

General background information

This training sequence developed by partner organizations in [Kosovo](#) contains **four training sessions** with the focus on the **development of the competence¹ Problem Solving**. Sport is known for the competitive nature of achieving goals and winning. At the same time, it improves players’ life skills and competences when they have to face problems and situations that they must solve as fast and accurately as they can. Although not everyone can develop these skills easily and in a short period of time, sport is one of the most effective tools to be used. In fact, we even coined the term “Athletic Transferable Skills” to help illustrate that there is a bridge from sports to the classroom, future careers, and just about every aspect of life, where kids can apply the skills they learned in sports for other life challenges. Setting goals, learning how to self-motivate, being a team player, and mastering time management are just a few examples of the importance and applicability of Athletic Transferable Skills.

Problem solving is a transferable skill that kids can learn through sports and apply to countless life challenges they experience on a daily basis. It refers to the ability to solve problems in an effective and timely manner without any impediments. It involves being able to identify and define the problem, generating alternative solutions, evaluating and selecting the best alternative, and implementing the selected solution. Although problem solving is often identified as its own separate skill, there are other related skills that contribute to this ability. Some key problem solving skills include: communication, team-building, active listening, analysis, research, creativity, dependability, and decision making. Problem solving skills are important in every stage of life at every level. Problem solving skills can be improved in many ways. There are four basic steps to efficient problem solving in any situation. They are:

- Defining and understanding the problem
- Searching for possible solutions
- Evaluating possible solutions and selecting one
- Executing the solution

Based on this list, we first have to look much deeper into the problem to understand the source and details of the problem, and not only what is obvious and visible. After we have finished identifying the problem, the goal is to search and find the most efficient and rational solutions that are agreeable in that case.

¹ S4D Competences should be part of every S4D Activity and S4D Training Session. [HERE](#) you can find a collection of general S4D competences children and youth can gain through their participation in S4D Activities and Training Sessions. To get an idea how we define S4D Competences, Life Competences/Skills, Sporting Competences and Learning Objectives, please have a look in our [Glossary](#). Further useful links regarding competences: <https://drstankovich.com/helping-kids-learn-important-problem-solving-life-skills-through-sports/>, <https://findanyanswer.com/what-is-problem-solving-in-sports-coaching> and <https://www.communicationtheory.org/improving-problem-solving-skills/>

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Once all the possible solutions have been considered, we have to evaluate and decide which is the best and the most rational solution for our problem. In the end we have to execute the solution that was selected and see the results. If the solution does not have the desired results then you have to stop, re-evaluate, select other solutions, and try again.

Main competences/skills	Problem Solving
Subtopics/ Focus of the training sessions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adaptability in Problem Solving 2. Effective Communication to solve problems 3. Decision Making in Problem Solving 4. Solving problems through Team Building (Group problem solving)
Sport	Mixed small games
Sporting Competences targeted throughout the session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motor competences: Coordination, speed, flexibility • Technical competences: Throwing, running, catching • Tactical competences: Working together as a team, making clever choices
Target Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Age group:</i> 12-16; <i>gender composition:</i> mixed; <i>size of group:</i> max. 20 • <i>S4D experiences of the group:</i> no experience; <i>general sporting abilities:</i> medium; <i>other relevant aspects:</i> diverse group (communities)
Duration of the sessions	60 min for each of the 4 sessions

1. S4D session: Adaptability in problem solving

Duration of the session	60 min
General Learning Objectives	This session will focus on how to solve problems by improving participants’ adaptability and flexibility skills. By developing their adaptability in different situations participants will improve their ability to be more positive and react properly no matter the problems they face.
Life Competences/ skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and youth are able to accept change with a positive attitude • Children and youth are able to seek out creative ways to adapt to change • Children and youth are able to modify their approach to a problem accordingly • Children and youth are able to effect changes in a course of action with smoothness and timeliness, and without any major setbacks

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Theoretical background information²

Adaptability skills are skill sets that encompass a person's ability to adjust to changes in their environment. Being adaptable in your career can mean you can respond quickly to changing ideas, responsibilities, expectations, trends, strategies, and other processes at school, work, or other places. Being adaptable also means possessing soft skills like interpersonal, communication, creative thinking and problem solving skills. A person with adaptability skills embraces an inconvenient change as a challenge, rather than a frustrating issue. It gives them the opportunity to showcase their problem solving and delegation skills.

One of the big reasons that adaptability is a desirable trait is that it enhances problem solving abilities. While we would all would like to live in an environment without issues, there will always be issues that you have to try and solve. How you react to arising problems and unpredicted circumstances contributes a lot to the quality of you as a person, whether it be in school, work, or another place that you belong to. People who take on problems with a positive mindset and adapt or are flexible are in high-demand because they maintain their productivity no matter the circumstance. A person with adaptability and flexibility shows:

- **Intellectual flexibility** – keeping an open mind is important. You should be able to demonstrate that you can integrate new information and draw conclusions from it, and that you can switch from the detail to the big picture.
- **Receptiveness** – particularly to change. Being able to respond with a positive attitude and a willingness to learn new ways to achieve targets and objectives is a key competency.
- **Creativity** – actively seeking out new ways of doing things and having confidence to improvise or experiment.
- **Modification of behaviour** – you are able to adjust your style of working or method of approach to meet the needs of a situation or emergency.

