

## **“Football meets Culture” initiative enjoys the support of strong partners**

Deutsche Hospitality funding a programme at two schools in Frankfurt / Eintracht Frankfurt announces that Muhammed Damar will act as an official mentor for the scheme

*Frankfurt am Main, 29 September 2021*

Strong partners have come together to assist with an integrative education programme entitled “Football meets Culture”. In Frankfurt am Main, local supporters of the initiative introduced themselves and described their work with socially disadvantaged children. The German Football League Foundation has been a partner of the integrative education programme since 2012, and the city’s main football club Eintracht Frankfurt have been involved with the Karmeliter Primary School since the very outset. Since January 2021, Deutsche Hospitality is supporting the programme at the Karmeliter Primary School located in the multi-cultural area surrounding Frankfurt’s main railway station, only one stop away on the suburban train network from Deutsche Hospitality’s headquarters. The company is also supporting the Erich Kästner School in the city’s North End.

Muhammed Damar, mentor of the programme and a member of Eintracht Frankfurt’s under 19 team as well as the junior national team of Germany, says: “The passion that these kids show for football reminds me of my own childhood. I’m very happy to support ‘Football meets Culture’ because you can see how much enthusiasm this sport creates and how this can motivate learning.” During the presentation of the programme at the Karmeliter Primary School, he was represented by Matteo Bignetti, goalkeeper of Eintracht Frankfurt’s under 19 team and the under 18 national team of Austria, due to a training assignment. “Football brings people of many nationalities together. Muhammed is my friend and a great programme mentor,” the youngster said about his teammate.

“Football meets Culture” is an integrative education programme which aims to improve opportunities for children in grades 3 to 6 from disadvantaged parts of the city. It uses a combination of football, language, and culture to encourage linguistic and social competence. Learning behaviour and self-belief are promoted too. The programme is also backed by Ridle Baku, a member of Germany’s national team who is also ambassador for “Football meets Culture” across the country. Other celebrity sports people such as Nia Künzer, Manuel Neuer and Joachim

Król are very much behind the project, which launched in 2007. It has now expanded to take in 34 locations in 22 cities, and partners include football clubs such as Borussia Dortmund, Eintracht Frankfurt, and Mainz 05. The pleasure of taking exercise, teamwork, incentives for language development, vocabulary expansion, articulation skills, reading and writing are all equally relevant.

“Giving children chances in life and the ability to participate is a prerequisite for social cohesion,” said Marcus Bernhardt, CEO of Deutsche Hospitality/Steigenberger Hotels AG. “LitCam is a charitable organisation which we have supported in the past by staging events at the Steigenberger Frankfurter Hof. We are delighted to be able to contribute to this important programme by making a commitment to two local schools.”

Karin Plötz, Director of LitCam, added: “The Steigenberger Frankfurter Hof is an institution in Frankfurt. This makes it even more special that Deutsche Hospitality, the umbrella brand of the Steigenberger Hotel group, will continue to provide funding for our integrative education programme “Football meets Culture” at two schools in Frankfurt over the next two years.”

The Literacy Campaign, known in abbreviated form as LitCam, was instigated at the 2006 Frankfurt Book Fair with the aim of establishing an international network for basic education and literacy. The second stage saw the start of the “Football meets Culture” initiative at the Karmeliterkirche in Frankfurt in 2007. For the very first time, children received the opportunity to improve their social and language skills by taking part in football training delivered by a youth coach from Eintracht Frankfurt. This was reinforced by competence-based teaching from an experienced teacher and by further cultural activities. The programme culminates in a “Football meets Culture” tournament, which takes place at the end of the year and enables all participating children to compete for a challenge cup.

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