

# **Voluntary Sports Clubs and Refugees**

How Voluntary Sports Clubs in Twente Adapt to Ukrainian Sporters

by

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the impact that Ukrainian refugees have on voluntary sports clubs in Twente, The Netherlands in 2024. At this time, many Ukrainians found their way to The Netherlands to escape the war in Ukraine and are now facing integration challenges.

Integration is important to achieve success in the new society they find themselves in. Sports can play a role in integration, but there are many different approaches to integrating through sports and different changes voluntary sports clubs make to facilitate integration. The current situation in Twente was analyzed through the multi conceptual framework for analyzing roll-out and implementation strategies in voluntary sports clubs (Ehnold et al., 2023), using policy plans from voluntary sports clubs, interviews with sport club representatives, interviews with volunteers, and interviews with Dutch sporters and Ukrainian sporters. This thesis shows that there is a diversity in methods of integrating Ukrainian sporters into the voluntary sports club. Additionally, many changes that the voluntary sports club makes are tailored to the specific needs of the individual Ukrainian sporter, without program setup or systematic changes. This thesis also shows that local governmental policy to financially support voluntary sports clubs or Ukrainian refugees sporting at a voluntary sports club do often not get used. The thesis argues that there is a need for a Ukrainian refugee integration through sports network where voluntary sports clubs can share their experiences and learn from each other, in which the local government also takes seat to learn how to improve their policies that target Ukrainian sporters.

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## 1. Introduction

This thesis focuses on the impact of refugees on VSCs (Voluntary Sport Club) in the host country. There are many struggles to overcome, the recent flight from the home country comes with psychological issues, uncertainty about the future and loss of housing. Therefore integration into The Netherlands is important, since understanding how the country and its inhabitants function increases the chances of establishing a new home. Furthermore, the success of integration is also dependent on the quality and effectiveness of integration policy, which is why this is worth studying further.

The Netherlands has received many refugees in the past year, 48.500, according to the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (2023). Because of war, political instability, political prosecution or other reasons to fear for their lives, many refugees come to the Netherlands (Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid, 2023). These refugees do not know whether they can stay or have to stay, this is dependent on many factors. Until then, the social acceptance of refugees is different between refugee groups (Costello & Foster, 2022). For example, many Ukrainian refugees have jobs and adequate housing, while refugees from non-European countries do not always receive these benefits. This shows there is more willingness to support Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands when compared to other refugee groups, for example by taking in Ukrainian refugees in their own homes. Around 20.000 Ukrainians are being privately housed since May 2022 (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2024). The increased willingness makes Ukrainians relevant to study in a context of voluntary work, which is the case in VSCs, to see what the VSCs do when they are willing to integrate Ukrainians into their club. Additionally, Ukrainians have come to the Netherlands over a short period of time, which pressured the VSCs and local governments to produce policy quickly. Sports is also deeply rooted within Ukrainian Culture, which increases the relevancy to integrate into sports clubs (Mickelsson, 2023).

While the initial focus is primary needs of refugees, such as housing, food, and safety, at a certain point people also need to have leisurely activities, such as sports. Organizations such as the KNVB (Royal Dutch Football Association, 2022) have special temporary rules for minor Ukrainian refugees to make it easier to join sports, illustrating the societal awareness that sports and leisure is important. However, VSCs do not always adapt to refugees by starting new programs. For illustration, in Germany, only roughly 900 out of 90.000 VSCs are registered for the *Integration through Sport* program in 2021 (Tuchel et al., 2020). In the Netherlands, no such data is available. Nevertheless, it is important to gain insight into the effect of governmental policy on refugees within VSCs and what measures and programs the VSCs create to accommodate refugees. This is important because The Netherlands is a country of resettlement, which means refugees tend to come to The Netherlands. Additionally, The Netherlands is obliged to take in refugees and give them a fair chance at citizenship according to the Geneva convention, which The Netherlands has signed. More knowledge on the subject can lead to better policy and programs and increased integration of refugees. On an organizational level, it is relevant to see how the organization adapts to a new incoming group. Do the people in the newly incoming group change the VSC themselves, do the newcomers change, or a combination of both? To address these questions, the research question is formulated as follows: “*What is the impact of Ukrainian refugees on programs of voluntary sports clubs in Twente?*.” This is a relational question, with two variables that can influence each other. The question is not causal since causality cannot be proven with this study.. The two variables are the presence of Ukrainian refugees and the programs of leisure associations in Twente. The unit of analysis is the leisure associations, while the units of observation are the programs, the board members and program makers, volunteers, and refugees themselves.

Since it is not possible to answer this question directly it is important to formulate sub-

questions. With the input of the sub-questions, the research question can be answered. The sub-questions are formulated as follows:

1. How does governmental policy influence the VSC refugee integration programs?
2. How do regional-cultural factors influence the VSC refugee integration programs?
3. What programs have been created or modified to integrate refugees in the VSC?
4. What effects do the programs created or adapted for Ukrainian refugees have
  - a. On the VSC?
  - b. On the refugees?
  - c. On the members?

The literature shows a clear gap when it comes to the effects of incoming refugees on VSCs in the Netherlands. Ehnold et al. (2023) created a theoretical framework for investigating the VSC level changes that come with integration programs. There are currently no studies published that have used this framework, which shows a lack of knowledge in the area. There is data from Germany (Tuchel, 2020), however, the German context is quite different from the Dutch context, since there are German integration programs that VSCs can use, which is not the case in the Netherlands. Tuchel (2020),-describes five types of refugee sports programs, numbered from 0-4. 0 means that there is no refugee sports at a VSC; 1 means there is engagement of the VSC members outside of the VSC; 2 means that refugees can participate in rotating sports activities, such as a separate competition; 3 means that a VSC established refugee groups at the VSC where refugees sport separately from other members; and 4, regular sport groups are opened up to refugees. In the Netherlands, there is data on how Dutch VSCs accommodate handicapped sporters or women (Van Der Werff, & Van Der Roest, (2017)) but no data on how VSCs integrate refugees in the Netherlands, except a master thesis researching a specific integration program in West-Netherlands (Van Kampen, 2020), not focusing on VSC level changes.

There is little knowledge on good practices commonly available, which means that every VSC must make their own program changes without knowledge of other VSCs experiences. This could lead to programs lower in quality. Research into this process can lead to more insight in the integration process of refugees in a host society, leading to better experiences all around. When more is known about the impact of refugees on VSCs, VSCs can better predict, adapt, and implement refugee programs which leads to better refugee integration. Further, if the policies are useful, they can be used as recommendations for other associations to further integrate refugees in their association. Additionally, the political debate on refugees can use data on the change that the Netherlands goes through to accommodate refugees in VSCs. The results of this research could also be relevant for regions integrating refugees outside Twente since successful programs or adaptations could also have effect elsewhere.

### **Thesis outline**

The outline of this thesis is as follows: In chapter 2, the available relevant literature is examined. This is followed up in chapter 3 with the discussion of the theoretical framework that will be used in the following chapters. In chapter 4, the methodology is discussed and limitations are mentioned. In chapter 5, the results are discussed in a case-by-case manner and further in a cross-comparative analysis in section 5.7. The results are concluded in chapter 6 and discussed in chapter 7. Chapter 7 also includes policy recommendations.



## 2. Literature review

In this chapter the relevant literature that covers relevant topics is discussed. The current knowledge on the VSC level is discussed first, after which the importance of integrating refugees is discussed. Lastly the factors that play a role in the effectiveness of sports as integrative measure are discussed.

### 2.1. The program changes that VSCs make for refugee integration

This study focuses on the impact on VSCs that refugees have, the VSC level change is called the meso level (Tuchel et al., 2020). There have been some studies that focus on the effects of refugees on the VSC.

To accommodate refugees, a priority of the VSC needs to be integration. Nichols, G.S. and James, M. (2017) write about the capacity and structural conditions for VSCs to accommodate groups that usually are not included in the core business of the VSC. There needs to be an alignment of objectives of the VSC and the new goal of including a new group. A VSC has three priorities, namely: service delivery, mutual aid, and conviviality. These are not always in balance and one can be dominant over the others. Clubs where high performance (service delivery) is most important, the mutual aid and conviviality are less important which most likely leads to a less welcoming environment for other groups that find mutual aid or conviviality most important. Refugees can change the objective of the association to be more integration focused.

After it is a VSCs priority to integrate refugees, the VSC culture needs to be welcoming to refugees. Seiberth et al. (2013) raises the point that cultural, sport-focused values can lead to discrimination of refugees under the cover of sport-focus. This has been further explored by Elling and Claringbould (2005) who present these meso level considerations as inclusionary and exclusionary mechanisms. Who is allowed into the VSC, and who wants to be in the

VSC, is influenced by these mechanisms. Factors such as financials, talent and culture play a role in these mechanisms. When VSCs change the organization and facilitation of sports they can enhance their sport with inclusive practices leading to more inclusion which might create broader social inclusion for refugees and other groups.

If the VSC has integration as a priority and they are welcoming to refugees, there are practical measures that can be made to accommodate refugees. Spaaij (2012) has identified other meso-level barriers for refugee sport participation based on research of Somali refugees in Australia. The first is the language barriers that can exist between the VSC and refugees. Not speaking the right language makes the first step to joining a VSC bigger and adds difficulties to integration. Financial constraints are a barrier as well. Not all refugees have jobs, and those who do usually do not make structurally large enough amounts to feel like a sports club membership is a good thing to spend their money on. Some sports clubs set up discounts and special arrangements for refugees not being able to pay their membership fees. An additional barrier that was found is gender expectations, where in some cultures it is not common for girls to sport at all, or to do different kinds of sports. This can make sports provision for VSC exceedingly difficult as there is a big organizational burden to provide special groups.

When the previous changes have been made to accommodate refugees, sometimes VSCs lack the organizational capacity to recruit and train enough volunteers to start projects and help other groups (Spaaij, 2012). This has a negative spiraling effect; more volunteers leave when things are not going well. This means it is essential to also recruit more volunteers from incoming refugee populations to sustain the incoming groups of refugees. Northcote and Casimiro (2009) convey more possible barriers to entry, namely the fear of parents that the VSCs' norms and values are not aligned with their own, which causes the parents to stay away. Alternatively, the refugees are not aware of other norms and values, which can also cause them to stay away from VSCs due to a lack of understanding of how sports work in The

Netherlands. There is a need for mutual understanding in this area because this process means that refugees will influence the VSC they join as well as the VSC influencing them.

## 2.2. The function of sports in integration

Sport playing a role in integration is supported by the idea that sports associations are mini democracies (Walseth and Fasting, 2004). Participating in a sports association is therefore a lesson in democracy, followed by learning the values and norms of the majority groups.

Additionally, sport is often described as an open and inclusive activity where young and old can establish a network of friends. Noting that leisure (this includes sport) activities of migrants have a relationship with their integration process, Lee and Funk (2010) found that leisure activity should be included as an integration indicator along with traditional other indicators. Supporting these conclusions, there was older data from 2003 that showed that diverse groups of immigrants into America would change their leisurely behaviors, and data from Australia in 2010, where similar patterns were found, which they ascribe to integration. Stodolska and Alexandris (2004) found three distinguishable patterns in immigrant integration when concerning leisure activities. The immigrants (1) fully adopted the White American way of leisure, or (2) integrated into the diaspora of their own community and adopted those leisure habits, or (3) preserved their own leisure habits. There were multiple factors playing a role in which was chosen, such as the ethnic group or social-economic status. Examples such as people being invited into American homes after playing sports together add anecdotal support to the claims that leisure activities play a key role in integration. Diving deeper into the role of sport in integration of immigrant youth, the Stodolska and Yi (2017) paper examines the processes underlying the result of one of the three patterns. They found three underlying processes. The first process is the self-discovery of their cultural differences when compared to the host community and other minorities, the second process takes place within the immigrant group, where youth compare themselves to others of their own group. Third,

outside labeling, by the media or peers, plays a role in what the leisure patterns end up. Stodolska and Yi do find that the patterns of immigrants in America are different from those of immigrants in their country of origin. This points to adoption of values of the host communities. According to Zhao and Liu (2023) the effect of leisure activities is larger for families when compared to individual migrants. Li et al. (2015) recommends some areas to research regarding leisure activities of immigrants. There seem to be changing patterns of leisure when people emigrate, sometimes even quitting leisure activities altogether after migration. This could be a cause for concern for their integration and further wellbeing. The role of sport clubs cannot be understated. In a paper of Walseth (2008), sport clubs were found to be well suited arenas for bridging social capital among immigrants from various ethnic minority backgrounds. In this paper it seems that sports clubs do not play a big role in bridging the gap between immigrants and non-immigrants. This finding is supported by the paper of Spaaij (2011), which researched Somali integration within sport associations. This paper also shows that there are few bridges built between Somalis and the host community thanks to sport, partly because of the outside pressures such as discrimination and aggression in the news. Sports alone cannot build the bridges that are necessary to integrate fully, according to Spaaij.

### 2.3. The effectiveness of sports in the integration process

In addition to barrier to entry of sports, there are also limiting factors regarding the effectiveness of sports in integration. Jeanes, O' Connor and Alfrey (2014) found multiple limiting factors. First, the image of sports being an inclusive environment only because it is sport, is not correct. There are prerequisites to make a VSC more inclusive that need to happen to make the VSC inclusive. This includes training of staff, for example. Another key factor is the structural character of integration programs. According to Jeanes, O' Connor and Alfrey this works counter-productive, because every VSC is different, and another program

could fit better. The focus on rules and regulations do also not increase integration through sport. Northcote and Casimiro (2009) go as far as to say that the integration of refugees might not have increased because of sports programs at all. They call for an increased evidence-based database from which to draw conclusions.

In the Netherlands, very few articles have been written on sports practices regarding refugee integration. A google scholar search leads to Master Theses from recent years, 2020-2023 which focus on policy on a municipal level, not on the level of the VSC (Baggen, 2023).

Another master thesis on the Dutch case researches the effectiveness of developmental project JongGras Sportbuddies, resulting in the conclusion that both refugees and coaches think the program works (Van Kampen, 2020). Not specifically focusing on refugees but on social integration in general, Van der Werff & Van der Roest (2017) explore how the VSC “Sprint” in Breda has integrated people with physical disability into the VSC over a period of over 30 years, now being a real sporter in the handicapped sports world, providing them with transport, equipment, and trainers. The main conclusion of this paper is that it takes time to set up the proper structures to facilitate this level of social integration, which is something that cannot be the case when dealing with refugees, who come unannounced and in large groups. These three papers all share one observation, which is that it is of utmost importance that the board, either that of the VSC or of the Municipality, must be committed to integrate outside groups into VSCs to make it work. Sports is mentioned in governmental documents as a means to integration, for example in research done by the SCP (2011) on the integration levels of four main refugee groups at that time. There is, however, no regulation that demands municipalities to offer sports integration to refugees, this happens on a case-by-case basis based on personal interest of the refugees.

