



Annual report 2025

**MOVE
FORWARD**
FOUNDATION



FOREWORD

Some children and young people grow up in environments where safety, stability and opportunities are taken for granted. Others grow up in circumstances where these essential foundations are missing.

For some the most important years of their childhood are spent in shelters, asylum seeker centres, or safe houses, often shaped by experiences of violence, abuse, exploitation, threats or forced displacement. As a result of these traumatic experiences, many of these children and young people become withdrawn and are less able to connect with support from the outside world. It is precisely for these children and young people that Move Forward Foundation is wholeheartedly committed.

In 2025, we once again reached hundreds of children and young people in the Netherlands and Mexico through sports and dance programmes. For us, movement is not the end goal, but a powerful tool to boost self-confidence, connection and recovery.

What moves us most are not the numbers or statistics, but the small moments behind them. The young girl who, after weeks of watching from the sidelines, joined the group for the first time. The child who shared that they felt less angry after a session. The participant who discovered they were stronger than they had ever imagined. These moments remind us why this work matters.

Alongside delivering our programmes, we also invested in the future throughout 2025. We continued developing and strengthening the Trauma Support Movement Program (TRASMO). We trained our coaches who work every day with these vulnerable target groups. In doing so, we are building sustainable impact, enabling even more children and young people to benefit from a safe and trauma-sensitive approach.

We are deeply grateful for the trust of our participants, youthcare institutions, funding partners, collaborators and coaches who make this work possible. Thanks to their dedication and support, we were once again able to reach many children and young people in 2025 who often remain unseen, yet who may need our attention the most.

In this annual report, we look back on the activities, achievements and developments of the past year.

Nina Schmid
Founder
Move Forward Foundation



ABOUT US

Move Forward Foundation uses sport and dance as powerful tools to support children and young people growing up in challenging circumstances. Since its establishment in 2014, the foundation has developed and delivered programmes for young people affected by trauma, social exclusion, domestic and sexual violence, forced migration, abuse, and other adverse life experiences. We believe that movement can play a vital role in recovery, personal development, and building self-confidence. Through safe and accessible programmes, we create environments where participants can express themselves, develop new skills, stay physically active, and build positive relationships with coaches and peers.

Our programmes are delivered in places where the need is greatest, including asylum seeker centres, shelters for survivors of violence, emergency accommodation facilities, and underserved

communities. We work closely with the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), multiple youthcare institutions, municipalities, charitable foundations, and community partners. Our workshops are led by coaches with backgrounds in sport, dance, and social work. All coaches receive specialised training in trauma-informed coaching, enabling them to respond to the unique needs of the participants they work with. Creating a safe, supportive and positive experience is at the heart of everything we do.

In 2025, Move Forward Foundation delivered projects in both the Netherlands and Mexico. Alongside our programmes, we continued to invest in knowledge development, research, and the professional development of our coaches. Through these efforts, we are strengthening our mission to make sport and dance accessible to children and young people who can benefit from them the most.





2025 PROJECTS

HIDDEN GIRLS NETHERLANDS

Hidden Girls is a programme developed by Move Forward Foundation for girls and young women living in safe houses across the Netherlands. Participants are temporarily unable to live independently due to safety concerns and receive support after experiencing domestic violence, sexual abuse, human trafficking, honour-based violence, or other forms of trauma. Within these shelters, the primary focus is naturally on safety and care. However, there is often limited opportunity for body-oriented activities that contribute to recovery, self-confidence and emotional wellbeing. Hidden Girls was developed to meet this need through weekly dance and sports workshops delivered within the safe environment of the shelters.

Since 2023, the programme has been delivered at multiple shelters throughout the Netherlands. In 2025, particular attention was given to locations outside the country's major cities, where the need for trauma-informed programmes is equally significant but similar initiatives are often unavailable. Guided by experienced female coaches, participants attended weekly dance and kickboxing workshops. These workshops formed part of the Trauma Support Movement Program, an intervention that uses sport and movement to reduce trauma-related stress while promoting participants' overall wellbeing.

