

YAN-KOLOBA®

SHORT INSTRUCTIONS

WHAT IS YAN-KOLOBA?

Imagine a group activity that reaches across all cultural boundaries, fully delights and engages more than 50 participants, teaching them respect and teamwork, collaboration and responsibility, promotes tolerance and trust, and boosts their self-esteem and leadership skills.

Yan-koloba is a team building game whose roots reach back to Africa. In the typical African village, adults and children, females and males do not usually get to play games together. *Yan-koloba* is the only social game that gathers persons of all ages, genders and physical abilities around the same circle. By playing this game, people reinforce their concepts of respect for self and others, acceptance and trust, responsibility and leadership, unity and teamwork, in a fun and relaxed environment. *Yan-koloba* means “Take care” or “watch out.”

HOW DOES YAN-KOLOBA BENEFIT YOUR TEAM?

- **Fun:** Team members enjoy the presence of each other in a fun, relaxed and very enjoyable environment
- **Teamwork:** Everyone’s contribution to the task and to the process is encouraged and valued, creating team cohesion that leads to team success. Everyone counts.
- **Values:** Players develop respect and responsibility for self and others, trust in and acceptance for each other
- **Diversity:** Team members work and succeed together, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, intellectual and physical ability.

FACILITATING YAN-KOLOBA

I. Instructions

A. What You Need to Play Yan-koloba.

1. **Blocks:** Each player starts with a block.
2. **Pads:** They play a double role: **reducing the noise level** when playing at desk or on wooden floor, and **directing** players on where to place the blocks.¹
3. **Name Tags:** If players do not know each other, each player must wear a name tag with their first name only. Female names are preceded by “*Mama*” (Mama Sarah). Male names are preceded by “*Papa*” (Papa Jacob)
4. The **Yan-koloba music** or another **song:** Play the *Yan-koloba* tape or sing another song to set and maintain the rhythm.
5. **Teaching/Learning Content:** If *Yan-koloba* is being used to facilitate learning, it is necessary to prepare the concept to learn such as math facts, reading materials, company’s mission statement, etc... prior to starting the game.

B. The Leader/Facilitator

The leader plays a key-role in the game by monitoring it. She/he indicates which variation to play, creates the playing pace, instructs the players on the procedures, teaches the song and sings the solo part of the song, starts or stops each round and monitors the overall development of the game. As players are arranged in a circle, the leader may be in the circle as participant and lead from that position. In a very large group, the leader may decide to circulate in the middle of the circle. Players may take turns to lead different variations.

C. The Playing Area

1. If **playing at desks**, arrange the desks or tables to form a closed area. Players sit around tables or desks, elbow-to-elbow with the playing hands on the desk and the other hand underneath the desk.
2. If **playing on the floor**, the players stand in a circle, elbow-to-elbow while facing the center of the circle. Next, they sit down and position their legs away from the middle of the circle, where the blocks will be placed.

D. The Players

Any team of **3 to more than 50 people of all ages** can get together and play. Because *Yan-koloba* is a very inclusive game, additional players may join

¹ Keep your blocks on your pad when you are not playing: Do not toss blocks in the air or throw them at others.

at any time, with same enthusiasm and same fun. Persons of various intellectual levels, physical abilities², cultural and linguistic backgrounds have fun, learn about each other and work together toward a common goal. Nobody loses, because the team wins.

II. Facilitating Yan-koloba

1. Object of the Game. Once all players are in place with their playing gear, the facilitator gives the object of the game by saying “**The purpose** of the game is to work together as a team to move the blocks rhythmically, continuously and simultaneously around the circle.” S/he continues “As each of us starts each round with one block, it will happen that at the end of the round you may not have a block, which means that somewhere someone has more than one. At the end of the round, all those who do not have blocks will raise their hand. Raising your hand will mean that you need a block. At that point it will be the responsibility of those who have more than one block to roll blocks to those with hands up before the leader starts the next round. This method helps eliminate unnecessary talking like “I need a block”, “pass me a block”, “I have 2 blocks”, “Who needs a block?”

