



GUIDE TO SUPPORT COUNTRY-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION OF LIFE SKILLS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Reimagining education systems
for better results

LSCE

THE LSCE INITIATIVE



The Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) Initiative provides a regional framework for reimagining education and learning, aimed at fostering a generation that is ready to **LEAP** into the future: ready to **L**earn, to be **E**mployed, to **A**ctively engage, and to take control over one's own **P**ersonal growth and empowerment.

The LSCE Framework has been developed in partnership with ministries of education, UN agencies, NGOs and the private sector to provide a holistic approach to education and learning, upholding human rights principles, promoting life-long learning, multiple pathways and a systems approach.

The LSCE Initiative has adopted a set of 12 core life skills: *skills for learning, employability, personal empowerment, and active citizenship* using the four-dimensional learning model (Delors report, 1996): 'Learning to Know', 'Learning to Do', 'Learning to Be', and 'Learning to Live Together'. These four dimensions of learning and the 12 core life skills should not be considered as distinct and mutually exclusive – they overlap, inter-connect and reinforce one another in the individual learner.

The 12 core life skills are higher-order, transversal and transferrable skills that enable individuals to deal with everyday life, and to progress and succeed in school, work and societal life. They are reinforcing and complementary to foundational and technical skills. The construction of life skills is gradual and accumulates throughout life, and can be nurtured from early childhood onwards.

The LSCE Initiative contributes to the UNICEF *Strategic Plan (2018-2021) Goal area 2: Every child learns*. Pursuing this requires putting life skills at the core of the national learning agendas, and opening learning systems to become responsive to the diverse learning needs of children and youth.

THE LSCE OPERATIONALIZATION GUIDE: PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

This guide has been developed to clarify UNICEF Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Office's key messages and considerations for country-level programming under the LSCE Initiative. As such it intends to support Country Offices in designing theories of change that realize the vision of the LSCE Initiative and guides programme implementation.

The present guide is complementary to the **LSCE Conceptual and Programmatic Framework (CPF)**, published in 2017.

The document provides a snapshot of:

- The theory of change and underlying principles
- Areas of interventions and implications for programming
- Possible support from the MENA Regional Office



1. THE LSCE INITIATIVE: A TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING AGENDA FOR ALL CHILDREN

A better future for all: A growing body of evidence suggests that for children to develop at their full potential with the best start for adult life, a wide range of skills, attitudes and values are required to prepare them to LEAP into the Future so that they are ready to **L**earn, engage in **E**mployment, be **A**ctive Citizen and in control of their own **P**ersonal growth and empowerment.

With the failing education systems, poverty on the rise, and continuing conflict, the number of out-of-school children in the region is increasing. In addition, there is consensus that despite progress in equitable access, current education systems do not produce the expected outcomes required to successfully advance individual, social and economic development.

Rethinking what to learn and how to learn: Current challenges to (political) stability, social cohesion and economic growth, puts pressure on the MENA countries to provide children and youth with flexible learning opportunities to acquire skills that go beyond the traditional literacy and numeracy skills or knowledge of subject matters currently taught in most education systems.

The window for action is now: Political will to reform education systems, together with changing demographics, present the region with a window of opportunity to translate investment in human capital into further development and economic growth. The realization of this window of opportunity cannot miss the profound and systemic changes of the fourth industrial revolution, reaping the benefits offered by new technologies, which will fundamentally impact on the world of work and societies.*

LSCE: Improved outcomes for children through skills development: The LSCE Initiative provides a framework to transform education systems into open learning systems that put life skills at the core of teaching and learning. To realize this vision, complementary interventions are required that

- i) develop educational contents and methods,
- ii) strengthen responsiveness of national education systems,
- iii) promote multiple pathways to learning, and
- iv) ensure enabling (institutional) environments.

LSCE: A partnership agenda: The development of the LSCE CPF, has contributed to building a shared vision on what skills to promote in the region, informed by the **Analytical Mapping of Life Skills and Citizenship Education in MENA**. The partnership built around this agenda at the regional level between governments, UN and other international agencies, NGOs, academics, and the private sector, should be leveraged at country level to build a holistic, intersectoral approach to learning throughout life.

