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SPORT FOR  
DEVELOPMENT

# How to use Local Sport for Development Networks to initiate effective social change

A practical roadmap based on  
the experience from a pilot  
program in the Western Balkans

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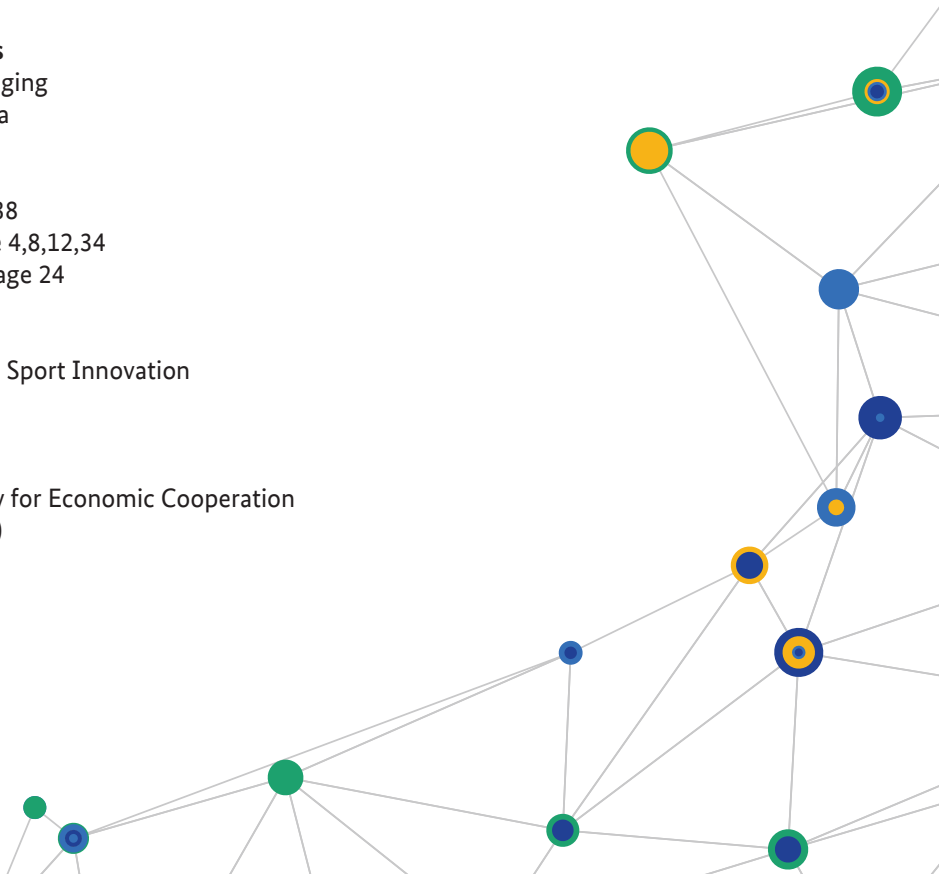
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On behalf of the  
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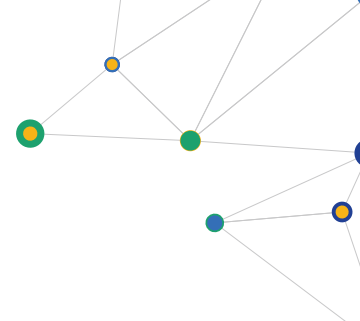
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## 1. INTRODUCTION





## L-S4D-Nets as a specific approach to sport for development in the Western Balkan region.

This booklet is an output of the *Sector Programme Sport for Development* in the Western Balkans (see context below). It describes the approach of *Local Sport for Development Networks (L-S4D-Nets)* that has been tested as part of a pilot programme in five countries of the Western Balkans since 2018.

The aim of this publication is, for one, to present the approach and to capture the main learnings from the above mentioned programme. For the other, this booklet has the ambition to serve as a practical and hands on working aid that supports other sport for development programmes in shaping their own local networking activities.

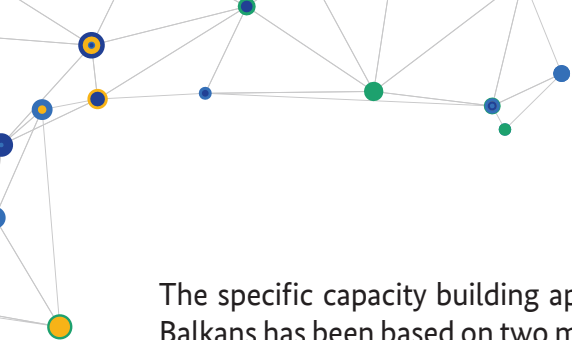
To this end, the description is aimed at everyone who is interested in using a multi-stakeholder approach with a local focus in sport-based development cooperation. Either as initiators of their own operational local network or as programme developers at a broader conceptual level.

### 1.1 CONTEXT

*German Development Cooperation* contributes to the *Sustainability Development Goals* using sport and physical activity as tool to foster broader social development worldwide. In that sense, the *Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)* commissioned GIZ with the implementation of the *Sector Programme Sport for Development*.

The objective is to develop awareness, capacities and concepts on local, national and regional levels in order to strengthen sport for development and harness its educational and social potential for the benefits of individuals and the broader community.

Since 2017/18 tailored activities were developed with local partners to strengthen social cohesion, contribute to social inclusion of marginalized groups, and promote youth employability through sport in the countries of the Western Balkans.



The specific capacity building approach of the sector programme in the Western Balkans has been based on two main pillars from the beginning. Firstly, on cross-regional trainings of coaches, teachers and youth/social workers and secondly, on testing and promoting local sports for development networks.

Capacity development has been supported in 7 municipalities of four Western Balkan Countries (Kosovo, North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) through different forms of L-S4D-Nets.

Typical activities of these networks have so far included (1) training of trainers regarding the specific sport for development methodology (2) activities for young people with a focus on social inclusion, employability and life skills development (3) the improvement of local offers for practicing sport and physical activity and (4) enhanced cooperation between local stakeholders such as municipality representatives, sport clubs, civil society organizations and schools.

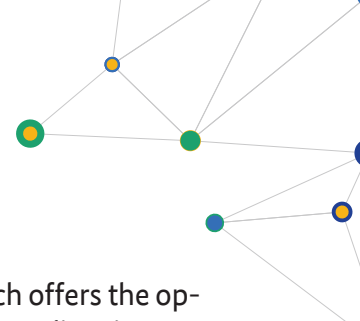
## 1.2 RATIONALE FOR SELECTING A LOCAL SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The decision for a local network approach was initially based on the existing programme constraints.

In 2018, the sport for development methodology, was rather unknown in the region and first had to be introduced in parallel in several countries of the Western Balkans. In addition, the pilot phase was relatively open in terms of both target group and thematic focus, and the time perspective of the pilot project was also limited.

For a more narrowly scoped programme (e.g. number of countries, thematic areas) with sufficient resources and time perspective, a roll-out through the structures of public bodies or national level partners might have been more efficient and effective. However, within the scope and set-up of the programme - which is rather typical for pilot programmes in the sport and development sector - concentrating on a few selected local communities seemed to be the better and more feasible approach.

However, besides the abovementioned limitations, there are also at least two other strong arguments in favour of a local approach when implementing sport for development programmes:



- 1. Coordinated Action and Consistent Messages:** The local approach offers the opportunity to work with different stakeholders who all have an immediate impact on the environment, routines and opportunities of young people in their specific context (e.g. schools, sports clubs, the local municipality, youth centres, etc.). Sport for development can thus be put on a broader base within that smaller local scope. Support structures can be coordinated and educational measures can be aligned. If a young person receives consistent messages in their sports club, in school and at the youth centre this increases the effectiveness of the approach.
- 2. Customised Solutions:** It is much easier to develop tailor-made offers for a target group at the local level, which are oriented towards the actual needs and allow for more specific problem-solving approaches and solutions. When for example the objective is to promote the employability of young people, the structure of the local labour market and cooperation with local companies that can offer internships or apprenticeships are key. These conditions are very heterogeneous locally and can certainly be better considered in L-S4D-Nets than within the framework of a nationally or even regionally standardised approach.

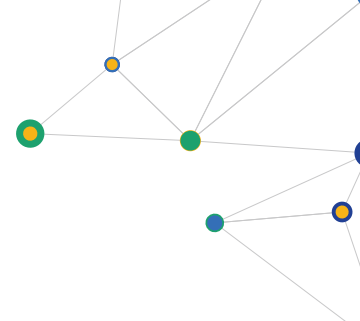




## 2. DEFINING LOCAL S4D NETWORKS







## Key characteristics of local S4D networks and differentiation from other network - and collaboration formats

There are many different approaches and formats of cooperation and collaboration that can be classified as a network. In addition, there are other forms of cooperation between organisations and individuals (e.g. communities of practice) that have a lot of similarities and overlaps with networks.

