



**Annual Report
of the DFL
Foundation
2024-25**

For more togetherness,
teamwork and social
cohesion

SOCIETY AS A TEAM



**Young
people in
Germany
have the
chance to
flourish.**

From the vision of the DFL Foundation

About us

The 36 clubs of the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 form the DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga e.V., for which the DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga GmbH organises and markets professional football in Germany. In 2008, the two organisations established the DFL Foundation to promote the following designated issues:

- **Sport**
- **Education and upbringing**
- **International understanding**
- **Charitable causes**

The DFL Foundation is a Germany-wide sponsor from the world of professional football that engages in social action with a strong network and its own expertise.

Our vision

Young people in Germany have the chance to flourish: they grow up healthy and active. They live in a diverse and united society and help to shape it. Talented athletes use their potential and are good role models.

To get closer to this vision, we support children and young people in their personal development. For us, this also includes influencing their social environment. We work to bring about positive change in society – in other words, to have a social impact.

In our view, “impact” means that our involvement has a lasting positive influence on the awareness, abilities, behaviour or circumstances of young people. Based on a model developed by the analysis and consultancy firm PHINEO, this can be illustrated using an impact staircase as shown bottom right.

To achieve an even bigger impact with our involvement, i.e. to reach a higher step on the impact staircase, we must climb right up the steps. Here is an example: we are supporting a programme that is encouraging 8-year-old Anna to do sport, and showing her how important exercise is for her health. She understands this and wants to be more active (step 1). As a result, she does more sport (step 2). Anna joins a gymnastics club and now

exercises regularly (step 3). Lots of other children go down this route, do more exercise and grow up healthier (step 4).

In line with this impact logic, we specify impact objectives that can be found in the fact boxes of our programmes. This also applies to programmes that are not presented in greater detail in this year’s report. We want to act in an increasingly targeted manner and record the impact of our programmes even better.

To achieve this, we collate knowledge, gather new insights and share them with others. We build and organise networks in order to better support the positive development of young people with our partners. ■



Sport & physical activity as a resource for the future

Professional football is our superpower, opening doors and hearts. Through sport and physical activity, we prepare young people for the future and for democratic togetherness, inspiring them to help shape society as a team.

The past year was shaped by the federal election. Through various initiatives, we worked to bring the importance of togetherness, cohesion and teamwork from sport into society – so that young people can look to the future with optimism.

Our flagship programme “Lernort Stadion” (“Classroom Stadium”) introduced over 600 young people to democratic processes and participation through special activities. We also championed democracy in the digital space. Together with the DFL and over 30 clubs from the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2, we launched the #DEMOKRATEAM campaign to encourage voting and promote the values of sport (p. 24/25). In addition, we joined forces with more than 25 foundations in a TikTok Foundation Alliance to counter populism, extremism and disinformation (p. 22/23).

Whether online or offline – to navigate today’s complex world, young people need special skills, so-called Future Skills, such as critical thinking, creativity and media literacy. We dedicated ourselves to fostering these abilities through our annual funding pot for the new project “Mädchen vor!” (“Girls to the fore!”) in Thuringia, which specifically supports young girls and their participation (p. 32/33).

Participation was also the focus when establishing the “Gute Freunde Förderfonds” (“Good Friends Support Fund”) on the occasion of the first Franz Beckenbauer Supercup. Together with the DFL and the Franz Beckenbauer Foundation, we launched an initiative to make access to sport easier, especially for young people with disabilities. Recently, the €100,000 provided by the DFL was awarded to 20 projects (p. 50/51).

The importance of teamwork for positive development is evident in our collaboration with Sporthilfe. Since 2016, we have supported the entire elite of

young German athletes, helping them to become not only excellent athletes but also role models for our society. In 2025, we extended our partnership with Sporthilfe for another five years (p. 56/57).

The added value that physical activity brings to our society is also demonstrated by our Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis as part of “Bundesliga bewegt” (“Bundesliga moves”, pp. 40/41). According to this, every euro invested in the programme yields more than double the social return. For us, this is a real motivation boost to continue advancing the activities together with the 21 participating clubs.

TOGETHER – this word has recently taken on even greater significance for us. To meet the challenges of our time, we must pool our strengths, create synergies, dare to think positively about the future and shape it together.

How we look to the future and use sport and physical activity to positively change society can be found in the Annual Report for the 2024-25 financial year. ■

Warm regards,

Franziska Fey



Franziska Fey
Chairwoman



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An illustration in shades of orange and yellow showing several hands of different skin tones cupping a soccer ball. The style is sketchy and artistic, with visible line work. The background is a solid orange color.

FEATURE TOPIC

SOCIETY AS A TEAM

Since 2024, the DFL Foundation has been working with strategic annual themes to focus its commitment on goals that are relevant both to the Foundation itself and to society. This provides the Foundation's activities with a clear sense of direction and helps the entire team to plan resources in a way that contributes to achieving the shared objective. The focus for 2025 was "Society as a Team".

In 2024, the DFL Foundation focused on promoting youth participation. Young people, not least as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, felt insufficiently heard and included. The DFL Foundation established the Next Gen Youth Advisory Board together with

young people and has increasingly integrated it into its activities. By now, the participation of young people has become an integral part of the DFL Foundation's DNA and a cross-cutting theme that continually shapes and enriches the Foundation's work in many areas. Even then, the DFL Foundation sought to convince others of the importance of involving young people, thereby strengthening shared understanding and action. As a result, in 2025 the DFL Foundation engaged intensively with social cohesion and togetherness, dedicating itself to the annual theme "Gesellschaft als Team" ("Society as a Team") in order to promote, in turbulent times, the socially unifying values that sport represents and conveys within society.



Relevance

The social challenges of recent years have shown how important cohesion and collective action are. There has been, and continues to be, an overemphasis on aspects that supposedly divide people and rob them of their optimism. From our daily work and from sport, we know that more can be achieved together. In sport, one experiences every day how team spirit and mutual support lead to togetherness, success and resilience. These experiences were ones the DFL Foundation specifically wanted to bring into the social discourse in the year of the 2025 federal election. Sport and physical activity should be made visible and purposefully used as a resource for cohesion, progress and democracy

Living and promoting team spirit

It was and remains important to the DFL Foundation to counter polarisation and extremism and to bring team spirit, as a virtue from sport, more strongly into society. This is based on the conviction, gained from sport, that more can be achieved together. The focus was therefore placed on imparting the unifying values of sport, forging new alliances, and consolidating existing structures. The benefits of cooperation and togetherness were also consciously and repeatedly emphasised – both internally, with regard to the Foundation's own work, and externally, in communication and collaboration with others.

Annual goal 2025

In the year of the federal election, we are bringing the importance of togetherness, cohesion and teamwork from sport into society – so that young people can look to the future with optimism.

To systematically approach this overarching annual goal, the DFL Foundation proceeded as follows:

- Promotion of social cohesion and team spirit
- Strengthening optimism and future prospects for young people
- Transferring positive values from sport into social contexts

Sport, team spirit, future

The positive contribution of sport and physical activity to social togetherness – what does it consist of? What conditions need to be met? The DFL Foundation has addressed the question of how it can bring teamwork and cohesion from sport into society.

The recent social challenges of the past years have shown how important cohesion and collective action are. Aspects that supposedly divide people are overemphasised. In sport, on the other hand, one experiences every day how team spirit and mutual support can lead to togetherness, success and resilience. In order to demonstrate the opportunities that sport and physical activity offer for promoting social cohesion, it was important to the DFL Foundation to establish a scientific basis. In addition to the theoretical side, teamwork was also to play an even greater role in the Foundation's practical work. Four areas were identified in which the DFL Foundation wanted and was able to become more active:

Knowing what sport and physical activity contribute to cohesion

- Conducting and evaluating a literature analysis on the impact of (football) sport on social cohesion
- Incorporating current studies and scientific findings
- Measuring and presenting impact, including through SROI (Social Return on Investment)
- Building and communicating our expertise as a basis for further activities



New Beginnings: In 2025, the DFL Foundation embarks on its annual theme "Society as a Team", with the talents from the elite youth development programme gathering for their meeting in Frankfurt am Main.

Positioning sport and physical activity as a resource for togetherness

- Developing and communicating positive core messages
- Agenda setting in politics, civil society and relevant networks
- Participation in public debates, committees and events
- Visible positioning of the Foundation as a strong voice for the topic

Strengthening young people's future skills through project funding

- Supporting projects in the field of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
- Establishing a funding pool for projects that support Future Skills

Thinking collaboratively and acting together

- Expanding and maintaining funding alliances and networks, e.g. in the area of Sport for Development (S4D)
- International networking and exchange
- Promoting team development and internal collaboration

Science: What we learned

In connection with its annual theme “Society as a Team”, the DFL Foundation was able to gain insights into the impact of sport and physical activity on social cohesion – among other things, through scientific analyses and by engaging with so-called Future Skills.

The literature analysis

A literature analysis commissioned by the DFL Foundation on the current state of research highlighted the contribution of sport and physical activity to social cohesion and identified areas where further research is needed. It became clear that football and team sports can promote the social well-being of young people and strengthen cohesion.

1

Belonging

is a socially constructed state based on recognition, reliability and a sense of community. It is a key mediator between participation and well-being, and a prerequisite for inclusion and sustainable skills development.

2

Future Skills

encompass personal, social and cultural competences such as teamwork, taking on responsibility and resilience. Football provides learning opportunities for these skills, provided that a culture of feedback, reflection and links to other educational programmes create opportunities for learning.

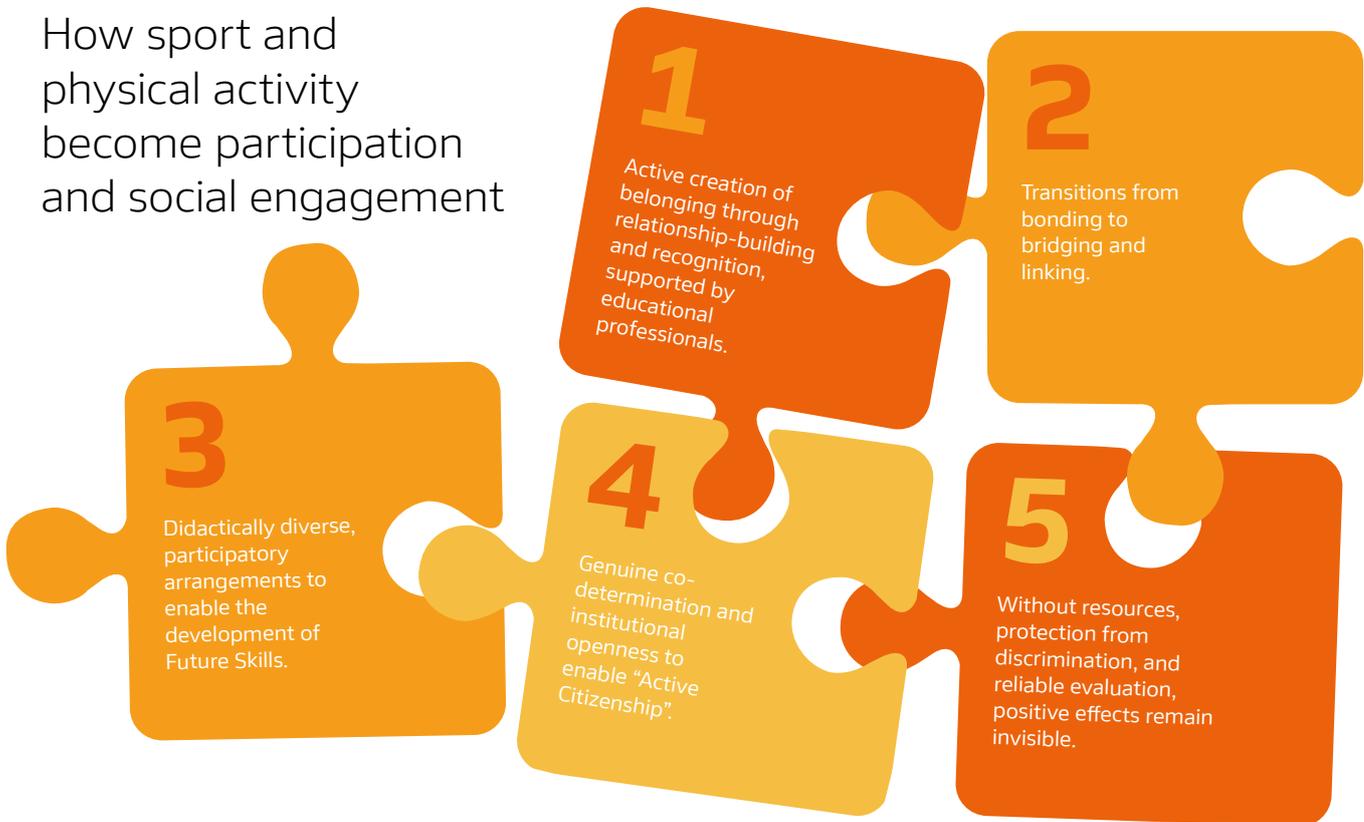
3

Active Citizenship

means involving young people in shaping processes and social responsibility. Football programmes initially strengthen social capital, but the transfer to civic engagement is only successful when structural and educational bridges are built.

Further research should contribute both to the development of evaluation standards and to approaches that are sensitive to target groups and settings, as well as to the identification of pathways for transferring into civic engagement. Away from performance pressure, exclusion and lack of resources, sport and physical activity can thus contribute to better social togetherness. However, certain conditions must be met:

How sport and physical activity become participation and social engagement



Future Skills

Sport imparts important competences for social participation as well as for meeting current and future societal challenges – including the so-called Future Skills. These include personal competences such as self-efficacy and resilience, social competences such as teamwork, methodological-strategic competences such as building networks, and social-emotional competences such as an awareness of justice and diversity. Based on research by Petry et al. (2025)¹ and a "Future Skills Framework" by Stifterverband and McKinsey & Company, the DFL Foundation has developed a target group-oriented and sport-context-specific definition for Future Skills in sport:

"Future Skills in sport are abilities that go beyond pure athletic skills. They help young people to respond actively and responsibly to the challenges of an ever-changing world. With these competences, they can not only participate in a sustainable society but also help to shape it. Future Skills include personal, social, strategic-methodological and social-emotional abilities. These competences can be specifically developed and strengthened through sporting activities and accompanying educational programmes."

¹ On behalf of the DFL Foundation, Prof. Dr Karen Petry (German Sport University Cologne) and Dr Johanna Wilmes (Goethe University Frankfurt) conducted a literature analysis on the research question: "How can sport strengthen social cohesion and the well-being of children and young people?"

With this approach, Future Skills can be specifically promoted through sport and integrated into project work. A call for projects by the DFL Foundation aimed at fostering Future Skills demonstrated how linking sport and Future Skills can promote competences such as teamwork or a sense of responsibility. Madiha Malik, together with Marvin Komo, was part of the selection jury for this call.



MADIHA MALIK
Member of the Youth Advisory Board and the Future Skills selection jury

WHEN REVIEWING THE PROJECT APPLICATIONS, WE PAID PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO WHETHER CO-DETERMINATION WAS PLANNED, WHETHER YOUNG PEOPLE COULD CONTRIBUTE THEIR OWN IDEAS, AND WHETHER THEY WERE ALLOWED TO TAKE ON REAL RESPONSIBILITY.



Report by Madiha Malik, member of the Youth Advisory Board and the Future Skills Jury.

SROI - the social added value of “Bundesliga bewegt” (“Bundesliga moves”)

To learn more about the social added value of its work, the DFL Foundation commissioned a Social Return on Investment analysis (SROI analysis) for its programme “Bundesliga bewegt” (“Bundesliga moves”) for the first time. This programme motivates more than 22,000 children each year to be more physically active (more on p. 38–41).

Key findings of the SROI analysis:

- Every euro invested in the programme generates €2.34 in social added value.
- In total, around €10 million in measurable benefits are created each year.
- The benefits arise primarily from higher employment income, lower unemployment, and reduced healthcare costs as a result of increased physical activity.



By giving children access to physical activity and shared experiences, “Bundesliga bewegt” (“Bundesliga moves”) promotes equal opportunities, integration, and social participation. The measurable effects show that investment in physical activity and sport not only supports individual development but also strengthens social cohesion.

Practice: What we learned

In connection with Society as a Team, the DFL Foundation was able to gain insights into the impact of sport and physical activity on social cohesion – among other things, through targeted project work and collaboration with others.

“Lernort Stadion” (“Classroom Stadium”): Young people and the federal election

The flagship programme “Lernort Stadion” (“Classroom Stadium”) of the DFL Foundation provides young people with political education in football stadiums. In the run-up to the 2025 federal election, young people at 15 “Lernort Stadion” (“Classroom Stadium”) locations engaged with democratic processes – through role-play exercises on founding fictional parties, creating election campaign messages as graffiti, discussions with local politicians, and youth reports by the Youth Advisory Board. The aim was to give young people a more in-depth engagement with democracy and to encourage them to participate more. Many young people subsequently reported that they were now more interested in politics and their democratic opportunities for influence. Some also spoke out in favour of lowering the voting age so that younger people can be involved in the decision-making process. (More on p. 18–21.)



Promoting democracy on social media

The content of extremist actors gains traction on TikTok. For many 16- to 29-year-olds in Germany, this is the most relevant channel for political communication. To strengthen the pro-democratic discourse, the DFL Foundation launched two TikTok initiatives. Personalities and organisations from professional football, under the handle “The Beautiful Game”, draw parallels between sport and society to convey values such as fair play, respect and diversity. An alliance of more than 25 foundations, initiated by the DFL Foundation, called for voting ahead of the 2025 federal election with “#Mission232” and promoted a democratic and solidarity-based society. This pooling of resources showed that, together, it is possible to reach more young people and increase communication impact. (More on p. 22–23.)



“BildungsgeRechtigkeit” (“Educational Equity”)

The Educational Equity initiative, in which more than 20 organisations including the DFL Foundation are involved, is committed to greater fairness in the education system. The aim is to redesign the education system to be more child-friendly and child-centred, so that structural disadvantages are reduced and everyone is given fair educational opportunities. Four academic expert reports resulted in a position paper with demands and recommendations for action for policymakers and practitioners. Education should be understood from the perspective of young people and as a shared responsibility of all stakeholders involved. A parliamentary evening and a specialist conference bring politics and civil society together for joint discussion.



**PAULINE
BULLINGER**
Member of the
Youth Advisory
Board

**THE “DENKFABRIK 2024”
 (“THINK TANK 2024”)
 WAS A GAME CHANGER!
 THE FOUNDATION
 GIVES YOUNG PEOPLE A
 PLATFORM TO BE HEARD.**

“Denkfabrik” (“Think Tank”) – Togetherness and Collaboration

The “Denkfabrik 2024” (“Think Tank 2024”) provided a platform for the topic of youth participation. The following year, “Denkfabrik 2025” (“Think Tank 2025”), under the title “Unbeatable as a Team: Collective Impact in Sport and Society”, encouraged greater collaboration and examined the role of sport in promoting democracy and togetherness. Stakeholders from sport, politics, academia and civil society concluded, among other things, that more dialogue, engagement and projects are needed to sustainably promote cohesion. It is important to have the courage to rethink the future. The participants signalled their openness to working together.