* UNICEF (2018): MENA Generation 2030

2. LSCE'S UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

The LSCE Framework is based on the following premises:

A holistic approach (life skills as core skills): The framework is based on the four-dimensional learning model referred to in the Delors report: 'Learning to Know' (Cognitive Dimension), 'Learning to Do' (Instrumental Dimension), 'Learning to Be' (Individual Dimension), and 'Learning to Live Together' (Social Dimension). Together, these dimensions of learning foster empowered individuals who can learn effectively and fulfil their responsibilities at home, in the work place and society at large. Acquisition of the 12 core life skills complements and contributes to the acquisition of knowledge, foundational or other (technical) skills.

A rights-based and gender-transformative approach: Quality education is not value-neutral and must have a transformative impact on children and youth. The LSCE Initiative promotes a strong ethical foundation, which recognizes the importance of human dignity, before economic results, and promotes human rights-based values. This implies adopting a gender-responsive and gender-transformative approach to learning in terms of addressing gender stereotypes and gender discrimination at all levels of programming and implementation and fostering positive gender socialization from early childhood onwards.

A life long learning approach: Evidence and longitudinal studies demonstrate the cumulative effect of skills acquisition from an early age, predicting not only higher achievement in schools, but also long-term impact on the socio-economic wellbeing of youth. This calls for a cumulative investment throughout the life course.

At every age, every individual is provided with opportunities to learn and fulfil personal potential and desire, thus going beyond the distinctions between initial and continuing education.

A multiple pathways and systems approach: To ensure sustained results for children and youth, systems need to be adapted to foster learning environments that allow for individual empowerment, social and economic connectedness. Open education systems, beyond traditional schooling, connected through (self) regulation and recognition, provide opportunities for all to develop relevant skills that are adapted to needs and desires of individual learners.

3. UNICEF'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

UNICEF is not alone in promoting a transformative learning agenda, rooted in life skills. However, in MENA, UNICEF has been at the forefront of the conceptual development of the skills and approach that are promoted under the LSCE Initiative. This, combined with its mandate to help *all* children reaching their full potential, has a comparative advantage in moving forward this agenda at the country level.

Focus on equity: The equity focus should inform not only the targeting of interventions, but also the need to address the specific barriers affecting marginalized groups. The focus on vulnerability, therefore, requires a comprehensive shift in programming to avoid reproducing the same institutional structures and conditions that perpetuate inequalities. This requires investment in data, analysis and monitoring including gender-sensitive and intersectionality perspectives as well as innovative approaches to delivery.

Leveraging partnerships: The success of the LSCE Initiative depends on the coordinated efforts among stakeholders. While the ministry of education plays a key role in fostering substantial change given its financial weight and outreach, other national stakeholders including ministries of labour, ministries of youth, etc. as well as UN agencies, NGOs and the private sector need to be brought together both at national and regional levels through consultations and collaborative frameworks that further promote private/public partnerships. Through the LSCE approach, UNICEF can play a convening and leadership role within the larger national agendas of skills development.

Multi- and cross-sectoral engagement: It is essential to ensure a continuum of services for all children and youth recognizing the complementary roles of different sectors. Ensuring synergy between child protection, education, health or communication for development (C4D), and other sectors, is a key component of the LSCE Initiative in line with the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021. Advancing common messages and a shared learning agenda represents a key comparative advantage of UNICEF to be invested at national level when designing interventions for children and youth.