*Networks [...] are a set of formal or informal relations among and between people and organisations. These relations are open and enable the establishment of communities that create and share knowledge. Also, networks are dynamic and complex systems of interconnected people contributing to coordination and joint action. This extended group of people share similar interests or concerns and interact with each other, remaining in informal contact for mutual assistance or support. Every network is unique to some extent. The members influence its establishment and this, coupled with its history, affects its management. (GIZ 2015, 23).*

### 2.1 CLASSIFICATION

Different types of networks can be distinguished according to their purpose, size and scope, the way they are managed and organised, the actors involved or various other characteristics. Bertha Camacho Tuckermann and colleagues have elaborated on this in more detail in their publication *Work the Net – A management guide for existing and emerging formal networks* (GIZ, 2015). In their extensive guide book, they distinguish along the line of informal and formal networks.

Within their taxonomie, informal networks are defined as: “[...] *individual, personal and amicable relations between businesspeople, peers, friends, or among members of a larger family. Typically, informal networks have no deliberately defined purpose. They grow organically and, in most cases, are not actively planned and managed. They play an important part in daily*





*private and working lives: they are recreational, can yield information, ideas and experiences and render assistance in times of need. They form the basis on which communities or formal networks are built [...].*

Formal networks in contrast are described as: [...] *interrelated groups of people or organisations that are established according to a specific design or need. [...] The members of the network share a common vision, objectives and rules, and they carry out a set of common activities. [...]. In contrast to communities, formal networks do not only respond to the needs and interests of members. Rather, they also have the goal of achieving changes in their own contexts [...].*

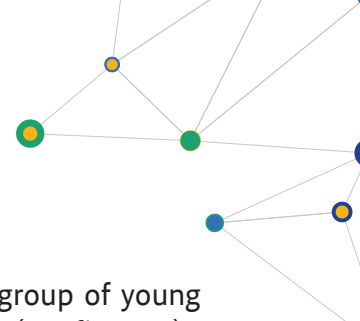
Against this background, L-S4D-Nets are formal networks. This means they go beyond the informal relationships and cooperation arrangements of the participating persons and organisations. They have a common network identity, and they can be identified from the outside as an entity that has a specific purpose and is composed of known actors.

Practical experience has shown that—at least within the pilot region—formal networks received better recognition, were taken more seriously and could thus be more effective than purely informal groupings. The degree of formalisation, on the other hand, can and should be kept low. The L-S4D-Net does not need a legal form, binding statutes, specific organs, or the like. As a principle we suggest to aim at “as much formalisation and administration as necessary, but as little as possible”.

## 2.2 KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Although L-S4D-Nets may differ, depending on the specific local needs and circumstances, they do have the following properties in common:

1. Their common purpose is to bring about social change at the local level, that corresponds to the vision and ambitions of the UN sustainability goals (SDG) - although in a broken down and pragmatic scope.
2. Testing, promoting and practicing “sport for development” as a method for social inclusion and social change is by definition a starting point for the network and is characteristic for the capacity development and operational activities within this network type.
3. The target group for the activities to be implemented by a L-S4D-Net are children and young people. This group can be addressed particularly well through

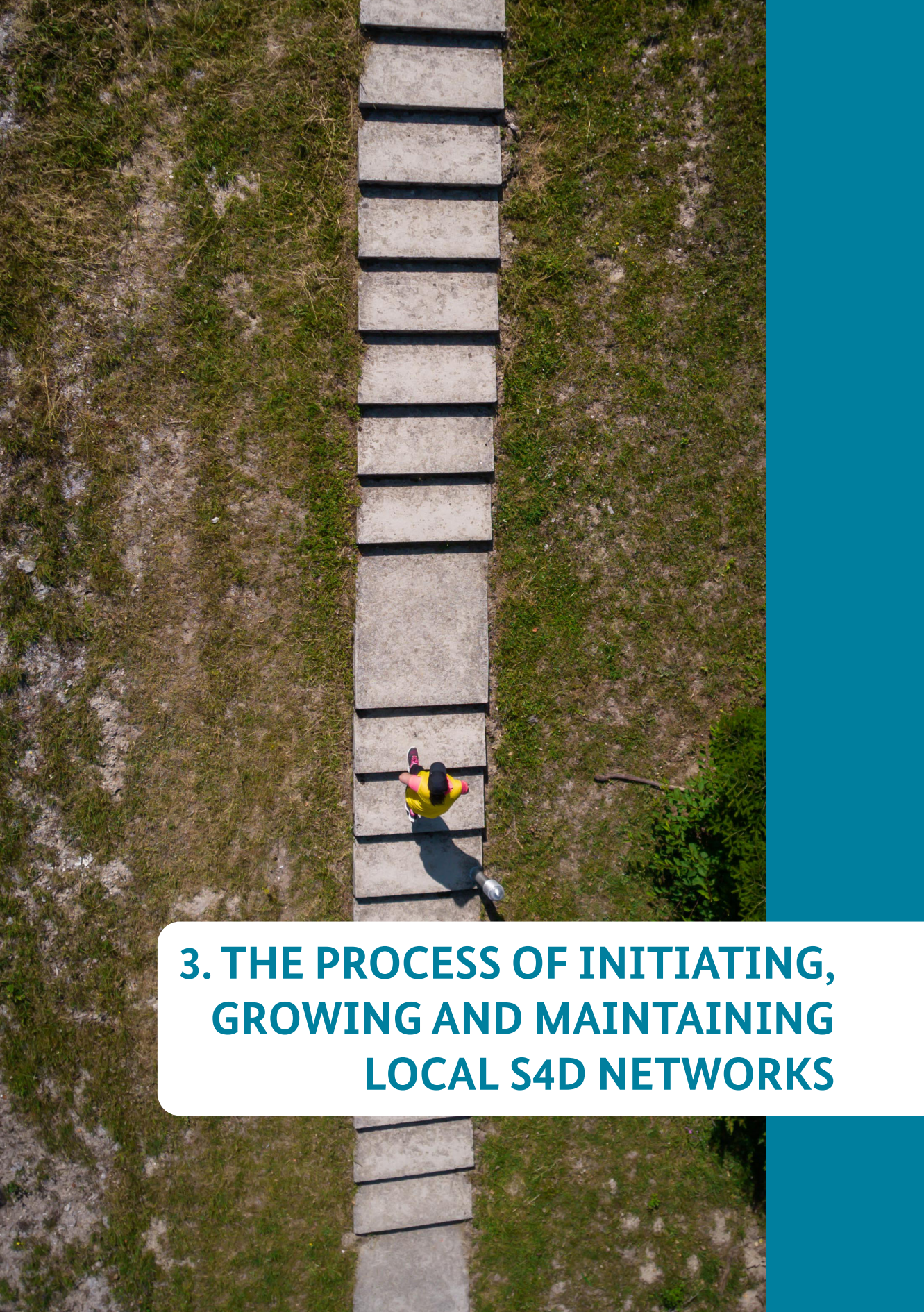


the sport for development method. This focus on the target group of young people leads to a prototypical composition of network partners (see figure 2).

4. L-S4D-Nets are always cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder networks. Ideally, representatives of the public sector (e.g. municipality, schools) and the civil society sector (e.g. sports clubs, youth centers, NGOs) are involved. Depending on the particular issues and objectives, it may also be useful to involve actors from the private sector (e.g. local businesses).
5. The scope for action planning and operational activities is always local. However, L-S4D-Nets can cooperate with other L-S4D-Nets and be part of a regional “network of networks”. In fact, the idea of peer learning, e.g., between networks in neighbouring municipalities, is a distinctive feature of the approach.
6. L-S4D nets are always context specific and demand driven. They address concrete problems in their specific setting and use the sport for development methodology in a way that seems effective under the prevailing local circumstances. The identification of local development needs and the selection of suitable starting points for the S4D approach resides with the local actors and should not be determined from outside.
7. Information, dialogue, trust building, mutual learning etc. are all important elements of working together in local S4D networks. However, local S4D networks are “not just about talk, but also about action”. They are meant to be operational networks through which the participating organisations can jointly plan and implement concrete S4D activities within their community. Roles and tasks may differ, but a common impact orientation should be given.

Within this general framework, many different variations are possible, depending on the interests of the actors, the concrete needs of the target groups and the specific local conditions at hand (see section 4).



An aerial photograph of a person climbing a long, narrow concrete staircase on a grassy hillside. The person is wearing a yellow shirt and a black cap, and is positioned near the bottom of the stairs. The stairs are made of rectangular concrete slabs and run vertically through the center of the frame. The surrounding area is covered in green grass and some small plants. A solid teal vertical bar is on the right side of the image.

