Life Skills and Citizenship Education Initiative
Middle East and North Africa

LSCE

Reimagining Life Skills and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa

A Four-Dimensional and Systems Approach to 21st Century Skills

Conceptual and Programmatic Framework

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The following organizations contributed to the development of the Conceptual and Programmatic Framework:

AFLATOUN INTERNATIONAL

Arab Institute for Human Rights

BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY

Deutsche Post DHL Group

ILO

international youth foundation

MERCY CORPS

NRC NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

Save the Children

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AfDB	African Development Bank
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
BYB	Build Your Business (IYF)
C4D	Communication for Development
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning
CBO	community-based organization
CCCI2	Civic Competence Composite Indicators 2
CFS	Child Friendly Schools (UNICEF)
CPF	Conceptual and Programmatic Framework
CVE	countering violent extremism
DDR	disaster risk reduction
ECE	early childhood education
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FRESH	Focusing Resources on Effective School Health partnership (UNESCO)
GCE	Global Citizenship Education
GDP	gross domestic product
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IASC-MHPSS	Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
ICCS	International Civic and Citizenship Education Study
ICT	information and communication technology
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
IT	information technology
IYF	International Youth Foundation
LMS	Learning Management System
LSCE	Life Skills and Citizenship Education
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MHPSS	mental health and psychosocial support
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOL	Ministry of Labour
NEET	not in education, employment or training

NESP	national education sector plans
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCEAN	Openness to experiences; Conscientiousness; Extraversion; Agreeableness; and Neuroticism
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFPPT	Office of Vocational Training and Labour Promotion (Morocco)
PIAAC	Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (OECD)
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD)
PTA	parent teacher association
PTS	Passport to Success (IYF)
PVE	preventing violent extremism
RORE	rates of return to education
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results (World Bank)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEL	social and emotional learning
SHN	school health and nutrition
SMC	school management committee
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
STEP	Skills towards Employability and Productivity (World Bank)
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNWRA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USAID	United States Agency for Development
VTC	Vocational and Training Corporation
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organization
Y4F	Youth for the Future (IYF)

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The situation of learning in the Middle East and North Africa calls for a holistic, lifelong and rights-based vision of education that maximizes the potential of all children and youth in the region and better equips them to create meaning out of knowledge and to face the transitions from childhood to adulthood, from education to work, and from unreflective development to responsible and active citizenship. This is what drives the MENA Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) Initiative, kicked off in 2015 with the aim of supporting the countries of the region – conceptually, programmatically and technically – to improve learning and to better invest such learning in individual, social and economic development.

Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and with the acquisition of skills defined as a key objective of the 2030 Education Agenda, this Conceptual and Programmatic Framework (CPF) is meant to reimagine the work around life skills and citizenship education – while addressing both the conceptual and programmatic gaps – with a view of achieving scale, sustainability and long-term change towards quality learning in MENA. It is addressed to policy makers, practitioners and experts and it is meant to serve as a basis for guiding policies, strategies and programs through a systems approach and in the context of national education reforms. The LSCE CPF constitutes also a roadmap for the mobilization of a large network of partners through multiple pathways and modalities in education, in the social sphere, in the workplace and on the road to the workplace, with a view of reaching all children and youth and creating an enabling environment for better learning.

The LSCE Initiative is led by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with partners at country, regional and global levels. It brings together the active contribution of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), along with Ministries of Education and other national institutions responsible for education across the MENA countries. Regional and global partners include: Aflatoun International, the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR), Birzeit University (BZU), Deutsche Post DHL Group, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Youth Foundation (IYF), Mercy Corps, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Save the Children, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA), the World Bank, and the World Food Programme (WFP).

The production of the LSCE CPF comes as a result of two years of consultations both at country and regional levels, including the engagement of more than 600 stakeholders such as representatives from governmental institutions (Ministries of Education, Youth, Social Affairs and Labour), UN Agencies, think tanks and universities, NGOs, the private sector, and children and youth. Key regional consultations include: the UNICEF MENA Education Network (MEdNet) Meeting conducted between 30 November and 3 December, 2015, in Amman, Jordan; the LSCE Initiative Regional Consultation held 8 to 10 November, 2016, in Amman, Jordan; and the LSCE Partners Consultation held 13 to 14 March, 2017, in Amman, Jordan.

The genuine engagement in the development of this document has been remarkable. The following officials, partners, colleagues and experts contributed with technical inputs, advice, reviews and resources.

- **Officials from MENA: ALECSO:** Hechmi Ardhaoui; **Algeria:** Nabil Bendeddouche, Kacem Djahlene, Mustapha Hamdi (National Ministry of Education), Mouloud Boulaouinat (Ministry of Professional and Vocational Training), Mouloud Larbi, Lila Melouane (Ministry of Youth and Sports); **Djibouti:** Said Mohamed Barkad, Mohamed Barkat Siradj (Ministry of Education); **Egypt:** Magdy Abdel Ghany, Samir El Sharkawy, Mohamed Medhat, Randa Ahmed Hafez Shahin (Ministry of Education); **Iran:** Seyyed Ali Hosseini, Hassan Sharbatdar, Morteza Shokoohi (Ministry of Education); **Iraq:** Muntaha Fahd Birassam, Majeed Sadeq Kadhim (Ministry of Education), Kawa Omar Hamad, Saif Husam Mohamad (KRI Ministry of Education); **Jordan:** Wafaa Abdullat, Khawla Abu Haija, Omar Migdadi, Haifa Takrouri (Ministry of Education); **Lebanon:** Samia Abu Hamad, Rania Ghoussoub, Pauline Yamine (Ministry of Education and Higher Education); **Libya:** Abdelgader Mohamed Abujalala, Om Khir Muftah Ali, Moftah Mohamad Elhadi, Hamad Salih Irghabeen (Ministry of Education), Hussein Alalem (former Ministry of

Since the inception of the LSCE Initiative in 2015 a great deal has been achieved, both in terms of framing the regional work conceptually and programmatically and in terms of launching initiatives at country level. The road ahead is now being travelled. It is complex and fraught with many challenges. However, with the political will and partner engagement that has been demonstrated to date, the ambitious goals set in this document should not be out of sight.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

1. The case for life skills and citizenship education in MENA

Children, youth and all learners in MENA face **unprecedented challenges** in terms of learning, employment and social cohesion, aggravated by a context of political instability and conflicts. The general consensus is that education systems are broadly failing to deliver the outcomes needed to advance individual and social development, and that the increasing number of education opportunities in the region has yet to translate into economic growth.

Globally, a growing body of evidence suggests that successful performance in school, work and life needs to be supported by a wide range of skills and values, the development of which should be fostered by education systems. Ongoing **education reforms in MENA** have certainly led to positive achievements in the past 15 years, such as improving the access to formal basic education and closing the gender gap. However, there is a skills deficit in the region that is yet to be addressed in a qualitative, concerted and systemic way, and a comprehensive education reform in this regard remains a 'road not taken'.

Constrained by traditional classroom teaching, learning techniques and examination practices, children and youth in MENA generally do not receive an education that is aligned with contemporary realities and labour market requirements. A far-reaching consequence is that they typically **lack the skills** to be successful at school and at work, and to become positive and active members of society. In addition, fragile learning environments exist where education has been increasingly used as an element of radicalization, by which the propagation of extreme belief systems taints children's and youth's educational experiences. This situation calls for a holistic and transformative vision of education that maximizes the potential of all children and better equips them with life skills to face the transitions from childhood to adulthood, from education to work, and from unreflective development to responsible and active citizenship.

The MENA **Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) Initiative** represents a country and regional collaborative endeavour towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. It seeks to reformulate traditional understandings of life skills and citizenship education in the region, while recalling fundamental questions about the purpose and role of education in societal development that are relevant to the current context.

The LSCE Initiative focuses on three **inter-locking challenges:**

- An elusive knowledge society, as a result of poor quality of education, low levels of learning outcomes, and limited equity and inclusion.

- Declining economic growth, as a result of a lack of employability skills, high youth unemployment rates, gender disparities in accessing the labour market, lack of job creation, and a weak business environment.

- Weak social cohesion, as a result of mounting violence and radicalization as well as weak civic engagement.

The **theory of change** for the MENA LSCE Initiative is driven by the compelling need to achieve tangible impact in these three inter-related areas where life skills and citizenship education can make a difference: the achievement of a knowledge society through improved education outcomes; the realization of economic development through improved employment and entrepreneurship; and the attainment of enhanced social cohesion through improved civic engagement.

At the heart of the LSCE Initiative is the proposition of a **rights-based and transformative vision** of education that fosters successful individuals in the context of the workplace while fulfilling education's role to enhance academic and personal development as well as social cohesion.

2. The LSCE Initiative as a conceptual and programmatic collaborative endeavour of country, regional and global partners

The LSCE Initiative seeks to provide diverse stakeholders in MENA with an evidence-based framework for action towards the achievement of the above three inter-connected outcomes. It has two main components: (i) the development of a **Conceptual and Programmatic Framework (CPF)** on life skills and citizenship education that serves as a guide to strategy development and programming at the country level, and (ii) the organization of technical support to countries on planning and implementation.

An Analytical Mapping (AM) has been developed to provide the evidence for the CPF, including an overview of the status of life skills and citizenship education in MENA, and an indepth analysis of major initiatives and programmes at regional and national levels.

The LSCE Initiative **brings together** the active contribution of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), along with ministries of education and other national institutions responsible for education across the MENA countries.

The United Nations agencies **partnering in the Initiative** include: The International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), the World Bank, and the World Food Programme (WFP). NGOs and academic institutions include: Aflatoun International, the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR), Birzeit University (BZU), the International Youth Foundation (IYF), Mercy Corps, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and Save the Children. The Deutsche Post DHL is part of the Initiative as a representative of the private sector.

The LSCE Initiative was launched at the 2015 UNICEF MENA Education Network (MEdNet) Meeting, where country delegations endorsed the Initiative and expressed their intention to take the work on life skills and citizenship education forward at the country level. The **development of the CPF** advanced through multiple country and regional consultations, and technical meetings, earning the engagement of more than 600 stakeholders at national, regional and global levels, including representatives from government institutions (ministries of education, youth, social affairs and labour), regional and global organizations, United Nations agencies, NGOs, academic institutions and experts, the private sector, and children and youth.

3. Towards a conceptual understanding of life skills and citizenship education

The LSCE Initiative revisits the concept of life skills and citizenship education in MENA, while providing a roadmap that is relevant to the regional 21st century context. The development of the CPF has included an extensive mapping and review of national, regional and global definitions that reveal a lack of consensus on what should define and constitute the skills of the 21st century. Overall, the **lack of clear definitions is coupled with conceptual confusion** between 'competencies', 'skills' and 'life skills', and in many instances the terms are used interchangeably. Typically, the term 'competency' is used within the specific technical domain of curriculum development. In other cases, diverse and broad definitions of skills and life skills are adopted as part of ad hoc and dispersed social initiatives undertaken by the United Nations or international NGOs within the non-formal sphere. While the term 'skill' is mostly used to mean technical vocational abilities, the term 'life skills' often refers to the softer forms of skills related to daily life and civic engagement. Finally, in many cases, the discourse and practice on competencies, skills and life skills is not accompanied by rights-based values that are so much needed to address the challenges of the 21st century.

Within this context, a revised, holistic and clearer definition of the term 'life skills and citizenship education' is proposed, addressing both the existing conceptual and programmatic gaps through **four essential premises:**

- **A holistic approach to education**: The vision is underpinned by a holistic approach to education, considering the whole learner by acknowledging the multi-dimensionality of education, which plays not only into the cognitive, but also the individual and social realms, especially with regard to personal development, social cohesion and sustainable development. Quality education, within this framework, is envisioned as fostering empowered individuals who can learn effectively and fulfil their social responsibilities while also being successful in the context of the workplace.

- **A humanistic and rights-based approach:** In relation to the above, quality education is not value-neutral and must have a transformative effect. Quality education needs to be sustained by a strong ethical foundation, which recognizes that education fosters human dignity, before economic performance, and promotes human rights-based values.

- **A lifelong learning cycle:** Life skills acquisition is understood as a cumulative investment from an early age, not only for adolescents and for adults. It builds on the assumption that, at every age, every individual is a learner in the context of a society that offers multiple opportunities throughout life to learn and fulfil personal potential, thus going beyond the traditional distinctions between initial and continuing education.

- **A multiple pathways and systems approach:** Quality education can be effective in fostering learning and individual empowerment, and creating an environment that enables social inter-connectedness. If life skills and citizenship education is furthered through multiple learning pathways, from formal education to informal settings to the workplace, it can reach all individuals. In turn, quality learning through life skills and citizenship education can be sustained only if it is mainstreamed in educational systems.

The following two sections provide an overview of the conceptual and programmatic components of the CPF.

4.   The Conceptual Framework

CLEAR HOLISTIC VISION AND WORKING DEFINITION OF LIFE SKILLS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION		
Dimensions of Learning	**Skills Clusters**	**Subject Areas**
Cognitive Dimension or 'Learning to Know'	**Skills for Learning (creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving)**	**Curricular Disciplines** (language, math, science, social studies, gender, etc.)
		Vocational Disciplines (carpentry, plumbing, etc.)
		Career Education (career guidance, financial literacy, job searching, etc.)
Instrumental Dimension or 'Learning to Do'	**Skills for Employability (cooperation, negotiation, decision-making)**	**Entrepreneurship Education** (goal setting, business planning, marketing, etc.)
		Computer Literacy (ICT, social media, etc.)
		Health Education (reproductive health, sexuality education, HIV/AIDS prevention, drug prevention, nutrition, hygiene, etc.)
Individual Dimension or 'Learning to Be'	**Skills for Personal Empowerment (self-management, resilience, communication)**	**Environmental Education** (water, pollution, climate change, recycling, etc.)
		Emergency Education (disaster risk reduction and risk informed programming, mine risks, etc.)
		Peace Education (conflict resolution, negotiation, etc.)
Social Dimension or 'Learning to Live Together'	**Skills for Active Citizenship (respect for diversity, empathy, participation)**	**Civic Education** (institutions of governance, duties and rights of citizens, etc.)
		Arts, Culture, Sports
		Etc.

4.1 The four Dimensions of Learning: a transformative vision of education for the 21st century

The CPF proposes a conceptual and definitional understanding of 21st-century skills based on **a four-dimensional model of learning**. This model consolidates and broadens the lifelong learning paradigm developed in the 1996 Delors report titled *Learning: The Treasure Within,* taking into consideration the subsequent developments in education and society. The CPF repositions the Delors report pillars of education as Dimensions of Learning to emphasize their dynamic nature.

The following four Dimensions of Learning underpin the working definition of life skills and citizenship education in the CPF:

- **'Learning to Know' or the Cognitive Dimension:** This Dimension includes the development of abilities involving concentration, problem-solving and critical thinking, as well as emphasizes curiosity and creativity as the desire to gain a better understanding of the world and other people. The concept of **'Learning to Know'** has become increasingly prominent, since it further underpins the acquisition of fundamental basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and Information Communications Technology (ICT) skills. The Cognitive Dimension of Learning is therefore necessary to develop new skills and to ensure acquisition of new knowledge.

- **'Learning to Do' or the Instrumental Dimension:** This Dimension considers how children and youth can be supported to put what they have learned into practice and how education can be adapted to better serve the world of work. This is anticipated in Bloom's 1956 *Taxonomy of Learning Domains* with the concept of application, i.e., putting theoretical learning into practice in everyday contexts. Learning for the fast-changing world of work should respond to the evolving demands of the labour market, new technologies and the needs of young people as they make the transition from education to work.

- **'Learning to Be' or the Individual Dimension:** This Dimension entails learning as self-fulfilment, personal growth and supportive of self-empowerment and includes cognitive, intra-personal and interpersonal skills. Personal growth encompasses both personal and social factors. Skills developed under this Dimension are important for self-protection, violence prevention and resilience, as such they should be considered as enablers for other Dimensions of Learning.

- **'Learning to Live Together' or the Social Dimension:** This is the ethical Dimension that underpins the vision for citizenship education in MENA. It adopts a human rights-based approach consistent with democratic and social justice values and principles, and it constitutes the ethical foundation of the three other Dimensions of Learning (Cognitive, Instrumental and Individual). Equally important, citizenship education aims to be relevant in MENA by engaging with the most poignant challenges facing the region.

These four Dimensions of Learning should not be considered as distinct and mutually exclusive; the reality is much more dynamic. The four Dimensions of Learning **overlap, inter-connect and reinforce one another** to combine in the individual learner. As such they offer a framework for looking at life skills in relation to different purposes of learning, and that constitute a practical tool for informing the selection of skills that are relevant for quality learning. It should be noted that many life skills can be applied simultaneously in all four Dimensions of Learning. The selection of skills for each Dimension includes a necessary judgement about their relative importance for the particular Dimension.

4.2 The twelve core life skills for MENA

Life skills are defined within the CPF as cognitive and non-cognitive, higher-order, transversal and transferrable skills for learning, for employability, for personal empowerment, and for active citizenship. Citizenship education is an inseparable component of life skills education that emphasizes the need for social transformation and refers to the capabilities and energies that can foster open societies, harness the enthusiasm and motivation of younger generations, and provide them with the tools to build a better future for their communities and the region.

A set of **12 core life skills for MENA** has been identified using the four-dimensional model. They are: creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, cooperation, negotiation, decision-making, self-management, resilience, communication, respect for diversity, empathy and participation (see figure on the next page).

The **identification and selection of the core life skills** was informed by an extensive literature review, and by regional and national consultations conducted as part of the LSCE Initiative. Identification and selection was achieved through a threefold process. First, it included a comprehensive analytical listing of a 'cluster of skills' under each of the four Dimensions of Learning, guided by the key socio-economic issues to be addressed: enhancing quality education and learning outcomes, enhancing employability and entrepreneurship, and enhancing individual empowerment and civic engagement. Second, for each of the four Dimensions, a set of three skills was identified based on their relative importance and implication for the particular Dimension, and on their inclusion of several other skills (or sub-skills). Third, an indepth analysis was conducted for each of the 12 core life skills, highlighting, through evidence, their objectives, their particular contribution to their related Dimension, as well as their contribution to the other three Dimensions of Learning. Each of the 12 core life skills, therefore, when analysed and applied from this perspective, provide learners with a solid comprehensive approach to learning that is value-based.

Indeed, it is important to note that the **12 identified core life skills are not value-neutral**. They reflect a holistic and transformative vision for quality education based on a strong ethical foundation, which recognizes that education needs to foster human dignity and promote human rights-based values. Unlike existing frameworks at use, the focus of the 12 core life skills for MENA does not solely

aim to gear education towards the achievement of successful individual performance in the context of the workplace and does not consider education primarily as an economic activity geared to maximize growth and productivity. Equally important, the 12 core life skills are featured within an approach to **'rethink education'** in a way that fulfils its role in enhancing social cohesion; they are aligned with relevant citizenship and humanitarian frameworks conceived to care for and respect other human beings, as well as to minimize or prevent the use of violence.

The **12 core life skills are lifelong** and they build on evidence that underlines the importance of skills acquisition from an early age, addressing the 'bias' that exists in the education community of linking skills acquisition only to the adolescent and youth ages. The importance of the cumulative investment in skill acquisition is recognized in the CPF. Furthermore, the 12 core life skills are acquired and sustained through all forms of learning in a systems approach that recognizes multiple pathways of learning, formal, non-formal and informal.

4.3 The twelve core life skills and subject areas

The CPF provides examples that clarify the difference between skills and relevant subject areas. It also defines key opportunities where learning could be improved through a focus on the 12 core life skills. **Subject areas** should be understood as thematic, technical, academic or knowledge subject areas where life skills and citizenship education need to be integrated. They include curricular and vocational disciplines, career and entrepreneurship education, computer literacy, health and environmental education, emergency education, civic education, arts, culture and sports, etc. Subject areas are often confused with life skills. However, they need to be seen as areas to be underpinned by life skills and citizenship education in order to support the acquisition of the core life skills.

For example, **curricular disciplines** refer to the main subjects of national curricula, such as language, mathematics and science, social studies, etc. A life skills and citizenship education approach is relevant to all of these, and a key issue is to ensure consistency across the curriculum. It is likely to be an ineffective strategy to only focus on the core life skills in one subject among many in the curriculum without ensuring a coherent and comprehensive approach.

Vocational disciplines are also key subject areas where life skills and citizenship education need to be embedded in order to increase access to these disciplines and enhance their relevance. Good quality demand-driven Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (based on life skills and citizenship education) is potentially one of the most important pathways for providing young people with skills, and enhancing employability. In addition, career and entrepreneurship education within the framework of employability programmes in MENA represent key subject areas where life skills and citizenship education need to be embedded. Beyond the theoretical understanding of entrepreneurship, children and youth need to be supported in the development of core life skills to ensure that they can effectively achieve the objectives of these programmes.

5.   The Programmatic Framework

MULTIPLE PATHWAYS	SYSTEMS APPROACH

TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES
(child centered and inclusive approaches; classroom management; positive discipline; psychosocial support, etc.)

MULTIPLE PATHWAYS	SYSTEMS APPROACH
Channels of Delivery	**National Policies**
Formal Education	**Plans and Strategies**
Non-formal and Informal Education	
Workplace and 'Road to Workplace'	**Coordination and Partnership Frameworks**
Social Engagement (volunteer and community work; scouting; social media)	
Child Protection (child entered safe spaces; child protection centers)	**Budgeting and Financing**
Modalities of Delivery	**School-based Management**
Curricular, Co-curricular and Extra-curricular	**Human Resources and Capacity Development**
Stand-alone and Integrated	
Self-learning, Face-to-face, Online, Media, Blended, Open and Distance Learning	**Communication and Community Participation**
	M&E Frameworks

5.1 The pedagogical strategies supporting the acquisition of the twelve core life skills

Teaching and learning approaches are positioned at the intersection between concept and programming. This is in recognition of the pivotal role of **effective pedagogy** and the high importance of skilled and motivated teachers and facilitators to ensure quality learning. The CPF highlights the pedagogical strategies needed to foster the acquisition of the 12 core life skills. These include socio-emotional learning (SEL), child-centred methodologies, activity-based learning, positive discipline and psychosocial support, among others.

The experience of successful education reforms indicates that equipping and supporting teachers to practice **active learning methods** can bring about significant change in learning outcomes and best supports life skills and citizenship education. It involves a learner-centred approach in which the process of teaching and learning is highly important; so much so that it can be considered more process-centred than product-centred. Participatory teaching and learning approaches are important in all aspects of life skills and citizenship education, where the rationale is to engage children and youth in the learning process and enable them to personalize knowledge and apply it to their own lives. Children and youth need to become reflective,

self-aware learners, conscious of their strengths and weaknesses, and capable of setting their own learning goals.

Creating a **safe learning environment** in which all learners can participate is fundamental to effective life skills and citizenship education. This means that learners are physically protected, socially and emotionally safe, and all are treated equitably, respectfully and fairly. The classroom climate should be positive and free from fear. Discipline should be positive and not punitive (which is counter-productive to the ethos of life skills and citizenship education).

Teachers and facilitators have a critical role in putting active learning into practice. The teacher, in an active classroom environment, is an enabler, facilitating learning rather than transmitting knowledge to the learner. Instead of focusing on asking questions, the teacher needs to encourage learners to ask questions themselves and to play a role in their own learning. The role of the teacher is often that of a facilitator, supporting learners as they learn and develop skills. In this approach, it is important that the teacher has a full understanding on the methods that enable the learner to learn effectively.

The figure below illustrates the **main teaching and learning principles** that contribute to the operationalization of the 12 core life skills.
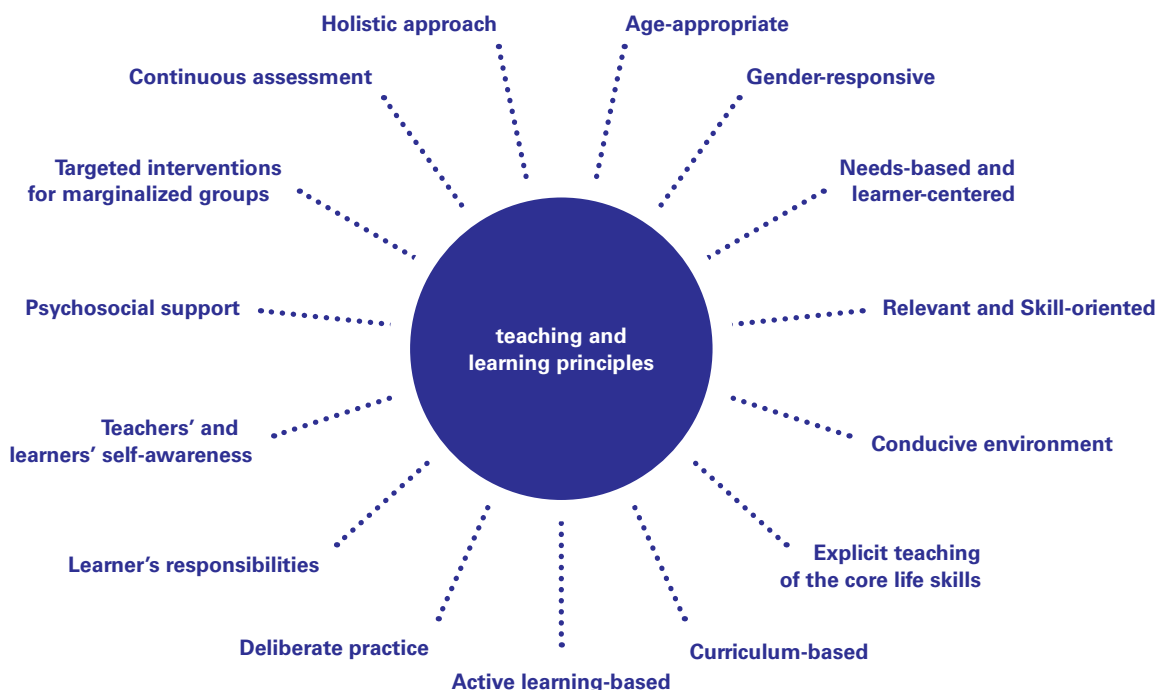
5.2 A multiple pathways approach: channels and modalities of delivery

A **multiple pathways approach** is essential for mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education and recognizes that life skills need to be developed along several and different educational pathways, from pre-primary to post-basic education, including formal and non-formal education, on the road to and in the workplace, through social engagement and child protection. It also acknowledges the different modalities through which life skills and citizenship education can be delivered, such as traditional face-to-face instruction and more innovative blended learning. A multiple pathways approach meets the increasing complexity of the knowledge-based economy and the rapid changes taking place in society more generally. It acknowledges that learning can take place at different times and in different settings. The same qualifications can be attained by following different learning pathways with different providers.

A multiple pathways approach has further **benefits**. It maximizes participation and safeguards equity and inclusiveness through targeting of marginalized populations. It is also needed to ensure coherence in interventions and messages within different environments where children and youth learn.

In addition to the various channels, there are multiple delivery modalities available for programming. These include curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular approaches. The CPF highlights several **curricular options** used to mainstream life skill and citizenship education in national curricula. In MENA, the common approach has been to introduce life skills and citizenship education as a stand-alone subject in the curriculum. This has often been a result of different initiatives that have variously supported HIV education, school health and nutrition, and education for sustainable development. However, life skills and citizenship education should ideally be progressively integrated across the curriculum in all subjects, within the framework of curriculum reforms. In Tunisia, the 12 core life skills are being integrated as part of the national curriculum reform, representing a unique and visionary example for their operationalization through the curricular modality.

Along with the curricular modality, life skills and citizenship education is often implemented through **co-curricular and extra-curricular interventions**. In MENA, the main focus is on extra-curricular approaches, as confirmed by the findings of the AM. On the other hand, promising practices highlight the importance of accompanying the curricula with co-curricular interventions. An example is the 'learning objects' approach, which has been piloted and evaluated by the Center for Continuing Education at Birzeit University in the State of Palestine and is aligned with the requirements of the Palestinian curriculum. Consideration of what is the best modality to adopt has been part of the discourse of the LSCE Initiative. The CPF advocates for the optimal combination of these modalities for effective teaching and learning of the 12 core life skills.

5.3 A systems approach

The findings of the AM show that life skills and citizenship education is poorly integrated in existing national policies, strategies and plans, with limited national assessments and weak participatory involvement of different stakeholders. This is coupled with a lack of effective national coordination frameworks representing the different stakeholders involved in life skills and citizenship education. Programmes in MENA have limited scalability and coordination among relevant governmental organizations, and the private sector is weak. Overall, they remain sporadic, unsupervised and face sustainability risks. In addition, there are limited regulatory frameworks linking formal and non-formal education with limited or no recognition or accreditation of alternative learning opportunities.

The CPF proposes a **systems approach** to programming for life skills and citizenship education, anchored to national education systems. A systems approach is required to achieve critical mass; national impact cannot be realized through the implementation of unconnected small-scale interventions at the margins of the education system. The systems approach to programming for life skills and citizenship education also warrants an equity focus because it can invest data, analysis and monitoring in tracking and targeting as means to maximize the impact of learning opportunities available to children and youth.

The mainstreaming of life skills and citizenship education within national education systems requires coordinated programmatic interventions that look at the totality of system components. To ensure national coverage, quality of learning processes and outcomes, as well as financial sustainability, it is necessary for countries to have **national policies, strategies and plans with budgets** to support the implementation of life skills and citizenship education.

Coordination and partnership frameworks between the ministries of education and other ministries, NGOs and the private sector – as part of a systems approach – are also key to ensuring coherent

approaches and efficient use of resources (human and financial). This calls for the identification of complementary and supportive roles within a coherent framework, together with regulatory mechanisms to ensure quality delivery as well as accreditation and certification.

Schools play a critical role in ensuring the realization of life skills and citizenship education. A systems approach recognizes that schools need to be supported within the framework of clear national policy mandates and the provision of necessary resources for them to build a conducive school ethos that fosters learning. In particular, schools need to have control over their interventions, as well as the tools for performing their own monitoring.

Human resources are the fundamental basis of effective life skills and citizenship education programming. These include not only teachers, but also head-teachers and all education personnel involved in supporting teaching and learning processes, whether in formal, non-formal or informal education settings. Specific attention should be given to the role of school counsellors as an important resource for skills development.

An **enabling environment**, political will, commitment and cooperation among partners, and a shared vision are the assumptions that underpin the theory of change for the LSCE Initiative. In particular, parental and community mobilization are essential for creating and sustaining a conducive environment for life skills and citizenship education. In this context, the development of coherent Communication for Development (C4D) strategies reflect the need for a multi-pronged approach that addresses further communication with care-givers, children and youth.

6. Travelling the road: the operationalization of the twelve core life skills at the country level

Achieving the vision set forth in the CPF requires a strategic approach towards the reforms needed to strengthen and mainstream life skills and citizenship education within and around education systems. This calls for the adoption of a **'strategic incrementalism'** that aims at maximizing the opportunities available for programming. Through the multiple pathways and systems approach the CPF further identifies the

key entry points that can become pressure points to achieve scale, sustainability and long-term change within national education systems.

In this regard, the **strong commitment, leadership and engagement of ministries of education** are of paramount importance in fostering substantial change in the education system, and beyond, to achieve quality and regulation of interventions, scale, sustainability and impact on learning, employability and social cohesion. Other ministries (for example ministries of youth) and other stakeholders (such as NGOs) engaged in life skills and citizenship education would need to be brought together within frameworks of collaboration, to ensure quality, sustainability and impact.

The operationalization of the 12 core life skills, identified as part of the LSCE Initiative, will be further supported through the development of an evidence-based assessment methodology and tools to **measure the 12 core life skills**. The methodology will offer a standardized approach to be adapted for localized interventions both in formal and non-formal settings across the region.

The CPF is an evolving regional framework to be tested and refined at the national level. The main recommendations of the CPF define a way forward for life skills and citizenship education programming in MENA that includes short, medium and long-term perspectives. **Technical support** will be provided to countries in terms of upstream engagement towards multi-sectoral collaboration, policy and strategy development, integration of life skills and citizenship education in national curricula, as well as programmatic interventions including the piloting of co-curricular and extra-curricular interventions within the multiple pathways and systems approach.

Functioning as a roadmap for the region, the CPF is a comprehensive framework that combines **three main building blocks**: (i) a holistic vision and working definition of life skills and citizenship education; (ii) a multiple pathways approach through which life skills and citizenship education can be implemented; and (iii) a systems approach to anchor interventions within national education systems. The figure on the next page provides the complete visual representation of the CPF that defines the impact and outcomes that it aims to achieve, while unpacking the main components already described within each building block.

SYSTEMS APPROACH
- National Policies
- Plans and Strategies
- Coordination and Partnership Frameworks
- Budgeting and Financing
- School-based Management
- Human Resources and Capacity Development
- Communication and Community Participation
- M&E Frameworks

MULTIPLE PATHWAYS

Channels of Delivery
- Formal Education
- Non-formal and Informal Education
- Workplace and 'Road to Workplace'
- Social Engagement (volunteer and community work; scouting; social media)
- Child Protection (child entered safe spaces; child protection centers)

Modalities of Delivery
- Curricular, Co-curricular and Extra-curricular
- Stand-alone and Integrated
- Self-learning, Face-to-face, Online, Media, Blended, Open and Distance Learning

TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES
(child centered and inclusive approaches; classroom management; positive discipline; psychosocial support; etc.)

CLEAR HOLISTIC VISION AND WORKING DEFINITION OF LIFE SKILLS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Subject Areas
- Curricular Disciplines (language, math, science, social studies, gender, etc.)
- Vocational Disciplines (carpentry, plumbing, etc.)
- Career Education (career guidance, financial literacy, job searching, etc.)
- Entrepreneurship Education (goal setting, business planning, marketing, etc.)
- Computer Literacy (ICT, social media, etc.)
- Health Education (reproductive health, sexuality education, HIV/AIDS prevention, drug prevention, nutrition, hygiene, etc.)
- Environmental Education (water, pollution, climate change, recycling, etc.)
- Emergency Education (disaster risk reduction and risk informed programming, mine risks, etc.)
- Peace Education (conflict resolution, negotiation, etc.)
- Civic Education (institutions of governance, duties and rights of citizens, etc.)
- Arts, Culture, Sports
- Etc.

Skills Clusters
- Skills for Learning (creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving)
- Skills for Employability (cooperation, negotiation, decision-making)
- Skills for Personal Empowerment (self-management, resilience, communication)
- Skills for Active Citizenship (respect for diversity, empathy, participation)

Dimensions of Learning
- Cognitive Dimension or 'Learning to Know'
- Instrumental Dimension or 'Learning to Do'
- Individual Dimension or 'Learning to Be'
- Social Dimension or 'Learning to Live Together'

IMPACT OUTCOMES
- Knowledge Society through Improved Education Outcomes
- Economic Development though Improved Employment and Entrepreneurship
- Social Cohension through Improved Civic Engagement

7. Navigating the Conceptual and Programmatic Framework

The CPF is structured in the following four chapters:

1. A transformative vision of education for the 21st century: This chapter outlines first the challenges that the LSCE CPF seeks to address through the proposed rights-based and holistic vision of education. It then unpacks the conceptual field around life skills and citizenship education, and provides a renewed understanding that builds on the strengths and resolves weaknesses of existing frameworks. Finally, the chapter presents the contours of the proposed LSCE CPF based on conceptual and programmatic building blocks as well as a higher-order theory of change.

2. The Conceptual Framework: This chapter analyses first the holistic vision of the four Dimensions of Learning. It then unpacks each Dimension through the identification of related life skills. It further presents the selected 12 core life skills in detail together with their relevance to each of the four Dimensions of Learning. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the subject areas through which life skills and citizenship education are realized.

3. The Programmatic Framework: This chapter outlines first the necessary teaching and learning approaches for life skills and citizenship education. It then unpacks the diverse channels and modalities for delivering life skills and citizenship education. It also analyses the key components of a systems approach and the final section proposes a three-pronged monitoring and evaluation strategy.

4. Travelling the road: This section proposes steps for translating the CPF into action and operationalization at the country level. It advocates particularly for strategic incrementalism as an approach to ensure sustainable, scalable, system-wide and lifelong interventions, recognizing especially the leadership of ministries of education.

SYSTEMS APPROACH

- National Policies
- Plans and Strategies
- Coordination and Partnership Frameworks
- Budgeting and Financing
- School-based Management
- Human Resources and Capacity Development
- Communication and Community Participation
- M&E Frameworks

MULTIPLE PATHWAYS

Channels of Delivery
- Formal Education
- Non-formal and Informal Education
- Workplace and 'Road to Workplace'
- Social Engagement (volunteer and community work; scouting; social media)
- Child Protection (child entered safe spaces; child protection centers)

Modalities of Delivery
- Curricular, Co-curricular and Extra-curricular
- Stand-alone and Integrated
- Self-learning, Face-to-face, Online, Media, Blended, Open and Distance Learning

TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES (child centered and inclusive approaches; classroom management; positive discipline; psychosocial support, etc.)

CLEAR HOLISTIC VISION AND WORKING DEFINITION OF LIFE SKILLS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Subject Areas
- Curricular Disciplines (language, math, science, social studies, gender, etc.)
- Vocational Disciplines (carpentry, plumbing, etc.)
- Career Education (career guidance, financial literacy, job searching, etc.)
- Entrepreneurship Education (goal setting, business planning, marketing, etc.)
- Computer Literacy (ICT, social media, etc.)
- Health Education (reproductive health, sexuality education, HIV/AIDS prevention, drug prevention, nutrition, hygiene, etc.)
- Environmental Education (water, pollution, climate change, recycling, etc.)
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Dimensions of Learning
- Cognitive Dimension or 'Learning to Know'
- Instrumental Dimension or 'Learning to Do'
- Individual Dimension or 'Learning to Be'
- Social Dimension or 'Learning to Live Together'

IMPACT OUTCOMES

- Knowledge Society through Improved Education Outcomes
- Economic Development though Improved Employment and Entrepreneurship
- Social Cohension through Improved Civic Engagement

1 | A Transformative Vision of Education for the 21st Century

The present Conceptual and Programmatic Framework (CPF), developed within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) Initiative, proposes a rights-based and transformative vision, reimagining education beyond the utilitarian economic realm. This vision is framed primarily in terms of its positive impact on human development (Tawil and Cougoureux, 2013). Quality learning, supported and achieved through life skills and citizenship education (reframed and reunited in one concept in this document), is promoted to address the challenges faced by children, youth and all learners in an environment marked by 21st-century requirements and MENA's failing educational systems, as well as the region-specific growing violence (World Bank, 2008; UNDP, 2016).

The purpose of this document is to provide a renewed conceptualization of life skills and citizenship education as well as a systemic approach to their practice in the context of MENA. This is done through **four essential premises:**

- **A holistic approach to education.** The vision is underpinned by a holistic approach to education, considering the whole learner by acknowledging the multidimensionality of education, which plays not only into the cognitive, but also the individual and social realms, especially with regard to personal development, social cohesion and sustainable development. Quality education, within this framework, is envisioned as fostering empowered individuals who can learn effectively and fulfil their social responsibilities while also being successful in the context of the workplace.

- **A humanistic and rights-based approach.** In relation to the above, quality education is not value-neutral and must have a transformative effect. Quality education needs to be sustained by a strong ethical foundation, which recognizes that education fosters human dignity, before economic performance, and promotes human rights-based values.

- **A lifelong learning cycle.** Life skills acquisition is understood as a cumulative investment from an early age, not only for adolescents

and for adults. It builds on the assumption that, at every age, every individual is a learner in the context of a society that offers multiple opportunities throughout life to learn and fulfil personal potential, thus going beyond the traditional distinctions between initial and continuing education.

- **A multiple-pathways and systems approach.** Quality education can be effective for fostering learning and individual empowerment, and for creating an environment enabling social inter-connectedness. If life skills and citizenship education is furthered through multiple learning pathways, from formal education to informal settings to the workplace, it can reach all individuals. In turn, as will be argued below quality learning through life skills and citizenship education can be sustained only if it is mainstreamed in educational systems.

With its holistic and rights-based propositions, conceptualizing quality education both as a fundamental human right enabling other rights and as a driver of development, this CPF is aligned with, and represents a contribution to, the new paradigm anchored in the **2030 Education Agenda.** The 2030 Education Agenda is characterized by a humanistic vision of education and development, based on the principles of human rights and dignity, social justice, peace, inclusion and protection, as well as cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity, and shared responsibility and accountability (UNESCO, 2016). The value-based vision also underpins the Global Citizenship Education (GCE) Initiative, which furthers the empowerment of all learners, children, youth and adults "to assume active roles to face and resolve global challenges, and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world" (UNESCO, 2017).

This **multidimensional perspective** (Salama, 2015) is encapsulated in Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4): "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". Furthermore, it is simultaneously echoed and built upon in five related SDGs that are concerned with a comprehensive view of the role of education towards health progress, especially family planning and gender equality in

sexual and reproductive healthcare (SDGs 3.7 and 5.6); decent work and economic growth by reducing the proportion of youth who are not in employment, education or training (SDG 8.6); and the promotion of sustainable and environmentally responsible lifestyles, and of climate change mitigation and solutions (SDGs 12.8 and 13.3).

One of the earlier efforts to articulate such a holistic and principled vision, which the CPF is inspired by and on which it builds, is the **Delors Report**, a key reference document for the conceptualization of a new model of education and learning worldwide (Tawil and Cougoureux, 2013). The Delors Report proposes four "pillars of learning": 'Learning to Know', 'Learning to Do', 'Learning to Be', and 'Learning to Live Together' (UNESCO, 1996), that in turn contribute to higher-order social outcomes: a knowledge society, economic development and social cohesion. These higher-order social outcomes can be attained if individuals are equipped, from early on, with a specific set of skills and education towards better citizenship, allowing them to learn, to work, to be personally empowered, and to be active and responsible citizens.

This chapter outlines the challenges that the LSCE CPF seeks to address through the proposed rights-based and holistic vision of education. It then unpacks the conceptual field around life skills and citizenship education, and provides a renewed understanding that builds on the strengths and resolves weaknesses of existing frameworks. Finally, the chapter presents the contours of the proposed LSCE CPF based on conceptual and programmatic building blocks as well as a higher-order theory of change.

1.1 Education in MENA

Children, youth and all learners in MENA face **three unprecedented challenges:** learning, employment and social cohesion. These challenges call for reform that should maximize the human potential of all children and better equip them to face the transitions from childhood to adulthood, from education to work, and from unreflective development to responsible and active citizenship. In the region, too many children are still out of school and at risk of dropping out, and MENA educational systems are strained. Growth does not translate in job creation and youth unemployment is rising exponentially while education systems do not provide youth, particularly female youth, with the skills needed to

enter and succeed in the world-of-work. In addition, children and youth encounter violence, conflict and extremism without the necessary mitigation tools to respond positively and bounce back.

Under-performing education systems

There is general consensus that education systems in MENA are broadly failing to deliver the outcomes needed to advance individual and social development, while the expansion of education opportunities in the region has yet to translate into economic growth (World Bank 2008; World Bank, 2014). Ongoing education reforms in MENA have certainly led to positive achievements in the past 15 years, such as improving the access to formal basic education and closing the gender gap. A comprehensive education reform, however, remains a "road not taken" (World Bank, 2008) and the skills deficit has yet to be addressed in a qualitative, concerted and systemic way.

Too many children and youth are out of school or are at risk of dropping out. In MENA, while remarkable progress has been made in enrolment at the primary level, significant challenges remain at the pre-primary and lower secondary levels, where progress has been slower. As a result, a total of 22 million children were out of school or at risk of dropping out in 2015 (UNICEF, 2014; UNICEF, 2016b).

The lack of access to pre-primary education, particularly for poor children, represents an important missed opportunity for skills development. Pre-primary education plays a key role in supporting children in acquiring the core personal and interpersonal skills needed for cognitive, emotional and social development. Yet, there is a lack of awareness among decision-makers and community members on the importance of quality pre-primary education for child development and its positive impacts on later life. In the 2014/15 school year, over five million children 5 years old in MENA were not in school (UNICEF, 2014).

At the lower secondary level, a large portion of children still remains out of school, either because they never enrolled in school or because they dropped out before completing the primary level. In five of the 15 MENA countries, at least one in four children of lower secondary age were out of school[1], with the highest rates found in Djibouti, Sudan and Yemen. The large number of children who dropped out represents a massive loss of human potential that contributes to the growing pool of unskilled

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[1] Data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) retrieved in March 2017 (http://data.uis.unesco.org/).

workers. Without the completion of basic education, children are missing the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy, and are unable to fully develop their skills to any sophisticated level.

A growing number of youth in the region are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Estimates show that youth (aged 15-29 years) NEET accounts for around 40 per cent in Egypt, 29 per cent in Jordan, 36 per cent in the State of Palestine and 32 per cent in Tunisia (ETF, 2015). This phenomenon is due, among other reasons, to high numbers of children and youth dropping out of school early, as well as social norms restricting mobility and access to work, particularly for female youth (Rosso et al., 2012).

The low proportion of youth opting for technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and the prevailing gender segregation in technical and vocational occupations, are factors that make the transition to the labour market difficult. Enrolment in TVET is often used by youth not as preparation for the labour market, but as an alternative pathway to gain access to university. There is still a strong preference, in particular among graduates, for obtaining a public sector job due to the associated job security and social benefits, despite the fact that many youth find the work involved unproductive and unsatisfactory (Rosso et al., 2012).

Several initiatives have sought to improve the quality of TVET programmes in the region. However, outcomes are compromised by limited access, poor quality of delivery and inadequate assessment systems. As a result, TVET programmes are not conducive to the acquisition of relevant skills to achieve meaningful life outcomes. Curriculum development has received particular attention in most countries and there is a general trend to move to competency-based approaches. Nonetheless, these initiatives tend to happen on an ad hoc basis and are not embedded in a wider reform programme (ETF and World Bank, 2005).

Large income-based inequalities remain prevalent both in access to education and learning outcomes. Decisions on education continue to be driven by social norms, which are major barriers to education, especially for female children and female youth (UNICEF, 2014). Early marriage is an important factor explaining the dropout rate for female youth, particularly in Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Sudan and Yemen. On the other hand, the high levels of male youth dropping out from lower secondary school in Algeria, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia are attributed to their lack of

motivation, uncertainty about future employment prospects and a wish to migrate for better opportunities (UNICEF, 2014). In contrast, education is highly valued by girls, as the only means of social advancement available to them and their motivation tends to be much higher.

Poor quality educational outcomes remain a key feature in the region. Countries in MENA obtain low scores on international achievement tests, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), reflecting that basic skills are not being learned (World Bank, 2013; Steer et al., 2014; Mullis et al., 2016). The newly released TIMSS 2015 results show that MENA countries remain low-performers: In grade 8 mathematics, none of the 11 MENA participating countries reach the global centre point of 500. In MENA, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) perform best (465) but rank only 23rd among the 39 participating countries globally. Ten out of the bottom 15 countries are MENA countries, with Saudi Arabia performing the lowest at 368 (Mullis et al., 2016).

The low performance in international standardized learning assessment reflect existing traditional teaching and learning approaches, which persist at the expense of student-centred pedagogies. This is further **amplified by poor assessment methods.** Several MENA countries have adopted reforms to improve teaching and learning approaches, and to move towards student-centred learning, competency-based curricula and critical thinking. Yet, despite these efforts, there is little evidence of a significant shift away from traditional models of teaching and learning (Gamar, 2013; World Bank, 2013). Current educational systems focus more on memorization and lecturing at the expense of critical thinking, creativity, life skills and the arts. Students in classrooms are still mainly copying from the blackboard, listening to the teachers and taking notes. Group work, creative thinking and proactive learning is rare. Frontal teaching, where a teacher is positioned in front of the students, is still the dominant teaching method, even in countries that have introduced child-centred teaching and learning approaches.

These traditional approaches are further reinforced by high-stakes examinations, which require rote memorization. The modes of assessment drive the way teaching and learning is conducted. While a majority of MENA countries have been carrying out national assessments, these are still predominantly curriculum-based and subject-orientated, and do not focus on the acquisition of skills (UNESCO, 2015a).

Increasing conflicts and crises in MENA have a negative impact on education outcomes. In 2014, almost 41 per cent of the world's displaced population were from the Arab region, with 98 per cent from Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen (UNDP, 2016). A significant segment of these vulnerable groups are children. Close to 11 million children in the region, among them over five million Syrian and Iraqi children, are out of school due to instability, political turmoil and conflict (UNICEF, 2014; No Lost Generation, 2016). In Syria, the total economic loss due to students dropping out from basic education in 2011 is estimated to amount to US$ 10.7 billion, equivalent to about 18 per cent of the 2010 Syrian GDP (UNICEF, 2016a).

Refugee and internally displaced children face specific educational challenges. Barriers include the cost of schooling, insecurity, language of instruction, bureaucratic procedures and lack of legal papers for school registration (UNICEF, 2014; UNHCR, 2016). As the violence spreads, millions of children and youth are at risk of becoming a 'lost generation' deprived of the knowledge and skills needed to be successful adults, further undermining the social cohesion of countries in MENA.

An uneasy relationship: Education and economic development

High youth unemployment rates. MENA has witnessed massive population growth and faces a 'youth bulge' with more than half of its population under 25 years old and 2.8 million youth entering the labour market every year (World Economic Forum, 2014). Unemployment amongst youth in MENA is the highest in the world, reaching 30 per cent, which is more than double of the world average (14 per cent) in 2016, and it is particularly severe in Libya (48 per cent), Palestine (41 per cent), and Tunisia (36 per cent).[2] The number of long-term unemployed is also increasing, with periods of unemployment exceeding a year for more than half of the youth in some Arab countries (UNDP, 2016).

Lack of job creation and a weak business environment. The labour market has not been able to absorb the flow of youth dropping out of school and graduates. A critical issue is skills development for the labour market. Neither basic nor post-basic education, including TVET, as they are currently implemented, offer the life skills education that youth need to improve their employability and to succeed in the workforce. The region lacks economic dynamism, which is associated with the lack of competition, accountability and transparency

(Tzannatos et al., 2014). This has locked economies into a low-value-added, low-productivity and low-wage equilibrium. As a result, MENA economies do not create enough jobs, and the jobs that are created do not meet the rising aspirations of the educated middle class. This suggests that the labour market's demand-side constraints, including for life skills, are more significant than skill-supply factors, and that improving the quality of the supply will be necessary but not sufficient to improve employment prospects for youth (Tzannatos et al., 2014).

As job creation has generally been insufficient, the labour force has grown faster than employment in some countries, e.g., Egypt and Tunisia (AfDB, 2012). This is the result of demographic pressure, population growth and the 'youth bulge', which has been a steady phenomenon in MENA (Assaad and Roudi-Fahimi, 2007). On the other hand, it presents the possibility of a demographic dividend if this reservoir of human capital could be harnessed in the economy. The shortcoming in job creation particularly affects youth university graduates in an economic context that relies, to a large extent, on low-skilled labour. Many graduates choose to be unemployed in the expectation that they will later obtain a high-status public sector job. Moreover, the amount of bureaucracy involved in creating a company, and in particular the conditions prevailing in the financial sector, do not encourage self-employment and small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development, despite positive experiences regarding their impact on labour market entry and employability (Rosso et al., 2012).

Correlation between education and employment. Of particular concern is the inverse correlation between education and employment in the Mediterranean countries of the region (Rosso et al., 2012). Unemployment rates tend to increase with education level, particularly for women, and are highest of all for female university graduates. The growing number of 'educated unemployed' suggests weak links between the education and training system and the labour market. Expansion of higher education does not ensure better labour market prospects and, in some instances, encourages trained youth who cannot find appropriate employment in their home country to migrate.

Rates of return to education (RORE) are particularly low in Arab countries. An additional year of schooling adds around 5.4 per cent to earning compared to the world average of 7 per cent, and sharply decreases as youth reach higher education

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[2]   Data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) ILOSTAT database retrieved in August 2017 (www.ilo.org/ilostat).

levels (Tzannatos et al., 2016). While the economic RORE is relatively high for basic education (9.4 per cent against the world average of 10.3 per cent), it is low for post-basic education, with rates half of the world average (3.5 per cent against the world average of 6.9 per cent for secondary education, and 8.9 per cent against the world average of 16.9 per cent for tertiary education) (Tzannatos et al., 2016). Interestingly, economic RORE are higher for women than for men (nearly 8 per cent versus 5 per cent). Employment, however, only carries a premium when a woman works in the public sector; work does not pay sufficiently in self-employment or in the private sector.

Skills mismatch. National education systems are failing to equip students with the skills demanded by the labour market (Rosso et al., 2012). The skills mismatch is the result of failures in the education system to foster employability, and a direct consequence of the poor-quality basic education and the lack of opportunity to benefit from high-quality TVET. Entrepreneurs in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco regularly cite the lack of suitable skills in the workforce as a major constraint on business development (ETF, 2015), which in turns prevents job creation. For example, there is an unmet demand for life skills (e.g., team work, communication and social skills, adaptability, languages, analysis and synthesis, critical thinking and work discipline) and skills in ICT. There is also a clear need to promote the development of job-search skills.

Further shedding light on the above is the limited relevance of curricula as well as the lack of interest for youth to develop skills by businesses themselves. Indeed, two factors need to be better reflected in the curricula of education and training systems: first, the changing nature of the labour market, and second, the changing nature of the skills required by the labour market, with life skills becoming increasingly important for youth to access and maintain employment (Sissons and Jones, 2012). Compounding the skills mismatch, firms attach a low priority to skills compared with other business constraints in development and investment. Only 25 per cent of businesses in MENA provide training compared with 57 per cent in East Asia and 53 per cent in Latin America (Almeida and Aterido, 2010).

Ambivalence of the new economy and new technologies in MENA. The skills mismatch between educational outcomes and market needs in the

region is further exacerbated by the profound and systemic change towards information technology (IT) and new technologies – the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab, 2016) – which fundamentally alter the relationship with the world of work and the societies in which they are embedded. On the one hand, youth and learners in the region are not prepared for the 'information age' by the formal educational system, neither with regards to technical skills nor with regards to dealing, selecting, critically interpreting and interacting with the information produced – all skills required in the 21st century (Ananiadou and Claro, 2009). Yet, on the other hand, IT may represent a double opportunity for MENA learners. To face growing automation, skilled workers, equipped with both more advanced digital literacy skills as well as higher-order critical skills, are in demand to master complex problems and to connect with others in highly collaborative settings. Second, technology-based education, if used adequately and properly embedded in various learning pathways, can bring new teaching solutions to failing educational systems while fostering digital literacy (Jalbout and Farah, 2016).

Gender inequality. Women face specific challenges in the labour market in MENA, and the region has the lowest female participation rates in the world. In 2016, 46 per cent of female youth in MENA and 25 per cent of male youth were not part of the labour force.[3] This may reflect barriers that female youth face when entering the labour market, such as gender discrimination on the part of employers or recruiters. Internalization of prevalent social norms also may prevent female youth from engaging in long-term education, training, or job-search activities in the private sector (Mansuy and Werquin, 2015). Marital status also plays a major role in employment status. Being a woman considerably increases the probability of being pushed out of the labour force due to economic inactivity, which is even more pronounced among married women. Equipping female youth job seekers with the right skills, such as confidence building and goal setting, as well as the right expectations is crucial to facilitate women's entry into the workplace.

The erosion of social cohesion

Low social returns of education, along with the appropriation and misuse of the education system by violent extremist ideologies in MENA are among the major factors contributing to the erosion of social cohesion and of human rights in the region. Research based on the results of the 2011-13 World

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[3]   Data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) ILOSTAT database retrieved in August 2017 (www.ilo.org/ilostat).

Value Survey, which measures levels of political emancipation, highlights that, when compared to the rest of the world, the population in MENA "has a lower preference for democracy (with a gap of 11 per cent), is less active civically (a gap of 8 per cent), respects authority more (by 11 per cent), values the patriarchal system more (by as much as 30 per cent more), and tends to be more religiously conservative (by 18 per cent)" (Diwan, 2016). Structural deficiencies of education systems, out-dated curricula, teaching and learning methods, and practices that fail to foster skills and the engagement needed for a critical citizenship are among the factors that help explain the low social returns of education in MENA (Faour, 2013).

Conflict and violent extremism. Low social returns of education are compounded with pervasive conflict and violent extremism in MENA, which negatively impacts the educational experiences of millions of children, compromising their future and that of the region and beyond. The region is plagued by on-going conflicts in Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Syria and Yemen; the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) maintain their stronghold while millions of youth refugees throughout the region have little access to quality education and a secure and prosperous future (Lynch, 2016). In this context, education is being increasingly used as an element of radicalization, with the propagation of extreme belief systems tainting both children's and youth's educational experiences. As the literature regarding education in emergencies highlights, education has the potential to either mitigate or exacerbate conflict and fragility: Schools and classrooms can either become the space for social cohesion or for further entrenching inequity and the structural roots of conflict (INEE, 2011).

In non-conflict contexts, formal education systems currently do little to prevent people from joining extremist groups because they do not equip students with the necessary critical thinking and social skills (Davies, 2009). In MENA this adds to the ambivalent role of education and is substantiated by analysis regarding the educational backgrounds of foreign fighters who have joined ISIL: 69 per cent of recruits report having at least some secondary education, 15 per cent report having left school before starting post-basic education, and less than two per cent report being illiterate. Recruits from MENA and both South and East Asia seem to be significantly more educated than what is typical in their region (World Bank, 2016).

Violence against children also must be addressed as it plays a major role in the erosion of social cohesion and represents a multifaceted problem at several different levels: individual, community and societal

(WHO, 2016). Giving children and adolescents the life and social skills to cope with, and manage risks and challenges without the use of violence is crucial for reducing violence in schools and communities.

1.2 Towards a conceptual understanding of life skills and citizenship education

To address this rather dire diagnosis of education and educational systems in MENA, the CPF presented here, **reframes and rethinks the concepts of 'life skills' and 'citizenship education' by connecting the two.** The quintessential value-added of this approach is to posit that, if mainstreamed in a comprehensive and universal way within the national educational systems, through multiple learning pathways, the complementarity and deeply dynamic interplay between life skills and citizenship education can help to empower learners, thus citizens, and foster an environment that can address the challenges of learning, employment and social cohesion.

Both life skills and citizenship education are essential components of the same concept. Citizenship education is the tie-in and foundational element bringing the rights-based dimension to the more 'instrumental' nature of skills and life skills. Citizenship education underpins the holistic and comprehensive approach to education by creating the conditions to empower all learners from early on, allowing them to make appropriate decisions benefiting themselves, their community and their society.

