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Inclusion of Refugees in Norwegian Football Clubs

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

FC	Football club
FFO	After-school football programme
HiMolde	Molde University College
IMDi	The Directorate of Integration and Diversity
MFM	Møreforsking Molde
NAV	The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration
NFF	The Football Association of Norway
NIF	The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports
RFF	Regional football federation
RSF	Regional sport federation
SFO	After-school programmes
UDI	The Norwegian Directorate for Immigration
UNE	The Immigration Appeals Board
UMA	Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers

SAMMENDRAG

Norsk fotball er basert på visjonen om «Fotball for alle». Norges Fotballforbund (NFF) skal virkeliggjøre denne visjonen gjennom sitt inkluderingsarbeid og skal legge forholdene til rette for at alle som vil, skal få delta i fotballen. Dette har sin bakgrunn i oppfatningen om at deltakelse i fotballen kan bidra til bedre fysisk og mental helse og velvære og sosial interaksjon. Fotballaktiviteter er viktige for barn og ungdoms utvikling fordi de skaper verdifulle sosiale relasjoner (Norges Fotballforbund 2016).

NFF og UEFA skal i samarbeid utvikle mer kunnskap om fotball for flyktninger i Norge (beboere på flyktningsmottak og nybosatte). Målet er å bedre kunne bistå kretser og klubber som ønsker å jobbe med flyktninger og integrering. I 2016 fikk NFF økonomisk støtte fra UEFA (HatTrick Investment Programme) til et fireårsprosjekt. Første steg var en studie som ser nærmere på samarbeidet mellom krets/klubb og det offentlige som kommuner og skoler, men også andre aktører som flyktningsmottak og frivillige organisasjoner. Denne rapporten omhandler inkludering av flyktninger i fotballklubber.

Resultatene viser at klubbene i undersøkelsen ser ut til å forstå, akseptere og sier seg enige i visjonen om «Fotball for alle». Resultatene reflekterer at de som er engasjert i fotballklubbene anerkjenner samfunnets forventninger til frivillige organisasjoner og idrettslag som inkluderingsarenaer, og dermed også at de gjennom sine verv eller stillinger i fotballen også innehar et samfunnsansvar for inkludering av flyktninger. Selv om mange av de samme utfordringene går igjen, er det ingen enkle eller standardiserte løsninger på utfordringene knyttet til inkludering. Hver region og hver klubb er ulike både med hensyn til størrelse, ressurser og til en viss grad også utfordringer. Selv om løsningene ikke nødvendigvis er felles, er det likevel et gjennomgående og overordnet funn som er relevant for alle klubber, nemlig at et suksesskriterium for inkluderingsarbeidet er implementeringen av et klubbrevet system for inkludering. I klubber som har utviklet og implementert et system for inkluderingsarbeidet, blir inkluderingen mindre personavhengig. Et klubbrevet systematisk inkluderingsarbeid er sterkere, mer holdbart og mindre tilfeldig enn et trenerrevet, personavhengig inkluderingsarbeid.

Utfordringer knyttet til inkludering kan oppsummeres i form av kommunikasjon- og språkbarrierer, kulturelle barrierer, manglende fotballerfaring, kjønnsbarrierer, økonomiske barrierer, transportbarrierer og praktiske og strukturelle barrierer. Noen av disse barrierene kan løses gjennom økonomiske tilskuddsordninger og støtte til klubbene. De viktigste tiltakene og løsningene krever imidlertid god samhandling mellom klubbene og sentrale aktører. Resultatene peker ut kommunens flyktningsetjeneste og skolene som de viktigste samarbeidspartene til fotballklubbene, selv om også flere av de andre aktørene er svært viktig. Idretts-, fotballkrets og fylkeskommune kan for eksempel være viktige tilretteleggere for samhandling om inkludering mellom fotballklubber og andre aktører. Et overordnet og viktig funn når det gjelder samarbeid om inkludering, er at gode planer og strategier bidrar til å gjøre samarbeidet mer effektivt og målrettet. Igjen viser resultatene behovet for en systemorientert tilnærming til inkluderingsarbeidet.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Norwegian football is based on the vision of “Football for All”. The aim of the Football Association of Norway (NFF) is thus to ensure that everyone has optimal opportunity to participate in football activities. The NFF believes that football activity can contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction, and hence, football activities are essential for young people’s development because of the valuable social bonds they create (Norges Fotballforbund 2016).

In 2016, the NFF received funding from the UEFA HatTrick Investment Programme for a project within the area of social inclusion. The first part of the project was to conduct a study looking at two related topics within this area: the inclusion of refugees in football clubs as well as the inclusion of economically disadvantaged children and youth in football clubs. This report concerns inclusion of refugees in football clubs.

An overall objective of the study has been to investigate the way Norwegian football clubs are cooperating with various stakeholders to achieve the goal of “Football for all” in their respective local communities. Specifically, the focus of the study is the cooperation between stakeholders such as regional football federations (RFFs), football clubs (FCs), municipalities, public agencies, schools and others (i.e. NGO’s, foundations, sports councils and commercial partners), and assess which challenges and possibilities present themselves in the relationship between the abovementioned actors.

Generally, the clubs in our study seem to understand, accept and agree with the vision of “Football for all”, and thereby acknowledge the expectations of their surroundings; that they as voluntary organisations have certain opportunities, and therefore responsibilities tied to integration of refugees through football. However, each region and each club is different in terms of size, its resources and even challenges. It is therefore important to emphasise that working with inclusion may take many varying forms, and that one size does not fit all. Nevertheless, one general finding from both the qualitative and quantitative data is the importance of club systems and structures. It is evident that those clubs whom adopt a broad systematic approach to inclusion often achieve more success in including refugees in their FC. A club-driven (system) perspective on inclusion, rather than a coach-driven (individual) perspective, enables inclusion initiatives to be sustainable.

The results point out several interconnected aspects that are considered challenging in terms of including refugees in the club. *Communication and language barriers* is almost exclusively related to the refugee parents, and not the children. To spread information regarding activities and member requirements are presented as a clear barrier and obstacle for inclusion in football. *Cultural aspects* are a second barrier considered challenging for refugee inclusion into football, for almost all informants. Typically, also here, parents are considered the main obstacle as their understanding and knowledge of Norwegian football is often limited. *Lack of earlier experience with football among youth* is another barrier related to the previous point. It is easier for FCs to enroll kids and those with developed football skills, than youth that might come from settings with little or no organized football. *Gender barriers* were addressed in both the interviews and in the survey. Generally, the clubs experience greater difficulties in recruiting refugee girls than refugee boys to football activities. This is especially evident for teenage girls, but also younger girls were scarcely represented. *Financial barriers* are pointed out as a main challenge.

Although football, compared to many other sports, is a relatively inexpensive activity, the costs of participating are usually a problem for refugees. *Transport barriers* is another challenge related to financial barriers. This is particularly evident in rural areas with long distances between home and practice venues, and limited public transport opportunities.

Even though the FCs were requesting a less bureaucratic and complex grant application process, the funds seem to be important for several of the FCs, to cover membership fees and expenses related to games, tournaments and other events for individuals, as well as activities organised by the FC, such as football schools and tournaments. Alongside funds, cooperation between the FCs and different stakeholders is important for the inclusion of refugees. The two stakeholder groups that stand out as most important for the FCs are refugee services in the municipalities, and schools. The report discusses how both stakeholder groups offer potential toward refugee inclusion through football. It is however a general request from both schools, municipalities as well as FCs to have clear strategies, in order to make the partnership(s) as efficient as possible, and inclusion through football as apt as possible for the target groups. Again, it is evident that a systematic approach to inclusion in the clubs is a highly recommended strategy.

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INTRODUCTION

Norwegian football is based on the vision of “Football for All”. The aim of the Football Association of Norway (NFF) is thus to ensure that everyone has optimal opportunity to participate in football activities. The NFF believes that football activity can contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction, and hence, football activities are essential for young people’s development because they create valuable social bonds (Norges Fotballforbund 2016). This harmonises with ongoing trends, where sport in general, and football specifically is increasingly recognised as a means for promoting social inclusion (i.e. Rich, Misener, and Dubeau 2015, Tacon 2007). Thus, the NFF aims at using children’s football to create an inclusive arena open to everyone - where children can feel safe, build friendships, as well as respect and understanding for each other, regardless of gender, economic and social status, and ethnic/cultural divides (Norges Fotballforbund 2016).

In 2016, the NFF received funding from the UEFA HatTrick Investment Programme for a project within the area of social inclusion. The first part of the project was a study looking at two related topics within this area: the inclusion of refugees in football clubs as well as the inclusion of economically disadvantaged children and youth into football clubs.

An overall objective of the study was to investigate the way Norwegian football clubs are cooperating with various stakeholders to achieve the goal of “Football for all” in their respective local communities. Specifically, the focus of the study is the cooperation between stakeholders such as regional football federations (RFFs), football clubs (FCs), municipalities, public agencies, schools and others (i.e. NGO’s, foundations, sports councils and commercial partners), and assess the existing challenges and possibilities in the relationship between these actors.

The overall objective of this specific part of the study *“Inclusion of Refugees in Football Clubs”*, has been to offer equal opportunities and access to football activities for refugees in host communities and to ease tensions between refugees and local populations in Norway.

