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PRESS RELEASE

Tadesse Abraham and Generali Switzerland kick-start the “THSN Refugee Team” in Zurich

After launching the “THSN Refugee Team” in French-speaking Switzerland, another running group for refugees has now been set up in Zurich. With Swiss marathon record holder Tadesse Abraham as the coach and the non-profit association SPORTEGRATION as the team’s partner, Generali Switzerland is holding training sessions several times per week. This initiative, which is financed by “The Human Safety Net Switzerland” (a foundation set up by Generali Switzerland), seeks to integrate refugees through sport. Dominic Lobalu, a talented upcoming runner, has been selected as the first “Generali Running Talent”, and will receive additional support.

Tadesse Abraham is working with “The Human Safety Net Switzerland” (THSN) – a foundation set up by Generali Switzerland – to support people from refugee backgrounds. The project started back in September 2020 with the launch of the “THSN Refugee Team” in French-speaking Switzerland. Together with the non-profit association SPORTEGRATION, the next step has now been taken in German-speaking Switzerland with the launch of the “THSN Refugee Team” in Zurich. Through THSN, Generali Switzerland seeks to provide disadvantaged people with opportunities that will allow them to reach their full potential. The running group was founded to help refugees integrate into society through sport.

Generali (Switzerland) Holding Ltd.
Media Relations
T +41 58 472 41 60

media.ch@generali.com
generali.ch

Training for amateurs, professionals and coaches

The “THSN Refugee Team” trains twice a week in Zurich. The Swiss marathon record holder Tadesse Abraham coaches the team together with Marco Rancan, running trainer at the LC Uster athletics club. Abdi Salam Ali, a talented up-and-coming runner, serves as a co-coach, learning firsthand how the two professional coaches go about training the “THSN Refugee Team”. Ali, who fled Somalia in 2016, also trains at LC Uster. Last year, he was crowned the under-20 Swiss champion for the 5,000 metres.

The team for refugees is aimed at three target groups:

- *Amateurs*, who run in a group and wish to benefit from the team’s network.
- *Professional runners*, who wish to have a career in running. These runners receive a personalised training plan that they can follow outside of the team training sessions.
- *Coaches*, who wish to train people interested in running in future.

From regular training sessions to specific workshops and coaching courses, the aim of the “THSN Refugee Team” is to create opportunities for all members. Regular training provides the runners with structure in their day-to-day lives and enables them to share their knowledge and experience.

Dominic Lobalu named “Generali Running Talent”

In future, the best runners in the “THSN Refugee Team” will receive “Generali Running Talent” status and benefit from additional support. The first talented individual to receive this status is a distance runner who has been making waves across Switzerland: 22-year-old Dominic Lobalu Lokinyomo. At the recent Swiss Championship, he came first in the 10-kilometre track running event with a time of 28 minutes 32 seconds. He runs the 3,000 metres in 7 minutes 49 seconds. The current Swiss record for this distance is 7 minutes 41 seconds. He has won the Murtenlauf – an annual run – and the 10-kilometre race as part of the Geneva Marathon. He also placed first in the Swiss half-marathon in Belp, with a time of 1 hour 3 minutes 52 seconds – a personal best. Dominic Lobalu is from South Sudan. In fleeing the war there he first went to Kenya before arriving in Switzerland in 2019. He currently lives in Abtwil (St. Gallen) and is trained by the St. Gallen native Markus Hagmann.

Upcoming talent set to attend training camp in St. Moritz

This summer, Tadesse Abraham will be dedicating his time to coaching the running stars of tomorrow. He will be taking six members from the “THSN Refugee Team” to a training

camp in St. Moritz. The two quickest runners, Dominic Lobalu and Kidane Solomon, will train side by side with Abraham for approximately one month. Originally from Eritrea, Solomon ran the half-marathon in Belp as part of the Swiss Championship and came in second behind Lobalu. "Tadesse will be giving me valuable tips during the training camp, and I'll be able to concentrate fully on taking my performance to the next level. This is a unique chance that I absolutely want to take," states Lobalu. Four other talented individuals will train with Abraham in St. Moritz over a 10-day period. Three are runners like him, while the fourth is doing their training as a coach. They'll have the chance to watch Olivier Baldacchino, Tadesse Abraham's personal trainer, in action.

Tadesse Abraham: from refugee to elite athlete

Tadesse Abraham knows all too well how sport can help people integrate into society. He came to Switzerland from Eritrea in 2004. "Gaining a foothold in a new country is a challenge in itself. I didn't know anybody in Switzerland. Running allowed me to meet local people quickly and get to know the culture and its customs," states Abraham. His aim is to help the members of the "THSN Refugee Team" on their path to success. "During the training sessions in Geneva, we saw the potential in these upcoming runners. Talented individuals like Kidane Solomon and Dominic Lobalu have what it takes to reach the top. I truly believe that. I'm delighted that I can share my knowledge and experience with them," states the fastest marathon runner in Switzerland.

Click here for more information about:

- [THSN Refugee Team](#)
- [SPORTEGRATION](#)
- [The Human Safety Net Switzerland](#)
- [Tadesse Abraham as a brand ambassador for Generali Switzerland](#)
- [Generali Running Tour](#)

ABOUT SPORTEGRATION

The SPORTEGRATION association organises numerous projects for refugees in Zurich and the surrounding area. These activities focus on finding joy through staying active and being with others.

With SPORTEGRATION, sport creates the foundation for successful social integration. Every day, locals and refugees exercise together. From fitness boxing, running training, various yoga and swimming courses through to dance classes and ball sports – there is something for everyone. Developing potential, equal opportunities and holistic health promotion are just as much a priority as intercultural exchange.

ABOUT GENERALI

The Generali Group is an independent Italian group with a strong international presence. Established in 1831, the company is now one of the world's leading insurers. Generali has around 72,000 employees serving more than 65.9 million customers in 50 countries. The Group's total income came to more than EUR 70.7 billion in 2020, making Generali the market leader in Western Europe. The company is also an increasingly important player in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in Asia.

Generali's roots in Switzerland date back to 1887. Today, Generali (Switzerland) Holding Ltd. operates throughout Switzerland, with two head offices – one in Adliswil and one in Nyon – and a wide network of agencies. The insurer has more than one million customers and offers products for every situation in life. These include property insurance, legal expenses insurance, life insurance and pension solutions. Generali partners with start-ups to develop innovative products. The company is the first Swiss insurer to launch a fully digital pillar 3a.

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