



Kicking Girls „FOOTBALL WITHOUT OFFSIDES“

Creating Opportunities for Girls through Football

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Ministerium für Familie, Kinder,
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Niedersächsisches Ministerium
für Wissenschaft und Kultur



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PD DR. ULF GEBKEN

PREFACE PD DR. ULF GEBKEN
Carl-von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg
Institute for Integration and Education through Sport

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am at the same time delighted and surprised about the success and attention the project -initially called Football Without Offsides- received, since it started in a couple of schools in 2006. Recommended "best-practise" in the German Nation

Integration Plan the project was then picked up und implemented in about 120 German city districts. It is amazing how powerful a simple idea can be.

However, if you ever experience the enthusiasm of Hülya and Nesrin playing football in one of the many affiliated schools of the project, you will get an idea why. Their passion will let you sense the great integrative qualities of the game. Following Nelson Mandela, it has the "power to chance the world because it speaks to youth in a language they understand". Football unities people with different cultural and social backgrounds - it attracts boys and girls.

In recent years "integration" has become a quite a controversial term of the public debate in Germany. Democratic societies depend on active participation and cannot afford to exclude large parts of their population. Discussions stressed a need to breakdown cultural and social barriers and create common spaces. Football is a great social tool to do so and the different elements of this project are intended to enable people to participate and shape their own futures.

I am very thankful for what has already been achieved. The passion and joy of girls like Hülya and Nesrin motivate everybody working in the project and encourage further efforts.

PD Dr. Ulf Gebken

Head of the Institute for Integration and Education through Sport
 Carl-von-Ossietzky University of Oldenburg

KICKING GIRLS

Football Without Offsides: Creating Opportunities for Girls through Football

In recent years football has become more and more popular among girls. Nonetheless, scientific studies show that girls and women with immigrant background are still highly under-represented in organized sports. Among other things, a lack of opportunities, the dominance of men's football, antiquated prejudices, cultural reservations and economic difficulties can be held responsible.

Raising new opportunities for girls in and through football was the aim of *Football Without Offsides*, which started in 2006 as a pilot project in 10 German cities, funded by the German Football Association *DFB*. Due to its great success, the idea was adopted and continued in various local and regional projects and initiatives. Today you will find *Kicking Girls* in 300 schools around Germany.

The project focuses on neighborhoods where social, economic and cultural problems often accumulate and particularly girls have little chances to participate. Combining different elements, like football classes exclusively for girls, qualification of junior coaches and organization of tournaments and football camps, the program reaches out to interested girls in their social environment and lowers access into organized sport while initiating new partnerships between primary schools, football associations, local authorities and communities.

The growing interest in football for girls in schools has many reasons. Most important: the integrative qualities of the game. Football unites girls (and boys) of all ages, social and cultural backgrounds. It can be a trigger of social change and integration and create new opportunities for those who participate.

From 2012 a new partnership with the *Laureus Sports for Good Foundation* will extend the program to more school and clubs around Germany.