Youth and Civil Society in Eastern Germany

Young people in Eastern Germany often have limited access to leisure or educational opportunities. According to the report by the Federal Commissioner for the region, their needs are insufficiently addressed. To support committed individuals and projects, as well as to promote the participation of young people in the region, the DFL Foundation has expanded its engagement in Eastern Germany – with new “Lernort Stadion” (“Classroom Stadium”) locations in Chemnitz, Jena and Babelsberg, as well as new sites for “Meine Stadt. Mein Sport. Meine Zukunft.“ (“My City. My Sport. My Future.”) in Western Pomerania and Lusatia, a girls’ project in Erfurt, and the “Gen Ost Youth Fund” of the joint initiative “Zukunftswege Ost” (“Future Paths East”). (More on p. 32–33).



Conclusion

The targeted combination of sport, physical activity, and social engagement can strengthen democracy and togetherness. How football and team sports can achieve this is summarised here.

The DFL Foundation is working to transfer positive values from sport into social contexts. Scientific analyses and an SROI study have demonstrated that sport programmes can create equal opportunities, social participation, and social added value. Promoting Future Skills in sport can strengthen competences such as teamwork and a sense of responsibility. Educational programmes like “Lernort Stadion”

(“Classroom Stadium”) and initiatives such as “BildungsgeRECHTigkeit” (“Educational Equity”) have promoted democratic participation and equal opportunities. Networks and the pooling of resources have proven particularly effective – collective action has become a counterbalance to social division. Building bridges between unequal groups remains a challenge.

For greater social togetherness through sport

Understanding sport as an educational resource

Sport is not an “add-on” in the educational context, but part of a holistic understanding of education. When included in early childhood and all-day education, it can promote social competence, personal development, and equal opportunities.

Scientifically based programmes

Through targeted accompanying research and theoretical frameworks, sport projects can better demonstrate and increase their impact on well-being and togetherness.

Specifically promoting transfer competences

Sport can impart Future Skills and social competences, provided that the transfer to other areas of life is systematically designed and supported.

Strengthening bridging and linking

Approaches and formats should be designed to build bridges between unequal groups and social levels in order to enable integration.

Promoting participation and a culture of learning from mistakes

Involving children, young people and parents, as well as fostering a positive culture of learning from mistakes, strengthens the development of democratic competences and well-being.

Addressing diversity and social issues

Sport can provide a platform for social debates on topics such as integration, gender diversity, and understanding of democracy, and can be a space for innovation.

Positioning sport and physical activity as social resources

The communicative power of sport can help to set positive impulses for greater team spirit and togetherness. In this way, sports and physical activity can be brought into focus as potential for social development.

Sport and physical activity are powerful resources for cohesion, progress and democracy – provided that programmes are scientifically based, inclusive and transfer-oriented. Building bridges between different groups and systematically promoting Future Skills remain in ongoing challenges.

Outlook 2026: What's next



The DFL Foundation will continue to strengthen the connection between sport, education, democracy and Future Skills:

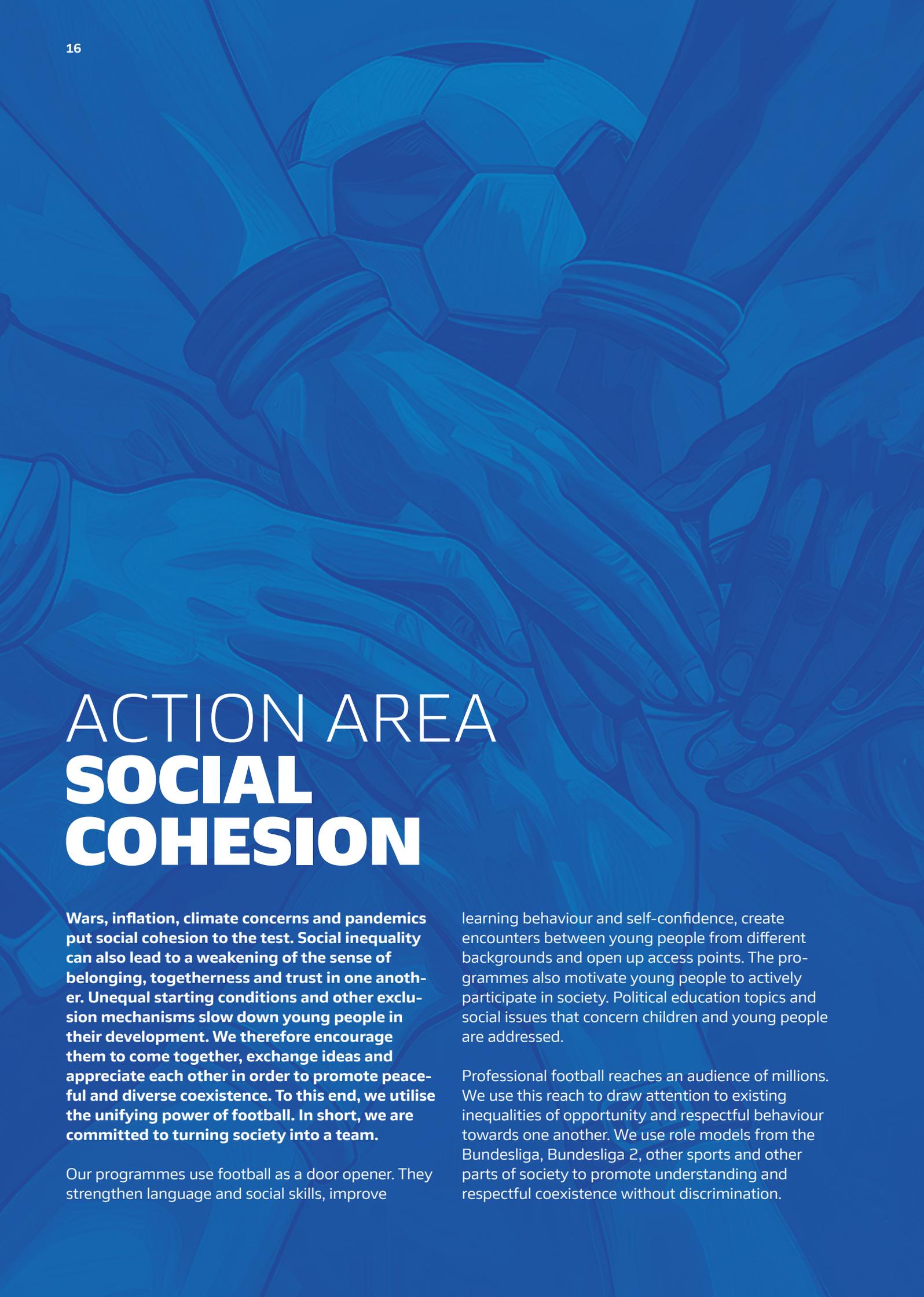
- Strengthening networks and cooperations for greater social impact
- Positioning sport as a resource for cohesion, integration and the future
- Advancing scientific studies to make potentials more tangible and visible
- Strengthening the development of Future Skills through sport
- Building bridges between sport, education and society
- Conveying democratic values and creating social connections
- Promoting social participation and, with it, togetherness through sport
- Creating safe, respectful and appreciative environments for social interaction and educational opportunities

Annual theme 2026



What we mean by “Team creates future”:

IN TIMES OF CHANGE, WE USE SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE, STRENGTHEN DEMOCRATIC TOGETHERNESS, AND INSPIRE PEOPLE TO SHAPE SOCIETY AS A TEAM.

A stylized illustration in shades of blue showing several hands of different skin tones reaching up to hold a soccer ball. The background is a textured, layered blue pattern.

ACTION AREA

SOCIAL COHESION

Wars, inflation, climate concerns and pandemics put social cohesion to the test. Social inequality can also lead to a weakening of the sense of belonging, togetherness and trust in one another. Unequal starting conditions and other exclusion mechanisms slow down young people in their development. We therefore encourage them to come together, exchange ideas and appreciate each other in order to promote peaceful and diverse coexistence. To this end, we utilise the unifying power of football. In short, we are committed to turning society into a team.

Our programmes use football as a door opener. They strengthen language and social skills, improve

learning behaviour and self-confidence, create encounters between young people from different backgrounds and open up access points. The programmes also motivate young people to actively participate in society. Political education topics and social issues that concern children and young people are addressed.

Professional football reaches an audience of millions. We use this reach to draw attention to existing inequalities of opportunity and respectful behaviour towards one another. We use role models from the Bundesliga, Bundesliga 2, other sports and other parts of society to promote understanding and respectful coexistence without discrimination.



Society as a team – this is not only, but especially, the focus in the Action Area “Social Cohesion”. Why? Because more can be achieved together, and many challenges can only be overcome collectively. Everyone can contribute, no matter what their background is. The DFL Foundation aims to unlock this potential and to share this conviction.

This is how it should be

All children and young people in Germany have the opportunity to fulfil their individual potential. They are an active part of a diverse and united society. Origin, religion, gender, sexual identity, ability or disability are not an obstacle.

To ensure that our services make the greatest possible contribution to realising this vision, we have set ourselves corresponding goals in line with our impact logic (which you can find on page 3).

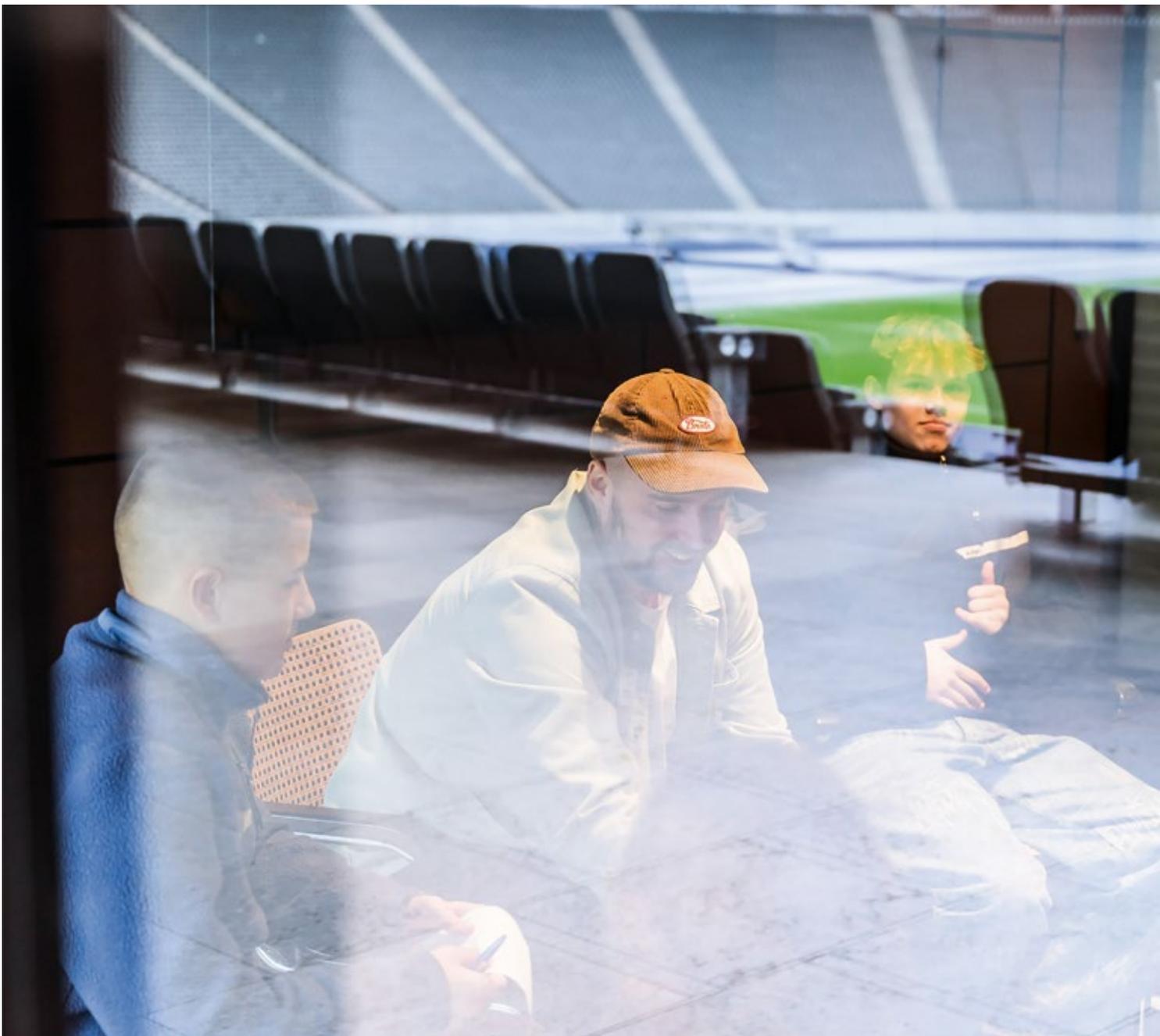
Who we support

We focus in particular on children and young people who are disadvantaged – due to their gender, educational background, migration background, disability, origin, religion, sexual identity or financial situation. It is also important for us to involve parents and teachers, i.e. important reference persons of the children and young people.

Impact goals

We want to help children and young people look positively to the future and have confidence in their own abilities and creative potential. For us, this means that they are listened to and taken seriously and play an active role in shaping their environment in the interests of a diverse society based on solidarity. To this end, they develop the necessary personal skills and engage with values and topics such as fairness, tolerance and justice.

Everyone shares responsibility



"Lernort Stadion" ("Classroom Stadium") - Workshop leader Marius Künzel inspires young people at the Berlin Olympic Stadium in November, three months before the 2025 federal election, to engage in democratic participation.



How does an election work? What does my vote mean? How can I take part in political processes? In the run-up to the 2025 federal election, around 600 young people took part in workshops organised by the "Lernort Stadion" ("Classroom Stadium") programme, focusing on democracy.

The project weeks showed how political decisions influence one's own reality and how crucial it is to take an active part in elections and political processes. Participants learned to understand complex issues, critically question the positions of different parties, and develop their own viewpoints. A total of 33 workshop days were held in Berlin, Bremen, Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Jena, Cologne, Leipzig, Leverkusen, Mönchengladbach, Münster and Rostock.

Developing their own election programmes

At many locations, young people were able to engage directly with local politicians or approach the topic of elections in a playful way. In Rostock, for example, participants used AI models to analyse

party manifestos; in Jena and at BAM! Education at Millerntor in Hamburg, pupils developed their own fictional election programmes, discussed them, and then voted for the most convincing parties.

Other sessions took a creative approach, such as in Dortmund: There, members of the Waltrop Children's and Youth Parliament created graffiti



LERNORT STADION

Supported since: 2010

Programme partners: Lernort Stadion e. V., social education fan projects and clubs, Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, as well as local networks at the "Lernort Stadion" ("Classroom Stadium") locations

Target group: Young people aged 14 to 18 – with and without disabilities, with and without a migration background, mainly from lower secondary, intermediate, comprehensive and special needs schools

Number of people supported: approx. 30,000

Locations: 33 "Lernort Stadion" ("Classroom Stadium") sites nationwide

Funding commitment: €1,067,000

Project content: Political education opportunities in football stadiums. In extracurricular workshops and project weeks, participants engage in a low-threshold and varied way with topics such as diversity, fair play, tolerance and democracy.

Role of the DFL Foundation: Strategic partner of Lernort Stadion e. V. and main sponsor of the overall programme

Impact target: Young people in socially challenging situations have developed an awareness of democratic values and actively help to shape their social environment. They see the sporting environment as a place to learn skills and experience diverse encounters.

election appeals, which were shown on the stadium screen before Borussia Dortmund's home match against Union Berlin. Stadium TV broadcast an interview with those involved. In addition, an exhibition was created at the BVB Learning Centre, which aimed to inspire young fans for democratic values at the Borusseum football museum.

All workshops shared the goal of raising young people's awareness of and motivation for politics. "In the end, the key insight was: everyone can take responsibility – for themselves, for others, and for our society," summarised Ibrahim Hassan, member of the Next Gen Youth Advisory Board, who attended a workshop at the Fan Project Learning Centre @ Hertha BSC.

Focus on social media

Also in the run-up to the federal election, around 160 guests gathered at the MEWA ARENA in Mainz at the invitation of "Lernort Stadion" ("Classroom Stadium") to discuss the influence of social media on democracy.

On the Mainz panel, Stefanie Hubig (then still Minister for Education of Rhineland-Palatinate, now Federal Minister of Justice and Consumer Protection), Anne Geisler (Chairwoman of Lernort Stadion e. V.), Anouk Seeliger (State Youth Advisory Board Rhineland-Palatinate) and Mario von Wantoch-Rekowski (Institut für Medien und Pädagogik e. V.) discussed the opportunities and risks of social media for democracy.

Democracy needs media literacy

The panellists saw opportunities in rapid communication and the networking of different groups in society. However, they also highlighted the risks of fake news and polarising content, which must be recognised and classified.

For this reason, media literacy must be a central component of democracy education, according to the unanimous opinion. In addition to schools, clubs, parents and politicians also share this responsibility.

Currently, 16 "Lernort Stadion" ("Classroom Stadium") locations offer workshops on media literacy, enabling young people to use the potential of the internet and to navigate the web safely and responsibly.

For example, the Rostock "Lernort Stadion" ("Classroom Stadium") at Ostseestadion offers an escape room on the topic. There, participants go in search of hate speech in football, then reflect on and discuss their experiences.



More than just a stadium tour through the press area – young people in Chemnitz now also receive political education in the stadium.

The network is growing

With the opening of three new "Lernort Stadion" ("Classroom Stadium") locations in Chemnitz, Jena and Babelsberg in the 2024-25 reporting year, the "Lernort Stadion" ("Classroom Stadium") network has also intensified its engagement in the eastern federal states. Further locations are planned nationwide.

In addition, Lernort Stadion e. V. is building an international network to share the idea of the stadium as a place of learning. In this context, it has launched the project "Civic Education in Football Stadiums" (CEFS), which also includes a buddy programme: coordinators from four German locations spent time at locations in the Netherlands, Denmark or Belgium, and vice versa. ■



Democracy education in the stadium – Interview with Marius Künzel ("Bildungspark Mönchengladbach") and Johannes Böing ("BVB-Lernzentrum").



JANNIS DIEHL
Member of the Youth Advisory Board

THE PROJECT AT THE BVB LEARNING CENTRE SHOWS HOW DEMOCRACY EDUCATION COMES TO LIFE WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE HELP TO SHAPE IT WITH OPENNESS AND A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY, LEARN TOGETHER AND GROW AS A GROUP.

➤ **The #Mission232 campaign was also dedicated to promoting democracy ahead of the 2025 federal election. Find out more on p. 22 and the following pages.**

#Mission232

“Promoting democracy. Voting out extremism.” Under this motto, at the beginning of 2025 the DFL Foundation joined forces with more than 25 other foundations for the “#Mission232” initiative. The joint social media campaign aimed to mobilise young people for the federal election on 23 February.



The stickers from the #Mission232 campaign feature various slogans related to voting and democracy, such as “We are going to vote”, “We choose democracy”, and “Vote out extremism”. These designs aim to motivate people to vote and to promote democratic values.

The campaign focused on TikTok, currently the most relevant channel for political communication in Germany among the 16 to 29 age group. Instagram and YouTube were also used as supplementary platforms. Visually appealing, dynamic social media posts explained what defines democracies and how they work. They not only encouraged people to vote, but also to stand up against extremism and to support good solutions from the democratic centre. The campaign conveyed that discourse is diverse and the majority is pro-democracy, that there are success stories despite many crises, and that fair coexistence benefits everyone – especially in the digital space.

TikTok & Saving Democracy

“Encouraging courage. How foundations strengthen togetherness” was the theme of the German Foundation Day in May 2025 in Wiesbaden. The DFL Foundation inspired the sector with its own panel at the event: “TikTok & Saving Democracy”.