Concluding the literature, there is no data or relevant research available for the Dutch context. However, the research currently available, which is discussed above shows that integration

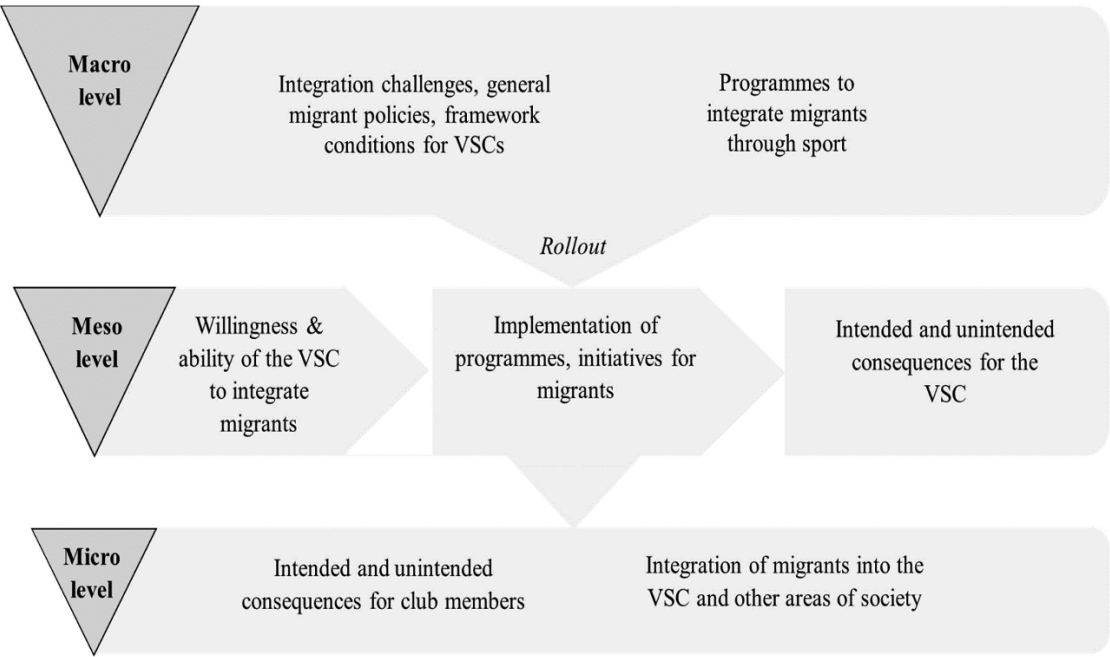
through sports only works if there is an appreciation for both the VSCs point of view and the Ukrainian sporters point of view. The shortage of available information for VSCs and local governments to learn from, calls for research on Ukrainian sporters at VSCs. The current literature is extensive when it comes to economic migrants that integrate in VSCs, but lacks depth when it comes to refugees. Lastly, the effectiveness of sports has been investigated, and there are leads that suggest a role in integration. The theorized relationships between integration and sports have not been thoroughly investigated and there is no scientific consensus on the topic.

### 3. Theoretical framework

In this chapter the theoretical framework is discussed. First the general framework structure is explained, whereafter the dimensions of the framework are further examined.

To make voluntary sports clubs more willing and able to integrate refugees into their processes, research needs to be done to clarify the costs and benefits for the VSC and refugees (Ehnold et al, 2023). To investigate this, Ehnold et al. (2023) created a multi-level framework specifically targeted at sports clubs and how the overall integration process affects both the refugee and the sports club (Figure 1). Policy and program implementation lies at the center of this model, which fits the research question. The VSCs are regarded as social entities, which means that every activity is considered to have a possible impact on the club and the members of the club. These levels are mutually dependent, but nevertheless can be analytically separated to explain the consequences on the meso level. This model is sequential, which gives the opportunity to explore consequences based on the findings in earlier steps. Currently, this framework is not cited in scientific papers as it has only recently been published (late 2023).

This framework has three levels, macro, meso and micro. Below these three levels are further explored.



**Figure 1. Multi conceptual framework for analyzing roll-out and implementation strategies. (Ehnold et al., 2023)**

3.1. Macro level

The greater context of integration of refugees in VSCs includes many factors outside of the influence sphere of the VSC, such as the political climate, refugee policy and other rules the VSC must follow. The macro level also includes any pre-developed programs made by the sports federation, which can help the VSC to integrate refugees. The programs made by the sports federation reflect the policy made by the government by making the policy operational. These programs are often a one-size-fits-all solution, which further complicates the implementation process in the Meso level because the one-size-fits-all solution seems not to fit for all VSCs.



### 3.2. Meso level

The meso level consists of three different areas. The first two are the willingness and ability of the VSC to integrate refugees. According to Seiberth, Weigelt-Schlesinger & Schlesinger (2013) integrating refugees is usually not an explicit objective of VSC's. This means that integration efforts are not necessarily part of the VSC view of what they should do.

Additionally, refugees often need more specific programs, which takes time, effort, resources, and skill to develop. These factors are compressed into willingness (time and effort) and ability (resources and skill). The last area is the unexpected and expected consequences that arise from the new programs, different volunteer tasks and refugee presence at the VSC.

- **Willingness**

Willingness is related to the institutional logics and guiding principles of the VSC.

Institutional logic and guiding principles can be summarized as the obvious thing to do from the standpoint of the VSC. For example, if a VSC wants to be as competitive as possible, recruiting new members from outside of their usual sphere can be beneficial for their results.

The willingness of the club can also lead back to their attitudes towards refugees in general.

These attitudes have developed historically and in a context greater than the VSC. In this context, the boundaries within the VSC between refugees and non-refugees are important.

These boundaries do not have to be real; the boundaries can also be perceived alone and not based on actual differences.

Because VSC operate on volunteering, the efforts of a small group of people or single individuals can make profound impact on how the VSC integrates refugees. The willingness of single individuals to invest time and energy into integration can have profound impact on the integration process. This could be inspirational for refugees to help with the integration of other refugees and have a catalyst effect. While a positively positioned volunteer can have a

positive impact on the integration process, a negatively positioned volunteer in a critical position within the club (such as Chair, secretary, or head of sports) can have negative effects on the willingness of other volunteers to help integrate refugees.

- **Ability**

Ability regards the extent to which a VSC can effectively refugees if they wanted to. Since there are limited resources available sometimes integration is hard to fit. For example, if all the soccer trainers are already taken, there are no trainers available for refugee groups. The search for new trainers is a time-consuming process which could be a requirement too large for the VSC. Additionally, underlying structures and traditions could hinder the flexibility of the VSC which makes adjusting to a new group of members difficult. For example, all the sports fields can already be occupied, and no-one feels like they should sacrifice their field, since this is how it has always been done. Another factor is the skills of the volunteers. It is not a given that volunteers have the skills and knowledge to integrate refugees, which makes the skills of an individual volunteer imperative to the integration process.

- **Intended and unintended consequences at the club level**

The multi-level framework is sequential, which enables the model to look at consequences after analyzing the previous factors (willingness, ability, and implementation). Actions of members can have impact on the VSC, while actions of the VSC have impact on the members of the VSC. There are three types of consequences that targeted integration can lead to: Structural, cultural, or social. For example, new sports activities are organized (Structural), but facilities need to be shared. Club life becomes more diverse, but routines and traditions change (cultural and social).

### 3.3. Micro level

There are two integration levels at play when talking about refugees and VSCs. Refugees can integrate into the VSC (integration in sport), and refugees can integrate into society, using the lessons from the VSC (integration through sport). Esser (2001) articulated four dimensions of social integration: Culturation (knowledge of cultural techniques), placement (adoption of positions and rights), interaction (embeddedness in functioning social relations) and identification (perceived sense of belonging).

- **Integration into the VSC**

The refugees integrate into the VSC along the lines of the four dimensions mentioned above. Culturation shows by the knowledge of VSC structural knowledge, and sometimes integration in friend groups. Placement shows by refugees' willingness to participate as a volunteer in the VSC. Interaction shows by intercultural contacts that the refugees have. Within sports clubs this is perceived to be easier because sport-knowhow can be used to make interaction easier. Identification shows by the relationships a refugee builds with the social collective, and places themselves in the organization instead of seeing themselves as an outsider.

#### **Integration of migrants into other areas through VSCs**

The dimensions mentioned above are important for integration elsewhere as well, however there are some other aspects that also matter for areas outside of the VSC. Characteristics of the refugee, such as age, ethnicity and gender are more important. Second, the background characteristics matter, such as the amount of uncertainty of the future or trauma from war and travel. Lastly, the amount of social capital someone has built up is important. There are strong social ties, with friends, and weaker social ties, with acquaintances. The VSC can play a significant role in this, introducing refugees to many different persons from many different

sectors. Additionally, VSC members develop an open mind to refugees when they encounter them more.

### 3.4. Hypothesis

- For research question 1, “*How does governmental policy influence the VSCs refugee integration programs?*” the expectation is that there is no governmental policy since none has arisen during literature review. However, it is known that the regional government has programs to financially facilitate sporters that need assistance paying for memberships, and it is expected that these programs do not always reach their goals because VSCs find it complicated.
- Research question 2, “*How do regional-cultural factors influence the VSC refugee integration programs?*”, the expectation is that, based on regional analysis, the people of Twente want to do good for the refugees (Garlick et al., 2006), especially since they are proud of their VSC. This means that personal time will be invested to make the Ukrainian refugees feel at home at the VSC.
- For research question 3, “*What programs have been created or modified to integrate refugees in the VSC?*”, the expectation is that there are no programs that create new systems specifically for refugees, as it is very unlikely for VSC to do so because of the time investment and reliance on volunteers (Seiberth, 2013). However, it is expected that there will be program changes made to make sport accessible for the refugees (Van Der Werff & Van Der Roest, 2017; Seiberth, 2013). Program changes such as help in purchasing sports equipment, or a buddy system to get to know their way around the VSC. It is expected that these results vary strongly between VSCs, because internal and external conditions are different between them.

- For question 4, “*What effects do these programs have on VSCs, refugees and members?*”, the expectations are broad. Some research points in the direction of great involvement of refugees in VSCs (Spaaij, 2012) while others foresee more problems with service delivery and a shortage of volunteers to help refugees (Northcote & Casimiro, 2009). Additionally, it is expected that a minority of people play a key role in integrating the refugees in the VSC (Nichols & James, 2017).

## 4. Methodology

In this chapter the research methods are explained. The first section discusses the scope of the research. The second section shows the research design. The third section shows how the VSCs are selected and how key people in the VSC are identified. The fourth section elaborates on the data collection and interview scheme. Lastly, the limitations, validity and reliability of the research are discussed.

### 4.1. Scope

The purpose of this study is to address the gap in knowledge that exists in the terrain of refugee sports in the Netherlands. More specifically, there is no data on how refugees in Twente are guided within VSCs and how VSCs makes programs to help refugees. To address this, two VSCs from Twente that have Ukrainian refugee members are selected for a case study. Twente is chosen because it is a culturally unique region in the Netherlands, with high levels of social capital and an historic background that is still alive (Garlick et al., 2006). Unique cases can give insights by highlighting specific aspects unique to the region which are less visible in other cases. In the case of Twente, there is a recognizable difference in culture compared to the rest of the Netherlands. This was recently illustrated by the 2023 election results, where the Twente region voted parties, such as the BBB and NSC that promise to

keep their culture intact (NOS, n.d.). Additionally, there is no data on Twente and refugees in sports, so this thesis can add empirical data. Lastly, the research is based in Twente which increases accessibility for research. Ukrainian refugees are chosen as the study population because it is the only large western refugee population in the Netherlands. Fleeing from war, Ukrainians entered the Netherlands over a short time span and are, per end 2023, with 73400 people (CBS, 2023). Additionally, The Ukrainian refugees are perceived to be culturally similar to Dutch people. In Twente, about 2700 Ukrainians have been housed (Opvang Vluchtelingen | Veiligheidsregio Twente, z.d.). Sport clubs in Twente that have Ukrainian members are invited to participate in the research. This study will take place within the duration of two months to ensure that there are as slight changes as possible in the surrounding policies.

#### 4.2. Research design

This research is a qualitative study. Field research and desk research is used to answer the research question. The desk research consists of visiting the websites of VSCs, and the federal organization (KNVB for football) and the national sports federation, Nederlands Olympisch Comité and the Nederlandse Sport Federatie, known as NOC\*NSF.

The field research consists of semi-structured interviews with board members and program developers within the VSCs, volunteers at the VSCs and with Ukrainian refugees participating within the VSC. Questions are formulated to provide more information on the requirements of federal/local organizations, experiences within the VSC and how they have managed the coming of refugees to the VSC. A second set of questions is formulated for VSC volunteers, to research if the volunteers are capable and willing to help, and if there are any side-effects of the new programs. The interview with volunteers has the primary goal to control for the answers provided by the board member or program maker. There are also

questions formulated for refugees that have entered the VSC. The aim of these questions is to investigate how integrated the refugees are within the VSC and if things they learned within the VSC may have been useful outside of the VSC. Next to VSCs, there are also questions prepared for Refugee housing center coordinators. These questions are formulated to establish what governmental rules the refugee center coordinators must deal with to arrange sport for the refugees and what their experiences are in the general refugee sporting process.

#### 4.3. Selection of participants

VSCs were approached via email or contact form on their website. VSCs were found on the internet, using search terms: Sportvereniging [City], Sport [City], Vereniging [City], Voetbal [City], Volleybal [City], Tennis [City]. 67 VSCs in Twente were identified and contacted. 26 VSCs did not respond, 33 VSCs responded with the message that there were no Ukrainian sporters at their VSC, 8 VSCs responded with the message that there were Ukrainian sporters and 5 of these VSCs were interested in an interview:

[67] -> nonresponse [26] -> no Ukrainian sporters -> [8] -> not interested -> [5].

The board members of VSCs that were willing to be interviewed were interviewed whereafter they were asked to connect the researcher with volunteers and Ukrainian sporters. In only 2 out of 5 VSCs there were interested volunteers, in 1 out of 5 there were interested Ukrainian sporters (2). In total, 10 people were interviewed. This research has been approved by the University of Twente Faculty BMS Ethical Committee, reference number 240301. The respondents have given signed permission to use their names, those who have not given permission have been anonymized. These documents are available upon request.

#### 4.4. Data collection

As the interviews were with Dutch people mostly, the interviews were held in Dutch. The Ukrainian sporters also preferred the interviews to be in Dutch, which they learned at

integration courses over the past year. There are four distinct groups of people that were interviewed for this research. The program makers and board members at the VSC, volunteers at the VSC, sporters at the VCS and refugees that sport at the VSC.

The program makers and board members were asked questions about all the levels of the theoretical framework, to establish a baseline to compare the other answers to. This means the questions were regarding the following topics: National programs, integration challenges, VSC culture, implementation of programs, consequences for the VSC because of these programs and the effects of the programs on individuals.

