Appendix

Social inclusion through sports: a possible model
Credits
Dott.ssa Daniela Conti (UISP)
Dott.ssa Micol Pizzolati, Prof. Alberto Tarozzi, Dott. Antonio Mancini (Università del Molise)
Dott. Giuseppe Beluschi Fabeni, Dott. Marc Ballester (Taller ACSA)
Maria Casas, Carlos De Carcer (Red Deporte Y Cooperacion)
Dott.ssa Simona Zamboni (Istituto per l’Ambiente e l’Educazione Scholé Futuro ONLUS)
Sandro Tacconi (Regione Toscana)
Eleonora Cavallari, Lina Pradilla, Alberto Urbinati, Gianluca Di Girolami, Giulio Gualerzi (Liberi Nantes)
Antonio Amendola, Antonio Marcello (Shoot4Change)
The practice of sports for displaced persons:  
an exploratory study on the Liberi Nantes Touch Rugby project  

Micol Pizzolati - Università degli Studi of Molise

Introduction

The international network of the project MIMoSA worked, under different perspectives, on the topic of the practice of social inclusion of migrants through participation in sports activities. One of the specific goals in this overall picture concerns the analysis, with social research methods and approaches, of projects using “non-traditional” sports practices directed to migrants at greater risk of exclusion.

The research performed by the partner Università degli Studi of Molise is dedicated to the project Liberi Nantes Touch Rugby, targeted to displaced women and sponsored by the amateur Liberti Nantes sports association in Rome. In this panorama, it was possible to reconstruct through an analysis of the literature, the project is noted for its pioneering nature in Italy and, for certain aspects, Europe, by targeting migrants to practice a sport - touch rugby - that only recently is spreading in Italy.

The original nature of the experience led to using an exploratory approach that allows, first, collecting the data on the development of the project within a period of two years through some distinguishable phases. Within the realm of the research, specific points of strength of the project emerged: a network made up of active partners in heterogeneous environments, the ability of promoters to redefine the activities according to occasionally arising obstacles, and careful dissemination of the initiatives connected with the project through different channels. The results of the study allow identifying some indicators of the impact of the project, at the level of beneficiary entities and in a broader social context.

The research was performed within the MIMoSA project by the partner Università degli Studi of Molise. The unit of the Università del Molise is composed of instructors, researchers and research technicians expert in sociology and pedagogy: Alberto Barausse, Antonio Mancini, Micol Pizzolati, Luca Refrigi, and Alberto Tarozzi. The responsibility for this work is entirely attributable to those writing it. This responsibility is also articulated through the contribution to the Methodological Guide produced by the project, in which in-depth reference is made to sports participation among foreign citizens and sociocultural minorities in different national environments and for a reflection on the implications in terms of social inclusion. Thanks are given to Daniela Conti for her constant support. To contact the author: micol.pizzolati@unimol.it.

Note

For more information on the project goals, partnership network and activities see www.mimosaproject.net.

Touch rugby, created as a form of warm-up for the rugby players, is a team sport that is characterized by the variation, compared with rugby, by the touch of the adversary rather than tackling. At any touch the action stops and the player touched passes the ball on the ground between their legs, it is captured by the closest teammate who passes it. Every team, which may be mixed by gender and age, is composed of a maximum of 14 players, 6 on the playing field. The match lasts 40 minutes divided in 2 times of 20 with an interval of 5. It may be played by from teams mixed by gender and age. Its history is relatively recent and the first official date goes back to the end of the 1960’s with the creation of the first club in Australia. In Italy, this sports practice has been disseminated in very recent years. In 2007 the Touch Rugby Italy association was founded (affiliated with the Italian culture sports association), recognized by the National Italian Olympic Committee, in which are enrolled about twenty teams. In 2008 the Italian Touch Rugby League association was founded (affiliated with the national sports center Libertas). The amateur sports association Touch Rugby Rome is affiliated with this second association; it was founded in 2007 as a sports partner of the “Liberi Nantes Touch Rugby” project. The first Italian championship was held in 2009.
1. Integration of refugees and asylum applicants in sports practice: a reference for project analysis

Part of the Studies dedicated to the routes of integration of refugees and asylum applicants\(^4\) are characterized by an orientation to the analysis of the psycho-physical conditions of displaced persons, often through the use of quantitative methods that tend to outline pictures of homogenous communities without in-depth exploration of the complexity of the experiences (Amara et al, 2005). Recently, some research, using a qualitative approach, has oriented its focus toward the influence of the social context in encouraging the ability of refugees to form relationship networks and resources (Bolzoni 2009) useful in the routes of inclusion (Ambrosini, Marchetti 2008).

In the sphere through which the social integration of refugees and asylum applicants is performed, reference is often made to the use of free time (Amara et al, 2005, Catarci 2011, Stack, Yoshitaka 2009). However, there is little presence in the literature of research intended to observe experiences in which sports activities provide useful means to strengthen resources for inclusion in the host community\(^5\). Among the surveys dedicated to the argument, it is distinguished for its comparative position in research conducted in the United Kingdom (Amara et al, 2005). Through the analysis of a dozen experiences\(^6\), it has demonstrated the heterogeneity of the involvement under different perspectives: the needs to which the projects attempt to respond, the composition of the partnership and coordination of the project, the goals and the types of action taken, the sports practiced, the origin of refugees, the obstacles arising during execution, and the evaluation criteria\(^7\).

While demonstrating the heterogeneity of the projects, the research allows drawing some general conclusions useful to guiding the research conducted in the Italian context. 

Team sports offer greater opportunities to have the beneficiaries interact with the host community. In all the cases analyzed, the benefits of the practice of sports for displaced persons are visible – reduction of tensions within groups, decrease in individual antisocial behaviors, an increase in the self-esteem of the beneficiaries involved – but difficult to measure. Greater attention to the evaluation of the impact of the project will be necessary in particular for attracting economic resources and institutional support.

For entities that provide services for refugees and asylum applicants, the practice of sports has a low priority, because the professional preparation of the operators is more

---

\(^4\) A close analysis from the point of view of the legal route and of the social context through which and in which are defined, in the Italian case, the right to asylum and the status of refugee is offered by Hein (2010) and a Marchetti (2009) for a sociological analysis of the social environment of the reception centers see Marchetti (2011).

\(^5\) In a popular context, refer to a reading of the novel of St. John (2009). In the Italian case, the book-diary of Mismetti Capua (2011) dedicated to the Afghan refugees in the capital Italian contains a reference to the Liberi Nantes Football Club.

\(^6\) Performed in the geographic areas of the Eastern Midlands, Wales and Scotland where the presence of asylum-seekers and refugees is significant.

\(^7\) The partnerships are mostly mixed and composed of local entities, law enforcement, associations of foreigners, university groups, and local sports teams. In some cases the projects are coordinated by associations of volunteers, in others by public entities. Among the types of sport practiced there are both team and individual sports, and sports more typical of the eastern context than local or more widespread in non-occidental cultures, traditional activities and emerging practices, competitive sports and activities oriented in particular to maintaining the physical condition. The obstacles arising during performance of the projects include a lack of volunteers; lack of funds for the regular performance of activities, for the rental of the facility and for the “supplies”; discontinuity in the level of participation in the sports activities by the refugees and asylum-seekers involved in the projects; difficulty in meeting the criteria of the local authorities for granting funds; difficulty for talented players in becoming involved in the local teams; absence of strategies for identification of the sports needs of the refugees and asylum applicants; lack of coordination among public entities and actors of the third sector.
oriented to other methodologies of interventions and due to the presence of more pressing survival needs. Meanwhile, despite expanding recognition of the use of sports to avoid embedding the phenomena of marginalization of immigrants, refugees and asylum applicants are rarely recognized, within the realm of sports entities, as a target group for interventions. The consequence is that the projects are often excluded by official planning of actions for the social inclusion of foreigners.

Furthermore, because of the lack of connection among the projects directed to refugees and the traditional sports system, the activities remain isolated from those offered in the citizen context, a factor that may lead to the sports performance of displaced persons becoming banal or marginalized.

In the projects, the dedication to the participation of displaced women is marginal. In some cases these are involved in exclusively feminine sports practices, but to avoid their remaining confined in the basic role of partner-spectator or being entirely excluded, support is desirable for their participation also in dominant sports practices that tend to be associated with only male involvement.

2. Goals and methodology of the study

The exploratory research dedicated to the project Liberi Nantes Touch Rugby, targeted to women migrants, refugees and asylum applicants hosted in centers of the Italian capital, is focused principally on a few aspects.