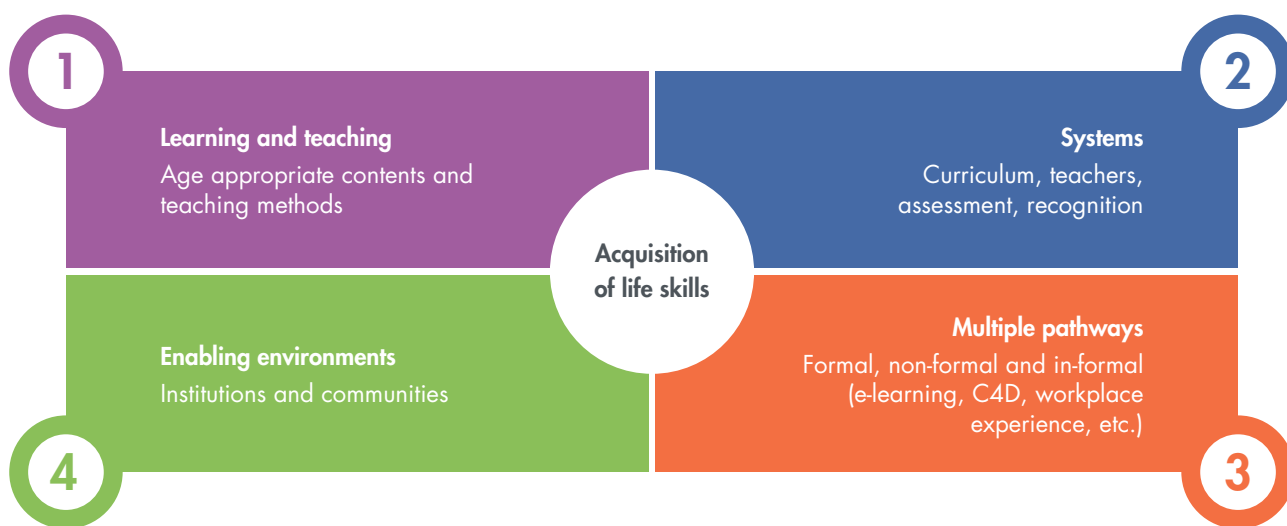


4. TRANSLATING THE LSCE VISION INTO ACTION

The LSCE Initiative puts the acquisition of life skills (21st century skills) at the centre of learning: – ‘*what to learn*’ is of similar importance as ‘*how to learn*’. This calls for changes in the learning and teaching processes, education system reforms, ensuring multiple pathways to learning, and enabling learning environments.

The LSCE CPF provides a solid conceptual foundation and clear definition of the 12 core life skills. It also provides an operational framework for programming taking into consideration flexible and interlinked interventions that address country-specific needs.

The diagram below shows entry points in programming to advance the vision of the LSCE Initiative.



4.1 TEACHING AND LEARNING

In structured settings, learning is the result of interaction between students, their teachers and learning materials. The contents of life skills programmes go beyond traditional subject matters and bring in new dimensions to learning, with reflections about one’s self and one’s environment. The acquisition of higher-order, transversal and transferrable life skills require that students are actively engaged and in control of their own learning. Many education systems however continue to use traditional rote-learning and frontal teaching approaches, promoting knowledge but not skills acquisition.

Introducing life skills entails bringing in both new content and new teaching methods. New contents can be introduced within existing subjects or as new subjects (e.g. citizenship education or entrepreneurship). Child-centred teaching methods are further required in day-to-day classroom practices to promote both learning and the socio-emotional wellbeing of children.

4.2 SYSTEMS

Bringing changes at the classroom level often requires system-level changes to create the conditions for the right learning/teaching to take place. Curricula may need to be adapted and instruction time changed. Teacher development programmes need to ensure that teachers are equipped to use strategies and teaching methods that promote higher order thinking and skills acquisition. The right incentives need to be put in place to motivate all to make the required transformational shift. This also implies assessment systems include measuring skills acquisition.

4.3 MULTIPLE PATHWAYS

Opportunities to learn extend beyond schools. There are multiple pathways to learning and they all should be treasured and nurtured. Skills development is not limited to school, and can occur at home, during play time, at workplace or as part of daily activities. It is important to recognize the variety of learners' trajectories that enable equity and inclusiveness while ensuring better targeting of marginalized populations.

Modern technologies provide alternative pathways to learning that extend beyond schools. They can also create synergies and consistency across learning pathways to ensure that what is learnt in the classroom is supported by what is experienced outside of school.

Accreditation and certification of skills acquired through multiple pathways will be crucial to support a learner's further trajectory.

