ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2024



Olympic Refuge Foundation

WITH THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

The ORF thanks the partners that have supported us in 2024, and we also acknowledge our passionate and committed donors that have supported the ORF since its inception. In particular, we thank the Qatar Olympic Committee for believing in our vision and making the founding donation.

FOUNDING PARTNER

International Olympic Committee

STRATEGIC PARTNER

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

FINANCIAL PARTNERS

International Olympic Committee
QATAR
airbnb
MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION NATIONALE, DE LA JEUNESSE, DES SPORTS ET DES JEUX OLYMPIQUES ET PARALYMPIQUES
RICHARD MILLE
COMCAST
OLYMPIC SOLIDARITY
Ville de Lausanne

OPERATIONAL PARTNERS

EMMAÜS Solidarité
FUTBOLMAS
kabubu
Terre des hommes Helping children worldwide
AVSI
generations for peace
UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency
MOLDOVA
MIPIM INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT HUB
SPORT INCLUSIF
PLAY INTERNATIONAL
IHF
REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS
RIGHT TO PLAY
UNFPA
YOUTH SPORT UGANDA

REFUGEE ATHLETES HOST NOCS

AUSTRIA
DENMARK
ISRAEL
ITALIA CONI
JORDAN
KENYA
PERU
NOC • NSF
COMITÉ OLÍMPICO DE PORTUGAL
swiss olympic
TURKISH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE
BRITISH OLYMPIC ASSOCIATION
ESPAÑA



WE BELIEVE IN A SOCIETY WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS, THROUGH SPORT.

CONTENTS

01. Overview	6
Foundation	10
Introduction from our Chair	12
A Word from our Vice-Chair	14
Our reach	16
Our Impact to Date	18
Our investment	19
Our Programmes in 2024	20
Access	22
Adoption	24
Collective Action	28

02. Refugee Olympic Team	30
Refugee Olympic Team for Paris 2024	32
Pre-games in Bayeux	34
A Medal for the 100million	36
Advocacy within the Olympic Movement	38
A message of hope communicated around the world	40
Awards	42

03, Programmes	44
Game Connect II, Uganda	46
Terrains d'Avenir, France	48
Sport for Solidarity, Türkiye	50
Riadati, Jordan	51
Ven y Juega, Colombia	52
Play 2 Protect, Kenya	54
SPiRiT, Bangladesh	56
RESPECT, Burkina Faso	58
Kukivi, Burundi	59
Refugee Athlete Support	60
Sport Coach+	62

04. networks	64
Sport for Refugees Coalition	66
The Multi-Stakeholder Pledge on Sport for Inclusion and Protection	67
ORF Think Tank	70
Evaluation activities	71
ORF Think Tank Members	72
Partners	74
Donor network	75

05. Annexes	76
Financial Statements 2024	78



01.

OVERVIEW

VISION

A society where everyone belongs, through sport.

MISSION

Shape a movement to ensure young people affected by displacement thrive through safe sport.

GOAL

For 1 million young people affected by displacement access safe sport by the end of 2024.



FOUNDATION

The members of the Foundation Board share the vision of building a society where everyone belongs, through sport. The Board is chaired by IOC President Thomas Bach, who is joined by the Vice-Chair, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, and 11 Board members.

CHAIR



Thomas Bach

VICE-CHAIR



Filippo Grandi

BOARD MEMBERS



HE Sheikh Joaan Bin Hamad Al-Thani



Yiech Pur Biel



Chungwon Choue



Joe Gebbia



Britta Heidemann



Anne Hidalgo



Pere Miró



Felicite Rwemarika



Josefina Salas



Paul Tergat



Michelle Yeoh



INTRODUCTION FROM OUR CHAIR

In 2016, in the midst of an escalating global refugee crisis, the International Olympic Committee created the first Refugee Olympic Team. By creating this team of 10 refugee athletes to compete at the Olympic Games Rio 2016, the IOC sent a message of hope and inclusion to all refugees in the world. With this initiative, we wanted to make the world aware of the magnitude of the global refugee crisis. The refugee athletes showed the world that we are all part of the same humanity. Their participation was a clear signal that refugees are our fellow human beings – that they are an enrichment to society just as they are an enrichment to our Olympic community.

When we created the Refugee Olympic Team in 2016, there were already 60 million displaced people globally. Since then, unfortunately, the number of displaced people has more than doubled. As of mid-2024, UNHCR reported that more than 122 million people had been forced to flee their homes due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order. The growing impacts of climate change are compounding this crisis, driving even more people to seek refuge elsewhere.

As this devastating global crisis has unfolded, we have continued to rise to the challenge. What began as the powerful idea of enabling 10 refugee athletes to compete at the Olympic Games evolved into a lasting commitment with the creation of the Olympic Refuge Foundation in 2017.

Since then, nearly one million young people affected by displacement have been reached through the transformative power of sport, thanks to the Foundation's work.

In 2024, we are witnessing the results of seeds sown years ago. The Olympic Refuge Foundation's work now spans five continents, reaching diverse contexts around the world.

As Co-Convenor of the Sport for Refugees Coalition, we have united over 140 organisations, all committed to using sport to support displaced people.

Through the ORF Think Tank, we are building a robust and growing evidence base to inform and strengthen our work.

With Sport Coach+, we have developed an innovative methodology that equips coaches with the tools to better support young people in crisis – potentially reaching thousands.

Since the reasons for creating the IOC Refugee Olympic Team still exist, the team competed again at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 and at the Olympic Games Paris 2024, where a record 37 refugee athletes took part. Throughout this journey, UNHCR has played a vital role in supporting and managing the team. Eight years after its debut at Rio 2016, the team reached a historic milestone in Paris, as Cindy Ngamba made history by winning the first Olympic medal for the IOC Refugee Olympic Team. Her success sent a resounding message: when given the chance to belong and thrive, refugees can – and do – succeed.

Today, in a rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape, we are redoubling our efforts with the Olympic Refuge Foundation, so that, through sport, displaced people find a sense of belonging, are empowered, and can rebuild their lives and shape their futures.

As the Olympic Movement enters a new era, its commitment remains steadfast. The message is unchanged: through sport, we can work together to ensure everyone, including those affected by displacement, has the chance to thrive.

We are especially grateful for the dedication of our many partners around the world, whose collaboration and commitment make our work possible; and for the steadfast leadership and support of the Vice-Chair of the Olympic Refuge Foundation Board, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, whose tireless advocacy for refugees continues to inspire and guide our mission.

THOMAS BACH, IOC PRESIDENT

A WORD FROM OUR VICE-CHAIR

FILIPPO GRANDI, UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

When the idea of a Refugee Olympic Team was first proposed in 2016, it was visionary. It was an affirmation of the potential of refugees – of people forced to flee conflict, violence and persecution. It recognised that seeing some of the finest refugee athletes on the world's biggest sporting stage would be a source of hope and inspiration to millions. And it became a reality at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

From that moment, a powerful movement began to take shape. As we reflect on the Olympic Refuge Foundation's work for the 2021-2024 period, we can look back with pride at how far we have come and how much we have achieved.

Born out of a shared conviction that sport is not a luxury but a lifeline, the ORF offers young refugees and the communities in which they live a sense of belonging, a path to healing and a reason to dream again. It has engaged more than 210,000 people in its own programmes and has contributed to partnerships that have reached hundreds of thousands more. Thanks to the ORF's engagement with the Olympic Movement, NGOs and displaced communities, sport is now widely recognised as a powerful tool for inclusion and peaceful coexistence.

This progress is also the result of great collaboration between the ORF, the International Olympic Committee and my organisation, UNHCR. In particular, and from the bottom of my heart, I want to thank President Thomas Bach for his steadfast leadership and vision. Together, we have built something that will endure.

The achievements of the IOC Refugee Olympic Team at Paris 2024 – including its first Olympic medal – are a testament to what refugees can do when they are given the opportunity to thrive. But away from the limelight of the Games, the true legacy of the ORF lies in the lives transformed by sport: the young girl who finds her confidence on the football pitch; the refugee coach who others look up to as a mentor and role model; the communities that come together and forge new friendships through play...

Today, the millions of people who have fled war and persecution need this support more than ever. Their numbers continue to rise, driven by what seems to be endless geopolitical turmoil. But our resolve to use the power of sport to help those in need, and to build on the achievements of the past four years, remains strong.

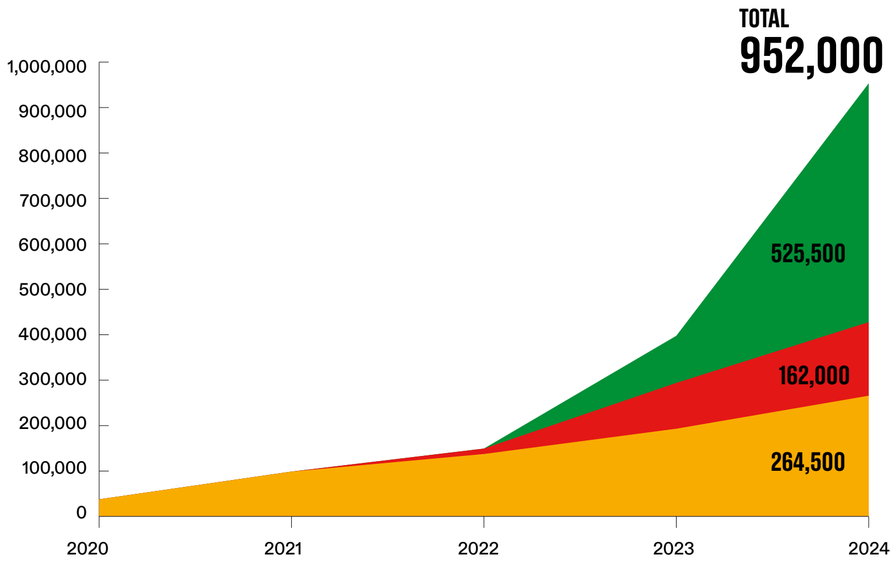
Sport has amply demonstrated its ability to restore hope and foster peace. It has been a source of respite and enjoyment for people – especially youngsters – who have been uprooted from their homes and who face immense challenges in their daily lives.