### **3. THE PROCESS OF INITIATING, GROWING AND MAINTAINING LOCAL S4D NETWORKS**

## Process and stages of the network development

Due to the fact that the approach of sport for development was little known and disseminated in the Western Balkans until then, the impetus to establish the first L-S4D-Nets in Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia came at first exclusively from the outside, i.e., through the initiative of GIZ's sector programme sport for development.

In the further course of the programme, additional networks were established from within the local community (Kosovo and North Macedonia), inspired by peer-to-peer contacts in their respective localities.

Whether a L-S4D-Net is initiated from the outside or from within the community has an influence on all stages of the network's creation and development process. The differences will be discussed for the different phases of the process below.

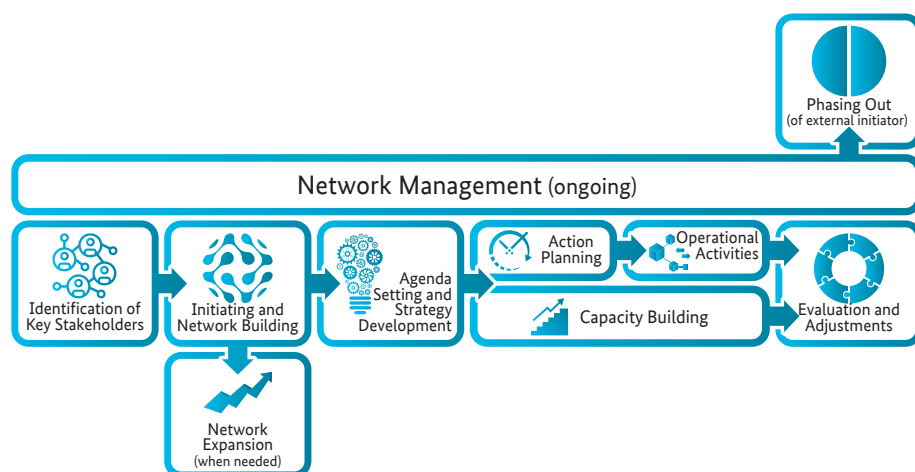


Figure 1: Process and stages of the network development





### Identification of Key Stakeholders

The identification of key stakeholders is either done from within, i.e. one of the actors already situated in the local community initiates the process and looks for partners with whom they want to build a local L-S4D-Net. Or, the impulse comes from the outside and an external initiator (usually an external donor) carries out a mapping in order to identify suitable actors for the network and the envisaged operational activities. The composition of the network depends on the local circumstances and can be different in each local community. However, there are certain groups that should be represented in a L-S4D-Net (see figure 2).

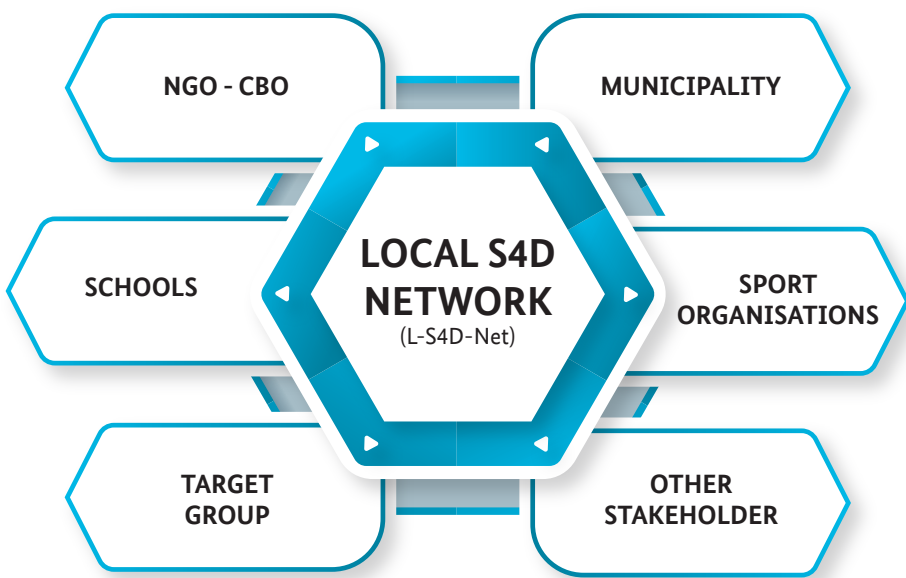
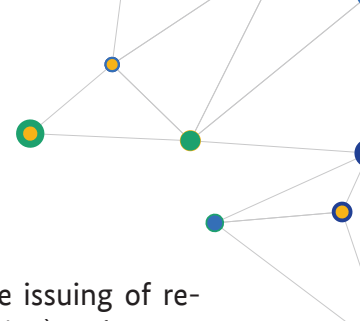


Figure 2: Proposed L-S4D-Network composition

All L-S4D-Nets that have been successfully established in the Western Balkans are coordinated by a **local non-governmental organisation or community-based organisation** that was already well anchored in the community before the start of the project. In most cases, these organisations operate in the field of social, community or youth work. This type of organisation usually has the necessary professionalism and expertise to set up a L-S4D network and make it operational.

An important role is also played by the municipality, which has to create the necessary framework conditions for the operational work of the network. In our pilot





municipalities, this involved public support for the network, the issuing of required permits (e.g. for all activities carried out in the school setting) and access to public sports facilities.

It is also crucial to involve local schools, as the target group of children and young people can only be reached in sufficient breadth through the school system. In practice, an active role of school representatives in the network has had a positive effect on the desired outcomes. Depending on the network's specific problem focus, primary schools, high schools and/or VET schools can be involved.

**Sport organisations** (i.e. especially local sports clubs or sports coaches) represent another important stakeholder group. However, the pilot phase has made it clear that the involvement of sports clubs requires a precise clarification of the sport for development approach and proper expectation management. Sports organisations that try to maintain a traditional, competition-oriented understanding of sport within all network activities have proven to be unsuitable network partners in practice. However, if sport organisations embrace the values and methods of the Sport for Development approach, they can become important key partners in a L-S4D-Net and also benefit from this broader understanding of sport themselves.

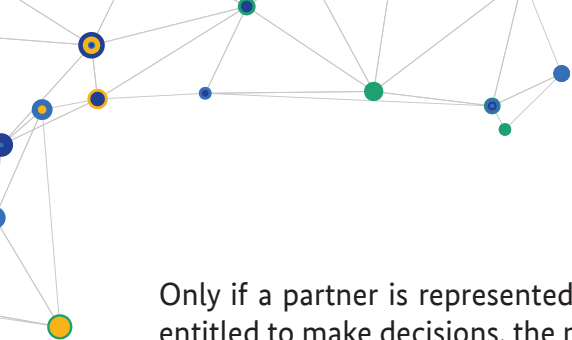
The **target group** of young people can and should be directly involved (young leaders, youth organisations) or be represented by organisations that are well aware of their needs and interests (e.g. NGOs, youth centres).

Depending on the local situation and problem focus, it may also make sense to involve **other stakeholders** into the networks.

Regardless of the stakeholder group, the partners must find links to their own tasks, objectives and interests within the network's common objectives. Only then they will have sufficient intrinsic motivation to commit to the network in the long term and without monetary incentives.

Each partner should also be in a position to actively contribute to the network. This may include a variety of resources such as a specific expertise, operational capacity or just the possibility to create suitable framework conditions. Partners who on the other hand cannot or do not want to actively contribute anything, usually only slow down a network's performance.

In addition to the selection of partners at the organisational level, the identification of the persons representing these organisations is also of great importance!



Only if a partner is represented by persons who are motivated, competent and entitled to make decisions, the participation can be effective!



### **Initiation, Network Building and Network Management**

The network building process should have a visible beginning, a clear starting point and be carried out with sufficient momentum. All representatives in the network need to know and understand the concept of sport for development at the beginning of the process. This has proven to be a challenge in practice. One way to achieve this is to involve the representatives of the organisations in a practical S4D activity or training so that they not only learn about S4D in theory but also experience it for themselves. This task is especially important if the concept of S4D is brought into the local community from the outside. In addition, the partnership needs to clarify the network's self-conception and their ideas and expectations about the envisaged cooperation during the initial stages of network building process.

Questions relating to ownership and leadership haven't posed any problems during the pilot phase. The management of a well-connected organisation in the community with demand-oriented participation of the other network partners has proven to be a functional concept. Stakeholders consider the availability and continuity that only a larger NGO with full time staff or very committed volunteers can provide to be a very important factor of the networks operational capacity and success.

The actual process of network building should be done quickly and lead straight into agenda setting, capacity building and the first operational measures.



### **Network Expansion**

L-S4D networks should not be seen as closed systems after they have been created. Depending on their specific objectives and their current work programme, it may at a later stage be necessary to integrate additional partners into the network on a temporary or longer-term basis. This may for example be the case when additional expertise is needed or when more partners and multipliers are required for operational activities.

In the course of the pilot programme in the Western Balkans described here, for example, there has been a stronger focus on the topic of sport for employability. As a result, cooperation between the existing network partners and VET schools and NGOs from the youth employability sector became more important.