Practical Session

Introduction



Welcome and Introduction (5 min)

- Gather the players in a team circle.
- Welcome the participants and create a pleasant setting and atmosphere
- **Have a look back to your last training session:** What happened after the last training session?
- **Have a look ahead to the upcoming training session:** What will happen in this session?
 - Introduction of learning objectives
 - Sensitisation to the topic

See [Structure of an S4D Training](#) and [S4D Training Session Cycle](#) to find more information about how to structure a S4D training session. To plan your own training session, you can use the [Template “Planning and Reviewing Sheet for S4D Training Sessions”](#).

² Further Resources: https://cchp.ucsf.edu/sites/g/files/tkssra181/f/6_CCHA_Communication_0406_FNL.pdf

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Warm up

Game 1: The boat

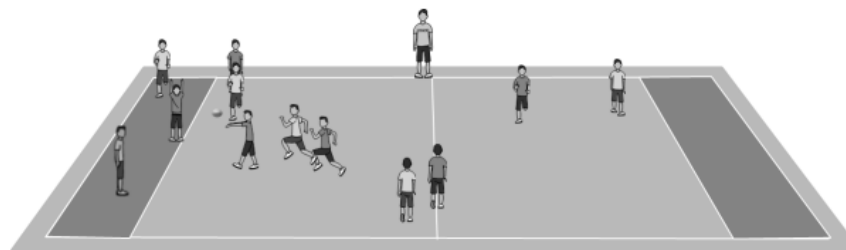
Duration	15 min
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be organized as a group competition or only with one group. • Divide participants and make teams of 7 to 10 people if you want to make a competition. • Draw with chalk or mark with a rope an imaginary boat that the participants have to use as their “escape plan”. • The boat has to be big enough for participants to stand but it should be small enough so it is challenging for participants to move.
Material, Equipment	- Chalk or rope (for the boat)
Activity & Description	<p>Objective: Teams have to solve different tasks that the coach gives to them.</p> <p>Make an oval form on the ground by using a rope or scratching it into the sand (be creative). Ask the participants to step into the oval. It symbolizes a boat. Tell them that they are not allowed to leave the oval because of the imaginary crocodiles which are swimming around the oval (boat). Give them different tasks without telling them the solution on how to solve the problem.</p> <p>Tasks: “Put yourselves in order from tall to small! The smallest person should stand on this side of your boat, the tallest on this side of the boat”; or from old to young. After that you can do the game again, but this time they are not allowed to talk.</p>
Learning Objective	The game involves a large number of skills which are also important in work and life. Participants learn the importance of being flexible and adaptable through new changes. During the game, participants have to keep an open mind when new issues (changes) present themselves. Activity requires from players to seek out creative ways to adapt to change. This activity shows how life always has new challenges for people. Problems in life need creative and flexible solutions from people, so they need to adapt through different circumstances in order to succeed.

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Main Phase

Game 1: Endzone Game³

Duration	30 min
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide the participants in 2 equal teams. • You need a wide field to run. • The field should be rectangle (football field can be used). • Create two endzones with cones in both ends (They should be the whole width of the field and the depth will be decided by the coach appropriately with the field). • The ball should be a handball or can be even larger ball (Be careful with the weight of the ball because it can cause face injuries). • Play for 10-15 minutes and then change the team fields and play for another 10-15 minutes.
Material, Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cones, bibs - Handball, tennis ball, other balls can be used (e.g. football, rugby ball etc.)
Activity & Description	<p>Objective: Teams have to pass the ball with their hands in the way to score as much points as they can by adapting to the changeable ways of playing or scoring. Start the game with only 3 simple rules: The players cannot run with the ball in their hands, no physical contact between the participants is allowed (the ball can be only intercepted and cannot be taken from others' hands), if one team makes 10 consecutive passes they score one point. After 3-4 minutes introduce “the endzones” (Each team has one endzone that they have to defend and the other one that they have to attack.). The point can be scored by making a pass that is caught inside the endzone. After 3-4 minutes you can change the rules: E.g. play with a tennis ball, the pass should be always between two different genders, they have to make at least 7 passes before scoring a point, etc. After playing some more minutes, ask them to analyse the game, and as a group decide on additional rules which are required to better define how the game is played (e.g. what happens if the ball is out of bounds, how to restart play after a team has scored, etc.).</p>



³ Reference: <https://www.sport-for-development.com/imglib/downloads/giz2017-practical-booklet-for-sport-for-development-volunteers-in-the-balkan-region.pdf>, page 30

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Learning Objectives	<p>The game involves a large number of skills which are also important in work and life. Participants understand that there will always be changes that will indicate in their future decisions. The activity shows that whatever issue arises, people have to adapt in order to get the results that they want.</p> <p>During the game, participants have to be creative, so they can find solutions for a better team strategy.</p> <p>People evolve, so do the problems. Consequently, the people have to find ways to adapt, so they will solve them for a time period until they will have to go through this cycle (Problem-adaption-solution) again.</p>
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Cool Down