First, the study has attempted to observe how the project has taken form over two years within the realm of an association – asd Liberi Nantes – already active in the field of sports activities for refugees and asylum applicants, consolidating and expanding the network of partners. Furthermore, the research has emphasized the main obstacles that emerged in the various phases of the project and the solutions implemented to address them. Finally, beginning with the reconstruction of the experience, it is attempted to identify through which indicators it is possible to evaluate the impact in terms of social inclusion at the individual level (the migrants involved) and at the level of a broader social context involved by the project.

The evolution of the project continued in a period of eleven months – from June 2011 to April 2012 – using non-standard sociological study methods, with particular reference to meetings, participant observations, and analysis of documents produced on the project and disseminated via internet through different channels.
The point of view from which the project is observed is principally that of promoters and volunteers. In fact, it is revealed as impractical to reconstruct subjective representations regarding the participation of all the beneficiaries by conducting meetings. This impediment is largely due to the different timing with which the activities of the project Liberi Nantes Touch Rugby are developed, on one hand, and the overall activities of the MIMoSA project.

3. The composite partnership network of Liberi Nantes

The project takes form within the realm of the amateur sports association Liberi Nantes. The association was founded in October 2007 through the commitment of a group of friends who for years had attended the “Antiracism World Competition” events and planned ongoing support for the promotion and the dissemination of sports among asylum applicants and refugees in the Rome area. This goal was accomplished first through the creation of a male football (soccer) team “open team”, which from 2008 until today has participated unclassified in an official championship. The activities of the association, over the years, have expanded to encourage female participation, within the realm of the coed touch rugby team since late 2009, and with touring activities since 2010.

The project is supported by individuals involved in the territory on different fronts; some partners have accompanied the project from its creation until today; in other cases it is occasional support. The network includes entities that work specifically for welcoming refugees (Unhcr Italy, Italian Council on Refugees, Centro Astalli of Roma), organizations that operate to counter social marginalization (Fondazione internazionale don Luigi Di Liegro, Caritas Roma), local entities (Lazio Region, Province of Rome), and associations active in

---

12 The training activities were, in fact, interrupted at the end of June 2011 and in the following months the participating asylum-seekers most present in the training moved to other Italian and European cities for reasons connected to obtaining their refugee status, in any case without maintaining contact with the volunteers of the association. The activities resumed in January 2012, but involvement of new migrants in the project began in March/April.

13 see www.mondialiantirazzisti.org/

14 Members of the team, in its first year, were approximately 200 refugees and asylum-seekers and from the beginning of the project in winter 2011/2012 more than 300 displaced persons took part in the training.

15 This was the third category provincial Roman championship (circuit of the Italian federation of soccer players - national amateur league).

16 Unhcr Italy, high commission of the United Nations on refugees, sponsored the project starting in October 2008.

17 With Centro Astalli of Rome in early 2008, the association organized a training course on forced migration. The Foundation is the Italian headquarters of the Jesuit Refugee Service, an international Catholic organization active in more than fifty countries, and manages the Centro Casa di Giorgia, associated with the Municipality of Rome, active since 1999 in field of housing refugee women with their children (www.centroastalli.it/la-casa-di-giorgia.96.0.html).

18 The Lazio Region allocated financing used to support the costs of the rental of the field XXV Aprile. The Province of Rome granted a contribution, partially used to offer reimbursement of expenses to the touch rugby trainers and to purchase public transportation tickets for refugees’ travel to training.
sports (UISP - Italian Union of Sports for all\textsuperscript{19}, Pescatori Ostia football association \textsuperscript{20}, Le Fornaci amateur sports union\textsuperscript{21}, AS Roma soccer society \textsuperscript{22}, Touch Rugby Roma, Spartaco Rugby), and groups dedicated to telling stories of migration (non-profit organization of photographers Shoot4Change\textsuperscript{23}).

The association, initially composed of fifteen partners that today have become twenty-four, in addition to the complex logistical management of the training and of the matches\textsuperscript{24}, was able to build an on-going collaborative relationship with some partners, to receive economic support, although extemporaneous, from some local entities, and to guarantee good visibility for the project, both among the local citizenship and in a broader context.

4. From the sports field to a social space of integration

The first training of the male football (soccer) team took place in November 2007 at the community sports facility “Fulvio Bernardini” managed by the Territorial Committee Uisp of Rome in the Pietralata quarter. Asylum applicants coming from various reception centers of the capital participated for free; the association provided the material necessary for the sports activities and two urban transportation system tickets for travel. In this same sports facility in May 2009, the association organized events open to citizens and participated as a partner in initiatives intended for the support of social inclusion through the practice of sports for social groups at risk of marginalization. The impossibility of having a place in which to keep uniforms and shoes also created logistical difficulties and the thought was to find a “home” for the team.

In April 2010 the territorial Ater - Azienda for residential construction of the Municipality of Rome - assigned to the association the management of the XXV Aprile field, used by the football (soccer) team Albarossa in the beginning of the 1970’s until the mid-1990’s, a period in which the closing of the society coincided with the closing of the space. The association, in its informational material and in various public interviews, underlined the connection between the field, the sports field of the project Touch Rugby (www.s4c.it/slides/touchrugby). The organization also performed a photography project, supported by the Province of Roma with the sponsorship of the Casa International delle Donne of Rome, that involved refugees housed at Casa di Giorgia. Within the project the exhibition “Point of Escape. Rome seen from the perspective of asylum applicants” was prepared and inaugurated on June 18, 2011 at the sports field XXV aprile at the time of the event “Free to Play. Right to games, to sports, to life.”

\textsuperscript{19} The football team has participated since 2008 in the event “Antiracism World Competition” created by Project Ultrà - Uisp Emilia Romagna in 1997. In 2009 Liberi Nantes won the Antiracism World Cup, the most important recognition for this event, because it is given to groups that are all year engaged in the battle against discrimination. At the end of 2008, Uisp gave recognition to “Sports for integration.”

\textsuperscript{20} In December 2008 the amateur sports union Le Fornaci donated a second uniform to the team.

\textsuperscript{21} Within the “Old shoes” campaign, launched to collect athletic clothing for the football players of the Liberi Nantes (in particular shoes and socks), the Rome soccer society donated jerseys with the logo of the previous sponsor were sold in part to collect funds.

\textsuperscript{22} Since December of 2009 the photographers of Shoot4change created video-photographic reports on the activities of the soccer team, on the project of renovation of the field XXV aprile (www.shoot4change.net/?cat=327) and on the activities of the project Touch Rugby (www.s4c.it/slides/touchrugby). The organization also performed a photography project, supported by the Province of Roma with the sponsorship of the Casa International delle Donne of Rome, that involved refugees housed at Casa di Giorgia. Within the project the exhibition “Point of Escape. Rome seen from the perspective of asylum applicants” was prepared and inaugurated on June 18, 2011 at the sports field XXV aprile at the time of the event “Free to Play. Right to games, to sports, to life.”

\textsuperscript{23} The uniforms and shoes are kept at the field and loaned to participants to use; these must be washed and organized for all of the participants after every training and match.
that in its period of functioning was a battleground for the right to sports for all, and the Pietralata quarter engaged in the same period in the fight for the rights to a home, school and work. In addition to the intention of providing a site for the open team, the broader goal was to make the field an intercultural space open to the quarter.

The project of also involving the residents of the quarter in the use of the spaces and awareness of the goal of projects performed by the association had its first moment on April 25, 2010 with the inauguration of the field, in which the president of the province of Rome participated. The field became the center and context of other initiatives, from sports practice to sensitization on the topic of social inclusion through sports. On June 18, 2011 the demonstration “Free to Play. Right to games, to sports, to life” was held, during which displaced persons and some volunteers played a demonstration match of touch rugby. In September 2011, the facility was the site of the initiative “Heart of the city” with a roundtable dedicated to immigration and the right to sports. On March 31, 2012 the field hosted the initiative of presenting the touch rugby project.

After years of neglect, the space needed consistent renovation work involving enormous expense, including upgrading the electrical equipment and the provision of an entrance for the disabled. Adaptation of the spaces was also needed: in the locker rooms it was necessary to create separators in the shower, given that both boys and girls were tired of being seen bathing by the other athletes, even of the same gender. In January 2011, the association launched the fund-raising initiative “one square meter of freedom.” Some skilled workers contribute free work, requesting only the reimbursement of the cost of materials.