In line with the project’s Terms of Reference, the following dimensions were assessed:

- a) The definition of the potential impact of football club-driven sport activities for refugees in host communities, such as the impact on integration, and the impact of girls’ participation in sport
- b) Identify strengths and weaknesses in the relation between relevant stakeholders (i.e. football clubs, municipalities, schools and other actors)
- c) Identify institutional determinants for success, including execution schemes and mechanisms for inter-institutional coordination and partnerships
- d) Identify ‘best practices’, promising methodologies and/or instruments that could be replicated

Molde University College (HiMolde) and Møreforskning Molde (MFM) conducted the study on behalf of the NFF.

Findings from the projects will further be implemented in a "Toolkit" for Norwegian football clubs and other relevant stakeholders (due in June 2018).

Key terms and context

In this report, the term *refugee* refers to children and adults dispersed to reception centres in different Norwegian municipalities, as well as those who have been granted a resident permit as a refugee and are in the process of resettlement in local Norwegian communities.

A person is called an *asylum seeker* if he or she has applied for protection (asylum) in Norway, and the application has not yet been finally evaluated. A person is only an asylum seeker from the time he or she reported to the police in Norway, applying for protection, until the UDI or UNE have considered the application and made a final decision. While the application is being considered, the person is dispersed to either a reception center under municipality administration, voluntary organisations or private sector stakeholders in agreement with UDI. If the application is rejected by the UDI or UNE, the person is obligated to leave Norway. (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration 2018b)

An asylum seeker whose application receives a positive answer, however, is granted a residence permit as a *refugee*, or on humanitarian grounds. The person will then move from the reception centre and settle in a different municipality. For the next five years the person is considered *newly settled*. (Norges Fotballforbund 2011)

Resettlement (quota) refugees are usually people who are registered as refugees by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), but who cannot be offered a permanent solution in the country they are currently in, and who are therefore offered resettlement in a third country. UNHCR submits the applications for resettlement refugees, and the UDI decides who will come, organizes the journey for them and decides in advance which Norwegian municipality they will reside in. (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration 2018b)

Children and youth under the age of 18 years that apply for protection (asylum) in Norway and who come to Norway without their parents or others with parental responsibility, are defined as *unaccompanied minor asylum seekers* (UMA). When they register at the police station, UMAs will be granted a guardian to act in the parents' stead, and protect the rights of the UMA both legally and financially in the following asylum application process. A youth between 15-18 years of age will live in a reception center adapted specifically for UMAs, whereas if the UMA is a child below the age of 15, he or she is under the protection of the child welfare services. The UDI prioritizes UMA applications as it is in the interest of the child and youth to get a clarification within reasonable time. If the UMA is granted residence permit, he or she will then move from the reception centre and will normally be settled in a different municipality. (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration 2018b)

At the time of writing (March 2018) 4245 individuals of nearly 40 different nationalities (see figure 1 below) are living in Norwegian reception centers (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration 2018a). Of these, 705 are refugees that have been granted a positive residence permit and are waiting to be settled in a Norwegian municipality. 1091 are asylum seekers under current UDI and UNE consideration. 514 have had their applications rejected, whereas 458 have received rejections upon which they have submitted complaints and are awaiting new evaluations. The remaining 1347 have been rejected and are obligated to leave Norway (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration 2018a).

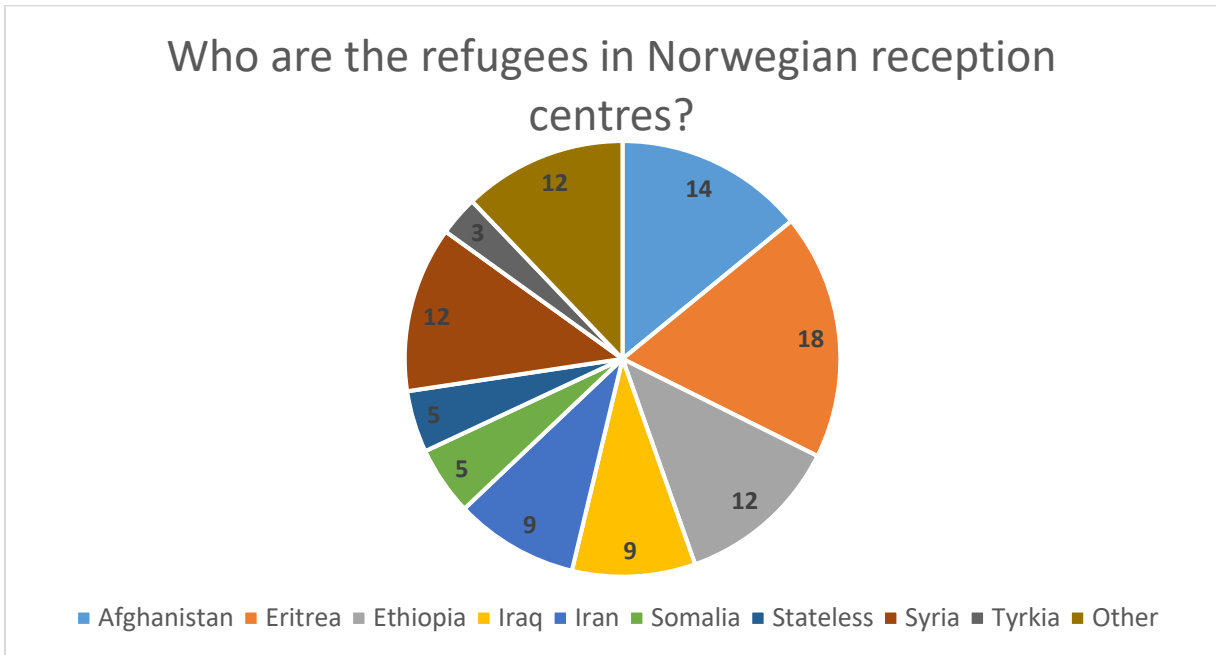


Figure 1: In April 2018, 4014 individuals were living in Norwegian reception centers. More than half of them were from Eritrea, Afghanistan, Syria and Ethiopia. (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration 2018a)

Most refugees settle in a municipality with the help of The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi). It is however possible for persons with a work and residence permit who can provide for themselves and their family if they have one, to settle in the municipality of their choice without the authorities being involved.

Refugees and their families who have been granted a residence permit in Norway, have the right to and must complete an introductory programme. All municipalities that settle refugees are obliged to offer the programme, and the programme must be presented as soon as possible and within three months after a person is settled in the municipality. The right and obligation to participate shall apply to newly arrived foreign nationals between 18 and 55 years of age who have been granted asylum.

The introductory programme may run up to two years, with additional periods of approved leaves of absence. On special occasions, the programme may run for up to three years.

Whilst participating in the introductory programme, the refugees receive economic support, and invalid absence from the programme results in less support (IMDi (n.d.)).

METHODOLOGY

In this study, we utilized a multiple case study methodology and employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data (Yin 2009).

First, data were gathered through 41 semi structured in-depth interviews with various stakeholders from three different (football) regions (cases). We selected the cases in cooperation with our contact person in NFF, who also provided us with contact details. Subsequently, we identified informants through snowball and purposive sampling.

The informants included representatives from football clubs, refugee reception centres and/or public refugee services, regional football federations, regional sport confederations, municipality representatives, schools, NFF and voluntary organisations.

The authors developed four different interview guides, allowing flexibility with regard to interview subjects. Five focus areas of the interviews were identified: 1. Systems and strategies for inclusion; 2. Cooperation between stakeholders; 3. Challenges related to inclusion of refugees and/or economically excluded and marginalised¹; 4. Actions and activities initiated by the club; and 5. What a Toolkit from the NFF to the clubs could entail.

Both inclusion of refugees as well as prevention of economic exclusion was brought up in all the interviews. We attempted to give special attention to participation of refugee girls in sport, and whether there are differences in the challenges and barriers met by boys versus girls.

The interviews lasted between 40 minutes to 1,5 hours. Most of the interviews were with one interviewee, however some were with two or more interviewees. Further, most of the interviews were conducted in pairs of two researchers, where one was interviewing and the other taking notes. Some interviews were conducted via telephone or Skype with one researcher both interviewing and taking notes. In some interviews the researcher recorded and thereafter transcribed the interview.

Based on the findings from the qualitative interviews, the authors developed an anonymous online survey (Questback) for Norwegian FCs (N=279) in February 2018. The survey was distributed via e-mail to the address that the club was registered with in the NFF system.

The main objective of the survey was to assess which strategies Norwegian football clubs had, in order to meet the challenges of inclusion in football and to identify “best practices” that could be shared with clubs through the forthcoming “Toolkit”. The questions in the survey were identified through the previous interviews and consisted of the following focus areas: 1. Information about the club; 2. Formal club systems for refugee inclusion; 3. The club’s rationale for refugee inclusion; 4. Support/funding of refugee inclusion projects; 5. Experiences in working with cooperating partners; 6. Best practices.

In the analysis of the qualitative data, Malterud's systematic text condensation was applied (Malterud 2012). The authors studied the interviews to get an overview of the data material and to identify preliminary themes. Thereafter, the authors discussed the preliminary themes before identifying meaning units that were further classified into themes. In subsequent meetings, the

¹ This particular document reports the findings related to *refugees*

research group discussed the coding, re-evaluated the original themes and identified illustrative quotations.

