



volunteer ireland  
obair dheonach éireann



**Migrant Participation  
in Sports Volunteering  
in Ireland**



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# Foreword

I am delighted to present this report on migrant participation in sports volunteering in Ireland. Our history tells us that sport, volunteering and immigration are three areas that have had and continue to have a major impact on Irish society.

Over 1 million people in Ireland volunteer with about half of those volunteering in sporting activities. Sport is renowned the world over for bringing people together, experiencing highs and lows as one. In Ireland, sport makes up the fabric of our communities with people of all ages and backgrounds participating in sports in various shapes and forms. Whether someone is playing a sport, attending a sporting event or volunteering in sport it is an inescapable part of life in Ireland.

Both volunteering and sport are intrinsic parts of Irish culture and are also effective tools for social inclusion and integration. We were keen to explore the current landscape of migrant volunteering in sport; the challenges, opportunities and real life experience of the migrant community.

This research will inform our work and the work of Sport Ireland as we seek to make volunteering in sport a diverse, inclusive and accessible activity. It is one step on our way to achieving our vision of **“an Ireland where everyone who wants to volunteer can volunteer to create a better society.”**



Nina Arwitz  
CEO  
Volunteer Ireland

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# Introduction

In Ireland, volunteering – particularly in sport – is very much part of what we do and who we are. The 2017 Irish Sports Monitor annual report (Ipsos MRBI and Sport Ireland, 2018) identified that 10.8% of the population regularly volunteer in sport. There is a population in Ireland of 3,693,670 (Census 2016) aged 16 and over, meaning that throughout the year almost 370,000 adults regularly volunteer in sport. The census also showed that 12.2% (535,475) of the total population identified as non-Irish nationals, the majority (67%) coming from European countries.

Data from the Irish Sports Monitor – covering 2015 to 2017 – indicates that 5.9% of respondents identifying as non-Irish volunteer in sport. This is higher than the European average of 4.1% (Nichols and James, 2017) reported for the same period. Overall the message is clear that while migrants are volunteering in sport in Ireland it is at levels significantly lower than other groups.

Volunteering in sport has been proven to be a good tool for social inclusion and by extension an effective way for migrants to integrate into their community. In order to effectively identify interventions that support accessibility and participation in sports volunteering among migrants, it is vital to understand how the migrant community themselves view volunteering in sport. At Volunteer Ireland we hear anecdotally about the experience of migrants who are currently volunteering or interested in volunteering in sport. In order to increase the evidence base and our knowledge and understanding, we carried out the following research. Between October and December 2018 we engaged with the migrant community to explore the following:

- Do factors such as where migrants are from, their age and the length of time they are in Ireland play a role in their volunteering experience?
- How and why are those migrants that are volunteering in sport doing so?
- What challenges are faced by migrants who are volunteering in sport and those who want to get involved?
- What barriers are hindering migrants from volunteering in sport?
- What impact does sports volunteering have on migrants?
- What can we learn from the migrant experience?

The following exploratory report presents the findings from our primary research. The information presented was gathered from migrants – who have and have not volunteered in sport – through an online survey and focus groups. Our ultimate aim with this research is that a better understanding of these questions will inform practice, prompt further research and facilitate an increase in migrants volunteering in sport in Ireland.

# Methodology

## Survey

A survey was carried out through Survey Monkey between 8th October and 31st December 2018. The survey was sent to all individuals registered on I-VOL who identified as non-Irish nationals (migrants). 510 people responded to the survey. The first question asked of all respondents was, have you ever volunteered in sport in Ireland? If they answered yes they went on to answer another 20 questions. If they answered no they went on to answer another 11 questions. The full sets of questions are listed in Appendix A.

## Focus Groups

In conjunction with Dublin City Volunteer Centre, Volunteer Ireland carried out two focus groups in November and December 2018. The focus groups were advertised on I-VOL by Dublin City VC. Participants were given a choice of a morning or afternoon session on two days. We ensured a mix of male and female and those who had and had not volunteered in sport. Prior to taking part in the focus groups two participants had completed the online survey. The process was a group discussion with the purpose of further exploring themes that emerged from the survey.

## Data Analysis

Automatic analysis from Survey Monkey was enhanced by quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data by Paul Collins, Outcomes and Impacts Manager, Volunteer Ireland.

## Limitations

The respondents were a convenience sample and do not necessarily represent the national situation in terms of gender, location in Ireland (urban or rural) or individual nationalities.

The size of the sample is limited as the survey was only sent to all those who are registered on I-VOL as non-nationals. Those registered on I-VOL have an interest in volunteering in general, but not particularly in sport.

Another import factor to consider is the gender split on I-VOL. This is approximately 68% female and 32% male and needs to be taken into account when considering the findings.

# Literature Review

## Social Inclusion and Integration Through Sport

Over the years there has been an increased focus by academics and policy makers on the role of sport in promoting social inclusion and integration (Sennett et al. 2016). In a white paper published in 2007 the European commission recognised that “sport promotes a shared sense of belonging and participation and may therefore also be an important tool for the integration of immigrants” (EU Commission 2007. p.7). In a 2011 follow up they said that sport enables immigrants and the host society to interact in a positive way and can be a vehicle for social inclusion (EU Commission, 2011). This was supported in a report to the European commission (Mapping of Good Practices Relating to Social Inclusion of Migrants through Sport) that reached the conclusion “that sports activities provide a particular opportunity to facilitate the integration of migrants by helping to promote and maintain intercultural contacts between immigrants and nationals” (Sennett et al. 2016. p.8).

In Ireland the Government state in the National Sports Policy 2018 - 2027 that “active and social participation by migrants and ethnic minorities can help combat the social exclusion they often experience” (2018 p. 13). The Migrant Integration Strategy – A Blueprint for the Future 2017, 2020 includes the following action points for volunteering and sport: a) “volunteering would be promoted among the less well represented groups;” and b) “the potential of sport in the integration of migrants will be further explored through encouraging active participation, volunteering and involvement in governance” (Migrant Integration Strategy, p. 34).

It is evident that sport is recognised at European and national level as an effective tool for social inclusion and integration. However, Collins and Haudenhutse (2015) point out that sport should not be viewed in isolation. They argue that poverty, class, gender, age, ethnicity, disability and location (urban or rural) have to be taken into consideration as they impact the ability of an individual to participate in sport. It can also be said that social exclusion and the challenges migrants face integrating into new communities are just symptoms and outcomes of the wider issues around inequality (Danny, 2015).

## Representation, Challenges and Benefits

While the overall number of volunteers in sport in Ireland is well documented there is limited information on how many of those volunteers are from the migrant community. Information from the Irish Sports Monitor shows that 5.9% of those who identified as non-Irish indicated that they volunteer in sport. Information obtained from I-VOL indicates that in 2018, 3.4% of those who identified as migrants registered their interest to volunteer in sport. At a European level there is information from the Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe (SIVCSE) project that was carried out across 10 European countries.<sup>1</sup>



It found that on average 4.1% of volunteers in sports clubs are migrants (SIVCSE, Quick Facts 2). This limited data suggests that migrants are underrepresented in sports volunteering in Ireland and across Europe.