THE LAUREUS SPORT FOR GOOD FOUNDATION GERMANY

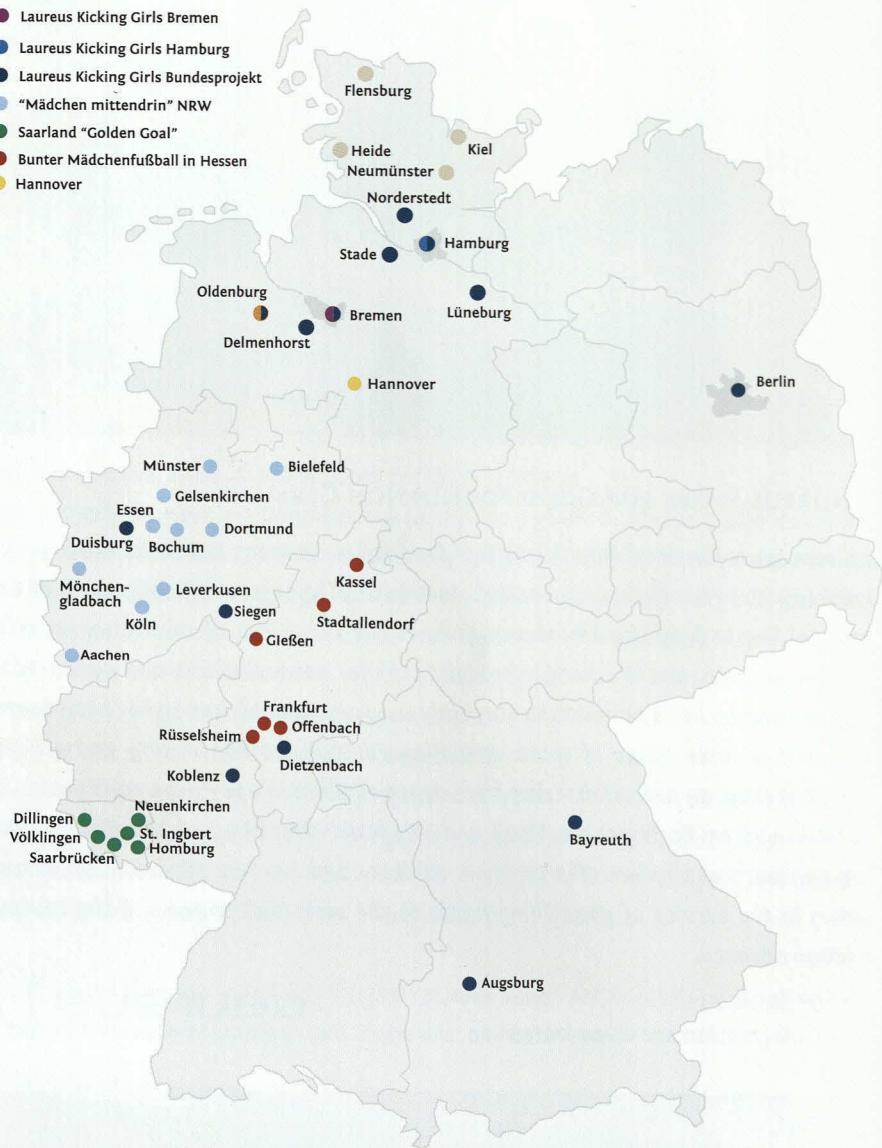
The Laureus Sport for Good Foundation was founded in Germany in 2001 as the first National Laureus Foundation. Since 2009 Austria also belongs to official action of the Foundation. The task of the Foundation follows the basic idea of the Nelson Mandela has given Laureus: Social Change through Sport for needy Children and adolescents. In Germany, the Laureus Foundation currently supports and advises eight social Sports projects with a wide range of sports including Football, hockey, boxing and golf for thousands of children and adolescents from deprived areas in age from 6 to 18 years. Franz Beckenbauer, Boris Becker, Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko and Nia Künzer have in common with a number of prominent athletes and Laureus personalities as ambassadors in the service of good Thing made to the tasks and projects of the Laureus Foundation advance.

For more information see www.laureus.de



PROJECT LOCATIONS IN GERMANY

- Schleswig Holstein "Mädchen kicken cooler"
- MICK Projekt
- Laureus Kicking Girls Bremen
- Laureus Kicking Girls Hamburg
- Laureus Kicking Girls Bundesprojekt
- "Mädchen mittendrin" NRW
- Saarland "Golden Goal"
- Bunter Mädchenfußball in Hessen
- Hannover



FOUR KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT

The project combines four key elements.

ELEMENT ONE: Football classes for girls

ELEMENT TWO: Tournaments for girls

ELEMENT THREE: Qualifying junior coaches

ELEMENT FOUR: Football-Camps





Element One

FOOTBALL CLASSES FOR GIRLS

Creating partnerships between schools and local football clubs

The basic idea of the project is to establish voluntary football classes at primary schools offered exclusively to girls. In an intimate setting, without having to leave the comfort of their social setting they are enabled to discover the fun of the game, pick up techniques and gain self-confidence. The class is set up together with a football club, which also provides a coach and creates new forms local partnership.

Various studies have shown that girls from immigrant families are still under-represented in organized sports -and ever more so in football. The experiences of the project have shown that the interest of the girls in playing almost equals to that of the boys. The project therefore offers the missing link for girls to discover football and opens up new possibilities for girls into the world of organized sport.



Element Two

TOURNAMENTS FOR GIRLS

Classes need goals

Tournaments and competitions are indispensable for the long-term success of the program. Not only do the girls put into practice what they have learned and to perform as a team, but self-organized tournaments also offer the chance to intensify partnership of teachers, coaches, junior coaches and parents. Moreover they change the spirit of the football class and players train with more ambition.

