

Game Changers: An Analysis of the Inclusion of Newcomer Participation and Integration Through Sport in National Sport Policies



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Summary

Participation in sports has numerous benefits for both the well-being of newcomers, and the success of their integration and sense of belonging in the destination country (Doherty and Taylor, 2007). A comprehensive approach to resettlement and integration utilises policies across various sectors—including national sport policy. While Canada’s national sport policy lacks robust sport-for-integration mechanisms, other countries have addressed this policy gap and can be looked to as the ‘game changers’ of sport and migration policy.

This study asks: **How do national sport policies address newcomer integration through sport participation?**

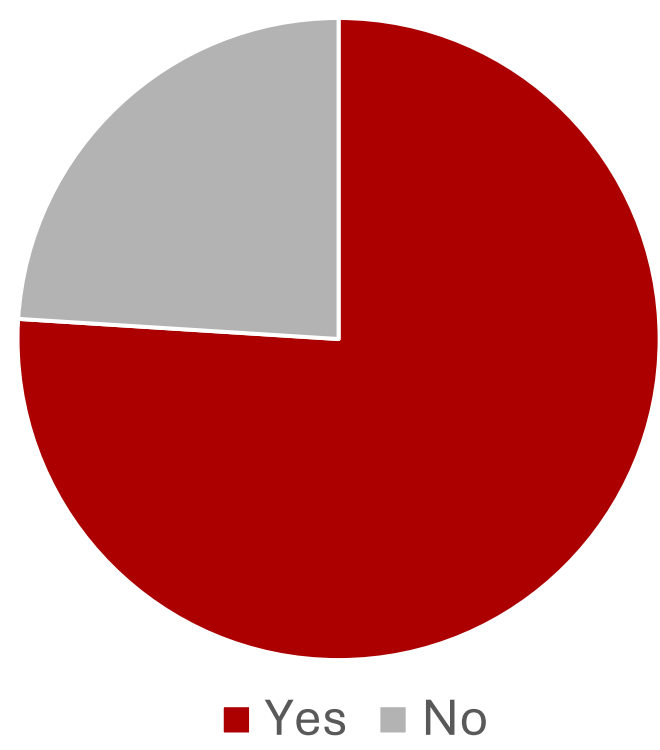
This study employs policy document analysis to examine how newcomer integration is addressed within sport-related policies.

- ▶ "Integration durch Sport" (IDS) in Germany
- ▶ "Citoyens du Sport" (CDS) in France
- ▶ “Sporting Schools Program" (SSP) in Australia

Through systematic analysis of these documents, the study identified key language, priorities, and components that shape policy approaches to integration through sport.

The findings demonstrate the potential for a collaboration between Immigrants, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Sport Canada (SC) in the Canadian context, and highlights sport-for-integration policy measures that could be included in Canada’s future sport policy to support and strengthen Canada’s resettlement strategy.

Canadian Context



76% of newcomers want to play a sport during their first year in Canada (Sport for Life, 2023)

- **2012** *Canadian Sport Policy* does not mention immigrants or newcomers to Canada or include any framework, strategy, or mechanism for supporting their participation in sports.
- **2021** Concept Paper (SIRC) made no explicit mention of newcomers or sport for integration.
- **2022** *What We Heard Report* (SIRC) consulted newcomers and calls for greater awareness on how to participate in sport in Canada for newcomers.
- **2024** \$16.7 million *Community Sport for All* initiative that specifically references newcomers as a priority group (Canadian Heritage).
- **2025** *Canadian Sport Policy 2025-2035* (CSP) improvements:

- ✓ Support for initiatives that welcome newcomers to sport is an objective at the government level.
- ✓ Sport for Development and its potential to support the settlement process of newcomers is an area of alignment for Canadians.
- ✓ Recognizes cooperation of government departments, including immigration and citizenship, for the successful implementation of CSP.



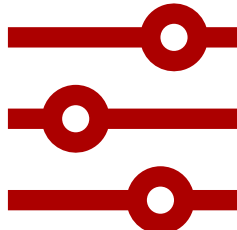
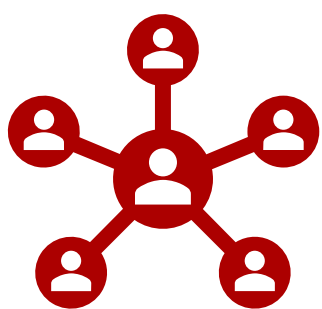
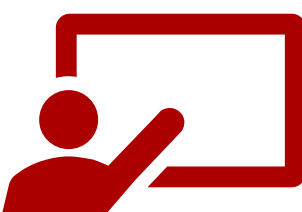
Integration Durch Sport
Germany