The volunteers of the VSC were interviewed for two reasons. The first is to control for the answers that the program maker or board member has given, as it could be that the practical truth is different from the theoretical truth. The volunteers also spoke on what consequences the new programs have for the rest of the VSC and its members. The second reason is to have a bigger focus of the dynamics in the sports groups, and they spoke more to the integration within the VSC of refugees. The last interview group is the refugees. The questions were about how they like it at the VSC, how welcome they feel, if they feel like part of the group, if they have made useful contacts and if there are lessons learned that helped them with integrating into other parts of society.

#### 4.5. Data analysis

The data gathered from the interviews was analyzed afterwards. First, the interviews were transcribed using Amberscript. The interviews were transcribed word-for-word, except some speaking imperfections. The results were openly coded, with code groups created based on the framework. The program ATLAS.ti was used, and a coding scheme was developed.

(Appendix 2)



#### 4.6. Limitations

Conducting interviews comes with some limitations (Verschuren et al., 2007). First, the number of interviews is limited which means that there are no statistical conclusions to be drawn from them. This was caused by limited interest and suitability for the interviews. However, the lesser number of respondents compared to a question-based form is compensated by the increased depth that can be achieved in an interview setting. Second, the interviewees can only speak to their perceptions and intentions, when compared to observational research. However, by interviewing we can learn motivations and intentions that would not be possible to gather from observation. To further address this limitation, any policy documents or programs will be asked for to support the interviews. Third, because some of the interviews will take place with Ukrainian respondents, language could be a limitation. In your mother tongue it can already be difficult to express emotions and complex feelings, this only becomes more difficult when the interviewee has to respond in a second language (Dutch for the Ukrainian refugees). The Dutch mastery of the Ukrainian refugees complicated interviewing which could have caused misunderstandings in the answers. To counteract this the Ukrainians would ask each other how to say certain things or use some English words. There could also be cultural differences that lead to different interpretations of the same conversation, body language or emotion, which can complicate analyzing results. All data gathering methods are somewhat sensitive to people giving strategic answers, which is why, when available, underlying documents and programs will be used to support claims made, especially by VSC-board members. Interviews can compensate for this effect as well because body language can be observed better in an interview setting compared to other methods. In practice, some respondents preferred doing interviews over the phone, which removes body language that can be observed altogether. Doing interviews in person caused

the issue that the sound recording was sometimes inaudible due to background noise, which caused a small amount of content to get lost.

#### 4.7. Validity and reliability

The used research methods were the investigation of websites and documents of the sports federations, and the open interviews with involved respondents. The research on websites and documents was there to establish which information is out there for the VSCs to use for starting refugee sporting programs. The interview schemes that were used during the interviews were open in character, leaving room to ask further questions if the original question or answer did not cover the topic. A closed interview scheme would increase the reliability of the research; however, this does not account for the complexity of personal experiences of people within the VSC. The interview scheme was developed based on the framework from the theory chapter. By using the framework to base questions on, the validity and reliability are increased as all the questions are asked for a specific and clarified reason. Additionally, the transcribed interview was coded using the framework, further clarifying results. For reliability of transcription, Amberscript was used and checked word for word. For reliability of coding, Atlas.ti was used.

## 5. Results

In this chapter, the results of the research into the Ukrainian refugee programs of VSCs and their experiences with Ukrainian sporters in Twente are presented. Every VSCs characteristics are described with attention to regional placement, Ukrainian refugee population, who was spoken to, and other relevant information. Thereafter the interview results are presented split in macro-meso-micro terms. The macro section discusses the governmental policy, VSC network, membership rules and whether pre-existing integration programs are used. The meso section discusses the willingness of the board, volunteers, and members to integrate Ukrainian refugees, the ability of the board, volunteers and members and which programs they use for integration. The ability section is presented in a bulleted fashion to increase comparableness with other VSCs. This is possible because the ability refers to measurable factors, for example available budgets. Other consequences for the VSC are presented afterwards, including the pressure on resources, availability of volunteers, Ukrainian refugee population development and other relevant VSC-level experiences. The micro section describes consequences for the sport experience of members, integration of Ukrainian sporters with the members and effects of the VSC on the general integration of the Ukrainian refugees. After the VSC results are presented, the findings from an interview with a refugee center coordinator are shown. The questions that are answered in this chapter are as follows: ‘How does governmental policy influence the VSCs refugee integration programs?’, ‘How do regional-cultural factors influence the VSC refugee integration programs?’, ‘What programs have been created or modified to integrate refugees in the VSC?’ and lastly ‘What effects do these programs have on the VSCs, refugees and members?’.

## 5.1. Juventa '12 (Wierden)

Juventa '12 is a football club located in Wierden, founded in 1912 with teams for boys, girls, men, and women. Wierden is a town with close to 25.000 inhabitants close to the bigger city Almelo, which almost has 73000 inhabitants (AlleCijfers, 2024). It is one of two football clubs in Wierden, with a familiar and Christian mood. The club aims to “provide amateur football with a healthy drive to perform and a good vibe for optimal results” (Juventa '12, n.d.). Additionally, the club aims to make everyone equals and to make everyone feel welcome.

Wierden is located close to Almelo which is where some of their refugee population comes from. At the time of the interview, there are two Ukrainian refugees sporting at Juventa '12. Both sporters are under 18. There are also some other refugee groups playing at Juventa '12, mainly Syrian refugees. These are also under 18. The information was gathered from an interview with Angelique Boddeman, secretary, and board member of Juventa '12 and from the policy plan (Juventa '12, n.d.). It was not possible to get into contact with a volunteer or the Ukrainian sporters' parents.

### 5.1.1. Macro

- **Regional Government**

The regional government in Wierden has no expectations of VSCs when it comes to refugee integration, according to the board member of Juventa '12. Additionally, there are no integration programs from the (regional) government of which they are aware. The regional government has taken up a role withing the VSC network, which is explained in the next paragraph.

- **VSC Network**

There is a VSC network called the SAWE (Stichting Accomodatie Wierden-Enter, ReggeRijk, n.d.), which has recently tried to create a sporting fund that all VSCs can make use of to give more people the ability to sport. The regional government has taken up a role in the creation of this sporting fund by hiring an external bureau to investigate the possibilities. The board member is aware of the youth sporting fund that already exists in the region, which allows youth to practice one sport for free, paid for by the regional government. However, sometimes this does not work properly. The board member has stated that: *“If for any reason the available funds do not work, as an VSC we have said that every child will be able to sport at our VSC. Because every child has to be able to sport, we will make the sport free for them.”* (Interview Angelique Boddeman, Board Member Juventa ’12).

- **Membership Rules**

In essence a VSC cannot decline a membership. Juventa ’12 has stated that they do not decline any members, nor do they remove members from the VSC, if they follow basic behavioral rules. However, after accepting a membership, Juventa ’12 makes some practical considerations when placing sporters into teams, for example when teams are overfull. This could lead to a new member not being able to play in the competition until there is enough room in the team for them, but they can train with the team outside of match days.

#### 5.1.2. Meso

- **Willingness of the Board**

Juventa ’12 has formulated some goals for the board. First and foremost, they aim to be approachable. The board wants to ensure that members feel welcome and seen. The board also expects the VSC to grow over the coming years, in part due to an increase of female football sporters and immigration. Immigration is a part of their board goals since they want everyone to be able to sport.

To broadcast this message to the members of the VSC, the board of Juventa '12 has made a booklet that is sent to all coordinators, leaders, and trainers at the start of the year. This booklet contains the goals for the coming year(s), social guidelines, and rules. Next to this, they have an GMA where all adult members are welcome to voice any ideas or concerns. Supporting the refugees in their integration does not cost the board more time when compared to a regular member. The age group coordinators, which are responsible for a specific age group (e.g., 11-13) contacts the parents and arranges the practical side.

- **Willingness of Volunteers**

So far there have been no volunteers that have spoken about not wanting to have refugees on their teams or in their section of the VSC. The age group coordinators usually guide about 25 sporters, when one refugee extra joins that does not significantly change their workload. Since there are no separate groups for refugees there is no real increase in time investment for refugees specifically.

There are volunteers with migration backgrounds. These volunteers do not have specific integration roles in the VSC. Their tasks are as diverse as any other volunteer, ranging from leader and trainer to a member of the handyman-crew. The board expects this to be related to uncomfortableness with the Dutch language. *“With the parents there is a language barrier. The kids have no problems with learning Dutch, since they are at school. This is more difficult for the parents.”* (Interview Angelique Boddeman, Board Member Juventa '12).

- **Willingness of Members**

The members are very welcoming to the refugees at the VSC. The refugees get involved in the bingo, the annual party and they are invited to come to camp. These activities are intentionally cheap so everyone can take part. The refugees also get involved in team events,

such as an end of year party. There is some extra drive among the volunteers to involve the refugee sporters in these activities.

- **Ability**

Budget – There is no extra budget for the integration of refugees. However, in the case that they cannot afford the quarterly membership fee, the VSC will cover it.

Board involvement – The board aims to be as visible as possible to integrate with the members, with the goal of knowing what is happening among the members. The board also decides whether a member has to pay their contribution.

VSC non-specific programs – There are activities for integration that all members can partake in, which are not aimed directly at refugees or other minority groups. For example, the annual party, an organizing meeting at the start of the year and the camp.

Team placement – Team placement happens based on age and skill. The technical committee places sporters into the appropriate team in consultation with the leaders of those teams.

Refugees are treated slightly differently in this process; they are more likely to be placed with friends from school to make them feel more at home.

Cultural differences awareness – Juventa '12 does not experience cultural differences between the Dutch sporters and the Ukrainians.

Volunteer skills – Most volunteers have a good mastery of English. This helps in the communication with Ukrainians since most Ukrainian parents speak some English. The volunteers make no further adaptations to their usual practices when Ukrainian refugees join the team.

Time investment – The fact that a member is a Ukrainian refugee does not increase the amount of time a volunteer or board member has to spend at the VSC more than a normal additional member would.

Awareness of refugees – The members of Juventa '12 are aware that there are Ukrainian

members at the VSC. The Ukrainian members are invited to activities and members want them to come.

Inclusion in usual programs – The Ukrainian members are invited to activities and members want them to come. Some volunteers try extra hard to be welcoming to the Ukrainians by inviting them to everything personally.

- **Programs**

- *Start of year meeting*

Juventa '12 does not have any Ukrainian refugee specific programs. However, one of their programs has integration and organization as the primary goal. The start-of-year meeting includes parents from the start in the organization and gets them to know each other.

Reason for program – Get to know fellow football parents, and to discuss who will be the team's leader and trainer, and to organize a car schedule and a coffee pool.

Target group – Parents of football playing youth or adults playing themselves

Program Goals – Arrange practical affairs at the start of the year with everyone present. Give all parents a chance to meet so that they know who they are emailing, texting, or supporting their children with.

Participation – The board and the age coordinator put in extra effort to ensure everyone can be present at this evening. Most evenings this works.

Costs – Apart from coffee and tea for all participants, there are no additional costs for this program.

Time investment – The organization of the evening takes some time, all parents have to be called and asked to join this meeting.

Program Success – Juventa '12 has been doing this for multiple years, and they keep doing it because it works well for them.



- ***Clothing from the lost and found***

There is one other exception made for the refugee sporters, the board has selected from the lost-and-found box for the two sporters, since they did not have sports gear to play in. The reason for this is that the board wants them to feel comfortable: *“I have personally selected some items from the lost and found box for the two boys, things they needed, because they had nothing. As a young boy you want to look at least a bit nice, that is important”* (Interview board member Juventa '12). This does not increase the pressure on these resources because the lost-and-found box gets donated to goodwill normally.

- ***KNVB registration***

The last program that works differently for refugees than for Dutch sporters is the KNVB registration system. The KNVB has to officially request transfer from the Ukrainian sporters' old football club, which does not work at the moment. The system requires the information if the sporter has played abroad in the past 5 years after which the KNVB needs confirmation. This means they can officially not be a member until the transfer is complete, but the transfer cannot be completed because the Ukrainian football club is not functioning at the moment. Juventa '12 lets them play in the teams without being registered. This costs no extra money or effort, however there is a risk of opposing teams objecting to results because an unregistered sporter played in the football match. There is no incident of this happening yet.

- **Other consequences for VSC**

- ***Ukrainian member population development***

Juventa '12 is experiencing no change in the Ukrainian member population. The two sporters will continue playing next season and their parents are sometimes present at the VSC. There was an application to play on their field outside of match times by a refugee center in the

region, but they moved to the other VSC in Wierden before it had started. The reason for this change is unknown.

- *Adaptation of volunteer roles*

Volunteers make only slight changes in their volunteering work. They sometimes speak English when Dutch does not work and make the occasional extra call to ensure the Ukrainians feel invited.

- *Pressure on resources*

The current group of Ukrainian sporters is so small (2), there is no added pressure on resources.

#### 5.1.3. Micro

- **Consequences for club members**

There are only two Ukrainian refugees, which does not significantly increase the pressure on resources available to members. The program that hands out secondhand sporting gear could mean that non-refugee sporters do not have access to this sporting gear, however, this has not been reported. The availability of volunteers has also not decreased, but also not increased. There are no additional volunteers that have come from the Ukrainian refugee population.

- **Integration of Ukrainian sporters with the members**

The Ukrainian sporters are invited to all activities and are expected to be there as much as any other sporter. It helps that the classmates of the Ukrainian sporters also play football at Juventa '12.

- **General integration of Ukrainian refugees**

The Ukrainian sporters also attend the school in Wierden. Being able to play at the VSC allows for them to live as normal a life as possible while in the Netherlands. The two

Ukrainian sporters used to live in a city in Ukraine, which is a lesson to learn for the Ukrainian sporters, according to Boddeman: *“Playing in a team, and living in a small village where everyone knows one another, must be a big difference. We know each other and we are easy to interact with. Also, I believe their language development is expedited by their participation at the VSC, because you play in a team.”* (Interview Angelique Boddeman, Board Member Juventa ’12).