4.4 ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The acquisition of life skills requires enabling environments, both at the institutional level and at home. Child-friendly environments, free of violence, encourage children and young people to engage and participate in decision making in order to shape their own learning agenda. The focus on conducive environments further reflects the need for strong accountability for learning outcomes through school-based and action-oriented monitoring as promoted in MENA (INSAF).

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR UNICEF PROGRAMMING

The LSCE agenda is a holistic, system-wide agenda and requires interventions at different levels as highlighted above. However, this does not mean that country-level programming needs to address everything. Depending on the country context, the specific needs, and the socio-economic and political environment, specific entry points can be used for optimal results.

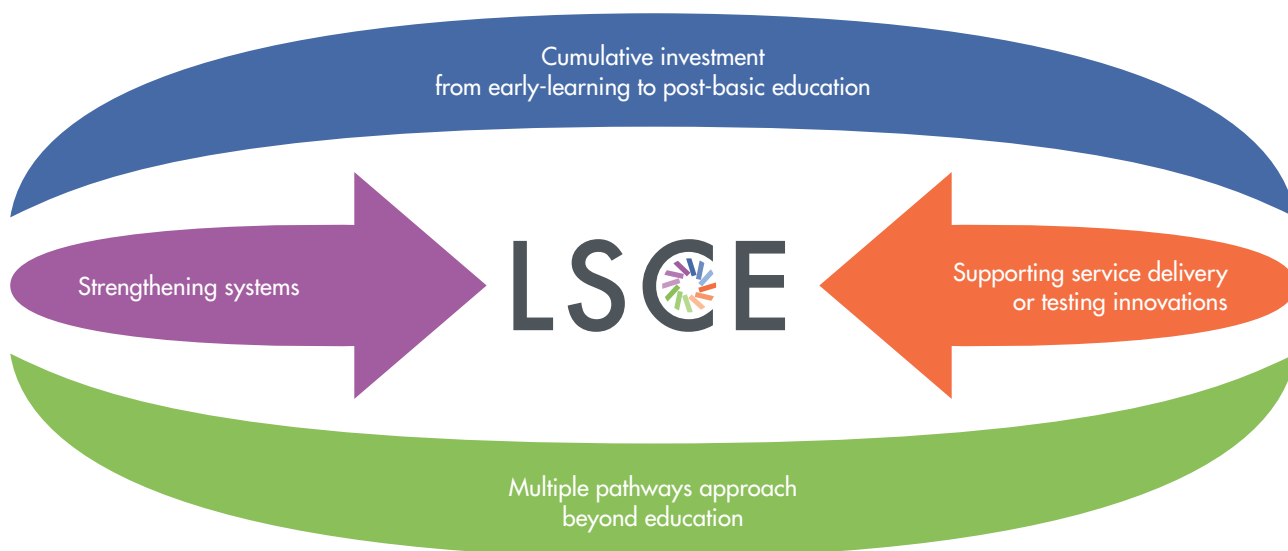
A decision on where to engage at the country level should be based on a careful analysis of the current situation and challenges to learning and skills acquisition for all children. The **identification of entry points** should be based on analysing the available opportunities for programming to achieve scale, sustainability and transformative change. This includes a careful prioritization exercise not only within education sector programming, but also across sectors – i.e. what are the factors impacting the choices to be made at the country level? This approach would strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration. Annex 2 provides examples of specific entry points that have been explored by the different country offices.

Achieving long-term impact and sustainability of policies and interventions towards the LSCE new learning agenda requires:

Political ownership and upstream engagement: The LSCE Initiative has been successful in expanding the scope of interventions away from project-based approaches through advocacy and national consultations. Most country offices have been moving towards upstream engagement ensuring development of national policies, plans and strategies as well as dedicated budgets.

Evidence-based programming: System-level changes need to be backed-up by experiences that have proven to be efficient and effective. Lessons learned from pilot projects, and small-scale interventions can be used to influence national strategies. Direct service delivery (pilot or not) should be accompanied by a clear monitoring and evaluation framework to allow lessons to be drawn.

