



## **Arts & Sports as Resolution Media**

Israel/WP8: D8.1

September 2023

Sophia Solomon and Kobi Gal  
Ben Gurion University of the Negev



© [Sophia Solomon, Kobi Gal]

**Reference:** D.RAD [D8.1]

**ISBN:**

This research was conducted under the Horizon 2020 project 'De-Radicalisation in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Re-integrate' (959198).

The sole responsibility of this publication lies with the author. The European Union is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:  
[Sophia@post.bgu.ac.il](mailto:Sophia@post.bgu.ac.il)

This document is available for download at [[www.https://dradproject.com/](https://dradproject.com/)]

## Table of Contents

<b>List of Abbreviations .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>About the Project.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Executive Summary/Abstract.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Sports as a means of alleviating social exclusion .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2. Literature Review.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.1 socio-political context .....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.2 Jewish-Arab relations .....	10
<b>2.3 Gender equality: LGBTQ+ and women in sports.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2.4 Geo-demographic gaps .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3. Challenging otherness Through Sports &amp; Arts.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3.1 Introduction: sports as an arena for social change .....</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1.1 cultural co-existence.....	13
3.1.2 Periphery-center proximity .....	14
3.1.3 Gender-based initiatives.....	14
<b>3.2 Case Study: Group interview findings: Sports as a Resolution Media .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>3.3 Sport Inclusion and the I-GAP Spectrum .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>4. Conclusions.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>References and Sources .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendix 1 .....</b>	<b>28</b>

## List of Abbreviations

**FIFA**- Fédération Internationale de Football Association, the organisation that controls international football and organises the World Cup.

**IFA**- Israel Football Association.

**Mamanet**- Netball league of mothers.

**MILAN** – Israel's first women's football club, established in the '70s. In Hebrew: "Moadon Israeli L'Kaduregel Nashim".

**NIF**- the New Israel Fund.

**The Wingate Institute**- the National Institute for Excellence in Sports, Israel.

**UEFA**- Union of European Football Associations.

**Zionism** – Jewish national ideology materialised by establishing Israel as a Jewish state, based on the word "Zion" (Jerusalem).

## About the Project

D.Rad is a comparative study of radicalisation and polarisation in Europe and beyond. It aims to identify the actors, networks, and wider social contexts driving radicalisation, particularly among young people in urban and peri-urban areas. D.Rad conceptualises this through the I-GAP spectrum (injustice-grievance-alienation-polarisation), with the goal of moving towards measurable evaluations of de-radicalisation programmes. Our intention is to identify the building blocks of radicalisation, which include a sense of being victimised; a sense of being thwarted or lacking agency in established legal and political structures; and coming under the influence of "us vs them" formulations of identity.

D.Rad benefits from an exceptional breadth of backgrounds. The project spans national contexts, including the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Finland, Slovenia, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, Israel, Turkey, Georgia, Austria, and several minority nations. It bridges academic disciplines ranging from political science and cultural studies to social psychology and artificial intelligence. Dissemination methods include D.Rad labs, D.Rad hubs, policy papers, academic workshops, visual outputs and digital galleries. As such, D.Rad establishes a rigorous foundation to test practical interventions geared to prevention, inclusion and de-radicalisation.

With the possibility of capturing the trajectories of seventeen nations and several minority nations, the project will provide a unique evidence base for the comparative analysis of law and policy as nation-states adapt to new security challenges. The process of mapping this variety and its links to national contexts will be crucial in uncovering strengths and weaknesses in existing interventions. Furthermore, D.Rad accounts for the problem that processes of radicalisation often occur in circumstances that escape the control and scrutiny of traditional national frameworks of justice. The participation of AI professionals in modelling, analysing and devising solutions to online radicalisation will be central to the project's aims.

## Executive Summary/Abstract

This report outlines the main insights from Israel, focusing on the critical themes of collaborative arts and sports media as avenues to challenge ideas of othering and difference in communities. It explores how creative arts and sports organisations across Israel can contribute to dialogue, collaboration, and everyday practices that create a framework around reconciling the grievances that can lead to radicalisation. The report demonstrates the potential for partnerships that bring people from different backgrounds together to create better and more resilient collective futures.

Relying on empirical data drawn from a few sources, including empirical research exploring the relations between sports and society (behavioural psychology, criminology and sociology of sport); sports journalism articles; information from official state reports; former D.Rad reports (D3.1; D3.2). The report will draw insights referencing the impact of sports in developing resilience to anti-social behaviours leading to violence and extremism. The first part (section 2) will offer the existing positions in the field, including arguments of sport as an aid to the personal development of skills and abilities, which create a connection to society and collective resilience. Next, (sections 2.1-2.4) will offer an overview of spaces pointing out an exclusion (peripheral populations, Arabs and other non-Jewish minorities) and discrimination in sports towards marginalised groups (LGBTQ+ and women) and a summary of action steps and events from the last decades, indicating the use of the sports field for inclusion and integration initiatives.

The following section (3) will offer an overview of the dominant projects and programs implemented as part of a policy of inclusion and integration in the community, which aims to encourage participation in sports of minority groups. This section presents state and civic society projects and collaborations between the two as avenues to challenge ideas of othering and difference in communities in Israel (3.1). It is followed by a summary of critical aspects from a group interview of a sports team, specially conducted to prepare this report (3.2). In addition, it also considers some discussion of the *I-Gap spectrum* (section 3.3) regarding the possibilities for social cohesion under the contemporary challenges of otherness, eventually affecting all layers of the population. Through promoting this understanding, sports engagement might contribute to minimising components of the I-GAP spectrum and set a basis for initialising de-radicalisation pathways.

Finally, the report will present conclusions (section 4) in the light of the reviewed data, offering the central themes that pinpoint the significance of plasticising sports as a source of personal and collective resilience: sports initiatives for community health; sports as a tool for educational availability; and Joint competition games for socialisation. The report will also list several sports programmes specifically designed to challenge aspects of social isolation and build infrastructure for resilience and community cohesion (appendix 1).

# Sports as a means of alleviating social exclusion

## 1. Introduction

Sports forge intercultural dialogue and shared identities. It can create role models for power-building and self-resilience. Sports activities among children and youths can contribute to social inclusion by strengthening physical and mental health, encouraging self-discipline, and assisting in opening learning abilities. Rehabilitation programs incorporating sports content can promote the prevention of radical manifestations of crime, especially among teenagers under long-term programs as "a way of life". Within communities, social belonging creates social networks, providing a sense of sympathy and support in times of need, making it collectively resilient. Without social cohesion and community strength, violent tendencies can become more dominant. Whereas sports activities can assist in increasing collective resilience, they can function as a mechanism for de-radicalisation.

Some states are investing in social inclusion programmes of sports as a policy to create collective resilience in societies. In Israel's divided society, which disagrees with ethno-religious perceptions and socio-economic gaps, sport is vital in its social culture. This report explores and uncovers trends in using sports as a framework for inclusion and collective resilience building while pinpointing processes that show sports' significance in promoting inclusion and social resilience under the conflictual reality. It wishes to examine recent activities made by the state and civil society organisations, offering actions that promote values of sports inclusion. In doing so, the report aims to draw insights into the potential of sports impact on diverting I-GAP-based behaviour into social resilience, helping pave de-radicalisation practices. This study focuses on the field of sports thanks to its popularity in Israeli society and due to preliminary research limitations.

The analysis in this report is based on multiple resources: researchers in behavioural psychology, criminology and sociology of sport; sports journalism articles; social media publications; and information from official state reports. We have also performed one preliminary interview and one semi-structured group interview with sports team players to get additional perspectives. This report offers a descriptive study that explores Israeli sports initiatives to answer the following questions: 1. What is the background for using inclusive sports attitudes against the social exclusion of certain groups? 2. In what way can sports be used as an arena to promote the inclusion of excluded and minority groups? 3. How can sports activities be shifted towards de-radicalisation, eliminating I-GAP tendencies?

To address the first question, we have reviewed the construction of sports leagues in Israel, particularly the most popular football game, under the complex socio-political context described by scholars and official state reports. We have located eminent exclusion towards specific groups and their relation to sports development as a field of interest. To answer the second question, we have examined the contemporary attitudes towards sports inclusion policies and programs promoted by the state and civil society organisations, as well as initiatives that express the joint work of the two.

To address the third question, we explored long-range sports initiatives and their public efficiency, using information from sports media reports, official NGO websites, and state committee reports. Relying on earlier D.Rad reports, we shared some discussion on sports' ability to potentially turn away youths and adults from expressing *Injustice, Grievance, and Alienation* that leads to *Polarisation* (I-GAP spectrum). In doing so, this report emphasises the importance of social resilience in shared spaces to develop independent-plural thinking and to find better ways to identify, investigate and solve common conflicts.

