

**A PLACE TO PLAY: INCLUSIVE  
FOOTBALL PROGRAMMING FOR  
YOUNG PEOPLE SEEKING  
SANCTUARY**

FROM THEIR *CANCHAS* TO OUR *ASTROS* –  
LESSONS FROM PERÚ AND CHILE



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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

My interest in who has access to public services, public spaces, and sport and leisure – and who does not – has shaped both my academic and professional life. I studied History at undergraduate level, completing a thesis on social urban planning in Colombia, before going on to complete a Master’s degree in Latin American Studies with a focus on urban informality in Rio de Janeiro. These foundations led me to a firm belief that all members of villages, towns, and cities have the right to leisure, to safe spaces, and to inclusion.

For several years before this Fellowship, I had the pleasure of working at Bloomsbury Football Foundation, creating and managing football programmes for young people who experience marginalisation – including refugees and asylum seekers, young people with disabilities, and Muslim girls. I believe that access to sport is something that can be genuinely transformative for young people, and that it should be far more easily within reach than it currently is.

During my time working in football, a social worker once told me that they spend 10% of their time calling football clubs trying to find opportunities for a young person in their care to play. This reaffirmed to me a current disconnection between the two worlds that, with a little more intention, could work more closely together.

Through this Fellowship, I hope to offer some examples of the innovative and hopeful work from the Sport for Development sector in Latin America. I hope this report can be helpful to organisations working in football, sports more widely, and I believe many of the learnings translate well to projects within the arts, too. I would like this report to be a small contribution towards a more connected, compassionate and an inclusive future.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by thanking the Churchill Fellowship, without which this research would not have been possible. I am profoundly grateful for this opportunity.

## PERÚ

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Ignacio Bastidas Ruiz, whose kindness and generosity of time during my stay in Lima were invaluable. He opened doors to many conversations and was a central figure in making my time there so meaningful. I would like to thank the team at Fútbol Más Perú, with whom I started the research for this report. From FM Perú, thank you to Alejandro, Claudia, Diego, Fred, Hebé, Ivonne, John, Mariano, Mischel, Nikita, Raúl, Rosemary, Sara, Victor, and everyone else on the team who welcomed me so warmly during my visit. At Sinkumunchis, thank you so much to Camilla, Diego, Thalia, Yero, and all members of the Sinku team for not only having me but also for their consistent feedback and support during the time of writing this report. Thank you to Arsenal Perú for welcoming me with open arms. Thank you to Michael and Carolina at the IOM, and Maricarmen Valdivieso, the founder of Nexos Comunitarios. Thank you for the time of Ocasiven and Veneactiva, both fantastic organisations working incredibly hard to uphold the rights of refugees and migrants.

## CHILE

I’d like to sincerely thank Perrine Mardiné for her support with my trip to Chile, and the Fútbol Más Global Team -Juan, Guillermo, Virginia, Katherine – along with the FM Chile team and the wonderful players at Las Banderas F.C., for making my visit so fantastic. Thank you to Richard at Futuros para al Tenis, Francesca and Nicolas at Deporte Libre, Samuel and Marcial at Patio Vivo, and Nuri and José at Fundación Luksic for being so generous with their time in speaking with me about their wonderful organisations. Thank you to Arsenal Chile for making me feel right at home.

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# KEY TERMS

**Asylum Seeker** – a person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn't yet been legally recognised as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim. [Amnesty International]

**Cancha** – the Spanish word for an open space or field set aside for playing a sport. The word derives from the Quechua word 'kancha,' which originally meant an enclosed or bounded space or courtyard used for public or communal activities

**Convivencia** – the Spanish word referring to the practice of living together with others, marked by coexistence, mutual respect, and efforts to maintain peaceful and harmonious relations among individuals or groups.

**Psychosocial Sport** – programmes that aim to restore social well-being and psychological health through group-focused practices, tailored to fit the context, local culture, traditions, needs and resources. [Sportanddev.org]

**Quechua (language)** – a family of Indigenous languages with multiple regional varieties, spoken across the Andean region of South America.

**Quechua (people)** – Indigenous peoples of the Andean highlands of South America, notably Perú, Bolivia and Ecuador and also in neighbouring countries, who share diverse but related histories, cultures and identities – many of whom speak one or more varieties of the Quechua language family.

**Refugee** – a person who has fled their own country because they are at risk of serious human rights violations and persecution. Refugees have the right to international protection. [Amnesty International]

**Sport for Development Sector** – refers to the intentional use of sport, physical activity and play to attain specific development and peace objectives, including health, education, social inclusion, gender equality and conflict resolution. [Sportanddev.org]

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sport for development has strengthened in recent decades, demonstrating that sport can be a tool for social inclusion and provide support for refugees and asylum seekers. At the same time, there has been concern that competitive sport can become a site of re-traumatisation, and that competition inherently heightens the risk of further exclusion.

This report presents the learning of six organisations working in Perú and Chile, using sport to provide support for young people, through teaching emotional regulation, resilience, and growing friendships and strengthening community ties. The organisations featured – Fútbol Más, Deporte Libre, Patio Vivo, Sinkumunchis, Futuros para al Tenis, and Fundación Luksic – are not refugee-specific, but their approaches offer rich and transferable learning for those working with displaced young people in the UK.

Across three phases of programme delivery – inception, delivery, and legacy – this report offers practical examples and reflections organised around key themes: community mapping and co-production, interdisciplinary teams and methodology, competition and psychosocial support, family and caregiver engagement, and sustainability. It argues that competition and psychosocial programming are not mutually exclusive, and advocates for more competitive opportunities. It concludes with two sets of recommendations: for practitioners delivering sport programmes, and for the wider sector.



# INTRODUCTION

# CONTEXT: REFUGEES & ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THE UK

The United Kingdom is home to a significant population of refugees and asylum seekers, many of whom face profound uncertainty, isolation, and barriers to accessing services and opportunities. The policy landscape has shifted considerably in recent years: the length of refugee status has been halved to 30 months, while the path to British citizenship has been extended to 20 years – creating greater instability and making it harder for people to build settled lives, gain employment, and develop a sense of agency and belonging.

This uncertainty takes a real toll. For young people, the instability of not knowing whether they will be allowed to stay – or whether they and their families could be uprooted at short notice – makes it profoundly difficult to feel safe, to invest in hobbies and friendships, or to imagine a future. This experience is further shaped by a public discourse that has often fuelled misinformation and emboldened hostile attitudes. For a young person already navigating loss, displacement, and the challenges of adapting to a new country, feeling unwelcome in the place they are trying to call home adds another layer of difficulty that cannot be underestimated.

These challenges do not exist in isolation from wider inequalities. Around 31% of children in the UK live in poverty, corresponding to approximately 4.5 million children, rising to just over one third in London, where high housing costs push many families below the poverty line ([Action for Children](#)). For young refugees and asylum seekers, who are often unable to work and dependent on limited state support, these pressures are frequently compounded further.

# CONTEXT: FOOTBALL

Sport – and football in particular – has been increasingly promoted as a tool for inclusion, and as the Sport for Development sector has grown and strengthened over recent decades, it has been well evidenced that sport, when delivered purposefully, can be a significant force for positive change – improving physical and mental health, confidence, communication, and a sense of routine. A recent study by Rosenbaum et al. [2025] proposes that sport and physical activity can be meaningfully integrated across each layer of mental health and psychosocial support for displaced populations.

Access to football in the UK is constrained by a range of barriers – including travel, cost, facility availability, and mental health factors. Many young people drop out of football or sport once free or subsidised school provision ends, unable to afford club membership or travel. Girls and women face additional barriers compounded by persistent structural inequalities – despite growing calls to invest in the women's game, 24% fewer girls than boys take part in team sport ([Women in Sport](#)). Disabled people face significant barriers too: [Sport England](#) has found that disabled people are almost twice as likely to be physically inactive as non-disabled people – 43% compared to 23% – a gap further widened by a lack of adapted activities, qualified coaching, and accessible facilities.

Football has never been apolitical, despite frequent calls to keep the game separate from broader social debates. The nationalism that surfaces around international tournaments has, at times, revealed the game's least inclusive instincts. Yet football has simultaneously produced some of its most innovative responses to exclusion: networks such as FARE Network and Kick it Out, campaigns such as the Refugee Council's Fair Shot FC and Amnesty's Football Welcomes, and a growing body of practical toolkits and training, such as the Olympic Refugee Foundation's Sports Coach Plus.