2. Passing the Blocks. The facilitator continues: “Now hold your block like a computer mouse. Practice tapping the blocks on your own pad only one time as I count to 3:

⇒ 1--- 2 --- 3 (normal rhythm) [*players tap blocks on pads*] (Repeat 2 times)

⇒ 1-2-3 (faster rhythm³) [*player tap blocks on pads faster*] (Repeat 2 times)

⇒ 1 --- 2 --- 3 (normal rhythm) [*players tap blocks on pads*] (Repeat 2 times)

Great!. Now, let’s practice passing our blocks to our neighbor to the right. Passing the block to your neighbor means taping it on your neighbor’s pad and leaving it there. Do not worry about losing a block; when you come back you will find another one in front of you. So let’s pass our blocks to our neighbors to the right, as I count to *play!*”

² Visually Impaired players share the same circle of fun and learn together. At the end of a diversity training workshop during which we used the game, a blind man said to me: “I have never interacted with so many people and have so much fun playing and singing. This game was truly designed for people like me. Thank you!”

³ The faster pace sets the stage that the game can be played at various speeds.

⇒ 1 --- 2 --- 3 (normal rhythm) [*Players pass blocks to their neighbors*] (Repeat 2 times)

⇒ 1-2-3 (faster rhythm) [*Players pass blocks to their neighbors faster*] (Repeat 3 times)

⇒ 1 --- 2 --- 3 (normal rhythm) [*Players pass blocks to their neighbors*] (Repeat 2 times)

“Great Job”!!

3. Learning the Song (*Sheet Music is on page 7*)

The facilitator continues by saying “We know how to pass the blocks, now let’s learn the song. The song is necessary because it keeps the rhythm alive. If you do not sing, you can easily disrupt the flow of the game. Repeat with me the name of the game “Yan—koloba.” The players repeat **Yan-koloba**. “Now let’s practice the song. Yan-koloba refrain sounds like this:

Yan-koloba -Eh-Eh- Yan-koloba

Let’s try that. [All the players sing the refrain]

Yan-koloba -Eh-Eh- Yan-koloba

(*Have players repeat as necessary*)

Yan-koloba -Eh-Eh- Yan-koloba.”

(*Refer to the Yan-koloba song on the audio CD or tape and the sheet music included in the game package*).

The facilitator continues:

“Fantastic job! Now let’s pass the blocks and sing at the same time. I will demonstrate. (*Leader demonstrates alone while singing, and introducing players’ names.*)

“Now, let’s all play the game, non-stop while following the rhythm of the song. I will count to “**Play**” Ready?

⇒ 1 - 2 – Ready? – **Play!**”

All: **Yan-koloba -Eh-Eh- Yan-koloba.**

Between repetitions of the refrain, the leader sings the solo. The solo is composed of players’ first names with *Papa* added on males’ names and *Mama* added on females’ names.

All: **Yan-koloba -Eh-Eh- Yan-koloba**

Leader: Mama Sa-rah

All: **Yan-koloba -Eh-Eh- Yan-koloba**

Leader: Papa Mi-chael

All: **Yan-koloba -Eh-Eh- Yan-koloba**

As players pass the blocks and sing at the same time, the leader monitors their progress, skills and reactions. If a player accumulates more than one block, stop the round by saying “Excellent, Good job” or similar encouraging expressions.

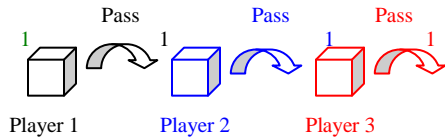
Encourage players to talk to their neighbors to resolve the issue. Then start a new round. Repeat until you notice that players are becoming proficient before moving to another variation.

III. Yan-koloba Variations

The variations suggested here are merely samples of unlimited ways of playing this versatile game. In fact, leaders and players are encouraged to create any other variation that suits their particular gathering. With all these variations, players pass blocks simultaneously, rhythmically and continuously.

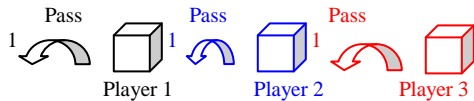
1. Regular Passing-Right (1 sequence)

In this regular passing, blocks are passed counter clockwise to your neighbor at your right. Pick up your block from in front of you, and pass it to your neighbors to the **right** while chanting and synchronizing with the leader.



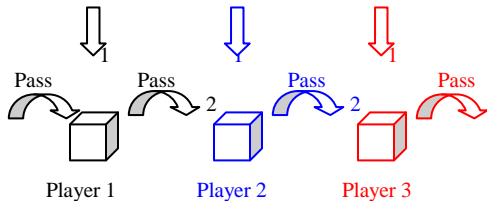
2. Regular Passing-Left (1 sequence)

This variation is like the previous one except that you pass blocks clockwise, to your neighbor to the **left**.