Based on the above, our conclusions enlighten the topic of sports inclusion as a mechanism for de-radicalisation actions, suggesting that it can develop mutual respect between the participants, communities and values despite inherent social difficulties in light of the prolonged conflicts and gaps. Spectating sports together can lead to the reevaluation of segregative perceptions. Operating joint tournaments between different ethno-religious communities, investing in sports infrastructure and promoting sports equality are essentials to foster an inclusive approach. It needs cooperation between state and NGO institutions that can underpin the necessity of sports initiatives' encouragement as part of public health, civic education and community co-existence reasoning.

Sports activities (and the Arts) among children and youths can contribute to social inclusion by strengthening physical and mental health, encouraging employment and assisting in opening learning abilities within educational institutions. Sustaining joint activities improved communities' social outcomes, such as reducing youth crime and creating more active citizenship (Bailey, 2005, pp. 71-75). Positive development can increase by implementing youth sports programs (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). Specifically, it can assist with youths' positive self-development paths (Bailey, 2007).

Social belonging is constructed in informal frameworks (i.e., neighbourhoods, among family and friends). It is added to the formal associations people attach to (workplace, political parties, etc.) (Grossman et al., 2014). Social belonging is produced by creating social networks and provides a sense of support in times of need. It enhances *resilience*- the ability of individuals and communities to handle and recover from a disaster, crisis or trauma. Violent tendencies might appear in the absence of social cohesion and community strength. Accordingly, to become resilient, a community needs to develop local ties outside its informal environments, a goal which sports can help accomplish. Participation in communal sports teams can protect resilience by building self-confidence, developing social skills, self-discipline and more within the individual (Ibid, p. 59).

There is also a rising awareness among states of adopting and investing in social inclusion programmes of sports as policy (Frisby & Ponice, 2013). Collective resilience became a dominant theme among counter-terror strategies (e.g., in Australia, Canada and more), asking to elevate communities' strength to assist groups and individuals in avoiding approaching extreme agendas leading to further violence. Therefore, sports



programs that emphasise personal and collective resilience can encourage resistance to radicalisation (Grossman et al., 2014, pp. 57-58). Sport is a field that can help develop positive feelings by mediating emotions and identity perceptions through an inclusive framework activated under the value of equality (Ibid, p. 68). Thus, sports can be seen as an agent of change (Lahav-Raz & Reznik, 2014, p. 136) and a source of empowerment (Ibid, p.147).

State authorities use sports programs to rehabilitate youths who turn to radical pathways (e.g., in cases of extreme Islam). Sports interventions turn the mind away from extremism by creating belonging and identification with groups of others (Richardson et al. 2017, p. 31). Empirical studies referred to sports' ability to reduce youth criminality inside weakened communities (Kelly, 2013) and among rehabilitation programs for prisoners (Meek, 2013) by building positive perceptions and behaviours (Woods et al., 2017). Participation in sports represents a positive form of social involvement, therefore progressing investment in communities and society. Since some programs have succeeded, they can fit the category of de-radicalisation initiatives (Richardson et al. 2017, p. 42).

Sports practices hold a therapeutic potential, especially for teenagers "at-risk" for radicalisation, thanks to the positive model that contributes to social integration and strengthens the sense of competence. Inspired by programs implemented in the USA and the UK, it was found that the unique importance of sport in this context lies in the fact that individuals from marginalised groups in society can see that there is a chance of success (Mughtar, 2016). However, practising sports without the proper involvement of constant professional directives does not reduce crime. It is attached to adequate budgeting and long-range programs implemented as a way of life among youths and others (Ibid, pp. 166-167).

In conclusion, sports can increase the sense of belonging to the community. Social belonging relies on resilience through which a community can help reduce future tensions. The feeling of belonging to the group can help strengthen the sense of value and self-confidence, which are known to reduce the chance of legitimising violence. To establish social resilience, one must also be exposed to other communities, which can be implemented by relying on the value of competitiveness. The shared narratives of sports, including the chance of success, the acceptance of the other, and the importance of equality in competition, can help individuals who are defined as part of "at risk" groups with a sense of group belonging and thus pave the way for them to strengthen themselves.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 socio-political context

Football is one of the most popular modern sports in the world (Guttman, 1978; Houlihan, 1997). The modernised version of football was founded in England and spread to other countries (Dunning & Elias, 1986). Football is considered a social, economic and political game field, enabling mobility as an influential tool for lower

classes and marginal groups (Ben Porat, 2008; Bernstein & Mendelzis, 2010). Thus, football and other sports are also instruments to construct political, ethnic, class and gender-based identities (Ben Porat, 2007; Guy, 2011). In Israel's early years, all football teams had an apparent political-Zionist affinity (Kaufman, 2006). Formed under its first political youth movements, the sports clubs in Israel were functioning under political affiliation: H'apoel (left-wing), Maccabi (centre-right-wing) and Bitar (right-wing). The game contained national-Zionist and class-based political elements (Ben Porat, 1999).

Under complex and fragile socio-political textures within Israeli society, notions of racism and xenophobia materialised in the past years' violent events involving youth in crucial roles of either perpetrators or human targets. As a divided society, the geo-political space is sometimes a fertile ground for various actors wishing to affect its contemporary issues violently (Gal & Solomon, 2021a). Minority exclusion expresses itself within the following conflicts: 1. Religion-based extremism, declining women and the LGBTQ+ community equal rights; 2. socio-economic differences between periphery and centre geographic areas (Gal & Solomon, 2021b); 3. The centrality of the Israeli-Palestinian national conflict used to gain in the name of radical ideologies (Gal & Solomon, 2021a). As shown in former reports (D3.1; 3.2), the above is sharpening elements of *Injustice, Grievance, Alienation, and Polarization* (I-GAP spectrum), pointing out that one of the threats Israel is facing involves its social cohesion as a multi-cultural society within the structure of a democratic framework.

## 2.2 Jewish-Arab relations

The first issue is related to the Israeli-Arab conflict. In the past, Israeli-Arab citizens were excluded from participating in the Jewish sports teams until further along, keeping self-structured teams within peripheral areas (Sorek, 2006). Over time, the commercialisation of sports in Israel decreased the importance of the national team representative as a national symbol. Football has gradually changed, adopting the transformation to global free market economies, viewing sports as profitable merchandise and not just a game (Carmi, 2020; Ben Porat, 2020). It created an increase in the importance of sporting excellence and professionalism. This trend paved the way for integrating non-Jewish players into senior football teams in Israeli sports and national groups, mobilising players nationwide. In 1976, the national football team included the participation of Rifat Turk, an Arab player, while representing the state at the Montreal Olympics. Some say it "opened" football to integrate between communities, while five Arab players were recruited to the young Israeli national team in 2010. This emphasises a sharp increase in the legitimacy of incorporating Arab players at the top of Israeli sports, sending a message that football is a platform for multiculturalism combining different ethnic groups (Pamson, 2014).

Joint sports programs for divided communities, such as Arabs and Jews, have been proven to reduce conflicts and contribute to co-existence (Shimon et al., 2014). At the very least- sports are not affected by disputes when performing within the framework of professionalism (Lahav-Raz & Reznik, 2014). In 2018, the national football team

included eight minority representatives out of 22 members. The Israeli football team showed an adjustment to inclusive regulation of minority integration in FIFA membered countries. In 2019, the number of Arab players in the senior Israeli team in the various football leagues and the youth teams exceeded the proportion of Arabs in the general population in Israel. Thus, football is viewed as an integrative arena based on one's abilities, eliminating socio-political stereotypes (Fadlon, 2019).

### 2.3 Gender equality: LGBTQ+ and women in sports

The inequality of women's participation in sports (mainly football) undermines post-modern inclusive agendas. Even though women footballers are in the minority in most countries, the imbalance between women and men in Israel is particularly noticeable. In the early 2000s, only 32,000 players registered in the soccer leagues, of which only 1,000 were women, barely 3% (Caudwell 2007, see also: Sugden, 2006). When targeted as a minority group, women footballers could also become targeted as a source of participation and inclusion. However, since football is often considered a 'male sport', the label of football played by women (women's football) departs it from the mainstream constructions of the game. It reflects a process of 'othering' (Caudwell 2007, pp. 97-99).

The first local women's team, established in the '70s, was named "MILAN" (Moadon Israeli L'Kaduregel Nashim). At the same time, football was still illegal for women in England and did not get the Official World Football Association (FIFA) support. What moved it to open women's teams and instruct a league separated from men was FIFA's order in the '90s (Reichner, 2022). In 2009, the women's league comprised 18 teams, all under budget, with a constant lack of human management resources and significant infrastructure deficiencies. The budget deficiency comes from inherent discrimination (Lahav-Raz & Reznik, 2014). Since women interviewed as "less" resulted in difficulties for women teams in recruiting investments of advertisers and resources thanks to a negative evaluation of women as "incapable". Despite that, the 2009 women's national team reached no. Sixty on the worldwide excellence scale (Perets et al., 2011, pp. 235, 240-241).