And it has given refugees and those who support them something to cheer.



OUR REACH

At the beginning of this strategic period, the Olympic Refuge Foundation set out to ensure 1 million young people affected by displacement access safe sport by the end of 2024. This graph represents how the three strategic pillars of access, adoption and collective action have contributed towards this goal.



ACCESS

Young people affected by displacement have directly accessed safe sport through the ORF's extensive programme portfolio. Through the development, refurbishment and improvement of safe sporting spaces within local communities, the ORF has ensured further access for the benefit of young displaced people.

ADOPTION

The ORF created platforms and opportunities for exchanging ideas and experiences, sharing knowledge and enhancing technical capacity through resources like the sport-for-protection Toolkit and Sport Coach+.

COLLECTIVE ACTION

Working collaboratively, and in particular through the Sport for Refugees Coalition, the ORF has led by example and ensured that a large number of organisations focus their activities on support with and for displaced people, through sport.

OUR IMPACT

+210,000
young people affected by displacement participating in our programmes

+2,800
coaches trained in delivering safe sport sessions

283
safe sporting spaces created or improved

Sport Coach+ training being delivered in

7
countries

USD 24.19
million invested in supporting displaced people through sport

40
partner National Olympic Committees

22
partner International Federations

102
refugee athlete scholarship-holders to date

16
evidence-based outputs

17
programmes

12
countries reached through programming

140+
members of the Sport for Refugees Coalition

37
members of the Refugee Olympic Team at Paris 2024

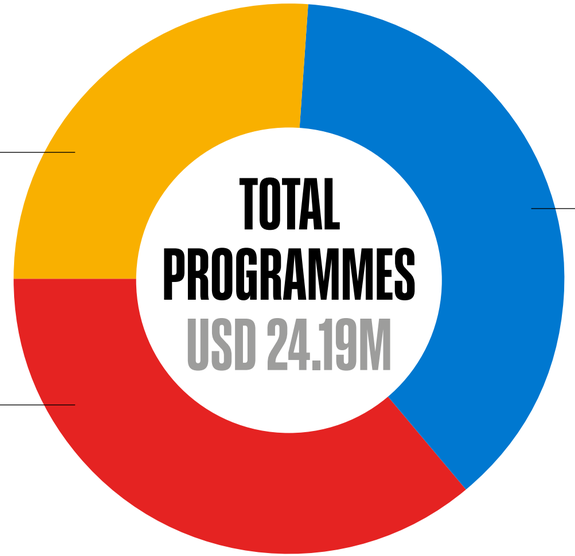
1
Olympic medal

TO DATE

OUR INVESTMENT

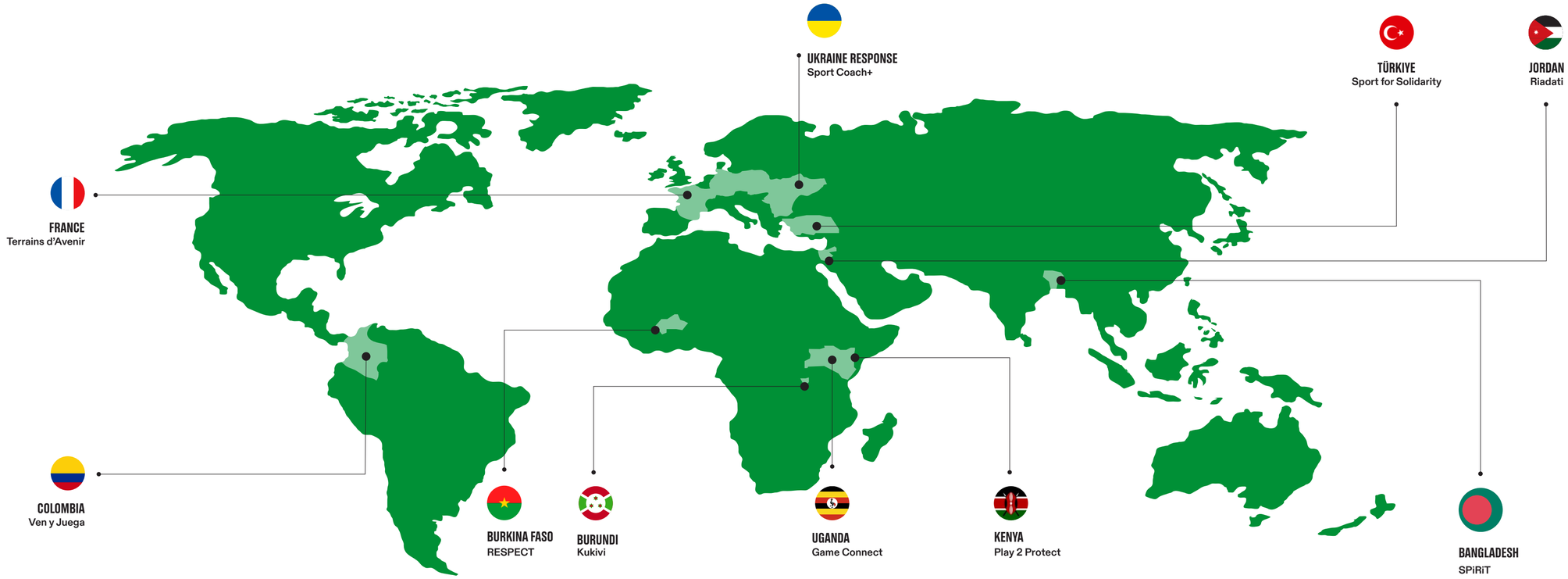
SOCIAL INCLUSION
USD 6.36M

SOCIAL COHESION
USD 9.14M



PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING
USD 8.69M

OUR PROGRAMMES IN 2024



ACCESS

Our challenge: Young people affected by displacement and refugee athletes too often miss out on the benefits that safe sport can bring due to a lack of quality provision, as well as barriers to access and participation.

ORF strategic objective: For young people affected by displacement access and benefit from safe sport through ORF programmes.

In the period 2021-2024, the ORF established new community-based programmes in Colombia (2021), Bangladesh (2022), France (2022), Jordan (Phase II, 2022), Türkiye (Phase II, 2022), Burkina Faso (2023), Uganda (Phase II, 2023) and Burundi (2024). These programmes added to the portfolio initiated prior to 2021, and the legacy programmes established by the IOC and latterly managed by the ORF.

In total, since its inception (2017), the ORF's programme portfolio has directly engaged more than 210,000 displaced young people and their peers in host communities directly in sport and sport-for-protection activities, with 17 programmes delivered in 12 countries. Programmes are focused in key thematic areas of social inclusion, social cohesion and psychosocial well-being.

ORF HIGHLIGHTS

17

programmes in 12 countries

+2,800

coaches upskilled to deliver safe and structured sport-for-protection activities

102

refugee athlete scholarship holders

+210,000

young people affected by displacement directly participating in sport and sport-for-protection activities

17

Olympic International Federations and IOC-recognised Federations allowing refugee athlete participation

IDENTITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE REACHED:



46%

FEMALE



52%

REFUGEE



6%

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)



42%

HOST COMMUNITY

ORF programmes are contextually relevant and needs-based, and place the expertise and lived experience of young people affected by displacement at the centre of the design, implementation and learning cycle.

Programmatic outcomes include improved mental health and psychosocial well-being, development of new skills and access to opportunities, as well as regaining a sense of belonging and promoting peaceful co-existence, through sport (see Programmes section).

Through ORF-funded programmes, more than 2,800 coaches (including teachers, youth workers, social workers and community-based volunteers) have been upskilled to deliver safe and structured sport and sport-for-protection activities. ORF programme partners have supported the creation, refurbishment or enhancement of more than 250 safe sporting spaces, that are accessible to an estimated 52,000 people in communities affected by displacement in addition to ORF-programme participants.

At elite level, in the period culminating in the Olympic Games Paris 2024, a total of 102 refugee athletes – 71 male and 31 female – were awarded scholarships through the Refugee Athlete Support (RAS) programme. Since September 2021, RAS has been managed by the ORF in close collaboration with Olympic Solidarity, which funds the scholarships. The RAS programme has been instrumental in allowing refugee athletes to continue their training and pursue their Olympic dreams in their new host country.

In May 2024, 37 refugee athletes – 24 male and 13 female – were selected to compete as part of the IOC Refugee Olympic Team at the Olympic Games Paris 2024. This team was the largest yet, reflecting the increased scale of the global displacement crisis. The team featured athletes hosted by 15 NOCs competing in 12 different sports – including Great Britain-based boxer Cindy Ngamba, who secured the first-ever Olympic medal for the IOC Refugee Olympic Team.

The ORF has worked closely with International Federations to help refugee athletes access club, national and international competitions, offering recommendations for their inclusion. Seventeen Olympic International Federations and IOC-Recognised Federations have amended their regulations and now allow refugee athletes to participate in their world championships and other competitions.

ADOPTION

Our challenge: Safe sport at scale must be embedded in the policy and practice of local, national and international responses for young people affected by displacement to access and benefit from it.

ORF strategic objective: Improved knowledge, understanding and technical capacity to deliver safe sport for young people affected by displacement and refugee athletes among humanitarian and development actors, governments and the Olympic Movement.