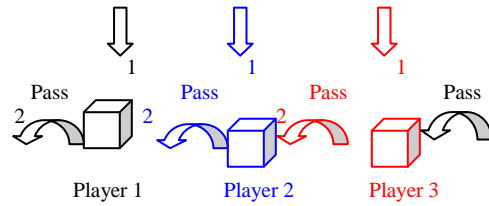
3. Single Tapping-Right (2 sequences)

In single tapping-right, blocks are passed counter clockwise to your neighbor at your right. Pick up your block from in front of you, tap it **once** (1-)⁴ on your own pad, and pass it (-2) to your neighbors to the **right** while chanting and synchronizing with the leader.



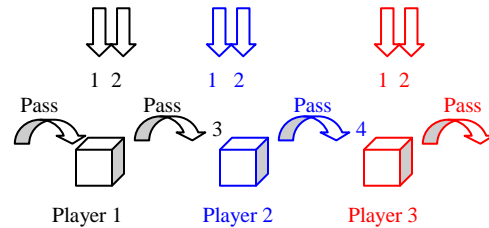
4. Single Tapping-Left (2 sequences)

In single tapping-left, blocks are passed clockwise to your neighbor at your **left**. Pick up your block from in front of you, tap it **once** (1-) on your own pad, and pass it (-2) to your neighbors to the **left** while chanting and synchronizing with the leader.



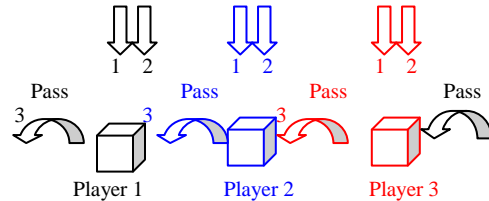
5. Double Tapping-Right (3 sequences)

In double tapping-right, blocks are passed counter clockwise to your neighbor at your right. Pick up your block from in front of you, tap it **twice** (1-2-) on your own pad, and pass it (-3) to your neighbors to the **right** while chanting and synchronizing with the leader.



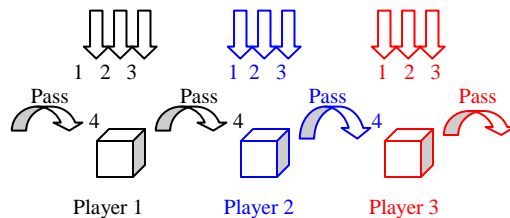
6. Double Tapping-Left (3 sequences)

In this variation, blocks are passed clockwise to your neighbor at your left. Pick up your block from in front of you, tap it **twice** (1-2-) on your own pad, and pass it (-3) to your neighbor to the **left** while chanting and synchronizing with the leader.



7. Triple Tapping-Right (4 sequences)

In the triple tapping-right, blocks are passed counter clockwise to your neighbor at your right. Pick up your block from in front of you, tap it **three times** (1-2-3) on your own pad, and pass it (-4) to your neighbor to the **right** while chanting and synchronizing with the leader.

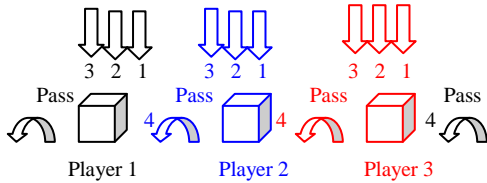


⁴ Numbers show the corresponding steps on the graphic: (1-) indicates that the step continues; (-2-): indicates that there are steps before and after this one; and (-5) indicates the last step.

8. Triple Tapping-Left (4 sequences)

In the triple tapping-left, blocks are passed clockwise to your neighbor at your left.

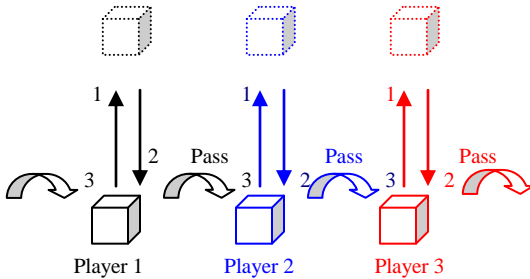
Pick up your block from in front of you, tap it **three times** (1-2-3) on your own pad, and pass it (-4) to your neighbor to the **left** while chanting and synchronizing with the leader.



9. The Low “L” Right (3 sequences)

Players draw the capital letter “L” with their blocks before passing them to their neighbors to the **right**.