The quantitative data were analysed and presented in Excel.

Limitations

The authors have studied the inclusion of refugees in football clubs from an organisational perspective, thereby focusing on collecting data from football clubs and relevant stakeholders in and around the clubs. An additional focus on the individual (refugee) level would have strengthened the project, but was not prioritised due to a multiple of reasons, including practical issues (time), methodological issues and ethics. The focus on the organisational level is within the scope of the Terms of Reference of the project.

FINDINGS

In the following, findings from and implications of the qualitative and quantitative data are presented. The findings are structured under the following focus areas:

1. Systems and strategies for inclusion
2. Barriers for inclusion of refugees in the FC
3. Support/funding of refugee inclusion projects
4. Cooperation between stakeholders

Under each focus area, best practice examples from Norwegian FCs will be provided. Special emphasis will be given to focus area 5, “Cooperation between stakeholders”, which particularly addresses dimension b) and c) in the Terms of Reference.

1. Football club’s systems and strategies for refugee inclusion

Generally, in agreement with the NFF vision of “Football for all”, representatives from the FCs in our study express a genuine interest and commitment to include *everyone*, not exclusively refugees, into football. Specifically, the FCs seem to understand, accept and agree with expectations provided by ‘the surrounding society’ (municipality, government and people in general) that their role as voluntary organisations present them with opportunities and therefore also responsibilities in focusing on integration of refugees through football. Due to the current attention given to challenges related to integration of refugees, many clubs seem to put special emphasis on this target group. Our quantitative data shows that only half of the clubs that answered the survey reported that inclusion of refugees was a specific goal for the club. However, many of the respondents do not have many refugees in or around their community. For those clubs where refugees are present, and refugee inclusion is more relevant, it is often a stated goal. When asked whether there were many refugee families in or around the community, 92 respondents answered yes. 74% of these answered that refugee inclusion was a stated goal for their club. Only 20% of the clubs responding in the survey have refugee reception centres in their impact area, whereas 1/3 of the clubs (77 respondents) report having schools with introduction classes in the community, as well as many refugee families settled in the municipality. Out of these respondents, 68% answered that inclusion of refugees is a stated goal for their club. In other words, a larger amount of the clubs where respondents claim to have more refugee families in or around their community, or a school with introduction classes, answer that inclusion of refugees is a stated goal for the club. Furthermore, the majority of clubs

Is inclusion of refugees a stated goal for your club?
N=284.

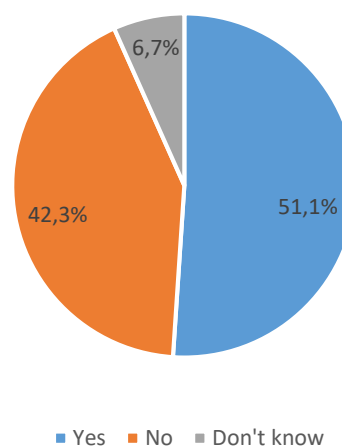


Figure 2: 51,1% of the clubs replying in the survey have goals of refugee inclusion

who answered the survey consider their own club to be very inclusive. However, when it comes to information regarding inclusion strategies of the club, it seems like coaches and team leaders on a grass roots level are considered by the respondents to be relatively unfamiliar with them, as illustrated in figure 3 below.

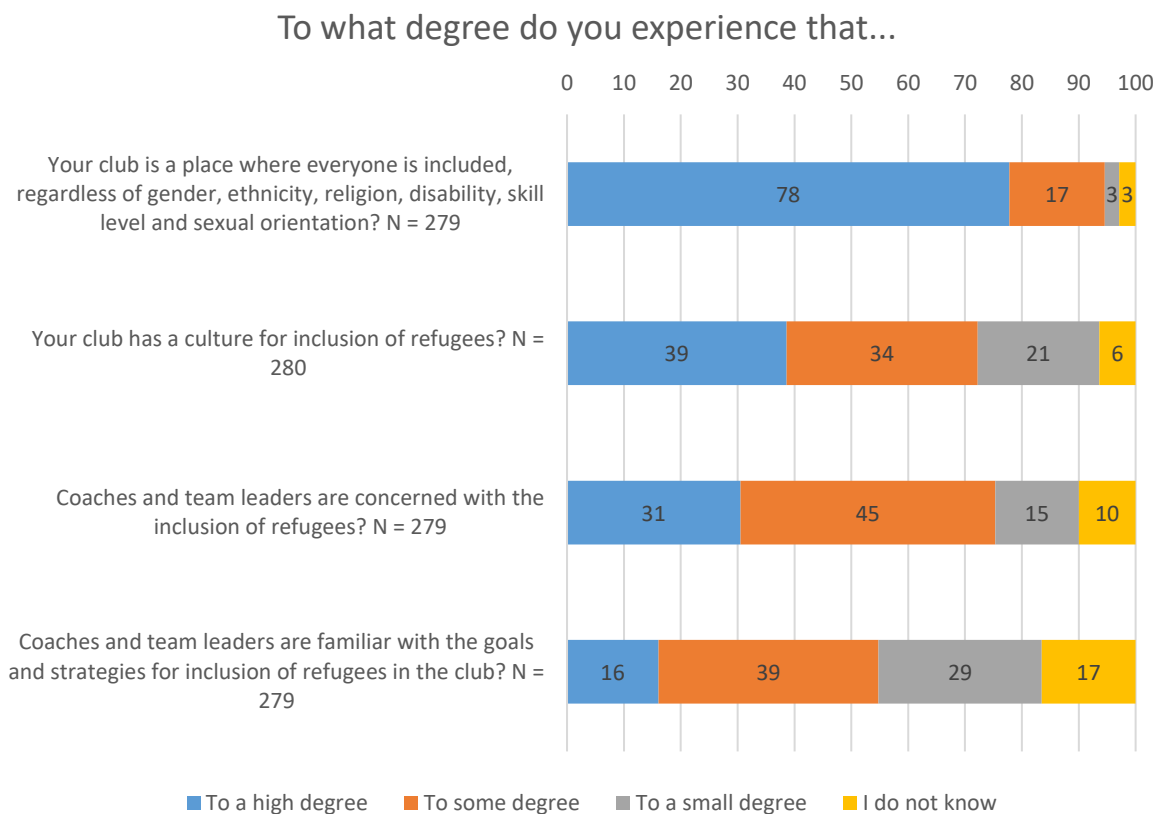


Figure 3: Respondents consider their FCs to be very inclusive, but with few routines of sharing information with coaches and team leaders

When asked about the club’s rationale for working with inclusion of refugees, the most frequent answers from both the qualitative and quantitative studies indicate that clubs want to positively contribute to the local community, to help refugees and refugee families in the integration process, to create a good club environment, and that refugee inclusion is part of the club’s social responsibility. Other reasons include recruiting players to the club teams and to meet the expectations set forth by the local municipality as well as from the NFF.

Approximately 1/3 of the clubs in the survey report that they have a designated person (paid or unpaid) responsible for inclusion of refugees in the club, whereas 1/3 report that the CEO is responsible for refugee inclusion. From the quantitative data it seems like there is little systematic work in many clubs related to communicating strategies for inclusion to its members and surrounding community. Similarly, many FCs are dependent on volunteer enthusiasts who are eager to work with inclusion of refugees.

An important finding from both the qualitative and quantitative data is the importance of club systems and structures. It is evident that clubs that adopt a broad systematic approach to inclusion often succeed in including refugees in the FC. A club-driven (system) perspective on

inclusion rather than a coach-driven (individual) perspective enables inclusion initiatives to be more effective and sustainable. (see Best practice example 1)

A common denominator for inclusion-oriented clubs is that they have resources prioritised for inclusion projects (as will be discussed later). Consequently, competence has arisen in these clubs and new resources have been acquired. These clubs have not only sufficient resources and competence on inclusion, but additionally have internalised *values* within the clubs that are operationalised in a solid system, like in Best practice example 1.

Both the regional football federations (RFF) and FCs in our study have experienced that greater awareness surrounding inclusion, the importance of systematic approaches and competence building has been established in the process of becoming a 'quality football club' (*Kvalitetsklubb*²), as was the case for the FC in Best practice example 1. In the interview, they referred to the process of becoming a 'quality football club' as awakening in regard to values of inclusion and the importance of a club-driven rather than coach-driven system.

Additionally, a committed Board that is promoting the club values related to football for all, is often present in clubs where inclusion of refugees seems to work well. Not least does that mean that sufficient resources must be allocated from the club for initiatives that deal with refugee inclusion.

When it comes to practical issues concerning inclusion of refugees in the FCs, individual involvement is crucial, and much depends on enthusiasts, coaches and team managers. Typically, in the latter two categories one often finds parents, working on a voluntary basis. It is highlighted that building knowledge, competence and awareness among these people working “on the ground” is essential for refugee inclusion. Thus, our informants across sectors emphasised the importance of coach and club leaders’ education, where inclusion of refugees is on the agenda. This was also presented as the ideal for the RFFs that wanted all teams to have at least one educated coach.

Some clubs also point out that to have a coordinator in the club, who is responsible for inclusion initiatives as well as for cooperation with other stakeholders has been a success factor.