Life skills and citizenship education are very much part of the educational landscape and if there is general agreement on their importance and relevance, especially for MENA in the present context, **two impediments** to their implementation remain, and which the CPF seeks to address:

- **A conceptual gap:** There is a lack of conceptual clarity, both in the literature and in international and national strategies, as to what life skills and citizenship education entail, what their scope is, and how they relate to knowledge acquisition, competencies, and socially desirable behaviours. Multiple perspectives on skills and life skills is resulting in a plethora of terminology and taxonomies, as well as partial frameworks, showing lack of consensus at times, but also a great deal of overlap.

- **A programmatic gap:** Furthermore, a clearly defined, holistic, and systemic programmatic approach for integrating and mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education in national

educational systems to reach all learners is still missing. Several, isolated initiatives focus on different approaches and pathways but do not offer a comprehensive take on the multidimensionality of education, lacking the lifelong learning cycle perspective, and addressing only specific learners, mostly adolescent youths.

Revisiting the concept of life skills and citizenship education, while providing a roadmap that is holistic, clear and relevant to the regional 21st-century context described above, is of paramount importance in the fragile MENA context. **By adopting a holistic approach and by bringing clarity into the terminology** – delineating 'life skills' from other concepts, in particular, 'competencies' or technical 'skills', and reaffirming the relevance of the rights-based 'citizenship education' over the governance-oriented 'civic education' – the following explains why these conceptual choices are appropriate starting points for universal quality learning to foster improved education outcomes, improved employment and entrepreneurship, and improved civic engagement. The next section of this chapter addresses the programmatic gap.

Multiple skills-based frameworks, various understandings

The development of the CPF has included an extensive mapping and review of national, regional and global taxonomies and frameworks that relate to the definition and use of the terms focused on 'skills' (life skills, competencies, 21st-century skills, soft skills, foundational skills, etc.).

Lack of clarity. The 2012 *Global Evaluation of Life Skills Education Programmes* found that there has been little work on the clarification of content or approaches to cater for specific needs or interests among the learners. It highlights the "need for further clarity about the boundaries between different categories of skills, as well as a greater understanding of their inter-relationships and development, so as to create a common understanding" (UNICEF, 2012). This lack of clarity is often found between life skills and the content of disciplines through which they can be facilitated. Existing frameworks often do not differentiate between areas of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours, thus preventing the development of robust monitoring and evaluation arrangements (UNICEF, 2012).

Efforts towards the conceptualization and clarification of terms have been initiated in 2016 through the Skills for a Changing World project, which is being implemented by the Center for Universal Education

at Brookings Institution and the LEGO Foundation. The evidence produced by Brookings highlights the need for an agreed upon understanding around skills both at global and national levels, which is coupled by national education systems failing to respond to the challenges of the 21st century (Care et al., 2017).

Partial approaches. The lack of clarity around multiple definitions is further affected by the absence of a holistic approach to 'skills' that addresses the cognitive, instrumental, individual and social aspects of learning and the interplay between them. The four "pillars of learning" suggested in the Delors Report ('Learning to Know', 'Learning to Do', 'Learning to Be', and 'Learning to Live Together') (UNESCO, 1996) are not considered in an integrated and mutually-reinforcing manner, specifically in relation to the individual and social aspect of empowerment, rights and values ('Learning to Be' and 'Learning to Live Together'), which are not articulated prominently and systematically in existing taxonomies and frameworks on skills. The challenges of education, employment and social cohesion mentioned above cannot be tackled in isolation, and in the context of MENA, they need an underlying transformative vision that empowers individuals and enhances citizenship.

Absence of lifelong learning perspective. While the evidence supports the advantages of starting life skills education with early childhood learners, hence the need to mainstream it within national education systems from the early age, most existing skills frameworks and life skills development focus on youth. Furthermore most of these frameworks particularly focus on non-formal settings, and emphasize the skills that youth need in order to thrive (USAID, 2013). In fact, life skills emerged as an international response to improving the health of young people in the early 1990s when 10 core life skills were identified as the foundation for the promotion of mental wellbeing and healthy interaction and behaviour (WHO, 1993). The list encompasses cognitive, intra- and interpersonal skills. WHO's approach found ample support and remains key in school health and nutrition (WHO, 2010). Furthermore, life skills as related to the world of work are also focused on youth, and concerned with school-to-work transitions, workforce success, employability and entrepreneurship. A number of countries have taken steps to integrate life skills across the national curriculum in selected subjects at secondary level (Birungi et al., 2015).

Focus on learning. As a means to foster quality learning, life skills have been included within the framework for UNICEF-supported child friendly schools (CFS), primarily to encourage the principle

of child-centeredness (UNICEF, 2009). Life skills have also been integrated in a wide range of other areas, including education in and after emergencies, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and environmental and mine risk education programmes. The *Global Framework for Measuring Learning* (Learning Metrics Task Force, 2013) provides a relevant list of skills for learning with emphasis on higher-order thinking skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, persistence, creative thinking, etc. Such skills are defined as 'essential' in relation to conflict and emergency contexts and underpin all the domains of learning identified by the Learning Metrics Task Force. The identification of skills contributing to learning and school success is also supported by the development of measurement frameworks, such as the OECD PISA and Analytical Framework (OECD, 2013a) and others.

The following frameworks are also focused on learning with some aspects related to employability and social engagement: the *Canadians for 21st Century Learning (C21 Framework)* of Canada (C21 Canada, 2012), the *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning: A European Reference Framework* (European Commission, 2006), the *Framework for 21st Century Competencies and Student Outcomes of Singapore* (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2016), and the *Partnership for 21st Century Skills* (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008). In particular, the *Partnership for 21st Century Skills* provides a comprehensive framework that conceptualizes different types of skills important for success in education and in the workforce, identifying critical thinking, problem-solving, communication and collaboration as the most essential skills. These skills are organized into three areas: (i) 'learning and innovation skills' such as creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration; (ii) 'information media and technology skills' including information, media and ICT literacies; and (iii) 'life and career skills' such as flexibility, adaptability, initiative, self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity, accountability, leadership and responsibility (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008).

Focus on work and employability. Over time there has been notable growth in global skills-based frameworks with a strong focus on employability. The generic term of 'skills' is mostly used with regard to the world of work to refer to specific abilities, including technical and vocational skills for employability as well as success and performance at work. Also called 'soft skills' in this context, life skills are geared towards the cognitive dimensions of 'learning' and 'doing' (Lippman et al., 2015; Cinque, 2016).

Examples of global taxonomies for workforce development can be found in the "21st Century Skills" identified within the framework of the World Economic Forum, where a list of 10 skills needed to support the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' are provided (i.e., complex problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, coordinating with others, emotional intelligence, judgement and decision-making, service orientation, negotiation, and cognitive flexibility) (World Economic Forum, 2016). This list further builds on forecasting efforts in the field of skills development at regional and global levels, undertaken by the ILO through the Programme on Skills and Employability (Brewer and Comyn, 2015; Brewer, 2013), and through World Bank-led initiatives on the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) and Stepping Up Skills (World Bank, 2010a). Additional frameworks, including long lists focused on skills for work or employability, are provided by other international organizations such as USAID, Child Trends, FHI 360 (Lippman et al., 2015), through the global project on Workforce Connections (USAID, 2013), and OECD through its skills strategy for "better skills, better jobs, better lives" (OECD, 2012a).

Focus on personal empowerment. The focus on personal empowerment is key in social and emotional learning (SEL), which represents a competencies-focused variant of life skills education, also implemented in schools. The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines SEL as "the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and mange emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions", and identifies five inter-related sets of cognitive, affective and behavioural skill clusters: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making (Payton et al., 2008).

A review of SEL programming from kindergarten to eighth grade in the United States found a range of positive effects in students in contrast to control groups (Payton et al., 2008), including increased social-emotional skills in test situations; more positive attitudes towards self and others; more positive social behaviours; fewer problems with conduct; and significantly higher academic performance. Furthermore, interventions were successful in schools in both urban and rural settings as well as with different types of schools and student bodies. The three variables identified as enabling

success were policy, leadership and professional development for teachers and administrators. Yet, while evaluations have instead focused on multiple SEL behaviours and their effects (Gutman and Schoon, 2013), there is a lack of knowledge about which specific skills are taught in SEL programmes.

'Skills' or 'competencies'? A matter of vision, purpose and context

The collected evidence highlights how both global and regional education and training frameworks frequently use 'competencies' and 'skills' interchangeably. In English parlance, a **'skill'** is an everyday word that is commonly used to mean "an ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carryout complex activities."[4] It embeds the meaning of doing something competently or well; a developed ability or aptitude.

Although the term **'competency'** can have broadly the same meaning in everyday language, it has a further nuanced technical meaning that refers to "a cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge, and skills that enable a person to act effectively in a job or situation."[5] It is commonly employed in the field of curriculum development, where a competency is understood as the integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Rychen and Tiana, 2004; UNESCO, 2016). In this narrow context, competencies are seen as **'diverse in scope'** and include categories as various as "core skills, content knowledge, cognitive skills, soft skills, to occupational skills" which enable individuals to "meet a complex demand or carry out a complex activity or task successfully or effectively in a certain context" (UNESCO, 2017). The term competency is also adopted in the specific context of PISA and measurement of learning outcomes, where competencies are defined by the "ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilizing psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes)" (OECD, 2005).

A competency is also **measurable,** as it is a more specific ability that can be observed in performing an action in a given context and can produce a set of outcomes (ILO, 2004). Competencies are particularly useful when designing a curriculum and specifying measurable learning outcomes. Originally applied in TVET, the concept of competency and the identification of key or core competencies have become common in national curricula for basic education since the 1990s. Flexibility in using

different notions of competency has contributed to diversity in their application in curriculum design (Halasz and Michel, 2011). Perceptions of key competencies are also closely related to historical and cultural contexts of national curricula.

In the context of MENA, a mapping of initiatives shows that there is **confusion between competencies and skills** (UNICEF, 2017a). In most countries, stakeholders use 'skills' and 'competencies' interchangeably, without necessarily and always referring to both terms as synonymous. The Arabic terms also vary among countries. Some refer to the term *Kifa'at* (كفاءات) to mean competencies, while others use *Maharat* (مهارات) t to mean skills. In general, and aligned with findings at a global level, there is a lack of agreement as to what distinguishes a competency from a skill. Some stakeholders define competencies as general capacities to gain and apply knowledge in association with skills, attitudes and values; while skills are perceived as components of competencies or sub-competencies and as abilities to perform specific tasks in a more mechanical approach. Furthermore, stakeholders in MENA refer to the expression of 'key competencies' as the generic skills that deserve special recognition for their significance and applicability to the various educational, occupational, personal and social domains. Finally, the adjectives 'core', 'generic', 'critical' or 'key' are sometimes used as synonyms implying the top skills that learners should acquire.

Taxonomy of 'life skills' within a holistic approach

Life skills as higher-order, transversal and transferrable psychosocial skills. This CPF starts from a higher-order categorization of life skills as fundamental elements, enabling individuals to develop both attitudes and behaviours to deal with everyday life, beyond the mere sum of abilities needed for success at work or in school. Life skills are not just components or sub-elements of competencies, but rather essential elements which, when they are fostered and nurtured in an individual from early on and in any learning setting, support that person's abilities to be and act in a construed way, while taking into account the context, and being able to weigh in choices.

At the heart of this conceptualization of life skills is the assertion of the fundamental importance of psychosocial skills, in education in particular and for success in life more generally. The vision developed here builds on the experience of life skills education globally and the UNICEF global

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[4]   Definition from Business Dictionary online http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/competence.html

[5]   Ibid.

evaluation of life skills programming (UNICEF, 2012). Life skills have been defined as the "abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life" (WHO, 1997), and more precisely, "refer to a large group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills which can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help lead a healthy and productive life" (WHO, 2003; UNICEF, 2011).

Because life skills are inter-connected and crosscutting, they are characterized as transferable or transversal, with the terms used interchangeably (UNESCO, 2015b). First, each of them is a premise to the development of other skills and helps to foster attitudes and behaviours in individuals. Second, they all are deemed important in the situation in which they are developed and nurtured in the first place, while also being of primary necessity in other life situations, from family-related situations, to school, work, migration, forced displacement, etc. (Perlman-Robinson and Greubel, 2013). As such they are overarching principles of all aspects of life that help an individual adapt, face and respond to changes and unexpected events in those different areas.

Consequently, while the concept of life skills is often associated with areas of health education due to its emergence in the early 1990s as an international response to improving the health of youth (UNAIDS, 2017; UNESCO, 2009), the scope of life skills has significantly broadened to become "an essential component of quality and relevant education", and it is now meant to equip children and youth to mediate the challenges and risks in their lives, and to enable their productive participation in society (UNICEF, 2012). It follows that 'life skills and citizenship education', as proposed in this CPF, builds on a broader understanding of life skills education than the narrower 'life skills-based education', itself related to health and family education. 'Life skills and citizenship education' can be applied to any subject area, notwithstanding its content, thus fostering in each learner both the life skill acquisition and practice which are universally needed in life and work situations.

Foundational skills, life skills and knowledge acquisition. There seems to be a general agreement over the concept of 'basic' or 'foundational skills' as the ones comprising basic literacy and numeracy, thus bringing about the basis for continuous learning and communication in at least one cultural environment (ETF and World Bank, 2005; UNCESCO, 2012b; Cinque, 2016). Organizations still disagree as to whether understanding and being equipped

with basic digital knowledge, until recently called 'information and communication technology (ICT)', constitutes a basic or foundational skill. While 'basic' or 'foundational skills' can be acquired by an individual lacking a set of 'life skills', possessing the latter helps in the acquisition of numeracy and literacy.

The differentiation between 'life skills' and other types of skills, and their promotion in the framework of this CPF, does not preclude the importance of content and knowledge acquisition, such as numeracy and literacy. The former does not happen at the expense of the latter. On the contrary, nurturing life skills arguably enables learners to order and compute information in a more organized fashion while controlling themselves and their reactions during the learning process. Further, it has been shown that life skills programmes allow children to retain information and use it overtime (Lamb et al., 2006).

Life skills and 21st-century skills. Drawing upon the narrow concept of skills in the world of work, the framework of '21st-century skills' enlarges the original view on employability to add to foundational and acquired skills (such as numeracy, literacy, and ICT) higher-order psychosocial skills (such as transcultural communication and creativity) in order to address the 'knowledge economy' and the challenges of a globalized economic environment, which has requirements that are "more sophisticated than in the prior industrial era" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016).

There exist two major cluster systems of 21st-century skills, which both remain "intertwined in human development and learning" (National Research Council, 2012). Based on the first taxonomy, "deeper learning" in educational and work-focused systems is required to foster: (i) cognitive skills referring to the ability to process information, to reason, to remember and to relate, thus including so-called higher-order thinking skills, such as problem-solving, critical thinking and decision-making; (ii) intra-personal skills (at the core of which is an individual's positive self-concept) forming the ability to know, understand and manage ones' emotions while also recognizing those of others. They enable successful decision-making, resolution of conflict, and coherent communication (Lippman et al., 2015); and, (iii) interpersonal skills having to do with interacting and getting along well with others. They include social skills, communication skills, using context-appropriate behaviours and respecting others (National Research Council, 2011). In a second taxonomy, OECD (2009) argues that learners will need "information-related skills" (information as

source and as product), effective communication and collaboration and virtual interaction, as well as ethical skills bringing about social responsibility, to deal with the global, yet increasingly social economy.

Here again, the suggested skill sets are aligned with performance at school and at work, and to the capacity to 'learn' and adapt in order to be successful in more complex economic and social settings. This is not sufficient to encompass the broader, more comprehensive meaning of 'life skills' as defended in this reimagined CPF for MENA; yet, 'life skills' play an essential role towards 21st-century skills as the underpinning higher-order skills, first, enabling an individual to bridge between foundational and 'deeper' skills, and, second, allowing learners and individuals to adapt and react to the complex, intertwined and fluid requirements of global interactions.

Rethinking citizenship education as the cornerstone of a value-based education in MENA

In the context of MENA, a vision for life skills education is inextricable from rethinking citizenship education. The MENA LSCE Initiative is inspired by, and is working along with, ongoing efforts by partners to promote a value-based education that reaffirms the principles of human rights, human dignity, non-discrimination, and respect for cultural and religious diversity, among others. In this regard, the LSCE CPF seeks to re-formulate the traditional understanding of citizenship education in MENA while addressing fundamental questions about its purpose and role in societal development in the current fragile context of the region.

Citizenship education, a concept expanding beyond the traditional understandings of civic education.

The LSCE Initiative acknowledges the multifaceted nature of social cohesion and adopts 'citizenship education' (translated as *Al-ta'lym min ajil al-muwatana* (التعليم من أجل المواطنة)) as the preferred term to explain the social dimension of the Initiative. Although the English term will find critics among practitioners of human-rights education for whom citizenship education may imply an exclusionary and reductionist approach to rights education, the term should not be taken in its narrow legal sense of civic education (focusing on democratic governance). Rather, in the context of a new education vision for MENA, citizenship education aligns with the progressive orientation of educational discourses, prioritizes societal transformation and social justice, and is developed through a vast field in education that includes a wide range of philosophical, political and ideological perspectives, and pedagogical approaches, goals and practices (Schugurensky and Myers, 2003). Indeed, the Arabic translation of

the term, *Al-ta'lym min ajil al-muwatana* (التعليم من أجل المواطنة) (closer in English to 'education for citizenship') positions it more adequately beyond traditional regional understandings of 'civic education' *(al tarbiya al madaniya)* or 'citizenship education' *(tarbiyat al muwatana)* in national curricula, which privilege knowledge of institutions while instilling narrowly defined patriotic values.

Evolving underpinnings, political uses and implementation of citizenship education in MENA.

The meaning of citizenship education in MENA national contexts has evolved over time to reflect some of the socio-political changes occurring in the region. During the late nineteenth century and early twentieth-century period known in the Arab world as the Nahda (Arab renaissance), intellectual discourses regarding nationalism and liberal democratic values critical to citizenship and citizenship education permeated the public sphere in the region and were accompanied by a renewed emphasis on the social purpose of education. In the post-colonial context of the 1950s and onwards, citizenship education became instrumental to nation-building projects in education and youth-related contexts. The post-cold war era of the 1990s and 2000s was characterized by agendas seeking political transformation and 'peace-building', along with the emergence of new international discourses furthering a culture of human rights. These discourses infused citizenship education with a new range of concepts and vocabulary related to peace building, conflict resolution, civic engagement, human rights education, etc. (Hawthorne, 2004).

In the current post-9/11 and post-Arab Spring phase, characterized by deep socio-political and economic transformation and dominated by human security concerns, citizenship education is acquiring new meanings and functions related specifically to discourses on 'preventing and countering violent extremism' (Davies, 2008; NRC, 2017). Several actors working on the ground are warning that current responses to violent extremism in the region that are rooted in preventing violent extremism (PVE) and countering violent extremism (CVE) agendas may actually have little impact and also prove counterproductive by overriding humanitarian principles and strengthening extremist groups (NRC, 2017; Mercy Corps, 2015). Social movements are calling for bottom-up political change, including in education, however, important challenges remain for transformative education reforms. In war-torn countries, education is often being made a hostage to ideological and political agendas. In non-conflict contexts, civic education and its related subject areas have been regarded as producing uncritical loyal citizens who may know rights in the absolute, yet do not know how to claim them (Skalli, 2016), and who

are afflicted by didactic transmission of knowledge about civic literacy in classroom contexts, and lack the interactive and experiential teaching and learning methods required (Faour, 2013).

Citizenship education as a driver to empowerment and community strengthening. In the context of the current LSCE Initiative, citizenship education aims to exploit the capabilities and transformative energy displayed during the 'emancipatory moment' of the Arab Spring (Gerges, 2014). This can be done by building a contextualized and relevant development-anchored approach to quality education that can foster open societies, harness the enthusiasm and motivation of younger generations, and provide future generations in MENA with the tools to build a better future for their communities and the region. Citizenship education presents an alternative narrative to PVE and CVE discourses by addressing critical questions regarding the function and philosophy underpinning a given society, by being relevant to local contexts and by promoting the full development of local actors as drivers of positive social transformation.

Critical to this vision of a transformative approach to citizenship education is the adoption of experiential learning methods to teach students citizenship through their involvement in civic activities and decision-making inside and outside the school; through their engagement in local, national and global issues and initiatives (both in school and in society at large); as well as by equipping them with values and the disposition to actively participate in society. These approaches aim at turning classrooms into safe and critical spaces actively engaged with surrounding communities, providing students with opportunities to engage in discussion of even the most sensitive topics, while educating against situations of abuse that can often lead to resentment and frustration of disenfranchised youth. Citizenship education, thus, has a critical role to play in fostering the values and attitudes needed to transform existing social tensions related to the rise of sectarian divisions, exclusionary identities in light of massive population movements (i.e., refugees and internally displaced persons), ideological extremism, distortion or misuse of religion, etc. Past and current educational discourses must be critically analysed in an effort to formulate relevant and adequate educational policies regarding citizenship education.

Citizenship education in a globalizing context.
In the process of globalization, the concept of citizenship is gaining in complexity. This has contributed to new modes of identification and mobilization beyond the limits of the nation-state. Despite differences in interpretation, there is a common understanding that global citizenship does not imply a legal status, but "refers more so to a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity, promoting a 'global gaze' that links the local to the global and the national to the international" (UNESCO, 2015b). It is defined as a "way of understanding, acting and relating oneself to others and the environment in space and in time, based on universal values, through respect for diversity and pluralism" (UNESCO, 2015b). In this context, UNESCO's GCE initiative is represented as a "conceptual shift that recognizes the relevance of education in understanding and resolving global issues in their social, political, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions". It represents a "framing paradigm" that provides guidance on how education can develop "the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that learners need for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable" (UNESCO, 2014a).

As an integral part of the networks and processes of globalization, MENA countries are key stakeholders in conversations regarding global citizenship education and this has been further buttressed by the new emerging consensus around the 2030 Education Agenda. Notwithstanding the general positive engagement, conceptual alignments to global citizenship education in MENA still remain upstream and subject to some tensions and debates within the region. The partners of a consultative meeting on GCE in MENA could only agree to define global citizenship education as a "psychosocial framework for collective action" (UNESCO, 2014b). In more general terms, the concept of global citizenship raises questions concerning its applicability within the context of national identities, narratives and education systems. It is also a contested concept as the definition and practice of citizenship remain principally situated within nation-states, especially from a legal perspective, and may constitute an oxymoron in terms. Based on this, the concept of GCE raises further questions on whether it refers to the fundamental objectives of education, constitutes a framing concept or a specific area of learning. Acknowledging the development of transnational and post-national/global civic engagement of individuals, and recognizing the role of citizenship education in this globalized context, alternative definitions (i.e., 'education for local and global citizenship' or 'cosmopolitan citizenship') would better capture the scope of GCE in enriching national/local citizenship and emphasize differences within universality (Tawil, 2014).

The LSCE Initiative vision for life skills and citizenship education in MENA embeds the values of GCE by recognizing that citizenship education is a multi-

layered process that ultimately includes the global realm while seeking to remain relevant to national contexts. MENA is not an isolated region, and has its own specificities that are critical to determining the vision and purpose of citizenship education in the region. Value-based, context-sensitive citizenship education, aligned with universal values of human rights, is key to achieving social cohesion in MENA national contexts.

1.3 Proposing a LSCE Conceptual and Programmatic Framework

In the context of the 2030 Education Agenda, and with the acquisition of skills mentioned in almost all targets of SDG 4 as integral to quality learning, the proposed CPF, developed within the LSCE Initiative, is meant to renew the concept of life skills and citizenship education in MENA while providing a roadmap that is relevant to MENA contexts. The CPF is based on a higher-order education, and economic and social theory of change, and attempts to address the conceptual and programmatic gaps in the work on life skills and citizenship education to attain the desired impacts and outcomes of this theory. This section outlines the **contours of the theory of change and of the conceptual and programmatic building blocks,** which will be further detailed in chapters two and three.

A higher-order theory of change

The theory of change for the MENA LSCE Initiative is a higher-order one, driven by the compelling need to achieve tangible outcomes in three separate, yet inter-related areas where education can make a difference:

- **The achievement of a knowledge society through improved education outcomes.** There is an imperative for MENA, within an increasingly competitive and globalized world, to improve the quality of education at all levels, in particular to develop relevant learning outcomes for the transitions from school to work and adult life. This outcome reflects the 'Learning to Learn' pillar suggested in the Delors Report.

- **The realization of economic development through improved employment and entrepreneurship.** With youth unemployment a widespread economic and societal issue in MENA as well as the requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab, 2016), substantial pressure is put on education systems to better prepare youth with the skills to navigate this complex new environment (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008). The

skills that are useful for labour intensive or even technology intensive industries are no longer sufficient for economic competitiveness and the knowledge economy. This outcome reflects the 'Learning to Do' pillar suggested in the Delors Report.

- **The attainment of enhanced social cohesion through improved civic engagement.** Social cohesion and inter-connectedness need to be supported by empowered individuals, who chose to positively contribute to and participate in their community. It is a particular focus in MENA, where inclusive nation building is a work in progress in many countries. Within the theory of change, social cohesion through improved civic engagement has significant education implications regarding the preparation of youth to become active citizens. It reflects the 'Learning to Live Together' pillar suggested in the Delors Report.

To achieve these three outcomes, it is necessary to ensure the **empowerment of each individual** through life skills and citizenship education, allowing for all to grow personally and to develop their relations to others (the 'Learning to Be' pillar in the Delors Report). As shown previously, this prerequisite is of particular relevance in the MENA context to enable individuals to face the current mounting conflicts and violence in constructive ways. As such, empowered individuals can be active learners, successful in the world of work, and positive participants in and contributors to their communities.

Addressing the conceptual gap

Informed by the above conceptual discussion, **life skills are defined within the CPF as cognitive and non-cognitive, higher-order, transversal and transferrable skills for learning, for employability, for personal empowerment, and for active citizenship. Citizenship education is an inseparable component of life skills education that emphasizes the need for social transformation** and refers to the capabilities and energies that can foster open societies, harness the enthusiasm and motivation of younger generations, and provide future ones with the tools to build a better future for their communities and the region. Citizenship education brings the rights-based dimension to the more 'instrumental' nature of skills. It represents a cornerstone of education in national contexts in MENA and needs to be leveraged within the skills discourse in the region.

To establish a clear and holistic vision definition of life skills and citizenship education – required to facilitate a common understanding and guide policy formulation and effective programming – the

CPF builds on the four pillars of the Delors Report (UNESCO, 1996) and proposes **four inter-connected, inter-related and mutually reinforcing 'Dimensions of Learning':**

- **'Learning to Know' pillar, or the Cognitive Dimension:** This Dimension includes the development of abilities involving concentration, memory and thinking, as well as emphasizing curiosity and a desire to gain a better understanding of the world and other people.

- **'Learning to Do' pillar, or the Instrumental Dimension:** This Dimension considers how children can be supported to put what they have learned into practice and how education can be adapted to better serve the world of work. It also means learning to do in the context of the various social and work experiences of youth.

- **'Learning to Be' pillar, or the Individual Dimension:** This Dimension entails learning as supportive of self-fulfilment, personal growth and self-empowerment. It includes cognitive skills, along with personal growth that encompasses both personal and social factors. This pillar is an enabler for the other Dimensions of Learning.

- **'Learning to Live Together' pillar, or the Social Dimension:** This Dimension is linked to social cohesion as well as to citizenship education, active citizenship and participation in social networks.

This 'four-dimensional' model of learning proposes for each Dimension a **skills cluster** of associated life skills, among which 12 are identified as 'core life skills' as follows:

- **Skills for learning:** creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving.

- **Skills for employability:** cooperation, negotiation, decision-making.

- **Skills for personal empowerment:** self-management, resilience, communication.

- **Skills for active citizenship:** respect for diversity, empathy, participation.

These identified core life skills need to be differentiated from **'subject areas'**, which are specific and thematic, technical or academic areas of teaching and learning where life skills are usually integrated. Subject areas include, for instance, curricular and vocational disciplines, career and entrepreneurship education, computer literacy, health and environmental education, emergency education, peace education, civic education, arts, culture and sports, etc.

Ensuring a lifelong learning approach. Life skills and citizenship education in the CPF resonate with a lifelong and life cycle approach that is key to learning and to human development more generally, and reflects the vision of lifelong learning opportunities for all put forward in SDG 4. This approach breaks the confinement of skills development to older age groups and underlines the need to start from an early age.

Maintaining political traction, familiarity and communicability. There is general consensus in MENA about the importance of life skills. Stakeholders participating in preparing the Analytical Mapping (UNICEF, 2017a) of definitions and initiatives in MENA consistently highlighted how life skills fundamentally entail a set of characteristics that are essential to success in school, in the world of work, and in life more generally. The term 'life skills' has wide currency among practitioners and policy makers in the region and beyond. It embeds a notion of skills that are used in daily life and that allow for meeting everyday demands and challenges as well as the requirements of improved learning. This broad understanding gives 'life skills' utility as a 'portmanteau' term that subsumes skills for learning, for employability, for personal empowerment, and for active citizenship. The term 'life skills' resonates within a holistic approach better than the learning- or world-of-work-related concept of 'skills', as it brings together life's practical activities with improved learning and enhanced socio-economic engagement.

Addressing the programmatic gap

While a clear definition of life skills and citizenship education is crucial for policy formulation and the development of effective programming, a programmatic framework is crucial for connecting concept and practice, and ensuring quality of learning outcomes, a lifelong learning perspective, coherence of messages and added value in interventions, critical mass and equity in delivery, mainstreaming and sustainability. Two key approaches are proposed within the programmatic building blocks of the CPF: a multiple pathways approach and a systems approach.

A multiple pathways approach. The multiple pathways approach focuses on three programmatic components: teaching and learning approaches, channels of delivery, and modalities of delivery.

Effective **teaching and learning approaches** are the connecting thread to successful learning through life skills and citizenship education. Changing the attitudes and improving the classroom skills of teachers represents the most promising entry point in bringing about systemic change. The experience of successful education reforms in MENA indicates that equipping and supporting teachers to practice active learning methods can bring about significant change in learning outcomes (UNICEF, 2017a). In fact, life skills and citizenship education cannot take place through traditional and top-down forms of teaching and learning.

Recent research from a range of disciplines, including education, economics, sociology and psychology, provides expanding evidence connecting successful performance in school, life and work to the acquisition of a wide range of 'life skills' beyond curriculum content (Brown et al., 2015a; Graber et al., 2015; Gutman and Schoon, 2013; Heckman and Kautz, 2012; Moore et al., 2015; Bazerman and Moore, 2008).

Aside from enabling successful performance, **multiple channels of delivery** are important to maximize participation and to further equity and inclusion of marginalized populations. These channels include formal, non-formal and informal education programmes in the work place and 'on the road to' the work place; social engagement programmes such as volunteer and community work: and child protection programmes in child friendly safe spaces and other fields. These channels also include **different modalities of delivery**, such as curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular modalities; standalone or integrated approaches; and face-to-face, online and blended forms of learning. A multiple pathways approach is critical to ensure that what is learnt in the classroom is supported by what is experienced outside of school within different environments where children and youth learn.
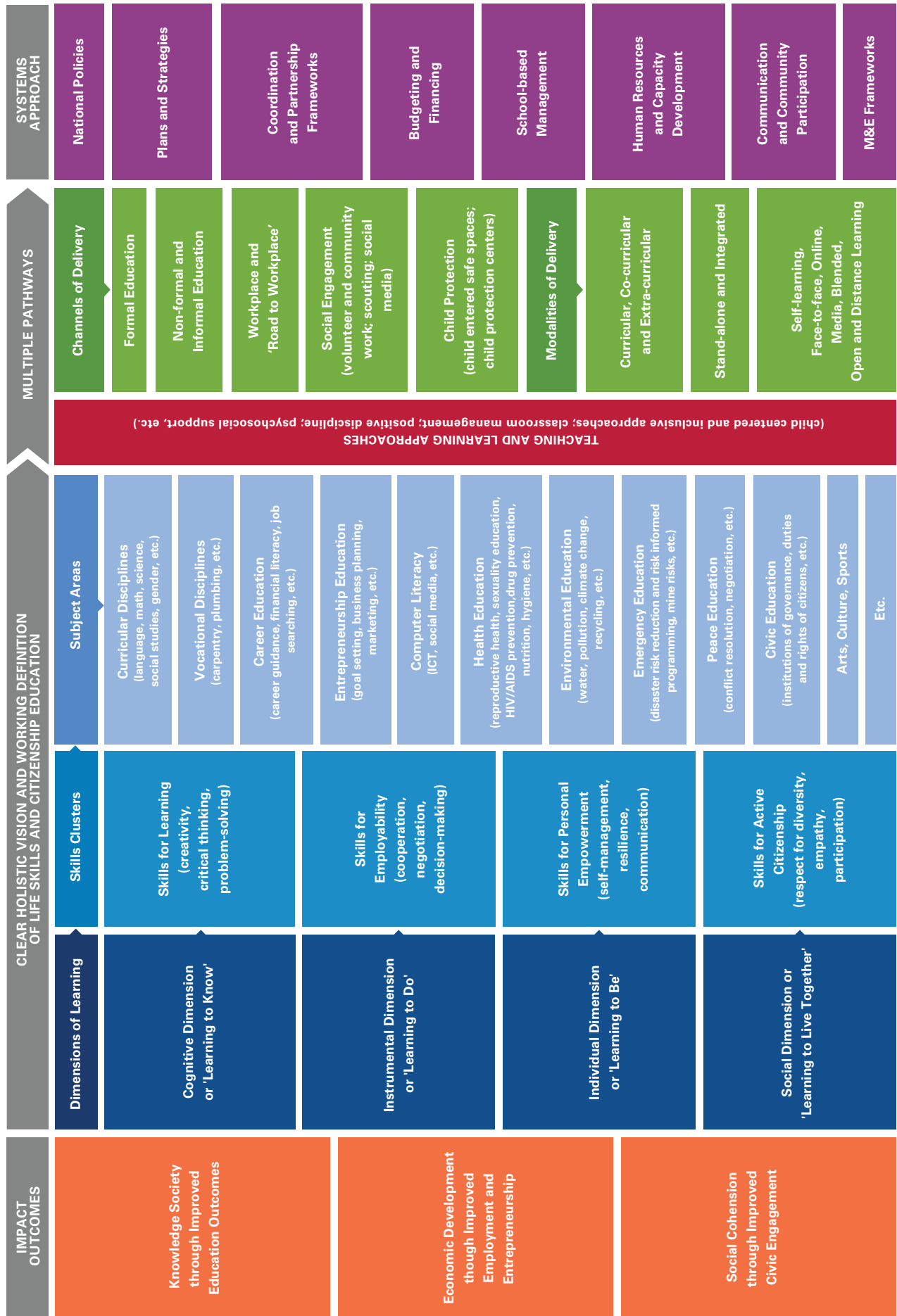
A systems approach. The presence of an enabling environment and political will, together with a shared vision, are key assumptions that underpin the theory of change for the LSCE Initiative. Putting life skills and citizenship education at the centre of education reforms can help revisit constructively the purpose of education and reorient learning to the practical needs of life in MENA. For this to happen, a system approach that anchors interventions within national education systems is indispensable. National impact cannot be achieved through the implementation of unconnected small-scale interventions often at the margins of the education system. Effective life skills and citizenship education requires enabling national policies, plans and strategies as well as dedicated budgets.

Furthermore, the commitment of and cooperation among partners, together with structured coordination and partnership frameworks (sector approaches) must accompany policies, plans and strategies to ensure the necessary coherence and complementarity of interventions. Investment in human resources is at the core of quality learning processes and outcomes. The 2012 *Global Evaluation of Life Skills Education Programmes* (UNICEF, 2012) emphasized the need for the institutionalization of life skills in pre-service training of teachers and continuous professional development. This should to be accompanied by school-based management initiatives, which secure an enabling environment in schools, and in the surrounding society through communication and community participation. Quality assurance, including robust monitoring and evaluation arrangements and changes to existing assessment strategies, will ensure that life skills and citizenship education meet the objectives set in the national policy frameworks as well as at different levels of programming.

Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the CPF that unpacks the main components within each building block (conceptual and programmatic). Each of these conceptual and programmatic building blocks with their components will be presented in detail in the following two chapters.

Figure 1 Life Skills and Citizenship Education Conceptual and Programmatic Framework

SYSTEMS APPROACH

- National Policies
- Plans and Strategies
- Coordination and Partnership Frameworks
- Budgeting and Financing
- School-based Management
- Human Resources and Capacity Development
- Communication and Community Participation
- M&E Frameworks

MULTIPLE PATHWAYS

Channels of Delivery
- Formal Education
- Non-formal and Informal Education
- Workplace and 'Road to Workplace'
- Social Engagement (volunteer and community work; scouting; social media)
- Child Protection (child entered safe spaces; child protection centers)

Modalities of Delivery
- Curricular, Co-curricular and Extra-curricular
- Stand-alone and Integrated
- Self-learning, Face-to-face, Online, Media, Blended, Open and Distance Learning

TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES
(child centered and inclusive approaches; classroom management; positive discipline; psychosocial support, etc.)

CLEAR HOLISTIC VISION AND WORKING DEFINITION OF LIFE SKILLS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Subject Areas
- Curricular Disciplines (language, math, science, social studies, gender, etc.)
- Vocational Disciplines (carpentry, plumbing, etc.)
- Career Education (career guidance, financial literacy, job searching, etc.)
- Entrepreneurship Education (goal setting, business planning, marketing, etc.)
- Computer Literacy (ICT, social media, etc.)
- Health Education (reproductive health, sexuality education, HIV/AIDS prevention, drug prevention, nutrition, hygiene, etc.)
- Environmental Education (water, pollution, climate change, recycling, etc.)
- Emergency Education (disaster risk reduction and risk informed programming, mine risks, etc.)
- Peace Education (conflict resolution, negotiation, etc.)
- Civic Education (institutions of governance, duties and rights of citizens, etc.)
- Arts, Culture, Sports
- Etc.

Skills Clusters
- Skills for Learning (creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving)
- Skills for Employability (cooperation, negotiation, decision-making)
- Skills for Personal Empowerment (self-management, resilience, communication)
- Skills for Active Citizenship (respect for diversity, empathy, participation)

Dimensions of Learning
- Cognitive Dimension or 'Learning to Know'
- Instrumental Dimension or 'Learning to Do'
- Individual Dimension or 'Learning to Be'
- Social Dimension or 'Learning to Live Together'

IMPACT OUTCOMES
- Knowledge Society through Improved Education Outcomes
- Economic Development though Improved Employment and Entrepreneurship
- Social Cohension through Improved Civic Engagement

SYSTEMS APPROACH

- National Policies
- Plans and Strategies
- Coordination and Partnership Frameworks
- Budgeting and Financing
- School-based Management
- Human Resources and Capacity Development
- Communication and Community Participation
- M&E Frameworks

MULTIPLE PATHWAYS

Channels of Delivery
- Formal Education
- Non-formal and Informal Education
- Workplace and 'Road to Workplace'
- Social Engagement (volunteer and community work; scouting; social media)
- Child Protection (child entered safe spaces; child protection centers)

Modalities of Delivery
- Curricular, Co-curricular and Extra-curricular
- Stand-alone and Integrated
- Self-learning, Face-to-face, Online, Media, Blended, Open and Distance Learning

TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES
(child centered and inclusive approaches; classroom management; positive discipline; psychosocial support, etc.)

CLEAR HOLISTIC VISION AND WORKING DEFINITION OF LIFE SKILLS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Subject Areas

- **Curricular Disciplines** (language, math, science, social studies, gender, etc.)
- **Vocational Disciplines** (carpentry, plumbing, etc.)
- **Career Education** (career guidance, financial literacy, job searching, etc.)
- **Entrepreneurship Education** (goal setting, business planning, marketing, etc.)
- **Computer Literacy** (ICT, social media, etc.)
- **Health Education** (reproductive health, sexuality education, HIV/AIDS prevention, drug prevention, nutrition, hygiene, etc.)
- **Environmental Education** (water, pollution, climate change, recycling, etc.)
- **Emergency Education** (disaster risk reduction and risk informed programming, mine risks, etc.)
- **Peace Education** (conflict resolution, negotiation, etc.)
- **Civic Education** (institutions of governance, duties and rights of citizens, etc.)
- **Arts, Culture, Sports**
- **Etc.**

Skills Clusters

- **Skills for Learning** (creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving)
- **Skills for Employability** (cooperation, negotiation, decision-making)
- **Skills for Personal Empowerment** (self-management, resilience, communication)
- **Skills for Active Citizenship** (respect for diversity, empathy, participation)

Dimensions of Learning

- **Cognitive Dimension or 'Learning to Know'**
- **Instrumental Dimension or 'Learning to Do'**
- **Individual Dimension or 'Learning to Be'**
- **Social Dimension or 'Learning to Live Together'**

IMPACT OUTCOMES

- Knowledge Society through Improved Education Outcomes
- Economic Development though Improved Employment and Entrepreneurship
- Social Cohesion through Improved Civic Engagement

2 | The Conceptual Framework

This chapter provides direction for conceptualizing life skills and citizenship education, and seeks to define how MENA can contribute to a new vision of education. To establish a clear holistic vision and working definition of life skills and citizenship education that is required to facilitate a common understanding and guide policy formulation and effective programming, the LSCE CPF defines **four 'Dimensions of Learning',** based on the four Delors pillars (UNESCO, 1996) of 'Learning to Know' or the Cognitive Dimension, 'Learning to Do' or the Instrumental Dimension, 'Learning to Be' or the Individual Dimension, and 'Learning to Live Together' or the Social Dimension.

For each Dimension of Learning, a list of life skills is provided based on the findings of a literature review, the *Analytical Mapping* produced within the framework of the LSCE Initiative (UNICEF, 2017a), and national consultations. **Twelve core life skills** are identified for priority attention in MENA and discussed according to the relevance of each to all four Dimensions of Learning and the desirable outcomes of improved education, employment, entrepreneurship and civic engagement.

While the four Dimensions of Learning and the identified 12 core life skills are presented linearly, **they need to be understood transversally.** Indeed, the selection of these 12 core life skills is based on their dynamic interplay and contribution to all four Dimensions of Learning. It is the result of a three-step identification process informed by an indepth analysis of existing conceptual and policy frameworks. The 12 core life skills work together and the set that they make up is not a menu to choose from, but rather a holistic and interdependent whole, embodying the renewed vision for education in MENA.

The first section of this chapter analyses the holistic vision of the four Dimensions of Learning, and the second unpacks each Dimension through the identification of related life skills. The third section presents the selected 12 core life skills in detail together with their relevance to each of the four Dimensions of Learning. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the subject areas through which life skills and citizenship education is realized.

2.1 The four Dimensions of Learning: A holistic vision

At the heart of the LSCE Initiative lies a shared conceptual and definitional understanding of the life skills needed to empower individuals, protect children, enhance employability, and recreate the bases of inter-connectedness, social cohesion and behaviours mindful of the environment in the context of 21st century MENA. This conceptual and programmatic framework aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and, in particular, the 2030 Education Agenda.

As mentioned, this common understanding is based on a four-dimensional model of learning developed in *Learning: The Treasure Within,* a 1996 report to UNESCO by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century, chaired by Jacques Delors, and which is a key reference document for the conceptualization of education and learning worldwide (Tawil and Cougoureux, 2013).

The Delors report proposes an integrated vision of education that goes beyond effectiveness and performance at school or at work, and emphasizes the humanistic role of education towards human development as a whole. In particular, it furthers a vision of the lifelong learning paradigm by defining the essential functions of learning through what it calls the 'four pillars of learning': 'Learning to Know', 'Learning to Do', 'Learning to Be', and 'Learning to Live Together'. The aim of the pillars is to enhance the dignity, capacity and welfare of individuals in relation to others and to their environment.

From 'pillars' to a dynamic 'four-dimensional model of learning'

Building on the Delors report, the CPF repositions the 'pillars' of education in the 'Dimensions of Learning'. While the term 'pillar' suggests that the four learning areas are distinct, the 'Dimensions of Learning' emphasize the dynamic nature of these categories by reflecting how they overlap, interlink and reinforce one another to combine in the individual learner.

Each of the four Dimensions has a designated conceptual function in the model and mirrors more specifically one particular cluster of concerns in

MENA. These conceptual functions by dimension are 'Learning to Know'/learning, 'Learning to Do'/employability, 'Learning to Be'/personal empowerment, and 'Learning to Live Together'/ active citizenship. However, each of the Dimensions is inter-related and must be read as **parts of the comprehensive approach**. These four Dimensions of Learning should not be considered in isolation, but should be interpreted in the light of the complex contribution that they have on individuals, who are family members, learners, contributors or future contributors to the world of work, community members, and citizens, who are supported by human rights.

Ethical underpinnings of the four Dimensions of Learning

The interplay between the four Dimensions of Learning reflects the conceptual understanding of education and learning as a dynamic and integrated processes over time, underpinned by a **humanistic vision of education** articulated in its rights-based ethical dimension. The four Dimensions of Learning suggest a model of human behaviour, whereby education is understood as holistic, lifelong and ethically grounded, contributing to the 2030 Education Agenda.

First, by considering the whole learner, the four-dimensional model is **holistic**. It explicitly recognizes the gamut of cognitive, intra-personal and interpersonal behaviours, and skills needed for life in general, as well as the more practical instrumental activities needed in the world of work. Each of the four Dimensions provides a particular perspective on learning that is part of the whole, as all four are combined in the individual learner. The key question is how these different, yet necessary, aspects of human development can be effectively improved through education and training overtime. The CPF proposes this model as the basis to promote the teaching and practice of life skills in a holistic conceptual approach.

Second, in this model, **lifelong learning** builds on the assumption that every individual is a learner in the context of a learning society that offers multiple pathways throughout life. Skills acquisition goes beyond the traditional distinctions between initial and continuing education. Through cumulative investment in skills acquisition, skills are developed across levels and channels of education from early childhood education (ECE) to adult learning.

Third, the four-dimensional model is underpinned by a transformative vision for quality education based on a strong **ethical foundation**. It recognizes that education (i) needs to foster human dignity and promote human rights-based values beyond the achievement of successful individual performance in the context of the workplace, and (ii) is not primarily an economic activity geared to maximize growth and productivity. Thus, education can fulfil its role as an enabler of social cohesion, aligned with relevant citizenship and humanitarian frameworks conceived to care for, and respect, other human beings, as well as minimize or prevent the use of violence.

Scope of the four Dimensions of Learning and their significance in MENA

As noted, **each of the four Dimensions mirrors a set of challenges** with regard to education, and which are felt in particular by children and youth in MENA. Therefore, the development of each in a learner is the key starting point to address both individual and social issues in the region. In this regional context, the four-dimensional model aims to bridge the existing gaps between the objectives of education expressed in national policies and the approaches undertaken on the ground. As evidenced by the existing literature on education in the region, the Cognitive and Instrumental Dimensions ('Learning to Know' and 'Learning to Do') have been the traditional focus of education systems and development actors. By contrast, the Individual Dimension ('Learning to Be') has been mostly addressed in emergency interventions, as in the case of the surge of psychosocial support services in the context of the conflicts affecting the region, while the Social Dimension ('Learning to Live Together') has constituted a common element among development actors active in the region in their attempt to reinforce peace building and democratic agendas to address the political realities facing the region.

While the four Dimensions are presented individually and linearly for clarity (see Box 1), they inform and complement each other, and have to be considered and understood in this **dynamic interplay**, particularly in the MENA context.

Box 1 The scope of the four Dimensions of Learning

'Learning to Know'/the Cognitive Dimension: Relates to the cognitive and meta-cognitive tools required to better comprehend the world and its complexities as well as an appropriate and adequate foundation for future learning.

'Learning to Do'/the Instrumental Dimension: Relates to the skills enabling individuals to participate effectively in the economy and society.

'Learning to Be'/the Individual Dimension: Relates to the personal and social skills to enable individuals develop to their fullest potential in order for them to become all-round complete persons.

'Learning to Live Together'/the Social Dimension: Relates to the values implicit within human rights, democratic principles, intercultural understanding and respect, and the promotion of peace at all levels of society, that an individual is exposed to and develop.

Source: UNESCO, 1996.

'Learning to Know' or the Cognitive Dimension. This Dimension of Learning includes the development of abilities involving concentration, problem-solving and critical thinking, and underscores the importance of curiosity and creativity for gaining a better understanding of the world and other people. It is foundational to the development of new life skills as well as technical skills, ensuring both acquisition and mastering of new knowledge. The concept of 'Learning to Know' has become increasingly prominent over 'Learning to Learn' as the latter's related skills are often related to the acquisition of fundamental basic skills.

Hence, the Cognitive Dimension offers the conceptual background to constructively rethink MENA educational systems' learning outcomes and promote pedagogies that go beyond rote learning and the transmission and retention of information. It also suggests rethinking various channels and modalities of learning throughout the life cycle, starting with early childhood. This Dimension of Learning requires that MENA learning environments are safe spaces for children, supported by the community, which promote ethical behaviours and equality among all participants. The Cognitive Dimension inter-relates with all three other Dimensions of the model, and if supported in an individual, fosters innovative and independent learners at any age, learners equipped for life transitions and the changing world of work (Instrumental Dimension), as well as informed citizens who respect others and their community (Individual Dimension and Social Dimension).

'Learning to Do' or the Instrumental Dimension. This Dimension, anticipated in the Bloom's *Taxonomy of Learning Domains* (Bloom et al., 1956) with the concept of application, considers how children and youth can be supported to put what they have learned into practice and how education can be adapted to better serve, in particular, the world of work. By being able to put theoretical learning into practice in everyday contexts, children,

youth and other learners learn how to concretely navigate demanding situations while being efficient and productive.

In MENA, this Dimension is especially relevant for children and youth as they transition to adulthood, when they need to make informed choices about adult health and family life, thus connecting education, application and social choices. More so, the Instrumental Dimension is directly linked to the world of work, and strongly related to, and informed by, the Cognitive and Individual Dimensions. Youth and others later in life face major issues in their transitions from education to work. The current educational systems do not equip them with the life skills that foster individual adaptability, which is sought after by employers and the market, thus limiting their employability, i.e., the capacity to gain and retain work. By offering the conceptual background to address failing TVET systems and poorly coordinated workplace learning activities, this Dimension can help to promote entrepreneurial capabilities in the learner, which are needed to both expand the labour market and spur innovation in the region. In MENA, learning for the world of work encompasses learning to make ethical, decisive and innovative choices to respond to the evolving demands of the labour market, new technologies, and the need for applied research and development.

'Learning to Be' or the Individual Dimension. This Dimension enshrines the principle that education should be concerned with maximizing the potential of each and every individual learner by aiming at the development of the complete person, thus allowing the individual to act with ever greater autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility. Learning in the framework of this Dimension includes cognitive, intra-personal and interpersonal life skills, brings self-fulfilment and personal growth, and is supportive of self-empowerment, thus promoting self-protection, violence prevention and resilience.

Because the Individual Dimension involves the all-round personal development of a learner, it is a composite of and an enabler for all the other Dimensions. Empowered and resilient children, youth and individuals can make thoughtful, positive life and work choices for themselves, their families and their society, and can be engaged citizens with respect for others. Therefore, the scope of the Individual Dimension, and its impact on and inter-connections with the other Dimensions of Learning play directly into the renewed vision of education in fragile contexts such as MENA. Education with an ethical, equality-driven and human rights-based underpinning promotes self-awareness, self-management, resilience, and complex communication skills in MENA children and youth, and other learners. This offers them the ability and the voice to constructively address, both at the individual and collective level, the risks linked to unhealthy behaviours, violence, extremism, conflicts and inequalities of treatment. With personal growth the result of both individual as well as social factors, the Individual Dimension promotes empowered individuals, who, because they are self-aware, know to respect themselves and others to be socially appropriate.

'Learning to Live Together' or the Social Dimension:
This is the ethical Dimension that underpins the vision for citizenship education in MENA. It adopts a human rights-based approach consistent with democratic and social justice values and principles, and constitutes the ethical foundation of the three other Dimensions. Equally important, citizenship education aims to be relevant in MENA by engaging with the most poignant challenges facing the region, by respecting neighbours and the others, and by focusing on active citizenship that promotes a sustainable vision and management of the environment.

By building inclusive identities to address the plurality of identities existing in the region, this Dimension promotes a self-reflected citizenship education that both considers its own conditions – building on the principles of universality and equality – and its boundaries (Ruitenberg, 2015). It promotes both tolerance and a culture of democratic values beyond the institutional electoral practice of democracy. It asks for individuals to be actively prepared to prevent intolerance and discrimination, major root causes of inequalities, and violence at home, in schools and in the workplace, as well as conflicts in MENA. Citizenship education, the Social Dimension, emphasizes life skills leading towards the 'right to peace' without subjugating individuals' rights, beyond mere appeasement (Schugurensky and Myers, 2003). In the framework of the 2030 Agenda, this Dimension for active citizenship

addresses issues of equitable management of shared natural resources and instils the values related to environmental conservation and collaboration, including but not limited to, sustainable lifestyles in the countries of MENA.

From four Dimensions of Learning to the life skills embodying them

The overlap between the Dimensions is not only foundational, it relates also to their realization in an individual through the promotion, exposure to, and development of life skills in each learner. Each Dimension of Learning is represented by a **set or cluster of life skills** that contribute to the development of that Dimension in each individual. This is the reason for the dynamic interplay between the Dimensions: One life skill can contribute to an individual being a more innovative learner, and at the same time, preparing this learner to be more efficient at work, to feel personally empowered, and to evolve into a more engaged citizen, thus touching on all Dimensions, while also supporting and reinforcing other life skills.

A **three-step process** was used to identify the core life skills at the centre of each of the four Dimensions of Learning. Box 2 (on the next page) provides a guide for finding the detailed presentations of the three steps:

- **Step 1: Identification of a cluster of candidate core life skills by Dimension of Learning.** Using the four Dimensions of Learning to categorize life skills, a first comprehensive listing of life skills falling under each of the four Dimensions of Learning was established by analysing a broad range of relevant international and regional frameworks and the life skills suggested in relation to quality education and learning outcomes, employability and entrepreneurship, individual empowerment and civic engagement.

- **Step 2: Selection of a set of three life skills most relevant to each Dimension.** Aiming to provide a manageable number of life skills, a set of three life skills for each Dimension was selected from the initial life skills cluster (see Figure 2), based on two criteria:

  - Each skill has to clearly contribute to the realization of the Dimension, and is a higher-order skill, from which 'related skills' can be subsumed that, in turn, contributes to understanding the depth of the selected life skill.

  - Each of these skills is of particular relevance to the MENA context building on the consultation process that has informed the development of this document.

Box 2 Three-step process for the identification of the 12 core life skills for MENA

Identification Process	Section for further information
Step 1. Identification of a cluster of candidate core life skills by Dimension of Learning.	Section 2.2.
Step 2. Selection of a set of three life skills most relevant to each Dimension.	Section 2.2.
Step 3. Analysis of the 12 core life skills for MENA. • Definition of each life skill and core relevance in MENA. • Detailed analysis of the contribution of each life skill with regard to each of the four Dimensions of Learning in MENA.	Section 2.3. Annex 1

• **Step 3: Analysis of the 12 core life skills for MENA**. With the purpose of emphasizing the holistic nature of the four-dimensional model, a final indepth analysis of each of the 12 core life skills was conducted highlighting their objectives, main features and particular contribution to their related Dimension, and, their equally important contribution to the other three Dimensions in the MENA context.

2.2 The four Dimensions of Learning and their life skills clusters

This section elaborates on the **first and second steps** involved in the identification of the core life skills relevant for each Dimension of Learning. The four-dimensional model provides a framework for looking at life skills in relation to different purposes of learning. Each Dimension was used to identify life skills based on available evidence through a literature review and the findings of the Analytical Mapping (UNICEF, 2017a) undertaken in the context of MENA. This resulted in the identification of an array of life skills – 'the cluster of candidate core life skills' – for each Dimension, from which three were identified as essential for the realization of that Dimension (UNICEF, 2017a).

The **interdependence of the four Dimensions of Learning** is further explained by the cross-dimensionality of the identified core life skills that combine in the all-round person. These core life skills together enhance and foster the learners' abilities to face and address key socio-economic issues. It is important to remember that, while the clusters of life skills, and more specifically the rationale behind the identification of three core life skills in each of these clusters, are presented by Dimension, both the Dimensions themselves and their related life skills have to be understood across all the Dimensions to fully capture their impact and how they reinforce each other.

The Cognitive Dimension

The Cognitive Dimension of Learning is necessary for developing both new technical skills and life skills, ensuring acquisition and mastering of new knowledge, understanding and being able to discover. There are **multiple theoretical approaches to learning**. While neuroscience is providing insights into how the brain works, recent cognitive models and constructivism have been influential in emphasizing that learning involves both cognitive processes as well as interpersonal skills, thus fostering an approach that is more participatory and involves the development of thinking beyond memorization of facts and concepts.

As a result, this Dimension implies the development of abilities involving at the same time concentration, memory, problem-solving and critical thinking (UNESCO, 1996), as well as curiosity and a desire to gain a better understanding of the world and other people. These life skills are instrumental in supporting learners in MENA to rethink and develop new solutions to old and new problems. Furthermore, the Cognitive Dimension involves a **mastering of the instruments of knowledge rather than merely acquiring information**. Thus, the Cognitive Dimension expands beyond the narrower 'Learning to Learn' concept, which tends to promote the acquisition of fundamental basic skills, such as literacy, numeracy, ICT and financial literacy (OECD, 2015).

Indeed, cognitive skills have long been recognized as critically important. One of the most influential approaches, Bloom's Taxonomy, identified three domains of learning: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (Bloom et al., 1956). The cognitive domain relates to knowledge and mental skills, the affective one concerns feelings, emotional areas and attitudes, and the psychomotor domain relates to manual or physical skills. This approach recognizes that learning involves the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Anderson et al., 2000) and is still

used in the TIMSS measurement methodology which assesses 'knowing', 'applying' and 'reasoning' as the cognitive domains.

In more recent education and skills frameworks, the conceptualization of life skills related to the Cognitive Dimension expands its scope to include **advanced critical thinking capabilities**, encompassing both the capacity to independently weigh in on the content of the information received, as well as the level of meta-cognitive awareness with the capacity to self-assess and 'think about thinking'. It also adds a layer of complexity by considering individual as well as collaborative learning settings. Thus, according to the European Commission (2007) and Rozman and Koren (2013), 'Learning to Know' skills include the ability to organize one's own learning and set learning goals, be self-disciplined, evaluate one's own work, learn autonomously, work collaboratively, share learning with others, and seek advice, guidance and support when appropriate. By promoting the meta-cognitive level in renewed pedagogies, MENA educational systems could prepare youth and children to identify and overcome complex life challenges in 21st century environments, as well as constructively engage and address the sometimes contradictory social demands by seeking inclusive solutions.