## Agenda Setting and Strategy Development

Agenda setting is a central step in the life cycle of L-S4D-Nets. In a joint process, the participating stakeholders should conduct a joint needs assessment to define their overall ambitions. As L-S4D-Nets are a specific form of local network, the guardrails for the agenda setting and strategy development are at least partially pre-set by the overarching vision of the SDGs and the S4D methodology as the network's main instrument.

Therefore, the main question should refer to what kind of social change or social impact the partners want to achieve and how the overarching development goals translate into tangible and concrete interventions at the local level.

This process should not be disconnected from other related initiatives but should be linked to existing local policies and priorities where possible. Existing sport or youth strategies, for example, can provide suitable starting points. In addition, the specific purpose and priorities of the network partners need to be taken into account. Only a relevant overlap between the participating organisation's agendas and the network activities, partners will be committed and active within the network.

To identify this common ground the L-S4D-Network partners should do a solid needs analysis to provide the foundation for the network agenda.

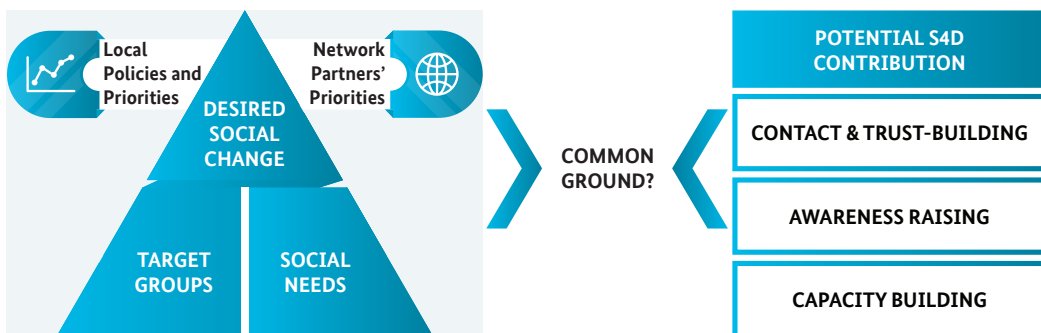


Figure 3 & 4: Finding Common Ground as part of the Agenda Setting

They may follow the process described in figure 3, starting to define the triangle on the left. That is to identify the specific local target groups and their specific needs, as well as the desired social change. In practice, the group will probably identify and describe more than one such triangle, for different target groups or different social needs.



When this initial planning step is completed, a comparison should be made with the priorities and policies already in place at the local level and in the participating organizations.

After the left side of the model in figure 3 & 4. is defined, it must be clarified if and how exactly sport based interventions can contribute to the problem solution.

Here, it is primarily the three functions on the right side of the model that sport-based interventions can perform. (1) Getting into contact and building trust with the target group, (2) raising awareness for a specific issue or (3) building capacities (skills, confidence etc.) among the target group. Only if these functions are suitable to contribute to the problem solution, it makes sense to use S4D as an instrument.

Given the pragmatic, activity-oriented nature of the L-S4D networks, it is not necessary to create extensive agendas or strategy papers in this step, but all actors involved should work collectively to identify their shared objectives and document the most important aspects of their discussions as a result.

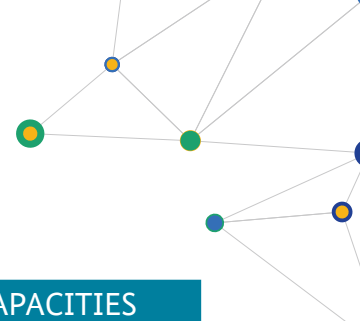


### Action Planning

L-S4D-Nets are by definition designed to “apply” S4D in the local context. This requires a clear work programme. The exact form of the Action Plan is less important than the fact that it is developed jointly by the network partners.

A joint action plan does not mean that the network partners also have to implement all measures together. Depending on their role and capacity, partners can take on different tasks, make contribution of different scope or implement different activities independently from each other. However, the Action Plan is there to ensure that all S4D activities are working towards the same strategic objectives. It is also important that these activities take into account the wider context. For example, where possible, S4D measures should seek to exploit synergies with the activities of a local/national youth, sport or employment strategy.

When developing the strategies and action plans in the pilot networks, the grid below has proved to be a useful tool for structuring the potential activities.



	CONTACT	AWARENESS	CAPACITIES
Secondary Target Group (Teachers, Coaches, Social Workers, Parents)	Measures and activities which help the L-S4D-Network partners to get into contact with their primary and secondary target groups (i.e. getting their attention, getting to know each other, building mutual trust etc.)	Measures and activities designed to inform about and create awareness for 1. Selected topics and problems (e.g. bullying in schools) 2. S4D as methodology	Capacities <b>for</b> S4D Measures and activities designed to develop capacities which enable the target group to apply S4D as an educational methodology
Primary Target Group (Children and Youth)	This may also include measures and activities that promote exchange and interaction between different groups in the community	Measures and activities designed to inform about and create awareness for 1. Selected topics and problems (e.g. bullying in schools)	Capacities <b>through</b> S4D Measures and activities designed to develop personal capacities like self-confidence, respect, life-or employability skills

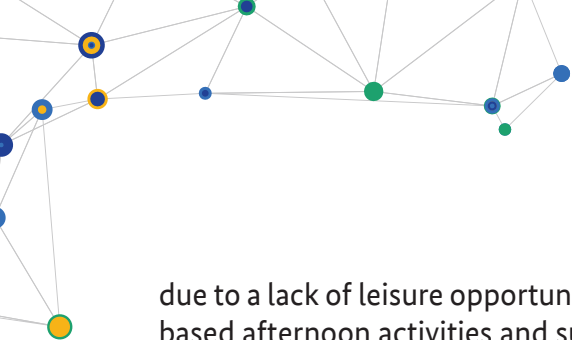
Figure 5: Planning grid for potential S4D actions and activities

The grid distinguishes between the actual target group of children and young people and the secondary target group of those who are shaping their environment and are supposed to use the S4D methodology to teach and educate young people. Furthermore, three stages are differentiated that occur in the course of a sport for development process (contact, awareness raising and capacity building). Usually the process requires to „work“ through that systematic from top-left to bottom-right. In other words building individual capacities through sport in young people is the actual goal. But to be able to do so, the necessary conditions have to be created first in the other boxes described in figure 5.

An important lesson learned from the pilot projects is that “less is more” at this stage. This means that, especially at the beginning, action plans should be as realistic as possible, leading to concrete, tangible results, which in turn increases the dynamics in the network and the acceptance of the S4D approach.

To achieve this, a focus should be set on a specific target group, on a specific spatial area or on some rather specific problems. The case study from Kriva Palanka described in section 4.1 is a good example for this. A specific problem for a specific target group was identified and solutions were provided in one specific place (unattended boarding school students were showing unintended social behaviour





due to a lack of leisure opportunities and guidance. S4D was used to provide sport based afternoon activities and supervision in one of the concerned schools).

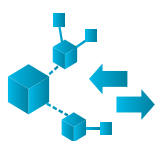


### Capacity Building

The operational effectiveness of the L-S4D networks depends on capacity building. This mainly concerns the training of trainers and instructors and the exchange with other networks (e.g. in a regional network of networks). In addition, it can also be helpful and necessary to support the participating organisations in organisational development (e.g. grant management) and network management (e.g. communication, sustainability planning), etc.

When building human resources, the aim should not only be to train a sufficient number of S4D trainers who will work with the actual target group in schools, sport clubs and, youth centres, but also to identify and train a certain number of S4D instructors as early as possible.

S4D instructors have their own practical experience in implementing S4D activities, but are also able as adult educators to pass on this knowledge and train other S4D trainers independently. This should make the network less dependent on external support and thus also more sustainable.

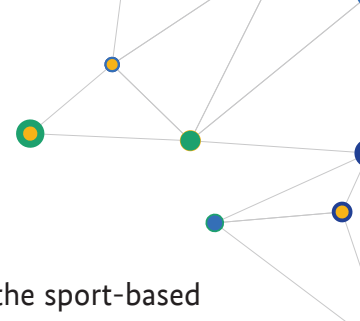


### Operational Activities

This is the key element of L-S4D networks: Sport for development practically applied in the local context for the benefit of the respective target group. However, experience has shown, that it was not always clear for the participating organisations when and how to leave the “meta level” (inform about and promote S4D) and start to implement for and with the actual target group (see figure 5).

The transition of L-S4D networks from the phase of internal capacity development (i.e. developing a good understanding of the S4D methodology, training of trainers and instructors, finding supporters in the local community etc.) to the phase of applying the S4D methodology to the target group takes time.

