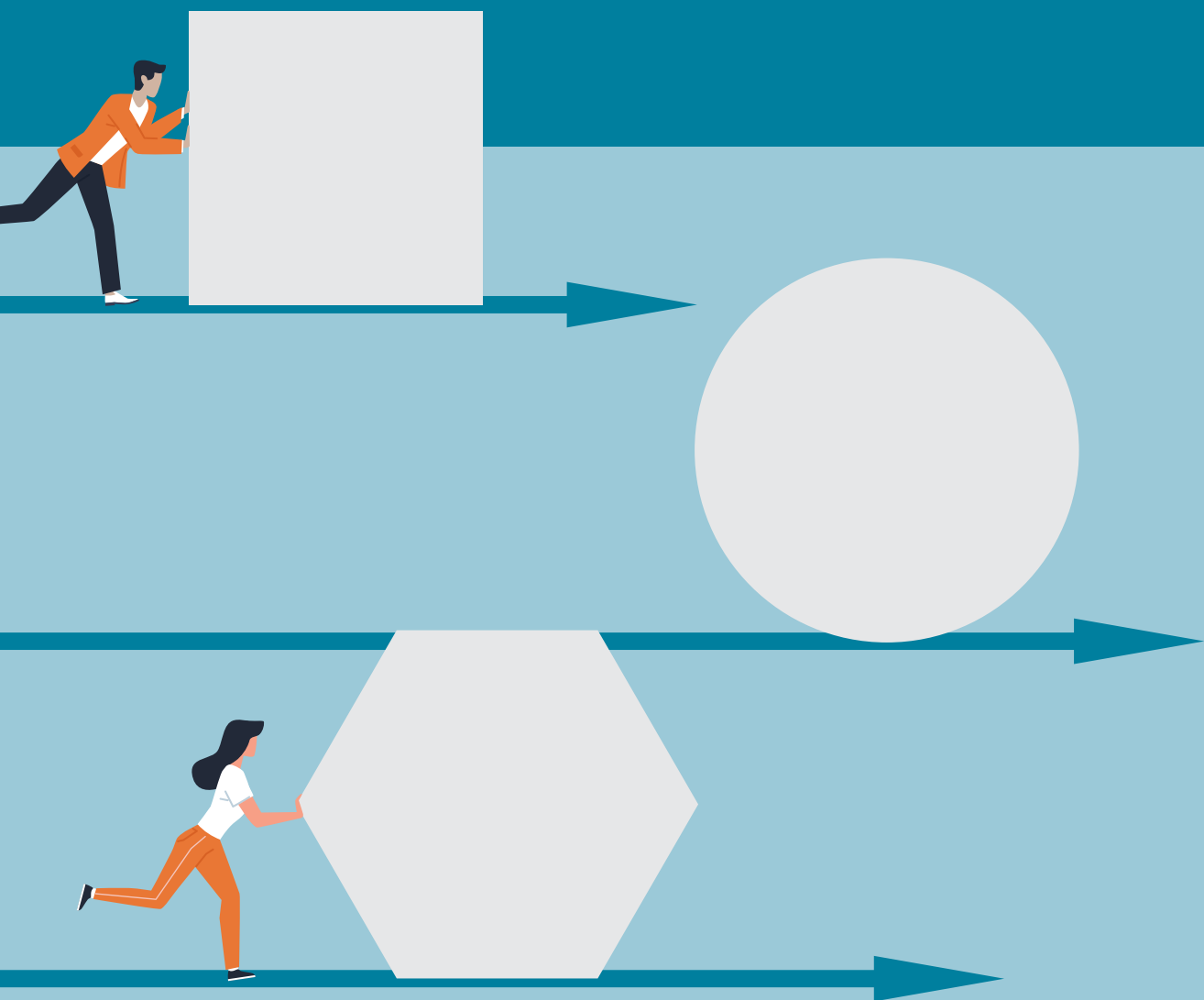


SPORT FOR EMPLOYABILITY

MANUAL FOR PROJECT DEVELOPERS IN THE WESTERN BALKAN REGION



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1. BACKGROUND



On behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) since 2013 the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) implements the Sector Programme Sport for Development (S4D). Besides its advisory services to the BMZ the programme has an operational mandate to implement sport pedagogical measures together with partner countries.

In 2017 GIZ has initiated a sport for development project in the Balkan region. The aim is to use sport and physical activity as a tool for social inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups. Among various other activities GIZ aims at building individual capacity in coaches, teachers, youth- and social workers.

In 2021/22 a specific measure entitled 'Western Balkans Youth proMOTION' has been initiated on "Sport for Employability". Together with regional partners, this measure further evolved the existing 'Sport for Development' approach towards the needs of young people in terms of strengthening their competencies relevant to the labor market. To this end, the initiative could rely on the previously set cooperation with Local Sport for Development Networks in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia. Following-up on the already tested capacity building strategy, the established qualification model was expanded both qualitatively (methodological focus on labour market competences) and quantitatively (training of additional multipliers).

In addition to follow-up trainings for S4D instructors and programme developers, different types of activities for the actual target group of 15-18 year old youth were developed and tested through a number of small scale pilot projects.

2. OBJECTIVE



This manual draws on the experience of the Western Balkans Youth proMOTION initiative and seeks to make the practical learning from this action available to a wider audience.

It is designed as a practical resource that aims to support coaches, teachers, youth workers and project developers across the region to make better and more targeted use of sport for development as a tool to promote youth employability.

Coaches, teachers and youth workers get a methodical introduction on how to teach employability relevant skills through sport. They learn which skills are relevant, how skills development through sport takes place in general and how to specifically plan for and trigger skills-learning as part of their classes and activities.

Programme developers are given an overview of how sport can be integrated into the wider context of employability promotion, which formats are suitable for which objectives, what kind of partners are needed for what kind of objective, etc.

3. TERMS AND KEY CONCEPTS

Terms and definitions are usually not what practitioners expect when they are looking for hands-on information on a topic. However, our experience has shown that especially when introducing a new or modified theoretical approach, it is helpful to name and describe the individual elements of the approach as clearly as possible in order to give all participants the orientation they might need to transfer their existing theoretical and practical knowledge and experience to the new method. This seems all the more important in a cross-regional context with its linguistic and socio-cultural differences.

For a better overview, the relevant terms and concepts are grouped under four headlines. The aim is not to discuss academic definitions, but to describe pragmatically “what is meant” when we talk about these issues.

3.1. Employment and Employability

Employment

Employment is sometimes simply described as “the state of having paid work”. But this binary definition falls short. It is not without reason that the UN Development Goal 8 explicitly aims at “decent work and economic growth”. “Decent work means opportunities for everyone to get work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration”(UN, 2021).

Finding good work is one of the most important prerequisites for social inclusion and social security. It is important for the personal development of young people and gives them a fair perspective for their future. But finding their first „real“ employment and maintaining it is a particular big challenge for young people in many parts of the world. „The United Nations estimate, that in 2019, 22 per cent of the world’s youth were not engaged in either education, employment or training“.

Employability

Employability “is the combination of all factors which enable a [young person] to progress towards or get into employment, to stay in employment and to progress during a career” (Cedefop, 2011: 46). This combination of factors includes the possession of basic educational skills, vocational qualifications, technical or job-specific knowledge plus the individual’s personal qualities, attitudes and attributes, usually called soft – or life skills (→ employability skills pyramid).

Employability and Employment

Sport for development can help young people to equip themselves with a wide range of soft or life skills that match the actual labour market demands. These skills are an indispensable prerequisite for employment. For young people without any previous work experience, they are a key resource to improve their employment prospects, but unfortunately even the best skills portfolio is no guarantee for employment in a tight and competitive labour market as it is characteristic of the Western Balkans. This should not diminish the motivation to develop and implement sport for employability programmes, but it must be taken into account with regard to the expectation management of programme developers and young people alike.

3.2 Education and Training

Primary Education

Primary education in the Western Balkan (WB) countries usually includes classes 1 to 8/9 leading to the Certificate for Completed Elementary Education. For some of the most vulnerable groups in rural areas, from ethnic minorities, girls in particular this is the only formal education.

Secondary Education

Secondary education known as regular takes a further three or four years to complete. The focus is on academic teaching and preparation for university.

Vocational Education and Training

Technical and other vocational schools provide training for a variety of occupations. Vocational schools are mostly organised into two types; four-year vocational schools provide a route to higher education, while less gifted students attend 2 to 3-year VET schools which do not allow for progression to higher levels of education but lead straight to the labour market. Also, after graduating from professional schools, students are given particular ranks. If their school course was “physiotherapy”, then their rank is the Physiotherapy Technician. Only four-year courses give ranks.