Dr Maximilian Oehl from the campaign agency Media Force, Nadine Brömme from the anti-hate speech network “Das Netz”, and Okan Cenedi, a TikTok content creator, discussed the opportunities TikTok offers to reach young people, why virality is hardly predictable, and why now is the right time to get involved on TikTok. Moderator Andrea Bonk from the DFL Foundation presented the campaign “#DEMOKRATEAM – Alles andere ist Abseits.” (“#DEMOKRATEAM – everything else is offside.”) in this context.

Key messages from the panel

- To be successful on TikTok, achieve good reach and connect with your target audience, you need to communicate in a way that suits the platform – using trends, humour or surprises. A wagging finger doesn’t work; communication needs to be on an equal footing.
- We must not leave the TikTok playing field to those who want to undermine democracy. We need to take action – now is the time.
- Our democracy is reflected in the small stories of everyday life. We need to tell these stories and score points with positive narratives.
- Let’s join forces and get started – as a team, we can change the game.



At the German Foundation Day in Wiesbaden, Dr Maximilian Oehl, Nadine Brömme and Okan Cenedi (from right to left) encouraged other foundations to become active on TikTok in order to reach young people.

Sport conveys values

Democracy was also a topic at the SPOBIS conference, Europe’s largest sports business event, in Hamburg shortly before the 2025 federal election. In a panel discussion, Andrea Bonk from the DFL Foundation exchanged views with Bundesliga referee Patrick Ittrich and Kristin Gaska, Creative Strategist at Media Force, on the social responsibility of sport.

Key statements

- Anyone who wants to live up to their social responsibility and protect their own values cannot be politically neutral (though they can remain neutral regarding party politics).
- In a (digital) world dominated by hate and disinformation, sport – with its positive values, stories and personalities – can provide a counterbalance.
- Young people in particular should receive more education in political literacy and information gathering. The basis for forming their opinions should be diverse (democratic) discourse.

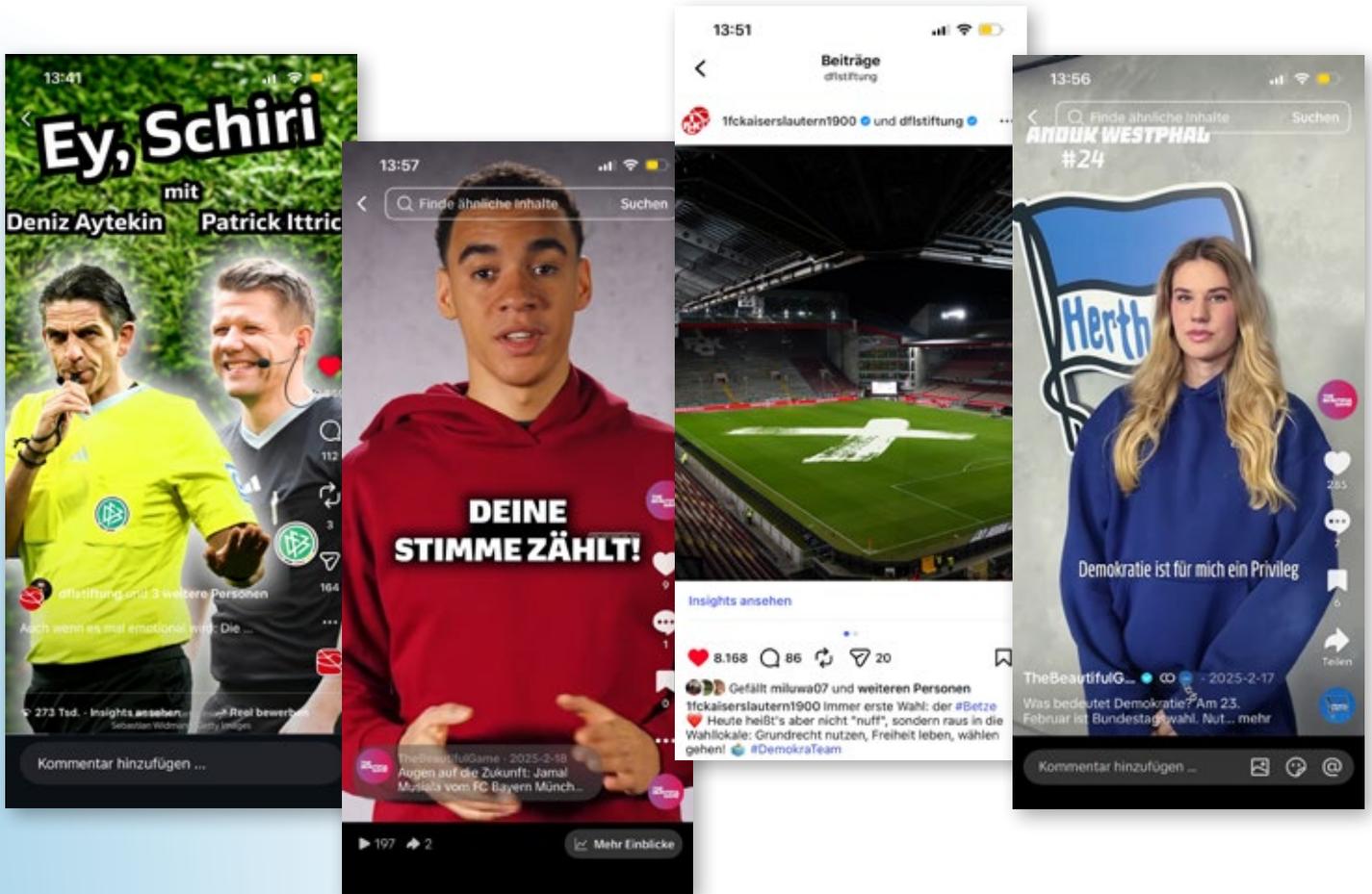
#Mission232



#DEMOKRATEAM

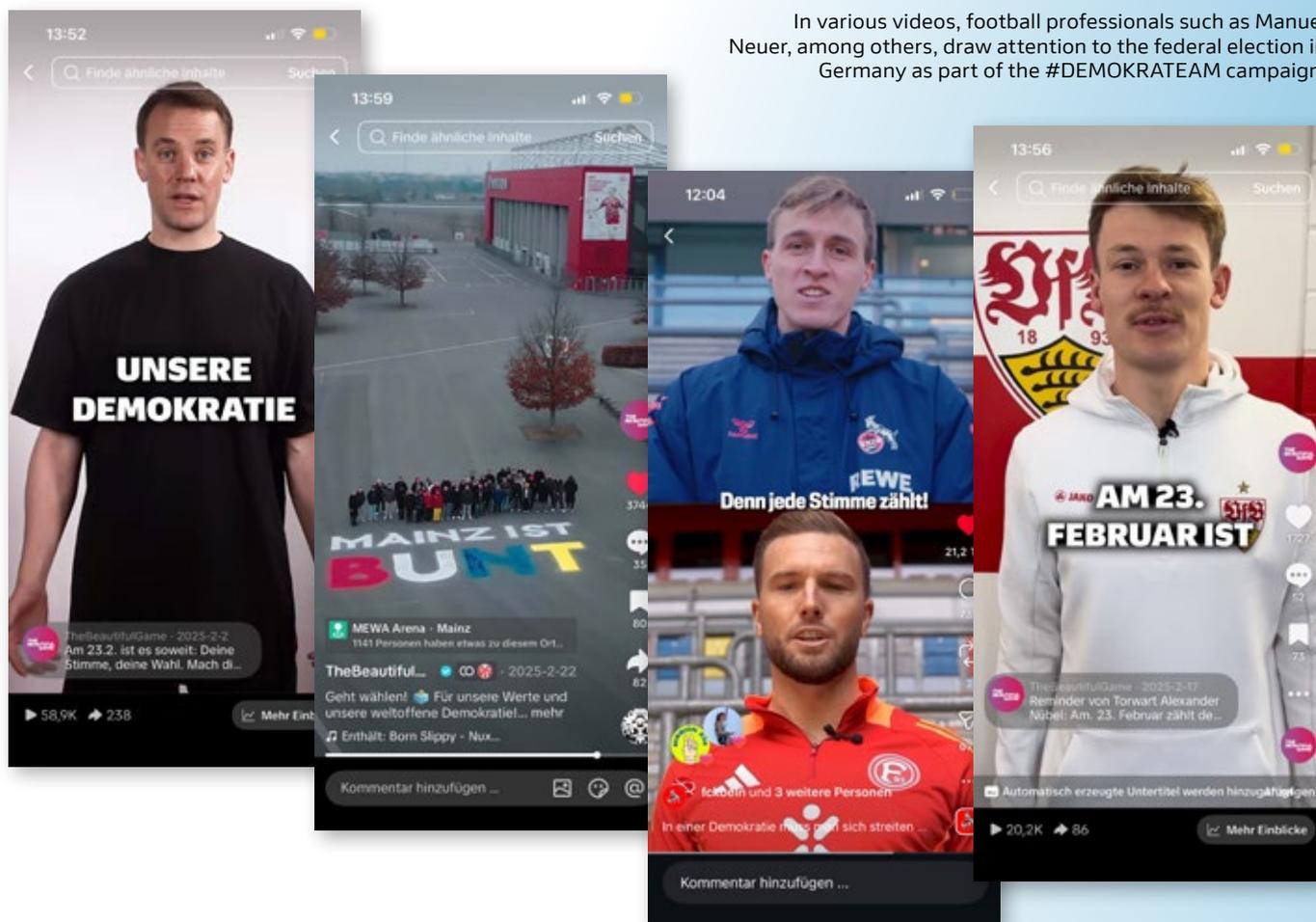


On TikTok and Instagram, not only referees Deniz Aytekin and Patrick Ittrich, but also professional footballers such as Jamal Musiala are committed to democracy, participation and social cohesion.



Professional football for the #DEMOKRATEAM

Ahead of the federal election in February 2025, German professional football united in support of democratic values and called on people to vote. The DFL, as well as numerous clubs from the Bundesliga and 2. Bundesliga, supported a social media initiative launched by the DFL Foundation.



In various videos, football professionals such as Manuel Neuer, among others, draw attention to the federal election in Germany as part of the #DEMOKRATEAM campaign.

The “#DEMOKRATEAM – Everything else is offside” campaign focused on TikTok – a platform that serves as an important source of information for many young people, but where populist and extremist content is increasingly being spread.

Video campaign for democracy

Since summer 2024, the DFL Foundation has been countering this with short videos, using parallels between sport and society to raise awareness for diversity, tolerance, team spirit and respect – with humour and without wagging a finger. At the heart of the campaign is the TikTok channel “TheBeautifulGame”, supported by Instagram and out-of-home advertising. Ahead of the federal election, many professional clubs contributed their own videos and used their high-reach channels. Among those involved: personalities such as referees Patrick Ittrich and Deniz Aytekin, DFB Vice-President Célia Šašić, national team players such as Manuel Neuer, Jamal Musiala, Chris Führich, Angelo Stiller and Kevin Trapp, former national player Jonas Hector, comedian Fabian Köster, as well as other influencers. Through a mix of edutainment, pro-democracy statements and calls to vote, the DFL Foundation’s digital channels alone generated a reach in the double-digit millions in the six weeks leading up to the election.

Activities on matchdays and in stadiums

On matchday 23 of the 2024-25 season, which took place on the weekend of the 2025 federal election, there were a variety of activities in the stadiums and on the digital channels of Bundesliga and 2. Bundesliga clubs. For example, around their derby, the Rhineland rivals 1. FC Köln and Fortuna Düsseldorf produced a joint video under the motto “Arguing healthily”.

“It is a strong and important signal that many clubs and players are using their reach for democracy and shared values,” emphasises DFL CEO Marc Lenz. “Across party lines, our team is Team Democracy. The task is to protect democracy together and to shape a positive future.”

Another component was the educational project “Lernort Stadion” (“Classroom Stadium”), supported by the DFL Foundation, including workshops on elections and participation at 13 locations, such as those of Borussia Dortmund, FC St. Pauli, RB Leipzig, Hertha BSC and Eintracht Frankfurt (see p. 18/21). The DFL Foundation was also involved with a foundation alliance (see p. 22/23). ■

A celebration of fair play

The 15th “Fußball trifft Kultur” (“Football meets culture”) final tournament in June 2025 was a large, colourful football festival. Around 600 participants from the integrative education programme travelled from all over Germany to Gelsenkirchen to compete in the U10, U12 and U14 age groups.



Exuberant joy was the defining image at the major final tournament of “Fußball trifft Kultur” (“Football meets culture”) in Gelsenkirchen.

The tournament, supported in 2025 by the Regionalverband Ruhr, the DFL Foundation and FC Schalke 04, is the annual highlight of the programme, which, in addition to football, also offers skills training, with a particular focus on language development. At 33 programme locations in 23 cities across Germany, football is played and learning takes place twice a week.

In Gelsenkirchen, children came together in the colours of their partner clubs and experienced what cohesion, fair play and teamwork mean.

The 2025 tournament winners were the Regenbogenschule from Gelsenkirchen (U10, partner club FC Schalke 04), IGS Bretzenheim (U12, 1. FSV Mainz 05) and the Herbert-Grillo-Gesamtschule (U14, partner club MSV Duisburg). Fair Play trophies went to the Gemeinschaftsgrundschule Lustheider Straße from Cologne, the Werner-von-Siemens-Hauptschule from Bochum and the Stadtteilschule am Hafen from Hamburg.

For the first time, the children also selected All-Star teams – the criteria: sporting performance and behaviour. ■

CHILD PROTECTION

In order for children to fully develop their potential, they need a safe and appreciative learning environment. The child protection policy published by LitCam in 2025 addresses this need.

The aim is to safeguard children's rights and to set out measures for protection and intervention. All persons working for LitCam are committed to protecting the rights and well-being of children and young people. Supported by the DFL Foundation and accompanied by Kindernothilfe, the policy (for more information, see QR code) was developed by LitCam staff in a participatory approach together with children, young people and freelance staff.



Karin Plötz, recipient of the Federal Cross of Merit, has developed a child protection policy with LitCam: "We work with groups of children who trust us and need to be able to rely on us."



Supported since: 2012

Programme partners: LitCam gGmbH, clubs, local sponsors

Target group: Children in years 3 to 7

Number of people supported: approx. 800

Locations: 23 locations with 33 groups

Funding commitment: €270 thousand

Project content: Twice-weekly skills lessons and football training for children. In addition, cultural events and an annual final tournament for all programme groups

Role of the DFL Foundation: Supporter and nationwide partner of LitCam

Impact target: Participants have improved their German language skills, communication skills and social behaviour and are able to realise their potential.



BEN QUERLING
Member of the
Youth Advisory
Board

“FUSSBALL TRIFFT KULTUR” (“FOOTBALL MEETS CULTURE”) GIVES CHILDREN THE CHANCE TO DISCOVER THEIR OWN STRENGTHS, BUILD SELF-CONFIDENCE AND TAKE ON RESPONSIBILITY.

“Fußball trifft Kultur” has an impact

The 2024-25 impact analysis once again shows: “Fußball trifft Kultur” (“FtK; Football meets culture”) brings about positive change. The participating children benefit especially in their social skills: teamwork, empathy and the ability to deal with conflict have been strengthened. Many participants found their way into sports clubs through the programme and made new friends. FtK also has an impact in the school environment: the children’s motivation and language skills improved significantly.

Participant survey

460 children from 29 programme groups at 22 locations were surveyed towards the end of the 2024-25 school year.

This corresponds to

70%

of the participants.

Output

In the programme year, **3,182 programme units** took place: **1,633 lessons** and **1,549 training sessions**, as well as **62 cultural activities**. A total of **654 children** took part; the groups comprised an average of **23 children**.



529 children took part in the final tournament in Gelsenkirchen.

Programme capacity

Target
80%

Actual capacity utilisation of the regular programme
77%

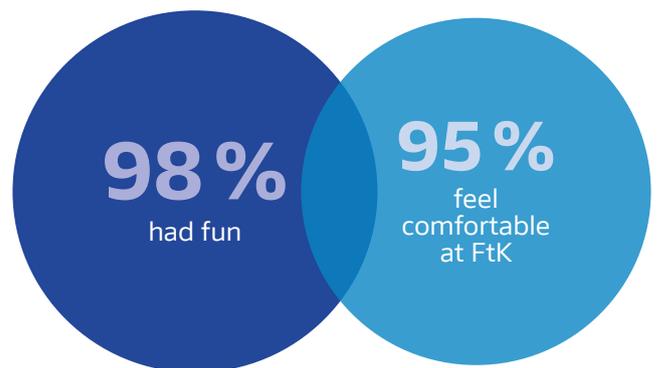
Actual capacity utilisation of cultural activities
67%



Programme acceptance

98%
had fun

95%
feel comfortable at FtK



1 2 3 4 Awareness and skills have changed *



1 2 3 4 The children behave differently *



1 2 3 4 The living situation of the target group is improving *

A refugee boy from Syria was bullied and could neither speak German nor play football. FtK children helped him when he didn't understand something and sometimes deliberately chose him for their team. His German improved rapidly and he also made great progress in football. He is now a permanent member of the group.

Freelance staff member



Impact analysis "Fußball trifft Kultur" ("Football meets culture") 2024-25 (available in German only).

*Adapted to the impact logic of the DFL Foundation, see p. 3.

TOGETHER! Stop hate. Be a team.

The 27th matchday of the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 in March 2025 was marked by solidarity and diversity. On the occasion of the International Weeks Against Racism, the DFL, DFL Foundation and the 36 professional clubs once again took a clear stand under the motto “TOGETHER! Stop hate. Be a team.”



The message was omnipresent throughout the matchday, including through an official match ball with a message, TOGETHER! special shirts for the first player escorts, digital activation including EA Sports FC25 and on social media channels, as well as visibility in the stadiums through banners, LED boards, stadium announcements and corner flags.

The clubs also launched their own initiatives, ranging from anti-discrimination projects and educational workshops to fan activities. Numerous partners supported the campaign, including Sky, DAZN, Sport1, ESPN, as well as Deutsche Sporthilfe and Deutsche Sportjugend in the DOSB.

The International Weeks Against Racism are based on a United Nations initiative. Since 2012, corresponding action matchdays have been held regularly during this period. ■



More about
TOGETHER!

DIVERSITY NEEDS STRUCTURES

How can sport counteract discrimination and serve as a role model for social change? On 21 March, the International Day Against Racism, the DFL Foundation hosted the digital Transfer Window "Play together. Live together. Strengthening diversity & cohesion through sport."

Participants included Jennifer Danquah, educational scientist; Younis Kamil Abdulsalam, "ROOTS – Against Racism in Sports" e.V.; Björn Koch, SV Blau-Weiss Grana e.V.; and moderator Gottfried Haufe.

Adapting structures

The speakers agreed: In order to raise general awareness of racism and discrimination and to break down prejudices, it is crucial to sensitise people and expand knowledge within clubs and other organisations. In addition, there is a need at a higher level for the continuous development of protection against discrimination and structural changes to embed anti-discrimination sustainably in society.

For example, Younis Kamil advocated for optimised reporting systems, involving people with personal experience of discrimination in their development. Studies show that those affected are more likely to turn to trusted individuals with similar experiences. Reported cases also offer organisations the opportunity to expand their knowledge of how to deal with discrimination, explained Jennifer Danquah.

