

ANALYTICAL MAPPING OF LIFE SKILLS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA



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The following organizations contributed to the development of the Analytical Mapping:

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ALECSO	Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization
AM	Analytical Mapping
BYB	Build Your Business
COB	community-based organization
CPF	Conceptual and Programmatic Framework
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
EFA	Education for All
E4C	Education for Competitiveness
EDSP	Educational Development Strategic Plan
ERfKE	Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy Project
HIV/AIDS	human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ICT	information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IYF	International Youth Foundation
KAP	Knowledge Attitude Practices
KAB	Know about Business
LSCE	Life Skills and Citizenship Education
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MENARO	Middle East and North Africa Regional Office
NGOs	non-governmental organizations
PTS	Passport to Success
QIF	Quality Improvement Fund
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMEs	small and medium enterprises
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNIATTTYP	United Nations Interagency Technical Task Team on Young People
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization
Y-Peer	Youth Peer Education Network

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The situation of learning in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) 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.

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 for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), the World Bank, and the World Food Programme (WFP).

The LSCE Initiative has two main components: 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, and the organization of technical support to countries on planning and implementation. An Analytical Mapping (AM) – this present document – has been developed to provide the evidence for the CPF; it gives a detailed analysis of major programmes and initiatives undertaken in MENA as related to life skills and citizenship education and it includes recommendations for further research. The AM also outlines the existing challenges and opportunities towards mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education within national education systems in MENA.

The production of the AM has benefitted from 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), United Nations agencies, think tanks and universities, non-governmental organizations (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 technical drafting of the AM was coordinated and reviewed by Bassem Nasir and Karen Phillips from the International Youth Foundation. Osama Mimi and Marwan Tarazi, with support from Rula Alqutami, from Birzeit University conceived and undertook the research. Country coordinators who facilitated the data collection process for the four case studies of Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and the State of Palestine include Rami Abass, Wala’ Al Jallad, Imane Mourabiti, and Bader Alhudhud. Researchers and writers who contributed to the drafts include David Clarke, Anne Genin and Joan Jubran. The UNICEF MENA Regional Office Education Team, comprised of Farida Aboudan, Vina Barahman, Alberto Biancoli, Francesco Calcagno, Dina Craissati, Magnat Kavuna, and Haogen Yao, provided technical support; Alberto Biancoli and Dina Craissati guided and coordinated the overall research project.



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, and 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 interrelated 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 interconnected 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.

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 Group 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 The Analytical Mapping in the context of the LSCE Initiative

An **Analytical Mapping (AM)** – this present document – has been developed to provide the evidence for the CPF. It gives an overview of (i) current major life skills and citizenship education initiatives and programmes in MENA and the key players and organizations implementing these programmes, and (ii) the challenges faced by implementing organizations.

The AM is framed by a definitional understanding of 21st-century skills based on a **four-dimensional model of learning** outlined in the CPF. 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 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 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, interconnect 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 constitutes 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 that particular Dimension.

4 Findings of the MENA LSCE Analytical Mapping

How is life skills and citizenship education defined and conceptualized in MENA?

The AM shows that there **are no clear definitions of life skills in MENA**, as existing definitions vary considerably among different stakeholders (governments, NGOs, United Nations agencies, donors and the private sector). Only few countries, such as Djibouti and Iran, reported having an agreed upon and documented definition of life skills that is commonly utilized by all stakeholders, as well as across different sectors (education, health, labour, sports, etc.). Most countries lack a consolidated document with a clear definition of life skills that is officially agreed upon and used by all stakeholders.

There is also **a conceptual confusion between competencies and skills**, and, in some instances, both terms are used interchangeably. Typically, life skills definitions are found in national curriculum frameworks and some national curriculum textbooks, often in post-basic education. Also, definitions are often adopted as part of **ad hoc initiatives**, mostly from international sources, whether United Nations or international NGOs.

Despite the prevalence of the Instrumental and Social Dimensions of Learning for the region, as highlighted by many states, NGOs and private sector organizations interviewed and surveyed during the mapping process, **existing life skills definitions are primarily related to the Cognitive and Individual Dimensions**, with some elements of the Social Dimension. The Instrumental Dimension of Learning is lacking a lifelong perspective and is not consistently addressed. A clear definition of lifelong learning, stressing all learning activities undertaken throughout life and aiming to improve life skills, is missing in most educational policies in MENA.

Policy makers and practitioners find it **challenging to integrate life skills into education systems** due to the lack of guiding conceptual frameworks that clearly define the concepts, offer a holistic vision for life skills and citizenship education and lay out the type of values to be taught and emphasized in MENA.

What is the life skills landscape in terms of Dimensions of Learning and skills clusters?

Within the **Cognitive Dimension** of learning, the vast majority of the programmes reviewed during the AM process address mainly problem-solving skills (86 per cent), while critical thinking is the least frequently addressed skill. Analysis by type of organizations further reveals that governmental organizations primarily address problem-solving and critical thinking skills, while NGOs may focus on skills from other Dimensions of Learning in other settings.

Within the **Instrumental Dimension**, teamwork was the most frequently reported skill in the programmes surveyed, while customer relationship was the least frequently reported skill, as only 30 per cent of programmes address this skill. State and non-state actors, as well as United Nations agencies, attest that many skills within the Instrumental Dimension of Learning, such as career planning, goal setting, job searching, interview skills, workplace protocol, customer relationships and rights at work, are extremely important for the workplace and ‘road to workplace’, but are not sufficiently addressed by current life skills and citizenship education programmes in the region, particularly those implemented by governmental organizations. Evidence shows that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes are still failing to address many of the skills needed by youth.

Within the **Individual Dimension**, which promotes skills for personal empowerment and development, cooperation and negotiation were the most frequently reported skills, with 91 per cent of programmes surveyed reporting focus on such skills, while resilience skills were the least frequently reported. Despite the perception of stakeholders that self-efficacy skills, such as assertiveness, self-presentation and agency, organization of society and groups, and leadership, as well as survival and resilience, are the most needed skills for the MENA context. However, such skills are amongst the least frequently reported skills by current programmes, particularly by governmental programmes.

Finally, within the **Social Dimension**, respect for diversity was the most frequently reported skill, as 74 per cent of programmes surveyed reported addressing this skill, while active engagement was the least frequently reported, only addressed by 5 per cent of programmes. Despite the high number of programmes promoting a variety of skills within the Social Dimension, the evaluation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education in MENA highlighted the paucity of systemic approaches consisting of a comprehensive analysis of the state of human rights education in policies, curricula and textbooks, teacher training, learning and teaching approaches, school environment and assessments.

Overall, a **holistic approach** integrating the four Dimensions of Learning in current life skills and citizenship education programmes **is lacking**, as most programmes focus on certain skills within one or two Dimensions at most. Furthermore, **perceptions of policy makers and youth differ around which skills are most needed** and there is a lack of guidance in the process of identification of core skills. While youth tend to focus on skills clusters within the ‘Learning to Be’ pillar, policy makers believe that skills clusters within the ‘Learning to Live Together’ and ‘Learning to Do’ are the most needed skills for youth. This divergence in perception can be attributed to the weak participation of youth in programme design, as well as the lack of comprehensive analysis and needs assessments at national levels.

It is worthwhile to highlight that in **fragile and conflict-affected MENA countries**, such as Syria, Sudan and Yemen, all life skills are perceived as equally important, but some are addressed more than others. The set of skills related to social responsibility, empathy, and ethical thinking is critical within socially and politically instable contexts. In a similar way, ‘Learning to Know’ and ‘Learning to Do’ related skills are key, yet they are less frequently addressed by formal education systems, which are affected by the ongoing crises.

What are the subject areas through which life skills are addressed?

Subject areas are understood as thematic, technical, academic or content areas of teaching and learning in which life skills are embedded. Countries reported **citizenship education as the most frequent subject area** in which life skills are addressed, facilitating topics such as civic society and systems, civic principles (equality, social cohesion and human rights), civic identities (national, regional and religious identities) and civic participation (decision-making, influencing policy and community participation). In fact, the post-conflict fragile and unstable context in MENA opened up opportunities for the emergence of many programmes in citizenship education. Results of the AM indicate that 51 per cent of programmes are implemented within the context of citizenship education, and most of them are run by NGOs (77 per cent in comparison to 18 per cent run by governmental organizations).

Out of all programmes reviewed, 40 per cent are implemented within the context of **health education**, which focuses on life skills, such as negotiation, refusal, communication and critical thinking as a crucial set of skills to influence positive health-related behaviours. These programmes have been developed in MENA as a result of many pressing health issues, such as HIV/AIDS, nutrition, hygiene and unsafe behaviour, early pregnancy, infections, etc.

In contrast, the **subject areas of environment and disaster risk reduction** report the lowest frequency of integration of life skills, while vocational disciplines have a limited focus on life skills, which, in turn, negatively affects the quality of TVET. **Curricular disciplines** are another subject area through which life skills is addressed in current programmes, referring to core subjects of the national curriculum, such as language, mathematics, science, social studies, etc.

The AM also highlights that the **concepts of life skills and subject areas are not clearly differentiated**. Some curricula and training manuals reviewed focused on knowledge areas and technical content, while lacking an underpinning in life skills and citizenship education. Knowledge is presented in these resources without giving attention to life skills. Similarly, life skills were integrated in some curriculum frameworks, without being labelled as such by stakeholders. The lack of a clear conceptual and programmatic framework to guide policy makers, educational experts and practitioners on how to integrate life skills and citizenship education, clearly differentiating subject areas from skills clusters, as well as defining each one of these, is one of the factors explaining the confusion.

Which teaching and learning approaches are used in life skills and citizenship education?

Curriculum frameworks and national education strategies of many MENA countries emphasize the interactive teaching and learning approaches and the need to link theory and practice. Many promising participatory techniques are implemented by governmental organizations NGOs and United Nations agencies, using drama, role play, group work and videos, as well as working on personal and community projects. These **life skills programmes demonstrate the importance of implementing good learning and teaching approaches**, as illustrated in UNRWA's experience in the framework of its Human Rights Conflict Resolution and Tolerance (HRCRT) Initiative that integrates human rights in school curricula and focuses on practical approaches and engagement with the community in teaching human rights.

The **majority of reported programmes, however, still rely on traditional lecture-based instructional methods**. Teaching behaviours that promote open questions, probing and comments are rarely encouraged. In TVET, prevalent teaching and learning approaches also fail to convey higher-order cognitive skills, such as problem-solving, and tend instead to emphasize rote memorization while rewarding passive learning. By contrast, teaching and learning approaches in life skills and citizenship education in non-formal education settings promote more interactive activities.

Teaching and learning resources used for life skills and citizenship education **are developed on a project basis and are mostly adapted from international definitions, frameworks and guides**. They primarily target youth, and only to a lesser degree, children at early ages. They provide detailed descriptions of and practical exercises for specific life skills, such as communication, decision-making, creative thinking, presentation, career searching, etc. Despite the availability of a multitude of resources for life skills and citizenship education, some are not publically available and there is a lack of learning fora where practitioners can exchange best practices and resources developed around life skills in the region.

How are life skills and citizenship education delivered, and what are the challenges?

Formal education is a major channel of delivery for life skills and citizenship education. It has the greatest reach, providing opportunities for learning to children and youth. Yet its potential to equip learners with relevant skills in MENA remains unfulfilled. **Most reported life skills programmes are implemented in formal basic education and non-formal education settings** (44 per cent of programmes), while programmes delivered in formal post-basic education (including tertiary education and TVET), workplace and 'road to workplace' settings were the least prevalent (26 per cent, 27 per cent and 21 per cent respectively). These data, however, do not provide a comprehensive picture of participation and quality of learning outcomes. There is a need for core life skills to be mainstreamed within formal education, in line with current education reform attempts to develop a knowledge society, improve employment outcomes and enhance social cohesion.

Life skills interventions implemented in **non-formal education settings are largely in the hand of NGOs** that run 65 per cent of these programmes, in comparison to only 8 per cent of programmes surveyed that are implemented by governmental organizations. Programmes in non-formal education are playing a crucial role in targeting vulnerable groups, such as out-of-school children, youth, victims of gender-based violence, refugees, etc. These programmes, however, have limited scalability and coordination among relevant governmental organizations, and/or the private sector. On the whole, they remain sporadic, unsupervised and face sustainability risks. In addition, there are only a few regulatory frameworks that link formal and non-formal education with limited or no recognition or accreditation of alternative learning opportunities.

On the other hand, **programmes delivered through learning in both the workplace and in the 'road to workplace', including apprenticeships and internships, are underrepresented in MENA**. One of these programmes is implemented by ILO in collaboration with the IYF and is aimed at improving the economic livelihoods of Jordanian youth by enhancing their knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in relation to personal development, problem-solving, healthy lifestyles and workplace success, while placing youth in apprenticeships with employers.

Also, **social engagement** in MENA 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. Life skills programmes in the field of social engagement are implemented mostly by local community groups or community-based organizations (CBO). These programmes flourish in response to the limitations of formal education systems coupled with the need for space to accommodate multiple organizations with a strong social presence in the public sphere. They integrate life skills as a key component and aim to socially engage children and youth in voluntary and community work, such as UNFPA's Youth Peer Education Network (Y-Peer) programme that focuses on sexual and reproductive health in using life skills approaches. Social engagement programmes often implement promising teaching and learning techniques in life skills but concerns arise as far as their scalability, sustainability, and alignment of the messages delivered with the national education system.

The AM further shows that life skills and citizenship education in the region have been introduced through considerably **varying modalities of delivery**. In formal education, life skills are most frequently delivered through co-curricular interventions such as the Learning Objects, piloted and evaluated by the Centre for Continuing Education at Birzeit University in State of Palestine, and extra-curricular activities, such as the 'personal project clubs' in Morocco, operating both inside and outside of school. Examples of extra-curricular activities include the citizenship and human rights clubs in Tunisia, meant as a space for creativity and communication to confront violence, intolerance and discrimination, as well as develop critical thinking among students. These clubs also aim to promote children and youth participation in public life through the promotion of concrete citizenship projects in partnership with civil society organizations. The 'life skills and HIV/AIDS prevention education' was initiated in Sudan and Yemen in extracurricular programmes targeting teachers, learners and parents.

Further, current programmes integrate **life skills and citizenship education in national curricula** by embedding them either in all subjects across the curriculum or into selected subjects. In countries that are developing new curricula, selected life skills are integrated into curriculum. In particular, the Tunisia national curriculum reform represents a unique and visionary example for the operationalization of the LSCE core life skills through the curricular modality. Other countries such as Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and the State of Palestine have also undertaken curriculum reforms or are in the process of reforming national curricula.

Integration of life skills in the curriculum, however, remains often fragmented because life skills programmes are predominantly delivered as stand-alone programmes. Further challenges hinder the effective integration of life skills into the curricula and other subject areas, including inadequate time allocation to promote life skills, lack of support from the ministry of education, high workload among teachers and shortage of teaching and learning materials, as well as insufficient evaluation at the national level. Another important issue is the identification and the role of core skills within existing discipline-based curricula. In addition, there is **limited use of innovative modalities**, such as media platforms, blended learning, open distance learning, etc. With the lack of sophisticated implementation strategies, appropriate human and financial resources and effective monitoring and evaluation systems, policy makers and educational practitioners find it difficult to successfully integrate life skills into the national education systems.

What are the opportunities and challenges to life skills and citizenship education programming?

The AM shows that life skills are **poorly integrated in existing national policies, strategies and plans**, with limited national assessment 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.

Funding priorities are dedicated to specific channels of delivery. Formal basic education receives the most budget allocation by governments and donors, while programmes implemented through learning in the work place (e.g., internships and apprenticeships) receive the least funding. Specific Dimensions of Learning are also subject to prioritization in budget, particularly Cognitive and Individual Dimensions, as well as specific target groups, mostly youth, people with disabilities and the poor.

Furthermore, current **school environments** in MENA are not conducive to life skills and citizenship education programming, mostly because of limited community mobilization and weak parent-teacher associations. In terms of human resources involved in life skills and citizenship education programmes, selection criteria to attract the best human resources dedicated to life skills and citizenship education are not clearly defined and there is a pronounced gender imbalance, as most programmes report hiring male facilitators. Professionals involved in life skills are usually highly educated, but have limited experience in life skills and citizenship education. Despite the availability and the support for professional development regarding life skills and citizenship education, policy makers, practitioners and teachers expressed concerns about effectiveness. Finally, there are **no specific monitoring and evaluation systems** for life skills and citizenship education, including national assessments of learning outcomes.

5 Structure of the Analytical Mapping

The AM document is organised as follows:

- **Chapter 1, Introduction**, situates the AM within the framework of the LSCE Initiative, and presents its theory of change, together with its conceptual and programmatic approach, with a view to facilitating the reading of the findings. It then introduces the methodology used in the development of the AM.
- **Chapter 2, Vision and working definition of life skills and citizenship education**, provides an analytical overview of the different conceptual approaches to life skills in MENA countries. A particular focus is on how different stakeholders understand and define life skills, as well as the various sources utilized to communicate these definitions. It also identifies, describes and analyses the various skills clusters and subject areas, through which life skills are addressed.
- **Chapter 3, Programmatic interventions and approaches**, explores the different components of the multiple pathways and systems approach of the CPF. It includes an overview of the teaching and learning approaches and their relative importance in implementing life skills and citizenship education programmes in MENA. It investigates how life skills and citizenship education are delivered in terms of the main reported channels and modalities of delivery. Furthermore, Chapter 3 presents the opportunities and constraints in mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education within national education systems in MENA.
- **Chapter 4, Areas for further research**, is informed by the key takeaways of the AM and recommends areas for future research in order to provide all stakeholders in the region with further evidence-based knowledge to inform programming and scalability.
- Finally, the **Annexes** to this report present the four in-depth countries studies on life skills and citizenship education, conducted in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and the State of Palestine.



This AM has been designed in relation to the theory of change developed through the Conceptual and Programmatic Framework (CPF) of the MENA Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) Initiative (UNICEF, 2017). At the same time, the findings of the AM have been also used to inform the analysis included in the CPF.

The AM aims to:

- Provide an analytical overview of interventions related to life skills and citizenship education in MENA.
- Highlight general challenges encountered in life skills and citizenship education programming, as well as focus on opportunities for mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education in MENA national education systems.
- Propose questions for further investigation and research around life skills and citizenship education that are crucial for programming in MENA.

The AM provides a multi-stakeholder view of the status of life skills and citizenship education in MENA and the corresponding vision for the region. It does not evaluate existing interventions, nor is it meant to generate an exhaustive list of all existing life skills programmes in MENA.

This chapter situates the AM within the framework of the LSCE Initiative and presents its theory of change, together with its conceptual and programmatic approach, with a view to facilitate the reading of the findings. It then introduces the methodology used in the development of the AM.

1.1 The MENA Life Skills and Citizenship Education Initiative

Children, youth and all learners in MENA face **three unprecedented challenges**: learning, employment and social cohesion. 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. These challenges call for reforms 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.

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 interrelated 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.
- **The realization of economic development through improved employment and entrepreneurship**
With youth unemployment being a widespread economic and societal issue in MENA together with 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.

- **The attainment of enhanced social cohesion through improved civic engagement**

Social cohesion and interconnectedness need to be supported by empowered individuals, who choose 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.

While there is a general agreement on the importance of life skills and citizenship education in addressing the above challenges, especially for MENA in the present context, there are conceptual and programmatic gaps that need to be addressed for effective implementation. This is what the LSCE Initiative strives for through the CPF developed as part of the Initiative (*see Figure 1*).

Addressing the conceptual gap

At the conceptual level, the CPF builds on the four pillars of the Delors Report (UNESCO, 1996) and proposes four interconnected, interrelated and mutually reinforcing ‘Dimensions of Learning’:

- **‘Learning to Know’ pillar, or the Cognitive Dimension:** This Dimension includes the development of abilities involving problem-solving and critical 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 Dimension 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. 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).

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 AM 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, employability, personal empowerment and 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

At the programmatic level, a clear 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 components of the CPF: a multiple pathways approach and a systems approach (see *Figure 1*).

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

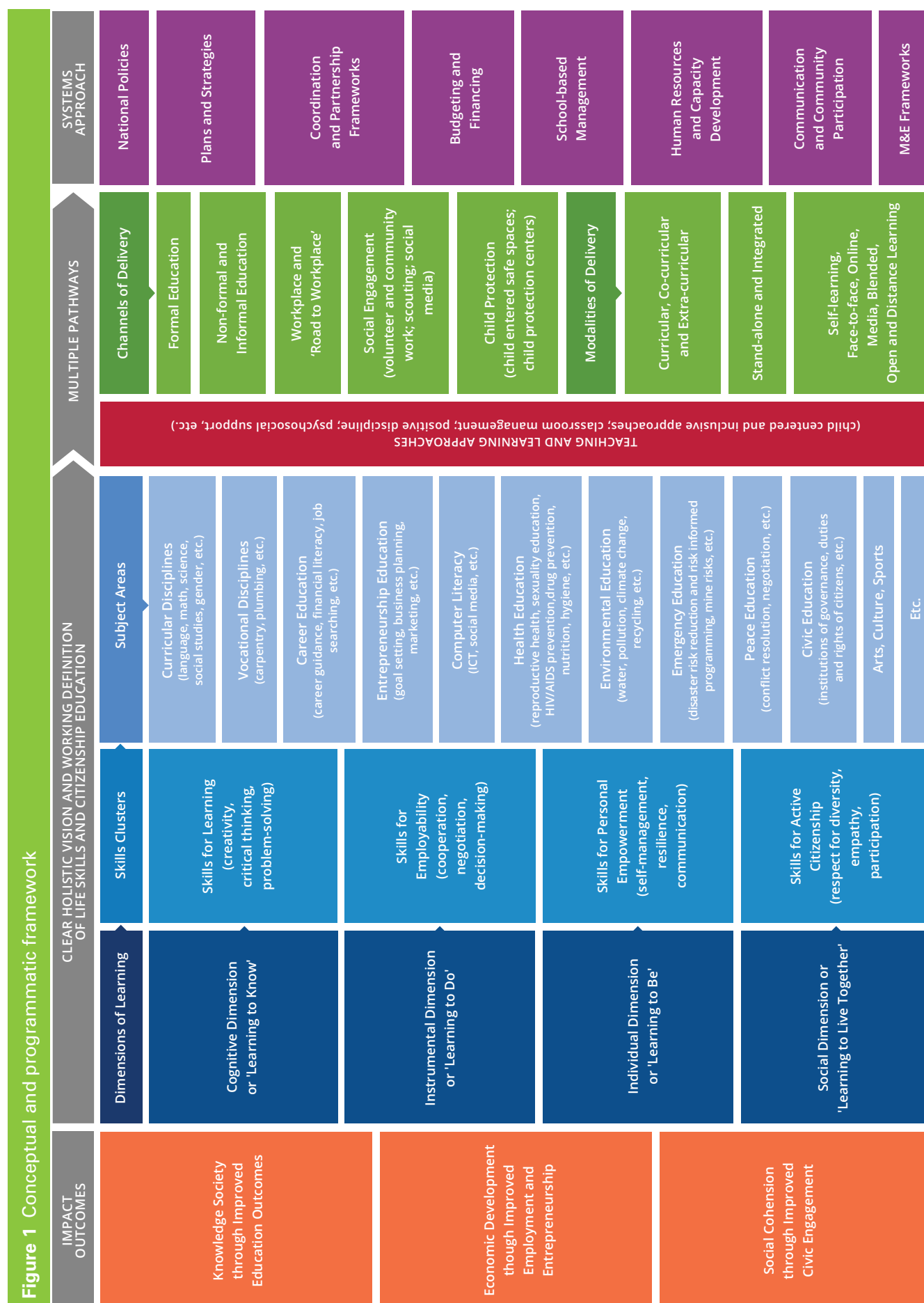
Effective **teaching and learning approaches** are the connecting thread to successful learning through life skills and citizenship education. Changing the attitudes and improving the classroom practices of teachers represents the most promising entry point in bringing about systemic change. The experience 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. 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 on connecting successful performance in school, life and work to the acquisition of a wide range of ‘life skills’ beyond curriculum content (Brown et al., 2015; Graber et al., 2015; Gutman and Schoon, 2013; Heckman and Kautz, 2012; 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 extra-curricular 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 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.



1.2 Methodology of the Analytical Mapping

The AM was carried out in 15 MENA countries: Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the State of Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen (see Figure 2). The preparatory phase of the AM included a desk review that continued throughout the process. A multi-phase approach was then used to conduct the AM utilizing four mixed data collection and analysis methods, as follows (see Figure 3).

Figure 2 The fifteen MENA countries involved in the Analytical Mapping



Figure 3 Key data collection and analysis methods employed in the Analytical Mapping



The **first quantitative mapping survey** takes stock of life skills and citizenship education in the 15 participating MENA countries by mapping life skills and citizenship education programmes from a quantitative perspective. Particular attention was given to the way life skills are defined, the dimensions of learning covered, existing skills clusters, as well as channels of delivery in basic education (ages 5-15 years) and post-basic education, including tertiary education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (ages 15-24 years), non-formal education (ages 5-24 years), and for the workplace and 'road to workplace' (ages 15-24 years).

The survey also explored how policies, strategies and plans address life skills, the availability and type of coordination frameworks, as well as the funding and budgeting for life skills programming. The nature of human resources involved in life skills programmes, target groups and geographical scope of programmes, and the nature of monitoring and evaluation frameworks at national and programme level were also examined. Finally, the survey offered a mechanism to collect relevant documentation about life skills and citizenship education across participating countries.

Figure 4 Number of life skills programmes collected in the first quantitative mapping survey, classified by type of implementing organizations

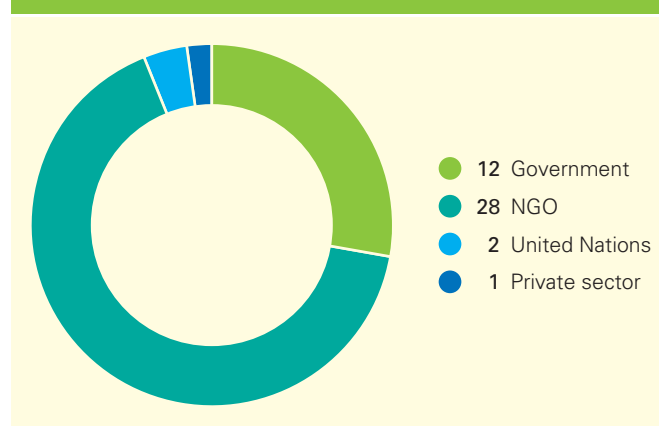
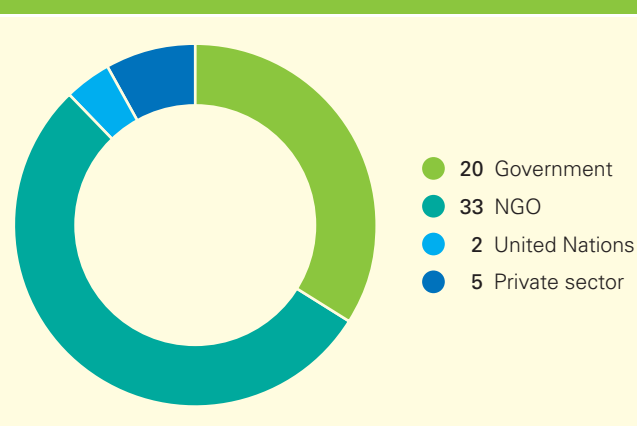


Figure 5 Number of life skills programmes collected in the second qualitative mapping survey, classified by type of implementing organizations



Accompanied by a technical guidance note that specifies all terms and definitions, the survey was completed by a total of 37 governmental, non-governmental, United Nations and private organizations currently implementing a total of 43 programmes (see Figure 4).

As a follow up to the first mapping survey, the **second qualitative mapping survey** collected qualitative information on different approaches to life skills and citizenship education and programmes, while focusing on challenges encountered during implementation and recommendations to improve life skills programming. More specifically, it sought to better understand the process utilized to develop the current vision and working definitions of life skills and citizenship education, including stakeholder engagement and challenges encountered, as well as to analyse the nature of multiple pathways and systemic approaches, challenges and recommendations for further enhancement. The second mapping survey also presented an opportunity to collect more documents and literature at the national and programme levels providing supplemental information on policies, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, curriculum, student assessments, studies, best practices, etc.

The second qualitative mapping survey was completed by 53 governmental, non-governmental, United Nations and private organizations, which are implementing a total of 60 life skills programmes. Of these 60 programmes, 33 programmes are implemented by NGOs, 20 by governmental organizations, two by United Nations agencies and five by the private sector (see Figure 5).

Furthermore, **four in-depth country case studies** were undertaken in order to explore the issues of life skills and citizenship education policy, programming and practice that were initially informed by findings of the first mapping survey and country documentation review. The four countries selected were Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and the State of Palestine, according to the following three selection criteria:

- Relevance and size of life skills programming, including the presence of life skills programming in formal education, non-formal education and workspace arenas;
- Geographical representation of MENA, including one Maghreb country, along with Middle Eastern countries; and
- Presence of life skills programmes related to emergency situations, including refugee education.