Academic Education

In the Western Balkans, most students in higher education are enrolled in public institutions. Tertiary enrolment rates in the region are relatively high, but completion rates are rather low. (Brajkovic 2016). These educational outcomes, coupled with structural issues and high unemployment rates, present major challenges for WB countries.

3.3 Employability Skills

As already described, employability results from the sum of different skills that a young person can rely on as a resource. The Employability Skills Pyramid illustrates which skills are needed and how these skills relate to each other.

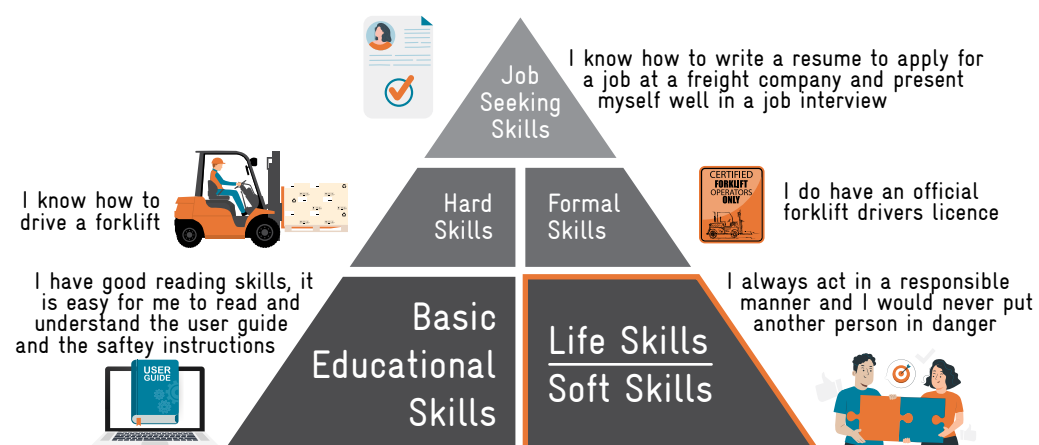


Fig.1: Employability Skills Pyramid

Life and Soft Skills

Sport can be used as an instrument at different points of the Employability Skills Pyramid, but the biggest impact of sport may certainly be expected in relation to the development of life and soft skills.

In literature, both terms are often used interchangeably. As there are no clear differentiation criteria, both terms are also used as synonyms in this manual. However, as life skills are already well established as a concept in the field of sport for development, we will prefer to use this term.

Life Skills are defined as psycho-social abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

This includes a wide range of “psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathise with others, and cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner. Life skills may be directed toward personal actions or actions toward others or may be applied to actions that alter the surrounding environment [...]”

They can be loosely grouped into three broad categories of skills: cognitive skills for analysing and using information, personal skills for developing personal agency and managing oneself, and inter-personal skills for communicating and interacting effectively with others (WHO 2003,3)”



Fig. 2: Life Skill Categories

A more detailed analysis of life skills with particular relevance to the employability of young people will be given in section 6.

3.4 Sport for Employability

Sport for employability is not a stand-alone concept. It rather represents a specific focus within the broader approach of sport for development. It includes all measures where sport is used in a targeted manner as a tool to promote the different aspects of employability at any stage of the pathway into a young person’s first employment.

The school and vocational training system, the agencies responsible for vocational orientation and career guidance, etc., vary among the countries of the Western Balkans (cf. section 4.2). However, beginning with basic school education, there are several stages on the path to employment that are comparable for all young people across countries (see fig. 3). It is important to note, that employability not only develops through formal education, but also through informal learning and personal development. The individual environment of the young people plays a very important role in this regard as well, but sport can make a contribution in all the stages identified in figure 3.

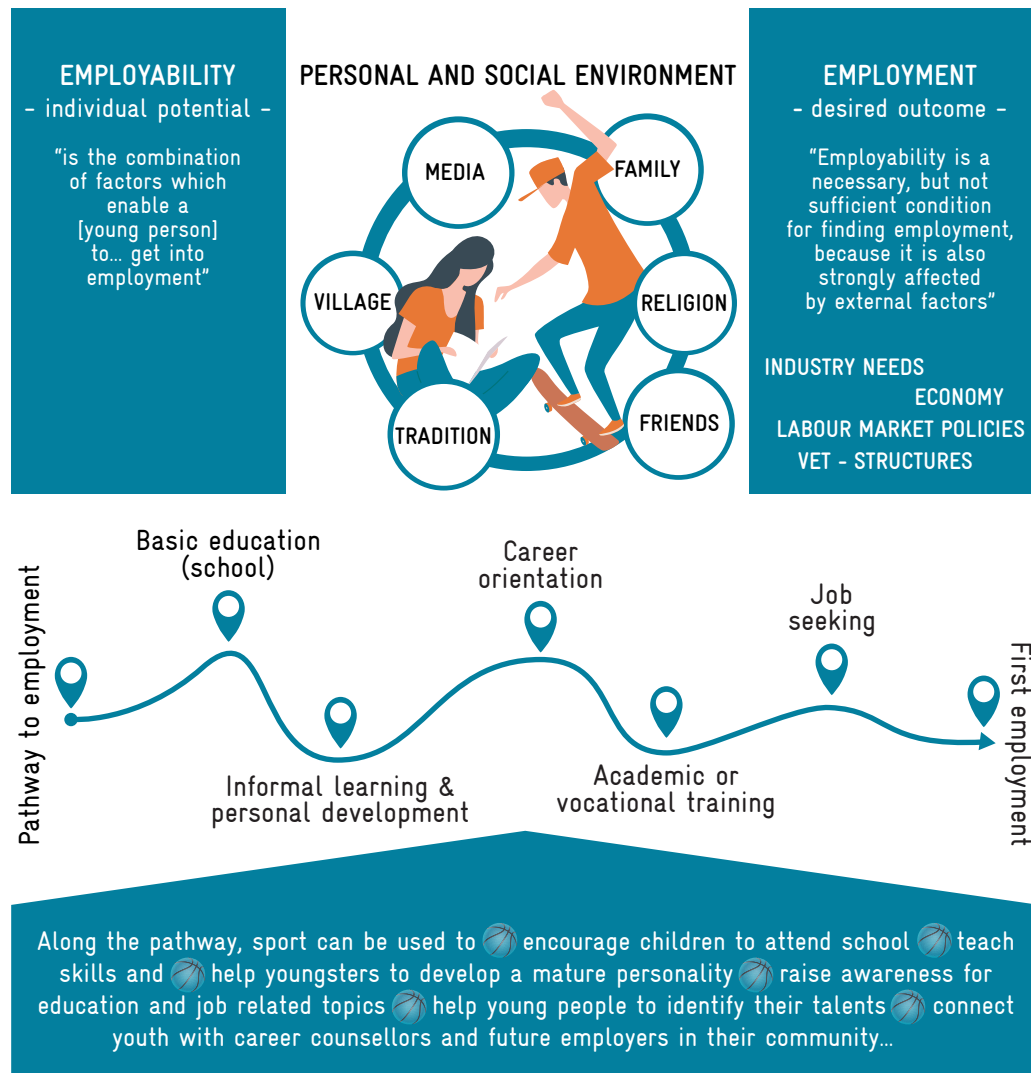


Fig.3: Pathway to Employment

The functions that sport can have in this process may be summarised under four major headings for all sections of the pathways to employment (fig. 4):

Sport can help to reach young people who would be hard to reach through other channels. This is because sport can draw attention to almost any issue and it is a very attractive activity for almost all young people.

Especially the final years of school and the transition into university, vocational education or work are associated with great challenges and uncertainties for young people. Disorientation, setbacks and frustration can be just as much a part of this phase of life as joyful anticipation, big dreams and important developmental steps. The stronger

and more stable young people are in their personalities, the better they succeed in their transition to adult life. Sport can help build trusting relationships with the target group and strengthen their health, wellbeing, confidence and resilience. Especially young people from vulnerable groups may benefit from such an empowerment, as it provides them with a more solid foundation for the specific challenges of this developmental stage.

Building on sport's unique ability to reach out to young people and build trusting relationships with them, sport can also be used as the starting point from which young people can be connected to other supporting agencies. In connection with sport-related events or activities (e.g. summer camps, sport organisations, tournaments), young people can be brought into contact with universities, career counsellors or potential employers in a non-formal, low-barrier environment.

However, the most important function of sport in terms of promoting employability lies in its educational potential and the opportunities it offers to teach life skills in a very effective and targeted way.