## 5.2. V.V. Rigtersbleek (Enschede)

V.V. Rigtersbleek is a football club in the neighborhood of Twekkelerveld in Enschede, founded in 1910. This is the only club in this neighborhood, but one of twenty football clubs in Enschede. Enschede is a city with close to 160000 inhabitants (AlleCijfers, 2024), Twekkelerveld has around 10.000. They aim to play football at a relatively high level and have their own youth academy to train sporters from a young age to become successful football sporters. Additionally, V.V. Rigtersbleek has the aim to provide the neighborhood with more than just football, also offering catering options, daytime activities for diverse groups, meeting rooms, and other sports such as elderly gymnastics and a recently constructed obstacle course. Enschede has two Ukrainian refugee centers, in total about 600 Ukrainians live in these centers (Gemeente Enschede, n.d.). However, some individuals have taken Ukrainian refugees into their homes, which makes the actual amount unclear. These centers are not close to V.V. Rigtersbleek, but due to their diverse programs still some Ukrainian refugees find their way to V.V. Rigtersbleek. V.V. Rigtersbleek has no Ukrainian members, but they do have Ukrainians participate in their Tiki Taka League, a friendly football competition without a membership requirement. The information was gathered from an interview with Wouter Dugardijn, Board member and Commissioner Future at V.V. Rigtersbleek and the website (V.V. Rigtersbleek, 2024, 9 Aug). Information on the Tiki Taka League was found on the website (Tiki Taka Cup, 2024, 9 Aug). The title of Commissioner Future entails that the focus lies in sustainability and value creation of the VSC. No further interviews were scheduled because there is no available record of who the Ukrainians are that participated in the past Tiki Taka League and there are no volunteers directly involved with the Tiki Taka League participants.

### 5.2.1. Macro

- **Regional Government**

V.V. Rigtersbleek is currently not aware of specific refugee sports goals or rules set by the regional government. Furthermore, when asked if aware of any integration programs made by government or the sports federation, Commissioner Future Wouter Dugardijn responded: *“No, but that is not a thing at the moment. Should we even want that?”* (Interview Wouter Dugardijn, board member at V.V. Rigtersbleek). Dugardijn explains further: the regional government must take up a more active role in providing VSCs in Enschede with a perspective on the future and the funding to make that perspective a reality. The situation in Enschede is that multiple VSCs are on the verge of collapse. According to Dugardijn that is mostly caused by an imbalance in the member composition: *‘When you have too many members with a refugee background, Dutch members will leave to another VSC’* (Interview Wouter Dugardijn, board member V.V. Rigtersbleek). Since refugee members invest less hours back into the VSC as volunteers the VSC can no longer afford to offer the same quality and experience as before, which causes even more members to leave. It is not known if the refugees were asked to volunteer at the VSC. Dugardijn continues to explain because of a lack of vision on this terrain by the municipal government, multiple VSCs are now in danger of collapse. Dugardijn: *“If you fall out of balance, you cannot mean anything to anyone anymore”* (Interview Wouter Dugardijn, board member V.V. Rigtersbleek). The regional government plays a role in the VSC network in Enschede, which is described in the next paragraph.

- **VSC Network**

Dugardijn is a part of a group of VSCs envisioning the future of sports clubs in Enschede, and the municipal government is also participating in this group. This group aims to create a vision of the future for sustainable football clubs, which means merger of several clubs and a

role that is more than just providing sports. V.V. Rigtersbleek does not have to merge in these plans, since they are the only VSC in the neighborhood and have a large member population.

- **Membership Rules**

Although there are no written membership rules, V.V. Rigtersbleek is cautious with admitting too many refugee or immigrant sporters. The board thinks if the club admits too many, it could cause the native population of the football club to leave. This could cause the downfall of the VSC in the longer run, which Dugardijn claims has happened to VSCs in Enschede already. This claim was not verified, but the number of VSCs has decreased over the years (RTV Oost, 2023). There is no policy formulated on this topic and no set ratio of Dutch players and non-Dutch players, as Dugardijn explains: *“This is not the type of policy that you write down.”* (Interview Wouter Dugardijn, Board member V.V. Rigtersbleek)

#### 5.2.2. Meso

- **Willingness of the Board**

The board of V.V. Rigtersbleek agrees over their refugee policy. This policy is that they do not want too many non-Dutch sporters at the VSC, because non-Dutch members are less likely to perform volunteer work and the Dutch members do not always enjoy having a lot of non-Dutch members at the VSC. This is not formulated as policy on paper. This is not broadcast to all members. This policy does not cost extra time to enforce. Nevertheless, the board is working to strengthen the societal role in the neighborhood the VSC can play, which is something the board puts a lot of time and effort into. Recently the board has appointed a board member that focuses on expats, since the board feels like this is a group they do not reach enough but is present enough in Enschede, because of the higher education in Enschede.

- **Willingness of Volunteers**

Since there are no Ukrainian refugees member at the VSC, this does not cost the volunteers more time. There are some volunteers with migration backgrounds, they fulfill the usual volunteer jobs like leader, trainer, or referee. There is no difference in how they function compared to Dutch volunteers. There is one program that Ukrainians do participate in, the Tiki Taka League, which is run by a volunteer.

- **Willingness of Members**

The Tiki Taka League takes place during weeknights, and the sporters in the Tiki Taka League join the other members in the canteen afterwards. The members were surprised that there were so many non-members in the canteen, but after a brief time they were used to it and had a fun time. The members have never expressed any negative feelings towards their canteen being populated by other nationalities that played in the Tiki Taka League.

- **Ability**

Budget – There is no integration budget.

Board involvement – The board does not aim to specifically increase the amount of refugee members at the VSC. However, the board aims to increase the VSCs role in the neighborhood.

Association non-specific programs – The Tiki Taka League is the only V.V. Rigtersbleek program that Ukrainian refugees participate in.

Team placement – in the Tiki Taka League sporters form their own teams.

Cultural differences awareness – The board expects people with migration backgrounds, which includes Ukrainian refugees, to do less volunteer work and to drink less beer in the canteen.

Volunteer skills – The volunteers are highly praised by the board. Many volunteers outperform their qualifications and would be able to support Ukrainian members.

Time investment – The board and the volunteers invest no time in integrating Ukrainian refugees.

Awareness of refugees – Most members are probably not aware that there are many international plays, including Ukrainian refugees at the VSC.

Inclusion in usual programs – Ukrainian refugees are as welcome as anyone else to use the canteen and to participate in the Tiki Taka League.

- **Programs**

- *Tiki Taka League*

The Tiki Taka League is inspired on similar initiatives from the west of the Netherlands. Tiki Taka is an 8-to-10-week competition which occurs multiple times per year. Complete 7v7 teams can sign up for the Tiki Taka League for a low price without any further commitment to the VSC or future Tiki Taka League installments. Every team plays against each other in a small football competition. (Tiki Taka Cup, 2024)

Reason for program – The Tiki Taka League was started at V.V. Rigtersbleek to have a low threshold football activity for external groups of friends to participate in, without having to become a member.

Target group – Groups of friends, colleagues, students, or otherwise that want to play a friendly football match every week for a few weeks.

Program Goals – The primary goal of the Tiki Taka League is increasing the occupancy rate of the football fields at V.V. Rigtersbleek. Tiki Taka can achieve this by appealing to new sporters that usually do not find their way to the VSC. Diversification is a sub-goal.

Participation – There is one team of Ukrainian refugees that played in a previous installment of the Tiki Taka League. It is unknown if this team continued the next installment or if they found another VSC to play at.

Costs – The Tiki Taka League makes the VSC money. The price is €150 per team per



installment. This comes down to about €2.50 per match per sporter.

Time investment – There is a volunteer running the Tiki Taka League, there is a website built for it (which is only available in Dutch) and there are advertisements for the Tiki Taka league.

Program Success – The Tiki Taka League has happened every time it was planned, which means the goal of increasing the occupancy rate is achieved. There was participation of a Ukrainian team in the Tiki Taka League, which means that also integration goals are being achieved.

- **Other consequences for VSC**
  - *Ukrainian member population development*

There are currently no Ukrainian sporters at V.V. Rigtersbleek, outside of the Tiki Taka League. It is unknown if the Ukrainian sporters will return next installments of the Tiki Taka League.

- *Adaptation of volunteer roles*

There are currently no adaptations to volunteer roles at V.V. Rigtersbleek because of the Ukrainians participating in the Tiki Taka League.

- *Pressure on resources*

One of the goals of the Tiki Taka League was to increase the occupancy rate of their football fields, which makes the increased pressure on resources a desirable effect of the Tiki Taka League.

- *Unexpected events*

The canteen was overfull when the Tiki Taka League and trainings were planned at the same time, which caused the 1<sup>st</sup> team to move their after-drink to the board room. There were no complaints by the sporters of the 1<sup>st</sup> team or the Tiki Taka League sporters.

### 5.2.3. Micro

- **Consequences for club members**

The club members have responded positively to the increased patronage in their canteen. The board of V.V. Rigtersbleek is happy about how the members are interacting with the new Tiki Taka League sporter base. It is not known if there are Ukrainian sporters in the canteen, however.

- **Integration of Ukrainian sporters with the members**

There is little integration into the VSC with the Tiki Taka League. The Ukrainian sporters are at least aware of the existence of the VSC and what they have to offer, after their participation in the Tiki Taka League.

- **General integration of Ukrainian refugees**

No Ukrainians, volunteers, or members that are personally affiliated with the Ukrainian sporters have been interviewed, which means there are no results regarding the integration of Ukrainian sporters in general society after visiting the VSC.

### 5.3. SDC '12 (Denekamp)

SDC '12 is a football club in Denekamp. It was founded in 1912, and SDC '12 is the only football club in Denekamp, a town with around 10.000 inhabitants (AlleCijfers, 2024).

Therefore, the club mainly plays a community role, providing relaxation and refreshment, and they currently have around 1200 members. They pride themselves in their Twente heritage and openness. There is one Ukrainian refugee center in Denekamp, housing around 60 refugees (Gemeente Dinkelland, n.d.), and more nearby, across the Dutch-German border. Ukrainian refugees from both these centers have found their way to SDC '12. Around the time of the interviews, four Ukrainian sporters were active at SDC '12. Three boys under 18 play at SDC '12 and one woman around 30. The information was gathered from a board member from SDC '12 and from Gerard Kraegsenberg, coordinator of sporters between 15 and 17 years, actively involved with new member administration and contact person for Stichting Leergeld and the Ukrainian refugee centers. There was no available policy plan. At the time of the interview, it was not possible to contact Ukrainian sporters or their parents, and the trainers of the Ukrainian sporters did not respond to an interview invitation.

#### 5.3.1. Macro

- **Regional Government**

SDC '12 is currently not aware or making use of pre-existing refugee integration programs. There are not refugee programs, because the number of refugees they have at their club does not warrant specific programs. The municipality does not have direct expectations of the VSC but would like them to have role that is more beneficiary to society, more than just sports. The municipality stimulates this by offering grants for projects that benefit the people in the municipality. The main goal of the municipal policy is to increase the amount of people that

play sports. Examples of granted subsidies are sporting coaches, help with difficult children and advisory councils.

- **VSC Network**

There is currently no active VSC network in the region of Denekamp. The board member of SDC '12 explains why there is no dire need for a VSC network: *“Denekamp is very small. A boy joins football, a girl joins volleyball. That is known. If it turns out that they have no football talent, they join road bowling or tennis. [...] We are isolated as a town that way.”*

(Interview board member SDC '12).

- **Membership Rules**

There are no membership rules currently that you must follow to become a member at SDC '12, other than a simple code of conduct for social safety. If there is a case of someone breaking these rules, for example kicking a referee, a disciplinary council will decide if the member can stay active at the VSC.

### 5.3.2. Meso

- **Willingness of the Board**

The Board of SDC '12 aims to fulfill a societal role beyond playing football. The municipality stimulates the board in doing this. The focus is to create a place where all people can come together and meet each other. For example, the Board is working on organizing an after-school daycare at the football park, thus creating a more central role for the VSC in Denekamp. As to for whom these additions to the VSC are created, the SDC '12 board member explains that everyone is welcome: *“Every football sporter, is a football sporter. Regardless of color, heritage, or agenda. We play football here, and as long as you play football you are welcome here.”* (Interview board member SDC '12). The whole board agrees on this topic. The board feels they do not have to broadcast this message actively to their

members, since the regional culture is welcoming to everyone, if they act “normal” according to their standards. These standards are explained in a social safety manual that everyone has access to. The board has also arranged a translator the first time there was a meeting with the Ukrainian sporters. This helped them in getting to know each other and mutual expectations.

- **Willingness of Volunteers**

There is only a handful of volunteers that work with Ukrainian refugees at SDC '12. The main volunteer that spends extra time is Kraegsenberg. As the contact person for Stichting Leergeld and the refugee center, Kraegsenberg invests extra time to get to know the Ukrainian sporters and their home situation, he does this by visiting them at home. This costs him considerable time, but only once. After this initial visit, the time spent is similar to another members’.

The leaders of the Ukrainian sporters have not significantly changed their behaviors around the Ukrainian sporters. Since the sporters quickly pick up the Dutch language there is little need to speak English. There are some volunteers with immigration backgrounds, these do not play a larger role in the integration of new members. There are no Ukrainian volunteers at the time of this research.

- **Willingness of Members**

The members are willing to invite the Ukrainian sporters to outside activities besides football, however an interesting situation has occurred. The Dutch volunteers were assuming that Ukrainian sporters did not have enough money to attend the end-of-year party. Therefore, the Dutch volunteers did not invite the Ukrainians to the party. It turns out that this assumption was unfounded, and the Ukrainians did want to attend the party and had no problem paying for it. Outside of this incident, the members have the same attitude as the board: if the Ukrainians act “normal” they are welcome.

- **Ability**

Budget – There is no separate integration budget at the VSC. However, the board thinks that if they wanted some extra integration budget there would be a municipal fund available.

Board involvement – When the first Ukrainians joined SDC '12, the board was involved in arranging a translator and exploring the possibilities. These responsibilities have thereafter been transferred to Kraegsenberg.

VSC non-specific programs – The municipality has funding for low-income households for the children to sport. However, this is not only for Ukrainian refugees, but also accessible for everyone.

Team placement – A technical committee places the sporters into teams. The first step is based on age and the second step based on skill. For Ukrainians, this process is different. Kraegsenberg places the sporters into teams he finds fitting, which he does in consultation with the team leaders. In the experience of SDC '12, it is better for integration to split the Ukrainians into different teams. In the past they have put four Ukrainians in teams together, which led to clumping. Additionally, having too many Ukrainian sporters in one team can cause issues with driving to away matches, since the Ukrainians do often not have access to a car.

Cultural differences awareness – the board of SDC '12 is sure there are cultural differences, but cannot name specifics. If the sporters act “normal” there is no problem. Kraegsenberg is dealing with differences in informing about absences, which the Ukrainians do not do very much.

Volunteer skills – Since the Ukrainian sporters seem to learn Dutch very quickly at the VSC, the volunteers do not have to adapt their language to English. There have been no problems which demonstrate a lack of volunteer skills in interacting with Ukrainian refugees.

Time investment – Besides Kraegsenberg, there are no volunteers spending extra time at the

VSC. However, Kraegsenberg does invest multiple hours in registering and getting to know new sporters and their families.

Awareness of refugees – There is no widespread awareness of the Ukrainian sporter’s presence at the VSC. The board claims this is caused by the fact that if the Ukrainians do what to normal boys do, they do not stand out.