Best practice example 1:

The importance of a systematic, club-driven strategy was reflected in the values of one of the clubs in the study. The club’s inclusion values were not something a coach could choose whether or not to follow. The values were integrated and operationalised in the sport plan and made compulsory through certain rules. For example, all the football players on a team are obliged to at least 50 % playing time during a football game. This was the rule for all teams, right up to senior level. The club worked continuously with the implementation and integration of their values. Values were communicated at least once a year at parents’ meetings and meetings for coaches. Prioritisation of coach education was also part of the implementation process. The club spent a considerable amount of time every year educating coaches, especially young leaders. On each team there was more than one coach, and always one adult with special social responsibility.

² The NFF ‘quality football club’ concept aims at strengthening the quality of the football activities offered through the FCs, RFFs and NFF. Clubs can work towards achieving the status of ‘quality club’ on three different levels. The focus areas of the ‘quality club’ certification is activity, organisation, competence and values. <https://www.fotball.no/klubb-og-leder/kvalitetsklubb/>

Several informants request arenas for clubs to meet and share common experiences and challenges. In one of the case regions this was formalised in practice and promoted by the RFF, and well visited and appreciated by the participants.

In conclusion, a solid club philosophy or value system that focuses on inclusion as well as a systematic club-driven approach, seem to be common denominators for Norwegian FCs that are successful in their work with refugee inclusion.

2. Barriers for inclusion of refugees in the football clubs

As previous NFF reports have shown (Norges Fotballforbund 2012), there is a common understanding in the data material that the *main* barriers with regard to including refugees in football clubs, are related to language and communication barriers as well as cultural differences. Further, as shown in figure 2 below, several interconnected aspects are pointed out that are considered challenging in terms of including refugees in the club.

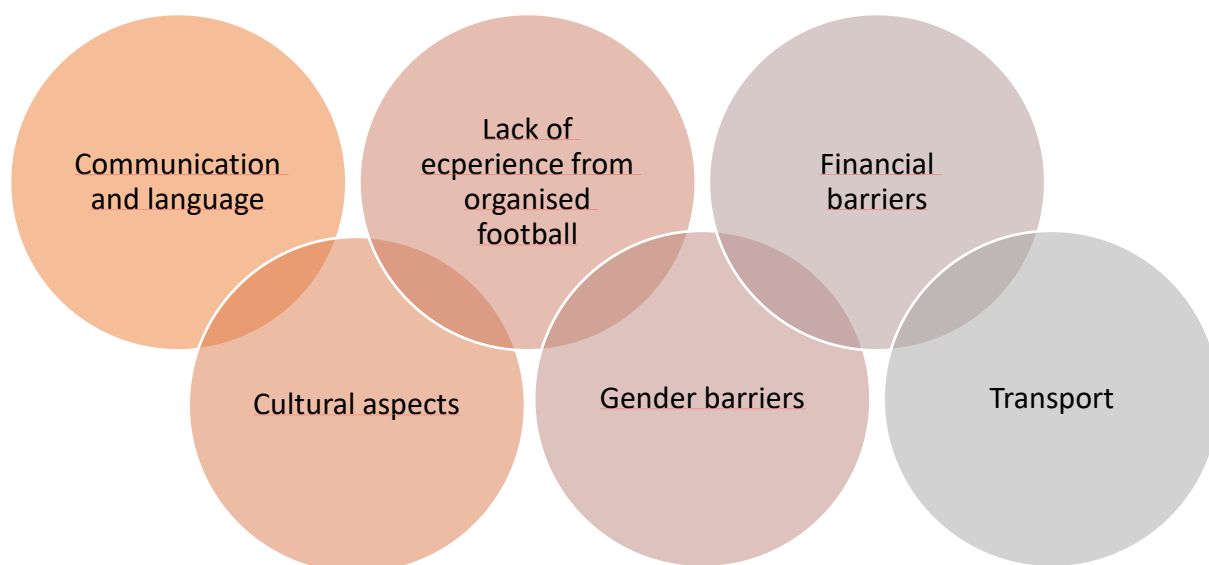


Figure 4: Reported barriers in including refugees into football

Communication and language barriers

Almost exclusively, language and communication challenges are related to the refugee parents, and not the children. To spread information about activities and member requirements is presented as a challenge and an obstacle for inclusion in football. Consequently, this often results in un-engaged parents and children that are more or less left to figure things out by themselves. Many FCs have made the effort to develop brochures in different languages where they inform about the club, its activities, the concept and importance of voluntary work and the Norwegian sport club model. The clubs are aware that similar brochures are available via the NFF or regional sport confederations, however they find these insufficient when it comes to explaining the peculiarities of their own clubs.

In practice, the chosen means of communication can be decisive with regard to inclusion. Our data show that face-to-face communication is considered more effective and necessary, especially in the pursuit to reach refugee parents. Face to face communication also adds value as one gets to know each other personally, and some of the respondents emphasised the need to prioritise this communication form. Some clubs had good experiences with using interpreters in the face-to-face communication.

Written notes to bring home or SMS’ were also considered a good way of communicating, whereas digital communication such as Facebook, which is most commonly used to organise teams’ activities, was presented as more of a challenge. Many parents are for various reasons not on the platform, and thus the information is not available to them. One club representative pointed out that one of the success criteria for their FC was that they assisted parents in signing up for platforms like Facebook.

Refugee reception centres, schools and introduction classes are arenas where necessary contact and relations are developed. Some clubs have for instance arranged mandatory meetings for refugee parents in order to share important information. Other clubs have successfully organised meetings as informal get-togethers where personal communication is key. A point to note was that food can be used as a way to ease dialogue with the parents, especially the mothers.

Essentially, the best practice examples of the FCs show it is crucial that the club and its representatives (teams, coaches and leaders) are open and flexible. As a club representative pointed out: “Don’t let language exclude: Let children and youth participate even though the parents can’t communicate with the club!”

Cultural aspects

The data shows that almost all informants have experienced cultural aspects as a barrier for refugee inclusion into football. Typically, also here, parents are considered the main obstacle as their understanding and knowledge of Norwegian football is often limited. For instance, many refugees are not familiar with the organisation of children's leisure activities in Norway, that “everyone” plays organised sport and that the premise for football club activities is voluntary work (*dugnad*).

Most of the informants point out the importance for refugee children as well as their parents to engage in all aspects of the football club. Therefore, facilitating and encouraging refugees to participate in coaching courses, to volunteer as coaches, join the FC board and engage in voluntary work is emphasised by some FCs as success criteria for refugee inclusion.

At the same time, the informants realise that this is challenging for some refugees, and thus point out that the FC needs to be flexible by for instance avoiding strict systems of volunteerism that might hinder inclusion. That means, also to participate in volunteer work by doing your fair share of e.g. cake-baking or driving to matches.

Furthermore, many clubs point out that the commitment to specific and regular practice hours is challenging. For clubs running outdoor training throughout the year, the weather may cause low attendance to regular practices. These are both challenges that can be solved relatively

easily through communication, however, the FCs point out that in order to do that, the means of communication need to be in order.

Lack of earlier experience from football among youth

Another barrier related to the previous point is the combination of age and previous football experience. It is easier for FCs to enroll kids and those with good football skills, than youth that might come from settings with little or no organised football. UMAs typically belong to the latter category. Mastery is an important motivation for all leisure activities, and starting to play organised football at the age of 16 or even later, with peers that have played football since the age of six, is a challenge for both the individual and the team.

Some clubs have established teams exclusively for refugee youth with little experience from organised football, and some are also organising additional practices for these refugees to give them the opportunity to reach a level on par with their peers.

This is in line with the NFF strategy stating that although inclusion ideally should happen within teams (i.e. refugees should be included in already existing teams), special arrangements may be initiated where appropriate.

Gender barriers

In both the interviews and in the survey, gender issues were addressed. Generally, the clubs experience greater difficulties in recruiting refugee girls than refugee boys to football activities. This is especially evident for teenage girls, but also younger girls were scarcely represented. Additionally, the country of origin was believed to be influencing girls' participation in football. As can be seen from the survey data, relatively few FCs have initiated activities specifically targeting refugee girls (see figure 5).

In the survey, the respondents were asked if the FC had implemented measures to include girls. It was an open question. Two categories of answers were identified. Most responded that they had established activities solely for girls, and some stated the importance of involving parents, especially the fathers. Communication with the parents was considered even more important in relation to including girls.

A recurrent explanation from the FCs for girls' lower participation, was the need for parents to protect the girls, and a culture in which girls increasingly participate in household activities and chores. According to our informants, joint training hours for boys and girls, and male coaches for girls' teams was further considered problematic for many refugee parents. Although girls

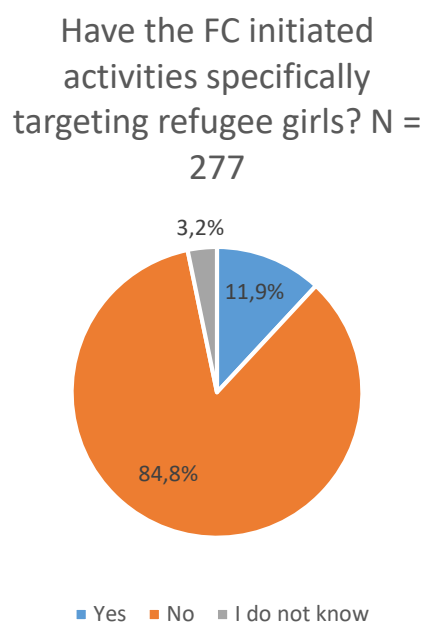


Figure 5: Approx. 12% of the FCs replying in the survey have initiated activities specifically targeting refugee girls.

are particularly emphasised in this context, the need to protect is also seen as an underlying explanation when clubs have trouble recruiting boys. Furthermore, some clubs have experienced that it is more difficult to have refugee girls attend evening practices than practices straight after school hours.