Nonetheless, although competitions are a driving force for the class, tournaments should not be designed to exclude weaker teams.



Element Three

QUALIFYING JUNIOR COACHES

Taking up responsibility

Female football coaches are needed but remain scarce. Through specially designed three-day courses, girls aged between 14 and 17 are qualified to become junior coaches. Participants learn theoretically and practically how to give football classes for girls: training methods and pedagogical questions are also covered in the course as well as legal issues and matters of first aid.

Finally participants are encouraged to coach a class themselves. In the long term the course is designed to allow qualified junior coaches to take up more responsibility in their local neighborhood through giving classes at schools and clubs.



Element Four

FOOTBALL-CAMPS FOR GIRLS

Experiencing team spirit

Football camps are not only about what is happening on the football pitch. They include a diverse agenda of games and exercises but what is more, the camps try to sustain the individual development of the girls, foster social skills, self-confidence and self-esteem. Training and living together in a group for several days demands mutual understanding and consideration. Camps are intended to provide a sense of community and take responsibility.

“FOOTBALL WITHOUT OFF-SIDES”

Eight characteristics of a successful social integration of girls through football.

1 GET STARTED IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS _____

Starting in small football classes in primary schools, girls from families with diverse cultural background can be inspired and attached to exercise and sports. Without any social pressure or the need to win and far away from the critical views of any boy, they may develop confidence and experience the joy of the game. As a reliable institution, the school creates acceptance and support among parents, which otherwise might not let their daughters join a football club. Moreover, many girls are only allowed to play if sports classes are separates boys from girls.

2 FOOTBALL CLASSES FOR GIRLS: CONNECTING SCHOOLS AND CLUBS _____

Female coaches from football clubs act as experts in football classes in schools in order to allow inexperienced girls to explore the game. The football class is a safe base to score their first goals, to learn techniques and tactics, develop self-confidence and a shared joy for the game. To practice separately before joining the boys at the schoolyard gives a huge encouragement for the girls.

CLASSES NEED GOALS: COMPETITIONS AND TOURNAMENTS _____

Football classes need goals, not only to score but to encourage girls to go their way. Tournaments and competitions change the life of the class: the players train with more ambition and learn to perform as a team.

SMOOTHENING TRANSITION FROM SCHOOLS TO CLUBS: INCLUDE PARENTS _____

Finding the way from the football class in school into a real football team in a club is not always easy and obvious. Rather, successful transition depends on carefully placed measures and adjustments by interested clubs. Sustainability can be guaranteed if social and cultural barriers like separate changing rooms or membership fees can be lowered and parents be brought on board.

5 KNITTING NETWORKS: USING LOCAL MULTIPLIERS _____

Besides sport teachers and principals, neighborhood managers and social workers are good partners for local sports clubs. As experts and coordinators in their quarters and school environments they are aware of pressing problems in their neighborhood such as child poverty, which often keeps children away from organized sport. They are best fitted to find practical solutions.

6 QUALIFY AND INTEGRATE JUNIOR COACHES _____

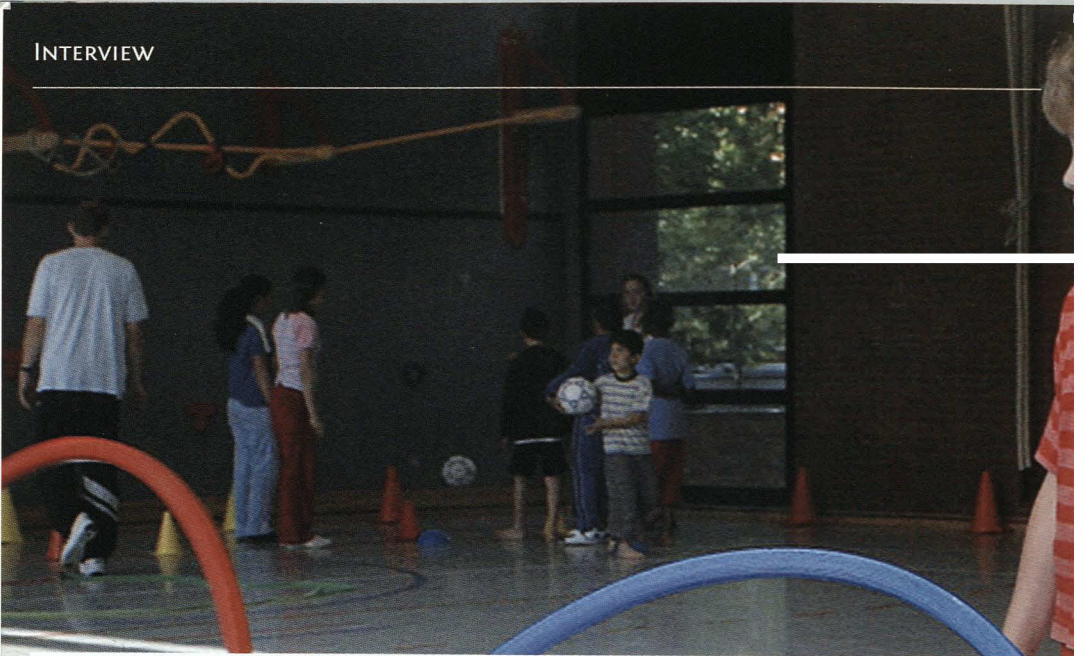
Qualified female coaches are underrepresented in organized football. They are important, not only as idols for the girls, but also to create acceptance for the sport among parents with culturally diverse backgrounds. Young girls from secondary schools can be qualified as junior coaches and motivated training girls' teams in schools and clubs or helping to plan tournaments and competitions.