Women are involved in sports daily, but fewer are registered in competitive sports. It affects the capability to get the same financial support as men. During 2016-2017, significant gaps were found in state-budgeted sports associations, which were targeted to develop the field for youths across the state (Sigalshifer & Hasson, 2018). State and civic actors are currently attempting to correct past years' discrimination in budgets, training and status of women's football. They are following an enthusiastic reaction of fans, expressed in the opening game of England vs. Austria in Old Trafford, accompanied by 68,871 field spectators- the highest number ever in a European women's championship (Ynet, 2022), as does Euro women's football cup viewing success in 2022. Israel women's primer league currently includes only eight teams (IFA, 2022a), as opposed to 14 in the parallel male league (IFA, 2022b).

Similar to the othering of female athletes, the social resilience of the LGBTQ+ community also experiences challenges in integrating into sports. A 2016 "TLV proud sports club" position paper revealed that most LGBTQ+ professional athletes remain

"closeted" and do not expose their sexual preferences due to verbal assaults from other players and sports fans. The club representatives also asserted that LGBTQ+ sports clubs struggle to find financial funding due to their identity (TLV Proud Sports Club, 2016). It undermines the fact that in recent years (in contrast to the past), affiliation with the LGBTQ+ community was a source of financial profits; sports marketing supports rights as part of an inclusive agenda, leading to more social diversity (Cunningham, 2014).

In continuation to the above, a vital inclusion move was expressed in 2021 when Sapir Berman, a former male footballer and currently the first transgender Premier Football League judge, outed herself nationally in a press conference. The vast public accepted Berman in a warm embrace. Berman stated: *"[...] the sports world is hostile to LGBTQ+ people, both as athletes, as judges, as managers and coaches, and even as spectators. [...] sponsors still prefer not to be identified with the gay community to not damage their brand. Some players express hostility towards it"* (Ofer, 2021). The Israeli Football Association (IFA) held the announcement and received extensive coverage live on all the leading media channels in Israel.

## 2.4 Geo-demographic gaps

The final issue concerning the exclusion of minorities relates to class-based gaps, expressed in the lack of sports facilities and training in peripheral areas. In some geographically distant regions, the population is characterised by low-income abilities (e.g., southern cities and villages, remote communities in the North) and in geopolitical centres (e.g., the Sharon area, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem). Various governments repeatedly attempted to compare sports infrastructure between all regions and sectors over the years to connect the periphery and centre. For example, in 2010, the plan of the Ministry of Sport aimed to invest up to 5.5 billion NIS until 2020 in comparing sports infrastructure in peripheral areas due to the substantial differences resulting in less equal opportunities for youths (Volak, 2010). Another national program named "Sport cadets" ("Pirchey sport") was confirmed in 2013, budgeting 370 million NIS on a five-year plan to promote sports among youths to fulfil the right to self-realisation through physical activity, consolidating social resilience. It intended to expand the number of young athletes in various fields: athletics, swimming, gymnastics, sailing, judo, handball, volleyball, tennis, cycling and a non-Olympic sport (ONE, 2013).

In 2016, "Trainers to Champions", a 100 million NIS plan, aimed to build 200 synthetic grass fields in the various authorities and increase the budget for public sports facilities by 50% for each municipality (Aljam, 2016). In 2018, the Sports Ministry declared the continuing investment in infrastructure in peripheral areas (Ministry of Culture and Sport, 2018). However, most of the plans above did not increase the number of young athletes, mainly in football, in the light of no budget transferring to relevant clubs. It was then decided to change the focus from infrastructure to training and educational programs (ONE, 2018).

### 3. Challenging otherness Through Sports & Arts

The structure of the sports associations in Israel was designed according to the European model, which includes the state's financial participation and regulatory supervision. In addition, it incorporates an American model of private ownership, following the rules of the free market, according to which any sport can receive donations and financial funding from institutions and individuals. Sports associations and clubs receive allocations from local authorities and raise resources from various private parties (Sigalshifer & Hasson, 2018). The model, therefore, combines the funding capacity of the state (the Ministry of Sports and the Sports Regulatory Gambling Council) through the local authority, donations from external bodies, associations and business owners, combining characteristics of privatisation and national involvement in infrastructure and sports regulations.

Israel's state policy under 'sport as inclusion' currently focuses on four main issues: Women in sports, periphery-centre gaps, Arab society developments and sports for disabled participants. On the 2022 strategy, it claimed practices in the following fields: coach training, infrastructure, elite sports (Olympics) and sports clubs (The Ministry of Culture and Sports, 2022, pp. 3-6). Here are some significant projects led by ideas of social inclusion under the values of equality in sports, performed by state and civic society.

#### 3.1 Introduction: sports as an arena for social change

##### 3.1.1 cultural co-existence

The most known initiative is the "Kicking Racism and Violence from the Fields" program, founded in 2003 by the New Israel Fund (NIF) (NGO). It aims to eradicate racism and violence from the football fields, believing that a change that begins on the football fields will permeate the rest of society. Against the background of the wave of violence and the deterioration of relations between Jews and Arabs, the 'Kick racism and violence from the fields' program, in cooperation with the IFA, gives football teams (except the Premier League) and fan organisations grants of NIS 100,000 in total yearly for promoting inclusion (NIF, 2022).

"Football 4 Peace" (F4P) in Israel began in a handful of villages in the Galilee region of Northern Israel in 2001. It involved sending four volunteer student football coaches and one staff member from the University of Brighton to set up basic football coaching camps for Jewish and Arab children (Caudwell, 2007). Ten years later, it stretches from the northern border with Lebanon down to the southern Negev Desert. In partnership with the German Sports University, the British Council and the IFA, F4P facilitates 14 clubs, bringing together 40 Jewish and Arab Communities and approximately 1500 children yearly (F4P Israel, 2023). It holds the "On-pitch/field activities", manifested in a manual designed as a guide for coaches who recognise the potential of football as a medium to teach positive personal values that laid the foundations for enhanced inter-community relations. F4P methodology has been adopted in various situations, including school Physical Education lessons and all sports clubs, promoting "Fair Play". The first pilots occurred in Israel and Northern



Ireland- divided societies across religious, cultural, political and social lines. Now, it is utilised for different contexts and development purposes in Africa (see F4P & F4P Israel, 2023).

### 3.1.2 Periphery-center proximity

"The Equalizer Group" (The "Shaar Shivyon" association) works to reduce gaps in Israeli society by using sports as a tool for education and social change. It operates unique programs that combine professional sports with educational, value and social activities in cooperation with schools and community centres. The training focuses on Israel's social and geographic periphery, intending to give children, girls and teenagers a robust framework for personal development, assimilating values such as tolerance, mutual respect, preventing violence and eradicating racism. All while creating a bridge between different populations in Israeli society (The Equalizer, 2023).

Another initiative is "Equals in sports" ("Shavim B'sport"), a program oriented to equality for disabled youths and adults from different ethnic and gender backgrounds. It began its operation in 2018 as a pilot in 5 municipalities in Israel: Netanya (Jewish), Beer-Sheva (Mixed), Acre (Akko) (mixed), Umm El Fachem (Arab), and the Emek Hefer Regional Council (Jewish) (Ben David, 2018). From April 2019 until today, more than 280 people, teenagers and adults with disabilities and another 90 participants without disabilities, participate in regular activities within the framework of Equals in Sport. New groups were formed, dedicated to people with disabilities in various sports and collaborative groups for people with and without disabilities, whereas 45% of the participants are women (Ministry of Culture and Sports, 2019).

### 3.1.3 Gender-based initiatives

In continuation to the above (see section 3.1.1), the NIF has been operating an additional program since 2016 named "kicking Homophobia out of the fields", in which premier league teams play annually against LGBTQ+ players and teams. In 2019 such a game was played by the team "Rainball" (meaning rainbow-coloured ball) (see also appendix 1), promoted according to an English model, with about 100 players from different groups. Its principles contain fairness, tolerance, mutual respect and equality regardless of religion, race, sex or gender. As part of the month against Homophobia sponsored by UEFA, a game was held for the third year in a row at the municipal stadium in Herzliya as a joint project of the IFA, the New Israel Fund, the local municipality and the Players' Organization for Social Responsibility (Levy, 2019). In 2022, the NIF hosted its first conference combining the notion of inclusion towards LGBTQ+, women and anti-racism in football (NIF, 2022).