In addition, the Cognitive Dimension has a strong **affective element** (Hoskins and Fredriksson, 2008), involving a positive attitude, self-motivation, inner-willingness to develop and make personal changes, self-awareness and confidence (Hofmann, 2008), which correlates with life skills needed for personal empowerment, aimed at in the Individual Dimension.

From the cluster of life skills identified in the Cognitive Dimension, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving are considered core life skills for MENA. These skills also support the promotion and development of a series of **related skills** in the learner. This approach to the 'Learning to Know' life skills is largely reflected in the *Partnership for 21st Century Skills Framework*, which focuses specifically on creativity, critical thinking, communication and

collaboration, and identifies 'learning and innovation skills' as a key outcome area, separating those learners who are prepared for an increasingly complex life and work environments from those who are not.

Specifically, **critical thinking and problem-solving** are now widely recognized as important life skills. They include the ability to reason effectively, use systems' thinking and identify solutions to problems. Related to these is the skill of decision-making, which includes analytical thinking, making judgements, and being able to evaluate evidence, claims, and beliefs. The ability to reflect critically on one's own learning is another important thinking skill, sometimes referred to as meta-cognitive skills *(Partnership for 21st Century Skills; C21 Framework for 21st Century Skills; European Framework of Competencies for the 21st Century)*.

Creativity and the life skills related to and furthered by creativity, such as the capacity to analyse and synthesize ideas, and innovative and divergent thinking, come to the fore on two levels: thinking creatively individually and working creatively with others in the context of learning activities. Creativity involves a range of skills, drawing on foundational, communication and cooperative skills for effectiveness, which are life skills at the centre of the Individual and Instrumental Dimensions respectively, thus underscoring the inter-relations both between Dimensions and between skills.

As a result, the integration of these life skills in MENA educational systems is the starting point for equipping learners to become more productive and innovative in life situations, to develop a sense of agency by thinking of and realizing, one's own thinking capacities and areas of growth, and to become informed, active citizens. In Table 1, the **three identified core life skills** of the Cognitive Dimension are related to the life skills that they connect to, both because the life skills enhance the core skills, and because they complement each other.

Table 1 Life skills cluster of the Cognitive Dimension

Core life skills	Related life skills
Creativity	Innovative thinking, divergent thinking, articulating ideas, analysis and synthesis; agency
Critical thinking	Meta-cognitive skills (thinking about thinking), questioning, interpreting information and synthesizing, listening; self-protection, social responsibility
Problem-solving	Curiosity, attentiveness, analytical thinking, active engagement

The Instrumental Dimension

'Learning to Know' and 'Learning to Do' are deeply inter-connected (UNESCO, 1996). Indeed, the second Dimension of 'Learning to Do' considers how children and youth can be supported to put what they have learned into practice and how education can be adapted to better help them to navigate life situations in general, and serve the world of work in particular. A major focus of the Delors Report, this approach had been anticipated in the Bloom's taxonomy with the **concept of 'application'**, i.e. putting theoretical learning into practice in everyday contexts (Bloom et al., 1956). In fact, 'Learning to Do' can be linked to major areas of action and key transitions for youth, such as the transition to adulthood, adult health, and family life. Thus, health education and reproductive health education are linked to this Dimension of Learning.

'Learning to Do' is, further, strongly correlated to **employability, technical and vocational skills and entrepreneurship**, and by extension, entering, adapting to and designing one's pathway in the world of work, both personally and in relation to co-workers, management, clients or customers. Because this is an important area where life skills are contextualized and performed in the framework of complex micro- and macroeconomic dynamics, it represents one of the major transitions in life from youth to adulthood (World Bank, 2007). Yet, a growing concern internationally, and especially in MENA, is youth employability, since current education provision is often perceived to be inadequately preparing them for the world of work, with the problem persisting in later stages of their career (Brewer, 2013; ILO, 2015; IFC, 2016). The process of learning for employability and the world of work can be delivered in various ways through general education, TVET, formal and informal workplace training, or entrepreneurship trainings.

With the workplace a place of learning, the **'Learning to Do'** skills entail a broad category of core work and life skills (Brewer, 2013). Employers generally prefer workers who are able and motivated to learn. Learning takes place through the demands of daily work activities, through programmed learning opportunities, such as training, and as independent learning by using e-learning or open and distance learning modalities. Employers are looking for independent learners who are motivated and self-sufficient on the job with life skills such as planning, time management, self-control, staying on task, customer service, etc. Hence, life skills for learning are useful for improving productivity, advancing on a career path, changing working practices and adapting to new technologies.

While employment and employability are a relatively rich field in life skills analysis and offer numerous listings of desirable individual life skills, there appears to be broad consensus on the fact that learning for the world of work needs to consider its fast pace of change so that the person can meet the **evolving demands of the labour market** (Winthrop and McGivney, 2016). Correspondingly, growing emphasis is put on lifelong learning and individual responsibility to remain flexible and adaptive (Lucas and Hanson, 2014). Hence, learning for employability includes the development of core life skills, awareness of workers' rights, as well as an entrepreneurial ambitious spirit.

Among the most **prevalent life skills** that were identified in different frameworks that enable youth and others to navigate the labour market, as well as gain and retain work, are teamwork, decision-making and negotiation skills. Further life skills often mentioned and mapped within different Dimensions in the CPF due to their relevance throughout the four-dimensional model, include creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving – all core life skills of the Cognitive Dimension – and communication, which is highly important with regard to the Individual Dimension (Brewer, 2013).

The development of **'entrepreneurship skills'** or an 'entrepreneurial spirit' is growing area of learning for the world of work. The European Union includes the 'sense of initiative and entrepreneurship' as a key competence (European Union, 2007). Among others, the ILO has developed the Know About Business (KAB) Programme to create awareness about, and sensitize youth towards entrepreneurship as a career option, encouraging youth to develop the life and technical skills that are needed to start and operate a sustainable enterprise (ILO, 2009).

Therefore, **cooperation, negotiation and decision-making** make up the core life skills of the Instrumental Dimension because of two inter-connected reasons: first, they support youth in MENA in finding work by being both decisive and prepared with the skills that employers seek, thanks in particular to better goal setting, career planning, and organizational skills; second, they help youth to be productive and efficient in the world of work as they develop a better knowledge of the workplace demands supported by related life skills, among others customer relationships and teamwork to achieve common goals. These life skills enhanced by other related life skills also lead to adaptation in the world of work (action planning, influencing and leadership). More specifically, they allow youth to navigate in more complex – and international – collaborative settings (cooperation, customer service,

Table 2 Life skills cluster of the Instrumental Dimension

Core life skills	Related life skills
Cooperation	Teamwork to achieve common goals, collaboration in the workplace; respect for others
Negotiation	Influencing and leadership, cooperation, customer relationship, career planning, effective communication
Decision-making	Action planning, goal setting, leadership skills, risk taking, safety skills, ethical reasoning

respect for others), and provide support for the increase in digital environments identified earlier along with support for the innovative process that the region needs (cooperation, leadership skills, risk-taking). Finally, these three core life skills can help foster entrepreneurial behaviours in youth and others. Table 2 presents the Instrumental Dimension with the **three identified core life skills** and the related skills necessary to enhance the impact of the core life skills in and for the learner.

The Individual Dimension

By involving the all-round development of the person, the Individual Dimension fosters personal growth and self-empowerment as well as a greater sense of agency in the learners who develop their ability to act with increased autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility. An **enabler to all other Dimensions of Learning**, the Individual Dimension entails life skills that are critical for self-protection, violence prevention and resilience (WHO, 1998; WHO, 2009), and allows each individual to make positive life and work choices. Education systems are expected to provide a wide range of opportunities as well as flexibility in delivering learning programmes in order to cater for individual differences due to individual experience, previous learning outcomes, age, family constraints, etc.

As both a foundation and a composite of all Dimensions, the Individual Dimension includes **cognitive, intra-personal and interpersonal life skills**. At the core of personal development are fundamental life skills, which are complemented by other types of skills, e.g., technical and vocational, artistic, recreational and cultural, together with a set of key attitudes. It is ultimately up to each individual to determine personal development goals and priorities, given individual variations. The provision of guidance for personal fulfilment and empowerment in MENA educational systems is an important consideration, as these systems evolve towards student-centred pedagogies based on the learners' individual needs, their strengths and areas of growth.

The Individual Dimension of Learning is realized through life skills that enable children and youth in MENA to constructively, not passively, face and address, individually and with others, the **risks linked to unhealthy behaviours**, violence, rising extremism and inequalities. Resilience, coping skills, stress management, motivation, self-awareness, self-efficacy and self-control are among the prevalent self-management skills that are critical to personal development and are regularly included in life skills frameworks for personal success (WHO, 1998).

Personal development has traditionally been labelled as 'character-building'. Despite definitional limitations, this term relates to relevant life skills, allowing elaboration on the concepts of 'self-fulfilment' and 'empowerment'; particularly, character skills including perseverance, self-control, attentiveness, self-esteem, self-efficacy, empathy, resilience, tolerance of diversity, trust and humility (Heckman and Kautz, 2013). Notably, self-management and especially self-awareness include the ability to assess one's strengths and limitations, which is key to building on opportunities to realize one's potential throughout life.

Personal empowerment and the aforementioned cognitive and intra-personal life skills clusters supporting autonomous, responsible and resilient individuals **correlate with the development of higher-order thinking life skills and interpersonal life skills**, such as communication skills, cooperation skills, empathy and relationship skills more generally. Autonomy is a key characteristic of empowerment and includes taking personal ownership of one's own development, work and career, and social connections. Critical for empowerment are complex communication skills, one set of the 'Four C's', which include critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity (Partnership for the 21st Century Skills, 2008; National Research Council, 2012). Beyond being essential in the learning process itself, communication enhances in learners their sense of worth and allow them develop and maintain balanced relationships while being socially appropriate. This is essential for children and youth in MENA, who can then become more self-aware and gain a voice amidst contradictory messages and

Table 3 Life skills cluster of the Individual Dimension

Core life skills	Related life skills
Self-management	Self-efficacy, goal setting, life planning, autonomy, agency, self-help, motivation
Resilience	Grit, steadfastness, stress control, adaptability, self-efficacy, self-development, agency, emotional and behavioural regulation, adaptation to adversity, emergency preparedness
Communication	Relationship management, self-realization, self-presentation, active listening, two-way empathic communication, appropriate assertiveness

conflict situations, thus equipped to be constructive and active citizens.

It is important to recognize the inter-connections between Individual Dimension and the Social Dimension, and the **tensions that exist between an individualistic conceptualization of learning and one that is socially oriented**. Since an overly individualistic approach would be counterproductive, it appears that the two must be harmonized to optimize the benefits of citizenship education. To that effect, the ethical and human rights-based values of citizenship education should underpin the Individual Dimension. Therefore, within this cluster of life skills, self-management, resilience, and communication are the three core life skills that underpin the Individual Dimension in MENA (see Table 3).

The Social Dimension

In *Learning: The Treasure Within,* the Delors Commission urged policy makers and practitioners of the educational community worldwide to be guided by the "**utopian aim of steering the world** towards greater mutual understanding, a greater sense of responsibility and greater solidarity, through acceptance of our spiritual and cultural differences" (UNESCO, 1996). In their view, 'Learning to Live Together', introduced as the third 'pillar' of education, was expected to help develop "an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence (carrying out joint projects and learning to manage conflicts) in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace" (UNESCO, 1996). In this document the Social Dimension is placed as the fourth Dimension as it underpins all other Dimensions of Learning and reinforces the rights-based approach to education. As 'Learning to Live Together' gained traction in education discourses in the last decade, it became an umbrella term that synthesized many related goals, such as education for peace and human rights, as well as citizenship and health-preserving behaviours (Sinclair, 2004).

The Social Dimension, understood as citizenship education, adopts a human rights-based approach

consistent with democratic and social justice values and principles, and constitutes the **ethical foundation of the three other Dimensions** (Cognitive, Instrumental, and Individual). By engaging with challenges related to fostering diverse identities, promoting tolerance, enhancing the right to participation, addressing conflict and achieving socio-economic development without compromising environmental sustainability, the Social Dimension is particularly relevant in the MENA context.

An analysis of the different frameworks and composite civic competence indicators with regard to skills for active citizenship points to **several conclusions**. First, skills for active citizenship are highly contextual to each of the socio-political contexts. Hence, in humanitarian contexts, conflict management and their related skills become more relevant to the particular context; while in liberal democracies, social responsibility, ethical thinking, or active engagement takes priority. Second, the selection of skills is, in many cases, driven by vision rather than by evidence, i.e., skills for active citizenship respond to the needs of the context as well as to the vision regarding the kind of society that is desired. Third, skills for active citizenship are intertwined with values that enhance one or a combination of ethical approaches (common good, rights, virtues, etc.). Finally, while skills for active citizenship build on and are grounded in cognitive and individual skills, it takes them a step further by adding the ethical dimension.

The **skills that are needed for the Social Dimension** are linked to participating effectively in civic life; exercising the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, national and global levels; respecting other cultures, and understanding local and global implications of political decisions. The promotion and development of these life skills is, thus, rooted in the Individual Dimension, as active citizens are learners and individuals who are steadfast, self-aware, and can position themselves within society. Furthermore, it strongly relates to the Cognitive Dimension, as these life skills are instrumental to learning to be an active citizen over a lifetime.

The **Global Citizenship Education** framework (UNESCO, 2014a) prioritizes critical thinking skills together with the ability to inquire and analyse. Learners need to develop empathy, solidarity and respect for diversity along with the motivation and willingness to take action, sharing values and responsibilities based on human rights. Cooperation and a set of complex communication skills, as well as ethically responsible behaviours, are therefore critically important and require identifying and following one's personal values. Self-management skills are also fundamental, involving self-control, self-awareness and anger management. Participation skills and the practice of voluntarism are necessary for active citizenship (Council of Europe, 2017).

As with the previous clusters of life skills and the identification of core life skills for each Dimension, the **list of life skills for active citizenship** is based on frequency and relevance during national consultations in MENA, and in national and international education frameworks, and related literature. Life skills for active citizenship build on many of the life skills introduced as part of the other three Dimensions, with the added ethical underpinning, on life skills for learning, such as critical thinking and problem-solving, as well as on life skills that foster personal empowerment, such as self-management and resilience. Because they support the goals of the Social Dimension, the **three identified core life skills** are respect for diversity, empathy and participation, all enhanced and complemented by the afore-mentioned related life skills (see Table 4).

2.3   Twelve core life skills for MENA

This section **explores each of the identified 12 core life skills**, stressing the holistic nature of the four-dimensional model proposed in the CPF. To that end, each core life skill is defined and its 'core' status in relation to the four Dimensions of Learning explained from a rights-based approach. A final table consolidates the functions of the core life skill and its related life skills in all four Dimensions. Both their

frequency across the four Dimensions as well as their relevance – as found in the literature and national consultations – were key criteria of selection.

To better understand the impact of their cross-dimensionality and the nature of these core life skills as 'revolving', life skills are further assessed in individual four-page explanations in Annex 1, that elaborate on their fundamental contribution to each of the Dimensions of Learning, i.e., not only for the Dimension in which they appear and through which they were identified in the first place. This section and Annex 1 complement each other. Indeed, the 12 core life skills, like the Dimensions of Learning, are presented in this document linearly as a way to highlight their components, relevance and added value, yet they have to be understood and interpreted transversally to fully capture their impact across the Dimensions.

In keeping with the logic of this model, the 12 core life skills reflect a **holistic and transformative vision** for quality education based on a strong ethical foundation, which recognizes that education needs to both foster human dignity and promote human rights-based values; enhanced and developed within the individual learner these core life skills are the actual, concrete vectors of the ethical principles of this framework. As a result, the identification and selection process of these core life skills was not value-neutral, as the life skills themselves have an ethical function.

The 12 core life skills are featured within an approach to **'rethink education'** in a way that fulfils its role in fostering processes of social interaction conducive to enhancing social cohesion (UNESCO, 2015b). Hence, the 12 core life skills are also aligned with relevant citizenship and humanitarian frameworks conceived to care for and respect other human beings, as well as minimizing or preventing the use of violence (GIZ, 2008). Consequently, unlike existing frameworks at use, and as previously mentioned, the aim of the 12 core life skills for MENA is not merely to gear education towards the achievement of successful individual performance in the context of

Table 4 Life skills cluster of the Social Dimension

Core life skills	Related life skills
Respect for diversity	Active tolerance social interaction, self-esteem, self-control, analytical thinking, active listening
Empathy	Understanding others, caring for others, identifying abusive and non-abusive behaviours, altruistic behaviour, conflict management, conflict resolution, understanding and managing emotions
Participation	Dialogue, active listening, analytical and critical thinking, self-confidence, agency

the workplace, as education is not primarily reduced to an economic activity leading to the maximization of growth and productivity (Spring, 2015).

The 12 core life skills are further analysed through a **lifelong approach to learning**. In this regard, they build on evidence that underlines the importance of life skills acquisition from an early age, addressing the 'bias' that exists in the education community of linking life skills acquisition only to the adolescents and youth. As explained above, the importance of the 'cumulative investment in skill acquisition' is recognized in the present document. Finally, the 12 core life skills are acquired through all forms of learning in a systems approach that recognizes multiple pathways through which learning can occur, including linkages between formal, non-formal and informal education.

The ethical foundation of these 12 core life skills, their holistic and transformative relevance, their cross-dimensionality, as well as their individual and social impact underpin their **interdependence**. This has two major implications; the first is a foundational and programmatic element: The 12 core life skills do not make up a 'menu' that one can choose from. As they work together, all have to be considered simultaneously to realize the vision of education offered in this document. The second is a conceptual principle: Because of their equal and intertwined relevance, **there is no hierarchy among these 12 core life skills**.

Figure 2 The twelve core life skills

Creativity

Definition and components. Creativity, or being creative, is the ability to generate, articulate or apply inventive ideas, techniques and perspectives (Ferrari, 2009), often in a collaborative environment (Lucas and Hanson, 2016). In conjunction with critical thinking and problem-solving skills, to which it closely relates, creativity is a major component of purposeful thinking, i.e., a non-chaotic, orderly and organized thought process. Further, being creative is to a large extent connected to the learners' cognitive abilities, including their analytic and evaluative skills (Sternberg, 2006). Ideational thought processes are fundamental to creative persons (Kozbelt et al., 2010), but creativity also intersects with social and personal management skills. Therefore, creativity, while also related to the arts, is a pre-condition to innovation and adaptive behaviours and solutions in all life settings, among them in learning settings and in the workplace (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015). Creativity is linked to the effectiveness of other life skills, in particular critical thinking, problem identification (Sternberg, 2010), problem-solving (Torrance, 1977) and self-management.

With regard to a renewed vision for education in MENA, creativity is relevant at two levels. First, it is intrinsic to the learning process of all learners, at all ages and across the curriculum; therefore, this is a means of knowledge creation that can support and enhance self-learning, learning how to learn and lifelong learning (Ferrari et al., 2009). Thus, the promotion of creativity is a core component of improved learning processes and education systems. Second, promoting creativity in and beyond education settings helps children, youth and other learners to unearth their resources in multiple disciplines and subject areas, while developing their capacity to brainstorm, cast a fresh look on school, family, health and workplace situations, and offer constructive suggestions. Indeed, recurrent in national skills documents, creativity and creativity-related skills, such as innovative thinking, collaboration, and self-efficacy, are valued throughout life (Care, Anderson and Kim, 2016). For this reason, psychologists have long maintained the importance of fostering creative development in children in order to prepare them for a changing future (Kozbelt et al., 2010; Guilford, 1950), which in turn, is a priority in the MENA context, as children and youth face particularly complex life environments.
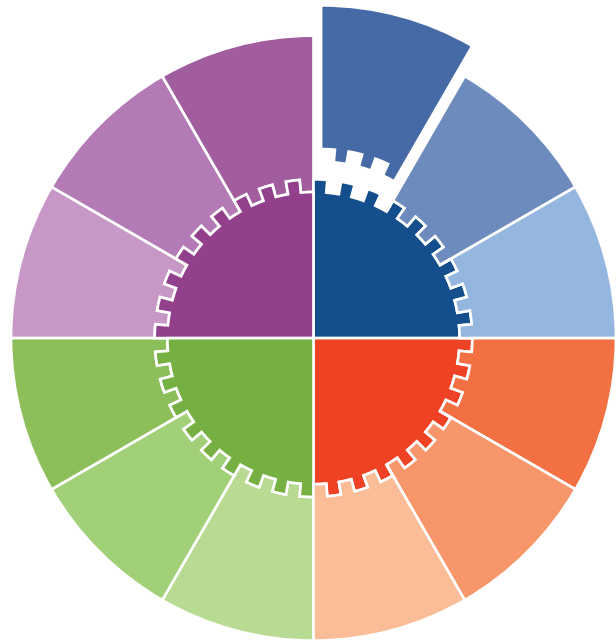
Relevance in MENA with regard to the Dimensions of Learning and added social value. Interventions targeted at improving creative thinking have been successful at increasing student academic achievement generally (Maker, 2004). This is of specific relevance in MENA where education service delivery generally does not set out to encourage it because teacher-centred pedagogy tends to suppress innovative ideas (Kozbelt et al., 2010), and school environments are not systemically felt as safe by children. Fostering creativity by adapting methods and building safe educational environments could, therefore, support the overall performance of the schools in the region, while preparing learners to be innovative in life and the world of work. As creativity develops over time, from potential to achievement, it is necessary to start at an early age. There have been successful efforts to improve creativity of children through facilitation of pretend play skills (Russ and Fiorelli, 2010). Other success factors include: (i) the exploration of different activities so that children can find what they enjoy and develop their talents and abilities; and (ii) caring environments, in which children feel safe to express even unconventional ideas, where every day acts of creativity are reinforced, and independence in problem-solving encouraged (Russ and Fiorelli, 2010).

Thus an essential component of the Cognitive Dimension, creativity is also one of the most sought after life skills in the Instrumental Dimension. It is a

necessary, constructive element of the innovative thinking processes, and a crucial life skill in sciences and the world of work. As such, being creative helps to address, and, more importantly for youth in MENA, to partake constructively in the complex and evolving technological and digital settings. Being creative further allows for adaptation in various life situations by developing improved or new solutions, methods and processes to address old problems and contemporary challenges. Thus, learners develop a sense of self-efficacy and persistence, leading them to feel empowered, one of the key outcomes of the Individual Dimension. In addition, social creativity, a collaborative phenomenon, shapes individual learners to be even more creative, combining in the process different cultures. Creativity adds quintessential value to the Social Dimension.

Finally, according to Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, creativity is critical to the "development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical talents to their fullest potential" (United Nations General Assembly. 1989). Hence, beyond the development of children's intellectual abilities, a task traditionally viewed as the sole responsibility of schools (UNICEF, 2007b), there is an ethical justification for a variety of educational settings to be conducive to creativity, particularly by encouraging and fostering dynamism, playfulness, freedom, trust (Cabra and Joniak, 2006), tolerance of differences and personal commitment (Siegel and Kaemmerer, 1978); as well as organizational encouragement and work group support (Amabile et al., 1995), thus emphasizing the Social Dimension of creativity.

Table 5 Relevance of creativity by Dimensions of Learning

Dimensions	Relevance
Learning to Know/ Cognitive Dimension	To sharpen learning processes and outcomes To prepare children for success in a fast changing world To enhance enjoyment and relevance of learning
Learning to Do/ Instrumental Dimension	To develop successful entrepreneurs To facilitate problem-solving in the workplace To improve employability and promotion, regardless of gender
Learning to Be/ Individual Dimension	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To support development of coping skills
Learning to Live Together/ Social Dimension	To contribute to societal problem-solving towards inclusive citizenship To improve social cohesion through creative approaches to conflict management To facilitate social engagement in the promotion of common good

Critical thinking

Definition and components. Critical thinking, an instrumental life skill conducive to academic achievement, is a long-standing life skill, which allows 'reflective thinking': By thinking critically, children, youth and all individuals who learn to assess situations and assumptions, ask questions and develop various ways of thinking. Therefore, critical thinking involves higher-order executive functioning: This is a 'meta-skill' through which one learns to think about thinking and develop purposeful thinking processes, such as being able to discern and evaluate whether an argument makes sense or not.

Dewey, in his classic work *How We Think,* described it as the "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey, 1910). Critical thinking is a universally applicable complex process, and purposeful mental activity, that involves multiple skills including separating facts from opinion, recognizing assumptions, questioning the validity of evidence, asking questions, verifying information, listening and observing, and understanding multiple perspectives (Lai, 2011). It constitutes an ability to analyse information in an objective manner. This is essential for children's and individuals' wellbeing, as it helps them to recognize and assess factors that influence their attitudes and behaviours, such as values, peer pressure and the media (WHO, 1997), thus helping them to protect themselves from violence, negative voices and radicalization.

Thinking critically, however, is not synonymous with systematically criticizing or rejecting, since it allows each learner to pose, gather, evaluate, synthesize and then assess facts, before drawing conclusions and preparing an answer. Therefore, critical thinking is also is a thoughtful and constructive process that prepares the individual to face complex economy changes and complex life environments.

Critical thinking is a lifelong life skill. In theory all people can be taught to think critically (Lai, 2011). Ideally, children should be taught this at an early, as empirical research suggests that people begin developing critical thinking skills at a very young age. Critical thinking should be practiced often, in various educational and work settings, and should not be pushed from core content designs (Trottier, 2009).

Relevance in MENA with regard to the Dimensions of Learning and added social value. Equipped with higher-order executive functioning skills, critical thinkers analyse information in an objective manner, make balanced decisions and are better problem-solvers. This helps individuals to access and grow in the changing world of work in MENA. They can re-consider and adapt existing business strategies and processes to be more efficient, make the workplace safer, increase customer-care, and are ready to evolve within the knowledge and digital economy. Of particular relevance in the region, thinking critically is conducive to self-efficacy and resilience, and also fosters a person's self-management skills, thus leading to safe choices with regard to their health and their community. This is why instilling a critical mind-set is key to enhancing children's capacities towards self-protection, particularly in the face of violence and fragile environments, such as the ones existing in MENA.

Critical thinking is also a crucial skill needed for citizens to constructively participate in a plural and democratic society, enabling them to make their own – positive – contribution to said society (Dam and Volman, 2004). Indeed, hand in hand with the Individual Dimension, critical thinking brings about constructive social behaviours in individuals as it enhances their self-determination and will to be engaged in their community. Children, youth and individuals who develop their capacity to think critically understand and can act to prevent violence, radicalization and environmentally unsustainable attitudes. Thus, critical thinking is at the core and one of the essential outcomes, of citizenship education.

Table 6 Relevance of critical thinking by Dimensions of Learning

Dimensions	Relevance
Learning to Know/ Cognitive Dimension	To be able to make a reasoned argument both orally and in writing To enhance scientific thinking
Learning to Do/ Instrumental Dimension	To ensure successful entrepreneurship and business development To ensure effective working with other people To ensure wellbeing and safety in the workplace
Learning to Be/ Individual Dimension	To support development of self-confidence and personal fulfilment
Learning to Live Together/ Social Dimension	To foster critical engagement in society To be able to recognize forms of manipulation and persuasion To promote sustainable and equitable social transformation To recognize and value other viewpoints

Problem-solving

Definition and components. A problem-solver has the ability to "think through steps that lead from a given state of affairs to a desired goal" (Barbey and Baralou, 2009). Another essential aspect of purposeful thinking, problem-solving is a high-order thinking process inter-related with other important life skills, such as critical thinking, analytical thinking, decision-making and creativity. More specifically, being able to solve problems implies a process of planning, i.e., the formulation of a method to attain the desired goal. Problem-solving begins with recognizing that a problematic situation exists and establishing an understanding of the nature of the situation. It requires the solver to identify the specific problem(s) to be solved, plan and carry out a solution, and monitor and evaluate progress throughout the activity (OECD, 2015).

Thus, evidence from cognitive psychology highlights the importance of recognizing, defining and representing problems in the problem-solving process. There are two classes of problems: (i) the well-defined ones (i.e., goals, path to solution and obstacles to solution are clear) and the ill-defined ones (i.e., a lack of a clear path to solution). The main challenge in solving an ill-defined problem is in clarifying the nature of the problem. Moreover, as neuroscience suggests that depending on whether a problem-solving task is well defined or not, different brain systems are involved (Barbey and Baralou, 2009), the exercises conducive to a coherent and efficient practice of solving problems should be varied to present learners with various types of issues.

The ability to solve problems is an important part of the PISA assessment (OECD), which has identified and grouped the cognitive processes involved in problem-solving into:

- Exploring and understanding: exploring the problem situation by observing it, interacting with it, searching for information and finding limitations or obstacles; and demonstrating and understanding of the information given and the information discovered while interacting with the problem situation.

- Representing and formulating: using tables, graphs, symbols or words to represent aspects of the problem situation; and formulating hypotheses about the relevant factors in a problem and the relationships between them, to build a coherent mental representation of the problem situation.

- Planning and executing: devising a plan or strategy to solve the problem, and executing it. It may involve clarifying the overall goal, setting sub-goals, etc.

- Monitoring and reflecting: monitoring progress, reacting to feedback, and reflecting on the solution, the information provided with the problem, or the strategy adopted.

Moreover, while problem-solving has so far been equated to one person resolving a problematic life situation or work alone, collaborative problem-solving (CPS) is an increasingly critical and necessary life skill across educational settings, as well as in the workforce. It is strongly driven by the need for students to prepare for careers that require abilities to work effectively in groups and to apply their problem-solving skills in these social situations (OECD, 2015). Accordingly, the 2015 PISA assessment CPS is defined "as the capacity of an individual to effectively engage in a process whereby two or more agents attempt to solve a problem by sharing the understanding and effort required to come to a solution and pooling their knowledge, skills and efforts to reach that solution" (OECD, 2015).

Relevance in MENA with regard to the Dimensions of Learning and added social value. Problem-solving is logically valued throughout life (Care and Anderson, 2016) and frequently included in international skills frameworks, including health and work related frameworks (WHO, 1997; IYF, 2014b; ILO, 2013). Indeed, problem-solving is a prerequisite for academic success, particularly for science, technology, engineering and mathematics

(STEM), which is best practiced and developed in various educational settings from early childhood onwards, for example through problem-based learning. Problem-solvers in the world of work are more employable, more efficient entrepreneurs and better decision-makers, usually working collaboratively. Individuals with developed problem-solving skills have an increased sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy, which, combined with the core life skills of effective decision-making and critical thinking, support the individual in achieving better health and wellbeing. Consequently, problem-solvers tend to be active in their community and contribute to developing community-based solutions to community problems, also by collaboratively

devising conflict-exit strategies acceptable to all members of the community.

Yet, international education outcome assessment results indicate that education systems are failing to equip young people with even basic problem-solving skills (TIMSS and PISA). Hence, there is an opportunity for MENA educational systems to rethink their pedagogy by integrating problem-solving into the teaching of content, and making teaching outcomes relevant to MENA children and learners, with regard to their everyday life problems, the 21st century challenges of the world of work, and the issues that their community may face.

Table 7 Relevance of problem-solving by Dimensions of Learning

Dimensions	Relevance
Learning to Know/ Cognitive Dimension	To improve learning processes and outcomes To prepare children for success in a fast changing world To foster learning that is relevant to everyday life
Learning to Do/ Instrumental Dimension	To improve decision-making and planning skills To enable efficient working with co-workers, improved productivity, innovation, decision-making, effective team working etc.
Learning to Be/ Individual Dimension	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To improve health and wellbeing
Learning to Live Together/ Social Dimension	To foster positive social transformation To contribute to community-based solutions to community problems To enhance social engagement in community work and voluntarism

Cooperation

Definition and components. Cooperation, i.e., for an individual being cooperative and acting cooperatively, is the act or process of working together to get something done or to achieve a common purpose that is mutually beneficial (Tyler 2011). It can involve teamwork and active collaboration, which is a form of cooperation and is often used as a synonym. Cooperation is central to many activities in the everyday world encountered by children, youth and all learners in school, at home, at work, in the community, and at national and regional levels. Because cooperation is useful for problem-solving and forms the basis for healthy social relationships, it is a core life skill directly related to family, social and political conflict management and resolution in MENA.

Cooperation can be conceived of in terms of rewards and costs, with people motivated to cooperate based on their perception of personal benefits or in relation to monetary value, which is a transactional view in contrast to a "socially-oriented or 'common good' approach" (Tyler, 2011). Accordingly, social, rather than material, motivations can shape cooperative relationships. These involve common values, shared identities, emotional connections, trust and joint commitments to using fair procedures. From this perspective it can be argued that the long-term viability of groups and organizations, even societies, is linked to their ability to develop and sustain cooperation skills. Moreover, cooperation can be related to the concept of fair-play that is instrumental to bridging the competitive aspect of human relationships, especially in business settings, and the necessity to collaborate to constructively overcome an issue at hand. Under the portmanteau phrase 'co-opetition' (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1997), a way of resolving sometimes difficult participation in cooperative processes, can be extended to conflict-management processes at home and in the community.

A cross-dimensional life skill, cooperation is closely related to, supported by and complements the following life skills communication, empathy, respect for diversity and problem-solving, which are all core life skills identified under the present model and prevalent in the Cognitive, Individual and Social Dimensions. Particularly important are communication skills, involving actively listening to other people's ideas and opinions, and being

supportive of those. Often identified in other life skills frameworks, collaboration is linked to communication in the 21st-century skills framework under the umbrella of learning and innovation skills.

Relevance in MENA with regard to the Dimensions of Learning and added social value. As a result, learners who develop cooperation skills, especially young learners who are taught to work collaboratively, take more pleasure in learning and perform better with regard to academic achievement. Moreover they demonstrate stronger socially desirable behaviours, while their sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy increase (Fall, Webb, and Chudowsky, 1997; Rojas-Drummond and Mercer, 2003; Saner, et al., 1994; Webb, 1993; Lavasani et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2007). These positive outcomes in the Cognitive and Individual Dimensions of cooperation make this core life skill highly relevant to enhance learners' academic results and psychological wellbeing in MENA, and are even more supported in the Instrumental and Social Dimensions. Cooperation and teamwork are among the most sought after life skills by the private sector in MENA, yet are currently not developed enough in young applicants and workers (Maktoum, 2008; YouGov and Bayt, 2016). Cooperation skills are key to both employability and success in entrepreneurship, as cooperative individuals work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams to achieve common goals (Brewer, 2013). Building on this, and the Individual Dimension of the skill, individuals who act cooperatively, not

competitively, are more engaged citizens, seeking favourable processes towards inclusion and conflict resolution (Deutsch, 2006).

Finally and notably, cooperation, an element of the ethical foundation and outcome of this model, is both a goal and the means through which human rights are effectively realized. According to Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights "everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible".

Table 8 Relevance of cooperation by Dimensions of Learning

Dimensions	Relevance
Learning to Know/ Cognitive Dimension	To enhance learning skills, processes and outcomes
Learning to Do/ Instrumental Dimension	To work more effectively with co-workers and customers including through effective team working To ensure sustainable entrepreneurship and development
Learning to Be/ Individual Dimension	To contribute to social skills including relationship management To cultivate good relationships with diverse individuals and groups
Learning to Live Together/ Social Dimension	To enhance social engagement towards the promotion of common good To foster prosocial processes for conflict prevention and resolution

Negotiation

Definition and components. In its simplest form, negotiation can be defined as a process of communication between at least two parties aimed at reaching agreements on their "perceived divergent interests" (Pruitt, 1998). Therefore, while the core life skill 'negotiation' relates to a process, it translates into the ability of an individual to interactively and effectively partake in a negotiation process until its conclusion by and among others, respecting others while being assertive, being cooperative, using communication skills, showing leadership skills while being civil, saying no when one's wellbeing is threatened, etc.

Individuals regularly negotiate with others in various settings and in everyday situations, from the mundane to the grave ones, at home, in family life, in school, at work, in public spaces, in international spaces, and with different types of parties – with potentially different negotiating styles – involved. Hence negotiation is applied in various fields, such as psychology, sociology, conflict management, economics, law, or international relations. The perspectives on the nature and meaning of 'a successful negotiation' may vary.

In line with existing policy guidance on humanitarian negotiation (Grace, 2015), as well as the goals of citizenship education, an 'integrative approach' to negotiation is proposed here, emphasizing cooperative processes, rather than 'competitive-distributive' ones. The integrative approach focuses on developing mutually beneficial agreements and solutions based on the interests, needs, desires, concerns and fears that are recognized as important for both parties involved (Fisher and Ury, 1981). In other words, for the negotiation process to be successful, it requires the two parties to come together and to come to an agreement that is acceptable to both.

In an 'integrative approach', negotiation and communication skills are closely interlinked (Alfredson and Cungu, 2008). Negotiation skills, supported and complemented by effective communication, can change attitudes, prevent or overcome impasses and misunderstandings, and help improve relationships, particularly in multicultural contexts, whereby culture may shape one's negotiating style (Wondwosen, 2006). As part of negotiation, listening, a key element of communication skills, provides important information about the other side and demonstrates that the party is being attentive to the other side's thoughts and respectful of their concerns (Alfredson and Hopkins, 2008). In addition, since the integrative

approach focuses on building mutual trust relationships between parties, sharing information is paramount to exposing interests and to helping parties to explore common problems or concerns.

One question relevant to all four Dimensions of Learning of the negotiation core life skill is whether the negotiation process is influenced by perceived gender roles (Hellman and Heikkilä, 2014), thus potentially questioning neutrality, fairness and equity of the process, modifying the way the negotiation is conducted, with pre-expected behaviours from the negotiating partners influencing the outcome of the negotiation. While evidence and results with regard the role of gender in the process or the outcomes of negotiating are conflicting (Alavoine, 2014; Mazei et al., 2014), gender roles, i.e., societal and constructed beliefs about behavioural expectations of men and women, can result in women feeling social pressure during negotiation processes to adhere to a perceived and socially constructed female role and display these gender-consistent behaviours, such as accommodation or cooperation, while deviations may be evaluated negatively by their negotiating counterparts (Mazei et al., 2014).

Relevance in MENA with regard to the Dimensions of Learning and added social value. With direct implications in all four Dimensions of Learning, negotiation skills are strongly interlinked with other life skills, such as communication skills, assertiveness, leadership skills, and refusal skills. More specifically in MENA, it relates to individuals', workers', learners', children's and youth's health, safety and psychosocial wellbeing. Indeed, while a key element of entrepreneurial success involving interactions with other businesses and markets

(Fells, 2009), negotiation skills enhance workers' abilities to protect themselves from exploitation, abuse and bullying in the workplace. This is, therefore, a central element of safety and both physical and psychosocial health, which also contributes to productive work.

Importantly negotiation skills are learned from early childhood, as negotiations form a part of children's play with the clear purpose to agree both on how they can be together in their play and on the content of their play. Therefore, these skills can also be reproduced, integrated and practiced in early educational settings, especially through play and simulation teaching methods. Equipped with negotiation skills from early on, children learn how to identify theirs and others' interests, and to use verbal arguments over violence, grow confident while respecting others and others' perspectives, and can protect their health, in particular their sexual and reproductive health, by being able to refuse pressure to become involved in risky behaviours (Sinclair et al., 2008). Finally, because integrative negotiation processes promote acceptable outcomes to all parties involved in conflict, negotiation skills foster a culture of respect and human rights, and social cohesion.

Table 9 Relevance of negotiation by Dimensions of Learning

Dimensions	Relevance
Learning to Know/ Cognitive Dimension	To foster negotiated learning processes and ensure children ability to be agents of their own learning To prevent bullying and violence in school
Learning to Do/ Instrumental Dimension	To enhance prevention of abuse and exploitation in the workplace To foster adequate and productive work environment To improve employability and entrepreneurship of young people
Learning to Be/ Individual Dimension	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To strengthen individual coping skills for self-protection
Learning to Live Together/ Social Dimension	To promote outcomes that are acceptable to all parties involved in conflict To foster a culture of human rights

Decision-making

Definition and components. Decision-making skills, or the ability to choose between two or more courses of action, relate to "one of the basic cognitive processes of human behaviour by which a preferred option, or a course of action, is chosen from among a set of alternatives based on certain criteria" (Wang, 2007). Decision-making is used by all individuals on a daily basis, as they are regularly faced with situations in which they have to make a judgement about how best to proceed, and also when it is most appropriate to do so. Notably, decision-making has consequences on all individuals' wellbeing through the effects of the choices they make (WHO, 1997).

As the capacity to make a decision is instrumental to most life situations, the various elements of this composite skill come from multiple disciplines, such as cognitive science, computer science, psychology, management science, economics, sociology, political science, or statistics. Decision-making is thus a composite life skill, which closely inter-relates with critical thinking skills, cooperation and negotiation skills. Several factors influence decision-making, including information, time constraint, clarity about objectives, past experience, cognitive biases, age, belief in personal relevance, and other individual differences (Dietrich, 2010; Thompson, 2009).

Decisions can be made through either intuitively, on the basis of gut feelings, or they can be made through a reasoned process, using thinking about facts and figures, or a combination of the two (Gigerenzer, 2007). More complicated decisions tend to require a more formal, structured approach, usually involving both intuition and reasoning. Self-management skills are important to control impulsive reactions to a situation. The decision-making process is often conceptualized as a step-like process involving multiple stages. For instance, one five-step model developed (Adair, 1985) consists of: (i) defining objectives, (ii) collecting information (for informed decision-making), (iii) developing options, (iv) evaluating and deciding, and (v) implementing.

In this framework, a major problem is overcoming biases, as psychology has long recognized that people show biases and utilize shortcuts in their reasoning. Some of the biases are motivational and some are more cognitive, a way of thinking given the enormity and complexity of the information (Nemeth, 2012). Attempts to reduce such biases in the service of decision-making have included mechanisms of getting people to reassess the shortcut or to consider alternatives. This includes

education about how biases operate, training, the technique of 'considering the alternative', and inviting dissenting viewpoints (Bazerman and Moore, 2008; Nemeth, 2012).

Relevance in MENA with regard to the Dimensions of Learning and added social value. Linked to cooperation, communication and negotiation, decision-making and decision-making related skills are a key element towards success in the world of work, and are becoming the basis of competitive advantage and value creation for business organizations (CIMA, 2007), especially in MENA's increasingly technology-driven development, as poorly prepared decisions can be costly. Decision-making related skills, also Instrumental in its Cognitive Dimension, can be learned and practiced early in various educational settings, whereby learners, through real life tasks, learn to consciously devise the alternative which suits them and their wellbeing at a particular moment. Thus, with regard to individual empowerment, decision-making related skills include the ability to understand and manage risk in daily lives, essential for the learners' long-term wellbeing (Gigernzer, 2014), and can have a protective value in the framework of negative power dynamics, and/or violent environments.

Finally, if decisions are themselves not value-neutral, responsible decision-making is also highlighted by CASEL as "the ability to make constructive and responsible choices about both personal behaviour and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic consequences of actions, as well as the wellbeing

of others" (CASEL. 2017). Hence, of heightened relevance in the context of this Initiative for MENA is 'ethical and responsible decision-making', which refers to the processes of evaluating and choosing among alternatives in a manner consistent with ethical principles, safety concerns, prevalent social norms and rules of civility in the region. Ethical and responsible decision-making enacts respect for others, especially the vulnerable or marginalized.

Table 10 Relevance of decision-making by Dimensions of Learning

Dimensions	Relevance
Learning to Know/ Cognitive Dimension	To prepare children for success in a fast changing world, supporting them in making the right choices about learning and for a career To foster independent learning and better learning outcomes
Learning to Do/ Instrumental Dimension	To ensure development of entrepreneurship and encourage self-employment To foster organizational management and leadership
Learning to Be/ Individual Dimension	To foster holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To promote responsible decision-making and enhance long-term wellbeing
Learning to Live Together/ Social Dimension	To guide individuals and communities in making ethically grounded responsible decisions regarding sustainable development and inclusiveness in society To enhance effective involvement in school management decision-making bodies

Self-management

Definition and components. A core life skill, highlighted first in its Individual Dimension towards personal empowerment, self-management, or both self-managing and being self-managed, is the individual ability to regulate and monitor one's behaviours, emotions, feelings and impulses. Thus, it constitutes a broad category of related skills that includes self-control, self-efficacy and self-awareness, as well as positive attitude, reliability, self-presentation and is strongly linked with the core life skill of resilience. These have wide applicability in all domains of life, from personal relationships at home to peer-relationships at school, and have been identified as common employability skills applicable to a range of jobs (Blades et al., 2012).

Self-management is possible because the brain has mechanisms for self-regulation, the set of capabilities that help individuals to draw upon the right skills at the right time, manage their responses to the world, and resist inappropriate responses (Zimmerman and Schunk, 2011). The ability to inhibit inappropriate behaviour develops relatively slowly in childhood, but improves during adolescence and early adulthood (Blakemore and Choudhury, 2006). There are large individual differences in the ability to exert self-control and these persist throughout life (Royal Society, 2011).

Self-control, an aspect of inhibitory control, is the ability to control one's emotions and behaviour. This is important as intense emotions, such as anger and sorrow, can have negative health effects if actions are not appropriately taken (WHO, 1997). Self-control, therefore, is an executive function involving a cognitive process that is necessary for regulating one's behaviour in order to achieve specific goals. Self-control addresses six inter-related elements: (i) impulsivity and inability to delay gratification, (ii) lack of persistence, (iii) risk-taking, (iv) little value given to intellectual ability, (v) self-centeredness, and (vi) volatile temper. Experimental studies find that self-control can be improved up to the age of ten, but find that it is malleable after this age, particularly for adolescents and youth (Gutman and Schoon, 2013).

Furthermore, self-management brings about self-efficacy, a self-assured belief in one's capabilities and ability to learn, achieve goals and succeed. It implies that people will generally only attempt to do what they believe that they can accomplish and will not attempt to do what they believe they will fail to do. Notably, people with a strong sense of self-efficacy will see difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered, rather than threats to be avoided (Bandura, 1994). They set themselves challenging goals and

maintain a strong commitment to achieving them. This outlook contributes to reducing stress, and also supports a readiness to face complex economic and security environments. Findings seem to suggest that self-efficacy beliefs are an essential precursor to life skills (Gutman and Schoon, 2013).

Self-awareness is an individual's evolving capacity for introspection and ability to recognize and understand one's own personal identity, feelings and capabilities, as well as a process of getting to know one's own feelings, attitudes and values (Barnard, 1992). Self-awareness is made up of emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence (Goleman, 1996). People who are self-aware have the ability to accurately assess their feelings, interests, values and strengths. They are able to maintain a well-grounded sense of self-confidence, which leads to self-efficacy. Self-awareness is important for building relationship skills to be able to live and work successfully with other people. It involves understanding how one can influence and affect each other. Developing active listening skills relies on self-awareness skills and sensitivity as to how one responds to and connects to other people.

Relevance in MENA with regard to the Dimensions of Learning and added social value. As a core life skill towards self-realization, which also includes personal goal setting and life planning, self-management relates directly to personal empowerment. Particularly, it enhances the individual child's autonomy, sense of agency and self-help, which are critical to reduce risks of exploitation and abuse. Yet, in spite of its widely acknowledged value from its

Cognitive Dimension through its social-added value, self-management skills do not currently appear to be explicitly included in most education curricula in MENA (UNICEF, 2017a). MENA educational systems would gain at integrating it more as it can be practiced and is proven to increase the learners' capacity to work towards long-term goals, and foster their aptitude for self-discipline and perseverance in the face of difficulties, as well as their ability to focus on clearly aligned goals and objectives (OECD, 2013b). Further, self-management skills, including self-control, staying on task and stress-management, are essential for employability and to address the complex challenges of the changing world of work. Moreover, self-confident and self-directed individuals who feel comfortable, respecting, relating and empathizing with others, tend to work more

collaboratively and seek long-term, sustainable solutions to community and social issues, thus fostering solidarity.

Therefore, self-management skills and its associated skills are at the core of an ethically grounded vision of education, and play a fundamental role in "fostering the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential," which is precisely, according to Article 29 paragraph 1(a) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child the goal of education (United Nations General Assembly. 1989. Convention on the Rights of the Child. New York: United Nations). Consequently, education systems must ensure that they address self-management in order to fulfil one of education's most important mandates.

Table 11 Relevance of self-management by Dimensions of Learning

Dimensions	Relevance
Learning to Know/ Cognitive Dimension	To improve students ability to manage their emotions at school and focus on learning To improve learning processes and outcomes
Learning to Do/ Instrumental Dimension	To develop efficient and successful entrepreneurs To enhance management and productivity in the workplace
Learning to Be/ Individual Dimension	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To develop personal goal setting and life planning To develop self-confidence
Learning to Live Together/ Social Dimension	To foster critical social awareness To contribute to social cohesion through social engagement

Resilience

Definition and components. Consensus on the meaning of the term resilience has yet to emerge (UNESCO, 2015b), and that may be largely due to its recent broadened use, referring to contexts as varied in their intensity as coping with stress at work to the grave psychosocial impact of child abuse, extremism, violent conflict and displacement, in particular on children and youth. Because it is highly contextualized, 'being resilient' will have different levels of depth for the individual developing and/or displaying that core life skill, especially in MENA. In all cases, however, the life skill of resilience shall be understood, in general terms, as the constructive, personal ability to navigate changing circumstances successfully (American Psychological Association, 2010), thus beyond the restrictive understanding, according to which resilience is constrained to the capacity to survive, accept or resign oneself to an unacceptable situation.

Therefore, being resilient translates into individuals being actively engaged in the process, and in full consciousness, and not being merely passive, by (i) maintaining good mental health while enduring challenges and adversity from daily stressors, but also economic hardship, or terrorist attacks (Waugh et al., 2011) and (ii) "overcoming these challenges that have a negative impact on [one's] emotional and physical wellbeing" (UNESCO, 2017). Clearly, being resilient does not mean that the person will not experience difficulty or distress. Indeed, emotional pain and sadness are common for people who have suffered major adversity or trauma. In fact, the road to resilience is likely to involve considerable emotional distress and it does not mean that the individual always functions well (Wright et al., 2013).

Therefore, being resilient implies that a person both struggles and copes with adversity, yet do this constructively. Hence, in order to both fully capture its meaning in the framework of and semantically align this meaning within highly politicized environments interwoven with a specific cultural socio-ecology, such as those of MENA (Marie et al., 2016), resilience should be the umbrella term for the life skill that addresses threatening issues in a tenacious, systematic, active and constructive way. In situations of radicalization and conflicts, resilience encompasses the element of resistance against negative views and behaviours that "legitimize hatred and the use of violence" (UNESCO, 2017). Particularly in this right-based approach, it includes the notion of addressing the status-quo, and not capitulating to its negative impacts, in order to overcome barriers and open new pathways. Thus contextualized, resilience takes into account the adversity of the situation itself, the 'coping' mechanisms as processes, the

psychological wellbeing of the person, as well as the long-term perspective and motivation to overcome the challenge.

Resilience demands perseverance, steadfastness and adaptability. Another similar concept, 'grit', first defined as a trait and now said to be teachable, relates to the capacity to orient oneself and one's actions towards the long term. This is "perseverance and passion for long-term goals" (Duckworth et al., 2007). Hence, in the aforementioned politicized context, 'grit', including perseverance, can be understood as one of the components of resilience and needs to be complemented with the core life skill of 'self-management'. Consequently, both being resilient and having grit build upon the individual being 'steadfast', i.e., being both resolute and determined. This is why researchers increasingly view resilience not as a fixed attribute, but as an alterable set of processes that can be fostered and cultivated (Wright et al., 2013). This is of the utmost importance for children and youth in MENA, as well as for educational systems, as resilience is not considered a trait that people either have or do not have, but rather involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone. Furthermore, as a developmental process that unfolds over a lifetime, resilience has been shown to be expressed differently according to gender, culture and age. In childhood and adolescence, resilience is greatly underpinned by family processes and related development of effective coping skills (Masten, 1994). It involves a complex interaction of multiple mechanisms ranging from the individual level to the structural. The influence and importance of caring and supportive school environments as protective factors is commonly argued.

Relevance in MENA with regard to the Dimensions of Learning and added social value. Therefore, as resilience contributes to the ability to self-development in times of hardship, difficulty and stress, it draws upon personal wellbeing, and, at the same time reinforces good health. In its Cognitive Dimension, resilience provides a basis for academic success, as the learner is able to cope with disappointment or failure and overcome learning difficulties, which holds also true in its Instrumental Dimension and the world of work. With grit, resilience is a crucial life skill towards employability and entrepreneurship. At the social level, promoting resilience is a way to ensure continuum between short-term disaster-response and long-term development programming (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013). Above all, the 'rights-based approach' with the outcome in mind – a good, secure life – pays attention to vulnerability risks that reproduce the very institutional structures and conditions that created the problems being addressed, yet recognizes that the adaptive capacity of humans is contingent upon the access to and the quality and quantity of resources needed. Equity, among other factors, is thus a central element to resilience building. A rights-based approach requires careful engagement with relations of power and the legacies of history. Supporting resilience involves efforts to uncover and work against the root causes of vulnerability and poverty (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013). More specifically, achieving resilience is a process of learning, organization and adaptation across scales that enables people to respond to and cope with internal and external stresses, and, above all, build and defend healthy, happy and meaningful lives and livelihoods (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013). Hence, relevant in the MENA context, the 'rights-based approach' to resilience includes rights, power and agency.

Table 12 Relevance of resilience by Dimensions of Learning

Dimensions	Relevance
Learning to Know/ Cognitive Dimension	To prepare children to face difficult challenges in school and later life To enhance prevention and coping strategies of learners in emergency contexts
Learning to Do/ Instrumental Dimension	To overcome difficulties in the workplace To cope with unemployment
Learning to Be/ Individual Dimension	To develop holistic coping mechanisms based on self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To enhance healthy behaviours
Learning to Live Together/ Social Dimension	To promote the capacity of local communities to respond to emergency contexts To transform shocks in opportunities for development To uncover and work against the root causes of vulnerability and poverty

Communication

Definition and components. Communication, or being able to communicate, involves the sharing of meaning through the exchange of information and common understanding (Keyton, 2011; Lunenberg, 2010; Castells, 2009). It takes place in the context of social relationships (Schiller, 2007; Castells, 2009) between two or more individuals and is considered an interpersonal skill. While communication enables human interaction and participation in society, the prevalence of new technologies and social media, particularly among youth in MENA, indicates a strong human drive for social communication (Kuhl, 2011; Dennis et al., 2016).

The development of communication is a lifelong process covering a broad category of skills, involving both verbal and non-verbal communication. Mastery of language in early childhood is key to success later in life and there is evidence that communication skill development requires both a social context and social interaction to be effective (Kuhl, 2011). Research from neuroscience suggests that changes in brain plasticity with age result in greater difficulty in learning second languages after puberty (Royal Society, 2011). Furthermore, communication skills are integral to the acquisition, practice and development of all other core life skills. Closely linked to communication are life skills concerned with negotiation and refusal, empathy, cooperation and participation.

While it has been argued that there are different communication styles for men and women (e.g., Gray, 1992; Tannen, 1990), communication is 'gendered' and communication constructs gender, i.e., certain specific communication behaviours are expected from either men or women based on socially constructed notions of men and women's roles in school, at work and in society in general, and that some men and women may, or have to, conform with or reproduce these pre-determined behaviours.

Relevance in MENA with regard to the Dimensions of Learning and added social value. As a set of primary skills necessary to establish interpersonal relations, communication skills are an essential source of self-worth and self-efficacy, are relevant in society and relationship management, including gaining and maintain friendships, and foster self-realization. Further, communication skills are integral to learning, which both applies and supports the development of effective speaking and active listening abilities. Interactive and participatory pedagogies, particularly with regard to the growing relevance of ICT and
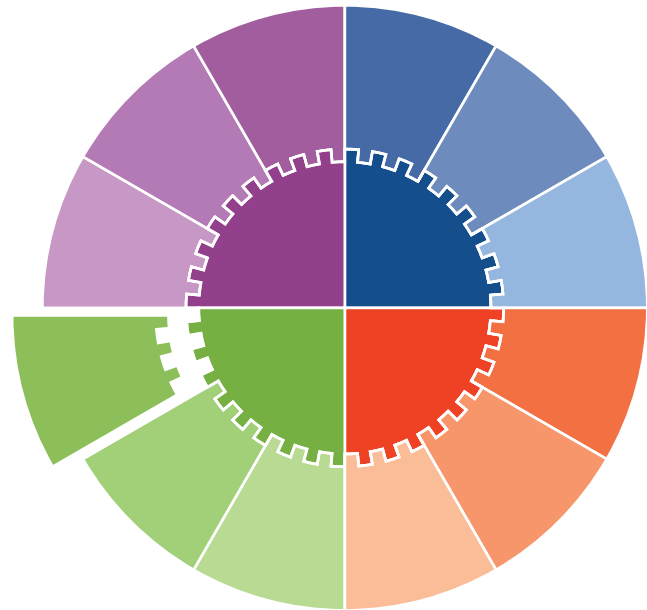
digital communication skills, are effective tools to enhance communication skills. The development of communication skills is especially important for MENA, since current educational approaches are heavily didactic (World Bank, 2008) and have a limited focus on developing and practicing the gamut of communication skills needed for a knowledge society.

Communication skills, because they are conducive to employability and instrumental to the various levels of relations in the world of work, are, along with teamwork, the most sought after life skills by MENA employers. Key to active citizenship, effective communication skills are vital to understanding and contributing to the public debate in a civil manner; equally importantly, they foster in learners and individuals the ability to avoid discriminatory language, thus enhancing social understanding. Communication skills in their ethical dimension are linked to civility and other core life skills, such as respect for diversity and empathy (Sinclair et al., 2008). Consequently, they also allow the realization of the human right of freedom of opinion and expression recognized in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Although different approaches in communication should not be considered a disadvantage, from a rights-based perspective, it is important to ensure that the principle of gender equality is applied to opportunities for communication skills development in learning at all levels. Furthermore, communication skills must ensure that children and youth have the

tools to express their views and enable them to enjoy their human rights and participate in society. In the MENA context, where most of the workforce are male workers, improved communication skills could benefit both girls and women as well as their families as a tool to engage with their environment, thus conducive to greater employability and better productivity (Bruder, 2015). Enhanced communication skills also foster protection from abuse and violence.