Previous research shows that many groups, not just migrants, are underrepresented in volunteering for a variety of reasons. However Schwenzer (2016) points out that members of the migrant community face additional challenges including: language, access to and information about opportunities, finding a sport they are interested in, discrimination, cultural awareness, social connections and status in the country (e.g. asylum seekers). Individual sports and organisations do take the initiative to address these barriers. For example, Dublin City Volunteer Centre played a role in the development of a handbook on “Volunteering of Migrants in Sports Clubs and Organisations” which was developed by the European Sport Inclusion Network (ESPIN). The handbook is a resource for migrants wishing to volunteer and sports clubs and organisations looking to involve people from the migrant community (ESPIN Migrants Booklet 2016). The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) have the “Integration Through Football” project which aims to increase diversity in players and volunteers for clubs and contribute to integrated communities through football. It is important to note that while there are efforts to address these barriers, they are limited and are not systematic. Hopefully this is something that the actions identified in the National Sports Policy, Migrant Integration Strategy and the development of the National Volunteering Strategy will address.

The SIVCSE report (Pitkowska et al. 2017) provides examples of good practice from clubs across Europe for breaking down barriers. Additionally “Creating a Level Playing Field” (2012) provides sports clubs and organisations with practical recommendations and good practice examples.

There is a wealth of evidence that people benefit from engaging in voluntary activity. While all those who volunteer will gain some benefit from volunteering it may have greater significance for migrants. It can be a way to make connections in the community, learn the language and improve opportunities through expanding their network and enhancing or learning new skills (OECD, 2018). It can also provide an opportunity for migrants and their children to participate, thus enhancing their physical and mental health and well-being. A recent report from Volunteer Ireland (Woods. A, 2017) showed that volunteers reported an increase in their health and well-being.

It is clear from the literature that this is a complex subject as there are many factors to consider along with those referenced. Examining this area from the perspective of the migrant will build on previous research and provide a clearer picture of some of the issues, specifically in the Irish context.

# Research Findings and Analysis

## Overview

It is clear from the literature review that volunteering in sport is viewed as a tool for social inclusion and integration, and that migrants are underrepresented in sports volunteering across Europe and in Ireland. The findings from this project provide further insight into the topic from the perspective of the migrant community. They are presented in three sections, which provide a clear outline of the information collected through the survey and focus groups.

**Section 1** provides a profile of the respondents and sports volunteers in Ireland. We explore some of the factors that play a role in migrant participation in sports volunteering. We look at sports culture, gender, age, country of origin and the length of time the respondents have been in Ireland. Through an analysis of these factors we will endeavour to gain a better understanding of how they are linked to migrants' experience. We look at how these factors affect the sports they volunteer in and the volunteer roles they undertake.

**Section 2** provides more details of the experience of those who have and those who have not volunteered in sport. We look at how they got involved, why they got involved, why they haven't gotten involved, challenges they faced and the impact volunteering in sport may have had on them.

**Section 3** provides insight from the respondents on what sport clubs and organisations can do to get more migrants involved in volunteering. It also provides some advice from those who have volunteered in sport to their peers who have not.

**The conclusion** provides a summary of the findings.

## Definitions

**Migrant** is used to describe those who identified as non-Irish nationals on I-VOL. This is a broad definition as we did not seek to determine any more detail about the respondents' status in Ireland e.g. asylum seeker.

**I-VOL** referenced throughout this report is the national volunteering database jointly managed by Volunteer Ireland, 21 Volunteer Centres and 8 Volunteering Information Services across Ireland to facilitate volunteering in all sectors of Irish society. It provides individuals with the opportunity to look for volunteering opportunities and volunteer involving organisations with the opportunity to advertise opportunities.

**Sports Culture** refers to those sports that are an intrinsic part of a country's overall culture.

**Sport** means all sports in the country.

## Section 1: Profile – Sports Volunteers and Respondents

### Sports Volunteers

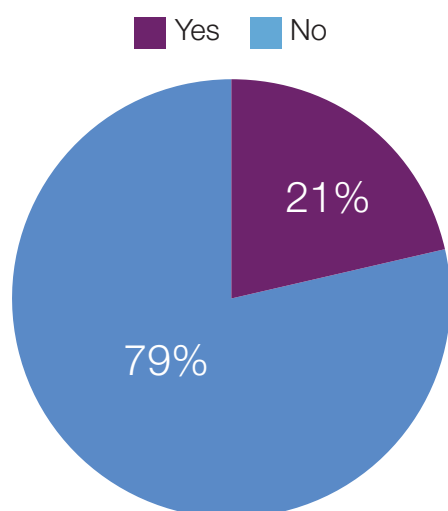
The profile of those most likely to volunteer in sport in Ireland is based on data from the Irish Sports Monitor 2017. The profile of a sports volunteer from the migrant community is based on this research and should be viewed in that context.

<b>Those volunteering in sport in Ireland are most likely:</b>	<b>Sports volunteers from the migrant community based on this project are most likely:</b>
Irish (97%)	From Europe
Male	Female
Aged between 35 – 54	Aged between 25 – 44
Volunteers in team sports (Gaelic Games, Soccer and Rugby)	Volunteers in individual sports (Athletics, Outdoor Activities and Gym/Fitness)
Volunteering as coaches	Volunteering as providers of practical help (refreshments, organising equipment/kit, transport, stewardship)
Volunteering because they played or their children play	Volunteering because it's a way to get involved in the community

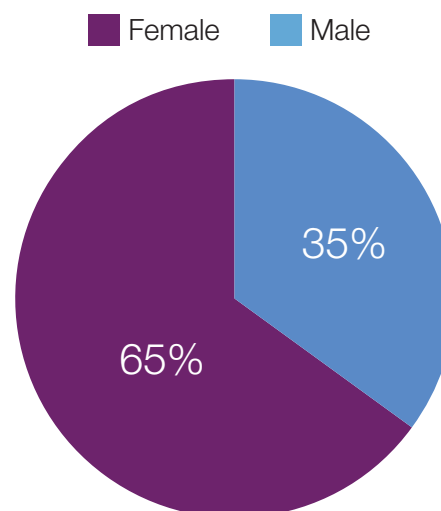
## Survey Respondents

A total of 510 individuals (68% female, 32% male) responded to the survey. Of these, 21% (107) indicated that they have volunteered in sport in Ireland (Fig. 1) – 65% are female and 35% are male (Fig. 2).

**Figure 1: Have you ever volunteered in sport?**



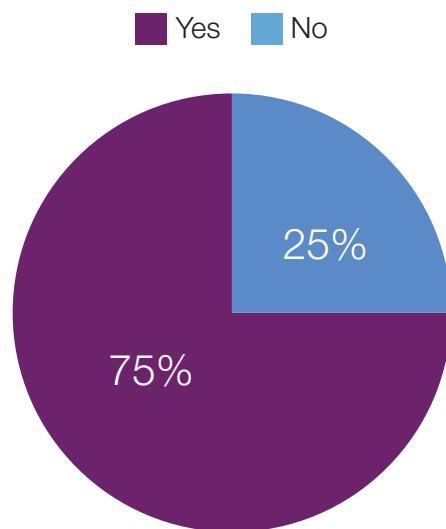
**Figure 2: Migrant sports volunteers by gender**



There is a good body of prior research in Ireland (ISM, Ipsos MRBI and Sport Ireland, 2018) and the UK (Good-Sports report, 2017) that indicates that males are more likely to volunteer in sport than females. The gender split on I-VOL (68% F, 32% M) is a major factor in the prevalence of females in this survey. This may not be the only reason and it is important to examine if there are other factors that explain the lower number of male volunteers in this research.

Along with the 21% (107) of respondents already volunteering in sport, 68% (274) of those who said they have not volunteered in sport indicated that they would volunteer in sport if circumstances allowed. These are significant findings as they indicate that 75% (367) of all respondents are already volunteering in sport or interested in doing so, suggesting that there is a good level of enthusiasm among the migrant community to volunteer in sport.