The challenge related to inclusion of refugee girls is one of the most complicated for the clubs. In a society like Norway, where girls’ participation is high in sport in general and football specifically, it is challenging both for the clubs and the refugees to conform to a different mind-set related to gender and sport. Some FCs offer more or less isolated practices for girls, to avoid the challenges of boys practicing at the same venue, or male coaches. For the roughly 12 % of FCs in the survey that reported to have specific initiatives for refugee girls, the initiative mostly included girls-only practices of various kinds. Although most of the FCs aim at enrolling refugee girls in ordinary teams, many of these initiatives were for refugee girls only. In the initiatives especially targeting girls, the clubs particularly emphasise the importance of communication with and recruitment of parents.

Financial barriers

Although football, compared to many other sports, is a relatively inexpensive activity, the costs of participating is usually a problem for refugees. Before a refugee has been granted a residence permit in Norway, he does not have a 'normal' Norwegian bank account, and thus cannot use digital payment methods (which is the system utilised by the clubs). The possibility to attend football practices is also limited if he has to pay full price membership and training fees. Because participation in leisure activities is recognised as an important measure in the integration of refugees, some municipalities have developed support systems to give refugee children the opportunity to participate in at least one leisure activity, such as football. The municipality then cover the costs of membership and necessary equipment. Further, some municipalities, local civil society organisations or clubs have systems of providing sports equipment for refugee children, such as the equipment storage system *BUA*³. In other clubs, equipment sharing is organised within the teams for instance via Facebook groups.

Best practice example 2:

One FC established *the inclusion fund*, with its own statutes and Board. The purpose of *the inclusion fund* is to support economically disadvantaged children, for instance to attend tournaments and to buy necessary equipment. Club members can apply for support, and the Board treats all inquiries with confidentiality. This is an example of an institutionalised support system. With *the inclusion fund*, the club has established a system that is less dependent on the individual. For instance, if a child has not brought food or money when travelling with their team, the coach can cover the costs and later be refunded through *the inclusion fund*; thereby avoiding a financial burden to the coach, or the coach having to make a personal choice to support the child or not.

All clubs in the study express flexibility regarding payment of membership and training fees. Also, FCs have more or less formalised routines for supporting teams and individuals to enable

³ BUA is a national association established in 2014 that aims at contributing to inclusion and increased participation in activities for children and youth regardless of socio-economic status. It does so by strengthening and visualizing the possibilities of borrowing sport- and leisure time equipment, by facilitating equipment centrals. (BUA n.d.)

participation in tournaments. The FCs operate with different solutions and approaches, however, some clubs have institutionalised their support systems to ease the challenge for the economically disadvantaged (see Best practice example 2). It is evident that institutionalised support systems are experienced as more predictable for both the FCs, the coaches and the refugees, as will be discussed later.

Transport

A related challenge to financial barriers is the (lack of) transportation opportunities. This is particularly evident in rural areas with long distances between home and practice venues, and with limited public transport opportunities. Similarly, as the Norwegian club model is founded on voluntarism, parents are expected to for instance drive to away-games and tournaments. Most refugees do not have cars, both for financial and practical reasons (e.g. they do not yet have an approved Norwegian driver’s license). Thus, they are dependent on help with transportation.

Our data material show that some actions have been taken in order to assist refugees with this matter. Some refugee reception centers report that they are bringing children and youth to and from leisure activities, but far from all have the opportunity to do so. In some instances, clubs have organised transport to and from practice.

For refugees settled in the municipalities, our informants acknowledge that transport is a challenge, but few have taken actions to formalise systems to address the challenge. Some clubs report that they organise pick-ups, however, it is often up to individuals in and around the clubs (coaches, other parents etc.) to take responsibility to assist the refugees with transportation. Thus, it becomes a matter of chance whether or not a refugee is assisted in this matter. A system to address this barrier is thus requested.

3. Support/funding of refugee inclusion projects

Through the qualitative interviews it was indicated that a big challenge for the FCs is a lack of knowledge and overview of the possibilities to get funding for refugee inclusion projects. It is evident that the FCs consider the funding process to be strenuous, and not a first priority. Additionally, as many clubs are in lack of human resources and only have people working on a voluntary basis, an application process and consequently follow-up is considered too arduous to work in practice. Consequently, the data shows that FCs who had a system where inclusion of refugees was a priority, an organisation with hired staff (i.e. a club of a certain size) and a designated person amongst the staff that works specifically with inclusion, naturally proved to be more successful in applying for and receiving funds than the ones that did not have these assets. The informants generally requested a less complex funding application process, and that the possibilities of applying for funds be made visible for the clubs to a higher degree than they are today.

Subsequently, a large part of the online survey distributed to the FCs contained questions regarding funding and support of refugee inclusion projects. As Figure 6 shows, less than half of the FCs in the study had applied for funding of refugee inclusion projects. Again, we need to see these numbers in accordance with the number of clubs who report to have many refugees in and around their community, and who thus see the need and relevance for such initiatives.

Of the FCs that had applied for support/funding, 37,5 % had applied to the municipality, 27,5 % to UDI, and the remaining 35 % to others such as the regional municipality, private sector and the NIF refugee fund and other subsidies.

On the question of whether the FC had received support/funding during the last two years, 30,6 % of the FCs (N=87 FCs) responded positively (see figure 6). Seeing the two together and keeping the 42,6 % (or 120 FCs) that had applied for funds in mind, we see that applying for funding of refugee inclusion projects seems to have a high success rate.

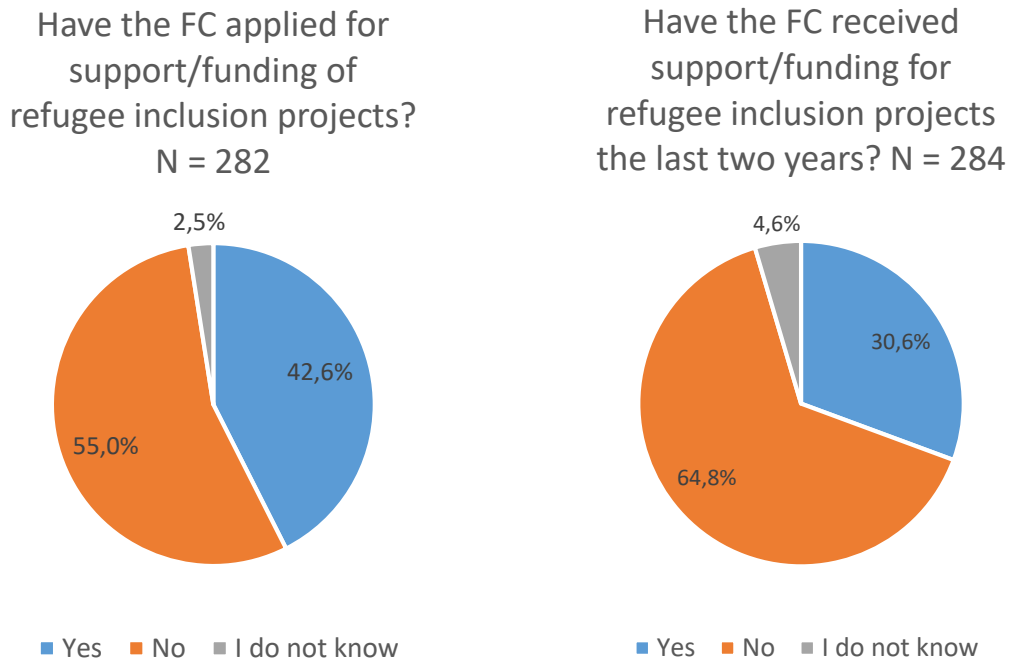


Figure 6: 42,6% of the FCs in the survey had applied for funding of refugee inclusion projects whereas 30,6 % had received support/funding

The FCs that reported to have received funding, primarily used the funds to cover membership fees and fees related to games, tournaments and other events for individuals, as well as activities organised by the FC (e.g. football schools and tournaments). The funds were rarely used to cover costs exceeding one year, and often used for specific projects. For the clubs this was sometimes frustrating as it was difficult to make long-term and sustainable plans with limited funding.

As the qualitative data also shows, the FCs request a less bureaucratic and complex grant application process. It was stated that it is difficult to navigate between the different funding possibilities, and that it is essentially the largest clubs with hired staff that applied for funds. Additionally, it was made evident that many clubs find the application criteria to be of little relevance to the club (see figure 7), as the perception is that the funds mostly target specific groups or events, and rarely the daily inclusion activities in the club. As some clubs argued, the funds encourage the establishment of teams and events solely for refugees, but not the inclusion of refugees in regular teams and activities. As pointed out earlier, the NFF strategy states that inclusion ideally should happen within existing teams.