The "LGBT+ sports club Israel" is a roof-top organisation established in 2008 to assist groups and individuals in combining LGBTQ+ athletes in sports leagues, parallelly operating self-sustained sports teams and competitions across the country (see Appendix 1). Centred in Tel Aviv, the club initiated the 2019 "*a three-day celebration of participation and inclusion*" and hosted the most significant international sports event for LGBTQ+ in the middle east. In cooperation with the local municipality of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, it produced an event participated by 1250 athletes from 17 countries and

hundreds of spectators in a multi-sports tournament, combining swimming, soccer, basketball, volleyball, same-sex dance, tennis and a running competition (The Jerusalem Post, 2019).

Regarding women's equality, one major initiative is the pioneer organisation "Athena-the centre for progressing women's sports in Israel" established in 2007. Athena operates professional multiyear programs across the country, intending to create opportunities for girls, young women, and women in sports, with dedicated programs at sports associations and bodies (defined by standards), programs at local authorities, and sports clubs and federations (Athena, 2014). Athena helps local authorities grow the base of the pyramid of women's sports in Israel to expand the infrastructure for women's sports, starting from elementary school age. It allows local authorities to call for support through tenders and assists the selected authorities in creating unique, ground-breaking projects that make sports accessible. It also supports collaborative projects with sporting associations and clubs that contribute to advancing girls and young women. These projects help recruit and retain new athletes, create competition, and develop new opportunities for girls at the participating club/association (Athena, 2022).

In 2018 Athena was defined as the national program for promoting women's sports in Israel as an integral part of the Wingate Institute, the National Institute for Excellence in Sports (Wingate, 2018). During 2019-2020, the organisation was on the verge of closing, an option discussed in the National Sports Council, even though it has exported many successful athletes to international sports competitions such as the Olympics in many fields (Volak, 2019; Rubinstein, 2020). In 2022, the CEO declared that the aim is to increase the number of women athletes in Israel from as low as 23% to at least 30% to get closer to equal representation in sports. Athena is doing so by increasing their funds to sports associations that will commit to implementing its policy and programs (Maman, 2022).

The NGO "Zaza" (meaning "moving") was established in 2017 by a group of women who met to play football while trying to find a vacancy on a practice field. The difficulty was getting playgrounds to practice since men mostly captured them. The players turned to the Jerusalem municipality and realised a need for a broader change in the attitude towards women's sports (Davar, 2019). Following the success in finding the football fields through Zaza, word-to-mouth began to spread, and more women began to contact the association with a request to help them find areas for the basketball and volleyball games throughout Jerusalem. Zaza association was officially established in 2019 to encourage women to engage in sports (Guidestar, 2023). Today, it helps to promote the practice of sports: organising training fields and games; establishing collaborative local groups and cooperations with municipalities for annual sports events; educational programs to increase exposure to team sports among girls at a young age; operating WhatsApp connecting groups for the various sports to connect between women who want to play. The communities serve to unify women from

different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds (Davar, 2019), also holding public sports-watching events (ZAZA, 2022).

### 3.2 Case Study: Group interview findings: Sports as a Resolution Media

Considering the initiatives that seek to promote equality towards women in sports (see 3.1.3), we chose to examine the importance of sports as a resolution media through the gender perspective. Contrary to the budgeting, resources and recognition that football and basketball have in Israel (and the world), "netball" is recognised as a female 'folk' sport, not an Olympic one. Netball has developed in the last decade following private initiatives establishing amateur leagues. The major netball league named "Mamanet" (association for Mothers) was founded in 2005 and developed and operated by women in the local communities.

The Mamanet netball network aims to attract mothers of school students (elementary, middle and high schools) to participate in weekly training. Each group holds 12 mothers connecting through their children's schools. The mother plays with a shirt bearing the name of her children's school while the teams compete against each other within a municipal league. Each team has a captain, empowering female leadership. The league is open to all mothers without prior knowledge, talent or unique sporting ability. In addition, the Mamanet Association sees itself as a platform for volunteering and working for the community (Mamanet, 2023).

For the current report, we contacted a Mamanet netball sports team that agreed to be interviewed jointly and provide us with insights from their experiences. Prior to the group interview<sup>1</sup>, we conducted a preliminary interview with the founder of Mamanet, Mrs Ofra Abramowitz, who explained the main ideas behind the initiative and the context for social action through sports. The initiative to establish Mamanet's community network came from her need to participate in sports activities. After she applied to the local authority for budget assistance, the call to other women was made through their children's schools:

*"Today, there are over 5,000 participants nationwide and in women's communities abroad. Mamanet has become more than a sporting activity and has succeeded in mobilising the power of sport for health and social responsibility. To me, sports serve as a bridge between working mothers who can instil sports education, health and socialising to their children and the rest of their family."* (Abramowitz, 2023).

Mamant operates in different geographic areas and recruits women to self-sport action in peripheral regions with less access to sports facilities and women from varial demographic communities (e.g., ultra-Orthodox women, women from Arab communities with patriarchal traditions, women in prisons). Mamanet's feminine characterisation allows it to participate in unique voluntary projects (i.e., a tournament to raise breast cancer awareness) and competitions that focus on values against

---

<sup>1</sup> All interviews were conducted under BGU ethics committee approval no. 469-5.



violence and racism in sports. Accordingly, the children's participation is well taken into account:

*"[...] as cheerleaders in the stands and as those who see their mothers playing in a competitive, egalitarian and social manner helps make them part of the experience." (Abramowitz, 2023).*

Following Abramowitz's guidance, we have located a Mamant group from Israel's southern periphery for this study. Before the group interview, we had a preliminary conversation with one of the players, who was also the manager of the official Facebook page, through which we were exposed to the activities of the "Desert Foxes" (Shoulot H'aMidbar) team. Most netball players live in the same locality. They shared different family statuses (single, divorced, single parents, co-parenting) and stated their diverse personal backgrounds (religious, secular, LGBTQ+) and age differences.

The group interview was performed via Zoom at the team's request. 6 out of 12 players and the coach participated in the discussion (seven participants) while having a joint dinner at the coach's house. After a short introduction, each participant was asked similar questions to examine how the sports activity influences one's personal and communal life, enhancing narratives of success, inclusion and belongingness. In the group interview, it became clear that the team is captured as an alternative to the lack of options in sports activities for women. The distance of the town from cultural centres and the lack of local resources have led the players to establish and maintain the team of Mamanet (Desert Foxes, 2023).

Several critical points have emerged from the group interview. First, all the participants testified that playing sports gives them a broad contribution on a personal level, emphasising the following: 1. improving physical abilities, 2. developing mental strength, and 3. sharpening self-abilities that they were not exposed to before they were a part from a regular sports team.

Second, the participants testified that being part of the group has a broad social importance. In this respect, the practice of netball led to the acquaintance of other women with different life characteristics, which helped them make new friendships. More than that, the new friendships present family-like attributes for them, as many shared their ability to trust their group members, sometimes even more than their immediate surroundings.

Thirdly, the sport is perceived by the players in the team as a refuge, a kind of space that is disconnected from the daily routine and allows for the release of tensions and pressures. In this way, the sport is seen as a routine breaker and produces a new act disconnected from the familiar environment. Fourthly, the participant considers the sport a value in itself, as it instils equality and fair competition for future generations by stationing 'sportive motherhood' as a role model. In this way, the sport helps them bequeath their children's essential values for everyday life (e.g., preventing school boycotts or violence).

Here, it is worth noting an important point of criticism raised by the participants during the interview. According to them, one of the main difficulties in operating and strengthening the group is balancing the value of the deep friendship ("socialisation") created between them and the striving for a high level of competitiveness, which requires holding onto professional standards. Even though success was captured as an achievement that supports those family-like ties, over time, the deep connections formed may decrease the value of competitiveness. Accordingly, each participant might confuse the personal relationship as part of professionalism and thus not consider its "true" sports qualities while playing the game.

The participants shared that the Mamant group's folk structure makes it a more eligible sports field since no prior requirements or high-skill qualifications are needed. Mamant brings together women from internal and external communities as part of the competitive element. The interviewees said that most friendships and connections formed through participation in sports would not have been created without the meeting through joint netball games and weekly training.

Some said that they learned how to handle emotions of failure since "[...] *the victories and the losses cannot be blamed on one's self. We are all part of it and learn to take it as an opportunity to improve on the next game*" (Desert Foxes, 2023). The players mentioned that when they lose, they do not ignore tensions but confront them by "*taking it out on the field*" (Ibid). They attempt to strengthen their resilience by continuing to meet, not allowing players to be left out, developing a sense of commitment to their partnership, and thus enabling them to confront their emotions together.