**Figure 3: Are you or would you volunteer in sport?**



## Factors that play a role in migrant participation in sports volunteering

There are many factors that play a role in participation in volunteering across all sectors i.e. a lack of information about opportunities, diversity of roles, language, age, finance, education, transport, religion, gender, disability, skills, discrimination, culture and fear of rejection to name a few (Inclusive Volunteering, 2013 - 2015). When analysing the information provided by the survey respondents and focus group participants, sports culture (Irish and respondents' native country) was a key factor in their participation in sports volunteering. The length of time in Ireland and the age range may add to the significance of sports culture.

### Sports Culture

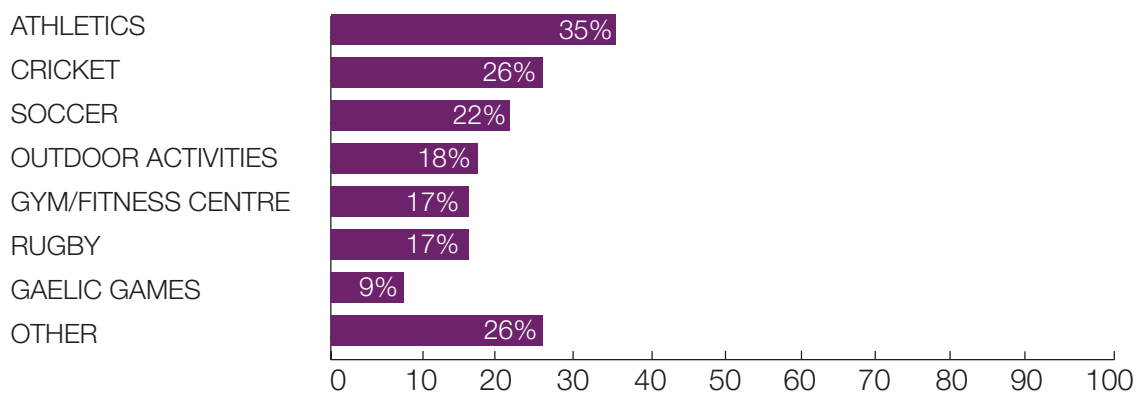
McClean et al. (2017) make the point that the sports culture in a person's native country plays a significant role in the activities they chose to take part in. To test this theory we just need to look at the sports culture in Ireland. Gaelic games are embedded in most communities across the country and are an integral part of Irish culture. Soccer is popular all over the world and rugby has been getting more popular in Ireland with the continued success of our national and provincial teams. With this in mind it should come as no surprise that the sports that attract the most volunteers in Ireland are Gaelic games (Gaelic football, hurling and camogie) with soccer and rugby making up the top three (ISM, Ipsos MRBI and Sport Ireland 2018). In this context the sports culture in Ireland poses a challenge for migrants. They may find that sports that are popular in their native country have limited availability in Ireland or they may have no interest in the sports that are popular and available in Ireland (Schwenzer, 2016).

*Most sports are Irish, either Gaelic football or hurling. I feel like there isn't many options. I would be more interested in volleyball or hockey but there is none of these near me."*(Male, European)

*"It must be appreciated that many migrants are interested in cricket, running, soccer, basketball and gymnastics."* (Female, African)

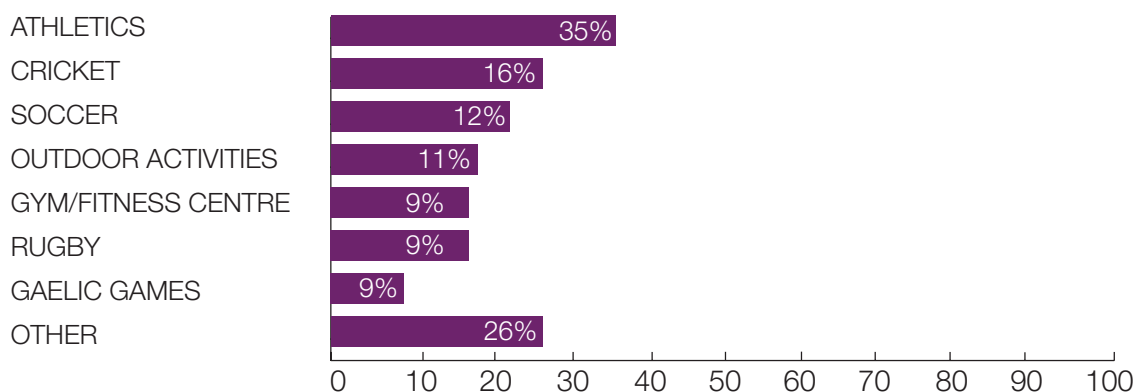
Of the three most popular sports in Ireland for volunteering (Gaelic games, soccer and rugby), among male respondents, only soccer is the top 3 (Fig. 4). Among female respondents none appear in the top 3, Gaelic games and soccer appear in the top 7 while rugby is outside the top 10 (Fig. 5). Many respondents had not even considered Gaelic games as they viewed them as for 'Irish only'. The majority (57%) of respondents are from Europe (Fig. 6) where in many countries rugby is not as significant in sports culture as it is in Ireland.

**Figure 4: Sports male migrants volunteer for, in Ireland (respondents could pick more than one)**

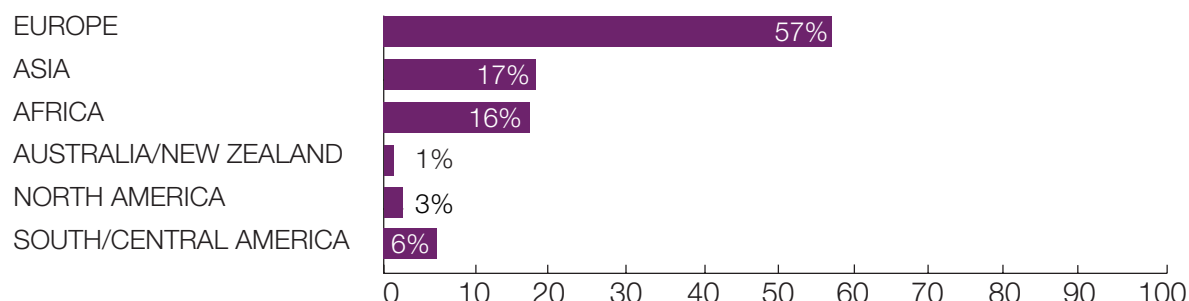


Other sports include: Basketball, Combat Sports, Cycling, Golf, Gymnastics, Hockey, Swimming and Tennis

**Figure 5: Sports female migrants volunteer for, in Ireland (respondents could pick more than one)**



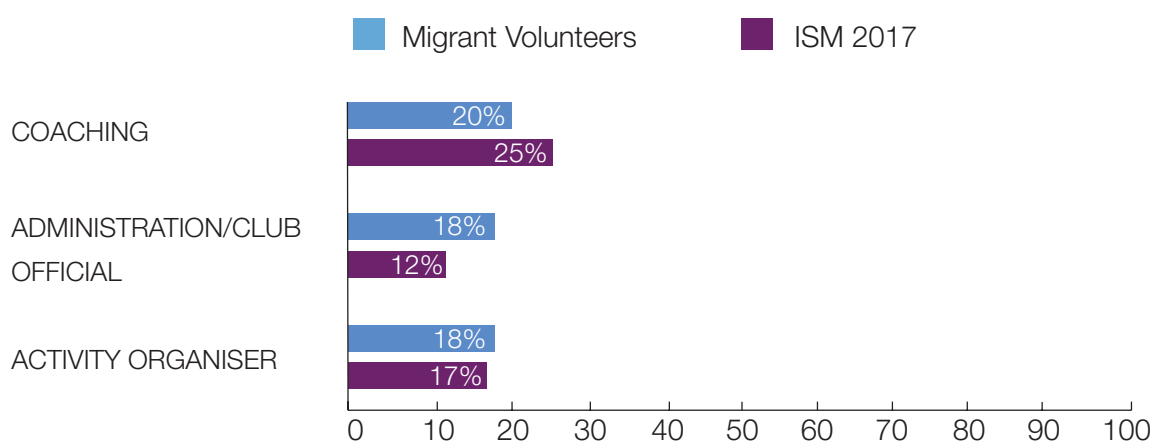
**Figure 6: Where respondents are from**