All levels are needed

It became clear that successful anti-discrimination work depends heavily on the leadership level in clubs and other organisations. Leaders set values that spread "top down" at all levels. But the reverse direction, "bottom up", is also crucial, according to unanimous opinion: members can play an equally important role in change processes if they take the initiative themselves.



To the video of the transfer window "Play together. Live together."

WE NEED TO BUILD KNOWLEDGE ABOUT RACISM WITHIN ORGANISATIONS.

JENNIFER DANQUAH
Educational scientist

SPORT BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER, BUT IT IS NOT SPORT ITSELF THAT INTEGRATES – IT IS THE PEOPLE WHO PLAY SPORT TOGETHER.

BJÖRN KOCH
Chairman
SV Blau-Weiss Grana e.V.

WE NEED PEOPLE IN DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES WHO CAN ALSO REPRESENT THE TARGET GROUPS AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL.

YOUNIS KAMIL ABDULSALAM
Vice President ROOTS -
Against Racism in Sports

Strengthening engagement in East Germany

Girls, participation and political education: In order to effectively encourage and involve young people with local partners, the DFL Foundation has expanded its funding activities in East Germany, also supporting existing initiatives. It is involved in the joint initiative “Zukunftswege Ost” (“Future Paths East”).

More than 30 girls from the three Year 5 classes at Friedrich-Schiller-Schule took part in the launch of “Mädchen vor!” (“Girls to the fore!”) – with energy, curiosity and the courage to try new things.




**ARI
MORAD**

 Member of the
Youth Advisory
Board

**WHEN I SUPERVISED
THE ARENA OF SKILLS
IN GREIFSWALD, MANY
PEOPLE FROM DIVERSE
BACKGROUNDS
CAME TO US. IT WAS
FANTASTIC TO ENGAGE
WITH THEM AND TO SEE
HOW THE INITIATIVE
BROUGHT THEM
TOGETHER.**

In intensifying its commitment in East Germany, the DFL Foundation focuses on supporting projects that specifically promote the social participation and development of young people. This takes into account the diverse potential in East Germany, including a girls' project in Thuringia, community engagement, and the expansion of several programmes to locations in East Germany.

Youth fund for a better future

As part of the joint initiative "Zukunftsweg Ost" ("Future Paths East"), the DFL Foundation is involved in the "Gen Ost Youth Fund", which supports young people aged 14 to 27 in realising their ideas for a democratic and cohesive society. The youth fund provides targeted support on site for political or cultural events, the creation of meeting places for young people, making youth clubs more attractive, or projects that make the environment more sustainable and socially responsible. Initiatives that support disadvantaged people or draw attention to injustices can also be funded.

Three new "Classroom Stadium" ("Lernort Stadion") locations

The political education programme "Lernort Stadion" ("Classroom Stadium") (see p. 18/21) was expanded by the DSEE to include three non-professional locations: Babelsberg, Chemnitz and Jena. Since 2009, Lernort Stadion e. V. and its partner organisations have used the fascination of football to encourage young people to engage with social issues and develop their own attitudes. School classes and youth groups visit the major stadiums in Germany and address key topics such as diversity, gender equality, anti-discrimination and fair play. More than 30 football clubs from the Bundesliga to the 3rd Liga are already part of the programme.

New girls' project in Erfurt

With the project „Mädchen vor! – S4D Pilotprojekt für Mädchen-Empowerment in Thüringen“ ("Girls to the fore! – S4D pilot project for girls' empowerment in Thuringia"), the DFL Foundation launched a new initiative in Thuringia together with Spirit of Football e. V. in October 2025, placing girls at the centre. Based on the principles of "Sport for Development", workshops and working groups teach skills such as self-efficacy and resilience. The aim is to empower girls and promote their participation in society and their immediate environment – especially at school. The project relies on the unifying power of football to encourage girls to realise their potential and confidently find their own path.

Most recently, the "Arena of Skills" movement and sports programme has also been increasingly active in the east of the Federal Republic, with visits to Gotha, Greifswald and Leipzig. The "Fußball trifft Kultur" ("Football meets culture") locations Dresden and Magdeburg, as well as the "Bundesliga moves" ("Bundesliga bewegt") locations Dresden and Leipzig, are also part of the DFL Foundation's commitment in East Germany. Since summer 2025, two new locations of the project "Meine Stadt. Mein Sport. Meine Zukunft." ("My city. My sport. My future.") have been active in cooperation with the S.O.S. Children's Villages in Cottbus and Grimmen, in order to support children and families in structurally weaker regions. ■



Safe-Hub Berlin was awarded the "Preis Soziale Stadt" award in 2025. AMANDLA received the UEFA Foundation for Children Award.

Football, participation, empowerment

Lara* scores the first goal just after half past eleven. A quick turn past Aylin, past Maya and Swetlana, an elegant shot into the right corner. On the touchline at Safe-Hub Berlin, the reporter notes: Maradona and Messi couldn't have done it better.

It's the third and penultimate day of the Easter camp on Ruheplatzstraße in Berlin's Wedding district. For a whole morning, Lara, Aylin, Maya, Swetlana and eight other girls have been writing, drawing and discussing. They are all between eight and twelve years old and are not all growing up on the sunny side of life. The old working-class district of Wedding is one of those areas where sociologists increasingly identify "structurally disadvantaged circumstances".

On the penultimate day of the Easter camp, the focus is on participation. "Strange word," says Julia

Knopf, and explains: "It's about you deciding what it's all about. For example, what would you do if you were the boss here and organising the holiday camp?" Immediately, arms shoot up enthusiastically and the ideas start flowing.

Strengthening the Voices of Girls

Julia Knopf leads the Easter camp and moderates the wishes, dreams and interests of the girls. She is the project coordinator for Safe-Hub Berlin at the non-profit organisation AMANDLA, which has been supported by the DFL Foundation since 2015. The Safe-Hub is a social education and sports campus

that offers children and young people a safe space for personal development through football, workshops and mentoring. “Football is a fantastic vehicle,” says Julia Knopf. “We want to strengthen the voices of girls and sustainably promote their participation, equality and democratic understanding.”

The Easter camp is part of the Girls Hub programme and is aimed at girls to boost their self-confidence and self-esteem. Take Viktorija, for example: she is eleven and, together with her family, has found shelter in Berlin from the Russian bombs that have been devastating Ukraine for years. She has only been learning German for a few weeks and found it a bit difficult to settle in during the first days of the camp. Julia Knopf suggested she bring someone from her accommodation along. So Viktorija is already at the Safe-Hub gate half an hour before everyone else and, as soon as Julia Knopf unlocks the door, she storms onto the pitch with three friends. The language of football is universal.

In November 2023, artificial turf replaced the old sand pitch. Soon, three containers will make way for a building. Age-group-specific training, open play and learning opportunities, and holiday camps are offered. When there is no in-house programme, the pitch is open to schools, nurseries or private groups, and even free of charge for non-profit organisations.



Big wish-drawing and -formulating for the summer festival. The girls can make suggestions and actively participate.

Participation of the girls

Julia Knopf now asks everyone into one of the containers. Posters with messages such as “Diversity”, “Solidarity”, “Female Empowerment” and “You can, Girl!” are stuck to the walls. The girls are asked to draw their ideal version of the Safe-Hub. Viktorija designs a skate park and Lara a stage where she wants to dance and sing later. “Can we put on some music?” And soon the big speaker in the middle of the container is playing. The exercise is a classic participatory tool, enabling the girls to express wishes and develop visions creatively and without language barriers.

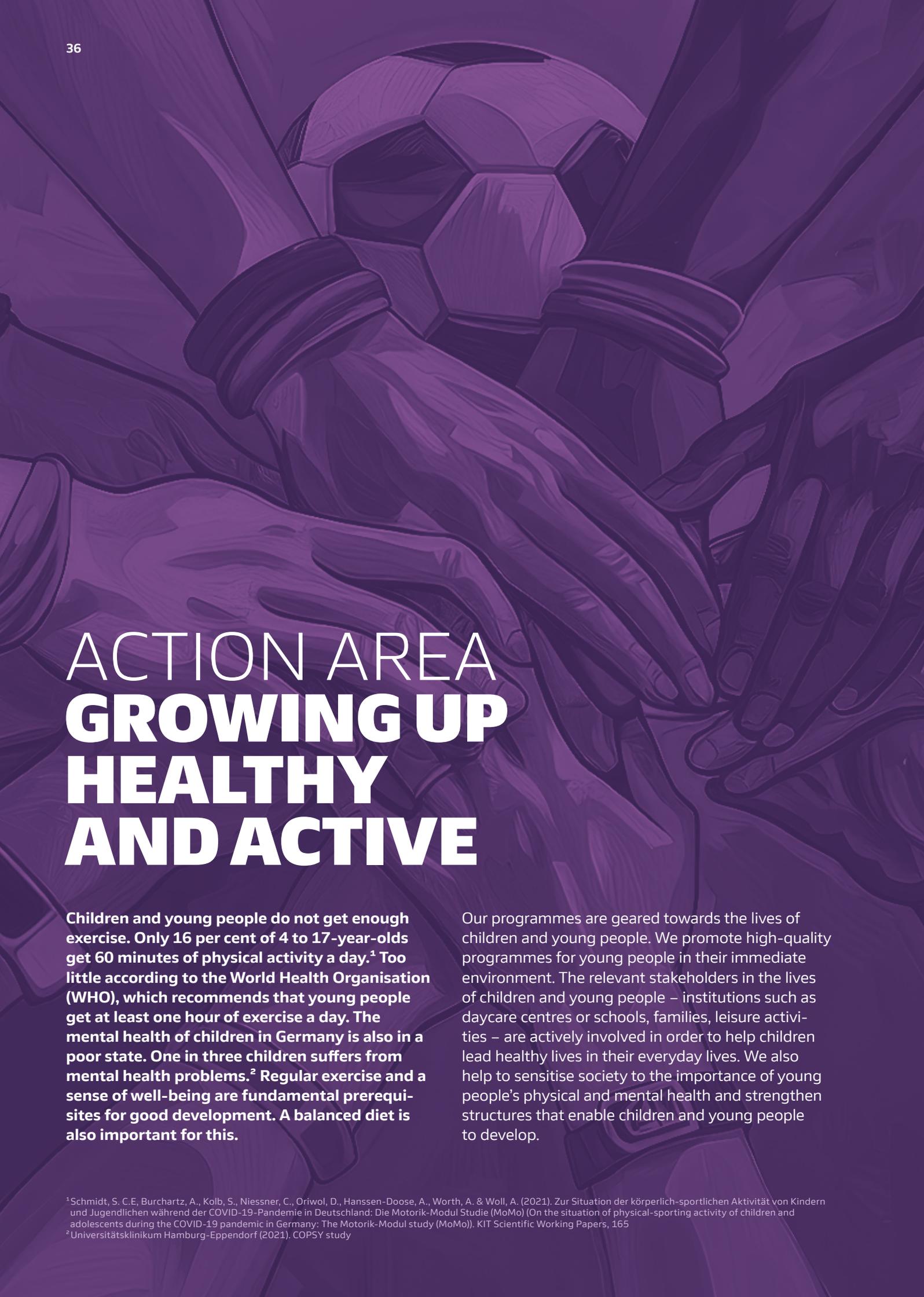
After the art comes the discussion. How would you organise the big Safe-Hub summer festival? Maya suggests a big girls’ football tournament, Svetlana votes for boxing and yoga, and Aylin wants to invite families for popcorn, candyfloss and other snacks. Music is a must, too. Julia Knopf notes everything down for the Safe-Hub’s managing director: “These are great suggestions! You can be sure we’ll take care of it!” The girls should not only feel that they have a say – their wishes will be the starting point for internal planning.

Then it’s already half past eleven and time for football. And there’s Lara again: a quick turn past Aylin, past Maya and Svetlana, a left-footed shot and cheers. Great goal, says the reporter, and wants to know who the number 10 on the sky blue and white shirt stands for: “So who is your favourite player – Maradona or Messi?” Silly question, Lara rolls her eyes – of course it’s Cristiano Ronaldo! ■

** All girls’ names have been changed*



More about Safe-Hub Berlin – Sports & Education Centre for children and young people in Berlin-Wedding (available in German only).

A stylized illustration in shades of purple and blue. In the center, a soccer ball is held by two hands wearing black gloves. Below the ball, several other hands are shown in various positions, some reaching up, some down, creating a sense of collective effort and support. The background is filled with abstract, flowing lines that suggest movement and energy.

ACTION AREA GROWING UP HEALTHY AND ACTIVE

Children and young people do not get enough exercise. Only 16 per cent of 4 to 17-year-olds get 60 minutes of physical activity a day.¹ Too little according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), which recommends that young people get at least one hour of exercise a day. The mental health of children in Germany is also in a poor state. One in three children suffers from mental health problems.² Regular exercise and a sense of well-being are fundamental prerequisites for good development. A balanced diet is also important for this.

Our programmes are geared towards the lives of children and young people. We promote high-quality programmes for young people in their immediate environment. The relevant stakeholders in the lives of children and young people – institutions such as daycare centres or schools, families, leisure activities – are actively involved in order to help children lead healthy lives in their everyday lives. We also help to sensitise society to the importance of young people's physical and mental health and strengthen structures that enable children and young people to develop.

¹Schmidt, S. C.E, Burchartz, A., Kolb, S., Niessner, C., Oriwol, D., Hanssen-Doose, A., Worth, A. & Woll, A. (2021). Zur Situation der körperlich-sportlichen Aktivität von Kindern und Jugendlichen während der COVID-19-Pandemie in Deutschland: Die Motorik-Modul Studie (MoMo) (On the situation of physical-sporting activity of children and adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany: The Motorik-Modul study (MoMo)). KIT Scientific Working Papers, 165

²Universitätsklinikum Hamburg-Eppendorf (2021). COPSy study



To get children and young people moving, different approaches are needed for different age groups. It is also important to involve the environment of young people. Parents, teachers and other key figures are important points of reference for children and young people. We are increasingly trying to take these and other aspects into account in our programmes, because these people are essential influences in the development of children and young people.

This is how it should be

All children and young people in Germany have the opportunity to grow up healthy and active. They receive sufficient stimuli and support to develop to their full potential.

To ensure that our services make the greatest possible contribution to realising this vision, we have set ourselves corresponding goals in line with our impact logic (which you can find on page 3).

Who we support

We focus in particular on children and young people from nursery age to the end of secondary school who are disadvantaged – due to their gender, access to education, fitness level or migration background, disability, origin or financial situation. It is also important to us to involve parents and teachers, i.e. important reference persons of the children and young people.

Impact goals

We want to introduce children and young people to a healthy and active lifestyle so that they get enough exercise and eat a balanced diet. Through exercise, play and sport, they acquire important skills that they use regularly. They treat themselves and others with respect, develop a healthy sense of self-worth and a firm set of values.

Movement from North to South

Physical activity is lacking in the everyday lives of many children. This challenge is addressed by the programme “Bundesliga bewegt” (“Bundesliga moves”), which connects people in their social environments and creates spaces for children to be active and to meet.

Just before one o'clock, Jonatan bursts into the maths lesson. Mrs Groth and class 1c are currently working on the number 2, but now it's time for a break. A movement break, known as “Bewupa” for short. Loud cheers erupt. The little ones have grown fond of Jonatan Bürgermeister since he first joined them. He brings movement into the lessons at Amtsfeld Primary School in Berlin-Köpenick. This is thanks to Union, who are part of “Bundesliga bewegt” (“Bundesliga moves”), a programme run by the DFL Foundation and 21 clubs from the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2.

Children today spend more time in front of screens, everyday structures have broken down, and access to physical activity is often lacking. There is a shortage of specialists, and the curriculum allows for

only two hours of sport per week, leaving little room for development. The project “Union macht Schule” aims to fill this gap.

Far in the west, movement coach Leon Schnücker from VfL Bochum 1848 invites preschoolers from the Bochum day-care centre “Pffikus” to the “Blue-White Movement Room” every Monday as part of “Bundesliga bewegt” (“Bundesliga moves”). The club is responding to overburdened day-care centres and, according to studies, the lack of physical activity among children, which leads to developmental delays. When Angelina Biela was involved at the start three and a half years ago, there was one coach for each day-care centre, primary school and secondary school. Today, 1,200 children in 61 groups are supported. Since 2024, Angelina has been successfully working as a movement coordinator to counteract the fact that some children cannot run backwards or stand on one leg. “At first, many children are still a bit shy. But after a few weeks, they tell their friends about it and integrate the games into their everyday lives,” reports Leon Schnücker.



For its commitment to day-care centres as part of “Bundesliga bewegt” (“Bundesliga moves”), VfL Bochum received the UEFA Grassroots Award and came second in the German Kita Prize 2025.

SV Werder Bremen enriches the school day with its SPIELRAUM primary school series. For example, in the Blumenthal district, where regular lessons are interrupted by teachers so that children can take part in football tournaments or other physical activities. They play Funino, with four mini-goals, four-a-side and no goalkeepers, which guarantees lots of ball contact and goals. “Thanks to the amount of playing time and the empowerment, the children experience many moments of success, whether on a sporting or social level,” says Emily Meier,

**BEN QUERLING**

Member of the
Youth Advisory
Board

AT “FORTUNA BEWEGT” (“FORTUNA MOVES”), A BOY SAID TO ME: “I LIKE IT HERE SO MUCH BECAUSE I ALWAYS HAVE SO MUCH FUN AND CAN RELAX.” THAT’S WHAT THE PROJECT IS ALL ABOUT: IT GIVES CHILDREN MOVEMENT, JOY AND APPRECIATION.

programme coordinator for day-care and primary school cooperation at SV Werder Bremen, which also offers weekly physical activity sessions. For many children, this is the impetus to take up other physical activities as well. In the past two years, the children from Blumenthal were even allowed to play on the hallowed turf of the Weserstadion as the highlight, their eyes shining with excitement.

In Freiburg, the Haslach-Weingarten Sports Quarter of SC Freiburg even attracted the Lord Mayor. He came to the opening of a new football pitch. For the opening party, Felix Bußmann and his colleagues from the club’s sports quarter management team decorated the walls with posters conveying the goal: “All children in Freiburg have access to sports activities!” Where there was once a grey ash pitch, there is now a 2,600 square metre complex with a mountain bike circuit, calisthenics park and two football cages. Noah Atubolu, now goalkeeper for SC Freiburg and the national team, grew up nearby in Weingarten among multi-storey social housing blocks and shows what opportunities sport can offer. ■

**BUNDESLIGA BEWEGT**

Implemented since: 2021-22

Programme partners: Clubs of the Bundesliga, Bundesliga 2, ALBA Berlin with SPORT VERNETZT, Deutsche Postcode Lottery

Target group: Children of day-care and primary school age directly, as well as indirectly: people in their environment and stakeholders in the physical activity sector. Through the DFL Foundation, also clubs of the Bundesliga, Bundesliga 2 and 3rd Liga (until 2024-25)

Number of people supported:
approx. 22,300

Locations: 20 (2024-25; currently 21)

Funding commitment: €351 thousand

Project content: Professional clubs initiate and coordinate, together with other stakeholders, local physical activity programmes in day-care centres and primary schools, as well as networking and training opportunities for coaching, childcare and teaching staff.