Table 13 Relevance of communication by Dimensions of Learning

Dimensions	Relevance
Learning to Know/ Cognitive Dimension	To be able to express a reasoned argument both orally and in written texts To develop the habit of reading fluently and write clearly, accurately, and coherently for a range of purposes and audiences
Learning to Do/ Instrumental Dimension	To enable effective working with other people To effectively use different communication media for enhanced efficiency and productivity To improve employability for finding and retaining work (including interview skills, workplace behaviours and customer relations)
Learning to Be/ Individual Dimension	To develop self-confidence and personal empowerment through effective self-presentation and social/relationship skills
Learning to Live Together/ Social Dimension	To communicate ideas to diverse audiences while respecting other viewpoints To avoid communications that are discriminatory and likely to result conflict To foster understanding across diverse populations and contribute positively to community management

Respect for diversity

Definition and components. In the context of the LSCE Initiative, 'respect for diversity' – or being respectful of diversity – is conceptualized as a key interpersonal life skill. It is based on the understanding developed by moral philosophers that acknowledges that human beings are equal participants in a common ethical world by virtue of their human status (Janoff-Bulmann et al., 2008). In this composite life skill, the concept of diversity means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing each other's individual differences. These can be defined along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other characteristics. Respect for diversity thus implies more than just tolerance, which is related to accepting differences passively, it means acknowledging and promoting the equal worth of peoples, without condescension (UNICEF, 2007b).

Especially in the MENA context, diversity, as a social reality, represents both a challenge and an opportunity for education. Although it can strengthen social cohesion in a society, diversity can also lead to fragmentation and conflict. Where diversity of gender, ability, disability, language, culture, religion and ethnicity map onto inequalities of power and status among groups, it becomes easier to mobilize attitudes of prejudice and intolerance, which may ultimately lead to violence and conflict (Smith, 2005). Respect does not mean agreeing, but rather listening and acknowledging that others have a right to shape outcomes as well. Although it may not be easy to establish in the aftermath of violent conflict, respect may be easier to encourage and promote than sympathy, empathy and altruism (Janoff-Bulmann et al., 2008).

In non-conflict contexts, respect for diversity is a pre-condition for acceptance of diversity and critical pluralism, that is, pluralism that recognizes that similarities and differences exist among individuals at the personal level, but also acknowledges differences in status, privilege and power relations among groups within society and among societies and, more importantly, respect for diversity means a willingness to identify the underlying causes and explore the possibilities for action to address social injustice (Smith, 2005). It is closely related to the principle of equality (Accept Pluralism Toolkit, 2013). Yet, critical pluralism of views also invokes critical thinking skills, which help to balance between constructive perspectives on the one hand, and, radical and violence-spurring ideas on the other hand.

The life skill that is most commonly associated with respect is that of active listening to what others have to say, which constitutes an openness to other perspectives (Janoff-Bulmann et al., 2008). By focusing on listening without disparaging the others and accepting mutual opportunities to influence, individuals may come to see others as worthy of respect.

Relevance in MENA with regard to the Dimensions of Learning and added social value. As a result, respect for diversity underpins an inclusive and equitable education as it contributes to the prevention of discrimination and violence, while promoting a positive learning climate that supports better learning processes and outcomes. This holds also true in its Instrumental Dimension and the world of work, where respect for diversity ultimately enhances productivity by preventing workplace conflict (Saxena, 2014). In a more global economy, the workforce grows more diverse, and, in the regional context there are diverse teams which tend to be more creative and innovative, an asset in the knowledge economy. Respect for diversity, in its Individual Dimension, is a complex life skill that requires one's self-esteem and self-management skills to help the individual to function effectively in MENA's socially complex societies. Thus, while in non-conflict contexts, it enables pluralism, in conflict management, it can promote reconciliation by allowing for the possibility that legitimacy may lie in more than one's own perspective.

Therefore, respect for diversity is a key element towards inter-connectedness, and thus, sustainable development, and is underpinned by, and grounded

on, the principles of human rights, enshrined in article 29, section 1c, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that: "States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own" (United Nations General Assembly. 1989). In its General Comment No.1 of 2001 regarding the aims of education, the Committee on the Rights of the Child clarifies that the goal of article 29 is "to develop the child's skills, learning and other capacities, human dignity, self-esteem and self-confidence. Children's education should be directed to a wide range of values […] and the "recognition of the need for a balanced approach which aims to reconcile diverse values through dialogue and respect for difference. Children are capable of playing a unique role in bridging differences that have historically separated groups of people."

Table 14 Relevance of respect for diversity Dimensions of Learning

Dimensions	Relevance
Learning to Know/ Cognitive Dimension	To foster inclusive and equitable education delivery To promote a positive learning climate
Learning to Do/ Instrumental Dimension	To prevent conflict in the workplace To prevent discriminatory practices in the workplace
Learning to Be/ Individual Dimension	To test assumptions and understand personal biases
Learning to Live Together/ Social Dimension	To enhance active tolerance in society To foster processes of reconciliation in the context of conflict To foster inclusion and participation of marginalized communities in society

Empathy

Definition and components. Empathy, or being empathetic, is "the ability to comprehend another's feelings and to re-experience them oneself" (Salovey and Mayer, 1990), while never being judgemental. A key construct in social and developmental psychology as well as in cognitive and social neuroscience, the ability to empathize is important for promoting positive behaviours toward others, and facilitating social interactions and relationships. Empathy is involved in the internalization of rules that can play a part in protecting others, and, it may be the mechanism that motivates the desire to help others, even at a cost to oneself. In addition, empathy plays an important role in becoming a socially competent person with meaningful social relationships (McDonald and Messinger, 2012). Consequently, empathy motivates altruistic behaviour and has the potential to enhance the process by which rights are realized, which is as important as an outcome (Jönsson and Hall, 2003).

According to developmental psychologists, the ability to empathize typically develops early and rapidly (McDonald and Messinger, 2012). A longitudinal study with children and youth (aged 4-20 years) demonstrated that empathy may be conceptualized as part of a larger prosocial personality trait that develops in children and motivates helping behaviours into early adulthood (Eisenberg et al., 1999). Furthermore, empathy has been highlighted as a key skill of successful learners (Jones, 1990).

Among the many factors explaining empathy skills are genetics, neural development and temperament, as well as socialization factors (McDonald and Messinger, 2012). Since empathy skills are developed from an early age, it can be developed through childrearing practices, e.g., reasoning with children, parental model of empathetic and caring behaviour, and encouraging discussion about feeling; empathy training, e.g., training in interpersonal perception and empathetic responding, focus on one's feelings, etc.; and classroom strategies and programme designs, e.g., through cooperative learning, and cross-age and peer tutoring (Gordon, 2005; Cotton).

Relevance in MENA with regard to the Dimensions of Learning and added social value. Consequently, as it is central to emotionally intelligent behaviour, empathy is a life skill that helps individuals to pursue positive relationships and plays an integral role in conflict management and conflict resolution in the family, at school, in communities and in conflict situations, as it is a motivator for altruistic behaviour at the basis of much of social perception and social interaction, paving the way to moral reasoning.
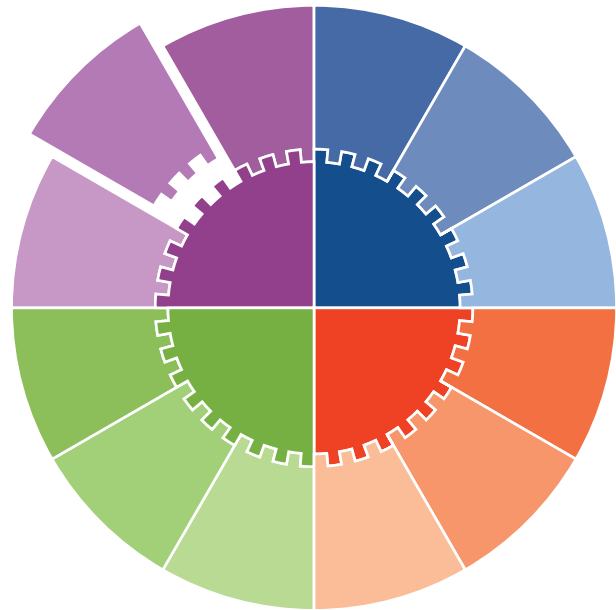
A key element underpinning citizenship education, empathy helps learners to achieve academic excellence, from an early age and continues to strengthen children's sense of self as well as their ability to connect to and collaborate effectively with others. In the world of work, empathy enhances a culture of service orientation, which means putting the needs of customers first and looking for ways to improve their satisfaction and loyalty (Goleman, 1996). Moreover, as empathy is key in the development of quality relations, it is essential in the establishment of long-lasting and reliable professional connections. "The failure of empathy can lead to apathy, and at worst to cruelty and violence" (Gordon, 2005). An education that fosters empathy focuses on a culture that values inclusion, responds in caring and practical ways to victims of violence (bullying), and nurtures a respect for and sense of responsibility to one another.

Importantly, empathy is a prosocial skill that strengthens the social fabric of communities. Four main social outcomes, key to the four Dimensions of Learning, are commonly associated with empathy:

- Internalization of rules: The ability to empathize with others' distress, which may be an important factor in learning right from wrong.

- Prosocial and altruistic behaviour: Empathy is considered an important precursor to and motivator for prosocial, or helping, behaviour (De Waal, 2008).

- Social competence: Higher levels of empathy in children are associated with more cooperative and socially competent behaviour (Eisenberg and Miller, 1987; Saliquist et al., 2009; Zhou et al., 2002).

- Relationship quality: The ability to empathize also seems to be important for relationship quality by facilitating the maintenance of meaningful relationships (Joireman et al., 2002), and it has also been associated with higher levels of conflict resolution skills in adolescents (de Wied et al., 2007).

Thus, as a key attitude for enhancing social cohesion, empathy fosters collaboration and solidarity, as well as safe behaviours towards the environment and sustainable development. It, thus, contributes to fostering the levels of appreciation needed to assert values related to people's common humanity in the light of diversity, as well as the promotion of active tolerance.

Table 15 Relevance of empathy by Dimensions of Learning

Dimensions	Relevance
Learning to Know/ Cognitive Dimension	To foster the critical blending of emotion, cognition and memory for successful learning
Learning to Do/ Instrumental Dimension	To facilitate successful businesses through responsive leadership and a motivating work environment
Learning to Be/ Individual Dimension	To motivate prosocial behaviour, inhibit aggression and pave the way to moral reasoning
Learning to Live Together/ Social Dimension	To develop a culture that values inclusion, respond in caring and practical ways to victims of violence, and nurture a respect for and sense of responsibility to one another

Participation

Definition and components. In its most basic sense, participation or being participative, can be defined as partaking in, and influencing, processes, decisions and activities (adapted from UNICEF, 2001). Therefore, both a contextualized process as well as a core life skill, participation is an action of empowerment in relation to the individual and the community. Consequently, being participative, which is interlinked with to the core life skill of creativity, is the contrary to remaining passive at school, at work, and, above all, in society. More than being engaged, learners and individuals who are participative, especially in MENA, actively contribute to a democratic society, by the people, thus exercising their human rights.

Participation skills are needed, and acquired, from early childhood, as children develop the required skills to participate effectively in class in order to maximize their learning opportunities. Being participative, for example, by having the opportunity to ask questions or volunteer to help others during classroom activities, etc., allows children to have a say in their education, and requires listening to them and involving them as much as possible in school life. It means valuing children's opinions and ideas, and giving them control of their learning. When children have a say in their education, they not only exercise their rights, they also achieve more and improve their sense of self-esteem, get along better with their classmates and teachers, and contribute to a better school environment, with better discipline and a culture where learning is a shared responsibility. Furthermore, participation promotes, in its Cognitive Dimension, equity among all learners. It also enhances both ownership of governance systems in schools and community's involvement in those schools.

Relevance in MENA with regard to the Dimensions of Learning and added social value. Being participative leads to 'worker empowerment', a condition for a healthy workplace, which also ties to the rights-based approach of fair employment (WHO, 2010). By extension, with regard to the Individual Dimension of the life skill, the ability to participate effectively is important for personal empowerment and agency, as well as the development of self-efficacy and social connectedness. Therefore, the
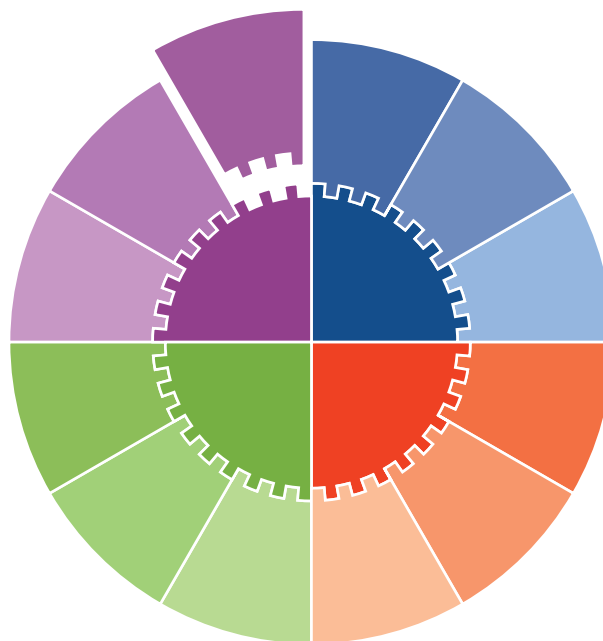
core life skill of participation enables individuals to play an active role in society towards improving life of the community, and owning responsibility towards others and the environment through meaningful political participation or involvement at the community level. Importantly, participation skills include a series of fundamental human rights, recognized in a number of international human-rights instruments, starting with Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides for the right to participate in government and free elections, the right to participate in the cultural life of the community, the right to peaceful assembly and association, and the right to join trade unions.

Participation is also one of the guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which enshrines participation as a fundamental right of all children and adolescents, especially in its articles 2, 3, and 12 to 15 (UNICEF, 2001). Children have the right to have their voices heard when adults are making decisions that affect them, and their views should be given due weight in accordance with the child's age and maturity. They have the right to express themselves freely and to receive and share information. The Convention recognizes the potential of children to influence decision-making relevant to them, to share views and, thus, to participate as citizens and actors of change (Brander, 2012).

Table 16 Relevance of participation by Dimensions of Learning

Dimensions	Relevance
Learning to Know/ Cognitive Dimension	To improve learning processes and outcomes To enhance democratic practices in the school
Learning to Do/ Instrumental Dimension	To promote healthy workspaces To enhance business ethics and human rights in the workspace
Learning to Be/ Individual Dimension	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To develop personal goal setting and life planning
Learning to Live Together/ Social Dimension	To contribute to a truly democratic citizenship To improve the wellbeing of the community

2.4 The twelve core life skills and subject areas

The 12 core life skills discussed in the previous section are not taught, learned or practised in isolation from real world purposes and content. They are tools for getting things done at home, at school, at work, in society, with and in relation to the family, and within the community. As such, they are contextual and their application depends to a large extent on the purpose, use of knowledge, medium and social context in which they are realized.

Critical to this is the knowledge that is used to give meaning to the core life skills. The LSCE Initiative builds on the premise that life skills and citizenship education promote life skills-based, life skills-conveyed, and life skills-consistent knowledge, thus building on knowledge, not dismissing its acquisition. This brings two discussions to the fore. First, **although knowledge, subject areas, life skills and life skills based-knowledge are linked, these categories are distinct from one another and should be carefully delineated**. Second, the nature of the relationship between knowledge acquisition, and the transmission and dissemination of the core life skills in the framework has to be elucidated.

Delineation of terms

Life skills and subject areas are often confused. They differ in nature, but also complement each other in the framework of a comprehensive and holistic life skills and citizenship education. As previously mentioned, life skills are higher-order, transversal and transferrable psychosocial skills, thus, fundamental elements that can be fostered and nurtured in learners from an early age. Most importantly, life skills enable learners to develop attitudes and behaviours to deal with everyday life and to contribute to their productive participation in society (UNICEF, 2012), by supporting the person's abilities to be and act in an orderly way, while taking into account the context and being able to weigh in choices. Further, they all involve a complex blend of cognitive abilities and emotional intelligence that are dependent on ways of communication.

On the other hand, 'knowledge' refers to a state or condition of understanding that permits factual information to be related to other information and knowledge, synthesized into broader concepts and usefully applied (UNICEF, 2003). Hence, **knowledge includes information, fact, opinion and ideas that are relevant to the purpose of an interaction or task**. Knowledge, being constructed, embodied in and transmitted through language (thought, spoken or written), and the development of means of communicating and/or language skills is therefore of fundamental importance in learning, education achievement and personal development. The foundational skills involved in literacy and numeracy are also critical for the ability to learn. In education, the acquisition of knowledge is traditionally organized in terms of a curriculum with core subjects or essential learning areas.

Building on this, **subject areas should be understood as thematic, technical, academic or knowledge subject areas into which life skills and citizenship education need to be integrated** to support the acquisition of the core life skills. Hence, they are the platform through which the core life skills in particular, and life skills and citizenship education in general, are introduced to and practiced by learners. Concomitantly, a heightened focus on life skills allows for improved learning by adding a new depth to the subject area and changing the learner's experience on how to approach specific areas. In this regard, effective utilization of life skills entails the individual being able to process and marshal the requisite knowledge through the use of particular life skills.

Therefore, life skills and citizenship education as proposed in this CPF are both linked to and build on a **broader and more extensive understanding of life skills education**, expanding beyond the narrower 'life skills-based education'. Developed around the World Health Organization's definition of life skills as stakeholders were rethinking their approach to health and family education, the latter refers to "life skills education addressing specific content or undertaken to achieve specific goals, e.g., life skills-based peace education or life skills-based HIV and AIDS education" (WHO, 1997). By contrast, 'life skills and citizenship education' can be applied to any subject area, notwithstanding its content, thus promoting in each learner information and life-skill practice and acquisition. Yet, both require competent facilitators and the use of participatory teaching and learning methods to facilitate the subject matter, "to help learners develop not only knowledge, but also the psychosocial life skills they may need to use knowledge to inform and carry out behaviour" (UNICEF, 2003).

The **strong association of subject areas with a life skills based-education** methodology explains why there is confusion among some education practitioners. However, this confusion is unhelpful, as life skills are not the characteristic of any particular knowledge domain, but rather are broadly applicable to all fields of knowledge. As a matter of fact, there are a wide range of subject areas in which life

skills-based education has been embedded, including, curricular and vocational disciplines, career and entrepreneurship education, computer literacy, health and environmental education, emergency education, civic education, arts, culture and sports, disaster risk reduction (DRR) education and programmes, environmental education, mine risk education and law education for at-risk youth. Acquisition of the core life skills needs to be ensured through increased inter-connection and interdependence among subject areas, enabling students to develop life skills in relation to real-world problems and projects (Vasquez et al., 2013).

Finally, since life skills (and other types of skills) and attitudes combine with knowledge in their use in everyday life, the selection of appropriate knowledge in curriculum development is a key factor in the effectiveness of life skills education. The combination of the three elements – life skills, attitudes/values, and knowledge – leads to the competencies, which is a common way to organize curricula in terms of expected learning outcomes.

Life skills and citizenship education, and knowledge acquisition

The promotion of life skills and citizenship education in the present CPF does not preclude, however, the recognition of the need to pursue content and knowledge acquisition, be it traditional and modern 'foundational skills', such as basic literacy, numeracy and basic digital knowledge, bringing about the basis for continuous learning and communication in at least one cultural environment (UNESCO, 2012b); Cinque, 2016; European Commission, 2017). **Life skills and citizenship education does not happen at the expense of knowledge acquisition, on the contrary, it supports it**.

Theoretically, knowledge can be acquired by an individual without the targeted development of specific life skills; yet knowledge acquisition will happen with greater difficulty. **Knowledge acquired without applying the core life skills would be essentially theoretical and didactic**, i.e., not linked to how it may be used in real life situations, and thus left to the learners to grasp intellectually and at the conceptual level only. Much traditional academic learning has taken place along these lines, especially in MENA. Knowledge acquisition without attention to the core life skills is prevalent in rote memorization approaches to learning, in which recall and replication are the priority skills to be practised. As it is entirely possible to achieve academic success in such a framework, this can lead to incompetency or deficiency in being able to carry out everyday life

tasks. Moreover, those learners already equipped with well-developed critical thinking skills could draw meaningful conclusions for themselves, their lives and practical applications, while other learners would have difficulties situating that knowledge in an empirical framework and would not be able to 'transfer' the knowledge to other Dimensions, therefore, missing out on the relevance and implications of that knowledge.

In fact, **nurturing life skills arguably enables learners to order and compute information** in a more organized fashion, while controlling themselves and their reactions during the learning process and utilizing higher-order thinking skills to improve their learning. Indeed, it has been shown that life skills programmes have a direct positive effect on knowledge acquisition. Life skills allow children to both retain information, for example, related to safety at home and elsewhere, and, to use that information over time (Lamb et al., 2006).

Essential knowledge, transmitted through one or more subject areas, is linked to and is the vector of a community or group of people's ontology, and, more specifically, its moral and social norms and values (Sharma, 2015), for example, the value of respect in one society. The acquisition of such content is therefore quintessential to children's social and psychological grounding, sense of identity, recognition and development in their community. This element brings about the **mutual benefit of the linkages between knowledge and human-rights-based life skills and citizenship education**. The latter both enhances and reinforces the strong ethical foundation that the children and learners need, while equipping them with the tools – the core life skills – to work through their community norms and to apply subject-based content, not mechanically, but with the depth of an ethical context.

With regard to knowledge acquisition, ethically grounded life skills and citizenship education are factors of **equity among learners**, as they foster in all learners, regardless of their status, background or abilities, the development of their own strengths around that knowledge. Subject areas combined and infused with life skills and citizenship education are organized to be child- and learner-centred. Moreover, it allows all learners to practice the knowledge content by utilizing the core life skills in a safe environment, thus raising their sense of self-efficacy and sense of agency, and preparing all learners, not only a selected few, to face practical life challenges, as well as be socially effective and community-aware.

Dynamic relations between life skills and citizenship education, subject areas, social outcomes, and the development of the 12 core life skills in MENA

The 12 core life skills are inter-related and resonate in each of the Dimensions of Learning; thus, the direct output of life skills education is that the learner is able to 'transfer' not only the knowledge learned with the help of one or many of the core life skills, but also **the usage of the life skill itself to other cognitive, social, environmental, work, family or personal challenging situations**. This means that, if MENA educational systems are to give all learners the opportunity to develop their whole potential, all core life skills shall be the medium of choice to further and practice knowledge in the framework of all subject areas. Yet, some subject areas, because of their general objective, might address some Dimensions of Learning more than others, whereby some core life skills would be more practiced than others.

Specifically with regard to the improvement of MENA educational systems learning outcomes, a life skills and citizenship education approach is relevant to national curricular disciplines, such as language, mathematics, science, social studies, etc. Yet, a key issue is to ensure consistency across the curriculum. It is likely to be an ineffective strategy if it only focuses on core life skills in one subject area among many in the curriculum while ensuring a coherent and comprehensive approach. The advantage of using a life skills approach is that learners develop core life skills relevant to real life needs, while they also learn to transfer the knowledge and these life skills to other areas and daily problems-solving.

While this holds true for all subject areas and curriculum disciplines, using a life skills approach is of particular relevance for STEM, as a means to strengthen relevance, innovation and quality in MENA, and allows learners to practice communication skills or problem-solving in these subjects. Notably for MENA educational systems, while the 2030 Education Agenda further promotes STEM in post-basic and tertiary education, research has shown that the major determinant of student interest in science is the quality of teaching. Yet, the content and pedagogy associated with national curricula often fail to engage the majority of children and youth (Osborne and Dillon, 2008), as little opportunity is provided for learners to use the language of science in discussion, to conduct collaborative work, to think critically, and to consider the views of others, all of which are necessary activities that the learners need in real life and work situations. It is worth noting that the same is true with culture and the arts as other subject areas that foster especially creativity, self-expression and self-reflection, as all life skills facilitate both learning and performance.

With regard to innovation in general, and the changing world of work more particularly, **vocational disciplines are also key subject areas where life skills and citizenship education can be embedded in order to increase access to these disciplines and enhance their relevance** in the region. Good quality demand-driven TVET, based on life skills and citizenship education, with career and entrepreneurship education within the framework of employability programs in MENA is potentially one of the most important pathways for skilling children and youth. Indeed, beyond the theoretical understanding of entrepreneurship, children and youth need to be supported in the development of their core life skills to ensure that they can effectively achieve the objectives of these programmes. Negotiation and decision-making skills, both core life skills closely related to employability and TVET-subject area, are also among the life skills highlighted in health and family health education, in particular school health and nutrition, and comprehensive sexuality education, which is particularly important in the context of the rapid spread of new media, particularly the internet and mobile phone technology, along with changing attitudes towards sexuality and behaviours among youth (WHO, 2010).

With regard to reinforcing individual active participation, social inter-connectedness and social cohesion in light of the socio-political developments in the region, **citizenship education should build on furthering a holistic approach drawing on the 12 core life skills** to arrive at a broader set of skills for managing everyday life without conflict and violence, and to resist radicalization and extremism. A comprehensive, clearly defined life skills approach, encompassing core life skills, ranging from communication skills, problem-solving and decision-making skills, cooperation and negotiation skills, including conflict management and conflict resolution, to empathy and respect for diversity, could significantly increase the relevance of citizenship education, and the teaching of knowledge regarding national institutions, and rights and duties of citizens, as well as civic engagement. In the context of formal education, citizenship education in MENA has been traditionally hampered by authoritarian school climates and governance, as well as out-dated curricula and inappropriate teaching practices (Faour, 2013), while it has flourished in non-formal education settings. Obviously, the breadth of the core life skills covered would ensure that all learners have access to practicing these skills for transfer in other areas of life.

Learners' holistic personal development and empowerment would also benefit from enhanced citizenship education, by emphasizing self-management and resilience, thus leading to a greater sense of self-efficacy and agency. Emergency education fostering resilience both in children and their families, and, more recently, risk-informed education programming are thematic areas that have increasingly recognized the importance of life skills acquisition as a means to mitigate risks in fragile contexts (OECD, 2011), as well as prepare for responsible citizenship (Sinclair, 2002). Sports education, when focused on life skills instruction, can also reach youth at all levels of physical ability, and is grounded in the skills of teamwork, cooperation and resilience, thus helping learners to grow empowered.

SYSTEMS APPROACH

- National Policies
- Plans and Strategies
- Coordination and Partnership Frameworks
- Budgeting and Financing
- School-based Management
- Human Resources and Capacity Development
- Communication and Community Participation
- M&E Frameworks

MULTIPLE PATHWAYS

Channels of Delivery
- Formal Education
- Non-formal and Informal Education
- Workplace and 'Road to Workplace'
- Social Engagement (volunteer and community work; scouting; social media)
- Child Protection (child entered safe spaces; child protection centers)

Modalities of Delivery
- Curricular, Co-curricular and Extra-curricular
- Stand-alone and Integrated
- Self-learning, Face-to-face, Online, Media, Blended, Open and Distance Learning

TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES
(child centered and inclusive approaches; classroom management; positive discipline; psychosocial support; etc.)

CLEAR HOLISTIC VISION AND WORKING DEFINITION OF LIFE SKILLS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Subject Areas
- Curricular Disciplines (language, math, science, social studies, gender, etc.)
- Vocational Disciplines (carpentry, plumbing, etc.)
- Career Education (career guidance, financial literacy, job searching, etc.)
- Entrepreneurship Education (goal setting, business planning, marketing, etc.)
- Computer Literacy (ICT, social media, etc.)
- Health Education (reproductive health, sexuality education, HIV/AIDS prevention, drug prevention, nutrition, hygiene, etc.)
- Environmental Education (water, pollution, climate change, recycling, etc.)
- Emergency Education (disaster risk reduction and risk informed programming, mine risks, etc.)
- Peace Education (conflict resolution, negotiation, etc.)
- Civic Education (institutions of governance, duties and rights of citizens, etc.)
- Arts, Culture, Sports
- Etc.

Skills Clusters
- Skills for Learning (creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving)
- Skills for Employability (cooperation, negotiation, decision-making)
- Skills for Personal Empowerment (self-management, resilience, communication)
- Skills for Active Citizenship (respect for diversity, empathy, participation)

Dimensions of Learning
- Cognitive Dimension or 'Learning to Know'
- Instrumental Dimension or 'Learning to Do'
- Individual Dimension or 'Learning to Be'
- Social Dimension or 'Learning to Live Together'

IMPACT OUTCOMES

- Knowledge Society through Improved Education Outcomes
- Economic Development though Improved Employment and Entrepreneurship
- Social Cohesion through Improved Civic Engagement

3 | The Programmatic Framework

To address the current challenges of learning, employment and social cohesion facing MENA, vision and conceptual clarity is essential but not enough. **Life skills and citizenship education needs to be mainstreamed within and around national education systems**. Next to the conceptual building block of the CPF a programmatic building block is necessary to provide the concrete tools to programme, design, operationalize, and implement at country level, according to a holistic and human-rights based approach, the concepts and principles of life skills and education set forth in this document.

A primary focus is first the intersection between the conceptual and programmatic components: the **supportive teaching and learning approaches** needed to foster life skills and citizenship education and the 12 core life skills for MENA in particular, at all educational levels and for all learners. They are presented under the premises that life skills are malleable, and, thus, can be taught, yet, that the appropriate education interventions are required and need to be introduced within educational systems, at the school level, and among teachers, to reach this goal.

Upon this foundation, the CPF argues that mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education needs to happen according to a **comprehensive multiple pathways approach**, whereby the different channels and modalities of education have to be activated to offer a variety of learning opportunities to all learners and throughout all phases of life, school, and work, in formal education, non-formal, and informal education settings, and also through social engagement and child protection. This approach safeguards the realization of the principle of equity among learners and inclusiveness through the targeting of marginalized populations.

Last, but not least, there needs to be a comprehensive review of the key tenets that underpin the functioning of national education systems in MENA to ensure a sustainable, scalable, system-wide, and lifelong quality life skills and citizenship education. This **systems approach** needs to recognize the leadership of Ministries of Education, while depending upon coordinated programmatic interventions by several other stakeholders, realistic and comprehensive costed medium-term national education sector plans, active parental and community mobilization, and nation-wide consultations systems. To address the current lack of systemic monitoring and evaluation guidance for life skills and citizenship education in the region, and to ensure the quality and performance of the suggested system approach, a three-pronged monitoring and evaluation strategy is proposed at impact and outcome level, at output and process level, and to measure learning outcomes for life skills and citizenship education.

This chapter outlines first the necessary teaching and learning approaches for life skills and citizenship education. It then unpacks the diverse channels and modalities for delivering life skills and citizenship education. The third section analyses the key components of a systems approach and the final one proposes a three-pronged monitoring and evaluation strategy.

3.1 Teaching and learning approaches

The bridge between concept and practice

Teaching and learning approaches are at the **intersection between the conceptual and programmatic frameworks** of life skills and citizenship education, and the 12 core life skills for MENA in particular. There are two central tenets to life skills education: first, life skills are malleable; i.e. they are not fixed personal characteristics, and, thus, can be taught, learned and acquired from early on in life and throughout life; second, they can be enhanced through appropriate education interventions. In this regard, since teaching and learning is part of the concept of life skills, a practical, core aspect of education programming is the determination of how these life skills can be taught and learned effectively. The acquisition of the 12 core life skills and active citizenship builds upon three critical pillars: effective pedagogical strategies, active learning methods and safe learning environments, which themselves depend on the foundational, enabling role of teachers.

Teachers, as facilitators and enablers, play a central role. The acquisition of the 12 core life skills is based on teachers, including (i) their willingness, training, preparation, and abilities to promote and use the life skills with the learners within their classroom; (ii) their ensuring that all learners feel safe in the classroom; and (iii) their understanding, practicing themselves beforehand, and then adopting and implementing effective pedagogy and active learning methods in the classroom. Thus, an essential educational paradigm shift has to take place in MENA and within the community, at two levels. There is a need to both rethink the role of teachers by recognizing and supporting them, and promoting teacher development and training to re-orient the classroom from a teacher-centred to a child-centred environment.

Effective life skills and citizenship education, furthermore, happens in **safe learning environments**, in which all learners without exception are physically, socially and emotionally safe. This means that the classroom should be positive and free from fear, punitive discipline, all forms by bullying by anyone, and physical, verbal and psychological violence. The classroom culture should encourage all learners to feel that their participation and engagement is valued. A safe environment fosters the ethical foundation of citizenship education by creating a space in which each learner's human rights, the principle of equity among learners and diversity are all respected. An enabling environment for teaching and learning further addresses the nutritional, health and cognitive needs of children including through school feeding and other nutrition awareness interventions all levels (WFP 2017).

Effective pedagogy plays a critical role in facilitating and realizing abstract notions in concrete scenarios, thus shaping the learners' experience and ensuring their ability to transfer and use both life-skill conveyed knowledge and the 12 core life skills in their everyday life. Therefore, the 12 core life skills represent practical capabilities, and are largely – and best – acquired through 'doing', active use and activity-based learning, rather than through abstract theory or memorization. More so, the methodologies and activities used to foster the acquisition of the 12 core life skills should be child-centred, engaging children and youth to become reflective, self-aware learners who are capable of setting their own learning goals. Pedagogical approaches further include socio-emotional learning, positive discipline and psychosocial support of the whole child.

As with all skills, the acquisition and development of life skills requires regular practice. Learning is an iterative process that takes place over a lifetime – it cannot remain a one-time occurrence. Moreover, as learners' cognitive and psychosocial abilities evolve with age, both life-skills conveyed knowledge and life-skills' acquisition build on earlier steps and grow more complex. Thus, pedagogies and the related activities have to be adapted based on the learners' age groups, starting in early childhood with directed play or targeted story-time, through adulthood and community-service activities.

This section explores teaching and learning approaches and the realization of the concept in practice. It investigates the pedagogy of life skills education and puts forward suggestions about how each of the 12 core life skills can be taught within a holistic approach to life skills education in the region and beyond.

Background: Current teaching and learning approaches in MENA

In line with previous studies undertaken in the region, **frontal or lecture-based teaching** is still the prevalent teaching methodology practiced in most formal education contexts throughout MENA, with classroom activities focused mostly on copying from the blackboard, writing and listening to teachers, yet rarely encouraging group work or proactive learning methods that develop skills, such as creativity, problem-solving and cooperation among others (UNICEF, 2017a; UNRWA, 2014; Alayan et al., 2012; World Bank, 2008; ETF and World Bank, 2005). This is compounded by a negative school climate, in which "many students do not feel safe physically, socially and emotionally in schools" (Faour, 2013). These deficiencies seem to be particularly acute in the context of TVET, since it has been reported that lack of basic life skills among new hires is more severe among graduates from vocational and education training institutes (Education for Employment, 2015).

An analysis of life skills training in MENA further revealed that the majority of organizations neglect to provide opportunities for interactive, hands-on instructional methodologies in teaching life skills (IYF, 2013a). By contrast, in non-formal settings, teaching and learning pedagogies of life skills education programmes tend to encompass more interactive activities, such as group work, case studies, discussions, role play, storytelling, songs and dances, student presentations, community projects, field work and other activities. Further a self-evaluation of Aflatoun International's social and financial life skills education programmes, implemented globally as well as in some MENA countries, revealed that participatory child-centred teaching techniques and their application to social and financial life skills education are key components to the effectiveness of life skills education programmes (Aflatoun, 2015). The conclusion that is drawn is that education service

delivery in MENA has yet to put in place systemic reforms that will enable all learners to take advantage of ample and well programmed opportunities to develop and practice a range of essential life skills within a lifelong approach to education.

Teaching, learning and the four Dimensions of Learning

As previously discussed, the four Dimensions of Learning, the Cognitive, Instrumental, Individual and Social Dimensions, are considered to be the critical purposes of education in the 21st century. These inter-connected Dimensions help to facilitate a holistic approach to life skills development for an individual, as well as a lifelong learning approach to skill development, and have a critical effect on reforming teaching and learning approaches in the region.

Lifelong learning and the four Dimensions of Learning. Lifelong learning implies that the learner retains the mastery of the ability to learn. Hence, each person will be encouraged, and enabled, to take up learning opportunities throughout life. From a life skills education perspective, lifelong education means a long-term approach to skill development, building on prior learning and capabilities. It implies that one of the most important success factors will be the learner's ability to continuously learn, even unlearn and change direction, in an adaptable and responsive approach to personal development. In this framework, learning involves a combination of personal discovery, improvement, empowerment and development, as well as requiring self-management, resilience and self-direction. Lifelong learning encompasses, therefore, learning skills from family, school and university, peers, and the workplace, as well as through citizenship/community service.

Teachers and the four Dimensions of Learning. This renewed vision of education is largely dependent and refocused on the teachers as agents of change. Among the key roles that they have, are awaking curiosity, encouraging intellectual rigor, promoting understanding and tolerance, and creating the success for learning throughout life. Improving the quality of education is contingent on improving the recruitment, training, social status and conditions of work for teachers. Teachers need appropriate knowledge, skills, personal characteristics and motivation. Careful balance needs to be struck between knowledge of the subject taught and competence in teaching. A key factor is the ability of teachers to link subject matter to daily life. Teacher education, encompassing both pre-service and in-service training, is critically important for equipping teachers with the ethical, intellectual and emotional capabilities to develop the same range of qualities in the learners as required by society.

Framing the questions towards education service delivery. The four Dimensions of Learning can be used to frame four critical questions for education service delivery:

- Cognitive Dimension: How will education develop the learner's capabilities to learn effectively and throughout life?

- Instrumental Dimension: How will education develop the learner's capabilities for the world of work, i.e., for employability and successful employment?

- Individual Dimension: How will education enable the holistic development of every learner's potential?

- Social Dimension: How will education develop the learner's capabilities to participate in civic and political activities, i.e., how will active citizenship be developed?

Each of these questions has implications for how teaching and learning will be delivered. Pedagogies within each Dimension require a balance of life skills and other skills, knowledge and values, with the exact content to be determined in national education curricula and local programmes. What is required is a coherent approach to teaching and learning life skills, in lifelong education, across content areas and in all curricula.

However, the teaching and learning approaches to life skills education need to be more clearly defined, both in general and for MENA in particular, with regard to the lifelong education paradigm. Moreover, the teaching and learning of life skills has to be accompanied and supported by specific learning practices, human resources and physical environments (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008).

A short history of life skills education pedagogy

The earliest guidance on the teaching and learning approaches to be adopted in life skills education originates from a set of life skills lessons in the context of comprehensive school health education (WHO, 1993), according to which life skills lessons should be both active and experiential. Active learning, the recommended pedagogical approach, involves the learner in a dynamic process of learning, while experiential learning is based on practice of what is taught. Participatory work in small groups is a characteristic feature of active learning; it promotes learning through social interaction. The role of the teacher in life skills education is to facilitate the participatory learning of group members, rather than conducting lectures in a didactic style.

Active learning is the approach that best supports life skills education. It involves a learner-centred approach in which the process of teaching and learning is highly important; so much so that it can be considered to be process-centred rather than product-centred (UNESCO, 2004). There are common principles that are applicable to all learner-centred education. Box 3 illustrates principles from life skills education programming in India (UNICEF, 2016d). In active learning approaches, learners are no longer passive recipients of knowledge, but are instead active and participatory in their own learning. Learners are treated as thinkers, and teaching methods are used to stimulate their interest and responses. They collaborate with other learners in developing their skills and, in doing this, they develop positive peer relationships. They take responsibility for their own learning rather than being lectured by the teacher. As mentioned above, learners ask questions and listen actively to the opinions of others.

The *Inter-Agency Working Group on Life Skills in Education for All* (UNESCO, 2004) further developed life skills education based on WHO conceptualization by identifying its defining elements as follows:

- Includes content that is a balance of knowledge, values, attitudes and skills;

- Uses interactive and learner-centred methods;

- Includes behaviour change or development as part of its objectives;

- Is based on participant needs and relates to real life; and

- Is gender sensitive and human-rights based.

It is key also to highlight the importance of taking the experience, opinions, and concerns of children and youth into account along with ensuring their active participation in the learning activities. Small group work is a fundamental tool in participatory teaching and learning with numerous benefits for life skills development (see Box 4).

Box 3 Principles of learner-centred education

- Every learner is engaged;
- A variety of learning materials is in use;
- Democratic processes and relations are present in the classroom;
- Equitable and inclusive learning environment;
- Physical environment conducive to learning;
- Provision for self-paced and individualized learning;
- Opportunities to learn through different modes;
- Meaningful learning oriented activities;
- Scope for higher-order thinking and critical questioning;
- Continuous assessment integrated with the learning process;
- Contextualization to learners' everyday life; and
- Attention to holistic all-round development.

Source: UNICEF, 2016d.

Box 4 Benefits of small group work for life skills teaching and learning

- Promotes cooperation;
- Promotes communication, including listening skills;
- Provides opportunities for group members to recognize and value individual skills and enhance self-esteem;
- Enables participants to get to know each other better and extend relationships;
- Encourages innovation and creativity;
- Promotes tolerance and understanding of individuals and their needs
- Increases participants' perceptions of themselves and others.

Source: WHO, 1993.

Participatory learning builds on the experience, knowledge and skills of group members. Applicable for learning from childhood to adulthood, it provides a creative context for exploring possibilities and defining options, and is a source of mutual comfort and security for the learning process.

Life skills education to date has been characterized by the use of **participatory activities** (WHO, 1993; UNICEF, 2010), which include, among others:

- Brainstorming: This is a creative technique for generating ideas on a particular subject and helps develop life skills in listening, assertiveness and empathy.

- Role play: This is the acting out of a scenario based on text or real life situations suggested by the instructor or learners. WHO (1993) considered this to be perhaps the most important method in life skills teaching and learning.

- Class discussion: This provides an opportunity for learners to learn from one another in problem-solving; helps develop communication skills.

- Simulations: These provide fun and active learning in activities that mimic real-life situations.

- Case studies: These can be powerful catalysts for thought and discussions.

- Debate: Debates offer opportunities to practice higher-order thinking skills and to address issues indepth and creatively.

- Processing questions: These can be used to structure life skills lessons, e.g., what is the lesson about? What have I learned from the lesson? How can I apply the learning to everyday life?

- Warm up activities: They help the learners feel more comfortable in groups and with the topic/content to be introduced.

- Reflection activities: These activities assist learners with the processing and application of learned skills.

It follows that teachers need to have in their professional repertoire the ability to use a range of participatory techniques that facilitate active learning in the classroom. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills emphasizes innovative learning methods, integrating the use of supportive technologies for inquiry and problem-based approaches, as well as the practice of higher-order thinking skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009).

Further, life skills teaching needs to be structured. Participatory activities can best support learning when they are presented in a logical, ordered and cumulative sequence (UNICEF, 2010). There needs to be a balance between direct whole class instruction and small group activities. Effective learning of life skills requires some conceptual understanding of psychology and how the brain functions. For example, simply providing the vocabulary for individuals, especially small children, to label emotions can be transformative (David, 2016). Life skills education can provide children and youth with the language for discussing personal and interpersonal issues relevant to their development and success in life. It follows that age-appropriate content on core life skills needs to be included in school curricula. There is also a strong case for a specific focus on learning how to learn, and the skills that are required for effective learning at different levels of the education system and for different learning purposes.

Global evaluation of life skills education programming and teaching and learning approaches

The findings of a UNICEF-commissioned global evaluation of life skills education programming identified strengths and weaknesses in programme delivery and the quality of teaching and learning. The report concluded that life skills education is bringing **major changes to curricula and to classroom practices** and, in some cases, is seen as a vanguard for wider change (UNICEF, 2012). These changes will take time and it is necessary for the actors to adopt a long-term view. There was strong evidence of life skills education developing relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes among learners, both in thematic risk areas and general psychosocial skills.

Content and delivery of life skills education are often restricted in their capacity to move the learner beyond knowledge and into the development of psychosocial skills, attitudes and behaviours. This is particularly apparent in the treatment of gender relations through life skills education, in which awareness of gender inequalities and gendered roles may be raised. However, opportunities and conducive environments (both in and beyond the classroom) to challenge and develop alternative gender relations and gendered identities are found to be limited.

Evidence from schools suggests that life skills education tends to be squeezed out of classroom teaching in the context of teacher shortages, overcrowded curricula, limited teaching materials,

and the focus on traditional examinations, of which life skills education is rarely a part. There are limited professional development structures for teachers of life skills education. The use of standards and benchmarks in life skills education programmes is limited and there are significant gaps in the monitoring and evaluation of life skills education outcomes.

There is a particular challenge in developing sufficient human resources, both in terms of numbers and quality, for life skills education delivery. Many programmes have specific teacher training components and, increasingly, this includes both in-service and pre-service training. Yet, the demand for further training remains extremely high among teachers, with indications that existing training is not adequately addressing important elements for life skills education delivery, such as the psychosocial skills and attitudes of teachers themselves.

Didactic methods are unlikely to enhance, and may even negatively affect, the development of social and emotional skills, which can have long-term consequences for the learners (Boyd et al., 2005).

Insights from social and emotional learning (SEL)

Social and emotional learning and early childhood education. Early childhood education (ECE) methods for developing SEL involve providing high-quality programming that addresses the needs of the whole child. Quality ECE programmes have small group sizes, well-prepared teachers and ongoing professional development, as well as partnerships with parents (Frede, 1998). In these programmes, teachers set up the pre-school environment so that

children begin to think ahead, plan their activities, and think about and use strategies to solve social problems (Hyson et al., 2007). The classroom climate is safe and nurturing. These factors contribute to the learning and practice of self-regulation, one of the most important skills for children to develop.

Social and emotional learning in schools. A key success factor in SEL implementation in primary and secondary schools in the United States is that teachers believe in the efficacy of the approach. They understand, value and endorse it, while also reporting that it should be given greater emphasis in schools. Teachers believe that SEL helps students achieve in school, work and life (Bridgeland et al., 2013). With regards to programming, SEL should be sequenced, involve active learning, focus on developing socio-emotional skills and explicitly target the development of socio-emotional skills (AIR, 2015; Payton et al., 2008). High levels of participation are associated with improved social and behavioural outcomes (Durlak et al., 2010).

Teaching methods in SEL programming rely on active learning techniques, such as discussions, small group work and role plays. Cognitive complexity is at an appropriate level for each age group. The most effective lessons provide explicit instruction and promote generalization by including opportunities for practicing skills beyond the lesson and throughout the day (Dusenbury et al., 2015). Parents and community members might be invited to help or participate in lessons. This is congruent with the Delors vision for ensuring that learning is linked to everyday life. Some selected SEL teaching practices are presented in Box 5.

Box 5 Some selected SEL teaching practices

Positive and predictable classroom environments. These use shared expectations or classroom rules that teachers and students develop together to establish social norms for the classroom, e.g., listen respectfully when others are speaking.

Positive teacher-student relationships. These include practices such as welcoming students to the class by name in a respectful way and the use of cooperative learning, which also helps students to develop positive relationships with their peers.

Creating opportunities for students to develop their own voice, explore their own interests and develop their own strengths. This involves questioning techniques, provision of authentic feedback to the student, project-based learning, and field-based learning activities for older students.

Source: Dusenbury et al., 2015.

Insights from mindfulness

Mindfulness is commonly defined as "the practice of maintaining a non-judgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis."[6] Mindfulness and mindfulness-based education have been gaining prominence in the promotion of the wellbeing and social and emotional competence of young people (Schonert-Reich et al., 2010), as these methods improved individuals' attention (Chiesa and Serretti, 2009), including better performance on tasks that need attention (Jha et al., 2007). Furthermore, they are associated with emotion regulation (Roemer et al., 2015). Indeed, mindfulness creates changes in the brain that correspond to an improved ability to engage in tasks even when emotions are heightened (Ortner et al., 2007).

Most mindfulness and mindfulness-based education programmes in formal education focus on developing mindfulness techniques within teachers and facilitators so that they themselves reap the benefits associated with those techniques and reflect them in their relationship with the learners. Such techniques include developing the skill of deliberately paying attention, through meditative practices, to what happens in the mind and body to become more familiar with the workings of mind patterns and identify habits that may no longer be helpful. The techniques help the learners to spot early signs of stress in order to be able to respond more effectively, rather than react in old familiar and often unhelpful ways.

In most programmes surveyed, there was a combination of guided meditation practices and cognitive exercises. Furthermore, many organizations, primarily in the United States and the United Kingdom, have developed offline as well as online training programmes for teachers to develop their own mindfulness. These programmes also include supplying the learners with age-appropriate curricula so teachers can introduce mindfulness into their classrooms (Schonert-Reich et al., 2010).

Enabling factors in life skills and citizenship education

The need for safe learning environments. Creating a safe environment in which all learners can participate is a fundamental characteristic of effective life skills education (Kirby et al., 2006). This means that learners are physically, socially and emotionally safe, and that all are treated equitably, respectfully and fairly. In schools, the classroom climate should be positive and free from fear. Discipline should be positive, as punitive discipline is counter-productive to the ethos of life skills education.

In school contexts, life skills and citizenship education plays a key role in preventing bullying and other forms of violence. Emphasis is placed on communication, resilience, decision-making and problem-solving skills, which have been proven as instrumental in reducing the existing level of physical and sexual violence among adolescents and youth (UNESCO, 2017). Indeed, in MENA, violence among children and youth is a critical issue, which harms students and negatively affects their psychosocial wellbeing. Poor social skills, low academic achievement and impulsiveness are among the factors that fuel violence. Evidence shows that preschool and school-based life skills education which target children early in life can prevent aggression, improve social skills, boost educational achievement, and improve job prospects by enhancing children's and youth's self-awareness, self-management and social awareness, and improving their communication, decision-making, conflict management and problem-solving skills, assisting them to build positive peer-to-peer relationships. The benefits of quality life skills education can be sustained into adulthood (WHO, 2009).

Evidence from work with teachers and with whole schools points to the importance and complexity of constructing schools as 'safe spaces' for generating equitable, inclusive relationships among members of the school at all levels, and clarity in the norms, values and boundaries for dealing with unsafe behaviour (UNICEF, 2016c). While schools are an especially important space where life skills training programmes can be delivered, programmes can also be provided in informal settings such as community centres and refugee camps. These programmes can be delivered over several years, and are structured to address the needs of specific age groups based on the situation and context. Youth centres and meeting places, where youth can discuss events of the past and their future, particularly in areas of violent conflict, are a way to offer psychosocial services if needed. Such approaches are key for reinforcing the impact of psychosocial support needed in emergency situations.

Inclusive classroom culture. A transformative change in classroom culture, including teachers' perceptions of what they can do in teaching and learning, is imperative in MENA. UNWRA's education reform strategy (2011-2015) offers insights

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[6]   Definition from Merriam-Webster online dictionary https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/skill

into where effective interventions can be made to improve the quality of education, including teaching and learning approaches in formal education contexts. In particular, the focus on teacher training and development, including through school-based teacher development, seems to have been a critically important factor in improving the quality of education in the classroom. This has enabled teachers to develop and to integrate life skills areas, such as communication and critical thinking skills, into their teaching across the curriculum. This experience suggests that the integration across the curriculum may be delivered more effectively than including life skills in specific subjects only (UNICEF, 2017a).

One major aspect of improving classroom culture is the emphasis on **positive discipline** as an approach to developing a conducive learning environment. This excludes corporal punishment and other forms of humiliation that leave children and youth anxious and fearful, and prevent them from reaching their full potential in the classroom (UNESCO, 2015b). Positive discipline is critical to the implementation of life skills and citizenship education, as it is based on the principle of safety for, and equity among, all learners, fostering in them a sense of trust and agency.

Classroom dynamics are critical to the success of the classroom environment, and must be supportive of inclusive active learning and teaching. Learning must be connected to real-life and learner needs (UNESCO, 2004). Classroom management must maximize opportunities for learning. Preparation by the teacher is important for ensuring that classroom space is properly utilized and that seating arrangements enable interactive learning. Inclusivity can be supported by the teacher taking into consideration any specific needs or circumstances of individual learners and preparing to take these into account in the learning process. This entails the teacher providing effective and available support to all learners in the class, and typically results in more meaningful connections between the teacher and learner. Teachers use multiple activities that are appropriate to the developmental age of the learner in order to fully engage them. Group work is an important activity that enables the teacher to allocate time to support all groups and individual learners.

Encouraging steps in the right direction have already been undertaken, as many of the life skill resources used in the region advocate participatory teaching and learning approaches, in which learners identify their own challenges, discuss possible solutions, and plan and carry out effective action programmes. Some innovative techniques are being tested by organizations working in formal and non-formal life skills education. In Morocco, for example, the

Ministry of Education integrates life skills education in schools as part of personal project clubs (primary and lower secondary levels), where children and youth are supported to prepare a personal career and life plan, outlining goals, ambitions and dreams. In the State of Palestine, the Al Qattan Foundation implements programmes for youth focusing on the use of drama as a teaching technique. In Egypt, an innovative community-school model for marginalized youth has been introduced, which includes a standardized package of teaching and learning of life skills for garbage collectors that could be replicated in other similar contexts.

The critical role of the teachers. The ability of the teacher to put active learning into practice is arguably the single most important factor in an effective approach to life skills education. The teacher, in an active classroom environment, has a holistic learning focus, not simply a subject-specific focus, as in more traditional pedagogical approaches. The teacher is an enabler, facilitating learning rather than transmitting knowledge to the learner. They are also role models, providing real-life examples of the types of skills, attitudes and behaviours they are transmitting. Instead of focusing on soliciting the 'correct' responses from learners, the teacher encourages them to ask questions themselves and to play an active role in their own learning. The role of the teacher is often that of a facilitator, supporting learners as they learn and develop skills.

In this approach, it is important that the teacher has a full understanding for how learners learn, including skills for learning how to learn, and has been trained in methods that enable the learner to learn effectively. Teachers should have high expectations of all their learners, for their learning and their potential. A characteristic of effective programming is the selection of teachers with desired characteristics, the provision of the training, support and supervision (Kirby et al., 2016). Training is fundamental for teachers to acquire new skills, techniques and methods to be innovative and creative (Ellis and Barr, 2008; Clarke, 2008).

Enhancing pre-service and in-service training for teachers is necessary in the context of life skills and lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2013). School-based teacher development is a promising intervention that has been successfully utilized by UNWRA (UNWRA, 2015). Specifically, teachers need to understand the importance of life skills in human development and in learning to learn. They also need to be able to practice their life skills in the context of their professional training. This suggests that pre-service training curricula for teachers need to be developed with a life skills education approach.

When providing opportunities for children to learn and practice life skills, teachers need to be skilful in classroom management. They need to be sufficiently close to their students to help, preferably before a problem occurs. This requires the teacher to have well developed anticipation skills, and to be aware of what is going on in group interactions and classroom relationships. The teacher needs to have multiple solutions ready to respond to difficulties in the activity. It is important to celebrate progress and acknowledge when children are successful in demonstrating their skills.

Teaching the 12 core life skills

The 12 core life skills identified in this Initiative are relevant for personal development and success in life. Therefore, attention needs to be given to how these core life skills can be taught, learned and practiced in the education system and throughout life.

General principles. The general principles for effective life skills and citizenship education apply to the teaching and learning of all 12 core life skills identified in this CPF. These principles can be applied to all core life skills, however, there are some variations in terms of focus, type of activities and assessment methods for each core life skill, as the level of transferability varies among them as they are applied and realised in different domains of life and knowledge.

In order for the learners to both benefit from the teaching and learning of the 12 core life skills, and to be able to practice and experience these on daily basis, each core life skill needs to be embedded within the culture of the school or learning environment (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015). Consequently, a common vision, plan and strategy for integrating life skills into teaching and learning are required, which need to be promoted in both curriculum and instruction. Furthermore, each core life skill should be integrated into the assessment process, while a learner's individual development should be regularly evaluated and reported.

A pre-condition is building teachers' capacities so that they can teach life skills confidently and effectively, as well as support and facilitate innovative teaching practices in their classrooms. Thus, pre- and in-service teachers' training must encompass both life skills education, and participatory and interactive teaching and learning methods. There must be sufficient time for teachers-in-training to master concepts and pedagogical skills.

The teaching and learning of the 12 core life skills revolve around the following principles (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Teaching and learning principles
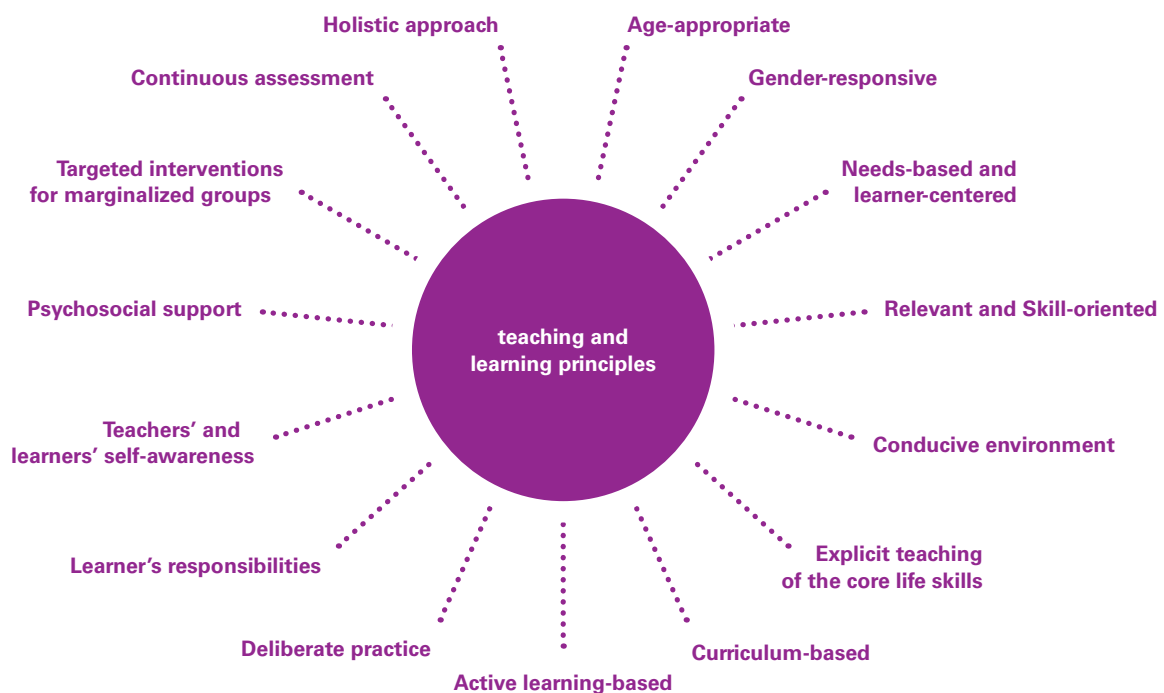
Holistic approach. Life skills and citizenship education involve the development of a balanced combination of cognitive, personal and emotional or self-management skills, as well as social and interpersonal skills covering the gamut of psychosocial skills. Therefore, when teaching life skills, facilitators should keep in mind that: (i) while some activities might be more geared towards practising one core life skill, all core life skills equally matter and should be addressed at some point; and (ii) each classroom activity will also have an impact on the development of an array of life skills.