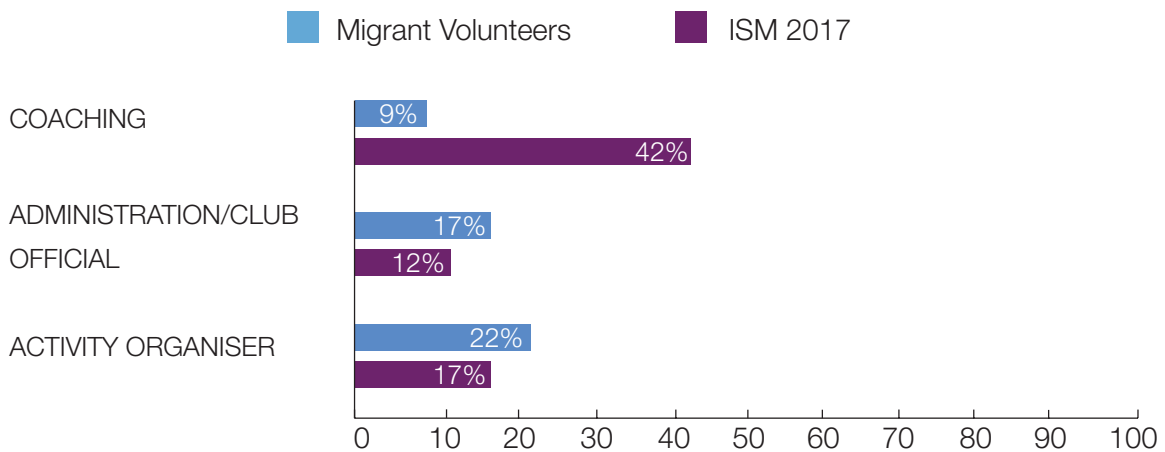
## Volunteer Roles

The roles undertaken by volunteers in sports clubs and organisations generally come under one of the following headings: administration (committee member, treasurer, secretary, public relations officer, fixtures secretary etc.), coaching (head coach, assistant coach, manager, assistant manager etc.), and providing practical help (transport, fundraising, stewarding, refreshments, parking, organising equipment and kit etc.). Each of these roles demand varying levels of experience, skill and time commitment. There are challenges for the volunteers and the clubs associated with all these roles. Comparing our findings on what type of volunteering roles migrants undertake with existing research (ISM, Ipsos MRBI and Sport Ireland 2018) about the types of roles the general public undertake, provides a further opportunity to explore challenges the migrant community, both female (Fig. 7) and male (Fig. 8), face.

**Figure 7: Roles that female volunteers undertake**



**Figure 8: Roles that male volunteers undertake**



These are positive findings with both male and female migrant volunteers exceeding the national averages in all categories except coaching. It is encouraging to see members of the migrant community in administrative positions in clubs and sporting organisations.

The most notable difference is the percentage of male migrants undertaking coaching roles. Consideration has to be given to the role of Irish sports culture plays in this significant difference. The fact that the majority of migrants in Ireland are first generation is also significant when looking at this difference. Among the male respondents who said they have not volunteered in sport but would, one of the main reasons was the predominance of Gaelic games and rugby.

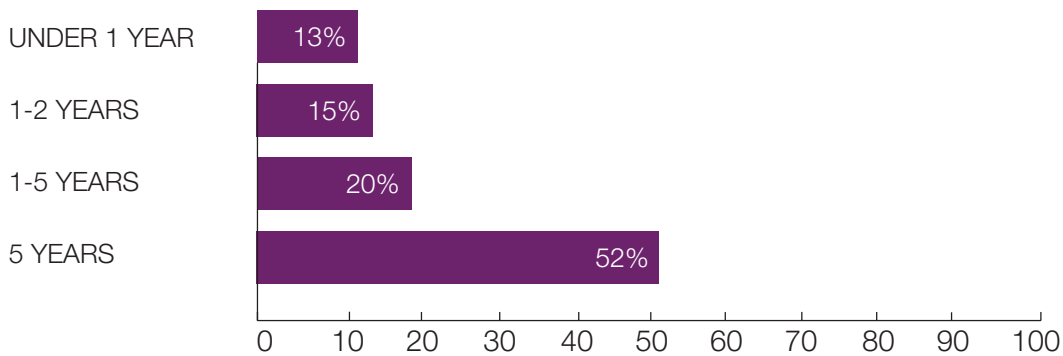
With the enthusiasm among the migrant community for volunteering in sport there is an opportunity for sports clubs and organisations to engage a pool of talented volunteers. Looking at a variety of roles outside the traditional coaching roles would provide opportunities for migrant volunteers to learn about Irish sporting culture and become valuable members of coaching teams and the wider club.

## Length of time in Ireland

Moving to a new country can be daunting, it takes time to settle in and get used to the culture and traditions of a different country (Getting on - From Migration to Integration, 2008). It is interesting to note the majority (72%) of respondents that volunteer in sport have been in Ireland for over 3 years (Fig. 9). Further analysis of this group shows that 22% of those in Ireland over 3 years said they started volunteering because their child played while only 4% in Ireland under 3 years gave this as a reason. Child participation in sport is one of the main routes into volunteering.



**Figure 9: Roles that males volunteers undertake**

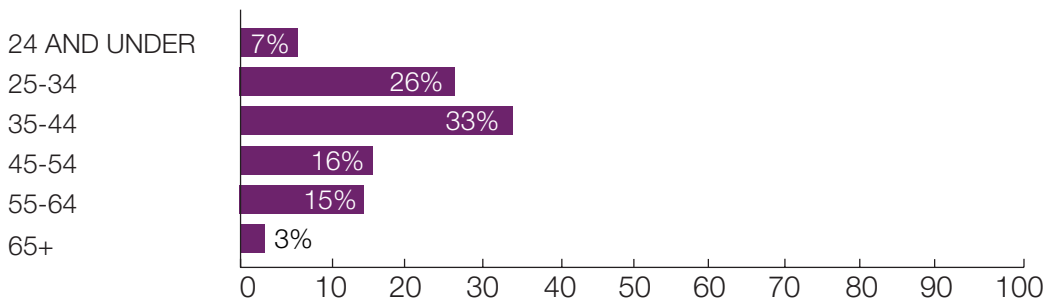


These findings could be viewed as indicators that those in Ireland for a longer period of time have more understanding of the culture, are more comfortable in their surroundings, know more people and feel part of their community and as a result are more likely to volunteer.

## Age Range

As reported in the Irish Sports Monitor 2017 those most likely to volunteer in sport in Ireland are aged 35 – 54. The findings from our survey and focus groups indicate that those most likely to volunteer in sport from the migrant community are aged 25 – 44 (59%) (Fig. 10). This is almost a direct reflection of the age range of the majority of migrants in Ireland which, is 25 – 42 (Demographics - CSO).