TARGET GROUP

Hidden Girls supports girls and young women between the ages of 10 and 25 who are living in protected shelter facilities. The majority of participants are between 10 and 18 years old. Many have experienced traumatic events that have affected their sense of safety, trust and self-confidence. Through sport and dance, Hidden Girls provides an accessible way for participants to experience positive moments again while gradually rebuilding confidence in themselves and in others. The programme was delivered in partnership with organisations including Humanitas, Pluryn, Leger des

Heils, Arosa, HVO Querido, Timon, Youz, Blijfgroep, Moviera, Rosa Manus, and several other shelter organisations across the Netherlands.

" MOVE FORWARD'S DANCE WORKSHOPS ARE AN INVALUABLE ADDITION TO THE LIVES OF THE GIRLS AND WOMEN IN OUR SHELTER. THEY FEEL SEEN AND HEARD, AND THEY ARE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO SIMPLY BE THEMSELVES. WITHOUT JUDGEMENT, THEY ARE FREE TO MOVE, EXPRESS THEMSELVES AND EXPERIENCE A SENSE OF FREEDOM "

Support worker at one of the participating shelters





REACH AND RESULTS

In 2025 Hidden Girls was delivered across sixteen shelter locations throughout the Netherlands. During this period, nearly 500 workshops were organised, reaching more than 100 girls and young women.

Alongside delivering the programme, significant investment was made in its quality. Eleven coaches were actively involved in the programme and participated in dedicated training and professional development sessions focused on trauma-sensitive coaching.

IMPACT

Throughout the programme, coaches and support workers observed participants gradually developing greater self-confidence and stronger connections within their groups. Girls who initially preferred to observe from the sidelines became increasingly engaged and actively participated in the workshops. In several places, participants formed close groups that supported and encouraged one another.

Support workers consistently reported that the weekly workshops became a positive and meaningful highlight for many participants. The combination of movement, personal attention and a safe environment enabled

participants to express themselves more freely while rediscovering enjoyment in physical activity.

From an organisational perspective, 2025 also marked an important milestone. Hidden Girls expanded across the Netherlands, while valuable insights were gained into the conditions required to successfully deliver the programme.

These experiences provide a strong foundation for the continued development and long-term sustainability of Hidden Girls.

LOOKING AHEAD

The lessons learned throughout 2025 will play an important role in the continued development of Hidden Girls. In 2026, the programme will continue in existing shelters while strengthening long-term partnerships with youthcare institutions across the Netherlands.

At the same time, Move Forward Foundation will continue building on the knowledge and expertise developed over recent years in trauma-informed sport and dance coaching. The ongoing development of the Trauma Support Movement Program, together with further research into its intervention, will strengthen the programme's evidence base and create new opportunities for future growth and wider implementation.





HIDDEN GIRLS MEXICO

Hidden Girls Mexico was developed for girls and young women living in safe houses across Mexico City. Participants have experienced domestic violence, sexual violence, or other forms of abuse and are unable to return home. Since 2022, Move Forward Foundation has partnered with local shelters to deliver a programme that uses sport and dance to strengthen the wellbeing of these girls and young women. Thanks to the support of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Mexico City, the programme continued throughout 2025.

As in the Netherlands, a trauma-informed approach forms the foundation of Hidden Girls Mexico. Through weekly sport and dance workshops, participants are given the opportunity to build self-confidence, strengthen social connections and improve their physical and emotional wellbeing in a safe and supportive environment.

SHELTER LOCATIONS

During 2025, the programme was delivered at five shelter locations across Mexico City:

Casa de las Mercedes – Tepito

Casa de las Mercedes – San Rafael

El Pozo de Vida

Amazonas Fundación IAP

Pro Niños de la Calle

The activities varied between shelters and included a combination of fitness, basketball, boxing and dance workshops. Each programme was tailored to the needs of the participants and the possibilities within each shelter location.

REACH AND RESULTS

Throughout the project year, approximately **125 girls** participated in the Hidden Girls Mexico programme. Weekly workshops were delivered at all participating locations.

The shelters Casa de las Mercedes and Fundación Jóvenes de Tlatilco showed particularly strong participant engagement and consistent attendance throughout the year. The workshops became an important part of the participants' weekly routines.