5. Touring activities: the road to inclusion

The association pursued its goals in the sphere of the social inclusion of displaced persons through a project of touring activities that began in July 2010 with a walk in Abruzzi’s Gran Sasso natural park and continued with the organization of two social evenings intended for fundraising for the purchase of basic equipment, the success of which allowed launching, beginning in April 2011, a program of monthly excursions in regions of Abruzzi, Lazio and Umbria.

The activities, overall, involve more than one hundred people – Italians and migrants – and occasionally a few dozen tourists take part. Among the participants are some members of the open football team and some residents and ex-residents of the Centro Casa di Giorgia, including some of the female players of touch rugby.

---

25 A video is available at www.teenpressroma.it/?p=87 of an interview with the president of the provincial entity on that occasion.
26 The initiative was sponsored by the political youth organization of the Democratic Party.
27 Information and details on the fundraising campaign are offered on a section of the association site of www.liberinantes.org/2011/01/27/un-metro-quadrato-di-liberta and the video documentary made by Shoot4Change viewable at www.youtube.com/watch?v=dB77vOj0tI.
28 For example, during the excursion at the end of November 2011 8 of the 33 people staying in the reception center participated.
This type of recreational and non-competitive sports activity contributes, in the intention of its promoters, to the inclusion of applicants and asylum seekers in two aspects. The first is connected to the discovery of the territory: the excursions are an occasion for expanding the knowledge of places, which for the applicants and asylum seekers living in the reception centers is often limited to the urban routes that connect the center with the Italian school and with places of worship. The second aspect refers to the meaning of the road in the experiences of many refugees, who have traveled long roads on foot to leave their Countries and they associate walking with the idea of a better life. During the course of the experience, another aspect also emerged that demonstrated the migrants' enjoyment of the activities: some of them declared finding similarities between the Italian landscapes and those “of home.”

One goal to which the association is dedicated is that of obtaining the financing for the purchase of a vehicle for transportation from nine places that allow facilitating and extending participation to the migrants housed in the reception centers.

6. Touch rugby for displaced persons: action and redefinition of a pioneering project

Liberi Nantes has worked to encourage female participation from the end of 2009 when it began, the Liberi Nantes Touch Rugby project with the partnership of the amateur Touch Rugby Rome sports association.

The participation of displaced persons in activities of sports practice responds, first, to the need to strengthen the self-esteem and the mastery of the body that gender-related abuse and violence have weakened, as a preliminary phase in inclusion in the new context. With “traditional” type sports practice, usually based on respect for shared rules for an encounter with others, they work to mature a sense of justice that was undermined in the experiences of forced migration. Team sports, finally, stimulate processes of socialization and sharing among the female players.

The choice of touch rugby is motivated by two orders of motives. First, this practice allows establishing a team mixed by gender, age and physical condition: this represents an important opportunity in a pioneering phase in which the number of migrants involved is not certain and it is presumed that can have heterogeneous physical conditions. Furthermore, the association and its sports partners place the accent on the “strong values” of a discipline that is part of a “clean environment” and for this it is considered particularly suited within the realm of a project intended for social integration and to emancipation.

---

29 An explanation of the distinction among traditional (or modern) sports practice and post-modern sports practice is offered by Ferrero Camoletto (2005).
Over the period of 2010-2012, a dozen migrant refugees participated in the project, all of legal age and coming from African countries – Ivory Coast, Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mauritania and Senegal.

The development of the project may be articulated in three timing and operative phases, in part corresponding to a change in the small group of asylum applicants: a launch phase (2010), an experimentation phase (2011), a phase intended for the consolidation of the activities (2012).

The first training, in which some displaced persons who resided at the Casa di Giorgia took part, was held in February 2010 at the Corviale Rugby Stadium, the facility used by the amateur sports association Arvalia Villa Pamphili Rugby Roma that provides the association its logistical and material support. In this phase, it was planned to maintain two training sessions per week. During the course of the year, the project was suspended principally because it is “difficult to consistently involve refugee girls” and it was no longer possible to continue to use the facility sports.

In the spring of 2011, the volunteers resumed their activities, with two training sessions per week managed by two female players of the Red&Blu rugby team of Rome; some volunteers were added to the group and the attempt was made to involve other Roman reception centers.

The volunteers dedicated particular dedication and attention to the interaction with and among the participants. Blending French-speaking and English-speaking migrants is complex. This division within the group tends to attenuate, also thanks to personal events – the childbirth of one of the migrants is an example – that enact supportive practices among the participants.

In this phase, the difficulty of guaranteeing continuity to the project is still evident. For example, in the first weeks, the beneficiaries did not attend training on some occasions, without advising of their absence, in part because they did not enjoy training in the late afternoon because of the darkness, and this made it difficult to always have the minimum number of players for competing in a match. The presence of a very motivated participant contributed to consolidating more constant participation in the entire group of six refugees. The migrants attended the first match of touch rugby in April 2011 at the “Tocca Roma Daje de Touch!” tournament. At the end of May, the two trainers invited the beneficiaries to participate in a meeting/training with their team. In June 2011, the refugees and volunteers participated in a stage of the third edition of the “Touch of blue” tournament organized by the Italian touch rugby league with the sponsorship of the Italian rugby federation with the goal of support the Liberi Nantes. The six most active refugees in the project play distributed in teams composed of athletes of the regional and national rugby circuit.

---

30 As already specified the study monitored the activities of the project up to April 2012.
For one of the more active female refugee players in this second phase of the project, the goal, in June 2011, was to consolidate the project. For this beneficiary, it was important to work on the means of transmission of the information to the refugees and on their level of trust in the activities. From her point of view, the first need for the refugees to which the project may respond is that of “filling the empty hours” that always characterized the period of staying in a center. Possible barriers to participation consist, for this beneficiary, of the lack of insurance in case of accident and the cost of transportation.

A series of events – the transfer to another city of nearly all the beneficiaries, the unavailability of the trainers to pursue the activities, the temporary absence of the volunteer responsible for the project – prevented the resumption of the training in Autumn 2011. In this period, the association evaluated the opportunity of continuing with activities targeted only to displaced persons, with fewer men and more difficult to involve in the practice of sports. One of the solutions proposed was to open training to the members of the football team: some players, after initial hesitation, participated in the resumption of the meetings. Two players of the Roman Spartaco Rugby team offered their availability as trainers and, in January 2012, accompanied two associates to the Casa di Giorgia for a presentation of the project and demonstration practice.

The fruits of this dedication matured over the following months, when a group composed by gender and origin participated in the training set for a Saturday morning: volunteers of the association, migrant men (both displaced and with less restricted emigration experiences), young adult Italians interested in supporting the project and practicing sports were joined by a group of five women staying in the reception center.

At the end of March, the association promoted the project through a touch rugby tournament in which the sports partners collaborated. This event was somewhat broadly disseminated through channels that allowed reaching citizens near the places involved, supporters of the association, entities and organizations active in the field of social inclusion and in the fight against discrimination. The event was also the opportunity to attempt to involve the residents of the quarter and to collect funds in support of the activities. In this circumstance, as in prior initiatives, the beneficiaries were able to meet in a mixed context and the migrants practiced sports in mixed teams with Italians.

32 all participants have insurance for sports activities.
Conclusions

The association takes particular care in the “telling” of its experience through the support of different partners. First, there is the effective and constant contribution of Shoot4Change, an organization of photographers and artists specialized in humanitarian reporting for social organizations. Two documentaries are dedicated to the experience of the Liberi Nantes football club: Pallone in Fuga (The Escaping Ball) and Liberi Nantes Football Club. Articles and reports dedicated to the football team appeared in various dailies, periodicals, national television and radio networks, numerous local media and some foreign mastheads, in addition to a broad presence of information on the project on the internet. Through these channels, as well as with the participation of promoters in socio-cultural debates and events, a very extensive and constant dissemination of the more specific goals of the project was guaranteed and, consequently, sensitization to the more general topic of the right to sports and the social inclusion of displaced persons.

The visibility of the project dedicated to women migrants in the first phase was deliberately moderate, while with the strengthening of the sports partnership and in a more advanced phase of the experience, it was more extensively promoted also outside of the reception centers, directed not only to female targets but also indicating the opportunity of uniting genders and origins that this sport offers.