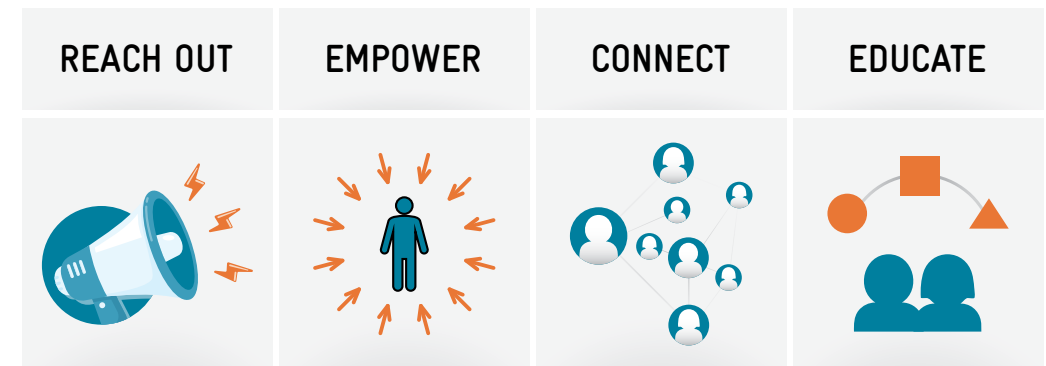


Fig.4: Main Functions of Sport within the Sport for Employability Approach

4. LABOUR MARKET AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

The labour market situation is very challenging and tense in all countries of the Western Balkans. Inconsistent quality of education and training, which often does not meet the requirements of the labour market, is frequently mentioned as one of the main causes of the high youth unemployment rate (34.6%) in the region. This high unemployment level in turn is one of the main reasons for the outflow of young people from the region, which is a huge problem because 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.

4.1 Labour Market Opportunities for Youth in the Western Balkans

Based on the shared insights of participating partner organisations we know that there is a need to create better labour market opportunities for young people in all Western Balkan countries, as youth unemployment is a major social problem across the entire region.

The WB countries have developed a wide range of employment promotion policies, however few of them have specifically targeted youth.

The employability requirements for young people are seen to be extremely high due to the existing competitive pressure. At the same time, there seems to be a lack of systematic support for career orientation and soft skills development, although young people would urgently need this kind of support. If at all, such offers are made by NGOs or international organizations.

A college education represents the most desirable career path for the majority of young people in the Western Balkans. Vocational or technical training options are less prestigious by comparison. The non-academic training system is also confusing, fragmented and of widely varying quality.

As another major problem field experts observe that universities and vocational training institutions do not provide training programmes that meet the actual skills needs of the labour market. Due to this, some of the WB countries are trying to restore the connections between vocational schools and the business sector by implementing dual education systems.

Many graduates from tertiary education find it difficult to transition to the workforce due to a lack of work experience. Most of the WB governments have established funded internship programs, however, none of them has yet put into place apprenticeship programs involving a contract between the trainee and the employer. However, informal training is frequently offered to young people who are registered with the Public Employment Service.

4.2 The Pathway to Employment for Young People in the Western Balkans

Many young people have a difficult transition from school or university to a first job, which in both cases can take many months or even years (RCC, 2021).

There are few active labour market programs that expressly target primary school leavers, and there is minimal support for this group of young people in their transition to work.

When students complete their higher education, they frequently struggle to get their first job because they lack work experience and there is a shortage of proper career guidance and counselling. This also applies to the graduates of the VET schools as their skills are often irrelevant to the labour market demands.

University students face a similar difficulty for transition to work. A large percentage of students are unable to find work in their field of study. In addition, students also experience insufficient information on job opportunities and unfair recruitment processes in which personal ties matter more than merit in obtaining a suitable position.

4.3 Employability of Young People in the Western Balkans

A wide range of employment promotion policies have been adopted in the Western Balkan economies, although few of them have been specifically targeted at youth. Young people have a difficult entrance to the labour market and gaining their first job. The transition to work takes a long time for many young people. For this reason, long-term unemployment is a particular concern in some economies. The transition can be considered from the point of view of those leaving the educational system after compulsory primary school, those leaving after secondary school and those leaving after higher education. (RCC 2021)

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) describes four core competencies for good employability: learning to learn, communication, teamwork and problem-solving. Sport for development (S4D) and more specifically sport for employability (S4E) aim at developing these life-skills. Sport for employability programmes are an effective complement to existing educational programmes.

5. TARGET GROUPS (YOUTH)

With regard to the target groups, a distinction can be made between primary and secondary target groups.

Young people who are in an orientation phase or in transition to tertiary education or the labour market represent the actual target group of sport for employability (cf. 5.1).

In addition, those institutions and persons who are supposed to support young people in these processes are relevant as secondary target groups. (cf. 5.2).

5.1 Primary Target Groups

All young people aged 14-25 years

In principle, Sport for Employability activities are aimed at all young people. When it comes to empowering youngsters and strengthening their personal development, this can also include younger students who are not yet in their career orientation stage.

However, since sport for employability programmes usually include specific measures designed to direct a young person's attention on their personal planning for the future

and to develop life skills that are relevant to their careers, the core target group consists of young people who are at a crossroads in their educational and vocational trajectories.

This concerns, for example, the decision between going to university or signing up for vocational training or the time before entering the labour market for the first time. Depending on the individual career path, this mainly concerns adolescents and young adults between the ages of 14 and 25 years.

Disadvantaged Youth and NEET in particular

In a labour market that is difficult for all young people and young adults, opportunities are unequally distributed within this group, as in other areas of society. Socially disadvantaged young people, for example young people from minority groups, or young people in structurally weak rural areas often face specific challenges. Many sports for employability projects are thus specifically aimed at NEET, i.e. young people who are neither in education, employment or training. However, in order to successfully support these target groups, we recommend an extended project architecture (see section 7.2).

5.2 SECONDARY Target Groups

Schools and Teachers

In order to reach as many young people as possible with a sport for employability project, suitable partners and multipliers are needed. Our experiences in the countries of the Western Balkans have shown that both high schools and VET schools match these requirements. Teachers from both school types are therefore an important secondary target group that should be trained as multipliers in order to harness the full potential of the approach.

5.3 Creating Personas as a method to develop a better understanding of your target groups

We have deliberately defined our primary target group very wide: young people between the ages of 14 and 25. But of course, not all young people are the same. So, it is important to look more closely at your target group when planning and implementing your own programme, in order to support them as best as possible through your sport-based interventions.

One method that can be very helpful in this is the creation of personas. Personas are typical representatives of the target group. They are not real persons, but very tangible personifications of the target group. They are models to which you can assign individual values, expectations, wishes and goals.

As fictitious individuals they are described with concrete characteristics such as name, photo, age, family, friends, skills, attitudes, hobbies, etc. They do not represent the

average of the target group but rather a frequent profile. For this reason, it makes sense to develop several personas as typical representatives of your target group.

Together with your team, describe some of the typical characters that you often meet in your groups or classes. Describe them as lively and holistic as possible and then use these descriptions to pre-test if your programmes, activities or services would be really meaningful and relevant for them when you step into their shoes to evaluate your ideas.

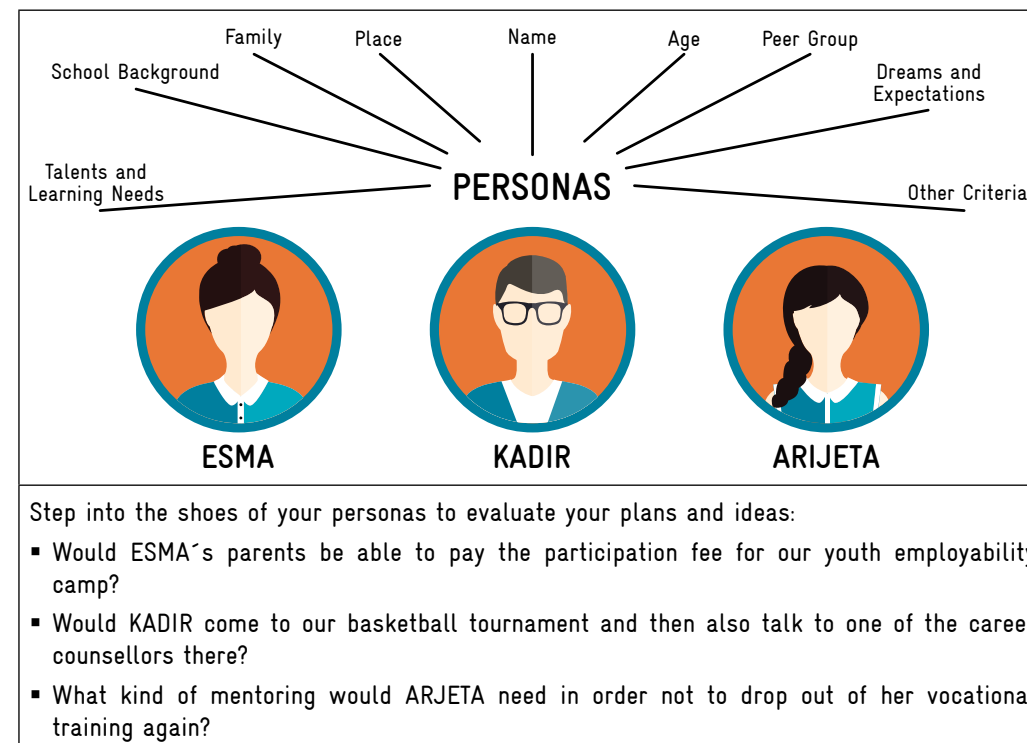


Fig.5: Personas with typical characteristics

FOR TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTORS

6. DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS THROUGH S4E

Life and Soft Skills have already been identified as a key element of the Employability Skills Pyramid in section 3.3.