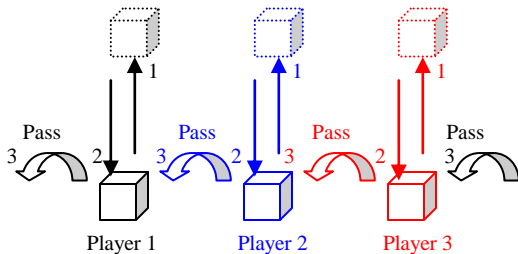
Pick up your block. Tap it first towards the middle of the circle (1-) with your arm extended, return and tap on your pad (-2-), and finally pass the block to your neighbor to the **right** (-3).



10. The Low “L” Left (3 sequences)

Players draw the capital letter “L” with their blocks before passing them to their **left**.

Pick up your block. Tap it first towards the middle of the circle (1-) with your arm extended, then return and tap it on your pad (-2-), and finally pass the block to your neighbor to the **left** (-3).

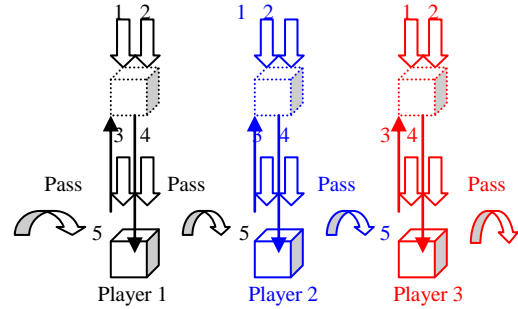


11. Double Tapping “L” Right (5 sequences)

Players draw the capital letter “L” with their blocks before passing them to their **right**.

Pick up your block. First tap it **twice** towards the middle of the circle (1-2-) with your arm extended, then return and tap it **twice** on your

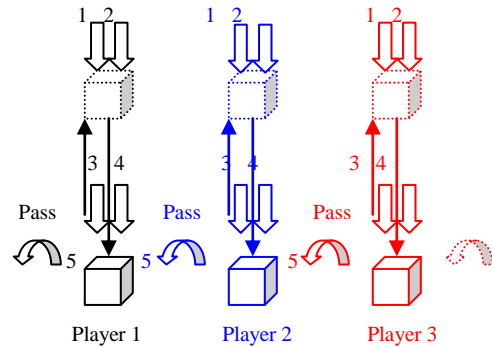
pad (-3-4-), and finally pass the block to your neighbor to the **right** (-5).



12. Double Tapping “L” Left (5 sequences)

Players draw the capital letter “L” with their blocks before passing them to their **left**.

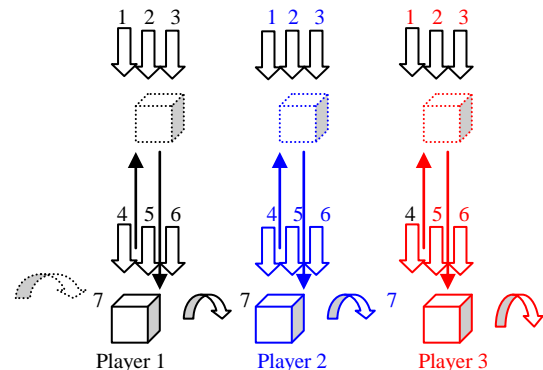
Pick up your block. First tap it **twice** towards the middle of the circle (1-2-) with your arm extended, then return and tap it **twice** on your pad (-3-4-), and finally pass the block to your neighbor to the **left** (-5).



13. Triple Tapping “L” Right (7 sequences)

Players draw the capital letter “L” with their blocks before passing them to their **right**.

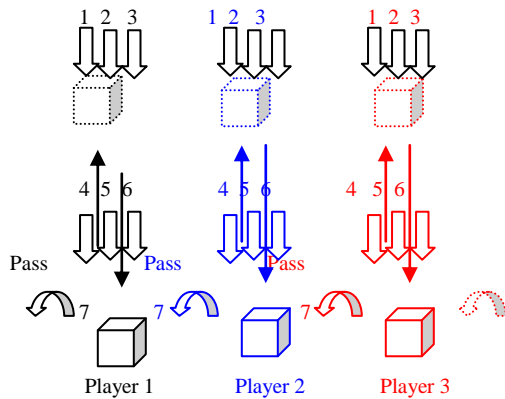
Pick up your block. First tap it **3 times** towards the middle of the circle (1-2-3-) with your arm extended, then return and tap it **3 times** on your pad (-4-5-6-), and finally pass the block to your neighbor to the **right** (-7).