Role of the DFL Foundation: Identifies potential, partners and approaches, and promotes the exchange and training of stakeholders

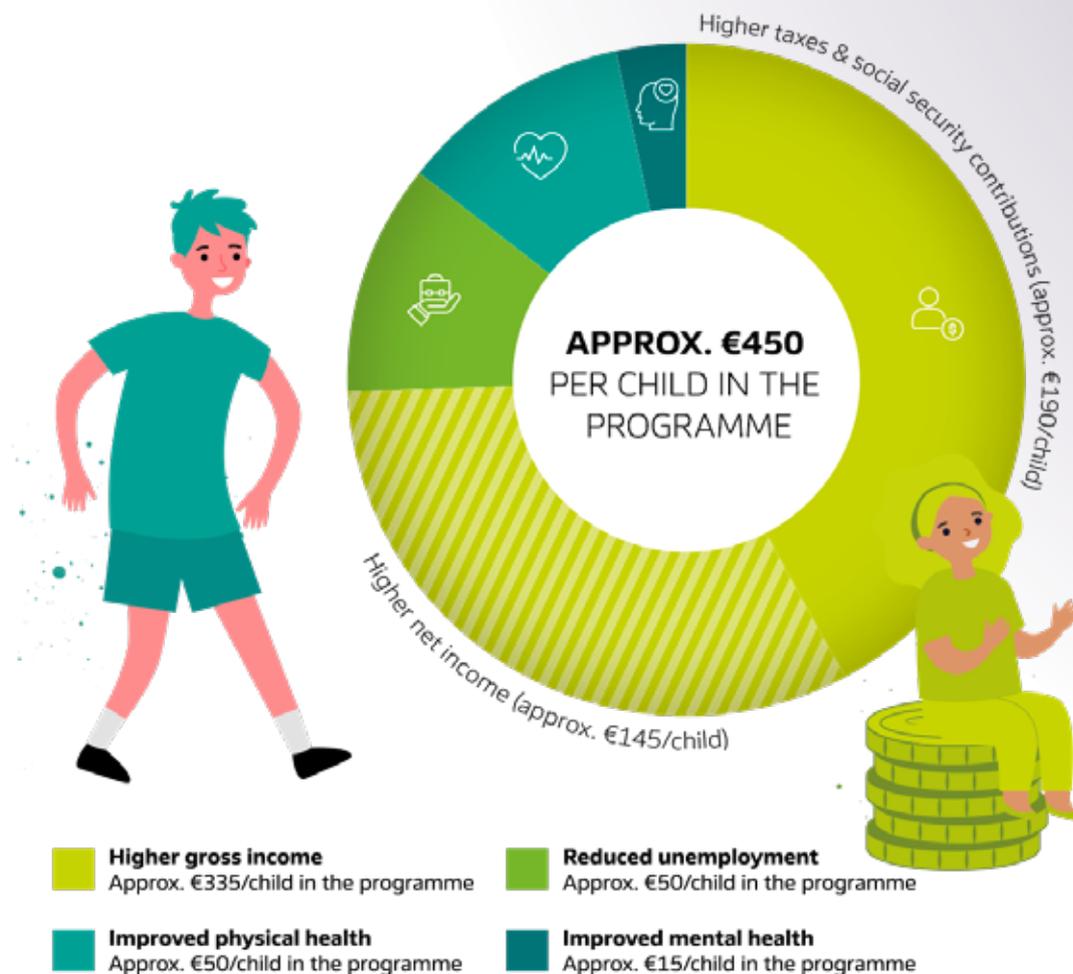
Impact target: Children have everyday access to needs-based, high-quality and cross-sport physical activity programmes in their environment. Their environment recognises the importance of physical activity for a healthy life and there are networks to promote healthy and active social spaces.



The SROI analysis of
"Bundesliga bewegt"
("Bundesliga moves",
available in German only).

10 Million Euros added value

Regular physical activity has a positive effect on the body and mind, learning ability, resilience and social participation of young people. Through its long-term effects, physical activity generates measurable social added value. One piece of evidence: the Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of “Bundesliga bewegt” (“Bundesliga moves”).



Looking at the investments and added value of the programme shows: every euro invested in Bundesliga bewegt pays off more than twice for society – through better educational attainment, higher employment income, lower unemployment, higher tax revenues and reduced health-care costs, i.e. effects of increased and sustained

physical activity. The deliberately conservative study, conducted in cooperation with the strategy consultancy Value for Good and the clubs involved in the programme, only takes into account effects that can be reliably monetised. The actual social benefit is therefore likely to be underestimated. ■

KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Every euro invested generates **€2.34** in social value.

Each year, **around 22,300** children and young people benefit from **“Bundesliga bewegt”** (“Bundesliga moves”).



Each participating child generates at least **€450** in social value per year.

Approx. **€4.2 million/year** invested in the programme

Approx. **€10 million/year** total value of the impact



Physical activity during youth **increases the chances of achieving a higher educational qualification** and a better income later in life.

Many participants report **better health and more physical activity** in their daily lives.



High-Quality Physical Activity for Better Day-Care Centres

Especially in the early years of life, physical activity, play and sport are crucial for healthy development. Together with the German Sports Youth (dsj), the DFL Foundation therefore developed a quality catalogue for movement-oriented day-care centres in cooperation with the University of Education Karlsruhe.

With this, the DFL Foundation is specifically committed to the sustainable promotion of physical activity in day-care centres. Promoting physical activity in early childhood is a central concern of the Foundation. The target group of “Kitas in Bewegung” (“Kitas in Motion”) are educational professionals in day-care centres as well as children aged 3 to 6 years.

Together for more quality

In the current financial year, two pilot projects were launched to evaluate the quality catalogue.

SC Paderborn 07, in cooperation with Kolping Kita gGmbH, is developing a day-care centre into a movement-oriented day-care centre. Sport-Club Freiburg is evaluating the quality catalogue in everyday educational practice with two partner day-care centres. The aim is the continuous development of the quality criteria on which the catalogue is based. In addition, the DFL Foundation is exploring the role that professional clubs can play as educational partners in the field of early childhood.



The DFL Foundation actively contributes its expertise – especially in the areas of physical activity promotion and quality development – to various discussions and processes. The Federal Government is also promoting quality in early education and, with the new Kita Quality Act, plans to establish binding standards nationwide and further improve the framework conditions for day-care centres.

Raising awareness

In the 2024-25 reporting year, the DFL Foundation increasingly drew the attention of professionals to the importance of physical activity, for example through the involvement of programme director Dr Nadine Seddig on the jury of the German Kita Prize 2025. There were also articles in specialist journals and other media, as well as a guest appearance by Nadine Seddig and project and communications manager Lukas Bendix on the importance of physical activity for the healthy development of children. ■



Podcast “The early years matter most” (available in German only).



“Why nurseries are key places for growing up healthy”: Interview with Julia Thurm, Sportjugend Schleswig-Holstein.

PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN DAY-CARE CENTRES IS NOT AN ‘EXTRA’, BUT AN IMPORTANT FOUNDATION FOR HEALTHY AND HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT.

JULIA THURM

Sports Youth Schleswig-Holstein

THE QUALITY CATALOGUE

The “Quality Catalogue for Movement-Oriented Day-Care Centres” is a tool that helps day-care centres firmly anchor physical activity in everyday life. Developed in 2023, it has been thoroughly evaluated and revised, and is now newly published.

Dr Rolf Schwarz, Professor of (Early) Childhood Movement and Play Development, presented the revised catalogue at the “14th German Child and Youth Welfare Congress” in June 2025 in Leipzig. “With the revised new edition, we have been able to further refine many of the quality criteria based on the latest research findings and increase their practical applicability, in order to sustainably embed age-appropriate opportunities for movement in day-care centres,” emphasises Schwarz. He developed the catalogue together with experts from day-care and sports practice and the DFL Foundation.

The quality catalogue comprises 69 criteria for more physical activity in everyday day-care life, divided into four areas:

- **Movement as an attitude:** How can a movement-friendly mindset be anchored within the team?

- **Spaces and materials:** Which areas, equipment and materials promote child-friendly movement?
- **Staff competence:** How do professionals qualify for movement-oriented pedagogy?
- **Networking:** How can day-care centres successfully cooperate with sports clubs and other partners?

All criteria are based on the latest scientific findings, are measurable and designed to be practical. This allows the quality of physical activity in day-care centres to be objectively assessed and specifically developed further.

The catalogue is aimed at everyone who wants to promote physical activity in day-care centres: member organisations of the dsj that advise day-care centres; sports clubs that are or wish to become day-care centre providers; day-care centres and providers who want to fully realise their movement potential.



The quality catalogue for download.

Goals and Socks – Movement at MANUS

The DFL Foundation has supported the two MANUS children’s centres since 2014 and, since 2021, has promoted the programme “MANUS bewegt” (“MANUS moves”), which not only gets young people moving but also teaches them additional skills.

Score goals or steal socks? That’s the big question this afternoon at MANUS, and it’s not as easy to answer as you might expect in a house that bears the name of a living football legend. Manuel Neuer is the man behind this initiative in Bottrop. Right in the heart of the Ruhr region and not far from his hometown of Gelsenkirchen, where there is another children’s and youth centre run by the Manuel Neuer Kids Foundation. “MANUS bewegt” (“MANUS moves”) is a programme that offers children and young people weekly physical activity sessions in both youth centres. This afternoon, 22 have gathered in Bottrop – just enough for two football teams.

Just after three o’clock, the sun has won its skirmish with the clouds and peers expectantly through the large windows of the sports hall. The children are fidgeting with their feet, all eager to get out onto the football pitch. But first, coach Mandy gets to introduce the second item on the afternoon’s agenda: self-assertiveness training. With sweeping steps, the professional martial artist strides through the hall, gesticulating and raising her voice. “Let me tell you what we’re going to do next: we’re going to box, kick and steal socks!” And: “Are you my monsters?” A chorus of cheers shakes the MANUS. Only a handful of children head out to the football pitch; most stay in the sports hall.

The goals of “MANUS bewegt” (“MANUS moves”)

This is exactly where the core of MANUS bewegt

(“MANUS moves”) lies: through movement, play and sport, the children acquire important basic skills, experience self-efficacy, learn mindfulness in dealing with themselves and others, and consolidate values. Basic motor skills training is also included.

Noah is nine years old, Devran two years older, and the two met at MANUS. “Sorry, football isn’t my thing,” says Devran, and Noah is also here because he was looking forward to Mandy and the self-assertiveness training. “Next weekend I have my first tournament,” he says. “I’m really looking forward to it – I’d



At MANUS, you’re allowed to kick your feet against pads that Mandy skilfully holds – all accompanied by impressive battle cries. With sound effects, it’s even more fun.



Relaxation after exertion – happy faces as Noah (back) and Devran (front) lean back to back after their battle for royal blue socks.

love to come here every day.” MANUS is a bright and friendly place. On more than 800 square metres, there are all kinds of free activities for children and young people aged six to eighteen, stimulating the mind and challenging the body. Five days a week, from 11:30 am to 8:00 pm. The timetable in the corridor promises arts and crafts, swimming, inline skating or an introduction to the secrets of a library. And, of course, football and self-assertiveness.

Learning self-assertiveness

Mandy has the children running in circles around gym mats. It’s part of a competition. “Great, I can see you’re all in a fantastic mood!” Then it’s on to self-assertiveness. Two or three steps forward, or back in case of an opponent’s aggression, then the flat hand forward: Stop! This far and no further! I’m ready to negotiate, but if you take another step, you’ve got a problem. That’s how it should be done. Noah makes it clear: “We don’t want to attack. We only do that in training and at tournaments!”

Then it’s finally time for the socks. They shine royal blue, just like Manuel Neuer used to wear at Schalke, and are wrapped around the opponent’s shins. Whoever manages to pull off the sock while the other is lying down gets to celebrate. It’s not that easy, and Mandy keeps a strict eye on the rules. Woe betide anyone who stands up!

The development of Devran and Noah

The highlight is the duel between Devran and Noah,

and Mandy is delighted at how confidently Noah handles missing the sock – and victory – at the last moment. Noah, once an impulsive character, has learned to regulate his emotions through his visits to MANUS. Devran, on the other hand, is the opposite: he has gained courage and self-confidence through the training.

Then it’s over. A smile flashes across Mandy’s face. “I bet you can’t tidy up the hall in a minute,” and the competition is forgotten. After 30 seconds, everything is done and finally it’s out into the sunshine, because there’s still a bit of football to be played at the house of Manuel Neuer. ■

DFL FOUNDATION AMBASSADOR MANUEL NEUER

Manuel Neuer (FC Bayern München) has been an ambassador of the DFL Foundation since 2014. The World Cup winner, U21 European champion and five-time World Goalkeeper of the Year has been committed to children and young people since 2010 with his Manuel Neuer Kids Foundation.



Six Years of step kickt!

The physical activity programme “step kickt!” by the DFL Foundation and the fit4future foundation motivated primary school children across Germany to be more active and raised awareness of healthy eating from 2019 to 2025.

Equipped with fitness wristbands, school classes collected steps over ten weeks, spurred on by exciting challenges. They could record and track their progress in an app. Professional footballers supported the programme as ambassadors, while the participating clubs organised action days with a variety of physical activities and inspiring ideas for healthy eating.

The core element of “step kickt!” – the fitness wristband, which allowed steps to be collected and credited to the step account of each class and club, encouraged pupils to become more active.



66
circumnavigations of the globe
(an impressive 4,292,374,970 steps). That's how much the children accumulated collectively.



8,800
Children were reached by the project in over six implementation phases.



Participating clubs:

- FC Augsburg
- Hertha BSC
- DSC Arminia Bielefeld
- VfL Bochum 1848
- Borussia Dortmund
- Sport-Club Freiburg
- SpVgg Greuther Fürth
- Hannover 96
(continuously represented)
- 1. FC Heidenheim 1846
- TSG Hoffenheim
- 1. FC Magdeburg
- SSV Jahn Regensburg
- SV Sandhausen
- FC Schalke 04



In addition to the pedometers, it was above all the protagonists from the clubs involved in “step kickt!” who motivated the children to be more active – such as Paule, the mascot of 1. FC Heidenheim. The club won the final edition of the “step kickt!” step competition.

To strengthen adults in their role as role models, information was also provided for parents and teachers. This included, among other things, a digital workshop on the topic of “active lessons”.

Success and Reach

Over six implementation phases, the project reached a total of 8,800 children from 421 school classes at 106 schools. Together, the children collected an impressive 4,292,374,970 steps – enough to circle the globe almost 66 times. The clubs involved in “step kickt!” changed over the years, with Hannover 96 participating throughout. A total of 14 clubs took part since 2018/19.

Conclusion and Outlook

The programme provided valuable impetus and was able to increase the physical activity of participating children during the three-month implementation phase. In view of the limited implementation period and the current strategic focus of the DFL Foundation and the clubs on the long-term and sustainable promotion of physical activity among children, it was decided to phase out “step kickt!” as planned in 2025.

Despite its conclusion, “step kickt!” remains a successful example of how children can be playfully motivated to be more active and lead a healthier lifestyle. ■



Implemented from: 2018-19 to 2024-25

Programme partners: fit4future foundation Germany, planero GmbH

Target group:

- Direct: Children in years 3 and 4
- Indirect: Parents/guardians and teachers

Number of people supported: 1,500 (2024-25)

Locations: 8 (2024-25)

Funding commitment: €303 thousand (2024-25)

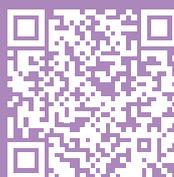
Project content: Children are playfully motivated to be active through a step challenge within their class group and experience themselves as part of a team. They are also made aware of the importance of a healthy and balanced diet.

Role of the DFL Foundation: Financial support and further development of the programme. Recruitment of professional clubs and players.

Impact target: Supported by their key adults, primary school children grow up healthy and active, feel comfortable and are strengthened in their development.

► **Final publication:**
see next double page

MATERIALS DEVELOPED AS PART OF STEP KICKT!



"Brochure for teachers for an active school day: "step kickt!" (available in German only)."

Nutrition brochure for children (available in German only).

Activity cards (available in German only).

Movement game (available in German only).



Knowledge for Practice

At the conclusion of the “step kickt!” programme, the DFL Foundation is making the consolidated knowledge from six years of project experience with 8,800 participating children available in a free guide.

The publication provides ideas, practical tools and specific recommendations for anyone who wants to promote holistic child development through increased physical activity – whether in education, sport, health promotion or community work. In

addition to general information and key findings from the programme, the guide contains checklists with tasks to tick off and templates for questionnaires to gather feedback from those involved in the project. ■

TIPS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN LESSONS

- **Set a time:** After every second lesson or before longer writing phases.
- **Choose exercises:** Collect the children’s favourite exercises and implement one or two each week, then rotate.
- **Visualise:** Display the “workout of the week”.
- **Ritualise:** Fixed start signal (bell, music jingle) and a joint finish with a “high five” line.
- **Regularly document and collect feedback:** Thumbs-up barometer “Did you enjoy the exercises?”.

THE ACTION DAY: AN ACTIVITY FORMAT FOR EVERYONE

Action days were a central component of step kickt! They can provide valuable impulses for enjoyment of movement and community. This clear checklist shows what to keep in mind.



To the checklist
(available in
German only).

KEY LEARNINGS FROM SIX YEARS OF PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Physical activity strengthens body and mind. Concentration, enjoyment of learning and well-being all benefit from movement in everyday school life.

Even small impulses make a difference.

Short activity breaks in lessons have a big impact.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CONNECTS. REGARDLESS OF BACKGROUND OR SPORTING EXPERIENCE.

Together, more is possible. Schools and clubs can create lasting experiences of physical activity, for example with action days.

ROLE MODELS INSPIRE. PROFESSIONALS MOTIVATE CHILDREN TO BECOME ACTIVE THEMSELVES.

Children's feedback improves what's on offer. For activity formats tailored to the target group, genuine participation and long-term motivation.

The final publication on step kickt! (available in German only).



Inclusion and Franz Beckenbauer

What began with Franz Beckenbauer's commitment to people with disabilities and continues to be embodied by his foundation has been extended by another chapter with the "Gute Freunde Förderfonds" ("Good Friends Support Fund"). The Franz Beckenbauer Foundation and the DFL Foundation are supporting 20 projects out of 114 applicants, enabling people with disabilities to access sport and physical activity.

The first Franz Beckenbauer Supercup was not only about the match between the DFB-Cup winner (VfB Stuttgart) and the German champion (FC Bayern München), but also about honouring football legend Franz Beckenbauer. As he was committed to people with disabilities through his foundation during his lifetime, the DFL Foundation and the Franz Beckenbauer Foundation took this as an opportunity to place greater focus on sport for people with disabilities. At the heart of this commitment was the newly established "Gute Freunde Förderfonds" ("Good Friends Support Fund").



The ambassadors of VfB Stuttgart and FC Bayern München, Cacau and Claudio Pizarro, accompanied Franz Beckenbauer Foundation board member Joel Beckenbauer at the presentation of the trophies of German football.

More Access to Sport for People with Disabilities

As a joint initiative of the DFL Foundation and the Franz Beckenbauer Foundation, and supported by €100,000 from the DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga, the "Gute Freunde Förderfonds" ("Good Friends Support Fund") aims to promote projects across Germany that enable especially young people with disabilities to access sport and physical activity. Many people with disabilities encounter barriers in everyday life that make it difficult for them to participate in sport – whether due to a lack of inclusive opportunities, insufficient accessibility, or a lack of support in clubs and institutions. This is also highlighted by figures from the German government's third Participation Report, according to which 55 percent of people with disabilities never take part in sport. The Support Fund addresses this very issue by supporting projects that remove obstacles, create inclusive sporting opportunities, and sustainably improve access to sport for young people with disabilities. In doing so, it not only promotes physical and social development, but also strengthens participants' sense of community, health, and self-efficacy.