**Figure 10: Roles that males volunteers undertake**



The findings across all these areas show that sporting culture (Irish and respondent's native country) is a key factor in the choices migrants make about their volunteering. So is the fact that the majority of migrants in Ireland are first generation (McGinnity et al., 2018). It will be interesting to monitor these trends in the coming years as the second generation of migrants start to play sports in Ireland as this is a key motivator towards volunteering in sport in Ireland. It is notable that while the number of migrants volunteering in Gaelic games is limited (12%) the majority of those that do, have been in Ireland over 3 years.

While the sports culture may be a challenge it also provides opportunities for migrants to get involved in volunteering. Gaelic games, soccer and rugby dominate the landscape in which children participate. Children's sport is where most volunteering takes place and is one of the major routes into volunteering.

## Section 2: Volunteer Experience - How and Why they Volunteer and the Challenges and Impact

In the previous section we got to know who the volunteers are: their age, where they are originally from and length of time they have been in Ireland. We explored how these factors impact what sports they volunteer for and what role they undertake. This section will add to their story: exploring how they came to volunteer, why they do or do not volunteer in sport, the challenges they face and the impact volunteering in sport has had on them.

### How do migrants get into volunteering in sport?

In Ireland the most common routes to volunteering in sport are having connections to a sports club or organisation. This could be through participation as a player or having a child, family member or friend that plays or is involved in some other way in a sports club or organisation (CSPPA, 2011). And according to Chambers (2014) the most common volunteer recruitment method by sports clubs and organisations in Ireland is word of mouth. The findings from this research show that both of these factors are also true for the migrant community (Fig. 11). The most common piece of advice that those volunteering in sport would give to their peers who are not volunteering in sport is 'go out and talk to and meet people'. According to one respondent:

*"If you're at the club regularly the chances are someone will ask you to give a hand with something and one thing will lead to another."* (Female, European)

**Figure 11: How did you get involved in volunteering in sport?**

Statement	%
Through previously being involved as a participant	28%
As a parent/guardian of a participant	19%
Heard about opportunities from someone else already involved in the sport/club	16%
Through my local Volunteer Centre/Volunteering Information Service	16%
Through a volunteer matching site (e.g. I-VOL)	14%
Through a family member/friend who is/was involved	13%
Through being involved in starting a club/team	6%

There are other routes into volunteering; being proactive in trying to find opportunities increases the likelihood of success. For example, those who engaged with their local Volunteer Centre/ Volunteering Information Service (16%) or through I-VOL (14%) found a role volunteering in sport. In addition a small percentage (6%) of respondents said they got involved in volunteering through establishing a club/team (Ref: case studies in section 3).

However, the main routes into volunteering and the predominant method of recruitment are part of the culture in sports clubs and organisations across the country. They pose additional challenges to the migrant community because if an individual does not have these connections they are unlikely to hear about opportunities to volunteer or be asked to “give a hand.” The main reasons respondents gave for why they have not volunteered in sport (Fig. 12) provide a clear picture of how this culture, particularly the method of recruitment i.e. word of mouth, is one of the main challenges facing migrants wanting to volunteer in sport. These findings highlight the fact that if you do not have a connection to a sports club or organisation then you are significantly disadvantaged.

**Figure 12: Is there any particular reason(s) why you have not volunteered in sport?**

Statement	%
I haven't heard about any opportunities	43%
I don't know how to find a role	23%

Two of the biggest takeaways from these findings are the missed opportunities for sports clubs, organisations and migrants and the number of migrants who want to volunteer in sport. This project alone has identified 264 people who are not volunteering in sport but would do so if they had more information. When asked to name three things that sports clubs and organisations could do to attract more migrant volunteers, the overwhelming response from respondents (200+) was to advertise through a variety of methods e.g. where migrants congregate, social media groups and migrant community representatives.

## Why do migrants volunteer in sport?

The reasons why people volunteer in general are well documented i.e. to make a difference, they like the cause, to make friends, to meet new people, to get involved in the community, to learn new skills, to help get a job and to improve their health and well-being (Farrell, M. et al. 2018). Additionally, why people volunteer in sport is linked to the how they got involved in the first place i.e. the connections referenced in the previous section. Many of these reasons are enhanced and have greater significance for migrants as they settle into a new community.

It is clear from the literature and Government policy (i.e. the Migrant Integration Strategy and National Sports Policy) that volunteering in sport is viewed as a critical element for social inclusion and the integration of migrants. Our findings show that members of the migrant community agree with this as many of the motivating factors (highlighted in bold) for their involvement in sports volunteering are about inclusion in and belonging to their community (Fig. 13). During discussions, focus group participants spoke of these same reasons as being some of their main motivators for getting involved in volunteering.

**Figure 13: Why did you get involved in volunteering in sport? (Respondents could pick multiple reasons)**

Statement	%
It was a way to get involved in the community	59%
I played/participated in the sport	45%
<b>I wanted to meet people/make friends</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>It makes me feel like I belong in the community</b>	<b>43%</b>
I had the spare time to do it	38%
It would give me a chance to learn new skills	26%
<b>It would help me to learn English/Irish</b>	<b>21%</b>
My child played/participated in the sport	16%
<b>It would help me to get a job</b>	<b>16%</b>

Further analysis of the information provided by respondents highlights the enhanced significance in some areas for migrants. For example, of those who have been in Ireland for less than 3 years 44% said they volunteered in sport to improve their English. This drops to 4% for those who have been here over 3 years.

These findings show that the migrant community view volunteering in sport as a good tool for social inclusion and as a way for broader social integration. They provide valuable information in support of the actions outlined in the Migrant Integration Strategy and the National Sports Policy around volunteering and sport.

## Challenges

The information presented in previous sections highlighted areas such as national sports culture (sports played) and club culture (routes into volunteering, volunteer recruitment) as the main challenges for the migrant community. But when looking to volunteer in sport there can be a combination of challenges (Lunn, 2006). Where there are challenges there may also be opportunities for sport and the migrant community.

## Respondents who have not volunteered in sport

79% (401) of respondents said they had not volunteered in sport. Of these:

- **48%** said they **had participated** (played) in sport – This a key route into volunteering and provides an opportunity to get involved.
- **68%** said **they have volunteered** in another sector – Prior experience is another key route into volunteering in sport. Not all volunteering in sport is about coaching.
- **66%** said **they would volunteer** in sport if they had more information – This is an opportunity for sport to engage enthusiastic talented volunteers.

As highlighted previously the main challenge for those not involved in sport is information about opportunities, which are the top two reasons on their list (Fig. 14).

<b>Statement</b>	<b>%</b>
I haven't heard about any opportunities	43%
I don't know how to find a role	23%
Not enough time due to home/work circumstances	15%
Not sure I would be welcome	12%
I'm new to the area	11%
I couldn't find a sport I was interested in	7%
A lack of intercultural openness	6%
Language	6%
It would cost me too much money to get involved	5%
I don't feel my gender is needed/wanted	3%
Discrimination	2%

**Figure 14: Is there any particular reason(s) why you have not volunteered in sport?**

### Respondents who have volunteered in sport

Of the respondents who have volunteered in sport, 28% reported that they faced a range of challenges before and during their volunteering experience (Fig. 15). It is interesting to note that the main challenges highlighted by those volunteering in sport are not to do with information, but are about cultural openness and uncertainty about being welcome. Research carried out in countries across Europe found that due to a lack of cultural diversity in sports clubs and organisations, cultural awareness can be an issue for the volunteer and the host club/organisation (ESPIN, 2016). These issues were also a feature in the focus group discussions and in a number of comments added by respondents when they were completing the survey.

