

3x 45'



Migrants United

MIGRANTS UNITED follows the hopes and dreams of the UK's only all-migrant competitive league football team in their quest for championship glory and their right to remain in the UK.



by LOUD Productions & Zig Zag Productions

EDITORIAL NOTE:

The editorial tone of Migrants United is incredibly important.

There is a real opportunity to focus on positivity, camaraderie and brotherhood. Our ultimate goal is to create positive and deeper connections between the players and the viewers using football and friendship as the vehicle. The player's journey and settled status is a kind of secret history and a background threat that will ultimately rear its head further down the line in the many ways it does and will affect their lives.

After years/decades of vilification from political and media sources there is a hostile attitude to 'illegal' immigrants coming to the UK to 'scrounge off the system'. The series aims to show that for the falsehood it is by getting to know the players as people, showing their love for the game and each other; before revealing the tragic circumstances from which they came to the UK." Negative events will occur but we want to create meaningful connections with the players first so when those events unfold they land like a bomb.

David Simmons, the team's manager, is a salt of the earth Essex lad who is a fantastic role model for everything this show is about. He has an infectious positive energy and is a beacon, a symbol for the best of us and in these dark and uncertain times we need more people like him on screen. After 5 seasons on the BBC's Ranganation, Simmons is comfortable on screen but the team need more to secure victory on the pitch and motivate them to remain focused and positive for the even tougher journey they face off the pitch.

Step in England and Tottenham Hotspur superstar, Jermain Defoe. Defoe joins Simmons and the team as Head Coach throughout the 23/24 season to lead them through the season and give them the guidance and direction they desperately need to win the league.



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MIGRANTS UNITED - 3 x 45' - Factual Documentary Series

MIGRANTS UNITED follows the hopes and dreams of the UK's only all-migrant competitive league football team in their quest for championship glory and their right to remain in the UK. Joining the team as superstar Head Coach for the 23/24 season is Tottenham Hotspur and England legend, Jermain Defoe.

SYNOPSIS:

Whilst many 20-something Essex lads spend their spare time living the high-life, David Simmons spends his training and managing Changing Lives FC, the UK's only all-migrant competitive league football team. The team finished top of their league in the 20/21 season, before crashing in 21/22 in their most challenging season to date. 22/23 season was filled with all the highs and lows you'd expect in a premier league title race and now it's 23/24 season and David and his team have more to fight for than ever before. But, this is no ordinary fight for football league glory - this is a fight for equality, humanity and survival. Can a young PE teacher from Essex educate the nation on the real migrant crisis?



Changing Lives - Winners of the
NATIONAL DIVERSITY AWARDS 2021
Multi Strand Category (February 4th, 2022)

SERIES OUTLINE:

MIGRANTS UNITED follows the coaches and players of Changing Lives FC who have left everything and risked their lives, in the most harrowing and inhumane circumstances, to make their way to a better life in the UK. Now the players, including 21 year old team captain, Fethi Ahmed and Libyan migrant, Ussri Badawi, face a new battle to stay in the UK and, giving them a focus outside of their long and ongoing journey to freedom, is their quest to win the Essex Alliance League, coached for the first time by England and Spurs legend, Jermain Defoe.

19 year old Yaya lost both his parents and fled civil war in his home country of Chad. This season Yaya has another fight on his hands. He was badly injured last season and the Changing Lives FC 'star player of the year' has a long road to recovery which now coincides with his fight to remain in the UK.

16 year old Sudanese refugee, Ismail Aziz, has been nicknamed 'the Wizard' after scoring 8 goals in 3 games. Could Changing Lives FC become a catalyst not just for refugees as they navigate their way through the asylum process but also for future premiership players - literally changing their lives more than they could ever imagine?

Over the course of the season we get a rare insight into the players characters. So often overshadowed by their immigrant label, we see how charismatic and funny they are when in the comfortable surroundings of the club. The fun is short-lived though. At any point during the season their time for processing comes around and it's clear at this point that the behaviour and mood of the players changes as their focus shifts from the sportsmanship, competition and fun of winning the league to a brutal and heart-wrenching fight for survival and right to remain in the UK.

Determined to keep their focus on the football, which he knows better than anyone is the key to better performance, better mental health and a better life, is special guest coach for the 23/24 season, Jermain Defoe. Defoe will lead manager, David Simmons, and the players throughout the season, coaching them to be the best they can be professionally and mentally. It's most young players dream to be coached by Jermain Defoe but for the players of Changing Lives FC it's more than they could ever imagine.

Will Defoe unlock premier league talent in the team and set some of the players off on a journey that's worlds apart from the one they made to the UK? How will the players respond to him on the pitch and how much bigger is the disappointment when it's Jermain Defoe who is confirming your place in the team?

23/24 is full of firsts for Changing Lives FC as it's also the first time the Women's team will enter the league. Women's football is more popular than ever thanks to the England Lionesses incredible performances in recent years and we follow the team as they navigate their way through their first ever competitive season.

First impressions last and this is a team that needs to impress more than any other. With most of the players currently living in cramped accommodation, life outside the team is tough so in a boost to morale, the season is filled with surprise appearances from the England Lionesses, who turn up to cheer the women of Changing Lives FC on, fresh off the back of their World Cup appearances in Australia and New Zealand.

This insightful and educational 3-part series follows the players and coaches of Changing Lives FC throughout the 23/24 season as they fight for their place at the top of the league and their right to remain in the UK. For the players this is a life or death situation. Football is their only escape from the long and difficult journey to freedom and their ongoing battles against prejudice and racism. They are quite literally playing for their lives. For Simmons and Defoe, this is a fight for change and a chance to show the world how charismatic, deserved and talented these players are.

Will the players at Changing Lives FC beat all the odds to become league champions and British Citizens or will their position in the team, and their right to remain in the UK come to an abrupt, terrifying and life-changing end? This is **MIGRANTS UNITED Season 1.**

SERIES STRUCTURE:

This talent led series will be structured in reverse to the expected arc so the audience grow to love the team and invest in their performance and their personalities in the here and now, before moving backwards and giving greater context to where they come from, and why they left. We will leave the series on an emotionally resonant and eye opening note, giving context to how many people there in the UK just like them. They are people, they are human, they have aspirations just like the players you've come to love over the last 3 episodes.

Episode One - Boots on the Ground

Meet the coach's, support staff and Jermain Defoe as we introduce the male and female teams of Changing Lives FC. Insight into the shocking and harrowing journeys that led Changing Lives FC manager, David Simmons, to be managing and working with the team. Grow to love the coaches and the characters within the team, invest in their performance and start to intro their personalities. Character Spotlights interspersed with their history as a team whilst training for their upcoming fixture.

Episode Two - One More Step

The team pull together for the big one, they want to go one step further in their quest for championship glory. We dive deeper in to the life and status of captain Fethi, 16-year old Ismail 'The Wizard' Aziz and Ussri Badawi, as they make a play for the trophy! The stakes are high for the game AND their settled status. Defoe is now fully invested in the team and has formed his own bonds with players. Tensions are high in the team as they throw everything they have at being good enough to be selected to play by Defoe.

Episode Three - Changing Lives

What now? The results are in for the championship but what about the future of our key players? We've heard snippets on where the team have come from and how long they've been in the UK. Now it's time to go back to the start to see why, and how, they arrived here. We pull back the curtain and show the hardship these people have faced and how the stakes in their personal lives are even higher before revealing the settlement status for these players.



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