14. Triple Tapping “L” Left (7 sequences)

Players draw the capital letter “L” with their blocks before passing them to their left.

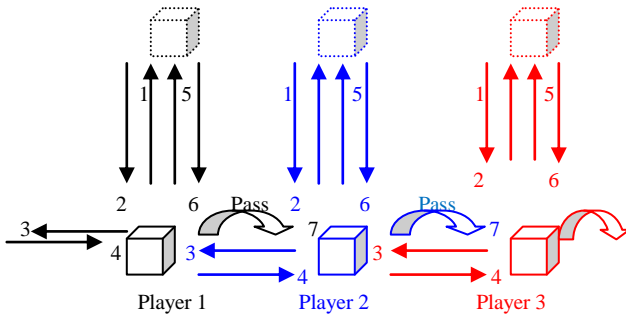
Pick up your block. First tap it **3 times** towards the middle of the circle (1-2-3-) with your arm extended, then return and tap it **3 times** on your pad (-4-5-6-), and finally pass the block to your neighbor to the **left** (-7-).



15. Double Reverse Low “L” (7 Sequences)

Players draw **two capital letters “L”** with their blocks before passing them. One of the “Ls” is reversed.

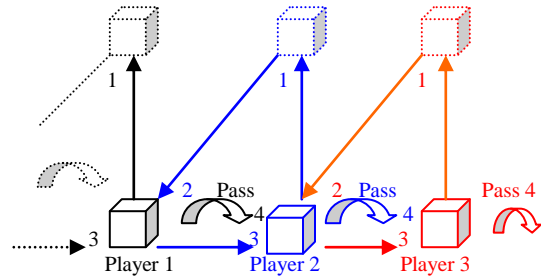
Pick up your block. First tap it towards the middle of the circle (1-). Return the block and tap it on your pad (-2-). Now tap it in front of your neighbor to the left (-3-) and finally **return** and tap it on your pad. [The reverse “L” is completed]. You will now proceed with low “L” Right as described in 9 with steps -5-, -6- and -7-.



16. Triangle Right (4 sequences)

Players draw **a triangle** with their blocks before passing them.

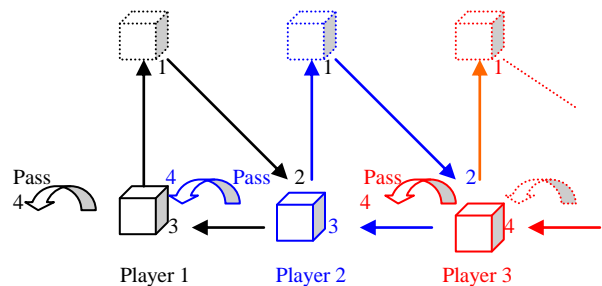
Pick up your blocks. Tap it first towards the middle of the circle (1-). Then tap it on the left on their neighbor’s pad (-2-), next on your pad (-3-), and finally pass the block to your neighbor on the **right** (-4-).



17. Triangle Left (4 sequences)

Players draw **a triangle** with their blocks before passing them.

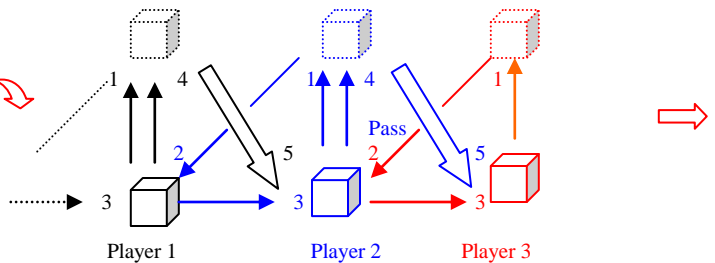
Pick up your blocks. Tap it first towards the middle of the circle (1-). Then tap it on the right on their neighbors’ pad (-2-), next on your pad (-3-), and finally pass the blocks to your neighbor on the **left** (-4-).



18. Double Reverse Triangle Right (5 sequences)

Players draw **two triangles** with their blocks before passing them. One of the triangles is reversed.

Pick up your block. First tap it towards the middle of the circle (1-). Then tap it on the left on your neighbor’s pad (-2-), next on your own pad (-3-). [The reverse triangle is completed]. You will now tap it towards the middle of the circle (-4-) and finally pass the blocks to your neighbor on the **right** (-5-).