Valuable programmes exist across professional and grassroots clubs alike, supporting young people seeking sanctuary, but unfortunately, the provision often remains inconsistent and in isolation. Many professionals working across sport and refugee support agree that while such initiatives exist, they too often depend on individuals who happen to hold knowledge of both the football and the support sector – a combination that is rare and difficult to scale. A social worker consulted for this research described the football world as frequently too esoteric, while sports organisations, in turn, can perceive working with refugees and asylum seekers as too politically loaded, or feel insufficiently resourced or equipped to do so well.

# CONTEXT: PERÚ AND CHILE

Perú and Chile were chosen as the focus of this research for several reasons. Both countries occupy a significant place in the Sport for Development (SfD) landscape in Latin America, and football is deeply woven into everyday life — from informal street games to organised local clubs. At the same time, both face challenges that resonate strongly with the UK context: entrenched social inequalities, sizable refugee and migrant communities, and public discourse marked by discrimination and xenophobia.

Both countries have histories shaped by displacement. They are home to significant migrant and refugee populations — including Venezuelans, Colombians, and Haitians — many of whom live in precarity and face discrimination in public life. In Perú, the internal armed conflict of the 1980s and 1990s drove mass migration from rural areas into cities. In Chile, the Pinochet dictatorship (1973–1990) forced hundreds of thousands into exile, leaving deep societal scars; the National Stadium in Santiago, home to Chile's national football team, was used as a detention and torture centre during the regime.

During the research period, both countries were undergoing significant political shifts. Perú experienced political instability, including the removal of a president and rising gang-related extortion, with refugees often scapegoated in public discourse. Chile held elections that resulted in the rise of a far-right candidate, intensifying debates around migration and security. These tensions form an important part of the backdrop against which the organisations in this report are working.





# CONTEXT: SPORT IN PERÚ AND CHILE

These dynamics unfold alongside urban insecurity, limited access to public space, and high rates of youth physical inactivity. WHO data from 2022 shows that the vast majority of adolescents (aged 11-17) in Chile and Perú are insufficiently physically active, with rates reaching 84% of boys and 91% of girls in Chile, and 83% of boys and 87% of girls in Perú. As is the case for many contexts, girls are disproportionately affected.

The institutional landscape differs between the two countries. Chile has a formal National Sport for Development policy (2016–2025, with a new framework underway), with explicit goals on inclusion, gender equity, and disability rights, led by the Ministry of Sport (MINDEP). In Perú, SfD efforts are more localised and community-driven, due to sport being promoted mainly by private clubs or academies, which are often inaccessible due to cost. Furthermore, sport falls under the Ministry of Education and receives less dedicated institutional support, meaning that for people not in formal education, sport can operate in a particularly narrow space.

It is in this context that both countries have developed a rich and innovative sector of Sport for Development. Football is widely loved in both countries, yet participation is constrained by barriers such as pay-to-play fees, gender norms, long travel distances, and the insecurity of public spaces. Despite these challenges, both countries are home to vibrant grassroots and community-based organisations that use football and sport to tackle exclusion. Venezuelan migration has also enriched the sporting landscape, with baseball – deeply embedded in Venezuelan culture – growing in popularity as a result. This creative use of sport extends further still: on the Peruvian–Brazilian border, organisations supporting refugees have used sport as a means of encouraging access to basic services, demonstrating the breadth of what it can offer beyond the pitch. Many of these organisations are deeply embedded in their local contexts, combining sport with broader goals such as education, physical health and psychosocial support.

A word that was heard a lot across the programmes visited was *convivencia*. Untranslatable in a direct sense, it encapsulates the idea of living together peacefully, with an emphasis on mutual respect. It is perhaps the clearest articulation of what sport, at its best, is being asked to build.

I spent eight weeks in Perú and Chile, visiting organisations in cities, suburbs, and rural communities – speaking with NGO founders, coaches, support workers, and young people. While football remained my principal focus, I was fortunate to learn from organisations delivering other sports and from those working in psychosocial support more widely. I visited pitches and offices, delivered a workshop, coached a team in a tournament, played with a women's team, and ate a considerable amount of ceviche.

Although I set out with the intention of focusing on refugee-specific provision, what I found was a much broader landscape of inclusive sport. Consideration of the needs of young refugees and asylum seekers was embedded in the provision from the outset, and I did not come across refugee-specific sports provision. The organisations and examples featured in this report are not refugee-specific, but I believe their approaches are deeply relevant to working with refugees and asylum seekers. The young people they serve might broadly be described as those who have experienced marginalisation – and it is in that spirit that, from here, I refer to them simply as young people.

During my stay in Lima, I lived in a flat with a balcony that looked over the city, which was very close to a concrete pitch. During the day, it was full of school children; in the evenings, local leagues took over. At all hours, I could hear the joy coming from that space. It set the tone for everything that followed. Everywhere I travelled, in cities and in the countryside, football pitches punctuated the landscape – a constant reminder of how central sport is to the fabric of daily life in both countries. I met young people for whom football and sport were genuinely transformative, and individuals and organisations who give everything they have to make that possible. I hope what I learned from them is useful to whoever picks up this report.





# ORGANISATIONS

1. FUNDACIÓN FÚTBOL MÁS
2. FUNDACIÓN SINKUMUNCHIS
3. FUNDACIÓN FUTUROS PARA AL TENIS

4. FUNDACIÓN DEPORTE LIBRE
5. PATIO VIVO
6. FUNDACIÓN LUKSIC

# FUNDACIÓN FÚTBOL MÁS

A Chilean-born international NGO founded in 2007, Fundación Fútbol Más (FM) has become a leading global organisation in the Sport for Development field. The organisation promotes resilience, happiness and community cohesion among children and youth in underserved communities through structured, play-based football sessions, delivered in schools and community facilities.

Its globally recognised methodology, including the Tarjeta Verde (Green Card), a symbolic tool used to praise and reinforce positive and supportive behaviours on the pitch, reinforces five key values: respect, joy, responsibility, creativity and teamwork.

Since its inception, FM has worked with over 180,000 children and young people, primarily aged between 6 and 17. They have worked in 12+ countries across Latin America, Europe, and Africa, working in cities, towns, border neighbourhoods and refugee camps.

Fútbol Más joined the Steering Board for *Sportanddev* (the international platform on Sport and Development), and in 2026 won the Laureus Sport for Good Award.

To find out more about [Fundación Fútbol Más](#), visit their website here



# FUNDACIÓN SINKUMUNCHIS

Founded during the Covid-19 pandemic by cousins Diego and Gonzalo García, Sinkumunchis is a Peruvian NGO and football club based in the heart of El Valle Sagrado de los Incas in Cusco and the Andahuaylas region in Apurímac. The organisation runs football provision in Quechua-speaking Andean communities, where young people grow up balancing school, familial responsibilities, and agricultural labour in geographically isolated areas. It offers free, regular football training incorporating Quechua language, aiming to strengthen local identity and provide opportunities for physical and emotional development. The organisation is supported by Ruralia, FIFA and UEFA Foundation.

From the outset, Sinkumunchis has aimed to bring high-quality training – the kind usually associated with urban academies – into rural areas, working across 15 pitches in *campesina* communities and organising and participating in local and regional tournaments. The organisation has also strived to create strong pathways for girls in football: more than half of their coaches are women, and girls have the same access to competitive play and academy-level environments as their male peers. Delivering sessions in Quechua affirms that Andean culture is a source of pride rather than deficit.

To date, their work benefits more than 2,500 participants between the ages of 4 and 17.

To find out more about [Fundación Sinkumunchis](#), visit their website here



# FONDACIÓN FUTUROS PARA AL TENIS

Fundación Futuros para al Tenis (FPT) is a Chilean non-profit founded in 2003 in the neighbourhood of Santa Adriana, in the district of Lo Espejo, Santiago. It uses tennis as a tool to promote the right to healthy and safe lives for children and young people living in one of the country's most densely populated neighbourhoods.