Human Knot

Duration	15 min
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a big circle of 10-20 people. • Make them hold each other’s hands (Do not let one person to hold both hands to the same person). • Put a timer of 6 to 10 minutes. • If you want to put even more pressure you can divide the participants in two groups where they compete against each other.
Material, Equipment	- Stopwatch
Activity & Description	<p>Objective: Participants have to solve the problem by unknotting their hands.</p> <p>Get the group to form a circle. Tell them to put their right hand up in the air, and then grab the hand of someone across the circle from them. Then repeat this with the left hand, ensuring they grab a different person’s hand. Check to make sure that everyone is holding the hands of two different people and they are not holding hands with someone right beside them. Now they must try to untangle themselves to form a circle without breaking the chain of hands. Allocate a specific amount of time to complete this challenge. Ask the group not to tug or pull on each other and watch participants as they pass over other participants. Monitor throughout the challenge and stop them if you need to. If the chain of hands is broken at any point, they must then start over again.</p>
Learning Objective	<p>During the game participants understand that they have to adapt to each other in order to solve the task.</p> <p>This activity shows the creativity of players to “decode” the problem and the modifications they have to make in order to approach progressively towards the solution.</p> <p>Players understand how to effect changes in a course of action with smoothness and timeliness, without any major setbacks.</p> <p>Adaptability of people, especially inside groups, is an important factor for problem solving.</p>

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Reflection (10 min)⁴

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gather participants in a circle and make sure to create an environment where participants feel comfortable to take part in the reflection and an open discussion. - Ask whether the session was good and which part of the session was most interesting/fun. - Give a short recap of the session and ask the participants what they have learned or what sticks to their minds after the session. You can ask more specifically about what they have learned regarding their personal role in teams and the general importance of teamwork.
<p>Example Questions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you like the session? • What life skills were acquired during the session from warm-up to cool down? • Is there anything you would change/improve the next time during our session? • What do you think that we wanted to achieve through these games today? • How do you understand the words adapt and change? • How do you understand the word adaptability? • While solving a problem do you consider yourself to have a positive or negative mindset? • When you are facing a problem, is it easy for you to adapt while solving it? • Do you think that adaptability and problem solving are related to each other? • Do you consider yourself a creative person? Does that help you to solve problems or adapt to problems quickly? • What could help you to adapt faster do changing situations? <p>Typical thoughts that participants may have after the game can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptability means evolving positively with circumstances. • To adapt means to become adjusted to new conditions. • Change means making or becoming different. • Most of the people feel that they can adapt to whatever issue they are facing. • Positive mindset helps to solve problems in the adaptation process. • Adapting to time and places can be easier than adapting to new people.

Make sure that every participant gets the chance to share or say something if they want to.

⁴ [HERE](#) you’ll find a guideline including examples of ways/methods how a reflection can be structured in four steps and how participants can be best organized.

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

2. S4D session: Effective communication to solve problems

Duration of the session	60 min
General Learning Objective	This session will be focused on how to solve problems through verbal and non-verbal communication. Students will learn how to communicate more effectively, meaning they will learn how to deliver and receive messages in a more rational way in the context of solving problems.
Life Competences/skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and youth are able to recognize the importance of communication and teamwork as key factors for success • Children and youth are able to explain why communication is vital part of maintaining healthy relationships • Children and youth are able to explain the importance of good communication and coordination in achieving a common goal • Children and youth are able to become more engaged/active listeners • Children and youth are able to give examples of effective communication

Theoretical background information⁵

Effective communication is about more than just exchanging information. It is about understanding the emotion and intentions behind the information. It is an essential part of life, and being able to do it effectively is a key skill that makes life much easier. Sport being an interactive activity creates an environment that serves as a training ground for kids; not just for honing their physical skills, but also for effective communication.

Based on the nature of problems people need different set of skills to solve them. For example, if you want to solve a problem at school or work, this requires not just knowledge but also good verbal, listening, and persuasion skills. Solving a problem within the group or team requires teamwork, coordination and effective communication among them. Hence, to improve problem solving skills there needs to be effective communication and understanding of the situation. One approach to solving problems through effective communication is brainstorming. Brainstorming is a creative problem solving technique used to explore a wide range of possible solutions. People who brainstorm create many ideas for solving a problem, offering solutions ranging from practical to farfetched. Discussion is not allowed until all solutions are recorded, and solutions are not judged or criticized when first suggested.