Note:

- : Regular movement of blocks (same player)
- ⇨: Tapping of blocks
- ↷: Passing of blocks to another player

YAN-KOLOBA IS MORE THAN A GAME... It's a teaching tool. Teach any content with the Learning Versions.

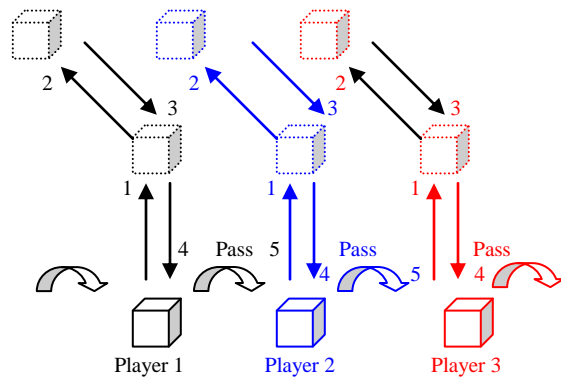
The "Learning Variations" (LV) are the tools that allow trainers and teachers to include various learning contents in the game. Trainers are utilizing them to help workers memorize the mission or vision statements of their organizations. Teachers use them to review course contents such as mathematics, reading, social studies or poetry. In addition to being as fun as the others, players pass blocks rhythmically and simultaneously, but not continuously. There is a **rest** between each chanting of the Yan-koloba refrain (See instructional video/CD).

The LVs are the favorites of young and adult participants for the following reasons:

- Participants' level of concentration is at its highest, preparing them to problem solving
- There is room for error and correction
- Participants learn from each other
- There is time to discuss learning contents
- Participants have the opportunity to present problems to the team
- Participants take turns to be leaders

19. LV1: The High "L" (7 sequences)

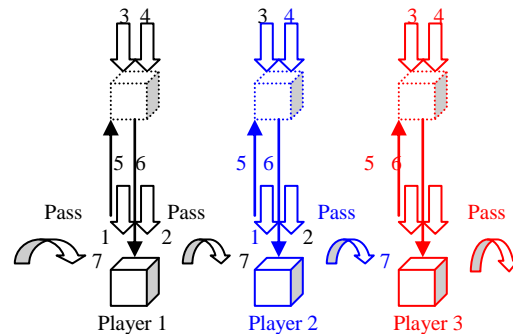
Blocks are moved like in "Low L". Pick up your block. Tap it first towards the middle of the circle (1-) then lift up block approximately at the level of their eyes (-2-) while maintaining the extended position, then tap them down again at the extended position (-3-), then on your pad (-4-), and finally pass it to their neighbors (-5-).



20. LV2: The Double Tapping "L" Right (7 sequences)

Players draw the capital letter "L" with their blocks before passing them. Pick up your block. First tap it **twice on your own pad** (1-2-), then **twice** towards the middle of the circle (-3-4-) then return and tap it again **twice on your own pad** (-

5-6-), and finally pass the block to your neighbor to the **right** (-7).



IV. Other Variations

- Double Reverse High-L Right
- Double Reverse High-L Left
- Double Reverse Triangle Right or Left
- Two Left and Right Tapping
- Two-Hands-Two-Blocks "L"
- The Fake Fist (See instructional video/CD)

REVERSE. For instructions on how to conduct Reverse without switching hands, consult the *Instructional Video/CD included.*

THE YAN-KOLOBA FOR LEARNING... SERIES. Details and instructions are found in the *Yan-koloba Book: No Better Way to Break Cultural Barriers; No Better Activity to Build Cultural Bridges.*

- Yan-koloba for Cultural Diversity
- Yan-koloba for Teambuilding
- Yan-koloba for Character Building
- Yan-koloba for Concentration, Multiple Intelligences and special education
- Yan-koloba for Leadership Development
- Yan-koloba for Respect and Responsibility
- Yan-koloba for Intergenerational Links
- Yan-koloba for Fun and Community Building

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Emmanuel Ngomsi, Ph.D., Creator of Yan-koloba.

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YAN-KOLOBA™

The musical score consists of six systems, each with two staves. The top staff of each system contains the vocal melody with lyrics, and the bottom staff contains a bass line. The lyrics are: 'Yan ko lo ba Heh Heh Yan ko lo ba' followed by 'Pa pa Ja cob!', 'Ma mi Sa rah!', 'Pa pa Jer ry!', 'Be ver ly y!', and 'Pa pa Mi chael!'.

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