Countries may find themselves at different stages of the spectrum that relates to the operationalization of the LSCE Initiative moving beyond service delivery towards system strengthening and upstream engagement. The figure below highlights the different aspects to consider while undertaking the prioritization exercise, ensuring identification of entry points not only within education sector programming, but also across sectors – i.e. what are the gaps and opportunities for promoting the LSCE vision at the country level?



6. UNICEF REGIONAL OFFICE SUPPORT

UNICEF MENARO's priority is to support country offices (COs) – conceptually, programmatically and technically – in promoting and introducing the LSCE new learning agenda through the following actions:

Development of a Long-Term Agreement (LTA) Framework: The LTA Framework will provide partnership opportunities for UNICEF in the operationalization of the LSCE Initiative at country level, and enables COs to raise contracts directly at country level with selected partners. It includes a multi-sectoral approach to skills development, expected to facilitate the operationalization of the LSCE Initiative beyond formal education, addressing the four areas of interventions presented in these guidelines (teaching and learning; systems; multiple pathways; and enabling learning environments).

Developing a regional measurement instrument for LSCE: Integrating life skills in the curriculum will not be effective if exams continue to focus on academic skills, considering how exams systems drive teaching-learning processes. Current approaches in MENA to monitoring and evaluation in relation to LSCE are scattered and often limited to project level (e.g. mostly based on self-reporting and/or anecdotal evidence). UNICEF MENARO and World Bank are currently developing a regional tool to support policy makers and practitioner to: a.) Understand the state of play (i.e. current levels and distribution of these skills across the population) to clarify the scale and areas of skills deficits; b.) Inform the nature and scope of required interventions, and c.) Track the progress of policies and programmes (including curricular, extra-curricular and teacher training) designed to enhance these skills.

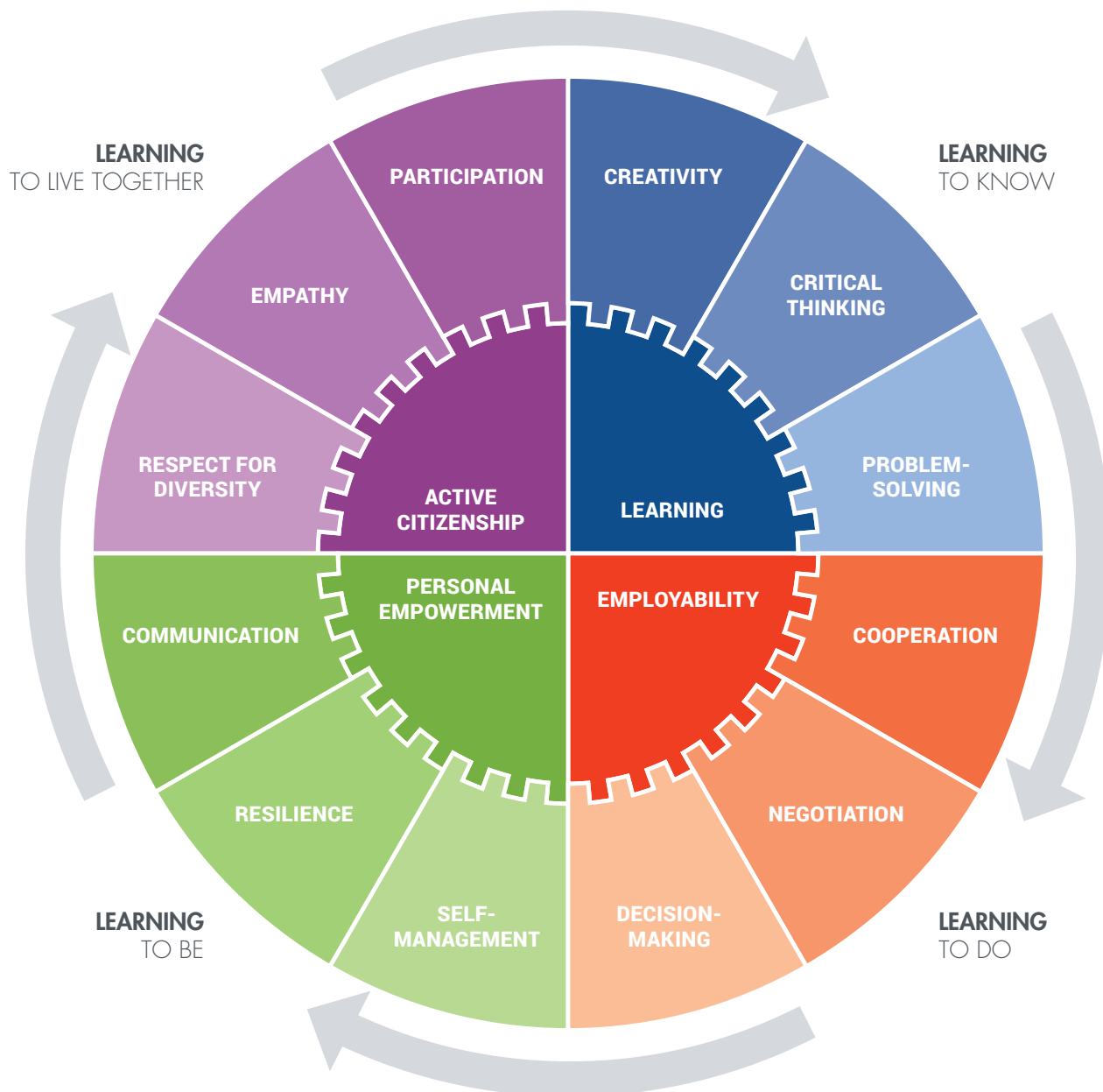
Advocacy and leveraging regional partnerships for multi-sectoral programming: The promotion of the LSCE transformative learning agenda will require continuous advocacy both at country and regional level, including through the mobilization of a large network of partners. Terms of Reference between regional partners have been developed to define partnerships modalities between LSCE regional partners and MENARO will continue supporting collaborative frameworks while advocating for the mainstreaming of the LSCE transformative learning agenda at both regional and national levels.

