is made more visible on the European level. It helps to make European societies better; more democratic and inclusive;
 2. SPIN stands for equal rights and opportunities, as everyone has the right to claim the right to access sport



and more diverse participation on different levels, which is an important goal of the network. If we enlarge the network further, we would have even more power and impact;

3. It is necessary to gain more knowledge about sports and inclusion. Moreover, it is important to gain non-white research material and share that knowledge around other European partners.

Gibril Deen (MGHRO) added that SPIN is important since „it is fighting different aspects of discrimination. In Hungary it is not easy to tackle prejudices, but we hope that we get better at it through SPIN, as we learn a lot about Human Rights.“

The founding organisations underwent an in-depth discussion process about the type of network they want to establish. As a final conclusion they agreed to formalize their network and drafted statutes. The statutes are now online and potential future member organisations are invited to get in contact. The founding organizations also agreed that the SPIN network will be registered as a Non-profit association according to Austrian law. In conclusion, all speakers agreed, that “we need to work together on an international level.”



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