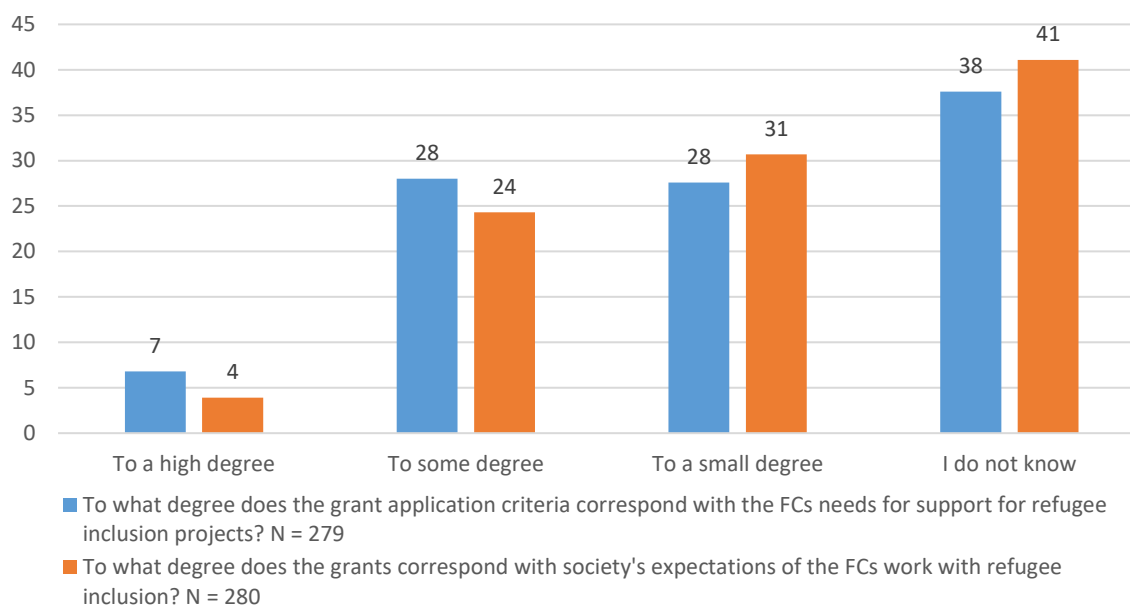


Figure 7: Many of the FCs in the study found the grant application criteria to be of little relevance to the club.

In essence, the data shows a variety of opinions from the FCs regarding support and funding; from those who are not at all familiar with the opportunities of applying for funds, to those that are content with the opportunities and information provided by NFF and the RFFs.

Still, there is a general perception that the matter of support and funding opportunities could be coordinated in a better way. For instance, it was suggested that applications and information should be available on one online portal, that guidelines and assistance should be provided from NFF, particularly to FCs that are short of (human and financial) resources, and that templates should be developed that make the application process easier. Further it was argued that funds should be made available also for longer-term projects and to cover the cost of hiring personnel to work specifically with inclusion. Some FCs also pointed out that applications should be open all year round, so that one can apply whenever the need arises.

4. Cooperation between stakeholders

In the interview data, different stakeholder groups such as public, voluntary and private sector stakeholders as well as individuals, are brought forward by the FCs as important partners in working with integration through football (see figure 8).

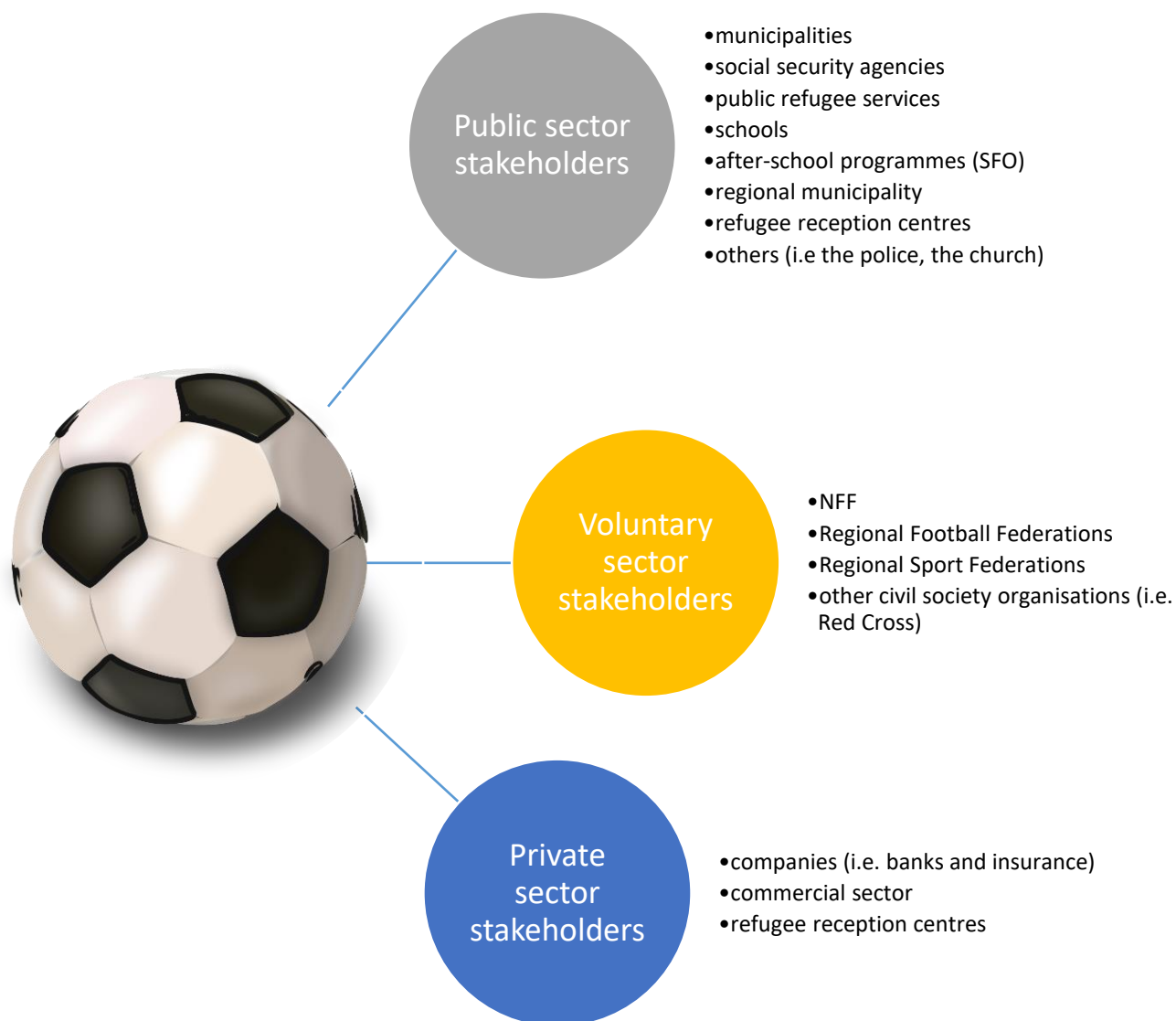


Figure 8: Stakeholders cooperating with the FCs in refugee inclusion programmes

In the survey the FCs were asked to what degree they cooperated with the various stakeholders identified in the interviews. As figure 9 illustrates, most of the FCs answering the survey reported a small degree of cooperation with any of these stakeholders. However, the two stakeholder groups of whom stood out, were refugee services in the municipalities and schools. As will be discussed in the following, both these stakeholder groups offer potentials for refugee inclusion through football. It is however a general request from both schools, municipalities and FCs, to have clear strategies that make the partnership(s) as efficient as possible, and inclusion through football as apt as possible for the target groups. Again, it is evident that a systematic approach to inclusion in the clubs is a highly recommended strategy.