Age-appropriate. Teaching and learning needs to be adapted to different age groups, depending on their needs, level of development and capabilities. This means that the methods and the activities used to teach the 12 core life skills will be different for younger children early education, children in basic-education, adolescents and youth in secondary education or TVET, and youth and adults in tertiary or continuing education, while continuously building on the earlier stages throughout schooling and life.

For instance, young learners need opportunities to use their hands and minds to create to demonstrate the skills and concepts they have learned in an exploratory way (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015). This may include model making from locally available materials, designing simple electrical circuits and using toy building bricks to construct objects for storytelling. It also depends on the creativity of the teacher and the resources that are available for creative activities. Commonly used activities can include brainstorming activities, small group work to solve a particular problem, simulations and games, such as the 'dramatic play centres' in early childhood classes. This particularly helps to facilitate learning problem-solving skills, as well as communication skills, from an early age, while encouraging cognitive and social development.

Moreover, critical thinking instruction and respect for diversity should start in ECE and be further fostered in primary levels by valuing reasoning, truthfulness, respecting others in discussion, being open-minded, being willing to see things from another's perspective, using cognitive strategies when something is unclear, and using principles of critical thinking (Bailin et al., 1999). The teaching and learning of decision-making skills can be introduced to younger learners with stories that provide situations for examining the decision-making of the characters involved and considering whether they made suitable decisions in the light of the information available and the risks. In basic education, using experiential learning through real-world tasks and situations allows for

greater potential for improvement (Joshua et al., 2015). Some tools used for teaching decision-making are similar to those for problem-solving, and may involve a step-by-step process to arrive at an informed decision. This structured approach, preparing learners for the world of work and decision-making regarding business and working practices, is more suitable for older learners who are able to understand and use a more formal, complex and logical approach.

In any case, teachers should be mindful of and understand the typical language development of children, particularly children aged 4 through 11, to make sure to align the activities with the children's needs and communication skills.

Gender-responsive. Life skills education involves the practice of active and engaged strategies to issues pertaining to gender equality. Specifically, life skills education actively promotes gender equality by addressing gender stereotypes and gender discrimination in teaching and learning at all levels, while showing all learners that the 12 core life skills are equally important to all, and that none is gendered. For example, all learners need to build their cooperation skills and their sense of empathy against the old stereotype that these would be 'feminine' traits (see Box 6).

Needs based and learner-centred. Aiming to develop independent learners who can drive their own learning processes and outcomes, life skills education is based on the assessed needs of each learner individually, which demands a personalized approach. Teachers should be aware of individual differences, strengths, and weaknesses, especially of learners' communication skills and self-management skills, and try to take these into consideration in regular teaching to get each learner the support needed to develop their skills. In some instances, this can be linked to guidance and counselling services.

Relevant and skills-oriented. Life skills and citizenship education focus on delivering specific skill outcomes and related behaviours for real-life purposes, which includes developing and using capabilities involving the interplay of life skills, knowledge and values in social contexts.

Communication skills benefit from being taught with regard to a given social context and situation (Hymes, 1972), with learners practising and using the appropriate knowledge and values for specific acts of both verbal and non-verbal communication to get things done. Critical thinking, decision-making and negotiation skills are relevant in school and everyday life, and include important community

Box 6 Life skills education and gender equality in school

This revised vision on education of this CPF provides a platform to address equity in the distribution of learning opportunities, knowledge and skills. Education can be a prime mover in equitable development and the promotion of gender equality. It draws attention to the problems of social marginalization and exclusion, as well as to the need for appropriate investment in education and research to address these problems. Gender equality needs to be mainstreamed in all four Dimensions of Learning with the aim of ensuring that all female and male children and youth have equal opportunities to fulfil their potential. This may entail the need to develop better educational opportunities for female and male children, and youth in contexts of gender inequality.

As such, life skills are directly relevant to the promotion of gender equality (UNESCO, 2008). To be effective, a gender perspective is required in life skills education programming and integrated in the curriculum, in the teaching and learning approaches as well as in the school culture. Life skills education needs to be gender responsive. Where possible, it would be helpful to conduct gender analysis on the status of skill needs and strengths by gender among learners in order to identify priorities for action. Gender stereotyping of particular life skills should be investigated, analysed and addressed. In all programmes, equal opportunities need to be given to all children and youth to learn and practice all life core skills. Gender norms can be challenged using role plays, simulations and discussions in a life skills framework. Teachers need to be trained in gender-responsive life skills education to avoid classroom practices that involve gender-based discrimination against female and male children and youth (UNESCO 2008, 2009)

issues. Negotiation and decision-making skills combine thinking and social skills, which children and youth need for better physical, social and mental health in order to resist peer pressure, especially related to health risks such as drugs, reproductive health and violence, as well as to effectively deal with workplace problems. Activities in which negotiation and decision-making can be practiced focus on local, real-life investigations in response to children's own personal experiences and participation in community events. This requires, for example, linking the core life skill to relevant information about health risks and outcomes, and is practised best in small-group, role plays, or discussions. Furthermore, teachers can also help learners to develop resilience by encouraging them to empathize with others who are facing difficulties, and being supportive inside and outside the classroom.

Conducive environment. To develop effectively, life skills and citizenship education learners need to be able to practice core life skills in different situations, and in safe, controlled environments before facing real-life situations. Hence, they must feel safe to express themselves and to experiment in the classroom, with the teachers, and among their peers. As previously mentioned, this entails that the practice of all core life skills, especially, communication, participation, respect for diversity, empathy and critical thinking skills, are embedded within both the culture of the school and the learning environment, as this is the daily setting that learners encounter and in which they practise these active citizenship-focused life skills, values and knowledge. School leadership, staff and teachers, as well as the learners' communities, have to be committed, prepared and trained to develop a school environment based on respect and supportive of diversity.

To teach each core life skill, the classroom needs to be a respectful environment between teachers and learners, and among learners, where differences are understood and accepted, and be 'communication friendly, i.e., optimal for easy, effective and enjoyable communication, allowing room for negotiation and learners' decision-making. Teachers should plan their own communications to share as part of lesson planning using simple, age-appropriate communication language, focusing on what is important, checking the learners' understanding, providing visual and verbal cues, giving extra time for learners to process language, and helping them develop communication strategies. Further, teachers need to be able to show interest in what each learner, regardless of gender, abilities or origin, has to say, maintain eye contact, use names, give positive feedback and be patient. There should be ample opportunities for everybody to participate, talk and listen. This also includes paying attention to space, light, classroom and sitting layout, noise levels, use of visual aids for support clear and consistent routines, and planned and created opportunities to support each core life skill throughout the day. In all instances, this requires group management skills on the part of the teacher so that the whole group can work in pairs or small groups, and for the teacher not to dominate communication.

Fostering communication, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and participation includes the flexible use of the learning environment, balancing structure with freedom, and having an opportunity to engage in self-directed and exploratory learning (Davies et al., 2012). Learning environments should create confidence, and develop domain knowledge and sensible risk-taking. Programmes that focus on developing creative thinking skills in realistic and

domain-specific exercises are more likely to be effective (Isaksen and Treffinger, 2004; Scott et al., 2004). Promoting creativity requires a classroom climate that encourages risk taking, making mistakes, innovation and uniqueness, hence, freedom in an overall environment of order. Teachers should be encouraged to experiment alongside learners (Craft, 2001) in a learning environment with enough resource materials and a bright and colourful working space, ideally, working with learners from an early age onwards.

The learning environment should be conducive to the acquisition and development of self-management skills by supporting all to become independent learners. Expectations for self-management in terms of behaviours and study habits need to be made explicit, and appropriate support given for learners to meet their self-management goals. A positive and conducive learning environment fosters empathy, altruism and compassion, which are valuable. Practicing empathy leads to improved classroom management and more time for learning, as learners arrive each day ready to learn and teachers are better equipped to deal with the social and emotional needs of their students. Schools that are committed to empathetic teaching and practices enjoy improved teacher efficacy and retention, because teachers are treated with the trust, resources and understanding that they deserve (Ashoka, n.d.).

Respect for diversity is integral to the classroom climate and learning processes. Fair treatment of all in classroom procedures communicates respect by implicitly recognizing that all individuals should be treated the same way, as valued members of society. This is a form of procedural justice that not only acknowledges the importance of voice and visibility, but also encompasses consistency and lack of bias. This leads to promoting resilience as an important capability for success in school and the transition to the world of work, whereby teachers provide a learning environment in which learners develop skills

to cope with disappointment, rejection and setbacks, learn from mistakes, learn not panic or take things personally, are open to constructive criticism, have a positive outlook, overcome adversity and display grit (Lucas and Hanson, 2015). Learners should be helped to discover their interests and develop their engagement in learning, as well as be provided with opportunities to practice skills in general (Duckworth, 2016). One model from Australia, the 'Resilience Doughnut' provides a long-term, sustainable and embedded approach and framework for building learners', staff' and parents' emotional resilience and wellbeing across the school community.[7] This model is both a strengths-based and solution-focused approach and fosters a sense of agency within the learners, staff and parents.

Explicit teaching of the core life skills. Learning objectives related to the development of each core life skill are made explicit, i.e., both communicated to learners as well as translated into clear learning objectives (see Box 7).

This is true for all 12 core life skills, yet explicit teaching requires ad-hoc approaches for some of the life skills. For example, teaching practices that are influential in developing creativity include teaching for creative thinking, providing learners with choice and exploratory learning, encouraging intrinsic motivation of learners, and providing learners with opportunities to use their imagination (Schacter et al., 2006), thus boosting learning achievement.

Further, concepts relevant to creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking, negotiation, decision-making, respect for diversity, participation and self-management skills need to be presented, taught, discussed and internalized. Critical thinking instruction can be started at the primary level by valuing reasoning and truthfulness, respecting others in discussion, being open-minded, being willing to see things from another's perspective, using cognitive strategies when something is unclear

Box 7 Teaching the core life skills: Learning objectives

- Set and clearly communicate the learning objectives relating to the core life skill for all learners.
- Create opportunities for modelling and practising the core life skill in teaching and learning, between teachers/facilitators and learners, and among learners within the group.
- Sensitize learners to the importance of the core life skill in learning and in life more generally.
- Facilitate the development and practice of the core life skill skills in all learners.

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[7] See "the Resilience Doughnut" at: www.theresiliencedoughnut.com.au/

and using principles of critical thinking (Bailin et al., 1999). Here, a mixed-method intervention, with critical thinking skills taught alongside a specific course produced the best results (Abrami et al., 2008), and is an important determinant of success. The least effective methods were when course objectives did not explicitly set critical thinking objectives. Explicit teaching of diversity includes techniques such as encouraging learners to talk to others when facing challenges, offering different points of view about a problem, encouraging learners to talk about events in their lives, and fostering a 'can do' attitude among learners. Techniques for participating in group activities as well as study skills need to be taught and practiced.

Curriculum-based. Life skills and citizenship education is structured in a curriculum that is logically sequenced. For example, since creativity skills are linked to the ability to connect with others, they can be integrated into classroom activities in all core subjects of the curriculum. Further, critical thinking can be taught by being integrated in an existing subject matter in the curriculum or taught separately. In the specific case of curriculum integration, both critical thinking and decision-making can be developed and practised in all subject disciplines. Self-management, on the other hand, requires a twin track approach to teaching and learning. There is a need to teach self-management skills separately, possibly around study skills in a school context, while self-management also needs to be integrated in existing curricula in all subject areas.

Active learning-based. This encompasses both the use of cooperative learning methods and authentic tasks. For example, cooperative learning and structured group work can support communication skills development. Active, student-engaging, problem-focused, non-hierarchical teaching styles are helpful in developing creativity (Tsai, 2012). A cooperative approach to learning towards critical thinking is also advocated based on the value of social interactions in cognitive development (Lai, 2011).

While the ability to cooperate is an important education outcome, little time has been traditionally spent in developing this capacity in group work, negotiation and teamwork in problem-solving in classrooms. Cooperative learning is an approach to teaching and learning that is learner centred and teacher facilitated. It involves small groups of learners being responsible for their own learning and the individual learning of all group members, whereby group members interact with each other in order to solve a problem, complete a task or achieve a goal. Learners maximize their own learning and each other's learning when they work together. In particular, participatory approaches to setting class ground rules (as illustrated in Box 8) can facilitate appropriate classroom behaviour as well as cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning methods can be grouped into two main categories. The first is structured team learning and the second is informal group learning. Classroom settings should be made to enable cooperation in learning, such as specific sitting arrangements whereby learners sit by forming a circle or sit in small groups looking at each other, and not continuously sitting focused towards the front of the classroom, the teacher or the blackboard.

The benefits of using cooperative learning include: (i) learning for all, which is inclusive of learners at risk or marginalized learners, through formalizing and encouraging peer support in safe learning environments; (ii) critical thinking by clarifying ideas through discussion and debate in small groups rather than in whole class teacher-led sessions; (iii) promotion of communication skills through more group discussions and debate; (iv) improved self-esteem (Slavin, 1990); and (v) increased cooperativeness of learners as they work better in teams.

Deliberate practice is required, which includes clearly defined 'stretch' goals, full concentration and effort, immediate and informative feedback, and repetition with reflection and refinement. Deliberate practice is particularly needed to develop a range of problem-solving skills, as well as to develop critical thinking skills (Van Gelder, 2005). This requires that critical thinking is an explicit part of the curriculum with indepth instruction. Learners must also be taught to

Box 8 Ground rules for group work activities

- All learners are allowed to voice their opinions. One person talks at a time.
- Everybody listens to what others have to say.
- Everybody is respectful of each other even when there is disagreement.
- Solutions that are reached in the group are agreed by everybody.

Box 9 The RULER approach[8]

The Yale Centre for Emotional Intelligence has developed the RULER approach for schools in the United States. RULER is an acronym that stands for 'recognizing emotions in self and others, understanding the causes and consequences of emotions, labelling emotions accurately, expressing emotions appropriately and regulating emotions effectively.' This represents a comprehensive approach to emotional self-management. Teachers should be able to:

- Identify what the observable behaviours are for the learner to learn to self-manage;
- Clearly describe what the learner should do for each step;
- Visually display the target behaviours using photographs or drawings on a poster, on a sheet of paper, or in a booklet;
- Provide a way for the learner to monitor his or her behaviour (e.g., a check mark);
- Guide the learner to learn and practice the desired behaviours and to use the self-management system; and
- Provide positive feedback.

transfer critical thinking to a variety of situations by providing them with opportunities to apply the skills in diverse contexts. This is usually in the context of specific subject matter.

Learners' responsibilities. Learners should be able to take on some of the responsibility for their own learning and take personal action to practice the core life skills and to transfer them into real-life situations. This entails, however, that support and guidance are provided, if needed, by teachers and other trained persons.

Creativity skills require allowing learners to take responsibility for their own learning (Ferrari et al., 2009). The same holds true for problem-solving skills and conflict resolution by learning to discuss alternatives, and focusing on thinking as a vital element of the curriculum thus developing self-management skills. Further, participation skills require from each learner the responsible learning of the procedures, methods and conventions for group participation, such as setting ground rules and abiding by them. Teaching resilience also encompasses providing opportunities for individual, learner-owned practice. Once the learners have been given both structure and guidance, it is important for them to be able to identify and face their own challenges, find their own solutions, and see the results for themselves. In this context, the teacher needs to step back and allow learners to develop responsibility for their own resilience skills development.

Teaching self-management includes enabling learners to pay attention to their own behaviour by developing self-monitoring skills. They are helped to use appropriate play and social interaction skills, participate actively in classroom routines and engage

in instructional activities. It is important for the teacher to assess the child's current level of self-management skills by determining if the child can complete target behaviours (see Box 9).

Teachers' and learners' self-awareness. In order to respond to learners' needs, as well as to monitor life skills and citizenship education sessions, teachers need to be aware of how much their students talk with each other, work in groups, or share what they have done with the rest of the class. This is of particular relevance with regard to communication skills, as teachers need to be aware of their own use of language to instruct, question and reply, acknowledging that the way in which teachers talk to children can influence understanding and motivation to learn. Furthermore, the teaching of empathy, respect for diversity and participation skills helps learners to be aware of their feelings and thoughts about their ability to understand and share in the feelings of others. With meta-cognitive awareness, learners become more effective at understanding others' perspectives throughout their lives, while being respectful of diversity and more effective in participatory activities.

Psychosocial support. When introducing life skills and citizenship education, it is recommended to have access to the skills of a professional who can provide psychosocial support in addition to the services of the teacher in order to cater to psychosocial needs of all children. Further details on the approaches related to psychosocial support are provided in the section addressing child protection as a channel of delivery for life skills and citizenship education.

Targeted interventions for marginalized groups. It is important that all learners are provided with opportunities to develop life skills. For example,

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[8] See Yale Centre for Emotional Intelligence at: http://ei.yale.edu/ruler/

Figure 4 Examples of tools and activities for teaching and learning
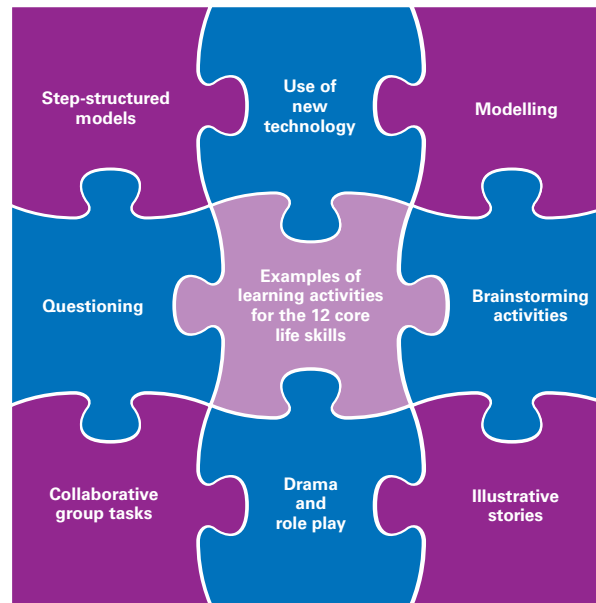
those who are out of school or those with special education needs will need targeted interventions. This is of particular relevance with regard to communication skills as speech and language, as communication difficulties of young people affect their performance in school and in life more generally. Factors such as learning difficulties, autism or hearing impairment can be severe, and require targeted support for speech, language communication development, and learning.

Continuous assessment. Learner progress in each core life skill needs to be monitored, regularly, assessed and reported to parents so that they are aware of their children's progress. Assessment activities can be a wide array of assignments or projects, during or at the end of the term. Creativity, for instance, should be incorporated into curriculum-based assessment procedures and portfolios. Performance-based assessments are considered to be a valid measure of critical thinking, but there are issues of reliability. Critical thinking is often best assessed in the context of real-world scenarios and simulations.

Further, available empirical evidence suggests that open-ended measures better capture critical thinking skills than multiple-choice measures (Ku, 2009). Different assessment methods are needed to allow learners to construct their own answers. With multiple-choice exercises, follow-up questions can be given to probe the underlying reasoning for the choices made. For critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and negotiations skills, assessment tasks should reflect authentic problems and performances wherever possible, noting that this is

more suitable for older learners. Learning self-control also requires the checking of progress and setting of clear goals (Lucas and Hanson, 2015) and entails that learners learn to self-assess.

Selected tools and activities. The 12 core life skills can be taught by using various types of activities that can be adapted and adjusted with regard to the individual life skill(s) targeted during a session (see Figure 4).

Modelling. Learners, especially young children, learn to identify and internalize life skills and behaviours best if they can both observe and experience them directly. Learners learn from a teacher's character and behaviours as much as they do from instruction. Teachers should be role models for all core life skills for learners in their classroom, as well as for the community, as modelling helps to develop and practice higher-order thinking skills.

Teachers should exemplify good practice in a range of oral communication skills, spanning a wide range of communicative functions related to how effective communications take place in the real world. It is also of the utmost relevance to foster cooperation and collaboration skills in children and youth. Teachers further needs to be able to demonstrate creativity, problem-solving skills and critical thinking skills in their teaching practices, as well as being able to communicate effectively about these skills. Teachers can be role models who, by example, show learners the power of creativity in their work. They should be able to model critical thinking in their instruction and provide concrete examples to illustrate abstract concepts. Moreover, teachers can model

negotiation skills in managing classes and model good decision-making in their work. To promote empathy in relationships and respect for diversity, the teacher leads individuals to care for the feelings of the others in class. As teachers model how to be positive when learning, learners mirror optimistic and confident learning behaviours. Teachers, by showing their capacity in facilitating participatory learning activities, model participation skills. Finally, teachers can show learners a calm and flexible way of handling challenges by being in control of one's emotions, keeping calm in stressful situations, so as not to exacerbate the problem, and having a positive outlook. Modelling also includes making mistakes as part of the learning process to show that resilience and perseverance are often necessary.

Use of illustrative stories. Oral communication skills such as storytelling skills and the use of vocabulary have been shown to be strong predictors of academic success (Feinstein and Duckworth, 2005). With younger learners, stories can provide situations for examining the decision-making of the characters involved and considering whether they made suitable decisions in the light of the information available and the risks. Moreover, a teacher can use stories to teach different perspective, as well as illustrate a point of view with an example from his or her own life in which an argument takes place with somebody simply because they had a different point of view. Stories develop the learners' ability to understand and sympathize with others' experiences.

Classic approaches to the development of empathy also involve role play and the use of stories, case studies and the news stories, whereby students are required to see things from other perspectives (Lucas and Hanson). Teaching respect for diversity is also successfully supported by stories. This requires the preparation of appropriate teaching and learning materials, including texts that can be subject to critical thinking (Starkey, 2002). For example, EmpathyLab is a British organization that is using the power of stories to inspire children, aged 4-11, to build their empathy skills, literacy and social activism. It created six story-based tools to help schools create immersive empathy-building experiences and further provided lists of core empathy texts characterized by strongly drawn characters and high-quality writing and illustration. An eight-month evaluation of the programme in eleven schools found impacts on children's empathy skills, wellbeing, literacy, family involvement, social action, and school ethos and strategy (Empathy Lab, 2016).

Collaborative group tasks. Most of the 12 core life skills are best practiced in the framework of collaborative group tasks, with an emphasis on small group work, with the large group format being preferred for interactions with the teacher/facilitator. As learners work together on specific tasks or challenges, they experience a controlled group moulding that brings them together. Shared success or failure gives them a collaborative experience that requires them to exercise respect with their peers, thus developing team work skills, particularly with older learners, and practising all other core skills.

Cooperative learning and structured group work support communication skills development, and small-group work and peer learning are conducive to dialogue and discussion. By extension, listening activities can build active listening skills either in a whole class or small groups. The teacher should plan to develop listening skills on a regular basis in class and be ready to provide opportunities for listening attentively to others. Learners need to have a chance to talk, which can happen in pairs or through group work. Integrating cooperation skills into classroom activities and in core subjects of the curriculum involves giving learners the opportunity to work in diverse teams and encouraging them to become more effective collaborators. Small group work activities involving decision-making support the learners to develop their communication skills, problem-solving skills, critical thinking and creativity. Furthermore, providing opportunities for learners to speak and discuss in pairs or small groups enables learners to develop self-confidence and engage with others in developing new ideas and thinking. Effective communication skills are critical to the ability to develop the social capabilities that underpin effective participation in a wide range of fields and contexts. Finally, discussions and teamwork can go a long way towards helping learners to see how they align with or differ from others. Teachers can facilitate opportunities for learners to be open with one another and safely discover what others' perspectives may be.

Use of new technology. New technologies can assist and enable innovative teaching that, in the 21st century context, promotes creative learning in the practices of teaching for creativity and help to apply innovation to teaching (Ferrari et al., 2009). Hence, children can be encouraged to prepare and give oral presentations to the class and to varied audiences in the community by using technology and new media to communicate innovatively and effectively.

Step-structured models. Models have been developed specifically for problem-solving, decision-making and negotiation. Teachers can use these models in the classroom to introduce 12 core life skills to the learners and practice skills in a systematic and structured way.

To teach problem-solving and decision-making, a six-step approach can be used. The class can select a common issue to experiment and learners are taught how to: (i) identify the problem, (ii) analyse the problem, (iii) generate potential solutions, (iv) select and plan the solution, (v) implement the solution, and (vi) evaluate the solution (Schein, 2010). This helps learners to understand the logic and the thinking skills involved in a problem-solving process.

Teaching and learning negotiation skills involve interactive activities, including structured approaches to teaching negotiation, e.g., the seven-step method, of which there are numerous variants. The McKinsey approach, among others, follows a logical sequence: (i) define the problem, (ii) structure the problem, (iii) prioritize issues, (iv) develop issue analysis and work plan, (v) conduct analyses, (vi) synthesize findings, and (vii) develop recommendations.[9] This approach is more suitable for post-basic education learners or those already at work.

Other selected tools. Other activities for teaching and learning the 12 core life skills include brainstorming activities, drama and role play relating to real-life problems and scenarios. One example is 'dramatic play centres' in early childhood classrooms, where children, in turn, individually and collaboratively, enact setting a table by questioning what is needed and finding the corresponding items in boxes set out by the teachers. Teachers can offer space for debates and discussions, oral presentations, workshops on questioning techniques, simulations and games. These various tools help to foster communication negotiation, decision-making, collaboration and participation skills, as well as resilience, empathy and respect for others and for others' views.

Skills development by age

Early childhood education. Children learn through play, which is critical to healthy development. During play, children learn and practice life skills. They develop core communication skills as they interact with other children, as well as thinking skills stimulated by play, along with developing their ability to use language. They also develop their ability to focus and enhance their attention span. Games provide a context in which critical interpersonal social skills are learned, including learning to cooperate, negotiate, take turns and play by the rules. These life skills develop as a child plays with other children and shares activities. For children aged 3-5, play activities can include games with puppets, simple board games, simple puzzles, dressing-up in costumes and storybooks.

Elements of good practice include:

- Relevant and appropriate skills and content that matches children's needs and interests;
- Provision of learning experiences that build on children's prior knowledge and previously acquired skills;
- Opportunities for children to engage in activities that are initiated by themselves;
- Theme-based learning;
- No use of textbooks;
- Use of children's mother tongue as the medium of instruction;
- Observation records on children's performance and progress made in various developmental aspects as the core assessment data;
- Strong collaboration among practitioners, parents and community service workers.

Basic education. Children in basic education also benefit from play and develop their life skills, such as communication, problem-solving and cooperation, through interactions with other children. At this age, children are seeking out new information, experiences, and challenges in play; peer influence at this age is strong. Group activities are conducive to play. These can include sports, simple model making, board games, building and construction kits, and coordination and memory games.

Learning in basic education takes place through a curriculum framework that offers the basic structure to set the learning targets for all learners at various stages of primary schooling. All 12 core life skills need to be integrated in the primary curriculum framework as generic or crosscutting life skills in the key learning areas. While teaching and learning methods shall be age-appropriate and based on life-relevant content, setting high expectations and explicit goals are important factors in effective learning for both the 12 core life skills as well as the other learning objectives.

Post-basic education. Structured learning in post-basic education also takes place through a curriculum framework at each of the stages of secondary schooling. As for basic education, all 12 core life skills need to be integrated in the primary curriculum framework as generic or crosscutting skills in the key learning areas, and methods for teaching and learning shall be age-appropriate and content relevant. To be effective, life skills education in post-basic education builds on those skills acquired and practised in basic education.

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[9]   See www.360casecamp.com/7-steps-of-problem-solving.html

Channels of Delivery

Formal Education

Non-formal and Informal Education

Workplace and 'Road to Workplace'

Social Engagement (volunteer and community work; scouting; social media)

Child Protection (child entered safe spaces; child protection centers)

Modalities of Delivery

Curricular, Co-curricular and Extra-curricular

Stand-alone and Integrated

Self-learning, Face-to-face, Online, Media, Blended, Open and Distance Learning

3.2 Multiple pathways approach

Pivotal to the realization and mainstreaming of life skills and citizenship education is a comprehensive multiple pathways approach, with the double aim to reach all learners and to maximize the potential of each of them. In the framework of a knowledge-based economy and of social-political changes in MENA, multiple pathways mean access to a variety of learning opportunities, allowing learners to focus on their academic and career goals as well as on their social role and engagement, and to develop both life skills and knowledge accordingly. This approach safeguards equity among learners and inclusiveness through targeting marginalized populations, thus recognizing the variety of learners' trajectories.

Multiple pathways include second-chance education opportunities for those who have dropped out of school, as well as flexible learning schedules for those who have other responsibilities, such as work. Therefore, the focus is as much on formal education delivery as on non-formal and informal education settings, and on the road to and in the workplace, and includes social engagement and child protection. Similarly, a multiple pathways approach acknowledges a variety of learning routes, from face-to-face delivery of education to alternative options, such as open and distance learning, blended learning and self-access learning, which all have to be explored and considered. New technologies, in particular, offer innovative channels of education delivery.

This section underscores the rationale and the importance of mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education through multiple pathways of learning, and discusses the variety of modalities and channels of delivery.

The case for multiple pathways for life skills and citizenship education programming

A multiple pathways approach meets the increasing complexity of the modern economy and the rapid changes taking place in society more generally. It acknowledges that learning can take place at different times and in different settings, and that both learners and their trajectories are diverse. In addition, it entails that the same qualifications can be attained by following different learning pathways with a variety of providers. This is particularly relevant to TVET.

Education system development is moving towards the provision of **multiple learning opportunities along a lifelong continuum** to improve access to education and ensure more efficient use of scarce economic resources for educations systems and students. By expanding the learners' choices, a multiple pathways approach helps to make various options more attractive to learners. A multiple pathways approach further underpins lifelong learning, where knowledge is continuously being updated and the demand for skills is ever changing as careers evolve, new technologies are invented, and innovative ways of working emerge. This reflects the changing way in which education is delivered, with an expansion of opportunities to learn through multiple pathways and channels throughout life.

Multiple educational pathways allow for **various, flexible routes between education and the labour market**, beyond the traditional, one-way route implying completion of formal schooling to achieve employment, thus reflecting changing economic realities as well as addressing demands of learners who are out of school. Youth and other learners can choose from TVET or general education, learn during on-the-job training or internships, work and get a supplemental education, or decide to come back, or add on, to their education later (Raffe, 2011). Hence, this facilitates movements from one level of education to another, from vocational to academic (and vice- versa), and between employment, schooling, training, or in combination. In a multiple pathways approach, programmes must differentiate between learners who seek to enter the labour market as employees, those interested in self-employment and those interested in returning to school or continuing in education. Programmes need to be tailored to the desired employment outcome of the learner (USAID, 2014).

The multiplication of pathways and the recognition of their validity facilitate **equity and inclusiveness** of all learners, as various education and training options, as well as different transitions between occupations, form more opportunities for diverse learners, and for marginalized groups in particular. This holds true for female youth and adult-age women in MENA (Heyne and Gebel, 2014) or for refugees and displaced people. Increases in alternatives also improve chances of successful training/employment transitions for youth with disabilities, if they are informed of these options (Toms-Barker, 2014).

The case for multiple pathways in life skills and citizenship education programming is multi-layered:

- First, this is an adaptive trajectory for education systems that have to respond to the needs of a 'knowledge-based' or 'learning' society, in which quantity and quality of, and access to information and knowledge become increasingly more important than the production of goods and services. In this framework, learners need to master and use higher-order cognitive and psychosocial skills to address both the complexity and the fluidity of the market and of societal relations.

- Second, it is vital that life skills and citizenship education contribute to enhancing the quality of the education offered through multiple pathways. For these different pathways to be effective, they need to be relevant to the practical and transformational learning needs of both the individual and the community.

- Third, it is important for the multiple pathways to achieve synergies so that the learners' experiences remain consistent across pathways and channels. This implies a mutual recognition system, as well as a common measurement and certification system across the channels of both the knowledge and life skills acquired through the course of the learner's trajectory (OECD, 2013b).

- Fourth, life skills programming in MENA is already being conducted through multiple pathways, as shown in the region-wide analytical mapping of life-skill initiatives. The majority of these programmes are delivered in formal basic education through extra-curricular activities, such as the Citizenship and Human Rights Clubs in Tunisia, as well as in non-formal settings, where they address the needs of vulnerable groups, such as out-of-school children, youth and other vulnerable groups. Makani – My Space centres, run by UNICEF in Jordan, address all vulnerable children and youth, particularly out-of-school Syrian refugees, while *Ishraq* is a second-chance programme for out-of-school female children (aged 12–15 years) in Upper Egypt.

- Fifth, a multiple pathways approach is needed to ensure coherence in interventions and messages within different environments in which children and youth learn and grow, and to ensure that what is learnt in the classroom is supported by what is experienced outside of school. This needs to be continued and strengthened, and lessons learned have to be shared across MENA. Particularly relevant in this regard is community-engagement, including the participation of parents and community leaders in educational system reforms.

Box 10 Main educational pathways for operationalizing life skills

Channel		Education levels	Typical age span
Formal education		Pre-primary and basic education (primary and lower secondary)	5-15
		Post-basic education (upper secondary, TVET, tertiary education)	15-24
Non-formal and informal education		Pre-primary, accelerated learning programmes, literacy programmes, catch-up and remedial classes, vocational training, etc.	5-24
Workplace and 'road to workplace' (apprenticeships, internships, etc.)			15-24
Social engagement (volunteer and community work, etc.)			10-24
Child protection (child-centred safe spaces, child protection centres)			5-24

Multiple channels of delivery

The multiple pathways approach is implemented through a spectrum of channels where learning can take place and be operationalized. The main educational pathways can be organized by channel, education level and the typical age span for which it applies (see Box 10).

Formal education. Formal education is education that is institutionalized, intentional and planned through public organizations as well as recognized private bodies. Formal education programmes are recognized as such by the relevant national education or equivalent authorities, e.g., any other institution in cooperation with the national or sub-national education authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education, defined as the formal education of individuals before their first entrance to the labour market, i.e., when they will normally be in full-time education. Vocational education, special needs education, and some parts of adult education are often recognized as being part of the formal education system. Formal education typically takes place in educational institutions that are designed to provide full-time education for students in a system designed as a continuous educational pathway (UNESCO, 2012a). The school system and higher education institutions are the fundamental components of formal education. Schooling can be characterized as encompassing both basic education and post-basic education provision.

Formal education is a major channel of delivery for life skills and citizenship education. It has the greatest reach in terms of providing opportunities for learning to children and youth. Yet, its potential to equip learners with relevant skills in MENA appears to be currently unfulfilled. In the region, 44 per cent of the programmes delivered by stakeholders involved in life skills education are implemented in formal basic education and 26 per cent in formal post-basic education, including tertiary education

and TVET (UNICEF, 2017a). This data, however, does not provide a comprehensive picture of participation and quality of learning outcomes. There is a need for 12 core life skills to be mainstreamed within formal education in line with current education reform attempts to contribute to developing a knowledge society, improve employment outcomes and enhance social cohesion.

Pre-primary education. Pre-primary education may be delivered through formal or non-formal education channels. There is strong evidence from around the world showing the impact of early childhood development programming throughout life as cognitive, emotional and behavioural development happens exponentially in a child's early years, above all if supported by targeted activities. Furthermore, the early years are critically important as they provide the foundation for the rest of life, including adolescence and adulthood (Young, 2000). The returns on investing in young children are high. Children who participate in quality pre-primary education programmes have better overall primary school readiness, cognitive development, lower repetition and drop out in the early grades, better learning outcomes in school, and higher school completion rates (World Bank, 2010a), as well as having better outcomes later in life (Gustafsson-Wright and Atinc, 2013).

Pre-primary education programmes have a key role in supporting pre-primary age children in acquiring core skills that enhance a child's ability to learn, work with others and develop a range of foundational skills. Children need to be able to cooperate, follow directions, demonstrate self-control and pay attention, as well as understand the feelings of others, control their own feelings, and manage relationships with peers and teachers. Self-regulation and impulse control are recognized as among the most important life skills at this age (Boyd et al., 2005), and prepare children for later

stages of negotiation skills and conflict management skills, thus building the foundations for self-efficacy and prevention against violence. Evidence suggests the need for early intervention for social, emotional and behavioural problems, such as aggressive and oppositional behaviour, when child behaviour is most malleable.

Basic education. Basic education consists of primary and lower secondary education. The critical importance of primary education in human development, recognized in Millennium Development Goal 2 (MDG 2) and reiterated in, and expanded by, the 2030 Education Agenda, with the main emphasis on universal primary education (UPE). Thus, there has been emphasis on access and completion of the primary education cycle for all. Yet, the quality of primary education, particularly in terms of learning outcomes, has been a lower priority.

Primary education is typically designed to provide students with fundamental (or foundational) skills in reading, writing and mathematics (i.e., literacy and numeracy) and to establish a solid foundation for learning and understanding core areas of knowledge, and personal and social development in preparation for lower secondary education. It focuses on learning at a basic level of complexity with little, if any, specialization. Educational activities at this level are often organized around units, projects or broad learning areas, often with an integrated approach rather than providing instruction in specific subjects. Typically, there is one main teacher responsible for a group of pupils who organizes the learning process, although a class may have more than one teacher, especially for certain subjects or units.

There is a strong case for emphasizing the development of age-appropriate life skills in primary education as an integral component of quality education. Building on the life skills that have been acquired in pre-primary education, primary education represents a distinct stage of child development. Life skills which can be developed at primary level include: problem-solving, critical thinking and creativity; communication and self-management skills including self-motivation, self-awareness, persistence and resilience, relationship skills including negotiation, active listening and seeing other points of view; cooperation skills and acceptance of diversity; and participating in and contributing to group work.

Lower secondary education is typically designed to build on the learning outcomes from primary education. Usually, the aim is to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and human development upon which education systems may then expand further educational opportunities. Some education systems may already offer technical and vocational education programmes at this level to provide individuals with skills relevant to employment. Programmes at this level are usually organized around a more subject-oriented curriculum, introducing theoretical concepts across a broad range of subjects. Teachers typically have pedagogical training in specific subjects and, more often than at primary level, a class of students may have several teachers with specialized knowledge of the subjects they teach.

Life skills at lower secondary level are typically more specialized, although the skills that are relevant at primary level continue to be important. This is the period of adolescence, and life skills relating to adolescent development become important, e.g., those included in comprehensive sexuality education, and school health and nutrition.

Post-basic education is typically designed to complete secondary education in preparation for tertiary education or provide skills relevant to employment, or both. Programmes at this level offer learners more varied, specialized and indepth instruction than programmes at lower secondary level. They are more differentiated, with an increased range of options and streams available. Teachers are often highly qualified in the subjects or fields of specialization they teach, particularly in the higher grades.

TVET plays a key role in skills development at post-basic education level. TVET is an area of considerable diversity (King, 2011), where pre-employment skills development takes place (Nam, 2009). It has been asserted that, if youth leave the schooling system without adequate life skills, it is extremely difficult to overcome employability barriers through future participation in labour market programmes (Martin and Grubb, 2001). Thus, ensuring effective pre-employment life skills development is crucial in contributing to the effectiveness of continuous skills development that may occur later in an individual's career development. It is also important that interventions in this area be based on application and practice in order to ensure expected results. In this regard, it is important to teach life skills and observe life skills development as long as there are small projects being built and connected with different sectors according to specialization.

As the concept of employability is changing, with a greater emphasis given on developing the ability to learn (Harvey et al., 2002) and the recognition that it is largely a state of mind (Lucas and Hanson), there has been a shift in TVET from a narrowly defined vocational training that is dominated by technical skills to a broader training agenda where life skills are acquired along with the technical (Leney,

Box 11 TVET and the multiple pathways approach

TVET delivery follows multiple pathways that include non-formal and informal education, the workplace and the 'road to workplace'. Different types of skills are emphasized and different qualifications are obtained through these pathways. As a result, fragmentation is a common characteristic of TVET and strengthening coordination between different service providers is key to effective delivery. The low quality of TVET in MENA is an issue for both employers and learners. Demand is consequently low.

A prerequisite for improving demand for TVET is enhancing its quality with regard to the learners' employability, especially by mainstreaming life skills education in TVET and emphasizing those life skills that are relevant for employability. Curriculum reform processes to support holistic skills development, human rights-based values, and active/experiential learning need to be introduced in MENA (UNICEF and ILO, 2016). More so, life skills education is key to promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment. To that effect, learner-centred pedagogies are of the utmost importance.

A systems approach with clear and coherent linkages between different pathways is a prerequisite for ensuring scale, quality and sustainability of TVET interventions. This is also important for ensuring access to quality TVET as part of a lifelong learning framework. National qualification frameworks need to be developed, relying on robust competency-based learning, to which life skills education can contribute. Monitoring of TVET needs to be strengthened.

A consultation on TVET in MENA, held in Amman in May 2016, identified four areas for a systems approach to TVET development (UNICEF and ILO, 2016):

- Increasing access to TVET opportunities.
- Enhancing quality and relevance of TVET.
- Strengthening partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders.
- Ensuring the transitions of graduates to decent work.

Mainstreaming of life skills and citizenship education within TVET curricula, including entrepreneurship education in a lifelong education approach, was recommended for enhancing quality and relevance. TVET instructors need opportunities for professional development in life skills education and in technical skills training.

2008). These life skills, sometimes termed 'generic, transferable, core, or key skills' or 'soft skills' because they can be applied across varied organizational and employment contexts (Payne, 2004), are becoming an integral component in TVET programming in response to labour market demands associated with the development of the service economy and the impact of the internet on working processes.

This is still in the early stages, as teaching and learning for employability is complex. However, TVET programming is increasingly adding teaching and learning that involves the holistic development of the 12 core life skills. To that effect, the principles of effective pedagogy identified by McLoughlin (2013) include (i) sustained practice, (ii) practical problem-solving and critical reflection on experience, (iii) learning from mistakes in real and simulated settings, (iv) collaboration and contextualization; (v) range of assessment and feedback methods; and (vi) benefits from operating across more than one setting.

Teaching life skills at the TVET level builds on the life skills that have been developed in basic education. It involves helping students to assume greater responsibility for their own learning and developing expertise in goal setting and decision-making (Alfassi, 2004). Tasks need to be broken down into different levels and learners guided through step-by-step planning and goal-setting activities (Morisano

et al., 2010). Learning should be as authentic as possible. Learners are more likely to persevere at learning something that is relevant to them and to their lives (Morrison et al., 2009; Berkowitz, 2011).

Developing co-curricular opportunities is an important adjunct to TVET training programmes. This can provide settings for life skills teaching and learning through a diverse set of options that include work experience, working with a mentor, volunteering, specific employability programmes and residential courses (see Box 11).

As part of post-basic education, **tertiary education** further provides learning activities in specialized fields of education. It aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialization. Tertiary education includes what is commonly understood as academic education, but also includes advanced vocational or professional education (UNESCO, 2012a). The content of programmes at the tertiary level is more complex and advanced than in lower levels. It is characterized by different levels: e.g., short-cycle tertiary education, Bachelor's or equivalent level, Master's or equivalent level, and Doctoral or equivalent level.

Non-formal education and informal education. Non-formal education is education that is institutionalized, intentional and planned by an education provider

(UNESCO, 2012b). The defining characteristic of non-formal education is that it is an addition, alternative and/or complement to formal education within the process of lifelong learning of individuals (UNESCO, 2012a). It is often provided in order to guarantee the right of access to education for all and it is considered to be flexible, learner-centred, need based and demand driven. It caters to people of all ages but does not necessarily apply a continuous pathway structure. It may be short in duration and/or low-intensity, and it is typically provided in the form of short courses, workshops or seminars. Non-formal education mostly leads to qualifications that are not recognized as formal or equivalent to formal qualifications by the relevant national or sub-national education authorities, or may lead to no qualifications at all. Nevertheless, formal, recognized qualifications may be obtained through exclusive participation in specific non-formal education programmes, which often happens when the non-formal programme reinforces the life skills acquired in another context.

Depending on the national context, non-formal education can cover programmes contributing to adult and youth literacy and education for out-of-school children, as well as programmes on life skills, work skills, and social or cultural development. It can include training in a workplace to improve or adapt existing qualifications and skills, training for unemployed or inactive persons, as well as alternative educational pathways to formal education and training in some cases. It can also include learning activities pursued for self-development and these may not be directly job-related.

The remit of non-formal and informal education includes:

- The provision of **alternative basic education programmes** to learners who lack access and/or educational opportunities in the formal education system. This may be due to social, cultural, and/or economic constraints. Typically, this type of non-formal education programme delivery is targeted at learners in remote and isolated locations, linguistic and ethnic minorities, learners with disabilities and special needs, female children and women, underperforming male children, out-of-school children, learners affected by HIV and AIDS, and other learners in difficult circumstances;

- Providing **continuing learning opportunities** to those who have completed basic education through formal education or to strengthen individual capacities in terms of updated knowledge and skills development.

Non-formal and informal service delivery draws on a wide range of providers in addition to government. These include NGOs, community-based organizations and industry.

In MENA, life skills and citizenship education interventions in non-formal and informal settings are playing a crucial role in targeting out-of-school children, youth and other vulnerable groups, while succeeding to provide a more holistic approach to teaching life skills (UNICEF, 2017a). Targeting out-of-school youth and vulnerable groups is a major concern for many MENA countries, reflecting social and economic challenges to national progress. Mixed with low enrolment attendance at secondary level, youth are missing life skills opportunities. Within this context, non-formal interventions seek to involve marginalized or vulnerable groups, such as out-of-school children and refugees in appropriate educational provisions, where formal schooling largely fails to achieve that. Interviews with Syrian refugees in Jordan revealed that they are finding the transition to school in Jordan a challenge and this is reflected in their performance (UNHCR, 2016). More so, some refugee families expressed their need for psychosocial support and life skills for personal management. Discussions with parents of refugees also indicated that their children face discrimination in school and physical violence including from teachers (UNHCR, 2016). Some life skills programmes in Egypt, Jordan, Libya, the State of Palestine, Sudan and Yemen are currently targeting risk groups.

Despite these positive initiatives, results from national consultations and country visits indicate that life skills education programmes in non-formal education settings are still sporadic and based on sustained support to implementing NGOs to ensure their ability to continue implementing such programmes. Being outside governmental support systems, interventions in non-formal settings are often unsupervised and lack any national or local coordination mechanisms. Such programmes are usually delivered on a project basis raising concerns of long-term sustainability, and despite the innovative approaches employed in non-formal settings, systematic mapping and dissemination of such approaches remain a significant challenge, as will be elaborated further in this report.

A promising example of a life skills programme for out-of- school adolescents and youth is the International Youth Foundation's Passport to Success® (PTS) programme, IYF's proprietary life skills curriculum, started in 2003, and implemented in several countries in MENA (see Box 12). The goals of the curriculum are to:

Box 12 Passport to Success® (PTS) and Build Your Business® (BYB)

PTS is an 80-module programme targeted at youth at risk living in Jordan's most vulnerable neighbourhoods. It delivers ten widely endorsed life skills, including effective communication, responsibility, goal setting and teamwork, and has been successfully adapted in eight countries in MENA. Special emphasis is placed on workplace readiness, including interviewing, respect for authority and time management, along with tools for how to be a good employee. Participants develop a career plan and carry out a community service project with the aim of practicing the skills they learned while contributing to society (IYF, 2013b).

IYF's BYB programme, on the other hand, was developed in partnership with Microsoft. It is a comprehensive and interactive training course designed to support entrepreneurs. At the end of the training course, students develop business plans, which have, in the past, ranged from selling herbal medicine to leveraging volunteers for social impact (UNESCO, 2016). Programming by IYF, which includes robust trainer training and comprehensive materials development, is influential in developing life skills training for employability within many private and non-governmental organizations in Jordan.

- Encompass core life skills;
- Emphasize life skills and behaviours for workplace readiness;
- Provide demand driven life skills and real-life practice situations that employers regard as paramount for hiring and job success;
- Be adaptable to any cultural or intuitional setting and be flexible in design to incorporate additional life skills through consultation with key stakeholders.

Using experiential pedagogical methods, this curriculum includes the use of scenarios, case studies and practice sessions, used in both individual and small-group peer learning activities. Each lesson is designed as an interactive 'laboratory' where every learner plays an active role, tapping into their own knowledge and experience as the basis of learning. In-class learning is complemented by opportunities for youth to practice their skills outside the class through real-life situations in service learning projects. Importantly, youth are encouraged to take charge of their own learning.

The workplace and the 'road to workplace'.
While much programming emphasis is put on youth workplace readiness, especially in MENA, the workplace is, in itself, an important learning environment following the transition from education to the world of work. The workplace and the 'road to workplace', including apprenticeships and internships, are increasingly becoming the setting for skills training, including life skills training. This may be subsumed within a competency-based training approach that is commonly encountered in TVET and employment related training. Such training is usually provided by a range of providers, many of which are from the private sector. This represents an exciting area of growth and innovation in life skills training and is an important part of the lifelong learning continuum.

The outcomes of life skills programming in this context, are, however, scattered; moreover, most of life skills training in the workplace, also often called 'soft-skill training' in this context, is geared at leadership- and manager-level staff, whereas entry-level and other employees receive more technical training (IYF, 2013a). Workplace-based programmes that teach life skills that appear to be the most effective are remediation interventions for adolescents (Kautz et al., n.d.). They motivate acquisition of work-relevant life skills and provide discipline and guidance for disadvantaged youth that is often missing in their homes or in post-basic education.

Furthermore, the design of life skills training in general (i.e., the activities and the pedagogy), and learners' behaviour seem to both matter in the workplace. A study conducted among employees of cross-sectorial organizations in one high-income country showed that, even more so than work environment, the design of a training programme had the strongest impact on post-training job performance, along with trainees' self-efficacy, and post-training behaviour (Diamantidis and Chatzoglou, 2014). Hence, there is still leeway to develop effective core life skills training for all learners in the workplace, either as standalone programmes or embedded in technical training, the form of training that is most offered currently.

Yet, programmes delivered through learning in both the workplace and 'road to workplace' are underrepresented in MENA and the delivery of such programmes is mostly undertaken by NGOs (UNICEF, 2017a). The USAID/Jordan Youth for the Future (Y4F) Project, a large-scale project implemented by IYF, which ran from March 2009 through to December 2014 in Jordan, is an example of such a programme. Aiming at "creating an enabling environment with a greater capacity to more effectively serve youth-at-risk", and working through selected CBOs, the

Box 13 Importance of the multiple pathways approach for improved civic engagement

Life skills and citizenship education must not focus exclusively on school-based curricula, but should also include social engagement programmes and activities that take place outside of school, as well as engage parents and broader elements of society.

Citizenship education includes many factors that influence youth, most importantly their families and friends, media, religious institutions and schools. In the current highly politicized climate in many Arab countries, schools do not play the most important role in the civic education of many students. Nevertheless, schools have a crucial part to play in socializing students and reinforcing values such as tolerance, civic participation and respect for the rule of law. Parents and family members also play an important role in student development, and efforts to educate parents will therefore be important to the overall success of developing attitudes, knowledge, and values that support more liberal and inclusive understandings of the rights and responsibilities of active citizenship (Carnegie Middle East Center, 2013).

While there is ample evidence on the benefits of adopting a multiple pathways approach in the context of citizenship education, as a way to ensure students are provided with opportunities for experiential learning and space for personal reflection, evidence regarding the relationship between citizenship education and improved civic engagement remains a subject of discussion.

According to the findings of the 2009 International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) while there was a positive correlation between civic knowledge and civic engagement at school and students' intentions to vote, this was not the case for students' expectations to engage in more active political behaviour, such as working in political organizations or on political campaigns. This finding was nonetheless nuanced by the fact that "past or current participation in activities in the wider community was a positive predictor of expected active participation". Furthermore, "trust in civic institutions and preferences for a political party tended to be positively associated with students' intentions to participate in electoral and more active forms of political participation in the future" (IEA, 2009).

In short, variables that relate to the overall political environment rather to teaching and learning approaches themselves, such as 'trust in civic institutions', make it difficult to establish a direct causal relationship between citizenship education and enhanced civic engagement as an outcome. Nonetheless, the wide range of well-established positive social outcomes of citizenship education, among which stands enhanced civic engagement, should outweigh any further considerations that may arise.

project focused on establishing sustainable delivery mechanisms for the aforementioned Passport to Success® to teach youth personal and problem-solving skills, and productive work habits, as well as resume writing and job search skills. The Project's final evaluation indicates that it has been effective in integrating life skills training into Jordan's Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), making it a mandatory component of the VTC's hospitality curricula and certifying its staff as trainers of the PTS life skills training package (USAID, 2014).

Examples of life skills programming implemented by the private sector are Zain and Al-Quds College (Luminus Education) programmes in Jordan. Zain Jordan is the foremost telecommunication company in the country. It has developed the Zain Academy to provide training opportunities to its employees. Part of the training provided is in life skills, particularly because recent graduates are not acquiring those in schools or universities. In 2015, the company also launched Zain Innovation Campus, through which it works with entrepreneurs and start-ups. Al-Quds College is a leading private community college that is implementing a UNESCO Job Readiness and Life Skills Project, funded by the Walton Family Foundation. Al-Quds integrates life skills into its core curriculum by implementing both

IYF's Passport to Success® (PTS) and Build Your Business® (BYB) curricula.

Social engagement. The lack of opportunities for experiential learning, space for personal reflection, as well as democratic classroom practices account for some of the limitations of education systems in relation to citizenship education in western and non-western contexts alike. While learners may talk about difference and equality, they have limited direct experience of the range of people that make up any community, or may not have the emotional literacy or skills to deal with it (Millican, 2010).

Partially in response to the limitations of formal education systems coupled with the need for space to accommodate a myriad of organizations and institutions with heavy social presence in the public sphere in MENA, social engagement is emerging as a rich and varied field of practice that provides youth (and children to a lesser extent) with the opportunity to complement their learning through active practical projects with or on behalf of a local community group, organization (NGOs, CBOs) or institution (religious, civic, etc.). The CPF utilizes the term 'social engagement' as a field of practice that includes the variety of socially-driven activities and programmes (See Box 13). Although these activities

are traditionally referred to in education discourses under the umbrella term of 'informal education', given terminological specificities in MENA with regards to 'informal education', along with the need to signify the scale and need for sustainability of this 'field of practice', explain the choice of the term.

Among its benefits, social engagement projects provide learners who work with a particular group to produce something together, as well as with the opportunity for building interpersonal relationships and utilizing different forms of knowledge. Furthermore, when working well, they offer the opportunity for people who might not otherwise meet to build relationships and develop a sense of trust. When encountering difficulties, they encourage patience and negotiation in dealing with challenging situations (Millican, 2010).

Child protection. Life skills acquisition is at the core of child protection programming. The CPF calls for a coherent approach and the establishment of synergies with the work done by child protection actors. In this regards, the LSCE Initiative provides an opportunity to better systematize, strategize, and potentially scale up interventions for children and youth that can contribute to the improvement of their wellbeing and protection. This is particularly relevant for community-based interventions implemented outside the national education system, which have proven effective in building resilience against violence, conflict and national disasters (UNICEF, 2016c).

Violence against children is a multifaceted problem with causes at the individual, community, and societal levels, so it must be simultaneously confronted by multiple actors (Inspire, 2016). Life skills and citizenship education is often delivered within the framework of child protection interventions as well as in the context of psychosocial support programmes. Particularly in emergency contexts, child-centred safe spaces and protection centres managed by local communities play a key role in promoting skills related to personal empowerment and psychosocial wellbeing. Life skills interventions in non-formal and informal education settings are an integral part of the preventive response adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (IASC, 2016) (see Box 14).

While life skills are critical for strengthening children's resilience to adversity related to their experiences of violence, a common understanding around the conceptualization of life skills and citizenship education has yet to emerge in the context of child protection. The coherent conceptualization around the 12 core life skills constitutes an important step forward for the harmonization of interventions and for quality approaches at the national level. In this respect, the inclusion of child protection within a multiple pathways approach enables the scaling up of psychosocial support interventions at the national level in coordination with national ministries of education. Messages delivered within different environments and by different actors need to be coherent and reinforce each other through complementary child protection platforms. Hence, it is important for the CPF to guide the life skills and citizenship education interventions of all national actors.

The working definition of wellbeing adopted by practitioners in the child protection field (UNICEF, 2017b) intersects with the four Dimensions of Learning set forth by the LSCE Initiative. Wellbeing is defined along the Dimensions as follows:

- Personal wellbeing defined as "positive thoughts and emotions such as hopefulness, calm, self-esteem and self-confidence" is related to the Individual Dimension of Learning;

- Interpersonal wellbeing defined as "nurturing relationships, a sense of belonging, the ability to be close to others" is related to the Social Dimension of Learning;

- Knowledge and skills defined as "the capacities to learn, make positive decisions, effectively respond to life challenges and express oneself" is related to the Cognitive and Instrumental Dimensions of Learning.

The CPF provides a joint programming approach to life skills and citizenship education in the context of child protection, which aligns with the humanitarian preparedness and response core principles in mental health and psychosocial support, as outlined by the IASC on Mental Health Psychosocial Support (IASC MHPSS). The IASC MHPSS guidelines aim to reduce risks and reinforce child and family resilience through the promotion of human rights and equity, participation, the building upon local capacities and resources, and the enhancement of integrated support systems (IASC MHPSS, 2012).

Modalities of delivery

While multiple delivery modalities are available for programming life skills and citizenship education, the critical stumbling block remains the optimal combination of modalities for effective life skills learning.

Box 14 Life skills and psychosocial support

Psychosocial support is an important adjunct to life skills and citizenship education. It is particularly important in education in emergencies, where support can be given through guidance and counselling to build a range of critical life skills such as communication, resilience and self-management skills. These services are also important at the school level where individual needs can be addressed through guidance and counselling as well as coaching services to address specific life skills needs that have been identified by the teacher. These are likely to revolve around self-management and communication skills. School counsellors, therefore, need training in life skills identification, counselling and coaching interventions.

