

The SDGs and Sport

To understand how S4D can be used to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, it is important to first define what is meant by sport and Sport for Development.

Sport and Sport for Development

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development uses a broad definition of sport and physical activity, which can be found in the text box.

Sport is a useful tool for achieving development goals because of its cross-cultural, universal popularity and its inherent contribution to **physical and mental wellbeing**. Important life skills such as **respect, fair play and teamwork** can be taught through sport.

Furthermore, sport has an important social component to it which can be used for the benefit of groups, communities and societies.

Sport in and of itself does not equal development, however. It is important to understand specifically what S4D entails and how its potential can be maximised.

S4D means the **intentional pedagogical development and implementation of exercises** that prioritise the **personal and social development of (youth) participants** over their sport and motoric development. In S4D, sport and physical activity are used to **attain development objectives**, including, most notably, the **Sustainable Development Goals**.

In order for sport to make a meaningful contribution to these goals, exercises need to be used in modified ways that explicitly and intentionally develop life skills/competences of participants. This includes **self, social and methodological competences**. Extensive frameworks that offer more detail can be found on the 'Sport for Development Resource Toolkit' website under: [Essentials – S4D Competences](#).

A necessary precondition for (youth) participants to develop and attain life skills/competences are well-designed and well-conducted S4D activities delivered by S4D-trained coaches. A useful collection of activities and exercises can be found on the 'Sport for Development Resource Toolkit' website under: [Tools for Your Practice – S4D Teaching and Learning Materials](#).

What is Sport?

Sport means any physical activity that promotes physical and mental wellbeing and social interaction, including mass and recreational sport, games and physical exercise, and traditional forms of culture and expression, such as dance.¹



To help with the development of such activities, coaches must take into account the **Five Principles of S4D Activities**:

- ✓ **Multidimensional Development of Participants**
- ✓ **Developing Life Skills**
- ✓ **Roles and Responsibilities of a Coach**
- ✓ **Appropriate Educational Goals**
- ✓ **Structure of an S4D Training**

In contrast to 'classic' sport exercises and training, sport for development offers a more complex and multidimensional approach. When implemented properly, **S4D can meaningfully contribute to important development goals, such as the SDGs**.

¹ German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (2015). *The Role of Sport in German Development Cooperation*.

The SDGs

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) introduced its [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and with it the [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#). These goals aim to end all forms of poverty and inequality as well as a whole range of other global issues.

All 193 UN members have pledged to contribute to achievement of the universal Sustainable Development Goals. That makes the 2030 Agenda the **most important development policy** to date.

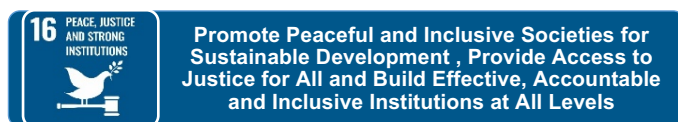
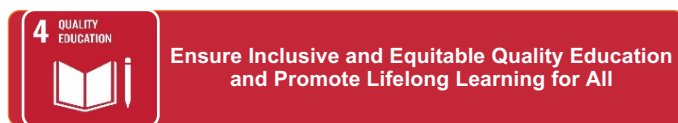
Importantly, Article 37 of the 2030 Agenda recognises that **sport can contribute to achievement of the SDGs**. This provides a great deal of legitimacy but also responsibility for the S4D sector. Sport can be used as a low-threshold, cost-effective and flexible tool in the field of development cooperation.

It is now up to S4D to prove its worth by effectively and sustainably contributing to the SDGs. For sport to be able to make a meaningful contribution to the 2030 Agenda, S4D activities, projects and workshops must be carefully

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Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development.

We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.²



planned, implemented and **monitored and evaluated**. And just as importantly, all activities of S4D training should **focus on a specific SDG**.

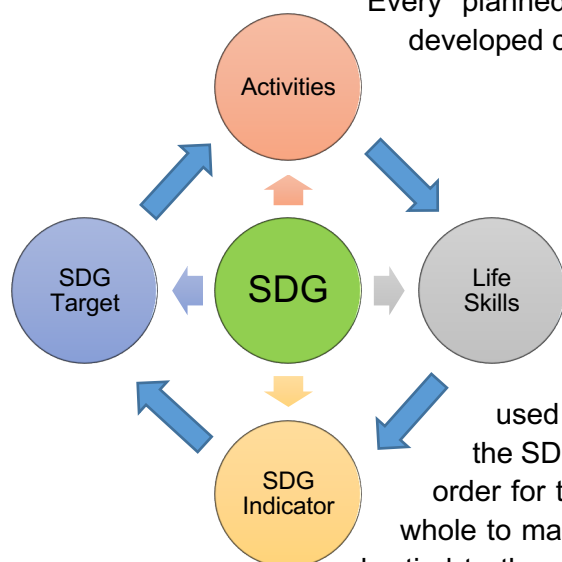
However, it cannot and must not be expected that sport can meaningfully contribute to all 17 SDGs. A selection needs to be made. There is a consensus that sport can make the most significant contribution to the seven SDGs displayed on the left. As a lot of helpful material on this topic has already been gathered, further information should be taken from the 'Sport for Development Resource Toolkit' website under: [Essentials – Introduction: Sport & SDGs](#).

To ensure that sport can make a real contribution to an SDG, **S4D activities must be specifically aimed at and tailored to it**. To help with this, all SDGs are divided into targets and individual indicators. By specifically choosing to focus on certain targets and indicators, the larger goals, such as achieving gender

equality, are broken down into manageable and achievable objectives. This way, S4D can make a meaningful contribution through carefully planned training sessions, workshops and additional activities.

This process is based on the following underlying logic.

Every planned activity and every competence that is to be developed centres around a specific SDG.



! *'Competence' may be used as a synonym for 'life skill'.*

Activities must be explicitly targeted at developing SDG-specific life skills. That is not

to say that the development of general life skills is not a worthwhile goal. Instead, this should be

used as a basic framework that is extended by adding the SDG-specific component. This is important because in

order for the S4D sector and development cooperation as a whole to make meaningful advances, life skills and goals must

be tied to the overarching, universal SDGs. This helps to **create**

synergies and harness global knowledge and resources.

To complete the process depicted above, since the life skills are now SDG-specific, they contribute to a corresponding SDG indicator that in turn will contribute to the relevant SDG target. This process will thus help make a small contribution to the respective Sustainable Development Goal around which it is centred.

More detailed information can be found in the advanced course on *Life Skills and the SDGs*.

Last but not least, bear in mind that **an SDG never stands on its own** but is always tied to and influenced by other goals.

To name just one example: SDG5 Gender Equality cannot be fully reached if SDG4 Quality Education is neglected. Quality education can help empower girls and at the same time educate boys to be more respectful towards the opposite gender, which can ultimately improve gender equality. Even more so, achieving gender equality and quality education can lead to inclusive economic growth and decent work for all, which are at the heart of SDG8.

As this *Content* part can only provide a **brief and basic overview of a complex topic**, it is important that as a course facilitator you make yourself familiar with further information, publications and examples that help consolidate your knowledge.

Besides the links provided in this manual, a lot of helpful material can be found on the 'Sport for Development Resource Toolkit' website under: [Essentials – Further Reading](#). Below are just a few links that will lead you to relevant documents on the SDGs and sport:

[Guideline: S4D and the Agenda 2030](#) (GIZ, 2018)

[Enhancing the Contribution of Sport to the SDGs](#) (Commonwealth, 2017)

[Sport and the Sustainable Development Goals](#) (UNOSDP, 2014)