

# Training Module on Problem Solving



Popularizing sustainable policies that impact  
school to work transition of the youth

## **Foreword**

UNESCAP provides technical and financial aid to facilitate the recognition and enforcement of policies that affect the student and youth population who undergo 'school to work transition'. The focal points of this can be categorised as follows,

- Empowering the youth on policies that benefit all stakeholders
- Empowerment of policy makers
- Effective distribution of the positive effects of successful policies among all parties
- Enhancing the interrelationship among different stakeholders
- Enhancing the working capacity through training

Drawing on the advantages of Information and Communication Technology, the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, national and private institutions which enforce policies that affect the population which undergo school to work transition, and other institutions which implement motivational programs for the targeted group, expects to formulate innovative policies.

NYSC, as the leading national youth development organization in Sri Lanka, implements pragmatic approaches in enforcing policies that affect school to work transition, utilizing the support of third parties, technical assistance and strategic methods. By effectively employing human resources with national and international exposure, it is expected to introduce novel tools and training modules to increase working capacity.

Thus, the aforementioned tools and resources will be utilized for a wider institutional involvement and better exchange of knowledge and experience among countries. The youth in the field of vocational and professional training in Sri Lanka and other regional countries can make use of the training modules produced to meet the demands of their working environments.



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## **Editorial:**

This training module provides technical guidance on the skills that should be achieved by students and the youth community in their transition from school to the corporate world. The training module is prepared to help youth policy makers, teachers, professional trainers, other training facilitators and the youth community to enhance service capacities through self-exploration.

In executing this training module, the training time period shall be decided by the chief service provider. The subject area has been scheduled to enable training time periods to be either one day or two and a half day training programmes based on the needs of the target group. The subject matter should be utilized in a manner which would enable a one day refresher discussion consequent to the training.

Studying the training module before the commencement of the training programme is the disposition of a skilled and experienced trainer. Therefore, we expect that you will study and examine both the training module and the training programme. This would in turn instill self-confidence within you. Hence we assert that it is your duty as a trainer to study in depth and gather information on the subject area beyond what is included in the training module. This module will provide you with the necessary guidance. The module will furnish the required technical direction and subject matter needed for a skilled trainer to confidently conduct a sustainable and effective training session.

Accordingly, steps should be taken to execute a high level training programme making use of the well formulated session plan and supporting material. Apart from that, we recommend that you use services of an assistant trainer which would aid you direct your attention to areas that you might possibly overlook.



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# Module Handbook for Problem Solving

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## Part 1

### Introduction

Aims and Objectives:

The youth in transition from school to work must develop skills within themselves to independently resolve problems they will encounter regularly. It is the policy makers' responsibility to provide necessary facilities to support them in this regard. Hence, we aim to train the student and youth population in problem-solving skills, which will assist them in adapting to situations and thereby ensure a successful entrance into their working environments.

### Guidelines for Trainers:

Identify your target group. Prepare the training programme and its session plan. Use youth-centered training methods which enables you to make a more qualitative change. The Training is expected to be interactive and to achieve the aims outlined for the youth skills' development.

## Part 2

Objectives of the Training Module:

At the end of this training session, participants will be able to,

1. Understand "What is a Problem?"
2. Identify causes of a problem
3. Analyze problematic situations to discern their nature and manage them.
4. Utilize effective problem-solving strategies
5. Solve problems in their daily lives.

### Training Framework (Training Duration):

Training Workshop	Duration	Notes
Motivational Training Workshop	One Day	Non-residential
Capacity Building Workshop	2 ½ Days	Residential
Follow-up Workshop	One Day	Non-residential

### Details of the training field: (Training content)

Subject/Field	Objectives and Mechanisms
What is a problem?	Identifying multiple problem situations and steps
What are the reasons that contribute to the problem? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Difference between hopes and expected result</li><li>- Mismatched and contradictory perception by others on your views</li><li>- To establish self defense</li></ul>	Presenting information via a role play of group members – The reasons for the occurrence of problems will be analysed
Analysing problem situations <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifying the nature of the problem</li><li>- Constructing alternatives</li><li>- Choosing the best alternative upon assessing all alternative</li><li>- Utilizing the selected alternative</li></ul>	Identifying parties related to the problem and analysing the problem through the problem tree.
Strategies in solving problems – Assessing the result	Sharing case studies and exchanging successful experiences.
Advantages and positive impact in solving a problem	Exchanging problem resolution experiences and understanding its advantages.
Future measures	Affirmation of strategy utilization.