In the context of MENA, the CPF attempts to respond to what has been described as a 'child protection crisis' that has arisen from the escalation and protracted nature of conflicts and the large-scale migration of families toward safety and economic opportunity. In particular, the CPF aligns with humanitarian preparedness and response core principles in mental health and psychosocial support according to the following principles and related actions.

Principle	Action
Human rights and equity	Promote human rights of all affected persons and protect those at heightened risk of human rights violations; ensure equity and non-discrimination in the availability and accessibility of MHPSS supports
Participation	Maximize the participation of local children, families and communities in assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the humanitarian response
Do no harm	Reduce potential for MHPSS and other humanitarian interventions to cause harm through providing effective coordination, adequate information about the local context and power relationships, cultural sensitivity, and participatory approaches
Build upon local capacities and resources	Support self-help, and identify, mobilize and strengthen existing resources, skills and capacities of children, family, community, government and civil society
Integrated support systems	Support activities integrated into wider systems (e.g., community supports, formal/non-formal school systems, health and social services) to advance the reach and sustainability of interventions and reduce stigma of stand-alone interventions
Multi-layered supports	Develop a layered system of complementary supports to meet the needs of children and families impacted in different ways

Source: UNICEF, 2017b.

Figure 5 The twelve core life skills as cross-cutting higher-order skills in the Tunisia curriculum reform
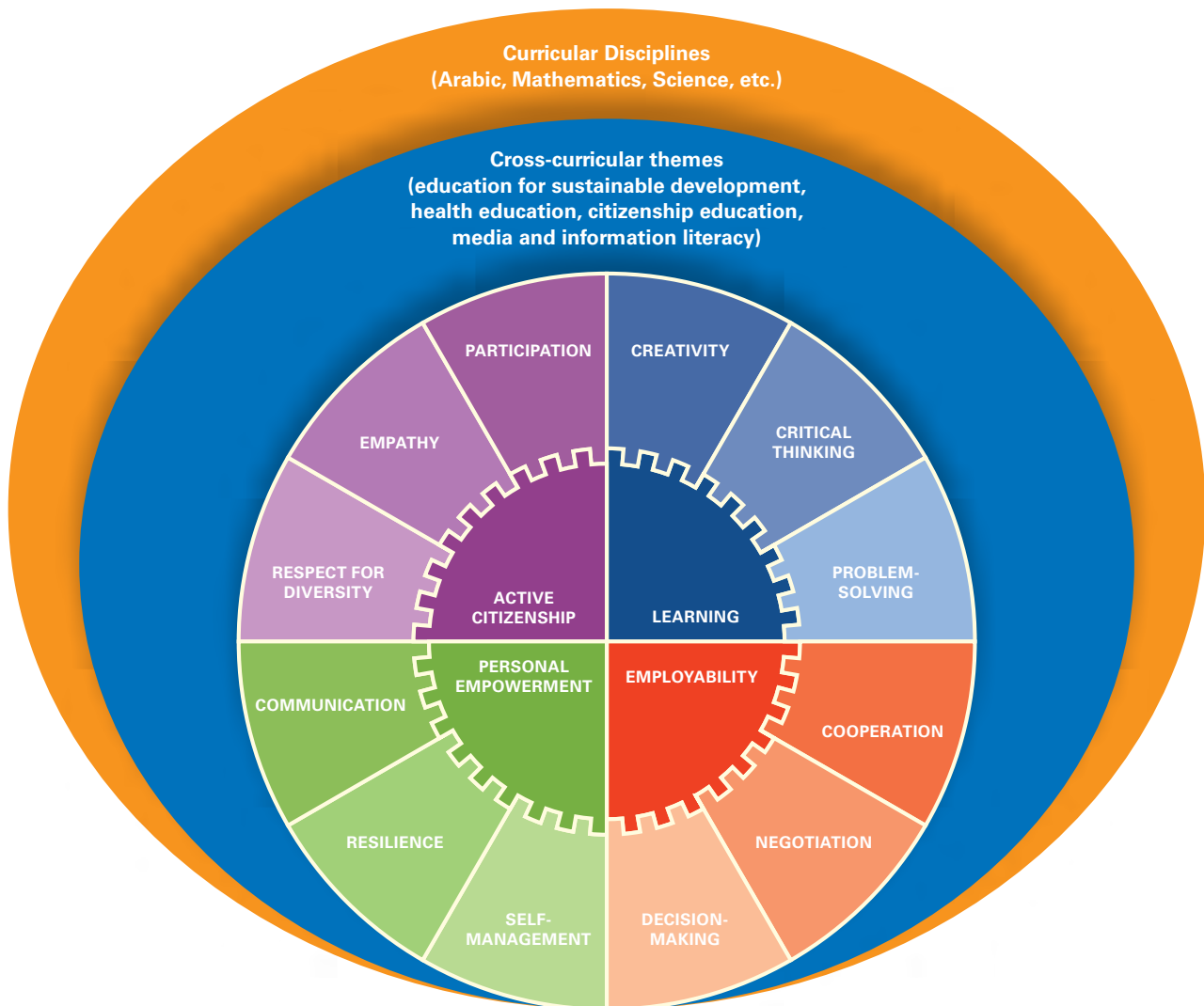
Curriculum approaches. Under this widely used modality – a stocktaking of life skills education found that 145 countries had initiated it in some form in their curricula for primary and secondary education (UNICEF, 2007a) – life skills education is based and builds on an existing curriculum. In the vast majority of countries, life skills education has been initiated in both ECE and primary education.

Several curricular options exist to include life skills education in national school curricula. Some countries have integrated life skills across the curriculum in all subject-areas and others have infused life skills into selected subject-areas. In MENA, Egypt has included life skills in the National Standards for Education and mainstreaming is taking place in all subjects. In Tunisia, the 12 core life skills are being integrated as part of the national curriculum reform, which represents a unique and

visionary example for the operationalization of the 12 core life skills through the curricular modality (see Box 15). The overall approach has been designed to address both the conceptual and programmatic challenges related to the integration of life skills within a national curriculum.

At the conceptual level, a key challenge is represented by the difficulty to define the inter-relationship between life skills and curricular disciplines. In particular a straightforward definition of life skills is key to clarifying the distinction between disciplinary competencies, which should be understood as technical abilities in relation to disciplinary knowledge, and life skills, which are defined as higher-order, transversal and transferrable psychosocial skills within the four inter-related Dimensions of the LSCE Initiative: Cognitive, Instrumental, Individual and Social (See figure 5)

Box 15 Mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education through the curricular modality: Lessons from the Tunisia curriculum reform

The Tunisia curriculum reform is part of a national education reform conducted by the Ministry of Education, the Labor Union, and the Arab Institute for Human Rights. While the work is ongoing there are key lessons that can be drawn to inform other national attempts to mainstream life skills and citizenship education within national curricula:

1. Ensuring a coherent approach that takes into consideration all elements involved (i.e., curriculum design including content and organization, teacher and student support, assessment and learning environments).

2. Ensuring the cumulative impact of life skills starting at an early age. Different levels of life skills acquisition need to be defined across the different learning cycles (pre-primary, basic and post-basic education).

3. Ensuring clarity in terms of learning objectives and approaches, and avoiding convoluted theoretical models and conflicting approaches.

4. Recognizing that life skills are not specific to any particular subject area. As such, they are broadly applicable to all fields of knowledge and should not be confused with a defined domain.

5. Understanding the different curricular levels where life skills are mainstreamed. This includes an exercise of clarification between curricular disciplines (e.g., language, math, science, etc.) and cross-disciplinary knowledge areas that intersect across curricular disciplines (e.g. health education, media and information, education for sustainable development, etc.).

6. Ensuring the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach that reinforces acquisition of the 12 core life skills across all disciplines.

7. Introducing multi-disciplinary project-based learning fostering identification and solution of real-life problems, and building on prior learners' experiences.

8. Providing practical examples of learning activities that encourage reflection, experiential and active learning, including life skills conducive methods, such as brainstorming, games, group discussion, debates, etc.

9. Enabling teachers to adopt learner-centred pedagogical strategies to life skills and citizenship education.

10. Enabling linkages between curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular interventions. These need to be explicit across the general curriculum, and in relation to cross-curricular themes.

11. Defining the structural support mechanisms to ensure that the taught curriculum is in line with the expectations set forth in the curriculum reform. This includes, for example, ensuring alignment between assessment methods and curricular objectives.

At the programmatic level, the curriculum reform is supported by a streamlined and transparent process based on a shared vision by all relevant stakeholders. In the specific context of the Tunisian curriculum reform, a key challenge relates to the integration of life skills within both curricular disciplines (e.g., language, math, science, etc.) and four identified crosscutting curricular themes (i.e., education for sustainable development, health education, and media and information literacy). These crosscutting curricular themes are also addressed in the CPF, not to be confused with life skills, but defined as areas of knowledge into which life skills and citizenship education need to be integrated.

The adoption of the 12 core life skills is instrumental in mitigating the risk to overload the curriculum with multiple and conflicting approaches. While clarifying the inter-relationship between curricular disciplines and crosscutting curricular themes, technical tools have been developed to enable experts from different disciplines to work together in the curriculum design process. This is further accompanied by the identification of a common approach across all disciplines for the operationalization of the 12 core life skills, taking into consideration the various learning cycles of the national curriculum (see Box 15).

In other MENA countries that are developing competency-based curricula, selected life skills will be integrated into curriculum competencies as appropriate. Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco reported the inclusion of life skills education as a formal compulsory requirement in the national curriculum (UNICEF, 2017a).

Box 16 Learning Object Bank: An innovative approach integrating life skills in co-curricular disciplines

One promising model that integrates life skills and citizenship in curricular disciplines through a co-curricular approach is the Learning Object Bank, piloted and evaluated by the Centre for Continuing Education at Birzeit University in Palestine and recently endorsed by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The National Learning Object Bank developed for grades 8-9 in Mathematics and 6-10 in Science, includes high quality support material and learning activities for children and youth, as well as resources for teachers on how to actively improve teaching and learning through life skills education in basic and post basic education.

A 'Learning Object', a detailed description and series of step-by step activities, is available for each unit to guide teachers on how to teach the subject area of focus by using life skills. The model has been extended to cover primary education and a complete framework has been developed with benchmarks for content knowledge and 12 core life skills for grades 1- 4 covering Science, Mathematics, Arabic and Social Science. The development process is based on a participatory approach with MoEHE teachers, supervisors and experts from Birzeit University.

The Learning Object complements the textbooks. This approach can be linked to any new curriculum since it focuses on experiential and deep learning rather than content memorization (UNICEF 2017a).

Often in the framework of initiatives promoting HIV education, school health and nutrition, and education for sustainable development, life skills are introduced as standalone programmes in the curriculum. This emphasis on health and the environment may also support the infusion of life skills across the curriculum in other subject areas carrying these topics. Countries in MENA have adopted multiple approaches, including life skills and citizenship education as standalone subjects into national curricula (UNICEF, 2007a). While, in Iran, life skills are included as standalone subject under scientific subjects, an attempt has been made In Jordan to integrate life skills within the subject of physical education and vocational education for grades 1-12. Palestine has included life skills in civic education as well as in health and environment. Further, Oman has introduced life skills as a standalone subject in basic education.

A common issue to the introduction of life skills as a **separate** subject added to the existing national curriculum, however, is that it contributes to curriculum overload. As such, teachers do not widely support it, and the added subject ends up being poorly taught and not examinable (UNICEF, 2007a; Clarke, 2008).

A third type of intervention, the introduction of life skills through **co-curricular and extra-curricular activities**, is the primary delivery modality of life skills education in MENA (UNICEF, 2007a; UNICEF, 2017a). An example of co-curricular approach is the Learning Objects model developed by the Centre for Continuing Education at Birzeit, which further builds on existing curricula (see Box 16). Examples of extra-curricular activities include the 'Personal Project Clubs' in Morocco, which operate both inside and outside of school, with a focus on creating an engaging and participatory school environment for learners aged 12-18 through life skills clubs. The citizenship and human rights clubs in Tunisia are also a relevant example of extra-curricular interventions: They are meant as a space for creativity and communication to confront violence, intolerance and discrimination, as well as develop critical thinking among students. These clubs aim also to promote children and youth participation in public life through the promotion of citizenship projects in partnership with civil society organizations. Further, the 'life skills and HIV prevention education' was initiated in both Sudan and Yemen in extracurricular programmes targeting simultaneously teachers, learners and parents (UNICEF, 2007a). Extra-curricular programmes supported by NGOs that include life skills education also provide an important opportunity to expose schools to new ways of teaching and learning (UNICEF, 2017a).

Interface and media for the delivery of life skills education. A range of media can be utilized in life skills education, while new technologies are extending the repertoire of opportunities. This includes:

- Standard **face-to-face learning** with both the instructor and learners in the classroom, which is currently the most commonly used approach in MENA.

- **Blended learning** – or hybrid learning – refers to learner-centred, strategic and systematic approaches combining times and modes of learning by integrating practices from face-to-face and online-based interface, allowing the instructor and learners to enjoy interactions in each discipline in either modality. As a minimum of face-to-face instruction or consultation time is required,

digital integration ranges from low, whereby face-to-face interactions still dominate, while some online activities substitute for class discussions, to high, with 'flipped classrooms', whereby all content is facilitated online and the instructor and learners only meet face-to-face for consultations. Increasingly implemented, blended learning strategies also vary according to the subject discipline, the grade level, student characteristics and learning outcomes. The digital content of the course usually requires a licensed-based Learning Management System (LMS). Digital tools that can be used to support learning and teaching in a blended environment includes videos, blogs, discussion boards, web and video conferencing, and online discussion forums. Blended learning can increase access and flexibility for learners, increase levels of active learning, and achieve better student experiences and outcomes. Commonly used in open and distance learning, blended learning presents various advantages with regard to life skills education, specifically for MENA. While the mandatory face-to-face time ensures higher retention rates than those in pure eLearning courses (Van Doorn and Van Doorn, 2014), the use of LMS allows for overcoming gendered social norms and broadens the course availability for learners with disabilities (Wahab, 2017). Blended learning, however, requires internet connectivity and might be a disadvantage for low-income students with lesser ICT knowledge. In addition, LMS licenses can be costly, and learners need to have a command of troubleshooting solutions to prevent course disruption because of technical issues (Wahab, 2017).

- **Online-learning or eLearning** is a modality of education delivery that strictly relies on online interaction without physical interface. Courses can be self-paced, semi-self-paced or entirely time-managed, which is the preferred option in formal settings. All the aforementioned digital tools can – and should be – integrated into the content design to provide learners with highly participatory, experiential learning. Most importantly, and with regard to life skills education, this modality of delivery emphasizes the building and functioning of a community of learning (Wahab, 2017), thus fostering a large set of 12 core life skills, and this, in an entirely digitalized environment. It fosters in the learners knowledge acquisition towards a technology-driven economy while allowing them to practice communication, negotiation, teamwork, conflict management, caring for others, participation, respect for diversity, assertiveness, and heeding others' perspectives, innovation and creativity skills.

National Policies

Plans and Strategies

Coordination and Partnership Frameworks

Budgeting and Financing

School-based Management

Human Resources and Capacity Development

Communication and Community Participation

M&E Frameworks

3.3 Key components of a systems approach

The multiple pathway approach cannot be realized without a comprehensive review of the key tenets that underpin the functioning of national education systems. The realization of life skills and citizenship education cannot be achieved through small-scale and fragmented interventions, or ad hoc approaches. A strategic shift is needed to ensure quality and regulation, scalability, sustainability and impact.

The CPF proposes a 'systems' approach to life skills and citizenship education programming, which is anchored within national education systems and recognizes the leadership of ministries of education. A systems approach to life skills and citizenship education programming also warrants an equity focus because it can invest data, analysis and monitoring in tracking and targeting as a means to maximize the impact of learning opportunities available to children and youth.

The mainstreaming of life skills and citizenship education within national education systems requires **coordinated programmatic interventions** that look at the whole system of components. The figure below provides a visual representation of the key components included in the CPF.

The systems approach further reinforces existing sector-wide approaches that have emerged in developing countries as a means to ensure harmonization of efforts, alignment with development objectives and increased accountability of results (UNESCO, 2007). The systems approach calls for an education sector analysis, including a comprehensive review of all different elements underpinning national education systems.

The *Education Sector Analysis Methodological Guidelines,* developed within the framework of the Global Partnership for Education, provide a detailed set of resources for undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the education sector as a means to inform and promote sector reforms (UNESCO, UNICEF, and World Bank, 2014). These guidelines support countries in designing education sector plans based on the identification and indepth analysis of key challenges affecting national education systems. As such, they can be invested in advancing life skills and citizenship education within all relevant components of national education systems.

Another key diagnostic tool that informs a systems approach is the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER), which relies on extensive diagnostic tools to provide detailed and comparative analysis on education systems, including those in MENA. All key components of the CPF systems approach are addressed under SABER strategic evidence. In the MENA context, the evidence generated by SABER has highlighted key systemic challenges as well as the need for policy and institutional reforms, which are particularly relevant in the field of life skills development (World Bank, 2015).

National policies, strategies, and plans

It is important for countries to have national policies, strategies and plans to support the implementation of life skills and citizenship education. This does not necessarily mean the adoption of specific stand-alone policies on life skills and citizenship education, although there may be benefits from doing so in specific cases when additional

Box 17 Life skills and citizenship education within the national education reform process in Tunisia

The national education reform 2016-2020 in Tunisia is an example of a comprehensive review of a national education system that builds on extensive consultations with national stakeholders. Multiple consultations have been organized to inform the reform process, opening a national dialogue with the participation of civil society organizations, teacher unions, and students and families, as a means to define common priorities across different stakeholders.

In the context of Tunisia, the consultation proved to be a successful opportunity to develop a conducive environment towards harmonizing ongoing interventions within common objectives. The development of a unified vision and a definition of life skills and citizenship education is also at the heart of the national education reform.

While the reform process is ongoing, the development of a White Paper in 2016 constitutes an example on how to sustain a comprehensive and systemic reform, building on participatory approaches. In this context, the White Paper constitutes a shared roadmap that provides a new vision of education where life skills and citizenship education constitutes a prerequisite of quality learning. The national reform process has further included the 12 core life skills as a key element to be integrated within the national curriculum representing a model for mainstreaming LSCE within curricular approaches.

focus is needed. The need to mainstream life skills and citizenship education suggests that the most appropriate approach is for existing policies on education to be reviewed to identify how life skills and citizenship education can be integrated. This also applies to national education strategies and plans. It is likely to be more efficient to integrate life skills education interventions in the broader context of current national education reform initiatives.

The Analytical Mapping has highlighted **the limited integration of life skills and citizenship education in existing national policies**, plans and strategies, so far. No MENA country has yet developed a comprehensive policy or strategy encompassing the holistic vision of life skills and citizenship education. This is compounded with a lack of participatory approaches when it comes to skills identification. In particular, the involvement of the private sector in policy formulation is very modest in all countries, and is often restricted to participating in boards and advisory committees, without clear mandates or leadership roles (UNICEF, 2017a).

The limited use of **national assessments to inform policy formulation and strategic implementation** of life skills and citizenship education programmes in MENA countries is a major concern. Most of the conducted assessments are ad hoc, only partially covering narrow definitions of skills development or specific target groups. In workforce development, some positive, yet still modest, progress has been made to involve employers and conduct national assessments of economic prospects and skills implications in some key sectors. As a way forward, however, it is key to ensure that national policies, strategies and plans are based on the holistic approach and common understanding of the definition of life skills and citizenship education.

National consultations are key to ensure the participatory development of a shared vision of quality learning. Consultations represent a high-level platform that facilitate the exchange of experiences and dialogue between representatives of different departments within ministries of education, representatives from other ministries, such as ministries of labour, youth and social affairs, representatives from United Nations agencies, bilateral donors and civil society. Within the framework of the LSCE Initiative, several countries in MENA have conducted national consultations. They provided an opportunity to review and endorse the CPF within the context of national education systems. They are also key in sustaining national education reform processes towards a common vision for life skills and citizenship education. The ongoing Tunisia education reform provides a notable example on the value of such consultations (see Box 17).

National TVET reform agendas being implemented at the country level further constitute an entry point for mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education towards increasing relevance, scale and sustainability. While the MENA context points to the need of systemic approaches for increasing TVET quality and fosters opportunities for youth employment, the fragmentation and duplications of efforts has been highlighted as a common challenge. The specific skills required to enter the labour market do not appear to be provided by national education and training systems. For example, there is a demand for life skills often described in national policies as soft or generic skills. The changing nature of the labour market, and the changing nature of skills required by the labour market, need to be reflected in the curricula and in training systems, as life skills become increasingly important for youth not only to access, but also to maintain employment.

Box 18 The case of the Morocco TVET reform

Contrary to general trends in MENA, the demand for TVET has been increasing in Morocco over the past few years, particularly for post-basic education levels. Within the context of Morocco, TVET is jointly provided by different private and public institutions. In particular, the majority of students (close to 90 per cent) are enrolled in vocational courses offered by the Office of Vocational Training and Labour Promotion (OFPPT), which is a Moroccan public organization that offers long-term as well as short-term practical training courses for young people to better integrate them into the labour market, with a specific focus on the most marginalized.

In order to achieve a flexible and coherent TVET system, a national TVET strategy until 2021 has been developed to ensure complementarity and coordination among different actors involved. A key strength of the strategy is the articulation of multiple pathways within a systems approach that strengthen and further diversify existing professional training levels, including for early ages. In addition, the focus on quality also features strongly, with emphasis on skills acquisition and competency-based curricula reform (UNICEF and ILO, 2016).

In this regard, a systems approach to TVET also calls for expanding access to TVET opportunities within the framework of lifelong learning strategies in order to balance education provision currently focused on general education. In particular, the development of strategies focusing on early ages is key to laying strong foundations towards the acquisition of employability skills. The Morocco TVET reform agenda represents a promising attempt to streamline and scale up skills development approaches within a systems approach (see Box 18).

Coordination and partnership frameworks

Education sector policy and national education sector plans typically provide well-defined mechanisms for the coordination of activities at national and decentralized levels down to the school level. It is consistent with a mainstreaming approach that existing mechanisms be used to coordinate life skills education interventions where possible, rather than creating new ones specifically for life skills education in isolation.

The lack of effective national coordination frameworks is a key challenge in MENA. The Analytical Mapping has highlighted how existing coordination frameworks are not effective in involving multiple stakeholders (governments, United Nations agencies, donors, NGOs, and the private sector) around a clear agenda for life skills and citizenship education (UNICEF, 2017a). Furthermore, most life skills and citizenship education programmes are being implemented by NGOs and the private sector outside the umbrella of existing national frameworks, thus raising concerns in terms of quality assurance, certification and accreditation of learning programmes.

The role of the ministry of education is of paramount importance in fostering substantial change in the education system and in addressing scalability and sustainability challenges. Other relevant ministries, such as the ministries of labour, youth, health, etc., as

well as national stakeholders, including NGOs, civil society organizations and the private sector, need to be brought together within national coordination and partnership frameworks to ensure quality, sustainability and impact.

Coordination and partnership frameworks need to be **embedded within national systems** that recognize the roles and accountabilities of each institutional partner. As highlighted in the Education Sector Analysis Methodological Guidelines, it is key to further understand the role of accountability mechanisms, including analysis of existing regulatory bodies and texts, as a means to further support the institutional capacity in advancing national education reform agendas (UNESCO, UNICEF, and World Bank, 2014)

This calls for the identification of **complementary and supportive roles** with a coherent framework, together with regulatory mechanisms to ensure quality delivery, as well as accreditation and certification. Multi-stakeholder coordination and partnership frameworks between the ministries of education and other ministries, NGOs and the private sector – as part of a systems approach – are also key for ensuring coherent approaches and efficient use of resources, both human and financial.

Budgeting and financing

The budgeting of education sector activities is complex at the best of times. It is good practice to **develop costed medium-term** (i.e. three-five years duration) national education sector plans (NESP) with costed annual operational plans. A mainstreaming approach to life skills and citizenship education suggests that costing and budgeting of interventions should be included within the NESP financial envelope. It appears that no country in MENA has a comprehensive costing for life skills and citizenship education within its national education budgeting. The main cost items in a life skills and citizenship education approach will be incurred in relation

to development costs for teacher training, school management training, teaching, learning resources development and assessment development. These will also have recurrent funding implications.

Financing typically comes from multiple sources. The main source of financing is the government, through its budgets for education and training. Other important sources of funding are the private sector, NGOs and international development partners. In this regard, the Analytical Mapping has highlighted **different funding priorities** within MENA countries (UNICEF, 2017a). While formal basic education is perceived to receive most budget allocation by the government and donors, programmes implemented through learning in the work place, such as apprenticeships and internship programmes are often excluded from national envelopes. A systems approach to budgeting and financing therefore will need to be adopted as part of national education reforms.

School-based management

Schools play a critical role in ensuring the realization of life skills and citizenship education. A systems approach recognizes that schools need to be supported within the framework of clear national policy mandates and have the provision of necessary resources in order for them to build a conducive school ethos that fosters learning. In particular, schools need to have control over their interventions, as well as the tools for performing their own monitoring.

School-based management is often associated with the **decentralization** of education. The assumption is that the effectiveness of schools increases if the education system is decentralized, such that schools can take on responsibilities and actions (Bruns et al., 2011; Mourshed et al., 2010). Decentralization and school-based management, however, are not sufficient conditions for improved learning. Emerging evidence has highlighted how school-based management alone has only a marginal effect when it comes to increased learning achievements, while it does not contribute to increased access.

For significant change to happen, **school-based management needs to be accompanied by school-based monitoring**, as well as by accountability frameworks. In this regard, successful school-based initiatives not only enable schools to develop school improvement plans, but also provide schools with effective monitoring tools at the school level, which also ensures community participation. As an example, most successful programmes require schools to develop annual report cards on school performance to be shared with the community at the end of the school year (Snilstveit et al., 2016).

The effectiveness of school-based management in promoting skills acquisition, therefore, depends on the capacity of schools to analyse, act on, manage and monitor interventions. Overall, there is significant variation among MENA countries with regard to how much and what kind of responsibilities are delegated to schools. There are in fact multiple and different approaches to school-based management, which are not associated with school-based monitoring (UNICEF, 2017c). The consultations conducted as part of the Analytical Mapping have further highlighted that current school environments in MENA are not conducive to life skills and citizenship education. In most cases, the role of parent-teacher associations is weak and does not play a significant role in school interventions (UNICEF, 2017a).

To guide MENA countries towards common goals in relation to equity in access and learning, a recent initiative has emerged to combine school-based management with school-based monitoring. In this regard, a new **regional school-based monitoring and action framework**, *INSAF,* named after the Arabic word for equity, has recently been designed to support national school-based initiatives, as well as national efforts towards improving monitoring and evaluation systems at the school level. Its effectiveness relies on empowering schools to analyse, monitor and respond to education challenges and barriers as they unfold. It helps ensure that human and financial resources are used more efficiently at the school level, where accountability to parents and the community is more direct (UNICEF, 2017c).

Human resources and capacity development

Human resources are the fundamental basis of effective life skills and citizenship education. These include **not only teachers**, but also head teachers and all education personnel involved in supporting teaching and learning processes, whether in formal, non-formal or informal education settings. Specific attention should be given to the role of school counsellors as they can provide an important resource for skills development. Yet, as highlighted by the *Analytical Mapping*, they are often under-resourced and stretched in terms of function (UNICEF, 2017a).

Other key findings point to a lack of **criteria for selecting human resources** involved in life skills and citizenship education programming, particularly within the context of non-formal and informal education. There is concern about limited professionalization and teacher development programmes. Training opportunities are fragmented and implemented on an ad hoc basis. In this regard,

there is a need for introducing comprehensive and harmonized capacity development programmes that focus on life skills and citizenship education.

An important entry point to support the mainstreaming of life skills and citizenship education within national education systems is to **review existing pre-service and in-service training** in order to identify how life skills and citizenship education teaching skills can be best delivered. In this regard, evidence clearly highlights that teacher preparation is key in enhancing education quality, and this applies not only to teacher in-service professional development, but also to pre-service training and teacher qualification (Mourshed, et al., 2010).

Exploring strategic partnerships within ongoing initiatives that focus on teacher development should be considered a key opportunity in maximizing the impact of interventions. This should include the design of school-based teacher development programmes that build on existing professional development trainings for both teachers and school principals.

Communication and community participation

Parental and community mobilization is essential for creating and sustaining a conducive environment for life skills and citizenship education. In this context, the development of coherent Communication for Development (C4D) strategies reflect the need for a multi-pronged approach that addresses the further communication with caregivers, children and youth in order to support the realization of the holistic vision of life skills and citizenship education. In particular, there is a need to ensure coherence between the interventions promoted at school level and the attitudes and behaviours of community members.

The establishment of **national platforms for communication** about educational vision and developmental priorities is needed to support advancing the life skills and citizen education national agenda. The technical content of national policies needs to be crafted in messages that can inform the nation as a whole. This may be particularly important with regard to life skills and citizenship education, where there is already some confusion among educators about terminology and given the sensitivity of the subjects involved.

Technical support needs to be provided in order to amplify the voices of marginalized groups in supporting advocacy, develop social awareness on the rights of children and the relevance of life skills and citizenship education within national contexts, engage public opinion, key influencers

and civil society on aligning social norms with the overall messages promoted by life skills and citizenship education, and to facilitate further innovations, including the use of social media, to promote digital exchanges of experiences and create positive discussions around life skills and citizenship education.

A key concern that has emerged through the *Analytical Mapping* is that awareness of the need for life skills among youth becomes clearer only when they leave school, by which time it is often too late for the education system to assist (UNICEF, 2017a). On the other hand, most of the programmes implemented by NGOs seem to adopt ad hoc approaches that aim to fill skills gap outside education systems, rather than effectively supporting interventions that reinforce the main messages for skills development at the school level. Evidence has also shown the need for youth voices to be more widely heard in respect of the contribution they can bring to address the structural deficits that prevent them from active engagement and participation (Spencer and Aldouri, 2016).

There are major opportunities to invest in NGO programming that further **support the development of an enabling environment for life skills and citizenship education**. Multiple approaches have proved successful in supporting attitude changes towards life skills acquisition based on peer-to-peer awareness campaigns, networking and mentorship programmes, both in development and humanitarian contexts (UNFPA, 2015). This is an area that requires attention in order to achieve the long-term vision of the LSCE Initiative.

3.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is critically important for ensuring that life skills and citizenship education meets the objectives set in the national policy frameworks as well as in the context of programming at all levels of implementation. Monitoring is a continuous process that tracks what is happening in a programme, and can be upgraded to be in real time using the data obtained to inform implementation and day-to-day management decision-making.

Usually, monitoring processes track inputs, activities and outputs of a programme. Evaluations involve periodic objective assessments of a planned intervention, programme or policy. They are carried out at discrete points in time and often involve external technical expertise to provide an outsider perspective. Impact evaluation is a specific area of monitoring and evaluation that involves research concerning the causal effect on outcomes of an

intervention or programme, generally performed to support evidence-based policy-making. It looks for changes that are directly attributable to the intervention. Impact evaluations are often combined with cost-effectiveness analysis (USAID, 2011).

Current approaches to monitoring and evaluation for life skills and citizenship education are scattered and largely operational at the project level. There is a lack of a system-level monitoring and evaluation framework. Existing surveys are not designed to cover the 12 core life skills in a comprehensive fashion and are unable to capture the experiences of marginalized or out-of-school children.

The *Global Evaluation of Life Skills Education Programmes* (UNICEF, 2012) found that there are very few monitoring and evaluation guidelines or frameworks that have been developed with a focus on life skills specifically. Where life skills are touched upon, it is largely through guidance for the evaluation of thematic programmes that incorporate content-specific life skills (such as HIV and AIDS), and provides only general suggestions with limited consideration of the practicalities and challenges for their operationalization.

The **Skills Towards Employability and Productivity (STEP)** programme of the World Bank has developed instruments to measure skills concerned with employment and productivity using household and employer surveys (World Bank, 2010b). The STEP approach recognizes the cumulative aspects of skills building and the necessity of starting from a young age (in ECE) and moving through the different stages of child and youth development. The skills measured by STEP include:

- Foundational skills (reading, writing, numeracy) and abstract problem-solving skills;

- Psychosocial skills (termed 'socio-emotional' skills), such as grit, interpersonal skills, decision-making skills and personality traits using the Big Five Inventory (OCEAN) – Openness to experiences. Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism; and

- Job-relevant skills, such as use of technology and machinery, autonomy, time management, problem solving and communication skills.

Another life skills and citizenship education related instrument is the **International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS)**, which has analysed ways in which citizenship education was being delivered in 38 countries. It explores student knowledge of civics and citizenship, attitudes and values, as well

as behaviours. In this approach, civic competence is conceptualized as comprising civic values, participatory attitudes, social justice and knowledge, and skills for democracy.

The monitoring and evaluation guidance developed for school health programmes by the Focusing Resources on Effective School Health (FRESH) partnership (UNESCO, 2013) provides some insights into how a national monitoring and evaluation framework might be developed. It contains eight core indicators that cover policy, learning environments, life-skills-based **health education and school-based school health and nutrition (SHN)** services. These are divided into national and school level indicators with suggested data sources. The indicators are primarily concerned with measuring the coverage of SHN programming in schools and the quality, which is defined in terms of meeting national standards on SHN, e.g., meeting minimum standards in SHN services.

Existing monitoring and evaluation frameworks should be used wherever possible and integrated with specific life skills and citizenship education indicators as appropriate. The **Education Management Information System (EMIS)** is potentially an important data system for informing the status of life skills and citizenship education. Relevant life skills and citizenship education questions can be integrated within the EMIS and surveys of school quality and attainment, in order to provide statistical data on implementation in schools. Issues that need to be considered are generating demand for information and developing an information culture with education ministries and governments more generally. Capacity building and strengthening in monitoring and evaluation in education are important in general and specific initiatives are warranted with regard to life skills and citizenship education.

A three-level monitoring and evaluation approach

In response to the current lack of systemic monitoring and evaluation guidance for life skills and citizenship education, three different frameworks are proposed on the basis of the contents and directions of this CPF. These include:

- Monitoring and evaluation framework at **impact and outcome levels**.

- Monitoring and evaluation framework at **output and process levels** for multiple pathways and systems approaches.

- Monitoring and evaluation framework **measuring learning outcomes** for life skills and citizenship education.

Monitoring and evaluation framework 1: Impact and outcome levels

The first framework sets **core indicators for assessing the impact of this Initiative** (see Table 17). The proposed indicators have been selected from existing monitoring and evaluation frameworks for education and the world of work. Selected 2030 SDG indicators for Education (UIS, 2015) have been included in the set of candidate indicators. These cover all three impact areas of the CPF. It is proposed that this Initiative will contribute to their operationalization in MENA. For economic development through improved employment and entrepreneurship, standard indicators for youth employment have been selected. For social cohesion through improved civic engagement, the proposed set of indicators address values. In this sense, the composite civic competence indicators in the context of Europe contain four domains: citizenship values, social justice, participatory attitudes, and knowledge and skills for democracy. While the third one could be considered to address directly 'civic engagement' (participatory attitudes), the first two clearly relate to values, and the fourth domain relates to the Cognitive Dimension (Hoskins et al., 2012).

There is some potential for additional life skills and citizenship education data gathering through impact evaluation. This should include a combination of quantitative research through national surveys and qualitative research through participatory methods. While the terms of reference for evaluation studies will need to be developed at the country level, it will be important to maintain a MENA regional approach to support international comparability.

Monitoring and evaluation framework 2: Output and process indicators for multiple pathways and systems approach

The second monitoring and evaluation framework is based on the contents of the Conceptual and Programmatic Framework, outcomes and processes (see Table 18). In particular it focuses on **tracking progress in mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education through a systems approach**. The indicators are specific to the MENA LSCE Initiative and, therefore, should be considered as candidate indicators, as they need to be piloted at the country level to see if they are workable. These indicators have been informed by existing monitoring and evaluation frameworks and indicators that include life skills and citizenship education, in particular the framework for school health programmes developed by the FRESH partnership (UNESCO, 2013).

It should be noted that a parallel effort will be undertaken to develop a student assessment system to measure and monitor acquisition of the 12 core life skills. This will develop additional indicators for learning outcomes related to life skills and citizenship education as addressed by the proposed the third monitoring and evaluation framework.

Table 17 Monitoring and evaluation framework at impact and outcome level

Impact area	Core indicators at the national level	Source of indicator
Knowledge society through improved education outcomes	Whether there is administration of a nationally representative learning assessment (i) during primary education; (ii) at the end of primary education; and (iii) at the end of lower secondary education	This proposed indicator builds on proposed thematic indicators to monitor 4.1 under the Education 2030 Agenda (UIS, 2015). Standards to be developed for all learning assessments. These should include standards for life skills and citizenship education
	Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex	This proposed indicator builds on proposed thematic indicators to monitor 4.1 under the Education 2030 Agenda (United Nations Statistics Division). The source of this indicator can be MICS or similar types of household surveys. Alternatively standardised learning assessment such as TIMSS, PISA, etc. can be used
	Percentage of youth who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in the 12 core life skills	This builds on proposed thematic indicators to monitor 4.4 under the Education 2030 Agenda (UIS, 2015)
	Completion rate (primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary)	Standard indicator (UIS) The source of this indicator can also be MICS or similar types of household surveys.
	Out-of-school rate (pre-primary, primary and lower secondary)	Standard indicator (UIS) The source of this indicator can also be MICS or similar types of household surveys.
Economic development through improved employment and entrepreneurship	Participation rate in TVET programmes (aged 15-24 years)	Standard indicator (UIS and ILO)
	Distribution of youth labour force by level of educational attainment	Level of education is a proxy that can serve as an important determinant of a country's capacity to compete successfully and sustainably in world markets, and to make efficient use of rapid technological advances (ILO).
	Youth in a decent and satisfactory job	Standard indicator (ILO)
	Youth unemployment rate	Standard indicator (ILO)
	Share of youth neither in employment nor education or training (NEET) in the youth population (%)	Standard indicator (ILO) building on SDG 8.6.1
Social cohesion through improved civic engagement	Percentage of students by age group or education level that show adequate understanding of issues relating to citizenship education	This proposed indicator builds on proposed thematic indicators to monitor 4.7 under the Education 2030 Agenda (UIS, 2015).
	Percentage of youth participating in relevant social spaces	This indicator builds on one of the three core indicators for measuring civic engagement and the participatory attitude dimension for civic competence indicators in ICCS and CCCI2 (Hoskins et al., 2012).
	Attitudes towards human rights values	This proposed indicator builds on social justice value dimensions for Civic Competence Composite indicators (ICCS and CCCI2) (Hoskins et al., 2012).

Table 18 Proposed monitoring and evaluation framework for the multiple pathways and systems approach

System Component	Indicator	Description
National policy	Availability of analytical work on life skills and citizenship education to inform national policy making and programming	This proposed indicator is measured by reviewing analytical work on skills needs to determine: • The evidence base for life skills and citizenship education development • The extent to which analysis of skills is holistic covering all four Dimensions of Learning • The extent to which the analytical work provides clear directions for policy
	Life skills and citizenship education included in national policy (policies) on education and training	This proposed indicator contributes to SDG 4.7.1. It is measured by reviewing the national policy framework for education to identify key policy directives in relation to life skills and citizenship education in: • Formal education • Non-formal and informal education • Workplace and 'road to workplace' • Social engagement • Child protection
Plans and strategies	National education strategic plan(s) include(s) interventions to mainstream life skills and citizenship education	This proposed indicator is measured by reviewing the national plans and strategies for education to identify directives in relation to life skills and citizenship education in: • Formal education • Non-formal and informal education • Workplace and 'road to workplace' • Social engagement • Child protection
Coordination and partnership frameworks	National coordination framework(s) for education and training include life skills and citizenship education coordination mechanisms	This proposed indicator is measured by reviewing the national coordination frameworks for education and training to determine: • The extent to which life skills and citizenship education is included • Coordination mechanisms that are specific to life skills and citizenship education • The extent to which coordination frameworks are inclusive
Budgeting and financing	Financing mechanisms are in place and budgets available for life skills and citizenship education	This proposed indicator is measured by reviewing the national education budget and any other national budgets relevant to life skills and citizenship education, including the following channels of delivery: • Formal education • Non-formal and informal education • Workplace and 'road to workplace' • Social engagement • Child protection
School-based management	Percentage of schools that have life skills and citizenship education guidance	This proposed indicator is measured through focus groups in a representative sample of schools to determine: • The extent to which guidance is accessible and used by school principals, teachers, and communities • The extent to which teachers are actively supported • The extent to which learners are supported to participate actively in their own learning • The extent to which classes are managed for active learning • The extent to which the school is free from fear and uses positive discipline

System Component	Indicator	Description
	Percentage of schools that provide regular curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular activities that aim to develop life skills and citizenship education	This proposed indicator is measured through focus groups in a representative sample of schools to determine: • The range of curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular activities involving life skills and citizenship education • Pupil participation rates
	Percentage of school committees (e.g., SMC, PTA, etc.) that take an active role in supporting life skills and citizenship education	This proposed indicator is measured through focus groups in a representative sample of schools to determine: • The extent of parental participation in life skills and citizenship education in school committees • The extent of student participation in life skills and citizenship education in school committees
Human resources and capacity development	Percentage of new teacher training graduates who have been trained and qualified in life skills and citizenship education related teaching and learning approaches	This proposed indicator is measured through national statistics on teacher education. This indicator can be measured through focus groups in a representative sample of teacher training institutions to determine: • Quality of training on child-centred and inclusive teaching and learning approaches • Quality of training on life skills and citizenship education
	Percentage of teachers in schools that have been trained in child centred and inclusive teaching, learning approaches, and life skills and citizenship education	This proposed indicator is measured through focus groups in a representative sample of schools to determine: • The extent to which teachers consider they have been trained in child-centred and inclusive teaching and learning approaches • The extent of school-based training for life skills and citizenship education • The extent to which teachers have in-service training, such as opportunities for child-centred and inclusive teaching and learning approaches (e.g., in the last 12 months).
	Percentage of schools that are implementing life skills and citizenship education in all classes	This proposed indicator can be measured through the use of classroom observation metrics in a representative sample of schools to determine: • The extent to which child-centred and inclusive teaching and learning techniques are being used in classroom teaching • Availability and use of teaching learning materials for life skills and citizenship education • The extent to which classroom management techniques and classroom climate facilitate life skills and citizenship education
Communication and community participation	Availability of communication products and processes to foster community participation in life skills and citizenship education	This proposed indicator is measured through focus groups in a representative sample of schools to determine: • Availability and usefulness of communication products • Availability of channels for community participation and their uptake
Monitoring and evaluation frameworks	Existence of monitoring and evaluation frameworks for tracking progress in life skills and citizenship education	This proposed indicator can be measured by reviewing the national existence of monitoring frameworks for education and training to determine: • The extent to which life skills and citizenship education has been mainstreamed • That there are core national indicators for life skills and citizenship education, coverage, quality and impact • There are ways of assessing learning outcomes from a life skills perspective

Monitoring and evaluation framework 3: Measuring learning outcomes for life skills and citizenship education

The measurement of learning outcomes related to life skills and citizenship education, both quantitative and qualitative is in its infancy. Insights on the learning outcomes of life skills and citizenship education are somewhat fragmented as a result of the different research perspectives involved.

The analysis of results from standardized assessments may be helpful for countries in relation to only few skills related to the Cognitive Dimension, such as problem-solving and critical thinking skills, however, other core life skills are missing or only partially addressed. There is a need for technical guidance based on successful approaches implemented by different countries in MENA and beyond. In this regard, the CPF calls for the development of a methodology that will enable the measurement of the 12 core skills while complementing and enhancing existing national assessment systems in MENA.

Within the framework of the LSCE Initiative, a methodology is being developed to enable the **measurement of the impact of life skills and citizenship education-related interventions** on children and youth. This endeavour focuses on three age groups (primary, lower secondary, and post-basic education age). A measurement instrument will be developed to be adapted for localized interventions both in formal, non-formal and informal learning settings (e.g., in schools, within learning centres, etc.) and used by different stakeholders involved in life skills and citizenship education (national ministries of education, bilateral and multilateral agencies, NGOs, etc.).

The main purpose of such a framework is not for ranking or country comparison, but to **inform about the level of learners' proficiency with the 12 core life skills**, including citizenship values, and to influence teaching and learning (as well as programming) on the way. This will be achieved through the development of a standardized approach of assessment in relation to life skills and citizenship education guided by the following objectives:

- To **foster a culture of assessment** of learning outcomes in MENA;

- To support MENA countries in **measuring the proficiency in the 12 core life skills;**

- To **support operationalization** of the 12 core life skills in all learning settings; and

- To **improve teaching and learning.**

4 | Travelling the Road

Achieving the vision set forth in the LSCE CPF requires a strategic approach to strengthening and mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education within and around education systems. This calls for the adoption of a **'strategic incrementalism'** that aims at maximizing the opportunities available for programming. Strategic incrementalism has been coined in the field of strategic planning (Quinn, 1980), and refers to the multiple, simultaneous and synchronized steps that need to be undertaken towards achieving a long-term ambitious change. In the context of the LSCE Initiative, it refers to the interventions needed to address the challenges defined in terms of learning, employment and social cohesion facing MENA as presented in chapter one.

The CPF identifies key entry points that need to be used as **'pressure points'** to achieve scale, sustainability and long-term change within national education systems. These entry points should be underpinned by the strategic approach put forward in the CPF and based on the following drivers of change:

- Need for an **indepth analysis of the education sector** to enable a coherent and long-term approach, which is linked to national reform processes. Specific to life skills and citizenship is the clear understanding of the national context.

- Beyond small-scale projects, there is a need to **work within a systems approach** that addresses all relevant components as defined in chapter three (e.g., national policies, plans and strategies, coordination and partnership frameworks, budgeting and financing, school-based management, human resources and capacity development, communication and community participation, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks).

- Mainstream life skills and citizenship education within all learning settings through **multiple pathways**. This includes interventions beyond education sector through multi/inter-sectoral approaches and inter-agency collaboration.

- Systematically **ensure the cumulative investment** in quality education and skill acquisition from an early age, addressing the 'bias' that exists in the education community of linking skills acquisition only to adolescent ages.

- Promote a **holistic approach** to quality education through life skills and citizenship education integrating the Cognitive, Instrumental, Individual and Social Dimensions of Learning that are essential to success in school and the world of work, and in life more generally. This further includes the investment in effective pedagogical strategies for the acquisition of the 12 core life skills identified as part of the LSCE Initiative.

- Adopt a **human rights-based approach** consistent with democratic and social justice values and principles that constitute the ethical foundation of quality learning.

To achieve the vision set forth in this CPF, the **strong commitment, leadership and engagement of ministries of education** are of paramount importance. This is needed to foster substantial change in the education system, and beyond, towards achieving quality and regulation of interventions, scale, sustainability and impact on learning, employability and social cohesion. Other ministries (e.g., ministries of youth, social affairs, etc.) and other stakeholders (e.g., national and international NGOs) engaged in life skills and citizenship education would need to be brought together within frameworks of collaboration for quality, sustainability and impact are to be ensured.

The LSCE CPF is an evolving regional framework to be tested and refined at the national level. It comes as a result of multiple consultations and engagement with MENA countries, which have also formulated country-specific proposals for mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education at the national level within education systems (see Annex 2).

While MENA countries will move forward, regional partners will further support the mainstreaming of life skills and citizenship education through the following proposed actions to be undertaken within the framework of the LSCE Initiative:

- Provision of technical support to the **operationalization** of the LSCE CPF, together with the needed pedagogical tools, and through collaborative frameworks around a multiple pathways approach including through mobilizing existing networks at regional and national levels.

- Undertaking of **national consultations supporting conceptualization and operationalization of the 12 core life skills** within national education systems.

- Identification and engagement of champions for changes at country and regional levels within the framework of the LSCE Initiative.

- Development of **communication and advocacy tools** for the LSCE Initiative.

- **Sharing of relevant information, tools, and other resources** supporting the implementation of the LSCE CPF within a dedicated LSCE website.

The operationalization of the 12 core life skills identified as part of the LSCE Initiative will be further supported through the development of an evidence-based assessment methodology and **tools to measure the 12 core life skills**. The methodology will offer a standardized approach to be adapted for localized interventions both in formal and non-formal settings across the region, and will provide the necessary evidence to inform rigorous evidence-based interventions at the country level.

Since the inception of the LSCE Initiative at the end of 2015, a great deal has been achieved, both in terms of framing the work conceptually and programmatically, and in terms of launching initiatives at the country level, demonstrating in turn, a high degree of engagement by diverse stakeholders, as well as traction and relevance to the contemporary realities of the MENA region. The road ahead is now being travelled. It is complex and fraught with many challenges; however, with a clear 'map' and well-identified 'drivers' of change, with political will, and with organized support from 'travelling companions', the ambitious goals set in this CPF should not be out of sight.

The Twelve Core Life Skills

CREATIVITY

Cognitive Dimension

Creativity is a core life skill that children should develop from an early age. It supports academic performance and helps uncover children's various talents. An essential component of the Cognitive Dimension, creativity is one of the most sought after life skills in the Instrumental Dimension: It is a necessary, constructive element of innovative thinking processes and is a crucial life skill in sciences and the world of work. Being creative helps to address and, more importantly in MENA, to partake constructively in complex and evolving technological and digital settings. Creativity allows for adaptability in various life situations by leading to solutions, methods and processes to tackle old problems and contemporary challenges. Using creativity, learners develop a sense of self-efficacy and persistence, which leads to feeling empowered, one of the key outcomes of the Individual Dimension. Social creativity, a collaborative phenomenon, encourages individual learners to be even more creative by combining different ideas, sometimes across cultures. Creativity adds value to the Social Dimension.

DEFINITION

Creativity, or being creative, is the ability to generate, articulate or apply inventive ideas, techniques and perspectives (Ferrari et al., 2009), often in a collaborative environment (Lucas and Hanson, 2015). In conjunction with critical thinking and problem-solving skills, to which it closely relates, creativity is a major component of purposeful thinking, i.e., a non-chaotic, orderly and organized thought process. Being creative is, to a large extent, connected to the learner's cognitive abilities, including analytic and evaluative skills (Sternberg, 2006). Moreover, ideational thought processes are fundamental to creative persons (Kozbelt et al., 2010). Creativity intersects with social and personal management skills; therefore, while related to the arts, creativity is also a pre-condition for innovation and adaptive behaviours and solutions in all life settings, including in learning settings and in the workplace (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015).
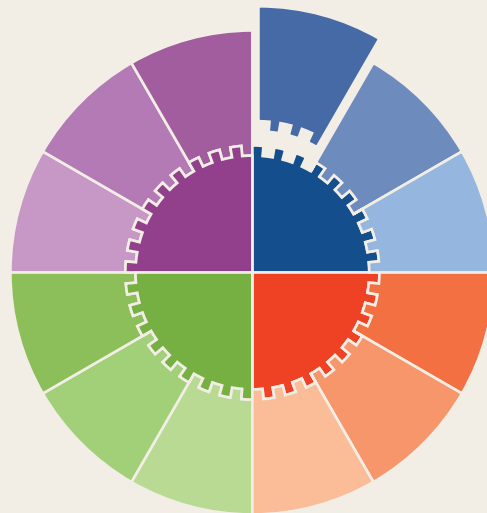
Creativity is linked to the effectiveness of other life skills, in particular: critical thinking, problem identification (Sternberg, 2006), problem-solving (Torrance, 1977), and self-management.

With regards to a renewed vision for education in MENA, creativity is relevant at two levels. First, it is intrinsic to the learning process of all learners, at all ages across the curriculum. Creativity is a means of knowledge creation that can support and enhance self-learning, learning how to learn and lifelong learning (Ferrari et al., 2009). Thus, the promotion of creativity is a core component of improved learning processes and education systems. Second, promoting creativity in and beyond education settings helps children, youth and other learners to unearth their resources in multiple disciplines and subject areas, while developing their capacity to brainstorm, cast a fresh look on every day, family, health and workplace situations, and offer constructive suggestions. Recurrent in national skills documents, creativity and creativity-related skills, such as innovative thinking, collaboration and self-efficacy, are valued throughout life (Care et al., 2016). For this reason, psychologists, such as Vygotsky and Guilford, have long maintained the importance of fostering creative development in children in order to prepare them for a changing future (Kozbelt et al., 2010; Guilford, 1950), which in turn is a priority in the MENA context, as children and youth face particularly complex life environments.

Interventions targeted at improving creative thinking have been successful at increasing students' academic achievement (Maker, 2004); this is of specific relevance in MENA where education service delivery generally does not set out to encourage creativity due to teacher-centred pedagogy that tends to suppress innovative ideas (Beghetto, 2010). In addition, school environments are not systemically felt as safe by children and this may inhibit creativity. Fostering creativity by adapting new teaching methods and building safe educational environments could, therefore, support overall improved performance of the schools in the region, while preparing learners to be innovative in life and the world of work. Creativity develops from potential to achievement as children grow up; therefore, it is necessary to start encouraging creativity at an early age. There have been successful efforts to improve creativity of children through facilitation of pretend play skills (Russ and Fiorelli, 2010). Other success factors include:

i) the exploration of different activities so that children can find what they enjoy and develop their talents and abilities; and

ii) caring environments, in which children feel safe to express even unconventional ideas, where every-day acts of creativity are reinforced, and independence in problem-solving encouraged (Russ and Fiorelli, 2010).

According to Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, creativity is critical to the "development of the child's personality, and mental and physical talents, to their fullest potential" (UN General Assembly, 1989). Hence, beyond the development of children's intellectual abilities, a task traditionally viewed as the sole responsibility of schools (UNICEF, 2007b), there is a rights-based justification for educational settings to be conducive to creativity. This can be done by encouraging and fostering dynamism, playfulness and trust, while promoting tolerance of differences and personal commitment (Siegel and Kaemmerer, 1978). An environment conducive to creativity should also include organizational encouragement and work-group support (Amabile et al., 1995) to emphasize the Social Dimension of creativity.

CREATIVITY AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension

As a core life skill, the contribution of creativity to the Cognitive Dimension of Learning brings about the advantages of purposeful thinking, especially creative thinking, for MENA learners and, by extension, for MENA educational systems and their outcomes. Creativity is sometimes misunderstood as resulting in chaotic thinking processes, however, it actually encourages orderly and organized thoughts, thus expanding in learners, at any age, the ability to constructively think anew and perform better.

Creativity can be fostered through teaching and is not the preserve of any particular subject discipline. It can be considered integral to quality education and is acquired through training and the right classroom environment (Gutman and Schoon, 2013). Teaching approaches that emphasize acquisition of facts over the development of thinking skills are, on the other hand, associated with the suppression of creative expression (Kozbelt et al., 2010).

Creativity is related to both innovative and divergent thinking; the latter, in particular, involves imagining several responses to a single problem, rather than focusing on a single correct answer, a thought process that can lead to creation and innovation. Meta-cognitive processes, such as tactical thinking, are also tied to creative thinking (Kozbelt et al., 2010).

Research exploring behavioural and brain function has evinced that, while men and women were indistinguishable in terms of behavioural performance across all tasks, the pattern of brain activity while engaged in divergent thinking indicated strategy differences between the genders. During divergent thinking, declarative memory related regions of the brain were strongly activated in male learners, while the regions involved in self-referential processing were more engaged in female learners. The implications of these gender differences beg further exploration in the field of gender differences in higher-order cognition, where the crucial question is not intellectual abilities, but the employed strategies, functional task approach and cognitive style adopted by each gender under specific conditions

(Abraham et al., 2014) in order to then foster each with the adequate educational activities to obtain the best performance.

'Learning to Do'/
the Instrumental Dimension

Creativity and creativity-related life skills are widely sought after in the workplace. Like findings elsewhere, creative thinking skills were considered among the most important life skills at recruitment, according to a survey of MENA chief executive officers (Al Maktoum Foundation, 2008). A survey of the skills gap in MENA found that creative thinking was considered an important skill for junior/mid-level positions, and especially important for senior-level positions (YouGov and Bayt, 2016). Difficulties in finding these skills were encountered by 63 per cent of companies from the region that responded.

Creativity and creativity-related life skills are important for fostering innovation and problem-solving, and for improving productivity. Innovation is a process by which people, or groups of people with an entrepreneurial mindset, develop new ideas or adapt existing ones (World Bank, 2010a). By extension, these life skills are highly relevant in any entrepreneurship endeavour, both at the start and for later business growth. Beyond innovations in the economy encompassing products, processes and services, creativity is linked to improvement in society as new ideas can help solve pressing problems (Moran, 2010). This includes developing workers in MENA who can think 'outside the box' to be competitive in the global economy by fostering their capacity to think in a digital and technology-oriented economy (Jalbout and Farah, 2016).

Creativity skills are often lacking in the labour market (World Bank, 2010a) and MENA enterprises are looking for solutions to encourage this core life skill (Nosseir, 2015). To support creative behaviours, organizations should be aware of existing gender bias with regard to creativity, which is sometimes linked to qualities traditionally associated with male workers, such as boldness, risk-taking and independence. This bias may lead to dismissing women's ideas and creative output, thus missing out on collaborative and inclusive innovations (Adams, 2015).

'Learning to Be'/
the Individual Dimension

Creativity, which is at the heart of "being human" (Robinson, 2015), is both integral to the fulfilment of individual talent and is an element leading to persistence (Simonton, 2010) and resilience, another core life skill. More specifically, creativity skills are a key factor in having a successful life (Sternberg, 2006) as they foster self-esteem and self-worth, and contribute to self-efficacy. Creativity also draws on individual skills and resources such as motivation and drive. Characterized as a way of coping with the challenges of life (Cropley, 1996), creative thinking can help people respond adaptively and with flexibility to problematic situations in daily life (WHO, 1997). Hence, in the volatile and sometimes violent context that children and youth face in MENA, being creative appears to be a constructive asset, conducive to personal empowerment.

As creative individuals are often intrinsically motivated (Kaufman and Sternberg, 2010; Van Tassel-Baska and MacFarlane, 2009), they are willing to take intellectual risks, ask questions and place themselves at risk of making mistakes (Sternberg, 2006; Kozbelt et al., 2010) to better learn from them. They are open to new ideas and tend to have high creative self-efficacy or belief in their ability to generate new and meaningful ideas (Kozbelt et al., 2010; Russ, 1996; Sternberg, 2006). This disposition, motivation, intellectual risk-taking and creative self-efficacy can be critical in the face of the natural resistance that society often displays toward creative ideas that are new and untested (Sternberg, 2006). Yet, like all core life skills in the framework of the Individual Dimension, creativity does not spur opposition; on the contrary, it is known to enhance the ability of children and youth to positively, constructively and innovatively face every day challenges in their social environment.