Among the goals that the promoters of the project had established, some remain to be reached more completely. One concerns a closer look at the practice of sports and the possibility of enabling the beneficiaries themselves to spread the information on the project among other displaced persons. Another is more general and has to do with the possibility, also through the project, of strengthening the channels with which displaced persons may introduce themselves into the community of origin already established on the territory. Finally, it takes time to give more effective performance to the intention of making the field an intercultural space and registering an interest and participation in the activities of the residents of the quarter in which it is located.

In any case, some goals reached were noted. In particular, in the second phase of the project the volunteers observed an improvement in interpersonal relationships among some participants, initially not united by links of origin and tending to remain isolated by linguistic groups. This emerges as an indicator of the positive effects of the activities offered to the beneficiaries and the ability by the volunteers to manage a group mixed by origin. Furthermore, an additional indicator of impact regarding the strengthening of the interpersonal skills of the beneficiaries is found in their participation in friendly/competitive sporting events on the occasion of public events organized by the association and partners and support networks for the inclusion of migrants.

The research sheds light on some practices that may also be replicable in other contexts: in addition to the differentiated occasions of interaction – in the smaller group at training, in the tournaments open to the public – among the migrants and other individuals mixed by gender and origin, it has been shown useful to present the project in the reception center with a demonstration game practice, touch rugby being a sport that is still not well-recognized and understood by those not accustomed to it.

Un Pallone in Fuga (An escaping ball), presented in May 2009, is written and directed by Salvatore Cotogno and tells the story of the first participation of Liberi Nantes at the Antiracism World Competition of 2008; Liberi Nantes Football Club, directed by Francesco Castellani, assembles a series of 30 spots broadcast on the online network Red Tv, telling the experience of the participation of the team in the third category championship and was shown outside the competition, at the international cinema festival of Rome in October 2009.
The characteristic of the sports chosen, the organization of public events, the ability to perceive difficulties and to find effective solutions, have definitely contributed to avoiding the reproduction of social marginalization in the practice of sports along with self-referentiality and conflicts among ethnic and linguistic groups and displaced persons, in this as in other social environments, necessarily serve to signal strengthening of the individual resources useful in facing the processes of adjustment to the new context.
Bibliographical References


The World Basketball Competition for Integration: reflections on the construction of the concept of social integration through sports in migratory contexts.

Giuseppe Beluschi Fabeni - Marc Ballester Torrents

ACSA Workshop – Anthropology and Applied social sciences

Introduction

The Mundialito de Baloncesto por la Integración (Basketball Competition for Integration) was chosen for a case study in Spain within the framework of the MIMoSA project. The Mundialito is a tournament of teams formed according to the national origin of their members. It has taken place since 2007 in the territory of the Municipality of Madrid and is organized by the Fundación Federación Española de Baloncesto 2014 (Spanish Basketball Federation Foundation 2014 - FEB2014 Foundation), along with the Consejería de Deportes (Sports Council) of the Municipality of Madrid, the ONGD Red Cooperación y Deporte (Cooperation and Sports Network), and the Fundación Deporte Joven (Youth Sports Foundation) of the Higher Sports Council. Its goal is to guarantee equal treatment of the immigrants settled in Spain and help them to become integrated in their new social environment.

This study explores the ways in which the actors who participate in this activity construct and define the concepts of integration and the social value of sports. These elements occupy a central place in the planning and structuring of the activity and definitely represent its general goal.

Based on these definitions, it analyzes how the same structure of the Mundialito may respond to the different facets composing the concept of social integration, as delineated by our informants. Meanwhile, a collection of perspectives is offered about social integration, gathered from professionals and volunteers in social intervention through sports, and the different discussions existing in the sports context considered are analyzed.

Below, is examined the evaluation process (formal, but also informal) which has taken place since its organization, identifying its points of consistency and possible critical points with the conceptualizations of departure.

Finally, possible elements of improvement are addressed that, although departing from the specific case considered, may expand the current lines of associative and institutional work.

Research methodology

Ethnographic techniques were used for the production of the information in the Mundialito: participant observation, on-site interviews and focus groups. In addition to the implementation of these techniques, the level of triangulation of sources was raised through the analysis of the written documentation contributed by the same association organizing the event and other sources available. In parallel, projects with characteristics similar to the Mundialito were observed by referring to documentation in writing and available in the Internet.

The production of data was guided by three dimensions of observation identified in the event:
1. The actors involved. Data was collected regarding the intended population, as beneficiary - direct participant and beneficiary - indirect participant (public). Information was also collected referring to the institutional actors involved in the promotion and organization of the event.

2. Resources. Data was compiled regarding the structures and physical space used, and the means of occupation and participation by the immigrant groups involved was observed.

3. Attitudes and behaviors during the activity were reviewed along with results, interaction between the different groups, participants, audience, and relationship between organizers and participants.

The semi-structured interviews (the script used is attached) took place both with participants in the event and direct organizers of the tournament. The same script allowed the inclusion of observations made in the field. Finally, members of the ONGD Cooperation and Sports Network were interviewed, along with prior and current participants of the Mundialito, the attending public, friends and family of the participants, and referees.

Six informants participated in the Focus Group, between volunteers and staff of the ONGD network Sports and Cooperation. The focus group as a research tool allowed working on different levels of information, keeping in mind both the object of the activity analyzed and the discursive processes developing around it. This way a balance was obtained between more direct and contextualized information from the interviews and other data encompassing a more reflective process and certain degree of abstraction.

The World Basketball Competition for Integration

The goal of the Mundialito is to encourage integration of the immigrant population of the Municipality of Madrid through the practice of basketball. Its complementary goals include the practice of basketball, favoring the municipalities that already practice it habitually, and encouraging the relationships between different groups through participation in the events.

In its fifth edition, the basketball tournament for integration took place in January of 2012. It was distributed in 5 day-long sessions. Coinciding with weekends, the first three elimination sessions were played on the 14th, 15th and 21st. A fourth session for quarter finals took place on Sunday the 22nd. The session corresponding to the semifinals was on the 28th and the final took place on January 29.

The activity is directed primarily to the foreign population living in the Municipality of Madrid, without distinction of origin or age. The teams participate on a national basis, representing the country of origin of their members. Each selection must have a minimum of five people originally from the country it represents. To participate as a representative of each country, the only requirement is to have a passport showing the country of origin.
The tournament players are mostly amateurs, although also there are cases of semi-professional players.

Not all the selections follow the same pattern at the time of formation. The majority of them are created based on groups of friends, who practice basketball more or less regularly. In other cases, the teams are made up of participants selected from minor leagues throughout the year in the Municipality of Madrid.

It is important to consider that the Mundialito takes place within a broader framework of basketball in the Municipality of Madrid and that, for the majority of its participants, it is a complementary and occasional time to continue playing. The interaction among groups takes place through already existing networks and following the proper steps of each group. Differences can be seen, however. For example, the case of the Latin American community best demonstrates the relationships between the members of each team beyond the Mundialito.

The number of teams is set at twelve for males and at three, with a possibility of becoming five, for females. The size is limited due to the shortage of physical space and available fields for more teams to play. The Mundialito is a tournament with increasing demand.

The general formula is of teams whose players join under the colors of the flags of their national origin, although there are also some teams “mixed by nationalities,” as is the case of some teams also integrated by Spaniards (a nationality in itself not represented in a specific team).

The basketball tournament is well-accepted among the immigrant population of the Municipality of Madrid, and year after year, the demand of people showing interest in participating is increasing. The number of countries with representation in the Mundialito has also increased.

The choice of the participating countries is by order of registration. There is a limit of twelve countries and the last to register remain on a reserve list. Something similar happens with the possible participants signing up individually to the championship. They register on a list in case, later, a person is lacking on a team.

There are different ways of configuring the teams. On one hand, there are the teams presenting themselves to participate with the necessary number of participants and a closed team. Meanwhile, there are also cases of five or six people representing a country and, not being enough to close a team, the organization (Sports Network) takes charge of looking for teammates (of any nationality) to complete the necessary number of people.

This duality is also reflected in the participants who are semi-professional, play on leagues within the municipality, and participate in a more amateur capacity.

Some examples:
The majority of members of the Dominican team participate in a regional league (Dominican Basketball League of Madrid) which for years has functioned with the goal of contributing to the integration of the Dominican community residing in Madrid, primarily
the youth, “to keep them from drugs and the street life” (field work note). For this, there has been a prior process of integration independent of the action of the **Mundialito**.

In contrast, the United States team arose informally. This diversity in establishing the team is also observed in other participating teams that, in some cases, are groups of people who usually practice in regional minor leagues, or others in which the practice is habitual but informal in nature. The size of the Dominican community is significant, and also has members on the teams of Ecuador or Uruguay, which did not have a sufficient number of members.