*"I usually volunteer doing first aid at sports events. Every time I assisted an injured player he would be uncomfortable and portray signs of resistance and fear. I dismissed everything and cleared my mind, acted as if I am the one who may be feeling out of place, sadly this went on and on. I then observed that I was the only non-Irish first aider. I am black and most of the clubs don't have black participants or even spectators. I pushed myself everyday even though I always*

Statement	%
I wasn't sure if I would be welcome	23%
There was a lack of intercultural openness	23%
I was new to the area	20%
Language	17%
It took time to find out about opportunities	14%
Discrimination	14%
I didn't know how to find out about opportunities	11%
No enough time due to home/work circumstances	9%

### Figure 15: Did you face any challenges/difficulties to getting involved in volunteering in sport?

While these issues are challenging for both migrants and sports clubs, recent research carried out in Ireland shows that frequent contact between people from different cultures is directly associated with more positive attitudes towards migrants (McGinnity and Kingston, 2017). These views about the benefits of meeting people are shared by the respondents.

*“Grab any opportunity you have to mix with other people.” (Female, African)*

*“Go out and meet people and you never know who will be your well-wisher and put you on the right path.” (Male, Asian)*

### Some key differences in the challenges both groups faced

- **43%** of those who **have not volunteered** in sport said they hadn't heard about any opportunities. In contrast only **14%** of those who **have volunteered** in sport said that it was difficult to find out about opportunities
- **23%** of those who **have not volunteered** in sport said they didn't know how to find a role. In contrast only **11%** of those who **have volunteered** in sport said the same thing.

These findings would suggest that a lack of knowledge among the migrant community about opportunities to volunteer in sport is contributing to their underrepresentation.

- **23%** of those who **have volunteered** in sport say that there is a lack of cultural openness. Only **6%** of those who **have not volunteered** said the same thing.
- **23%** of those who **have volunteered** in sport say they were not sure if they would be welcome. Only **12%** of those who **have not volunteered** said the same thing.
- **14%** of those who **have volunteered** in sport say they encountered discrimination. Only **2%** of those who **have not volunteered** said the same thing.
- **17%** of those who **have volunteered** in sport say that language was an issue. Only **6%** of those who **have not volunteered** said the same thing.

These findings are interesting in that they suggest that the lack of intercultural openness, being unsure if they would be welcome, discrimination and language became more of a challenge for those already volunteering in sport. While it is important to highlight these issues it is equally as important to point out that the majority (**86%**) of migrants' reported that they have not encountered discrimination. Additionally **77%** said they had **no issues with intercultural openness** or were **worried about being welcome**.



Highlighting these issues provides an opportunity for them to be addressed by sports clubs and organisations in a systematic and meaningful manner through raising awareness and educating people about the benefits of cultural diversity in sport across Ireland.

## The impact of volunteering in sport

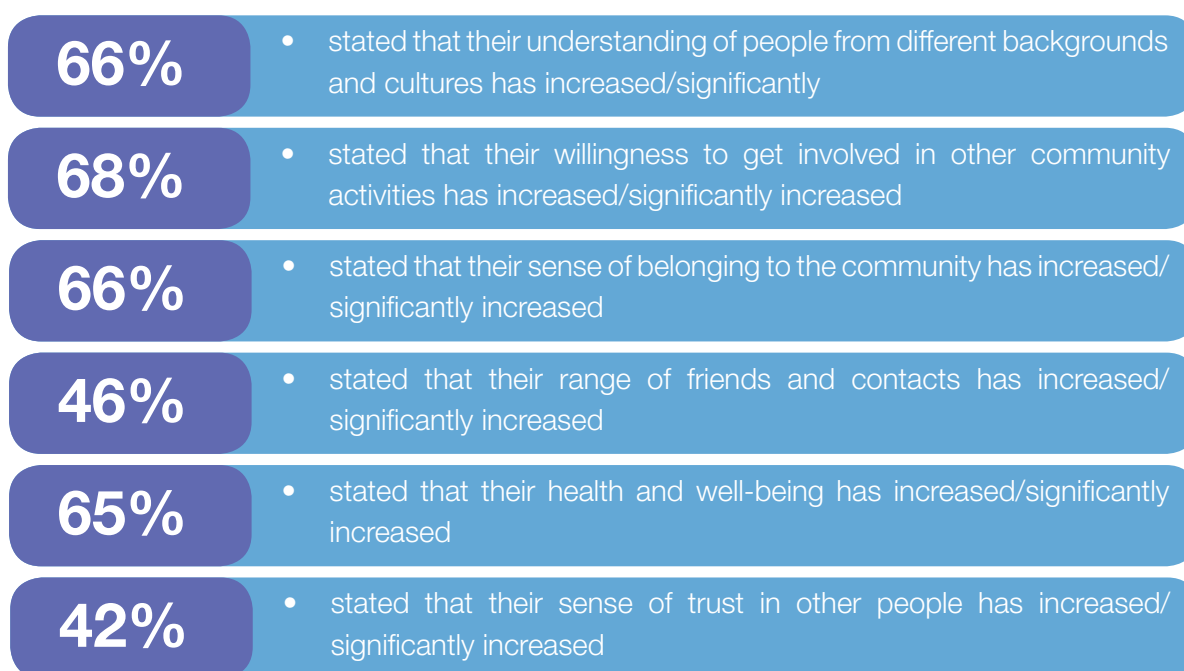
A recent study by Volunteer Ireland in collaboration with NUI Galway on the impact of volunteering in rural Ireland highlighted that there is a significant social and cultural impact for volunteers (Farrell, M. et al. 2018) including those volunteering in sport. The findings from this project agree with that (Fig. 16). Some of the main motivations that respondents gave for volunteering in sport were:

1. It is a way to get involved in the community
2. It will make me feel like I belong in the community
3. It will help me meet new people and make friends

Taking these and the issue of cultural awareness into consideration respondents were asked what impact volunteering in sport had on them.

### Figure 16: The impact on migrants from volunteering in sport

All respondents were asked how connected they feel to Ireland (Fig. 17).



**Figure 17: How connected do you feel with Ireland?**

On a scale of 1 - 10 how connected do you feel to Ireland		
Those who have volunteered in sport	Those who have not volunteered in sport but have volunteered in other areas	Those who have not volunteered at all
<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>66% of respondents stated that their connection to Ireland has increased/significantly increased because they have volunteered in sport.</b>		

### Case Study: Desire Busingye

Desire arrived in Ireland from Uganda in 2008. Within 2 weeks of his arrival he registered with the local Volunteer Centre in Dublin. Before he could take up any roles he was transferred to Tralee, where he registered with Kerry Volunteer Centre. Home for Desire was Atlas House direct provision centre in Tralee.

*“As soon as I got to Tralee I registered with the Volunteer Centre and met with the manager Geraldine. I started to get involved in volunteering with youth and the community. The Volunteer Centre were doing some work with St. Brendan’s Park Football Club and they introduced them to me. I started volunteering there as an assistant coach. I was also the representative for the centre and I promoted soccer coaching opportunities to fellow asylum seekers. I was there for two years’ and in that time over 70 people from that centre got involved in sports. It was a great way for people to get to know each other and it made it easier for us to get used to being in Ireland. When I stopped volunteering with the soccer club I helped set up the new resource centre and we coached young kids.*

Desire left direct provision in 2013. He now lives in Cork and continues to volunteer in a variety of roles and is eagerly awaiting his Irish citizenship. Kerry Volunteer Centre continue to support St. Brendan’s who have an ongoing direct relationship with the direct provision centre who they contact every year during their main recruitment drive.