Visibility through Media and Role Models

Media coverage around the Supercup has made the "Gute Freunde Förderfonds" ("Good Friends Support Fund") well known and at the same time brought the topic of sport for people with disabilities into the



Former Federal President Christian Wulff and content creator Younes Zarou visit the "Arena of Skills" with the Board of Trustees. In the background, among others, DFL Foundation trustees Matthias Steiner and Matondo Castlo as well as DFL Foundation board member Jörg Degenhart.

public spotlight: In interviews on Sky and Sat.1, Heidrun and Joel Beckenbauer, board members of the Franz Beckenbauer Foundation, spoke about the importance of participation and the opportunities the Gute Freunde Support Fund creates. Spectators in the stadium could also learn about the joint commitment of the foundations via stadium TV and the Sportstudio Talk in the hospitality area of the MHP Arena with Rudi Völler (ambassador of the Franz Beckenbauer Foundation), Heidrun Becken-

bauer (chairwoman of the Franz Beckenbauer Foundation) and Franziska Fey, while also remembering the legacy of Franz Beckenbauer.

To ensure that the topic of inclusion in sport was not only discussed but also experienced, a colourful supporting programme was organised around the match in Stuttgart: On Stuttgart's Schlossplatz, the "Arena of Skills" invited visitors to try out not only Olympic sports but also various Paralympic sports such as wheelchair basketball, blind football and para-table tennis. The activities were aimed at children and young people with and without disabilities and demonstrated how sport connects and opens up new perspectives. On the soccer field directly in front of the stadium, the VfB Stuttgart inclusion team also provided opportunities for encounters and shared physical activity.

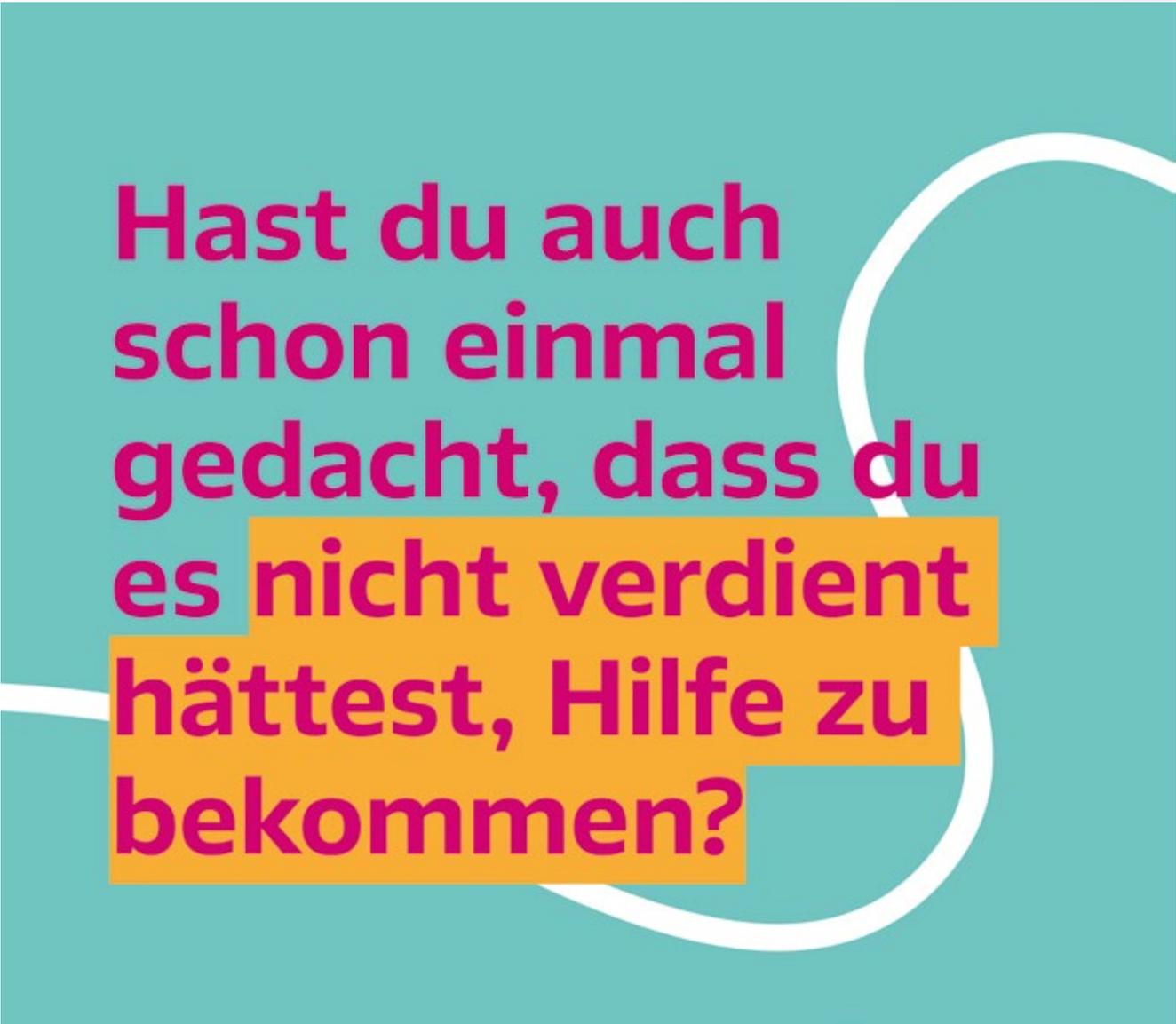
The activities surrounding the Franz Beckenbauer Supercup 2025 clearly showed how diverse and effective commitment to inclusion in sport can be. Whether through targeted funding, innovative participation opportunities or public discussion – the central question everywhere was how more people with disabilities can experience the joy of physical activity and sport together. ■



Heidrun Beckenbauer, Rudi Völler and Franziska Fey in the Sportstudio Talk discussing the background of the "Gute Freunde Förderfonds" ("Good Friends Support Fund").

Immediate Support via Chat

In winter 2024-25, a digital campaign by the DFL Foundation drew attention to the psychosocial counselling service offered by krisenchat and promoted the destigmatisation of mental health issues, prevention, and the positive impact of sport.



**Hast du auch
schon einmal
gedacht, dass du
es nicht verdienst
hättest, Hilfe zu
bekommen?**

An example of communication by the DFL Foundation and krisenchat.

krisenchat is a low-threshold digital support service. Children, adolescents and young adults up to the age of 25 can contact professional counsellors every day, around the clock, via the website, SMS or WhatsApp. No registration or disclosure of personal data is required for the consultations. This allows those seeking help to open up and, often for the first time, talk about their problems in a protected environment.

The service is important: children and young people are more worried than ever in view of the many current crises and problems such as wars, energy shortages, climate change or discrimination. This is shown, among other things, by the SINUS Youth Study 2024, supported by the DFL Foundation.

Since 2020, krisenchat has conducted more than 200,000 personal counselling sessions. Through its social media channels, the service reaches more than 40 million people every year and provides prevention and education with content tailored to the target group. Thanks to the support of the DFL Foundation, krisenchat is able to carry out more prevention work and also convey to children and young people the importance of exercise and sport as effective means of coping with stress. ■

More information about krisenchat (available in German only).



SINUS Youth Study 2024.



Manchmal fällt es uns schwer, um Hilfe zu bitten. Wir haben dann das Gefühl, dass unser Gegenüber schlecht von uns denkt oder uns nicht ernst genug nimmt, weil jemand anderes die Hilfe vermeintlich dringender braucht.

Um dir den Schritt zu erleichtern, nach Unterstützung zu fragen, haben wir 6 Gründe für dich, warum du Hilfe verdient hast – denn jede*r hat das!

Du bist nicht allein.
Deine Gefühle sind wichtig.
Du bist einzigartig.
Du bist liebenswert.
Du bist es wert.
Du bist gut so, wie du bist.

Hilfe zu suchen ist ein Zeichen von Stärke.

A stylized illustration in shades of red and pink. At the top center, a soccer ball is held by two hands. Below it, several other hands are shown in various positions, some reaching up, some down, creating a sense of support and teamwork. The background is filled with abstract, flowing lines that suggest movement and energy.

ACTION AREA ELITE SPORT

Around half of all competitive athletes in Germany have thought about ending their careers prematurely, despite good sporting prospects.¹ Reasons for this include the often poor financial basis and a lack of public appreciation. At the same time, most people in Germany see top athletes as role models – for example in terms of motivation (71%), togetherness (63%), diversity (62%) and fair play (61%).²

To help turn talented individuals into role models, we provide them with financial support, assist them in their personal development and help ensure that their achievements and contributions to society are recognised and appreciated. We give talented individuals and top athletes from more than 50 sports a platform for their messages, making them visible, involving them and giving them a voice.

¹Bundesinstitut für Sportwissenschaft ("Federal Institute for Sports Science") (2017). Akzeptanz des Spitzensports in Deutschland – Zum Wandel der Wahrnehmung durch Bevölkerung und Athleten ("Acceptance of elite sports in Germany – on the change in perception by the population and athletes")

²Stiftung Deutsche Sporthilfe ("German Sports Aid Foundation") & ONEBY (2023). Stellenwert des Spitzensports ("The importance of elite sports")



Elite athletes, especially at the start of their careers, face major challenges. For example, they have to juggle school, vocational training or university with training sessions and competitions, family and friends, and sometimes even a job. We support talents from various sports not only in being able to focus better on their sport, but also in developing their personalities, so that they can overcome obstacles and realise their full potential. Pictured: “#ZukunftBewegen” (“#MovingForwards”) protagonist and former recipient of elite youth support, Taliso Engel. The swimmer has already won gold twice at the Paralympics and is a multiple European and World Champion.

This is how it should be

Sports talents are financially independent role models for children and young people in Germany. They enjoy public recognition and are ambassadors for a diverse society based on solidarity.

To ensure that our offers make the greatest possible contribution to realising this vision, we have set ourselves corresponding goals in line with our impact logic (see page 3).

Who we support

We particularly focus on ambitious teenagers and young adults who participate in Olympic, Paralympic or Deaflympic sports at a high level. Through their achievements and personalities, they can reach many children and teenagers as well as the general public.

Impact goals

We want to help talented athletes to focus on their sporting goals free from economic constraints and to develop into strong and value-oriented personalities. In this way, they become role models for performance and values, particularly for children and young people. The company values them for their achievements and their role model status.



Olympic champion and Foundation Trustee Deborah Levi explains to professional footballer Timothy Chandler on the starting track at the Frankfurt national athletics base how a two-man bobsleigh is accelerated. Here you can find the full film with Deborah Levi and Timothy Chandler.



Youth Development Support until 2030

A work of art made from adhesive tape and a professional footballer on the bobsleigh track: DFL Foundation, DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga and Stiftung Deutsche Sporthilfe extend their partnership.

A hot summer's day in Frankfurt, focused faces of young up-and-coming talents, colourful adhesive tapes and a huge work of art: not only a visual highlight, but also a powerful symbol of the unifying power of sport. A few weeks later: Olympic bobsleigh champion Deborah Levi and Eintracht Frankfurt professional Timothy Chandler stand together at Eintracht's new bobsleigh push track. After an inspiring conversation about the social significance of sport and the promotion of young talent, Chandler himself dares to try the bobsleigh – joking that he might even compete as a bobsledder at the next Olympic Games in Germany.

The role models of today and tomorrow: both stand for the long-standing partnership that DFL Foundation, DFL and Sporthilfe have extended this year until 2030. Together, they are committed to supporting Germany's best young talents, enabling them to grow not only in sport, but also personally.

Turning talents into role models

At the heart of the partnership is the "Nachwuchselite-Förderung" ("Youth Elite Funding") support funded by the DFL Foundation. It supports young Olympic, Paralympic and Deaflympic athletes not only financially, but also through numerous opportunities for personal development – from workshops at the elite youth meetings to webinars on topics such as mental strength or media training.

"Through sport, young people in particular can develop important skills for their future. With our support, we help young talents to get the best out of themselves – in sport and beyond. They should have the opportunity to live their dreams and become role models for the next generation," summarises Franziska Fey, Chairwoman of the DFL Foundation.

A strong commitment

The importance of the partnership is also emphasised by Deborah Levi, who is also a member of the Trustees of the DFL Foundation: "For us, it's great that there is continued long-term support, especially in the youth sector, and that the talents of tomorrow are given a chance and are not only supported financially, but also in their personal development. Often, people on the outside don't see this at all – there are so many people supporting you, and Sporthilfe with its partners, the DFL Foundation and the DFL, are part of that."

Looking to the future

With the extension of the partnership until 2030, DFL and DFL Foundation are reaffirming their commitment to supporting elite sport in Germany. In addition to the existing components, which include joint public initiatives and, on the part of the DFL Foundation, the “Nachwuchselite-Förderung” (“Youth Elite Funding”) support and the athlete farewell as part of the Sporthilfe Juniorsportler, future focus will also be placed on the protection of athletes and on measuring the impact of the support programme.

The contract extension shows the next generation that they will have support on their journey and opportunities to realise their dreams – for example, at Olympic and Paralympic Games in their own country, for which Germany would like to apply. If Timothy Chandler has his way, this opportunity should not be missed: “That would bring real success for the people and especially for the children, and would really drive the country and other sports forward.” Who knows, maybe Timothy Chandler will also be there alongside the supported athletes – in the bobsleigh at the Summer Games, with a wink, of course. ■

“NACHWUCHELITE-FÖRDERUNG” (“YOUTH ELITE FUNDING”)

Supported since: 2009

Programme partner: German Sports Aid Foundation

Target group: Olympic, para- and deaflympic talents from over 50 sports

Number of people supported: 515 athletes (456 Olympic, 39 Paralympic, 20 Deaflympic)

Locations: location-independent, nationwide support

Funding commitment: €1,255 thousand

Project content: Germany’s best Olympic, Paralympic and Deaflympic talents are supported financially and in their personal development.

Role of the DFL Foundation: as a sponsor, mouthpiece and platform provider, enabling athletes to communicate their values and topics

Impact target: Talented sportspeople are financially independent role models of achievement and values for young people and enjoy social recognition.



At the elite youth meeting in Frankfurt, the athletes created a motif that depicts Olympic and Paralympic sports as well as, hidden within, the digits 2, 0, 3 and 0 – a symbol of the long-term partnership between DFL Foundation and Sporthilfe.



The first “Nachwuchselite-Treffen” (“Elite Youth Meeting”) was in 2015 in Wolfsburg. On the right: snowboarder Cheyenne Loch, who carried the championship trophy onto the pitch at the Supercup in the Volkswagen Arena between VfL Wolfsburg and FC Bayern München.

Role models of tomorrow

Since 2015, the DFL Foundation and Sporthilfe have regularly invited outstanding young athletes to the “Nachwuchselite-Treffen” (“Elite Youth Meeting”; “NEF Meeting”). In the anniversary year 2025, talents from Olympic, Paralympic and Deaflympic sports came together in Frankfurt and Stuttgart.

The meetings give young athletes the opportunity to network, learn from each other and gain inspiration for their sporting and personal careers. In Frankfurt, the DFL Foundation and Sporthilfe welcomed almost 30 participants together with Olympic champion and DFL Foundation Trustee Deborah Levi in June for an open talk. During the



Tape Art: (from left) Robin Weiler (Para-Badminton), Benedikt Maurer (Triple Jump) and Timo Schmiesing (Para-Tennis and Basketball).

intensive discussion, Deborah spoke about her sporting career, mental strength, setbacks – and what it means to be a role model in society.

Performance, Attitude, Creativity

The second day was colourful: in a tape art workshop, participants were able to artistically create their vision of the future. The joint work was inspired by the extended partnership between DFL, DFL Foundation and Sporthilfe until 2030 and joint initiatives such as #ZukunftBewegen (#MovingForwards). The message: young athletes are shaping the future of sport – with performance, attitude and creativity. Content creator Aminho (Amin Belhadj) accompanied the meeting on the DFL Foundation's Instagram channel.

In addition, the young talents in Frankfurt gained insights into the work of the DFL Foundation and Sporthilfe and were able to further develop themselves in two practical workshops: a workshop with the National Anti Doping Agency Germany (NADA) focused on values in elite sport, and a media training session focused on rhetoric and body language in front of the camera. Of course, sporting activities were also a must at the meeting of Germany's most promising young athletes. In the early evening, the young talents took part in a dragon boat race on the River Main.

Together at the Franz Beckenbauer Supercup

At the "Nachwuchselite-Treffen" ("Elite Youth Meeting") in Stuttgart as part of the Franz Beckenbauer Supercup in August, the programme included



The elite youth got active together in Stuttgart playing spikeball in the park. Ultimate frisbee and Viking chess were also on the programme.

a workshop on mental strength and neuro-athletics training. The participants were also able to exchange ideas with Elisabeth Seitz, former artistic gymnast, three-time Olympian, 45-time medallist at World and European Championships as well as German Championships, and herself once a beneficiary of the "Nachwuchselite-Förderung" ("Youth Elite Funding") Support. Later, a small activity programme awaited all participants in the park. The highlight of the weekend was the visit to the Franz Beckenbauer Supercup: in Stuttgart's MHP Arena, the young athletes experienced the clash between VfB Stuttgart and FC Bayern München up close. ■



FELIX MOSKALEV
Member of the
Youth Advisory
Board

More information about support for young elite athletes.



IT WAS INSPIRING TO SEE AT AN "NEF MEETING" WHAT NETWORKING WITH EACH OTHER MEANS AND WHAT IDEAS CAN EMERGE IN THIS ATMOSPHERE.



Field hockey player Jan Husemann and eventing rider Greta Busacker build their model of Olympic and Paralympic Games in Germany.

Olympic and Paralympic Games in Germany?

Germany is bidding to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games. What do young athletes, who might be able to take part towards the end of their careers, think about this? A text by Felix Moskalev and Ben Querling, members of the Next Gen Youth Advisory Board of the DFL Foundation.

The Olympic and Paralympic flame is set to burn again in Germany. To achieve this, the Olympic spirit must above all inspire the future spectators and participants of the Games! Who could shape a bid for the Olympic and Paralympic Games better than those who could one day take part themselves? The group that comes closest to this are the athletes supported by the Elite Youth Development Support ("Nachwuchselite-Förderung", NEF) of Sporthilfe and the DFL Foundation.

On the initiative of the Youth Advisory Board and in cooperation with the elite sport team of the DFL Foundation and Trustee Deborah Levi, a workshop was therefore developed with the athletes of the Elite Youth Development Support.

Perspective of the next generation

The half-day workshop, which began with an introduction from the DOSB on the status and further process of the bid, brought together 13 young athletes from eleven Olympic, Para-sport and Deaflympic sports and two representatives of the dsj sports associations in Düsseldorf. The aim was to hear and record their views, expectations and ideas for modern, future-proof Games in Germany.



WHAT I PARTICULARLY LIKED WAS THAT WE WERE ABLE TO TAKE SUCH AN ACTIVE PART AND NOT JUST LISTEN OR ASK QUESTIONS.