In other cases, such as that of Sweden, the Spanish help to fill the minimum number to be able to participate, as also happens with the Italian team. The Moroccan team is made up of players of different African countries; some members of the Moroccan team jokingly refer to themselves as “the African selection” (field notes).

**What sports?**

The sport for this activity is basketball. The FEB2014 Foundation proposed the model of the **Mundialito** encouraged by the petitions it received from different groups for materials, spaces for practice, and other infrastructures. The choice of basketball arose as a response to the needs submitted by the groups that already habitually practice basketball.

The choice of basketball was decisive in the selection of the participating population, depending on its relevance in each country of origin, although the growing world-wide popularity of basketball has encouraged its increased practice among most of the national groups. This allows encounters of participants representing China, Ecuador, Morocco, Philippines, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, USA, Italy, Sweden, Argentina and Uruguay.

The relevance of basketball according to national origins is also perceived in the composition of the public. The presence of institutional agents among the public and the involvement of institutions, for example, in funding consumable materials for the team, is another element marking the difference in the importance sports have in the different countries.

One example is that of the Dominican Republic team, which received financing from its consulate to purchase jerseys and other materials; the same consul attended the matches as part of the audience. In addition to forming its own team, the Dominican population contributed players to the selections of Ecuador and Uruguay. It must be clarified that the relevance of the Dominican group is not casual, among other reasons because the **Mundialito** was originally supported by the Dominican Basketball league in the Municipality of Madrid.
Institutional actors involved

Three actors are involved:
- The public administration, represented by the Municipality of Madrid, which contributed the facilities where the Mundialito is held
- The FEB2014 Foundation, which promotes and organizes the event.
- The ONGD Sports and Cooperation Network that, in addition to supporting the FEB2014 Foundation in the organization, coordinates the celebration and is responsible for the relationships with the different groups.

The Sports and Cooperation Network, then, is the link between the participants and the sponsoring entities. The basketball World Championship for Integration is one of the many activities and championships the ONGD Sports and Cooperation Network organizes to promote spaces of encounter and participation of immigrant groups through sports. Although basketball is a vehicular sport in the case studied, the ONGD Sports Network works with the immigrant population through other sports such as football (soccer), athletics, volleyball, and others called “traditional” by the entity.

In view of this plurality, a technician of the entity described these “traditional” sports:

“We work with soccer, basketball, volleyball, and traditional games ... the Ecuavolei, a game that comes from Ecuador... and then there are a series of games from Paraguay such as the Kenbuyi Keyoya. We have done this in different ways. That is, we make a 60 meter run with five guys, and they go out and the ones who finish first have a kind of... there is a hanging bottle they have to break...” (focus group)

History of the Project

The seed of this format of competition, the ultimate goal of which is integration through sports, dates back to the year 2002.

“It was something new and it was a form of meeting, sharing, to get to know each other and break the ice, right? (...) we began with interculturalism and we were innovative in bringing together people of different countries in a relaxed environment and without big plans either (...) but simply knowing that it works, right? and continues working... [member of the Sports Network, focus group]

However, this seed did not become the Mundialito of Basketball until contact was established with the FEB2014 Foundation. The first edition of the Mundialito of Basketball was held in 2007, following the agreement made between the FEB2014 Foundation and network Sports and Cooperation, which was already working in this realm. Today, the Mundialito takes place over a period of three weekends within a common model of competition.

The goal, according to a representative of the Foundation, was to offer and encourage the values of social integration while promoting the practice of basketball. The proposal of a Mundialito of Basketball arose, according to her:

“from the demand identified. There were organized groups that played in leagues within the Municipality of Madrid and requested materials for their leagues. These requests inspired the organization of a Mundialito” (FEB Member, interview)
Throughout the years, the number of teams has been increasing, until reaching, in the current edition, a total of 12 male teams representing their respective countries: Angola, Argentina, Bolivia, China, Colombia, Croatia, Ecuador, United States, Italy, Morocco, Portugal, Dominican Republic, Sweden, Uruguay and Venezuela, among others and, since 2009, also with the participation of three female teams representing Bolivia, Dominican Republic and Ecuador:

“for the women there were 5 teams that wanted to participate but since there were no more fields available, that’s why we chose three, but they said that next year it will expand. This is because the Latinos have their own basketball league, offering a multitude of people who want to participate and are also good players. [Sports network member, focus group].

The Mundialito has been maintained and has grown in participation in its time of existence. However the duration over time (seven years) is connected with the brief duration of the activity in itself. It works with the existing infrastructures, which are used in a brief period of time (six weekend afternoons). Its visibility throughout the years has been encouraged by the presence of important people in the media in the realm of basketball. This has encouraged its visibility and an increase in participation.

**Physical and virtual space**

The activity is held in the sports facilities of the Municipality of Madrid located in the Canal of Isabel II. Specifically, the basketball courts equipped with bleachers for the public are used. The use of the facilities for the Mundialito is free, although usually people must reserve and pay for use (the rent for an hour, according to some of the participants, is 54 Euros).

The fact that this is a relatively short activity over time, three weekends, in a closed space, implies that they must be accompanied by an informational network to disseminate the intended goals and the investments made by each of the parties.

This involves presence in the virtual space and communication media (in their different modalities) during the brief time of the activity. A presentation in the Sports Council of the Municipality was supported by well-known figures in the world of basketball such as Fernando Romay. Publicity was offered in the autonomous media and presence in the websites of the organizations involved as well as other types of associations related to this realm of action.

**Social Actors involved**

The fact that the FEB2014 Foundation is one of the promoters facilitates the participation of professional referees and people recognized in the realm of basketball. Meanwhile, in specific cases such as that of the Dominican Republic, the consul attends the inauguration day.

The presence of a public administration or diplomatic representatives of the country of origin is relative to its importance for the participating municipality. The purposes are different and the case of Dominican Republic contrasts with that of the US team that has no representation.
The case of the Dominican Republic is already exceptional since this is one of the groups with the greatest number of participants, supported by professional players. The presence of different agents of the Dominican Community in Spain allows us to understand the relevance the practice of basketball has in this municipality as an integrating element.

The participation of the public progressively increased, with the last weekend being best-attended. This audience is directly related to the participants by links of friendship or family relationship.

Integration, nationality and interculturalism

The tournament organization conforms to the model of national identities as a means to address interculturalism, as explained in the following terms:

"by league of teams?... if [we look at them] by league, nearly all the players are playing in a league here in Spain. Then, we don’t need to form a league. This is a project that has 5 editions; each year the people who are outside their country, want to be able to represent their country, which they miss, and it is a form of action... they are proud to see their flags. (Interview).

In general, the weight of adscription by nationality as a structural element of the Mundialito is not questioned with regard to possible segregationist effects, and for the success of the project is continued to be measured by the increase in people observed edition after edition. On the other hand, as we said, the Mundialito is not the only opportunity for its participants to meet and play. The participation generalized to other tournaments and leagues, not organized according to the formula “one nationality – one team,” gives the Mundialito the possibility to present itself with specificity.

Furthermore, according to our informants, the choice to maintain such a structure seems, to a certain extent, intended to offer just which the “leagues” do not offer: a “World Championship” in which national pride and the processes of re-identification with the country of origin are considered part of a general integration process in the host country. The Mundialito reproduces, at its scale, different rituals of world championships, with parades of flags, national colors in the uniforms, the occasional presence, of well-known personalities associated with the nation of origin (consuls or selection players) as well the existence of delegates (members of the team, captains) of each country that manages the relationships between the team and the organizing institutions.

“what I notice in the Mundialito is that the players feel like sports stars; realistically we know these are people who come from Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Uruguay, Morocco and come from very discouraging situations, then they come here and participate in a Mundialito with an official team representing their country. They feel like authentic stars since they will have the possibility of becoming integrated in a more visible league with these media with funds for an official field, referees, ... on one hand there are the facilities they wouldn’t be able to use, and on the other hand there is the sport” (focus group)
In this framework, the social integration the Mundialito pursues is related, in the discussion of our informants, with the dimension of interculturalism, in turn based on the concept “one nationality- one culture.”

The dynamics of intercultural encounters take place at three points of the development of the tournament: the competitive encounters between different teams-nationalities, the informal encounters prior to and after each match and the incorporation, where players are lacking, of “non-national” participants on each team. In this, the lack of a “Spain” team and the incorporation of Spanish players on other teams stands out.