Above all, the social contribution of participating in the sports team stood out, emphasising that "accepting the other" is an integral part of the goals of participating in the Mamant team. Hence, Mamant's togetherness exposes its members of a distant community to other groups while sharing similar values and perceptions through sports infrastructure. It is seen as a self-made action, offering a self-made solution due to the inherent position of lack of opportunities as women and as peripheral habitats, thus decreasing perceptions of Injustice, Grievance or Alienation for the participants *and* their children and families.

### 3.3 Sport Inclusion and the I-GAP Spectrum

Expenditure of specific populations from centres of power may lead to generational perceptions of exclusion. Children and the immediate family environment can develop negative ways of expressing themselves and an unfairly lower self-perception. In contrast, including groups that perceive themselves as excluded can produce resilience and, thus, resistance to harmful pathways. At the personal and social level, inclusion passes on positive and healthy lifestyles to future generations. As revealed in our previous report (D3.2), children's exposure to racism and xenophobia incurs the highest price, whether through building negative perceptions towards others or replicating violent acts (Gal & Solomon, 2021b).

It is here to offer that a sports-inclusive framework must focus on young participants, as shown in the case of the Mamanet League, in which the players' children are part of the sports influence, connecting through their schools. It can eliminate I-GAP components that develop over time. The connection between de-radicalisation and sports practices is created precisely in places of essential socio-political gaps and involves teenagers and young people. Fundamental injustice based on sex, gender or resources can alienate discourse when the opposite action detracts from it. Exclusion affects some subjects and populations sometimes in a double way (e.g., excluding women from participating in sports who are also of non-Jewish origin and discrimination against members of the LGBTQ+ community who also experience exclusion due to living in a peripheral area).

According to the data gathered for this report, primary conditions for equality suggest it is possible to strengthen positive qualities through developing the skills that sports games offer to provide a solution for achieving personal justice over time. More remote communities feel part of the entire population through the support of appropriate facilities and professional training as a regular practice. Thus, satisfaction can replace the grievance created because of injustice by developing personal skills that will allow one to achieve what the establishment or other bodies do not provide, even when there is no "perfect" distributive justice.

The sense of alienation sometimes attached to fundamental injustice and grievance can be replaced by a sense of belonging when sports can strengthen personal and collective resilience, reducing loneliness and the isolation of communities through initiatives and projects in central areas. Eventually, it might contribute to decreasing perceptions of polarisation. Cooperation between different communities via sports associations, NGOs and municipal networks leads to integration, which produces inclusion in the long run.

Finally, when other parts of society work together within small communities that are part of the whole, the chance of deepening internal and external polarisation is slight. Modern sport is blind to socio-political differences; however, it must be made visible to communities that perceive themselves as transparent. While examining a united team of netball players, sports seemed to alleviate their attachments to their community, thus eliminating notions of exclusion. Our findings revealed that players admitted to becoming familiar with the local neighbours through the team. Some have acknowledged that alongside the sports activity, the connection to the team has empowered them as strong women captured as part of the community's representatives.

Despite differences in resources compared to other sports teams in central areas, the participants said they do not hold any negative emotions, such as anger or frustration, but rely on their self-abilities. The players have suggested that being part of a team fulfils the feeling of "belonging" throughout the friendships created from their joint practices. Some have added that weekly sports training with other people with different skills and agendas has taught them to develop "self-control" mechanisms, "patience",

and "respectful discourse" towards each other despite differences. It also empowered them with a sense of "self-worth". As the coach mentioned, tensions or grievances might appear due to a lack of resources, yet they are replaced with feelings of accomplishment and success when keeping the framework of sports despite the struggles (Desert Foxes, 2023).

## 4. Conclusions

This report reviewed the main issues concerning national differences and conflicts and how sports are a gateway to social communication with excluded communities based on ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic affiliation. Thus, the initiatives undertaken in the inclusion and social resilience through sports activities offer a source of integration and connection between Arab-Israeli and Jewish-Israeli communities through the competitive dimension of sports. In doing sports, mutual respect develops towards the game, even under an inherent difficulty in light of the prolonged national conflict.

The initiatives presented throughout the report showed that even in the case of exclusion and discrimination of women and the LGBTQ+ community, sports activities for equality cross sectors and political ideas. It can unite under the equality framework that modern sport offers. Building resilience at a personal level through the private practice of sports from a young age can lead to collective resilience in marginalised communities, thereby normalising equality and excluding the perception of "otherness". For example, to people with disabilities, sport is a significant health value, but they do not always have the option of practising due to a lack of facilities. Municipalities' support in domestic and national initiatives is crucial for utilising local community facilities, especially among excluded groups initially suffering from a pre-unjust condition. Sports initiatives that are joint under the goal of community health cooperating with local medical facilities might increase the availability of sports to other groups.

Referring to Sports as a tool of educational availability can assist the general population when practised in schools and other educational institutions. However, when it is less available, there is also an option of educating the community via local community centres and even libraries for sports and inclusion lectures oriented to parents, teenagers and young adults. When it is financially not possible, an accessibility approach to knowledge through "free socialisation" can bridge the gap. Creating annual local activities such as public game-watching of communities, targeting expressly excluded communities in sports, such as women and LGBTQ+, can meet between groups. When an action is consistent and supported annually, society accepts more customs as normative (i.e., women can play high-quality professional football).

Sports can develop mutual respect between the participants, communities and values, transparent to differences. Spectating sports together can lead to the reevaluation of segregative perceptions. Operating joint tournaments between different ethno-religious communities, investing in sports infrastructure and promoting sports

equality are essentials to foster an inclusive approach. It needs cooperation between state and NGO institutions that can underpin the necessity of sports initiatives' encouragement as part of public health, civic education and community co-existence reasoning.

## References and Sources

- Abramowitz, O. 2023. Interview with the author, Beer Sheva, 13 August (via Zoom).
- Athena, 2014. "About us", official website, Available at: <https://www.athenawomen.org.il/%d7%90%d7%95%d7%93%d7%95%d7%aa/%d7%9e%d7%99-%d7%90%d7%a0%d7%97%d7%a0%d7%95/> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).
- Athena, 2022. "Special Projects with Associations", Athena- the centre for promoting women's sports in Israel, official website. Available at: <https://www.athenawomen.org.il/english/special-projects-with-associations/> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).
- Aljam, S. 2016. "Signing an agreement for the establishment of sports facilities in the periphery", *Sport5*, 21 June [online]. Available at: <https://www.sport5.co.il/articles.aspx?FolderID=413&docID=217664> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).
- Bailey, R. 2007. "Youth sport and social inclusion". In *Positive youth development through sport*, Routledge, pp. 99-110.
- Bailey, R. 2005. "Evaluating the relationship between physical education, sport and social inclusion". *Educational Review*, 57(1), pp. 71-90.
- Bartal, L. 2019. "The news will come from Jerusalem: the "Zaza" association promotes women's sports throughout the country", *Davar*, 4 August [online]. Available at: <https://www.davar1.co.il/191642/> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).
- Ben David, A. 2018. The Ministry of Sports launched the 'Equal in Sport' project", *ONE*, 20 February [online]. Available at: <https://www.one.co.il/Article/307867.html> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).
- Ben Porat, A. 2020. "Cosi (non) Fan Tutte: women's football 'made in Israel'". *Soccer & Society*, 21(1), pp. 39-49.
- Ben Porat, C. 2008. "What can be learned from soccer about globalisation, and vice versa". *Politika: The Israeli Journal of Political Science & International Relations*, (18), pp. 11-25.
- Ben Porat, A. 2007. *Oh, what a delightful war!* Pardes Publishing House.
- Ben Porat, A. 1999. "How much did Hapoel do? The transformation of Israeli football into a commodity". *Megamot*, pp. 517-534.
- Bernstein, E., & Mendelzis, L. 2010. "Ichud Bnei Sachnin in the documentary discourse: The story of an Arab football cup holder in a Jewish State". *Social issues in Israel*, pp. 153-174.

Carmi, U. (2020). "From Amateurism to Professionalism: The Beginning of the Elite Sports in Israel". *Social Issues in Israel*, 29(1), pp. 193-220.

Caudwell, J. (2007). "On shifting sands: The complexities of women's and girls' involvement in Football for Peace". *Football for peace: The challenges of using sport for co-existence in Israel*. Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport, pp. 97-112.

Cunningham, G. B., & Melton, E. N. 2014. "Signals and cues: LGBT inclusive advertising and consumer attraction". *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 23(1), pp. 37–46.  
Desert Foxes, 2023. Interview with the author, Beer Sheva, 9 September (via Zoom).

Dunning, E., & Elias, N. 1986. *Quest for Excitement: Sport and leisure in the civilising process*. Basil Blackwell.