⁵ Further Resources: <https://www.playmeo.com/type/team-building-problem-solving-activities/> and <https://www.playmeo.com/team-building-problem-solving/>

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Practical Session

Introduction



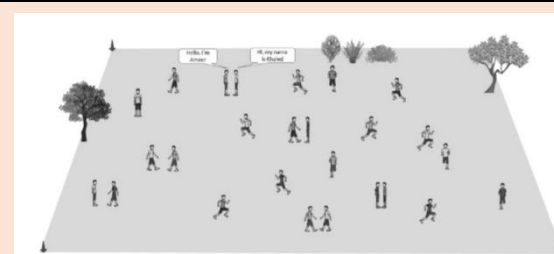
Welcome and Introduction (5 min)

- Gather the players in a team circle.
- Welcome the participants and create a pleasant setting and atmosphere.
- **Have a look back to your last training session:** What happened after the last training session?
- **Have a look ahead to the upcoming training session:** What will happen in this session?
 - Introduction of learning objectives
 - Sensitisation to the topic

Have a look into the [S4D Training Session Cycle!](#)

Warm up: Meet and Greet⁶

Duration	15 min
Setting	Mark with cones a rectangular or square area, large enough for the participants to jog around.
Material, Equipment	- Cones
Activity & Description	<p>Objective: Participants introduce each other in an active way. All participants run slowly inside the marked area. When they are close to another person they stop shortly, greet each-other and introduce themselves (They can give their name and another piece of information about themselves, like their age or where are they from). Then they run and greet another person and provide a different piece of information. After 3-4 minutes the coach asks for half of the group to be the “unfriendly people”. These participants have to greet others in an unfriendly way, and the one responding has to stay calm and remain friendly when answering. When the game is over, the coach selects a participant and the group tries to mention the pieces of information that the selected person gave to them when they met.</p>
Learning Objective	<p>This game creates opportunities for all participants to introduce themselves to others even if they do not know each other. Participants must overcome their shyness and strike up meaningful conversations with people from different backgrounds. During the game participants recognize the importance of good communication and coordination in achieving a common goal. Knowing each other’s names can be the first step of further communication, and good communication inside the group solves the problems easily.</p>



⁶ Reference: [Practical Booklet for Sport for Development Volunteers in the Balkan Region](#), page 7

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Main Phase

Game 1: Word Decoding⁷

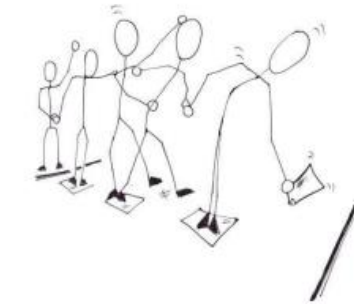
Duration	15 min
Setting	<p>Can be organized as a group competition or only with one group.</p> <p>Divide participants and make teams of 6-10 people.</p> <p>Make straight rows with teams so they will make 2-3 straight lines (based on the number of teams).</p> <p>Put papers and markers in the end of each team, so the last participant can write or draw.</p> <p>Think and prepare for the things you want to use for the participants.</p>
Material, Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Papers - Pen or markers
Activity & Description	<p>Objective: Teams have to create a relay of players. Player after player has to go and write on their teammate’s back what the coach gave to the first person.</p> <p>Divide 2-3 teams in equal number of players. Teams create a row, where every participant is 5m away from each other (Like a relay in athletics). From the moment that the coach gives the sign, all the players must look straight and are not allowed to talk. The coach gives a picture or a word that the first player of each group has to run and draw or write to the second participant’s back of their group, and so on until the last participant. The last participant has to draw or write what they think that their team wrote or drew on their back. The fastest team to find the right answer wins the round. Try 4-5 rounds by switching the participants’ places in the row.</p>
Learning Objectives	<p>The game involves a large number of skills which are also important in work and life.</p> <p>Participants learn the importance of a good communication and coordination in achieving a common goal.</p> <p>Participants recognize communication as a vital part of maintaining healthy relationships.</p> <p>Problems at school or work needs more than words to be solved, and this game shows that we need to adapt and create a suitable way for all the participants in case if you want to succeed in the end.</p>

⁷ Reference: *NGO AKTI - Katalogu i lojerave sociale*

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Game 2: Crossing Lake Badovc⁸

Duration	15 min
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum number of members in one group is 20. • If you want it more competitive you can divide groups in smaller groups and fewer papers (5 boats-10 participants) and they have to compete against each other who arrives faster. • Papers have to be of the formats A4 but you can also use format A3 (easier game)
Material, Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Papers - Chalk or rope
Activity & Description	<p>Objective: Participants have to find the most effective way to cross the lake without losing their participants.</p> <p>The participants stand along a line (draw it with chalk or put a rope). Tell them that as a group they have to get to another line which they can see 10m away. Tell them that they are standing in Gracanica and they want to get home to Prishtina by crossing the area (Lake Badovc) in front of them. You explain that they have eight boats (eight pieces of paper) for crossing the distance (Lake Badovc) to the other line (Prishtina). Explain and demonstrate that the “boats” sink if there is no contact to at least one person. They have to find a solution on how to cross the lake with all group members. No one should be left behind. You should be strict during the game, so if you see a boat which is on “Lake Badovc” and without contact, take it away. They will then have to continue with fewer boats.</p>
Learning Objectives	<p>During the game participants learn to recognize the importance of communication and teamwork as key factors for success. This game shows the importance of good communication and coordination in achieving a common goal.</p> <p>The participants are taught to overcome the pressure during the game.</p> <p>Having effective communication inside the group can lead to better solutions for the problems that we face.</p>