The participants and organizers state that it is also before and after the matches that the intercultural encounters take place, independent on the fact that more or less homogeneous teams compete, as they explain:

“before and after the match, there is a moment of playing under the rules. Then, between the matches, the Americans are more serious, the Dominicans joke around more - you already know how they are, right? And each one is the way he is, it’s just personality, I think we have to be willing to accept each other and assert ‘this is how I’m’ to be accepted. This is the intercultural theme of sports, in 2000 we played football with the Peruvians and they have different ways and what you do, you adapt, that’s what counts, you know, willingness to adapt. [Interview].

However, the interaction between the different groups also occurs throughout the year, when the teams meet to train together and they also meet to make requests to the FEB2014 Foundation and to other institutions, through their delegates.

Another aspect that emerges in our interviews about the social function of the Mundialito is its potential to reduce situations of conflict between nationalities, as well as offering a space of “welcome” for recently arrived immigrants and supporting them in building their capital social:

“you start to get together, you have a group of people who have taken steps to become integrated, it may improve since some questions may come up, regarding other areas, if they don’t know how to get the health card, or how to register, those things are good for us. So I talked with the people and they ask you their questions, and you can help them at a personal level. Africans might not have bus fare or they want to return to another city, and they always ask you. (focus group).

There are some networks independent of the Mundialito which promote a process of integration not so much directed to integration into their general society, but within their own community:

“We want to be a reference for the Latino in general who arrive and when they arrive, so they will not do things they must not do. This means taking the youth from these gangs they have now to have a better image. So that the people of Madrid to have a better image of the immigrant. Through sports [Dominican Basketball League] they join so that the virus will not spread.” (Dominican Republic Trainer)

This refers to the projects of the foundation in this sense directed to the social inclusion through the practice sports. However, in the case of the Mundialito it is clear that its goal is integration in the community of Madrid:
“We attempt to encourage sports and the inclusion of all the players within this tournament with the goal that they will feel part of the community of Madrid. (Interview Foundation FEB 2014)

Finally, the proposal of a sport, the infrastructures used, and the regulations determine the relationship with sports and the levels of integration. The case of the Mundialito shows us how applying one regulation or other may demonstrate unequal degrees of integration. The model of basketball that rules the tournament is the regulatory model of the Spanish Basketball Federation, a model based on a collection of rules different from the way more customarily played in America, which is practiced in the US, of the NBA. In the case of the match between the Dominican Republic and the US, although both teams practice the model regulated by the NBA in their country of origin, we found details that allowed us to assume different levels of integration in this area. The USA team obviously committed more double errors for “traveling” before throwing the ball than the Dominican team. This is one of the rules that differentiate the two models (European and North American).

**Evaluation**

With regard to the mechanisms of follow-up and evaluation of the project, the data on which these are based are only quantitative, and regarding the number of participants, by nationality and gender. The evaluation process for follow-up, however, seems to have developed more by informal routes, thanks to the interpersonal closeness of the members of the organizing entities with the players. The effectiveness of these processes is also guaranteed by a structure of intermediate levels that perform a role of communications chain between which we may call “base players” and the more management levels of the entities. These intermediate levels are primarily the delegates of the teams, on one hand, and the volunteers and coordinators of the activities on the other. Added to these are more social relationships and non-formalized roles, which are legitimized through different types of leadership, especially social (centrality in social networks) and competence (being “good” at playing).

There does not appear to be a clear requirement among the informants for the objectively evaluating the processes of social integration that the Mundialito considers among its goals. This study wishes to offer some lines of possible application in the future.

**Social inclusion in sports: general conceptualizations**

We will integrate the data about the Mundialito with other considerations of general nature collected through our field work among the informants interviewed. We want to offer a descriptive framework on how sports are conceptualized in the context studied in the quality or function as a vehicle for integration.

First, the view of sports stands out as a ‘neutral field’ for play that, through shared rules, offers spaces for socialization:

“I always had the impression that sports can help to change the world”

“When you arrive in a place and you don’t know anyone, playing sports is one of the ways of relating socially when you don’t know the language, the culture or anything. There are some common rules, soccer is the same, basketball or volleyball in
Australia, in China, or in Spain... playing sports is a place where you can find a vehicle for communication... well, in something as simple as this, you can find meeting places.”

and even dialogue between social parties that, in a given moment, can be in conflict:

“...I say, between the people and also taking a step toward peace. For example, to build, more or less. In Senegal, for two gangs that are always attacking each other, sometimes a football tournament is organized and you see that the people get along better. There are neighborhood conflicts ... where sports are a means to take time to talk with people, talk in peace. Sports are a useful medium, a tool for peace (focus group).

The need to respect common rules in sports leads to an education in respect outside of the field:

“I think, what I told you is you have something in common, I’m from Ecuador, you’re from the Dominican Republic, and you know that both of us like basketball and we start to respect each other because of the rules of basketball.” (focus group).

This allows working on motivation, teamwork, mutual support, respect, an increase in self-esteem, socialization, peace and integration.

Although we find unanimity in the opinion of the practice of sports as a tool for facilitating integration, it is not easy to find the same consensus regarding the concept of integration itself. It is defined in various terms:

“know to live and know how get along with people”

“when society accepts a person with his culture, without hiding it”

“it’s feeling good, comfortable in a place, being yourself”

“this is the relationship we must have independent of where we are, with people, it’s something positive. So it has to be something natural.”

“but this isn’t integration, integration is more when the society accepts the person with his or her culture without hiding it; for example, I’m French and I want people to accept me with my past, my culture and my form of working in France. I wouldn’t feel integrated if I can’t look for a job, because compared with a Spanish woman, she would have priority for being Spanish under the same conditions.

(Statements extracted from interviews and focus groups)

If these visions come from conceptualizations of integration as an opening toward diversity, there are also others reinforced based on a more homogenizing perspective of what it means to become integrated:

“if I’m not different from the others then I’m integrated, but if I’m different for the group then this is something I have to adapt myself to, as they say in my country since the time of my great grandparents, we’ve said “when you go to a city and everyone is naked, and you put on a t-shirt, you’re the one who is different. Even if you don’t believe it inside, you have to do it outside like the others. The anomaly of the thing, is to try to be different from the others and that’s that.” (focus group)

The feeling of belonging to the place of immigration is also considered a central element:
“Integration is when different groups can be together without any problem, that they get along well and become part of this place (Madrid). There should be no differences.” (Interv. Field notes)

The cultural element is also introduced in the construction of the concept of culture and, sometimes, more essentialist or even assimilationist positions unite with other more dynamic ones, which identify intercultural integration as a moment of cultural do-it-yourself:

“have curiosity about the other culture”
“know how to mix and adapt”
“be sociable”
“wherever you are, do what you see” (focus group)

Also there are those who question whether the manipulation of these requirements is functional for the geographic areas of origin (i.e., relationships and international economic-political differences) of immigrants from Europe or other continents:

“also... in the case of European immigrants we can choose whether to make the effort of integration or not, we have to make the effort to become integrated. (focus group)

Conclusions
Through the study of the World Basketball Competition for Integration we have presented lines of observation about the concept of social integration as the different participants involved present it. The goal of this work is to offer some points of reflection about dimensions to consider at the time of approaching the planning, execution and evaluation of projects directed to social integration in and through sports. For this reason, we can say that the Mundialito was an object of analysis in itself and, at the same time, a pretext for a broader reflection on sports and social integration.

The analysis is also not only an exclusive result of the observation of the Mundialito. Despite being the point of departure and source of the development of the structure of analysis, there are aspects addressed here that are not exclusive to it, nor are they explicitly represented in the activity of the Mundialito.

Far from intending to approach the dimensions through which we may study the reality considered, the proposals and reflections demonstrated here are presented as a point of departure for future practices having a goal of encouraging social integration through sports and in migratory contexts.

First, any project must be framed, both in its planning and in its evaluation and/or follow-up, in the broader context in which it takes place. The Mundialito, from this point of view, obtains its effectiveness and consistency with regard to its goals only if they consider some framing elements. This must not be considered as a tournament disconnected from a broader system of basketball competitions held throughout the year in the territory of the Municipality of Madrid. The Mundialito complements, occasionally throughout the year (lasting a few weekends), a sports life already existing and organized based on a sport with a broad social base.

Only taking this characteristic into consideration can we understand the reasons that its organizers and participants offer at the time of appreciating its organization “for teams that represent belonging to a nation.” Outside of the Mundialito, the players meet in teams
independent of their origin, although some cases must be mentioned in which the national
selection teams continue existing and competing.