Knowledge management: The LSCE Initiative harnesses the knowledge and experience of a large number of global, regional and national partners from UN agencies to regional bodies and the private sector, forming a 'community of practice' around life skills and citizenship education. **The LSCE in MENA website** (launched in October 2017) provides an overview of the LSCE Initiative, using dynamic and interactive features and is home to a rich and growing repository of tools and resources at global, regional and country levels, which are currently being documented and circulated across the region. UNICEF MENARO works with country offices to capture their experiences in translating the LSCE agenda into action at country level through four-page briefs and videos, as well as news and updates.

ANNEX 1: THE LSCE 12 CORE LIFE SKILLS

The 12 core life skills are interconnected and life-long and they build on evidence that underlines the importance of skills acquisition from an early age. 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.

Identified as most critical in the region, the 12 core life skills are not 'set in stone' but rather mean to guide discussions, debate and adaptation at the country level, considering the different contexts and challenges in education and learning in each country.



LSCE 12 CORE LIFE SKILLS – DEFINITIONS

Creativity: the ability to generate, articulate or apply inventive ideas, techniques and perspectives often in a collaborative environment. It is a means of knowledge creation that can support and enhance self-learning, learning how to learn and life-long learning. Creativity allows for adaptability in various life situation by leading to solutions, methods and processes to tackle problems and contemporary challenges.

Critical-Thinking: the ability to assess situations and assumptions, ask questions and develop various ways of thinking. It is a means of learning to think about thinking and developing purposeful thinking processes, such as being able to discern and evaluate whether an argument makes sense or not. Critical thinking is essential as it helps to recognize and assess factors that influence one's values, attitudes and behaviours.

Problem-Solving: 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. It begins with recognizing that a problematic situation exists and establishing an understanding of its nature – the process leads from exploring and understanding to representing and formulating towards planning and executing, and finally reflecting.

Cooperation: the ability to work together to achieve a common purpose or mutual benefit. It includes teamwork, respecting others' opinions and inputs, accepting feedback, resolving conflict, establishing effective leadership, and working towards consensus in decision-making. It is central to problem-solving in the everyday world – in school, at home, at work and within the community.