## Case Study: Rafique

Rafique arrived in Ireland in 2009 as part of a UNHCR resettlement programme after spending 17 years of his life in a refugee camp in Bangladesh. Rafique, his wife and daughter were among a group of 64 Rohingya who settled in Carlow. They brought with them a passion for cricket.

*“When Rohingya were resettled in Carlow in 2009, Rohingya youths – who were born in Kutupalong and Nayapara refugee camps in Bangladesh – sought a sport to seek refuge in. The early years of the resettlement were stressful as they experienced huge challenges in culture, language, lifestyle and weather. Cricket is the medium that played an important role linking their new lives in Ireland to that of growing up in the camp where cricket is a national sport. Cricket provides the youngsters with an opportunity to come together and experience their new lives, in their new home”.*

They found there was no cricket in Carlow. There was a cricket club established in 1834 but it closed its' doors in the early 1980's due to a lack of interest. However there was now a group of enthusiastic cricket players in Carlow.

*“We started playing in open public spaces available in Carlow, until former Minister Mary White inquired from the youths about their needs and they responded, to play cricket. Since there had been a cricket club in Carlow – Carlow Cricket Club, which was defunct in 1982 – we took the opportunity to revive it in 2011. It gives a sense of belonging and is a way of giving back to the local communities who have welcomed the members of Rohingya community and assisted us to feel at home while integrating in the smoothest possible ways.*

*The club is a symbol of successful integration for a resettled community. Now it has at least 12 different nationalities who play cricket. There are adult teams, Division 8 and 16, and a youth development team at Leinster Cricket. Carlow saw two championship trophies brought home in 2015 for the first time in the club's 40-year history, and another one in 2018.*

*I feel privileged and honoured to initiate the revival process along with so many wonderful people from the local Irish society and the Rohingya community. Now I chair the cricket club which has seen steady progress and remains an example for immigrants and refugees giving back to the society.”*

## Section 3: Insight from Respondents – for Sport and Peers

**Name 3 things that sporting organisations (national and local) could do to encourage more migrants to volunteer in sport.**

*“Sporting organisations need to be more proactive and welcoming, in general, about how and where they share information about their organisation and how they want and value volunteers, from all nationalities to a part of their organisation.” (Focus Group Participant)*

1. Advertise more through all areas (social media, local papers etc.)
2. Have more roles than just coaching
3. Advertise at places where migrants are likely to attend
4. Organise events targeted at migrants, have open days
5. Training on equality and diversity (other cultures)
6. Be welcoming and more open
7. Educate migrants about the club/organisation
8. Provide a better mix of roles to make it more interesting
9. More diverse images and stories about volunteers
10. Subsidise membership for migrants
11. Don't discriminate
12. Implement clear guidelines on racism and language
13. Be family friendly
14. Let migrants know about the benefits of volunteering with your club
15. Encourage younger members/players to involve their family
16. Post short videos of migrants doing it and explain why they do it/like it

*“Integration Officers and/or people in specific roles where they encounter people from other countries to be an active source of information about volunteering and be the link or bridge to volunteering experiences.” (Focus Group Participant)*

**Based on your experience what advice would you give a migrant who is unsure about volunteering in sport or doesn't know where to start.**

*"I would tell them to just do it because it is a good way to make new friends and learn new skills as well as getting to understand other cultures." (Female, African)*

1. Get out and speak to and meet local people
2. Go to some games/events and talk to people
3. Go to your local Volunteer Centre
4. Join groups on the internet
5. Get clarity about what's involved
6. Don't hesitate
7. Be willing to learn
8. Get familiar with the culture, remember it's not the same as your own country
9. Be open minded
10. Choose something you love doing
11. Don't be afraid to get involved
12. Smile
13. Keep going you will get to know more
14. Be approachable
15. Don't be shy
16. Be brave
17. Be proactive
18. Have faith in yourself and others
19. Think of every barrier as a motivator
20. Go to lots of events

*"Talk to people, show up at events and show that you are really interested in volunteering." (Male, European)*

## Conclusions

The national survey and focus groups have provided insight into the experience of migrants volunteering in sport and those interested in doing so. While there are issues to be addressed and challenges to be faced the findings also provide a positive message from the migrant community about their experience volunteering in sport in Ireland.

### Key Findings

- The main motivator for the migrant community to get involved in volunteering in sport is, to get involved in the community. This is a positive finding and provides valuable information to inform actions arising out of the Migrant Integration Strategy and the National Sports Policy. It is clear from the findings that volunteering in sport is a good tool for social inclusion and by extension an effective means of facilitating social integration.
- The main barrier to volunteering in sport for the migrant community is a lack of information. Overwhelmingly, the advice from migrants to sporting clubs and organisations is to provide more information about opportunities. 264 people involved in this project who have not volunteered in sport said that if they knew how to get involved, they would, a missed opportunity for sport. However, this is also a positive as there is enthusiasm among the majority (72%) of respondents to volunteer in sport.
- The sports culture in Ireland is impacting the number of volunteers from the migrant community, particularly male volunteers. The dominance of Gaelic games and the popularity of rugby are significant. Volunteer roles are also limited, with coaching seen by many as the only option. Consideration should be given to broadening the roles available.
- Volunteering in sport has impacted positively on the sense of belonging to the community, the willingness to get involved in other community activities, the health and well-being, the trust in others, the understanding of other cultures, the range of friends and how connected migrants feel to Ireland.
- Intercultural openness and discrimination are seen by migrants as issues that need to be addressed. There needs to be more education for clubs and organisations on how to engage with people from different cultures.

*"If people come together for the love of sport, it doesn't matter where you are originally from you will be part of that club and the sport's community." (Female, European)*

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# Appendix: Survey Questions

All respondents were first asked

**1. Have you ever volunteered in sport in Ireland?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

Those that answered YES were asked the following questions

**2. In which sport(s) do you now or have you volunteered in? (Please tick all that apply)**

Athletics	Gymnastics
Basketball	Hockey
Badminton	Rugby
Combat Sports (boxing, martial arts, Mixed martial Arts, Wrestling etc.)	Outdoor Activities (Hill Walking, rock Climbing, kayaking etc.)
Cricket	Soccer
Cycling	Swimming
Equestrian	Tennis
Gaelic Games (Gaelic football, Hurling, Camoige)	Gym/Fitness Centre Activities
Golf	

**3. How did you get involved in sport? (Please tick all that apply)**

- Through previously being involved as a participant
- As a parent/guardian of a participant
- Through a family member/friend who is/was involved?
- Heard about opportunities from someone else already involved in the sport/club.
- Heard about opportunities from someone not involved in the sport.
- Through my place of worship
- Through School, College, University
- I heard about opportunities at a promotional event/volunteer fair
- I heard about opportunities at a local event

- Local/national newspaper
- TV/Radio (local/national)
- Through my Volunteer Centre/Volunteering Information Service
- Through my employer/job
- Through the internet/organisations website
- Through a volunteer matching site (e.g. I-VOL)
- Other (please specify)

**4. What role(s) have you carried out as a volunteer in sport? (Please select all that apply)**

- An Administrator (committee member, chairperson, treasurer, secretary, president)
- A coach
- A manager/assistant manager
- Activity organiser
- Referee/Official
- Practical help (organising equipment/kit, refreshments, parking, stewardship etc.)
- Providing transport
- Other (please specify)