However, the feedback from the pilot networks has also shown that it is important to start applying the method in practice as soon as possible. The experience that the method works in educating children and young people and the concrete proof of concept in the local context can help the network to strengthen the

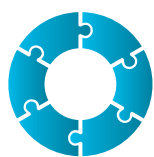
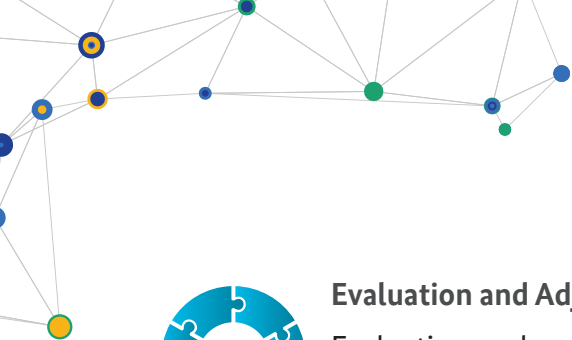


confidence in the method and to get the necessary support for the sport-based development activities.

In the Western Balkans, this process was supported by GIZ through the allocation of local subsidies/grants. On the one hand, this helped the networks to explore, implement and apply the S4D approach, but on the other hand, it also placed additional demands on the networks (application, grant management, adherence to a tight timeframe, etc.).

As a result, of this local grant funding and promotion strategy various implementation formats could be tested:

- 1. Awareness Raising and Information Activities:** Including for example (coordinated) flash mobs, parent info days, S4D exhibitions, round tables and panel discussions.
- 2. Various Types of S4D Events:** Full or half-day events, using an open and inclusive sports approach to reach out to different target groups or the wider local community. For example an inclusive family sports festival, a community hike, games without limits etc.
- 3. S4D Camps and Summer Schools:** Usually one week events with participants from the main target group (i.e. youth), using S4D as a tool for individual capacity building (i.e. life and employability skills). Directed to a diverse group of young people (inclusive approach in regard to the selection/admission of participants). Partly regional with coaches and participants from different countries of the Western Balkan .
- 4. Regular S4D Offers:** I.e.S4D activities organised on a regular basis over a certain period of time. Including for example, social clubs at secondary schools, an inclusive handball league or a female football programme.
- 5. Micro Projects:** Small projects that use S4D to tackle specific local problems. For example, better care for “neglected” young people in a local dormitory. Including the renovation of the urban sports spaces together with the young people and the development of a regular S4D offer at these sport spaces.
- 6. Capacity Development in Multipliers:** Measures to systematically disseminate the S4D approach to appropriate multipliers, especially teachers at different levels of the school system. Usually in the form of information events and short training courses of 3-5 days. Partially supported by a follow-up mentoring of the trained multipliers through S4D specialist from the local S4D networks.



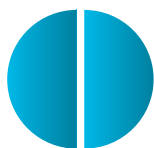
## Evaluation and Adjustments

Evaluation and monitoring are important tools to achieve impact and ensure quality. However, they are always associated with considerable effort and require the necessary know-how. Against the background of these considerations, not everything has to be evaluated in a systematic, structured and elaborate way. However, a regular and critical examination of one's own goals, strategies and activities should take place in every organisation. This also applies to L-S4D-Nets.

In the case of L-S4D-Nets, this concerns two levels: Firstly, the question of cooperation within the network (process evaluation): Are the right partners on board? Do all partners continue to identify with the goals and strategies? Are all partners active? etc. Secondly, the evaluation of the operational activities (process and impact evaluation): Have the activities been implemented as planned? Should the activities been organized in another way? Does the network actually achieve the social impact it aims for with its activities? etc.

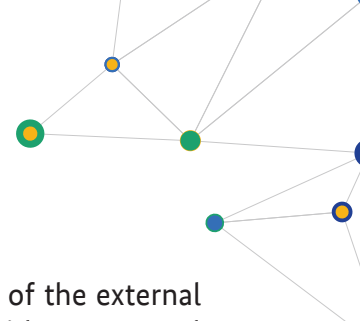
Feedback from the pilot networks shows, that process evaluation is used and works well. The pilot networks feel sufficiently competent themselves and have also been supported externally by GIZ in the initial project phases. The approach of peer to peer learning also plays an important role in this context. The feedback from the network coordinators clearly shows that the exchange of L-S4D-Nets at regional level is considered particularly helpful for network development.

The evaluation of the social impact, on the other hand, is a challenge for the L-S4D networks. Here, the networks obviously need help from outside. However, standardised instruments for impact measurement are only applicable to a limited extent due to the individualised concept of the L-S4D-Nets and the very different implementation formats (cf. step 6). The assessment of social impact in the pilot projects has so far been based mainly on quantitative indicators (how many multipliers have been trained) and qualitative feedback from local stakeholders. The feedback from the school system in particular is very positive. Teachers and trainers who use the S4D method in their groups report a positive development of social relations and the learning climate even beyond the actual physical education lessons.



## Phasing out of external initiator

Phasing out refers to the role of an external initiator or donor. Both perspectives are relevant here, that of the external initiator (when and how should they withdraw from the L-S4D-Nets?) and that of



the network itself (how can partners prepare for the withdrawal of the external initiator? Is their network motivated, capable and active even without external support? etc.)

This process has not yet taken place in the pilot region but has already been discussed with the L-S4D nets. The feedback from the networks is not uniform on this point, but basically all networks are of the opinion that the external initiator (in this case GIZ) has to exit at one point, but that this must not happen prematurely.

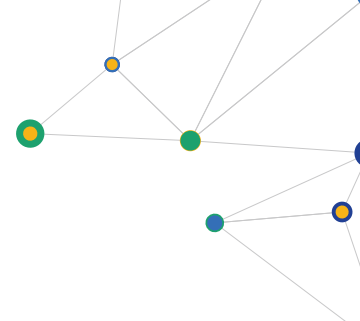
In the view of the local experts, a prerequisite for the sustainable continuation of sport-based development work through the local S4D network is that the sport for development approach is fully understood and well known for example:

- that sport for development is part of the local youth strategy,
- that S4D is accredited as an option within the catalogue of accepted extra curricular school activities or,
- that a S4D training is formally accredited within the continuous professional development framework of PE teachers.



## 4. EXPERIENCE FROM THE FIELD





The descriptions of the Local S4D Networks in Kriva Palanka, Fier, Fushe Kosova and Brcko presented below are intended to show the diverse forms and working modalities that are possible within the basic concept.

Each of the four networks fulfils all of the characteristics described in 2.2, yet the partnerships are composed differently.

The local context is also similar. All of the communities described are in a multi-ethnic environment, affected by high unemployment rates, face significant inequalities and poverty among ethnic minorities, with women and girls also having to deal with traditional gender roles and the associated obstacles. Despite the similar challenges seen from the outside, the networks have come to different conclusions in their needs analyses regarding the key issues to be tackled with sport based interventions.

While the S4D method used is the same in all networks since all instructors in the region have been trained together, the four L-S4D-Nets have found different approaches to using the methodology in their local environment in order to address specific challenges or achieve the biggest possible impact.

The following descriptions are deliberately kept very short and answer the same four questions in each case in order to make them comparable:

1. In which local context does the network operate?
2. Which stakeholders are actively involved or provide support?
3. What is a specific local problem the network partners have identified?
4. How is S4D used to improve the situation for the target group in this case?

It is important to understand that in the descriptions only one specific problem and the particularities of the respective solution approach are presented for each local community in order to make the versatility of the concept visible. However, the complete scope of activities of the L-S4D-Nets was a lot more extensive and much broader than presented in these short excerpts.



## 4.1 KRIVA PALANKA – NORTH MACEDONIA

### In which local context does the network operate?

Kriva Palanka is located in the north-eastern region of North Macedonia and is constituted by 35 communities with a total number of population of around 30.000 people. It is located in a mountain region where citizens from the rural parts have limited access to public infrastructure. Several factors such as technological change or rising costs for farming have reduced job opportunities in the region so that many rural communities around Kriva Palanka are confronted with socio-economic challenges and disadvantages.

### Which stakeholders are actively involved or provide support?

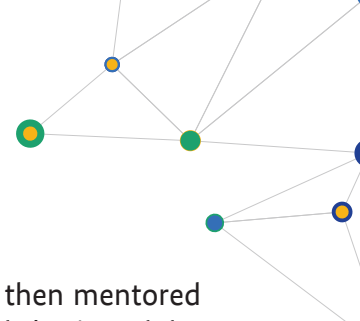
The Partnership in Kriva Palanka includes several sports clubs (e.g. basketball, football, handball, karate and table tennis); 2 elementary schools; a dormitory/student home; a center for social work and politics and the local youth council. The S4D network in Kriva Palanka is strongly supported by the municipality and an experienced NGO from Skopje (NGO TAKT) has helped to initiate the cooperation process and continues to act as an external facilitator.