The ORF creates platforms and opportunities for exchanging ideas and experiences, co-creating and sharing knowledge, enhancing technical capacity and advocating through evidence-based resources and practical recommendations.

Co-creating and sharing evidence

The ORF Think Tank is at the centre of the Foundation's efforts in relation to the co-creation and sharing of evidence. Established in 2020, the ORF Think Tank – comprising independent experts including academics, practitioners and individuals with lived experience of displacement – enhances the ORF's credibility and advances the evidence base in relation to sport, displacement and mental health, fostering greater awareness and improvement in this field.

Members of the ORF Think Tank have published evidence-based discussion pieces and peer-reviewed articles, produced a short podcast series, collated and published a curated database of guidance and tools on sport and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and significantly contributed to the ORF's programme evaluation function (see also the Game Connect II and Sport Coach+ sections).

This work has formed the basis of ORF advocacy activities in the digital space as well as at events and conferences globally.

ORF HIGHLIGHTS

16

evidence-based products produced

567

coaches trained in Sport Coach+

Sport Coach+ handbook and interactive website open source and in

11

languages

3,399

participations in ORF-facilitated sessions and events

Sport-for-protection Toolkit open source and in

4

languages

Resource development

In 2018, the International Olympic Committee, UNHCR and Terre des Hommes published the Sport-for-protection Toolkit, programming with young people in displacement settings. The Toolkit has been widely promoted by the ORF as a framework and reference point for good practice in the design and implementation of sport-for-protection activities (see Uptake and Value of the Sport-for-protection Toolkit overleaf). In 2021, a brief guide and introductory video were launched to promote awareness and uptake. All of these resources are available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

In 2024, the ORF partnered with the Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement MHPSS Hub to launch and scale Sport Coach+ in response to the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine.

The initiative provides resources and training for sports coaches to:

- understand how stress and trauma affect the behaviour and development of young players impacted by displacement;
- create safe and supportive sports spaces that meet young people's psychological needs for connection, autonomy and mastery of skills in sport and life; and
- recognise young players in distress and respond in trauma-informed and healing ways (see Sport Coach+ section).

Exchanging ideas and experiences

The ORF's visibility and credibility have been steadily growing. Over the course of the strategic plan period 3,399 participations have been recorded in sessions facilitated by the ORF aimed at promoting safe sport as a tool to support young people affected by displacement and refugee athletes. In 2024, we have been active contributors at major events and forums including the 56th Session of the Human Rights Council, ANOC General Assembly, the Smart Cities Summit, and the Paris Summit for Sustainable Development.

INTER AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE (IASC) Wednesday Webinars for Well-being Series:

Sport and MHPSS for children and youth in humanitarian contexts: From evidence to practice brought experts and practitioners together to share evidence and practical experiences around using sport to support MHPSS and well-being of children and youth in humanitarian settings. The webinar featured contributions from ORF Think Tank members and from partner the AVSI Foundation on the ORF-initiated Game Connect programme in Uganda. In attendance were over 50 individuals from the sector.



UPTAKE AND VALUE OF THE SPORT-FOR-PROTECTION TOOLKIT



The Sport-for-protection (SfP) Toolkit – developed in collaboration between the IOC, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and Terre des Hommes – equips organisations with tools to create safe, inclusive spaces that foster belonging, hope, and resilience in displaced individuals and host communities, through sport. The Toolkit emphasises three key outcomes: social inclusion, social cohesion, and psychosocial well-being.

To understand how organisations have utilised the Toolkit, the Olympic Refuge Foundation conducted a short survey of Sport for Refugees Coalition members to gauge awareness and uptake of the Toolkit, and documented implementation experiences among a sample of users, highlighting practical insights and challenges faced in the community.

Terre des Hommes (TdH)

Locations: India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Egypt, Jordan, Greece, Burkina Faso

The Toolkit's flexibility allowed TdH to adapt its approach across contexts, from structured leagues in India, to community-driven events in Greece. The evidence-based framework supported continuous improvement, enabling the organisation to refine its methodology and expand its programming over time. Stakeholders noted that, in the absence of the Toolkit, adoption of sport as a tool for promoting protection outcomes across the organisation would unlikely have been at the same scale.

"At its core, the Toolkit equips practitioners (programme managers as well as our technical child protection teams) with practical strategies and tools to harness the potential of sport as a protective mechanism."

Reach: 23,981 young people

Palestine Sport for Life (PS4L)

Location: Palestine

PS4L found the Toolkit valuable for planning and implementing activities to promote social inclusion, gender equality, and psychosocial well-being among youth in conflict-affected areas. PS4L used the project management cycle outlined in the Toolkit to conduct situation analyses, plan strategically, and implement interventions with a focus on cultural sensitivity and trauma-informed care. Supplementary resources, such as templates and best practices, allowed them to design programmes that were both impactful and sustainable.

"By integrating the principles and strategies outlined in the Toolkit [...], we have been able to enhance the impact on the lives of young people and communities."

Reach: 24,966 young people

UNHCR's Sport-for-protection portfolio

Locations: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Chad, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malawi, Malaysia, Morocco, Slovakia, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda

All sport-for-protection projects that are supported by the Sport Coordination Team at UNHCR are informed by, and aligned with, the Sport-for-protection Toolkit. For the period 2024-2027 this portfolio now comprises 15 multi-year sport-for-protection projects through three global sport-sector partnerships.

In particular, UNHCR notes that all monitoring frameworks have been developed based on the Framework for Achieving Sport Protection Outcomes, which in turn is drawn from the Toolkit. UNHCR has also worked with partners to create and contextualise specific playbooks, building on the Toolkit and linked to specific sports: cricket, baseball 5s, football and golf (coming soon).

Reach: 77,608 displaced and host community members projected by 2027

COLLECTIVE ACTION

Our challenge: Sport as a tool to support the needs of young people affected by displacement is often ad hoc, small scale and uncoordinated.

ORF strategic objective: Fot the ORF to be a catalyst and convenor, creating and joining networks and mobilising resources.

The ORF creates platforms and opportunities for exchanging ideas and experiences, co-creating and sharing knowledge, enhancing technical capacity and advocating through evidence-based resources and practical recommendations.

ORF HIGHLIGHTS

Engagement with

40 **National Olympic Committees**

22 **International Federations**

140 **members of the Sport for Refugees Coalition**

Sport for Refugees Coalition pledging

USD 50MILLION

to reach more than

825,000 **displaced people and their host communities by 2027.**

In order to create sustained change, the ORF works with and through multi-stakeholder partnerships, to scale, improve and innovate the way in which sport is used in contexts of forced displacement. This collective action is evident at local, national and international level.

LOCAL ↘

Terrains d'Avenir: Access to sport in Paris

ORF partners in France are working hard to create lasting changes in terms of how and how much asylum seekers and refugees access sport in greater Paris. Through advocacy, communication and partnerships, we have one goal: to change the way sport is accessed in Paris, and to create a lasting legacy of Terrains d'Avenir.

This year, we focused on boosting female participation and enhancing coaches' expertise in working with young people with forced migration backgrounds.

Working with Nike we supported the creation of female-only sport sessions such as boxing, cycling, fitness, running and climbing. Female participation in sports activities has already reached 36% — double the Parisian average. By training 200 professionals in the sport-for-protection approach and securing the commitment of four major clubs in the Paris region to inclusivity for people of all backgrounds, we're ensuring the long-term impact of Terrains d'Avenir.

NATIONAL ↘

Game Connect: Advocacy and collective approaches in Uganda

In Uganda, Game Connect is engaged in national-level advocacy to raise awareness and secure the engagement of relevant ministries, departments and agencies in sport for mental health. Game Connect has engaged with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Sports, and the Office of the Prime Minister, among others.

The consortium has supported use of the Game Connect curriculum in 15 schools and by the CAFAR Foundation. The Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Health and the Uganda Parliamentary mental health forum will also have this in their respective libraries for access and use by other stakeholders.

INTERNATIONAL ↘

Sport for Refugees Coalition: Driving change at an international level

At the global level, the ORF continues in its role as co-convenor of the Sport for Refugees Coalition alongside UNHCR and the Scort Foundation.

The Sport for Refugees Coalition was established ahead of the first Global Refugee Forum in 2019. The Coalition provides a platform for members to connect and learn from others engaged in leveraging sport in support of displaced persons and their host communities. It also acts as a focal point for joint communication and advocacy efforts promoting sport as an essential tool in displacement settings.

The Coalition now unites over 140 members, including 20 International and National Federations, 30 NOCs, 14 UN Member States, and 60 civil society and other public- and private-sector organisations.



02.

REFUGEE OLYMPIC TEAM

REFUGEE OLYMPIC TEAM FOR PARIS 2024



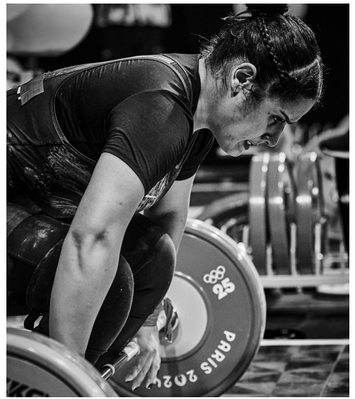
On 2 May 2024, 36 athletes hosted by 15 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and competing across 12 sports were selected to represent the IOC Refugee Olympic Team at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games – with an additional athlete joining the team later. The announcement was made by the IOC President, Thomas Bach, during a live-streamed ceremony from Olympic House in Lausanne, Switzerland. Appearing at the Olympic Games for the third time, the IOC Refugee Olympic Team represented more than 120 million forcibly displaced people worldwide.





