



# V4L contributes to development of life skills

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world2win



Volleyball4Life





**From 4 to 13 January 2022 a Dutch delegation was in Senegal on behalf of the Nevobo for the Volleyball4Life program. 12 coaches were trained to educate young girls in life skills.**

From 4 to 13 January, a Dutch delegation on behalf of Nevobo was active in Senegal for the Volleyball4Life (V4L) program, as part of the World2Win project. There, the Volleyball4Life Coaches Course was given for the first time. 11 coaches from Senegal and 1 from Rwanda were trained to teach the Volleyball4Life program and 11 girls and one boy participated.

### **The Volleyball4Life program**

The V4L program was created with the intend of having girls between the ages of 12 and 21 make considered choices based on self-insight and that they may do so from their social environment. They go through a number of developmental phases in order to achieve this self-awareness and receive support from their environment. In each developmental phase different life skills are addressed. The coach accompanies them through exercises, activities and coaching. These coaches are trained locally in the V4L program using the V4L Coaches Course and the V4L Manual. They develop themselves as an inspiration and role models and learn how to have conversations from different roles, such as coach of the girl or conversational partner of the parents or for example school director. In addition, the coaches learn to use sport (and volleyball in particular) as a metaphor to facilitate personal development.



*'This was the first time I felt safe enough to tell my story. It has made me relieved from the prison I felt I was in. I feel liberated and peaceful. I also realize now that, as a volleyball coach, I can create a safe environment for my girls so that they too have a person to talk to and share their personal story with when the situation at home is not safe. Coach Mohamadou, age 26.'*

### **The development phase of Volleyball4Life**

For the personal development of the girls we work in four different phases, these are defined and worked out with partner ISA, International Sport Alliance:

- Identity development: girls get to know themselves. What makes it that I am 'me', what is my personality and my personal power. They learn self-insight and self-confidence.
- Dreaming and expressing my wishes: in this phase girls learn what they are good at and what their dreams and passion are. They learn life skills like cooperation and perseverance.
- Behavioral development: girls orient themselves beyond themselves and look at what is happening in the environment and how they can respond. They learn to see opportunities, use them, take direction and develop personal leadership.
- Environmental development: girls learn about the influence of their social environment, how they can move in it and what the effect of their choices is. They learn how they can stimulate and influence others.





*'In the Volleyball4Life program I learned a lot about volleyball, but also about everyday life. It was an inspiring environment to work on my self-confidence and to share experiences. This created a bond with each other. Through V4L I learned that it is important not to always depend on others, but rather to rely on yourself and ignore others who discourage you from achieving your goals'. Participant Fatoumata, 17 years old*

### **The V4L Coaches Course**

To help girls develop, coaches are trained locally in a 5-day program. Part of this course is theory on understanding the different life skills, the link between personal power and volleyball, the different norms and values of gender, and how to use the V4L Manual. In addition, we work on personal skills; discovering your own qualities, self-confidence, setting goals, sharing your personal story. We also work on coaching skills; creating a safe environment, being able to lead a volleyball and life skills session, applying the Reflect-Connect-Apply methodology, creating your own plan for volleyball sessions with girls and developing your adaptability to the local situation girls find themselves in.

*'I can apply the training program in my work and daily life by creating a pleasant atmosphere in my family, school and team. But also to create and enter into connections in order to maintain healthy relationships where we can teach each other norms and values, such as helping each other, forgiving, showing solidarity, self-confidence, determination and openness. In sports, this will help everyone in fair play, dealing with emotions and disappointments and having faith in others'. Coach Patha, 47 years*

### **The V4L Coaches Course in Senegal**

This Coaches Course was organized in cooperation with the Senegalese Volleyball Federation and OlympAfrica. From the Netherlands Peter van Tarel, Ine Klösters and Dorien Tenhaeff were present to facilitate the training. The training lasted five days and took place in Stade Léopold Sédar Senghor, Dakar.

On Day 1, the focus was on getting to know each other, creating a safe environment and the importance of making a connection with others. The language barrier made making contact extra challenging, but it became immediately clear that you can make a connection with each other in other ways, for example by paying attention to body language and eye contact. The girls received a uniform, which was donated by Volleyball club Wivoc to our partner Let's Keep the Ball Flying, which they wore all week, even at school.



Personal Power and gender equality were the themes of the second day. Through a game, the difference between Gender and Sex was made clear. Sex is about the characteristics of the gender and gender about the characteristics itself. A beard in the throat is a male characteristic, but being caring is a characteristic that can apply to both men and women.

The Power Walk builds on this. In this exercise each person has a role of a girl/boy/man/woman of a certain age and situation such as a completed high school education, job, or e.g. neither. Through a number of statements on which one takes a step forward if it applies to their situation, the [unfair] start to life eventually becomes clear. Finally, a number of volleyball games strengthened the mutual connection further.