#### ❖ What is a problem?

Give all participants a Zoop card each. Firstly, advise them to individually write their opinion on what is a problem. Along with it instruct them to note down the instances of any problem. Afterwards allow them to compare their opinions and ideas with their neighbor and take down on a separate sheet of paper the content that is mutually agreed by both. If both seem to have similar opinions it should be written down as one fact. Next, make groups of four and eliminate opinions that are only agreed to by two and list down what is commonly agreed by all four.

- ❖ Upon listing down the commonly agreed facts, find the answer to the question what is a Problem.
- ❖ Consequently, share with the participants the opinion and definitions of the trainer.
- ❖ What are the reasons for the occurrence of a problem?

Advise participants to create a role play with members of their respective groups to provide answers to the above question and its sub titles. Appoint a panel of judges for the role play and furnish them with marking criteria. The panel of judges should provide feedback reflective of the above topic and its sub titles. Final recommendations should be displayed in the form of flip charts for the benefit of all participants.

**Directions for the role play:**

- 1) All members of the group should be part of either the role play or the panel of judges.
- 2) Trainer should provide assistance in the creation of the role play.
- 3) At the end of the role play, advise to first commend the positive aspects and then discuss areas to be improved.
- 4) Advise to create the role play with emphasis on the sub titles.

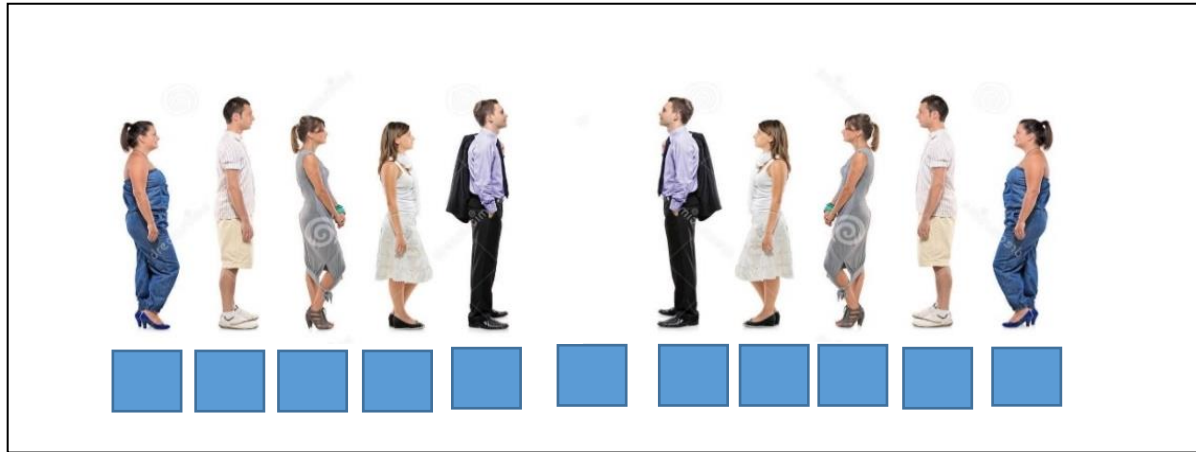
**❖ Creating alternatives to solve problematic situations:**

Use the activity “**Traffic Jam Exercise**” as it is appropriate to achieve the purpose of developing the ability to build alternatives to solve problematic situations. Select two participants from each team (with both male and female participation). Place 11 A4 sheets with a gap of 1 ft among each on the floor in a selected area of the room. The 10 participants must proceed to stand on the sheets in two groups of five facing the other team, with one empty sheet in between the two groups. Instruct the two teams to cross onto the other side.