MARC DELBROUCK
Figure skater

KEY RESULTS: WHAT THE ELITE YOUTH EXPECT FROM FUTURE GAMES

The athletes' visions for the future show that the Olympics and Paralympics are being considered in a comprehensive way, going beyond sport itself:

FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE GAMES

- Simultaneous hosting of Olympic, Paralympic and Deaflympic Games
- Equal conditions for all athletes in terms of accommodation, catering and similar aspects
- Reducing the ecological footprint through recycling and climate-friendly mobility

INCLUSIVE AND INTEGRATIVE GAMES

- Joint opening and closing ceremonies
- Equal rewards for all athletes
- Fair media coverage for all sports
- Comprehensive awareness-raising for inclusion

SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Focus on renovation rather than new construction of sports venues
- Adaptation of facilities for hybrid use (elite and grassroots sport)
- Long-term use of the Olympic Village, e.g. for youth trips or as student accommodation
- Creation of holistic training centres

STRENGTHENING SPORT

- More PE lessons in schools
- Promotion of a better work-life-sport balance
- Financial support and strengthening of fringe sports
- Free mobility in "Team D" kit for greater visibility

APPRECIATION OF VOLUNTEERING

- Demand for genuine recognition of volunteering
- Provision of a dedicated Olympic Village as accommodation
- Free catering and use of public transport
- High-quality clothing
- Organisation of a "Festival of Volunteering" for public recognition

HEALTH PROMOTION

- Using the Games as an impetus for more health and exercise
- Creation of spaces for physical activity for all age groups
- Linking school sport and the Olympics
- Using elite sport as ambassadors for exercise and health
- Parallel grassroots sports competitions (e.g. in schools)
- Finals of these competitions later held in the former Olympic Village

For many of the athletes involved in the workshop, the Games are the guiding principle and long-term goal of their careers, associated with motivation, community, fairness and the desire for great emotional moments. The opportunity to help shape the process was seen as an appreciation and provided additional motivation.

In small groups or idea sprints, visions were developed, challenges discussed and perspectives broadened beyond their own sport. The exchange between Olympic, Para-sport and Deaflympic perspectives provided new impulses and strengthened mutual understanding.

Relevance and outlook: The voice of the elite youth must be heard

The athletes involved in the workshop learned that their voice has an impact – an important step towards encouraging young athletes to get involved in shaping and engaging in sport in the long term and to strengthen them in their role as role models.

The results of the workshop developed by the athletes were passed on by the elite sport team of the DFL Foundation to DOSB, dsj and DBS and are being discussed with the two associations in relation to the further bidding process. The workshop can serve as a model: ideally, bidding regions will be further encouraged to implement their own formats with young sports enthusiasts and athletes. In addition, we advocate for involving young athletes more in committees and for planning further workshops by the DFL Foundation and Sporthilfe for the future.



THE ENTHUSIASM THAT CAME TOGETHER HERE WITH SUCH ENERGY WAS FASCINATING. SO MANY IDEAS EMERGED AND I REALLY HOPE THAT WE CAN ONE DAY MAKE GERMANY A REALITY AS A HOST LOCATION.

GRETA BUSACKER
Eventing

The voices of the young athletes provide important impulses for a bid that interprets the Olympic spirit in a modern way – sustainable, inclusive and together with the generation that will carry it forward in the future. ■



The young athletes collect their ideas for Olympic and Paralympic Games in Germany in a brainstorming session – here supported by Ibrahim Hassan (light blue shirt), member of the Youth Advisory Board of the DFL Foundation.

In #ZukunftBewegen (#MovingForwards)

Inspiring children and young people to get involved in sport – that is the aim of the “Arena of Skills”. As part of the #ZukunftBewegen (#MovingForwards) initiative by the DFL, DFL Foundation and Sporthilfe, the Arena made stops in 2025 in places including Gotha, Greifswald and Osnabrück. Under the motto #CHECKdeineSKILLS (#CheckYourSkills), children and young people tried out sports for people with and without disabilities.



New elements at the “Arena of Skills”: a nutrition quiz and a flyer for parents with tips on exercise, sport and nutrition.

Since 2023, the Arena of Skills has been the central element of the #ZukunftBewegen (#MovingForwards) activation and was recently expanded to include a (para-)table tennis station with a participation tool from the Next Gen Youth Advisory Board. The offering now places an even greater focus on para-sport.

In Stuttgart, the Arena was part of the programme surrounding the Franz Beckenbauer Supercup. In addition to the sport on the pitch at the MHP Arena, the event was dedicated to honouring football legend Franz Beckenbauer, who during his lifetime was also deeply committed to supporting people with disabilities. The Stuttgart Schlossplatz was

transformed by the “Arena of Skills” into a space where children and young people could try out blind football, ski jumping or wheelchair basketball.

Encounters with personalities

In addition to the sporting activities, the “Arena of Skills” also offered the opportunity to meet well-known personalities. Among those present were content creators Amin Belhadj, Okan Cenedi and Sarah Maria Linder, as well as Bundesliga legend Claudio Pizarro, long-time VfB Stuttgart goalkeeper Timo Hildebrand and national hockey players Stine Kurz and Aina Lilly Kresken. Some Trustees of the DFL Foundation also paid a visit. ■



REPORT BY ARI (YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD)

In order to reach young people who do not yet have direct access to sport, the “Arena of Skills” mainly appears at events that are not primarily focused on sport or in more rural regions, such as at the “Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Tag” (“Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Day”) in Greifswald in June. Ari Morad from the Next Gen Youth Advisory Board was there:

“In the Arena of Skills, children can try out an exciting range of sports and collect stamps for a prize draw at each station. In addition, participants and their parents receive information on regular sports activities offered by clubs in the area.

My task was to supervise the table tennis table. I explained to visitors what youth participation means and what we do in the Next Gen Youth Advisory Board of the DFL Foundation. It was like a small promotional campaign for greater youth involvement – and it was enjoyable. Many people from Greifswald were interested, asked questions, and, of course, played table tennis.



Ari Morad supervised the participation module in Greifswald as part of the Arena of Skills.

I also helped out with the para-sport activities. There was blind football with eye masks, football with walking aids (for people with leg amputations) and wheelchair basketball. Trying out these sports together with the visitors was exciting and an important experience – for everyone involved. It was great to see how open and curious so many people were.”

ENCOURAGEMENT EVENTS: ROLE MODELS UP CLOSE

The core idea behind the “Mutmacher-Events” (“Encouragement Events”) organised by the DFL Foundation and Sporthilfe is to inspire children and young people to get active and embrace fair play through direct encounters with role models from elite sport. In 2025, the events took place as part of the Rhine-Ruhr 2025 FISU World University Games from 24 to 26 July in Essen. In the Try Out Area at Grugapark, visitors were able to experience elite sport up close.

The event kicked off with a taster training session in table tennis led by up-and-coming talent Eireen Kalaitzidou, supported by the West German Table Tennis Association. She also spoke in an interview at the Sporthilfe stand about her goals and experiences, as well as the importance of support in elite sport.

Taster training sessions inspire

Essen’s young judoka Florian Böcker, together with coaches from PSV Essen, introduced participants to the basics of his sport – from the greeting and safe falling to the first throwing techniques and the core values of judo. As a

highlight, some children and young people were able to earn the white-yellow belt – a first step towards the black belt. Afterwards, Florian Böcker was available for interviews, photos and autographs.



At encouragement events organised by the DFL Foundation and Sporthilfe, children were able to try out judo, among other sports, at the FISU World University Games.

Overview of programmes

Programme	Programme description	Funding commitment (in € thousand)	Programme partner
Lernort Stadion ("Classroom stadium")	Young people receive extracurricular political education programmes at the special learning venue of the football stadium	1,067	DFL Foundation
Thementopf ("Thematic fund")	An annually changing funding programme to support clubs, initiatives and NGOs. In 2024-25, the focus was on supporting young people and their "#Future Skills" in order to strengthen the importance of togetherness, social cohesion and teamwork	311	DFL Foundation
Fußball trifft Kultur ("Football meets culture")	The educational triad of language lessons, football training and cultural activities increases the educational opportunities of the participating children	270	LitCam gGmbH
Democracy & Social Media	#DEMOKRATEAM campaign on social media to promote democratic opinion-forming among young people and to encourage voter participation	210	DFL Foundation
Mädchen vor! ("Girls to the fore!")	Holistic empowerment of girls in Thuringia through football, theatre and art to promote their life skills and gender equality	110	Spirit of Football e.V.
GIRLS HUB	empowers disadvantaged girls through football, education and empowerment to promote greater equality and social participation	60	AMANDLA gGmbH
MitternachtsSport ("Midnight Sports")	Low-threshold football programme in a socially deprived area at conflict-prone evening/night times	58	MitternachtsSport e.V. - Association for intercultural youth social work
Zukunftswege Ost ("Future Paths East")	strengthens social cohesion in East Germany by supporting initiatives for democracy, dialogue and diversity, and by connecting stakeholders across sectors	33	Foundtion Bürger für Bürger
GPS Girls Power Sustainability	GPS supports girls and young women in their personal development through regular football workshops, club activities and holiday camps, while promoting social cohesion, fair play and sustainability	22	Spirit of football e.V.
United on Ice	Low-threshold (ice) sports programmes for disadvantaged target groups, expansion especially for girls and young women as well as young refugees	22	Berlin Youth Empowerment e.V.
Girls for Boxing	Boxing training for girls and young women from migrant or refugee backgrounds, providing access to sport and exercise and the accompanying positive effects on a physical, mental and emotional level	22	Sports for More e.V.
Tandem Young Coach training	Inclusive qualification programme that enables teenagers and young adults with and without disabilities to take on responsibility as coaches for people with disabilities in football	16	Scort Foundation
Other projects < €15 thousand		59	

Total funding commitment for "Social cohesion"*

2,259

Bundesliga bewegt ("Bundesliga moves")	Networking and qualification of clubs from the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 as well as stakeholders in their social environments, in order to anchor high-quality and interlinked physical activity programmes in the everyday lives of young people (especially children) in a low-threshold way. This is complemented by cross-club strategic management, networking and communication, as well as the placement of relevant topics at (sports) political level	351	DFL Foundation with thirdparty funding from the German Postcode Lottery
step kickt!	Interactive competition in which children in grades 3 and 4 collect steps as a class. The project gets the children excited about exercise and sensitises them to a balanced diet	383	fit4future foundation Germany

Programme	Programme description	Funding commitment (in € thousand)	Programme partner
Meine Stadt. Mein Sport. Meine Zukunft. ("My Sport. My Town. My Future.")	Promotion of programmes for the development of exercise and nutrition programmes in the SOS Kinderdorf	131	SOS-Kinderdorf e. V.
Bewegungskita ("active nurseries")	We strengthen the promotion of physical activity across different life settings and sports in early childhood education, also by actively involving organised sport and professional football. Two approaches: implementation of the quality catalogue "Kitas in Bewegung" ("Daycare Centres in Motion") at pilot sites from professional football, and support for the German Kita Prize	69	DFL Foundation
MANUS bewegt ("MANUS moves")	MANUS bewegt is a movement-oriented educational project integrated into the weekly programme of the MANUS children's homes. It is aimed at children and young people who want to try out different sports, improve their motor skills and social competences, and experience social participation	49	Manuel Neuer Kids Foundation gGmbH
Krisenchat ("Crisis Chat")	A communications campaign that raises awareness of and highlights the positive impact of sport and physical activity on the mental health of young people	31	Krisenchat gGmbH
Other projects < €15 thousand		29	
Total funding commitment for "Growing up healthy and active"*		961	
NachwuchseliteFörderung ("Youth elite funding")	Financial and non-material support for talented young Olympic, Paralympic and Deaflympic athletes so that they can develop into role models for children and young people	1,225	Stiftung Deutsche Sporthilfe (German Sports Aid Foundation)
Sporthilfe Juniorsportler ("Sporthilfe Junior Athletes")	Awards for the best young German athletes in the following categories: individual and team award, disabled sports and deaf sports	69	Stiftung Deutsche Sporthilfe ("German Sports Aid Foundation")
ZukunftBewegen (Moving forwards) – initiative	Activations – especially as part of events – that bring children and young people into contact with athletes so that they are encouraged to do more sport and exercise and are won over to the values of sport	18	DFL GmbH, German Sports Aid Foundation
Other projects < €15 thousand		4	
Total funding commitment for "Elite sport"*		1,347	
S4D-Netzwerk Deutschland ("S4D Network Germany")	After its successful founding, the Sport for Development Network Germany established digital infrastructure, funding and services in its first year, in order to give the sector a strong voice and create better conditions for networking	145	Sport for Development (S4D) Netzwerk Deutschland e. V.
#Mitbewegen ("Making moves")	The Next Gen Youth Advisory Board supports the DFL Foundation in an advisory capacity, thereby enabling the perspective of the young target group to be integrated into the Foundation's work	82	DFL Foundation
Denkfabrik DFL Stiftung ("DFL Foundation Think Tank")	Invitation to the symposium in Frankfurt to work with experts on developing ways to strengthen youth participation and democracy in football	78	DFL Foundation
BildungsgeRECHTigkeit ("Educational Equity")	German educational foundations are working on how a future-proof and equitable education system should be structured, and are initiating a discourse on this topic. The aim is to ensure equal access to quality education and the best possible individual support for all children and young people	21	Wider Sense TraFo gGmbH
Other projects < €15 thousand		37	
Total funding commitment for "Networks and cooperation"*		362	
Total funding commitment		4,929	

*Due to the presentation of amounts in full thousand euros, there may be rounding differences when adding up the individual items.

Financial Performance

With the reporting year 2024-25, the total funding commitment of the DFL Foundation exceeded the €50 million mark. In 2024-25, 66 programmes and projects were supported with funding of over €4.9 million to assist young people in their development.

The focus was on the Action Area “Social Cohesion”, which was allocated 50 per cent more resources, in particular to bring the annual theme “Gesellschaft als Team” (“Society as a Team”) to life, which shaped and guided the work of the DFL Foundation this year. In this context, a call for proposals was issued to support projects that impart “Future Skills” (“Future Skills”, see p. 10, definition in the focus chapter) to young people. Accordingly, the funding amount in the category of funding projects also increased.

In addition, in the year of the federal election 2025, programmes and campaigns to promote democratic values and social participation were strengthened or initiated, including “Lernort Stadion” (“Classroom Stadium”), the Foundation Alliance #Mission232 (founded by the DFL Foundation, in reference to the election day, 23/2/2025) and #DEMOKRATEAM (see pp. 22–25). Although the funding in the Action Area “Networks & Cooperations” slightly decreased, in 2024-25 the DFL Foundation relied more than ever on collaboration and joint action to strengthen civil society and democracy.

The funding commitment of the DFL Foundation includes financial and material resources for its own

initiatives and for the support of third parties, as well as personnel and administrative costs. In 2024-25, the resources were again provided primarily by DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga e.V. and the German Football Association (Deutscher Fußball-Bund e.V.). Third-party funds from Deutsche Postcode Lotterie once again contributed to the support of the flagship programme “Bundesliga bewegt” (“Bundesliga moves”). “Bundesliga bewegt” (“Bundesliga moves”) and the other flagship programmes “Fußball trifft Kultur” (“Football meets culture”, FtK), “Lernort Stadion” (“Classroom Stadium”), “step kickt!” and “Nachwuchselite-Förderung” (“Elite Sport”) once again formed the focus of the DFL Foundation’s funding activities. “step kickt!” entered its final round in the reporting year.

The administrative cost ratio fell to just over 14 per cent. As part of its commercial operations, which are shown in the income statement on p. 69, the DFL Foundation once again implemented projects on behalf of the DFL Group. These included, in particular, the #ZukunftBewegen (#MovingForwards) campaign with the “Arena of Skills” as well as the TOGETHER! action weeks. ■■

Business figures

Conceptual sphere

Donations access (in € thousand)

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	in %
DFB donation	875	2.100	3.000	40.28%
DFL e.V. donation	3,731	4,007	4,161	55.87%
Donations (general)	19	10	0	0.00%
Other	426	0	286	3.85%
TOTAL	5,051	6,117	7,447	100.00%

Funding commitment per action area (in € thousand)

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	in %
Social cohesion	1,527	1,430	2,259	45.82%
Growing up healthy and active	1,091	843	963	19.54%
Elite sport	1,228	1,348	1,346	27.30%
Networks and cooperations	498	462	362	7.34%
TOTAL	4,344	4,083	4,929	100.00%

Funding commitment per programme category (in € thousand)

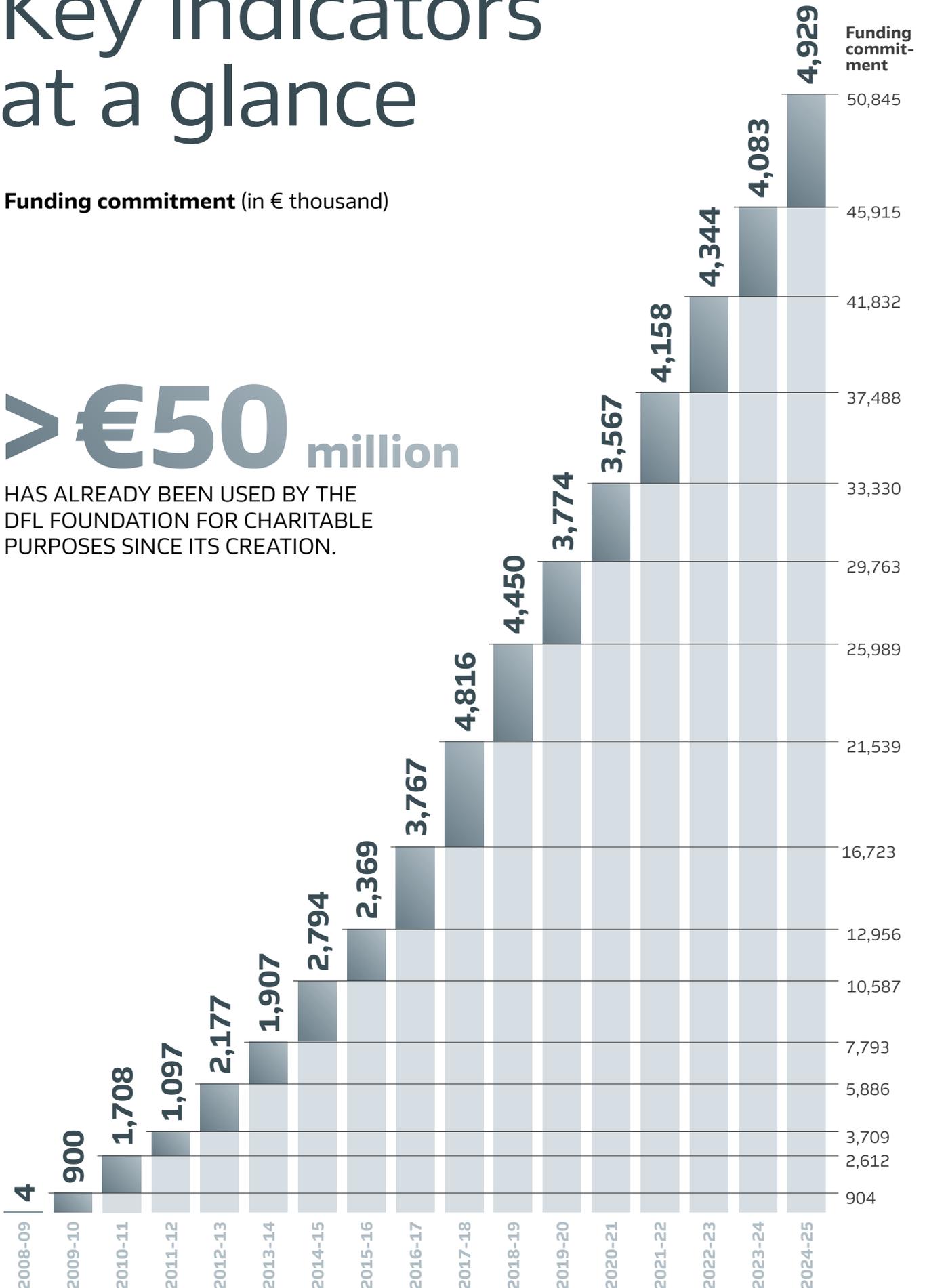
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	in %
Flagship programmes	2,945	2,982	3,246	65.84%
Funding programmes	891	938	1,475	29.92%
Small-scale programmes	507	163	209	4.24%
TOTAL	4,344	4,083	4,929	100.00%

Key indicators at a glance

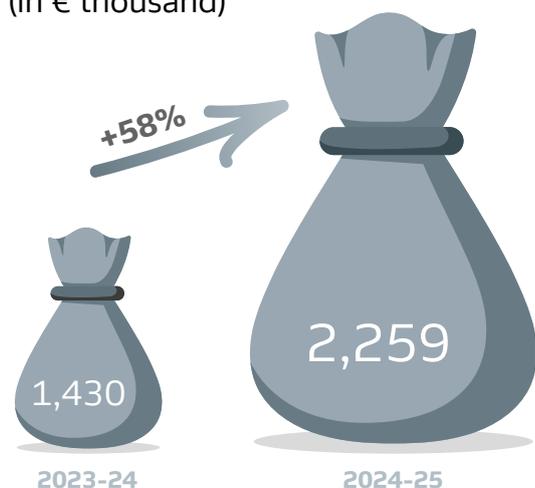
Funding commitment (in € thousand)

> €50 million

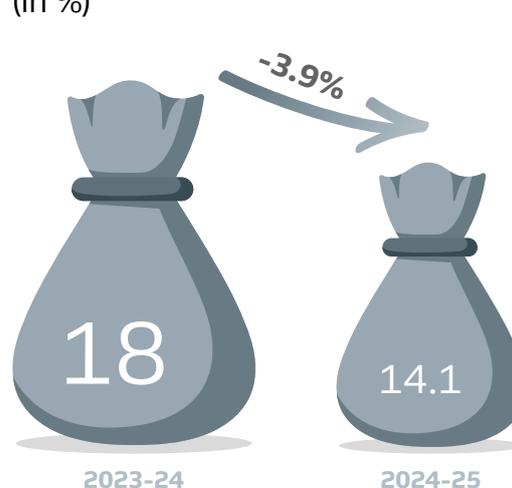
HAS ALREADY BEEN USED BY THE DFL FOUNDATION FOR CHARITABLE PURPOSES SINCE ITS CREATION.