The *Mundialito* is “playing at the World Competition” and offers the possibility of
symbolic affirmation of national identities in the migratory context. Such structure does not
in itself guarantee preventing the exaltation of national identities from becoming an
element of conflict; but it does offer the possibility of strengthening connections between
immigrants from the same country and, meanwhile, the name of a country and its
community is associated with the practice, and sometimes the excellence, of basketball,
which often is among the most followed and valued in the same countries of origin. Ritual
elements such as the use of flags, national colors and other “globalist” symbolism have
reinforced the atmosphere of competition between countries. However, and this is an
element to emphasize, the ‘national’ borders in the constitution of the teams are not rigid,
given that any person may become part of a selection when these are lacking players. The
absence of a Spain team may be a positive element of bidirectional integration, given that it
causes the nationals to enter foreign teams.

In such a game structure, the social integration processes are identified by the actors
involved through different concepts, especially with reference to interculturalism and
dialogue between groups in a context of diversity. Here there are certain essentialist
elements in which the concept of “culture” is identified, rather simplistically, with belonging
to a nation. However, there is no lack of discussions more oriented to dynamic conceptions
of the intercultural encounter, in which the practice of sports develops a pedagogical role
offering the possibility to “learn and teach” or “do-it-yourself” from what was learned in the
encounter between different immigration contexts.

The existence of informal moments and spaces for socialization beyond the matches, is
also considered a central vehicle for diluting the “national” borders that categorize each
team.

In the case of the *Mundialito*, we observe that the population to which the activity is
directed may be considered in many cases satisfactorily integrated in the society of
immigration with strong networks of support within the same national resident alien
communities. Their participation in sports is also high. The origin of the *Mundialito* goes back
to the demand for spaces and sports moments for people already active in the practice of
basketball. In the discussions collected in this study, however, seems to be little emphasis in
the models of relationships established between the immigrant communities, this being a
significant facet of the ‘bag of tricks’ of social integration as presented at the academic level.
It is significant, at the time of planning, to take into consideration the existence of dynamics
for strengthening networks of people from the same countries or cultural realities as others
that encourage building new networks.

The participation of women is something that seems to be growing in the case of the
*Mundialito*. It is connected with the connection of friendship and family relationship with
the members of the male teams of the Dominican Republic or Bolivia, but except for the
three teams that actually compete, female participation is limited to the role of audience.
Social networks are some of the most powerful mechanisms for guaranteeing equality in
participation in social life, but this can also be a barrier. There are, however, other
mechanisms missing that would guarantee such participation.

With regard to the processes of follow-up and monitoring of the activities, especially with
regard to reaching a better situation of integration, the quantitative data are the only
tangible and objective source, while the majority of the qualitative assessments remain in
the informal sphere. This is due above all to the absence of financing more specific
dedicated evaluation activities and especially has the consequence that much of the value added of the project, much of what was learned and done, was not transferred to social actors beyond those participating in the same activity. In this sense, the approach to the goals of social integration is poorly defined and rather intangible, and the project dissemination activities do not explore in-depth what integration wishes to strengthen. All this leads to leaving the wealth and potential of the project unclear.

The sole use of quantitative indicators introduces the risk of evaluating only a part of the reality and results of the activities. This means that, for example, a decrease in the number of participants in an activity could be considered only in negative terms, when it may hide, in contrast, an improvement in the quality of the participation due to an increase in the identification and motivation in the activities by the participants.

The lack of continuous evaluation instruments, often not foreseen in the frameworks of grants and other lines of financing, does not allow confirming the scope of the interventions or implementation of the activities. It would be necessary to strengthen these processes of monitoring (throughout the project), evaluation (when completed) and follow up (maintenance of the change foreseen and obtained in the medium/long term).

The diversity of teams and the high number of participants allows the organizers to corroborate the success of the activity. Participation and presence in the media are the two indicators that seem to indicate the success of the activity. However, despite the relationships existing between some teams and the number of participants, having a space in the news of Tele Madrid does not imply that the goal of encouraging integration is met.

The qualitative evaluation must be holistic. This involves providing indicators (relationships between people or groups, participation of new members, continuity in practice, appropriation of spaces, etc.) and qualitative demonstration of the different dimensions (temporal, spatial, and social) that impact the practice of sports.

Working with concepts such as integration, interculturalism, and social inclusion and reaching a common definition among all the participants is not easy, or not even always necessary. Diversity may be enriching, but there are always different interpretations and models of society that each person and institution involved conceives as evident in spaces of common reflection.

On the contrary, the use of the same term, but with different conceptualizations, may end up promoting activities of different characteristics, which contradict each other if they are focused on the same goal, or similar activities dispersed in a range of diverse goals. At the time of defining goals there is a risk, included in the same concepts, of not reaching clear operativity shared by all of their members and participants. It is important for internal processes to be encouraged in the organizations that help to define these concepts in more practical and tangible terms. This may allow an improvement in the definition of the real goal, as well harmonizing the daily work of each individual with the mission, culture and know-how of the organization.

The ambiguity in this area, far from being merely a theoretical question, has direct impact on the host population and the development of the activity. A good definition allows us to determine the intended goal, to be more concise, and to execute activities more consistent with the goals proposed. In the short term, meanwhile, it is economically more feasible.
APPENDIX
Tools. Focus Group / Interview Script.

SCRIPT FOCUS GROUP.

Estimated number of participants 6-7: Volunteers, coordinators of the *Mundialito*, team delegate)

Goal:
- Promote the reflection of the participants regarding the values implied by sports and the concept of integration.
- Identify through this reflection the lacks, best practices that identify the current programs regarding sports and social inclusion.
- Propose lines of work that improve the current associative and institutional lines of work.

Development – script.
Presentation of the participants. Personal relationship with the project and with the realm of work.

LINES OF DISCUSSION:

A. SPORTS AND INTEGRATION.
- Sports are understood and accepted as a tool to facilitate social integration. **What are the values transmitted by sports and how are they reflected in their practice?**
- Sports are a tool to encourage integration, and have values but what view exists of integration? **What do we understand by integration?**
- **How may sports and their practice encourage carrying out the model of integration previously proposed?**

B. THE *MUNDIALITO* FOR THE INTEGRATION.
- How is the model of *Mundialito* perceived? What values are encouraged with this model of competition?
- Does this really encourage integration by strengthening the collective identity from the National Identity?
- Does the *Mundialito* attain the values defined in the first line of discussion?
- Do you think that it is decisive which type of sports are practiced, working with non-traditional minority sports?
- What do you think would be the most integrating model of competition?

C. PROPOSALS AND NEW LINES OF WORK.
- What role do the institutions have and what should they have, in this realm?
- How may the relationships between sports and integration through associations and other public and private institutions be improved?
- Is institutional action necessary?
- What perception do the beneficiaries have of the different institutional actions and other groups of civil society on this line?

SCRIPT INTERVIEW.
The proposal of interviews began with the idea for them to be held in an open physical area, with a significant number of people around; this context prevented long interviews and with
analytical content. The proposed interview scripts referred in exclusively to the Mundialito and the sports practice beyond the activity.

1. The team

   How is it created? How many times does it meet? Is it a specific union for the Mundialito? Are the members of the team recent arrivals to Spain or have they already been here for some time. How do they contact each other?

   Why do they participate in the Mundialito? How do you think the Mundialito will help them in the process of integration in the Madrid and Spanish society?

   What relationship is established with the other participating teams?

   What relationship is established between the different fans of each team? (Family and friends).

   What relationship is there after the Mundialito?

2. Sports in daily practice.

   Do you practice sports daily?

   What? See which sports and ask about the reason for these or other sports.

   Where? See the response and note public or private spaces, clubs, gyms

   If they are private spaces, Who runs?

   With whom do you practice sports?


   Do you think that public institutions do enough to encourage accessibility to the sports among all the citizens (foreign and native-born).

   Do you feel that you have the same possibilities to practice sports as a native?

   Do they understand sports as a form of integration? At what level? What type of integration - social, cultural... ?
The Ethics Statement as a tool of Local Public Administrations to promote a European sports culture
by Simona Zamboni (Schole Futuro Onlus) and Stefano Tacconi (Tuscan Region)

The primary objective of local public administrations’ actions in continuing to program and direct its sports policies is to develop increasing awareness of the importance of the benefits deriving from the performance of sports and motor-recreation activities, understood as a tool for enacting health rights, the complete physical, mental, and social wellness of people, and prevention of illness and dependence.