Semi-structured individual and group interviews were conducted with 150 individuals representing beneficiaries, state and non-state actors involved in life skills and citizenship education (*see Table 1*). In addition, nine focus groups were conducted with a total of 130 participants representing school teachers, students, life skills trainers, youth beneficiaries, state and non-state actors.

Table 1 Data collection methods employed in the country case studies aggregated by number of participants

Tool	Representation	Number of participants by country			
		Egypt	Jordan	Morocco	State of Palestine
Semi-structured interviews	National level Ministry of Education, other relevant ministries and governmental bodies	15	2	14	5
	Universities and colleges	1	1	–	2
	NGOs	1	4	5	13
	Private sector	4	5		5
	United Nations Agencies and donors	3	12	4	7
	Management, counsellors and teachers at governmental schools and vocational centres	7	15	–	5
	Beneficiaries (school students, youth and refugee families)	–	16	–	4
Total people interviewed		31	55	23	41
Focus groups	School teachers	–	–	16	–
	School students	14	–	30	–
	Life skills trainers	10	8	–	–
	Youth beneficiaries trained in life skills at NGOs	14	10	–	–
	NGO and private sector representatives	15	–	–	–
	Representatives from different departments at ministries of education	–	–	13	–
Total participants at focus groups		53	18	59	0

As a way of complementing the findings of the two surveys and country case studies, as well as to triangulate the information obtained, a **desk review** of both primary and secondary sources was undertaken. The desk review of primary sources entailed the mapping of institutions' and United Nations agencies' websites, review of relevant resources including learning resources and training manuals, as well as important documentation of life skills and citizenship education programmes collected through the AM research. These were collected in a compendium of resources for the Life Skills and Citizenship Education Initiative. In parallel, the desk review of secondary sources included the review of relevant reports, journals and peer-reviewed articles relating to life skills and citizenship education in MENA, and Education for All (EFA) reports.

Finally, based on a highly participatory process, **national partner consultations** were conducted with **more than 600 stakeholders** (see Table 2) representing: (i) governmental organizations (Ministries of Education, Ministries of Labour, etc.); (ii) MENA regional organizations, such as ALECSO; (iii) international organizations; (iv) NGOs; and (v) the private sector. These consultations provided a high-level platform for exchange and dialogue between different stakeholders involved in life skills and citizenship education at national level. Specifically, these consultations offered an opportunity to:

- Reach a common perspective about the nature of life skills and citizenship education in those countries and across the region; share and validate findings of the results from the mapping surveys, discuss key conceptual and programmatic issues to inform the CPF; and
- Articulate a shared way forward to inform future operationalization of the LSCE Initiative in MENA.

Table 2 National and regional consultations with countries and partners

Type of consultation	Dates
MENA Education Network (MEdNet) Meeting	30 November – 3 December 2015
15 national consultations (one per country) – quantitative survey	November – December 2015
14 national consultations (one per country) – qualitative survey	April – May 2016
National consultation workshops in Iran, Iraq, State of Palestine, Yemen, and Tunisia	July 2016 – July 2017
Two partners' consultation meetings	7 – 9 June 2016 13 – 14 March 2017
One regional consultation on life skills and citizenship education	8 – 10 November 2016

Throughout the mapping process and whenever possible, findings were triangulated by comparing and contrasting the evidence collected from various documents (policies, strategies, curriculum frameworks, etc.) with the views collected through surveys and consultations, and by looking at practices based on findings and observational data obtained during the four country visits (focus group discussions and interviews).

Challenges encountered during the data collection process

Various limitations emerged during this process, which influenced the type, scope and quality of information gathered. While a total of 43 programmes were included in the first mapping survey, some programmes were missing, specifically those implemented by NGOs. Furthermore, during the first quantitative mapping survey, some national consultations engaged as few as four stakeholders and in other cases, only one category of organizations, either governmental or non-governmental, was present.

To overcome these limitations, the data collection period was extended for two months to allow UNICEF offices to reach more organizations and to give organizations more time to complete the survey. The list of participating organizations was expanded and many additional organizations were encouraged to contribute with the aim of mobilizing greater participation. This resulted in an increased number of respondents in the second qualitative mapping survey with 61 questionnaires for life skills programmes collected and an increased number of participants in the national consultations. Nevertheless, life skills programmes, collected both in the first and second mapping surveys, represent key interventions only, and are not exhaustive. Notably, Oman did not participate in the second mapping survey due to operational challenges. **The private sector is also underrepresented** across the countries and programmes surveyed. It is also worth noting that the first quantitative and second qualitative mapping surveys included self-reported questionnaires that were completed by organizations implementing life skills programmes. Despite the many advantages of self-reported questionnaires, including the richness of information and low barriers to participation, self-reporting implies certain methodological limitations. In particular, self-reported answers are frequently influenced by the participants' perceptions and understanding of each area investigated as well as their distinct interpretations of the questions asked with the risk of response bias.

Self-reported questionnaires also influenced the quality of responses and data gathered. As part of the measures to mitigate such limitations, the technical guidance note was distributed with the questionnaire, clarifying all terms employed. Furthermore, the key components of the first quantitative and second qualitative surveys were explained to key stakeholders in 15 national consultations. Similarly, the comparison of the data collected with programme documents, curricula, tools, training materials, and manuals collected from organizations allowed for further validation. Referring to secondary sources helped to complement self-reported data whenever possible.

Finally, the research tools employed in the country visits varied from one country to another due to the different typology of stakeholders involved in life skills and citizenship education in each country and to the ability to organize interviews or focus groups systematically for all four countries. As a result, there are variances in the in-depth analysis of life skills and citizenship education by country.

Despite these limitations, the analysis of the data collected through the AM outlines the main trends in life skills and citizenship education programming in MENA. These limitations also provide the basis for recommendations for future research in order to further investigate the efficiency, cost-effectiveness and the impact of life skills and citizenship.



This Chapter provides an analytical overview of the different conceptual approaches to life skills and citizenship education in MENA. It outlines how life skills are understood, defined and conceptualized by the different stakeholders in the region. It analyses the different definitions of life skills and citizenship education adopted and used by stakeholders, the sources of these characterizations and the perceived consensus or tensions in this area. It also identifies, describes and analyses the various skills clusters, through which life skills are addressed. It then concludes by providing an overview of the main subject areas as defined in the CPF.

2.1 How is life skills and citizenship education defined and conceptualized in MENA?

- There is no clear definition of life skills and citizenship education in MENA.
- There is no common understanding of life skills across the various stakeholders within each country.
- Competencies and skills are not conceptually differentiated from one another.
- Life skills definitions are found both in national curriculum frameworks and ad hoc initiatives.
- Life skills definitions are mostly adopted from international sources, whether from the United Nations agencies or international NGOs.
- Existing definitions do not consistently address the lifelong element of life skills and citizenship education.
- Existing definitions primarily address the cognitive and individual Dimensions of life skills, the social Dimension to a lesser extent, while the instrumental Dimension is mostly left out.
- Policy makers and practitioners find it challenging to integrate life skills and citizenship education into education systems, as there are no conceptual frameworks to guide them.

The analysis of both secondary sources consisting of policy documents, curriculum frameworks, guides and training manuals collected from the region, and interviews with key informants during country visits, clearly demonstrates that **life skills definitions across MENA vary considerably**. Different countries and different stakeholders (governments, NGOs, United Nations agencies, donors and the private sector) within each country attach different meanings to the term (*see Box 1*). The scope of the definition of life skills and citizenship education is quite wide and not commonly understood or formalized in the region (IYF, 2013). Only a few countries, among them Djibouti and Iran, reported an agreed-upon and documented definition of life skills at the national level which is utilized by all stakeholders involved in life skills and citizenship education and implemented across different sectors, such as education, health, labour, sports and youth, etc.

Box 1 Examples of definitions of life skills

The **Iraqi** curriculum framework defines life skills as “skills which provide learners with the capacity to undertake tasks or processes related to their day to day lives”. It also specifies that the national competency-based curriculum is developed based on skills learners should develop, defining these as the “broad capacity to apply knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in independent, practical and meaningful ways” (Iraq Ministry of Education, 2012). Other publications adopt the World Health Organization (WHO) definition, and refer to the term as the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (Iraq Ministry of Education, 2016).

In **Iran**, life skills are defined as “a set of individual and collective qualities and qualifications applied to all dimensions of identity (rational, emotional, wilful and practical) and all the elements of society according to the Islamic norm system” (Iran Ministry of Education, 2011). Competencies and skills are used interchangeably.

The **Palestinian** education sector refers to several definitions of life skills. In 2002, the Formal and Non-Formal Life Skills-Based Education Initiative, supported by UNICEF and coordinated by the Palestinian MOE and Higher Education, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs, UNRWA and NGOs, adopted the definition for life skills as “the abilities we need to solve our problems, cope with pressure, search for positive changes and promote available positives in order to improve our situation and reach security, peace, harmony with the society and the environment”.¹ But in 2014, a new term was used combining two international definitions of life skills. It is described, on the one hand, as “the group of processes and procedures through which an individual is able to solve a problem, face a challenge, or amend various aspects of his life”. On the other hand, the WHO definition is also adopted. Other definitions are referred to in various official manuals and focus on the same conceptual considerations.

In **Morocco**, the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training defines life skills as “the ability to evoke different knowledge and experiences already acquired in similar situations, then adapted and activated to overcome specific types of risks faced by youth” (Morocco Ministry of Education, 2016). Reference to ‘core competencies’ as applied knowledge and the ability to mobilize resources to overcome challenges or perform daily tasks is also found in non-formal education as well as in the curriculum for second-chance schools (Morocco Ministry of Education, 2015), that were established for non-formal education settings complementing the formal schooling system to provide education outside the formal schooling system and targeting out-of-school children (UNESCO, 2014a). The curriculum for second chance schools uses ‘competencies’ as well as ‘life and socio-vocational skills’ interchangeably at times, with the same connotation.

In **Sudan**, a comprehensive life skills curriculum was introduced and implemented across schools in 2008. It included developing self-confidence, HIV/AIDs, gender issues and dealing with conflict (UNESCO, 2010). In 2014, the Sudanese MOE defined the term as “skills that enable learners to interact with life constantly and on a daily basis”. These have been further elaborated as the necessary skills that allow one to adapt to, and effectively interact with, others and the environment, positively deal and interact with the needs and challenges of society, establish sound relations with others and lead a successful life (Sudan Ministry of Education, 2014).

Based on the documents analysed, it appears that most **MENA countries lack a consolidated or overarching document with a clear definition of life skills** that is officially agreed upon and used by all stakeholders involved in life skills and citizenship education. Rather, different organizations and donors develop their own definition within the framework of specific programmes or projects, and many of the existing definitions are developed on an ad hoc basis. As an example, six different life skills definitions, found in various documents, are used by different entities within the Ministry of Education and Higher Education of the State of Palestine.

Furthermore, there are usually no operational guidelines to direct the integration of life skills and citizenship education into educational and vocational programmes. Interviews during country visits revealed that some organizations are unable to clearly articulate the key components of life skills and citizenship education or of their application in the context of risk-based situations where children and youth need to be empowered. Effective national dialogue and stakeholder engagement to achieve coherent conceptual frameworks and common definitions of life skills and citizenship education are still sporadic despite ongoing country-level efforts.

¹ United Nations Children’s Fund, *Formal and non-formal Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE) Initiative in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, UNICEF, accessed at < http://www2.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_8797.html >.

There are **various barriers** to the adoption of comprehensive life skills and citizenship education frameworks. First, findings from country visits (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and State of Palestine) suggest that life skills and citizenship education is not a new concept, however, there is no consensus around their definition, scope or even means of measurement. National efforts in this regard remain scattered. Second, organizations also stress that there is a need to raise awareness on the part of government officials and decision-makers about the importance and relevance of life skills and citizenship education. Third, in most cases there is no responsible authority or body that organizes, regulates and accredits life skills and citizenship education at the national level. Fourth, the existence of different players and donors in the life skills and citizenship education arena, the lack of coordination between them and the weak ownership by key sectoral ministries (women, employment, education, youth, etc.) hinder the effective development of a cohesive definition. Fifth, the lack of knowledge and expertise in addressing life skills and conceptualizing a definition, vision and operational framework plays a crucial part in the lack of a common definition. Additionally, the unstable political situation in some MENA countries shifts educational priorities towards more urgent humanitarian issues and away from other areas, such as career readiness.

There is common agreement amongst stakeholders participating in the AM process that life skills fundamentally entail a set of characteristics that are essential to success or fulfilment at work and/or in life. In some instances, however, stakeholders use 'skills' and 'competencies' interchangeably.

First, the Arabic terms vary among countries. Some refer to the term *Kifa'at* (كفاءات) for competencies, while others use *Maharat* (مهارات) for skills. **In general, there is a lack of agreement amongst governmental, non-governmental and private sector organizations in the region as to what distinguishes competencies from skills.** In some definitions, competencies were referred to, 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 taking a more mechanical approach. For example, in the Iraqi curriculum framework, skills are defined as a component of competencies. Here competencies are defined as the "broad capacity to apply knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in independent, practical and meaningful ways", whereas skills are referred to as "the capacity to apply knowledge to perform a particular task to a consistent standard", implying an operational side to knowledge or knowledge in action (i.e., the 'know-how') (Iraq Ministry of Education, 2012).

Second, as a result of education reforms and the adoption of a competency-based approach in curriculum development initiated by some MENA countries, supported by United Nations agencies, the phrase 'key competencies' has been introduced to refer to the generic capabilities that deserve special recognition for their significance and applicability to the various educational, occupational, personal and social domains. In addition, adjectives, such as 'core', 'generic', 'basic', 'critical' and 'key', are used as synonyms by countries such as Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, to indicate the most important skills that learners should acquire.

Some countries also refer to '21st-century skills' or 'lifelong learning'. However, the reference to lifelong learning with a clear definition entailing all learning activity undertaken throughout life and aiming to improve knowledge, skills and attitudes, is missing in most educational policies in the region. A World Bank report on education reform in MENA already pointed out that only a few countries had adopted lifelong learning, and most education systems offered only limited opportunities for individuals to obtain more skills and acquire more knowledge after completing their formal degree or beginning to work (World Bank, 2008).

Curriculum frameworks as well as toolkits and manuals on life skills collected from the countries show a wide range of definitions of skills for positive and adaptive behaviours, as well as for those skills required to manage the challenges of everyday life. Many organizations accept and utilize the definition and taxonomy of life skills proposed by WHO in Skills for Health (WHO, 2003). This finding is in line with the results of UNICEF's global evaluation highlighting that the life skills discourse has centred on a range of psychosocial skills, mainly due to the reliance on research in the social sciences, specifically in psychology and childhood sociology, which stress the importance of skills for our protection, wellbeing, and our ability to live productive, meaningful and fulfilling lives (UNICEF, 2012). In that framework, individuals apply these skills across a wide spectrum of relevant contexts that, in turn, show the necessity to identify a core set of skills relevant to everyday life. As a result, many stakeholders recognize that life skills are a vital element for all individuals and in everyday life.

Despite the varying definitions among state, non-state and private sector organizations, it is possible to identify a basic conceptual framework for the idea of life skills. In fact, in many MENA countries, **life skills and citizenship education has taken on a specific meaning in the area of health promotion**. Life skills have been introduced in different forms and with varying levels of commitment, chiefly to support general health education with a particular focus on HIV/AIDS education. Life skills are also being implemented, albeit less widely, through education programmes to enhance employability and entrepreneurship. Life skills and citizenship education in the region has emerged as a result of the global focus on education, particularly since the World Conference on Education for All in Dakar in 2000 focusing on the Education for All Goal 3² and Goal 6³ directly related to life skills and citizenship education.

These findings for MENA strongly align with the global findings of the *Global Evaluation of Life Skills Programmes* conducted by UNICEF in 2012 and which included Jordan. The evaluation concluded that the term 'life skills' has gained popularity in the fields of health, education and social policy, but remains highly elastic and covers an extremely broad range of skills, falling short of a full and widely accepted definition. To deem all skills equally relevant for life is also problematic as it diminishes the utility of the concept. In some countries, such as Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, the State of Palestine and Morocco, existing life skills definitions are strongly interlinked with the Cognitive ('Learning to Know'), Social ('Learning to Live Together'), and Individual ('Learning to Be') Dimensions of Learning. In each of these definitions, these Dimensions of Learning are considered important because they provide the foundation for the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. In some instances, life skills are defined as cognitive, social, and emotional skills necessary to know, to be, to do and to live together as well as practical skills that are essential for individuals to function in specific real-life contexts.

In most of the definitions adopted by MENA countries, however, **the Individual Dimension slightly outweighs the other Dimensions of Learning**, specifically the Instrumental and Social Dimensions. This stands in contrast with what many governmental, non-governmental and private sector organizations shared during the country visits as they mostly emphasized the Instrumental and Social Dimensions. Similarly, none of the countries that participated in the national consultations reported including explicit references to skills for active citizenship in their national definitions of life skills, despite the integration of these skills in their programmes. Moreover, life skills are rarely understood as encompassing concurrently both Individual and Social Dimensions. Indeed, the Social Dimension in the documented life skills definitions translates only in the individual element of relating to others and living together, with less focus on the concepts of cohesion and the functioning of a group or the community as a whole.

Despite **the Instrumental Dimension not being clearly embedded in most of the available definitions**, some definitions expand on the idea of success and also include living a self-fulfilling life outside the world of work. In the face of the challenges of globalization, education systems in some MENA countries, such as in Jordan and Iraq, are increasingly focusing on the need to acquire essential 'knowledge economy skills', particularly employability skills. Thus, both the *Jordanian National Education Strategy* (Jordan Ministry of Education, 2006) and the curriculum framework⁴ refer to 'knowledge economy skills' as the skills required to succeed in the knowledge-based economy. These include knowledge, communication and intercommunication; teamwork; scientific thinking; personal, technology, future career and scientific research skills; and ability to contribute to one's community. The vision for the Jordanian education system is to provide all people with lifelong learning experiences that are relevant to their needs and to help to build an educated and skilled workforce, which can drive sustained economic development. The Iraqi curriculum framework clearly articulates that children are expected to possess "thinking and learning competencies, so that they become successful lifelong learners; personal and social competencies so that they become confident and productive individuals; and citizenship and work competencies so that they become proud and responsible citizens" (Iraq Ministry of Education, 2012). Another definition of 'employment skills or getting ready for the life of work' as the non-technical skills that enhance effective and successful participation in the workplace and help learners to prove that they are both technically qualified and possess the necessary skills to create and uphold the outcomes of successful work (UNICEF, 2013).

² EFA Goal #3: *Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes*, accessed at <www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/efa-goals/>.

³ EFA Goal #6: *Improve every aspect of the quality of education, and ensure their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills* accessed at <www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/efa-goals/>.

⁴ Jordanian Ministry of Education, General Curriculum Framework 2016

With the exception of the Iraqi definition of skills from the country's National Curriculum Framework, none of the available definitions found in country resources or identified through the mapping surveys clearly articulate the role of values in skills development.

Given the social and political transformations that many MENA countries are undergoing, the issue of citizenship education is of great concern, and **state, non-state and international organizations raise legitimate concerns about whether life skills and citizenship education should include values, and if so, which ones.**

The integration of values in the life skills and citizenship education learning process remains challenging. According to interviews and desk research findings, most countries claim that they aim to produce creative, independent, lifelong learners who are competent in languages, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology. However, interviews with other stakeholders in the same country give an opposite picture of the actual practice.

Moreover, some countries strive to raise religious citizens or patriotic nationalists, while others aspire to graduate youth with two or more identities along ethnic, religious, national, regional and international lines (Faour, 2013). Concerns arise as to whether MENA education systems provide youth with the right values to stop hatred and violence, or promote social, moral and political values – such as human dignity, individual freedoms, equality, pluralism, inclusion, responsibility and common good interest – to foster positive social change and cohesion.

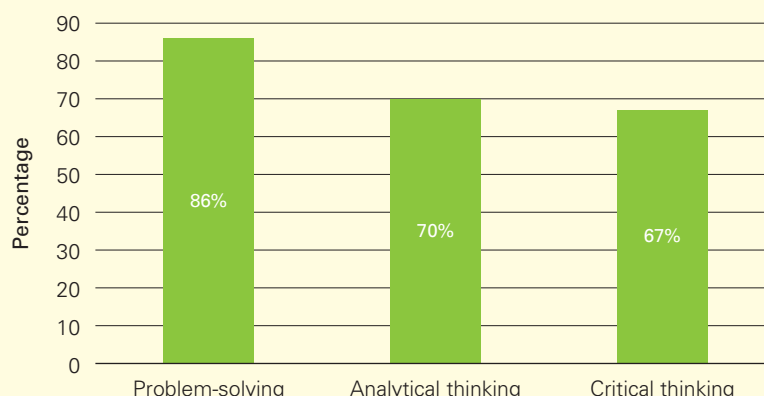
2.2 What is the life skills landscape in terms of Dimensions of Learning and clusters?

- The Cognitive Dimension: Problem-solving is the most frequently reported life skill while critical thinking is the least frequently reported one.
- The Instrumental Dimension: Teamwork is the most frequently reported life skill while customer relationship is the least frequently reported one.
- The Social Dimension: Respect for diversity is the most frequently reported life skill while active engagement is the least frequently reported one.
- Individual Dimension: Cooperation and negotiation are the most frequently reported life skills while resilience is the least frequently reported one.
- Perceptions of policy makers and youth of what are the most needed life skills greatly differ.
- The process of identification of core life skills lacks guidance.
- In fragile and conflict-affected countries, all life skills are perceived as equally important.

What are the current skills clusters addressed by programmes?

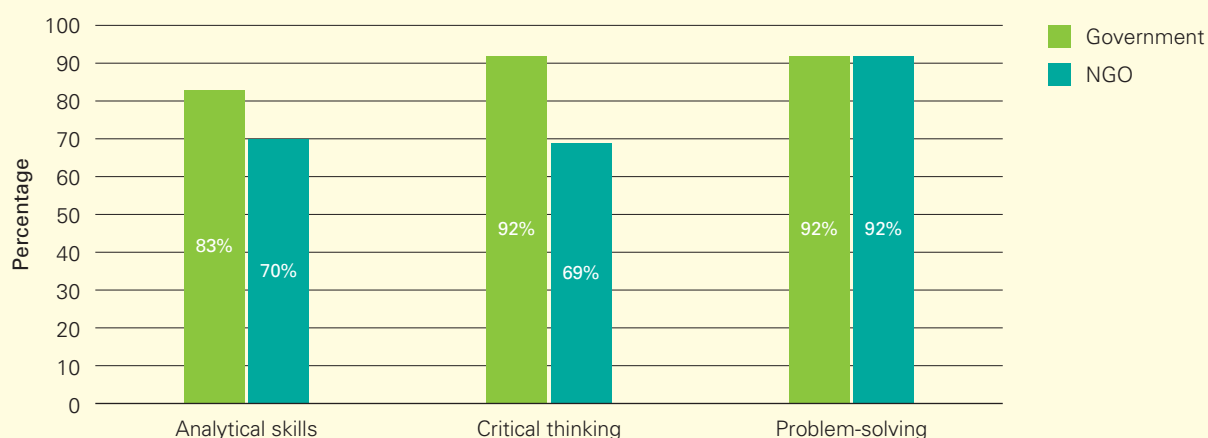
The **Cognitive Dimension** aims to promote discovery and to develop the faculties of memory, imagination, reasoning, and the ability to think in a coherent and critical way (Tawil and Cougoureux, 2013). Within this Dimension, problem-solving is the life skill that is addressed the most by the 43 life skills and citizenship education programmes reviewed towards this dimension in the process of the AM (hereinafter programmes surveyed). Of the programmes surveyed and implemented by governmental organizations, the private sector, United Nations agencies and NGOs, 86 per cent address problem-solving skills. Analytical skills and critical thinking skills come second and are addressed by 70 per cent and 67 per cent of programmes, respectively (see Figure 6).

Figure 6 Percentage of programmes surveyed (N=43) covering the various skills clusters within the cognitive dimension



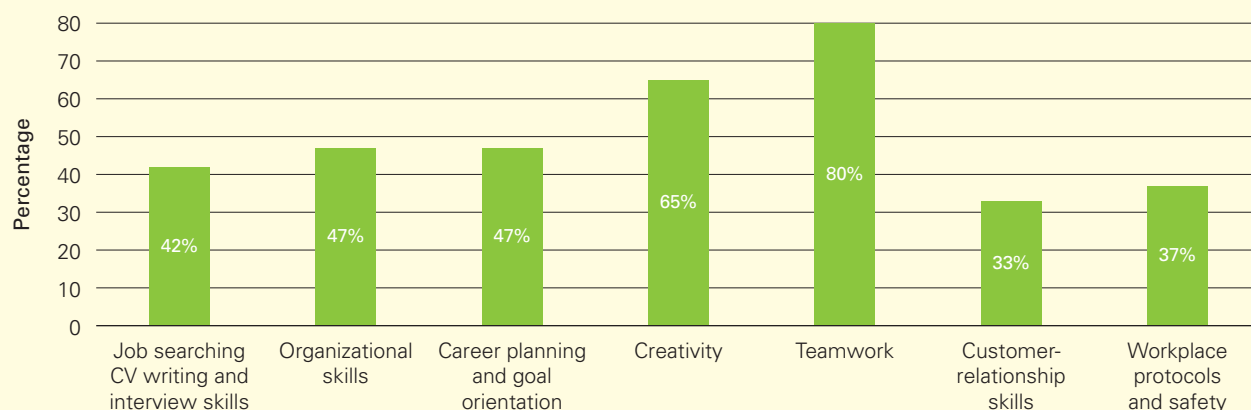
The analysis by type of implementing organizations further reveals that, out of the 12 programmes reviewed that are implemented by governmental organizations, 92 per cent primarily address critical thinking compared to 69 per cent of the 28 programmes implemented by NGOs (see Figure 7). These results might be attributed to the fact that most governmental organizations traditionally address these skills in formal education while NGOs focus on skills from other dimensions and in other settings. Although these life skills are reported in curriculum frameworks, the ways in which they are addressed in textbooks and how they are taught in the classroom remain the key challenges to effectively integrate skills into the curriculum.

Figure 7 Percentage of programmes surveyed and implemented by governmental organizations (N=12) and NGOs (N=28) covering the various skills clusters within the Cognitive Dimension



Within the **Instrumental Dimension**, teamwork is the most frequently covered skill by the 43 programmes surveyed, regardless of the type of stakeholder or target group, followed by creativity skills. By contrast, customer relationship skills as well as workplace protocol and safety were the least addressed. As national consultations showed, stakeholders consider career planning, goal setting, job searching, interview skills, workplace protocol and safety, customer relationships and rights at work as the most needed skills for the workplace and 'road to workplace'. They indicated, however, that these skills are still inadequately addressed by life skills and citizenship education programmes in the region. Indeed, only 35 per cent of programmes surveyed focus on workplace protocol and safety, and 30 per cent address customer relationship skills (see Figure 8).

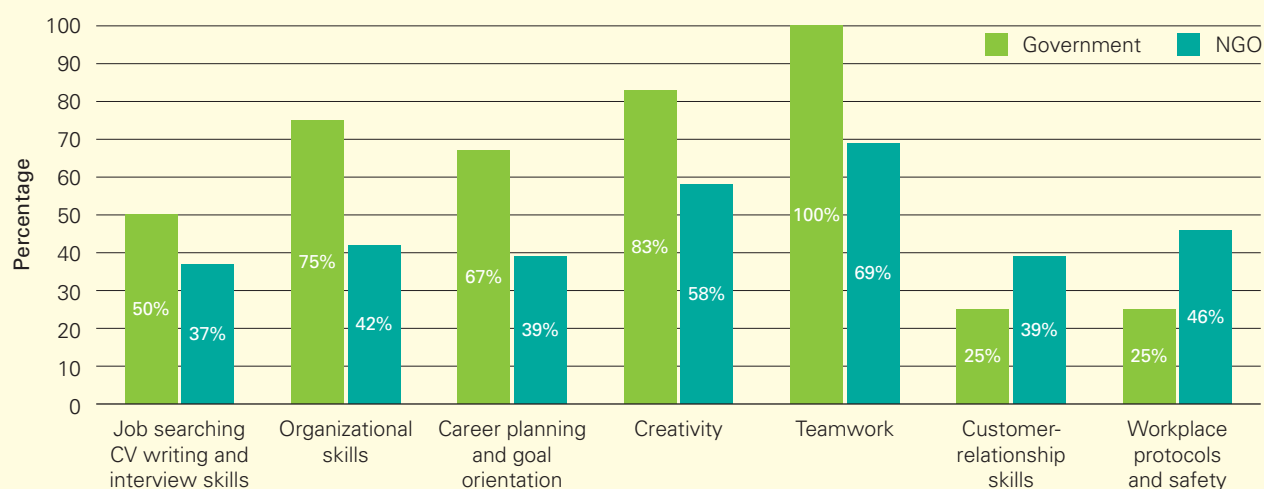
Figure 8 Percentage of programmes surveyed (N=43) covering the various skills clusters within the Instrumental Dimension



TVET programmes in particular fail to address the life skills needed for the world of work. In Jordan, for example, a national survey of businesses revealed that the poor technical knowledge of TVET graduates was the main reason for the dissatisfaction of employers, followed by poor performance under work pressure, poor leadership skills, poor work ethics, poor interpersonal skills, inflexibility and inability to adapt, poor time management and prioritization skills, and lack of contribution to strategy and vision of the organization. In the hotel industry, the skills gaps included communication, interpersonal skills (42 per cent) and English knowledge (29 per cent), while technical skills were the least reported (UNDP, 2013).