**5. Why did you get involved in volunteering in sport? (Please tick all that apply)**

- I play/participate in the sport
- A desire to stay involved when I finished playing/participating
- My child played/participated in the sport
- I wanted to meet people/make friends
- It was a way to get involved in the community
- My family and friends did it
- It would give me a chance to learn new skills
- It would help me to get a job
- It would help me in my current job

- It would help me to learn English/Irish
- It makes me feel like I belong in the community
- Other (please specify)

**6. Did you face any challenges/difficulties to get involved in volunteering in sport?**

- Yes
- No

**7. If you answered yes what were those challenges?**

- Language
- I couldn't find a sport I was interested in
- I didn't know how to find out about opportunities
- It took time to find out about opportunities
- Not enough time due to home/work circumstances
- I thought getting involved would take up too much time
- I thought it would cost me too much money to get involved
- I wasn't sure if I would be welcome
- I'm new to the area
- I didn't feel my gender was needed/wanted
- There was a lack of intercultural openness
- Discrimination
- Other (Please specify)

### Because of Volunteering in sport...

<b>8.</b>	My range of friends and contacts has?	
<b>9.</b>	My sense of belonging to the community has?	a) Significantly Increased
<b>10.</b>	My trust in other people has?	b) Increased
<b>11.</b>	My understanding of people from different cultures and backgrounds has?	c) Stayed the same
<b>12.</b>	My willingness to get involved in other community activities has?	d) Decreased
<b>13.</b>	My health and well-being has?	e) Significantly Decreased
<b>14.</b>	My connection with Ireland has?	

**15. Based on your experience what advice would you give a migrant who is unsure about volunteering in sport or doesn't know where to start?**

Those that answered NO were asked the following questions

**2. Have you ever participated in sport in Ireland?**

- Yes
- No

**3. If you answered yes which sport(s)? (Please tick all that apply)**

Athletics	Gymnastics
Basketball	Hockey
Badminton	Rugby
Combat Sports (boxing, martial arts, Mixed martial Arts, Wrestling etc.)	Outdoor Activities (Hill Walking, rock Climbing, kayaking etc.)
Cricket	Soccer
Cycling	Swimming
Equestrian	Tennis
Gaelic Games (Gaelic football, Hurling, Camoige)	Gym/Fitness Centre Activities
Golf	

**4. Have you volunteered in any other area of society?**

- Yes
- No

**5. Is there any particular reason(s) why you have not volunteered in sport?**

- Not interested in any sport
- Language
- I couldn't find a sport I was interested in
- I don't know how to find a role
- I haven't heard about any opportunities
- Not enough time due to home/work circumstances
- Getting involved would take up too much time
- It would cost me too much money to get involved
- Not sure I would be welcome
- I'm new to the area
- I don't feel my gender is needed/wanted
- Lack of intercultural openness
- Discrimination
- Other (Please specify)

**6. Volunteering in sport would help me feel more connected to Ireland**

- a) Strongly Agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neither agree or Disagree
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly Disagree

**All respondents were asked the following questions**

**1. Name 3 things that sporting organisations (national and local) could do to encourage more migrants to volunteer in sport?**

**2. On a scale of 1 – 10 how connected do you feel to Ireland?**

**3. What gender do you identify as?**

- a) Female
- b) Male
- c) Other

**4. Where are you originally from?**

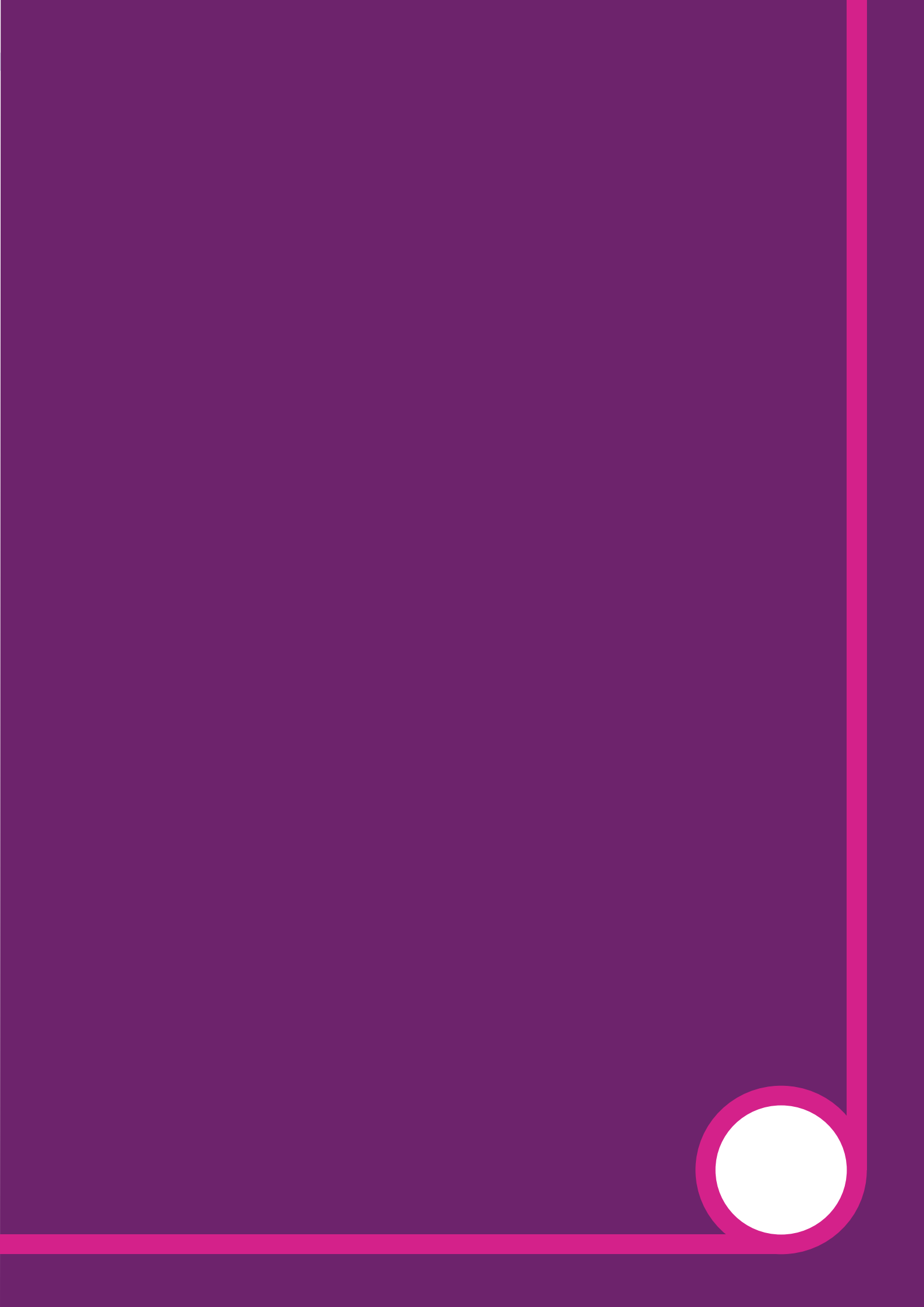
- Europe
- Asia
- Africa
- Australia/New Zealand
- North America
- South/Central America
- Other (Please Specify)

**5. Age**

- 24 or under
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 44
- 45 – 54
- 55 – 64
- 65 +

**6. How long have you lived in Ireland?**

- Under 1 year
- 1 – 3 years
- 3 – 5 years
- 5 or over



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