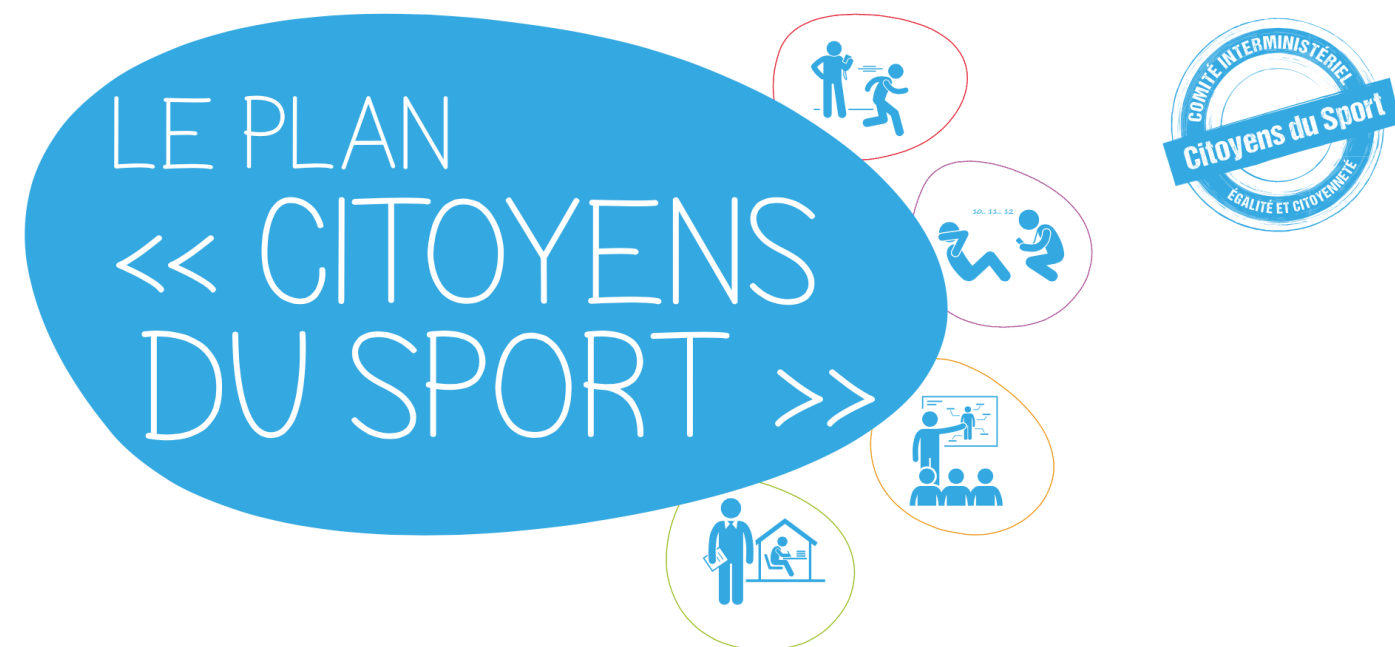
Overview

“Integration through sports” (IDS) is a federal program that was set up in 1989 to provide financial and other support to sports clubs in Germany, with the aim of encouraging migrants to participate in sports clubs and integrate into German society.

- Initially exclusively for immigrants, in 2016 the program expanded to include refugees and all other forms of migrants.
- 11.4 million euros budget.
 - ▶ Jointly funded by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building, and Community, as well as the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.
- Participating actors include the German Olympic Sports Confederation, the sports confederations of all 16 German states, and 2200 sports clubs.

Framework

-  **Diverse variety of sports activities**
-  **Target-group oriented programs**
-  **Sponsorship of tournaments**
-  **Networking events and conferences**
-  **“Fit for Diversity” qualification and training activities**
-  **Sport + X**



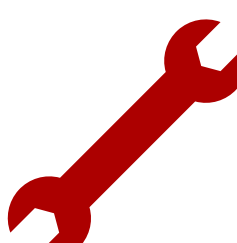
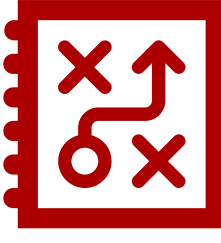
Citoyens du Sport
France

Overview

“Citizens of Sport” (CDS) is a federal plan launched by the Interministerial Committee on Equality and Citizenship in 2015 in France as a part of the broader “Equality and Citizenship” plan. This plan recognizes that “sport (like culture) has thus been defined as one of the major tools for integration,” (Ministre de la Ville, de la Jeunesse, et des Sports, 2017).

- Collaboration between the National Centre for Sport Development, Interministerial Committee for Equality and Citizenship, Minister of City, Youth and Sports, and sport associations and federations.
- 2015 funding highlights included 3.3 million euros for training of youth and creation of jobs for sports instructors and 2 million euros for sports federations to implement a Citizens of Sport plan.

Framework

-  **Professionalization of sports clubs and associations that facilitate educational, social, and civic actions**
-  **Equip sport federations with tools to develop and promote civic actions**
-  **Regular and supervised sports practice in clubs**
-  **Athlete Ambassador program**



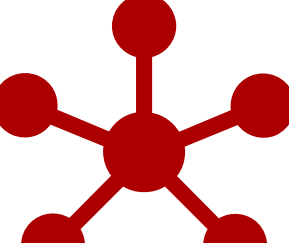
Sporting Schools
Australia

Overview

The Sporting Schools Program (SSP) was launched in 2015 to get Australian youth more active before, during, and after school (Australian Sports Commission, 2015). SSP is grounded in promoting the health value of sport participation.

- Launched with an initial investment of \$100 million AUD, 2023 budget of \$41 million.
- Operates in partnership with 35 national sporting organizations.
- Funded 8600 schools and created more than 13 million opportunities for youth to be involved with sports from 2015-2023.
- Makes sport accessible for newcomer families who often cannot afford extracurricular activities.

Framework

-  **Funding for sports programs within schools**
-  **Online database of sport lesson plans and resources**
-  **Variety of sports offered for different ages and skill levels**
-  **Accessible sports for students with disabilities**
-  **‘Playing for Life’ philosophy: fun and learning over performance**
-  **Low or no cost programs**

Recommendations

- 1. Adopt IDS’s Sport+X model to formally integrate sport with resettlement supports like language learning and cultural education.**
- 2. Model IDS’s interdepartmental collaboration to jointly produce and fund a sport for integration policy between Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Sport Canada.**
- 3. Promote Athlete Ambassadorship for members of Canada’s national team athletes to foster community connections for newcomers.**
- 4. Prioritize funding for sport in schools to increase accessibility for newcomer youth.**

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