Stakeholders also indicated that life skills programmes implemented by NGOs tend to focus on two of the most needed skills in this Dimension, which are customer relationships, and workplace protocol and safety, more than programmes implemented by governmental organizations. Governmental organizations address more traditional sets of life skills, such as teamwork, creativity and organizational skills. This is particularly true with participating governmental organizations reporting that all 12 governmental programmes include teamwork skills, 83 per cent creativity skills and 75 per cent organizational skills, while only 25 per cent focus on customer relationships, and workplace protocol and safety skills (see Figure 9).

Figure 9 Percentage of programmes surveyed and implemented by governmental organizations (N=12) and NGOs (N=28) covering the various skills clusters within the Instrumental Dimension



In recent years, the number of entrepreneurship training programmes implemented by governmental organizations and NGOs targeting youth in the region has increased, such as the ILO programmes, 'Know About Business' (KAB) (see Box 2), 'Start Your Business', and 'Expand Your Business', which equip youth with the skills needed for work (OECD, 2012).

Box 2 The Instrumental Dimension: Instilling the entrepreneurial mind set and thinking among post-basic education students, with particular attention to TVET students

'Know About Business' (KAB) is a classroom-based entrepreneurship education programme developed by ILO and implemented in partnership with national ministries of education and labour, and other relevant education institutions in over 50 countries around the globe, including 12 MENA countries: Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen. KAB is an example of a life skills education programme that covers the Instrumental Dimension of Learning. The skills addressed include self-esteem, problem-solving, critical thinking and a range of employability skills.

The programme's goal is to contribute to the creation of a culture of enterprise by strengthening the capacities of governments and tripartite constituents to provide entrepreneurship education to youth, raise awareness about the opportunities and challenges of entrepreneurship and promote self-employment as a potential career option (UNIATTTYP, 2015). More specifically, the programme aims to create a responsible, enterprising culture among youth defined as the entrepreneurs of tomorrow. It also seeks to develop such qualities as initiative, innovation, creativity and risk taking among youth participants, as well as to increase their understanding of their role in shaping their own future and that of their country (ILO, 2011).

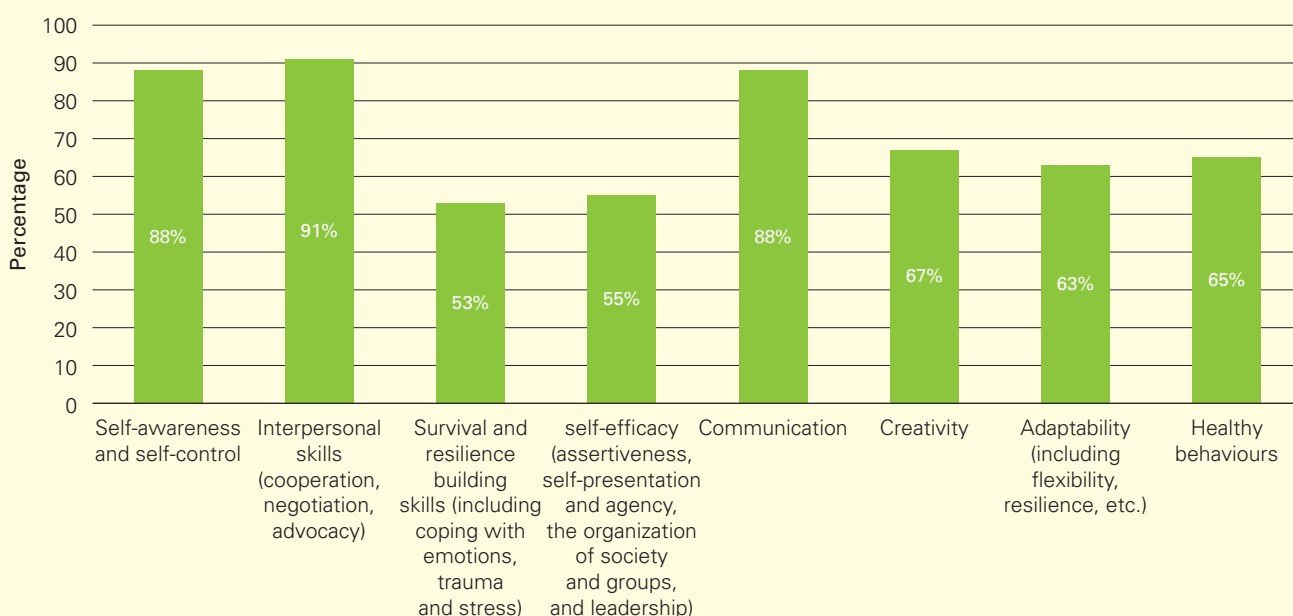
Another example is the programme implemented by INJAZ Al-Arab (INJAZ), a non-governmental organization in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, the State of Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. In partnership with these countries' ministries of education, INJAZ focuses on financial literacy, entrepreneurship and work readiness, targeting schools, universities and volunteers.⁵ The INJAZ curriculum focuses especially on analysis of information, decision-making, evaluating alternatives, communication, teamwork, consensus building, active listening, critical thinking, problem-solving, innovative thinking, coping with conflicts, job searching, self-awareness and negotiation skills.

Many of the programmes surveyed have adopted international curricula to inform the Instrumental Dimension, and adapted them to their country context. Contextualizing these skills poses great challenges to many organizations, yet it is a key factor in the success of such programmes. For example, ILO advocates for the translation of its curricula into Arabic and Kurdish, as well as for the cultural adaptation of their content, as this contributes significantly to national ownership and encourages opportunities for feedback on the material (ILO and UNICEF, 2016).

Within the **Individual Dimension of Learning**, which promotes life skills for personal empowerment and development, the most frequently reported skills are interpersonal skills, including cooperation, negotiation and advocacy, with 91 per cent of the 43 programmes surveyed focusing on these life skills (see Figure 10), followed by communication, self-awareness (which include self-esteem, self-confidence, identification of strengths and weaknesses, and identity), and self-control skills (which include anger management, self-motivation, self-regulation and self-discipline), with 88 per cent of the programmes addressing these life skills. By contrast, life skills which help to develop self-efficacy (which include assertiveness, self-presentation and agency, the organization of society and groups, and leadership), survival and resilience were amongst the least frequently reported life skills, despite participating stakeholders recognizing both that these are critical life skills in the current political and social context of MENA, and that current programmes inadequately address them.

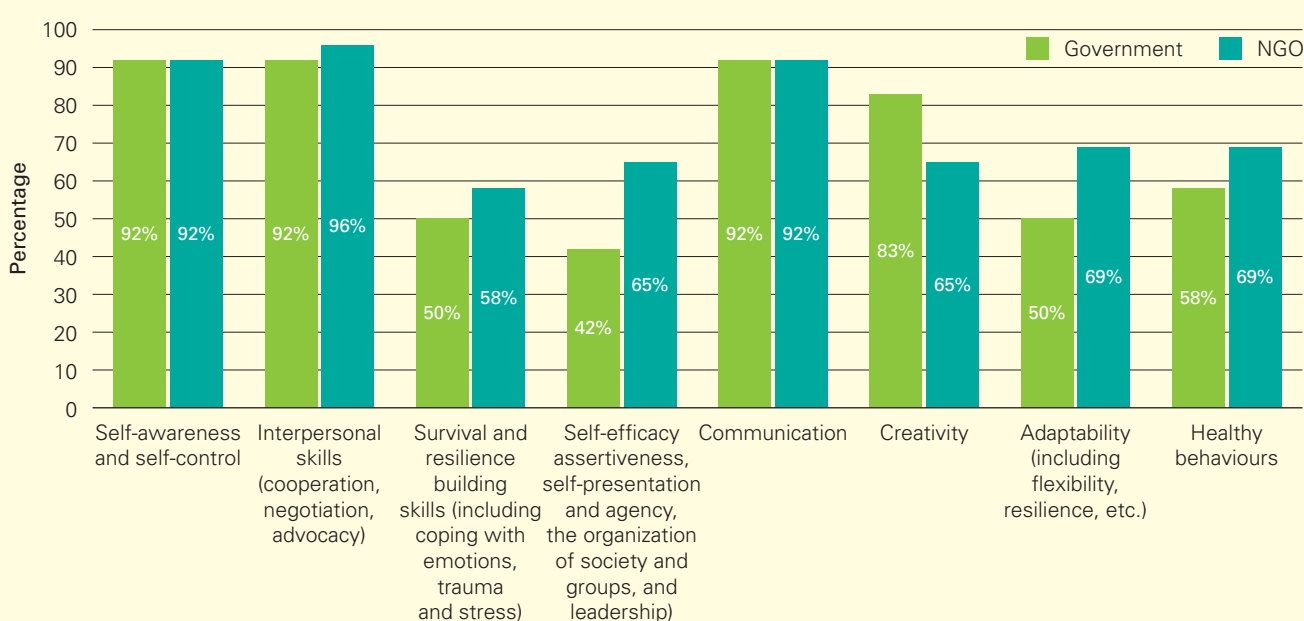
⁵ INJAZ Al-Arab website, accessed at <www.injazalarab.org/injaz-in-action/>.

Figure 10 Percentage of programmes surveyed (N=43) covering the various skills clusters within the Individual Dimension



The analysis of life skills by type of organizations delivering these programmes further shows that particularly governmental organizations participating in the survey **inadequately address self-efficacy, adaptability, survival and resilience building skills** (see Figure 11). More so, the relatively high frequency of a variety of reported life skills by both governmental organizations and NGOs raises questions regarding both the scope and content of curricula as well as the quality and impact on learners. Also of concern is the fact that stakeholders tend to ignore the differences between thematic areas and life skills, which can be attributed to the high frequency of certain life skills within the Individual Dimension.

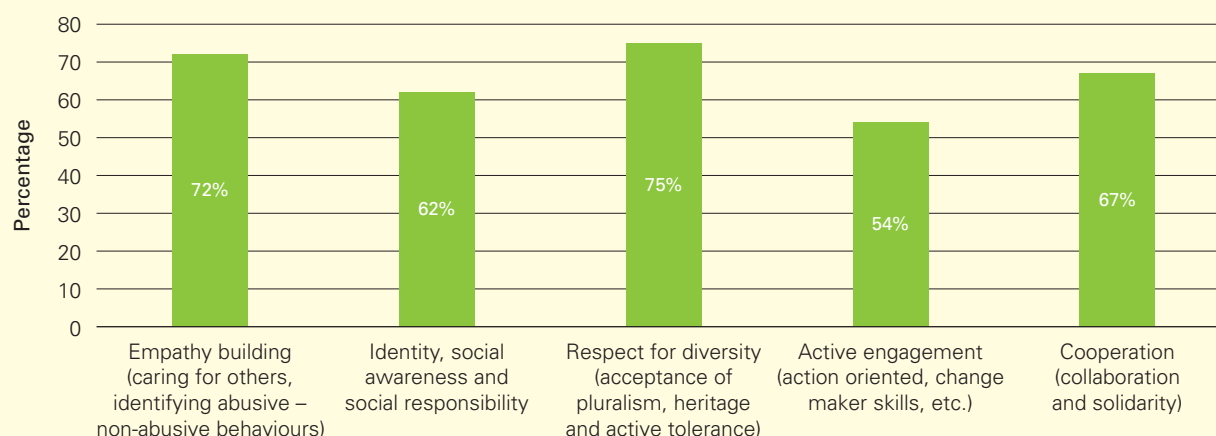
Figure 11 Percentage of programmes surveyed and implemented by governmental organizations (N=12) and NGOs (N=28) covering the various skills clusters within the Individual Dimension



Main programmes implemented within the Individual Dimension include those from UNFPA and their partner institutions in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Syria that target vulnerable girls and women, including refugees, internally displaced populations and survivors of gender-based violence. By having access to safe spaces in community centres, women and girls can socialize and re-build their social networks, receive social, as well as psychosocial support, legal and medical services, acquire skills, and access information on issues pertaining to women's rights, reproductive health and other services (UNFPA, 2015). Life skills training offered in these spaces address, among others things, communication, negotiation, teamwork, advocacy, decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking, self-control and resilience (including stress management and facing fears) skills (UNFPA, 2015). For example, UNFPA provides Syrian refugee women in Lebanon with information on basic life skills, early marriage, reproductive health, healthy nutrition and gender-based violence. Also, as part of its civic values, and life skills and citizenship education programme for youth development and empowerment in Iraq, UNFPA promotes, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies (ILO, UNESCO, UNDP and WHO), access to information and life skills training on health and social issues, through both formal and non-formal education curricula and the Youth-to-Youth Peer Education approach implemented in Lebanon.

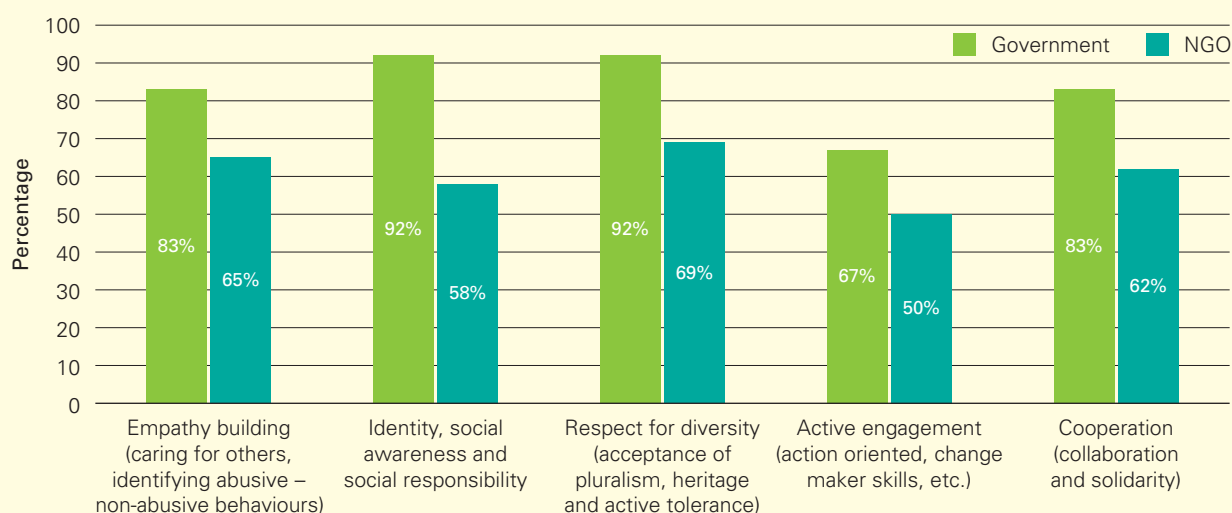
Lastly, the acceptance of pluralism is the most frequently reported value within the **Social Dimension**; 74 per cent of the 43 programmes surveyed address it, whereas active engagement including participation, civic action and self-motivation are the least frequently reported, being addressed by only 54 per cent of the programmes (see Figure 12).

Figure 12 Percentage of programmes surveyed (N=43) covering the various skills clusters within the Social Dimension



Despite the variety and relative high frequency of the life skills addressed in programmes implemented by governmental organizations (see Figure 13), a review of citizenship education in MENA concluded that reform initiatives have not satisfactorily addressed citizenship education (Faour and Muasher, 2011). Similarly, a 2015 evaluation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education in MENA found that systemic and comprehensive review frameworks analysing the state of human rights education in policies, curricula and textbooks; teacher training, teaching methods and school environment; and assessing the remaining needs and the establishment of specific objectives and priorities were scarce (UN Human Rights Council, 2015). Further research on coverage, content of curriculum, quality and impact on learners is thus needed to assess the effectiveness, quality and impact of the interventions addressing the Social Dimension and implemented by governmental programmes.

Figure 13 Percentage of programmes surveyed and implemented by governmental organizations (N=12) and NGOs (N=28) covering the various skills clusters within the Social Dimension



Citizenship education can promote various life skills, contribute to reforming classroom environments, and nurture a democratic environment in the school among staff, administrators and teachers. Effective citizenship education employs active learning methods, open discussion, and opportunities to practice skills such as problem-solving, communication, persuasion and cooperation, rather than relying on didactic teaching. It contributes to making education more relevant to everyday lives, as strongly evidenced by UNRWA's experience in enhancing the design and implementation process of its Human Rights Conflict Resolution and Tolerance programme. After a nine-month thorough review, and within the framework of the education reform process, it was agreed to move towards a strengthened and more coherent approach to the teaching and learning of human rights across the agency (UNRWA, 2013). This programme helped to integrate concepts of human rights, conflict resolution and tolerance into school curricula. The programme is now a vital component of UNRWA's education programme vision that aspires to develop "the full potential of Palestine's refugees to enable them to be confident, innovative, questioning, thoughtful, tolerant and open-minded, to uphold human values and religious tolerance, to be proud of their Palestinian identity and to contribute positively to the development of their society and the global community" (UNRWA, 2011).

On the whole, national and regional stakeholders acknowledge that a **holistic life skills and citizenship education approach integrating the four Dimensions of Learning is lacking in the region**, as most programmes focus on certain skills within one or two Dimensions at most. However, one example of a life skills programme that links various skills clusters across several dimensions, is the Peace Building Programme implemented by Aflatoun International in Jordan and Syria (see Box 3).

Box 3 Multi-dimensional approach: Linking life skills within the Instrumental, Social and Individual Dimensions

The Aflatoun International Peace Building programme targets out-of-school children in Jordan and Syria who are affected by armed conflict. The curriculum is built on the principle that every person's personal, social, and economic lives are interrelated and that teaching approaches should be holistic, to enable children to pursue their goals. This holistic approach has proven to be essential to the success of Aflatoun's programmes (Aflatoun, 2017). In Syria, Mobaderoon contextualizes Aflatoun curricula for peace education with a focus on rebuilding their broken communities.

The Near East Foundation in Jordan teaches Syrian and Iraqi refugees important survival skills, while helping them to transition away from illegal employment. Along with entrepreneurship skills related to financial literacy, including starting and managing a business, the Peace Building curriculum also incorporates three components covering the Instrumental, Social and Individual Dimensions. The 'Myself, My World' Module introduces skills, such as self-expression, resolving conflict, problem-solving, critical thinking, active listening and communication, while skills within the Social Dimension are tackled through the 'Learning to Live Together' Module that teaches teamwork, social inclusion (fairness and empathy), rights and responsibilities, the value of volunteering, respect for diversity, as well as gender roles and awareness. Further, the 'Do Good, Be Enterprising' Module introduces youth to career planning skills, labour and workers' rights, and negotiation skills, along with other skills needed to start and manage a business.

According to the findings of the self-evaluation conducted by the organization, the programme provides a concrete example of how to successfully link together skills from the Instrumental, Social and Individual Dimensions. Aflatoun's self-evaluation concluded that 99 per cent of children targeted by its programmes have positive, rights-based attitudes and knowledge. It also showed that the inclusion of rights-oriented social education protected children from engaging in child labour. The evaluation also revealed that targeting children at an early age (aged 3-6 years) is more likely to equip them to think and act independently. At this early age, it was shown that children improve their self-understanding, are able to manage their emotions in a healthier way, and are able to identify other children's and adults' emotions, as well as adjust their behaviour accordingly. Furthermore, children were better able to promote and maintain mutual, positive relationships with others (Aflatoun, 2017).

What are the top skills that MENA's future generations need?

More challenging than defining life skills in the national and local-specific contexts of MENA countries is the identification and selection of 'key' or 'core' skills. In the absence of comprehensive and participatory national assessments to inform policy frameworks, strategies or plans in the area of life skills and citizenship education, as well as the lack of national policies on skills development in most MENA countries (12 out of 15 countries reported lacking such policies), stakeholders have difficulties in systematically and comprehensively prioritizing specific skills that both address various target groups' needs and which are applicable at the national level by different providers. Core skills represent the multiple, diversified perspectives of different academic disciplines and sectors (educational, economics, sociology, etc.) on life skills.

Core skills are often identified within national curriculum frameworks as well as educational and TVET strategies. In **Morocco**, for example, analytical skills as well as higher-order thinking skills are transversal to the curriculum (science, technology, mathematics and languages), while entrepreneurship is addressed in extracurricular programmes. Identity and social awareness are embedded in post-basic history and civic education curricula. The 2001 *Livre Blanc* of the Moroccan MOE stresses the values related to Islam, the Moroccan identity, citizenship, and human rights, as well as core skills required for learners, such as self-knowledge and expression; positioning in time and space; awareness of the other, social institutions and the environment; communication; analytical thinking; self-organization and time management; identity; decision-making; and the ability to conceptualize, design, innovate and produce.

In **Algeria**, the selection of core skills varies by sector. In education, priority is given to civic engagement, critical thinking and tolerance. In TVET, communication, creativity and entrepreneurship are key priorities, whereas communication and social awareness are identified as the two most essential core skills for youth development.

In **Lebanon**, different stakeholders prioritize different skills. Some implementing United Nations agencies and international donors focus on peace building, conflict management and active citizenship, while the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, supported by other international organizations, focuses on six skills that are regarded as core skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity and digital literacy, perceived as the ‘new universal skills’.

In **Jordan**, interviews with representatives from the MOE highlighted the focus on five key skills in the following order of importance: identity, communication and technology, social cohesion skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. On the other hand, the Jordanian National Education Strategy refers to communication skills, thinking skills, positive attitude and behaviour (self-esteem, honesty and initiative), responsibility, adaptability and teamwork as critical ‘knowledge economy’ skills (Jordan Ministry of Education, 2006). By contrast, the Higher Council for Youth has set communication and social awareness as the top skills needed for youth, while in the *Manual on Skills Testing and Certification Jordan* the ability to communicate with each other, use information and communication technology, work with each other, solve problems, as well as exercise numeracy skills are the core skills within the Instrumental Dimension (ILO, 2015).

While these core skills represent the multiple, diversified perspectives of several academic disciplines and sectors (educational, economics, sociology, etc.), the interviews conducted during the country visits with policy makers, educators, youth and private sector representatives show different priorities, albeit at times with common elements to what desirable skills should be acquired by youth.

In the process of the AM, **stakeholders identified core skills that they perceived as desirable and necessary attributes of citizens and learners in the region**. Countries report that skills addressing the Instrumental Dimension (‘Learning to Do’) and the Social Dimension (‘Learning to Live Together’) of learning are the most important ones for future generations (*see Table 3*). Particularly because many MENA countries are experiencing social and political instability, as well as undergoing internal changes, the focus on skills related to social responsibility, empathy building and ethical thinking are amongst the ones deemed most necessary. In fragile and conflict-affected countries, such as Syria, Sudan, Yemen and Tunisia, a wide variety of skills clusters covering the four Dimensions of Learning are perceived as equally important.

Table 3 Stakeholders' ranking of the top most needed skills (country typology)⁶

Dimensions	Top most needed skills	Algeria	Djibouti	Egypt	Iran	Iraq	Jordan	Libya	Morocco	State of Palestine	Sudan	Syria	Tunisia
Learning to Know/Cognitive Dimension	Analytical skills		●		●					●	●	●	●
	Problem-solving				●	●					●	●	●
	Critical thinking				●	●	●				●	●	●
	Questioning skills				●								
	Creative thinking					●							
	Decision-making, planning and organizing					●							
	Independence					●							
Learning to Do/ Instrumental Dimension	Communication		●	●	●		●				●	●	●
	Teamwork		●	●	●		●				●	●	
	Creativity and artistic skills				●	●	●						●
	Negotiation												●
	Workplace skills and career guidance	●	●	●	●		●			●	●	●	●
Learning to Be/ Individual Dimension	Healthy behaviours		●								●	●	
	Resilience				●								
	Self-awareness and self-control				●	●							●
Learning to Live Together/Social Dimension	Social responsibility, empathy and ethical thinking	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Active engagement (participation, civic action, self-motivation, commitment)	●	●	●	●						●	●	●

The many available programmes in the region are still failing to address core life skills for learners. While there is a broad consensus on some of the most important skills that all learners need in order to live productive and rewarding lives, and to successfully face the challenges of an uncertain future, stakeholders stressed the difficulty in selecting and prioritizing these skills, and regretted the lack of guidance in the process of identification and implementation of these skills. The issue seems particularly acute in pre-primary education, which is often overlooked in the skills development paradigm. As mentioned earlier, one of the recurrent issues is the lack of a common understanding and of common definitions of many of these core skills. Moreover, the range of contexts in which each core skill should be applied is not clearly identified.

The perceptions around the most needed skills differ widely between policy makers and youth. While policy makers and educational practitioners emphasize skills clusters within the Social and Instrumental Dimensions, youth tend to focus more on skills clusters within the Individual Dimension. During the four country visits, discussions held with youth showed that they consider life skills and citizenship education to be highly significant to their personal and professional development, emphasizing problem-solving skills, self-efficacy (assertiveness, self-presentation and agency), self-awareness (self-esteem and self-confidence), resilience (stress management, facing fear and confronting failure) and social awareness (relationship skills, respect for others and self-reflection) as the most needed skills. Awareness of the need for life skills among youth becomes clearer when they leave school, by which time it may be too late for the education system to assist them.

⁶ This table is based on the information shared by participants both during the national consultations and in the surveys. In Yemen and Lebanon, participants did not report any core life skills due to the lack of clear national definition of life skills in their respective country and the inability to identify them with the lack of a conceptual framework or national assessment.

2.3 What are the subject areas through which life skills are addressed?

- Stakeholders and programmes do not always differentiate between the concepts of ‘life skills’ and ‘subject areas’.
- Conflict resolution and health education are the most frequent subject areas in the framework of which life skills are addressed.
- Environment and disaster risk reduction are the subject areas in which life skills are the least integrated.
- Vocational disciplines have limited focus on life skills, which negatively affects the quality of TVET education.

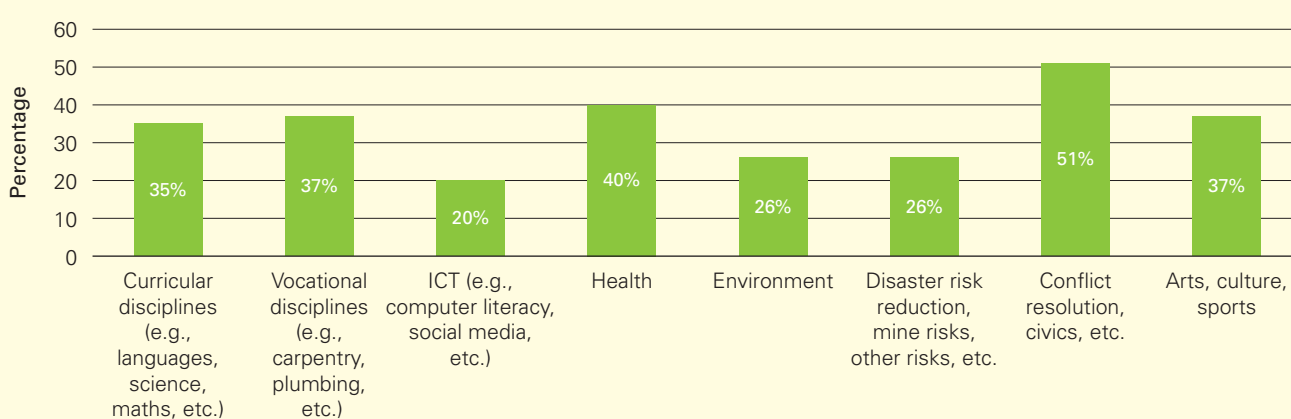
Subject areas are knowledge areas defined as thematic, technical, academic or content areas of teaching and learning in which life skills are embedded. They can include curricular and vocational disciplines, career and entrepreneurship education, computer literacy, health and environmental education, emergency education, peace education, civic education, arts, culture and sports, etc.

Similar to other international experiences, and because most programmes were developed as global and national responses to specific challenges and risks, such as the HIV/AIDS crisis, drug abuse or conflicts, **life skills and citizenship education in MENA was first integrated in programmes which focused on specific subject areas, including their content-relevant life skills.** The most prevalent subject areas in MENA identified during national consultations are conflict resolution, civic engagement, health, curricular disciplines (languages, mathematics, etc.), vocational disciplines (carpentry, etc.), information and communications technology (ICT), environment, disaster risk reduction and mine risk reduction.