F4P, 2023. "Israel adopts Brighton's Football for Peace", Football for peace International, official website. Available at: <https://www.football4peace.org.uk/2019/04/10/israel-adopts-brightons-football-for-peace/> (Accessed: 14 February 2023)

F4P Israel, 2023. "F4P Israel- about". Football for peace International, official website. Available at: <https://www.football4peace.org.uk/projects/israel/> (Accessed: 14 February 2023)

F4P, 2023b. "F4P Methodology". Football for peace International, official website. Available at: <https://www.football4peace.org.uk/about-us/life-skills/> (Accessed: 14 February 2023)

Fadlon, T. 2019. "Inclusion of minority players in the Israeli soccer team". *Hedim- The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)*, Vol.5. (March), Available at: <https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%91-%D7%A9%D7%97%D7%A7%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%91%D7%A0%D7%99-%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%A2%D7%95%D7%98%D7%99%D7%9D->

Fraser-Thomas, J. L., Côté, J., & Deakin, J. 2005. "Youth sports programs: An avenue to foster positive youth development". *Physical education & sport pedagogy*, 10(1), pp. 19-40.

Frisby, W., & Ponick, P. 2013. "Sport and social inclusion". *Sport policy in Canada*, pp. 381-403.

Gal, Yaakov., and Sophia Solomon. 2021a. "Stakeholders of (De)-Radicalisation in Israel (3.1)". *Zenodo*. Available on: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6386089> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Gal, Yaakov., and Sophia Solomon. 2021b. "Trends of Radicalisation in Israel (3.2)". *Zenodo*. Available on: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6352045> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Greenfeld, S. 2022. "The Zaza Association and the British Embassy in Israel invite you to the screening of the opening game in Euro 2022", *JSports Magazine*. Available at: <https://www.jsport.co.il/football/wsoccer/worldwsoccer/womens-euro/116024/> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Grossman, M., Johns, A., & McDonald, K. (2014). "More than a game": The impact of sport-based youth mentoring schemes on developing resilience toward violent extremism". *Social Inclusion*, 2(2), pp. 57-70.

Guidstar, 2023. "Zaza - Community for the Promotion of Women's Sports (AR)", Ministry of Justice [online]. Available at: <https://www.guidestar.org.il/organization/580681500> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Guttmann, A. 1978. *From ritual to record: The nature of modern sports*. Columbia University Press.

Guy, S. 2011. "Winning in the spirit of football": The civilisation process in English football". *Israeli Sociology*, pp. 161-182.

Houlihan, B. 1997. *Sport, policy and politics: A comparative analysis*. Routledge.

IFA, 2022a. "Women's football league". Israel Football Association, official website, Available at: [https://www.football.org.il/leagues/league/?league\\_id=637&season\\_id=24](https://www.football.org.il/leagues/league/?league_id=637&season_id=24) (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

IFA, 2022b. "Football premier league", Israel Football Association, official website, available at: [https://www.football.org.il/leagues/league/?league\\_id=40&season\\_id=24](https://www.football.org.il/leagues/league/?league_id=40&season_id=24) (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Kaufman, H. (2006). "The beginnings of Hebrew football in Eretz Israel (1910-1928)". *In Motion: Journal of Physical Education and Sport Sciences*, pp. 54-20.

Kelly, L. 2013. "Sports-based interventions and the local governance of youth crime and anti-social behaviour". *Journal of sport and social issues*, 37(3), pp. 261-283.

Lahav-Raz, Y., & Reznik, S. 2014. "Empowering marginality-Hapoel B'not Sakhnin". *Sociological Issues in Israel*, 18, pp. 129-151.

Levy, M. 2019. "It's surprising that football players haven't come out of the closet", *Ynet*, 26 February [online]. Available at: <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5470291,00.html> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

LGBT Sports Club Israel, 2021. "Fighting homophobia in sports", official website, Available at: <https://isrlgbtsports.club/%d7%9e%d7%90%d7%91%d7%a7-%d7%91%d7%9c%d7%94%d7%98%d7%91%d7%95%d7%a4%d7%95%d7%91%d7%99%d7%94-%d7%91%d7%a1%d7%a4%d7%95%d7%a8%d7%98/> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).



Maman, A. 2022. "Women are only 23% of sports in Israel. We need 50%", *Ynet*, 16 July [online]. Available at: <https://www.ynet.co.il/sport/article/one414708> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Maman, A. 2018. "The 'sport flowers' plan failed, the reform is on the way", *ONE sport*, 13 November [online], Available at: <https://www.one.co.il/Article/324182.html> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Meek, R. 2013. *Sport in prison: Exploring the role of physical activity in correctional settings*. Routledge.

Muchtar, O. 2016. "Sports programs as a means of reducing youth crime", *Menituk Leshiluv Journal*, The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, Youth Education Branch, pp. 161-179. Available at: [http://library.macam.ac.il/study/pdf\\_files/d12258.pdf](http://library.macam.ac.il/study/pdf_files/d12258.pdf) (Hebrew).

NIF, 2022. "The first kicking violence and racism from the pitches conference is underway", The New Israel Fund- official website. Available at: <https://nif.org.il/kickitout-con-one/> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Noff, L. 2017. "The event "Athena Goes Far" was held for the 10th year". *ONE sport*, 19 May [online]. Available at: <https://www.one.co.il/Article/291741.html> (Accessed: 14 February 2023)

Ofer, G. 2021. "Pride: The sports world needs more sapphires", *Israel Hayom*, 28 April [online]. Available at: <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/sport/article/357785> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

ONE, 2013. "The "Sport Flowers" project was approved, Livnat: a breakthrough", *ONE sport*, 8 December [online]. Available at: <https://www.one.co.il/Article/226484.html> (Accessed: 14 February 2023)

Pamson, T. 2014. "The state's national team or the nationality team?", *Calcalist*, 16 November [online]. Available at: <https://www.calcalist.co.il/sport/articles/0,7340,L-3645019,00.html> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Perets, S., Levy, M., & Galily, Y. 2011. "National and gender identity perceptions among female football players in Israel". *Soccer & Society*, 12(2), pp. 228-248.

Reichner, E. 2022. "Women on the field: an evening without a World Cup but with Israeli success in football", *Makor Rishon*, 8 December [online]. Available at: <https://www.makorrishon.co.il/opinion/550905/> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Richardson, C., Cameron, P. A., & Berlouis, K. M. (2017). "The role of sport in de-radicalisation and crime diversion". *Journal for Deradicalization*, (13), pp. 29-48.

Rubinstein, A. 2020. "Closing the 'Athena' project: a stormy meeting at the National Sports Council", *Israel Hayom*, 24 December [online]. Available at: <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/article/833037> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Shimon, F., Galili, Y., & Leitner, M. 2014. "The Mifalot football program and attitudes of Palestinian". *Israeli and Jordanian youth toward one another Social issues in Israel*, pp. 196-216.

Sigalshifer, V., & Hasson, Y. 2018. How do you change the rules of the game? A gender perspective on the sports budget", *Politically-Corret*, 29 July [online]. Available at: <https://politicallycorret.co.il/%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%AA%D7%95%D7%97-%D7%AA%D7%A7%D7%A6%D7%99%D7%91-%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%93%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%94-%D7%A1%D7%A4%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%98/> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Sorek, T. 2006. *Playing with identities: Arab soccer in a Jewish state*. Magnes.

Sugden, J. (2006). The challenge of using a values-based approach to coaching sport and community relations in multi-cultural settings. The case of Football for Peace (F4P) in Israel<sup>1</sup>. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 3(1), pp. 7-24.