⁸ Reference: [Rockenfeller \(2010\): Jambo Bukoba Teachers Guide](#), page 40


S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Cool Down

Count to 10⁹

Duration	15 min
Setting	Ask 5-10 Players to stand in a circle facing each other.
Material, Equipment	-
Activity & Description	Create a circle with the participants. Tell them to count to ten (or how many participants you have in your group) as a group. Only one person may speak at the same time. They may only say numbers. No one may say two numbers in a row. All players are expected to participate. They may not just go around the circle one after the other. If two start speaking at the same time the group has to start at 1 again. If they accomplish the task, ask them to do it for as long as they can.
Learning Objective	The activity provides an interesting insight into the subtle dynamics of our verbal and non-verbal conversations. The exercise requires players to observe the others before they communicate. Every person must be patient when they communicate and try to feel when it is their turn to say something. On the other side, everyone must also speak at one point. Only if everyone is involved can the game can be won. The participants can recognize communication as a vital part of maintaining healthy relationships.

Reflection (10 min)¹⁰

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gather participants in a circle and make sure to create an environment where participants feel comfortable to take part in the reflection and an open discussion. - Ask whether the session was good and which part of the session was most interesting/fun. - Give a short recap of the session and ask the participants what they have learned or what sticks to their minds after the session. You can ask more specifically about what they have learned regarding their personal role in teams and the general importance of teamwork.
Example Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is it important to have a clear, simple, and effective communication system in a group or a team? • When you are facing a problem, what do you do? • When you are facing a problem, do you ask for help from others, or try to solve it all alone? • When do you think it is more effective to solve problems as a group? And why? • When do you think it is more effective to solve problems on your own? And why?

⁹ Reference: [Small Games Collection, Indonesia](#) page 24

¹⁰ [HERE](#) you'll find a guideline including examples of ways/methods how a reflection can be structured and how participants can be best organized.

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

- How was the communication during the games? Did the group manage to communicate efficiently? Did the group manage to develop a strategy?
- Why did the group win or lose the game?
- What are typical situations at school where you need good communication skills? When do you and your friends really need to work as a team to get the job done?

Typical thoughts that participants may have after the game can include:

- Communicating with others can lead to better results.
- Working as a group can lead to more rational solutions.
- Being in a team can help you see the problem in different views.
- Communication may sound simple but it is a very complex subject.
- The meaning of the message can be affected by a huge range of factors.
- The factors that can be included: our emotions, the cultural circumstances, methods of communication or even the location we are in.
- Knowing each other’s name is one of the first things that can lead to an improved communication.
- Some people tend to be shy when it comes to formally present themselves.
- Physical activity creates a friendlier atmosphere within the group.
- Listening and speaking in order can lead to better results.

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

3. S4D session: Decision making in problem solving

Duration of the session	60 min
General learning objective	This session will be focused on how to solve problems by improving participants decision making skills. Students will develop their decision-making skills and will improve their ability to evaluate and react wisely to different stressful problems that need to be solved in a short period of time.
Life Competences/skills:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and youth are able to recognize the importance of decision making while solving problems • Children can further develop their spatial skills • Children and youth learn to cooperate with others in solving a problem • Children and youth are able to examine the pros and cons of the decisions they are about to take • Children and youth improve brain functions such as attention and concentration • Children and youth develop critical and analytical thinking skills • Children and youth learn the importance of thinking ahead in order to solve a problem

Theoretical background information

Decision-making process is a reasoning process based on assumptions of values, preferences and beliefs of the decision-maker. Every decision-making process produces a final choice, which may or may not prompt action.

People in everyday life solve problems and make decisions. They usually have to make the decision in a short time and under pressure. Consequently, when they have to encounter the new problems, people tend to react with the same decisions that they feel comfortable to make and seemed to work before. Decision making is more natural to certain personalities, so these people should focus more on improving the quality of their decisions. People who are not natural decision makers are often able to make quality assessments, but then need to be more decisive in acting upon the assessments made. Problem solving and decision making are closely linked, and each requires creativity in identifying and developing options, for which the brainstorming technique is particularly useful.


Whether it's deciding who should take the final shot of a game or shoot a penalty, sports come with a lot of decision-making opportunities. People who make the most rational decisions in a short time are the “gems” of sport because they can solve their match's or team's problems (winning the game) in just one or two opportunities during the game.

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Practical Session

Introduction

Have a look into the [S4D Training Session Cycle!](#)

	<p>Welcome and Introduction (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gather the players in a team circle. - Welcome the participants and create a pleasant setting and atmosphere. - Have a look back to your last training session: What happened after the last training session? - Have a look ahead to the upcoming training session: What will happen in this session? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction of learning objectives ○ Sensitisation to the topic
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Warm up:

Game 1: Tic Tac Toe¹¹

Duration	15 min
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide teams in an equal number of participants. • 3-5 players in one team. • Using the cones, create a grid with 9 cones. • Create as many grids as you need so all the participants can play at the same time (e.g. 2 grids = 16 players) • Set a starting point approx. 15-20m away.
Material, Equipment	- Cones, Bibs

¹¹ Reference: : [Practical Booklet for Sport for Development Volunteers in the Balkan Region](#) page 15