Civic Education

Civic education is the traditional umbrella term for the teaching of knowledge regarding national institutions and the rights and duties of citizens, as well as civic engagement. In many programmes, it is an essential content area in which life skills and citizenship education is addressed. Post-conflict, fragile and unstable contexts prevalent in the region, coupled with a history of human-rights abuses in many countries, have opened up an opportunity for the emergence of citizenship education to foster the reconstruction of societies and national identities. According to the questionnaires completed for the AM, 51 per cent of life skills programmes in MENA countries have a civic education focus (*see Figure 14*). Civic education programmes are largely offered by NGOs (77 per cent of all reported programmes) and only 18 per cent by governmental organizations.

Figure 14 Subject areas through which life skills are addressed



In citizenship education programmes, subject areas reflect national political and socio-cultural contexts as well as historical and geopolitical trajectories. The following four categories of civic topics were identified in the textbooks of 11 of the countries participating in the AM: (i) civic society and systems including the democratic system; (ii) civic principles, such as equality, social cohesion and human rights; (iii) civic identities (national, regional and religious identities); and (iv) civic participation addressing decision-making, influencing policy and community participation (Faour, 2013).

In light of the recent socio-political developments in the region, civic education is the subject of much scrutiny. In formal education settings, it has traditionally been hampered by authoritarian school climate and governance, as well as the prevalence of out-dated curricula and inappropriate teaching practices (Faour, 2013). In contrast, several civic education initiatives offered in non-formal education settings aim to provide the required social space to nurture the skills and values needed to foster civic engagement, while also promoting appropriate teaching and learning methodologies. For instance, programmes in Morocco and Tunisia address the political and legal dimensions of active citizenship, while programmes in non-formal settings in Iraq reflect the community tensions and national dilemmas that have arisen since 2003. Citizenship and civic education programmes in Yemen focus on peace building education. UNESCO's *Manual for Citizenship and Human Rights Education for Moroccan Youth* analysed six topics adapted to the Moroccan context, which can be addressed in citizenship education programmes and training, namely: human development, social justice and the economy; gender equality; constitution and religion; linguistic and cultural diversity; migrations and human rights; and the role of media within the public space.

Health Education

Health education plays a key role in furthering life skills in MENA. Out of the 43 programmes surveyed, 40 per cent have a focus on health-related issues (see Figure 14). Life skills and citizenship education in the framework of health education is currently being promoted in the region to address especially HIV/AIDS prevention, sexual and reproductive health education, reduction of early pregnancy, infections, healthy lifestyle promotion, nutrition, and hygiene and safe behaviour, defined as combating violence, smoking and drug abuse. Health education programmes have evolved to focus on attitude and life skills that are all crucial to fostering positive health behaviours, such as communication, negotiation, the ability to say 'no' and critical thinking.

Health education may be included within the curriculum as a stand-alone subject or be integrated across the curriculum. It may also be delivered as a co-curricular activity. Curriculum contents of school, health and nutrition (SHN) usually promote a broad approach to health informed by local needs, including nutrition education, hygiene, sports and physical exercise. The predominant approach to SHN is a life skills based approach in which health-seeking behaviours are learned and practiced in ways that are relevant to youth's everyday life. UNICEF's water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programme is an integral component of SHN education.

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) overlaps with health education with regard to sexual and reproductive health (SRH). Formalized sexuality education addresses ways for youth to deal with their sexuality in a safe and satisfactory manner (see Box 4), especially in the context of the rapid spread of new media, particularly the internet and mobile phone technology, along with changing attitudes towards sexuality and behaviour among youth.

Box 4 Subject areas through which life skills are addressed: Comprehensive Sexuality Education

UNFPA and UNESCO technical guidance on CSE stresses the importance of life skills and citizenship education (UNESCO, 2009). CSE is embedded within conceptual frameworks for life skills and citizenship education. Technical guidelines developed by UNFPA to operationalize CSE emphasize life skills that encourage critical thinking, communication, negotiation, decision-making and assertiveness. These skills can contribute to better and more productive relationships with family members, peers, friends and partners. CSE should also foster respect for human rights and diversity, and strengthen capacities for citizenship (UNFPA 2014).

Most life skills programmes in health are provided in basic education (or address children of those ages) and are mainly through formal school health programmes as well as by NGOs implementing health promotion activities targeting youth in non-formal education settings. In some MENA countries, such as Lebanon and the State of Palestine, the ministries of health and education, and NGOs supported by UNFPA and UNICEF have developed guides on reproductive health and life skills. Other countries refer in their programmes to the aforementioned UNFPA's guidelines (UNFPA, 2014) identifying life skills as a guiding principle for CSE (see Box 4).

Vocational Disciplines

Vocational disciplines are key subject areas that address the life skills needed for the workplace. In MENA, these are mostly confined to TVET at post-basic education levels and have limited focus on life skills, which negatively affects the quality of TVET. Of the life skills programmes surveyed, 37 per cent have a focus on vocational disciplines (see Figure 14). Some vocational and employability programmes prepare unskilled or low-skilled youth to become self-employed in carpentry, plumbing, etc., by offering technical training, along with training in business skills, such as mentoring or bookkeeping, literacy and life skills (including counselling to improve risk behaviour).

The quality of current TVET programmes in the region is a major issue. Current education systems in MENA countries are failing to provide the essential tools for students to effectively transition from school to work. In Egypt, for example, schools and technical and vocational schools fail to provide the appropriate skills demanded by the market (UNESCO, 2012c). While the skill mismatch is one factor affecting employment, the lack of life skills is another issue, as the latter are increasingly necessary to be successful in the labour market, particularly in the private sector.

Despite greater attention to TVET by Arab countries in the past few years, and a better understanding and definitions of the skills involved, TVET programmes have become less attractive to students, declining from 14 per cent in 1999 to 9 per cent in 2012. Findings from regional TVET reviews, including the *World Bank Systems Approach for Better Education Results* (SABER) and the European Training Foundation (ETF) Torino Process, highlight the low-quality education associated with TVET, the weak integration of life skills in vocational training and TVET graduates' poor prospects of employment.⁷ The need to increasingly focus on the acquisition of employability skills calls for the introduction of vocational activities in earlier education stages.

Curricular Disciplines

Curricular disciplines are another subject area through which life skills are addressed. It refers to the core subjects of national curricula, such as language, mathematics and science, social studies, etc. Thirty-five per cent of programmes identified by the AM in MENA countries focus on this subject area (see Figure 14).

One issue is the lack of conceptual differentiation between subject areas and life skills. The review of some curriculum and training manuals collected in MENA countries shows that these resources do not emphasize life skills and citizenship education, and focus mainly on knowledge areas and technical content. While the selection of the appropriate subject area is a key factor to effectively promote life skills education, knowledge can be acquired without attention to life skills, as is the case with rote memorization approaches to learning. In some instances, however, life skills were integrated in some curricula but not labelled as such.

⁷ World Bank, SABER – Workforce Development Reports for MENA countries, *Systems Approach for Better Education Results*, World Bank, <<http://saber.worldbank.org/index.cfm?indx=8&pd=7>>; see also UNESCO / International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, *Advancing TVET for Youth Employability and Sustainable Development*, UNESCO/UNEVOC, 2013.



This chapter explores the different components of the multiple pathways and systems approach of the CPF. It includes an overview of the teaching and learning approaches and their relative importance in implementing life skills and citizenship education programmes in MENA. It investigates how life skills and citizenship education is addressed in terms of the main reported channels and modalities of delivery. This chapter further investigates the different components of a systems approach by analysing opportunities and constraints in mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education within national education systems in MENA.

3.1 Which teaching and learning approaches are used?

- The majority of life skills and citizenship education programmes in MENA rely on traditional lecture-based instructional methods.
- The more student-centred and interactive the learning and teaching approaches are, the more effective life skills programmes are.
- Life skills tools and manuals tend to be project based and adapted from international definitions and frameworks.
- Life skills tools and manuals mainly target youth, and only to a lesser degree early ages.

Teaching and learning approaches facilitated by skilled and motivated teachers are a critical element of quality life skills and citizenship education programming. **In MENA, teaching and learning approaches have been both an entry point and a priority area in reforming education.** Since the nineties, several MENA countries, such as Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia, have been engaged in pedagogical reform efforts inspired by international trends and focusing on student-centred learning, competency-based curricula and critical thinking. Various pedagogical innovations in curriculum and textbooks, as well as in-service teacher training were adopted (World Bank, 2008).

MENA countries' curriculum frameworks and national education strategies emphasize the importance of both interactive educational pedagogies, such as peer, group and project work, and project-based methods. Effective life skills programmes usually rely on interactive learning and teaching approaches. For example, Al-Qattan Foundation is using drama in its teachers' education programmes (*see Box 5*).

Box 5 Drama as a teaching and learning approach

In the State of Palestine, the Al-Qattan Foundation is implementing a culture and art programme targeting teachers and youth that incorporates drama as a teaching and learning approach in life skills and citizenship education. Al-Qattan uses drama education both as tool and context for learning, as teachers, artists and community activists work together on issues related to their local communities and translate their ideas in art for peace.

Life skills education happens as participants work on community projects and learn how to plan, work together, solve problems, analyse, negotiate, convince others and support each other, etc. In classroom settings, teachers are taught how to use drama throughout the curriculum. The Qattan Centre for the Child in Gaza City includes a library, and multi-media and information resources for schools.

In 2012, UNRWA's education reform process (see Box 6) focused on enhancing teachers' skills to embrace new methods supporting student learning, moving away from a didactic approach that depends on memorization towards holistic styles and approaches of active student learning.¹

Box 6 Embracing new learning and teaching approaches

Integrating life skills into the formal education system requires a holistic approach as demonstrated by UNRWA's experience in education and service delivery reform during the years 2011-2015. UNRWA provides education for Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. UNRWA's education reform strategy offers insights into effective interventions to improve the quality of education, especially in the following areas: governance frameworks, teachers' professional development, as well as the enrichment of national curricula to support the basic human rights of Palestinian children and to foster inclusive education. In particular, the focus on teacher training and development, including school-based teacher development, has been a critical factor in improving the quality of education in the classroom, and is central to the provision of life skills programmes. Innovative modalities of delivery, such as blended learning strategies enabling teachers to learn in situ, have been introduced. The reform's outcomes show that mainstreaming life skills education was successful because it was coupled with measures geared at changing the attitudes and practices of teachers and other education staff. Teachers have been able to develop key competencies and integrate skills areas, such as communication skills and critical thinking, into their teaching across the curriculum.

TVET was another area addressed by the reform, in order to reach a larger number of students, particularly vulnerable youth, and align the relevance and responsiveness of TVET programmes to labour market requirements. New courses were designed and their delivery modality enhanced, with a greater emphasis on the development of entrepreneurial skills. The establishment of Programme Advisory Committees and the introduction of apprenticeship programmes were key factors in institutionalizing labour market linkages.

UNRWA's experience in the region suggests that addressing the curriculum is crucial to fostering significant change in the education system and that integrating life skills across the curriculum may be more effective than embedding life skills in specific subjects only. In addition, this experience demonstrates the added value of developing policies and standards for curricula along with a systemic and holistic approach to learning, assessment and personal development. Because UNRWA follows the curriculum of its host countries, a curriculum analysis framework was created that defines criteria against which textbooks are assessed. Students and teacher guides and materials were both developed by integrating key skills as well as enriched in terms of universal values of equality and diversity.

In this respect, it is also worth highlighting UNRWA's Human Rights Conflict Resolution and Tolerance initiative, which is another example of a systemic approach to life skills, as it integrates human rights in school curricula and focuses on the use of learning and teaching approaches. In the framework of this initiative, concepts of human rights, conflict resolution and tolerance were integrated into the curriculum and teacher toolkits developed. Students learn about their rights and the rights of others through practical experiences. Elected school parliaments were activated in all schools, and, in most schools, parliament action plans developed that focus on community initiatives. UNRWA's Human Rights Conflict Resolution and Tolerance initiative shows that cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality, inclusiveness, human rights and values, are crucial for curriculum development, and that there is a need to reflect them in curriculum materials for children. Life skills, such as communication, empathy and respect, also need to be addressed both explicitly and implicitly in curriculum and teacher support materials.

Organizations, teachers, children and youth met in the framework of the country visits acknowledged the value of interactive and hands-on practices in teaching life skills that engage learners and provide a supportive learning environment. Youth in focus groups often referred to practical activities, such as role play, group work, watching videos and working on personal projects, as key strengths of teaching and learning practices used in life skills programmes.

Many of the life skill resources used in the region advocate participatory learning and teaching approaches where learners identify their own challenges, discuss possible solutions, plan and carry out effective action programmes. Some innovative techniques are being tested by organizations working in formal and non-formal life skills and citizenship education. In Morocco, the MOE is embedding life skills and citizenship education in school clubs by introducing more interactive activities than classroom-based teaching. Topics taught in school clubs encompass citizenship education, human rights, sexual education, combating violence and drug abuse, etc. In dealing with these issues, students use theatre, role play, competitions, exhibitions,

¹ See UNRWA *Education Reform*, available at <www.unrwa.org/who-we-are/reforming-unrwa/education-reform>.

etc., which provide an opportunity to practice self-expression and communication. Nevertheless, the practical implementation of life skills programmes in clubs varies from one school to another and is often influenced by the capacity and motivation of the teachers who work with students on a voluntary basis after school hours, as well as the length and duration of each activity.

In Jordan, youth-led motivational talks are used as a programming technique, while in Lebanon students attributed their ability to successfully apply the life skills they acquired to field visits to local markets, where they practiced communication skills with potential customers. The formation of Dabkheh folkloric groups was used to practice working in teams to resolve conflicts (IYF, 2013). In addition, as part of UNRWA's Human Rights Conflict Resolution and Tolerance programme, school parliaments were established, with members participating in community activities, suggesting ways to solve problems in their school and community, resolving conflicts and raising awareness on human rights issues (UNRWA, 2015). School parliaments and student educational clubs are seen as good activities for experiential teaching methodologies that offer real-world opportunities to practice life skills.

Despite these positive practices, **traditional learning models and 'frontal teaching' approaches, with the teacher addressing the whole group from the front of the classroom, dominate in most MENA countries'** formal education systems. Classroom activities remain focused on copying from the blackboard, writing and listening to teachers, with only rare opportunities for group work, creative thinking and proactive learning methods. A 2013 review of citizenship education programmes in public schools from kindergarten through grade 12 in 11 key Arab nations noted that "many students do not feel safe physically, socially, and emotionally in schools, and [...] student and teacher absenteeism, classroom overcrowding, and limited resources all contribute to the problem of negative school climate [...]". The same review also showed that civic principles' education, such as human rights, frequently stands in contradiction with the content taught in other classes. Citizenship education is largely limited to rote instruction with lessons tending to be didactic, teacher-directed and promoting official political and religious views (Faour, 2013).

Students are still instructed to learn and retain answers to pre-determined questions on topics that are rarely contextualized. During the country visits, educational specialists pointed out that the main focus of teaching and learning in formal settings, and of life skills in particular, is academic in approach and directed at delivering examination results. According to the findings of a baseline study investigating teaching and learning practices in 56 UNRWA elementary schools (grades 1-6) in Jordan, Lebanon, the State of Palestine and Syria, the dominant transmission model of teaching remains the use of a chalkboard and/or textbooks by the teaching staff. Students are rarely given the opportunity to participate in classroom discussions and often spend a significant amount of time listening to the teacher's presentations. Participatory teaching techniques, such as open questions, probes and comments, are rarely encouraged. These general classroom practices hinder the development of both learners' critical thinking skills and communication and public speaking skills (UNRWA, 2014).

Rather than addressing the students' individual needs, teachers tend to address the whole class, failing to support weak students, although Tunisia, Jordan and Iran are making additional investments in this area. The few countries that have attempted to advance higher-order cognitive skills as a pedagogical objective have failed in altering teachers' practices. As a result, skills such as flexibility, problem-solving and judgment are ineffectively rewarded in formal school settings (World Bank, 2008).

The analysis of life skills training in MENA, conducted by International Youth Foundation (IYF) in 2013, similarly concluded that the majority of organizations do not provide opportunities for interactive hands-on instructional methodologies in teaching life skills. Yet, **life skills and citizenship education programmes facilitated in non-formal settings tend to employ more interactive activities**, such as group work, case studies, discussions, role play, storytelling, songs and dances, students' presentations, community projects, field work and other practical activities (IYF, 2013).

Traditional teaching methods used in TVET education in MENA also fail to effectively convey higher-order cognitive skills, such as problem-solving, to learners, and tend instead to emphasize rote memorization and reward passive learning (ETF and World Bank 2005a).

Better teacher's training and quality teacher's development are key factors in improving the quality of education and of teaching and learning techniques. In this regard, UNWRA's education reform strategy (2011-2015) offers interesting insights: Thanks to the reforms, teachers have personally developed key competencies and have started to integrate skills areas, such as communication and critical thinking skills, into their teaching across the curriculum.

Moreover, classroom culture needs to change; this includes teachers' perceptions of what they can do in teaching and learning. Many stakeholders expressed the need for investments in teacher education in order to embed life skills and citizenship education in routine classroom teaching approach. Stakeholders also stressed that attention needs to be paid to enhancing the status of the teaching profession.

3.2 Teaching and learning resources

The first type of documents that the AM process unveiled is a wide range of **teaching and learning resources** in life skills and citizenship education used by organizations in MENA. Published in Arabic, English and French, these include training information for teachers and instructors and other training materials, students' and operational guides, standards, manuals, toolkits and curricula of training courses on specific topics in life skills and citizenship education. The most reported materials used by life skills programmes were likely to be teaching or training manuals for either youth or teachers, facilitators and trainers in life skills and that often provide detailed descriptions of, and relevant exercises on, the use of specific life skills, such as communication, decision making, creative thinking, presentation, career search, etc. Training manuals also introduce specific skills, such as leadership, communication, tolerance, conflict resolution and peace building. The Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training's *Manual on Conflict Resolution Skills*, for example, includes lesson plans for the following eight workshops: (i) The definition of conflict and its stages, (ii) The causes of conflicts; (iii) The techniques for conflict resolution; (iv) Dialogue; (v) Negotiations; (vi) Mediation; (vii) Arbitration; and (viii) Prosecution. Each lesson plan identifies the objectives of the workshop, the materials needed, number of participants, time required and the necessary exercises. The second type of documents are institutional resources that introduce the overall concept of life skills, from a theoretical and conceptual standpoint, such as the Sudanese MOE's document on life skills.²

The third type of resource is a series of **guides and manuals** offering more practical suggestions to both implementing agencies and youth, for the latter to acquire skills and to facilitate their peers' learning of life skills in a way that promotes their active participation in decisions related to their personal life, civic engagement and active contribution to the economy. One example is UNICEF's manual *Basic Life Skills for Various Life Situations*. The Iraqi MOE and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in cooperation with American University of Beirut, have also developed a manual on *Life and Work Skills for Youth*, which aims at supporting providers working with youth around life skills, detailing basic skills that are essential for the youth. The manual introduces the general concept of life skills and details emotional, cognitive and social skills as well as a set of sub-skills under each category. Finally, the manual provides organizations with guidance on how to embed life skills into their programmes and suggests effective training techniques. This manual is also accompanied by a training of trainers' curriculum. The *Manual on Skills for Life and Work related to Vocational Training Centers – Skills for Communication and Conflict Resolution* published by the European Union and targets both female and male youth and focuses on communication and conflict management skills.

Compendiums of resource materials, such as the one on adolescent and youth programming in Lebanon, published by the University of Balamand, UNFPA and UNICEF, make up the fourth category of teaching and training materials. The Lebanese compendium of resource material regroups, for example, various resources on life skills, which mainly address the Individual and Instrumental Dimensions, while largely leaving out the Cognitive and the Social Dimensions (UNICEF and UNFPA, 2017).

² See European Union, Amel Association, ANERA, Youth for Development, *Manual on Skills for Life and Work related to Vocational Training Centers – Skills for Communication and Conflict Resolution*, documented in *Compendium of Resource Material on Adolescent and Youth Programming*, edited by University of Balamand et al., in 2017, p. 75.

The last category of materials is made of **resources addressing general subject areas** in which life skills are integrated as separate components. They include citizenship education, peace building and social cohesion, health awareness (sexual and reproductive rights, HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, general health issues, etc.) as well as advocacy and lobbying. As an example, the Iraqi MOE with guidance and support from UNICEF further developed manuals on psychosocial support for teachers in the newly re-taken areas from ISIS. The MOE was also supported in the development of the *Civic Values and Life Skills Textbook* as a pilot textbook to be used in regular and schools for internally displaced persons in primary education at grade 5. The textbook consists of a list of recreational activities aimed at disseminating core life skills through non-classroom activities.

Two main shortcomings of these resources are that they sometimes have **limited availability and they lack of harmonization between definitions, tools or techniques**. Despite the availability of most resources on the websites of organizations, some are not publicly available; moreover, the region lacks learning forums where facilitators can exchange best practices and resources developed around life skills. To address the issue of harmonization, current efforts are geared at developing standardized manuals. UNICEF Lebanon, for instance, is developing a standardized manual comprising three Dimensions of Learning to include 'Learning to Know', 'Learning to Be' and 'Learning to Live Together', while the 'Learning to Do' Dimension is partially addressed by the competency-based training programme currently being implemented.

Most of the resources collected were produced within the framework of programmes implemented in life skills and citizenship education, or adopted from international guides and toolkits developed by international NGOs and United Nations agencies. The date of production and publication ranges from 2004 to 2015, with most of the products published during the years 2010 to 2016. Moreover, they seem to target youth, aged 15-24 years, while there are **only a few learning resources addressing life skills in basic education**. In Egypt, for example, the MOE and the National Centre for Educational Research and Development published a *Manual Guide for Teachers on Thinking Skill Development among First Graders*, which introduces appropriate thinking skills in basic education and offers guidelines on how to develop these skills, connect them to specific values and behavioural habits, and, eventually, practice them.

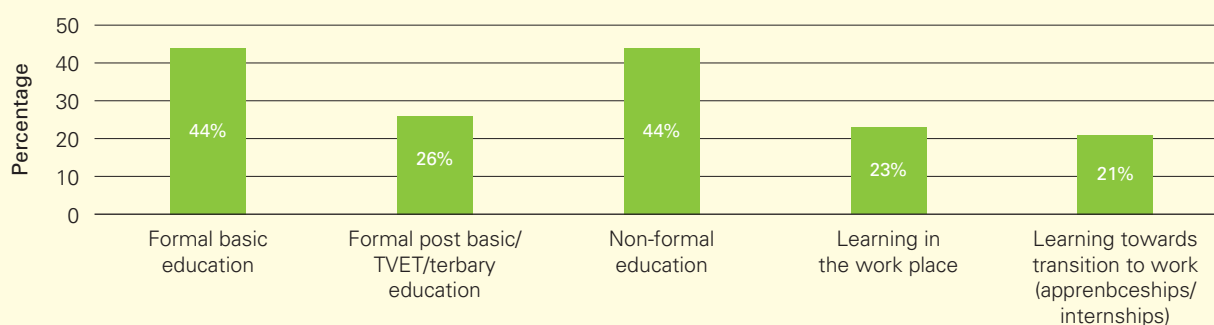
3.3 How are life skills and citizenship education delivered, and what are the challenges?

- Most reported programmes are implemented in formal basic education and non-formal education settings.
- Programmes in non-formal settings often target vulnerable groups.
- Life skills programmes delivered in formal post-basic education as well as workplace and 'road to workplace' settings are the least prevalent.
- Integration of life skills and citizenship education in the curriculum is often fragmented, and life skills programmes are mostly delivered as stand-alone programmes.
- There is limited use of innovative teaching strategies using media platforms, blended learning or open distance learning.

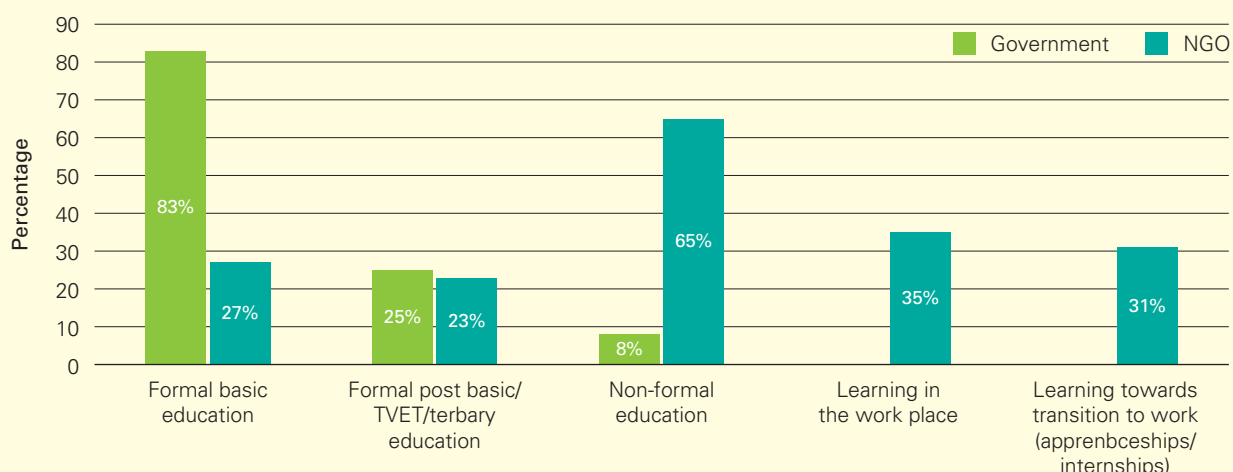
Channels of delivery

Life skills and citizenship education in MENA is delivered through various channels ranging from formal, non-formal and informal settings, learning in the workplace to social engagement settings. Yet, most **reported programmes are implemented in formal basic education and non-formal education settings**, with 44 per cent of programmes surveyed implemented in formal basic education and 26 per cent in formal post basic education, including tertiary education and TVET (see Figure 15).

There are various challenges in implementing life skills programmes through formal education. These include the weak organizational capacity of schools, the low motivation and low awareness of teachers regarding the importance of life skills in education, as well as the inadequate time allocated to addressing life skills during classroom activities. Furthermore, the shortage of teaching and learning materials to effectively embed life skills in curricula as well as the lack of technical guidance and approaches to support teachers hinder the effective implementation of life skills interventions in formal education.

Figure 15 Percentage of programmes surveyed (N=43) by delivery channels

Outside of formal education settings, **there is a wide array of non-formal life skills interventions in the MENA region**. 44 per cent of programmes reviewed as part of the AM are implemented in non-formal education settings, largely by NGOs that run 65 per cent of these programmes, in comparison to only 8 per cent of programmes surveyed that are run by governmental organizations in non-formal education (*see Figure 16*). These findings, however, do not reflect the scalability of many governmental programmes that are often implemented at the national level.

Figure 16 Percentage of programmes surveyed (N=43) by government and NGOs

Non-formal life skills and citizenship education interventions are mostly run by NGOs and are playing a crucial role in targeting vulnerable groups, such as out-of-school children, youth and other vulnerable groups, while succeeding to provide a more holistic approach to teaching life skills. **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 the secondary level, youth are missing life skills learning opportunities. In this context, non-formal interventions seek to involve marginalized or vulnerable groups, such as out-of-school children and refugees in appropriate educational settings. Interviews with Syrian refugees in Jordan reflect the challenges youth face while transitioning to the Jordanian school system, which impacts their performance. Some refugee families expressed the need for psychosocial support and life skills for personal empowerment. Discussions with refugees' parents indicated that their children face discrimination in school and physical violence, including from teachers. Some life skills programmes in Egypt, Jordan, Libya, the State of Palestine, Sudan and Yemen, are currently targeting risk groups (*see Box 7*).

Box 7 Non-formal education: A second-chance gender-focused programme for out-of-school girls in Egypt

Ishraq (“Sunrise” in Arabic), a second-chance programme for out-of-school female children (aged 12–15 years) in Upper Egypt, is an example of effective life skills practice that is implemented in non-formal education. The programme was launched in 2001 by the Population Council in collaboration with the Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), Save the Children, Caritas and local NGOs in four villages in the Menya governorate. In girl-friendly safe spaces, the programme delivers a combination of traditional training, such as literacy training and a curriculum of life skills and nutrition education, and more innovative ones, such as sports and financial education.³

To assess the long-term impact of the programme’s life skills component, the skills of participating children were compared post-programme with those of a group of children with similar background characteristics who did not participate in the programme. The evaluation showed that the programme succeeded in improving the participants’ literacy, cognitive skills, and ability to think about and plan for the future, as well as improved their health-related knowledge and attitudes. Participants also expressed greater self-confidence and enhanced participation in decision-making that affected their lives.⁴ For instance, *Ishraq*’s beneficiaries were more likely to want to delay marriage until at least age 18 than female children that had not participated in the programme.⁵

While these programmes play a crucial role in reaching out to the most marginalized, they do not seem to be coordinated with relevant governmental institutions and/or private sector. Challenges to the inclusion of at-risk children and youth are the limited regulatory frameworks that would link formal and non-formal education, and limited or no recognition or accreditation of alternative learning opportunities.