In 2007, FPT was awarded the grant to build its sports facility under 'Quiero Mi Barrio' from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. The court is named 'Héroes Olímpicos' in honour of Chile's Olympic tennis champions Nicolás Massú and Fernando González, and it has become a community hub extending well beyond tennis.

Their free programming serves young people in the neighbourhood to integrate sport with educational workshops on life skills, resilience, discipline and teamwork, partnering with local schools to combat high drop-out rates and risky behaviours while building healthy habits in an inclusive environment. They support young people aged between 3 and 18 with and without additional needs.

With tennis being a sport traditionally reserved for the elite, FTP provides a compelling example of how tennis (and tennis facilities) can be used to support communities of all backgrounds.

You can also read [Sebastián Varela's piece about co-founder Richard Quintana's story here](#).

To find out more about [Fundación Futuros para al Tenis](#), visit their website here



# FUNDACIÓN DEPORTE LIBRE

Founded in 2013, Fundación Deporte Libre harnesses the power of sport and exercise to transform public spaces and address physical inactivity, heightened feelings of insecurity, gender inequality in sport, and mental health challenges within communities in Chile.

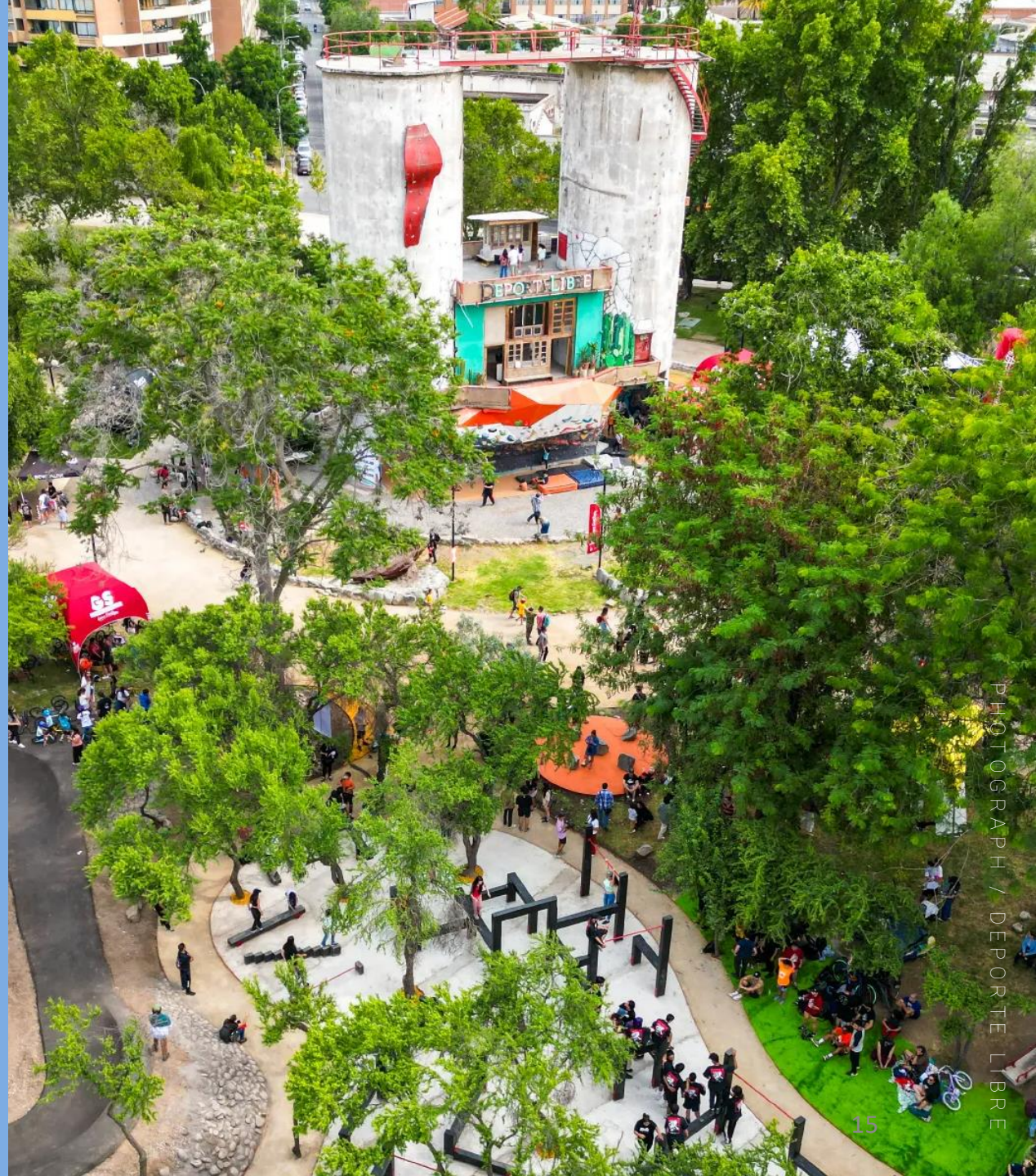
Its Plazas DeporteLibre programme transforms often neglected public spaces into active community hubs, delivering workshops and coaching in disciplines including climbing and bouldering, callisthenics, skate, BMX and urban dance – opportunities to practice sports other than football and often rooted in urban space.

The climbing workshops focus on safe, recreational bouldering to teach problem-solving through movement while building confidence, healthy habits, and social skills in accessible public parks. Their activities foster community ties amongst neighbourhoods that might otherwise lack sports access.

One of their key sites is their transformation of two abandoned cement towers in Parque Los Reyes, Santiago, into a climbing park, including an office and space for community events. This site welcomes around 80 visitors daily and 150 on weekends, and is now the largest public bouldering wall in South America.

To date, they have 11 *Plaza Libre* sites, 22,600m designed and constructed and 16,561 beneficiaries of children and young people.

To find out more about [Deporte Libre](#), visit their website here



# PATIO VIVO

Patio Vivo is a Chilean non-profit organisation founded in 2013 that seeks to transform the way children and adolescents experience playgrounds in nurseries and schools. They aim to improve playground dynamics, foster inclusivity, and strengthen pupils' connection with nature, while reducing school violence, bullying, discrimination, and the mental health challenges that arise from exclusionary spaces.

They also seek to address what they describe as 'Nature-Deficit Disorder' — observing that, due to a significant lack of outdoor play spaces, only 4% of children and adolescents regularly explore nature, with 90% of their time spent indoors. Working in communities with little access to green areas, Patio Vivo transforms concrete playgrounds into dynamic, nature-inspired spaces using structures, swings, plants, and natural materials, promoting four types of play they consider essential: free play, active play, risky play, and nature-based play.

To date, they have transformed over 103 playgrounds across Chile, reaching more than 55,000 students.