The combination of sport and dance created opportunities for different forms of personal expression and development. During 2025, additional investments were also made in programme quality. Coaches received specialised training and supervision from Dutch and Mexican trauma specialists, further strengthening the programme's trauma-informed approach.

IMPACT

Shelter staff and coaches reported clear positive developments among participants throughout the year. Girls became more actively involved in group activities, demonstrated greater self-confidence and showed improved cooperation with others. For many participants, the weekly workshops provided an opportunity to release stress, experience joy and temporarily leave behind the challenges of daily life. The combination of sport and dance proved particularly valuable. Sports activities promoted discipline, body awareness and resilience, while dance created space for creativity, emotional expression and self-confidence. Several shelters also reported a noticeable improvement in the overall atmosphere within their groups. Staff observed increased motivation, stronger social interaction and higher levels of participant engagement.

“ I FEEL LESS ANGRY BECAUSE OF THESE SPORTS LESSONS

Participant, Hidden Girls Mexico

Another important achievement is the weekly presence of our coaches during the last 4 years. Trusting relationships developed with both participants and shelter staff, creating a stable foundation.

LOOKING AHEAD

The experiences gained throughout 2025 once again demonstrated the value of Hidden Girls Mexico for girls in safe houses.

In 2026 Move Forward Foundation will focus on making this programme self-sustainable while maintaining a strong focus on quality, trauma-informed coaching and creating safe environments where girls can continue to grow, recover and develop.



AZC WORKSHOP TOUR

Since 2014, Move Forward Foundation has been organising sport, dance and movement workshops for children and young people living in asylum seeker centres and emergency accommodation facilities across the Netherlands. Through these activities, we provide children and young people with opportunities to stay active, develop new skills and experience positive moments during a period of life that is often marked by uncertainty and constant change.

During the autumn school holidays of 2025, Move Forward Foundation organised a small edition of our AZC Workshop Tour. Some asylum seeker centres reached out to us in Summer, if we could please come to their location. We were planning to do a big AZC Workshop Tour in 2026, but thanks to the support of the Vaillant Foundation we were able to give already 14 workshops to the asylum seekers centres that approached us.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY

The AZC Workshop Tour offers a wide variety of sport, dance and creative workshops, including boxing, street gym, dance, dance & play and rap.

The programme was developed in close collaboration with staff members at each location to ensure that the workshops matched the ages, interests and needs of the participating children and young people. All workshops were delivered by our Move Forward coaches with extensive experience working with children and young people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Across every workshop, the focus remained on talent development, building self-confidence, strengthening social connections and creating a safe environment where participants could enjoy moving, learning and expressing themselves.

REACH AND RESULTS

During the autumn tour, **14 workshops** were delivered at asylum seeker centres throughout the Netherlands, reaching **183 children and young people**. Workshops took place in Arnhem, Den Helder, Enschede, Hengelo, Albergen, Liessel and Rijssen-Holten, among others.

Participants were introduced to a variety of sports, dance styles and creative activities while developing new skills, working together and building positive experiences through movement.

IMPACT

Evaluation results showed overwhelmingly positive feedback from both participants and staff members at the reception centres. Contact persons highlighted the enthusiasm and energy of the coaches, the strong connection with the target group and the positive atmosphere created during the workshops.

" WHEN YOU COMPARE MOVE FORWARD'S PROGRAMME TO THOSE OFFERED BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS, THERE REALLY IS NO COMPARISON. THE VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES IS EXCEPTIONAL, AND THE COACHES ARE ALWAYS ENTHUSIASTIC. "

COA employee

Additional evaluations confirmed that the workshops were a valuable addition to the existing activity programmes within the reception centres. Participants were actively engaged throughout the sessions and responded enthusiastically to the wide range of activities offered.

LOOKING AHEAD

The positive feedback from participating reception centres confirms the ongoing need for accessible sport and movement programmes for children and young people living in reception facilities.

Move Forward Foundation therefore remains committed to providing workshops that promote enjoyment, social connection and personal development.