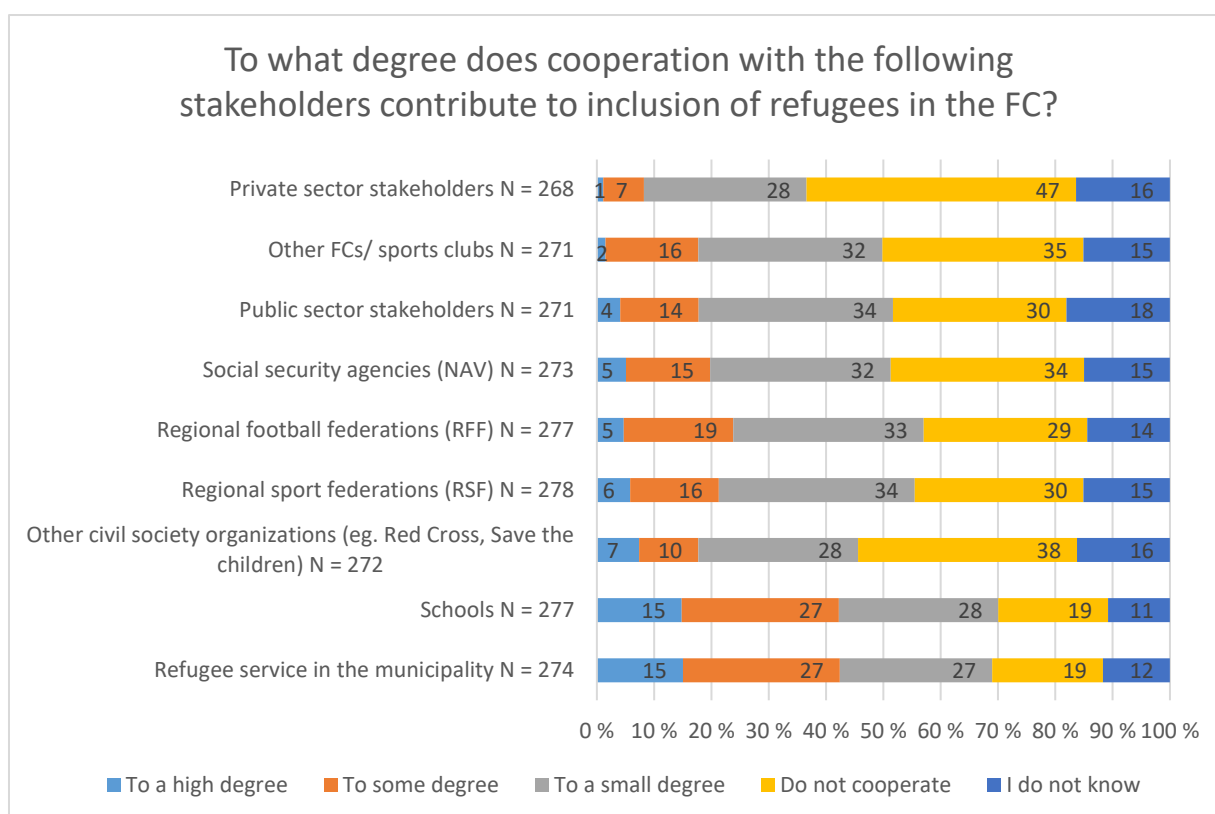


Figure 9: The degree to which the FCs in the survey report cooperating with other stakeholders.

In the following tables the different stakeholder groups will be presented in more detail. Specifically, two dimensions in the Terms of Reference will be addressed, namely b) Identify strengths and weaknesses in the relation between relevant stakeholders (i.e. football clubs, municipalities, schools and other actors) and c) Identify institutional determinants or challenges for success, including execution schemes and mechanisms for inter-institutional coordination and partnerships. Best practice examples are provided under each stakeholder group.

Relation between FC and relevant public-sector stakeholders

Local Municipalities – Public Refugee Services, Social Security Agencies (NAV)

Strengths in the relationship:

- Local municipalities recognise the importance of the role that the FCs have in inclusion of refugees in the municipalities.
- The municipality coordinates cooperation between relevant stakeholders.
- The municipality has overview, access to and experience in work with the refugees settled in the municipality.
- Many municipalities have systems of supporting refugees that are organised by the public refugee services. For instance, that all children are supported with NOK 5000 to participate in an activity, and NOK 1500 for the equipment needed for that activity. Such schemes make it possible for FCs to encourage refugee children to participate in football

Challenges of the relationship:

- The FCs often claim that the support from public sector stakeholders is only symbolic. FCs wish for the municipalities to take more responsibility.
- The extent to which the municipalities are supporting the clubs varies greatly from region to region, and even within regions.
- The public-sector stakeholders’ working days end at 4 pm, when sport activities begin. FCs are dependent on voluntary sector stakeholders after working hours.
- Clubs call for human resources within public sector stakeholders to manage practical enrolment in football activities after regular working hours.
- FCs access to information from the municipalities regarding funding opportunities is often scarce.
- It is often difficult for FCs to relate to slow, bureaucracy processes, especially in relatively easy cases regarding for instance support for equipment for individuals joining a team.

Institutional determinants for success:

- Systematic strategies for inclusion in the municipality must be communicated to the FCs, as well as to other relevant stakeholders.
- Information about the Norwegian sports model and an opportunity to try different sports should be provided by public refugee services to refugees.

Best practice examples 3:

The introductory programme works well as an arena to acquire knowledge about Norwegian sport, particularly for refugee parents.

Some municipalities have facilitated meetings for introductory programme participants and sport clubs to socialise and inform, with the help of interpreters, about available activities and what it means to be part of a sports club. Similarly, some IPs have arranged “parents’ courses” for refugees, specifically addressing being a ‘sport parent’. In one of the municipalities in the study, the introductory programme included work practice in sport clubs and other volunteer organisations as approved practice in the programme.

Some municipalities have employees specifically working with assisting clubs to apply for grants.

One of the municipalities in the study initiated a pilot project, *the activity card*, aimed at refugee children from 0 to 17 years. With *the activity card* the child (+1) is given access to many different facilities (swimming pool, cinema, the football stadium) and thereby experiences they would not otherwise have access to.

Regional Municipalities

Strengths in the relationship:

- The regional municipality facilitates inclusion through providing financial means and coordinating interaction between stakeholders.
- The regional municipality can fund project positions responsible for inclusion in the regions.
- The regional municipality can take a counselling role in relation to the regional football federations (RFFs) (and FCs), in questions regarding funding.

Challenges of the relationship:

- The regional municipality is not necessarily a natural cooperating partner for the FC, as it lies relatively higher in the system. For the regional municipality, a cooperation with the RFF is more likely relevant.
- The grant application process is bureaucratic and often an obstacle to the FCs (Ref chapter 3).

Best practice example 4:

One regional municipality in the study partly funded a project position (together with the regional sport federation, the RFF and the regional handball federation) responsible for inclusion through sport, with refugees as one target group. The same regional municipality administered 13-14 activity funds that particularly prioritised immigrants and low-income families. The RSF was consultative partner in the allocation process.

Institutional determinants for success:

- Clear strategies for inclusion in the local municipalities, with the regional municipality as consultative partners.
- Plans and strategies anchored in regional municipalities, local municipalities, RSFs, RFFs and FCs.

Schools and After School Programmes (SFO)

Strengths in the relationship:

- Every child is enrolled in a school, thereby schools and school teachers have unique access and relations to refugees.
- Some schools have refugee reception classes and thus they are particularly suited to cooperate with in inclusion projects.
- Schools and school teachers might assist in sharing information on behalf of the FC or sending kids to practice.
- Schools and teachers can become the link between the FC and the refugee parents.
- FCs can initiative after school football programmes (FFO) to recruit school children to football, as an alternative to SFO.

Challenges of the relationship:

- Very few systematic or formal efforts are taken from schools in terms of cooperating with the FCs, as much depends on private initiatives from the teachers and their personal contacts in the FCs (if any).
- Parents might be side-lined if the school/teacher functions as the link between the refugee parents and the FC.
- Football club activities are not organised through schools and are often not on the school premises. If more of the activities were located at the schools it would have been easier for the children to attend practices and possibly perceived as safer for the parents. The latter is especially relevant in relation to the inclusion of refugee girls (economy and transport is also an issue in this regard).

Institutional determinants for success:

- Use the advantages of the schools to introduce activities and to establish formal contact with the FC.

- To involve field workers (for instance from the municipality) who know the Norwegian context, but preferably also speak the (foreign) language. In cooperation with schools and municipality, the field workers can follow the children to the activities the first few times and keep contact with families.

Best practice examples 5:

A few of the municipalities in our study employed field workers (*feltarbeider*), whose main objective was to find a suitable leisure activity for the refugee, available in the local area, and to coordinate activities between the refugee, the schools and the FCs. The fieldworker taught gymnastics to the refugee reception classes at schools, and introduced different sports and activities. The field workers sometimes hosted activity days at school where different sports clubs were invited to come and present themselves to the refugees, who were then given a chance to try different sports, socialise with club representatives and carry on with the activity in the club if he or she desired. The field worker would take responsibility for further supporting the child and the family, mostly by following the child to the activity the first 3 to 4 times. They also informed parents about the activities and what was expected in terms of parent involvement, when the child entered a sports club. The field workers were considered particularly important for the inclusion of girls to the FCs. Further, the field worker took a significant coordination load off the shoulders of the clubs that, understandably, were supportive of such positions.

Some clubs have initiated homework help programmes after school, where teachers are hired to come and help children with their homework. Football activities are offered afterwards. There are a few variations of this, and in some cases, FCs have taken an effort to also involve parents (refugee or not) as assistants in one way or another.

Refugee Reception Centres⁴

Strengths in the relationship:

- Cooperation between FCs and refugee reception centres in those municipalities that hosted such centres, was reported to be very important for refugee inclusion.
- Refugees at reception centres are in limbo and football can contribute in a situation with a lot of spare time.
- The refugee reception centres take an active role in initiating and enrolling refugees in football or other activities.
- Communication between the children, their parents, the FCs and the reception centre is key to overcome challenges related to cultural differences.

Challenges of the relationship:

- Lack of communication and information between refugees in reception centres and FCs has in some places led to tensions in the community.
- Lack of systematic plans and sharing of responsibility between FC, refugee reception centre and municipality actors (who does what?).
- Refugee reception centre staff are over-loaded and have little capacity to follow up initiatives.

⁴ Refugee reception centres in Norway are run by both public and private sector stakeholders and companies. In the study, it is not considered whether the reception centre is private or public.

Institutional determinants for success:

- Refugee reception centres have an informative and educative role in relation to the refugee parents.
- After arrival to the reception centre, the arrivals’ interests are mapped, and actions are taken by the refugee reception centre related to establishing contact between the refugee and the FC.
- The reception centre can coordinate the information process by inviting clubs to the centre where leaders and coaches can meet both children and their parents.