### What is a specific local problem the network partners have identified?

One very specific problem identified by the partners in Kriva Palanka, was that students from rural areas who stayed overnight at the boarding school during the week did not receive sufficient educational support after school hours. As a result of the lack of integration and supervision, the youth developed a number of socially undesirable behaviors that contributed to conflict and rejection within the local community.

### How is S4D used to improve the situation for the target group in this case?

In response to the above-mentioned problem, the local S4D-Net has developed a programme for the young people of that boarding school and has carried out a series of activities for them. The programme involves small sport for development games as well as sport specific activities designed and implemented by the primary school teachers and the local partnership. As a specific feature, peer leaders (other young people from the local community) were trained to assist in



the implementation of S4D activities. These young leaders were then mentored by the adult S4D coaches. Activities are now conducted on a weekly basis and the project got support from the local municipality in order to renovate some of the existing sport spaces, including the target group into this process as well. According to the assessment of the local network, in addition to the boarding school students, the project partners and peer leaders have also benefited significantly from the process. The local basketball club, for example, was able to broaden its base of young players and establish itself among the national leaders, especially among girls, which the coaches also attribute to the personality development through the S4D activities.

## 4.2 FIER - ALBANIA

### In which local context does the network operate?

Fier is one of the largest municipalities in Albania. It is located in the south-western part of the Country. It has a heterogeneous, multiethnic and multi-religious population of approx. 200,000 inhabitants, from which 27% are youth. The Region around Fier is ranked in second place in Albania in regard to economic capacity. However, social problems are pronounced and various marginalized and vulnerable groups are not sufficiently represented. Local partners point out that there is a significant lack of social services as well as a need for sport-related activities for social development and social inclusion.

### Which stakeholders are actively involved or provide support?

The L-S4D-Net in Fier is composed of the municipality's directorate of projects and two administrative units from communities in Topojë and Dërmënas. On the public side the regional education department is also involved. The sports sector is represented by a multi-sports club that covers a broad variety of sports from teamsports, to martial arts, to cycling and chess. From the social sector NGO Epoka e Re is involved. The organization work with youth and for youth.

### What is a specific local problem the network partners have identified?

As a key challenge to be tackled, the network in Fier has identified gender discrimination and unequal social inclusion of young women and girls. This issue



is described to be a result of the patriarchal mentality (especially in rural areas), poverty and low social integration. The school curriculum is focused mainly on formal education with no specific social or sport-based activities to accompany the learning. Sport activities are limited to PE classes with different involvement of boys and girls. In some cases girls are even completely excluded from some sportive activities. In particular girls in rural areas are not allowed to participate in sports as a result of gender stereotypes. Parents often do not understand and lack proper awareness of the importance of sport for the girls' health and well-being. Due to the local partnership's experience this also links and contributes to other problems such as early marriages, early withdrawal from school, lack of information and education, low levels of self-esteem in young people etc. Given the above, the network intends to bring positive change into schools.

#### **How is S4D used to improve the situation for the target group in this case?**

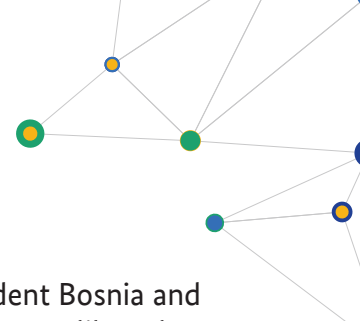
To harvest the potential of S4D in strengthening young people and tackling gender discrimination, the network in Fier has established the concept of Social Clubs in 16 high schools located in urban and rural areas within the Fier municipality. Social clubs are part of the Schools' extra curricular programme and held twice a week. The activities provided by the social clubs are based on the S4D methodology and are targeting students aged 13-18, both girls and boys. The programme's main focus is on gender issues and other relevant social problems such as bullying, violence or conflicts between peers.

A special feature of these social clubs is that social workers and psychologists actively participate in the S4D activities. By this a trust base is created between students, teachers, social workers and psychologists. Thus students can more easily find support for their social or mental issues in a non-stigmatized environment.

### **4.3 BRCKO - BOSNIA AND HERCEGOVINA**

#### **In which local context does the network operate?**

Brčko District is a self-governing administrative unit in north-eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina. Formally it is a condominium of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska, that was formed in 2000 to reflect the areas'



multi-ethnic nature and special status within the newly independent Bosnia and Herzegovina. In practice, it functions as a local self-government area, like other municipalities in the country. The district has around 95.000 inhabitants of which approx. 50.000 are living in the city of Brčko.

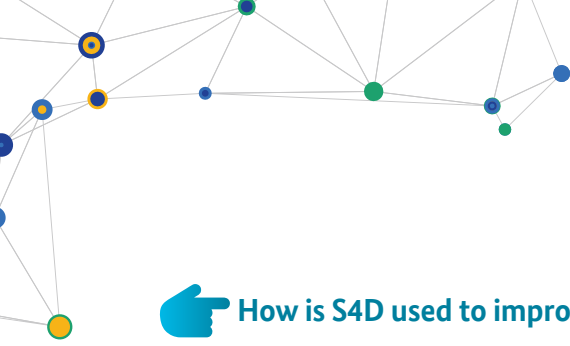
### **Which stakeholders are actively involved or provide support?**

The L-S4D-Net in Brčko is build around the Youth Center Vermont, an experienced NGO that runs a day center for vulnerable children and young people and provides a number of social services to them. The sport and youth sector is represented by nine different sports clubs and 5 NGOs for youth. For administrative reasons, schools can't formally participate, but they are having an affiliated role, helping the network to get access to participants and sport facilities. The Brčko network operates in a rather regulated bureaucratic environment. The local government must be formally informed about the network's activities but provides support with these administrative tasks. Besides high unemployment rates, local partners have identified social inequality, discrimination and intolerance against ethnic minorities as a major challenge in their local communities, with children and youth being particularly vulnerable for these threats.

### **What is a specific local problem the network partners have identified?**

There are seventeen national minorities in BiH. Roma are considered to be one of the most vulnerable minorities whose social situation is characterized by poor living conditions, housing problems and educational obstacles. A large number of Roma children is not registered in the birth registry, and therefore cannot be enrolled in school. Poverty, poor nutrition and the lack of education of parents are further causes of unequal chances of Roma children compared to other kids. In the BiH Brčko District, many Roma children are living in remote suburban settlements under very poor economic and social conditions. The majority of them do not attend school, and those who attend, are at high risk of dropping out from school before completing their primary education and gaining a degree.





### **How is S4D used to improve the situation for the target group in this case?**

The Brčko network's approach has several specific features. First of all the partnership tries to reach the children very early in their development with their sports-based activities. This means as early as in pre-school and kindergarten. Secondly, it does not limit the S4D activities to the actual target group but also tries to involve teachers, parents and the general public into some of the activities to increase problem awareness. Thirdly the network tries to systematically mingle children from different backgrounds during their S4D activities. For example by providing specific activities for a school pair consisting of a city school and a school from the remote rural areas.

## 4.4 FUSHE KOSOVA / KOSOVO POLJE – KOSOVO

### **In which local context does the network operate?**

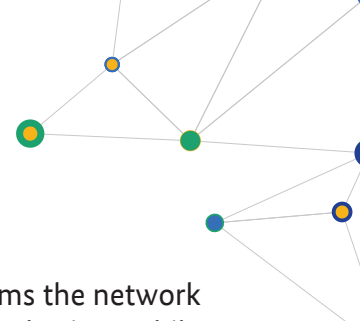
Fushe Kosova is a town and municipality in the central part of Kosovo in close proximity to Prishtina. Today Fushe Kosova is one of the most dynamic municipalities in Kosovo, experiencing major urban changes. The municipality has a multi-ethnic population of approx. 35.000 inhabitants of which almost 13.000 live in town.

### **Which stakeholders are actively involved or provide support?**

The S4D network in Fushe Kosova is led by an established Youth Organisation (NGO Akti) that cooperates with two volleyball clubs and the local PE teachers association in which teachers from 17 local schools are represented. In addition, the municipality of Fushe Kosova has delegated a representative and supports the network by providing the required access to schools and sports facilities.

### **What is a specific local problem the network partners have identified?**

In their needs assessment the L-S4D-Network in Fushe Kosova has identified a general lack of opportunities for young people and in particular for children and youth from ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups. Girls being even more



affected than boys, with even fewer opportunities. In broader terms the network sees a need for initiatives to promote social inclusion and social cohesion. While the network considers sport and play, in particular when it is based on the S4D methodology, a potential tool to promote social inclusion and cohesion, large parts of the target group have only very limited access to sport related activities. Due to various reasons such as a lack of school sport facilities, a competition-oriented sports concept, priority given to “class room” subjects etc. Physical Education is very much neglected in schools. The local S4D partnership has observed that the subject is usually taught in gender separated groups, only in theory or even replaced by other, supposedly more important classes. Thus an important opportunity for social learning is missed.