To find out more about [Patio Vivo](#), visit their website here



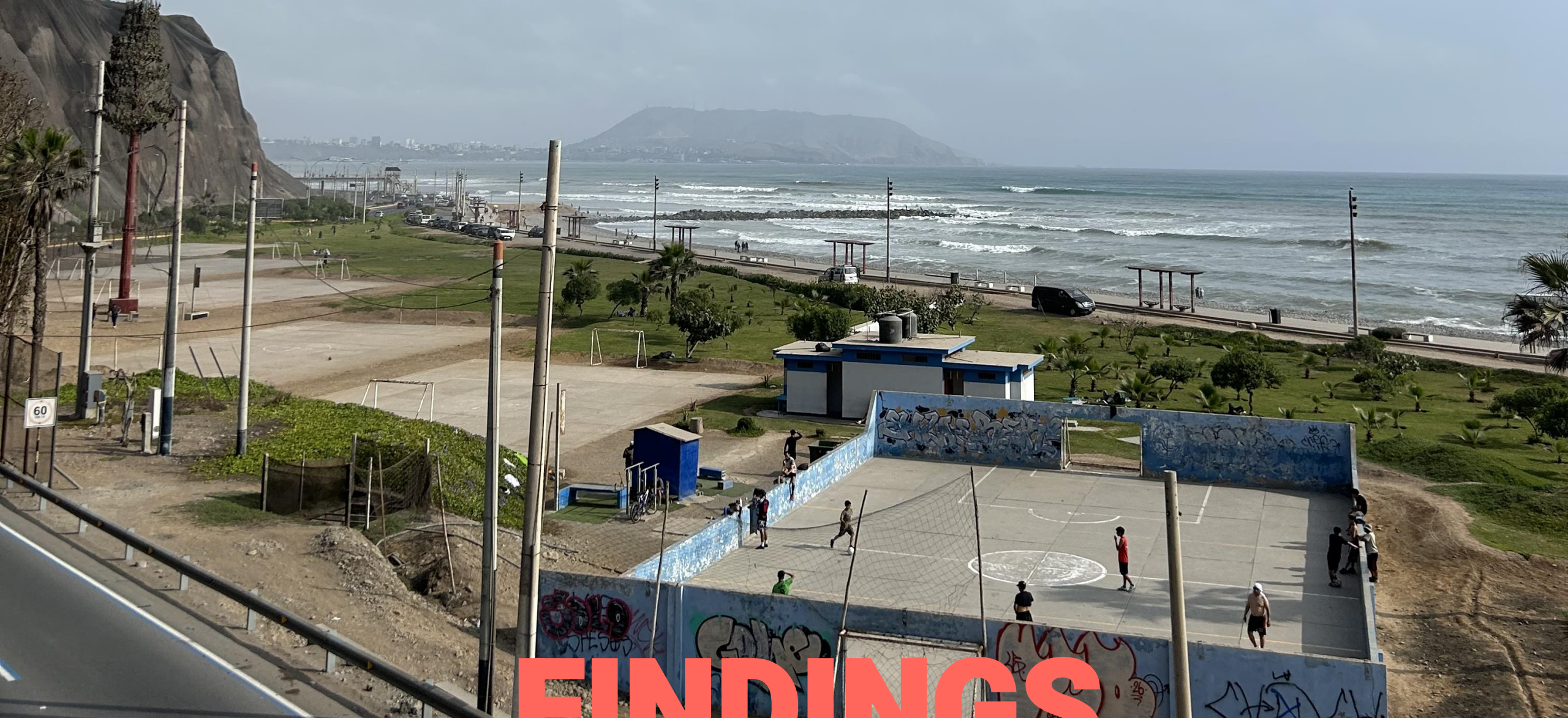
# FUNDACIÓN LUKSIC

Fundación Luksic, the foundation of the Luksic family, has supported sustainable development in Chile across education, entrepreneurship, conservation and training. Its sports programmes support young people aged 7 to 13 through free football and field hockey sessions across schools in vulnerable areas in the Metropolitan Region of Santiago and Antofagasta.

Their sports delivery focuses on developing socioemotional skills, such as emotional regulation, self-esteem and collaboration, to promote healthy living and resilience amid challenges of low physical activity and exposure to violence. They have a significant focus on thorough monitoring and evaluation and capacity building, both internally and externally.

To find out more about [Fundación Luksic](#), visit their website here





# FINDINGS

# FINDINGS



## PHASE 1: PROGRAMME DESIGN & ESTABLISHMENT

- ✦ Mapping
- ✦ Community Engagement



## PHASE 2: DELIVERY IN PRACTICE

- ✦ Physical Creation of a Safe Space
- ✦ Socio-emotional Delivery
- ✦ Family/Caregiver Involvement
- ✦ Tournaments/Competition



## PHASE 3: SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY

- ✦ Interdisciplinary Teams
- ✦ Community Ownership & Belonging
- ✦ Monitoring & Evaluation
- ✦ Training/Partnerships



# PHASE 1

**PROGRAMME DESIGN & ESTABLISHMENT**

# MAPPING PROCESS

Organisations that design and deliver programmes with psychosocial outcomes in mind understand the importance of thoughtful, considered programme design. It can be tempting to rely on hard data alone to determine need, or to make assumptions about what communities require. With tight deadlines, grant restrictions, and wider organisational pressures to navigate, the design process can too easily become rushed and disconnected from the reality on the ground. Co-production is widely recognised as best practice, yet the following example illustrates what is possible when practitioners go beyond consultation – getting out into the spaces and neighbourhoods in which they will work – to truly understand what is needed on the ground. While it may seem unusual to open a report on football with examples from outside the sport, the lessons these organisations offer are highly transferable.

Preoccupied with the reality that, according to the *Chile Nos Habla* survey, [68.8% of respondents said they feel threatened in parks and plazas](#), Fundación Deporte Libre has developed an efficient, rigorous mapping process which uses a distinct, radical lens on neighbourhood involvement to create more space for communities to enjoy.

## 1. Context Mapping

By identifying ‘the big picture’, their team maps out the physical boundaries, main roads and side streets of a proposed area – informed by their partnership with the UNHCR – situating it within the broader city context.

## 2. Layering Data

They combine official data on population, housing, and presence of migrant communities, layering this with the locations of schools and health centres – recognising that young people do not always attend school in the area where they live – to further identify priority zones for a new project.



# PHASE 1: PROGRAMME DESIGN AND ESTABLISHMENT

# MAPPING PROCESS

GRAPHIC / DEPORTE LIBRE



## DIAGNÓSTICO

# 1

### ANÁLISIS TERRITORIO DÓNDE:

- PARQUES
- PLAZAS

## CO-DISEÑO

# 2

### DISEÑO PARTICIPATIVO Y CONSTRUCCIÓN QUIÉNES:

- NIÑOS, NIÑAS Y ADOLESCENTES
- CUIDADORAS Y CUIDADORES
- ORGANIZACIONES COMUNITARAS.
- EQUIPOS DE EDUCADORAS
- MUNICIPIOS

## SEGUIMIENTO Y MEDICIONES

# 3

### EVALUACIÓN SOCIO DEPORTIVA BENEFICIARIOS:

- 4.500 BENEFICIARIOS.

## 3. Ground Work

Deporte Libre staff walk through the identified priority zones, photographing the spaces as they go, noting which areas are busier and which are quieter. Where available, the local municipal authority can also provide data on the location of existing plazas and public spaces.

## 4. Actor Mapping

They then map other organisations in the area – youth and sports clubs, cultural centres, neighbourhood organisations, and local businesses (which often can be approached for donations such as paint and materials). What is striking is that this actor mapping extends beyond organisations to the people present in the space itself: street vendors, people who spend their days in and around the plaza, and those who exercise control over the neighbourhoods through potentially less formal means. A territorial manager is responsible for these relationships, alongside links to municipal government and schools. The team firmly believe that every person in the community has a valued contribution to make, and the buy-in generated during this process directly supports both implementation and long-term sustainability.

## Considerations for the UK

There are a multitude of reasons why organisations and their employees are increasingly reluctant to conduct work on the ground in the initial stages of a project, and much work has shifted online. Yet Fundación Deporte Libre offers a hopeful alternative to this – demonstrating what becomes possible when practitioners take the time to walk the streets, meet the residents, and build relationships before a programme even begins.

Readers in the UK may find questions around GDPR arise when drawing on data from health centres and schools, and it is acknowledged that local government data operates differently across different settings. In the context of football or sports programming, this might look like assigning a clear responsibility – whether as a dedicated role or alongside existing responsibilities – for developing relationships with social workers and other support staff, and visiting their existing provision before a programme begins. Building trust within an already familiar, safe environment can ease the transition into a new one. Organisations could develop a similar mapping process – consulting support professionals, identifying existing sports clubs, youth organisations, schools, and colleges – and, where possible, taking young people to visit the pitch or facility before the programme launches. Where sports organisations are working within facilities owned by another institution, their ability to make permanent physical changes may be limited. However, the principle of 'you said, we did' can still be applied meaningfully by responding to young people's preferences in the session design.



## PHASE 1: PROGRAMME DESIGN AND ESTABLISHMENT

# MAPPING PROCESS

Patio Vivo, another Chilean non-profit, also employs a process of mapping and analysis in the initial stages of programme design that may be of interest to those in inclusive football programming.