**Activity Instructions:**

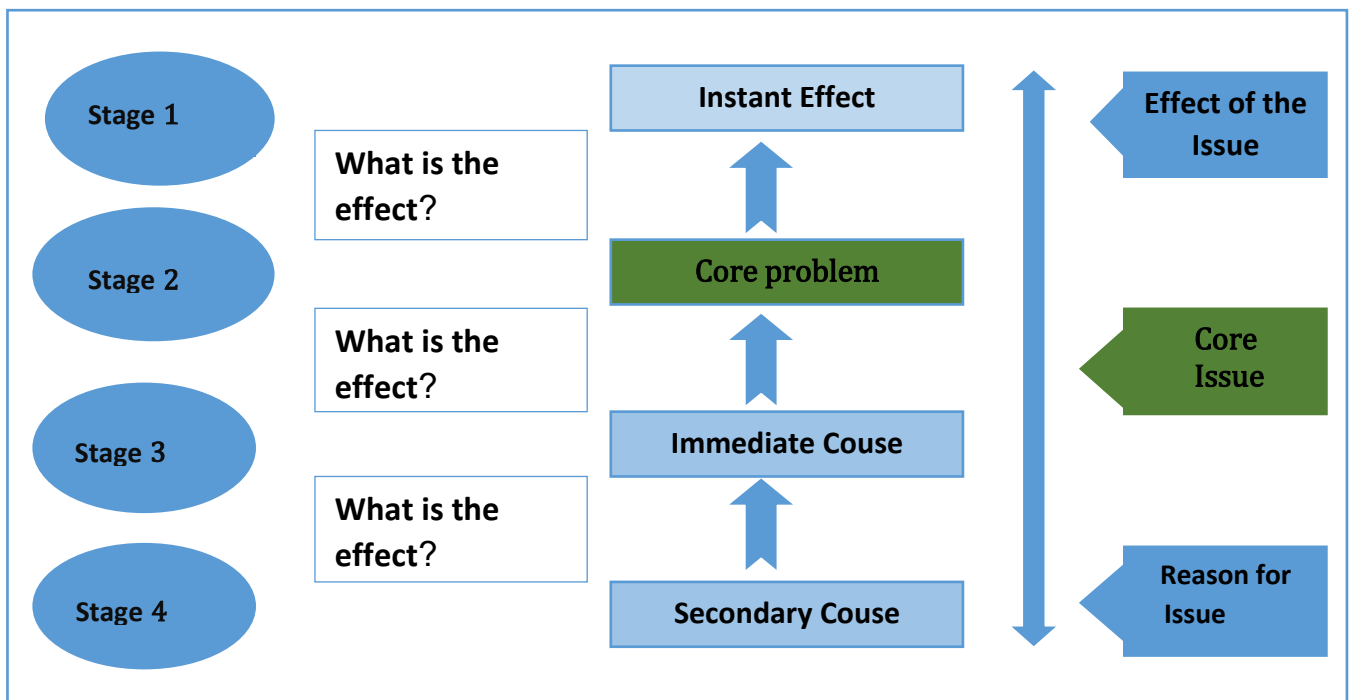
1. No group member can move past two others at once.
2. A foot placed forward cannot be drawn back.
3. No two group members of the same group can proceed in the same direction in any instance.
4. There must always be a spot for one to move forward when the two teams are crossing.
5. Rule breakers must be warned or taken appropriate measures against.
6. Players must refrain from moving or swinging their arms and legs out of their lane. If they do, they may get injured from vehicles on either side of their lane.
7. Limit the activity to a maximum of 20 minutes.

The two groups must proceed to move until their initial direction changes entirely. Build alternatives step by step. Provide room to identify the next alternative if a decision in one instance goes wrong. Also train the participants to assess every step taken by them to solve the problem. Teams should be exposed assessing the potential consequences of at least two steps forward and two steps back following their decision.



**Problem Analyzing:**

Choose a problem of significant consequences, thereafter brainstorm and establish the factors affecting this problem. Assess the differences between these consequences and their overall societal impact before attempting to solve this problem and discuss a suitable action plan. For this purpose, draw up the action points on a Problem Tree and by understanding the activity below, attempt to provide a series of solutions to this problem.