The Equalizer group, 2022. "Sport as a tool for social change", official website. Available at: <https://en.the-equalizer.org/about/> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

The Equalizer, 2023. "About us", The Shaar Shivyon group, official website, Available at: <https://en.the-equalizer.org/shaar-shivyon/> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

The Jerusalem Post, 2019. "Tel Aviv hosts largest LGBTQ+ sports event in the Middle East", 28 March [online]. Available at: <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Sports/Tel-Aviv-hosts-largest-LGBTQ+-sports-event-in-the-Middle-East-585048> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

The Ministry of Culture and Sports, 2022. "Sports national policy", Department of budgets, planning and strategy [online]. Available at: [https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/policy/national\\_sports\\_policy/he/%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%93%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%95%D7%AA%20%D7%94%D7%9C%D7%90%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%AA%20%D7%91%D7%A1%D7%A4%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%98.pdf](https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/policy/national_sports_policy/he/%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%93%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%95%D7%AA%20%D7%94%D7%9C%D7%90%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%AA%20%D7%91%D7%A1%D7%A4%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%98.pdf) (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

The Ministry of Culture and Sports, 2019. "Equals in sports" allows every person with a disability to engage in physical activity", 3 December [online]. Available at: [https://www.gov.il/he/departments/news/sports\\_equality](https://www.gov.il/he/departments/news/sports_equality) (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

The Ministry of Culture and Sport, 2018. "Sports flowers", Guides and Information. Available at: [https://www.gov.il/he/departments/general/sport\\_cadets](https://www.gov.il/he/departments/general/sport_cadets) (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

TLV proud sports Club, 2023. "The proud sports club", Facebook page, Available at: [https://www.facebook.com/isrlgbtsports.club/?paipv=0&eav=AfZcwCK1V0Y5uXRqVbLCLzP0WdmvUsKnKnfmeesqVZwOMqGb5wX9IE1dAbEKbr94IH0&\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/isrlgbtsports.club/?paipv=0&eav=AfZcwCK1V0Y5uXRqVbLCLzP0WdmvUsKnKnfmeesqVZwOMqGb5wX9IE1dAbEKbr94IH0&_rdr) (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

TLV proud sports club, 2016. "Fight against LGBTphobia in sports", position paper the sports committee of the Knesset, Available at: [http://fs.knesset.gov.il/%5C20%5CCommittees%5C20\\_cs\\_bg\\_342174.pdf](http://fs.knesset.gov.il/%5C20%5CCommittees%5C20_cs_bg_342174.pdf) (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Volak, T. 2019. "Between Paris and Be'er Sheva: why women's sports in Israel do not receive budgets", *Globes*, 7 June [online]. Available at: <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001288720> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Volak, T. 2010. "Ministry of Sports plan: 5.5 billion NIS will be invested in facilities", *Globes*, 14 June [online]. Available at: <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1000566657> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Woods, D., Breslin, G., & Hassan, D. 2017. "A systematic review of the impact of sport-based interventions on the psychological well-being of people in prison". *Mental Health and Physical Activity*, 12, pp. 50-61.

Wingate, 2018. "About Athena", Athena - the centre for promoting women's sports in Israel, Wingate Institute. Available at: <https://wingate.org.il/%d7%90%d7%aa%d7%a0%d7%94-%d7%94%d7%9e%d7%a8%d7%9b%d7%96-%d7%9c%d7%a7%d7%99%d7%93%d7%95%d7%9d-%d7%a1%d7%a4%d7%95%d7%a8%d7%98-%d7%a0%d7%a9%d7%99%d7%9d/>

Ynet, 2022. "Beyond all imagination": The Women's Euro opened with a historical record", 7 July [online]. Available at: <https://www.ynet.co.il/sport/worldsoccer/article/sk1q6aqic> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Zaza, 2023. "Zaza- Women's Sports Community", *Facebook page*. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/zazawomen/about> (Accessed: 14 February 2023).

Appendix 1

Organisation Name	Date set up	Bio	Place	Activity	Target Group	Aims	Source
<b>Football 4 Peace-Israel</b>	2001	(NGO) It began in peripheral villages in Northern Israel, setting up basic football coaching camps for Jewish and Arab youths. since 2011, it also operates in southern Negev in partnership with the German Sports University, the British Council, and the IFA. From 2009-2012 it was funded by the European Union. In 2013 a new NGO, Sport Unites, began working with the IFA, inheriting and adapting the F4P model for a broader application beyond football in the latest "Sport 4 Life project".	International Tel Aviv Local	"Off-pitch manual" activities- getting children to enjoy learning and playing football together in non-threatening settings. The idea is to underpin the technical football coaching programme and manual with the values and principles that help promote mutual understanding and inclusive citizenship. "On-pitch manual" activities- designed as a guide for coaches who recognise the potential of football as a medium through which to teach positive personal values that laid the foundations for enhanced inter-community relations. It is adopted by school	Jewish and Arab Youths, Teenagers, and kids from the geographic and demographic peripheral areas	One of the guiding principles of F4P is that simply playing football is not sufficient to promote the kind of interaction that can allow longer-term relationships and cross-community understanding to flourish.	<a href="https://www.football4peace.org.uk/projects/israel/">https://www.football4peace.org.uk/projects/israel/</a>

				Physical Education lessons and sports clubs, where Fair Play is promoted. Events- Peace Education on the Korean Peninsula and for Social Justice' inclusion' events in Europe, such as the F4P v Homophobia Festivals with the Justin Fashanu Campaign.			
<b>kicking Racism and Violence out of the fields (KRV)</b>	2003	(NGO) Founded by the New Israel Fund (NIF), promoted by the IFA, as a project that funds games and activities against racism in football. In 2016 it announced that against the deterioration of relations between Jews and Arabs, KRV would give local football teams and fan organisations grants of 100,000 NIS for acting on the topic. Its first national	Jerusalem, Herzliya, Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Hifa	The NGO holds Conferences, suggests supportive grants, and works on social media awareness through posts and podcasts. It also participates in parliament communities' debates, providing data.	Jewish and Arab football clubs, football fans	aims to eradicate racism and violence from the football fields, believing that a change that begins on the football fields will permeate the rest of society.	. <a href="https://nif.org.il/kickitout-con-one/">https://nif.org.il/kickitout-con-one/</a>

		conference took place in 2022.					
<b>Athena- the centre for progressing women sports in Israel</b>	2007	(NGO) operates professional multiyear programs intended to create opportunities for girls, young women, and women in sports, with dedicated programs at sports associations and bodies (defined by standards), programs at authorities, and sports clubs and federations. It first started with connecting to local authorities to grow the base of the pyramid of women's sports in Israel, expand the infrastructure for women's sports, and create more opportunities to recruit and retain girls in various sports.	Tel Aviv Also local	Athena acts to recruit, retain, and promote girls, young women, and women in various sports. They start from elementary school, at local authorities, and close to home (15 localities). Its projects help recruit and retain new athletes, create competition, and develop new opportunities for girls at the participating club/association. So far- 25 of this type (2022). Programs are oriented for all ages, from elementary school to elite competitive levels, as part of the select competitive sports programs in all sports bodies; It promotes discourse on women's issues in sports and places this content on the agenda through	Girls, young women, and women in sports	1. Establishing a quantitative and qualitative foundation for female athletes across Israel. 2. Creating women's leadership in sports – Appropriate representation of women among decision-makers and policy leaders in sports, ensuring appropriate and egalitarian budgets, resource allocations, and management	<a href="https://www.thenawomen.org.il/english/">https://www.thenawomen.org.il/english/</a>

				conferences, forums, and meetings; It offers a broad portfolio of enrichment tools via such projects as Athena Plus and Athena Ambassadors; "Athena Plus" program - enrichment lectures by professionals in the fields of sports for female athletes at all levels; "Athena is walking far"- dominant national festival in each municipality, including dozens of thousands of women walking and running together (15,000 participants in Tel Aviv only in 2017).		by decision-makers. 3. Education to change public opinion in Israel society as to the importance of sports as a critical factor in the training and development of each girl and young woman	
<b>The LGBT sports club Israel</b>	2008	Established as a small club in Tel Aviv, this organisation is the only LGBTQ+ organisation in Israel engaged with the world of sports. It is a member of international LGBTQ+ sports federations. It holds critical	Semi-national (Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Haifa, Jerusalem, Ramat H'ashron)	The LGBTQ+ Sports Club will work to promote and strengthen the integration between the LGBTQ+ community and the world of sports (While empowering its members, professionalising them and creating a community fabric	LGBTQ+, people with a particular sexual preference, students or young people, and others.	A proud sports club leads the fight against Homophobia in sports on four levels: 1. Explanation. 2. Education for tolerance. 3. Promoting	<a href="https://twitter.com/tlvlgbtports?lang=en">https://twitter.com/tlvlgbtports?lang=en</a>

		<p>messages, declaring that sport is for everyone, including the LGBTQ+ community; there is no contradiction between belonging to the community and engaging in sports, and no room for Homophobia. It is supported in part by the Ministry of the treasury. Its directive board includes athletes from academia, sports, businesses and the public sector. In recent years it expanded to additional cities.</p>		<p>between them). Their shared values include creating and maintaining sports teams for the community. Encouraging social connections as part of engaging in sports. Offering a social framework for all ages, which is not based on entertainment and is not based on support groups, etc.</p>		<p>LGBTQ+ visibility in sports. 4. Changing regulations and legislation.</p>	
<p><b>The Equalizer Group (Shaar L'shivyon)</b></p>	<p>2012</p>	<p>The NGO program operates football teams and learning centres where participants receive assistance with homework and test prep and have educational activities that instil values and</p>	<p>Semi-national Tel Aviv the Galilee region of the North the Negev region in the south, Tel Aviv, Dimona, Haifa, Ramat</p>	<p>Educational sports activities. The activity focuses on the social and geographic periphery in Israel to give children, girls and teenagers a robust framework for personal development and assimilating values such</p>	<p>Teenagers, kids from the geographic and demographic peripheral areas</p>	<p>Create social, gender and geographical equality through programs combining team sports with educational</p>	<p><a href="https://en.the-equalizer.org/shaar-shivyon/">https://en.the-equalizer.org/shaar-shivyon/</a></p>