'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension

Although creativity may be associated with individuals, it is now largely conceived as a collaborative and social phenomenon developed in and through communities and groups (Carlile and Jordan, 2012). Social creativity shapes creative individuals within it, encourages social cohesion and celebration, suggests a dynamic inter-relationship between the personal and the social, involves an ethical dimension, and may arise from the interaction of differing cultures and values (Carlile and Jordan, 2012). In order to promote the social aspect of creativity, teachers should be aware of the extent to which different cultures value creativity to show learners how subjects and disciplines are socially constructed, and of how to use group diversity to stimulate creativity and explore the ethical dimensions of creativity (Carlile and Jordan, 2012).

The growing relevance of creativity to address complex challenges in society is evinced through a myriad of citizenship discourses and research currently fostering creativity (e.g., the "Creative Citizens" programmes in the UK). In its most practical dimension, creativity is key for the exploration of everyday problem-solving at the community level and for enabling positive social transformation.

Relevance of creativity (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension	To sharpen learning processes and outcomes To prepare children for success in a fast-changing world To enhance enjoyment and relevance of learning	Innovative thinking, divergent thinking, articulating ideas, analysis and synthesis
'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension	To develop successful entrepreneurs To facilitate problem-solving in the workplace To improve employability and promotion, regardless of gender	Productivity, collaboration and teamwork, risk taking
'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To support development of coping skills	Self-efficacy, self-worth, self-esteem, persistence
'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension	To contribute to societal problem-solving towards inclusive citizenship To improve social cohesion through creative approaches to conflict management To facilitate social engagement in the promotion of common good	Social transformation and agency, positive change

For more information, visit: www.lsce-mena.org

LSCE

The Twelve Core Life Skills

CRITICAL THINKING
Cognitive Dimension

Equipped with higher-order functioning skills, critical thinkers analyse information in a more objective manner to make balanced decisions and are better problem solvers. A core life skill of the Cognitive Dimension, particularly sought after by employers in MENA, critical thinking is instrumental to enhancing learning and contributes to academic success, as learners ask questions, identify assumptions and develop the capacity to assess facts. Equipped with these abilities, individuals can access and progress in the changing world of work in MENA. Critical thinkers can reconsider and adapt existing business strategies and processes to be more efficient, make the workplace safer, increase customer care, and are ready to evolve within the knowledge and digital economy. Conducive to self-efficacy and resilience, thinking critically also fosters self-management, leading to safer choices with regard to health and community issues. Hence, hand in hand with the Individual Dimension, critical thinking brings about constructive social behaviours in individuals by enhancing their self-determination and will to be engaged in their community. Children, youth and all individuals who develop their capacity to think critically can try to prevent violence, radicalization and environmentally unsustainable attitudes. Thus, critical thinking is an essential outcome of citizenship education.

DEFINITION

Critical thinking is an instrumental and long-standing life skill conducive to academic achievement. By thinking critically, children, youth and all individuals learn to assess situations and assumptions, ask questions and develop various ways of thinking. Critical thinking is a 'meta-skill' through which one learns to think about thinking and develop purposeful thinking processes, such as being able to discern and evaluate whether an argument makes sense or not.

Dewey, in his classic work *How We Think*, described critical thinking as the "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey, 1910). Critical thinking is a universally applicable complex mental process that involves multiple skills: separating facts from opinion, recognizing assumptions, questioning the validity of evidence, asking questions, verifying information, listening and observing, and understanding multiple perspectives (Lai, 2011). It includes an ability to analyse information in an objective manner. This is essential for children's and individuals' wellbeing, as it helps them to recognize and assess factors that influence their attitudes and behaviours, such as values, peer pressure and information from the media (WHO, 1997), thus helping them to protect themselves from violence, negative influences and radicalization.

Thinking critically allows each learner to pose, gather, evaluate, synthesize and then assess facts, before drawing conclusions and preparing an answer. Therefore, critical thinking not only translates into a complex process, it also is a thoughtful and constructive one that prepares individuals to face complex economic changes and life environments.

Critical thinking is a lifelong life skill and, in theory, all people can be taught to think critically (Lai, 2011). At best, children should be taught early, as empirical research suggests that people begin developing critical thinking skills at a very young age. Critical thinking should be practiced

often, in various educational and work settings, and should not be pushed from core content designs (Trottier, 2009). Critical thinking is one of the hardest skills to practice well and adults often exhibit deficient reasoning, maybe due to deficient educational experiences (Lai, 2011).

Developing a critical mindset is key to enhancing children's capacities towards self-protection, particularly in the face of violence and fragile environments, such as those existing in some locations in MENA. Critical thinking is also a crucial aspect in the competence of citizens to constructively participate in a plural and democratic society, enabling them to make their own positive contribution to their society (Dam and Volman, 2004). Without critical thinking, education cannot fulfil its social role to equip children with the necessary skills to face life challenges and participate in society.

CRITICAL THINKING AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

Critical thinking is sought after in the world of work and knowledge economy and it is an essential element of active and constructive citizenship, leading to positive and socially cohesive behaviours. It stands among those life skills most frequently identified in national documents (Care et al., 2016). This core life skill has wide applicability in many fields of life and international skills frameworks (WHO, 1997; IYF, 2014b; UNFPA, 2014). Critical thinking skills are closely related to other higher-order thinking skills, such as problem-solving, analytical thinking, reflection, creativity, and decision-making.

'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension

Critical thinking is an important constituent of 'Learning to Know' and 'Learning to Learn'. However, in MENA, school instruction too often employs learning through emphasis on the coverage of curriculum content and its recall by the learner. Research evidence suggests that many people struggle to think critically, however it is known that critical thinking is malleable and students of all ability levels, not only the gifted, can benefit from appropriate instruction and practice in critical thinking skills (Lai, 2011), which entails teachers using methods that show students

how to think without fearing dissent, thus enhancing their overall learning abilities.

Background knowledge is considered an essential condition to think critically since students need something to think critically about. Critical thinking skills may be domain-specific, such as in mathematics or in the sciences, while some are more generalized (Lai and Viering, 2012). Critical thinking skills are best practiced in diverse disciplines and are an important aspect of academic learning outcomes (Lai, 2011).

Educators have long been aware of the importance of critical thinking skills as an outcome of student learning; and these skills and abilities are unlikely to develop in the absence of explicit instruction (Abrami et al., 2008; Case, 2005; Facione, 1990; Halpern, 1998; Paul, 1992). Specifically, in the framework of MENA educational reforms, the development of critical thinking skills can become central to every subject at school and practiced regularly in teaching and learning, which would ultimately also enhance student achievement and school outcomes. Explicit instruction appears to be a key component to teaching critical thinking skills successfully: Halpern (2011) found evidence that students who were explicitly taught critical thinking skills, for example, the students taking a critical thinking course, performed better than students who were simply taking a course with the skills embedded within it.

A number of researchers have recommended using particular instructional strategies to encourage the development of critical thinking skills and abilities, including explicit instruction, collaborative or cooperative learning, modelling, and constructivist techniques (Lai, 2011). Looking at student reactions to scepticism and developing personal viewpoints, students often appear to initially be better critics than critical thinkers. The acquisition of content typically requires choosing whether a concept is true and then applying that truth to a given situation. Yet, when given the opportunity to ask and explore openly, or to think critically, students learn and thrive by evaluating, questioning and synthesizing new information. This opportunity must be provided by the educator if students are to learn to be critical thinkers rather than critics (Knodt, 2009). Hence, equipped with the proper critical thinking skills, youth and children do not just disagree or dissent, they actively participate, positively weigh in and can make informed decisions.

'Learning to Do'/
the Instrumental Dimension

Critical thinking skills are helpful in all work situations to assess demands from the market and relations with others, and to propose alternative perspectives to problem-solving, which is at the core of the knowledge economy. Improving critical thinking skills is extremely important as employment demands are growing more complex and multifaceted, with MENA enterprises and industries seeking higher productivity and the use of new technologies. Therefore, employees, including persons in management positions and entrepreneurs, need to be able to assess the situation in front of them and determine the costs/benefits for them, the company and the market. Critical thinking allows individuals to take ownership of the situation and the decision. Effective leadership by all relies on critical thinking skills, enhancing problem-solving and decision-making skills (Abdulwahed et al., 2016).

In addition, critical thinking can improve team-building efforts and team performance: Knowledgeable and/or experienced team members who think critically can offer ideas that encourage discussion and strengthen teamwork. All team members – not only managers – need to analyse ideas and suggestions and consider them from all angles to come to a reasoned conclusion. Both critical thinking and creative thinking are important in the workplace and are fundamental for success in business. Critical thinking contributes to employability and entrepreneurship, helping to address MENA youth unemployment (World Economic Forum, 2014).

Deficits in critical thinking in the workplace can have serious consequences leading to accidents, mismanagement of finances and resources, conflict among personnel, and other functional difficulties. Critical thinking is a necessity for health and safety in the workplace.

'Learning to Be'/
the Individual Dimension

Critical thinking is an important characteristic of successful individuals throughout life as it raises decision-making to the level of conscious and deliberate choice. This helps to improve people's quality of life and maximize their chances of happiness, successful living and personal fulfilment. Certain dispositions or attitudes are relevant to critical thinking, such as open-mindedness, inquisitiveness, the desire to be well-informed, flexibility and respect for others' viewpoints (Lai, 2011).

Equally, critical thinking is essential for the wellbeing of people by helping them recognize and assess certain factors, such as values, peer pressure and the media, which influence their attitudes and behaviour (WHO, 1997). This can help protect individuals from violence and radicalization. Individuals who think critically develop a heightened sense of self-worth and self-efficacy, which equips them to make balanced decisions taking into account both their health and wellbeing, as well as their environment's demands, all of which find direct application in MENA.

'Learning to Live Together'/
the Social Dimension

The development of critical thinking is one of the main aims of citizenship education as it is an essential tool for self-determination and civic engagement (Giroux, 2010). It allows individuals to participate critically and ethically in their communities and social practices. From a Social Dimension point of view, critical thinking refers to "making choices and knowing why one is making that choice, respecting the choices and opinions of others, thereby forming your own opinion and making it known" (Dam and Volman, 2004). Deficits in critical thinking at the societal level can have serious repercussions at both national and community levels, for example through decisions that lead to conflict, misuse of funds, inappropriate policies and interventions, etc.

In the digital era, where people are bombarded with information and opinions, there is an urgent need for individuals to be able to separate facts from opinions, honesty from deception, and sense from nonsense (Robinson, 2015). Critical thinking gives individuals the tools to eliminate bias, prejudice and stereotyping, and is needed for effective active citizenship, bringing about sustainable and equitable changes in society, as well as promoting social justice. Youth in MENA whose critical thinking skills are enhanced, develop a constructive voice and seek, through positive debates, to bring a 'fresh look' to challenges posed by extremism and radicalization and want 'to be part of the solution' (Spencer and Aldouri, 2016).

Relevance of critical thinking (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension	To be able to make a reasoned argument both orally and in writing To enhance scientific thinking	Thinking about thinking, questioning, interpreting information and synthesizing
'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension	To ensure successful entrepreneurship and business development To ensure effective working with other people To ensure wellbeing and safety in the workplace	Career planning, solving work related problems, effective reasoning, innovative and creative thinking
'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension	To support development of self-confidence and personal fulfilment	Self-protection, self-discipline, goal-setting, life planning
'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension	To foster critical engagement in society To be able to recognize forms of manipulation and persuasion To promote sustainable and equitable social transformation To recognize and value other viewpoints	Ethical reasoning, social responsibility, ethical decision-making

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LSCE

The Twelve Core Life Skills

PROBLEM-SOLVING
Cognitive Dimension

Problem-solving is the ability to think through steps that lead to a desired goal by identifying and understanding a problem and devising a solution to address it. Problem-solving is a core skill relevant throughout life and is a prerequisite for academic success, particularly for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and is best practiced and developed in various educational settings from early childhood onwards through problem-based learning. Problem-solving represents an opportunity for MENA educational systems to rethink their pedagogy and make teaching outcomes relevant for children and learners with regards to their everyday life problems, the 21st century challenges of the world of work and the conflicts that their community may face. Problem-solvers in the world of work are more employable, more efficient entrepreneurs, better decision-makers and should be able to work collaboratively. Individuals with developed problem-solving skills have an increased sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Consequently, problem-solvers tend to be active in their community and contribute to developing community-based solutions to problems, which includes working collaboratively to devise conflict-exit strategies acceptable to all members of the community.

DEFINITION

A problem solver has the ability to "think through steps that lead from a given state of affairs to a desired goal" (Barbey and Baralou, 2009). Problem-solving is a high-order thinking process inter-related with other critical life skills, including critical thinking, analytical thinking, decision-making and creativity. Being able to solve problems implies a process of planning in the formulation of a method to attain a desired goal. Problem-solving begins with recognizing that a problematic situation exists and establishing an understanding of the nature of the situation. It requires the solver to identify the specific problem(s) to be solved, plan and carry out a solution(s), and monitor and evaluate progress throughout the activity (OECD, 2015). In relation to cooperation and decision-making skills,

as well as other core life skills identified in this model, problem-solving is central to conflict management and conflict resolution processes, as it allows individuals to devise various conflict-exit strategies, which are especially integrative with 'win-win' solutions (Weitzman and Weitzman, 2000).

Evidence from cognitive psychology highlights the importance of recognizing, defining and representing problems in the problem-solving process. There are two classes of problems:

i) the well-defined ones, with clearly defined goals, paths to a solution and obstacles to solutions; and

ii) the ill-defined ones with no clear path to a solution(s).

The main challenge in solving ill-defined problems is in clarifying the nature of the problem. Neuroscience suggests that depending on whether a problem-solving task is well-defined or not, different brain systems are involved (Barbey and Baralou, 2009) and the exercises conducive to a coherent and efficient practice of solving problems should be varied to present learners with various types of issues.

The ability to solve problems is an important part of the PISA (OECD, 2015), which has identified and grouped cognitive processes involved in problem-solving into four areas:

- *Exploring and understanding:* exploring the problem situation by observing it, interacting with it, searching for information and finding limitations or obstacles, and demonstrating an understanding of the information given and discovered while interacting with the problem situation.

- *Representing and formulating:* using tables, graphs, symbols or words to represent aspects of the problem situation, as well as formulating hypotheses about the relevant factors in a problem and the relationships between them in order to build a coherent mental representation of the problem situation.

- *Planning and executing:* devising a plan or strategy to solve the problem and executing it. This may involve clarifying the overall goal, setting sub-goals, etc.

- *Monitoring and reflecting:* monitoring progress, reacting to feedback, and reflecting on the solution, the information provided on the problem or the strategy adopted.

While problem-solving is sometimes equated with one person figuring out and tackling a problematic situation alone, collaborative problem-solving is an increasingly critical and necessary life skill across educational settings and in the workforce. It is strongly driven by the need for students to prepare for careers that require abilities to work effectively in groups and to apply their problem-solving skills in these social situations (OECD, 2015). Accordingly, in the 2015 PISA, collaborative problem-solving is defined as "the capacity of an individual to effectively engage in a process whereby two or more agents attempt to solve a problem by sharing the understanding and effort required to come to a solution and pooling their knowledge, skills and efforts to reach that solution" (OECD, 2015). That is why problem-solving is logically valued throughout life (Care and Anderson, 2016) and is therefore frequently included in international skills frameworks, including health and work-related frameworks (WHO, 1997; IYF, 2014a; Brewer, 2013).

PROBLEM-SOLVING AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension

A prerequisite for academic success, problem-solving is particularly important for STEM, both for teaching and learning. Problem-solving is linked to education systems that better prepare learners to use their knowledge in real-life contexts, to be at ease with cognitive processes to solve everyday problems, and to interact with unfamiliar technological devices (OECD, 2014). However, PISA results indicate that education systems are failing to equip youth with even basic problem-solving skills (OECD, 2014 and 2016). Education systems currently better prepare learners to solve problems that are "well-defined and presented to them in the classroom", rather than equipping them to begin with formulating the nature of problems (Pretz et al., 2003). The skills involved in solving well-defined problems differ from those in recognizing, discovering or creating a problem. Thus, some educational settings in MENA miss out on the opportunity to engage learners, even at an early age, in actively trying to not only think about, but also sort through everyday life situations in order to identify problems, well-defined or not, and creatively, yet in an orderly fashion, imagine a way to resolve the issue.

Problem-solving skills can be developed through both experiential learning as well as within disciplines, such as engineering (Abdulwahed et al., 2016). To develop problem-solving skills in all MENA learners, it is important to equip them with 'problem-based learning', which is an approach that develops problem-solving skills with learners at the centre and empowers them to conduct research, integrate theory and practice, and apply knowledge and skills to develop a viable solution to a defined problem (Savery, 2006). First introduced in medical education, 'problem-based learning' has since been introduced into school systems.

The essential generic characteristics of the 'problem-based learning' approach include the following:

i)   Students are responsible for their own learning, which suggests a certain level of autonomy and leeway for experimentation granted by the instructor;

ii) The problem simulations used in problem-solving must be ill-structured and allow for free inquiry;

iii) Collaboration is essential;

iv) The activities carried out in problem-based learning must be those valued in the real world; and

v)   The problem-based learning must be the pedagogical base in the curriculum and not part of a didactic curriculum.

Critical to 'problem-based learning' are both the selection of ill-structured problems and teachers who can guide the learning process.

Another pathway to reform pedagogy and foster problem-solving is 'inquiry-based learning', frequently used in science education. Similar to 'problem-based learning', it is based on problem-solving, critical thinking and questioning. Activities begin with a question followed by investigation of solutions. In this approach the teacher is both a provider of information and a facilitator of learning (Savery, 2006).

'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension

Problem-solving is an important skill for employability and success in the world of work, especially for entrepreneurship. The World Economic Forum ranked complex problem-solving as the top skill for jobs in 2015 and predicted it would remain in first position in 2020 (World Economic Forum, 2016).

Problem-solving skills in the workplace involve recognizing the long-term consequences of solutions to problems and developing action plans for problem resolution. Employers want workers who take personal responsibility for meeting targets and who can see that there might be a better way of doing things, people who seek a way around a problem and do not panic when things go wrong (Brewer, 2013). While problem-solving may involve personal independence and initiative, in the workplace it is often carried out in teamwork situations. It may also involve resolving customer concerns.

The development of problem-solving is critical for employment and entrepreneurship in MENA. A survey of the skills gap in MENA found that problem-solving was considered to be an important skill for positions at junior, middle and senior levels. Yet, difficulties in finding these skills were encountered by 63 per cent of companies that responded (YouGov and Bayt, 2016).

'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension

The ability to effectively solve problems is important for the all-round development of a person at all stages of life. Successful problem-solvers are flexible and adaptable. The skills related to the process of problem formulation, such as thinking divergently and flexibly, intrinsic motivation, openness and curiosity, all of which complement problem-solving as a core life skill, imply that a person is in a state of constant meta-cognitive attentiveness to the environment (Pretz et al., 2003).

Therefore, effective problem-solving supports the development of self-efficacy and personal empowerment, and anchors the learners in their environment by giving them the tools to interact with it. While significant problems that are left unsolved can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strain (WHO, 1997), problem-solving skills combined with effective decision-making and critical thinking support the individual in achieving better health and wellbeing.

'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension

Problem-solving contributes to active citizenship through engagement, either on an individual basis or at the community level, not only by helping to identify and report problems, but also by helping to conceptualize, develop and implement solutions to everyday problems that affect the community. This skill enables the individual to become an active and informed partner in community life. Problem-solving and collaborative problem-solving are important for operationalizing human rights and are central to conflict management and conflict resolution (Weitzman and Weitzman, 2000), as problem-solvers seek rational-yet-acceptable resolution strategies for all members of the community.

Community problem-solving has been included in UNESCO's initiative for *Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future* as one of the key areas to be addressed. The approach is defined as a teaching and learning strategy that helps students participate actively in addressing local community concerns with a view to creating a more sustainable future. It revolves around the steps to guide students through the process of community problem-solving.

Community problem-solving is key to addressing challenges related to sustainable development and the environment, as well as enhancing a sense of common identity and agency required to improve social cohesion in MENA.

Relevance of problem-solving (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension	To improve learning processes and outcomes To prepare children for success in a fast-changing world To foster learning that is relevant to everyday life	Curiosity, attentiveness, analytical thinking
'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension	To improve decision-making and planning skills To enable efficient working with co-workers, improved productivity, innovation, decision-making, effective team working, etc.	Autonomy, collaborative work, personal responsibility, entrepreneurship
'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To improve health and wellbeing	Flexibility, self-efficacy, reflective thinking
'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension	To foster positive social transformation To contribute to community-based solutions to community problems To enhance social engagement in community work and voluntarism	Active engagement, solidarity, collaborative thinking, social responsibility, conflict management, conflict resolution

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LSCE

The Twelve Core Life Skills

COOPERATION

Instrumental Dimension

An essential and instrumental core life skill, cooperation skills include teamwork, respecting others' opinions and inputs, accepting feedback, resolving conflict, effective leadership, working towards consensus in decision-making, and building and coordinating partnerships. Learners who develop cooperation skills, especially young learners who are taught to work collaboratively, take more pleasure in learning and perform better with regards to academic achievement. Moreover, they demonstrate stronger socially desirable behaviours, while their sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy increase. These positive outcomes are related to the Cognitive and Individual Dimensions of cooperation and make this core life skill highly relevant to enhance learners' results and psychological wellbeing in MENA. They are supported in the Instrumental and Social Dimensions. Cooperation and teamwork are among the most sought after life skills by the private sector in MENA, despite not being currently developed enough in youth (Al Maktoum Foundation and UNDP, 2014; YouGov and Bayt, 2016); indeed, cooperation and teamwork are key for both employability and success in entrepreneurship, as cooperative individuals work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams to achieve common goals. Building on this, and the Individual Dimension of the skill, individuals who act cooperatively, not competitively, and use 'fair play', are more engaged citizens, seeking favourable processes towards inclusion and conflict resolution.

DEFINITION

Cooperation is the act or process of working together to get something done, to achieve a common purpose or mutual benefit, either for an individual being cooperative or acting cooperatively (Tyler, 2011). It can involve teamwork and active collaboration and it is central to problem-solving in the everyday world, including challenges encountered by children, youth and all learners in school, home life, at work, in the community and at the regional level. Because cooperation is useful for problem-solving

and forms the basis for healthy social relationships, it is a core life skill directly related to family, social, and political conflict management and resolution in MENA.

Cooperation can be conceived in terms of rewards and costs with people motivated to cooperate based on their perception of personal benefits, and often in relation to monetary value. This transactional view is contrasted with a "socially-oriented or 'common good' approach" (Tyler, 2011). Accordingly, social, rather than material, motivations shape cooperative relationships. These involve "common values, shared identities, emotional connections, trust and joint commitments for using fair procedures" (Tyler, 2011). From this perspective, it can be argued that the long-term viability of groups and organizations, even societies, is linked to their ability to develop and sustain cooperation skills. Moreover, cooperation can be related to the concept of 'fair play', which is instrumental as a bridge between the competitive aspect of human relationships, especially in business settings, and the necessity to collaborate in order to constructively overcome the issue at hand. Under the portmanteau phrase 'coopetition' (Nalebuff and Brandenburger, 1997), this way of resolving the sometimes difficult issue of participation in cooperative processes can be extended to conflict management processes at home and in the community at large.

Cooperation is closely related to, supported by, and also complements the following life skills: communication, empathy, respect for diversity, and problem-solving, which are all core life skills identified under the present model and prevalent in the Cognitive, Individual, and Social Dimensions. Particularly important are communication skills, involving actively listening to other people's ideas and opinions, and being supportive of those. Often identified in other life skills frameworks, collaboration is linked to communication in the 21st-century skills framework under the umbrella of learning and innovation skills.

Notably, cooperation, an ethical foundation and outcome of this model, is both a goal and the means through which human rights are effectively realized. Indeed, according to Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights "everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible" (UN General Assembly, 1948).

COOPERATION AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

Cooperation depends to a great extent on the following core skills: communication, respect for diversity and empathy.

'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension

An element in 'Learning how to Learn', cooperation skills are important for success in learning outcomes; work completed collaboratively produces higher scores than other types of work, even when students turn in separate products (Fall et al., 1997; Rojas-Drummond and Mercer, 2003; Saner, et al., 1994; Webb, 1993). Furthermore, learning that occurs in collaborative settings persists (Saner et al., 1994; Webb, 1993). In other words, after collaborating with others, a student's performance on subsequent, related tasks completed individually tends to be better than the performance of students with similar ability who have only worked alone; it furthermore supports a student's social skills (e.g., conflict resolution skills and use of helping behaviours) and "academic self-concept" (Ginsburg-Block, et al., 2006).

Cooperation through group work enables students to draw on each other's strengths, mitigates weaknesses and allows for sharing and developing ideas.

Relevant teaching and learning approaches are critical for developing cooperation skills. In many schools in MENA however, youth largely work on their own; they may learn 'in' groups but not 'as' groups (Robinson, 2015). An advantage to fostering both the learning of cooperation skills and the teaching of methods conducive to cooperative behaviours early on is that children learning collaboratively in basic education develop social skills and tend to demonstrate "less impulsive behaviours" (Lavasani et al., 2011).

To that end, cooperative learning is an educational approach that involves structuring classes around small groups working together in such a way that each group member's success is dependent on the group's success. This is conceptually different from competitive or individualistic learning, as well as different from putting students into groups to learn. Five key elements distinguish cooperative learning:

- *positive inter-dependence* among the group members;

- *individual accountability* where students learn together but perform alone;

- *face-to-face interaction* that includes oral explanations of how to solve problems, discussing the nature of the concepts being learned and connecting present learning with past knowledge;

- *interpersonal and small group social skills*, since the group must not only know the subject matter but also how to provide effective leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication and conflict management; and

- *group processing*, in which students are given time and procedures for analysing how well their learning groups are functioning and how well their social skills are being employed. It involves both task work and teamwork, with an eye to improving them on the next project (Johnson et al., 2007).

Cooperative learning is associated with improved learning outcomes, critical thinking skills, creativity, motivation and preparation for the school-to-work transition. Research comparing cooperative learning with traditional classroom

instruction using the same teachers, curriculum and assessments has found that students who engage in cooperative learning enjoy their classes more, learn significantly more, remember the lessons for longer and develop better critical thinking skills than their counterparts in traditional lecture classes. Furthermore, it helps students develop the skills necessary to work on projects too difficult and complex for any one person to do in a reasonable amount of time (Johnson et al., 2007).

'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension

MENA CEOs consider cooperation and teamwork together with communication skills to be the most critical life skills for hiring and remaining employed (Al Maktoum Foundation, 2008). A 2016 survey on the skills gap in MENA confirmed these results for junior, middle and senior level positions equally (YouGov and Bayt, 2016). Yet MENA youth still lack cooperation skills, as the educational systems, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), do not foster practicing these skills and do not seem to promote how important they are for employability, as well as the direct advantages for learners to develop this core life skill.

Cooperation is frequently included in life skills frameworks for the world of work, employability and entrepreneurship as an umbrella skill complemented by, and in connection with, a variety of other life skills and attitudes. In its Instrumental Dimension, cooperation involves a demonstrated ability to:

i)   work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams both within an organization as well as with external teams;

ii) exercise flexibility and a willingness to be helpful by making the necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal and assume shared responsibility for collaborative work; and

iii) value the individual contributions made by each team member (Partnership for 21st Century Skills Framework, 2015).

In the ILO's core work skills, teamwork includes: respecting others' opinions and inputs, accepting feedback, resolving conflict, effective leadership, working towards consensus in decision-making, and building and coordinating partnerships (Brewer, 2013).

Cooperation skills, including teamwork, are a high priority for most employers, as working well with colleagues and third parties is essential for the fluidity of enterprise processes and for growth. Employers are looking for individuals with cooperation and leadership skills, including: organizing groups to accomplish a task, helping others to do things their way, understanding the strengths of others and teaching others new (life) skills. By extension, cooperation is also about understanding orders and instructions, respecting leadership and knowing how to communicate concerns. Cooperation skills also involve negotiating, influencing, advising, managing and resolving conflicts, and interpreting (Brewer, 2013). The enthusiasm with which people engage in their jobs has been recognized to be a factor conducive to acting cooperatively, even in settings of highly repetitive jobs, where studies find that managers view the willingness to voluntarily help and cooperate as a highly desirable employee characteristic (Newman, 1999).

'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension

In its Individual Dimension, the ability to cooperate is an important factor of self-identity, as individuals integrate into or are members of communities. Cooperation skills are dependent on the acquisition of self-management skills, such as self-control and self-awareness, which give individuals basic grounding and the capacity to define and position themselves before turning outwards and engaging in collaborative behaviours with others.

Relevant in MENA, especially for children and youth, is the positive correlation between cooperation and psychological health. Studies in MENA and the United States have found that cooperation promoted higher self-esteem than competitive or individualistic behaviours, as well as better social skills (Johnson and Johnson, 1999; Lavasani et al., 2011). Furthermore, cooperative learning may increase students' academic self-concept and self-efficacy, and their ability to formulate meaningful goals, deal with uncertainty and initiate, form and maintain meaningful relationships, which are factors relevant to personal empowerment (Tinto, 1993).

'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension

Cooperation skills are key to thinking and solving many of the problems and conflicts faced by real-world groups, organizations and societies. From a Social Dimension perspective, cooperation's common theme is the desirability of motivating individuals to act in ways that transcend their self-interest and serve the interests of their groups (Tyler, 2011). Since cooperation in society draws upon common values, attitudes, emotional connections, shared identities, trust and motivation, it should be considered a key aspect of active citizenship and therefore a major element of social cohesion in MENA.

Linked to effective cooperation skills, particularly in its Social Dimension, are those life skills of problem-solving, respect for diversity and empathy. This connection is particularly relevant in relation to the theory of 'Cooperation and Competition' for conflict management, providing insight into what can give rise to a constructive or destructive process: "A cooperative or win-win orientation to resolving a conflict enormously facilitates constructive resolution, while a competitive or win-lose orientation hinders it" (Deutsch, 2006). Furthermore, a cooperative process as compared to a competitive one, leads to "greater group productivity, more favourable interpersonal relations, better psychological health and higher self-esteem" (Johnson and Johnson, 1989) for the individuals and the groups involved, thus raising the wellbeing of all parties.

A cooperative orientation is defined through the norms of cooperative behaviour, some of which have been identified in the context of conflict as: "placing the disagreements in perspective, addressing the issues and refraining from making personal attacks, seeking to understand other views, building on the ideas of others, fully acknowledging other values, emphasizing the positive in others and the possibilities of constructive resolution of the conflict, taking responsibility for harmful consequences, seeking reconciliation rather than nurturing a grudge, being responsive to the legitimate needs of others, empowering others to contribute effectively to the cooperative effort, and being appropriately honest" (Deutsch, 2006).

Relevance of cooperation (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension	To enhance learning skills, processes and outcomes	Self-monitoring, cooperative learning, active listening
'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension	To work more effectively with co-workers and customers including through effective team work To ensure sustainable entrepreneurship and development	Teamwork to achieve common goals, collaboration in the workplace
'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension	To contribute to social skills including relationship management To cultivate good relationships with diverse individuals and groups	Self-concept (being cooperative), relationship management, self-esteem
'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension	To enhance social engagement towards the promotion of common good To foster pro-social processes for conflict prevention and resolution	Respect for others, active listening, empowerment of others, interpersonal relations, responsible behaviour, conflict management, conflict resolution

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LSCE

The Twelve Core Life Skills

NEGOTIATION

Instrumental Dimension

Negotiation skills help reach acceptable agreements with other parties. Negotiation processes happen in everyday life and in all settings. In early childhood, negotiation skills develop through play and simulation teaching methods, and children learn how to identify their own and others' interests, use verbal arguments rather than violence, and grow confident while respecting others and others' perspectives. Negotiation skills can also help protect their health, in particular the ability to refuse pressure to become involved in risky behaviours. In the working environment, negotiation skills are a key element of entrepreneurial success and help workers protect themselves from exploitation, abuse and bullying. Negotiation processes promote acceptable outcomes for all parties involved in conflict, thereby fostering a culture of respect and social cohesion.

DEFINITION

Negotiation can be defined as a process of communication between at least two parties aimed at reaching agreements on their "perceived divergent interests" (Pruitt, 1998). While negotiation relates to a process, it translates into the ability of an individual to interactively and effectively partake in a negotiation process by respecting others while being assertive, being cooperative, using communication skills, showing leadership skills and saying no when one's wellbeing is threatened.

Individuals regularly negotiate with others in family life, in school, at work, in public spaces and with different types of parties – with potentially different negotiating styles. Negotiation is applied in various fields, including psychology, sociology, conflict management, economics, law and international relations. The perspectives on the nature and meaning of 'a successful negotiation' may vary across fields and in different contexts. In line with existing policy guidance on humanitarian negotiation (Grace, 2015), as well as with the goals of citizenship education, an 'integrative approach' to negotiation is proposed here, emphasizing cooperative processes, rather than 'competitive-distributive' ones. This cooperative process focuses on developing mutually beneficial agreements based on the interests, needs, desires, concerns and fears that are recognized as important for all parties involved (Fisher and Ury, 1981). In other words, for the negotiation process to be successful, it requires that parties come to an agreement that is acceptable to all parties involved.

In an 'integrative approach', negotiation and communication skills are closely linked (Alfredson and Cungu, 2008). Negotiation skills supported by effective communication can change attitudes, prevent or overcome impasses and misunderstandings, and help improve relationships, particularly in multicultural contexts in which culture may shape negotiating styles (Wondwosen, 2006). Listening is a key element of communication skills as it provides important information about others and "demonstrates that the party is being attentive to the other side's thoughts and is respectful of their concerns" (Alfredson and Cungu, 2008). In addition, since the integrative approach focuses on building mutual trust relationships between parties, sharing information is paramount for exposing interests and helping parties to explore common problems or concerns.

Negotiation skills are learned from early childhood. Evidence shows that negotiations form a large part of children's play and that these negotiations have a clear purpose: to agree both on how they can be together in their play and on the content of their play. Therefore, these skills can also be reproduced, integrated and practiced in educational settings in early childhood education.

One question relevant to all four Dimensions of Learning of the negotiation core life skill is whether the negotiation process is influenced by perceived gender roles, meaning the societal and constructed beliefs about behavioural expectations of men and women (Hellman and Heikkilä, 2014). Perceived gender roles potentially challenge neutrality, fairness and equity of the negotiation process, modifying the way the negotiation is conducted. Pre-expected behaviours from the negotiating partners can influence the outcome of the negotiation. While evidence and results with regards to the role of gender in the process or the outcomes of negotiating are conflicting (Alavoine and Estieu, 2014; Mazei et al., 2014), gender roles can exert a strong influence on negotiation, with the expectation that women in negotiations would be accommodating, concerned with the welfare of others and relationship-oriented, whereas men would be competitive, assertive and profit-oriented. These expectations of gender roles may affect how women and men behave. For example, women may feel social pressure in negotiations to adhere to a perceived and socially-constructed female role and display these gender-consistent behaviours, such as accommodation or cooperation, while deviations from these expectations may be evaluated negatively by their negotiating counterparts (Mazei et al., 2014).

NEGOTIATION AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension

Negotiation skills are important in learning on several levels. First, negotiation skills support positive and healthy interactions between peers. Second, they contribute to a positive learning climate and enable children and youth to resist negative peer pressure, thus self-regulating and maintaining control over their own wellbeing.

Negotiation skills are also relevant in the learning process itself with regards to teacher-learner interactions in the negotiation process.

Negotiation skills can be taught and learned. Providing relevant contextual opportunities for learner observation and practice in negotiation appears to be important to teaching effectiveness (Cukier, 2006). While negotiation training courses are in high demand in tertiary education disciplines, such as law, business and economics, negotiation is also considered a key life skill that needs to be included in all early childhood development curricula. This is important for teaching children how to resolve, together under teachers' oversight, disagreements over a toy or play, providing opportunities for children to learn to read emotions and use language instead of violence to address disagreements. Moreover, negotiation can be featured in teaching and learning approaches that focus on role playing linked to real-life interactions that further foster questioning, listening and debating skills (Nelken et al., 2009).

In schools, the curriculum may include elements of negotiation. Negotiated projects may focus on local real-life investigations in response to children's personal experiences and their participation in community events. Teachers need to help children develop negotiating skills to handle conflict situations and children must use negotiation skills to resolve issues in a manner that benefits them and is acceptable to others (Berk, 2002). This acknowledges children as agents of their own learning, whereby they make choices about, and begin to take increased responsibility in their learning. Interactive pedagogical techniques have become popular vehicles by which the negotiation process can be taught.

There is basic consensus that negotiation role playing simulations are effective teaching approaches. Teaching negotiation 'by doing' has become common. In addition, successful peer negotiation, a component of peer education, requires a range of communication and personal skills, which include self-esteem, empathy, assertiveness (but not aggressiveness), active listening, good questioning to clarify points, and reflection of what went well and less well.

Thus, by developing negotiation skills early in educational settings, children and youth are better equipped to handle home and life situations, without the use of violence, while being assertive and respectful of themselves and the viewpoints of others. This also prepares children and youth to assess and navigate situations which may be threatening to their own and others' health and wellbeing, and prepares them for the world of work.

'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension

A core life skill in the work place, negotiation is frequently cited as being both conducive to employability and essential for navigating career development, as well as key to successful entrepreneurial endeavours, e.g., when negotiating with financial institutions or with trading partners. Associated with influencing and leadership skills, it is also measured in the OECD Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (OECD, 2016).

Negotiating skills are needed for positive interactions among co-workers and with managers, and are especially relevant with regards to safety in the workplace. Furthermore, workers with developed negotiation skills can, at any age, better protect themselves against potential exploitation, abuse and bullying. With rising occupational health and safety concerns, increased hazards in industrial settings, and gender-based violence in the workplace reported in MENA, equipping workers with communication and negotiation skills would benefit both the workers and employers with greater productivity (Shikdar and Sawaqed, 2003).

Research on gender differences in economic negotiation outcomes shows that differences between men and women in economic outcomes strongly depend on the context. For example, specific social norms within organizations may override the influence of gender roles as guidelines for negotiators' behaviours (Mazei et al., 2014). Negotiation skills are important for business success and some aspects of the process will generate competitive interactions, while others will require cooperation if agreement is to be reached (Fells, 2009). When negotiation in the business world occurs between people with different interests (e.g., trade unions and business partners), both parties are usually well-informed and clear on the purpose.

'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension

Negotiating is essential for personal empowerment, particularly in relation to sexual and reproductive health, as it allows for "maintaining health by refusing pressure to become involved in risky behaviours" (Sinclair et al., 2008). The global prevalence of HIV and other sexual and reproductive health issues, especially among youth, has raised concerns and demonstrated the need to enhance their negotiation skills (Adamchak, 2006).

Negotiation skills combine thinking and social skills relevant to enhancing child protection. For better physical, social and mental health, youth require strong negotiation skills to resist peer pressure, especially related to health risks such as drugs, alcohol, tobacco and sex. Sometimes called 'refusal skills', negotiation skills are important for the development of assertiveness and resisting pressure from peers and adults to use violent or risky behaviours (WHO, 2003). In situations involving family members and friends, emotional bonds complicate negotiations. Constraints related to power structure and hierarchy within the family and social environment make it more difficult to ensure developing mutually beneficial agreements based on the interests, needs, concerns and fears that are important for both parties involved.

'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension

Principled negotiation, or an integrative approach to negotiation, is key in fostering a democratic culture. In fact, it has been highlighted as the preferred approach in humanitarian negotiation (Grace, 2015).

Principled negotiation seeks 'win-win' solutions, acceptable to all those involved in the conflict.

Negotiators see each other as partners in an effort to solve a mutual problem, sharing their own needs and interests while also listening to the needs and concerns of others. Furthermore, they recognize that their needs and interests are interdependent and that it will be difficult for them to meet their own needs and interests without examining the needs and interests of others. Principled negotiation involves problem-solving brainstorming and building relationships to cooperate rather than compete with each other.

Relevance of negotiation (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension	To foster negotiated learning processes and ensure children's ability to be agents of their own learning To prevent bullying and violence in school	Assertiveness, active listening, questioning to clarify points, reflection
'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension	To enhance prevention of abuse and exploitation in the workplace To foster adequate and productive work environments To improve employability and entrepreneurship of youth	Influencing and leadership cooperation, customer relationship, career planning
'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To strengthen individual coping skills for self-protection	Refusal skills, self-awareness, self-esteem/self-efficacy
'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension	To promote outcomes that are acceptable to all parties involved in conflict To foster a culture of human rights	Effective communication, active listening, positive interaction, respect for others

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LSCE

The Twelve Core Life Skills

DECISION-MAKING

Instrumental Dimension

Decision-making refers to the cognitive ability to choose between at least two options within a set of influencing factors and constraints. Decision-making skills are instrumental in the Cognitive Dimension and can be learned and practiced early in various educational settings in which learners, through real-life tasks, learn to consciously determine the alternative that is best for them at a particular moment. Linked to cooperation and negotiation, decision-making is a key to success in the world of work and is the basis of competitive advantages and value creation for business organizations, as poorly prepared decisions can be costly. Thus, with regards to individual empowerment, decision-making skills include the ability to understand and manage risks in daily life, and can also have a protective value in negative power dynamics and/or violent environments. Responsible decision-making is seen as the ability to make constructive and responsible choices about personal behaviour and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic consequences of actions and the wellbeing of others.

DEFINITION

Decision-making skills relate to "one of the basic cognitive processes of human behaviour by which a preferred option, or a course of action, is chosen from among a set of alternatives based on certain criteria" (Wang, 2007). Decision-making is used by all individuals on a daily basis. Notably, decision-making has consequences on all individuals' wellbeing through the effects of the choices they make (WHO, 1997). The various elements of this skill come from multiple disciplines, including cognitive science, psychology, management science, economics, sociology, political science and statistics. Decision-making is thus a composite life skill that closely inter-relates with critical thinking, cooperation and negotiation skills. Several factors influence decision-making, including information, time constraints, clarity about objectives, past experience, cognitive biases, age, belief in personal relevance and other individual differences (Dietrich, 2010; Thompson, 2009).
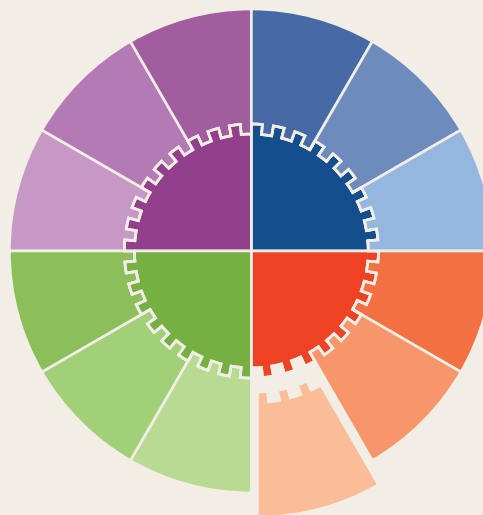
Decisions can be made through intuition, on the basis of feelings and instincts, through a reasoned process, weighing facts and available information, or they can be made using a combination of the two (Gigerenzer, 2014). More complicated decisions tend to require a more formal, structured approach involving both intuition and reasoning. To support decision-making, self-management skills are important for controling impulsive reactions to situations. The decision-making process is often conceptualized as a step-by-step process. For example, one five-step model consists of (i) defining objectives, (ii) collecting information (for informed decision-making), (iii) developing options, (iv) evaluating and deciding, and (v) implementing (Adair, 1985).

A major challenge for decision-making is overcoming bias, as psychology has long recognized that people show bias and utilize shortcuts in their reasoning. Some biases are motivational and some are more cognitive depending on the enormity and complexity of the information (Nemeth, 2012). Attempts to reduce such biases in decision-making have involved encouraging people to reassess the shortcut or to consider alternatives. This includes education about how biases operate, training, the technique of 'considering the alternative' and inviting dissenting viewpoints (Bazerman and Moore, 2008; Nemeth, 2012).

Ethical and responsible decision-making is of heightened relevance in the context of the LSCE Initiative in MENA. This refers to the processes of evaluating and choosing among alternatives in a manner consistent with ethical principles, safety concerns, and prevalent social norms and rules of civility in the region. Ethical and responsible decision-making enacts respect for others, especially the vulnerable or marginalized.

DECISION-MAKING AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension

Decision-making is a life skill that can be learned and can help learners to take responsibility at school and in their subsequent career choices. Better decision-making is likely to improve study habits and support the achievement of classroom learning objectives. The teaching and learning of decision-making skills can be introduced at school in basic education. The earlier the skill is taught, the greater the potential for improvement (Joshua et al., 2015). Teaching skills for decision-making and risk management should involve real-world tasks by including teaching and learning approaches that rely on experiential learning and that foster the capacity of students to make choices and identify the pros and cons of actions in order to make a balanced judgement (Gigerenzer, 2014).

Skills related to decision-making can be practiced in all classroom activities and in collaborative activities among peers. In these activities, students develop their communication, cooperation, problem-solving, creativity and critical thinking skills, becoming more actively engaged in the learning process. Cooperative learning provides a suitable environment for developing decision-making skills (Johnson et al., 1986; Gregory et al., 1994). Teaching and practicing decision-making skills are important for children and adolescents, as they are more likely to take risks than adults (Aggleton et al., 2006).

'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension

Decision-making is important in the world of work, even more so in MENA's changing economy. Decision-making is the basis of competitive advantage and value creation for business organizations, as improving decision-making is key to the strongest business performance (Harvey, 2007). In addition, decision-making is needed at the individual level for success in the workplace and to ensure health and safety. It is a basic feature of the workplace, particularly in the service sector, as it is unrealistic to expect people to be able to carry out tasks in complex situations simply by following instructions (Thompson, 2009).

"Effective decisions result from a systematic process, with clearly defined elements, that is handled in a distinct sequence of steps" (Drucker, 1967). Biases in judgment can lead to individuals accepting the wrong job, engaging in unnecessary conflict and making the wrong investments. Errors in decision-making can be costly for individuals and businesses. In knowledge economies, errors are becoming more costly in relation to deliverables and globalization may result in wider negative economic implications. The skills involved in making good decisions in the workplace and business include the ability to manage knowledge and analyse information, analyse and appraise competing options, delegate and empower people, lead successful teams, resolve problems and remove obstacles effectively, foster creativity and motivate people, as well as understand customer and market needs (Kourdi, 1999).

'Learning to Be'/
the Individual Dimension

Decision-making is critical to feeling successful, as it is at the root of all actions individuals take. Skills related to decision-making include the ability to understand and manage risks in daily life, a process called 'risk-literacy' (Gigernzer, 2014). Decision-making about risks, which is more complex than deciding whether or not to take a particular risk, frequently involves "balancing these risks" (Thompson, 2009). In other words, a decision on a course of action may involve avoiding one set of risks and accepting another set. Decision-making skills can have a protective value. In the framework of negative power dynamics, developed decision-making skills may allow individuals to protect their wellbeing. Decision-making is also associated with self-determination, which is defined as the intrinsic motivation to achieve specific goals and overcome significant challenges and shocks. As such, it is a core skill for empowerment, particularly among children with disabilities, implying self-monitoring, self-evaluation, self-reinforcement and self-instruction skills (Wehmeyer, 1998).

'Learning to Live Together'/
the Social Dimension

Decision-making is fundamental to an individual's ability to develop relationships and make new ones. As the decision-making process can be complicated and overwhelming, it is valuable for individuals to learn a model to follow that may be applied to both everyday decisions and life-changing choices (Dietrich, 2010). Ethical and responsible decision-making generates and sustains trust, respect, fairness and caring, and is consistent with human-rights values. Responsible decision-making is defined by CASEL as "the ability to make constructive and responsible choices about personal behaviour and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic consequences of actions and the wellbeing of others" (CASEL, 2017).

Responsible decision-making is anchored in the evaluation of ethical considerations and grounded by principles of human rights and social justice. Decision-making involves the exercise of power and needs to be understood in its political context, where the role of political pressure is prevalent. Other issues include transparency in decision-making, the problem of hidden agendas and socio-economic status. People in lower socio-economic groups may have less access to education and resources, which may make them more susceptible to experiencing negative life events, often beyond their control; thus, these individuals may make poor decisions based on past decisions (Dietrich, 2010).

Relevance of decision-making (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension	To prepare children for success in a fast changing world, supporting them in making the right choices about learning and for a career To foster independent learning and better learning outcomes	Knowledge management and analysis of information, self-instruction
'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension	To ensure development of entrepreneurship and encourage self-employment To foster organizational management and leadership	Action planning, goal setting, leadership skills, risk taking, safety skills
'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension	To foster holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To promote responsible decision-making and enhance long-term wellbeing	Self-determination, self-reinforcement, time and stress management
'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension	To guide individuals and communities in making ethically grounded responsible decisions regarding sustainable development and inclusiveness in society To enhance effective involvement in school management decision-making bodies	Analytical thinking, ethical reasoning

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LSCE

The Twelve Core Life Skills

SELF-MANAGEMENT

Individual Dimension

Self-management is the ability to regulate and monitor one's behaviours, emotions, feelings and impulses. It is a core life skill towards self-realization. It is related to personal empowerment, and includes personal goal-setting and life-planning. Self-management enhances a child's autonomy, agency and sense of self-help, which are critical to reducing the risks of exploitation and abuse. Yet, self-management skills are not explicitly included in most education curricula in MENA (UNICEF, 2017a). In the workplace, self-management skills, including self-control, staying on task and stress-management are essential for employability and to address complex challenges. Self-confident and self-directed individuals, who feel comfortable respecting, relating to and empathizing with others, tend to work more collaboratively and seek long-term, sustainable solutions to community and social issues, thus fostering solidarity. Therefore, self-management skills are at the core of an ethically grounded vision of education.

DEFINITION

A core life skill, self-management, or both self-managing and 'being self-managed', is the ability of individuals to regulate and monitor their behaviours, emotions, feelings and impulses. Thus, it constitutes a broad category of related skills that include self-control, self-efficacy and self-awareness, as well as positive attitudes, reliability and self-presentation. Self-management is closely linked with the core life skill of resilience. It has wide applicability in all domains of life, from family relationships at home to peer-relationships at school, and has been identified as a common employability skill applicable to a range of jobs (Brewer, 2013).

Self-management is possible because the brain has mechanisms for self-regulation, the set of capabilities that help individuals to draw upon the right skills at the right time, manage their responses to the world, and resist inappropriate responses (Zimmerman and Schunk, 2011).
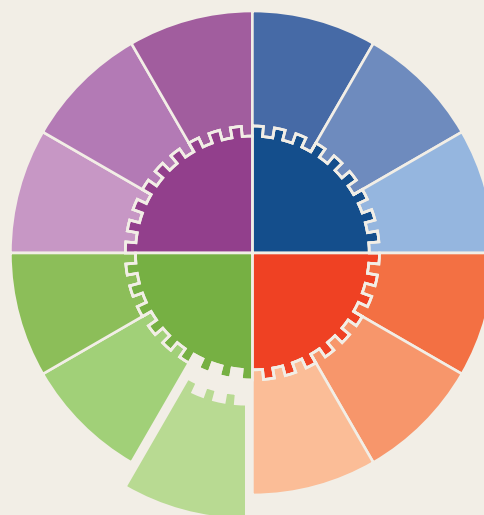
The ability to inhibit inappropriate behaviour develops relatively slowly in childhood, but improves during adolescence and early adulthood (Blakemore and Choudhury, 2006). There are large individual differences in ability to exert self-control and these persist throughout life (Royal Society, 2011).

Self-control, an aspect of inhibitory control, is the ability to control one's emotions and behaviour. Intense emotions, such as anger and sorrow, can have negative health effects if actions to regulate these are not appropriately taken (WHO, 1997). Self-control is an executive function involving a cognitive process that is necessary for controlling one's behaviour in order to achieve specific goals. Self-control addresses six inter-related elements that can lead to negative behaviour: (i) impulsivity and inability to delay gratification; (ii) lack of persistence, (iii) risk-taking; (iv) little value given to intellectual ability; (v) self-centredness and (vi) volatile temper. Experimental studies find that self-control can be improved up to the age of ten, but find that it is malleable after this age, particularly for adolescents and youth (Gutman and Schoon, 2013).

Self-management brings about self-efficacy, a belief in one's capabilities and ability to learn, achieve goals and succeed. This implies that people will generally attempt to do what they believe that they can accomplish and will not attempt to do what they believe they will fail to accomplish. However, people with a strong sense of self-efficacy will see difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered, rather than threats to be avoided (Bandura, 1994). They set themselves high goals and maintain a strong commitment to achieving them. This outlook contributes to reducing stress, and supports the readiness to face complex economic and security environments. Findings suggest that self-efficacy is an essential precursor to life skills (Gutman and Schoon, 2013).

Further, self-awareness is an individual's evolving capacity for introspection and ability to recognize and understand one's own personal identity, feelings and capabilities, as well as the process of getting to know one's own attitudes and values. Self-awareness is made up of emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence (Goleman, 1996). People who are self-aware are able to maintain a well-grounded sense of self-confidence. Self-awareness is important for building relationship skills to be able to live and work successfully with other people. It involves understanding how one can influence and affect others. Developing active listening skills relies on self-awareness skills and sensitivity as to how to respond to and connect to other people.

Self-management and its associated skills play a fundamental role in "fostering the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential" which, according to Article 29 paragraph 1(a) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is the goal of education (UN General Assembly, 1989). Consequently, education systems must ensure that they address self-management in order to fulfil one of education's most important mandates.

SELF-MANAGEMENT AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

Self-management covers a wide range of skills and different skills frameworks set them out in different ways according to their priorities. For example, the P21 Skills Framework emphasizes flexibility and adaptability as well as initiative and self-direction, while self-control is often included as a separate skill (Brewer, 2013; IYF, 2014), as are self-efficacy and self-awareness. Consultations with partners in MENA indicated the need for a comprehensive approach to self-management and to include the relevant skill areas under this term (UNICEF, 2017a).

'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension

Self-management skills are important for success in learning, and have a constructive impact on children and youth later in life. Children and youth suffer from stress, anxiety, and/or depression as a result of their educational experience; instances of violence in school environments, family life, fragile – if not violent – social contexts, or a combination of these, which can lead to feelings of disengagement, anger and boredom (Robinson, 2015). With an increase in anxiety-related disorders in MENA (Tanios et al., 2008), and more so among children and youth experiencing displacement in the region, strengthening the self-management skills of children and youth can help them cope better with difficult situations.

Research suggests that childhood self-control predicts achievement outcomes even in adulthood. Better self-control is associated with higher education attainment (Mischel et al., 1989) and it is an important predictor of academic success (Duckworth and Seligman, 2005). Furthermore, similar correlations exist between self-efficacy and higher academic achievement.

Particularly relevant for MENA educational systems' outcomes are focus and persistence, two self-management related life skills that have been shown to contribute to learning achievement. Persistence, defined as an intentional effort to positively adapt and continue to master a skill or complete a task in spite of challenges, obstacles and distractions, also includes concepts of 'engagement' and 'grit'. Psychologists and educators are increasingly interested in measuring students' capacity to work towards long-term goals, including their aptitude for self-discipline and perseverance in the face of difficulties, and their ability to focus on clearly aligned goals and objectives (OECD, 2013a).

PISA 2012 results show that students' self-reported levels of perseverance varied across countries and that socio-economically advantaged students reported higher levels of perseverance than less advantaged students. The results, however, did not provide any conclusive findings regarding gender differences. While in 26 countries and economies boys reported higher levels of perseverance than girls, in 17 countries and economies girls reported higher levels of perseverance than boys. In general, countries with large gender gaps in self-reported levels of perseverance are countries with above average gender gaps in mathematics performance (OECD, 2013a).

'Learning to Do'/
the Instrumental Dimension

Self-management is a key life skill commonly included in life skills frameworks for employability (Brewer, 2013; Lowden et al., 2011). In MENA, while some of the life skills related with self-management capabilities, such as the ability to work under pressure, organizational skills and adaptability, are considered important by companies, they remain relatively hard to find in job applicants (YouGov and Bayt, 2016).

To foster employability, MENA educational systems should encourage the practice of self-management skills in various pathways. These skills are important for staying on task and emotional regulation, as well as anger management, all of which help maintain healthy and positive interactions with co-workers. At the individual worker's level, this is important for stress-management and resilience.

Self-control is a key life skill for managing challenging situations in the world of work. All jobs involve a degree of pressure and the risk of stress, as does schoolwork with pressure to perform academically. Stress is a personal response to too much pressure or too little stimulation (Thompson, 2009). Working with other people can result in stress, which can have a number of harmful effects including stress-related illness, loss of motivation, tension, irritability and proneness to error. Worst, stress can lead to violence and undermining relationships.

'Learning to Be'/
the Individual Dimension

Self-management is a core life skill for self-realization and personal empowerment. In the MENA context, self-management skills enhance the individual child's autonomy, agency and sense of self-help, which are important for reducing risks of exploitation and abuse. These contribute to better child protection and long-term individual outcomes for children.

Self-management skills include personal goal setting and life planning, which are life skills necessary to be able to manage emotions on a daily basis, particularly those which can lead to adverse consequences, such as anger. These skills are important for the maintenance of wellbeing and successful functioning in society. Further, self-awareness includes the recognition of one's strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes. Self-awareness skills can help individuals recognize when they are stressed and under pressure. As such, they can be considered a prerequisite for effective communication and for developing empathy for others (WHO, 1997).

'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension

Self-management skills constitute the foundation upon which learners build ethically grounded behaviours and attitudes needed to live in society. Self-management skills are key to developing autonomous, self-confident and self-directed individuals who feel comfortable, respecting, relating and empathizing with others, thus able to work collaboratively towards peace beyond appeasement, fostering solidarity and active tolerance. Community group processes are increasingly finding empowerment in self-direction, and in having a voice in demanding citizen rights and social justice (Mazzer Barroso, 2002).

From a Social Dimension perspective, the self-awareness associated skill of self-management is one of the means of developing an understanding of the world in which one lives in its economic, political and psychological dimensions. It is related to critical consciousness, developed through critical and socially responsible thinking (Freire and Macedo, 1987).

