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PRESS RELEASE

Start-up assistance for refugees: Generali Switzerland launches running team with Tadesse Abraham

Giving socially disadvantaged people a chance. That is the aim of The Human Safety Net Switzerland Foundation. And that's why the foundation powered by Generali Switzerland has set up the THSN Refugee Team, a running group for refugees and migrants. Swiss marathon record holder Tadesse Abraham will train the team. In addition to the running group, the foundation also helps refugees to set up their own business. Both initiatives contribute to the integration of those taking part.

In sport, performance and a shared passion are what count – not where you come from. Tadesse Abraham, the fastest marathon runner in Switzerland, experienced the integrative power of sport for himself when he came here as a refugee in 2004. He would now like to give something back to his adopted country and second home.

Amateurs, pros and coaches – united by a shared passion

Tadesse Abraham and Generali Switzerland's The Human Safety Net Switzerland Foundation (THSN) are taking action to support refugees and migrants. Together, they launched the THSN Refugee Team, a running group seeking to promote the integration of refugees, in the French-speaking part of Switzerland on 14 September 2020. A similar initiative is planned for German-speaking Switzerland in 2021. The team will attend training twice a week, led by Tadesse Abraham or his personal trainer Olivier Baldacchino. The runners will be given tasks to complete in between training sessions, either alone or in groups. And all their hard work and perspiration will pay off: the fastest team members will get to work out with Tadesse Abraham in St. Moritz next year, where they will undergo altitude training to get them in shape for upcoming competitions.

The team is aimed at three target groups:

- **Amateurs**
All refugees and migrants who enjoy running are welcome to join the team. Training will let them benefit from the mutual exchange with other team members and the coaches. And they can take part for free in various races throughout Switzerland that form part of the Generali Running Tour.
- **Professional runners**
People looking to launch a running career. The coaches will draw up a training plan for them and help them get the best out of themselves. Workshops are also planned at which the runners can pick up other important skills, ranging from how to win sponsors and negotiate contracts right through to media training.
- **Co-coaches**
Tadesse Abraham's personal trainer Olivier Baldacchino will share his experiences with people who want to become trainers themselves. And they'll be given the chance to put their abilities to the test as co-coaches in the preparation phase of the Generali Running Tour.

From refugee to top athlete – an inspiring story

Tadesse Abraham grew up in rural Eritrea and knows from his own experience the power sport has to bring people together: "Coming to a new country as a refugee is a challenge. I knew no one. The system and way in which things were done were alien to me. Thanks to marathon running, I soon got to meet local people and was able to learn more about the culture and customs here."

That's why Tadesse Abraham is joining forces with The Human Safety Net Switzerland Foundation and public assistance office *Hospice général* to encourage talented young runners from a similar background: "A daily schedule with fixed workouts, professional

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structures and a sense of community. These are the components that make up our programme. I want to encourage up-and-coming young runners to pursue their dreams."

Refugees as entrepreneurs – and not just in running

Generali Switzerland seeks to empower people with a refugee or migrant background through The Human Safety Net Switzerland Foundation. The Human Safety Net For Refugee Start-Ups programme is another way in which the foundation supports refugees and migrants, by helping them set up their own companies. "Starting a venture on your own means taking on risks. Whether that's as an elite athlete or as the founder of a business. It means following your own path – one that is littered with challenges. Our foundation supports people from the refugee and migrant communities on their courageous journey towards independence," says Schirin Razavi, Chair of The Human Safety Net Switzerland Foundation.

You can find further information here on:

[The Human Safety Net](#), including the [Refugee Team](#) and [Refugee Start-ups](#)
[Tadesse Abraham as brand ambassador of Generali Switzerland](#)
[Generali Running Tour](#)

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You can find pictures of the launch event [here](#).

ABOUT THE HUMAN SAFETY NET SWITZERLAND FOUNDATION

The Human Safety Net Switzerland Foundation run by Generali Switzerland supports people with a migration or refugee background in setting up their own business and empowers disadvantaged families with children. It pursues these objectives together with its partner organisations CapacityZurich and the *Marie Meierhofer Institut für das Kind*. The foundation was established by Generali Switzerland in 2019 and forms the basis for its programme of social engagement in Switzerland.

The Human Safety Net is a global initiative of the Generali Group. It supports 24 programmes in 21 different countries around the world. All share a common goal: creating opportunities for disadvantaged people to build better lives for themselves.

ABOUT HOSPICE GÉNÉRAL

Hospice général is a public institution in Geneva that was founded in 1535, since when its mission has been to help people in need. Responsible for providing social assistance and other support to refugees and migrants in the canton of Geneva, *Hospice général* welcomes and accommodates asylum seekers, refugees and migrants at around 15 locations. Those seeking help are given social and administrative assistance as well as financial support. They can also attend courses, training sessions and activities that facilitate their professional and social integration. In this way, *Hospice général* helps them to become fully independent members of the Genevan community.

ABOUT GENERALI

Generali is one of the biggest insurance and asset management companies at global level. Founded in 1831, it is present in 50 countries throughout the world, with a total premium income of about € 70 billion in 2019. With nearly 72,000 employees serving 61 million customers, the Group boasts a leading position in Europe and a growing presence in Asia and Latin America. Generali's ambition is to be a life-time partner to its customers, offering innovative and customised solutions thanks to an unrivalled distribution network.

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. In 2018, the company became the first insurer in Switzerland to launch a digital pillar 3a solution.

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