### **How is S4D used to improve the situation for the target group in this case?**

Like in many other European countries elementary school teachers are not specifically trained to provide physical education. The focus of the L-S4D network in Fushe Kosova thus lies even more than in the other networks involved in the pilot project on the capacity building of teachers. Almost 90% of Primary School Teachers have now been trained in S4D in Fushe Kosova and the neighboring Municipality of Obiliq. In this process, teachers receive an introductory 3-day training and are then supported by mentors in practical S4D activities on site. After initial skepticism about the new method, the network has since received a lot of positive feedback from teachers. More sport-based lessons are taking place. Teachers report improved social and communication skills of students. As a next development step, the network aims to accredit S4D training as in-service training for primary school teachers. This would structurally anchor the activities developed and help rolling them out nationally.

## **4.5 CROSS REGIONAL – ALL LOCAL S4D NETWORKS INVOLVED**

### **In which local context does the network operate?**

The labour market situation in the countries of the Western Balkans is tense and has been exacerbated by Covid-19. Young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are



particularly affected, with an average unemployment rate of 34.6%, putting them at risk of poverty and social exclusion. The employment rate for women is moreover significantly lower than that of men. The insufficient quality of (vocational) education and training, which does not meet the requirements of the labour market, is one of the main causes of the high youth unemployment in the region. Between 2010 and 2019, 700,000 new jobs were created in the Western Balkans, but only 70,000 of these jobs were filled by young people (15-24 years old).

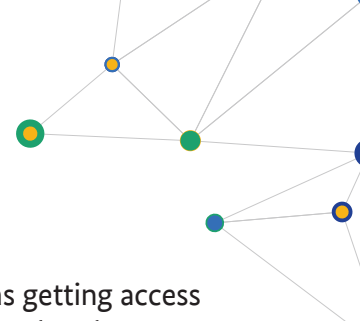
As a result, many young people are leaving their home countries in search of better education and employment opportunities. The Western Balkan countries have one of the highest brain drain rates in the world, while the young generation in particular should play a decisive role in social, economic and cultural cooperation as well as in the reconciliation of the entire Balkan region. There is therefore an urgent need to promote the employability of young people throughout the region.

### **Which stakeholders are actively involved or provide support?**

The L-S4D nets established in the region have exchanged and cooperated with each other from the beginning. In particular, the joint training of S4D instructors has contributed to this. As a result of a change in the emphasis of S4D activities in the region in 2021, towards a greater focus on strengthening the employability of young people through sport, a common objective has also emerged for all local networks involved. As a result, the local networks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania continued to implement specific activities in their respective communities, but they started to plan and implement a number of cross-regional activities.

### **What is a specific local problem the network partners have identified?**

In the broader context of insufficient youth employability and high youth unemployment in the region, the partners have identified structural problems in the education sector and labour market as the main causes, which are beyond the control of the existing programme. However, the network representatives were also able to identify some common starting points to improve the employability of young people at the individual level and in the local context through sport. On the one hand, insufficient social skills of the young people (such as goal orientation, perseverance, teamwork and communication skills) were mentioned across the country borders. On the other hand, all networks see a lack of systematic support for young people in terms of career orientation and decision-making. This includes the ability



to recognise one's own talents, strengths and weaknesses as well as getting access to relevant information about the different educational and vocational pathways.

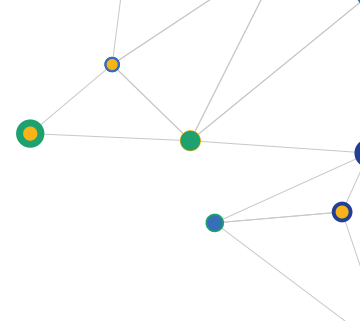
### **How is S4D used to improve the situation for the target group in this case?**

In order to address the issues described above, the networks have developed a common framework for the implementation of Youth Employability Camps, where young people could receive career guidance and work on improving their social and employability skills through S4D activities. These Youth Employability Camps were then implemented in summer 2021 and 2022 by cross-network teams of S4D instructors with young people from several Western Balkan countries participating in each camp.





## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



## 5.1 CONCLUSION

Local S4D networks are a valuable approach to implement sport based development programs and activities. They are particularly suitable as a pilot format to introduce the Sport for Development approach in a community, country or region. The local network strategy also helps to quickly develop a good understanding of the respective local context. Especially where conditions in a target region are not uniform but rather heterogeneous.

A key strength of local S4D networks is that they meet the requirements of truly participatory development cooperation in their local context. It is the local actors on the ground who identify needs and problems, set priorities and decide how best to use the S4D methodology to bring about the desired social changes. This creates ownership and commitment, which is an important prerequisite for real change and sustainability.

The genuine understanding of the local context results in customized solutions that produce visible results very quickly which in turn contributes to the acceptance and dissemination of the S4D method in the local environment. Local stakeholders seek and find synergies and connection opportunities which a centrally planned and rolled out S4D program would not be able to leverage in the same way. This happens, for example, through incorporating the S4D idea into local youth or sports strategies, by complementing already existing training opportunities with the S4D methodology, or when S4D activities are linked to local events and traditions).

In addition, L-S4D networks have also proven to be a good exchange platform, providing fertile ground for the development of other initiatives and projects. For example, several organisations from the Western Balkans network are jointly participating in various applications or already approved projects under the ERASMUS+ funding programme of the European Union.

Like all truly participatory processes, building local S4D networks requires time and mutual understanding. The time frame that is needed to set-up these structures is therefore more suitable for programs than for projects.



Another challenge is that the openness and flexibility of the approach is accompanied by a significantly lower level of plannability at the overarching program level and that the overall program success depends a lot on the objectives, competencies and commitment of the local partner organisations. Within three years of systematic S4D work in several local S4D networks in the Western Balkans, a wide range of approaches and measures has been developed and tested. Not each and every activity was targeted, effective and efficient and not everything that was tested in one local context can be transferred to another local context.

However, the approach has contributed significantly to solving locally identified problems and creating the desired local impact. For the entire regional “network of networks” and GIZ as the initiating cooperation partner the approach has in addition led to meaningful practical learning and several useful and transferable approaches have emerged for youth promotion in the region.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are primarily aimed at program developers who want to use local S4D networks in a national or regional framework.

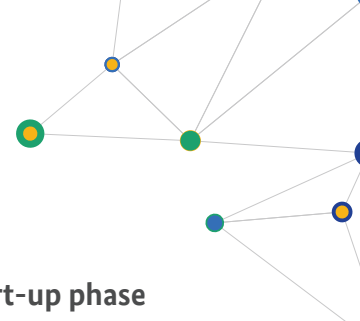
### **Carefully select local network partners in the start-up phase**

Local S4D networks are only as strong as the organisations and individuals acting within these networks. Therefore, be clear about what you want to achieve in a particular local setting and then carefully select the first potential network partners. Make sure you well informed about the existing experience and expertise of each organisation, their reputation in the local context and how well they are already connected at the local level. Do not rush the process of identifying the relevant stakeholders and clearly define your own expectations, as each network partner will bring their own agenda into the system.

### **Give the approach sufficient time to unfold its potential**

If the approach is chosen, it must be given sufficient time to develop and resources must be planned to support the networks. We believe that 2 years is the minimum time needed to initiate the concept successfully. If stable and sustainable networks are to be created, we believe that 4-5 years is an appropriate period of support. This implies a large investment for an external donor / cooperation partner, but also creates strong relationships between donors and local implementers as a return on investment, if this is aspired.





### **Provide (financial) support to the local networks during the start-up phase**

Our experience has shown that the networks should also be supported financially at least in the initial stage, so that they can become active as quickly as possible and achieve tangible results. Financial support should always be accompanied by the corresponding capacity building (e.g. strategic development, proper funds management).

In addition it is important to make sure that the external funding does not damage the original network character. For instance, when the networks start to align their sport for development measures towards the requirements of the funding program instead of focusing on the actual local problems or needs of their target groups. In this context, it is also important not to support individual actors to such an extent that dependencies are created or individual actors gain a dominant role in the network as a result of unbalanced start-up funding. With a view to sustainability and needs orientation, it also makes sense to strive for co-financing from within the local context right from the beginning (e.g. through the local municipality).

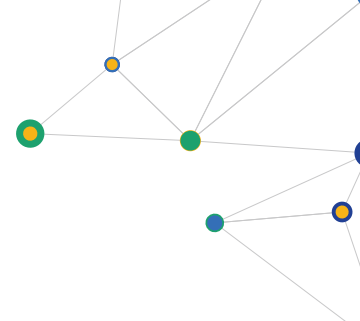
### **Be aware that the approach is difficult to scale up**

L-S4D-Nets create good local visibility, and enable measures and formats to be quickly tested in different settings and developed together with local actors. Whenever the local level is the main level of intervention, or as long as testing and piloting is a priority, this approach is very worthwhile.