7 CREATE INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS AND RESPECT RELIGIOUS RULES _____

Living in mixed societies, intercultural competences become ever more important. Culture matters, as it influences the way of life and everyday interaction (i.e. eating habits or the relationship between the sexes). Places of exchange are needed in order to create mutual understanding. Girls football is a highly symbolic field of action which asks for a greater sensibility for culturally implied needs, reservations and desires.

8 GIRLS FOOTBALL AS A TOOL FOR EMANCIPATION _____

Football playing girls, not only from immigrant families, show not only great enthusiasm in the sport but also growing self-confidence and a changing self-perception. Conquering domains classically dominated by boys, like the football pitch, questions gender relations profoundly and tackles traditional and often obsolete role perceptions. Girls change the way of the game as well, as friendships and the support from peer groups are as important to them as they are for their male schoolmates.



„IT´S SIMPLY A LOT OF FUN“

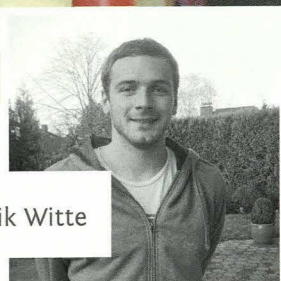
Interview with Frederik Witte, coach in Bielefeld, Stieghorst

WHEN DID YOU TAKE OVER THE FOOTBALL CLASS?

Frederik: *I am coaching the girls since the beginning of the school year. Regularly about 25 girls attend the class.*

WHAT ARE THE KIDS LIKE THAT COME TO YOUR CLASS?

Frederik: *There is a great variety of nationalities in the group, some Muslim girls, but also girls from India and Eastern Europe. Impressingly that has no influence whatsoever on the atmosphere, which is very harmonic. Everybody is very respectful without creating in- and outsiders. What is very nice about kids of this young age is that they make no difference between color of skin or decent.*



Frederik Witte

DO YOU CONSIDER THE CLASS A SUCCESS?

Frederik: In my opinion it is definitely a success. You cannot expect to teach outstanding technical and tactical football skills to absolute beginners in just one hour a week. It is more about playing together and the team spirit. It is just wonderful to see them run after the ball. The girls win and lose together.

DO YOU THINK THE GIRLS HAVE FUN PLAYING FOOTBALL?

Frederik: They are enjoying themselves a lot. Since the class is voluntary, the high number of kids attending every week shows me, that football is very motivating. That is a good feedback for me, too. The head teachers tell me that their girls always speak very positively about the class.



Sportpädagogik 05/09 | Bastian Kuhlmann

FROM SCHOOL GIRL TO JUNIOR COACH

Qualifying football training assistants

“I never imagined working with kids could be that much fun! Maybe I’ll become a real coach someday...”, says 15-year old Harifar euphorically.



Harifar is just one of the many participants of a qualification course directed at schoolgirls aged between 15 and 17 to become football training assistants.

In neglected neighborhoods, where economic, social and cultural problems often accumulate, the program offers girls from various secondary schools an easy access to try out their skills as football coach.

The young participants learn theoretically and practically how to work with children. Later they are encouraged to conduct lessons themselves with girls from neighboring primary schools.