The team was led by the Chef de Mission, Masomah Ali Zada — herself a member of the Refugee Olympic Team Tokyo 2020 — who was supported in her role by the Deputy Chef de Mission, Bernadette Castel-Hollingsworth, Deputy Director of the Division of International Protection at UNHCR. The IOC Executive Board (EB) selected the Refugee Olympic Team for Paris 2024. To be eligible, athletes needed to be elite competitors in their respective sport and be refugees in their host country, recognised by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency.





The Refugee Olympic Team's participation in the Olympic Games not only was a testament to their resilience and excellence, but also sent a powerful message of hope, belonging, and inclusion.

The flagbearers for the Refugee Olympic Team at Paris 2024 were boxer Cindy Ngamba and taekwondo athlete Yahya Al-Ghotany, and they were represented by taekwondo athlete Kasra Mehdipournejad and runner Farida Abaroge at the Closing Ceremony.

PRE-GAMES IN BAYEUX

The IOC Refugee Olympic Team, including athletes, coaches and operational staff, all gathered in the historic town of Bayeux, Normandy, for a pre-Games welcome event. The team were jointly hosted by the towns of Bayeux and Caen. The event was an opportunity for the athletes to meet for the first time and create a sense of unity amongst the team.





With its rich history, strong understanding of the impact of war, and affinity with the plight of refugees, Bayeux was the perfect host to bring the team together ahead of the Olympic Games. While in Bayeux, the athletes had access to top-level training facilities to continue their preparation, and also took part in a number of team-building activities.

Speaking from the Team base in Bayeux, Chef de Mission Masomah Ali Zada said:

“AS A TEAM, WE ARE A VERY DIVERSE GROUP – WITH MANY DIFFERENT CULTURES, LANGUAGES AND STORIES – BUT HERE YOU CAN SEE THAT WE ARE REALLY A UNITED TEAM AND WE ARE ALL CONNECTED. WE AIM TO CARRY THIS SPIRIT AND THIS TOGETHERNESS WITH US TO PARIS, WHERE WE WILL INTRODUCE THIS UNIQUE TEAM TO THE WORLD AT THE OPENING CEREMONY.”

CINDY WINNER DJANKEU NGAMBA

Her name will forever feature in the Olympic record books.

Cindy Ngamba won the first-ever medal for the Refugee Olympic Team when she defeated Davina Michel of France in the quarter finals of the women's -75kg boxing category to secure a historic bronze medal. She had defeated former World and Panamerican champion Tammara Thibeault of Canada on her way to the quarter-final.

It represented a historic moment for a team that first competed at the Olympic Games Rio 2016.

At the time, Cindy, a three-time English champion, reflected on what being part of the Refugee Olympic Team meant and how it impacted her.

"Me being here means the world to me and I am sure it means a lot to the refugee team, and many people around the world that are not even athletes that are going through so many issues and so many obstacles. They don't believe in themselves and they feel like, it's the end of the world. I hope that by them watching me they can see that everything in life I have gone through, I was able to overcome it."



A MEDAL FOR THE 100MILLION

"WHEN I WAS GIVEN REFUGEE STATUS, I USED TO BE VERY EMBARRASSED AND KEPT IT QUIET. HAVING DONE MY BACKGROUND RESEARCH AND EDUCATED MYSELF A BIT, I STARTED APPRECIATING BEING A REFUGEE, AND BEING PROUD."

After every fight Cindy reflected on the importance of her participation and successes. She said at the time: "I want to tell the refugees around the world, keep on working hard, keep on pushing yourself and you can accomplish anything."

Masomah Ali Zada, Chef de Mission for the Paris 2024 Refugee Olympic Team, said after the match: "We are so proud of Cindy. Ever since she became a part of this team, she has represented us with grace and charisma. She will go down in history as the first ever member of the Refugee Olympic Team to win an Olympic medal – and no one can ever take that away from her."

Cindy's success was due in large part to the support she received from the British Olympic Association and GB Boxing – demonstrating what refugees can achieve if they are included in their communities.

The Refugee Olympic Team that competed at Paris 2024 was the most successful team to date. Cindy's historic success was supported by standout performances from Dominic Lobalu (athletics), Ramiro Mora Romero (weightlifting) and Dina Pouryounes (taekwondo), all of whom earned Olympic diplomas in their respective sports.



ADVOCACY WITHIN THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

As the Olympic Movement came together in Paris to celebrate the Olympic Games, this presented the ORF with a number of opportunities to foster and strengthen partnerships and carry out advocacy within the Movement and beyond.

Prior to the Games, an exhibition on sport and refugees by the Ville de Paris in partnership with the ORF and UNHCR revealed the journeys of refugee athletes, including some from the Refugee Olympic and Paralympic teams, and others through 24 photographs displayed on the walls of the Napoléon barracks next to the Hôtel de Ville in Paris.

Throughout the Games, Airbnb hosted a number of events for refugee athletes and the ORF, including a special celebration at Maison d'Airbnb and a Travel Grants Beneficiaries event specifically for athletes.

Along with NGO Kabubu, the Ville de Paris, UNHCR, and Airbnb, the ORF supported Albatros: a collaborative dance performance on the theme of immigration run by choreographer and Terrains d'Avenir contributor Krisildo Guçe and featuring 18 refugee youth and professional dancers. The show was featured at a number of events during the Games, including the UNHCR-supported event on sport and refugees on 27 July, the Airbnb high-level event on 5 August and as a standalone show at Kiosque Jeune and Fabrique de la Solidarité.

Further opportunities arose at flagship events such as the Paris Summit for Sustainable Development; a special event hosted by UNHCR at Maison des Réfugiés attended by UN High Commissioner for Refugees and ORF Vice-Chair Filippo Grandi; and a special screening of We Dare to Dream at Team USA House hosted by the US Olympic & Paralympic Committee. All presented opportunities to further advocate for the cause of refugees and displaced people.



A MESSAGE OF HOPE COMMUNICATED

In its preparation for and participation in the Olympic Games Paris 2024, the Refugee Olympic Team drew the attention of the world and sent a message of inclusion to millions of people around the world. While the athletes continue to inspire through their journeys, the story of the team and the athletes was told through a number of orchestrated campaigns in collaboration between the ORF, IOC stakeholders and other partners.

The ORF worked closely with the IOC Digital Engagement and Marketing Department to deliver a visual identity, including a new logo, and a flagship marketing campaign. The “1 in 100 million” campaign included the production of an original song, a campaign film, TV and online advertising, and outdoor billboard advertising. The film was seen around the world, and also shown along the banks of the River Seine before the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony and in Olympic competition venues.

In collaboration with the ORF, Nike developed “Watch Where We’re Going” – a flagship campaign aimed at introducing the IOC Refugee Olympic Team to the world, and called on audiences to reframe their thinking around refugee athletes.

The campaign film launched shortly after the announcement of the IOC Refugee Olympic Team for the Olympic Games Paris 2024 and was distributed across most major social media channels.

The “Home Crowd” campaign, produced by Olympic Broadcaster Warner Bros. Discovery (WBD), kicked off with a powerful short film emphasising the Refugee Olympic Team’s lack of home support and called on viewers to cheer for the Team.

WBD used its global channels, platforms and digital sites to share the stories of the refugee athletes, providing spaces where their voices could be heard. This included first-person “Refugees’ Voice” features on Eurosport.com and on-demand documentaries available on Max, discovery+ and the Eurosport app, including the aforementioned documentary “We Dare to Dream”.

Beyond the cornerstone campaigns, the ORF carried out a number of communications activities to spread the stories and the message of the Refugee Olympic Team around the world.

Altogether, these efforts resulted in millions of social media engagements, thousands of articles across multiple media outlets and a global reach for the Refugee Olympic Team and its message.

AROUND THE WORLD

70 MILLION

million social media engagements through the Refugee Olympic Team campaigns

5.8K

online articles in traditional media

3.5K

articles generated by Cindy Ngamba’s medal win



AWARDS

After many years of hard work, the ORF is beginning to be recognised as a leader in the field of sport-for-protection and specifically for using sport to support young people affected by displacement. This is exemplified by a number of recent awards.

Annual Report 2024
Olympic Refuge Foundation



The Olympic Refuge Foundation and the Refugee Olympic Team received the Sports for Peace Award at the Champions Gala Event on 3 August during the Olympic Games in Paris. The Award was presented by Hollywood actor Sharon Stone to Refugee Olympic Team Chef de Mission for Paris 2024 Masomah Ali Zada, in the presence of sports legends including Carl Lewis and Michael Phelps.

On 15 October, the Refugee Olympic Team for Paris 2024 and the Olympic Refuge Foundation received the inaugural Human Rights First “Spotlight Award” during a ceremony in New York City in the presence of Yiech Pur Biel. The award recognises organisations and individuals that inspire others through their dedication to human rights and impactful advocacy whilst elevating marginalised voices.

03.

PROGRAMMES



GAME CONNECT II, UGANDA

Focus: Improve psychosocial well-being and mental health resilience

Timing: August 2023 - August 2026

Investment: USD 2 million

Partners:

AVSI People for development
RIGHT TO PLAY PROTECT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER.
YOUTH SPORT UGANDA www.youthsportuganda.org
UGANDA OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

About: Uganda hosts the largest number of refugees in Africa, with more than 1.8 million refugees mainly from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi. Through Game Connect we witness first-hand how sport supports the mental health and well-being of young people. Together with our in-country partners, we use sport to help them build the skills and capacities that support their mental health and well-being and enhance their social and support networks.

In addition to the structured curriculum of sport for mental health activities and the community engagement that was the foundation of the first phase of Game Connect, in this second phase access to sport is being scaled through schools and community-based organisations, as well as through advocacy at local and national level.