As an organisation, they are concerned with rising discrimination and violence amongst pupils, physical inactivity, and a growing disconnection from activities outside of the home, and how the playground is a key site for this. Central to their philosophy is the concept developed by Loris Malaguzzi that the school playground functions as the 'third teacher' – the first being the schoolteacher themselves, and the second the children. From this, they have developed the concept of 'Learning Landscapes' – a design approach, which, in their own words, is where:

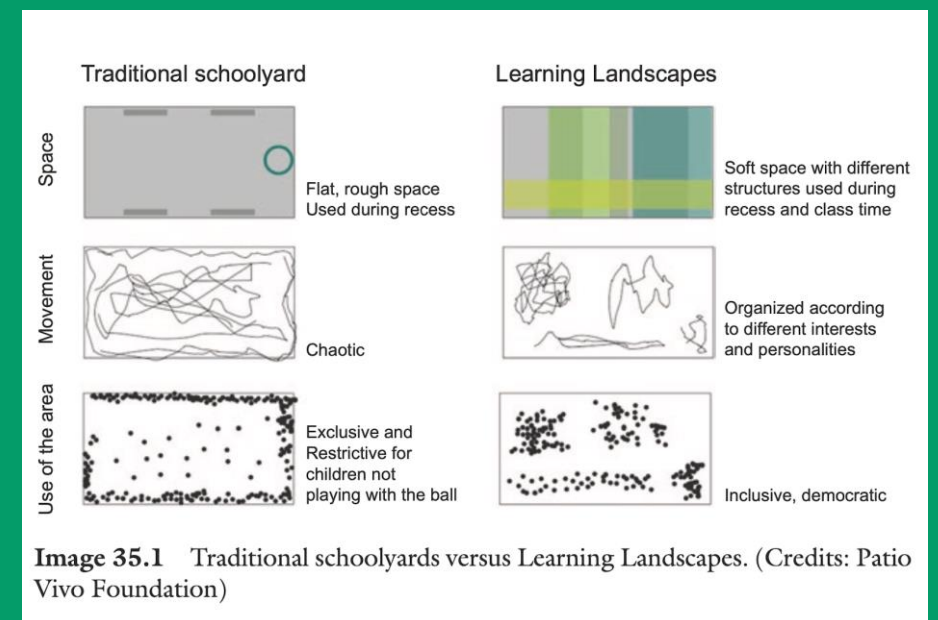
*'The use of the space goes from being exclusive and restrictive to a shared, inclusive, and democratic environment.'*

The starting point is often a concrete playground – perhaps with painted football markings, a basketball hoop, and a handful of benches. This is often the form which playgrounds around the world take. Patio Vivo describes these as 'leftover spaces', and what they consistently observe within them is disconnection between students, large areas occupied by very few young people, physical inactivity, and high screen use.

To address this, they work in partnership with schools to analyse how the space is being used in everyday practice. This begins with getting to know the school and its community, before conducting a spatial analysis of the playground's layout and materials. Observations during break times capture how the space is used by boys and girls, young people with disabilities, and those from migrant and refugee backgrounds. These findings are then relayed onto physical maps, from which the architectural teams develop innovative solutions to promote the four types of play they consider essential: free play, active play, risky play, and nature-based play.

### Considerations for the UK

As is illustrated on the map of the 'use of the area' under the 'traditional schoolyard', it is often found that there may be a game played by a few pupils, usually boys, with other pupils sticking to the outskirts of the playground and the corners. These sorts of considerations could be helpful for sports programming, especially in the context of mixed-gender sessions.



**Image 35.1** Traditional schoolyards versus Learning Landscapes. (Credits: Patio Vivo Foundation)

Traditional Schoolyards versus Learning Landscapes (Ibáñez and Huneus, 2024, p. 405). Credits: Patio Vivo Foundation



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Once a location is decided, community involvement becomes essential – not just for effective implementation, but for genuine long-term buy-in. Co-production is widely discussed in the sector, and the work of Deporte Libre offers a strong example of what it can look like in practice.

Deporte Libre's *PlazaLibres* hinge on community involvement as a constant. Following their diagnostic phase described in the previous pages, the team sets up fairs in intended spaces, with tables, chairs, tents, music and snacks, creating a welcoming environment for engagement. Activities like their 'flag activity' invite residents to mark spaces where they feel safe or at ease (green) and where they feel more vulnerable (red), building an emotional map that informs design decisions: bench placement, climbing wall locations, spaces for conversation.

Community involvement then shifts into ownership during the implementation. Residents take pride in outcomes they helped shape – remarking things such as '*this is ours*' and '*we asked for this here.*' These forms of co-production exercises also have a history in Chilean housing justice organisations, where communities can practice autonomy in creating a space, and have more options for *choice*.

The team continues gathering feedback throughout, adjusting as needed and running sports and arts activities alongside social and emotional support. Particular attention is paid to how girls experience public space, and to young people with disabilities or from migrant and refugee communities – groups whose voices must be present at every stage. They also seek to make the spaces intergenerational, and knock on doors of elderly neighbours and ask if they want to join in on these processes, or even to just sit amongst neighbours and chat – this helps the community know one another.

What makes the model especially effective is its precision and reach. Each site takes around two months, with multiple site developments running simultaneously. Yet the impact extends beyond the physical: one mother who once felt unsafe walking three blocks to the plaza with her young children now knows the people on the street corners, selling food or sitting outside their houses, and her path now feels familiar. By blending quantitative mapping with qualitative insight, the model builds genuine ownership and lasting sustainability through the social networks it creates. This is further reinforced by training local people to maintain the spaces, embedding long-term stewardship within the community itself.





## PHASE 1: PROGRAMME DESIGN AND ESTABLISHMENT

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Fútbol Más conducts a social diagnosis with similar elements, identifying priority zones and working with local government and community partners. From the outset, the organisation conducts what they term *las transferencias metodológicas*: workshops held with members of the communities within which they work, including community organisations, teachers, sports professionals, local government and health centres.

These workshops explore the vulnerabilities and strengths of the area, invite participants to reflect on situations of risk and potential, and encourage open dialogue about the neighbourhood itself. The importance of safe spaces and the role of responsible adults within them is central to the training. They create WhatsApp groups to maintain communication with those who have received the training, providing an accessible, ongoing line of support. By sharing the Fútbol Más methodology from the outset, the organisation ensures that community members feel informed, confident, and part of the programme throughout the process.

Patio Vivo conducts questionnaire analysis with teachers to gather their perceptions of student behaviour during break times, interactions between pupils, and how students settle after returning to class. They also run workshops with young people themselves to explore what they would like to see in their playground, as illustrated in the image to the right. Once the new playground is completed, both the Patio Vivo team and school staff are invited to experience the space before it officially opens – giving the team an opportunity to reflect on the design first-hand and, importantly, to reconnect with the joy of play themselves.

### Considerations for the UK

When conducting focus groups or consultations with young people, organisations might also consider extending this process to include family members, caregivers, and wider members of the local community. Fútbol Más's approach of looking not only at areas of risk but also of potential offers a useful framework here – one that empowers both young people and adults to have a genuine say in what their space and provision looks like. Where sports programmes in school settings are delivered by external organisations, consultation with teachers about participants' behaviours, preferences, and needs can offer valuable additional insight.



PHOTOGRAPH / FUNDACIÓN FÚTBOL MÁS



PHOTOGRAPH / PATIO VIVO





PHOTOGRAPH / SINKUMUNCHIS

# PHASE 2

## DELIVERY IN PRACTICE

# PHYSICAL CREATION OF A SAFE SPACE

Football, and sport in general, is widely believed to hold real power in supporting young people who face the risk of isolation. There is a strong conviction amongst the organisations presented that even where sport cannot change a life, it can offer something immediate, lasting and real – a defined period of time where a young person can exist and play in safety. It is from this foundation that the physical space of delivery becomes not just a question of logistics but integral to achieving desired outcomes.

Across the countryside and cities visited during the research for this report, football pitches appeared consistently. Maricarmen Valdivieso, founder of Nexos Comunitarios, a Peruvian non-profit working to empower communities facing poverty and social exclusion, explained that some form of sports pitch is the first thing communities ask their local politicians to be built or repaired. These spaces are multifunctional: used for their traditional purpose, for community events, the sale of food and artisanal goods, and for municipal or health ministry-run health screening and counselling. In vast spaces of land where there were very few settlements, there was always a well-maintained *cancha*.