They have been defined as “psycho-social abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” and we have already explained, that they can be “[...] loosely grouped into three broad categories: cognitive skills for analysing and using information, personal skills for developing personal agency and managing oneself, and inter-personal skills for communicating and interacting effectively with others” (WHO 2003,3)”

Now, we will go into more detail in chapter 6 and specify which life skills should be developed and how this can be done within a sport for development / sport for employability approach.

6.1 Relevant Skills

Depending on the specific context, purpose or occupational sector there are long lists of potentially relevant life skills which can be linked to a young person’s level of employability: Among many other capabilities, these descriptions often include skills such as adaptability, communication, confidence, conflict resolution, creativity, critical thinking, decision-making, dedication, emotional intelligence, empathy, flexibility, honesty, integrity, leadership, organisation, perseverance, politeness, problem-solving, punctuality, reliability, respect for rules, self-discipline, self-motivation, teamwork, tolerance, willingness to learn etc. In addition, many of these skills are inter-related – for example, to be a strong leader one also needs to have good communication and organisational skills.

The question of which life skills should actually be developed through an S4E programme in order to increase the employability of young people should take several perspectives into account.

First, the selection of relevant skills can be based on theoretical considerations derived from research findings and expert knowledge. Second, the skills that are required and expected by potential employers in the different occupational sectors must be considered and finally, the individual skills deficits identified by trainers, mentors and the participants themselves should also be taken into account.

This means that the choice of life skills to be developed in an S4E programme should always consider the specific circumstances. However, there are also a number of

general and field-tested frameworks that are well suited as a starting point for the selection of relevant life skills.

In our activities in the Western Balkans, we drew on the systematics of the “scoring for the future” toolkit, which was developed as part of a European initiative by several experienced expert organisations and published by streetfootballworld (Schlenker and Braun 2019)

As part of this process, we have reduced the proposed skills catalogue and adapted it to the local context and expectations which has then resulted in the following list:

Tab.1: Selected Life Skills

Life Skill	Aftësi jetësore	Životna vještina	Животни вештини
Self-Confidence	Vetëbesimi	Samopouzdanje	Самодоверба
Self-Motivation	Motivimi personal	Samo motivacija	Самомотивација
Self-Control	Vetëkontrolli	Samokontrola	Самоконтрола
Reliability	Besueshmëria	Pouzdanost	Доверба
Concentration	Përqendrimi	Koncentracija	Концентрација
Social Sensivity	Ndjeshmëria sociale	Socijalna osjetljivost	Социјална чувствителност
Communication	Komunikimi	Komunikacija	Комуникација
Conflict Resolution	Zgjidhja e konflikteve	Rješavanje sukoba	Решавање конфликти
Teamwork	Puna ekipore	Timski rad	Тимска работа

6.2 Skills Learning

There is no doubt, neither in theory nor in practice, that sport CAN be an appropriate field of activity and a powerful tool for the development of a variety of a broad spectrum of life skills.

Very often, the general characteristics of sport that make it a special learning environment are described in this context. These distinctive qualities of sport are of great importance for the entire learning process. They are therefore briefly described below (→ sport as an extraordinary learning environment).

However, to fully exploit this potential, it is probably even more important to understand how sport-based activities must be designed to enable a systematic skills learning process (→ skills learning in sport as a systematic process).

Sport as an extraordinary learning environment

Sport is a playful and enjoyable activity for many people: When we like something, when we feel comfortable in a situation, when something is important to us, it is

usually easier for us to learn and keep what we have learned. This is why we often use playful content as part of S4D activities and also try to keep the mood within the group open and friendly.

Sport and play create strong emotions and intense experiences: We experience sport and play with all senses. We are emotionally engaged, and we make a variety of intense physical, social and psychological experiences. Learning messages are thus stored in connection with emotions and sensory perceptions which leads to more sustainable learning.

Sports and games are easy to learn but hard to master: Many sports require little skill at the beginning, while the path to perfection is long and difficult. Therefore, in sports, we can quickly recognize our improvements and celebrate small victories, but no matter how long we play, it remains challenging, and we always know that we can evolve.

Sport and play can provide a protected space where young people can test their skills: Eventually, it is “just” sport. In sports and games, we can make mistakes without serious consequences and learn from our strengths and our weaknesses. Children and young people can test their skills in a protected environment. While playing or doing sport with their peers, they can try different behaviours and make mistakes without serious consequences. A guided reflection of what was happening in a given situation can then support the learning from success and failure.

Sport and play are a smaller reflection of the world in general: In sport and play we often imitate the world, we can create analogies to other situations and participation in sport and play requires similar skills and competences as “real life”. We therefore assume that we can learn for life and also that we can transfer the things that we learn in sport back into to other areas of life. If we’ve learned for example that hard work leads to success in sport, we’ll be confident, that industriousness will also lead to success in school or a professional career.

Skills learning in sport as a systematic process

To explain how we learn new skills and to guide this learning process the “conscious competence theory” provides a helpful model. The model is also known as the “stages of competence” model. Its origins are not fully traceable and the approach can’t be assigned to a single author. The current terminology was probably introduced by Martin Broadwell and is especially helpful to distinguish between different stages of soft- or life skills learning through sport and play. The original approach includes 4 levels or learning stages (1) unconscious incompetence (2) conscious incompetence (3) conscious competence (4) unconscious competence to which a fifth element has been added later (5) reflective competence.

In table 2 we describe the first 4 stages of the conscious competence model and propose other labels for each stage as these have been found to be easier to understand in practice.

Tab.2: The 5 stages of skills learning according to the conscious competence theory.
Source: Steinbach 2019, based on input from businessballs.com

Level 1 unconscious incompetence	Level 2 conscious incompetence	Level 3 conscious competence	Level 4 unconscious competence
NO AWARENESS	AWARENESS	BASIC COMMAND	MASTERY
We don't know, that we are missing a skill.	We know, that we are missing a skill and we become motivated to learn it.	We've learned a skill, but we still need to focus and concentrate on it when we try to apply it.	We've learned a skill and trained it for so long, that we just apply it without thinking whenever we need it.
SKILLS LEVEL			
At this stage, a person is not aware of the existence or relevance of a particular skill. The person is either unaware that they have a particular weakness in that area or denies the relevance or usefulness of the new skill.	After the learner becomes aware of the existence and relevance of a skill and of his or her own shortcomings in that area they enter the second level. Ideally, by trying to use the skill the person realises that by improving their skill or ability in this area their effectiveness will improve.	A person achieves 'conscious competence' in a skill when they can perform it reliably at will. However, the trainee only has developed 'basic command' and still needs to concentrate and think in order to perform the skill.	Finally, the skill has been practised so much, that it enters the unconscious parts of the brain. The skill becomes 'second nature' and it is possible for certain skills to be performed while doing something else at the same time.
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE LEARNING PROCESS			
At this stage, the person must become aware of the specific skills area and their own skills deficits before the learning process can actually begin. The aim of a trainer or teacher is to move the person into the 'conscious competence' stage, by demonstrating the skill or ability and the benefit that it will bring to the person's effectiveness	At this point the person ideally makes an intrinsically motivated commitment to learn and practice the new skill. The trainer or teacher will provide an environment in which the new skill can be practiced and actively assist the trainee, so they will understand the requirements and find the correct solutions	Once a skill has been learned fundamentally, the trainee should practice the new skill continuously and in increasingly complex situations until he or she is, unconsciously 'competent' in this skill. Practise is the single most effective way to move to the stage of unconscious competence	Whatever we do as a daily routine and at the level of unconscious competence, becomes vulnerable to carelessness or sloppiness and should therefore from time to time be reflected and taken back to the level of consciousness

<p>Sport based activities can be used to create situations in which one or more specific skills are required in order to identify skill deficits within a group. Typically, more complex games and teamsports can be played to observe the level of cooperation, communication, teamwork etc. Targeted activities (e.g. small games) can then be used to make the relevance and/or lack of a specific skill visible to a group or to individual players in order to create awareness and motivate them to develop that skill.</p>	<p>Targeted activities (e.g. small games, specific exercises) can be used to make participants fully understand the nature of a specific skill and practice that skill in isolated, "undercomplex" situations.</p>	<p>Targeted as well as unspecific games and sports activities can be used to practice one or more skills in different and more and more complex situations. This can include a wide range of sports activities with team sports being the most typical example. Regular and long-term participation, preferably in stable groups is a precondition at this stage of skills development through S4D. Role model coaches and regular reflection are further key elements.</p>	<p>Mastering complex soft- or life skills such as leadership, teamwork, determination or outstanding communication through sport for development requires a committed, regular and ongoing sports participation in an individual or team sport. Here, sport can unfold its qualities when participants are challenged by a constantly evolving level of requirements through which they can grow continuously while being supported by their coach and peers committed, regular and ongoing participation.</p>
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Figure 6 illustrates the skills learning process from the perspective of both the learner and the S4D coach. The task of the coach is to ensure that the learner successfully moves from one phase of development to the next.