In non-formal education, one alternative schooling model for economically marginalized young women is currently being implemented in **Egypt** with a focus on health and financial literacy. Citizenship education is incorporated into the *Neqdar Nasharek Project*, translated as “We can participate”, which is implemented by Population Council. The project’s activities include life skills and business education, and vocational training, as well as training in problem-solving and civic engagement. The programme also works with community members to promote understanding about the importance of women’s economic and social participation.⁶

In **Jordan**, UNICEF is implementing the “Makani – My Space” approach that aims at enhancing learning opportunities for all children with no access to any form of formal or non-formal education in the country. “Makani – My Space” centres are run by national and international NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) throughout Jordan, and include a network of 200 centres. These centres incorporate a holistic approach that provides all vulnerable children and youth, particularly out-of-school Syrian refugees, with learning opportunities, life skills training and psychosocial support services. The life skills training offered includes self-management skills (self-awareness, self-esteem and confidence, identity, responsibility and resisting pressure); cognitive skills (creative and critical thinking, decision-making skills and problem-solving); social skills (listening, communicating, understanding, accepting others, self-assertion and negotiation); and collective action skills/civic skills (planning, team work, leadership and campaigning).⁷

On the whole, however, results from national consultations and country visits indicate that **life skills and citizenship education programmes in non-formal settings are still sporadic and based on sustained support from implementing NGOs**. 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 about their long-term sustainability. 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.

³ Population Council, *Ishraq: Bringing Marginalized Rural Girls into Safe Learning Spaces in Rural Upper Egypt, Project Brief*, accessed at <www.popcouncil.org/research/ishraq-bringing-marginalized-rural-girls-into-safe-learning-spaces-in-rural>.

⁴ Nahla, Mona, et al., *The Ishraq Program for Out-of-School Girls: From Pilot to Scale-up, Final Report*, Population Council, 2013, p. 10.

⁵ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *EFA Global Monitoring Report: Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges*, UNESCO, 2015, p. 125.

⁶ Population Council, *Neqdar Nesharek project*, accessed at <www.popcouncil.org/research/neqdar-nesharek>.

⁷ *No Lost Generation Initiative, MAKANI: All Children in Jordan Accessing Learning*’, accessed at www.unicef.org/jordan/1_Jordan_-NLG_-MAKANI_-All_Children_Accessing_Learning.pdf.

Programmes delivered through learning in both the workplace and in the ‘road to workplace’, including apprenticeships and internships, are underrepresented (see *Figure 15*) and their delivery is also mostly undertaken by NGOs (see *Figure 16*).

Box 8 Road to workplace: Upgrading informal apprenticeships in Jordan⁸

To improve the economic livelihood of Jordanian youth in the country’s most populous governorates of East Amman, Irbid, Zarqa, Tefileh and Ma’an, IYF and ILO implemented a programme upgrading informal youth workers’ apprenticeship experiences to prepare them for a more institutionalized world of work. The ‘on the road to workplace’ component focused on life skills so as to enhance youth’s knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in relation to personal development, problem-solving, healthy lifestyles and workplace success, while placing youth in apprenticeships with employers.

A pre-program assessment identified five key occupations for youth: tailor, food production technician, carpenter, retail sales and heavy equipment maintenance. First, using IYF’s ‘Effective Teaching Methods’ curriculum, mentors and facilitators were trained on occupational competency profiles and charts development, youth learning and development, as well as occupational safety, health principles and assessment. Local CBOs were then mobilized to recruit youth job seekers to undertake a five-week training programme, which included technical and life skills training using IYF’s life skills curriculum, Passport to Success® (PTS), followed by three months of on-the-job training. Trained mentors followed up with the youth on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to encourage them as well as to help to mediate any potential conflicts that they may have been experiencing on the job. Parents were also engaged through sessions organized by the CBOs.

The first set of key challenges encountered included youth recruitment, programme completion rates and the discrepancy between youth’s remuneration expectations and the programme’s goals. Key lessons learned were the need to partner with CBOs to increase recruitment and encourage programme completion, customize outreach approaches, and manage youth’s expectations through open conversations about the benefits of the programme, especially from a long-term professional development perspective.

Another challenge was parents’ refusal to allow their daughters to work after 5 p.m. A key lesson learned is the need to improve stakeholders’ engagement, especially by devising strategies to increase parents’ awareness of the benefits of the programme, as well as by exploring female-friendly alternatives with employers such as group employment opportunities and company transportation to enhance female youth’s access to both apprenticeships and future job openings.

Lastly, conflicts between youth and employers, as well as employers’ general reluctance to sign contracts, highlighted the need for on-the-job mentoring to reduce complaints and the need to organize one-to-one informational sessions to explain the benefits of the initiative to employers.

USAID/Jordan Youth for the Future (Y4F) project, a US\$33 million project implemented by IYF from March 2009 through December 2014, is another example of such programmes. It aimed at “creating an enabling environment with a greater capacity to more effectively serve youth-at-risk”. Working through selected CBOs, the project focused on establishing sustainable delivery mechanisms for PTS, IYF’s proprietary life skills curriculum, to help youth to improve their personal and problem-solving skills, build productive work habits, as well as boost resume writing and job search skills (see *Box 8*). PTS is a 78-lesson curriculum that covers 10 widely endorsed life skills, including effective communication, responsibility, goal setting and teamwork. It has been successfully translated in Arabic and utilized in eight countries in MENA. Special emphasis is placed on workplace readiness, including interviewing, respect for authority and time management, along with workplace tools. 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.⁹ Youth for the Future’s final evaluation indicates that it was 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.¹⁰

⁸ See *Consultation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the Middle East and North Africa Workshop Report*, Amman, Jordan, 30-31 May 2016, pp. 18-19, published by ILO and UNICEF.

⁹ See Factsheet: *Equipping Jordanian Youth with Essential Life Skills, Passport to Success: An Initiative of the International Youth Foundation* accessed at: <http://www.iyfn.org/sites/default/files/library/Jordan-PTS-one-pager.pdf>

¹⁰ See USAID Jordan. *Final Performance Evaluation of the USAID/Jordan Youth for the Future (Y4F) Project* at: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00KN57.pdf

Life skills programming also happens with, or through, private-sector initiatives and partnerships between the for-profit and non-for-profit private sector. Two prominent examples, in Jordan, are Zain Jordan and Al-Quds College (Luminus Education) programmes. Zain Jordan¹¹, the foremost telecommunication company in the country, has created Zain Academy to provide, among others, life skills training to its employees, especially entry-level ones. In 2015, the company launched the Zain Innovation Campus, through which it works with entrepreneurs and start-ups, and runs a programme called Zain Al-Shabab, which is a youth incubator.

Al-Quds College¹² is a leading private community college implementing a UNESCO Job Readiness and Life Skills Project, funded by the Walton Family Foundation. Al-Quds also uses IYF PTS as well as IYF's Build Your Business (BYB) curricula. IYF's BYB programme was developed in partnership with Microsoft and is a comprehensive and interactive blended learning training course designed to support entrepreneurs. At the end of the BYB training course, students develop a business plan – successfully developed plans have ranged from selling herbal medicine to leveraging volunteers for social impact.¹³ Programming by IYF, which includes robust trainer training and comprehensive materials development, has been influential in developing life skills training for employability within many private and non-governmental organizations in Jordan.

The third channel of delivery of life skills are programmes which do not focus on learning, but have a life skills component as they aim to **socially engage** youth in either voluntary and community work or scouting. One example is UNFPA's Youth Peer Education Network (Y-Peer) programme that focuses on sexual and reproductive health and integrates life skills (see Box 9). In Jordan, many programmes focus on social engagement, such as the Touchstones programme adopted by the Jordanian MOE, the Cultural Heritage and Peace programme or the programme, Promoting National Competencies in Reproductive Health and Gender.¹⁴ Another example is the programme implemented by Generations for Peace, a global non-profit organization, which equips volunteers with the practical knowledge and skills to apply peace-building theory to situations of destructive conflict in their communities by organising activities for children, working with youth and adults, training other trainers and gathering support by building and strengthening community networks and partnerships.¹⁵

Finally, various children and youth serving organizations in MENA utilize the UNICEF manual, *Basic Life Skills for Various Life Situations*, which suggests 'life skills-based learning' for social engagement, through which students learn by action and experimentation, as well as in groups and from each other. In addition to small lectures, group work, roleplaying, case studies and brainstorming, the manual offers other methods of participatory training such as simulation, sports, interactive theatre, actual work, feedback, self-reflection, peer education and interviews (UNICEF, 2013).

Box 9 Social engagement practices: Youth Peer Education Network (Y-Peer)

UNFPA's Y-Peer is an example of a life skills and citizenship education initiative revolving around social engagement practices, and is run in 32 countries. The project's core area, sexual and reproductive health, with modules on HIV/AIDS, and sexually transmitted diseases, is presented using life skills, especially, decision-making, communications and self-confidence and interactive techniques, such as theatre, games, youth camps, etc. Volunteer peer educators are identified in schools and clubs are created in partnership with local NGOs/local association networks. A five-manual toolkit, developed by UNFPA and Family Health International, helps programme managers and master trainers of peer educators to develop and maintain effective peer education programmes.¹⁶

¹¹ Zain Jordan website, accessed at <www.jo.zain.com>.

¹² Al-Quds website, accessed at <www.quds.edu.jo/ar>.

¹³ UNESCO in Amman, *Job Readiness and Life-skills programming helps 543 Young Jordanians see a Brighter Future*, News Note, 04 May 2016, accessed at <www.unesco.org/new/en/amman/about-this-office/single-view/news/job_readiness_and_life_skills_programming_helps_543_young_jo/>.

¹⁴ Jordanian Ministry of Education, 2016.

¹⁵ Generations for Peace, accessed at <www.generationsforpeace.org/en/how-we-work/approach/>.

¹⁶ The toolkit is accessed online and can be downloaded from UNFPA webpage. *United Nations Population Fund and FHI360, Youth Peer Education Toolkit*, UNFPA, 2006, accessed at <www.unfpa.org/resources/peer-education-toolkit>.

Evidence from country visits and national consultations indicates that these programmes uphold best practices and common standards in life skills education, and widely use participatory and interactive delivery and facilitation methods. Concerns arise, however, as to whether these initiatives can be scaled and made sustainable; another area of concern is the **risk of conflicting messages around life skills when these programmes are run in isolation from the national education system**. National consultations in Tunisia and Egypt highlighted, for example, that many of these programmes in these two countries are conducted independently from any educational programming and do not reinforce the outcomes of formal and non-formal education. This can lead to conflicting messages around life skills delivery, particularly in Egypt, where programmes are delivered through social engagement are implemented by the Ministry of Youth in isolation from the MOE.

Modalities of delivery

Life skills and citizenship education in the region has been introduced in different ways and its modalities of delivery vary greatly, whether through integration in curricula, as extra-curricular activities or as stand-alone programmes. There is complementarity between these different modalities of delivery, however, as many programmes use more than one modality to teach life skills.

In formal education, life skills are most frequently delivered through **extra-curricular activities** (see *Box 10 and Box 11*), with 40 per cent of programmes surveyed delivering life skills as an extracurricular provision in formal basic education and 21 per cent of programmes in formal post-basic education, in comparison to 35 per cent of programmes that use a stand-alone curriculum in formal basic education, and 21 per cent in formal post-basic education (see *Table 4*). Integration into the curricula was only reported by 28 per cent of programmes surveyed in formal basic education and 16 per cent in formal post-basic education.

Table 4 Modalities of delivery of life skills and citizenship education programmes by channels of delivery

Channels of delivery	Integrated curricula	Extra-curricular	Stand-alone programme
Formal basic education	28%	40%	35%
Formal post-basic education	16%	21%	21%
Non-formal education	16%	33%	28%
Workplace and 'road to workplace'	7%	9%	21%

Box 10 Life skills and citizenship education in formal education as extra-curricular activities

As part of education reform in Tunisia, the Ministry of Education of Tunisia, the Arab Institute for Human Rights and seven United Nations agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, OHCHR, UN Women, UNHCR, and UNFPA) partnered to put in place a strategic plan to foster citizenship education and human rights in Tunisia. One of the core elements of the National Strategy for Citizenship and Human Rights Education, is the establishment of Citizenship and Human Rights Clubs in primary and secondary schools of fragile regions and marginalized communities across the country.

In 2012, Citizenship and Human Rights clubs in seven schools were created. The programme later expanded to eighteen schools. These clubs create a space for creativity and communication to confront violence, intolerance and discrimination, as well as to develop critical thinking among students. The main goal is to promote children and youth participation in public life through concrete citizenship projects delivered in partnership with civil society organizations. Additionally, the club aims to reinforce the capacity of teachers to promote the values of civil commitment to human rights in the school environment and strengthen the relationship between educational institutions and civil society organizations.

Teachers' and students' participation in these clubs is voluntary. Activities include building the club members' capacity on, and understanding of, human rights principles and democratic participation, as well as the establishment of citizenship projects open to the communities and civil society organizations active in the vicinity of the school. Students' rights, as well as their ability to make decisions, express their opinions and participate in the management of the school affairs are fully recognized. All club members participate in all stages of planning, implementation and evaluation through the means of results-based management; to this end, an agreement on sharing management roles and functions between children and adults is established. Strong emphasis is put on the multiple and diverse representation of Club management parties in order to limit individualist behaviours. The main challenge, however, that the clubs face is the retention of club members, as they all work on a voluntary basis.

At the country level, findings from national consultations revealed that eight countries use a stand-alone life skills programme in formal basic education, while 12 countries incorporate life skills into the curriculum, and 10 teach it via extra-curricular activities (see Table 5).¹⁷

Table 5 Modalities of delivery of life skills and citizenship education in formal basic education (country typology)

Country	Integrated in curricula	Extra-curricular	Standalone programme
Algeria	●		
Djibouti	●	●	
Egypt	●	●	
Iran	●	●	
Iraq	●	●	●
Jordan	●	●	
Lebanon	●	●	●
Libya	●		
Morocco	●	●	●
Oman			●
State of Palestine	●	●	●
Sudan	●	●	●
Syria	●		●
Tunisia	●	●	●
Yemen		●	

Box 11 Extra-curricular approaches: Personal project model and clubs in Morocco

Existing life skills initiatives in Morocco are implemented as extra-curricular activities and take place either inside or outside formal school time.

An extra-curricular approach implemented in the formal system is the Personal Project Model, which helps students to develop their own school and professional project in addition to acquiring skills that can enable them to progress in society. The model includes key skills such as problem-solving, communication, teamwork, responsibility, decision making, organization, cooperation, accepting criticism and building a desire to self-learn. The model also aims at strengthening the links between formal education and vocational training systems to enhance continuity in children learning.

Life skills clubs taking place after school on school premises are an example of the extra-curricular approach. Their goal is to create an engaging, welcoming and participatory school environment for students aged 12–18. Depending on the school level, life skills clubs may have various formats: “Personal Project Clubs” at the elementary school level, implemented in partnership with UNICEF, help younger students to explore their own emotional management, likes and dislikes, as well as relationships with peers, family and the community while “Thematic Area Clubs” in lower secondary schools address issues such as health, i.e. drugs, sexual and reproductive health, science/environment, citizenship, journalism and life skills using IYF’s PTS® model. Volunteer teachers who act as club mentors do receive some training in facilitation and have access to a national-level guide developed by UNFPA; it is not clear, however, how extensively this guide is used at the individual school level. The volunteer teacher-club mentors encourage youth to take leadership of, and responsibility for, all questions related to the club’s life, thus increasing participant’s autonomy and offering a safe space to practice key life skills such as decision-making, cooperation, communication and negotiation skills.

Both teachers and youth participation in the clubs is voluntary which may lead to incomplete coverage of the general school population. This model is largely decentralized allowing individual clubs at the school level to adapt the type of club and the topics addressed to their needs; this, however, makes a national assessment of club impact on the general school environment or on student learning outcomes nearly impossible.

¹⁷ There is some overlap, as some countries use more than one modality to deliver life skills and citizenship education.

Life skills and citizenship education can be embedded in formal education by either being integrated across the school curriculum or via curricular subjects, such as mathematics, science or sports. Below is a list of different approaches that have been mapped within MENA.

In **Tunisia**, for instance, a first attempt was made to move away from information-based curriculum to a curriculum that focused on knowledge (*savoir*), skills (*savoir faire*), and attitudes (*savoir-être*) with a specific emphasis on the core skills of reading, writing and numeracy. Each unit of the curriculum was based on learner-centred activities that integrate these three types of skills (World Bank, 2008). In the latest curriculum reform the core life skills identified as part of the LSCE Initiative are being integrated as part of the national curriculum. The curriculum reform represents a unique and visionary example for the operationalization of the twelve core life skills through the curricular modality. 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 (see Box 12).

Box 12 Integration of life skills and citizenship into national curriculum of Tunisia

The curriculum reform in Tunisia is led by the Ministry of Education, the Labor Union (UGTT) and the Arab Institute for Human Rights. The focus on life skills and citizenship education in the Tunisia Curriculum Reform comes as a result of an extensive nation-wide consultation process and the adoption of a White Paper in May 2016, which guides the national education reform between 2016 and 2020. UNICEF first implemented a pilot project with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health between 2013 and 2016. The project targeted lower secondary school students with life skills interventions addressing the abuse of psychoactive substances. This experiment aimed at bringing together teachers, health personnel and parents to improve personal behaviours as well as academic performance. This pilot experience also resulted in the production of methodological and pedagogical tools that were relevant to the overall reflection on the issue of integrating life skills into the broader education reform.

As part of the LSCE Initiative, the results of this pilot project along with other regional experiences on life skills and citizenship education were reviewed in a national consultation workshop organized jointly with the Ministry of Education in July 2016. The consultation prompted the decision to mainstream the 12 core life skills within the national curriculum, building on the vision of quality learning put forward by the LSCE CPF.

Jordan is another MENA country that has been at the forefront of integrating life skills into the curriculum. Following the endorsement of the national framework for life skills and citizenship education in the curriculum in 2006, life skills have been integrated into physical, civic and pre-vocational education as carrier subjects, rather than being taught as separate subjects (UNICEF, 2008). The new curricula focus on both subject-matter skills and other transferable skills that are necessary for learners to be prepared for the knowledge economy and be successful in the workplace, including: communication, teamwork, analysis and synthesis of information, self-directed learning, etc. (World Bank, 2008). Additional life skills learning materials have been developed and include topics such as public safety, first aid, anti-smoking/anti-drugs, civic engagement, information technology and the economy (UNICEF, 2012).

In **Libya**, life skills have been integrated in basic education school curricula (science, mathematics, Arabic, etc.), and within teachers' in-service training programmes and in **Yemen**, into curricular disciplines. In contrast, there is no systematic process in place for the integration of life skills into the curricula in **Djibouti**, **Sudan** and **Syria**. In the **State of Palestine**, the integration of life skills is still at the vision stage, and the curriculum has some topics in life skills but there is a lack of focus on instrumental skills.

In **Egypt**, a national curriculum framework, underpinned by a standards-based approach and a variety of assessment methods, sets out goals for basic and post-basic education, criteria for selecting curriculum content and expected generic learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and attitudes (OECD, 2015). These efforts were oriented to more relevant learning for life and work, including the development of cognitive skills, interpersonal skills and technological skills. There is, however, no comprehensive or systematic plan to embed life skills in basic formal education; as a result, life skills integration in the new curricula is limited to the reading of book excerpts or stories in subjects such as Arabic, English and religion.

As part of the efforts of the **Moroccan** Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training to improve the quality of **non-formal education**, a national strategy to help un-enrolled and out-of-school children and youth was devised and a new competency-based curriculum developed in 2015. The curriculum framework for non-formal education classifies core skills into five areas. First, the 'psychosocial competencies' are defined as 'life skills' related to the ability to live in a social context, citizens' behaviour, health prevention, environmental protection and other skills that are necessary to positively and appropriately adapt to others and the environment. Second, the 'socio-vocational competencies' are skills related to the ability to behave and perform in a work environment; it includes job searching, career planning and goal orientation. Third, the 'contractual competencies' are skills related to initiating and developing the personal project of learners and the ability to choose among various alternatives in life, while the 'technological competencies' are those related to the ability to apply information systems for technical purposes and in communication, research and learning. Finally, the 'school life areas' include acquiring creative skills and the expression of positive positions on environmental protection and children's' rights.

The Moroccan curriculum framework for non-formal education further identifies 12 general skills detailing components classified by another set of dimensions. The intellectual and methodological dimension refers to: communication and expression, critical analysis, use of technology in transforming and receiving messages, as well as creativity and spirit of initiation skills. The individual and social dimension includes self-awareness and awareness of social, natural and technological environment skills, independence, responsibility towards one-self, others and the environment, collaborative and team work skills, as well as respect for diversity. The communication dimension includes skills of how to communicate and clearly express oneself verbally and in writing, analysis of documents, and the use of technology. The socio-vocational competency dimension includes one skill: how to behave and communicate in the workplace, while the contractual competency dimension includes the ability to initiate a personal and vocational project. The Training of Trainers Guide for the New Generation Centres for Non-Formal Education further details various activities to incorporate skills within the 'Learning to Do' dimension. Yet, neither the Arabic and mathematics textbooks incorporate these skills in a comprehensive and clear manner. The integration of skills elaborately expressed in the curriculum framework remains as external activities to be implemented by teachers during the class.

A sophisticated elaboration of life skills clusters in the Moroccan non-formal curriculum has not been matched yet in formal education settings. There is no reference to life skills and their integration in the learning process in the Manual for New Teachers in Elementary Education. Only analytical skills and higher order thinking skills are transversal to curricular programmes (science, technology, mathematics and languages), while identity and social awareness are part of history and civic education curriculum in post-basic education. Entrepreneurship is a component of extracurricular programmes only.

In the framework of its curricular reform, **Oman** is following a promising pilot approach by introducing environmental life skills with the twofold goal of connecting skills and knowledge to students' practical world and school learning with students' local environment characteristics. Subjects, such as geography, health, ecology, nutrition, traditional culture and craft, family life and citizenship, among others, are introduced in colourful books that are attractive and easy to read (Rassekh, 2004).

The **Palestinian** Ministry of Education and Higher Education integrates core skills, including: empathy, self-assertiveness, communication, problem-solving and decision-making, analytical thinking, creativity and collaboration, in basic education.¹⁸ Activities are included in each subject (Arabic, mathematics, science, civic education, religion, sports, etc.) and classified according to the general core skills. Life skills integration into post-basic education does not happen systematically: While a Vocational Education and Training Curriculum was designed for grades 8-11 focusing on skills, such as self-awareness and awareness of others, discovery of work, decision making, communication, problem-solving, self-management, team work, organization and planning, etc. Supporting life skills activities for grades 7-11 in non-TVET post-basic education were developed and are implemented by the Ministry in the Gaza Strip only. This life skills curriculum focuses on decision-making skills, respect for others, career planning, problem-solving, creativity, communication, conflict resolution and self-management skills. The teaching approach is based on discussions of real life situations, implementation of community projects by students, group work, etc. Many of the activities are based on verses from the Quran and incorporate Islamic religious values and teachings.

¹⁸ Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, *Manual on Life Skills for the First Grade*, 2015.

Despite these positive efforts for the integration of life skills in the Palestinian curricula, the analysis of the results on Palestinian textbooks in 2010 indicated that the life skills components included in science, Arabic and geography are still incomplete, arbitrary and unorganized, as well as largely dependent on teacher capacity and time to deliver the skills. Furthermore, the level of proficiency in students' critical thinking and life skills remains well below accepted mastery levels.¹⁹ In response to these challenges a new co-curricular approach for integrating life skills and citizenship education has been introduced through the piloting of the Learning Objects model developed by The Centre for Continuing Education at Birzeit (see Box 13).

Box 13 An innovative co-curricular approach to integrating life skills and citizenship education in curriculum 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 grades 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 core life skills for grades 1- 4 covering Science, Mathematics, Arabic and Social Science. The development process is based on a participatory approach with Ministry of Education and Higher Education 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.

With **stand-alone subjects**, however, life skills topics may include a range of skills and thematic content, such as health, sexual and reproductive education, HIV/AIDS prevention and interpersonal relations. Life skills in basic and post basic education are often offered within the framework of various educational initiatives and as a part of comprehensive school health education and mental health promotion.

With respect to the **integration of citizenship education in the curricula**, many interventions have focused on developing active citizenship skills at the school level. In Lebanon, these efforts have included producing curricular support material (e.g., *UNDP Peace Building Toolkit*), training teachers and supporting extracurricular activities where these skills can be practiced. During the national consultations with representatives from governmental organizations in Iran, participants reported that the concept of citizenship is introduced in textbooks for basic education and there are extracurricular activities associated with developing national identity and citizenship. In post-basic education, social education expands on the concept of citizenship. This is the case in most MENA countries, as citizenship education is introduced as one of the themes of civic education.

The analysis of the data collected during the AM process shows that the integration of life skills in curricula is often fragmented. There are a number of complex and unresolved issues related to the practical implementation and assessment of core skills and various challenges hinder their effective integration in curricula and other subject areas, among others: inadequate time allocation for teaching life skills, lack of support from the MOE, high workload among teachers, shortage of teaching and learning materials, as well as insufficient evaluation at the national level.

One of the most controversial implementation issues is the definition of the role and contribution of core skills to existing discipline-based curricula and the delineation of the interactions between core subjects and other disciplines, and life skills development. Policy makers, educational experts and practitioners agree that developing competency-based policies necessitate sophisticated implementation strategies which may entail: systematic changes within the education sector, mobilization of resources and the development of effective monitoring and evaluation systems for life skills and citizenship education often lacking in most MENA countries, as will be further elaborated in this report. The elaboration of cross-curricular skills is in itself a

¹⁹ See Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, *Education Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) 2014-2019: A Learning Nation*, March 2014, p. 64.

complicated pedagogical undertaking, requiring intense and sustained alterations in the teaching and learning process, as well as teachers' capacity and assessment systems, since teachers have to support students in developing skills and are also expected to have acquired these skills themselves.

A central and recurrent challenge in integrating life skills into the curricular, other disciplines and subjects is the difficulty to identify or select a coherent and sound set of key skills to be acquired by individual learners, as well as clearly articulate learning standards that define each of these skills with for each level of learning and the different needs of learners. For instance, despite the inclusion of communication skills in most curriculum frameworks as a central competency that learners needed, the exact outcome for different learners and ages might be different, and yet, most existing educational policies and frameworks of MENA countries do not articulate that differentiation clearly for either this skill or any other core skill identified.

Stakeholders also refer to the challenges that arise from a lack of, or a vague definition, of key skills in policy documents, such as education strategies, plans and curriculum frameworks. Some argue that the classification of what constitutes key skills, the desired outcomes of non-cognitive learning, as well as the definition of each competency, are still insufficiently clear, and are understood differently by different stakeholders, particularly in areas related to the social, individual and instrumental dimensions.

Because life skills and citizenship education reflects a shift in the conceptualization of the curriculum through broadening the range and nature of skills to include behaviour, attitudes and values, along with knowledge and skills, most education practitioners and policy makers in MENA countries are facing difficulties both identifying and reaching an agreement on learning outcomes with clearly identified goals, as well as translating such goals and objectives into measurable learning outcomes, as will be further elaborated. Overall, **most existing frameworks and manuals** provided by countries that are used in formal settings **lack a definition of each skill and do not contain any practical and operational guidelines** to include a comprehensive new set of activities into the curriculum.

Life skills are applied through sporadic exercises and activities that the teacher performs along with the other exercises and lessons, depending on his/her ability and time available to introduce life skills during the class session. Because quite often teachers already have to deal with a 'congested' or overloaded curriculum, it is challenging to find enough time and space for core life skills, especially because a high level of teacher and student engagement and interaction is required. On the other hand, co-curricular life skills material often remains at the periphery and is utilized by a selected few. Textbooks remain predominantly used in the classroom, hailed by formal assessment.

Focus groups conducted with school teachers further indicated that the skills included in the curriculum are presented in an explicit theoretical manner that is separate from the reality of children, and often it is up to the teacher's capacity and knowledge to know how to teach such skills. While children and youth participating in focus groups referred to the use of theatre to address current topics such as children's rights and tolerance, most teachers generally focus on theoretical information. Classroom culture needs to change including teachers' perceptions of what they can do in teaching and learning. **Investments in teacher education** are needed to embed life skills and citizenship education in routine classroom teaching approach. This may be the most important area to help to advance life skills and citizenship education. Attention also needs to be paid to enhancing the status of the teaching profession, especially for male teachers.

These results align with the findings of the assessment of the impact of the Peace Building Toolbox consisting of teaching aids and exercises on peace building and tolerance for secondary school teachers, developed by the United Nations Development Project (UNDP) in Lebanon. The assessment shows that teachers found the topics interesting and relevant to the curriculum. Yet, because it was only partially relevant to "one idea" of the lesson, they found it difficult to dedicate a full class period to such topics. As a result, the activities included in the toolbox failed to achieve the full objectives of the lesson, while the lesson alone was "too dull, too theoretical and almost sermon-like at times". Teachers attempted to integrate the toolkit activities with the assigned curriculum, based on their individual experiences and knowledge. The evaluation further indicates that current assessment systems need to be revisited to allow for the successful integration of life skills. Teachers further reported that they often dedicate class time coaching students to learn how to prepare for official examinations, which takes away from the time that could be used for life skills activities (UNDP, 2012).