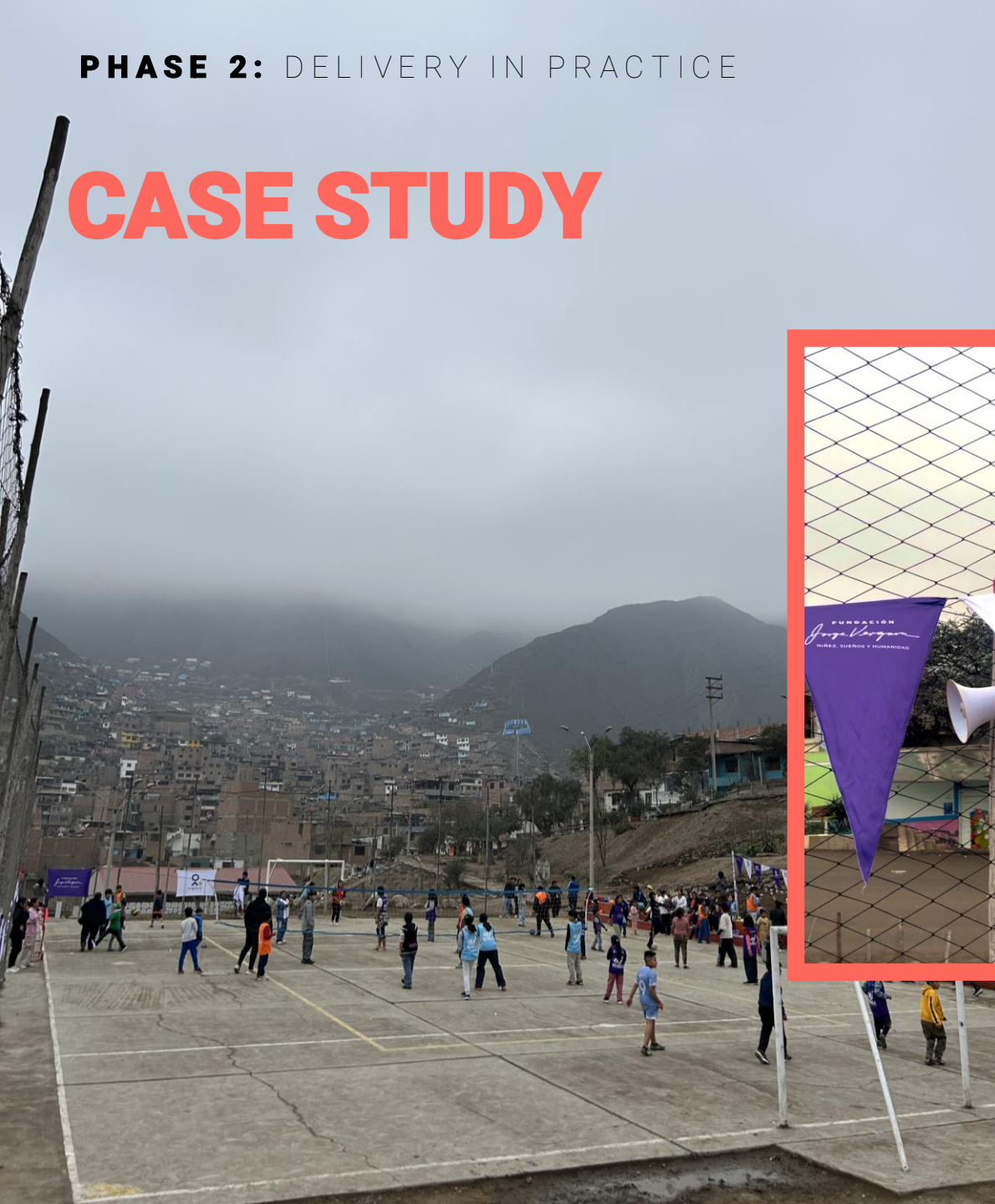
During a visit to FM's provision in Cusco, I noted that regardless of the pitch's initial state, it always looked incredibly bright during sessions. Claudia, organiser for their Cusco division, told me that this was what they called the importance of '*pintar la cancha*' – paint the pitch. Painting the pitch doesn't need to be any kind of permanent transformation, but their use of flags, bright cones and bibs creates an atmosphere that *something* is happening – and makes the atmosphere instantly feel fun.



PARQUE RECREATIVO A.P.V. VALLE SAGRADO  
CCOTOHUINCHO

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# CASE STUDY



My visit to Carmen Alto offered one of the most vivid illustrations of Fútbol Más's skill in creating a safe space. The event marked the conclusion of a project delivered in partnership with an external corporate partner, held in Carmen Alto, a neighbourhood in Lima's northern district of Comas – one of the most populous districts in the city.

On arrival, the concrete pitch – known as a *losa*, perhaps the equivalent to a MUGA in the UK – was covered in puddles after recent rain. Coaches Nikita and John, who deliver weekly sessions in the community, were already there sweeping the water away with the help of two brothers who had arrived early. Like every FM event, flags were put up all around the circumference of the pitch, adding colour and a feeling of something special. These flags are central to creating a vibrant space where children and young people really feel like something is *going on* – and also instantly recognisable for a new joiner who may be nervous that they're in the right place.

As the space was being set up, one detail that stayed with me was a megaphone being attached to the fence amongst the flags, playing on a loop a message calling out across the neighbourhood: 'Fútbol Más are here on the pitch at Carmen Alto, waiting for the children.' Almost immediately, children came running down the hillside from the houses above. It was a simple but effective, and quite moving, form of outreach. It also demonstrated the sense of trust and familiarity that the young people felt towards the organisation.

Another moment during set-up that I found particularly moving was when I was tasked with hanging photographs taken throughout the project on a line across two poles. The youngest of the two original brothers was watching quietly nearby, so I invited him to help. He was shy at first, but as I passed him each photo to put on the line he began to look carefully at each one, pointing out where he appeared – with his brother, or with his friends. He showed such a sense of pride in showing me where he was. This kind of detail spoke volumes about what it means to make young people feel genuinely part of something.

PHASE 2: DELIVERY IN PRACTICE



## PHASE 2: DELIVERY IN PRACTICE

All of Fútbol Más sessions open with a large circle – a consistent, recognisable structure that in weekly provision gives coaches space to check in with the players, revisit key values, and discuss any upcoming events. At a larger event such as this, the circle serves an additional purpose: from the outset, the young people are presented with getting involved with something already familiar to them, simply on a greater scale. It also allowed the team to outline the day's plan and for partners and volunteers – of whom there were many – to introduce themselves and reaffirm FM's key values.

The event itself had a joyful, relaxed and party-like energy, with music and a microphone in action throughout (something that is also characteristic of all FM events I attended). Alongside football and sports-based activities, young people had spaces to paint and a time to draw with crayons on the ground. Towards the end, a volleyball net was strung across the pitch, and parents joined in alongside their children. Despite the coaches' earlier concern that the rain might have deterred families, parents and families were very happy to watch on the benches to the side and get involved. Their involvement reflected the trust the organisation had built within the community over the course of the project, and served as a reminder that the impact of this work extends well beyond the young people themselves. As everything was packed away, parents were coming up to FM staff members to say how much fun they had.

### *Considerations for the UK*

1. Consistent routine during weekly provision that can then be continued into larger-scale events
2. Use of flags and music to decorate spaces that don't belong to the organisation
3. Involvement of parents, family or caregivers by either providing space to support or involvement in activities
4. Involvement of art and other sports – either as a drop-in station or part of the programming.



## PHASE 2: DELIVERY IN PRACTICE





# TOURNAMENTS AND COMPETITION

The inclusion of young people at increasing risk of isolation into competitive sport – particularly refugees and asylum seekers – is widely discussed in the context of social cohesion and confidence building, and programming often centres on participation over competition. A conviction running through this report is that competition, or competitive dynamics, and psychosocial support are not mutually exclusive, and when designed with intention and safeguarding at the forefront, can work in harmony. Equally, competitive sport can be delivered with greater attention to psychosocial support without it detracting from the integrity of the game, though that discussion falls outside the scope of this report.

Competitive environments such as tournaments or league entries, when implemented without proper consideration for trauma or mental health, can be unhelpful at best and seriously damaging at worst. When working with young people facing significant challenges across different areas of their lives, challenges will inevitably arise. However, as the organisations visited during this research demonstrated, difficulty is not a reason to avoid something worth doing.