[1] In the first phase, at the beginning of the learning process, learners are not yet aware of their skills deficits. They would for example not realise that they don't communicate enough or that they are poor team players (→ NO AWARENESS). The coach observes the learning group and will recognise the lack of cooperation of his players as a competence deficit from their behaviour on the pitch.

[2] The coach then sets the learning process in motion by waiting for a teachable moment or by creating a specific activity or situations in which good communication and teamwork are needed to successfully complete the task. In these situations, the learners should realise that they are less likely to succeed without good communication and teamwork. The "eye-opening" effect created by the trainer and the subsequent reflection will help the learners to reach the second level of the learning process. They are aware of that particular skills deficit and are motivated to improve their teamwork skills (→ AWARENESS).

[3] In the third phase of the skills learning process, the students try to apply their team playing skills. However, they still struggle with that new skill, and in the heat of the game, they frequently fall back into their old patterns of selfish play (→ BASIC COMMAND). At this stage, which can last for quite some time, the coach creates targeted opportunities to practise the new skill.

[4] At some point, the learners will have internalised the skill and will find it easy to behave as a team player. By continuously monitoring the learning progress, the coach

will recognise when their players have reached the fourth level and master the targeted skill at the required level of competence (→ MASTERY). This then is the moment when the expectations in terms of a specific skill (here teamwork and cooperation) can be raised. The described learning process can then start again at a higher level of expectations.

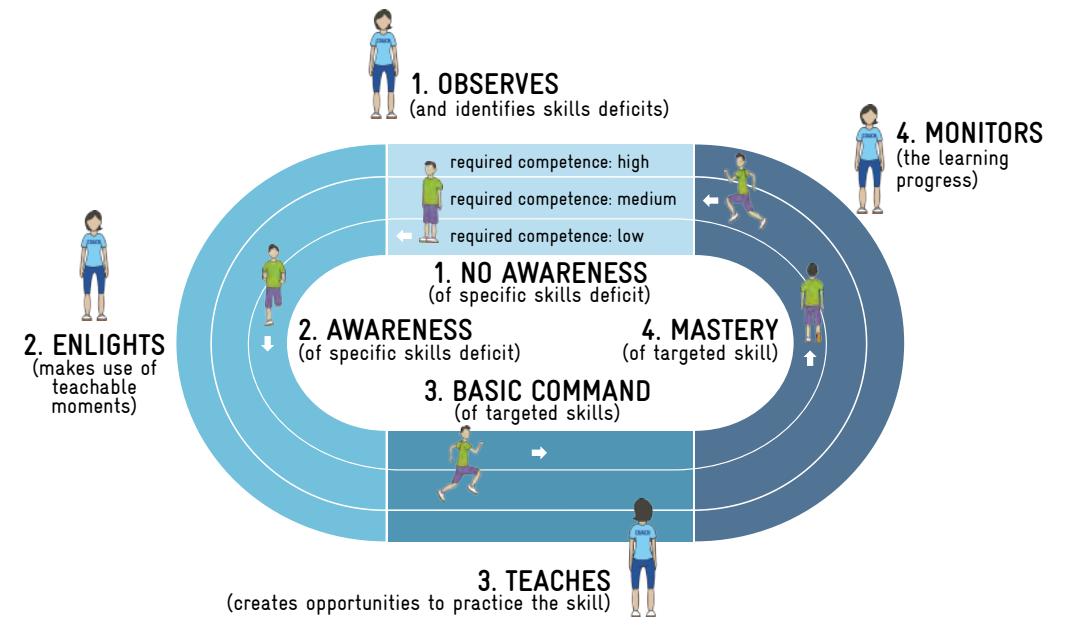


Fig.6: Illustration of the Skills Learning Process

6.3 Planning your Life Skills Training

As already described above, the role of the S4D coach is to ensure that the learner successfully moves from one phase of development to the next.

The more systematically this process is prepared and planned, the greater the chances that the learners will actually develop new life skills or improve existing life skills through their participation in sport-based activities.

To guide this planning process, we have developed a planning scheme which is shown in figure 7. In the upper part of the table, you would first analyse the specific life skill to be developed:

While planning your S4E activities, you should carefully consider what the desired life skill entails (→ skill description), what learning goals you want to achieve in relation to this particular skill (→ learning objectives), what you can expect from your target group by taking their age and background into account (→ learner profile) and how you might support the students in general to improve the targeted skill (→ LEARNING SUPPORT).

In the lower part of the table, we have assigned a total of 7 questions to the four steps of the skills learning process. These questions should help you to choose the right measures at the right time.



LIFE SKILL		A: SKILL DESCRIPTION: Description of the desired skill, its sub-aspects and how the skill relates to other skills.		B: LEARNER PROFILE: Description of the learners and what can be expected from them in relation to the desired skill.	
		C: LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Description of what exactly we want our learners to understand and learn.		D: LEARNING SUPPORT: Description of the options, the coach or teacher has to support the development of the desired skill.	
	skills learning phase	NO AWARENESS	AWARENESS	PRACTICE	MASTERY
	coaching focus	→ OBSERVE	→ ENLIGHT	→ TEACH	→ MONITOR
		Q1: Which kind of BEHAVIOUR do you look for (on and off the field) in order to understand if your learners are already aware of and practice the desired skill?	Q3: How can you provoke or actively create a "TEACHABLE MOMENT" related to the desired skill?	Q5: What kind of LEARNING ENVIRONMENT should you create to help your learners develop and practice the desired skill?	Q7: What would be the NEXT LEVEL of expectations regarding the envisaged skill?
		Q2: Which type of SITUATIONS or activities will demand your learners to show the desired skill?	Q4: How will you DISCUSS the topic with your learners?	Q6: What kind of activities (games and exercises) should you play to help your learners develop and PRACTICE the desired skill?	

Fig.7: Planning Scheme for the Skills Learning Process

In order to illustrate how the planning scheme shown in figure 7 can be applied, an example is given below for the life skill of SELF CONFIDENCE.

Self Confidence ← → Students, Grade 9, Age 15-16, Boys and Girls

A	<p>SKILL DESCRIPTION: Description of the desired skill [self-confidence], its sub-aspects and how the skill relates to other skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The common definition of self-confidence is that an individual believes in themselves, and their ability to deal with everyday challenges and demands. ▪ It means being aware of one's strengths and weakness, and having a generally positive, yet realistic view of oneself. ▪ This general confidence in their own abilities helps self-confident people to engage in new and unknown situations without worrying too much about them. ▪ Because self-confident people accept and trust themselves, they dare to make their own decision independently from the opinion of others. ▪ They are also able to communicate assertively and to deal with criticism.
B	<p>LEARNER PROFILE: Description of the learners and what can be expected from them in relation to the desired skill [self-confidence].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At this age, young people are usually not very self-confident. They feel insecure about their bodies. ▪ Appearance, clothing and other outward appearances play a big role. ▪ The young people pay a lot of attention to what others think about them. ▪ They try to avoid failure, critique or what they perceive as embarrassing situations. ▪ It is difficult for them to assess their own abilities realistically. Depending on the situation, they often underestimate or overestimate themselves. ▪ They feel insecure especially in unfamiliar situations or groups. ▪ Sometimes they try to cover up their lack of self-confidence by exaggerating and posing.
C	<p>LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Description of what exactly we want our learners to understand and learn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to explore and discover their (hidden) talents. ▪ to develop a realistic idea of their strengths and weaknesses. ▪ to venture into new situations and challenges. ▪ to feel ok when being in the limelight for a certain period of time ▪ to have a sense of achievement. ▪ to feel safe and experience failures as learning opportunities
D	<p>LEARNING SUPPORT: Description of the options, the coach or teacher has to support the development of the desired skill [self-confidence].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a safe environment. Be there when they need you. Take them seriously. ▪ Provide structure and stability (values, rules, rituals). ▪ Enable a sense of achievement in familiar situations and create opportunities to try out new things. ▪ Give praise and recognition even for small successes when appropriate. ▪ Let them know they are ok. If needed, criticize their behaviors but not their person; ▪ open up and share your story (if you feel comfortable with it)

Q1 Which kind of **BEHAVIOUR** do you look for (on and off the field) in order to understand if your learners are already aware of and practice the desired skill **[self-confidence]**?