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Activity & Description	Objective: Both teams try to be the first to place three markers in a row on top of the cones (horizontal, vertical or diagonal). Teams start at the same time. The first participant from both teams carries a bib and drops it on top of one of the nine cones. Participants then run back to their team and tag another participant, who repeats the same task. Once they have three in a row, the game is over. If, after each team has placed its 3 bibs there is no winner, the next participant is allowed to move one of their own bibs to another empty cone until there is a winner.	
Learning Objectives	The game creates opportunities to understand how important is to make fast decisions to solve the tasks (problems). During the activity participants improve brain functions such as attention, concentration and their spatial skills. This game creates a situation in which the players need to make very quick decisions under time pressure. The activity shows that the cooperation makes the problems easier to solve. One of the learning outcomes could be that not making a decision is very often the worst option because it prevents you from making any progress at all. Solving a problem is the result of your earlier decisions that you made toward it.	

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Main Phase

Game 1: Stuck on a deserted island¹²

Duration	30 min
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide the participants in 2 equal teams. • You need at least 20m field to run. • Make a starting point. • In the half of the running zone create two obstacle courses near each other (Running zig zag obstacle course, where the participants have to run past cones once in the left side and once in the right side until they finish the cones; and jumping obstacle course, where the participants have to jump with two legs between the cones until they finish the cones). • The number of obstacles to pass should be the same in both obstacle courses (e.g. eight cones). • 5-10m after the courses put the shuffled pictures on the ground face down. • If you want to have 3-4 teams than you need 3-4 obstacle courses.
Material, Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cones - 30-50 pictures
Activity & Description	<p>Objective: Teams have to choose and discuss what are the most suitable items for them to live in a deserted island until help comes.</p> <p>Round 1: Teams start at the same time. The first participant from both teams starts running toward the obstacle courses (made with cones and other equipment), where they choose which course they will take: the jumping one or the zig-zag running one. After they finish it they have to run to the pile of pictures that are spread on the ground and decide which item (e.g. hammer, drinkable water, phone, lighter, etc.) they will take. Participants then run back to their team and tag another participant. They have 2 minutes to take as many objects as they can.</p> <p>After the 1st round the teams have to explain and persuade the coach why they need the items they chose. The coach gives their thoughts about if the items are usable or not, then they count the items that are usable.</p> <p>Round 2: The coach gives 2-3 minutes for participants to think and discuss about the items they will take now. The round is exactly the same as the first round but now the participants will be more careful in the decisions they make.</p>
Learning Objectives	<p>The game involves a large number of skills which are also important in work and life.</p> <p>During the game participants develop critical and analytical thinking skills when they have to think about the items that are needed in a real-life situation.</p> <p>Participants learn the importance of thinking ahead in order to solve a problem.</p> <p>While playing this activity players learn by correcting their past wrong decisions.</p>

¹² Reference: <https://empoweredparents.co/decision-making-games/>

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

	<p>Participants in this game have to utilise their decision-making skills in two cases (i.e. choosing the course and choosing the picture). During life there will always be circumstances where you have to decide what will be your options to solve a problem, try those options, and see the results after.</p>
<p>Reflection</p>	<p><i>After the first round the typical comments from participants could be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need the phone to call people and ask for help • We need a lighter to start a fire so we will not be cold • We need food to survive from starving • We need drinkable water to survive from dehydration • We need a bed to sleep • We need a flashlight to see in the dark • We need kitchen equipment (e.g. pot, frying pan, knives, etc.) to cook the meals <p><i>The coach has to decide if they have chosen the right items and ask questions for example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You’ll have lots of fun with your three toys but what will you eat and do you have any way to prepare food? • Do you think you will find spare batteries for that on the island (e.g. flashlight)? • Is there a place to charge it or plug it in (e.g. phone or radio)? • Can you use the phone where there is no service? • Where will you sleep? • Have you taken anything that will help you survive? Or can you use things in nature to help you? <p>After the second round there should be only a short discussion if they did better now or they did worse than the first round.</p>

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”


Cool Down

Memory Game

Duration	15 min
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide teams in equal number of participants. 3-5 players in one team. • Create a grid with pairs of shuffled pictures. Choose the number of pairs based on the number of players (i.e. more pairs of pictures if more players) • Create as many grids as you need so all the participants can play at the same time (e.g. 2 grids = 16 players) • Set a starting point approx. 15-20m away.
Material, Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Printed pairs of pictures - Cones (can be used to be put on papers)
Activity & Description	<p>Objective: Both teams try to find the most pairs of pictures.</p> <p>Teams start at the same time. The grid with pictures should be filled with two opposite groups, one good and one bad (e.g. healthy vs unhealthy food). The first participant from both teams runs towards the grid of face down pictures and when they arrive they turn two pictures face up. If they match and are from the “good” group of pictures, the participant returns them to their “base”. If they don’t match, or are from the “bad” group, participants return them face down. Participants then run back to their team and tag another participant, who repeats the same task. They repeat this until the pictures are finished. The team with more pairs found wins the game.</p>
Learning Objectives	<p>During the game participants reinforce functions such as attention and concentration.</p> <p>The activity creates an opportunity for participants to choose between instinctive decisions and memory decisions.</p> <p>Participants can understand the pros and cons of the decisions they’re making.</p> <p>Players have to quickly decide what is good or bad for them.</p> <p>During life there are problems where you have to quickly choose what is good or bad, and the decisions you make can affect your future.</p>