Relevance of self-management (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension	To improve students ability to manage their emotions at school and focus on learning To improve learning processes and outcomes	Self-control, self-efficacy, perseverance, grit, persistence
'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension	To develop efficient and successful entrepreneurs To enhance management and productivity in the workplace	Self-efficacy, time management, organizational skills, reliability
'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To develop personal goal-setting and life-planning To develop self-confidence	Goal setting, life planning, autonomy, agency, self-help
'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension	To foster critical social awareness To contribute to social cohesion through social engagement	Self-direction, self-reflection, self-awareness, critical consciousness, social awareness

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LSCE

The Twelve Core Life Skills

RESILIENCE

Individual Dimension

As the content of resilience is still debated, the context in which it comes to the fore and is realized by an individual is a major factor in determining its scope, especially in highly politicized or fragile environments, such as MENA. Resilience includes coping skills, steadfastness, perseverance, grit, and bouncing back from some form of disruption, stress or change. This is a core life skill with an active, conscious and constructive component on the part of the individual. Since resilience contributes to the ability of self-development in times of hardship, it draws upon personal wellbeing, and, at the same time, reinforces good health. In its Cognitive Dimension, resilience provides a basis for academic success, as the learner is able to cope with disappointment or failure and overcome learning difficulties. This also holds true in its Instrumental Dimension and the world of work, as it is a crucial life skill towards employability and entrepreneurship. At the social level, promoting resilience is a way to ensure continuum between short-term disaster-response and long-term development programming (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013). Above all, the 'rights-based approach', with the outcome of a good and secure life in mind, addresses the risk of reproducing the same institutional structures and conditions that created the initial problems, and recognizes that the adaptive capacity of humans is contingent upon the access to, and the quality and quantity of resources needed.

DEFINITION

Consensus on the meaning of the term resilience has yet to emerge (UNESCO, 2015b), and that may be largely due to its recent broadened use, referring to contexts as varied in their intensity as coping with stress at work to the grave psychosocial impact of child abuse, extremism, violent conflict and displacement. Because it is highly contextualized, 'being resilient' will have different levels of depth for the individual developing and/or displaying this core life skill, especially in MENA. In all cases, however, the life skill of resilience shall be understood, in general terms, as the constructive, personal ability to navigate changing circumstances successfully (American Psychological Association, 2010).
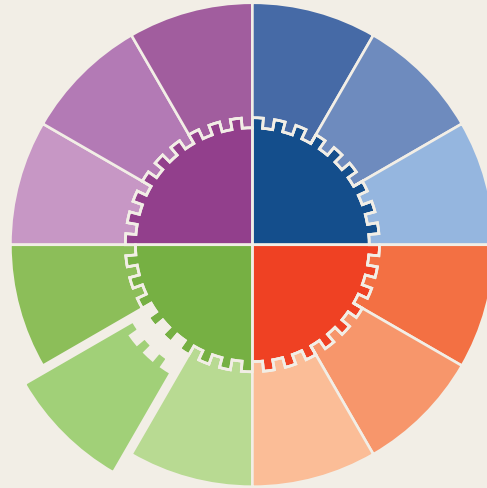
This goes beyond the restrictive understanding, according to which resilience is confined to the capacity to survive, or accept, by resigning oneself to an otherwise unacceptable situation.

Therefore, being resilient in a given situation translates into being actively engaged and in full consciousness by (i) maintaining good mental health while enduring challenges and adversity from daily or exceptional stressors (Waugh et al., 2011), and (ii) "overcoming these challenges that have a negative impact on [one's] emotional and physical wellbeing" (UNESCO, 2017). Being resilient does not mean that the person will not experience difficulty or distress. Emotional pain and sadness are common in people who have suffered adversity or trauma. Developing resilience is likely to involve emotional distress and it does not mean that the individual always functions well (O'Dougerty et al., 2013).

Being resilient implies that a person both struggles and copes with adversity, and does this 'constructively'. Hence, to fully capture its meaning in the framework of highly politicized environments with specific cultural socio-ecologies, such as those in MENA (Marie et al., 2016), resilience should be the umbrella-term for the life skill which allows for addressing threatening issues in a tenacious, systematic, active and constructive way.

In situations of radicalization and conflicts, resilience encompasses an element of resistance against negative views and behaviours that "legitimize hatred and the use of violence" (UNESCO, 2017). Particularly in a rights-based approach, it includes challenging the status quo and not capitulating to its negative impact in order to remove barriers and open new pathways. Thus contextualized, resilience takes into account the adversity of the situation itself, the 'coping' mechanisms as processes, the psychological wellbeing of the person, and the long-term perspective and motivation to overcome the challenge.

Resilience demands perseverance, steadfastness and adaptability. Another similar concept, is 'grit', which relates to the capacity to orient oneself and one's actions towards the long-term, also described as the "perseverance and passion for long-term goals" (Duckworth et al., 2007). Hence, in a politicized context, 'grit' can be understood as one of the components of resilience and needs to be complemented with the core life skill of self-management. Both being resilient and having grit build upon an individual being 'steadfast', i.e., being both resolute and determined.

Researchers increasingly view resilience as an alterable set of processes that can be fostered and cultivated (O'Dougerty et al., 2013). This is of utmost importance for children and youth in MENA, as well as for educational systems, as resilience is not considered a trait that people either have or do not have, but rather involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone.

Furthermore, as a developmental process, resilience has been shown to be expressed differently according to gender, culture and age. In childhood and adolescence, resilience is greatly underpinned by family processes and related developments of effective coping skills (Masten, 1994). It involves a complex interaction of multiple mechanisms ranging from the individual level to the structural. The influence and importance of caring and supportive school environments as protective factors is also commonly argued.

Beyond its psychological aspects, resilience has become popular in development thinking in relation to volatility, sustainability and wellbeing. The 'rights-based approach to resilience' argues that it should always be used with the outcome in mind – resilience for a good and secure life.

Achieving resilience is a process of learning, organization and adaptation that enables people to respond to and cope with internal and external stresses, and, above all, build and defend healthy, happy, and meaningful lives and livelihoods (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013). Hence, relevant in the MENA context, the 'rights-based approach' to resilience includes rights, power and agency.

RESILIENCE AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

The concept of resilience has been advanced in numerous fields. While the most developed and influential approach has emerged in the ecological sciences, other disciplines, such as psychology, medical sciences, hazard and disaster management studies, and the social sciences, have provided important insights to understanding the dynamics of social-ecological systems (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013; Marie et al., 2016).

'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension

Resilience is "the result of a developmental process, unfolding over time and circumstances" (Graber et al., 2015). Childhood and adolescence are critical periods to lay foundations for functioning in adulthood, taking into account that individuals change and grow throughout life. Opportunities for social learning are important contributors to resilience because they provide mechanisms through which knowledge can be harnessed and shared, and because learning improves creative capacities (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013). Resilience is important for learners' capacity to maintain a positive outlook on their education, even in contexts of adversity, such as conflict or emergency. Further, if resilience does not necessarily lead to academic achievement in a direct, causal way (Rimfeld et al., 2016), 'academic grit' supports the learning process, as learners are able to cope with disappointment or failure, and overcome difficulties, thus persevering in their education and related goals. Education is needed to develop resilience in situations of conflict and crisis, granted that school environments are protective in such situations. Teaching coping strategies appears to be an effective method of helping youth develop resilience and deal with the everyday stresses of their lives (Gutman and Schoon, 2013).

Education also improves the ability to predict and prepare for shocks. Learning can take place in a variety of settings, including formal and informal education, or extension services, or through apprenticeships and intergenerational learning networks. Like other sets of resources, from a resilience perspective, learning can and should involve multiple forms and mechanisms of knowledge acquisition and generation. While formal education opportunities may be the most obvious, there are many informal forms of learning and knowledge sharing that can also contribute to generating creative solutions (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013).

'Learning to Do'/
the Instrumental Dimension

Resilience is a necessary skill underpinning employability. First, youth and other applicants have to face the possibility of rejection during the hiring process, and yet keep on searching for work. In MENA, resilience, and its related life skills, grit and perseverance, may support post-basic education graduates who cannot find jobs in the industry for which they prepared. Second, resilience is important for coping with difficulty at work, including stress and disappointment, while faced with multiple pressures in home life. Resilience can also help in recognizing and addressing situations of bullying and abuse.

Resilience is also important for coping with long-term unemployment, equipping the individual with strength to keep searching for suitable job opportunities. More specifically, in MENA, where most of the private sector jobs come from very small and small enterprises, resilience is valuable to all entrepreneurs, even more so when their business decisions and the protection of their assets are constrained by external, non-economic factors. As a core life skill, resilience in such contexts can help create strategies to maintain one's livelihood or rebuild it.

'Learning to Be'/
the Individual Dimension

Resilience is important for self-efficacy and empowerment and, at the same time, draws on these for effectiveness. Resilience contributes to the ability to continue self-development in times of hardship, difficulty and stress. Specifically in fragile and violent environments, resilience means that the individual is able to resist negative

discourse (UNESCO, 2017), i.e., act consciously to not fall prey to this discourse, while also recognizing the pain caused by the adverse situation. By using self-control and self-efficacy, resilience supports the ability to construct pathways allowing for both self protection and a means of moving forward.

The interactive processes between the individual and environment, and between risk and protective factors, are the crucial underpinnings of developing resilience. Resilience involves capacity, negotiation and adaptation (Graber et al., 2015). While research identifies key personal characteristics that correlate to resilience building, it is recognized that personal characteristics of an individual are continually shaped by the interactions with aspects of the environment. As a result, and with regard to policy and intervention, attempts to improve isolated skills in children without consideration of the surrounding ecology are deeply misguided (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013, citing the works of Pianta and Walsh, 1998; Luthar et al., 2000).

At the individual level 'coping skills' can be considered as a core component of resilience. Specific coping mechanisms that are known to facilitate resilience include reappraising a situation more positively, regulating emotions, utilizing social support, accessing tangible resources and planning (Graber et al., 2015). Coping with stress involves recognizing the sources of stress and how stress affects oneself, and acting in ways that helps control levels of stress. It can involve taking action to change lifestyle or learning how to relax so that tensions caused by stress do not create health problems (WHO, 1997). Psychological flexibility has been highlighted as key factor in how resilient people adapt to these changes successfully. A list of relevant characteristics correlating with the adaptive ability that supports resilience includes good cognitive abilities, problem-solving skills and executive functions, the ability to form and maintain positive peer relationships, effective emotional and behavioural regulation strategies, a positive view of self (self-confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy), a positive outlook on life, and characteristics valued by society (sense of humour, attractiveness to others, etc.) (Masten, 2007).
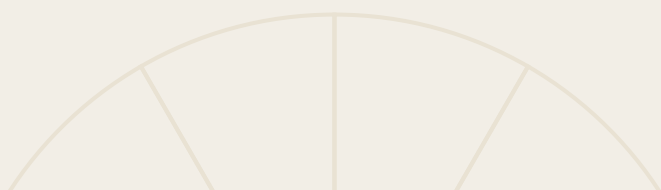
'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension

Resilience is important for coping with adversity and the effects of conflict in a socially constructive manner. Resilience frameworks focus on understanding and promoting the capacity of local communities to respond to, negotiate and transform shocks such that disturbances do not initiate a downward spiral, and may even provide opportunities for improvement. As such, promoting resilience is seen as a way to connect short-term disaster response and humanitarian interventions with long-term development programming (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013). The disaster resilience approach has its roots in the work on disaster risk reduction and hazard mitigation. Disaster risk is the potential for severe alterations in the normal functioning of a community or a society due to particular hazardous events, which is derived from a combination of physical hazards and vulnerable social conditions. These frameworks emphasize mitigation as the key mechanism to build resilience. Hazard mitigation is any action taken to reduce or avoid risk of damage from hazardous events. Understanding, managing and reducing disaster risk is the key to building resilience (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013, citing CINRHD, 2012).

A rights-based approach to resilience addresses the vulnerability to reproducing the same institutional structures and conditions that created the existing problems. This is to avoid strategies that naturalize socially created differential vulnerability (e.g., by gender, class, and so on) or that lead to inaction by accepting that shocks are inevitable and that encourage individuals to focus more on weathering them rather than preventing or changing them. By contrast, a rights-based approach to resilience recognizes that the adaptive capacity of humans is contingent upon the set of resources that they have access to, the quality and quantity of these resources, and the nature of this access. Equity, among other factors, is a central element in this approach. In this regard, "lack of equity is not just an outcome of failed resilience; inequality itself diminishes the possibilities for resilience building" (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013). A rights-based approach requires careful engagement with relations of power and the legacies of history. Supporting resilience involves efforts to uncover and work against the root causes of vulnerability and poverty (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013).

Relevance of resilience (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension	To prepare children to face difficult challenges in school and later life To enhance prevention and coping strategies of learners in emergency contexts	Coping with stress, analytical and creative thinking, positive peer relationships
'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension	To overcome difficulties in the workplace To cope with unemployment	Stress control, adaptability
'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension	To develop holistic coping mechanisms based on self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To enhance healthy behaviours	Self-efficacy, self-development, agency, emotional and behavioural regulation
'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension	To promote the capacity of local communities to respond to emergency contexts To transform shocks into opportunities for development To uncover and work against the root causes of vulnerability and poverty	Adapting to adversity, solidarity, mitigation, emergency preparedness

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LSCE
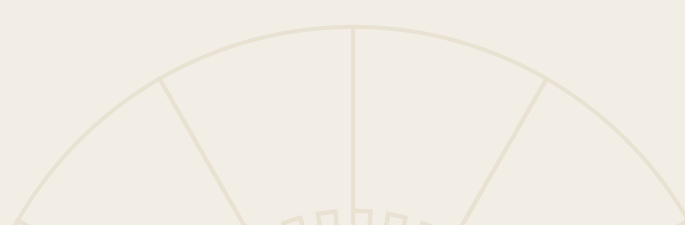
The Twelve Core Life Skills

COMMUNICATION
Individual Dimension

Communication is a two-way exchange of information and understanding. Communication skills include verbal, non-verbal and written communication. As a set of primary skills necessary to establish interpersonal relations, communication skills are an essential source of self-worth and self-efficacy, and foster self-realization. They are relevant in society and relationship management, including gaining and maintaining friendships. Communication skills are integral to learning, which applies and fosters the development of effective speaking and active listening abilities. The complexity of communication has increased with information technology and new media. Interactive and participatory pedagogies, particularly with the growing relevance of digital communication skills, are effective tools to enhance communication skills. Communication skills are conducive to employability and instrumental to the various levels of relations in the world of work. Along with cooperation and teamwork, they are the most sought after life skills by MENA employers. A key to active citizenship, effective communication skills are vital to understanding, and contributing to public debate in a civil manner. Equally important, they can support the ability of learners and all individuals to avoid discriminatory language, thus enhancing social understanding.

DEFINITION

Communication, or being able to communicate, involves the sharing of meaning through the exchange of information and common understanding (Castells, 2009; Keyton, 2011; Lunenberg, 2010). It takes place in the context of social relationships (Castells, 2009; Schiller, 2007) between two or more individuals and is considered an interpersonal skill. While communication enables human interaction and participation in society, the prevalence of new technologies and social media, particularly among youth in MENA, indicates a strong drive for social communication (Dennis et al., 2016; Kuhl, 2011). The development of the ability to communicate is a lifelong process, covering a broad range of skills involving both verbal and non-verbal

communication. Mastery of language in early childhood is key to success later in life and there is evidence that communication skill development requires both a social context and social interaction to be effective (Kuhl, 2011). Research from neuroscience suggests that changes in brain plasticity with age result in greater difficulty in learning second languages after puberty (Royal Society, 2011).

Communication skills are integral to the acquisition, practice and development of all other core life skills. Closely linked to communication are life skills related to negotiation and refusal, empathy, cooperation and participation. While it has been argued that there are different communication styles for men and women (Gray, 1992; Tannen, 1990). Communication is used to construct gender and reinforce gender stereotypes, i.e., certain communication behaviours are expected from either men or women based on socially-constructed notions of men's and women's roles in school, at work, and in society, and some men and women conform with, or reproduce, these pre-determined behaviours.

Although different approaches in communication should not be considered a disadvantage, from a rights-based perspective it is important to ensure that the principle of gender equality is applied to opportunities for communication skills development in learning at all levels.

Communication skills must ensure that children and youth have the tools to express their views, and enable them to enjoy their human rights and participate in society. In the MENA, where most of the workforce is made up of male workers, improved communication skills could benefit girls and women, as well as their families, as a tool to engage with their environment, thus conducive to greater employability and improved productivity (Bruder, 2015). Enhanced communication skills also foster protection from abuse and violence (WHO, 2003).

COMMUNICATION AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

The development of communication skills is especially important for the MENA, as current educational approaches are heavily didactic (World Bank, 2008), and have a limited focus on developing and practicing the gamut of communication skills needed for a knowledge society gained through more interactive learning.

'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension

Communication is integral to learning, supporting the development of effective speaking and active listening abilities. It is strongly linked to literacy and numeracy skills, and as technology evolves, increasingly with information and communication technology literacy and skills. Skills involve the ability to use oral, written and non-verbal communication for a wide range of purposes, such as informing, instructing, motivating and persuading in a variety of social contexts, including at home, school and work, sometimes in a second or additional languages (Partnership for 21st Century Learning Framework, 2009). Communication is essential for academic, personal and professional success, as well as being vital to the all-round development of the individual. Specific problems in understanding or speaking due to specific language impairments in children, as well as developmental dyslexia or dyscalculia

affecting the mastery of reading or mathematics, render learning attainment more difficult (Royal Society, 2011).

Teaching and learning activities apply and foster in children and learners a wide range of communication skills important for both learning and the construction of knowledge. Interactive participatory learning uses and develops more communication skills than lecture-based teaching. At school, there is an expectation that children will listen to language from adults and peers, understand what is being said to them, and respond with well-structured, clear and appropriate sentences. To do this effectively, active listening and questioning skills are clearly important. Spoken language is an important vehicle for early learning. Thus, it is key to acknowledge the importance of talk to support and extend children's thinking and to advance their learning and understanding (Alexander, 2006). This involves a transition towards reading and writing as key performance indicators, accompanied by increasingly complex and challenging expectations on the part of the teacher and learner.

'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension

Communication skills are key for employability (Brewer, 2013), both for finding a job and retaining it. These skills are vital for effective co-worker and customer interactions, as they involve the ability to work effectively with others in teams and collaboration. MENA CEOs identify communication along with teamwork as the most important skills in an applicant (Al Maktoum Foundation, 2008). Further, a survey of the skills gap in MENA found that communication skills were considered to be among the most important skills for junior-, mid- and senior-level positions (YouGov and Bayt, 2016). Yet, 53 per cent of companies have difficulties in finding qualified applicants.

The mastery of a variety of communication skills and their associated skills that are required in the workplace include effective speaking, active listening and asking questions. These should, therefore, be fostered in all educational settings, as well as within society. Especially in the region's technology-driven economy, people communicate using a variety of modalities, including text, telephone, email, written correspondence and direct verbal communication. Internet use has increased among workers, notwithstanding their career level, and has led to the expansion of information occupations.

Effective communication entails the choice of the communication method best suited for the message. Although not exclusive of the Instrumental Dimension, it is a concept strongly associated with the world of work. Effective communication is the most frequently sought skill among employers. The strong support for communication holds true across regions of the world, for both formal and informal positions, and for entry-level employees (Lippman et al., 2015).

Effective communication, while fundamentally interpersonal in nature, draws on cognitive life skills, such as critical thinking, and on intra-personal skills, such as self-management, thus enabling people to work more successfully in groups or teams. Effective communication involves the ability to understand and use language efficiently, which is important for developing higher-order thinking skills, such as reasoning and inference. A review of engineering graduates in MENA found that managers felt that communication was one of three skills identified that needed most improvement (Ramadi et al., 2016).

'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension

Communication is an important source of self-worth and self-efficacy, underpinning relationship management and social cohesion, including gaining and maintaining friendships, as well as a fundamental element of self-realization. As communication skills are becoming more complex, individual coping skills are required in this era of rapidly changing communication technologies and accelerated information flows (Webster, 2014).

Effective communication is the ability to express oneself verbally and non-verbally in ways that are appropriate to social situations and cultures. Hence, with regards to self-realization, it entails being able to express opinions and desires as well as needs and fears, and includes being able to ask for advice and help in times of need (WHO, 1997). More specifically, language skills are essential for the development of thinking skills, expression of personal feelings and creativity, which are important for interpersonal relationships management, self-realization and self-presentation.

Consequently, communication is critically important for lifelong personal development and to optimize one's potential, as it enables the individual to be able to act in society with greater autonomy, exercise better judgement and personal responsibility. Communication skills are key to people being able, as much as possible, to be in control of their lives. They are fundamental to empowerment and personal effectiveness in all domains of life.

'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension

Communication is vital to functioning in society, for the performance of other interpersonal skills, and is a key to active citizenship. Communication skills enable capacities for action in society, which include the capacity to take part in public debate, and make choices, thus allowing the individual to make a contribution to the way the community runs itself. (Faour and Muasher, 2011). This involves being able to explain one's point of view clearly on issues that affect people while considering – and heeding – the viewpoints of others. Within the Social Dimension,

communication skills involve expressing ideas in the context of diverse audiences. Influencing, dialogue and debating skills are important to fulfil the social purpose of communication (Sinclair et al., 2008).

Equally important, in alignment with the ethical foundation of a renewed vision for education, communication skills are a powerful tool to combat discrimination and minimize the risk of conflict. Communication skills, in this Dimension, encompass the avoidance of the use of discriminatory and inflammatory language, a choice and a process that requires also

self-management skills. In this regard, communication should be understood as 'two-way communication', thus intrinsic to attitudes, such as civility, and core life skills, such as respect for diversity and empathy (Sinclair et al., 2008). It helps to enact everyday human rights principles and values of dignity, active tolerance and solidarity. Freedom of opinion and expression is a human right in itself that includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media, regardless of nationality (Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19).

Relevance of communication (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension	To be able to express a reasoned argument both orally and in written texts To develop the habit of reading fluently and writing clearly, accurately and coherently for a range of purposes and audiences	Presentation skills, articulating and explaining ideas and concepts clearly, awareness of purpose of communication, context and audience, active listening
'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension	To enable effective working with other people To effectively use different communication media for enhanced efficiency and productivity To improve employability for finding and retaining work (including interview skills, workplace behaviours and customer relations)	Job application skills, interview skills, persuasion skills, formal oral presentation skills, planning and self-evaluation of written communication
'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension	To develop self-confidence and personal empowerment through effective self-presentation and social/relationship skills	Relationship management, self-realization, self-presentation
'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension	To communicate ideas to diverse audiences while respecting other viewpoints To avoid communications that are discriminatory and likely to result in conflict To foster understanding across diverse populations and contribute positively to community management	Dialogue skills, active listening, two-way empathic communication, avoidance of discriminatory language, appropriate assertiveness

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LSCE

The Twelve Core Life Skills

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY
Social Dimension

By being respectful of diversity, individuals remind themselves and are reminded that all participants in society are equal, in a common ethical world, by virtue of their human rights, while fully recognizing individual differences. More than tolerance, respect for diversity is a deeply interpersonal skill, which underpins an inclusive and equitable education, as it contributes to the prevention of discrimination and violence, while promoting a positive learning climate that supports better learning processes and outcomes. This holds true in its Instrumental Dimension and the world of work, where respect for diversity enhances productivity by preventing workplace conflict. It is especially important in the MENA context of a diverse workforce. Respect for diversity in its Individual Dimension is a complex life skill that requires one's personal self-esteem and self-management skills to help the individual to function effectively in socially complex societies. Thus, in non-conflict contexts, it enables pluralism in conflict management, and in conflict situations, it can promote reconciliation. Respect for diversity allows for the possibility that legitimacy may lie in beyond one's own perspective and is a key element towards inter-connectedness, and thus, sustainable development.

DEFINITION

In the context of the LSCE Initiative, 'respect for diversity' – or being respectful of diversity – is conceptualized as a key interpersonal life skill. It is based on the understanding developed by moral philosophers that acknowledges that human beings are equal participants in a common ethical world by virtue of their human status (Janoff-Bulmann et al., 2008). In this composite life skill, the concept of diversity means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing each other's individual differences. These can be defined by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other characteristics. Respect for diversity implies more than tolerance and understanding, which are related to accepting differences passively, it means

"acknowledging and promoting the equal worth of peoples, without condescension" (UNICEF, 2007b).

Especially in MENA, diversity, as a social reality, represents both a challenge and an opportunity for education. Although it can strengthen social cohesion in a society, diversity can also lead to conflict. Where diversity of gender, ability, disability, language, culture, religion and ethnicity map onto inequalities of power and status among groups, it becomes easier to mobilize attitudes of prejudice and intolerance, which may ultimately lead to violence and conflict (Smith, 2005).

In conflict and post-conflict situations respect for diversity may be easier to encourage and promote than other related life skills such as sympathy, empathy and altruism. In these contexts, "respect does not mean agreeing, but rather listening and acknowledging that the other has a right to shape outcomes as well" (Janoff-Bulmann et al., 2008).

In non-conflict contexts, respect for diversity is a pre-condition for acceptance of diversity and critical pluralism, and acknowledges differences in status, privilege and power relations among groups within society and among societies.

More importantly, respect for diversity means the willingness to identify the underlying causes and explore the possibilities for action to address social injustice (Smith, 2005). As such, it is closely related to the principle of equality (Dobbernack and Modood, 2013). Yet, critical pluralism of views also invokes critical thinking skills, which help to balance between constructive perspectives on the one hand, and radical and violence-spurring ideas on the other hand.

The life skill that is most commonly associated with respect for diversity is that of active listening to what others have to say, which constitutes an openness to other perspectives (Janoff-Bulmann et al., 2008). By focusing on listening without disparaging others and accepting mutual opportunities to influence, individuals may come to see others as worthy of respect.

Respect for diversity is grounded on the principles of human rights, and is enshrined in article 29, section 1c, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that: "States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own" (UN General Assembly, 1989). In its General Comment No.1 of 2001 regarding the aims of education, the Committee on the Rights of the Child clarifies that the goal of article 29 is "to develop the child's skills, learning and other capacities, human dignity, self-esteem and self-confidence. Children's education should be directed to a wide range of values […] and the recognition of the need for a balanced approach which aims to reconcile diverse values through dialogue and respect for difference. Children are capable of playing a unique role in bridging differences that have historically separated groups of people."

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension

Respect for diversity is essential for achieving equity and inclusive education. It contributes to the prevention of discrimination and violence, while promoting a positive learning climate that supports better learning processes and outcomes.

Education can build respect for diversity by helping to develop life skills for deconstructing stereotypes of individuals and groups that are considered to be lower in status. The ability to listen respectfully to others rather than confrontationally is important in this regard. Respect for diversity also enhances 'Learning to Know' by refining the analytical thinking process through meta-cognitive skills, as it leads to testing assumptions that are key in critical thinking.

With regard to rethinking pedagogies in MENA educational systems, the key characteristics of teachers who want to foster respect for diversity include "basic training in rights and responsibilities; an interdisciplinary awareness of social, cultural, civic, political, legal, economic, environmental, historical and contemporary affairs; disposition to interdisciplinary learning; commitment to inquiry-based learning; skill in facilitating experiential learning; and confidence in addressing controversial issues" (Smith, 2005).

Difference and respect for diversity is one of the nine topic areas of Global Citizenship Education. This topic has distinguished several age-appropriate learning objectives, including "the values and skills that enable people to live together peacefully (respect, equality, caring, empathy, solidarity, tolerance, inclusion, communication, negotiation, managing and resolving conflict, accepting different perspectives, and non-violence); recognition for how diverse identities (ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic, gender, age) and other factors influence the ability to live together; and critical engagement in actively promoting these values" (UNESCO, 2015b).

'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension

Respect for diversity is essential for a workforce that cooperates and can function in effective teams. Respect for diversity in the workplace means accepting other people's different levels of competence, such as abilities and skills, as well as differences including gender, ethnicity or religion. It helps to prevent discriminatory practices, encourages respect among employees in a diverse workforce and contributes to a decrease in the incidence of workplace conflict. In a diversified workforce, respect for diversity is also a key to enhancing productivity (Saxena, 2014). Furthermore, diverse teams tend to be more creative and innovative, an asset in the knowledge economy.

'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension

Respect for diversity is at the core of the Individual Dimension, as it helps individuals to contrast and test assumptions about themselves. Respect for diversity is a part of human development that helps the individual to function effectively in socially complex societies, a current reality in many countries in MENA. Respect for diversity is linked to one's personal self-esteem in that respect begins with oneself, and is also closely associated with self-management skills, which are essential for respecting others in case of disagreement.

Through observing respect, people are able to treat each other as individuals of goodwill and competence. Respect of others helps to explain why people, including strangers, trust each other. It also explains a host of other interpersonal behaviours, such as helping and avoiding confrontation. Respect of diversity in this context is not easy as it works often against an individual's underlying preferences rather than for them. It has been defined as constituting "what people think they should do rather than what they want to do; it focuses on regulating actions; and is more *moral* – private and personal – than *social* – honoured only because it is actively enforced by others – in nature" (Dunning et al., 2016).

'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension

"For any society to thrive, it must possess a behavioural code that tempers self-interest, and promotes instead coordinated, cooperative, and self-sacrificing action among its members" (Dunning et al., 2016). Respect for diversity is an essential precondition for this behaviour. Consequently, respect for diversity enables pluralism and democratic practices. Respect for diversity is critical for social cohesion and accepting without prejudice other groups in society that may differ from one's own. It is important to learn how to interact with other social groups, and to display respect in communication and social behaviours.

Respect for diversity can play a key role in conflict management. Overall it has been found that respect of others inhibits aggression (Pruitt et al., 2003), and can facilitate and promote reconciliation. It involves treating adversarial others as equal participants even if their views are not shared (Janoff-Bulmann et al., 2008).

In the long-term process of reconciliation, respect-enhancing strategies include specific procedures that are directly aimed at fostering the recognition and visibility of diversity.

In the context of MENA, respect for diversity remains elusive. "While the ethnic and religious diversity in the region is a social reality, no one seems to really celebrate this diversity" (Muasher, 2014). Respect for diversity implies respect for the various ethnic, religious and gender identities, and their accommodation in public institutions and school life, and access to health, politics and employment. For socio-economically marginalized populations, respect for diversity requires most importantly socio-economic inclusion and measures that work towards substantive equality (Accept Pluralism Project, 2013). It has been suggested that education and educational policies must be revisited in MENA in terms of the values that are taught to the young generation. Education needs to include learning tolerance, acceptance of other points of view, an understanding of truth being relative and not absolute, and critical thinking. In addition, learning about "how to question, how to research and how to communicate provides the necessary foundation to foster a pluralistic culture" (Muasher, 2014).

Relevance of respect for diversity (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension	To foster inclusive and equitable education delivery To promote a positive learning climate	Analytical thinking, active listening
'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension	To prevent conflict in the workplace To prevent discriminatory practices in the workplace	Adaptability and flexibility, client orientation, teamwork
'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension	To test assumptions and understand personal biases	Self-esteem, self-control
'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension	To enhance active tolerance in society To foster processes of reconciliation in the context of conflict To foster inclusion and participation of marginalized communities in society	Active tolerance, social interaction

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LSCE

The Twelve Core Life Skills

EMPATHY

Central to emotionally intelligent behaviour, empathy is a life skill that helps individuals to pursue positive relationships and plays an integral role in conflict management and conflict resolution in the family, at school, in communities and in conflict situations. It is a motivator for altruistic behaviour and is the basis of social perception and social interaction, paving the way to moral reasoning. A key element underpinning citizenship education, it helps learners from an early age onward by supporting academic excellence and strengthening their sense of self as well as their ability to connect to and collaborate effectively with others. In the world of work, empathy enhances a culture of service orientation, which means putting the needs of customers first and looking for ways to improve their satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, as empathy is key to the development of quality relations, it is essential in the establishment of long-lasting and reliable professional connections. With regard to the Social Dimension of this core life skill, an education that fosters empathy focuses on a culture that values inclusion, responds in caring and practical ways to victims of violence, and nurtures a respect for and sense of responsibility to one another. This supports collaboration and solidarity, and safe behaviours towards the environment and sustainable development.

DEFINITION

Empathy, or being empathetic, is "the ability to comprehend another's feelings and to re-experience them oneself" (Salovey and Mayer, 1990), while never being judgemental. A key construct in social and developmental psychology, as well as in cognitive and social neuroscience, the ability to empathize is important for promoting positive behaviours toward others and facilitating social interactions and relationships. Empathy involves the internalization of rules that can play a part in protecting others, and it may be the mechanism that motivates the desire to help others, even at a cost to oneself.
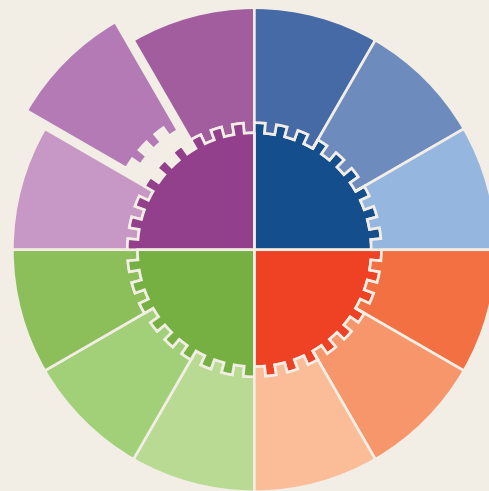
In addition, empathy plays an important role in becoming a socially competent person with meaningful social relationships (McDonald and Messinger, 2012).Consequently, empathy motivates altruistic behaviour and has the potential to enhance the process by which rights are realized, which is an important outcome (Jönsson and Hall, 2003).

According to developmental psychologists, the ability to empathize typically develops early and rapidly (McDonald and Messinger, 2012). A 1999 longitudinal study with children and youth from 4 to 20 years of age demonstrated that empathy may be conceptualized as part of a larger prosocial personality trait that develops in children and motivates helping behaviours into early adulthood (Eisenberg et al., 2000). Furthermore, empathy has been highlighted as a key skill of successful learners (Jones, 1990).

Among the many factors explaining empathy skills are genetics, neural development and temperament, as well as socialization factors (McDonald and Messinger, 2012).

Since empathy skills are developed from an early age, it can be developed through childrearing practices, e.g., reasoning with children, parental models of empathetic and caring behaviour, and encouraging discussion about feelings; empathy training, e.g., training in interpersonal perception and empathetic response, and focusing on one's feelings, as well as classroom strategies and programme designs, e.g., through cooperative learning, and cross-age and peer tutoring (Gordon, 2005; Cotton, 1992).

EMPATHY AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

Empathy is a prosocial skill that strengthens the social fabric of communities. Scholars have identified four main social outcomes associated with empathy that are key to the four Dimensions of Learning:

- Internalization of rules: The ability to empathize with others' distress may be an important factor in learning right from wrong.

- 'Prosocial and altruistic behaviour': Empathy is considered an important precursor to, and motivator for, prosocial, or helping, behaviour (De Waal, 2008).

- 'Social competence': Higher levels of empathy in children are associated with more cooperative and socially competent behaviour (Saliquist et al., 2009; Zhou et al., 2002).

- 'Relationship quality': The ability to empathize also seems to be important for relationship quality by facilitating the maintenance of meaningful relationships (Joireman et al., 2002), and it has also been associated with higher levels of conflict resolution skills in adolescents (de Wied et al., 2007).

'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension

Empathy lies at the foundation of academic success. Focusing on the development of empathy opens the doors to social and emotional learning for children, giving them skills of emotional perception that strengthen their sense of self as well as their ability to connect to and collaborate effectively with others throughout childhood and adolescence. Focusing on empathy provides the critical blending of emotion, cognition and memory that will make children successful learners (Gordon, 2005).

Emotion regulation has been described by neuroscientists as "one of the basic macro-components of empathy" (Decety and Jackson, 2004). Along with motivation, emotion regulation stands at the core of academic achievement independent of measured intelligence (Gottfried, 1990; Skinner et al., 1998). Indeed, researchers examining self-regulation in adolescence and adulthood have long recognized the relevance of emotional state and emotion-related processes to the functioning of component processes of cognitive regulation (Blair, 2002). Teachers who have implemented programmes that foster empathy in six-year-old children highlight how it enhances children's collective abilities to engage in critical thinking, while individually they are able to make independent decisions (Gordon, 2005).
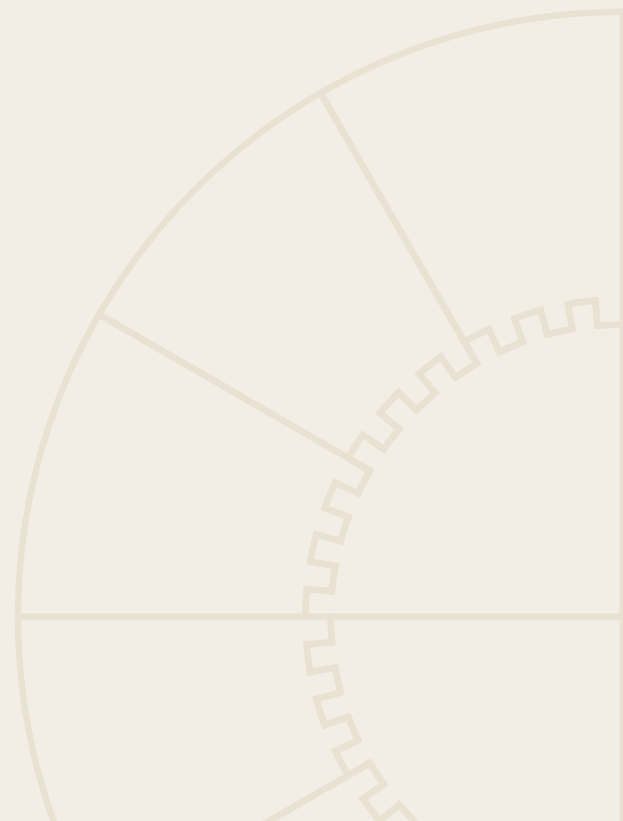
'Learning to Do'/
the Instrumental Dimension

Learners who have good job skills, but poor social and emotional skills may get a job, but may have trouble keeping it or being promoted. In the workplace, empathy is key for moving businesses forward as it enhances a work culture of service orientation, which means putting the needs of customers first and looking for ways to improve their satisfaction and loyalty (Goleman, 1996). Moreover, empathy is key in the development of quality relations, which is essential in the establishment of long-lasting and reliable professional connections. These relationships are the product of taking an honest and dedicated interest in others and their businesses. Successful people do not operate alone; each needs the support of others to achieve positive results that push one toward one's own goals (Boyers, 2013). Furthermore, business success depends on empathetic leaders who are able to adapt, build on the strengths around them, and relate to their environment. An empathic leadership and environment that shows a deep respect and care for co-workers and displays this care, as opposed to just going by rules and regulations, can make everyone feel like a team and increase productivity, morale and loyalty (Boyers, 2013).

'Learning to Be'/
the Individual Dimension

Empathy is core to literacy of emotions. According to neuroscientists, empathy is the basis for much of social perception and smooth social interactions. "Empathy-related responding, including caring and sympathetic concern, is thought to motivate prosocial behaviour, inhibit aggression and pave the way to moral reasoning" (Decety, 2010). As humans are predominantly social, understanding emotions in oneself and others is an important skill to have, and a good part of the brain is devoted to that effort. Basic emotions, such as happiness or fear, differ from the so-called moral emotions, e.g., shame, guilt, pride, etc., that arise in social interactions, where a normative or ideal behaviour is either explicitly or implicitly established. Understanding and managing moral emotions requires internalization of norms and moral principles shared by the community. It is also necessary to perceive and understand other people's emotions, and make attributions of their mental states, including an understanding of their beliefs and attitudes. As such, emotional and social development are tightly linked to one another (Rueda and Alonso, 2013).

Literacy of emotions is deeply gendered in many cultures. However, this can be overcome. In the context of Canada, it has been argued that, since male children are not often encouraged to talk about their feelings, they might lack the vocabulary to express emotions, yet, when exposed to programmes targeting empathy, male children developed a vocabulary as large as that of female children, and were more likely to talk about problems and emotions than the female children (Gordon, 2005). This outcome is relevant, especially when children need, for self-regulation and their wellbeing, to express their emotions in the face of violence or conflict situations.

'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension

Because empathy plays a profound and often complex and fundamental role in the healthy functioning of human relations, it is an essential element of life skills and citizenship education, particularly in MENA. "The failure of empathy leads at best to apathy; at worst it leads to cruelty and violence" (Gordon, 2005). Research on bullying confirms that a strong characteristic of bullies is their lack of empathy. An education that fosters empathy leads to a culture that values inclusion, responds in caring and practical ways to victims of violence (bullying), and nurtures respect for, and a sense of responsibility to, one another. Consequently, empathy skills enable an individual to also care for future generations, fostering safe societal behaviours and actions towards the environment (Gordon, 2005).

Empathy is integral in conflict management and conflict resolution in the family, school, communities and in conflict situations. As such, it has the potential to enhance the process by which rights are realized (Jönsson and Hall, 2003). As exercised by adults, it provides safe emotional space for children to exercise their right to be heard and understood.

A unique attribute of empathy is that it is a motivator for altruistic behaviour, a key attitude for enhancing social cohesion, as it fosters collaboration and solidarity. Empathy also contributes to fostering the levels of appreciation needed to assert values related to people's common humanity in light of diversity, as well as the promotion of active tolerance.

Relevance of empathy (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension	To foster the critical blending of emotion, cognition and memory for successful learning	Respect for others, collaboration, self-regulation
'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension	To facilitate successful businesses through responsive leadership and a motivating work environment	Service and customer orientation, active listening, teamwork
'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension	To motivate prosocial behaviour, inhibit aggression and pave the way to moral reasoning	Understanding and managing emotions, active listening, respect for others, agency
'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension	To develop a culture that values inclusion, responds in caring and practical ways to victims of violence, and nurtures a respect for and sense of responsibility to one another	Understanding others, caring for others, identifying abusive and non-abusive behaviours, altruistic behaviour, conflict resolution

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LSCE

The Twelve Core Life Skills

PARTICIPATION

Social Dimension

Participation is a life skill related to empowerment in relation to both the individual and the community, therefore, a quintessential aspect of citizenship education in MENA. Participation involves giving children a say in their education, listening to them and involving them as much as possible in school life. It entails valuing children's opinions and ideas, and giving them control of their learning. More specifically, participation is concerned, in its Cognitive Dimension, with equipping learners with capacities to engage proactively, thus promoting equity among all learners by enabling effective, active and experiential learning to take place in the classroom. Participation also enhances ownership of governance systems in schools and communities. The ability to participate effectively is important for personal empowerment and agency, as well as for the development of self-efficacy and social connectedness. Further, being participative leads to 'worker empowerment', a condition for a healthy workplace, which also ties to the human rights-based approach of fair employment (WHO, 2010). The core life skill of participation, which is anchored in human-rights instruments, enables people to play an active role in society, working towards improving life of the community and owning responsibility towards others and the environment through meaningful political participation or involvement at the community level.

DEFINITION

In its most basic sense, participation or being participative can be defined as partaking in and influencing processes, decisions and activities (adapted from UNICEF, 2001). Therefore, both a contextualized process and a core life skill, participation is an action of empowerment in relation to the individual and the community. Being participative is interlinked with the core life skill of creativity, and learners and individuals who are participative, especially in MENA, actively contribute to a democratic society, exercising a human right.
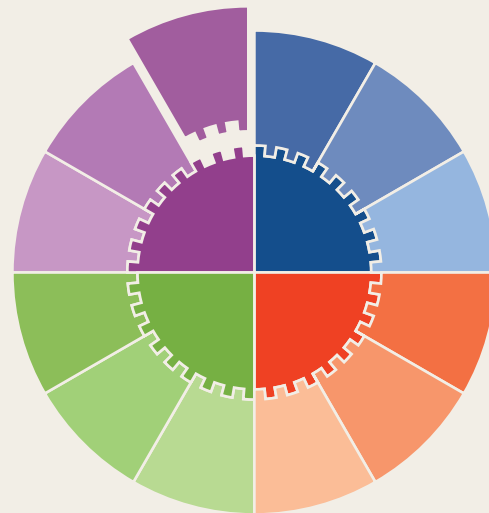
Participation skills are needed and acquired from early childhood, and help children develop the required skills to participate effectively in class to maximize their learning opportunities. Being participative, for example, by having the opportunity to ask questions, volunteer to help others during classroom activities, etc., allows children to have a say in their education, and requires listening to them and involving them as much as possible in school life. It means valuing their opinions and ideas, and giving them control of their learning. When children have a say in their education, they not only exercise their rights but also achieve more. They have improved self-esteem, they get on better with their classmates and teachers, and they contribute to a better school environment, with better discipline and in a culture where learning is a shared responsibility.

Participation skills reflect a series of fundamental human rights, recognized in a number of international human-rights instruments, starting with Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides for the right to participate in government and free elections, the right to participate in the cultural life of the community, the right to peaceful assembly and association, and the right to join trade unions.

Participation is one of the guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which enshrines participation as a fundamental right of all children and adolescents, especially in its articles 2, 3, and 12-15 (UNICEF, 2001). Children have the right to have their voice heard when adults are making decisions that affect them, and their views should be given due weight in accordance with the child's age and maturity. They have the right to express themselves freely and to receive and share information. The Convention recognizes the potential of children to influence decision-making relevant to them, to share views and to participate as citizens and actors of change (Brander et al., 2012).

PARTICIPATION AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension

The ability to participate effectively is critically important for learning outcomes and quality of teaching and learning. Participation enables active and experiential learning to take place effectively. Participation in the classroom is more than students raising their hand. This life skill implies that learners are given the chance to actively support each other, make choices, volunteer, etc. Good classroom participation promotes equity in that all learners are able to participate, enhances learners' focus and engagement, and increases a range of social skills. These skills include "cooperation, sharing, helping, communication, empathy, providing verbal support or encouragement, and general friendliness or kindness" (Gutman and Schoon, 2013). Moreover, learners' participation in active learning can strengthen student-teacher relationships, improve the classroom climate, accommodate a variety of learning styles, and provide alternative ways of learning (WHO, 2003).

Participation is concerned with equipping learners with capacities to launch and engage in proactive actions. In this context, the curriculum should give priority to students' choices and voices, and encourage student leadership though planned action (UNESCO, 2014a). Through enhancing participation in the classroom, learners should be able to develop and apply skills for effective civic engagement, including critical inquiry and research, assessing evidence, making reasoned arguments, planning and organizing action, working collaboratively, reflecting on the potential consequences of actions, and learning from successes and failures (UNESCO, 2015b).

As an essential component of the renewed vision for education in MENA, participation in sports at school can create long-lasting lessons in justice, tolerance, diversity and human rights. Sports can promote social values and goals of collaboration, persistence and fair play, while also promoting respect for peers, teachers and families. Because sports promote social cohesion, and mutual understanding and respect, they can also be used to promote diversity and conflict resolution (UNESCO, 2014a).

Furthermore, participation enhances ownership of governance systems in schools, and is inclusive of the community, a necessity for MENA schools and communities. Learners, parents, community workers and peer educators all participate in the design and implementation of school programmes, identifying which needs and concerns are met in appropriate ways, thus enhancing the effectiveness of schools. This is also particularly relevant in the context of health programmes (WHO, 2003).

'Learning to Do'/
the Instrumental Dimension

A common theme in the literature regarding healthy workplaces is the importance of worker participation. Phrased either as 'control over work' or 'input into decisions' or 'worker empowerment,' active involvement of workers is one of the most important aspects of a healthy workplace (WHO, 2010). The relationship between participation and health as related to the workspace has led to the inclusion of fostering active participation in the workspace. This practice is recognized by a variety of declarations and frameworks fostering healthy workspaces, such as the 1997 Luxembourg Declaration on Workplace Health Promotion in the European Union (WHO, 2010).

Employee participation involves management actively encouraging staff to assist in running and improving business processes and operations. Also known as employee involvement, employee participation includes management encouraging and recognizing individual employees' opinions and inputs. Evidence has consistently highlighted the linkage between employee participation, job satisfaction and increased productivity, particularly when participation is linked to decision-making (Summers and Hayman, 2005). On the other hand, WHO research on psychosocial risk management, highlights low participation in decision-making among the psychosocial factors having the greatest risk to workers' health (WHO, 2010).

Being participative in the workplace is underpinned by a rights-based approach: First, it is one of the features included in the concept of 'fair employment', defined as a "just relation between employers and employees that requires certain features to be present: freedom from coercion; job security in terms of contracts and safety; fair income; job protection and social benefits; respect and dignity; and workplace participation" (Benach et al. 2013). The concept of 'fair employment' complements ILO's notion of 'decent work', and ties into the principles that link business ethics with human rights, labour standards, environmental protection and protection against corruption (WHO, 2010).

'Learning to Be'/
the Individual Dimension

The ability to participate effectively is important for personal empowerment and agency, as well as the development of self-efficacy. Participation skills help to build social connectedness, which is important for resilience and wellbeing more generally. Participation varies according to one's evolving capacities, but all children and youth can participate in different ways from the earliest age. Competence is learned through experience, not endowed at a certain age. Maturity and growth are an ongoing process that can be supported through participation. This is a virtuous cycle: the more one participates meaningfully, the more experienced, competent and confident one becomes, which in turn enables more effective participation (UNICEF, 2001).

'Learning to Live Together'/
the Social Dimension

"Human activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is a transformation of the world." (Freire, 1970). Paulo Freire's conceptualization of 'praxis' was intended for people to actively engage standing and perspectives, as well as respecting diversity, questioning the status quo in hopes of change, and forming a truly democratic citizenship (Levinson and Stevick, 2007), thus putting participation skills at the core of citizenship education in the region.

Participation relates to the life skills that are required to play an active role in society towards improving life be it through political participation, participation at the community level, or participation in other aspects of civic life, including fostering inter-connectedness through sustainable development. In order for citizens to be capable of fully engaging in civic and political life, they must possess skills that include personal communication skills, knowledge of political systems, and, most important, the ability to critically think about civic and political life (Comber, 2003). Participation skills enable individuals and communities to make their voices heard to influence decision-makers, achieve change and eventually take charge of their own lives.

As a right in itself, participation of children and youth must be sought and encouraged. However, it is worth remembering that although voluntary participation is crucial, it cannot solve everything. Structural concerns such as macroeconomic arrangements, patriarchy, racism, and other forms of institutionalized discrimination have an enormous bearing on the development and wellbeing of children and youth, and cannot be dealt with simply through participatory processes. The last thing children and youth need is to be burdened with the responsibility for solving many of the world's intractable problems, and forcing them to do so can cause serious harm (UNICEF, 2001).

Relevance of participation (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension	To improve learning processes and outcomes To enhance democratic practices in the school	Active listening, planning and organizing, dialogue, presentation, focus, analytical thinking
'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension	To promote healthy workspaces To enhance business ethics and human rights in the workspace	Organizational management, effective communication
'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To develop personal goal setting and life planning	Self-confidence, agency
'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension	To contribute to a truly democratic citizenship To improve the wellbeing of the community	Dialogue, active listening, analytical and critical thinking

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ANNEX 2 Country Proposals for Mainstreaming Life Skills and Citizenship Education at the National Level

Country delegations participating in the regional consultation on Life Skills and Citizenship Education in MENA, held in Amman, Jordan, on 8-10 November 2016, proposed recommendations for follow-up steps, ongoing and planned, at the national level within the framework of the LSCE Initiative. These are summarized in the table following.

Country delegation	Action points
Algeria	1. Undertake in-depth mapping of life skills and citizenship education experiences in the country. 2. Ensure the development of a shared vision on life skills and citizenship education through a national consultation process. 3. Develop an holistic inter-sectoral action plan involving all relevant stakeholders (Ministry of Education; Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education; Ministry of Youth and Sports; Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women Affairs, United Nations agencies and NGOs), including capacity development, development of life skills and citizenship education material and manuals, budget mobilization, support for youth engagement, monitoring and evaluation, etc. 4. Organize sub-regional workshops to share best practices with other Maghreb countries. 5. Focus on communication and community mobilization of youth and families.
Djibouti	1. Undertake an evaluation of national initiatives and existing programmes in light of the CPF. 2. Undertake a national consultation to share lessons learned and best practices with a view to identifying gaps and formulating recommendations for integration of life skills and citizenship education in the country. 3. Set up a working group to develop a roadmap for the integration of life skills and citizenship education in the context of Djibouti.
Egypt	1. Engage in policy dialogue with Ministry of Education to explore means to introduce life skills and citizenship education as an umbrella framework for the new 'transformation' programme (Edu 2.0) introduced by the Government of Egypt. 2. Promote integration of life skills and citizenship education through sharing of best practices and lessons learned from other countries in MENA. 3. Introduce life skills and citizenship education in existing and new programmes, targeting formal and non-formal education, and TVET.
Jordan	1. Establish a multi-stakeholder partnership to ensure a unified vision of life skills and citizenship education. 2. Engage the Ministry of Educations to ensure integration of life skills and citizenship education in the education sector. 3. Integrate the vision of life skills and citizenship education in the reform process of the human resource development. 4. Establish a national committee with all relevant stakeholders involved to develop and implement a national plan for integration of life skills and citizenship education at all levels. 5. Ensure continuous monitoring and evaluation of life skills and citizenship education
Iran	1. Identify entry points for life skills and citizenship education through an established national committee. 2. Ensure capacity development of education actors and partners to mainstream life skills education at the national level.

Country delegation	Action points
Iraq	1. Ensure validation of the life skills and citizenship education at the ministry level, including a review of existing experiences in both Bagdad and Erbil as a first step towards mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education. 2. Develop a joint action plan between relevant ministries and identify structural changes, focusing on teaching and learning approaches. 3. Undertake social outreach activities to engage communities around life skills and citizenship education. 4. Ensure capacity development of teachers, supervisors and school administration personnel. 5. Mainstream life skills and citizenship education within ongoing work undertaken to promote positive discipline in schools and communities, social cohesion and psychosocial support. 6. Create a monitoring and evaluation framework that includes teacher and student performance.
Lebanon	1. Establish an inter-ministerial committee (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, including the Center for Educational Research and Development, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture, and private sector and civil society representatives). The committee would have a consultative and governance role to establish a common vision of life skills in the national education system. 2. Develop a common vision and action plan, including human and financial resources, on life skills and citizenship education implementation in formal, in-formal and non-formal education settings, and in the workplace. 3. Build on current experiences of life skills implemented throughout the country showcasing best practices in terms of partnerships between the public, private and NGOs. 4. Raise awareness on common vision and approach including communication tools and community mobilization.
Libya	1. Introduce life skills and citizenship education to national stakeholders though national consultation. 2. Conduct training of trainers to develop a cadre of qualified teachers who can integrate life skills within teaching and learning practices. 3. Pilot life skills programmes in formal and non-formal education settings. 4. Introduce life skills and citizenship education in school curriculum and implement programmes promoting citizenship education. 5. Introduce life skills and citizenship education in TVET programmes in formal and non-formal education settings.
Morocco	1. Undertake a national consultation to define a shared vision among national stakeholders (Ministry of Education; other ministries; NGOs; multilateral agencies; etc.). 2. Ensure mobilization and sensitization of other ministries and institutions, civil society organizations and youth on life skills and citizenship education. 3. Develop new learning content and tool on life skills and citizenship education, targeting adolescents in formal education through adopting co-curricular and extra-curricular approaches. Train inspectors, teachers and other relevant resources on the developed tools. 4. Pilot life skills and citizenship education programmes in lower secondary schools through co-curricular and extra-curricular approaches. 5. Develop measurement tools in relation to learning outcomes for life skills and citizenship education.
State of Palestine	1. Formulate a policy paper, strategic action plan, and monitoring and evaluation framework for life skills and citizenship education provision in coordination with relevant stakeholders including the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Labour, UNRWA, NGOs, and the private sector focusing on sustainability over the long term. 2. Undertake national consultation to review the policy paper building on common definition and vision for life skills and citizenship education. 3. Conduct national awareness/policy advocacy with United Nations agencies, NGO and CSO partners to facilitate recognition of the importance of life skills and citizenship education to effective and lifelong learning from pre-primary onwards, in both formal and non-formal settings. 4. Ensure the identification of funding and consolidation of available resources for life skills and citizenship education. 5. Support the mainstreaming of life skills and citizenship education through co-curricular modality in formal education. 6. Support the piloting of initiatives and projects that integrate life skills and citizenship education, including development of training resources on how to integrate these in formal, non-formal and informal education.

Country delegation	Action points
Sudan	1. Review current experiences on life skills education (including pilot projects in Khartoum state). 2. Integrate life skills and citizenship education within extra-curricular activities (school clubs for children and youth). 3. Pilot life skills and psychosocial support interventions with refugees and internally displaced persons in camp settings with a view to scale up. 4. Review pilot initiatives in order to ensure alignment with the LSCE Initiative.
Syria	1. Short-term interventions: a) target out-of-school children (aged 12-15 years) with life skills (using existing Life Skills Manual) and integrate into TVET/post-basic level; b) provide most vulnerable children in schools with life skills through conducting master trainings. 2. Medium-term interventions: a) integrate life skills and citizenship education into teacher professional development programmes through Teacher Resource Centres, school supervisors, and teacher training at governorate level; b) undertake the mapping of national capacity of TVET and add life skills in TVET programmes. 3. Long-term interventions: Ensure mainstreaming of life skills into policies, sector-wide approaches and national curriculum.
Tunisia	1. Continue supporting the integration of life skills and citizenship education into the National Education Reform as recognized in the White Paper supporting the reform. 2. Continue supporting the integration of life skills and citizenship education into national curriculum development, including the general curriculum (covering primary and secondary levels), the new pre-school curriculum and teacher pre- and in-service training. 3. Contribute to the integration of life skills and citizenship education with extra-curricular activities and school clubs through the National Office for School Activities with the Ministry of Education and NGOs. 4. Develop and test the measurement tools for life skills and citizenship education at the school level. 5. Design and test a school dropout prevention model relying on the life skills and citizenship education vision for quality learning to reduce children's risk of dropping out. 6. Design and test a second-chance education programme based on the life skills and citizenship education vision to quality learning to ensure sustainable reintegration of adolescents within the education system.
Yemen	1. Introduce life skills and citizenship education in formal education through Child Friendly Schools as an entry point, focusing on school development plans. 2. Develop a strategic partnership between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education around a common framework on life skills and citizenship education. 3. Support community participation through advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns. 4. Mainstream life skills and citizenship education in schools through student councils. 5. Ensure national consultation towards integrating the concepts of life skills in the National Education Agenda (2017-2030), including higher education and TVET.

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