Inclusion in usual programs – There has been one incident where the Ukrainians were assumed uninterested in a paid team activity, however this has been resolved. The parents of the Ukrainian sporters are mostly absent from the VSC.

- **Programs**

- *Personal attention from sporter coordinator*

The extra time that Kraegsenberg invests into the new sporters is unwritten policy that is in effect at SDC ’12. Kraegsenberg visits the sporters homes, speaks to their families, calls after them in case of absence and places them into teams himself. Kraegsenberg also visits the sporters outside of the football season to invite them to come back again next year.

Reason for program – This program stems from the first meeting with Ukrainian sporters, for which the board arranged an internal get-to-know meeting. Afterwards, Kraegsenberg took this responsibility on himself, in deliberation with the board, to get to know the new Ukrainian members.

Target group – Ukrainian new members and other new members with migration backgrounds.

Program Goals – To make the sporters feel seen and heard, to give them a familiar face at the VSC from the start.

Participation – So far no one has declined the visit from Kraegsenberg.

Costs – There are no additional costs to this program, but SDC ’12 does pay for contribution if the sporters are unable to and if they are not eligible for municipal funding.

Time investment – These visits and re-visits cost Kraegsenberg extra time: “*The foreign boys*

*do ask for a bit more time. See, visiting their home obviously costs more time, but it builds trust. It communicates easier. Whenever I cycle to the football field now, they say “Hi Gerard!” You need to build a bond, which makes talking much easier. Because they know me, they also get accepted easier at the club..”* (Interview Gerard Kraegsenberg, Volunteer SDC '12).

Program Success – Kraegsenberg is happy with how the sporters behaving in the team surrounding football. If it turns out the initial team placement does not fit with the sporters, Kraegsenberg looks for a new team. There are still two things that can be improved upon: first, the Ukrainian sporters do not always let their teams know when they are absent. When the Ukrainian sporters have been absent for a while, the team leaders report this to Kraegsenberg. According to Kraegsenberg the report should happen sooner, giving him more opportunities to clear up the situation. Second, the Ukrainian sporters are mostly absent at outside of football activities. This is something Kraegsenberg is working on to improve it.

- **Other consequences for VSC**

- *Ukrainian member population development*

The Ukrainian member population is quite stable at SDC '12. Currently there are 2 boys remaining that will most likely continue next season. This is unsure because their situation can change quickly, due to housing or relocation.

- *Adaptation of volunteer roles*

The role of the sporter coordinator that Kraegsenberg fills is different, it now includes house visits and personal monitoring of the Ukrainian sporters. Other volunteers do not have to make changes.

- *Pressure on resources*



Because the number of Ukrainian refugees is so low, in the history of SDC '12 it has ranged from 0-4, there is no added pressure on resources.

### 5.3.3. Micro

- **Consequences for club members**

Since there are only two Ukrainian sporters, there are no consequences when it comes to resource pressure. The increased workload of the coordinator, Kraegsenberg, is substantial. Kraegsenberg explains that at times he spends 9-10 hours weekly working for the VSC.

- **Integration of Ukrainian sporters with the members**

The two Ukrainian sporters are invited to all events in the VSC, but do not attend often.

- **General integration of Ukrainian refugees**

The VSC is a way to get to know Twente culture, according to the board member: *“I do think they feast their eyes on the things that we do here in Twente. How to interact with your team, with each other. I also expect them to learn Dutch quickly in a team. [.] They also learn about Sinterklaas.”* (Interview board member SDC '12).

#### 5.4. Eurosped Pollux (Oldenzaal)

Eurosped Pollux is a volleyball club in Oldenzaal. The club was founded in 1970 and currently plays at a high level, just below the professional volleyball level. Oldenzaal has around 32000 inhabitants and has multiple volleyball clubs. Eurosped Pollux makes fun their primary mission and attempts to provide a challenge for everyone at their level of volleyball. There is a Ukrainian refugee center in Oldenzaal, housing 50 refugees. However, the single Ukrainian member does not live at this center, but at one further away.

The information was gathered from the policy plan (V.V. Pollux, 2018), and from a board member from Eurosped Pollux, Katja Wiebe, who is the secretary and a parent involved in the team that the Ukrainian member is playing in. Neither the trainer nor the Ukrainian sporter did respond to an interview invitation.

##### 5.4.1. Macro

- **Regional Government**

There are no regional governmental rules or plans that Eurosped Pollux must follow regarding refugees or integration. There is general municipal policy and updates that are broadcast for everyone to see, but these are not targeted specifically at the VSC. There are no pre-existing programs currently being used, nor is there awareness of these programs.

- **VSC Network**

There is no VSC Network that Eurosped Pollux is a part of. In case of any questions, the Nevobo (Dutch Volleybal Federation) is the contact point.

- **Membership Rules**

There is usually no reason for Eurosped Pollux to turn down membership requests. There are some practical situations thinkable, which solve themselves, for example: *“If a 35-year-old*

*wants to play competitive volleyball, but there are only teams with 18-year old's, it's fun for no-one. Usually, the member that signs up realizes this and starts searching elsewhere."*

(Interview Katja Wiebe, Board member at Eurosped Pollux). For team placement Eurosped Pollux looks at the characteristics of the aspiring member, such as age, skill, and level of motivation.

#### 5.4.2. Meso

- **Willingness of the Board**

The board of Eurosped Pollux aims to be a spider in the web of the VSC. They aim to be informed on all committees and events at the VSC. The main goal of the board is to make volleyball at Eurosped Pollux as fun as possible. The board aims to do this by arranging the practical side of things as well as possible, for example the location arrangements and broadcasting news to the members. The board is aware of a Ukrainian sporter in the VSC, but it has not been a topic of discussion or debate, the sporter is very welcome. The fact that there is a Ukrainian sporter is no big deal at the VSC, and most members are unaware. The board does inform members on who the new sporter is if the member wants to know.

- **Willingness of Volunteers**

The volunteers are willing to help the Ukrainian member integrate into the team and to enable him to play volleyball.

- **Willingness of Members**

Members do notice the presence of a new sporter and will inquire about who it is. The team members of the Ukrainian sporter are incredibly supportive of him. He has received a bike to use for biking to the bus station, and the members wait with him when it is raining so he does not have to sit alone. Wiebe explains why she thinks the team members are willing and able to

help the Ukrainian sporter: *“It is just Twente neighbourhoodyness, we make sure it all goes easy”* (Interview Katja Wiebe, board member Eurosped Pollux).

- **Ability**

Budget – There is no budget specifically for integration of new members or refugees. There is a larger budget for VSC-wide activities, like club tournaments and an end-of-year party.

These activities are accessible for all members.

Board involvement – The board is not specifically involved with the Ukrainian refugee integration. The board is responsible for organizing the VSC-wide activities.

VSC non-specific programs – There are only non-specific programs as mentioned above.

Team placement – The team placement of Ukrainian refugees is handled the same as a normal members’ placement, mostly based on what team has room for new sporters and where the new members’ peers are playing.

Cultural differences awareness – The board is not aware of any cultural differences. They are impressed with the independence and persistence of the Ukrainian sporter, since he has to travel over one hour to get to the VSC, which he does seemingly unwavering.

Volunteer skills – The volunteers have the skills to interact with the Ukrainian sporter. The Ukrainian sporters is very active in making himself understood, using all languages at his disposal and hand gestures if that does not work.

Time investment – The teammates of the Ukrainian refugee put in extra time to make him feel comfortable, for example waiting with him at the bus stop or giving him car rides.

Awareness of refugees – It is not a wide known fact that there is a Ukrainian refugee playing at the VSC, but members that would like to know can ask when they meet him.

Inclusion in usual programs – The Ukrainian sporter takes active part in most activities offered to him. He is also welcomed by the members.

- **Programs**

There are no programs aimed at Ukrainian refugees at Eurosped Pollux. Instead, the individual members are integrated into the team by member involvement in their integration. Instead of systematically analyzing all small initiatives that were started by the Ukrainians' teammates, here follows a list of things team members and volunteers have done to make playing at the VSC easier:

- The Trainer arranged a bike for the Ukrainian sporter to bike to, and from, the VSC to the bus station.
- The teammates take him to the station by car and accompany him if he has to wait for the bus.
- The Ukrainian sporter gets invited to all events via his trainer, but also via private message to make sure he understood what is going on.
- The Ukrainian sporter does not have to participate in the driving schedule for out-games, because he does not have access to a car.

- **Other consequences for VSC**

- *Ukrainian member population development*

There is currently only one Ukrainian member and there is no indication this is going to change.

- *Adaptation of volunteer roles*

Volunteers do not have to change their usual activities for the Ukrainian refugee, especially since he can understand Dutch.

- *Pressure on resources*

There is no additional pressure on resources because there is only one Ukrainian Refugee playing at Eurosped Pollux.

#### 5.4.3. Micro

- **Consequences for club members**

The club members play an influential role in the integration of the Ukrainian sporter. They are responsible for arranging the bike, giving rides, inviting the Ukrainian to parties and events. According to Wiebe the team has an enjoyable time together and likes having the Ukrainian player there. There is no additional pressure on materials, team spaces, volunteers, or something similar, because there is only one Ukrainian sporter.

- **Integration of Ukrainian sporters with the members**

The Ukrainian sporter is present at most activities, hangs out with team members outside of volleyball, and uses social media to stay in contact with them.

- **General integration of Ukrainian refugees**

The Ukrainian sporter has made friends at the VSC and sees them outside of volleyball. Next to this, the Dutch ability of the Ukrainian sporter is growing, and he becomes easier to understand with time.

## 5.5. Recreatiesport Almelo (Almelo)

Recreatiesport Almelo is a VSC located across Almelo, a city with around 73000 inhabitants (AlleCijfers, 2024). Recreatiesport Almelo is different from a normal VSC, because of their wide arrange of sports that are offered, from ball sports (football, volleyball, indoor football) to cardio (BodyFiT, Bodybalance) to dance (Jazz, Ballet) and many more sports. Currently there are 19 sports listed on the website (Recreatiesport Almelo, n.d.). All these different sports can be offered for a low price, which is the main goal of Recreatiesport Almelo. These sports are played for fun and not competitively, which is a way to cut costs, since there is no membership fee to a sports federation necessary. For this research, the focus lies on the volleyball part of the VSC, which currently has two Ukrainian sporters. The volleyball takes place once per week in a large group of adults who play friendly matches, no score has to be kept or competition played. There is no further organization, other than a board member randomly creating teams every week. Almelo has a Ukrainian refugee center where around 300 Ukrainians live (Van Schuppen, 2022). Two Ukrainian residents from the center play volleyball at Recreatiesport Almelo, both 18-year-old males. The information was gathered from an interview with a board member, Lillian Brouwer. Brouwer is the board secretary and responsible for the volleyball at Recreatiesport Almelo. Additionally, the two Ukrainian sporters were interviewed on their experiences playing volleyball at Recreatiesport Almelo. Lastly, another volleyball member was interviewed on his experiences with the Ukrainian sporters.

### 5.5.1. Macro

- **Regional Government**

There are no rules, regulations or expectations surrounding refugees sporting that Brouwer is aware of. The Ukrainian sporters that joined the VSC have joined through their refugee center

coordinator, who is employed by the municipality to ensure that the residents have access to sports. There are also no pre-existing integration programs that Recreatiesport Almelo makes use of. In the past there were agreements with the COA (Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers) (COA, n.d.) when there was an influx of Afghan refugees to the Netherlands. The agreement consisted of a set price, much lower than the usual price, €7.50 per quarter instead of €23.40. When the influx of Afghan refugees stopped, the rule was forgotten and eventually stopped to exist. Even though there is no agreement, the current Ukrainian sporters play for free, an agreement that Brouwer made with them personally.

- **VSC Network**

There are no other VSCs that Recreatiesport Almelo is in contact with regarding foreign sporters. The structure of Recreatiesport Almelo is a network of different sports within the city under one umbrella, and the sports function mostly separately. Problems are dealt with within the internal network. The member of Recreatiesport Almelo wishes that the municipality would play a larger role in the integration of refugees, by hosting get-to-know moments between diverse groups.

- **Membership Rules**

There are no written rules for declining memberships at Recreatiesport Almelo, but in the past it has happened, for multiple reasons. If a sporter cannot play volleyball at a minimum level, they usually leave. For Ukrainians specifically, the volleyball coordinator has decided to ask a section of the Ukrainian group to leave. Brouwer explains: *“At a certain point they formed a group of five to six sporters. Two of them were already there, calm, and modest boys, which went well, their Dutch was also pretty good. But then they proceeded to bring more Ukrainians, which formed a clique during volleyball. Some members voiced concerns, they did not like the clique, which they could not understand, since they spoke Ukrainian to each*



*other. We cannot tell what they were saying which is not a nice feeling. So, I made an agreement with the two Ukrainians that were already here, so that they can stay, and the others have to leave. They can come back if their Dutch is good enough.*” (Interview Lillian Brouwer, board member Recreatiesport Almelo). So far, none of the other Ukrainians have returned.

#### 5.5.2. Meso

- **Willingness of the Board**

The board of Recreatiesport Almelo has so specific policy or views on refugee sports, their policy is to have as many people as possible play sports at an affordable price. An incident from the past, where there was trouble registering a Russian member, has caused Brouwer to admit the Ukrainian sporters without any of the paperwork required to sign them in as members. There was no consultation with other board members for this decision, as coordinator volleyball the decision was made to admit the Ukrainian sporters at no cost. This is not common knowledge for the members. As coordinator volleyball Brouwer always introduces new members to all volleyball sporters at the start of the next session. The fact that the new sporters were Ukrainian was mentioned. Admitting these Ukrainian members does not cost the board or Brouwer extra time. The Ukrainian sporters confirm Brouwers’ hospitality towards them. *“The people here are very friendly”* (Interview Ukrainian Sporters Recreatiesport Almelo). They add that Brouwer has told them that Ukrainian sporters can come and sport for free, if they can communicate in (basic) Dutch.

- **Willingness of Volunteers**

Since Brouwer is the only volunteer at the volleyball at Recreatiesport Almelo and board member, the experiences have been described above.

- **Willingness of Members**

The members are open to new people joining the VSC. As one member puts it: *“There are still more fields available, let them come! As long as they can play a bit of volleyball, they are welcome.”* (Interview member Recreatiesport Almelo). The volleyball sporters at Recreatiesport Almelo are a diverse crowd, made up of people of many different (ethnic) backgrounds. This points to openness to everyone that likes to play volleyball. The Ukrainian sporters confirm this, claiming that people are always friendly and willing to have them on their teams. When the Ukrainian sporters meet fellow members in the city there is always time for a chat with them.

- **Ability**

Budget – There is no additional budget for integrating Ukrainian refugees. However, because the volleyball is well attended, the coordinator volleyball has allowed Ukrainians to play for free, costing the VSC €23.40 per sporter per quarter, resulting in lesser income of €187.20 yearly based on the current two sporters.