Life skills activities are regarded by teachers as important and useful, but they have to 'fit' with the textbook objectives. Some teachers, students and even parents often perceive life skills and citizenship education as an addition to learning requirements, and therefore only marginally relevant, especially if what has been learned in life skills is informally assessed and not evaluated in formal examinations. Limited teacher awareness and experience may represent a considerable impediment to the implementation of an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approach. The well-rooted disciplinary structure of the curriculum, which places more importance on some subjects rather than others, particularly in post-basic education, along with the discipline-based qualifications of teachers are also considered strong barriers to cross-curricular teaching and learning of life skills.

As such, the **teaching of key skills has not moved beyond theory** in many countries of the region, and its integration into the curricula and other subjects stopped at the level of curriculum frameworks, while textbooks and teachers' practices are still failing to address this integration's issue effectively. This evidence may serve to alert and encourage other education systems that have yet to revisit and initiate changes in their policy and curricula to think about effective and practical methods to integrate life skills.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that, while curricula and textbooks used in MENA have been continuously changed by administrations in place, external interventions on curricula and textbooks' contents have been easily rejected as illegitimate across the whole political spectrum. For both secular and religious approaches in MENA countries, these revision have the potential to endanger the cultural identity of Arabs and Muslims (Alayan et al., 2012). In this regard, the work of Adyan, a Lebanon based Institute promoting inter-religious dialogue in MENA, provides a promising example in the field of curriculum development based on "consensual citizenship." This is done through the development of common curricula that enables "mutual understanding and coexistence between religious communities in Muslim majority countries" (Adyan Institute, 2016). In most countries, humanities and social sciences curricula emphasise obedience and submission rather than freedom of thought and critical thinking (UNDP, 2003).

On the other hand, curriculum development for **life skills in TVET** appears to be at an early stage. There are opportunities to work with stakeholders involved in this process to develop a relevant package of life skills for TVET trainees. As with curriculum reform in general education, a strategic approach is needed in TVET. This could entail: Ensuring that TVET is included in the proposed national consultations on life skills and citizenship education; working more closely with stakeholders on piloting life skills programmes into TVET service delivery; and building on NGO programmes for employability skills to integrate relevant life skills elements into the school curriculum and co-curriculum.

In non-formal education, life skills are delivered predominantly through extra-curricular activities (33 per cent of programmes) and as stand-alone training programmes (28 per cent of programmes). These differences in modalities of delivery of life skills are not as strongly perceived when introducing life skills through learning in the workspace and transition to work. It seems that life skills programmes that use these channels mostly focus on stand-alone training programmes, and few interventions refer to the integration within the curriculum or teaching life skills as extra-curricular activities.

In the State of Palestine, a significant amount of what constitutes life skills and citizenship education takes place through extra-curricular NGO programmes in schools; these are focused on issues such as employability, arts, culture, citizenship, as well as support in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. It is recognized that NGOs provide added value in a range of participatory teaching and learning activities including life skills and citizenship education. They also constitute an important source of innovation if interventions are structured within the systems approach led by the MOE. However, some of the key challenges faced by NGOs in this area is a lack of clear governmental policy and strategy on NGO partnerships in education, low scalability, coverage and sustainability, limited programme coordination between the different stakeholders involved to ensure that duplication does not occur at the school level and limited monitoring and evaluation activities around life skills, particularly in terms of impact assessment.

In the workplace and the 'road to workplace', life skills are delivered through a combination of stand-alone programmes, integration into the curriculum and as extracurricular activities. Furthermore, life skills and citizenship education are mostly delivered using face-to-face techniques, particularly in the non-formal and formal basic education settings, with limited use of innovative modalities of delivery, such as online, self-learning, media and blended learning (*see Table 6*). This shows the need to introduce innovative and alternative modalities of delivery for life skills and citizenship education in the region.

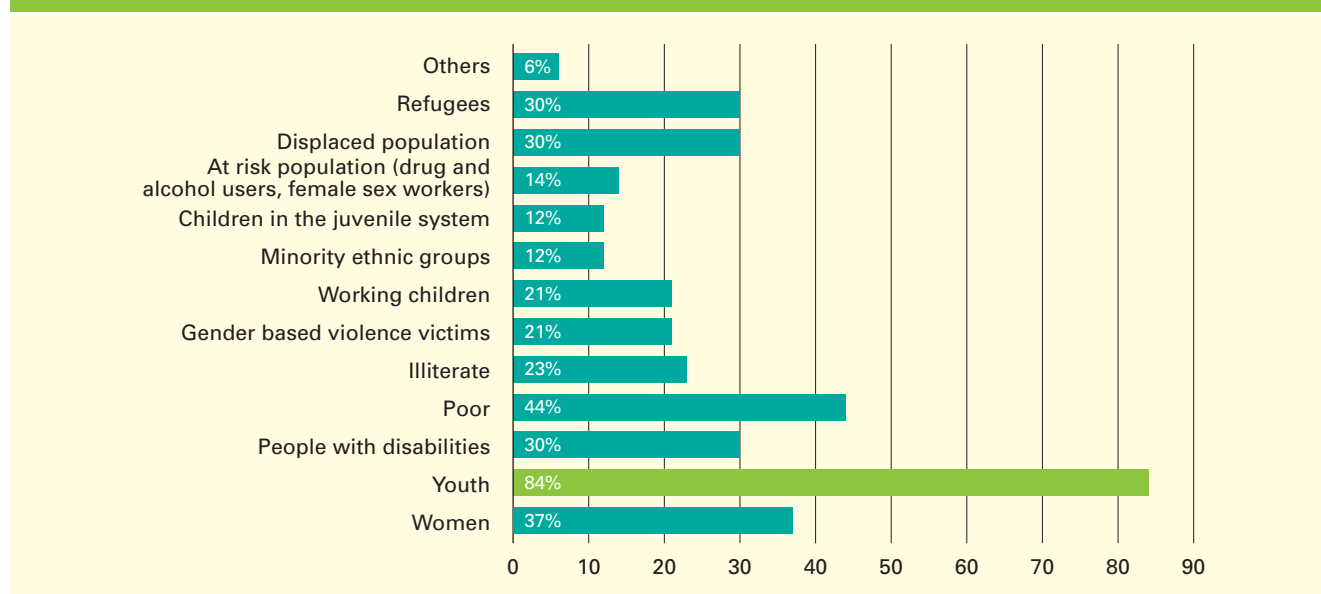
Table 6 Modalities of delivery of life skills and citizenship education programmes by channels of delivery

Channels of delivery	Face to face	Online	Blended learning	Media (radio, TV, social media, etc.)	Self-learning
Formal basic education	30%	9%	23%	5%	19%
Formal post basic education	16%	2%	12%	12%	7%
Non-formal education	37%	0%	16%	12%	14%
Workspace and transition to work	26%	0%	7%	5%	7%

Target beneficiaries

There is strong evidence from focus group discussions conducted with children, youth and teachers during the four country studies that the subject areas of life skills and citizenship education programmes address the challenges faced by learners as well as their needs. The number of programmes that target children at the early childhood or pre-primary level, however, is very limited. In fact, it is estimated that 70 per cent of current life skills and citizenship education programmes target groups between 16–18 years old.

The majority (84 per cent) of life skills and citizenship education programmes documented are designed for youth, defined as a vulnerable group (see Figure 17). Other high-risk groups, such as the poor, refugees, displaced populations, the illiterate, gender-based violence victims, working children and those in juvenile systems, are only offered a limited number of programmes. This raises issues around the relevance and coverage of life skills and citizenship education programmes to vulnerable and risk groups.

Figure 17 Target groups in the life skills programmes surveyed (N=43)

While much attention has been directed to the introduction of life skills and citizenship education in formal school settings, the issue of out-of-school children is still of major concern for many MENA countries. 54 per cent of life skills and citizenship education interventions reaching this at-risk group happen in non-formal settings. In many countries, however, these initiatives are locally driven and small-scale. Morocco is an exception, where the second chance school programme is being implemented by the MOE to specifically target this group and incorporates life skills and citizenship education. In Egypt, the *Learning and Earning in Cairo's Garbage City Project*, is a community-school model for marginalized youth, in which life skills and citizenship education is integrated through experiential learning and community empowerment (see Box 14).

Box 14 Life skills programmes reaching marginalized youth

In Egypt, there are promising practices that could be further built on, learnt from and expanded. The *Learning and Earning in Cairo's Garbage City Project*, is a community-school model for marginalized youth, in which life skills and citizenship education are integrated in experiential learning and community empowerment. It is implemented by an Egyptian NGO, Spirit of Youth Association, founded in 2004. The Project is located in Manshiyet Nasser, which is one of the largest *Zabaleen* (garbage collectors in Arabic) community districts in Cairo. UNESCO first founded it in 2001, with support from Procter and Gamble, the Bill Gates Foundation, the Community and Institutional Development (CID) consulting services, the Hands on the Nile Foundation and the African Star Foundation.²⁰

The association's runs the Recycling School for Boys, which was founded by CID and UNESCO Cairo Office in response to the socio-economic change felt by the community when the multinationals' trash recycling systems were introduced. The school aims to enhance the diffusion of practical knowledge to enhance qualifications levels and empower the community in the recycling business, while promoting cooperation rather than competition between the *Zabaleen* recycling system and the multinational companies. The programme implements innovative methods of non-formal basic education, specifically designed for individuals and families that are caught in poverty and are unable to access formal schooling. This is done by linking the learning process to work-related contexts. Flexible school hours are in place at the recycling school to allow the students to continue working with their parents, enabling thousands of youth in Cairo to access alternative learning opportunities where they learn and acquire skills in non-formal learning environment. This experience facilitates their integration into the new, centralized waste management business.²¹ The learning process includes a standardized package of teaching and learning of life skills for marginalized children and youth that could be replicated in other similar contexts.

There is limited support available to vulnerable groups, including former detainees, illiterates, people with disabilities, etc., in TVET programmes in the MENA region. Some positive practices in active labour market policies are in place for specific groups, such as people with hearing or physical disabilities. Yet, similarly to the situation in non-formal education settings, these provisions are neither widespread nor scalable enough to effectively cover the needs of vulnerable groups in most countries (World Bank, 2015).

Finally, males and females are equally included in the current life skills and citizenship education programmes. Ninety per cent of programmes have mixed gender targeting, with 50 per cent of them reporting that they target males and females equally. The AM did not investigate how gender issues are being mainstreamed into life skills and citizenship education curriculum and materials, or if a gender-aware assessment of needs is being undertaken.

²⁰ UNESCO, *Learning and Earning in Cairo's Garbage City*, accessed at <www.unesco.org/ui/litbase/?menu=4&programme=203>.

²¹ See the story by Hoda Bakara, UNESCO Egypt: *Learning and earning in Cairo's Garbage City, Education for Sustainable Development, Success Stories*, accessed at <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002166/216677e.pdf>>.

3.4 What are the opportunities and challenges to life skills and citizenship education programming?

- Weak integration of life skills and citizenship education in existing national policies, strategies and plans, with limited national assessment and weak participatory involvement of different stakeholders.
- Lack of effective national coordination frameworks representing the different stakeholders involved in life skills and citizenship education.
- Funding priorities are dedicated to specific channels of delivery: formal basic education is perceived to receive most budget allocations by the government and donors while programmes implemented through learning in the work place (i.e., internships and apprenticeships) receive the least funding.
- Funding priorities are dedicated to specific dimensions, particularly Learning to Know and Learning to Be.
- Funding priorities are dedicated to specific groups, particularly the youth, people with disabilities and the poor.
- Current school environment in MENA is not conducive to life skills and citizenship education.
- Community mobilization and parent associations are weak.
- Lack of criteria in selecting human resources dedicated for life skills and citizenship education.
- There is a gender imbalance in human resources involved in life skills and citizenship education, as most programmes reported hiring males.
- Human resources involved in life skills are highly educated, but have limited experiences in life skills and citizenship education.
- Despite the availability of support for professional development regarding life skills and citizenship education, policy makers, practitioners and teachers expressed concerns around effectiveness.
- Lack of monitoring and evaluation systems for life skills education, including national assessments of learning outcomes.

Education reform, national policies, strategies and plans

Countries in the MENA region have invested heavily in education since the 1960s. This is reflected in the current levels of spending of national governments averaging 5 per cent of GDP and 15 per cent of total government spending. Education reforms since the 1990s in the region have featured a strong focus on universalizing basic education and expanding participation in post-basic education. A study of reforms in post-basic education for 1990-2000 indicated that countries were investing in quality and efficiency improvements (Algeria, Jordan and Morocco), curriculum development (Egypt, Jordan), as well as technical and vocational education (Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon) (USAID, 2002).

During this period, **several countries adopted pedagogical reforms that included student-centred learning, competency-based curricula and a focus on critical thinking** (World Bank, 2008). Despite these efforts, there is little evidence of a significant shift away from a traditional model of teaching and learning approach. As mentioned, the main activities observed in classrooms continue to be copying from the blackboard, writing and listening to the teachers. The use of group work, creative thinking, and proactive learning is rare. Frontal teaching (with a teacher addressing the whole class) is still a dominant feature, even in countries that have introduced child-centred pedagogies. Thus, the individual needs of the students are not commonly addressed in the classroom and there is little consideration of individual differences in the teaching-learning process. Current pedagogical practices do not offer adequate support to weak students, although a number of countries, including Tunisia, Jordan, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, are making additional investments in this area.

There have been various **initiatives to improve the quality of TVET** programmes in the MENA region. Curriculum development has received particular attention in most countries, and there is a general trend to move to competency-based approaches that include the integration of life skills. Lebanon and Morocco have adopted competency-based approaches since 2001 and 2003, respectively. In Algeria, all newly developed training programmes also apply this approach. Yet, in most countries, curriculum development is a stand-alone initiative and is not embedded in a wider reform. In a few cases, developing a competency-based approach is part of a broader objective, which includes engaging private sector businesses in a systemic TVET reform process. Some of the countries in MENA currently engaged in a TVET reform are highlighted in the list below.

The **Egyptian** Technical Education Strategy (2011/2012 – 2016-17) provides a framework for technical education in Egypt (UNESCO, 2012c). The Strategy, currently being updated with the support from the European Union, was developed by the MOE with the aim of establishing a technical education system that can play a crucial role in economic and social development by providing high quality education that fosters scientific, creative and critical thinking; learning for life, social values and technical skills.

Iraq was a pioneer in TVET in the MENA region. However, the TVET system was destroyed in the 1990s and is now slowly being rebuilt. Due to the fluctuating political situation in the past decade, there is no announced TVET policy or strategy. Nevertheless, the Iraqi government is expecting TVET to provide unemployed youth, in particular previous militia members, with quick and reliable training courses in order to assist them in finding jobs or creating their own businesses; as well as to equip people with the necessary technical skills to contribute to the rebuilding and reconstruction of Iraq.

Jordan commenced work on a labour observatory in 2003, creating networking opportunities between public and private institutions to support the economic reform process.²² Today the hub institution is part of the National Centre for Human Resources Development. By 2009, the observatory had a fully functioning human resource information system in place which provided support to the Government of Jordan's Employment and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (E-TVET) sector reform plan. The observatory has published a handbook on vocational education and training indicators, and a profile for the tourism sector that can be adapted to other sectors. The observatory has helped create new indicators relevant to the reform process, and has given important stakeholders opportunities to network with one another. Analytical reports have been produced and discussions launched on how to integrate the analysis in mainstream reforms.

In **Lebanon**, the government prepared a TVET strategy in 2012 that is composed of four core areas: (i) reviewing and updating the available programmes and specialties in TVET, (ii) reviewing the academic and administrative structure of TVET, (iii) providing and developing human, physical and financial resources, and (vi) strengthening partnerships and cooperation in the field of TVET (UNESCO, 2012b). Each core area is associated with specific projects and action plan.

Oman intends TVET to become the first choice for students and employers by providing demonstrably high-quality teaching, learning and research that makes significant contributions to the ongoing national economic development (UNESCO, 2012d). The mission of its TVET system is to achieve and sustain a strong reputation for excellence in teaching and learning. It is dedicated to the delivery of high quality technical education and vocational training and aims to produce graduates who have the professional and personal skills to enter employment with confidence, contributing effectively to the Sultanate's on-going economic development.

The **Palestinian** National TVET Strategy 2010 was developed by Palestinian TVET specialists. It reflects an important paradigm shift of recent years that places quality and the relevance of TVET as its priority (UNESCO, 2012d). The new structure follows the inner logic of a consistent and feasible TVET system. It integrates the labour market in all parts of the TVET system. The overall objective of the National TVET Strategy is to create a knowledgeable, competent, motivated, entrepreneurial, adaptable, creative and innovative workforce in the State of Palestine as a skilled workforce is expected to contribute to poverty reduction. A demand-driven, high quality TVET addresses the needs of all sectors of the economy. A National Qualification Framework (NQF) will allow for the mobility of TVET students within the entire education system through comparable education levels and accreditation of graduation certificates. On the other hand, the National Employment Strategy 2010 is interrelated with many government socio-economic policies and identifies areas for cooperation, especially, between the Ministries of Education, Higher Education and Labour for policies related to TVET. The employment strategy is harmonized with the national TVET strategy. The Ministry of Women's Affairs is responsible for strategies related to increasing the participation of women in the labour market and related programmes of lifelong learning. Creating a public employment agency, developing and implementing active labour market measures, as well as strengthening the labour market information system are among the strategies to be taken forward.

²² European Training Foundation Observatory Team, *Developing observatory functions – Information systems for education and labour market reforms*, Blog, 1 June 2010, accessed at <www.etf.europa.eu/ETFBlog.nsf/dx/issue03>.

In **Tunisia**, the active labour market programmes, initially supported by the World Bank, established an information system that allowed job seekers to identify opportunities outside their local labour market and allowed employers to recruit from a larger pool of available skills.

Lifelong learning is articulated among national objectives and strategies of only a few countries, given that the term is restricted to formal education, and linked to adult illiteracy, teacher training or continuous education in the form of e-learning. In Egypt, for instance, the term refers to the opportunity for teachers to obtain practical specialized certificates that will lead to promotion, while, in Jordan, it refers to the provision of professional development programmes to school staff (World Bank, 2008). Furthermore, UNESCO analysis of informal and non-formal learning and frameworks in the Arab region indicates that the term ‘adult education’ is used interchangeably with literacy and there is little inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial cooperation, meaning that the adult education sector is very narrowly defined as remedial education. There is also no attempt to link adult learning to other sub-sectors of the education and training systems.²³

Over the past decade, **many MENA countries have endorsed new education laws and strategic plans**, through which they aim to nurture responsible citizens who actively contribute to their societies, as well as creative, independent thinkers and lifelong learners that are competent in languages, mathematics, science, as well as ICT (Faour, 2013). Some particularly emphasize the acquisition of skills that will enable graduates to communicate effectively, solve problems and contribute to their countries’ socio-economic and political development. In the framework of national consultations, Djibouti, Iran, Morocco, the State of Palestine, Sudan and Tunisia reported having national policy and regulatory frameworks, strategies relevant for life skills and citizenship education in which life skills are referenced. **A closer examination of these documents, however, indicates that life skills and citizenship education is sparsely mentioned** or, then, only as a general aim of education with little identification of specific skills or concrete strategies for implementation. In addition, some documents only refer to specific activities that often focus on developing manuals or curriculums for life skills and citizenship education.

The Fundamental Reform Document of Education in the Islamic Republic of Iran, for instance, calls for educating individuals that would “gain competence to face social and political changes accountably and wisely” (Iran Ministry of Education, 2011). In Algeria, the National Education Law Number 08-04 for the year 2008 clearly stipulates that education aims at providing students with skills that could be utilized in real life situations to solve problems, adapt to changes and enable lifelong learning. The law further stipulates the importance of developing the civic sense in students, and raising them with citizenship values, equity and equality, and respect for others, as well as producing citizens that are creative and responsible in their personal, civic and professional lives.²⁴ Furthermore, the Sudan National Strategic Plan and Sectoral Plan on HIV/AIDS for the years 2004-2009 refers to several activities in life skills and citizenship education under the health, education, sports and security sectors.²⁵

The Moroccan Education Charter of 1999 and the apprenticeship law of 12 June 2000 created a climate for recognition of on-the-job training to improve workforce skills and to support socially vulnerable groups.²⁶ In 2008, as part of its educational reform process, the Moroccan MOE published the *National Certification Framework* (ETF, 2013) that addresses skills in vocational training, and is expected to contribute to the implementation of practices and tools linking updated information on demand for skills, with the development of occupational and qualifications standards, as well as assessment criteria.²⁷ The *Palestinian Educational Development Strategic Plan of 2014-2019: A Learning Nation* sets out strategic options and anticipated results

²³ See Presentation on *Informal and Non-Formal Learning and Frameworks in the Development Context*, slide 11, PowerPoint Presentation by Mahdu Singh at UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2009, accessed at <[www.etf.europa.eu/events/mgmt.nsf/\(getAttachment\)/FB1391CC32C7E2E8C125758B00392B61/\\$File/30%20Jan%2002%20Informal%20and%20non%20fomal%20learning%20\(UIL_ETF%20UNESCO\).pdf](http://www.etf.europa.eu/events/mgmt.nsf/(getAttachment)/FB1391CC32C7E2E8C125758B00392B61/$File/30%20Jan%2002%20Informal%20and%20non%20fomal%20learning%20(UIL_ETF%20UNESCO).pdf)>.

²⁴ See: *Algerian National Education Law No. 04-08, Journal Officiel*, vol. 4, 2008, pp. 8-9.

²⁵ See: *Sudanese National AIDS Council, Sudan National Strategic Plan and Sectoral Plan on HIV/AIDS (2004-2009)*, 2004.

²⁶ See Presentation on *Informal and Non-Formal Learning and Frameworks in the Development Context*, slide 11, PowerPoint Presentation by Mahdu Singh at UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2009, accessed at <[www.etf.europa.eu/events/mgmt.nsf/\(getAttachment\)/FB1391CC32C7E2E8C125758B00392B61/\\$File/30%20Jan%2002%20Informal%20and%20non%20fomal%20learning%20\(UIL_ETF%20UNESCO\).pdf](http://www.etf.europa.eu/events/mgmt.nsf/(getAttachment)/FB1391CC32C7E2E8C125758B00392B61/$File/30%20Jan%2002%20Informal%20and%20non%20fomal%20learning%20(UIL_ETF%20UNESCO).pdf)>.

²⁷ See *Morocco Moves Ahead with its National Qualification Framework*, by ETF, 21 August 2015, accessed at www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Morocco_moves_ahead_with_its_national_qualifications_framework_EN.

for a curriculum reform by preparing a general national framework that includes its philosophy, vision, major goals and attaining life skills, concepts of citizenship, national identity and characteristics of humanity. It also calls for “introducing higher order thinking skills into the curriculum, test structure and teaching habits and emphasize teaching the 21st century skills for all stages”.²⁸

Most MENA countries have moved – or are starting to move – towards placing greater emphasis on skills in their curriculum reform processes. During country visits, education specialists and curriculum developers expressed a growing interest in competency-based curriculum development, which is seen as an urgent prerequisite in most countries to address the shortcomings of national curricula that are often criticized as overloaded, out-dated and irrelevant to learners’ needs. Reforms in this area, however, vary from one country to another. While the discourse in education reforms in some MENA countries points out to the importance of core skills, and despite the fact that 11 out of 15 countries reported integrating life skills and citizenship education in their curriculum reform process, few countries are actively moving towards developing a competency-based curriculum like in Iraq, Jordan and Tunisia. Lebanon and Tunisia reported including life skills and citizenship education as a formal, compulsory requirement in the national curriculum, while the remaining surveyed countries have not initiated such a comprehensive process.

None of the MENA countries examined has developed a comprehensive national policy on life skills, and the goals stipulated in most national educational legal frameworks and policies that refer to skills are rarely complemented with realistic plans or adequate commitment and resources.

Another challenge in relation to the formulation of policies and strategies relevant to life skills and citizenship education is the **limited use of national assessments**, as only six out of 15 countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, the State of Palestine, Sudan and Tunisia) reported having undertaken assessments, such as evaluations, studies and analyses of life skills and citizenship education (see Table 7). Most of these assessments were conducted within the framework of specific projects, or for particular life skills areas or groups, such as school children and youth. None of them were undertaken at the national level to comprehensively cover overall life skills and citizenship education in order to inform education policies and strategies. In addition, few assessments were undertaken via a participatory approach involving key stakeholders and beneficiaries, as only Jordan and the State of Palestine reported referring to such an approach.

Table 7 Examples of national assessments that address life skills and citizenship education as reported by stakeholders

Country	National assessments (evaluations, studies or analysis) that address life skills education	Responsible body	Date
Jordan	Mapping of Youth Activities in Jordan: Who is Doing What for Youth in Jordan	UNFPA	2015
Lebanon	Mapping Youth Interventions, Actors and Resources within the Humanitarian Response in Lebanon	UNICEF-UNFPA	2015
	Situation analysis of youth affected by the Syrian Crisis in Lebanon	UNICEF-UNFPA	2014
Oman	Evaluation of life skills manuals for the age group of 13-15 years	MOE and UNICEF	2009
State of Palestine	Baseline M&E report 2014, The Third Education Development Strategies Plan (EDSP 111 2014-2019)	MOE	2005
Sudan	Market Studies by GIZ	GIZ (not national level)	2016
	Peace Bridge	Peace bridge (not national level)	2014
	Sudan Open Learning Organization before commencement of MOE National Survey	MOE	2010
Tunisia	Mid-term evaluation for youth schooled in drug addiction prevention life skills programme	School and university health unit in cooperation with an expert	2015

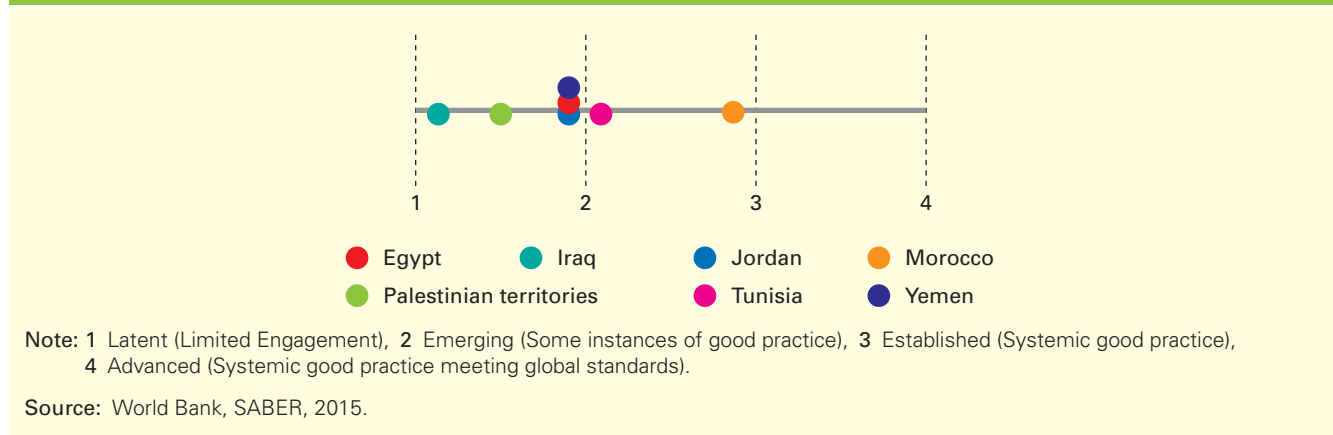
²⁸ See Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, *Education Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) 2014-2019: A Learning Nation*, March 2014, p. 65.

In Tunisia, for instance, a mid-term evaluation of a life skills programme for youth enrolled in drug addiction prevention was conducted in 2015. In Lebanon, a mapping of youth interventions, actors and resources, with a focus on life skills, was also undertaken in 2015. Similarly, in 2015 UNFPA conducted a Mapping of Youth Activities in Jordan in which the category ‘life and employability skills’ was integrated into the analysis of organizational activities (UNFPA, 2015).

When national assessments exist, they often adopt a narrow approach and focus on employability skills.

In this regard, results using the *World Bank Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) workforce development diagnostic tool* indicate that the region has taken some positive, yet modest, steps to institutionalize employer engagement and occasionally conducts assessments of national economic prospects and skills implications in a few key sectors. Most countries were ranked between latent (i.e., limited engagement) and emerging (i.e., some good practices) (see Figure 18).

Figure 18 Classification of MENA countries using a demand-led approach to workforce development²⁹



In some MENA countries, such as Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco, occasional assessments of national economic prospects and their implications for skills development were conducted for a number of sectors. In the State of Palestine, two major assessments of all economic sectors in selected governorates were conducted in 2011, while no formal assessments of economic prospects and their skills implications were conducted at the national level. Skills demand in Yemen is currently identified through ad hoc, informal and unsystematic approaches, such as small-scale studies and surveys conducted by different stakeholders, mainly prior to establishing donor-supported programmes. While in Iraq there is a widespread sense of urgency for market research and analysis in order to help education and training institutions better address market needs, no assessment has been conducted to date. Despite the provision of the latest picture of skills demand, the available studies fail to portray a comprehensive picture of the country’s economic prospects and skills implications; they also rarely inform design of initiatives that TVET institutions are encouraged to implement and, thus, remain of little policy value.