OBJECTIVES

General interest of girls in football is high, but so far the lack of qualified female coaches to train them adequately poses a huge problem to schools and clubs. Qualified female coaches are important, not only as idols for the girls, but also to create acceptance for the sport among parents with culturally diverse backgrounds. Without female coaches many girls are not allowed to play.

Recent studies (Kleindienst-Cachay 2007) have stressed the low participation of girls from immigrant families in organized sport. The qualification program tries to tackle this shortcoming through initiating partnerships between cooperations to develop new strategies for social inclusion and adapt to the day-to-day life of juvenile girls.



Starting in schools as a safe base both for girls and their parents, with reliable structures but less controlled by cultural or religious norms, the training course offers a chance for football passionate girls to support, instruct and supervise sport (training) lessons and for the first time over responsibility for other kids in schools and clubs.

THE SCHEDULE

The first day of the course focuses on the didactic and pedagogical as well as legal issues of the sport. Under the instruction of experts the girls gain key competences like controlling group dynamics, investigating life-worlds of children and teenagers, obeying to obligatory supervision, designing football lessons or treating injuries - all presented in a simple and adequate form to the educational level of the participants.

Nevertheless, giving real lessons for girls from primary schools are the emotional highlights for the aspiring coaches. During “their” lessons the aspiring coaches act as female football experts, who instruct, motivate, explain and correct. They develop, apply, evaluate and adapt individually training methods, materials and training stations. Later they reflect on their performance together with the instructors. What worked out well? What should be done differently next time?

LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS

On a regular basis the courses have proved high levels of self-motivation and interest in taking over responsibility in football among the participants. Participants stressed the importance of the demonstration lessons (“We were allowed to teach”) and the intensity (“They kids picked up a lot in very short time!” “It was very demanding for us”) of the course.

PROBLEMS AND CHANCES

The course opens up new ways for young girls to take over responsibility. Being a football training assistant could be the first step into becoming a coach.

However, experience has shown that further engagements in schools or club is not self-evident, often a small personal time budget or reservations of clubs and schools with respect to the young age or qualification of the girls impede them from getting further. Positive development depends on continuous moderation and advice from adult mediators. Especially partnering and tandem models promise success and keep the enthusiasm of the young coaches alive.

Moreover, the course demonstrates the great potentials for football associations and their qualification programs, if they acknowledge the achievements of the participants and the need to render their qualification programs in order to make them more adequate for girls.

PERSPECTIVES

For half a year now, Harifar supports the football training in one of the projects partnering schools. She became friends with the children and a reliable partner for their official coach. Her engagement is acknowledged by the school: after the summer break she will take over the class with her friend Ayca.

Following Harifar's steps, more and more girls from immigrant families engage in football. Whoever experiences the enthusiasm of the participants of the course will sense the great chances and effects of the program.



NEW YORK TIMES (25/6/2011) | JERÉ LONGMAN

FOR WORLD CUP HOST GERMANY

Diversity Is the Goal

Fatmire Bajramaj and her family fled to Germany from Kosovo as Yugoslavia broke apart in conflict in the early 1990s. She began playing soccer as a 6-year-old without her father's knowledge or permission.

At first, she played at recess and after school with her older brother. Secretly, she joined a club team, using equipment lent by her brother and cleats borrowed from a teammate that she returned after each practice and game.

"My father wanted me to be a singer or an actress," Bajramaj, who is known as Lira, said in a recent telephone interview, speaking through an interpreter. *"He told me that football was for men, not for women."*

Yet today, at 23, Bajramaj (pronounced BUY-rah-mye) is a star midfielder on the German women's national team, the lone Muslim player on a squad that is seeking its third consecutive World Cup title, beginning with Sunday's opening match against Canada before a crowd of 70,000-plus at Berlin's Olympic Stadium.

The 16-team tournament, which features the United States and Brazil as the expected top challengers, will end July 17 in Frankfurt.

German soccer officials hope the World Cup will provide a marketing boon for the women's game and will also enhance their efforts to promote the country's national sport as a means of social integration. In Germany, a third of all children are born to immigrant families, and the issue of assimilation — or the lack thereof — has become an urgent political concern.

Building on the success of the 2006 men's World Cup in Germany, German soccer officials said the sport's national federation had spent more than \$27 million on a project to encourage integration. The program includes the building of 1,000 small fields, developing a joint arrangement between soccer clubs and 17,000 chosen schools and devising an ambassador campaign featuring star German players like Bajramaj and Mesut Özil, a midfielder of Turkish descent on the men's team.