It is also important to acknowledge that many young people who engage in football and sport are not seeking competitive opportunities – for them, a relaxed, participation-focused atmosphere is exactly what is needed. High-profile examples such as the Olympic Refugee Team offer an inspiring glimpse into what is possible at the elite level, and the same can be said for professional footballers. However, these pathways are often exceptional and difficult to reach, and the choice need not be between high-pressure, elite environments and participation-only programming. The aim of this section is not to advocate for competition above participation, but to offer some inspiration around the spectrum of what competitive sport can look like when working with young people in vulnerable contexts.



# CASE STUDY

## LIGA DESCENTRALIZADA YAPE – SINKU TOURNAMENT



## PHASE 2: DELIVERY IN PRACTICE



During my time with the organisation, I observed two tournaments held in Urquillos, in the Urubamba Province close to Cusco: one for U14/U15 girls and another for U16/U18 boys. I spent most of the day at the girls' tournament, where there were 64 girls, many of whom had travelled significant distances to be there. Sinkumunchis coordinates with rural communities to host tournaments in partnership with Yape (Peruvian Digital Wallet app) which also creates opportunities for local people to sell food and drinks along the sidelines. Some players had journeyed more than two hours each way, with Sinku supporting travel to and from the site.

The scene before kick-off was lively – girls chatting in their teams, younger children and families cheering from tiered stands, women from the local area selling snacks at the sidelines. The tournament was well organised, with a clear schedule, a coach for each team, and referees for every game. The teams reflected Sinku's reach across the region, with girls coming from communities in the valley and others from high up in the mountains. All six teams were part of Sinku's network of community programmes. Many of these communities sit at 4,000 metres above sea level and higher – and yet the energy and strength of the players was remarkable. I, stationary throughout, was struggling to breathe.

The Sinku team spoke openly about the realities many of these young people face: domestic violence, responsibilities for agricultural and domestic labour, long distances to school and training, and various health concerns. Diego spoke of two sisters who are exceptional players, but who face protective parents and other difficulties at home. I noticed a few girls playing in long trousers and t-shirts under considerable heat – a quiet reminder that for some, participation itself is an act of negotiation.

This raises a question that sits at the heart of any competitive programme working with young people in vulnerable contexts: how do you balance the demands of competition – showing up, being on time, being selected – with the reality that some absences and difficulties are entirely beyond a young person's control? Sinku's answer is captured in something Diego said during one of our conversations about the topic: that the key is for it to be 'flexible, but it doesn't break.' The organisation has built a culture in which empathy comes first – where players understand each other's absences, where reintegration after difficulty is the default, and where the team holds together not despite that flexibility, but because of it.

Sinkumunchis is a Quechua word that translates roughly to 'Together We Roll' – and having spent the day in Urquillos, it is difficult to imagine a more fitting description of what this organisation has built.



# TOURNAMENTS AND COMPETITION

Competitive opportunities are not just about the chance to play – they shape how young people feel before they have even kicked a ball. In Rancagua, just outside Santiago, Fútbol Más hosted an inter-school tournament (pictured to the right). The stands were full of young people and their teachers, and as with all Fútbol Más events, there was a microphone, music, and every player was clapped onto the pitch through a tunnel formed by FM staff. Some came through shyly and left beaming; others grinned from the outset. One boy put on a serious expression, did some jumping high knees, bent to touch the grass, and thanked his god before running through the tunnel. The Champions League anthem played before every match, and players walked out as though it meant everything – and for them, it did. Every young person was given the space to experience the tournament in their own way. A notable touch was the relationship between each school's FM coach and their teacher. FM coaches created moments for teachers to be celebrated, with whole schools cheering behind them. A best mascot competition – with pupils dressed as animals or more abstract creations – added to the sense of occasion. Taken together, these details combined to create such a genuine sense of occasion and achievement.

At Futuros para al Tenis in Santiago, competitive opportunities extend across 18 teams, and the organisation provides rackets for any young person in need of one, for both internal and external tournaments. During a conversation with co-founder Richard, 15 young people were preparing to travel to the National Stadium to compete in a tennis tournament. The opportunity to compete in a professional facility was an exciting opportunity, but the experience also offered a chance to practice wider life skills. Before departure, Richard briefed the youth people alongside their coaches, covering practical logistics – routes, what to do if separated, and how to conduct themselves in competition. The preparation itself was part of the experience.

As these examples demonstrate, competition need not be in opposition to socio-emotional support. Fundación Luksic runs intra-school tournaments specifically aimed at strengthening bonds with local neighbourhoods and putting tools of team building, confidence and self-regulation into practice. Attendance at weekly programme sessions earns places in these tournaments – embedding competitive opportunity within the broader culture of participation.







PHOTOGRAPH / DEPORTE LIBRE

# PHASE 3

## SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY

# COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

All charities and non-profits understand the pressure of securing sufficient funding to sustain operations. Restricted funding and short timelines can affect the intended impact of a programme. The legacy of a project is also shaped by the nature of the intervention itself – whether a one-off event or consistent provision – and whether it is delivered in partnership with others. It is worth acknowledging that some organisations find ways to continue regardless. Ocasiven, an organisation supporting the rights of refugees and migrants in Lima, describes its members as volunteers precisely because when funding ends, they carry on. This is an admirable position, but not one that many organisations are able to take. What was consistent across the programmes explored in this report is that for an intended change to outlast the confines of a project's funding, the community must feel genuine ownership of it. Deporte Libre and Patio Vivo's design processes produce tangible, visible results that reflect what residents and pupils indicated they wanted. Fútbol Más's *transferencia* process ensures that community members, from local organisations to teachers and health workers, are equipped with the knowledge and tools to carry the programme forward.

Practical longevity is also built into the model in other ways. Deporte Libre trains local volunteers, youth leaders, and municipal staff in ways to maintain what has been built. Patio Vivo designs with ecological sustainability in mind, selecting materials that are durable and easily repaired using locally available resources. During a visit to a rural school in Puerto Varas, in the south of Chile, a Patio Vivo staff member noticed boards on a large circular structure beginning to wear and arranged repairs with the headteacher on the spot – a small moment that speaks to an embedded culture of feedback and mutual relationship rather than one-off installation and feedback.

There will, of course, be setbacks. In 2016, three years after the transformation of the water tower in Parque Los Silos, Deporte Libre suffered an arson attack that destroyed the entire outside gym and climbing area and destroyed their office and stores of material. Their response, with the community's support, was a fundraising initiative that raised 10 million Chilean Pesos. With the help of local volunteers, the facility was completely reconstructed – and the climbing wall expanded from 95 to 200 square metres, making it the largest free bouldering wall in South America. It is a powerful illustration that when a community truly feels ownership of something, even the most difficult setbacks can be overcome.



PHOTOGRAPH / DEPORTE LIBRE

# SOCIAL IMPACT

Alongside practical longevity, the psychological impact on individuals and their wider families is equally important, and considerably harder to measure.

A phrase heard repeatedly across the organisations featured in this report was '*poco a poco*' – little by little. This spirit is illustrated through the work of Sinkumunchis. One area the organisation is deeply committed to is the incorporation and active encouragement of Quechua during training. Quechua-speaking people continue to face discrimination and stigma when speaking their language in public, and young people often arrive carrying a learned sense of shame around it. Coaches noted that when a young person first joins, they will frequently deny speaking Quechua when asked – yet the same coaches will hear it spoken freely amongst peers moments later. Having coaching staff who come from the same communities, with over 50% being women, provides powerful role models and creates an environment in which speaking Quechua becomes something to be proud of rather than hidden.

Another sensitivity the organisation navigates carefully is the perception of girls playing football. The girls often arrive with enthusiasm, but tension can exist within families who may view participation as less important than responsibilities at home. Alongside the presence of role models within the coaching team, a key tool is active family engagement. Sinku describes getting parents and caregivers onside as 'non-negotiable', and invests significant time in relaying individual progress directly to the adults – something as simple as 'she scored an amazing goal today' can carry real weight. The young people look up to the adults in their lives, and that relationship is one the organisation recognises it cannot do without. Attitude change is gradual, but on the ground, it is visible.