		<p>strengthen the team spirit. It activates thousands of kids and teenagers participating in sports activities near their living area while containing inclusive agendas for different sectors. It funds itself via contributions from private and public businesses, educational facilities and sports public and private actors.</p>	<p>H'ashron, Afoula, Jerusalem</p>	<p>as tolerance, mutual respect, preventing violence and eradicating racism while creating a bridge between different populations in Israeli society. All teams in the program attend a festive monthly regional tournament. Players are selected by the school or community centre based on their familiarity with the participants. The activities include weekly soccer practice, social activities, and monthly tournaments in which 12 regional teams meet to celebrate sports spirit and values. The participants must conduct themselves appropriately at school and the community centres, with a direct link between school staff, the coach, and the social coordinator.</p>		<p>activities. It also aims to empower and develop teens, equip them with new skills, and expose them to global content that will help form and solidify their dreams and aspirations for the future.</p>	
--	--	--	------------------------------------	--	--	---	--

				It holds five central programmes that manifest its aim within peripheral localities across the country: The equaliser (Shaar L'shivyon), "Boatot", "The 48ers", "Special goals", and "safe swimmer".			
<b>kicking Homophobia out of the fields</b>	2016	This sub-initiative emerged from the KRV program of the New Israel Fund (NIF). Following UEFA awareness month in the fight against Homophobia, the IFA is compelling the topic via games.	International, local (Herzliya)	Activity includes playing annually against LGBTQ+ teams and reporting to the IFA regarding incidents of Homophobia, including within football clubs. "Rainball"- established in 2012; works according to an English model, with about 100 members. Its principles are fairness, tolerance, mutual respect and equality regardless of religion, race, sex or gender.	LGBTQ+ players, judges, and fans.	It attracts crowds from different sectors and raises awareness of tolerance and acceptance of LGBTQ+ football participants.	
<b>Zaza- Community for the Promotion of Women's Sports</b>	2017	(NGO) Zaza (meaning "moving") association arose out of the area of Jerusalem, out of a real need for women	Semi-national (North, Centre, South) - Beer Sheva, Tel Aviv, The	Promote sports practice - help to find fields, an educational program to increase exposure to team sports among girls	Local populations, the general public, children and youth,	1. Promoting, encouraging and leveraging popular	. <a href="https://www.facebook.com/zazawomen/about">https://www.facebook.com/zazawomen/about</a>

		<p>to find a place to play leading sports in the country (football, basketball, volleyball). The players turned to the Jerusalem municipality and realised a need for a broader change within Jerusalem and the attitude towards women's sports. Following the success in finding fields, Zaza's operation began to spread, and more women began to contact the association with a request to help them find areas for games throughout their cities. The association is a community promoting women's sports that have been working for several years to turn women's sports into a legitimate consumer product. It created a network of women athletes involved in</p>	<p>western Negev region (Sderot), Haifa, Jerusalem, Binyamina</p>	<p>at a young age, and establish WhatsApp groups for the various sports. We try to connect women who want to play. It holds communal gatherings involving sports, such as in the 2022 Euro Cup, with many participants; Zaza organised a meeting to watch the game and spread women's football.</p>	<p>women, students</p>	<p>sports, achievements and challenges, body culture and a healthy lifestyle among women in various settings of all ages and all sectors, 2. Organising, managing and running sports initiatives and competitions for women in various branches. 3. Supporting women's sports associations and organisations , 4. Financing resources for women's sports,</p>	
--	--	--	---	---	------------------------	---	--

		practical and educational solutions for practising sports.				providing scholarships for sports initiatives, and for women who wish to engage in sports.	
<b>Equal in sport (Shavim B'Sport)</b>	2018	This innovative program of the Ministry of Culture and Sports and "Joint Israel" (NGO) intends to promote opportunities for people with physical, cognitive or mental disabilities to engage in adapted and regular physical activity near their homes. It Cooperates with many private and non-profit organisations and the Israeli Disabled Sports Association.	Netanya, Beer-Sheva, Akko, Umm El Fahim, and the Emek Heffer Regional Council.	Municipalities get funds and then operate sports programs with similar approaches and facilities adjusted to athletes with disabilities according to the proximity of the desired sports facilities. Five authorities work it by using special programs that combine special needs athletes with regular ones, by adopting the adjustments and accessibility to sports structures and environment. The local schools and community centres publish it.	Adults and teenagers aged 15 and over who live in the community, people with physical, cognitive or mental disabilities, and Special needs in Jewish and Arab municipalities	The main aim is to increase the number of people with disabilities who engage in sports regularly in the community to improve their health and sense of mental well-being (Well Being). It aims to promote achievements in competitive sports for	<b>Equal in sport (Shavim B'Sport) -</b> <a href="https://schoolsport.co.il/%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%95%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%91%D7%A1%D7%A4%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%98/">https://schoolsport.co.il/%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%95%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%91%D7%A1%D7%A4%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%98/</a>

						people with disabilities, to create an infrastructure that allows every person with a disability to choose an adapted physical activity from various possibilities and lead to a positive change of attitudes of the entire population towards people with disabilities.	
<b>Mamanet</b>	2005	The first ever communal mothers. Mamanet has established the third biggest sports field of "netball" in Israel. Netball is a team ball game, similar to a volleyball game. The	International (Austria, Italy, Greece, Cyprus & the US and more) National (Kfar Saba, Yerucham, Galilee region	Mamanet allows mothers to revive their younger days as athletes or experience being part of a sports league. Mothers of students play in a league that holds awards. In doing so,	Mothers and adult women (ages 30 and above) run across all populations, such as secular ultra-orthodox	To supply a model for a combination of sports and community, demonstrating school pride, good sportsmanship	<b>Mamanet</b> <a href="https://www.mamanet.org.il/viewArticle_en.asp?id=192">https://www.mamanet.org.il/viewArticle_en.asp?id=192</a>

		<p>game is popular among women, girls and girls. Mamanet is the largest social sports league specifically for mothers in Israel. Its establisher initiated the first team through municipality support. It has gathered mothers through their children's schools to meet once a week for a game. It has become the only sports league for thousands of mothers in a few years. Mamanet is a part of the CSIT World Sports Games (International Workers and Amateurs in Sports Confederation) since 2017.</p> <p><a href="https://www.mamanet.org.il/viewArticle_en.asp?id=192">https://www.mamanet.org.il/viewArticle_en.asp?id=192</a></p>	<p>of the North, the Negev region in the south Haifa, Jerusalem, Beer Sheva; Kfar Saba, Yerucham ("The Desert Foxes"), Haifa, Jerusalem, Beer Sheva, Omer, Holon, Tamra 90 cities in total).</p>	<p>they represent their children's school with sportsmanship. The association is based on children's elementary, junior high and high schools. It progresses social connection development as part of the communal perception of assisting each member in all aspects of life (e.g., annual tournaments for breast cancer prevention, COVID-19 support groups, and more.</p>	<p>immigrants, newcomers etc.</p>	<p>p, friendly and professional competition, fair play &amp; positive physical activity.</p>	
<b>El Halev</b>	2003	<p>The NGO is the Israeli representative and the global movement</p>	<p>Jerusalem, Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Rishon</p>	<p>The association operates within hundreds of</p>	<p>Children, youth, women, people with</p>	<p>It has two goals. 1. teaching</p>	

		<p>leader for 'empowering self-defence (ESD) and exports knowledge and expertise. It trains women of all ages and sectors in preventing sexual, emotional and physical violence through educational programs of empowering self-defence, which provide tools to increase confidence, discover personal resilience, manage conflicts and deal with various risk situations.</p> <p><a href="https://www.elhalev.org/about">https://www.elhalev.org/about</a></p>	<p>LeZion, Ramat Gan, Rehovot, Petach Tiqwa, Modiin, Lod, Kefar Saba, Beer Shemesh, Beer Sheva, the North region.</p>	<p>organisations, municipal authorities, business companies, associations and educational, health and welfare institutions. It seeks to create a society that respects each person's right to life, liberty and personal security.</p>	<p>disabilities, minority groups (Ultra-orthodox, Arab women, LGBTQ+), and older people from all sectors of Israeli society, Backlash populations.</p>	<p>personal safety and empowering self-defence skills. 2. Raising awareness and achieving significant and sustainable social change.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.elhalev.org/about">https://www.elhalev.org/about</a></p>
--	--	---	---	--	--	--	--