



An evaluation of the conceptualisation, development and implementation of a football-based programme for prevention of radicalisation

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PUBLIC PHD DEFENCE FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR IN MOVEMENT AND SPORT SCIENCES

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH 2026, 6PM
AULA I 0.01, CAMPUS ETTERBEEK

PROMOTORS

Prof. dr. Marc Theeboom (VUB)
Prof. dr. Fred Coalter (VUB)

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ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH

This PhD examines the conceptualisation, development and implementation of a football-based programme aimed at contributing to the prevention of radicalisation among young people. The research follows the Belgian Red Courts Radicalisation Prevention Programme from its initial programme theory and design to its implementation in practice. Using a theory-driven and realist-informed approach, the dissertation analyses how assumptions about sport, social relationships, diversity and re-pluralisation were translated into programme activities, and how organisational, contextual and implementation conditions shaped what could ultimately be delivered and evaluated. The findings show substantial divergence between the programme as proposed and the programme as implemented, including reduced reach, limited local anchoring and selective participant retention. The dissertation argues that implementation is not merely a technical stage between programme theory and outcomes, but a central part of the causal process that determines whether a programme theory can be enacted and meaningfully assessed.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Younis Kamil Abdulsalam (born in 1984 in Khartoum, Sudan) moved to Germany in 1990 and grew up in the Cologne/Bonn region. He obtained a Diplom-Sportwissenschaftler degree from the German Sport University Cologne and subsequently built a career at the intersection of sport, youth development and social integration. For two decades, he has worked as a football and swimming coach and as a sport-based youth worker. Today, he works as a diversity and anti-racism consultant for sports organisations and associations, with institutional partners including the German Football Association (DFB), the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) and the German Football League (DFL). He is the founder of YouMo! gUG, a non-profit organisation for sport-based personality training and chairman of ISC AlHilal Bonn e.V., the biggest migrant sports club in Germany. He is also Vice-President of ROOTS – Against Racism in Sports e.V., an anti-racism organisation in sport. In 2021, he began his doctoral research at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel under the supervision of Prof. Marc Theeboom and Prof. Fred Coalter, examining the conceptualisation, development and implementation of a football-based radicalisation prevention programme.