- Learner avoids or accepts a challenging task (e.g. does or doesn't take the penalty)
- Learner either goes for too difficult or too easy options (e.g. when different types of obstacle courses are offered)
- Learner plays down a challenging situation or finds excuses (e.g. "I could do it, I just don't want to do it now")
- Learner often asks for praise, also in situations which do not justify it
- Learner either pushes him-/herself to the centre of attention all the time, or steps forward when it is inappropriate or always hides within the group
- Learners make fun of others that are not as good as themselves on a particular task
- [...]

Q2 Which type of **SITUATIONS** or activities will demand your learners to show the desired skill **[self-confidence]**?

- Situations or settings which are new or less familiar to them (e.g. high rope course, outdoor activities)
- Tasks which are feasible but challenging for them (e.g. jump from the 3m or 5m-plattform at the pool)
- Tasks or situations which require them to draw attention on them (e.g. demonstrate an exercise, give their opinion, make a performance)
- Tasks where they need to take responsibility for the entire team (e.g. take the penalty, be the referee)
- [...]

Q3 How can you provoke or actively create a "**TEACHABLE MOMENT**" related to the desired skill **[self-confidence]**?

- Depends on the specific aspect of Self-Confidence, that has been identified as the skills deficit (see Q1)
- By creating one of the situations described in Q2 that responds to the specific deficit (e.g. observe which technical skill a shy player is particularly good at and then ask him to demonstrate this technique for the other players).
- [...]

Q4 How will you **DISCUSS** the topic of **[self-confidence]** with your learners?

- Follow our general reflection process (describe → explain → generalize → learn and apply)
- On this issue young people are particularly vulnerable. An appreciative discussion approach is therefore even more important here.
- Emphasize that both, over- and underrating your own skills must be avoided to improve your performance and employability
- [...]

Q5 What kind of **LEARNING ENVIRONMENT** should you create to help your learners develop and practice the desired skill?

- Create a positive and supportive culture in your groups
- Use appreciative feedback methods
- Introduce "support rituals"
- [...]

Q6 What kind of activities (games and exercises) should you play to help your learners develop and **PRACTICE** the desired skill **[self-confidence]**?

- Teach the required techniques to make achievements and progress possible (proper dribbling, proper catching etc.)
- Provide challenging activities and incentives to encourage and motivate your learners to try out new challenges.
- Provide multiple options during exercises with different levels of difficulty to choose from and to gradually increase the demands
- Use handicap systems and let learners define their own handicaps
- Create activities which require a realistic self-assessment of one's own skills and abilities
- [...]

Q7 What would be the **NEXT LEVEL** of expectations regarding the envisaged skill **[self-confidence]**?

- Make sure your learners have to leave their comfort zone regularly in order to progress, but also give them time to recover and stabilize in their comfort zone.
- Increase the difficulty of the tasks and requirements step by step.
- Expand the range of challenges with the goal of developing a sport-specific self-confidence into a general skill.
- [...]

FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPERS

7. PROJECT ARCHITECTURE

Section 7 does not relate to the pedagogical process in the more specific sense as it was described above, but rather to the project architecture in which the educational interventions must be embedded.

The chapter is therefore primarily aimed at those who are involved the planning and organisation of sport for employability projects.

Figure 8 provides an orientation framework that can be used to plan and visualise your project architecture. The left side of the figure (elements 1-6) describes the potential building blocks of a sport for employability programme, while the right hand side (elements 7-8) outlines the envisaged outcomes and impacts.

On the input side, six elements need to be specified. Elements one and two refer to the period before the actual intervention takes place and ask about who can participate [→ 1] and how / what mutual expectations must be agreed between participants and the project [→ 2].

Element three addresses the question of the setting in which your sport for employability project will be implemented (school, vocational school, community, etc.) and what it takes to create a safe environment in which also personal or sensitive issues can be discussed [→ 3].

Element four is, of course, at the centre of our framework. It contains the different formats, methods and activities of the sport-based intervention you would like to implement in order to promote youth employability [→ 4].

Element five also refers to the interventions but includes the non-sport related interventions that complement (or are complemented by) the sport related interventions [→ 5].

Finally, the sixth element asks who should guide and support the learning and consultation process (etc. a teacher, a S4D-coach or a personal mentor...) [→ 6].

On the output side, the framework differentiates between the expected specific outcomes [→ 7] and the envisaged impact [8] that eventually results from them.

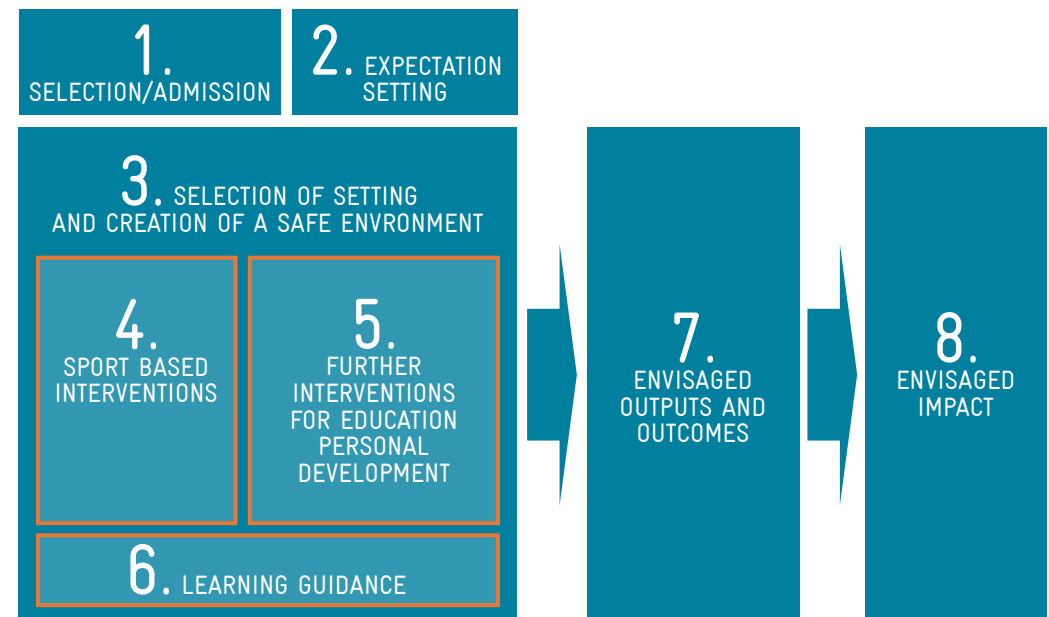


Fig.8: Framework for “employability through sport” projects and programmes (template)

Our experience shows that it is very important to clarify at the planning stage of a project exactly what expectations there are with regard to the intended results and impacts of the project and what measures are necessary or most suitable to actually achieve these results.

In this context, it is first of all helpful to distinguish between two basic requirement profiles. On the one hand, there are “employability through sport” projects or programmes that address the target group of all young people who are in a vocational orientation phase with a basic and more general approach.

On the other hand, there are “employability through sport” projects or programmes with a more targeted and individualised approach aiming at young people with special support needs to obtain formal school qualifications, participate in vocational training or find employment.

Both approaches are presented and discussed in this chapter to highlight the similarities and differences between them. Sport can fulfil similar functions in both approaches, but the targeted and individualised approach requires significantly more contact time and more complementary measures that go beyond our sport-based interventions.

In practice, a project or programme does not necessarily have to follow just one of the two approaches. Mixed forms are also conceivable in which a general, broad-based programme also contains a few, non-sport-based elements that promote individual employability in a more targeted way.

7.1 Framework for “Employability through Sport” projects with a general approach

The general approach is our core model in sport for development. The focus is on sport-based interventions and projects applying this approach usually have a scope that can be implemented with limited resources. The target group of this approach basically includes all young people who are in a vocational orientation phase. Individual projects can also be aimed more specifically at different sub-target groups (e.g. all students in the 9 high school classes of a community, or girls in rural areas), but the aim is not to provide targeted and individual support to individual youth. Accordingly, the access criteria in this approach are usually rather open and inclusive. As many people as possible from the defined target group should have access to the programme activities. The expectation setting is also defined generally for all participants and not differentiated for each individual participant.