© Gordon Welters for The New York Times

Muslim girls can wear head scarves, forbidden in international play, in German youth leagues.

A parallel program started by a university professor, called Football Without Offsides, encourages girls, most from Turkish, Arabic and Eastern European backgrounds, to play soccer at school at ages 9, 10 and 11 – sometimes with their mothers playing alongside them.

Theo Zwanziger, the president of the German soccer federation, is fond of saying, *“It does not bother the ball who hits it.”*

Heike Ullrich, the head of women’s soccer in the German federation, said this means: *“Football is for everybody, man, woman, black, white, green, all races, all religions. Everyone should have a chance to come in contact with the ball. It unites people.”*

When the Bajramaj family arrived in Germany from Kosovo in 1993 and settled in a refugee center, Lira was 5. She said she felt resentment from some locals as she went to and from kindergarten, hearing taunts like “gypsies” and “go back where you came from.” At 6, she joined a soccer club in Giesenkirchen, and later played in nearby Mönchengladbach.

"I was the only girl," Bajramaj said. "At first, the boys didn't accept me. When they saw I could play football, they decided to play with me. Then they were fighting about which team I should play with."

Two years after she began playing, Bajramaj said, her father, Ismet, attended a match to watch her older brother, Fatos, and by accident learned that his daughter had also taken up soccer. His response was surprise and acceptance, she said, not disapproval.

"He told me I was very good," she said. "Now he is my biggest supporter."

In 2007, Bajramaj came on as a late substitute as Germany won the Women's World Cup final over Brazil. A year later, she scored both of Germany's goals in a victory over Japan for the bronze medal at the Beijing Olympics. In 2010, her club team, Turbine Potsdam, won the inaugural European women's Champions League title.

"Playing football is what helped me integrate," Bajramaj said. "First, the language. And later I learned a lot about the culture and the cities. In Germany, I am welcome because I play football. And Muslims can see that even though I'm in football, I'm very religious."

In addition to Bajramaj, three other players on Germany's Women's World Cup team have immigrant roots from Cameroon, Italy and Romania. Germany also has about 30 female players from immigrant backgrounds on its youth national teams, soccer officials said. A handful of Muslim women also play in Germany's professional league, Bajramaj said. Still, cultural and religious barriers exist.

Many Muslim families do not want their daughters playing in shorts, with their arms and legs and heads uncovered. Yet, at the elite level, head scarves that also cover the neck are prohibited by FIFA, soccer's world governing body, for reasons of player safety. The governing body also bans the expression of religious beliefs on uniforms.

Three years ago, a German girl was given a red-card expulsion from a youth match for wearing a head scarf, said Ulf Gebken, the founder of Football Without Offsides



and a specialist in sport and social integration at Carl von Ossietzky University in Oldenburg, Germany.

The German soccer federation was petitioned, and it amended its rules to allow head coverings for lower-level leagues, Gebken said. Ullrich, the head of women's soccer in the federation, said: *"When we get this question, I say to people, 'Just let them play.' If it's not the highest league, it's not a problem."*

Football Without Offsides has expanded to about 300 schools and 80 club teams in 120 German cities, Gebken said. A key element of the program is inviting young girls from immigrant families to play at school with their mothers – outside the presence of boys.

"We're not going to solve all the problems," Gebken said. *"But when we make tournaments of daughters and mothers, the mothers are very happy their daughters are playing football. Then we have a chance. If a girl is a very good swimmer or runner, hardly anyone notices. But if the girl is good in football, the family is proud. The girls will come out and play, and there is the chance for integration and emancipation."*

So far, five Muslim women in their late teens and early 20s have become referees, Gebken said. What is needed, he said, are many more female coaches. Half of the club teams in his program still have male coaches.

As of now, most German girls from immigrant families wear the jerseys of their favorite players on the men's national team, not the women's team, Gebken said. Players like Özil and Sami Khedira, a midfielder with a Tunisian father. At the 2010 men's World Cup in South Africa, 11 of Germany's 23 players came from immigrant backgrounds and the team was widely celebrated for its multiculturalism.


"Last summer, many Turkish people were proud," Gebken said. *"If Lira Bajramaj is a star in this World Cup, a lot of people will look at her. This is very good marketing for women's football. Will it help integration? We will see. Maybe girls will start wearing the jerseys of the women's players in Germany."*





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