

Social integration of children and adolescents with a migration background in organised sports – Two valuable examples in Switzerland

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Introduction

Organised sports has a high social-integrative significance for children and adolescents with a migration background. Sports clubs offers a variety of contexts in which, for example, sport-specific knowledge can be acquired, social contacts can be made, and a sense of belonging and involvement in club politics can be strengthened. Such integration achievements can be captured along a four-dimensional concept of social integration (see table 1, Adler Zwahlen et al., 2018; Esser, 2009). Organisational conditions of sports clubs can promote social integration: e.g. suitable offers, goal-oriented communication, a welcoming culture, culturally-awared coaches, integration efforts (e.g. Flensner et al., 2022). The extent to which foundations or networks with physical activity offers have conditions that promote social integration has hardly been investigated so far.

Aims

The study aimed to examine the exercise programmes «Miteinander Turnen» (network Miteinander Turnen, MiTu) for pre-school children and «MidnightSports» (IdéeSport foundation) for adolescents, and especially the structures and procedures for promoting social integration in sport as well as the diverse integration achievements were of interest.

Methods

- Phone interviews with the network Miteinander Turnen and the IdéeSport foundation in June 2020 and March 2022 that lead to qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2022)
- Document analyses of the websites www.mitu-schweiz.ch and www.ideesport.ch, of the Miteinander Turnen evaluation report and of the IdéeSport foundation report 2020/21
- Key questions on:
 - Organisation and structure
 - Strategies and measures
 - Success indicators and challenges

Results

A focused recruitment strategy, the networking of the organisations, the use of synergies, age-appropriate and multilingual information enable the integration of children and their parents as well as adolescents with a migration background in physical activity offers. In order to involve children and adolescents with a migration background,

suitable physical activity offers are designed: attractive locations and schedules, low-threshold access, participation and interaction (see figure 1), peer-to-peer approach, non-sporting offers. Furthermore, «Miteinander Turnen» und «MidnightSports» are characterised by a dynamic organisation with flexible structures, culturally-awared and trained coaches, diverse team composition and the continuity of the physical activity offer.



Figure 1: Active involvement of parents in «Miteinander Turnen» (© Netzwerk Miteinander Turnen)

With these measures and framework conditions within «Miteinander Turnen» and «MidnightSports», diverse integration achievements are possible:

Culturation	Learning sports motor skills; knowing rules, values and the importance of movement; competence development of coaches
Interaction	Bringing families closer together and networking; doing sports, exercising, playing without conflict; intensifying social contacts and everyday communication
Identification	Trust in the group; sense of belonging and pride of the group/coaching team
Placement	Place of participation; right to regular participation; involvement in planning and decisions

Table 1: Integration achievements along four dimensions (Adler Zwahlen et al., 2018)

Discussion

The two examples examined illustrate: When staging integration-oriented physical activity offers, it is goal-oriented to systematically consider organisational factors of social integration and to implement them in measures. This way, the network Miteinander Turnen and the IdéeSport foundation succeed in reaching out to young migrants and integrating them in their physical activity offers in many ways. In addition to sports clubs, alternative settings with organised physical activity offers also proactively support social integration in sport and should be more in the focus of the public, sports practice and integration research.

References

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