Board involvement – The board is involved in the person of the volleyball coordinator, who has the ability to make decisions as they seem fit. Brouwer has done this by removing the membership fees for the remaining Ukrainian sporters and removing other Ukrainians with mutual understanding. The Ukrainian sporters praise Brouwer for her help and how approachable she is.

VSC non-specific programs – The habit of randomly assigning teammates at the start of every session leads to different teammates every week. This contributes to volleyball wide integration.

Team placement – The teams are randomly decided by the coordinator every week, everyone plays at the same time in the same place. There is no real team structure in a seasonal sense, which is common at other VSCs. The board representative of volleyball decides whether you can join. There are no reasons that membership would be declined, except when behavioral

rules are not followed.

Cultural differences awareness – The board and the members are not aware of many cultural differences. Brouwer does note that the Ukrainian sporters do not share a lot about what has happened to them recently. There could be many reasons for this, according to her. The Ukrainian sporters are aware of cultural differences: *“If you make a mistake, Ukrainian people can be aggressive. Here, people just skip over your mistake. If you make 1, 2, 3 mistakes, that doesn’t matter. In Ukraine, people only play for results.”* (Interview Ukrainian sporters Recreatiesport Almelo). This was a small culture shock for the Ukrainian sporters. The Ukrainians add that Dutch people are interested in listening to them and what they went through.

Volunteer skills – Brouwer is praised by the Ukrainians and the members for her openness and approachability.

Time investment – Brouwer does not have to spend extra time to arrange volleyball for the Ukrainians.

Awareness of refugees – The presence of Ukrainian refugees is announced when they started playing there, as a part of the usual introduction process of new members.

Inclusion in usual programs – There have been none non-sport related activities since the Ukrainians have joined the VSC. The Ukrainians have been invited by members to play in a volleyball tournament outside of the VSC.

- **Programs**

- *No membership costs for Ukrainians*

This policy was specifically designed for the two Ukrainian sporters that joined Recreatiesport Almelo. Since they do not have parents to take financial care of them, Brouwer removed their membership fee. Brouwer has asked the Ukrainians if their financial situation has changed, but since they are both in school, this is not the case.

Reason for program – to allow the Ukrainian sporters to play sports

Target group – the two Ukrainians that joined, and any other Ukrainians that would like to, as long as they speak some Dutch. This stipulation has been added to the policy after a larger group of Ukrainians joined but only spoke to each other, in Ukrainian.

Program Goals – Have the Ukrainians play worry free volleyball

Participation – The two volleyball sporters this is designed for are still there, one for over a year, the other almost a year.

Costs – this policy costs 93.60 per Ukrainian using it for a year.

Time investment - none

Program Success – the Ukrainians are very glad they can play sports for free, and they currently intend on continuing.

- **Other consequences for VSC**
  - *Ukrainian member population development*

The two Ukrainian sporters that are at the VSC now will stay for another year. There was an increase in Ukrainian sporters, however, due to clumping issues they have been asked to leave until their Dutch is good enough to play at the VSC. Currently, none of these Ukrainians have returned.

- *Adaptation of volunteer roles*

There is no change in the volunteer role.

- *Pressure on resources*

There is no added pressure on resources so far. If the volleyball grows out of the current facility, there could be issues, but this is far from the case currently.

### 5.5.3. Micro

- **Consequences for club members**

There are only little consequences for the club members. Sometimes members have to work hard to make themselves understood to the Ukrainian sporters and the other way around.

When this happens usually other members step in to help. When the group of Ukrainians was too big and not communicative with other members, the other members felt uncomfortable.

There is no added pressure on resources for the members because of the Ukrainian sporters.

- **Integration of Ukrainian sporters with the members**

The two Ukrainian sporters take part in sporting activities. They also help build up the nets when they are on time to do so. Members interact with them and vice-versa. There are no extra activities that the Ukrainians have had the option to participate in and there is no canteen to join other members in a drink. There is no outside contact with other members from the VSC.

- **General integration of Ukrainian refugees**

The Ukrainian sporters feel like they have learned about Dutch people at the VSC. According to them, Dutch people are friendly, forgiving of mistakes, and prioritize effort over results.

Speaking Dutch with them has also helped them learn Dutch. Outside of the volleyball most contact the Ukrainian sporters have, is with other Ukrainians. They find it easier to talk to them and already know them from volunteer centers.

## 5.6. Refugee Center Coordinator (Tubbergen)

The refugee center in Tubbergen houses around 65 Ukrainian refugees. Some Ukrainians have been in the center for a longer period, some have recently entered the center. The center has one central coordinator, Naut Seemann. The coordinator deals with the daily business of the refugee center, which includes but is not limited to: Dealing with housing applications, registration at the municipality, receiving the correct stickers from the central government, help with finding a job, enabling them to be able to pay taxes, making sure they have access to healthcare and contacting VSCs for the refugees to practice sports at. For the coordinator to arrange a place to sport, first the refugee has to signal to the coordinator that they would like to sport, and which sport they would like to do. Thereafter, the coordinator calls VSCs and asks if they are able and willing to receive refugee sporters. In the interview this process and other experiences with refugee sports were discussed.

### 5.6.1. Macro

The responsibility of matching residents with VSCs is of the refugee center coordinator.

Seemann explains: *“A resident can come to us with a sporting need. [...] 6 Months ago, two boys came to me that wanted to play volleyball. [...] We then go looking for which VSCs play volleyball and are open to receiving international players, which can differ per VSC. We also look at the availability of a team in the right age range and if it is financially feasible for the resident. Maybe we have to arrange a subsidy.”* (Interview Naut Seemann, Coordinator Refugee Center Tubbergen).

Some VSCs do not want to receive refugees at their club.

Seemann does not know why this is. VSCs that have received refugees before, or still have refugees are more open to receiving refugees, according to Seemann. The refugee center makes these arrangements in the name of the municipality.

### 5.6.2. Meso

Usually, the refugee center has no further contact with the VSC. Only in specific cases where something goes wrong the refugee center gets involved. There are currently few programs that concern both the VSC and the refugee center, but sometimes there are specific deals made to ensure that refugees can sport. For example, there is an agreement with a nearby football club that the Ukrainian refugees can play football there when the fields are free: *“The residents sometimes used the football field of the VSC nearby. Instead of giving them a hard time for it, the VSC invited everyone over for a get to know meeting and to make agreements on what is possible. Now, the refugees can play on the fields outside of opening hours and they even got a football as a present from the VSC.”* (Interview Naut Seemann, Coordinator refugee center Tubbergen). The websites of the VSC are hard to understand for Ukrainian refugees. It is often unclear how expensive the facilities are and what you get for each subscription: *“I notice that VSCs are often vague about the costs. [...] I read their website as a Dutchman, and I cannot understand everything they put on their website. As a VSC, you should be proactive and make a price offer for the refugee specifically.”* (Interview Naut Seemann, Coordinator refugee center Tubbergen).

### 5.6.3. Micro

- **Integration into the VSC**

According to Seemann there are two types of refugees at the center, one group willing to integrate and another not willing to integrate: *“It depends on the willingness of the refugee whether they want to integrate or not. Some refugees have the mindset that they will return as soon as possible, and everything here is temporary. Other refugees have the mindset that maybe want to stay and explore what there is to offer here. These are the people that join a*

*VSC and develop Dutch very quickly.*” (Interview Naut Seemann, Coordinator Refugee Center Tubbergen). The refugees that are only trying to return to Ukraine do not join a VSC. In the observations of Seemann the people that are open to integration join VSCs and quickly integrate there.

- **General integration**

The Ukrainian refugees that join VSCs quickly integrate, according to Seemann. He observes a compounding effect where willing Ukrainians join VSCs, which further makes them willing to integrate. Playing sports is an enjoyable way to get out of the refugee center, Seemann explains: *“There is not a lot of room to express yourself in the refugee center. This means it is nice to go out and do other things. For most residents visiting the VSC is a very welcome addition to their days.”* (Interview Naut Seemann, Coordinator Refugee center Tubbergen).

The Ukrainian sporters have encountered cultural differences. In the Netherlands, it is mandatory that children under a certain age have parental supervision at the swimming pool, however, this is not the case in Ukraine. This caused a small discussion between Seemann and the Ukrainians. After some work they figured it out together. There is now an adult accompanying the children to the swimming pool.



## 5.7. Comparative Analysis

In this sub-chapter, the differences and similarities between the different VSCs are analyzed, following the same order as the results sub-chapters. The goal of the analysis is to develop a further understanding of the methods used to have Ukrainian refugees sport at VSCs in Twente. Next to comparing the different VSCs, this analysis aims to develop insight into factors that play into why the programs are successful or not. First the external factors of the clubs are compared, and noticeable outliers are highlighted. Then, the Macro-Meso-Micro comparison follows. In table 1, the attributes of each VSC are summarized to support the analysis.

VSC/ attribute	Location	Number of Ukrainian sporters	Program(s) For Ukrainian refugees	Costs for VSC
Juventa '12	Wierden	2	Start of year meeting; Clothing from lost & found	Time and small cost; no costs. Pays membership sometimes
VV Rigtersbleek	Enschede	7-10	Tiki Taka League	No costs, paid by membership
Eurosped Pollux	Oldenzaal	1	Small adaptations and support	No costs, small personal expenses
SDC '12	Denekamp	4	Personal attention from sporter coordinator	Time investment by volunteers
Recreatiesport Almelo	Almelo	2 (5 at peak)	No membership costs	Membership costs paid by VSC

**Table 1: VSC attributes summarized**

### 5.7.1. External factors

Although all the VSCs are situated in Twente, their surrounding environment is different. Two of the VSCs are situated in a city and three are situated in a town. The size of the VSCs is also diverse. From over a thousand people sporting at V.V. Rigtersbleek to only a couple

hundred at Eurosped Pollux, and under a hundred playing volleyball at Recreatiesport Almelo. This could influence how much time the board can spend on a small number of Ukrainian members. All VSCs are relatively close to refugee centers, but VSCs in remote places, such as Denekamp and Oldenzaal, have a bigger reach because there are less options to practice sport in the region. This is shown by their Ukrainian members having longer travel times to get to the VSC. The Ukrainian members sporting in Almelo and Enschede live in the city itself.

#### 5.7.2. Macro

- **Regional Government**

In all cases the regional government has no rules or specific programs for refugees sporting at the VSCs. All regional governments do have a system which provides the low-income sporters with a grant to pay contribution fees, although not all VSCs go through the additional trouble to apply for these grants. Additionally, the grant only covers one sport at a time, which is usually swimming lessons since the refugee centers recommend refugees take them. This means that refugee children who also want to play football with their peers cannot afford to do so. Four out of five VSCs have stated that they will let Ukrainian refugees play no matter what, even if they cannot afford their membership fees.

Although the regional government does currently not have specific rules or programs for refugees, the regional government is involved with participation policy in three out of five VSCs. These developments are either currently on their way, in V.V. Rigtersbleek and Juventa '12, or are more open-ended in the case of SDC '12. In the case of SDC '12 this means they do not use the available budgets for the Ukrainian members.

- **VSC Network**

The three football VSCs are connected to VSC networks. Two of these networks are also working with regional government, and one of the networks is mostly inactive since covid. The two networks that are active and working with the government are developing vision plans for the region and programs to make sure everyone can play sports in the future. In the case of V.V. Rigtersbleek the VSC network is focused on maintaining a stable, diverse offer in VSCs in Enschede, where the Juventa '12 VSC network is focused on providing sports for everyone, even those who cannot afford it on their own. The volleyball VSCs that are not connected to a VSC network do not feel the need to be connected. This could have something to do with the size of the VSCs, which are smaller when compared to the VSCs that are in networks.

- **Membership Rules**

Four out of five VSCs are not selecting members when they enter, their aim is to have as many people be a member as possible. The only concern of these VSCs is the placement in suitable teams, which they put considerable effort into with technical committees or personal attention. This is different at V.V. Rigtersbleek. V.V. Rigtersbleek is situated in Enschede where VSC survival is not certain, which makes them wearier of inviting refugees to become members of their VSC. V.V. Rigtersbleek fears that too many refugees will move their VSC out of balance which will cause eventual collapse. This vision is based on other VSCs in Enschede where V.V. Rigtersbleek claims similar processes have taken place.

### 5.7.3. Meso

- **VSC Willingness**

Four out of five questioned VSCs have shown high levels of willingness to integrate refugees into their VSCs. These board members have all stated in their interviews that they feel everyone should be able to sport at the VSC if they want. This motivation was confirmed by

the interviewed volunteers and members, all of whom invest some amount of effort and time into getting to know the refugee members. V.V. Rigtersbleek also wants to integrate refugee members into the VSC, but they are less positive about the long-term effects of a large group. However, this sample is only from VSCS which have Ukrainian refugees playing. This means there could be a survivor bias present in the sample. The refugee center confirms the suspicion that there could be a bias: According to the refugee center coordinator there are many VSCs that are not very enthusiastic about receiving refugee sporters at their VSC. Similarly, because of snowball sampling the volunteers and members that have been interviewed were selected because of their involvement in refugee integration already. This means that there was already some willingness to be involved with refugees. Member and volunteers seem open to integrating refugees if they do not behave differently from other members. In three out of five VSC board interviews the Twente culture was mentioned as a factor in ease of acceptance of refugee members, if they act “normal”. This means that, if the refugees don’t stand out, they are accepted. The interviewed Ukrainian members confirm the hospitality of the Twente people and are friendly with them.

- **VSC Ability**
  - *Budget*

None of the interviewed VSCs have dedicated budgets for integrating refugees. However, one VSC lets the Ukrainian refugee play for free, one VSC hands out materials, and another acts as an integration coach for the refugees. These are all activities that cost money and time but are not related to a budget.

All interviewed VSCs have budgets for general VSC integration activities, for all members to attend. These activities are available for the Ukrainian refugees as well, and often they get invited personally so they understand that they are welcome. Still, the Ukrainian refugees attend these activities less when compared to other members at most VSCs.

- *Board involvement*

The boards of the VSCs are personally involved in the integration of the Ukrainian sporters, except at V.V. Rigtersbleek. This could have something to do with VSC size, since V.V. Rigtersbleek is larger than the others. However, it could also be club culturally decided, where some VSCs are more hierarchical than others. In the VSCs where board members have multiple roles, for example new-member registration, coordinator or team leader, they board members are more involved in the integration of Ukrainian refugees. In all VSCs with Ukrainian members, the board is directly involved at the start of the membership because of the contact made from the refugee center.

- *VSC non-specific programs*

All VSCs have VSC wide activities that Ukrainian refugee members are invited to, but the attendance of the Ukrainian members at these activities is lower when compared to other members. The VSCs that offer free or cheaper membership to Ukrainian refugees have also done so in the past to other refugee groups such as Syrians or Afghans. This shows a commitment to their “everyone should be able to sport” motto’s.