The formal, leading role in defining policy frameworks strategies and plans related to life skills and citizenship education is still largely under the control of the Ministries of Education in MENA countries.

Nine out of the 15 countries also reported the involvement of the Ministry of Health at both the policy and strategic level in life skills and citizenship education along with the involvement of the MOE. Other stakeholders, such as governmental organizations, NGOs, United Nations agencies and the private sector are formally involved in the process with varying degrees of engagement. Eight countries reported the involvement of United Nations agencies and NGOs, often in cooperation with governmental organizations that lead the process (see Table 8).

²⁹ Source: World Bank. 2015. *Middle East and North Africa Regional Synthesis Report, Workforce Development Report*, Systems Approach for Better Education Results.

Table 8 The formal and recognized role of stakeholders in defining policy frameworks, strategies and plans related to life skills and citizenship education, as reported during national consultations (country typology)

Country	Ministry of Education/ Higher Education	Ministry of Labour	Ministry of Sports	Ministry of Social Affairs/ Development	Ministry of Health	Civil society	UN agencies	Private sector
Algeria	●	●	●					
Djibouti	●			●	●	●	●	●
Egypt	●		●	●	●		●	
Iran	●	●	●		●			
Iraq	●	●						
Jordan	●	●		●	●	●	●	
Lebanon	●	●	●	●		●	●	
Libya	●							
Morocco	●		●	●	●		●	
Oman	●	●			●			
State of Palestine	●				●	●	●	
Sudan	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Syria	●			●		●		
Tunisia	●				●	●	●	
Yemen	●							

Further results indicate that the involvement of private sector organizations and employers in policy formulation related to life skills and citizenship education remains very modest, which is an important area to be investigated in the future. In defining workforce development priorities, **MENA countries have no clear role for the private sector**. This might be linked to the prevalence of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the region, whose predominant focus is limited and which often lack resources and capacity to contribute to long-term national goals. In Jordan, private sector representatives participate in boards and advisory committees, such as those of the E-TVET Council, E-TVET Fund, the Vocational Training Corporation and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. These members, however, are viewed as guests by the government and are unofficially nominated by the private sector, lacking any legal mandate to speak on its behalf, and hence fail to assume any leadership role in influencing policy frameworks. In Egypt, employers participate in defining workforce priorities on an ad hoc basis and their contribution remains limited.³⁰

National consultations are key to ensure that the development of national policies, plans and strategies is a participatory process. Consultations represent a high-level platform that facilitate 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 also play a key role in sustaining national education reform processes towards a common vision for life skills and citizenship education. The on-going Tunisia education reform provides a promising example on the value of such consultations.³¹

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ On Tunisia Education Reform, see <www.reforme.edunet.tn/>.

Along with education reforms, **national TVET reform agendas** constitute an entry point for mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education and increase its relevance, scale and sustainability. While the MENA context points to the need of systemic approaches to increase TVET quality and foster opportunities for youth employment, the fragmentation and duplications of efforts is generally seen as a common challenge across all countries.

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, as well as the changing nature of skills required by the labour market, needs to be reflected in the curricula and training systems, as life skills become increasingly important for youth not only to access, but also to maintain employment.

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 15).

Box 15 The case for 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. In Morocco, TVET is provided by different private and public institutions. The majority of students (close to 90%) 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 and practical training courses for youth, especially the most at-risk, to better integrate them into the labour market.

In order to achieve a flexible and coherent TVET system, a national TVET strategy, programmed through 2021, has been developed to ensure complementarity and coordination among the different actors involved. A key strength of the strategy is the articulation, within a coherent system’s approach, of multiple pathways that strengthen and further diversify existing professional training levels, including for early ages. In addition, the strategy stresses the focus on quality, skills acquisition and competency based curricula reform.

Despite this participatory involvement of stakeholders in many countries in defining policy frameworks and strategies in which life skills and citizenship education is integrated, specific institutional objectives are mostly addressed in strategies and plans, with less focus on their inclusion in national policy frameworks (see Table 9).

Table 9 Inclusion of institutional objectives, role of stakeholders and gender issues in life skills and citizenship education, as reported during national consultations (country typology)

Country	Inclusion of institutional objectives around life skills education			Stakeholders role in life skills education			Addressing gender issues		
	Policy frameworks	Strategies	Plans	Policy frameworks	Strategies	Plans	Policy frameworks	Strategies	Plans
Algeria	●	●	●				●	●	●
Djibouti		●	●		●	●		●	●
Egypt	●	●	●						
Iran	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Iraq		●	●		●	●		●	●
Jordan	●		●			●	●		
Lebanon		●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Libya		●		●					
Morocco	●	●		●		●	●	●	●
Oman	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
State of Palestine		●	●		●	●		●	●
Sudan	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Syria			●	●	●	●			
Tunisia			●				●	●	●
Yemen			●			●			●

Similarly, according to stakeholders participating in national consultations, gender issues and the needs of certain risk groups in life skills and citizenship education are mainly addressed in educational strategies and plans. Because most constitutional provisions state that education is a right for all and call for equal opportunities, these references are integrated in policies and strategies. Youth, people with disabilities, women, the poor and illiterate were amongst the most identified risk groups (*see Table 10*). The needs of other groups, such as gender based violence victims, children in juvenile justice systems, working children especially those carrying out hazardous or exploitative work, drug and alcohol users, as well as female sex workers, are not addressed in policies, strategies or plans.

Table 10 Risk groups whose needs are addressed in policies, strategies or plans

Country	Poor	Women	Youth	People with disabilities	Illiterate	Gender based violence victims	Working children ³²	Minority groups	Children in juvenile justice systems	Drug and alcohol users, female sex workers
Algeria	●		●							
Djibouti	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Egypt	●			●	●	●	●		●	
Iran	●		●	●	●			●		
Iraq		●	●			●			●	
Jordan		●		●			●			
Lebanon	●		●		●					●
Libya										
Morocco			●		●					
Oman			●	●						
State of Palestine										
Sudan	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Syria										
Tunisia			●	●					●	
Yemen	●									

Furthermore, in most of the MENA countries examined, policy framework, strategies and plans that refer to life skills and citizenship education predominantly address the needs of children aged 5–18 years, whereas **the needs of young children aged 3–4 years and adults above 18 years are addressed to a much lesser degree**. While it was outside the scope of this AM to investigate the level and quality of integration of gender issues and risk groups into national policies and strategies, it is worth assessing this topic in the future to help inform the design of life skills and citizenship education policies and strategies that address more comprehensively gender and risk group issues, how these regulatory frameworks are implemented in practice and how life skills curricula are designed to embed such values and needs.

In fact, national consultations have shown that there is a general consensus among experts, practitioners and partners in the MENA region on the pressing need for a strong vision of quality learning through life skills that reaffirms respect for life and human dignity, equal rights (non-discrimination), social justice and respect for cultural and religious diversity, in order to improve social cohesion. There is also an emerging demand for reengaging stakeholders around models for positive social transformation consistent with democratic, emancipatory and social justice values that will help form ethically empowered citizens and promote social cohesion.

Coordination and partnership frameworks for life skills and citizenship education

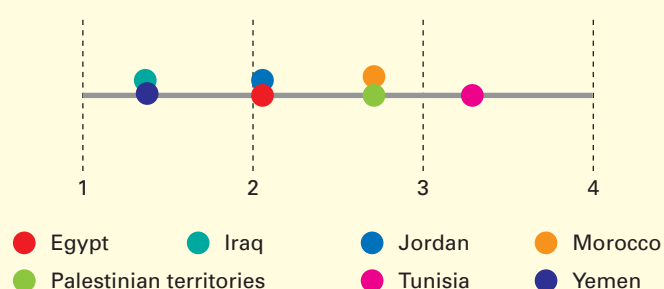
Overall there is a lack of coordination and partnership frameworks at the national level, and most of the life skills programmes are implemented in isolation with little or marginal impact. During national consultations, eight out of 15 countries indicated being in the process of introducing coordination frameworks at the national level, while nine countries reported partnerships between the MOE and other stakeholders involved in the field of life skills and citizenship education. It is not clear, however, whether these coordination frameworks are merely forums for operational harmonization and restricted to governmental organizations and donors, or whether they have the capacity to provide national coordination platforms involving various stakeholders (government, United Nations agencies, donors, non-governmental organizations and the private sector) around life skills design and implementation at national and regional levels.

³² Working children especially those carrying out hazardous or exploitative work.

Coordination frameworks are an important area to take into account, particularly as only 37 per cent of life skills programmes were part of local, national or regional coordination frameworks or bodies related to life skills programming. Out of the 16 programmes reported as being part of coordination frameworks, 12 were implemented by NGOs and four by governmental organizations. The nature of many of these coordination frameworks is restricted to the coordination of project activities and monitoring and evaluation. It should be noted that 23 out of all 43 life skills programmes surveyed (55 per cent) are implemented in partnership with other organizations.

The World Bank points out to the range of experiences across the MENA region as far as coordination frameworks related to workforce development are concerned (*see Figure 19*); some of which being deemed positive. Notwithstanding, some key challenges, particularly the overlapping mandates between government ministries and agencies responsible for workforce development, as well as the reliance on ad hoc mechanisms for coordination, remain.

Figure 19 Classification of MENA countries in relation to coordination mechanisms in workforce development³³



Note: 1 Latent (Limited Engagement), 2 Emerging (Some instances of good practice), 3 Established (Systemic good practice), 4 Advanced (Systemic good practice meeting global standards).

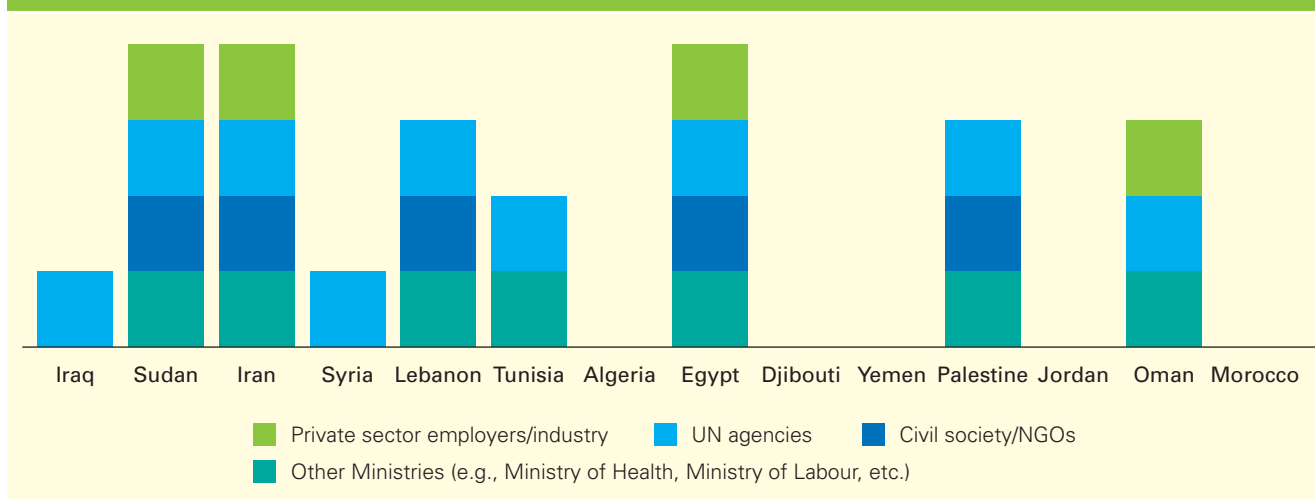
Source: SABER, World Bank, 2015.

As in the case of all coordination frameworks related to life skills and citizenship education, non-governmental stakeholders involved in workforce development have no legally defined roles and responsibilities. Coordination with state actors is effectuated through ad hoc mechanisms. This being said, there are some exceptions in some coordination processes, like in Iraq, where government ministries and agencies responsible for workforce development have clear mandates and legally defined roles, but the various existing coordination committees have no clear mandates, working protocols, responsibilities or authority. In Yemen, the incentives for the established inter-ministerial coordination committees to communicate, share information and work collaboratively with relevant ministries are limited to protecting territorial interests rather than enhancing cooperation mechanisms and approaches. Tunisia, on the other hand, has an official and institutionalized coordination mechanism with non-governmental actors that involves specific responsibilities and an implementation plan, but is only applied to certain economic sectors.³⁴

As far as formal framework agreements detailing partnerships between the Ministries of Education and other stakeholders, nine (Iraq, Sudan, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, Egypt, the State of Palestine and Oman) out of 15 countries reported having one. However, these formal frameworks predominantly involve ministries and United Nations agencies, while civil society and the private sector are only involved at much smaller scale in some countries, such as in Sudan, Iran, Lebanon, Egypt, the State of Palestine and Oman (*see Figure 20*).

³³ Source: World Bank. 2015. *Middle East and North Africa Regional Synthesis Report, Workforce Development Report, Systems Approach for Better Education Results*.

³⁴ Ibid.

Figure 20 Stakeholders involved in formal partnership agreements with ministries of education

Building on existing networks with the potential for a wider outreach, is a major window of opportunity to enhance life skills programming. This is critical to ensure that the life skills selected for any type of curricular (or even extra-curricular) programming are relevant and address real-time needs in the labour market (see Box 16). There are important frameworks and initiatives relevant to life skills and citizenship education and training in the MENA region that provide an opportunity and can be built upon or complemented, such as the Education for Competitiveness and the United Nations Interagency Technical Task Team on Young People (UNIATTTYP).

Box 16 Public-private partnerships in life skills programming in Egypt and Morocco

In Egypt, an example of a private-public partnership in technical and vocational education is the dual school model funded by Americana (e.g. Zaiton School). The focus is on life skills education for employability with a formal curriculum developed jointly with the private sector. In Morocco, IFMIA Automobile Training Centre is another example of a public private partnership in life skills programming. The Centre has developed a curriculum model supported by the European Union, in partnership with over 60 automotive companies. The curriculum includes practical methods for teaching and learning, delivered by in-person and blended learning strategies. An e-learning platform hosts more than 500 automotive technical courses from global automobile manufacturers and is adapted to the Morocco context. Teachers who use the curriculum receive a three-month training in Korea. To address life skills, newly enrolled students receive a three-week training course focusing on citizenship, respect for others, health education and self-confidence. There is, currently, no standard material or approach to life skills instruction, but the Centre is considering this option. The current demand for the course largely outnumbers the demand with 4,000 applications received for 90 available spots. One essential feature of this programme is that partner companies pay the students' fees as part of the pre-hire agreement signed between the companies and the TVET.

3.6 Budgeting and financing for life skills and citizenship education

Identifying funding resources for life skills and citizenship education interventions in the 15 MENA countries examined is complicated, particularly because there is little endowment from national and educational budgets for life skills and citizenship education, as only five countries, Algeria, Iraq, Morocco, Oman and Sudan, reported specific allocation also mainstreamed as part of the national education budget. In some countries, budgets for life skills and citizenship education are available when it is integrated in national policies, strategies, plans and curriculum frameworks. For example, a budget line on HIV/AIDS and life skills could be included in some education and health strategies. But since evidence for this is limited, it is difficult to assess funding characteristics for such components.

Available information about funding for life skills and citizenship education shows that the **highest frequency of support depends on governmental sources, as well as multilateral and bilateral funding agencies**, such as UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, USAID, WHO, World Bank, etc. The analysis of funding resources for life skills programmes documented through this AM indicates that 87 per cent of programmes are funded by international donors, in comparison to 14 per cent of them being self-financed. The training fees for only 4 per cent of life skills programmes are covered by beneficiaries and only 20 per cent of programmes offer needs-based scholarships or discounts for beneficiaries. These issues raise concerns about the long-term sustainability of such programmes.³⁵

Furthermore, the analysis of the annual budget allocated for the life skills life skills programmes run by NGOs shows that the average budget reaches US\$375,782, with the lowest rate being US\$4,000 and the highest at US\$1.5 million. Allocation of funding for life skills interventions out of the total organizational budget remains scarce, as 58 per cent of stakeholders indicated that less than 20 per cent of their organizational budget is dedicated to life skills interventions, while only 19 per cent allocate more than 31 per cent of the budget to these initiatives.

Funding priorities for life skills programming are dedicated to specific channels of delivery and skills.

The results from 15 national consultations indicate that funding for life skills and citizenship education in formal basic settings is prioritized by governments, donors and NGOs, followed by programmes implemented in formal post basic education, including tertiary education and TVET (*see Table 11*). Although these trends portray a kind of complementarity in funding between different stakeholders and cover the various channels of delivery, these results also indicate that there are certain gaps in funding allocations, as programmes implemented through learning in the work place receive the least funding allocations from governments and NGOs, and come in third place only in donor funding priorities.

Table 11 Ranking in national consultations of stakeholders funding priority for life skills programming

Channels of delivery	Government	Donors	Private sector	NGOs
Formal basic education	●	●	●	●
Formal post basic education	●	●	●	●
Learning in the work place	●	●	●	●
Learning towards transition to work/apprenticeships/internship	●	●	●	●

● Receives most budget allocation ● Second most funded channel of delivery ● Third most funded channel of delivery
 ● Least funded channel of delivery

Source: National Consultations with 15 MENA Countries, UNICEF, 2016.

Moreover, when asked to rank their funding priorities for the different dimensions of life skills, results show that governments, donors and NGOs have similar ones (*see Table 12*). Life skills and citizenship education and programmes that promote skills for knowing, including creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, receive most budget allocations from these stakeholders, followed by skills for personal empowerment and development. This can be in part attributed to the fact that these are funded as components of formal education, which has the largest coverage, along with the focus of the different stakeholders on designing and implementing programmes within this dimension. On the other hand, skills for employability are the least funded by governments, donors and NGOs, because many of these programmes are often implemented in non-formal settings with limited sustainability and scalability. In contrast, funding priorities for the private sector are oriented towards business needs and employability skills, such as job searching, résumé writing, interview skills, organizational skills, career planning, goal orientation, creativity, teamwork, customer-relationship skills, workplace protocols and safety, etc.

³⁵ While it is out of the scope of this AM to measure the cost-efficiency of life skills programmes, it is worth mentioning that the range of fees charged per participant ranged from a minimum of US\$2 to a maximum of US\$130, with an average of US\$18, whereas the average organizational cost of the programme per beneficiary, including operational, administrative and training fees, ranged from a minimum of US\$4 to a maximum of US\$3,000 per beneficiary.

Table 12 Stakeholders' dimensions of life skills funding priorities

Channels of delivery	Government	Donors	Private sector	NGOs
Skills for learning	●	●	●	●
Skills for employability	●	●	●	●
Skills for personal empowerment	●	●	●	●
Skills for active citizenship	●	●	●	●

● Most funded life skills dimension ● Second most funded life skills dimension ● Third most funded life skills dimension
 ● Least funded life skills dimension

Source: National Consultations with 15 MENA Countries, IYF/UNICEF, 2016.

In terms of the allocation of funding for specific vulnerable groups in life skills and citizenship education, only six out of the 15 countries reported such priorities, especially towards youth, people with disabilities and the poor. There is also an evident gap in tracking expenditures related to life skills programming at the national level, as only the Palestinian MOE reported tracking such expenditures.³⁶

Because most life skills and citizenship education programmes are implemented on a project basis, depend on available resources, and are partially integrated into formal core curricula in the best of cases, sustainability issues arise which prevent future strategic planning. Furthermore, the lack of understanding on the role and benefits of life skills and citizenship education at the national level among stakeholders negatively influences budget allocation for such interventions.

School-based management, communication and community mobilization

More and more MENA countries are introducing school-based management reforms that aim at strengthening parental involvement in schools. Despite the increased emphasis on the need for decentralization, in which the school is in charge of most of the managerial decisions with the participation of parents and the community through school councils, **school autonomy and community participation in children's learning process are limited in most of the MENA countries examined.**

During national consultations, stakeholders commonly agreed that existing national policies are not equipped with relevant tools to improve relations within school communities and foster parental mobilization. Only Djibouti, Iran, Morocco and Tunisia reported including such issues in their education strategic plans. Social community and parental mobilization are often addressed through sensitization and communication through media and social networks, the establishment of parent and teacher councils, provision of training to parents and the latter's involvement in the implementation and evaluation of some life skills programmes. Lacking any national long-term perspective, most of these efforts are project-based and often stop once project funding ceases.

For Jordan, the SABER *School Autonomy and Accountability tool* shows that school educational councils have a voice in adopting operational budget items through consultations with school principals, but the Parent-Teacher Council has no role in planning the school's operating budget. Both councils have no legal right or voice on matters related to management of teaching and non-teaching staff and learning inputs. Furthermore, parents or community members are not consulted in the preparation or execution of the school budget. On the other hand, schools start gaining more autonomy in personal management, while the appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff is conducted at the central level and their deployment is managed at both the central and regional levels by the MOE and the regional Directorates of Education. Finally, decisions about the selection and evaluation of school principals are managed by the Directorates.³⁷

³⁶ The percentage of funding for life skills and citizenship education is only 1 per cent out of the total budget of the Palestinian Ministry of Education.

³⁷ See SABER Jordan Country report 2015: School Autonomy and Accountability, accessed at <http://wbfiles.worldbank.org/documents/hdn/ed/saber/supporting_doc/CountryReports/SAA/SABER_SAA_Jordan.pdf>.

In Morocco, the School Management Council representing school personnel and the community supports the school principal in operational management and partnership projects, but has no legal right on matters related to staff management and learning inputs.³⁸ This means Jordan and Morocco have emerging school autonomy (*see Table 13*), reflecting some good practice, while policy work is still in progress.

In Yemen, the MOE started institutionalizing community and parental participation in the late 1990s, as it established a community participation unit in the Ministry, supported by donors, such as the GTZ and the World Bank. Building on these efforts, the Ministry continued to experiment with participatory school-based management programmes, throughout 2005–2010, in cooperation with UNICEF for Child Friendly Schools, World Bank and its co-financers for a whole school development programme, and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Fathers' and mothers' councils are part of the school committees that manage school grants, and thus parents have the right to review the financial report. Despite these promising results, challenges remain and the Yemeni policies are still assessed as being low on school autonomy (*see Table 13*). Local authorities, schools and communities share responsibilities, and they play the important roles in helping children learn. But in terms of personnel matters, public schools' regular teachers are hired by governorates of education, after approval by the central government in Yemen (Yuki and Kamayama, 2013).

Table 13 Schools' autonomy in selected MENA countries³⁹

Country	Autonomy in Budget	Autonomy in personal management	Role of school council in school governance	School and student assessment	Accountability
Jordan	●●○○	●●○○	●●○○	●●○○	●●○○
Morocco	●●○○	●●○○	●●○○	●○○○	●●○○
Yemen	●○○○	●●○○	●○○○	●○○○	●○○○

Note: Latent ●○○○, Emerging ●●○○, Established ●●●○, Advanced ●●●●

Source: Jordan and Morocco: SABER, World Bank, 2015; Yemen: Yuki and Kameyama, 2013.

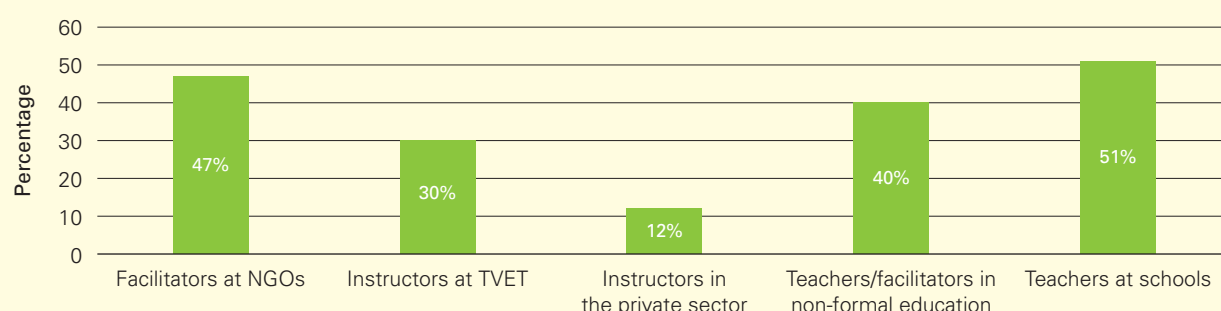
Overall, **community involvement is confined to the participation of parents in school councils whose responsibilities and engagement in school's governance are limited**. Research and empirical studies regarding the impact of school autonomy on the quality of education remain limited, especially for developing countries and those in the MENA region; it is, therefore, worth investigating further the effects of school autonomy on students learning outcomes. In 2009, a study that examined the effects of school autonomy (school management, ownership and funding, competition and accountability measures) on the quality of education in Jordan and Tunisia indicated that it has no significant effect on student attainment in both countries, except for a minor negative impact in Jordan (Escardibul and Helmy, 2009). Another study for the same countries in 2011 further concluded that students in schools with more school-based management measures are on average no more skilled than students in schools without school-based management measures. Only parental involvement in schools in Tunisia was linked with higher skills among low-skilled students. According to this study, school autonomy has little margin in improving skills if existing types of school-based management measures are adopted (Shafiq, 2011). To achieve this, profound reforms are needed in the way schools are managed in MENA.

Human resource in life skills and citizenship education

Human resources are arguably the most crucial inputs for successful life skills programming, particularly because they strongly influence children and youth's learning outcomes. Teachers in schools and facilitators in NGOs are the top most human resources involved in life skills and citizenship education, followed by teachers and facilitators in non-formal education, and instructors at TVET and in the private sector (*see Figure 21*). The average age group of human resources involved in life skills and citizenship education programmes is within the 26–35 year range.

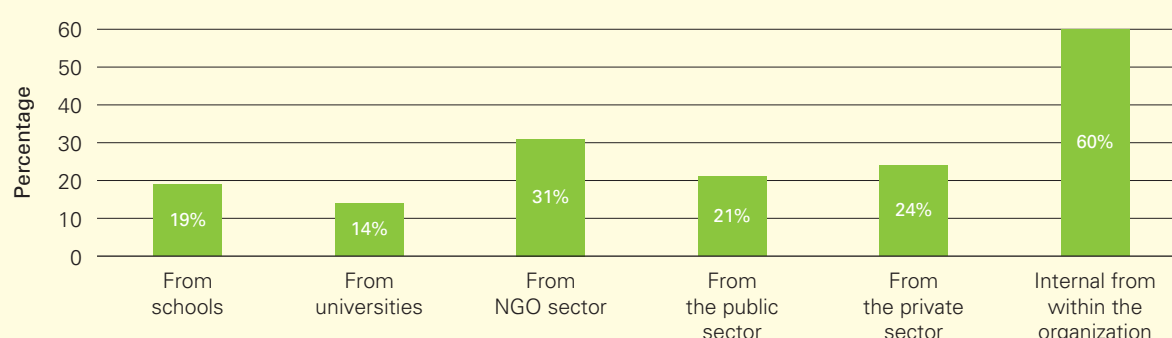
³⁸ See SABER Morocco Country Report 2015: Autonomy and Accountability.

³⁹ Source: For the data on both Jordan and Morocco, see World Bank SABER, accessed at <<http://saber.worldbank.org/index.cfm>>; for Yemen, see Yuki, Takako and Yuriko Kameyama, *Improving the Quality of Basic Education for the Future Youth of Yemen Post Arab Spring*, Global Economy and Development, Working Paper 59, Brookings Institution, January 2013, using data from World Bank SABER.

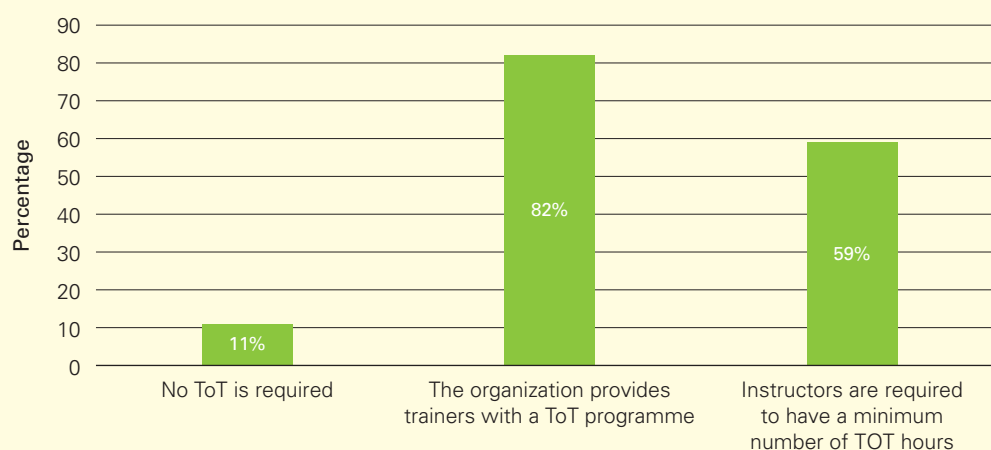
Figure 21 Human resources involved in life skills and citizenship education

One of the most difficult challenges encountered by the majority of MENA countries in this area is developing qualified human resources for the delivery of life skills and citizenship education. More specifically, the **lack of effective criteria at national and programme level for the selection of human resources in life skills and citizenship education** is the first area of concern. Only six (Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, the State of Palestine, Sudan and Tunisia) out of the 15 countries reported having criteria at the national level adopted by relevant ministries for hiring human resources in life skills and citizenship education. Often life skills and citizenship education in formal education settings is delivered by school teachers, whose employment process depends on their educational background and experience in teaching the subject; there exists no specific criteria to take into consideration the particular experience of teachers in life skills or their ability to address the specific needs of vulnerable groups. Even when these criteria exist, they are often not systematically applied.