Negotiation: the ability to communicate towards reaching agreements on perceived divergent interests – interactively and effectively partaking in a negotiation by being cooperative while being assertive. Listening, sharing information and building mutual trust are key elements in exploring common interests or concerns.

Decision-Making: the ability to choose between options within a set of influencing factors and constraints, and to make constructive and responsible choices about personal behaviour and social interactions. It builds on ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, consequences of actions and the wellbeing of others.

Self-Management: the ability to monitor and regulate one's behaviours, emotions, feelings and impulses. It constitutes a broad category of related skills such as self-control, self-efficacy and self-awareness, as well as positive attitudes such as reliability and self-presentation – and is closely linked to resilience.

Resilience: the ability to cope with negative changing circumstances and to overcome challenges that have a negative impact on one's emotional and physical wellbeing. Being resilient implies both struggling with and coping with adversity in a tenacious, systematic, active and constructive way.

Communication: the ability to share meaning through a two-way exchange of information and common understanding in social relationships. It enables self-expression, human interaction and participation in family, community and social life. It is an essential source of self-worth, self-efficacy and self-realization.

Respect for Diversity: the ability to acknowledge that human beings are equal participants in a common ethical world by virtue of their human status. It means realizing that all participants in society are equal, while fully recognizing individual differences, such as socio-economic status, age, gender, race, religion.

Empathy: the ability to comprehend another's feelings and to re-experience them oneself, while never being judgmental. It motivates altruistic behaviour and positive relationships. It is the basis for social perception and social interaction, paving the way to moral reasoning.

Participation: the ability to engage proactively, get involved and actively participate in influencing processes, decisions and activities, not just for personal wellbeing but towards improving life for all in the family, community and society. It fosters the development of self-efficacy and social connectedness.

ANNEX 2: THE LSCE ONGOING INTERVENTIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL, AS OF 2018

EXAMPLES OF LSCE ENTRY POINTS

The LSCE learning agenda has advanced through national consultations and in-depth mappings undertaken in most of the MENA countries. At the operational level, results have been achieved in moving towards upstream engagement including through national curriculum reforms, the integration of LSCE within national Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) strategies, and the piloting of LSCE related contents in formal and non-formal learning settings. Promising examples include:

- **Strengthening national systems** including through feeding into ongoing curriculum reform processes (e.g. Egypt – focus on pre-school and early grades, Tunisia – overall curriculum reform, Lebanon – reform of the TVET sector)
- **Focusing on changing teaching-learning practices.** This includes a focus on teacher/facilitator training to facilitate skills acquisition within curriculum implementation (e.g. State of Palestine/Morocco – introducing learning objects within the existing curriculum)
- **Promoting alternative pathways to learning** for youth with stronger linkages between formal, non-formal, and informal, including TVET (e.g. Sudan – accelerated learning; Jordan – non-formal education; Morocco/Tunisia – second chance education)
- **Enabling environments** through promoting child-friendly learning places, free of violence (Morocco, State of Palestine) in collaboration with Child Protection.

The list is a live document and provides an overview of ongoing interventions across the four areas of interventions (teaching and learning, systems, multiple pathways, and enabling environments) per country.

	TEACHING AND LEARNING	SYSTEMS	MULTIPLE PATHWAYS	ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
Algeria		LSCE to be integrated in Sahraoui refugee curriculum. National curriculum framework with MoE, MoYS to be adjusted in line with LSCE framework.	Provision of life skills programme to Sahraoui refugee youth. Design of an LSCE game application for youth in collaboration with the Innovation Lab of ESI (Ecole superieure d'Informatique). Establishing a Center of Excellence in partnership with the Algerian Muslim Scouts for the provision of life skills programmes to the most vulnerable adolescents and youth. MOOCs to be developed. An online collaborative platform to be created for educators and youth.	
Djibouti	Upon completion of integration of LSCE in curriculum during the review process, teachers will be trained on the new curriculum integrating LSCE.	Integration of LSCE in basic education curriculum during the review process (ongoing). In addition, LSCE will be integrated in the preschool curriculum (planned).	Provision of LSCE for OOSC through NGOs.	
Egypt	Review and packaging of life skills training material against LSCE framework.	LSCE integrated in national curriculum framework and development of learning outcomes for KG1-2 and Grade 1 to continue for other grades.	Meshwary project to be scaled up in partnership with MOE.	
GAO		UAE MOE review of life skills interventions against LSCE CPF and identification of life skills programming expected for 2019.	National youth policy to be developed in collaboration with UNFPA.	
Iran	Integrating LSCE in in-service teachers training.	Establishment of national LSCE committee within MOE. Development of LSCE national action plan.	Integration of LSCE as co-curricular interventions in lower and upper secondary.	