Building on the success of the AZC Workshop Tour, Move Forward Foundation will continue organising holiday workshops at Asylum seeker centres throughout 2026 and 2027. These programmes will focus on strengthening talent development, social cohesion and self-confidence among young people aged 12 to 21 living in reception centres outside the major cities. Through intensive, co-created programmes in music, dance and sport, we aim to create meaningful opportunities for young people to develop their talents, connect with others and build confidence for the future.



COACHES ACADEMY

In 2025 Move Forward Foundation launched the Coaches Academy. This programme was developed to further strengthen the professional development of coaches by equipping them with practical knowledge and skills in trauma-informed and inclusive coaching.

The Coaches Academy was initiated by Move Forward Foundation and also open for coaches of 3 other Dutch NGO's Project Fearless, Favela Street and 3X3 Unites. Nike employees also participated in the training sessions, because the Academy Days were hosted at Nike's European Headquarters in Hilversum, the Netherlands.

ACADEMY DAYS

Throughout the year, a series of workshop days was organised around themes that directly support coaches working with children and young people. Topics included trauma-informed coaching, diversity and inclusion, psychomotor therapy, aggression regulation, stress reduction, body awareness, first aid, social media and sport activities for refugee communities. One of the most requested training was the First Aid for Trauma Triggers, that was especially for us designed by The Trauma Company.

Alongside the Academy Days, several **Field Experience Days** were organised. During these practical sessions, participants supported our Move Forward coaches at shelter locations, allowing them to observe trauma-informed coaching in real-life settings and gain valuable hands-on experience.

Finally, two **Exploration Days** were held. During these sessions, coaches worked together to further develop exercises and make them trauma informed. Guided by 3 trauma specialists from different Dutch and American companies, existing activities were reviewed and refined from a trauma-informed perspective, ensuring they better met the needs of participants.

REACH

During the Coaches Academy,

80 coaches participated in the Academy Days.

Participating sports coaches represented a wide range of organisations, with the largest groups coming from Move Forward Foundation and Favela Street. The majority of participants were female coaches, while the Academy also welcomed coaches of different ages, professional backgrounds and levels of experience.

IMPACT

Through the Coaches Academy, Move Forward Foundation created a sustainable platform for knowledge sharing and professional development in 2025.

The Academy brought together coaches from different organisations, enabling them to exchange experiences, best practices and practical insights. This not only strengthened participants' understanding of trauma-sensitive coaching but also fostered a growing network of professionals working with similar target groups.

The addition of Field Experience Days and collaborative development sessions ensured that participants could immediately connect newly acquired knowledge to real-life situations within their own coaching practice, making the learning experience both practical and directly applicable.

LOOKING AHEAD

The positive evaluations and high level of engagement from participants demonstrate a clear need for an ongoing learning platform where coaches can continue developing their skills while sharing experiences with one another.

Move Forward Foundation will explore opportunities to implement the Coaches Academy in existing projects and strengthen collaborations with new partners. Nike has supported us for many years but did let us know that unfortunately for 2026 and 2027 they are not able to financially support our Coaches Academy.



BACKYARD PROGRAM

The Backyard Program is a collaboration between Move Forward Foundation, Nike and The Salvation Army. The programme was initiated by Nike and developed for children and young people living at a shelter for Ukrainian refugees in Hilversum. Directly next to the European Headquarters. Since its launch, in 2023 the programme has used sport, dance and movement activities to provide children with a safe, supportive and enjoyable way to spend their free time. Fun, connection and participation are at the heart of every activity.

The project, which started in May 2023, continued through to May 2025.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY

During the first months of 2025, activities continued at the Salvation Army shelter in Hilversum. Participants took part in weekly sport and dance workshops led by Move Forward Foundation coaches in close collaboration with the shelter. Even the security guy turned out to be a great assist basketball coach and one of the young people who lived in the shelter was the DJ during our Backyard Events.

The programme also built upon the relationships established during the previous year, allowing coaches to continue supporting children and strengthening connections with both participants and their families.

COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAMME

With the completion of the Backyard Program, an important chapter came to an end. For two years the programme provided children and young people who had been forced to flee the war in Ukraine with opportunities to experience joy, connection and stability through sport and dance.

Move Forward Foundation looks back with great appreciation on this collaboration with Nike, Salvation Army and all coaches who contributed their passion, commitment and expertise to the successful delivery of the programme.





FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRAUMA SUPPORT MOVEMENT PROGRAM (TRASMO)

In 2025, Move Forward Foundation took an important next step in the further development of the Trauma Support Movement Program (TRASMO), the intervention that forms the foundation of all our programmes. TRASMO uses sport and dance to help reduce trauma-related stress and support the recovery and wellbeing of children and young people who have experienced traumatic life events.

The founder of the Move Forward Foundation has been working together with a team of trauma specialists and researchers from Pluryn and the Radboud University to validate the intervention, making it more accessible for professionals working with young people affected by trauma.

This work builds upon previous experiences within Hidden Girls as well as a feasibility study conducted by Pluryn in collaboration with Radboud University. The study showed that participants experienced the intervention as valuable and that it contributed to relaxation,

positive group dynamics and increased engagement in programme activities.

Throughout 2025, considerable effort was invested in collecting, documenting and structuring the knowledge developed over recent years across Move Forward Foundation's various programmes. This work will result in a manual describing the intervention, its theoretical foundations and practical applications.

Alongside the written methodology, visual learning materials are also being developed to support coaches and healthcare professionals in applying the approach within their own practice.

Through this continued development, Move Forward Foundation is taking an important step towards further professionalising and strengthening the evidence base of its intervention. Completion of this development process has been done in the first quarter of 2026.





DOCUMENTARY – **THEY MATTER TOO**

In 2025, preparations began for the documentary **They Matter Too**.

The documentary follows the Hidden Girls programme and highlights how sport and dance are used within shelter locations to support girls and young women recovering from traumatic experiences.

The production of the documentary is supported by the Agis Innovation Fund and forms part of Move Forward Foundation's broader mission to raise awareness of the target group, the Trauma Support Movement Program and the value of body-oriented, trauma-informed interventions.

Throughout the production process, the safety and wellbeing of participants remain the highest priority. Particular care is taken to protect their privacy, anonymity and the sensitive circumstances in which they are living.

Production and development of the documentary continued throughout 2025, with the final documentary completed and released in 2026.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work of Move Forward Foundation would not be possible without the dedication, commitment and support of countless individuals and organisations. We would therefore like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to our mission in 2025: making sport and dance accessible to children and young people growing up in vulnerable circumstances.

First and foremost, we would like to thank the participants of our programmes. Their courage, resilience and trust continue to inspire us every day. It is truly remarkable to witness how children and young people, despite facing incredibly challenging circumstances, continue to grow, support one another and discover new strengths within themselves.

We are equally grateful to the shelter organisations, healthcare providers and community partners with whom we have worked throughout the year. Thanks to their collaboration, our coaches have been able to deliver weekly workshops at locations across the Netherlands and Mexico, providing activities that truly respond to the needs of the participants.

A special word of thanks goes to our coaches. Through their passion, professionalism and dedication, they create safe environments where participants feel seen, valued and supported. They provide opportunities for children and young people to experience joy, build confidence and take meaningful steps towards recovery and personal development.

We would also like to thank the trauma specialists, trainers and knowledge partners who have contributed to the continued development of our methodology and to the professional growth of our coaches.

Furthermore, we are sincerely grateful for the support of our funding partners, donors and financial supporters. Their trust and commitment have enabled us not only to deliver our programmes, but also to develop new initiatives and continue investing in the quality, sustainability and long-term impact of our work.

Finally, we would like to thank all volunteers, ambassadors, network partners and everyone else who has supported Move Forward Foundation in any way throughout 2025.

Together, we have once again reached hundreds of children and young people who deserve safety, opportunity and hope. We look forward to continuing this journey together in the years ahead.





**IF YOU LIKE TO READ OUR ANNUAL REPORT
FROM THE YEARS BEFORE, FEEL FREE TO SEND
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