Best practice examples 6:

FCs were invited to the reception centre, to provide information and speak directly (through an interpreter) with the refugee parents. The FC appreciated such invitations, and considered them important in their work with inclusion, both in order to explain how the clubs work, to establish trust and to clarify expectations related to attendance and commitment. All refugee reception centres in the study conducted such introduction activities.

One of the refugee reception centres in the study covered the cost of participation in one leisure activity for the children at the centre.

Relation between FC and relevant voluntary sector stakeholders

NFF (central)

Strengths in the relationship:

- NFF develops strategies and road maps that the FCs need to follow.
- NFF administers grants opportunities that FCs can apply for.
- NFF holds the expertise to support FCs in developing good strategies for inclusion.

Challenges of the relationship:

- FCs think that there is a long way between the NFF central administrations to the FCs on the grass roots level. The expertise is thus often perceived as ‘out of reach’.
- Grants applications are perceived as bureaucratic and challenging for voluntary FCs.
- The registration process (of players) required by NFF, is too bureaucratic and it is sometimes easier to register players as Norwegians, as this demands less documents from the player.

Institutional determinants for success:

- Clear strategies and systems that are possible for the FCs to follow up.
- Resources (human and financial) for supporting FCs in grant application processes.
- Joint efforts in developing information material for refugees, initiated by the NFF.

Regional Football Federations (RFF)

Strengths in the relationship:

- As representatives from the NFF in the regions, the RFFs contribute to implementation of NFFs policies on the grass roots level.

- The RFF can take a coordinating role by for instance facilitating meetings between the clubs in the region.
- The RFF can provide guidelines for and/or initiate projects in both municipalities and clubs, adapted to local contexts.
- The RFF can assist clubs in applying for funds.
- The role of RFF as a coordinating partner may not only be related to cooperation with and between clubs, but also other important stakeholders in the regions.

Challenges of the relationship:

- The role of the RFFs varies, depending on access to both financial and human resources.
- In areas where resources (human and financial) are scarce, the responsibility of integration lies within the clubs.

Institutional determinants for success:

- RFFs taking the role of regional coordinators, and facilitating arenas for FCs to meet and share experiences and join efforts.

Best practice examples 7:

Cooperation between the RFF and different stakeholders, like the county council and different departments in the municipality (for instance refugee services and schools), enabled a variety of inclusion initiatives and generated funds in one of the case regions.

One RFF had its own coordinator working specifically with issues regarding inclusion (see also example from regional municipality above). This position was established in cooperation with the RFF, the regional handball federation, the municipality and regional municipality. The role of the coordinator was to be a support for the clubs in their work with inclusion, to facilitate cooperation with relevant collaborators, to provide information and competence on inclusion matters, to give an overview and help with funding applications and to facilitate arenas to meet and share experiences. Such a position in the RFF can contribute to a degree of formalisation of the different solutions to inclusion found in the clubs.

One RFF systematically used some of the more experienced clubs as resources for other clubs. As far as best practice goes, the RFF should still take a coordination position in order to enable all clubs in the region to be included in such efforts.

Regional Sport Federations (RSFs)

Strengths in the relationship:

- Because RSFs represent all sports in a region, it can take a coordinating role by for instance facilitate meetings between various sport clubs and relevant partners, as well as to initiate projects in the region.
- RSFs often have specific positions working with inclusion (of all) into sports. For FCs with scarce or no human resources, the RSFs can provide assistance and expertise in grant application processes.
- RSFs can coordinate field workers specifically dealing with inclusion through sport.

- RSF can provide information and information material for refugees (through for instance the refugee reception centres and the introductory programme) about the Norwegian sport model in general, and what it means to be part of Norwegian sport.

Best practice example 8:

In one case region the RSF held a project position responsible for inclusion, which was partly funded by the regional municipality (different case than in the regional municipality example above). The position enabled a focus on integration through sport. An important part of the work portfolio is to go through each grant application to NIFs inclusion fund from the clubs in the region, and to be NIFs consultative partner in the allocation process.

Challenges of the relationship:

- FCs think that it is a long way between the RSFs and the FCs on the grass roots
- For FCs the RFFs are more relevant partners than the RSFs
- RSFs have not enough human resources to assist each (football) club individually

Institutional determinants for success:

- RSFs facilitating arenas for clubs in and out of football to meet and share experiences and join efforts.
- RSFs providing information to clubs regarding grant application processes and use their position to advocate easier application processes.

Civil Society Organisations

Strengths in the relationship:

- Civil society organisations are often familiar with inclusion work and might be of support to FCs working with inclusion.
- Civil society organisations are based on voluntary activity, and (unlike public sector stakeholders) available also after working hours.
- For FCs it can be useful to cooperate with local civil society organisations in communicating with and recruiting refugees to the club.

Challenges of the relationship:

- Cooperation with the FCs is requested, but scarce.
- Relatively few systematic and formalised efforts of cooperation between FCs and other civil society organisations are initiated.

Institutional determinants for success:

- Organisations already involved with refugees share knowledge and experiences with FCs and provides information and contact between the FC and the refugees.
- Clear strategies and action plans in the FCs, assessing which civil society organisations in the community are beneficial to cooperate with.

Best practice examples 9:

The Red Cross is involved in several activities for refugees. Among these are the organisation of activity days where refugees can try different activities. Similarly, the ‘Buddy Project’ connects young refugees with a friend in the community, aiming to socialise them into different activities such as football. In one of the cases of the study, an activity coordinator from the Red Cross worked to get refugees included in clubs and organisations, and to encourage clubs and organisations to establish/build on systems for inclusion.

Another example was a Save the Children project named ‘the Good Neighbour’, where a Norwegian family supported a newly arrived refugee family by inviting them home and to different arrangements, explaining Norwegian society and culture, and also following the children to different activities if needed. Save the Children supported the volunteers with courses or training and covered some of the costs.

Relation between FC and relevant private sector stakeholders

Strengths in the relationship:

- Private sector stakeholders can provide funding opportunities for FCs.
- Private sector stakeholders can react rather quickly and with less bureaucracy than public sector stakeholders.
- FCs can be valuable sponsor objects for addressing different companies’ CSR strategies.

Challenges of the relationship:

- Funding is often project-based or for one-off events. FCs need funds for daily and sustainable activities.

Institutional determinants for success:

- Clear strategy from the FC both in terms of establishing partnerships, but also in terms of securing funds for longer-term projects and daily activities, and thereby optimise chances of sustainability.

Best practice example 10:

One FC explained how, in the past couple of years, they had organised trips during the summer holiday for children (refugees and low-income) who were otherwise not able to travel due to economic challenges. Private sector stakeholders from different companies that the FC already cooperated with funded the trips. The club argued that there was an increasing interest for such partnerships in the club as more and more children fell under the target group.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO NFF

Through this study, it has become clear that many Norwegian football clubs are working with inclusion of refugees. It is evident though, that each region and each club is different in terms of size, resources and number of refugees in its proximity. It is therefore important to emphasise that working with inclusion of refugees in Norwegian football may take many different forms and that one-size does not fit all.

The clubs in the study seem to understand, accept and agree with the vision of "Football for all", and thereby they acknowledge the expectations set forth by 'the society'; that they through being voluntary organisations have particular opportunities and therefore responsibilities tied to integration of refugees through football.

The clubs reveal that there are several barriers related to inclusion of refugees into Norwegian football. These are particularly related to language and communication barriers, as well as cultural differences and economy. The barriers largely involve refugee parents, and thus, involvement of this group is considered crucial in order to make inclusion initiatives work.

A generic result of the study is that a broad, systematic club-driven approach (as opposed to an approach driven by individuals) is important for the inclusion of different sub-groups. Thus, to address some of the challenges related to refugee inclusion, the “successful” clubs often work systematically on a club-level, and in close cooperation with other stakeholders in the community.

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations⁵ to the Football Association of Norway (NFF) are presented:

1. NFF should strive to encourage broad, systematic club-driven approaches to inclusion, on all levels in the organisation.
 - a. Club-driven approaches can be encouraged through systematic work with each FCs value system. NFF has already been working with this through the ‘quality club’ certification, and further emphasis might be integrated into the ‘quality club’ concept.
 - b. A systematic approach to inclusion should also include sharing information, adapting rules and building competence.
2. NFF should initiate joint efforts to translate relevant material into different languages, for distribution to clubs.
3. NFF should strive to make grant application processes easier for the FCs. Information and guidelines should be available at an online portal, and assistance for applicants should be provided by NFF.

⁵ The recommendations are preliminary, and will be elaborated further pending NFF comments on the draft report.

4. Funds should be made available for longer-term projects (and less one-off events) and to cover the cost of hiring personnel in the FCs, to work specifically with inclusion. We believe that this in turn would secure project sustainability.
5. NFF should, through the RFFs, facilitate arenas for FCs in the regions to meet and share experiences, and potentially join forces.
6. Through the RFFs, NFF should increasingly cooperate with other sport federations in the regions to ensure that even more refugees can be included through sport.
7. Since football by far is the largest girls’ sport in Norway, NFF should continue to emphasise also refugee girls’ inclusion into football, by supporting clubs that are adapting activities to include girls.
8. To recruit refugees and market activities, NFF should utilise the many good examples and best practices found in Norwegian football clubs.
9. NFF should strive to empower refugees through providing courses and certifications (coach -, referee -, volunteer courses etc.) that give an opportunity to build a CV and increase chances of career development and future employment.

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