



DISCOVER FOOTBALL to the 2022 FIFA Men's World Cup in Qatar:

“We are returning our FIFA Diversity Award!”

Conditions connected to the FIFA Men's World Cup in Qatar are currently creating a big stir. Discover FOOTBALL is representing a general criticism towards major events organized by FIFA, which is not only limited to the Men's world cup 2022.

FIFA is focusing on profit and entertainment when it comes to championships, while social and ecological compatibility are put back and are only taken into account in the form of a less binding sustainability strategy. Local concerns about sustainable infrastructure and social distribution of economic gains are thus left out of the equation.

Without question, this tournament is characterized by human rights violations. The infrastructure was built by workers who died, suffered injuries and were not paid adequately. In stadiums, the temperature has to be cooled down in the middle of a global energy and climate crisis. However, we consider it to be negligent to only work off Qatar as a host country without mentioning the fundamental nature of these problems.

We would like to point out that the responsibility for the situation of migrant workers in Qatar does not only lie with Qatari actors. The poor working conditions and low wage levels, especially in countries of the Global South, are a central prerequisite for the prosperity of economies like Germany, whose companies depend on low production costs abroad. That these costs do not rise is in the economic interest of all profit-oriented producing companies and is repeatedly sealed by international treaties such as free trade agreements. The responsibility for the business structures that produce the working conditions in Qatar thus lies just as much with the so-called West as with the Gulf states.

In the media discourse, there is a tendency to dilute the fundamental and systemic problems of events like the FIFA Men's World Cup 2022 by focusing on Qatar as the host country. For us, a critique that also aims to show solidarity with the people on the ground requires the aforementioned contextualization and a serious examination of our own entanglement in these contexts based on colonial histories.

DISCOVER FOOTBALL focuses on the promotion of football for women* and girls. Since 2008, the promotion of women's* football and the development of amateur* female football structures have been FIFA requirements that must be fulfilled in a bid for a Men's World Cup. However, after FIFA identified both as a given in Qatar's bid in 2010, these criteria were never reviewed for sustainability. The Qatari national women's team was only established for Qatar's bid in 2010 and was not promoted any further from 2014 at the latest.

There is no evidence of the development of sustainable structures in grassroots sport. We call on FIFA to guarantee the promotion of women's* football and the development of corresponding structures in professional as well as grassroots sport in the medium and long term, as a standard for host countries.

DISCOVER FOOTBALL is part of the international LGBTIQ+ Human Rights Sports Coalition (<https://lgbtiqsportsrights.com/>), which approached FIFA and the Qatar Supreme Committee (SC) in January 2021 with eight demands regarding LGBTIQ+ people on site or as visitors to the Men's World Cup. We believe that World Cups must be organised in accordance with international human rights standards, regardless of the host country

We regret that the enjoyment of men's football is increasingly being clouded by putting profits above human rights. This men's World Cup is inaccessible to, among others, queer people and people who cannot afford tickets or travel. With our partners, we are working for a world where football can be celebrated as a major event that is accessible to all fans and players.

However, a purely cultural critique of Qatar in particular is too short-sighted. We welcome any actions that point to these contexts and seriously criticise profiteering, queerphobia, racism and sexism. We also call for widespread support for debates on alternatives to the consumer-driven and deadly men's football business.

As a consequence of our demands and the unacceptable behaviour of FIFA, we are returning the third place we received in the FIFA Diversity Award in 2017. The prize money of 10,000 US dollars we received at that time will be passed on with 1,000 US dollars each to ten women* and initiatives in the WANA region (West Asia and North Africa) who have been working for human rights and women* football for years. We will introduce these ten women* and initiatives via our social media channels in the coming weeks.

For us as an organisation that relies on grants and donations, 10,000 US dollars is a considerable amount of money. However, we don't want to be used for FIFA's purely symbolic politics, as we find it absurd that FIFA, on the one hand, has been presenting diversity awards for years, but on the other hand, tramples on values that stand for diversity for us.

The DISCOVER FOOTBALL TEAM