In this model, the setting can be school- or community based. However, our experience with such projects in the Western Balkans has shown that schools (high schools and vocational schools) are particularly suitable because almost all young people can be reached there and because existing structures make it much easier to set up the project. Especially when the contact period in which the young people are supposed to participate in your project measures extends over several weeks or months, other settings have proven to be a lot more difficult.

Within the school setting, various possibilities for placing the topic may be considered. It can be integrated into regular physical education classes or implemented within the framework of compulsory courses. However, according to our experience, a save space and sufficient time are more likely to be realised outside formal physical education classes.

With regard to sports-based interventions (→ 4), it is helpful to first differentiate between the formats concerning the duration of the interventions (→ 4a-4c). A distinction can be made between one-off events (e.g. tournaments, information days or job fairs), intensive programmes (e.g. summer schools or summer camps) and measures that take place regularly over a longer period of time (e.g. weekly sports activities or social club meetings). What can be done methodically and in terms of content and what can realistically be achieved in terms of promoting employability through sport depends a lot on how intensive and how long it is possible to work with the young people in a sport for employability programme.

One-off events can help to reach large numbers of young people and raise their awareness about career orientation and future planning. A real development of general or employability specific life skills (see section 6) however requires longer contact times, so that they can only be effectively taught within the framework of an intensive programme or regular S4D activities. The same applies to a valid self-assessment of one's own strengths and weaknesses as part of a young person's participation in sport.

Further non-sport-based interventions (→ 5) are not foreseen in this general approach because they would overburden the typical time frame and resources of a standard S4D

project as well as the professional competences of the average S4D coach. However, single modules from the more targeted approach (see section 7.2) may be included.

Within the general approach, trained teachers and S4D coaches should implement the activities and guide the young people in their learning process (→ 6). Where information about training and career opportunities or the situation on the local labour market is to be provided within the project framework, it may also be useful or necessary to involve external experts from this field (e.g. career counsellors).

If we switch to the output side of the model, it becomes clear what a general approach to promoting youth employability through sport can realistically achieve (→ 7). One-off interventions such as career information days can engage and motivate young people, make them aware of the need to consider their professional future and provide them with access to the information and advisory services they need.

Intensive programmes and, above all, regular activities can achieve much more. On the one hand, such programmes can strengthen the physical and mental well-being of the participants and positively influence their social behaviour and inclusion. On the other hand, if sufficient time is available, life and soft skills which are particularly important for a young person's level of employability can be developed.

In the best-case scenario, young people develop into more mature and stable personalities through participation in sport-based youth employability programmes, which would prepare them for a wide range of requirements in education and in the labour market (→ 8).

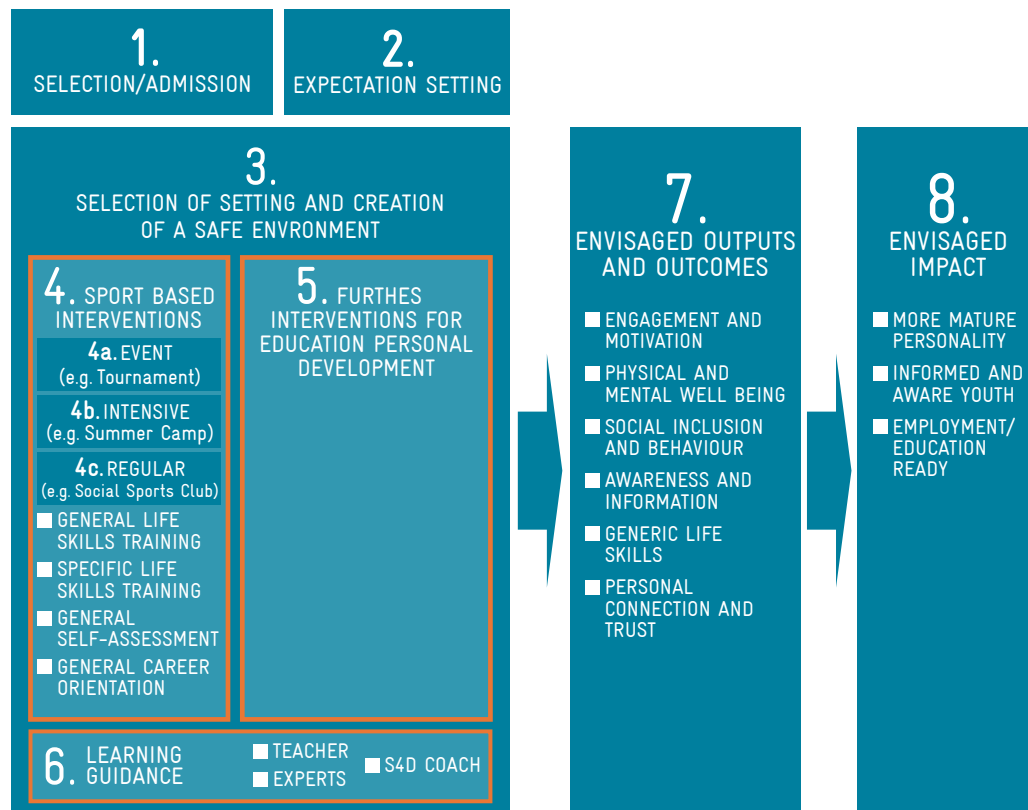


Fig.9: Framework for "employability through sport" projects and programmes with a basic and generalized approach → see section 7.1

7.2 Framework for "employability through sport" projects with a targeted and Individualised approach

In our view, a targeted and individualized approach to promoting employability through sport does represent the benchmark in promoting youth employability through sport, but in practice such a model can only be realized with considerable effort and sufficient time and is thus in most cases outside the reasonable scope.

The differences to the general approach described above start with the target group. Where youth with special support needs or young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) shall be integrated into the labour market, such an individualised approach can be necessary. Few young people benefit from intensive support with sports-based and non-sports-based activities.

Since the human, financial and time requirements of such programs are particularly high, there are usually only a very limited number of places available. The selection of participants is therefore usually linked to a selection procedure with clearly defined

criteria [→ 1]. In addition, mutual expectations are discussed individually with the participants and often a kind of participation contract is concluded in which the participants commit themselves to the program and agree to the rules of the program [→ 2].

While schools are a particularly suitable setting for the general approach, the target group of the individualized approach is often characterized precisely by the fact that they have dropped out of the formal school system. Access to the target group therefore tends to be via social services, street workers or NGOs [→ 3].

Intensive programs and regular sports activities can be a core element of targeted employability through sport projects [→ 4]. There, the sports-based activities can help to build confidence and trust between participants, coaches and mentors and to strengthen the young people's commitment to the programme. In addition, personal and social skills of the young people should be strengthened through sports. Life skills such as self-confidence, perseverance or teamwork play are just a few examples here.

The big difference to the general model is the individualized and intensive support of young people outside the sports field [→ 5]. In this context, many programs of this type first analyse the individual needs and formulate individualized goals and development plans.

Where necessary, existing gaps in general school education are closed (e.g. literacy and numeracy skills) and the involvement of social workers or therapists can also be part of such programmes when basic living conditions first need to be stabilized.

Also, the introduction to first "work-like" experiences (volunteer work, internships) and the acquisition of simple formal qualifications (e.g., as an assistant coach) are common components of this approach.

In comparison to the general approach, the implementation of such an extensive programme cannot be carried out by an S4D coach alone [→ 6]. Learning support in this type of programme is therefore usually provided by a team of experts. In addition to the sports expert, personal mentors, social workers, psychologists and other experts can be involved in the various activities.

On the other side of the equation, intensive and individualized measures can then be expected to produce more substantial results [→ 7]. In addition to the expected personal development already described above for the general approach, other specific outcomes such as changes in the personal environment, formal qualifications or specific job-seeking skills can be achieved. The envisaged impact of these programmes then also goes further, so that their success can be measured, for example, in terms of the number of participants who graduate from school after the project or actually find employment [→ 8].