Funding for “Gesellschaftliches Miteinander” (“Social Cohesion”) expanded (in € thousand)



DFL Foundation reduces administrative cost ratio (in %)



Income statement (in € thousand)

	Total	Conceptual sphere	Commercial operations	Asset management
1, Income from use of donations in the financial year	5,685.27	5,685.27	0.00	0.00
a) Donations received in the financial year	7,447.40	7,447.40	0.00	0.00
b) Consumption in previous years donations received	1,246.30	1,246.30	0.00	0.00
c) Donations not yet utilised in the financial year *	-3,008.42	-3,008.42	0.00	0.00
2, Other income	215.92	54.76	41.16	120.00
3, Expenses for statute-related purposes	-4,929.47	-4,929.47	0.00	0.00
a) Project funding	-3,233.22	-3,233.22	0.00	0.00
b) Incidental expenses (project-related)	-458.64	-458.64	0.00	0.00
c) Payroll costs (project-related)	-725.09	-725.09	0.00	0.00
d) Administrative expenses (project-related)	-512.52	-512.52	0.00	0.00
4, General administrative costs	-849.20	-810.56	-38.64	0.00
a) Payroll costs	-495.50	-475.61	-19.88	0.00
b) Depreciation and amortisation	-3.49	-3.35	-0.14	0.00
c) Committee work	-3.77	-3.77	0.00	0.00
d) Travel expenses	-10.91	-9.12	-1.79	0.00
e) Marketing expenses	-48.70	-41.81	-6.90	0.00
f) Building expenses	-81.70	-78.47	-3.24	0.00
g) General office expenses	-31.18	-30.35	-0.83	0.00
h) Other operating expenses	-173.95	-168.08	-5.87	0.00
5, Other interest and similar income	28.22	0.00	0.00	28.22
6, Taxes on income and earnings	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net income for the year	150.75	0.00	2.52	148.22

Amounts shown are rounded to thousands of euros; the addition of these amounts may therefore result in rounding differences.

*The donations not yet utilised as at the reporting date result from unplanned donations and will be available to support projects in the following year.

Balance sheet to 30 June 2025

Assets

	30 June 2025 in € thousand	30 June 2024 in € thousand
A. Fixed assets		
I. Intangible assets		
Purchased concessions, industrial property rights and similar rights and assets as well as licences to said rights and assets	0.00	0.00
II. Property, plant and equipment		
Other fixtures and fittings, tools and equipment	22.32	27.31
	22.32	27.31
B. Current assets		
I. Inventories		
Finished goods and merchandise	8.26	9.61
II. Receivables and other assets		
1. Trade receivables	13.88	2.74
2. Other assets	1.43	2.89
	15.31	5.63
III. Cash in hand, bank balances	5,064.64	3,663.70
C. Prepaid expenses	5.75	0.00
	5,116.28	3,706.26

Equity and liabilities

	30 June 2025 in € thousand	30 June 2024 in € thousand
A. Equity		
I. Base capital, establishment capital	1,000.00	1,000.00
II. Revenue reserves	371.92	371.92
III. Retained earnings	415.02	264.28
	1,786.95	1,636.20
B. Donations not yet utilised	2,832.53	1,212.56
C. Provisions		
1. Tax provisions	0.00	0.00
2. Other provisions	105.98	120.54
	105.98	120.54
D. Liabilities		
1. Liabilities from donations with contingent repayment obligations	175.89	33.74
• of which with a remaining term of up to one year: €175.89 thousand (2023-24: €33.74 thousand)		
2. Trade payables	61.40	91.82
• of which with a remaining term of up to one year: €61.40 thousand (Vorjahr: €91.82 thousand)		
3. Project liabilities	135.66	594.77
• of which with a remaining term of up to one year: €135.67 thousand (Vorjahr: €594.77 thousand)		
4. Other liabilities	17.87	16.63
• of which with a remaining term of up to one year: €17.87 thousand (Vorjahr: €16.63 thousand)		
• of which from taxes: €14.90 thousand (Vorjahr: €14.74 thousand)		
	390.83	736.96
	5,116.28	3,706.26

Amounts shown are rounded to thousands of euros; the addition of these amounts may therefore result in rounding differences.

Foundation Board

The Foundation Board monitors the activities of the Executive Board. It also advises and supports it. The five members of the Foundation Board are:



Dr Marc Lenz
Chairman

- CEO of DFL GmbH
- Member of the Executive Committee of the DFL e.V.
- DFB Vice President
- Member of the FIFA Stakeholders Committee & UEFA Club Licencing Committee
- Member of the European Leagues Board of Directors and the World Leagues Forum Supervisory Board
- Member of the Supervisory Board of DFL Digital Sports



Ansgar Schwenken
Deputy Chairman

- Member of the DFL Management Board
- DFL Director of Match Operations & Fans
- Member of the DFB Executive Board



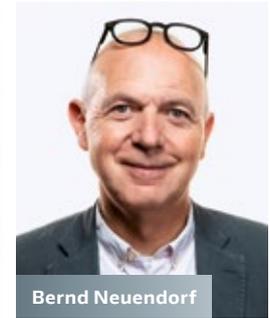
Axel Hellmann

- Member of the Executive Committee of the DFL e.V.
- Member of the Supervisory Board of DFL Digital Sports GmbH and the Supervisory Board of Sportec Solutions AG
- Member of the DFB Executive Board
- Member of the UEFA Club Licensing Committee
- CEO and Member of the Board Eintracht Frankfurt Fußball AG



Nicole Kumpis

- President of BTSV Eintracht von 1895 e.V.
- Deputy Chairwoman of the Supervisory Board of Eintracht Braunschweig GmbH & Co. KGaA



Bernd Neuendorf

- President of the DFB
- Chairman of the DFB Executive Board
- Chairman of the Annual General Meeting of DFB GmbH & Co. KG
- Member of the FIFA Council
- Chairman of the Trustees of the DFB Foundations Egidius Braun and Sepp Herberger

Executive Board

The Executive Board manages the business and administers the foundation and its assets. It is responsible for strategy, funding guidelines and budgets. Its members are appointed by the Executive Committee of DFL e.V. and the management of DFL GmbH for a term of three years.

Jörg Degenhart
Deputy Chairman

- Member of the DFL Management Board
- DFL Director of Finance, IT and Organisation
- Member of the Supervisory Board of DFL Digital Sports
- Chairman of the Supervisory Board Liga Travel GmbH
- Head of the Finance Commission of the DFL e.V.
- Deputy Chairman of the DFB Examination Committee



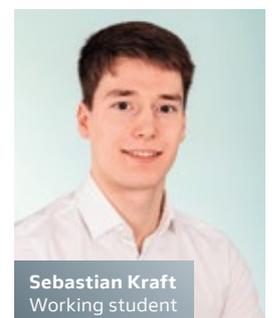
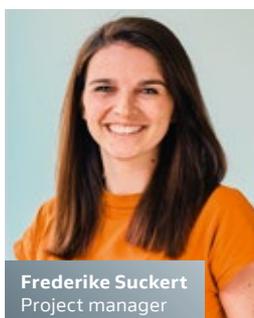
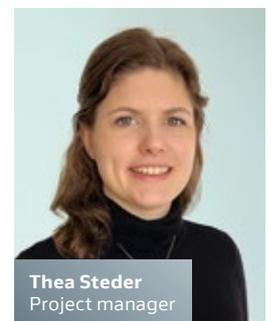
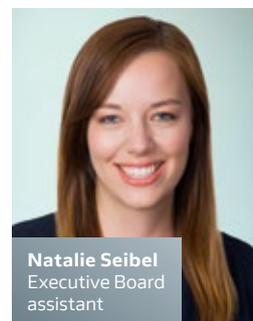
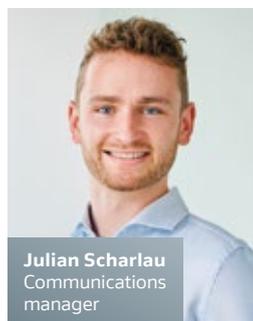
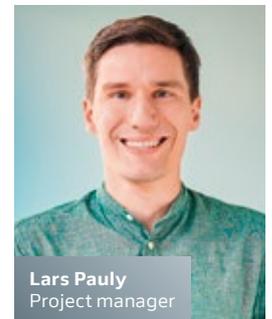
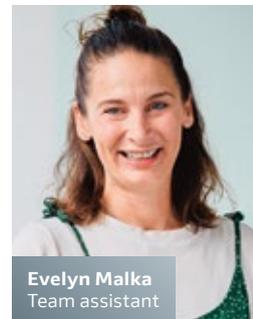
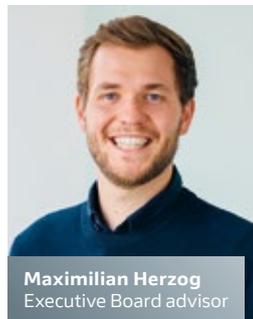
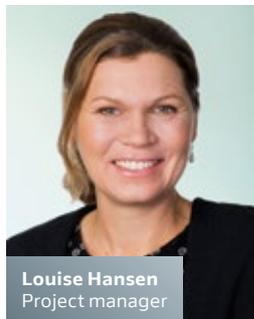
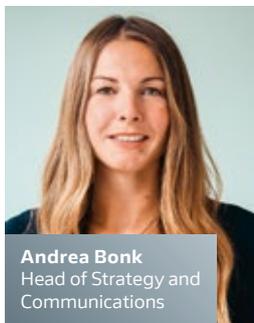
Franziska Fey
Chairwoman

- Member of the DFB's Social Responsibility Commission (as of 2024-25)
- Member of the Board of the Initiative Frankfurter Stiftungen e.V.

Team

The DFL Foundation team organises operational project management and supports the Executive Board in strategic planning. It is characterised by thematic expertise and good cooperation with project partners.

The DFL Foundation team (as at December 2025)



Trustees

The DFL Foundation is supported by personalities from politics, sport, business and society. The trustees advise the foundation's Executive Board and the Foundation Board. As public figures, they or their network help to advance the principles, ideas and commitment of the foundation.

Trustees of the DFL Foundation (as at December 2025)



Marcel Reif

• Chairman of the Board of Trustees



Matondo Castlo



Dunja Hayali



Britta Heidemann



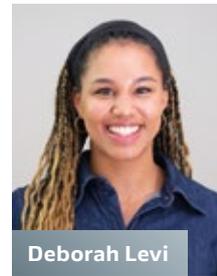
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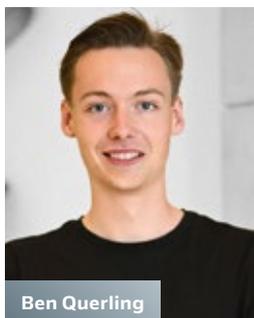
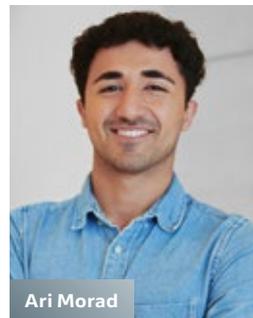
In dialogue

The Trustees of the DFL Foundation were once again actively involved in various areas over the past year – in conversations with children and young people, through exchanges with individuals and organisations engaged in civil society, as well as at the “Arena of Skills” in Stuttgart and as part of the Future Skills Jury in Frankfurt am Main. The Trustees were also active in social media campaigns surrounding the federal election in 2025. In Chemnitz, they exchanged their thoughts and ideas during the Trustees’ meeting.

Next Gen Youth Advisory Board

The Next Gen Youth Advisory Board advises and actively supports the DFL Foundation. Its current 12 members contribute the perspective of young people, for example in communication, project funding and events.

The team of the Next Gen Youth Advisory Board (as of December 2025)



Next Gen@Work

How the Youth Advisory Board helps shape the work of the Foundation and our society as a team. Four experience reports from members of the Next Gen Youth Advisory Board of the DFL Foundation.



TRANSFER WINDOW ON WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY

Discussion on the opportunities for youth participation in sport and society

On 20 November, the DFL Foundation placed the right of young people to participate in our society at the centre of attention to mark International World Children's Day. Guests included:

- **Thomas Bosch**, Head of Department for Extracurricular Child and Youth Education, BMFSFJ
- **Hatice Kahraman**, Editor-in-Chief of Salon5, youth editorial team of CORRECTIV
- **Matthias Mühlen**, Director of Sustainability, VfL Bochum 1848 and
- **Julian Lagemann**, Board Member, Deutsche Sportjugend.

As a member of the Next Gen Youth Advisory Board, I had the opportunity to moderate the digital discussion and immediately made the motto of the Transfer Window the rule of the game: interactive and participatory, we began with the guests' and listeners' memories of their first experiences of participation, which were as diverse as the perspectives of the experts involved. The Transfer Window made it clear, through a wide variety of approaches, how diverse youth participation can be implemented and what potential it holds for society, sport and politics.

Felix Moskalev

SPORT CONNECTS AT ANY TIME OF DAY

MitternachtsSport e. V. in Berlin-Spandau

MitternachtsSport e. V., based in Berlin-Spandau, is aimed primarily at young people and young adults who want to play sport together in their free time – usually late in the evening or at night. As a member of the Next Gen Youth Advisory Board, I visited the project. During my visit, I immediately felt the positive energy in the hall: joy, openness and a strong sense of community. What was impressive was that the games are played without referees – the young people take responsibility, learn fairness and conflict resolution.

Football here is more than just sport – it opens doors to trust, cohesion and personal development. The supervisors create a family-like environment that provides support and enables growth.

As someone from Spandau, I know how valuable such places are. Young people here learn teamwork, responsibility and respect – skills that go far beyond sport.

The visit was inspiring and showed how real community is created through football.

Christian Beier





YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ACTION

KICKFAIR Youth Forum #24 in Wolfsburg

The Next Gen Youth Advisory Board was represented at the KICKFAIR Youth Forum #24 in Wolfsburg by Jannis Diehl, Felix Moskalev and myself, as well as Lars Pauly from the Foundation team, for three days. The event began on Sunday evening with the Bundesliga match VfL Wolfsburg vs. 1. FSV Mainz 05, before Monday was used for preparation, exchange and coordination.

On Tuesday, the forum took place with around 100 participants. After the presentation of KICKFAIR's work, we gave a short talk introducing the Next Gen Youth Advisory Board. This was followed by workshops in a special setting: a circuit in the interior of the Volkswagen Arena. There, the young people from KICKFAIR presented their projects and showed how they combine football with education, personal development and social engagement.

The Youth Forum thrived on intensive exchange and offered exciting insights into different forms of youth participation, from structured involvement in the Youth Advisory Board to more open forms of participation at KICKFAIR, where young people become engaged through their own participation.

Ben Querling

YOUTH PARTICIPATION AS A BOOSTER

Foundation team and Youth Advisory Board lead workshop in Berlin

As part of the transform_D Summit of the German Foundation for Engagement and Volunteering (DSEE), Nadine Seddig and Lena Ziegenhagen from the Foundation team, together with me as a member of the Next Gen Youth Advisory Board, led a workshop entitled "Society as a Team – Youth Participation as a Booster for Social Cohesion".

Together, we highlighted why the DFL Foundation involves young people and how this creates added value for the work of the Foundation and for society. In a well-filled cinema hall, a lively exchange developed after our presentation, with the audience showing great curiosity about our work and us being able to report on concrete projects of the Youth Advisory Board and its involvement in the Foundation's work.

The transform_D Summit 2025 offered a variety of perspectives, inspiring conversations and concrete impulses for our own work. For us, it was a valuable experience to engage with so many committed people – and to share our vision of youth participation and social cohesion. The event, with its good organisation and appealing programme, showed us: engagement is the engine for change.

Felix Moskalev



The transform_D Summit 2025 brought together committed people, decision-makers and visionaries at the Colosseum Berlin to shape the future.

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DFL FOUNDATION

DFL Foundation

Eschersheimer Landstrasse 14
60322 Frankfurt/Main
Germany

T +49 69 3006555-0

E info@df-stiftung.de

W dfl-stiftung.de/en

@ @dflstiftung

f @DFLStiftung

in DFL Stiftung

🎵 @beautifulgame_official

Editor-in-chief

Franziska Fey (Chairwoman, legally responsible for content)

Project manager

Maximilian Türck

Editing and coordination

Julia Lehmann (fidea – Beratung für Kommunikation)

Visual and brand design

Thomas Markert, Blazenka Ceh, Florian Witzschel

Support team

Lukas Bendix, Andrea Bonk, Maximilian Herzog,
Evelyn Malka, Lars Pauly, Lukas Rudershausen,
Clarissa Sagerer-Schlockermann, Claudia Schaa,
Julian Scharlau, Dr Nadine Seddig, Natalie Seibel,
Thea Steder, Frederike Suckert, Lena Ziegenhagen

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DFL FOUNDATION

DFL Foundation

Eschersheimer Landstraße 14
60322 Frankfurt/Main
Germany

T +49 69 3006555-0

E info@dfi-stiftung.de

W dfi-stiftung.de/en

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