To support sustainability, 43 peer leaders received training, mentoring and resources to engage their peers in regular sports activity post-graduation from Game Connect. Through the Uganda Olympic Committee, Game Connect coaches and peer leaders have accessed sports administration training (101 participants, including 32% from refugee communities and 34% female) and technical support in sports coaching. The addition of Village Savings and Loan Groups to the Game Connect model integrates a livelihood component to the programme.

Game Connect also carries out advocacy at a national level to engage relevant ministries, departments and agencies in sport for mental health. The consortium of delivery partners has supported use of the Game Connect curriculum in 15 schools and by the CAFAR Foundation. The Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Health and the Uganda Parliamentary mental health forum will also have this curriculum in their respective libraries for access and use by other stakeholders.



BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE

Game Connect Phase II is informed by key learning and an independent impact evaluation of Game Connect Phase I. The evaluation employed a randomised design with eligible young people enrolled either directly into Game Connect or on a waitlist control group. The evaluation data show a significant improvement in the mental health of young participants in Game Connect, relative to the control group. Symptoms of anxiety and depression reduced from 55% and 57% to 6% respectively. Only modest changes were observed in the control group.

These significant improvements were observed among participants regardless of gender, age, displacement status or disability, demonstrating the inclusivity of Game Connect.

The full evaluation report is available on the ORF website and an evaluation summary is accessible via the QR code.

The evaluation data have also been published in the Journal of Affective Disorders; a submission led by members of the Olympic Refuge Foundation Think Tank.

6,392
young people supported to access safe sport

25
safe sporting spaces improved

86
coaches and professionals trained

TERRAINS D'AVENIR, FRANCE

Focus: Support young people to regain a sense of belonging and find a positive life path

Timing: February 2022 - February 2025

Investment: Over EUR 2 million

Partners:

About: Terrains d'Avenir is a programme that uses sports – such as dance, taekwondo and football, amongst many others – to support displaced young people and those from the host community-based in the Île-de-France region of France.

The programme launched in February 2022 offering opportunities for synergies with the Olympic Games Paris 2024 and the Refugee Olympic Team's participation therein.

With the aim of improving the social inclusion of young displaced people and their host communities, and to ensure access to sport for participants, the programme developed a "Terrains d'Avenir membership card", that allows free and universal access to all the sports activities offered by the consortium.

Beyond this, Terrains d'Avenir worked in collaboration with Nike to deliver 100% female sessions to create access to safe sport and social links among women affected by displacement. The work with Nike also extended to providing clubs with the capacity to include displaced people through sport by creating a training programme aimed at 200 professionals to secure the long-term, structural commitment of clubs in the Paris region.

"At the beginning I was a bit broken, a bit depressed because I was lost. They called me to go to the sessions and I feel in better shape since then. They get us out to forget about the stress, to give us motivation, not to get discouraged"

Terrains d'Avenir participant

9,368

young people supported to access safe sport

167

coaches and professionals trained

Annual Report 2024

Olympic Refuge Foundation



BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE

The findings of a recent independent evaluation of Terrains d'Avenir found that the programme fills a gap in providing support to displaced people by integrating sports into social inclusion efforts, a rare approach in mainstream services. It successfully fosters social connections, reduces isolation, improves participants' physical and mental well-being, and (re-) engages them in a variety of sports. The diversity of the sports on offer and the adapted nature of the sessions, which cater to different abilities and needs, is a strength.

The evaluation also found a positive impact on language skills, and for some young people, especially those who take on leadership roles, the programme has fostered broader socio-emotional and life skills. The evaluation noted the potential of the Terrains d'Avenir model to be further integrated into the settlement process through strengthened links with organisations such as Emmaüs Solidarité, accommodation, reception and orientation centres for newly arrived asylum seekers and to further strengthen the links between social support, sport clubs/sport-based organisations and professional pathways.

The evaluation of Terrains d'Avenir will be published on the ORF website.

SPORT FOR SOLIDARITY, TÜRKIYE

Focus: Promote social cohesion amongst refugee and host communities in urban areas, and enhance protection of young refugees through sport.

Timing: May 2022 - May 2025

Investment: USD 9.13 million (USD 4 million from ORF and USD 5.13 million from the Ministry of Youth and Sports)

Partners:

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS

ASSOCIATION FOR SOLIDARITY WITH ASYLUM SEEKERS AND MIGRANTS SGDD - ASAM 1995

About: Over 3 million Syrian refugees and over 400,000 asylum seekers now live in Türkiye, making Türkiye the world's largest host of refugees and asylum seekers in the world. There is, therefore, a strong need for programmes like Sport for Solidarity to forge connections between communities. Unfortunately, there can sometimes be tensions, bullying, discrimination and gender-based violence towards young refugees. Sport for Solidarity helps diffuse potential conflicts and builds bridges.



12,495

young people supported to access safe sport

Sport for Solidarity aims to reach young people in seven cities across Türkiye: Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, Adana, Bursa, Mersin and Şanlıurfa. As part of the programme, the Turkish Olympic Committee offers frequent seminars to learn about the Olympic Games, Olympic values, physical and mental health benefits of sports, health nutrition, fair play and environmental awareness.

A number of awareness-raising seminars have been organised in each city to cover child protection, children's rights, recognising and expressing emotions and other topics.

An external evaluation of the programme is ongoing, focusing on the extent to which Sport for Solidarity has contributed to strengthened social cohesion, through sport, among the refugee and host community young people who participated.

189

coaches and professionals trained

RIADATI, JORDAN



Focus: Improve the mental health and psychosocial well-being of displacement-affected Syrian, Palestinian and Jordanian young people, through sport.

Timing: July 2022 - February 2025

Investment: USD 1.24 million

Partner:

generationsforpeace

About: Jordan is one of the countries most affected by the crisis in Syria, hosting around 730,000 refugees, of whom some 620,000 are Syrian. Riadati, which means "my sport" in Arabic, treats sport not just as an activity, but as a purposeful tool for protection through which our partner – Generations For Peace – is equipping young Syrian and Palestinian refugees, and Jordanians.

RIADATI MY SPORT

As a part of the programme, three five-day training sessions were conducted, covering Sport-for-protection and Peace Training with the aim of mainstreaming MHPSS. The sessions engaged 40 physical education teachers who subsequently facilitated eight sport-for-protection and peace activities for 2,000 youth in nine governorates.

During the school holidays summer camps were also organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Jordan School Sports Federation. Age- and context-appropriate basketball, volleyball and sport-based activities integrated psychosocial well-being outcomes, and were delivered by volunteers trained in sport-for-protection.

15,198

young people supported to access safe sport

Programme monitoring data demonstrates a positive shift in knowledge and attitudes, and against self-reported measure of well-being and belonging. Following participation in Riadati sport for peace and protection sessions:

- **70%** of young participants reported enhanced subjective well-being
- **94%** of young participants reported an increased sense of belonging in relation to a group
- **95%** reported improved levels of intra-group social connectedness.

214

coaches and professionals trained

VEN Y JUEGA, COLOMBIA

Focus: Support social cohesion amongst refugees, migrants, returnees and host communities and reduce xenophobia in host communities.

Timing: March 2021 - March 2024

Investment: USD 1.33 million

Partner:

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

About: Ven y Juega – or "Come and Play" - is delivered within a context of ongoing displacement in Colombia, driven by the country's 60-year armed conflict. Along with Syria, Colombia currently hosts the largest population of internally displaced people worldwide, almost 7 million (UNHCR). Colombia is also home to large numbers of people crossing the border due to the political situation in Venezuela.

Co-designed with UNHCR Colombia and the Colombian Olympic Committee and by working together with three local NGOs (Makikuna Fundación, Fútbol con corazón and Opción Legal) in three diverse regions of the country (La Guajira, Norte de Santander, and Putumayo), the programme aimed to improve social cohesion among young refugees and migrants from Venezuela, internally displaced and returning Colombians, as well as the host communities.

Complementing UNHCR's child protection strategy, the programme fostered awareness of and promoted access to human rights and the Olympic values, fostered leadership development and increased resilience among young people affected by displacement in Colombia.

2,776

young people supported to access safe sport

54

coaches and professionals trained

"It helped me be more social, have better interpersonal relationships, and have more self-confidence. In addition, I have learned the fundamental values we are taught daily, such as respect, tolerance, honesty, solidarity, and more, which have been very important and have contributed to my social and personal development. Thanks to that, I am who I am."

Interview with an adolescent, Riohacha, La Guajira

8

safe sporting spaces improved



BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE

A qualitative evaluation, utilising an innovative, Outcome Harvesting methodology, found that Ven y Juega contributed to the social, emotional and psychological growth of its participants. The strongest outcomes were seen in self-efficacy, social skills and psychosocial well-being, while peaceful coexistence and social networks showed some positive but less consistent results. The role of coaches, structured activities and community support was crucial in achieving these outcomes.

The Ven y Juega evaluation will be published on the ORF website.

"IF I SEE A SITUATION WHERE I NEED TO GET INVOLVED, IT IS MOSTLY SOLVED THROUGH DIALOGUE, AND NEVER GETTING INTO A FIGHT WITH ANOTHER PERSON"

Interview with an adolescent, Los Patios, Norte de Santander

PLAY 2 PROTECT, KENYA

Play2Protect

Focus: Raise awareness of gender-based violence and promote psychosocial well-being among adolescent girls, young women and boys.

Timing: July 2020 - December 2024

Investment: USD 1.48 million

Partner:

UNFPA

About: More than 200,000 refugees and asylum seekers live in the northern Kakuma Camp and the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement of Kenya where this programme is delivered. Women and girls living in the settlements are at increased risk of gender-based violence as well as other forms of sexual and physical violence. Historically, they have had limited access to sport, but through Play 2 Protect this is starting to change.

Play 2 Protect promotes psychosocial well-being among displaced young people while also preventing, and raising awareness of, gender-based violence. Reducing vulnerability to gender-based violence among displaced adolescent girls, young women and boys, the programme aims to improve the participation of young people in sports activities and to promote their access to health services.