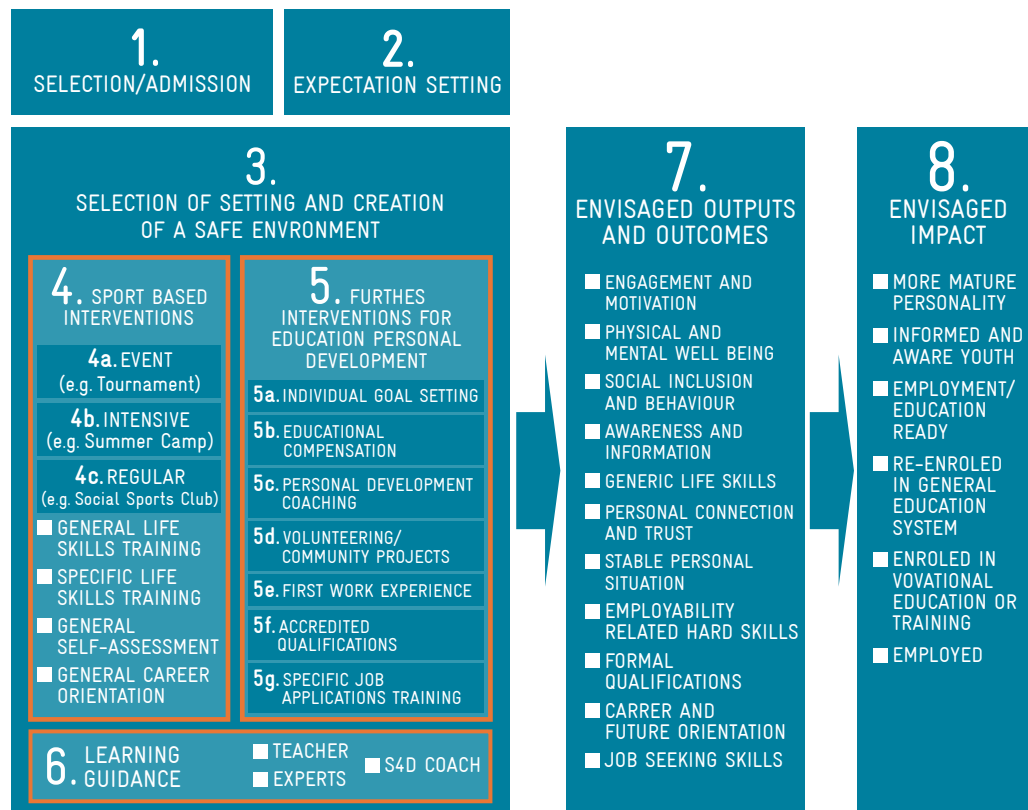


Fig.10: Framework for “employability through sport” projects and programmes with a targeted and individualized approach → see section 7.2

8. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND FORMATS

As described in Section 7, sport-based interventions can be implemented as events, intensive programmes or as regular programmes. Within the general “employability through sport” framework three strategic implementation strategies have proven to be particularly effective:

1.1 Awareness Raising and Career Orientation Events

The first strategic option is to use sport as a hook to get the attention of the target group and to inform the young people about their various career opportunities.

This approach is particularly useful if a large number of young people shall benefit from your sport for employability measures in a short period of time. The downside of this

implementation strategy is that personal development or the acquisition of values or skills is almost impossible in that kind of short-term formats.

AIM

- Triggering young people to seriously think about and plan for their own professional future
- Putting various options (e.g. college, vocational training, orientation internship) and providers (e.g. vocational schools, technical schools) on the radar of young people.
- Providing relevant information material or contact data to young people (e.g. for career counselling)
- Helping young people to make their career decision by giving them the opportunity to get some more in-depth insight into different career options or professions
- Helping young people to evaluate their own talents and preferences
- Bringing young people into informal contact with relevant institutions and experts (e.g. vocational schools, companies, career counselors etc.)

ASSUMPTIONS

- If the information is presented in a sports-related setting or in connection with a sports-related activity, young people will take more notice of it than, for example, in a formative school setting.
- The information is also more likely to be positively connotated than without the connection to sport
- Sport based activities and games can help to reflect on talents and preferences by making abstract concepts more tangible and understandable (e.g. perseverance / dedication = I never give up in sport).
- Getting to know education or employment experts in a sport setting can help to reduce reservations and build trust
- Spending a day or a week addressing the issue together with peers in a positive environment encourages young people to really deal with it.

TARGET GROUP

- All young people who are about to make a career direction decision.
- Preferably those in or just ahead of their last year in school.



FORMATS

- Awareness Raising Campaigns and Info Days
- Career Orientation Days
- Career Orientation Camps.



SCOPE

- A replicable intervention format can be developed and applied more than once.
- 100 or more youth can be reached through some of these formats.



PARTNERS

- Schools, youth centres, sports clubs (to reach out to the target group)
- Universities, TVET schools and programmes, employment agencies, career counsellors, businesses (to provide information and follow-up support)



REQUIREMENTS

- A setting where youth feel welcome and comfortable with activities that are interesting and attractive for them
- Availability of up-to-date and correct information on career options. Preferably as written / printed take home materials (for youth and maybe also parents)
- A follow-up process, where youth can get more in-depth information after being triggered to start their career orientation process (e.g. partners where you can send them)
- A concept how sport is used in these events. Preferably not just as an entertaining activity, but in a way in which it supports the participants' ability to reflect about their own skills and talents
- Sufficient time and opportunities for participating youth to really look into and experience work related activities (active participation)

8.2 Sport Based Life Skills Trainings

The second strategic approach uses the core idea of the sport for development method, namely to empower young people through sport-based interventions and to strengthen their capacities. However, a prerequisite for this strategy to be successful is sufficient time to work with the target group.



AIM

- Providing a safe and stable environment for young people
- Building trust and supportive relationships, both peer to peer and between coaches and participants
- Developing life skills in young people and help them to become mature personalities
- Helping young people to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses
- Helping young people to find their way in life in general. Supporting them in making the right career decision.



ASSUMPTIONS

- If a young person is secure in their own role or personality, is integrated into a stable environment, and has reliable and supportive relationships, it is generally easier to make ambitious career decisions, to persevere with projects that have been started, and to make a successful transition from school to working life.
- Sport provides a setting in which young people can build strong and trusting relationships with others outside their own families.
- Soft-or Life Skills are a very important criterion for a young person's level of employability and according to employers in the region many young people are lacking these skills.
- Sport is a tool that can be used to develop generic life skills and individual capacities.



TARGET GROUP

- All young people who are about to make a career decision.
- In particular those who do not have the same support from parents and families than others



FORMATS

- Sport based skills trainings in already existing groups of young people with regular activities (e.g. in sports clubs, youth centres etc.).
- Intensive programmes for new groups with regular interventions over at least a few weeks.
- Sport based interventions only or in combination with additional, employability-relevant, activities



SCOPE

- Groups of 20 +/- participants
- Regular activities (at least once a week)
- Minimum duration (at least a few weeks)



PARTNERS

- Does not necessarily need external partners, but...
- Qualified, motivated and reliable S4D coaches, youth- or social workers are key



REQUIREMENTS

- Sufficient time (weeks or months), regular activities
- Competent staff or volunteers (coaches, youth- social workers)
- Save environment, stable groups, clear rules
- Clear concept of how to develop which skills through sport

8.3 TVET-SCHOOL COOPERATIONS

The third strategy that has been successfully tested in the pilot projects in the Western Balkans is to improve the image of technical and vocational education through sport-based interventions and to cooperate with TVET schools and TVET programmes in order to better exploit the job potential in this area.



AIM

- Bringing sport based educational activities to TVET schools or TVET programmes
- Making these programmes more attractive to young people
- Bringing added value (i.e. health promotion, soft- and life skills training) to these programmes
- Informing teachers in these institutions and programmes about the method of sports-based education and development
- Building partnerships with these institutions and programmes



ASSUMPTIONS

- The potential and opportunities of TVET are underestimated in the region. For some young people, TVET can open up better career opportunities than university studies.
- Sports-based content can make TVET institutions and programs better known and more attractive to young people
- Strong partnerships between TVET schools or programmes and our local S4D networks can create an environment where sport for employability measures can be successfully implemented and further developed in the future.



TARGET GROUP

- All young people considering or already participating in TVET schools or programmes
- Teachers of TVET schools or programmes.



FORMATS

- Regular sport-based skills development activities, delivered by a local S4D network partner in a TVET school or programme
- Intensive programmes with sport-based skills development activities for students of TVET schools or programmes (e.g. as a project week)
- ToT for Teachers of TVET schools or programmes



SCOPE

- Groups of 20 +/- participants
- Regular activities (at least once a week) or intensive programmes (duration of at least 3-5 days)



PARTNERS

- TVET schools and programmes at local or regional level



REQUIREMENTS

- Sufficient time (weeks or months), regular activities
- Competent staff or volunteers (coaches, instructors)
- Partnership agreement with TVET schools or programmes
- Clear concept of how to develop which skills through sport

9. CONCLUSIONS



Sport for Employability is not a miracle cure. It cannot create jobs for young people, and it cannot replace necessary structural reforms in the labour market or in the education system.

Sport for employability can, however, help young people to become aware of their own talents, wishes and expectations for the future and their career options at an early stage so that they can make informed and self-determined decisions in this important phase of their lives.

Above all, it is suitable for strengthening young people in their personality and skills, and thus enhance their capacities and employability in the long term.

10. LITERATURE



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