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Reflection (10 min)¹³

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gather participants in a circle and make sure to create an environment where participants feel comfortable to take part in the reflection and an open discussion. - Ask whether the session was good and which part of the session was most interesting/fun. - Give a short recap of the session and ask the participants what they have learned or what sticks to their minds after the session. You can ask more specifically about what they have learned regarding their personal role in teams and the general importance of teamwork.
<p>Example Questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think that we wanted to achieve through these games today? • When you are facing a problem, what do you do? • When you are facing a problem, do you take advice from others to make a decision, or do you try to solve it all alone? • Do you think that decision making and problem solving are related to each other? • Do you make decisions promptly or do you take your time to think? • Do you consider yourself a good decision maker when solving problems under time pressure? • Are you a risk taker, in terms of being ready to make decisions for a problem that you are not really aware of or once tried and failed? <p>Typical thoughts that participants may have after the game can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solving a problem depends a lot on our decisions. • Wrong decisions create opportunities for us to learn for future problems. • Solving the same problem multiple times can lead to easier and faster decisions. • Advice from others can help us decide easier. • Taking time to decide can lead to better results. • Making decisions while you are under time pressure can negatively affect the accuracy and carefulness of the problem solving. • It is harder to decide on a problem you have failed once already. • Decision making skills can vary from person to person. • People with good decision-making skills are better time managers.

¹³ [HERE](#) you'll find a guideline including examples of ways/methods how a reflection can be structured in four steps and how participants can be best organised.

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

4. S4D session: Solving problems through Team Building (group problem solving)

Duration of the session	60 min
General learning objective	This session will be focused on how to solve problems inside groups while everyone is involved equitably. Students will develop their problem solving skills and improve their ability to get to the bottom of different complex situations through working together as a whole, while giving their opinions and solutions.
Life Competences/skills:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and youth are able to recognize the importance of teamwork as a key factor for problem solving • Children and youth are able to recognize that everyone in the team has their own role and responsibility • Children and youth are able to describe why good communication and coordination is important for achieving a common goal • Children and youth are able to use different thinking styles to solve the problems together • Children and youth are able to adapt their skills inside a group or team in order to achieve the team goals

Theoretical background information

Team building is the action or process of causing a group of people to work together effectively as a team, especially by means of activities and events designed to increase motivation, promote cooperation, improve working relationships, and improve team functioning in areas like problem solving, decision making, and conflict resolution that enables the group to overcome any goal blocking barrier. It involves a lot of skills, analysis, and observation to form a strong and capable team.

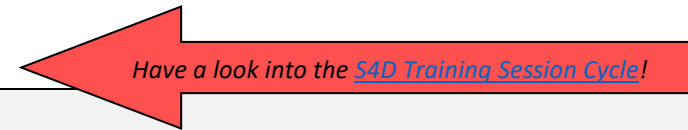
The goal here is to achieve the group or team vision and objectives. Problem solving through team building activities provides an opportunity for groups to communicate, co-operate, and compromise with each other as they solve one or more problems as a team. These activities often stimulate significant growth for a group, especially if their [experience is processed](#) upon completion. Group problem solving exercises typically feature the following characteristics:

- Give opportunities for group or team members to interact, play, trust, and learn
- High levels of challenge, arousal, and excitement
- Opportunities for trust, leadership, communication, and group cooperation to evolve
- Often focused more on the process, not just completion of the task

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Practical Session

Introduction



	<p>Welcome and Introduction (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gather the players in a team circle. - Welcome the participants and create a pleasant setting and atmosphere. - Have a look back to your last training session: What happened after the last training session? - Have a look ahead to the upcoming training session: What will happen in this session? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction of learning objectives ○ Sensitisation to the topic
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Warm up

Game 1: Stand up in one team¹⁴

Duration	15 min	
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a little distance between different teams in the field so there would not be undesired contact that can lead to injury. • Make the participants sit in the field. • Start with two people. Increase the number of the people inside the group after every round. 	
Material, Equipment	n/a	
Activity & Description	<p>Objective: Participants try to solve the task together.</p> <p>Start with two people standing in front of each other, sitting on the ground. They hold both hands to each other. Their feet touch each other. When you give the signal, they have to stand up together without disconnecting their hands and legs. After you have finished the first round try it with 3, 4, 5 people, or even more.</p>	
Learning Objectives	<p>This game creates opportunities for all participants to express their thoughts to solve the task. During the game participants recognize the importance of good communication and coordination in achieving a common goal. Solving a problem together with the team members can improve the relations inside the group, and the participants can be open to hearing different solutions and coming up to a final solution together.</p>	

¹⁴ Reference: [Jambo Bukoba Teachers Guide, Sebastian Rockenfeller, 2010](#) page 46