- *Team placement*

The three VSCs that have Ukrainians placed into teams have all placed them in the team they feel is best for them, considering the presence of peers and people that are willing to have Ukrainians in their teams. Two VSCs have noted that too large a refugee group leads to clumping and less integration with the other members of the VSC. The refugee center adds that at some VSCs, Ukrainian sporters from different refugee centers are placed in the same training group separate from other sporters. This is experienced as easy for the VSC, and the Ukrainian members do not seem to mind. The refugee center confirms that even the sporters that are placed into only Ukrainian groups still experience some of the integrative benefits of

sporting that other Ukrainians also do. The Ukrainians that are placed with mostly Dutch players do also not have an issue in the VSCs where this happens.

- *Cultural differences awareness*

VSCs are aware of little cultural differences, although two of the VSCs note that notifying of absence is difficult for some Ukrainian sporters. The Ukrainian sporters are very aware of cultural differences. There is a more relaxed, less competitive culture in the Netherlands when compared to Ukraine, where everyone wants to win. SDC '12 experiences less activity from Ukrainians at activities, but the cause of this is unknown.

- *Volunteer skills*

Four out of five VSCs have confidence in their volunteers to integrate refugees properly. Three of them attribute this to the Twente culture, which is accepting to people that fit in. V.V. Rigtersbleek thinks that real integration happens with volunteers trained in integration.

- *Time investment*

Four out of five VSCs show that the presence of Ukrainian sporters does not cost anyone a considerable amount of extra time. The amount of extra time at the beginning to register and get them involved is similar to a regular member. However, one VSC does spend more time on the Ukrainian refugees than on normal members. This VSC visits the home of the new members to get to know their home situation and gets to know their members. This costs the player coordinator a couple of hours extra. Besides the home visit, the player coordinator also stays in the loop of whatever happens to the Ukrainian sporters, for example them being absent without any notice. V.V. Rigtersbleek has a separate program that costs a large amount to run, but has many player groups, the Ukrainians only being one of those groups.

- *Awareness of refugees*

Only in one VSC are all the members aware of there being Ukrainian sporters at their VSC. This is the case because in this VSC all the volleyball players play at the same time. In other VSCs this is limited to team members, volunteers or otherwise interested persons in that particular team. The boards explain their reasoning because they do not want to make a big deal out of it, which for them it is not. The Twente culture also seems to play a role in not making things known, because everything is just “normal”, the way the boards want it to go. While it might not be important, there could be advantages to letting other club members know what is going on at the VSC. For example, the societal role that VSCs want to play can be supported by examples such as refugees playing at the VSCs.

- *Inclusion in usual programs*

In all VSCs, the Ukrainian sporters are welcome to attend usual activities. However, the Ukrainian sporters do not always do so. At the VSCs where Ukrainian sporters get invited personally to events the attention rate of Ukrainian sporters at usual activities seems higher. This happens at 3 out of the 5 VSCs. There is a key role for individual initiatives when it comes to personal invitation. This task often lies with trainers or team leaders, some of whom decide to spend the additional time inviting the Ukrainian players and others who do not. When the goal of the VSCs is to play a role in integrating the Ukrainian players it could be worth the effort to make sure the players get personally invited to events the first few times.

- *VSC Programs*

There are several distinct levels of refugee sports at the VSCs. The observed levels will be discussed in order here. The refugee center made a deal where Ukrainian sporters can use the terrain of the VSC outside opening hours. This is the type of sporting program that was observed where Ukrainian sporters and members of the VSC meet the least. Next, V.V. Rigtersbleek has created a program where Ukrainian sporters can play separately from the

club members, using the same sporting space. The separate groups could meet, but it is more likely they only play football with their own teammates and integrate little. Recreatiesport Almelo has created a separate type of membership, namely a free one, without intending to create a separate type of membership. Making the membership free could lead to the Ukrainian members feeling less member of the VSC. In the interviews with the Ukrainian members, it was clear that they integrate little socially outside of the sports interaction that they have at the volleyball field. Lastly, at SDC '12, Juventa '12 and Eurosped Pollux the Ukrainian sporters are full members. They get slightly more personal attention at every one of these VSCs. This seems to make the threshold to join activities slightly lower. The Ukrainian sporters function normally in a team with other members.

VSCs also create small adjustments or one-time provisions for Ukrainian sporters to integrate. These included: A bike to get to the VSC with, hand-picked secondhand clothing from the lost and found, exemption from the car schedule for outside games, no additional costs for non-sporting activities such as camp, and more monitoring from the player coordinator. The board members mentioned these adjustments and provisions casually, like it was the normal thing to do. After all, in Twente, you help those who need it. This was said by multiple board members in the interviews. However, these small adjustments can make a substantial difference for the Ukrainian sporters. The bike to get to the VSC significantly lowers the effort it takes to get to the VSC, making it more attractive. The specifically selected secondhand clothing can mean that the players feel comfortable around their peers. The reduced cost for non-sporting activities reduces the barrier of entry and exemption for the car schedule lets Ukrainian sporters participate in game-days, even if they do not own a car. It must be noted that most of these small adjustments were made with the particular Ukrainian sporters in mind. Providing all Ukrainian sporters with free bikes would make less sense than providing one bike to the Ukrainian sporter that needs it to get to the VSC. Not all Ukrainians



need discounts on non-sporting activities, but those that do need the discount to feel good about participating.

- **Other VSC consequences**

- *Resource pressure*

None of the VSCs reported larger pressure on resources because of the presence of Ukrainian sporters. The groups that each VSC has are relatively small. The VSCs where Ukrainian sporters use the fields outside of regular member training hours, such as the Tiki Taka League, are happy with the increased occupancy rate of their fields.

- *Ukrainian population development*

The VSCs report no increases in Ukrainian memberships after the initial members had arrived. The refugee center confirms this picture, the turnover rate is not remarkably high. The one VSC where Ukrainian sporters brought more Ukrainian sporters with them, the Ukrainians were sent away again due to clumping and difficulties communicating in Dutch with the other members. This was a member-initiated move by the volleyball coordinator. The other members were asking for the removal of the additional Ukrainians because they made them uncomfortable.

- *Adaptation of Volunteer roles*

V.V. Rigtersbleek with the Tiki Taka League has created a new volunteer role, the manager of a sports competition outside of the normal KNVB competition. These volunteers are not directly involved with the Ukrainian players, but they do provide a place for them to sport. The only other association with a different volunteer role because of refugees is SDC '12, where the player coordinator visits the homes and families of the new players. This specific volunteer already has a large responsibility package, it could benefit the VSC and the players

if this role were transferred to someone that has less responsibilities already so there is enough time to perform the role. This role would be called integration volunteer for example.

### 5.7.3. Micro

- **Consequences for club members**

At most of the interviewed VSCs the members do not have to change anything in their behavior to accommodate the Ukrainian sporters. However, at most VSCs, the members have shown to be very willing to make an effort in including the Ukrainian sporters into the VSC. The members do this by involving them in drinks, parties and making the VSC more accessible by switching to English if necessary or using hand gestures to make themselves understood. In some situations, the members have made friends with the Ukrainian sporters.

- **Integration of Ukrainian sporters with the members**

In the VSCs where the Ukrainian sporters are part of a competitive team, the Ukrainians function as a normal part of the team. In VSCs where Ukrainian sporters are casually playing or playing separately from the other members, there is less integration. In these situations, Ukrainian sporters do not have contact outside of the sports with other members from the VSC. They do say hi whenever they meet on the street.

- **General integration of Ukrainian refugees**

The interviewed Ukrainians sport at Recreatiesport Almelo, where they have not built up a group of peers or friends at the VSC. They rarely meet with them outside of the VSC. However, the Ukrainian sporters have explained that they are now more knowledgeable about the Dutch way of doing things. According to them, the Dutch are welcoming and forgiving of mistakes. The VSCs where Ukrainian sporters are a normal part of sports also notice other lessons that the Ukrainians can learn from being at the VSC. For example, the Twente culture of everyone is okay, learning more Dutch in interacting with different people, being a team

player and experience the holidays such as Sinterklaas. The refugee center coordinator confirms this picture painted by the VSC board members and volunteers. The Ukrainians that go out sporting are usually better adapted to Dutch culture and better capable of expressing themselves in Dutch. The refugee center coordinator explains this effect could be partially caused by positive selection because the Ukrainian refugees that are willing to try out sports are probably also more willing to adapt to new circumstances.

## 6. Conclusion

This chapter contains the conclusion of the exploratory research regarding the situation of Ukrainian refugees sporting in Twente influence VSC policy. The focus of this thesis has been to investigate what adaptations VSCs make to accommodate Ukrainian refugees in their VSC. In this chapter, the hypotheses of chapter 3.4 are tested. Answering the main research question aims to contribute to a better understanding of how VSCs handle the arrival of refugee groups and which factors influence their decision making.

The central research question of this thesis was as follows: “What is the impact of Ukrainian refugees on programs of voluntary sports clubs in Twente?.” To answer this question, the following sub-questions were created: “How does governmental policy influence the voluntary sports club refugee integration programs?”, “How do regional-cultural factors influence the voluntary sports club refugee integration programs?”, “What programs have been created or modified to integrate refugees in the voluntary sports club?” and “What effects do these programs have on the voluntary sports club, refugees and members?”

### **Sub-Question 1: Role of local government**

The analysis provided a clear picture of the absence of governmental policy specific for refugees. None of the VSCs interviewed are aware of any policies. All the observed municipalities have specific policy for people with low incomes, which often also targets refugees. These policies are not working as they should, since three of the interviewed VSCs pay, or have paid, for Ukrainian refugees membership costs.

### **Sub-Question 2: Regional-cultural factors**

During the interviews, over half of the interviewees referred to the regional culture when discussing refugee integration programs. They describe the regional culture as making no big deal out of things, accepting new people as long as they act “normal”, not being liked to be

told what to do and investing in personal relations. These attributes of Twente culture have most likely been a big influence on how the refugee programs have taken shape. Most of the programs found have been made by a single individual, who had personally met the refugees that were going to use the program and subscribes to the Twente culture ideas as described above. All people interviewed are proud of how they have integrated refugees in their VSC. Paradoxical, the Twente culture could also play a role in the fact that some VSCs are reportedly not willing to receive Ukrainian refugee sporters. Possibly, the VSCs are scared that they have to adapt their usual programs or practices to Ukrainian refugees, which is unusual in Twente Culture. Newcomers are supposed to adapt, not the receiving population. In the interviews the respondents call this acting ‘normal’.

### **Sub-Question 3: VSC programs**

The research shows that five different VSCs in five different places all handle the integration of Ukrainian refugees differently. One VSC has appointed some sort of coach, one VSC created a separate sporting program, one VSC has given the Ukrainian refugees a special status in the VSC and the other two have the Ukrainians sport normally as much as possible, while providing practical support in the form of transport or materials. These are all chances to the usual way the VSC would have operated without the Ukrainian refugees. This shows there is clear willingness and ability to integrate Ukrainian refugees into the VSC in most cases. The Ukrainian sporters that were interviewed also confirm this.

Two patterns that seem to influence the willingness and the ability of an VSC to adapt their functioning to Ukrainian refugees have arisen. First, the competitiveness between regional VSCs reduce the willingness to invest time and effort into refugee integration programs.

When VSCs already must compete for survival, giving more attention to smaller groups, that contribute little to the wellbeing of the VSC, seems unattractive for the VSC to invest into.

The opposite seems to happen when the amount of VSCs available in the region is lower, here

the willingness of VSCs to integrate Ukrainians seems higher. This is explained by the realization of the VSCs, that the VSCs are a central socializing factor for the region they are in. This effect is enhanced by smaller sizes of the VSCs, where smaller size VSCs seem more willing to integrate refugees into their VSC.

#### **Sub-Question 4: Effectiveness of VSC programs**

The effects of the programs used by the VSC to integrate refugees are diverse, however, there seems to be a positive effect from the programs on the refugees sporting at the VSC. At the VSCs interviewed the Ukrainian members have not left the VSCs, and most are reported to be active in non-sports activities. This all comes at little sacrifice of the VSCs. The VSCs where the Ukrainian refugees are normal members do an upfront investment to get to know the new members, whereafter the Ukrainian refugees function mostly normally. There are often one or two volunteers tasked with keeping an eye on the Ukrainian refugee sporters. This task is interpreted differently between volunteers, which causes comparison between them to be difficult. There is no additional pressure on resources since the refugee groups are small per VSC.

#### **Central Research Question**

The central research question, which investigates the impact of Ukrainian refugees on programs of VSCs in Twente, implies that Ukrainian refugees have an impact on the programs in the VSC. However, the research has shown that in most cases the arrival of Ukrainian refugees is met with personal attention and small adjustments to usual programs. At most, the impact of Ukrainian refugees coming to a VSC on the programs of the VSC is that one or two volunteers invest some more time into enabling the Ukrainian refugees to sport, an investment which decreases after the initial landing phase. Members of the VSCs are shown to be happy with the arrival of Ukrainians at the VSC. This is also a form of impact, namely

the cultural awareness that Ukrainians form a part of the region that the VSCs are in. The impact of Ukrainian refugees on programs of VSCs in Twente can be said to mainly be impactful on the micro level where individuals interact with each other and less so at the meso level, where the VSCs have to make structural changes. However, changes at the meso level do seem to contribute to longer stay of Ukrainian sporters at the VSCs, revealing the need to make structural meso-level changes to make Ukrainian refugee integration at the VSCs successful.

## 7. Discussion

In this chapter first the limitations of the thesis are discussed. Thereafter the place of this thesis in the pre-existing literature on the topic is discussed which is followed by suggestions for further research. Lastly, some policy recommendations are proposed.

### **Limitations**

This research had some limitations. The voluntary participation in the research leads to possible bias, because only VSCs that are proud of their Ukrainian refugee population want to participate. This could cause the results appear more positively. Additionally, relying on board members to provide contact information to interview volunteers and members also leads to possible positive selection by the board members, as only positive and happy members and volunteers are presented to the interviewer.

Developments in the Ukraine-Russia war impacts the certainty of stay for many Ukrainian refugees, which could influence the willingness of the VSC to invest in integrating refugees that could leave at any time. Some Ukrainian refugees seem to follow similar reasoning as to why they are not attempting to integrate.

### **Relation to existing literature**

The findings of this research seem to align with the research of Tuchel et al., (2020). In this thesis, all five forms found in the Tuchel et al paper have been found. Additionally, the regional-cultural themed literature which describes Twente culture (Garlick et al., 2006) is also recognizable in this paper. Seiberth (2013) described how VSCs are unlikely to create new programs specifically for refugees, which is also found by this research. The expectation of Van Der Werff & Van Der Roest (2017) and Seiberth (2013) that there will be smaller program changes such as the provision of materials or buddy systems has also been confirmed in this paper for VSCs analyzed in Twente.