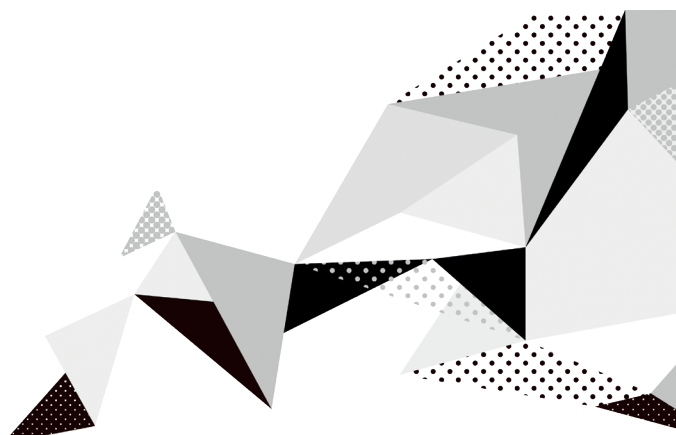


Day 3 was all about courage. The coaches and girls faced personal challenges in sharing their own life story and the goals they have in life. Both the coaches and girls overcame their fears by speaking out about their personal story and goals, battling their shyness and telling their dream. On this day, connections were formed between the coaches and girls that provided the foundation for the rest of the week to trust each other to learn and ask for help.



After an intense day, day 4 was mostly about having fun. Through various games and activities, they learned about The 4 Powers that can be used in difficult and challenging situations: the power within, the power of the group, the power of information, the power of support. Attention was also paid to the types of life skills that are needed to go through the 4 stages of development and that these can be developed at different times in life. Through a relay game with unfair

rules, the coaches were confronted with how you deal with unfair moments in life and how you can keep control. At the end of the day a volleyball game was played with the coaches and girls, which caused big smiles on the faces of the girls and the coaches who proudly encouraged their girls.



On the last day, the Dutch delegation visited the girls' school. In an introduction to the principal, volleyball materials were donated. Together with the girls and teachers of the school a volleyball game was played with the principal playing the first ball.

Back at the training location, several V4L games from the V4L Manual were reviewed and the Reflect-Connect-Apply method was reflected upon. The coaches and girls indicated that they experienced the group as a big family within which they felt safe to connect with each other, share deep personal stories and help each other learn. And within which they could become a version of themselves where their personal power is central. So that this can be used during difficult situations in life that everyone faces.

At the closing ceremony all coaches received their official Volleyball4Life Coaches Certificate and were presented with an official V4L Coach shirt. The coaches proudly accepted these.

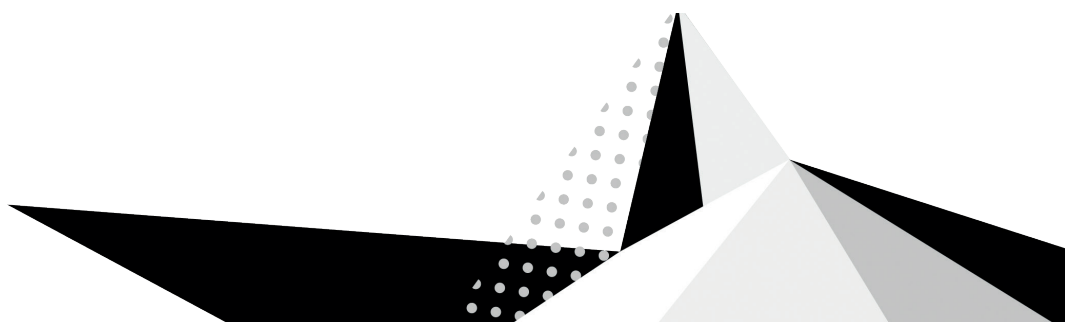


*'What I can say to women and girls all around the world, is that you will not get anything easy in life. My advice is: if you want something, you will have to fight for it and really go for it. It's hugely important that you develop self-confidence and believe in yourself. And you do not have to allow others to make decisions for and about you. It's your responsibility to decide for yourself.'* Coach Augustine, 39 years old


### **The importance of Volleyball4Life at home and abroad**

Volleyball is more than sport, the Nevobo realizes this like no other. In the basis of the game cooperation is crucial, just like setting goals, making agreements and actively participating from your own role. With Volleyball4Life we translate these elements to situations off the field and in daily life. From our vision we strive for Sportif and Social Gold. The Volleyball4Life program contributes to this by using our beautiful sport for the personal development of girls and boys who grow up in difficult circumstances.

Based on the experience we gained in Nepal and Senegal, and knowing that also in the Netherlands young people grow up in difficult situations, we will try to start Volleyball4Life in the Netherlands this year. We focus on girls and boys in low SES neighborhoods and will look with them how we can help them a step further with the help of volleyball.







The program in Senegal proved once again that although volleyball is the largest team sport for women worldwide, it still feels like a small and involved family. Moreover, as a non-contact sport, volleyball is approachable for girls to play. Together with the aforementioned specific characteristics, this makes our sport extremely suitable to be used for social purposes. We are pleased that our partners have also committed themselves to this, believing that together we can make a difference. Together we ensure quality, continuity and commitment.

More information can be found at [nevobo.nl/volleyball4life](https://nevobo.nl/volleyball4life). Would you like to get an impression of the Volleyball4Life Coaches Course that was held in Senegal? Then take a look at this [facebook page](#).