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Main Phase

Game 1: Partner Football

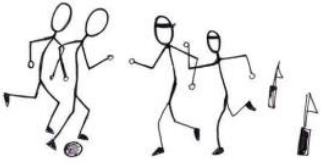
Duration	10 min
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide the group in pairs (2 players = 1 pair) • Set up the obstacle course for the zig zag runs (5-8 cones that players have to dribble in between each cone) • Put a cone 5-10m away from the obstacle course so the players can sprint to that cone.
Material, Equipment	- Football, cones, bibs
Activity & Description	<p>Objective: Teams have to solve different tasks that the coach gives them.</p> <p>In pairs (holding hands) players have to finish two obstacle courses (dribbling and sprinting). The first course is dribbling between cones zig zag, where one of the players does it while holding their partner’s hand. Next, the player has to leave the ball and they have to run as fast as they can for 5-10m. After finishing this the pair switches places, where the other player has to dribble the ball.</p>
Learning Objective	<p>Participants learn the importance of a good communication and coordination in achieving a common goal.</p> <p>This game shows that every team member has an important role inside the team.</p>

Game 2: Partner Football¹⁵

Duration	20 min
Setting	<p>Set up the football field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two goals • Field (you choose the dimensions) • Divide participants and make teams of 5 to 10 people (Based on your field dimensions). Divide teams by bibs. • You can also make a tournament of 4 teams. (Every team plays against each other once) • The amount of time to change pairs can be shorter if there are more teams.
Material, Equipment	- Goals (can be made with cones), cones, football, bibs

¹⁵ Reference: [Jambo Bukoba Teachers Guide, Sebastian Rockenfeller, 2010](#) page 54

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

Activity & Description	<p>Objective: Teams have to solve different tasks that the coach gives them.</p> <p>Divide the group into two teams. Within the team they have to make pairs by taking each other’s hands. Play football with normal rules (Two goals, field, handball not allowed). If a pair loses contact, it is a foul, and the other team gets the ball. After 4-5 minutes ask the participants to change their partner within the team. Change the pairs 2 times during the game.</p>	
Learning Objective	<p>During the game participants recognize the importance of teamwork as a key factor for success. Participants learn the importance of a good communication and coordination in achieving a common goal. This game shows that every team member has an important role inside the team. Participants in this game understand that they have to use different strategies and tactics in order to adapt to their team compositions. During life there will always be circumstances where you have to adapt to your friends, colleagues, or relatives to solve problems.</p>	

Cool Down

Mine field¹⁶

Duration	15 min	
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide participants in pairs (1 pair = 2 people) • Blindfold one of the team members. • Divide a large field into 3 zones--2 small ones and 1 big one. The middle or big zone (mine zone) has to be 15-20m long and 5-10m wide. • Put a lot of cones (mines) inside the mine zone so it will not be easy for participants to pass it without obstacles. 	
Material, Equipment	- Blindfolds, Cones	
Activity & Description	<p>Objective: Participants have to help their blindfolded partners to cross the field without stepping on the mines.</p> <p>Divide participants in pairs. One of the players has to be blindfolded. The teammate that can see has to help their partner cross the mine field without stepping on the mines, while verbally instructing them where to go. All the pairs start the game at the same time, beginning in the starting safe field and going to the next safe field that is 15-20m away, with the mine field in the middle. The first team that arrives safely wins the round. If one team steps on a mine, they have to restart from the beginning. After all the teams have finished the task, partners switch roles and play another round.</p>	
Learning Objectives	During the game participants understand that everyone has a role and responsibility in the team’s success.	


¹⁶Reference: <https://www.yourerc.com/blog/post/11-team-building-games-and-activities>

S4D Training Sequence: “Problem Solving”

This game shows the importance of good communication and coordination in achieving a common goal.

The participants understand that it is easier to solve problems when they are on a team even if they are being pressured (by the time and other circumstances in this case).

Reflection (10 min)¹⁷

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather participants in a circle and make sure to create an environment where participants feel comfortable to take part in the reflection and an open discussion. • Ask whether the session was good and which part of the session was most interesting/fun. • Give a short recap of the session and ask the participants what they have learned or what sticks to their minds after the session. You can ask more specifically about what they have learned regarding their personal role in teams and the general importance of teamwork.
<p>Example Questions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you are facing a problem, what do you do? • When you are facing a problem, do you ask for help from others, or try to solve it all alone? • What is the definition of teamwork for you? • How can teamwork help solve problems? • Why is problem solving important in a team? • Why is it important for team members to define and understand the problem? • Is it hard for you to accept different thoughts from your teammates, colleagues, friends, etc.? <p>Typical thoughts that participants may have after the game can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I am facing a problem, I ask people close to me for help. • Working with others can help solve the problems easier. • Teamwork is doing something together with a group of people. • Teamwork is dividing responsibilities for a task. • Dividing responsibilities can help the group work in a systematic way, so everyone does the part that they know the best. • Teams can work together, share ideas, and review progress. • Problem solving is an important part of teamwork: working through difficulties, overcoming challenges, and finding solutions together. • To define the problem means to make a statement that tells what the problem is.

¹⁷ [HERE](#) you'll find a guideline including examples of ways/methods how a reflection can be structured in four steps and how participants can be best organized.