	TEACHING AND LEARNING	SYSTEMS	MULTIPLE PATHWAYS	ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
Iraq	Two Manuals on Psycho-Social Support for teachers in the re-taken areas developed (at the federal level). The Ministry of Education in Kurdistan is working on developing a comprehensive package on life skills in light with the LSCE framework (through curriculum intervention) for basic education (6-15 years).	Consultation conducted and action plan adopted in line with LSCE Framework.	Provision of life skills to refugee children and IDPs.	Programme on Positive Discipline launched in 2017. In coordination with Communication for Development (C4D), social outreach activities conducted at schools with children and community interaction, advocating for social cohesion and respect for diversity through sports, drama, and music festivals.
Jordan	Development of 100 Learning Objects introducing life skills in two subject areas for grades 7-10 in partnership with Birzeit University, including training of teachers, supervisors and school principals.	Scaling up of Nashatati as part of 20% allocation of co-curricular activities focusing on life skills and social cohesion, with the objective of rolling it out to all schools as of 2019/2020.	In collaboration with Birzeit University, UNICEF piloted learning objects in 11 Makani Centres, targeting children aged 14-18. Makani academic facilitators trained on the 'Learn as you work' methodology, with focus on interactive pedagogical tools that would enable facilitators to develop their own lesson plans to match the curriculum objectives. An evaluation study conducted to measure the impact of the LOB's in developing core life skills.	Promoting child-friendly learning places, free of violence in collaboration with Child Protection.
Lebanon	Development of LSCE standardized contents targeting youth.	Development of national TVET strategy integrating LSCE.	Life skills programme implemented in Makani centres.	
Libya	Development of extra-curricular life skills resources with focus on citizenship education.	Mapping and TVET strategy development integrating LSCE.	Inventory of life skills programmes targeting youth conducted against LSCE conceptualization.	
Morocco	Integrating LSCE in teachers training (initial and in service).	Integration of LSCE curricular and co-curricular intervention in lower secondary; Scale up of Personal Project and development of LSCE through citizenship clubs.	Integration of LSCE as co-curricular intervention in lower secondary. Scale up of Personal Project and development of LSCE through citizenship clubs in secondary. Modeling and extending LSCE-based second chance schools for out-of-school children.	
Oman	Introduction of life skills as a standalone subject in basic education.			LSCE approach to be integrated into Child Friendly Education (CFE) principles, which are being mainstreamed across schools in Oman.
State of Palestine	Development of Learning Objects integrating LSCE as co-curricular activity (Grade 1-4 in partnership with Birzeit University).	Development of Learning Objects integrating LSCE as co-curricular activity (Grade 1-4 in partnership with Birzeit University).		
Sudan	Life skills manual developed in 2017 to be piloted and scaled up.	Integration of LSCE within formal education at primary level through school clubs and educational material.	LSCE integrated in skills programme targeting youth and partnership with MOE mainstreamed at national level.	
Syria	Development of life skills manual and resources targeting in-school and out-of-school children.	LSCE integrated as co-curricular and extra-curricular activities within the framework of curriculum reform; Implementation of teacher training on LSCE.		
Tunisia	Development of life skills teaching and learning materials for remedial education and second chance education programmes.	National consultation and action plan developed in 2017; LSCE integrated in curriculum framework (general curriculum); Further development of national curricula KG.	LSCE to be integrated in second-chance education framework including development of contents for adolescents and youth.	
Yemen		National consultation conducted (2017); No further action planned due to current emergency situation.	LSCE to be integrated in ongoing youth civic engagement and life skills programmes.	

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