As the Government of Kenya works to develop the Shirika Plan, which has the objective of integrating refugees into their local communities, the ORF has worked to ensure sport is integrated into the plan.

58,757

young people supported to access safe sport

774

coaches and professionals trained

40

safe sporting spaces improved

Annual Report 2024

Olympic Refuge Foundation



SPIRIT, BANGLADESH

SPiRiT
Sports for Protection
Resilience, and Transformation

Focus: Foster inclusion and empowerment of young people experiencing or at risk of climate displacement in Kurigram district and Dhaka.

Timing: 2022 - 2025

Investment: USD 1.57 million

Partner:

Terre des hommes
Helping children worldwide.

About: SPiRiT (Sports for Protection, Resilience, and Transformation) promotes the inclusion and empowerment of young people aged 15-24, who are displaced or at risk of climate-induced displacement. Safe sport activities enhance physical, mental and psychosocial well-being for young participants and provide them with meaningful engagement opportunities and protection from the risks associated with displacement. Climate-induced disasters have forcibly displaced people living in the north of Bangladesh to slums in the capital, Dhaka. SPiRiT engages young people in communities vulnerable to the effects of climate change in Kurigram — a region highly susceptible to events such as riverbank erosion and flooding — as well as those who have been displaced to Dhaka.

10,006

young people supported to access safe sport



"Having people to turn to during hard times made me feel more protected and less alone"

Interview with SPiRiT participant.

SPiRiT is also improving young people's understanding of climate-induced vulnerabilities, focusing on preparedness and resilience. This integration of climate resilience education has enabled young people to translate knowledge into action, becoming community leaders during climate crises.

"I FEEL MORE PREPARED TO HANDLE TOUGH SITUATIONS BECAUSE I KNOW WHERE TO GO FOR HELP, WHETHER IT'S MEDICAL OR FOR A PLACE TO STAY"

SPiRiT participant

148

coaches and professionals trained

127

safe sporting spaces improved

BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE

A mid-term assessment covering SPiRiT's first phase found positive outcomes across six domains associated with psychosocial well-being. Positive changes were reported in relation to:

- Positive attitudes and self-esteem – 93%
- Feeling understood and valued – 92%
- Confidence in solving problems – 93%
- Inclusion and a sense of belonging – 96%
- Sense of safety and access to support – 90%
- And there was a decrease in the percentage of young people reporting that they felt unsupported (37% to 7%).

Young people's awareness of community services and networks increased:

- awareness of reporting mechanisms – 81%
- shelter access – 71%
- medical assistance – 69%

As did knowledge of issues related to climate change, migration and life skills; 88% reported an increase.

RESPECT, BURKINA FASO

Focus: Promote values of peace and protection, and foster psychosocial well-being among young people

Timing: June 2023 - June 2026

Investment: USD 1.05 million

Partner:

Terre des hommes
Helping children worldwide.

About: Burkina Faso has experienced a combination of crises, including armed conflict, inter-ethnic violence, poverty, inequalities and food insecurity. This is made worse by climate change, putting even more pressure on scarce resources.

Consequently, 1.4 million people have fled their homes to urban areas, making the situation in Burkina Faso one of the fastest-growing displacement and protection crises globally. The Government of Burkina Faso also hosts over 22,700 refugees and asylum seekers, mainly from Mali.

RESPECT (Sport pour la Protection et la Résilience Psychosociale des Enfants et Jeunes affectés par la crise sécuritaire) strengthens the resilience and capacity for self-protection of young people forcibly displaced by multiple converging crises in Burkina Faso. By running sport-for-protection sessions in safe environments, young displaced people develop critical life skills, improve their well-being and become agents of positive change in their host communities.

3,099

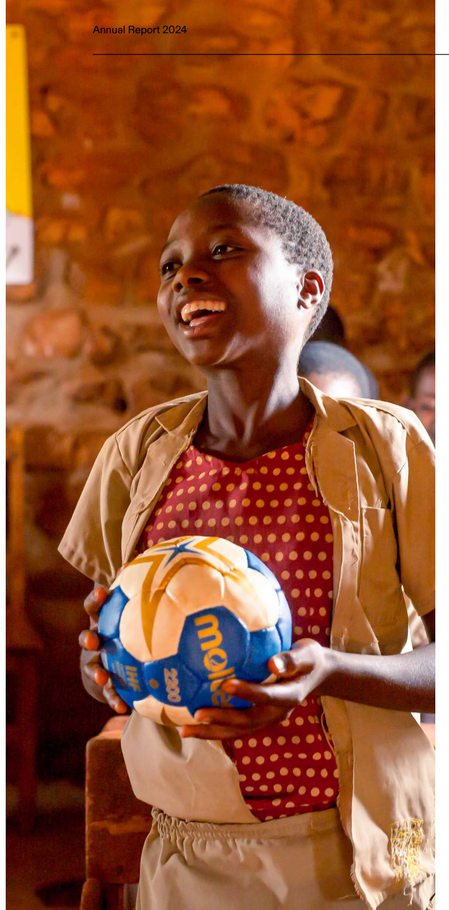
young people supported to access safe sport

104

coaches and professionals trained

17

safe sporting spaces improved



KUKIVI, BURUNDI

Focus: Improve the psychosocial well-being and resilience of returnees and host community youth

Timing: Jan 2024 - Dec 2026

Investment: USD 973,751

Partner:

RIGHT TO PLAY
PROTECT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER.

About: By the end of June 2023, Burundi was host to 374,435 persons of concern. This includes more than 200,000 refugees returning from Tanzania, Rwanda, DR Congo and Uganda as well as 75,300 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). In addition, the country has seen a sizeable influx of refugees fleeing the protracted conflict in neighbouring DR Congo.

The “Kukivi” programme uses sport-based approaches to help returnees and host community youth develop essential life skills and access quality psychosocial support. This support is provided through a network of coaches, youth peer leaders, parents, caregivers and other community members. The programme also works to strengthen the role of government authorities in using sport to enhance the psychosocial well-being of young people.

4,249

young people supported to access safe sport

78

coaches and professionals trained

REFUGEE ATHLETE SUPPORT

Focus: Support refugee athletes to train and compete at elite level

Timing: 2022 - 2024

Investment: USD 4 million through Olympic Solidarity scholarships

About: Displacement can have a profoundly negative impact on the sporting careers of elite-level athletes, often forcing them to pause or even abandon their training. The Refugee Athlete Support programme, which is managed by the ORF and funded by Olympic Solidarity, provides refugee athletes with the support needed to continue their training and compete at the highest level with the hope of achieving their dream of competing at the Olympic Games. The ORF works closely with host National Olympic Committees and International Federations to ensure that athletes are properly supported in their host country, and are able to access international competitions.

74

refugee athletes supported through scholarships in the latest quadrennial period

24

host National Olympic Committees

10

refugee athlete scholarship holders have obtained citizenship from their host countries

14

sports

17

International Federations allowing refugee participation

4

IOC Refugee Olympic Team athletes received university scholarships and resettlement opportunities in Canada - in collaboration with Olympic Solidarity and the World University Service of Canada



SPORT COACH+

sport coach+

Focus: Equip coaches with skills in trauma-informed coaching practice and psychosocial support to create safe and supportive environments for young people affected by crisis in Ukraine.

Location: Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Czechia, Ukraine, Poland and Germany

Timing: 2023 - 2025

Partner:

MHPSS INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT HUB

About: The war in Ukraine has continued to affect many young people in the region. By the end of 2024, approximately 6.1 million Ukrainians sought refugee protection across Europe and beyond; while 3.7 million Ukrainians remained internally displaced within their country.



In 2024, Sport Coach+ equipped coaches with the knowledge and skills to provide trauma-informed, inclusive coaching for displaced young people, thereby strengthening the role of sport as part of the support network in responses to displacement.

Sport Coach+, seeded in the ORF Think Tank and scaled in collaboration with the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement MHPSS Hub, helps coaches to better understand the effects of stress and trauma on young people's behaviour and development, and the ways in which sport can play a positive role supporting healing and recovery.

This year, the initiative made significant strides through Training of Trainers (ToT) and direct coach training sessions. Over the course of 2024, the Sport Coach+ team conducted six ToTs in key countries across Europe — Bulgaria, Romania, Czechia, Ukraine, Poland and Germany. These sessions have built a network of skilled trainers who are now facilitating coach training in their respective countries.

To further enhance its reach and accessibility, Sport Coach+ developed a brand identity, launched a website and published a suite of online training materials in mid-2024. These digital resources communicate the Sport Coach+ Handbook in an accessible and interactive way.

By making these materials open-source, Sport Coach+ ensures that even more coaches, regardless of their location, can access high-quality training and integrate its principles into their work.

6
training of trainer courses

95
trained trainers

567
trained coaches

approximately
40,000
young people supported by these coaches

BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE

The ORF has partnered with Columbia University Irving Medical Centre (CUIMC) to design and implement a formative evaluation of Sport Coach+ in this early phase. The evaluation aims to understand and improve the implementation and effectiveness of the initiative with a focus on identifying strengths, areas for improvement, potential barriers and progress in achieving outcomes. Findings will inform future partnerships and scaling.

RESOURCES AND TRAINING MATERIALS:

www.sportcoachplus.org



04.

NETWORKS

SPORT FOR REFUGEES COALITION

In December 2023 UNHCR brought the world together at the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva, where the IOC President Thomas Bach presented the refreshed Multi-Stakeholder Pledge on Sport for Inclusion and Protection, on behalf of the Coalition.