## **Future research**

Future research should focus on identifying other factors that influence the adaptability of VSCs. There are municipal programs to support the VSCs, but the VSCs analyzed in this research have not shown to be using these programs much. These programs should be investigated and improved upon, so the programs fit the needs of the VSCs. Future research could also focus on providing VSCs with manuals which to use for the integration of refugees, since there is no available and suitable literature for VSCs. This means that there are no lessons learned from the experiences that different VSCs have with integrating Ukrainian refugees. This learning could also take place in a VSC network specifically for VSCs that play a role in integrating Ukrainian refugees. This network could be led by regional government so that they are aware of any developments.

## **Policy recommendations**

1. A regional government run VSC network wherein VSCs can learn from each others' experiences and find common issues. This network could be started by regional government and be taken over by the VSCs independently later.
2. The Sports federation could extend the expired registration exception for amateur Ukrainian players to reduce the administrative tasks for the VSCs.
3. The financial support for Ukrainian sporters should be clarified and a program could be developed for VSCs that make extra costs for integration.
4. A vision for the regional role of sports in integration can be developed by the regional government which VSCs can use to shape their policies.

In conclusion, this research gives insight into the current situation of the impact of Ukrainian refugees on programs of VSCs in Twente. The paper highlights considerations of VCSs on why programs are chosen and builds from a regional perspective and includes experiences of

volunteers, members, and Ukrainian refugees next to the policy makers experiences. The findings in this research can be a basis for cooperation in the refugee integration for the region among VSCs. It also highlights a flaw in regional governmental policy, which is lacking when it comes to refugee integration into VSCs.

## Appendix

### Appendix 1: Interview schemes

Questionnaire for program maker / Board member at VSC

Discuss the agreement on interviews, in line with the UT rules on privacy. Explain what the interview will be regarding. Offer the interviewee the consent form and discuss the implications. If all is arranged, start the interview.

Name:

Function:

Other relevant information:

#### **1. Macro level**

##### **a. General migrant policies**

1. Are there governmental rules you have to follow regarding refugees?

##### **b. Rules VSCs have to follow**

1. Are there membership/participation rules you have to follow as a VSC?
2. Can you decline memberships?
3. Can you set any boundaries for entry for refugees/members?

##### **c. Expectations of VSCs**

1. Do regional governments have expectations of you regarding refugees?
2. Do VSC networks have expectations of you regarding refugees?

##### **d. Pre-existing programs that integrate refugees**

1. Are you aware of any pre-existing programs that exist for integrating refugees?
  - a. If yes, do you use it?
    - i. If yes, what is your experience with the program?
    - ii. If no, why not?

#### **2. Meso level**

##### **a. Willingness**

###### **i. Of the board**

1. What are the goals of the board?
2. Which priorities do you have?
3. What is the position of the board regarding refugees?
4. How is this message broadcast to members/volunteers?
5. How much time is invested into this?
6. Is everyone on the same page?
7. How do you entice volunteers to join?

###### **ii. Of the volunteers**

1. Are the volunteers willing to adapt their practices to new groups?
2. Are the volunteers spending more time than before at the VSC?
3. Are there new volunteers with immigration backgrounds that guide new incomers?



### **3. Micro level**

#### **a. Consequences for club members.**

1. Are there enough fields/materials available?
2. Are there enough volunteers available?
3. Are there any other consequences for club members?

#### **b. Integration level**

##### **i. In the VSC**

1. How many Ukrainians participate in the programs?
2. Do the Ukrainians keep participating in the programs?
3. Are the Ukrainian refugees part of the usual processes of the VSC?
4. What processes are they a part of?
5. How many Ukrainians participate in the programs?
6. Do the Ukrainians keep participating in the programs?

##### **ii. Outside the VSC**

1. What lessons do the Ukrainian refugees learn at the VSC that can be useful outside of the VSC?

### **4. Other**

1. Do you feel like I missed anything?
2. Do you have anything to add to this interview?

Questionnaire for volunteer involved with Ukrainian Refugees at VSC

Discuss the agreement on interviews, in line with the UT rules on privacy. Explain what the interview will be regarding. Offer the interviewee the consent form and discuss the implications. If all is arranged, start the interview.

Name:

Function:

Other relevant information:

## **1. Macro level**

### **a. Pre-existing programs that integrate refugees**

1. Are you aware of any pre-existing programs that exist for integrating refugees?
  - a. If yes, do you use it?
    - i. If yes, what is your experience with the program?
    - ii. If no, why not?

## **2. Meso level**

### **a. Willingness**

#### **i. Of the board**

1. What are the goals of the board?
2. What is the position of the board regarding refugees?
3. How is this message broadcast to members/volunteers?
4. Is everyone on the same page?

#### **ii. Of the volunteers**

1. Are you willing to adapt your practices to new groups?
2. Are you spending more time than before at the VSC?
3. Are there new volunteers with immigration backgrounds that guide new incomers?

#### **iii. Of the members**

1. How do you feel about the incoming refugees?
2. Are you open to including refugees in your normal programs?
3. How do you do that?

### **b. Ability**

#### **i. Of the volunteers**

1. Are you able to adapt your practices to new groups?
2. How is your mastery of the English language?
3. Are you able to spend more time than before at the VSC?

#### **ii. Of the members**

1. How much awareness do you have that there are Ukrainian refugees in the VSC?
2. Do you involve VSC members in your usual programs?

### **c. Types of ideas/programs**

1. What programs are there for Ukrainian refugees?
2. Why did you choose these programs?
3. What programs do Ukrainian refugees participate in?

4. What ideas do you have for Ukrainian refugee programs, but have not executed yet? Why?
- d. Implementation of ideas/programs**
  1. How have the programs been implemented?
  2. What were the goals of these programs?
  3. Are the implemented programs successful?
  4. Are there programs that were thought of but not implemented?
  5. What problems did you run into with program implementation?
- e. Consequences of ideas for VSC**
  - i. Positive**
    1. Is the Ukrainian member population growing?
    2. Are Ukrainian members taking on volunteer roles?
  - ii. Negative**
    1. How much did the programs cost?
    2. How much time do these programs cost?
    3. Is there a larger strain on materials/rooms than before?
  - iii. Intended**
    1. Have the goals of the program been reached?
  - iv. Unintended**
    1. Did unexpected things happen surrounding the programs?

### **3. Micro level**

- a. Consequences for club members.**
  1. Are there enough fields/materials available?
  2. Are there enough volunteers available?
  3. Are there any other consequences for club members?
- b. Integration level**
  - i. In the VSC**
    1. How many Ukrainians participate in the programs?
    2. Do the Ukrainians keep participating in the programs?
    3. How do the Ukrainian refugees feel about the programs?
    4. How open are the Ukrainian refugees about other experiences?
    5. Are the Ukrainian refugees part of the usual processes of the VSC?
    6. What processes are they a part of?
  - ii. Outside the VSC**
    1. What lessons do the Ukrainian refugees learn at the VSC that can be useful outside of the VSC?
    2. Do you, or do you know anyone, that has contact with the Ukrainian refugees outside of the VSC?

### **4. Other**

1. Do you feel like I missed anything?
2. Do you have anything to add to this interview?

## Questions for Ukrainian Refugee sporting at the VSC

Discuss the agreement on interviews, in line with the UT rules on privacy. Explain what the interview will be regarding. Offer the interviewee the consent form and discuss the implications. If all is arranged, start the interview.

### **1. Meso level**

#### **a. Willingness**

##### **i. Of the board**

1. Are there any provisions you use to be able to sport at the VSC?

##### **ii. Of the volunteers**

1. How do the volunteers approach you?

##### **iii. Of the members**

1. How do other members approach you?
2. Do you get invited to join other parts of the VSC, just outside sporting (like 3e helft?)

#### **b. Ability**

##### **i. Of the volunteers**

1. Are the programs adapted to you in some way?
2. How is your mastery of the English language? How is the volunteers?
3. Are the volunteers able to make the program accessible for you?
4. Are there things you would like to change so you can participate better/more?

##### **ii. Of the members**

1. Do the members make you feel welcome?

#### **c. Types of ideas/programs**

1. What programs are there for Ukrainian refugees?
2. What programs do you participate in?
3. Do you have any ideas for programs that you would like to see at the VSC?

#### **d. Consequences of ideas for VSC**

##### **i. Positive**

1. Is the Ukrainian member population growing?
2. Are Ukrainian members taking on volunteer roles?

##### **ii. Negative**

1. Do you experience any negative effects from the programs you participate in?

##### **iii. Intended**

1. Are the programs well organized?

##### **iv. Unintended**

1. Did unexpected things happen surrounding the programs?

### **2. Micro level**



**a. Consequences for club members.**

1. Are there enough fields/materials available?
2. Are there enough volunteers available?

**b. Integration level**

**i. In the VSC**

1. How many Ukrainians participate in the programs?
2. Do the Ukrainians keep participating in the programs?
3. How do the Ukrainian refugees feel about the programs?
4. How has the adaptation process been for you?
5. Are the Ukrainian refugees part of the usual processes of the VSC?
6. What processes are they a part of?

**ii. Outside the VSC**

1. What lessons have you learned at the VSC that can be useful outside of the VSC?
2. Do you have contact with VSC members outside of VSC time?
3. Do you have a small network of contacts through the VSC?
4. Has the VSC helped you in finding a something? (job/aid/things to do)

**3. Other**

1. Do you feel like I missed anything?
2. Do you have anything to add to this interview?

Questions for Coordinator Refugee Center

Discuss the agreement on interviews, in line with the UT rules on privacy. Explain what the interview will be regarding. Offer the interviewee the consent form and discuss the implications. If all is arranged, start the interview.

**\*Note: It was known the coordinator preferred to do the interview in Dutch, which is why the questionnaire is in Dutch.**

1. Zou jij willen vertellen wat jouw rol is in het plaatsen van vluchtelingen bij sportverenigingen?

**Macro**

2. Welke al bestaande programmas bij sportverenigingen om vluchtelingen te integreren ben jij bewust van?
  - a. Wat zijn de ervaringen met deze programma's?
3. Wat is de rol van de lokale overheid bij het plaatsen van vluchtelingen?
4. Wat is jullie beleid rondom het plaatsen van vluchtelingen bij sportverenigingen?

**Meso**

5. Hoe zijn de ervaringen met het plaatsen van vluchtelingen bij sportverenigingen?

**Micro**

6. Wat merk jij van de vluchtelingen die sporten?
  - a. Wat levert het de vluchtelingen op?
  - b. Kost het ze iets?

- c. Hoe zit het met de volhardendheid van de Oekraïeners?
- d. Welke ervaringen hoor jij van de verenigingen?

## Appendix 2: Coding Scheme

Level	Code	Sub-Code	Definition
Macro	Government policy		Govt policy
Macro	Rules	Membership	Any rules/advice government has on membership/sports
Macro	Rules	Declining Memberships	Agreements/rules surrounding memberships
Macro	Rules	Entry Boundaries	How to become a member
Macro	Expectations	Regional Government	Regional sports vision, sports programs, integration policy
Macro	Expectations	VSC networks	Cooperation of VSCs goals, expectations, policies, agreements
Macro	Pre-Existing programs	Aware/Considerations	Any government or open-source integration programs
Macro	Pre-Existing programs	Experiences	Recall of past events and opinions about these events
Meso Board	Willingness	Goals of the board	Targets, intentions or ideas of the board
Meso Board	Willingness	Priorities of the board	The goals of the board that are actively being pursued
Meso Board	Willingness	Board Attitude towards refugees	Opinions and views of refugees within board
Meso Board	Willingness	Time investment of board	How much time refugee related activities cost the board
Meso Board	Willingness	Agreement within board	The extent to which the board members feel like they agree on refugee policy
Meso Board	Willingness	How board motivates volunteers	Strategies used by board to motivate volunteers to work with refugees
Meso Volunteer	Willingness	Volunteers changing behavior	Different activities taken by volunteers
Meso Volunteer	Willingness	Volunteer Time	The amount of time that

		spending	volunteers spend on volunteers
Meso Volunteer	Willingness	Volunteers with migration background	Are there volunteers with migration backgrounds and what they do in the VSC
Meso members	Willingness	Member feelings	How members feel about having refugees
Meso members	Willingness	Inclusion of members in activities	How members include refugees in their activities
Meso	Ability	VSC budget	How much money is allocated to integration and refugee accessibility
Meso	Ability	Board involvement	What activities do the board undertake to support refugees
Meso	Ability	Less money programs	What programs are available that reduce the financial burden on refugees
Meso	Ability	Team placement	How players get placed into a team
Meso	Ability	Ukrainian team placement	How refugees get placed into a team
Meso	Ability	Cultural differences awareness	What cultural differences the board member/volunteer/sporter are aware of
Meso	Ability	Volunteer capabilities	The skills that volunteers have that are needed for working with volunteers
Meso	Ability	Volunteer English Mastery	How well the volunteers can speak English – or other relevant language skills
Meso	Ability	Volunteer availability	If the volunteers can make it to spend time with the volunteers
Meso	Ability	Member Awareness	Are members aware of the presence of refugees
Meso	Ability	Member Involvement	How much the refugees get involved in the events surrounding sports
Meso	Programs	Type	e.g. special sports group, financial aid organised by VSC, material exchange

Meso	Programs	Reasoning	Why these programs have been chosen
Meso	Programs	Participation in programs	How much the programs are used
Meso	Programs	Unused ideas	Any ideas that were not used or instated because of constraints
Meso	Program implementation	Who and how implemented	The board member or volunteer responsible, how did they work
meso	Program implementation	Program goals	What the goals of the programs are
meso	Program implementation	Program success	How the programs functioned
meso	Program implementation	Implementation problems	Any trouble the program implementer ran into
meso	Positive Consequences	Member population	What number of refugees are there and whether that number is increasing
meso	Positive Consequences	Volunteer population	How the volunteer population is developing
meso	Negative Consequences	Program Cost	The costs associated with the programs for refugees
meso	Negative Consequences	Program Time Investment	The time invested into the programs for refugees
meso	Negative Consequences	Material shortage	Whether there is a strain on materials since the refugees
meso	Negative Consequences	Room/field pressure	Whether there is a strain on rooms/fields since the refugees
meso	Intended Consequences		Goal success
meso	Unintended Consequences		Goal Failure
Micro	Consequences for club members	field/rooms/materials	If members have to adapt to the refugees when it comes to material use
Micro	Consequences for club members	volunteers	If members have to adapt when it comes to volunteers
Micro	Consequences for club members	Other	Other consequences for club members
Micro	Integration	Amount	The extent that refugees are (perceived) to be integrated

Micro	Integration	Persistence of participation	The extent to which refugees stay at the VSC
Micro	Integration	Participation outside of sports	The extent to which the refugees participate in activities outside of sports
Micro	integration	Learned lessons in VSC	Things that refugees have learned in sports that seems relevant

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