

# Sport Coach + Resources



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# SPORT COACH+ RESOURCES

Cultural considerations in setting a sport environment



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# CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS IN SETTING A SPORT ENVIRONMENT

Some cultural considerations in setting a sport environment that can help young players feel safe, included, understood and supported, include:

## Cultural Context Considerations

### Communication

Sport is often grounded in rules which are shared world-wide. This enables participation even in the absence of a shared spoken language among coaches and young players. However, it is still important that coaches can effectively communicate with, and understand, young players.

When coaches and players do not speak the same language, try to improve communication by:

- ✓ learning basic words in each other's language;
- ✓ using online translations apps;
- ✓ using non-verbal language and signals; and
- ✓ setting up language buddies and check in systems.

### Language

Be aware of how certain phrases and words may be translated and understood.

- ✓ Avoid demeaning gender stereotypes ('you run like a girl').
- ✓ Be aware of and minimise language by young players that may reinforce stereotypes or cultural discrimination often focused on religion, ethnicity, race, gender, age or disability.
- ✓ Use these as teachable moments reinforcing the principle of dignity for everyone.

<b>Identity language</b>	<p>✓ If relevant to the culture, before starting sport, find out privately how each young player identifies and what pronouns they prefer (e.g., he, she, they). This should not be done in a public way, so as not to 'out' a young player without their consent, embarrass them or put them in danger.</p>
<b>Buy-in</b>  Sport may be seen by some as not worthwhile, a distraction from family, academic or livelihoods activities and/or a religious immorality.	<p>To obtain buy-in consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ meeting parents/guardians to discuss their worries; and</li> <li>✓ finding ways to include the families in sport activity (open days, showcase etc).</li> </ul>
<b>Trauma</b>  Culture is important to how people experience, understand, and recover from distressing events, including experiences associated with displacement. Safe and supportive sport is trauma-informed - recognising the potential impacts of traumatic experiences on young players - and healing-centred.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Invite young players to take part in activities in ways that feel comfortable for them. Provide time and space for them to opt out when they need to.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Gender</b></p> <p>Gender influences a young player's ability and motivation to join sport activities, interactions with peers and how they respond to different situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Speak with young players to understand gender differences, how these impact participation and experience, and how best to meet young players rights for safety, dignity, and inclusion.</li> <li>✓ In some contexts and for some young players, it may be necessary to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender-separate activities in order for sport to be safe and culturally appropriate;</li> <li>• Specific sport clothing and equipment (e.g. girls from certain cultures may need a trouser option or the freedom to wear hijab); and</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Consider the gender balance among coaches to promote gender equality and participation of young players of all genders. Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there coaches of all genders for sport activities? Are coaches of all gender sufficiently represented?</li> <li>• How many girls' teams are coached by women? How many boys' teams?</li> <li>• Are there coaches of all genders in leadership roles? Do young players see these leaders in action?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Coach diversity</b></p> <p>Coaches may have different or similar backgrounds from the young players in terms of ethnicity, religious or political beliefs, gender and so forth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Coaches can use their similarities and differences to reinforce safety, dignity and inclusion and can act as role models.</li> </ul>



Sport Coach+ is a partnership of the Olympic Refugee Foundation and the IFRC PS Centre to support coaches working with young people (age 10-24) affected by displacement. It aims to provide sport coaches with skills, knowledge and techniques to understand how stressful experiences impact young players, create safe and supportive sport environments, and respond to young players in trauma-informed and healing ways.



Olympic Refugee  
Foundation



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