The ORF led a reporting and data collection exercise in late 2024 to understand the progress made on the implementation of the pledge up to that point. Data showed that in the 12 months following the Global Refugee Forum 2023, Coalition members (including the ORF) collectively supported more than 445,000 people affected by displacement to access sport and play-based activities across 82 countries.

Sport for Refugees Coalition

140+ pledging entities

33 National Olympic Committees

65 NGOs and civil society organisations

24 International and National Federations

14 governments

5 private sector entities

1 UN agency

82 countries

445,000 people affected by displacement accessing sport and play-based activities

2,000+ sports clubs and initiatives supported

6,000+ individuals trained to lead sport-based activities

109 sporting spaces created or refurbished

THE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PLEDGE ON SPORT FOR INCLUSION AND PROTECTION

1. Promote an enabling environment including policy, that delivers access to safe sport

2. Promote and provide inclusive, safe sport and play-based initiatives

3. Promote and provide opportunities for enhanced skills and pathways in and through sport

4. Use targeted communication, evidence and advocacy

5. Strengthen partnerships and coordination efforts

VOICE AND LEADERSHIP OF DISPLACED PEOPLE

In 2024, the Sport for Refugees Coalition (SfRC) continued to drive collaboration and knowledge-sharing among its members through several key initiatives:

1.

Quarterly Coalition Briefings: A platform for members to receive updates on the Global Refugee Forum, exchange insights, discuss challenges and opportunities in leveraging sport for refugee inclusion with other coalition members.

2.

Game Changers Series: Monthly articles from Coalition members on the Sportanddev platform, highlighting the impact of members to inspire and inform the wider sport and development community.

3.

1-1 Member Check-ins: Providing a space for updates on recent activities and feedback from members.

4.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Workshop Series: Three dedicated workshop series, to enhance member MEL capacity and promote effective use of data and evidence. Some 40 organisations were enrolled in the three series, which focused on strengthening data collection and impact measurement, the effective communication of data and ethics in data collection.

5.

MEL Helpdesk: A helpdesk was set up to support pledge implementation reporting.

A PERSPECTIVE FROM A COALITION MEMBER: TAMBAI, ZIMBABWE

Tambai Zimbabwe's commitment to the Multistakeholder Pledge focuses on the Sport for Refugees' Inclusion, Transformation, and Empowerment (SPRITE) project to engage over 8,000 refugees and host community members in structured sports activities by 2027. The project prioritises inclusivity, grassroots participation and partnerships. As a result of its engagement in the SfRC, Tambai has established new formal and informal partnerships including with the International Basketball Federation (FIBA), which are providing funding and equipment for project activities and Special Olympics.

"Without both platforms, it may not have been easy to attain these milestones. We are highly indebted to the capacity building received through the SfRC ahead of, during and after the Global Refugee Forum."

Martin Dururu, Tambai



ORF THINK TANK

The ORF Think Tank continues to be a pivotal initiative within the ORF's broader mission, strengthening the evidence base and advancing the discourse surrounding the intersection of sport, mental health and displacement. Building upon its foundational work in 2024, the ORF Think Tank diversified and expanded its outputs. Key initiatives included:

THINK SPORT. THINK REFUGE.

A four-part podcast series that provided a unique platform to explore the role of sport in fostering belonging and well-being for displaced young people. Hosted by Professor Alastair Ager, Co-Chair of the ORF Think Tank, each episode featured discussions with refugee athletes and Think Tank members, offering perspectives grounded in humanitarian programming, training, research and lived experience.

POLICY BRIEF

A Roadmap for Cities and Municipalities to Use Sport and Physical Activity for the Inclusion and Support of Young People Affected by Displacement. This policy brief synthesises five emerging recommendations, providing municipal stakeholders with actionable guidance on leveraging sport as a tool for social inclusion and settlement support.

SPORT AND MENTAL HEALTH INFOGRAPHIC

An accessible yet comprehensive visual representation of the global evidence base on sport's role in supporting mental health and well-being in displacement contexts. Designed to serve as both a resource and a call to action, the infographic encourages enhanced collaboration between mental health and sports professionals. This open-access resource is available on the ORF website.



EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

The ORF Think Tank played a critical role in evaluation activities, contributing to the impact evaluation of Game Connect in Uganda and the ongoing formative evaluation of Sport Coach+. These evaluations provide essential insights into the efficacy of sport-based interventions, supporting programme learning, adaptation and advocacy (see Programmes section).

Furthermore, members of the ORF Think Tank are engaged in the joint ORF and IOC-funded research project Climate Action Through Sport in the Context of Refugees and Displacement. Utilising digital storytelling methodologies, this research captures the lived experiences of young people living with the consequences of climate change and explores how sport can serve as a conduit for localised climate action.

Case studies in Bangladesh, Fiji and Jordan offer diverse geographical perspectives, while the participatory research design ensures that findings are both contextually grounded and widely applicable.

Through these initiatives, the ORF Think Tank continues to consolidate its position as a leading knowledge hub in the field, bridging the gap between academic research, policy development, lived experience, and practical implementation in the domains of sport, mental health, and forced displacement.

A SAMPLE OF PUBLISHED WORKS BY ORF THINK TANK MEMBERS

Physical activity, mental health and psychosocial support, Forced Migration Review, 2021

Realising the cross-cutting potential of sport in situations of forced displacement. BMJ Global Health, 2022

A sport-for-protection program reduces anxiety and depression in youth affected by displacement: A randomized controlled trial of the Game Connect program in Uganda. Journal of Affective Disorders, 2025

Physical activity training for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) professionals in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, Intervention, 2025

ORF THINK TANK MEMBERS

CO-CHAIRS



Alastair Ager

Emeritus Professor, Institute of Global Health and Development



Ajwang Warria

Associate Professor, Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary

MEMBERS



Maria Bray

Global Child Protection and MHPSS Advisor, Terre des Hommes



Dan Burrows

Senior Director, Social Impact EMEA, Nike



Michael Cacich

Senior Education Specialist, Education Above All - Educate a Child



Dick Clomén

Project Manager, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement



Holly Collison-Randall

Lecturer, Institute for Sport Business, Loughborough University



Anna Farello

Assistant Professor of Sport and Exercise Psychology, Ball State University



Grace Gatera

My Mind Our Humanity, Lived Experience Advocate



Dr Sabrina Hermosilla

Assistant Professor, Columbia University



Matthew Lam Joar

Programmes Officer, ON



David Karorero

Lived Experience Advocate



Phiona Naserian Koyjet

Senior Technical Advisor, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, World Vision



Gerald Mballe

Advisor, Unified with Refugees, Special Olympics



Insherah Musa

Psychologist, Jesuit Refugee Service, Jordan



Dicky Pelupessy

Lecturer, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia



Simon Rosenbaum

Associate Professor, University of New South Wales



Leslie Snider

Founder, Peace in Practice



Jadranka Stikovac-Clark

Advisor, FIBA



Victor Ugo

MHPSS and Youth Engagement Advisor



Chinwendu Ukachukwu

Lived Experience Advocate



Davy Vancampfort

Physical Therapist, KU Leuven Faculty of Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Science (FaBeR)



Pieter Ventevogel

Senior Mental Health Officer, UNHCR

PARTNERS

In addition to its core of implementing partners, the ORF works with a number of strategic partners as well as entities and organisations that provide financial and in-kind support to the Foundation and its work.

STRATEGIC PARTNER

The ORF's strategic partnership with UNHCR is of key importance. ORF Vice-Chair and UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi and Deputy High Commissioner Kelly Clements actively supported the Refugee Olympic Team (EOR) during the Olympic Games Paris 2024 and participated in communications activities and events. Filippo Grandi took part in the Torch Relay on the opening day of the Games and publicly received the Olympic Laurel awarded by the IOC during the Opening Ceremony in recognition of his outstanding dedication to support refugees through sport, and his contribution to the Olympic Refuge Foundation and the Refugee Olympic Team.

In October 2024, Filippo Grandi and IOC President Thomas Bach travelled together to Uganda to visit the Game Connect programme in Kampala's outskirts and meet with the Ugandan Prime Minister, Robinah Nabbanja. From there, they travelled to Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya to visit the Play 2 Protect programme alongside ORF Board member Paul Tergat. The ORF enjoys a regular presence at UNHCR Executive Committee meetings and UN High-Level Dialogues.

The ORF and UNHCR also worked closely as co-convenors of the Sport for Refugees Coalition, alongside the third co-convenor, Scort Foundation, in coordinating the implementation of the Pledge made at the Global Refugee Forum 2023 and supporting Coalition members.

OPERATIONAL PARTNERS

Through an agreement signed in 2023, Nike provided the training and competition uniforms for the refugee athlete scholarship holders and the Refugee Olympic Team. Additionally, Nike provided financial support to the ORF to support the Terrains d'Avenir programme in Paris, ensuring displaced women and girls have better access to safe sport and strengthening the ability of coaches to create safe and inclusive sporting environments. Nike also contributed to employing individuals with lived experience of displacement within the Foundation.

To introduce the IOC Refugee Olympic Team to the world, Nike developed "Watch Where We're Going" — a flagship campaign calling on audiences to reframe their thinking around refugee athletes and the EOR. The campaign film launched in May 2024, shortly after the announcement of the EOR for Paris 2024.

As a project of strategic importance, the ORF and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement MHPSS Hub partnership to deliver Sport Coach+ represented a key relationship for the Foundation's work in 2024, and one which looks set to continue in 2025.

THE OLYMPIC COMMUNITY

Since 2022, Airbnb has provided travel grants to all refugee athlete scholarship-holders, and in 2024 offered additional support to a number of athletes who have been resettled to Canada through a partnership with the World University Service of Canada (WUSC).

Through a collaboration with Olympic Solidarity and WUSC, four athletes who were part of the IOC Refugee Olympic Team at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 received university scholarships and were supported to resettle in Canada.