❖ **Problem solving steps and decision making:**

- 1) Clearly identify the problem
- 2) Generate alternative solutions
- 3) Analyse and choose the best possible solution
- 4) Choose the most ideal solution
- 5) Implement the most ideal solution
- 6) Evaluate the results

Implementation – Team decision making to be presented using Visual Aid.

Example: At the end of this course, the teams will join in on a Trip; to this effect the expenses to be borne per person will be decided by the organisation committee. Any participant unable to attend the Trip will be presumed to forego this opportunity for financial reasons.

**How to get him to participate in the organized trip?**

STEP		
1	Identify the issue clearly	Direct the group to assess the situation and to identify the real issue faced. Encourage the group to present ideas along different viewpoints.
2	Identify the suitable options to address the issue	Make the group realize the importance of this step in solving the problem. Two participants should get together to build suitable alternatives by making use of the knowledge acquired from the above exercise.
3	Analyze the suitable solutions	It is necessary to think over your ideas thoroughly in order to select the most suitable solution. To better understand these concepts, direct the group to study the following situations.  What are the best subjects to be selected for the next study session? What are the criteria that you considered when arriving at this selection?

4	Select the most suitable solution	<p>It is important to understand the reason/s behind the strategies employed in solving the problem. Advise the group to clearly note down such criteria in a piece of paper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The time invested to solve the problem should be time efficient, cost efficient and feasible</li> <li>•The ideas must be reasons to solve the problem</li> <li>•The ideas should not offend or oppose any other person.</li> </ul> <p>List out the ideas as “our suggestions” and use for consideration</p>
5	Execute the selected solution	<p>Make the participants realize that the solution arrived at, is the result of the input of all participants.</p>
6	Assess the selected solution	<p>Successfully solving a problem or the failure to do so depends on the above factors .If the problem is not solved by the solution arrived at, restart the process all over again.</p>

Following these steps may also help you to successfully solve the problems faced in the day to day life as well.

### **Utilizing skills in solving problems:**

Use the knowledge acquired here to solve the problems that you face in your household or workplace.

You shall be able to use this knowledge in the issues faced in your personal life.

### **Utilizing this knowledge in the next study session**

Problem solving is a complex skill that is difficult to grasp. But in order to successfully solve a problem that arises in the workplace or day to day life, it is a necessary skill. You must practice the techniques given in this module to improve the skill of problem solving. Constant training and informing oneself of other techniques is also important.

## Session Plan

Subject Area	Problem Solving	Location	
Time/	1 Day – 8 Hours	Team Number and Total	

No	Time	Sub Subject Field	Methodology	Assistance
01	30 mins	Introduction Defining the problem/Creating awareness on the nature of the problem	Presentation	Pictures ,Video clips Multimedia Computers
02	60 mins	What is a problem? Give instructions for the activity. Listing problems, discussing about problems and arriving at conclusions.	Presentation Individual activities Group activities	Zoop card .Zoop card board Flip chart paper.Marker pen Pins.Multimedia .Computers
03	120 mins	What are the causes of problems? Provide instructions on conducting activities to explain problematic situations, discussion and arriving at conclusions.	Presentations Group activities Role plays	Flip chart paper Flip chart board Multimedia .Computers
04	90 mins	Building alternatives for problematic situations Identifying the nature of the problem and create alternatives. Assess all alternatives and use the best selected alternative.	Presentations Group activities	A4 Papers Glue/ Sellotape Flip chart paper. board Multimedia Computers
05	120 mins	Analysing the problem Identifying the nature of the problem Listing the solutions to the problem Executing the solutions.	Presentations Case study Brain storming Acting out Group activities	Flip chart paper.flip chart board Multimedia .Computers Marker pen
06	30 mins	Importance of using strategies in solving problems	Assessing ideas and group suggestions	Flip chart paper, Flip chart board.Marker pen
07	30 mins	Positive impact in solving problems (Advantages & Disadvantages) Importance of using problem solving techniques	Presenting discussions	Flip chart paper.flip chart board Multimedia .Computers
08	15 mins	Summarizing	Presentations	Flip chart paper.flip chart board

Facilitator: .....

Assistant Facilitator: .....