However, due to its high individuality, participation requirements and complexity, the concept cannot be easily transferred to a national or regional level. In order to achieve a broader impact, a larger number of networks must be established in a country or region. In our opinion, this can only succeed if there is a national partner or agency that specifically supports and co-finances such an approach and already has local structures itself or cooperates with local structures (e.g. municipalities) on the ground.







## 6.1 L-S4D-NETWORK PROFILE TEMPLATE

The following template can be used to describe your Local-S4D-Net and create your individual network profile. This process should be done as a joint activity, as it will help you to clarify open questions among partners and ensure that all stakeholders have clear and consistent expectations regarding the Local-S4D-Net and its ambitions.

### Example Community - Sport for Development Network Network Guidelines

#### Authors:

#### *1-INTRODUCTION*

#### *2-OBJECTIVES AND RATIONAL*

What is the main purpose of your L-S4D-Network? What do you want to achieve?  
Why is the envisaged change needed?

#### *3-NETWORK CHARACTERISTICS*

What is the main purpose of your L-S4D-Network? What do you want to achieve?  
Why is the envisaged change needed?

#### *4-ADDED VALUE*

What is the added value your L-S4D-Network wants to create for your target groups, for your community, for the participating organisations and other stakeholders? What can be achieved by collaborating in this network? What could not be achieved by the participating organisations alone?



### **5-OWNERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION**

Who can participate in your L-S4D-Network? Does it need an invitation to participate? Who decides who can be in? What requirements are linked to becoming a member of your network?

### **6-LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND DECISION MAKING**

Who is leading or facilitating the network activities, how is the network organised or managed? How do you make decisions?

### **7-ACTIVITIES**

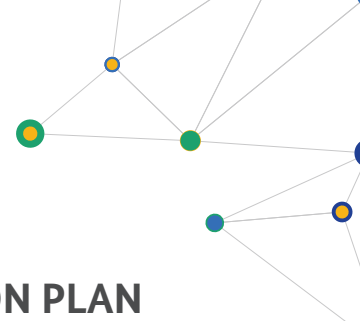
What kind of activities does your L-S4D-Network aim to implement in general (describe the details in your local action plan)? Who plans and delivers the activities?

### **8-INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COLLABORATION**

How do you plan to collaborate within your L-S4D-Network? Do all partners share a common set of goals or values? How do you deal with competing interests of network members? How does the network collaborate with other stakeholders? Who can speak or act on behalf of your network? Are you already aware of other stakeholders you should collaborate with as a network?

### **9-RESOURCES**

What kind of resources do you need to establish a general working base for your L-S4D-Network (e.g. a certain number of meetings) and/or to provide the envisaged activities? Time, money, infrastructure, expertise, contacts, patronage, information etc.? Who will provide these resources (which internal or external stakeholders)?



## 6.2 LOCAL SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

The following template can be used to create your Local Sport for Development Action Plan.

### Example Community - Sport for Development Action Plan

Planning Period: 01/2022 – 12/2022

#### Authors:

##### 1-INTRODUCTION

##### 2-LOCAL SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

What is the purpose of this Sport for Development Action Plan? How was it developed? Who was involved in the planning process? How will the action plan be implemented?

##### 3-POLICY CONTEXT

Are there any relevant policies or strategies this local sport for development action plan should take into account or link to? This would eg. include policies and strategies on sport, youth or social issues on either, local or national levels?

##### 4-COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Relevant description of your local community and context. What is important to know in order to understand the objectives and envisaged activities of this action plan? (What are the main characteristics of your community? Key figures? Population? Areas or groups with specific needs ? etc.)

##### 5-TARGET GROUPS

What are the target groups your L-S4D-Network wants to address in general? Which target group(s) will be a priority for the upcoming planning period?



### 6-NEEDS ANALYSIS

What are the development needs your L-S4D-Network is aiming at? What is the envisaged social impact you want to achieve and how will sport be used to contribute to the envisaged social impact and results?

### 7-PRIORITIES FOR THE UPCOMING PLANNING PERIOD

Does the current action plan build on previous S4D activities? What are your local Sport for Development priorities for the upcoming planning period?

### 8-ACTION AND ACTIVITIES

Based on the previous considerations, what concrete activities is your S4D network planning for the upcoming implementation period?

## ACTION FIELD 1: CONTACT & TRUST BUILDING

No	Activity	Description	Target Group(s)	Expected Outcomes	Timeline	Responsible	Required Resources

## ACTION FIELD 2: AWARENESS RAISING

No	Activity	Description	Target Group(s)	Expected Outcomes	Timeline	Responsible	Required Resources

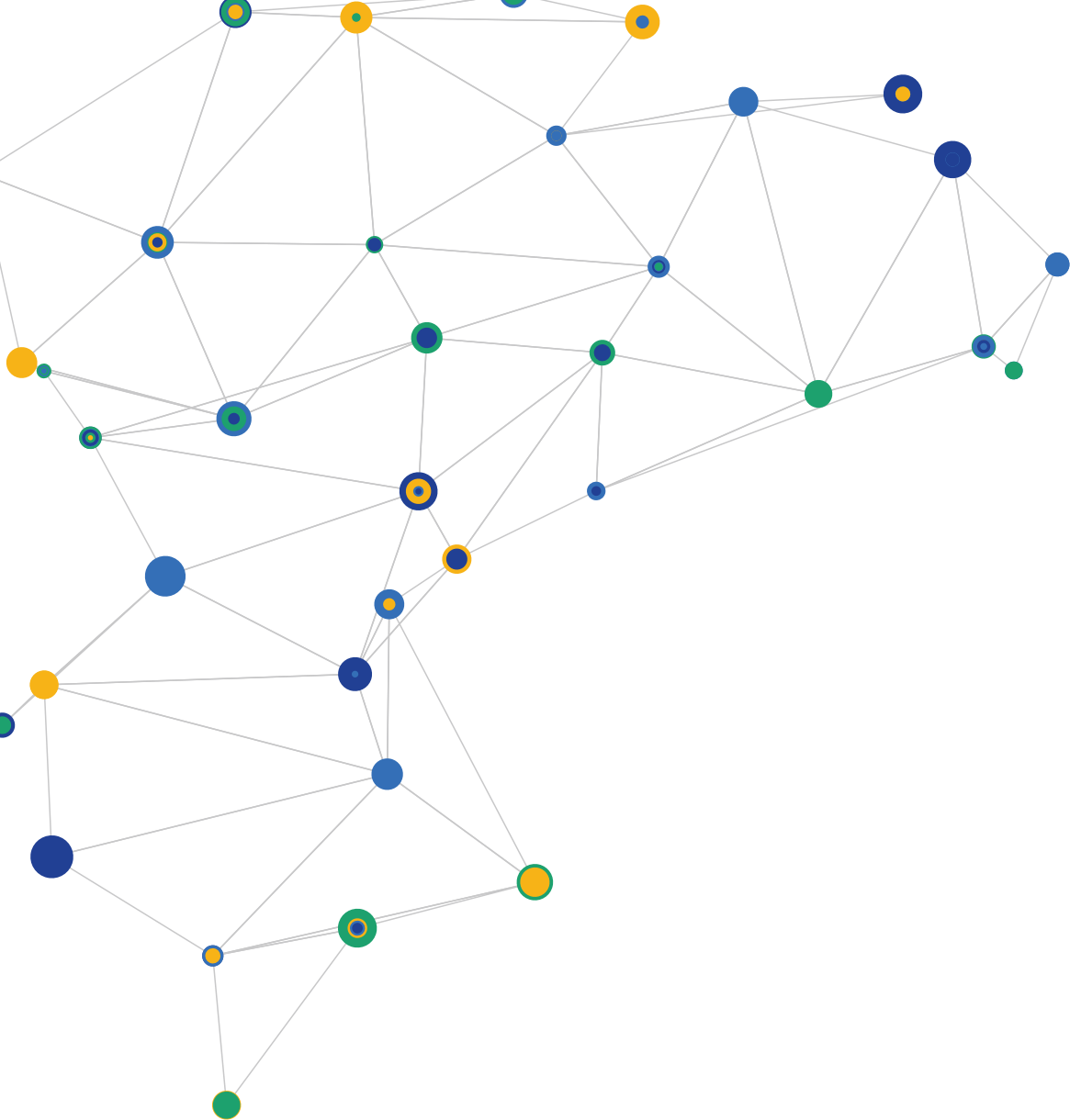
## ACTION FIELD 3: CAPACITY BUILDING

No	Activity	Description	Target Group(s)	Expected Outcomes	Timeline	Responsible	Required Resources

## REFERENCES

GIZ (2015): Work the Net. A management guide for existing and emerging formal networks. Authors: B. Camacho Tuckermann, L. Auge, J. Schwaab and B. Seibold. Ed. by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. Bonn.





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