### PHASE 3: SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY

Fundación Luksic takes a similarly intentional approach to caregiver engagement, offering an optional parent programme running alongside their sports provision. Delivered by a partner organisation, the programme draws on the Australian-developed Triple P methodology. Over eight weeks, parents and caregivers attend four group online sessions of approximately fifteen participants, followed by three individual phone call sessions and a closing commemorative session. The programme covers parenting strategies, addressing challenges at home, goal-setting, and techniques to support children's development.

#### *Considerations for the UK*

The question of how to engage caregivers may look different in the UK context, where many young people attend sessions without an adult present or are not in the care of one specific adult. A way of strengthening this network through sport and support might mean making contact with key workers, social workers, foster parents, or other organisations with an established relationship with the young person. The approaches of Deporte Libre and Futuros para al Tenis of designing spaces with benches and informal seating for observers are a reminder that, where possible, creating a welcoming environment for someone to watch casually can make a real difference. It can also work to provide an opportunity for a young person to invite a friend or any siblings. Inviting a trusted adult to a session or event is not always feasible given professional caseloads and time pressures, but when it is possible, the impact on the young person can be significant. And where no caregiver is present, a trusted member of the delivering organisation can themselves fulfil that role – someone who shows up, watches, and makes the young person feel seen.



# INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS

There is a widely held belief that sport is the tool, and its impact depends entirely on the intention of those wielding it [Stephen Raynard]. Interdisciplinary teams bring diversity of thought, cover blind spots, and offer a breadth of expertise that strengthens both the design and delivery of programmes – and in doing so, help ensure that the intention behind the tool is a good one.

Fútbol Más pairs each coaching team with two individuals – one from a sports background, one from a sociological background – a model replicated across all of FM's global activities. Patio Vivo's team brings together architects, sociologists, and education professionals, while Deporte Libre draws on social workers, architects, and sports professionals. This diversity of expertise reflects a deliberate recognition that the challenges these programmes seek to address cannot be met by any single discipline alone. Sport provides the entry point, but it is this surrounding knowledge of space, youth work, and community dynamics that can create significant change. Sinkumunchis and Futuros para al Tenis root their teams in the communities that they serve – building trust and a depth of understanding.

Alongside these interdisciplinary teams comes a set of clearly defined methodologies unique to each organisation. Within FM, there is an ongoing negotiation between maintaining a universal, cohesive methodology that binds the organisation together and remaining responsive to the specific needs of each local context. Co-founder Guillermo Rolando shared that from the very beginning, he envisioned young people playing football on a pitch that could be anywhere in the world – the setting might change, but the core idea of their provision remained constant. This careful balance is embedded in FM's methodology. Although their global office is based in Chile, the team maintains regular contact with facilitators across all the countries. This ongoing connection not only ensures consistency in delivery but also fosters a strong sense of belief amongst all employees that they are part of a shared mission.

Longevity of programmes is also strengthened by the capacity building of both practitioners and participants. Fundación Luksic ensures extensive training is delivered to staff and delivery partners in emotional regulation and self-care, and Deporte Libre ensures training to staff and educational professionals in the areas where they work. Futuros para al Tenis is currently working on embedding Youth Voice into their programmes, and supporting the young people with having more agency in shaping the programme and the organisation as a whole. Sinkumunchis is embarking on a pilot to support players who age out of their provision into becoming coaches. Across all of these programmes runs a common thread: a recognition that sustainable programmes require sustained investment in and support of the people delivering and receiving them.





PHOTOGRAPH / FUNDACIÓN FÚTBOL MÁS

# CONCLUSIONS

## AND RECOMMENDATIONS

# CONCLUSIONS

I feel incredibly privileged to have learned from the organisations described throughout this report, and deeply grateful to the Churchill Fellowship for making this research possible.

My aim was to learn from countries with a rich tradition of Sport for Development, and to explore how sport and support can work more effectively together in the UK context. I hope the examples in this report can offer practical inspiration for how programmes can be more deeply rooted in their communities, how competitive and psychosocial approaches can complement rather than contradict each other, and how creating genuine places to play requires patience, presence, and trust.

I was inspired by the word *convivencia*, and by the quiet persistence of *poco a poco*. Change in this field is rarely dramatic. It is built slowly through relationships formed on street corners and pitches, in school playgrounds and disused water towers, across mountains, valleys and city parks. They too can develop across MUGAs, pitches on housing estates and school astros.

The following pages set out my recommendations, divided into two sections: recommendations for practitioners, and recommendations for the sector, a non-comprehensive recommended further reading and some suggestions for further research. I hope this report is useful to practitioners and organisations, and to anyone who believes, as I do, that sport at its best is not just something young people do, but somewhere they belong.



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

## DESIGN

Conduct a diagnostic phase, in person wherever possible, where the team is very clear on the issues they are trying to create solutions for. During this phase, also focus on the potential of the area, not just the challenges.

Consult with players on how they experience the space. Take into consideration the different experiences of young people.

Create a clear methodology that resonates with the delivery team and follows a pattern through to delivery.

## DELIVERY

Create environments that are welcoming with temporary materials – e.g. banners, music, colourful bibs. These are small things that may seem obvious but are often missed.

Encourage competitive opportunities. Loop in with local teams to arrange friendlies.

Think carefully about whether spaces are best as mixed or if girls-only programming lends itself better to achieving the organisation's goals.

Think outside of confining refugee-based teams to refugee-focused opportunities.

Include sustained involvement of parents/caregivers, whether that be simple communication or specific programming.

## LEGACY

Invest in training and support for staff to avoid vicarious trauma.

Support local communities by creating open channels of communication and feedback loops.

Create a sense of ownership over the programme amongst the community involved.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SECTOR

## GUIDANCE

Clearer guidance and support from football governing bodies on:

1. How clubs can meaningfully include refugees and asylum seekers within their wider sport provision – offering the option for young people to join more than a standalone provision.
2. Support for support workers – a clear, up-to-date and accessible directory of available provision, whether specialist, closed-group or open provision, based on age bracket to enable confident and appropriate referrals.

## FUNDING

Funding opportunities to support refugees and asylum seekers in competitive opportunities.

Investment in supporting the development of coaches and referees from within refugee/care-experienced communities.

Support for smaller grassroots organisations in funding applications and processes.

## COLLABORATION

Shared training or CPD between sport/support sectors. Encouraging ongoing collaboration as opposed to stand-alone events.

Investment within organisations in interdisciplinary teams within design and delivery.

Strengthening the literature on competitive opportunities for psychosocial outcomes.

# FURTHER READING & RESOURCES

## HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR PRACTITIONERS

Olympic Refugee Foundation, Sport Coach Plus <https://www.olympics.com/en/olympic-refuge-foundation/programmes/sport-coach-plus>

UNHCR, *Sport for Protection Toolkit*, <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/media/sport-protection-toolkit>

UEFA, *UEFA Refugee Toolkit*, <https://www.uefa.com/news-media/news/02a2-1fd675d43b0c-b0c1e9b6406c-1000--refugee-support/>

## LITERATURE ON SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

Spaaij, R., Broerse, J., Oxford, S., Luguetti, C., McLachlan, F., McDonald, B., Klepac, B., Lymbery, L., Bishara, J., Pankowiak, A., et al. (2019). *Sport, Refugees, and Forced Migration: A Critical Review of the Literature*. *Front Sports Act Living*, 1, 47

UNESCO (2024) *The Social Impact of Sport, Unlocking the Potential of Sport to Drive Social Transformations*. UNESCO

Olympic Refugee Foundation (2025), *Cities, Sport and Inclusion: A Policy Plan to Support Displaced Communities*

Stone, C., (2019). *Football: A Shared Sense of Belonging? Final Report on the Role of Football in the Lives of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*. *Football Unites, Racism Divides (FURD)*

## SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are several topics that, while not covered here due to constraints of time and length, would be valuable to explore. These topics include how race, ethnicity, gender, identity, and disability shape both access to and experience of sport, exercise, and public space, and what organisations are doing to specifically improve these experiences. Funding, a continual strain for sport for development and grassroots organisations, development of partnerships and ethical storytelling are themes that should be investigated further. I believe there is a real gap in the literature on competitive sporting opportunities outside the 'elite level', and it's an area I'd be interested to see explored.