The Refugee Athlete Support Programme is co-funded by Olympic Solidarity and managed by the Olympic Refuge Foundation. By the end of 2024, the programme had supported 102 scholarship-holders across three different Olympiads.

DONOR NETWORK

During 2024, the Olympic Refuge Foundation received a total of USD 2,616,050, bringing the total donations received by the Foundation to USD 29.5 million.

The Chinese Olympic Committee contributed USD 1 million as part of its five-year commitment (2021-2025) to the Foundation.

The support of the Ville de Lausanne continues and resulted in a donation of USD 54,484.

As part of the agreement signed in 2023, Nike contributed USD 200,000 to fund the different partnership streams, as well as the value-in-kind donation of the uniforms of the Refugee Olympic Team.

Comcast Corporation made a donation of USD 500'000, announced by Pharell Williams on the occasion of the Prelude event held by LVMH, Comcast and NBC Universal on the eve of the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Paris 2024.

The Sport Coach+ initiative, supporting the mental health and well-being of displaced Ukrainians, is funded in partnership with the IOC and Olympic Solidarity through a USD 569,000 Ukraine emergency response fund.

Other donations, including from the Richard Mille Fund (USD 108,610), Mizuno, IOC Members and private donors, amounted to USD 292,571.

Source	Amount in USD
Chinese Olympic Committee	1,000,000
IOC (Ukraine response)	569,000
Comcast NBC Universal	500,000
Nike	200,000
Richard Mille Foundation	108,610
Mizuno	100,000
IOC Members	58,350
Ville de Lausanne	54,484
Private donors	25,606
Total	**2,616,050**

05.

ANNEXES



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF 31 DECEMBER

(in thousands of US dollars translated into Swiss francs)

Assets	2024	2023	2024	2023
	USD 000	USD 000	CHF 000	CHF 000
Current assets				
Cash and short-term investments	4,105	3,293	3,727	2,771
Cash	*874*	*193*	*794*	*163*
Bank deposits	-	*3,100*	-	*2,608*
Marketable securities	*3,231*	-	*2,933*	-
Other receivables	83	218	75	184
Total current assets	**4,188**	**3,511**	**3,802**	**2,955**
Non-current assets				
Marketable securities	1,269	4,944	1,152	4,160
Total non-current assets	**1,269**	**4,944**	**1,152**	**4,160**
Total assets	**5,457**	**8,455**	**4,954**	**7,115**

Liabilities	2024	2023	2024	2023
	USD 000	USD 000	CHF 000	CHF 000
Current liabilities				
Accounts payable	1,106	75	1,004	63
Accrued expenses	34	109	30	92
Total current liabilities	**1,140**	**184**	**1,034**	**155**
Fund balances				
Foundation capital	103	103	100	100
Undesignated funds	4,214	8,168	5,095	8,585
Result brought forward	*8,168*	*12 738*	*8,585*	*12 686*
Net result for the year	*(3,954)*	*(4,570)*	*(3,490)*	*(4,101)*
Cumulative translation difference	-	-	(1,275)	(1,725)
Total fund balances	**4,317**	**8,271**	**3 ,920**	**6,960**
Total liabilities and fund balances	**5,457**	**8,455**	**4 ,954**	**7,115**

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER

(in thousand of US dollars translated into Swiss francs)

	Notes	2024	2023	2024	2023
		USD 000	USD 000	CHF 000	CHF 000
Revenues					
Donations received	1	2,616	1,530	2,309	1,373
Total revenues		**2,616**	**1,530**	**2,309**	**1,373**
Expenditures					
Contributions	2	(5,506)	(5,196)	(4,860)	(4,663)
Administrative expenses	3	(1,374)	(1,460)	(1,212)	(1,310)
Total expenditures		**(6,880)**	**(6,656)**	**(6,072)**	**(5,973)**
Financial income / (expenses), net		269	489	237	439
Net increase (decrease) of carrying amount of marketable securities		50	48	44	43
Exchange gains / (losses), net		(9)	19	(8)	17
Excess of (expenditures) / revenues		**(3,954)**	**(4,570)**	**(3,490)**	**(4,101)**

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

(in thousands of US dollars translated into Swiss francs)

a. Activity

The Olympic Refuge Foundation (ORF) was constituted as a Foundation on 5 December 2017, governed by the provisions of the Swiss Civil Code, with its registered office in Lausanne.

The ORF's mission is to initiate sports-related programmes for children, young people and vulnerable populations, contributing to their protection, health, well-being, gender equality, integration, youth development, education, social inclusion and the promotion of peace; to support the creation or the rehabilitation of accessible and sustainable sports facilities within disadvantaged communities around the world; to support the creation or the rehabilitation of risk-free play spaces and the practice of sport without harassment or abuse.

b. Accounting principles applied in the preparation of the financial statements

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of commercial accounting as set out in the Swiss Code of Obligations (art. 957 to 963b CO).

The fair value of the financial instruments traded in active markets is based on quoted market prices at the balance sheet date. Where not prescribed by law, the significant accounting and valuation principles applied are described below.

Donations received and contributions

The Foundation is financed by third parties. As per the donation deed, donations are irrevocable and may not be reclaimed by the donor for any reason whatsoever. These are recognised in full as revenues (donations received) at the collection date. Donations can be received in form of cash, goods and services (Value in Kind).

Expenditures are mainly contributions to the ORF's partners in charge of implementing the projects and are recognised as expenditures (contributions) according to the payment schedule as defined in the contracts.

The excess of expenditures or revenues resulting from the period are carried forward to the next year in the undesignated funds.

Foreign currencies

The ORF's accounting records are maintained in US dollars. Assets and liabilities denominated in currencies other than US dollars are recorded based on the exchange rates at the balance sheet date. All exchange differences arising on cash and bank deposits are considered realised.

The statement of activities has been translated into Swiss francs using the average exchange rate for the year (2024: USD/CHF 0.8827, 2023: USD/CHF 0.8974), the fund balances at historical exchange rates and the statement of financial position at the year-end exchange rate at 31 December (2024: USD/CHF 0.9078, 2023: USD/CHF 0.8414). Exchange differences arising from such translation have been reported under the cumulative translation difference in the Fund balances.

c. Details, analyses and explanations to the financial statements

(in thousand of US dollars translated into Swiss francs)

1. DONATIONS RECEIVED

Donations received	2024	2023	2024	2023
	USD 000	USD 000	CHF 000	CHF 000
Donations in cash	2,616	1,440	2,309	1,292
Donations in kind*	-	90	-	81
	2,616	**1,530**	**2,309**	**1,373**

*consists of uniforms for refugee athlete scholarship holders in 2023

2. CONTRIBUTIONS TO PARTNERS

	2024	2023	2024	2023
	USD 000	USD 000	CHF 000	CHF 000
Red Cross Red Crescent MHPSS Hub (Bulgaria, Czechia, Romania, Ukraine, Poland)	1,160	-	1,025	-
“Terrains d'Avenir” Consortium, Paris Ile-de-France region	835	666	737	597
Ministry of Youth and Sport, Republic of Türkiye	813	884	717	793
Terre des Hommes, Bangladesh and Burkina Faso	808	888	713	798
AVSI Foundation, Uganda	700	750	618	673
Generation For Peace, Jordan	550	550	485	494
Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants, Republic of Türkiye	490	455	433	408
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Kenya	150	362	132	325
Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Colombia	-	341	-	306
Right To Play, Burundi	-	300	-	269
	5,506	**5,196**	**4,860**	**4,663**

3. ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

	2024	2023	2024	2023
	USD 000	USD 000	CHF 000	CHF 000
Management fees*	915	1,010	807	906
Programme development & support costs	163	166	144	149
Advocacy costs	95	80	84	72
Non-recoverable VAT	81	83	71	74
Partnership costs	50	24	44	21
Programme impact management costs	47	82	42	74
Other	23	15	20	13
	1,374	**1,460**	**1,212**	**1,310**

* Management fees consist of operational and administrative services provided by the International Olympic Committee.

4. NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS

The ORF does not have any employees.

Report of the statutory auditor

on the limited statutory examination to the Foundation Board of Olympic Refuge Foundation, Lausanne

As statutory auditor, we have examined the financial statements (statement of financial position, statement of activities and notes) of Olympic Refuge Foundation for the year ended 31 December 2024.

These financial statements are the responsibility of the Foundation Board. Our responsibility is to perform a limited statutory examination on these financial statements. We confirm that we meet the licensing and independence requirements as stipulated by Swiss law.

We conducted our examination in accordance with the Swiss Standard on the Limited Statutory Examination. This standard requires that we plan and perform a limited statutory examination to identify material misstatements in the financial statements. A limited statutory examination consists primarily of inquiries of foundation personnel and analytical procedures as well as detailed tests of foundation documents as considered necessary in the circumstances. However, the testing of operational processes and the internal control system, as well as inquiries and further testing procedures to detect fraud or other legal violations, are not within the scope of this examination.

Based on our limited statutory examination, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the financial statements do not comply with Swiss law, the foundation's deed and the internal regulations.

PricewaterhouseCoopers SA

Gérard Ambrosio
Licensed audit expert
Auditor in charge

Thomas Kohler
Licensed audit expert

Lausanne, 2 June 2025

Enclosure:

- Financial statements (statement of financial position, statement of activities and notes)

PricewaterhouseCoopers SA, Avenue de la Rasude 5, 1006 Lausanne
Téléphone : +41 58 792 81 00, www.pwc.ch

PricewaterhouseCoopers SA is a member of the global PricewaterhouseCoopers network of firms, each of which is a separate and independent legal entity.


REFUGEE
OLYMPIC TEAM
PARIS 2024


Olympic Refuge
Foundation