This development may occur through specific initiatives intended to guarantee every citizen the right to participate in sports and motor-recreational activities.

Through the adoption of specific tools, the local public administration must interpret the recognition attributed to sports and motor-recreation activities within the Treaty of Lisbon, effective December 2009, and in which, for the first time, the European Union acquired a specific competence in sports (Title XII, art.165 of the Treaty). This competence resides in the “promotion of the European sports profiles considering their specificity, of their structure based on volunteerism and their social and educational function.” The attribution of this competence, intended to promote coordinated incentive actions, leads, however, to sharing a political and social responsibility between the European Union and Member States.

This commitment assumed by the European Union is the outcome of a long route begun in 1975 with the “European Agreement for Sports for All” in which, in Art. 1, the “right to sports” for all European citizens was sanctioned for the first time. After this beginning, in 1992, the subscription of the “European Sports Agreement” (revised in 2001), which defined sports as “any form of physical activity, through organized participation or not, that has the objective of the expression or improvement of the physical and mental condition, the development of social relationships, or obtaining results in competitions at all levels.”

This definition, promoting the all-inclusive value of the sports phenomenon, allowed the emergence of its cross-cutting nature and connection with many aspects of the daily life of all citizens. For this purpose, in 2007, the European Commission created the White Book on Sports. It may be called the first European strategic document to address the topic of sports in depth to integrate it with other policies of the European Union and to improve the governance of European sports.

The directives contained in the various community documents and the attribution to the European Union of a specific competence in sports within the Treaty of Lisbon strongly emphasizes their value and social role and their now evident full inclusion in the rights of citizenship.

The importance of the development of strategies intended for the promotion of sports and motor-recreation activities was emphasized in the 2010 “Toronto Letter.” The Toronto Letter is directly targeted to the decision-makers and actors involved in the promotion of physical activity at all levels (national, regional and local) and that operate in the various sectors of society: health, transportation, environment, sports and leisure, education and training,
urban planning, public administration, civil society and private sector. The Letter underlines the importance of physical activity specifying across the board how much it “promotes wellness and physical and mental health, prevents illness, improves social relationships and the quality of life, produces economic benefits and contributes to environmental sustainability.” The Letter “invites all the countries, regions and communities to request a greater political and social commitment to promote the importance of physical activity and improve the health of all.”

This is not limited to statements of principle, but goes beyond it, identifying 4 distinct but complementary strategic areas of action:

1. implement a policy and action plan at the national level;
2. introduce policies that support the physical activity;
3. reorient services and financing to give priority to physical activity;
4. develop partnerships for the action.

If the statements cited above are analyzed in detail, first we can observe that the national policies of the European states, these past few years, have initiated a route for enacting, along the lines developed by the Union, the adoption of policies oriented to the development of the concept of ‘sports for all’ as a tool for individual and collective growth of the entire citizenship to create the basis for the development of a new concept of wellness. Within this context, policies were developed intending to promote sports and motor-recreation activities, considering them a useful tool for the promotion of collective wellness, including in physical activity those peculiarities shown in the Toronto Letter and developing programs intended to implement points 2), 3) and 4) of the Letter itself.

The adoption of specific tools at the local level able to synthesize the principles cited above expresses a willingness to orient its policies toward the evolution and consolidation of the social role of sports and motor-recreation activities, promoting actions aiming to affirm it with and toward all actors of the sports panorama... meanwhile, through these initiatives, the concept of sports for all is expanded, identifying in the right to the sports and motor-recreational practice one of the major individual factors of physical and mental well-being beyond which social, political and cultural goals are attained and has identified in this a right of citizenship and, as such, an inalienable right of everyone.

The particular merit of these initiatives is the development of their cross-cutting nature, managing to involve the various sectors within and outside the public administration and in the actions for promotion of sports and motor-recreation activities to implement joint and coordinated actions that have the wellness of the citizens as their unique center.

Precisely the area of involvement – the wellness of the citizen- is the work area of those who are more in contact with the citizens in the various phases of life; however, the Ethics Statement arises from a need emerging from the sports world and the schools recognized by the Public administrations. This represents the synthesis of the indications proposed by the European Union, cited above, and have the goal of promoting and sharing the very principles they have inspired. This begins from the application of the various local realities also in consideration of the fact that the best stories of sports, its champions, their sports actions, and their virtuous behavior are now part of the collective imagination and are universally considered sources of values, rules, and ethically correct behavior and vehicles of inclusion and healthy and aware lifestyles.
In order to make the Ethics Statement tool fully known, shared and used, there is a basic condition of general attention to the culture of healthy lifestyles and movement.

The Letter must guarantee:
1. visibility
2. sustainability
3. dissemination
4. commitment
5. participation
6. action

**Visibility**
Making a tool such as the Ethics Statement visible has a precise meaning. It must first of all be adopted through specific actions that constitute the specific political willingness of the advocate. Furthermore, to be known and respected, it must be connected to the leadership and example of well-known athletes or sports figures. For this reason, it may be useful to have testimonials from athletes or non-athletes, but certainly people known for the ethical and moral perspective that they adopt and pass on whenever their participation produces a message. Also the fact that the Public Institutions are promoting increases their credibility and authority.

**Sustainability**
It is the financial support from Public Entities or Foundations or private individuals intended to define communications campaigns promoting general wellness through greater cultural knowledge of sports. A budget allows launching a process of reflection on the indications of the White Book at the local level and an analysis of local needs.

To do this, it is necessary to involve all the entities called upon by the Letter in a process of participation: Health System, Sports System, Schools, the private sector etc.

A participative process with identified stakeholders is also the tool to define valid indicators for measuring and monitoring the state of health of sports in a specific region.

**Dissemination**
It is necessary to reproduce the Letter through various communications media, tools, websites or dedicate parts of these, organization of social network forums, specific application formats in the primary school or, in general, in schools with required attendance. The seminar organizations that explore in-depth each of the principles proposed are also the means for ensuring reflection on the Letter’s principles by all citizens and the different targets of which it is composed.

**Commitment**
The true challenge is to make every effort to overcome the difficulty of passing from rhetorical phrases to a real application of the principles.
Apply principles such as:
“Every form of doping is a violation of sports principles.”
“The proper practice of sports must be commensurate to age. It is a basic fact that the growth of people comes before an extreme search for athletic success.”
“The growth of people through sports is expressed in the understanding and in the acceptance of one’s own limits and respect for adversaries,” requires the firm willingness of the Public administration to be the motor of actions that ensure that they are not meaningless words, but source of inspiration.

A specific form of commitment is the **continuous monitoring** of the members and the members performed through publication of lists of members; for example, divided in associations, sports federations, *E.P.S. (Enti di Promozione Sportiva - Sports Promotion Bodies)*, and public entities, etc.

**Participation**
Involving the citizenship means organizing the process of adopting the Letter in a participatory manner through group development, and ensuring public moments of reflection on the Letter, also including among the actors private companies that sometimes, seeking a positive image, finance sports as a tool for prevention in a situation of economic and social difficulty without really having the tools to evaluate the effects.

**Action**
The Letter must act to disseminate a new sports culture; it must manage to speak to children, youth, families, and Institutions.
To do this, it may be useful to ensure that specific projects for target groups arise from the Letter: a kit for schools with games about sports and sports values, a spot suited to companies involved in sponsoring the Letter’s message, a prize recognizing sports for all that is not connected with “performance,” but in tune with the Ethics Statement.

**Examples of Ethics Statements**

**Piedmont Region**
In 2006, at the time of the Turin Winter Olympics, the Piedmont Region promoted and disseminated an Ethics Statement for Sports intended for Local Entities and athletes. Along with the Letter, the March 20 Turin Olympic Foundation sponsored laboratories and in-depth studies in the region’s schools.
The document may be downloaded from the website:

**Tuscan Region**
In 2011, the Tuscan Region created an Ethics Statement for Sports already adopted by many communities and public entities. Fifteen clear and concise articles affirm the right of all to practice sports in order to be well, defining the practice of sports as an “**essential component in the educational process**” and fairness, or basic fair play, in every sports discipline at both the amateur and professional levels.
The document may be downloaded from the website:
http://www.regione.toscana.it/regione/multimedia/RT/documents/2012/05/23/cd15ddf1ae78542f7ead5add9ae0987_lacartaeticadellosport.pdf
MIMoSA consortium