At programme level, organizations tend to employ more specific selection criteria as most programmes are specifically delivering life skills. 60 per cent of programmes surveyed in this AM use trainers/teachers within their respective organizations, while 31 per cent of programmes contract trainers from the NGO sector, 24 per cent from the private sector, 19 per cent from schools and 14 per cent from universities (*see Figure 22*). These findings indicate that **human resources are employed from different sources**, mostly on an ad hoc basis when they are from outside sources (schools, private sector, public sector, NGOs universities), and mainly without experience in life skills and citizenship education, but rather experience in training and teaching in general.

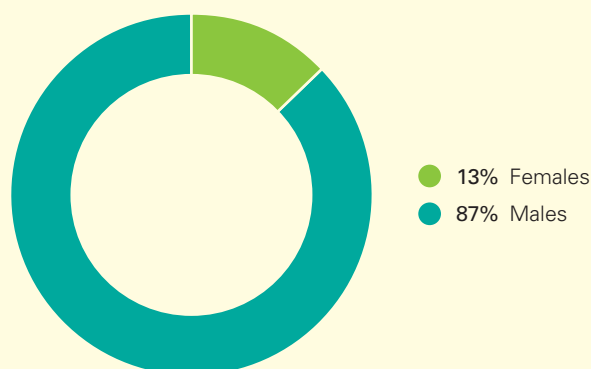
Figure 22 Sourcing typologies of human resources involved in life skills and citizenship education programmes

The availability of specific criteria for human resource selection for life skills and citizenship education programmes remains limited, as only 19 out of the 43 programmes documented reported having other criteria than only age and educational background. Some of these criteria include experience in teaching life skills in general, or specific life skills topics, experience dealing with vulnerable groups, children and youth, personal qualifications (communicating effectively with young people) and Training of Trainers (TOT) certification. In fact, 59 per cent of programmes require their instructors/facilitators/teachers to have a minimum number of TOT hours, ranging from a minimum of 12 to a maximum of 150 hours. Results further indicate that 82 per cent of programmes provide their employees with such training (*see Figure 23*).

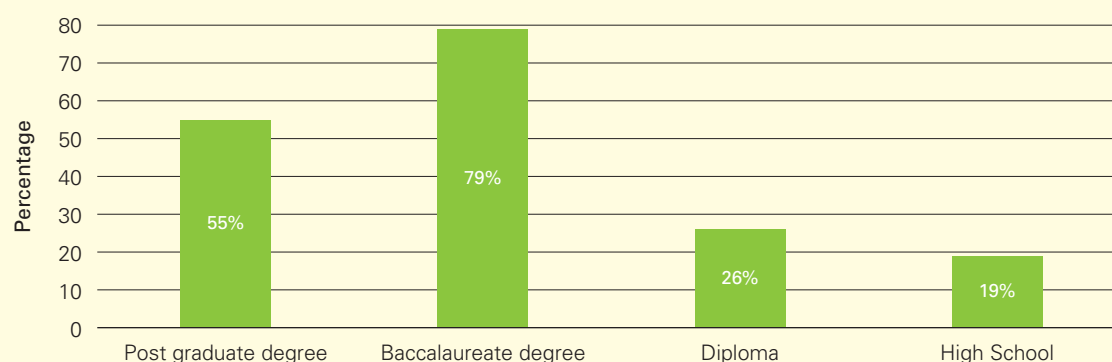
Figure 23 Academic background of human resources involved in life skills and citizenship education

The AM shows a **gender imbalance in human resources involved in life skills and citizenship education**.

The surveyed life skills and citizenship education programmes employ more males than females with 87 per cent of human resources involved in life skills and citizenship education programmes being males and only 13 per cent females (*see Figure 24*). This gender imbalance is an area that needs further investigation to inform and narrow this gender gap, and understand its influences on the learning outcomes of programmes.

Figure 24 Gender distribution in human resources

Despite the high educational level of human resources, they have limited experience both in life skills and citizenship education and in practices and methods for the delivery of life skills. Results indicate that 79 per cent of programmes documented through the AM employ human resources with baccalaureate degrees, in comparison to 55 per cent that employ individuals with post graduate degrees, 26 per cent with two-year diplomas, and 19 per cent with high school degrees (*see Figure 25*). Despite the high educational level of human resources involved in life skills and citizenship education programmes, their lack of experience both in life skills and citizenship education and in the practices and methods for the delivery of life skills were often brought up by stakeholders.

Figure 25 Academic background of human resources involved in life skills and citizenship education at programme level

Concerns about the effectiveness of capacity building measures and professional development support for human resources involved in life skills and citizenship education have been raised. The AM shows that there is sufficient capacity building and professional development support for human resources in life skills, as 82 per cent of programmes provide TOT and 76 per cent provide professional development support, mainly through face-to-face modalities. Coaching is provided to human resources involved in life skills and citizenship education programmes by the majority of programmes (77 per cent), also via face-to-face modalities.

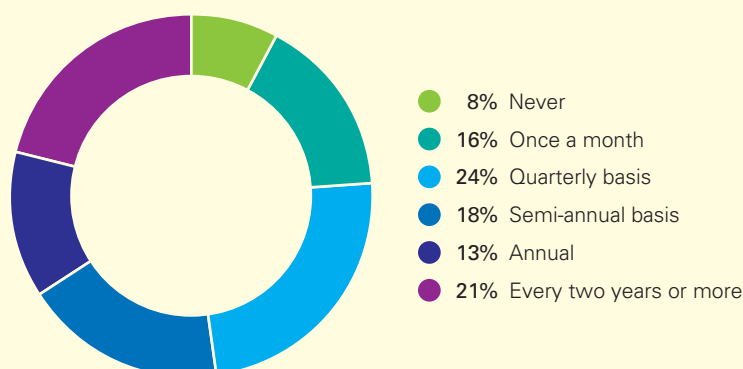
Despite the reportedly high levels of capacity building activities for teachers, trainers and facilitators involved in life skills and citizenship education, effectiveness concerns were raised. In all MENA countries, the system-wide institutional capacity to support and ensure the quality of classroom assessment practices in life skills in formal education settings remains weak, particularly because the focus in the classroom lies on assessing knowledge acquired by students in other topics that are needed for national examinations. Results show that **there is limited training of teachers** in conducting life skills assessments; only Egypt and Jordan reported having such training. Teachers also lack resources for their classroom assessment activities related to life skills and citizenship education. Only Egypt, Jordan, Iran, Morocco and the State of Palestine reported offering assessment resources that assist teachers in assessing their classroom activities in life skills (see Table 14). In Iraq, training of teachers is conducted with support from UNICEF to introduce life skills and citizenship education in selected schools and includes an assessment tool. In TVET assessment criteria are largely available as teacher guidebooks spell out the specific objectives of each lesson.

Table 14 Resources available to teachers for their classroom assessment activities in selected countries

Resources available to teachers	Egypt	Jordan	Iran	State of Palestine
A document that outlines the level(s) of knowledge that students are expected to learn in different life skills types at different grade/age level				
A document that outlines the level of performance that students are expected to reach in different life skills types at different grade/age levels	●			
Textbooks or workbooks that provide support for classroom assessment in life skills				
Scoring criteria or rubrics for students' work in life skills		●	●	●
Item banks or pools with examples of selection/multiple-choice or supply/open-ended questions				●
Online life skills assessment resources				●

During national consultations, participants indicated the two key challenges related to the capacity of human resources involved in life skills: the **weak comprehensive teacher training for life skills and citizenship education and the lack of education materials and resources** on the subject that would be systematically disseminated and shared amongst stakeholders and used at both national and programme level. In addition, current pre- and in-service training of teachers and instructors in most MENA countries fail to incorporate life skills and citizenship education as a key component. Moreover, teachers lack incentives to apply practices learnt in life skills and there is no national accreditation for the profession of life skills educator/facilitator/trainer/teacher. Lastly, 31 per cent of programmes provide refresher training on an annual basis or every two years or more, and 8 per cent never provide such training for their employees (see Figure 26). Even training that is provided on a quarterly basis is limited to a few days.

Figure 26 Frequency of refresher trainings provided by organizations implementing life skills and citizenship education



The analysis of life skills training in MENA that IYF conducted in 2013 showed that, despite the acknowledgment of most stakeholders in the region of the importance of implementing a mentorship programme for their trainers involved in life skills and citizenship education, few organizations had actually developed such a system. Even these organizations that have such a system lack selection criteria for their mentors and fail to provide them with the training needed to serve effectively in a mentorship role. This is essentially due to the lack of organizational capacity to implement comprehensive mentorship programmes (IYF, 2013).

In Lebanon, for example, the insufficient number of educational counsellors in the Department of Pedagogical Orientation and Guidance in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, responsible to address teachers' needs, hampers the implementation of a mentoring and support process. During the academic year, some teachers never get a counsellor to visit their classroom, and, hence, receive no feedback. Some teachers refuse to receive counsellors in their classroom, because the role is perceived more as one of inspection than mentorship. When counsellors visit a teacher's classroom, observe and provide feedback, they are required to write a visit report summarizing the visit offering recommendations. Yet, there is no system to follow-up on action points mentioned in the recommendations, which makes counsellors often feel that their work is futile.

Lessons learnt from life skills and citizenship education programmes implemented in the region indicate that **regular professional support and mentorship is critical** for new trainers who may lack the experience with interactive teaching methodologies, or in implementing life skills and citizenship education. Structured professional support, mentorship and follow-ups are excellent approaches to ensure the quality of life skills programming, as well as an opportunity for small organizations that depend on volunteers (see Box 17). The experience of PTS in Jordan revealed that trainers are more likely to drop out of programmes, or continue using lecture-style training techniques when interaction with, and support of, mentors is unavailable (IYF, 2013).

Box 17 Teacher training and professional development as a window of opportunity

Teacher training, and teacher education more generally, provides an entry point for life skills education. During the country visits, stakeholders identified teacher training as one of the major areas that could benefit from further investment in order to increase the quality, impact and sustainability of life skills interventions. Teacher professional development and training remains highly fragmented and compartmentalized in many countries. The lack of national harmonized systems for professional development and training of teachers further contributes to the dispersion and duplication of efforts. At the institutional level, teacher training and supervision departments play a strategic role in providing an entry point to mainstream life skills education into the formal system, by:

- Supporting innovative approaches to introduce life skills education in teaching and learning methods.
- Exploring strategic partnerships with existing pre-service and in-service teacher training programs.
- Working with school advisors to develop their capacity to support life skills education in schools by consulting with both teachers and students.
- Training teachers not only in life skills content, but also classroom management, interactive techniques, planning skills (i.e. lesson planning), etc. Teachers can also benefit from the development of teaching and learning resources that support teachers in mainstreaming life skills into curriculum disciplines, such as a life skills resource bank for teachers.
- Conducting a comprehensive review of teacher development programmes, which currently rarely focus on teaching and learning techniques, as well as teacher qualifications, to include life skills education as a key component in both.

Monitoring and evaluation frameworks and assessments of life skills and citizenship education

Assessing the availability of monitoring and evaluation systems for life skills programmes and their implementation processes is crucial to identifying how programme outcomes and impacts are being tracked and if the design of life skills interventions is based on evidence and lessons learned. The AM indicated that the assessment of key skills is another critical issue in the systemic development of life skills and citizenship education. Stakeholders in the region commonly agree that measuring key skills on a national scale is an extremely challenging task, often requiring significant resources and elaborative efforts in the development and design of effective national monitoring and evaluation systems, including a national assessment of learning outcomes. They recognize that assessing key skills is a complex and demanding task, particularly because attitudes – one of the main components – are rarely assessed, given the importance to do so to the greatest extent possible in the range of ‘real life’ contexts. Current assessment trends in the region focus on traditional skills and knowledge related to subjects, such as languages, mathematics and science.

There is increasing need in the MENA region to obtain technical guidance on what should be measured and how it should be measured, particularly in relation to learning outcomes. There is **little evidence of systematic and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation frameworks in place for life skills and citizenship education** in the region, or valid indicators to support it. At the national level, there is a need to define what monitoring systems can measure to improve the quality and relevance of life skills, particularly at the level of impact on learners. During national consultations, 12 out of the 15 countries indicated having national monitoring and evaluation frameworks for life skills and citizenship education available, yet only four of these frameworks focused on defining indicators to measure the impact of life skills and citizenship education (Sudan, Lebanon, Djibouti and Oman), while the remaining frameworks focus on measuring outcomes, outputs and activities, with most of the frameworks being project or programme-based (*see Table 15*). Only the State of Palestine reported that its system is integrated within the national education system.

Table 15 Characteristic of M&E frameworks (country typology)

Country	Availability of a national M&E framework for life skills citizenship education	The M&E framework measures			
		Impact	Outcomes	Outputs	Activities
Algeria	●				
Djibouti	●			●	●
Egypt					
Iran	●				
Iraq	●	●			
Jordan	●				
Lebanon	●	●		●	●
Libya					
Morocco	●				
Oman	●			●	●
State of Palestine	●	●	●		
Sudan	●				●
Syria					
Tunisia	●	●	●		
Yemen	●				

The analysis of the life skills programmes in this AM indicates that despite the availability of monitoring and evaluation systems, only 40 per cent include indicators to measure their impact, while 54 per cent focus on outcome indicators and 58 per cent on output indicators. The development of monitoring and evaluation systems often depends on the internal experience of organizations, with 58 per cent of programmes reported developing their systems internally, in comparison to 19 per cent of programmes that referred to external consultants, and 28 per cent that adopted their systems from donors. Key top system components include data collection tools and forms, followed by the results and indicator matrix. In practice, monitoring and evaluation systems are partially implemented, with only 40 per cent of organizations measuring the impact of their programmes.

In terms of classroom assessment activities, the Regional Mapping Report on Assessment in the Arab States indicates that 15 countries reported having a formal state-level document that provides guidelines for classroom assessment. Most of these documents, however, are not regularly updated. Most countries also developed documents that outline what students are expected to learn in different subject areas at different grade levels. Classroom Assessment is also part of in-service training programs across all countries. But none of the countries utilize computer-based testing as a resource for classroom assessment activities. Often classroom assessment is not used to improve learning but to test knowledge, and is mainly about recalling information. Only seven countries reported including an assessment of skills (teamwork, reasoning, scientific thinking, conflict resolution, critical thinking and creativity). Assessment of such skills is also often limited to certain educational levels. For example, Egyptian exams only assess teamwork and perseverance skills in the primary cycle of basic education (UNESCO and ALECSO, 2014).

Countries that use the National Learning System Assessment (NLSA), mostly implement it by completion of basic education, and of the lower secondary and upper secondary cycles. In all countries, the NLSA measures performance against national/system or state-level curriculum guidelines or learning standards. Nine countries have formal policy documents that authorize NLSA, while the rest either have none or have an informal or draft policy document. Gaps remain in terms of content and use of NLSA to improve learning (UNESCO and ALECSO, 2014).

Impact evaluations of life skills and citizenship education undertaken in the last five years are also scarce, with only Iraq, Tunisia and Oman reporting the undertaking of such evaluations. However, none of these evaluations included the measurement of learning outcomes. The *Education for All Regional Monitoring Report for Arab States* shows that despite the increasing number of countries conducting national assessments, these are mostly curriculum-based and subject-oriented, in contrast to international assessments that focus on cross-curricular knowledge and skills (UNESCO, 2015b). There is limited national evidence on the change of attitudes, skills and behaviours amongst learners. Some of the very few examples of publicly available research and national studies include the national studies conducted in Lebanon and Morocco on civic and citizenship education. Impact analysis is mostly disaggregated by geographical location as a priority, then by vulnerability and age group. Disaggregation by sex is rarely undertaken in the impact analysis. Baseline surveys and Knowledge Attitude Practices (KAP) are rarely included in monitoring and evaluation frameworks; only 19 per cent of programmes surveyed in this AM reported using KAP studies or tests to monitor and/or evaluate their programmes, and 30 per cent included baseline surveys.

In its report on workforce development in the region, the World Bank indicated that **sources of data on labour market outcomes are limited to a few, ad hoc skills-related surveys** or evaluations of specific targeted programmes, with limited public access to this information. In Iraq, for instance, no training provider, state or non-state, has a cohesive integrated data system in place and none is required to report any kind of data or to analyse any trends. Egypt and Jordan both lack key performance indicators and monitoring and evaluation systems for measuring outcomes in workforce development. Reporting on basic administrative data is only required from public training providers. Although an education monitoring and information system has been established in Jordan by the World Bank supported Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy Project, the system is not yet functional. The TVET system in Jordan is developing a monitoring and evaluation system as part of the framework of the Employer Driven Skills Development Project. In the State of Palestine, all training providers are required to collect and report basic administrative data that is often used for the production of statistical reports (World Bank, 2015).

It is also worth noting that despite the specification of the third goal relevant to life skills in the EFA, some MENA countries found it difficult to measure indicators for this goal due to the complex and broad concept of life skills, the lack of specific indicators to measure progress related to life skills for two large groups (i.e., youth and adults) with different needs, and the difficulty to assess their progress towards achievement (UNESCO, 2014a).

It seems that apart from the current coordination frameworks that are often project-based, knowledge learning and sharing platforms in the MENA region to publicly disseminate lessons learnt from existing life skills programmes, share studies and evaluations, as well as present a local and regional ‘think-tank’ about life skills and citizenship education, remain sparse. 70 per cent of the programmes surveyed depend on internal sessions to identify lessons learned, 63 per cent undertake sessions with stakeholders and beneficiaries, and 56 per cent disseminate their evaluations using their organization’s websites.

Some countries are developing **National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs)** as an attractive policy solution to support the match between the supply and the demand for skills. Egypt, for instance, aims to use the NQF to move from a traditional input-based model of education to a new approach that copes with changing skills needs. While Morocco sees it as an opportunity to reconsider its whole education system, Tunisia uses it as a means to increase the coherence, readability and quality of its human resources system, as well as a means to encourage lifelong learning. Jordan wishes to make its workforce more competitive (Borhene and Sicilia, 2009). During the national consultations, Morocco, Yemen and Iran each reported having a NQF, while Djibouti, Egypt, Sudan and Iraq are currently developing ones. Yet, only Morocco has defined competency standards for all occupations, whereas standards in Yemen and Iran were only developed for a few occupations. Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia are developing qualifications in the construction and tourism economic sectors, with two occupations selected under each sector: bricklayer and site supervisor, as well as waiter and hotel receptionist, respectively (ETF, 2013).

One of the key challenges encountered by countries that have developed, or are currently developing, their NQFs is the infrequent integration of occupational standards with vocational qualifications systems, consequently leading to unused occupational standards and complicating the conversion process into different types of qualifications and curricula. This is mostly due to a poor identification process of different qualification types and mechanisms to build on occupational standards. Furthermore, implementing NQFs necessitates a major reform of the qualification system and the surrounding education and training system. Because most NQFs are based on learning outcomes, adopting learning outcomes approaches is essential, not only for qualifications, but also for curricula, teaching and learning and assessment. In practice, most MENA countries are encountering challenges in this regard.

When analysing the key challenges in implementing monitoring and evaluation frameworks at the national level, particularly in measuring learning outcomes, stakeholders from the national consultations highlighted the difficulty in determining which attitudes and practices the life skills programme wants to change and how to measure this. Limited financial resources are another challenge, as well as the lack of sufficient and qualified human resources with knowledge and experience in monitoring and evaluation and in measuring life skills and learning outcomes in particular. Finally, national measurement often requires a strong collaboration with different stakeholders, which remains difficult in many countries. The short-term sustainability of many life skills programmes hinders.

This chapter builds on the key takeaways of the AM and recommends areas for future research to provide all stakeholders in the region with additional evidence-based knowledge to inform programming and scalability.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the general landscape of life skills and citizenship education in MENA shows systemic similarities across the 15 countries surveyed, in areas such as policies and strategies, coordination frameworks, human and financial resources, as well as monitoring and evaluation practices; and variations in teaching and learning practices, level of integration of skills, and coverage of and complementarity within, the four Dimensions of Learning (Cognitive Dimension, Instrumental Dimension, Individual Dimension and Social Dimension).

The following key areas were identified as a result of this AM, for future research in the field of life skills and citizenship education in MENA:

- **Curriculum analysis:** Aiming to identify gaps in existing national curricula and inform changes and areas for future reform in each MENA country, curriculum analysis could entail a comprehensive identification of life skills integration, as well as the mapping of existing skills clusters and Dimensions of Learning against the core skills needed for future generations, as defined in the CPF.
- **Evaluation of life skills and citizenship education programmes and learners' outcomes:** Due to the lack of comprehensive evaluations of key life skills and citizenship education programmes in MENA, particularly in relation to measuring the impact of interventions on learners and learners' outcomes, it is important to assess efficiency, cost-effectiveness and impact of life skills and citizenship education interventions, as well as learners' outcomes, in order to bring forward key issues that are crucial in future programming.
- **Assessment of existing life skills and citizenship education resources:** With a wide range of teaching and learning resources for life skills and citizenship education available and used by different stakeholders, it is imperative to assess their content, utility, relevance to the needs of target groups; embedded learning and teaching approaches and their level of adaptation to the national context; and gaps in addressing specific skills and groups. The assessment of these resources and materials could also identify best practices and be an opportunity to share experiences and lessons learned, and disseminate curricula across countries.
- **Gender mainstreaming:** Information on how life skills and citizenship education programmes mainstream gender is still scarce. Therefore, it is crucial to assess how gender issues are being mainstreamed into life skills and citizenship education curricula and materials, and to evaluate whether on not gender-aware assessment of needs is being undertaken.
- **Life skills and citizenship education in private schools:** Because the scope of the AM did not cover private schools in MENA countries, it is recommended that a study is undertaken to assess life skills and citizenship education offered in private schools, as well as the innovative teaching and learning approaches used in these settings.



ANNEX 1 Egypt case study

At a glance: The education context in Egypt

The January 2011 uprising in Egypt was spurred by poorly educated youth who felt – among other factors – that their educational systems inadequately prepared them with the knowledge and skills needed to respond to the demands of the 21st century (Brookings, 2011). The increased schooling attainment in Egypt since the 1980s has not translated into improved personal and social wellbeing, which can be mainly explained by the low quality of education and the narrow focus of the curriculum (Eid et al., 2016). As a result of the democratic transition, the Egyptian education system needed a thorough overhaul, and expectations for improving learning outcomes after the uprising were high (Chatham House, 2012). This has been an extremely challenging task as it is one of the largest school systems in the world with around 43,000 schools, 1.6 million education personnel, including teachers, administrators and other staff, and over 16 million students at different levels of education (Ghoneim and Mohamed, 2015).

Five years after the January 2011 uprising, some important changes occurred: The new Egyptian Constitution of 2014 stated that every citizen has the right to education and gave high priority to education through expanding basic education opportunities to eliminate the gaps at both national and regional levels, increasing compulsory education requirements to 12 years of schooling and providing education in accordance with international quality standards. The Constitution stipulated that the goals of education are to: build the Egyptian character, preserve the national identity, root the scientific method of thinking, develop talents and promote innovation, establish cultural and spiritual values, as well as establish the concepts of citizenship, tolerance and non-discrimination (UNESCO, 2015a).

The Egyptian vision for development is broad as evidenced by recent policy revisions. According to its *Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030*, the objective is that “the new Egypt will possess a competitive, balanced and diversified economy, dependent on innovation and knowledge, based on justice, social integrity and participation, characterized by a balanced and diversified ecological collaboration system, investing the ingenuity of place and humans to achieve sustainable development and to improve Egyptians’ life quality”. The knowledge and innovation pillar of this vision strives to transform Egypt by 2030 into “a creative and innovative society producing science, technology and knowledge, within a comprehensive system ensuring the developmental value of knowledge and innovation using their outputs to face challenges and meet national objectives”.¹

Furthermore, the Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education (2014-2030) outlines three key policies: (i) providing equal opportunities to all education-age groups for enrolment in, and completion of, education, by targeting especially poor areas; (ii) ensuring the availability of second chances for out-of-education children; and (iii) improving the quality and effectiveness of pedagogical service through the provision of both a contemporary curriculum for every child in every classroom and efficient leadership in every school and in the administration’s higher levels.

However, these policy ambitions are met by significant challenges on the ground (Chatham House, 2012). In 2013, Egypt ranked 119 out of 144 countries in competitiveness, while the quality of its basic education and its science and mathematics education ranked 136 out of 144 (Schwab, 2014). The total number of students that dropped out of basic education in the 2010–2011 school year was 28,841, with another 130,564 students dropping out of preparatory schools, i.e., 6 per cent. In August 2012, illiteracy rates reached 40 per cent for all citizens over 15 years old, totalling 34 million people.² Poor reading and writing skills contribute to a 30 per cent unemployment rate among youth.

¹ Egypt, *Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030*, accessed at <<http://sdsegypt2030.com/?lang=en>>.

² See Egyptian Ministry of Education, *Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education (2014-2030)*, Education Egypt National Project, 2014, p. 9.

Some of the key challenges in children's enrolment in school education are socio-economic burdens, such as poverty, or geographical factors, such as living in remote areas.³ Other challenges are related to the low levels of participation in pre-primary education, problems of teaching quality and school infrastructures, the inadequate inclusion of children with special needs, and the mismatch between the outcomes of the education system and the labour market demand, as reflected in the high unemployment rate for youth with a school degree above the intermediate level.⁴ There is also an adverse attitude of learners towards vocational training as most students attending Egypt's technical colleges are those who have failed to enter universities (Chatham House, 2012).

In early 2017, the Minister of Education has announced a new 'transformation program' defined as 'Edu 2.0.' aimed at creating a new national education system that equips Egyptian students with innovation and global competitiveness skills. The Edu 2.0. vision document is yet to be released, however, a number of major operational actions have been underway, especially in terms of building on already existing initiatives such as the 'Teachers First' and the 'Egyptian Knowledge Bank (EKB)' Initiatives as well as the development of a new curriculum framework. This new system is expected to be introduced in the school year 2018/2019, to grades KG1, KG2, and primary 1 and will be gradually replacing the current education system, now known as Edu 1.0. starting 2030. Edu 2.0. will be the only operating national education system for students in mainstream education from KG 1 through Grade 12. These attempts constitute a complete transformation of the current system including the introduction of new curricula and new assessment and examination models among others.

Life skills and citizenship education in Egypt: Challenges and opportunities

The general feedback from meetings and focus group discussions with stakeholders in Egypt has shown a strong awareness of the need to expand life skills interventions. Good examples of quality initiatives have been identified, but they are mostly reaching specific target groups and face issues of scalability and sustainability. Existing interventions typically do not include a comprehensive definition of life skills that would incorporate all four – cognitive, individual, social and instrumental – dimensions. Life skills interventions do not often include the need to challenge social norms. In particular, stakeholders interviewed stress the need to focus on the needs of female youths, especially in the TVET system. However, no systematic analysis of the needs of female youth or the implementation of any concrete programming strategies have been put in place outside of small, individual programmes such as Neqdar Nasharek (*see below*). This is also true of other groups who may have special life skills programming needs, such as disabled youth.

Most of life skills programmes are implemented outside formal education settings and are short-term, i.e., three to five days, with limited follow-up and coaching. For example, short-term courses, such as those focusing on citizenship education, provided by the Ministry of Youth, do not fully engage the MOE, the cooperation between the two being limited to logistical issues. According to interview results, these short courses seem to have very limited impact, do not engage schools around the content of the programme, and do not provide procedures for follow-up/continuity within the school environment. The Ministry of Youth implements other short-term programmes with similar goals, for example, a large-scale peer education programme supported by UNICEF and implemented by the National Council for Youth, which has reached thousands of youth with life, employability and entrepreneurial skills.⁵ These programmes face similar challenges, particularly limited coordination within the Ministry as well as among programme partners (Microsoft, ILO, UNICEF, etc.). To address some of these challenges, interventions have been designed to focus on enhancing the capacities of government and to ensure sustainability and scalability of the programmes.

³ UNESCO, Institute for Lifelong Learning, *Egypt Country Context*, accessed at <www.unesco.org/ui/litbase/?menu=4&programme=203>.

⁴ From UNICEF, *Egypt Country programme document* (2013-2017), 21 June 2013.

⁵ From UNICEF, *Egypt Country programme document* (2013-2017), 21 June 2013, p. 5.

Channels of delivery for life skills interventions are also limited. Within formal education settings, there is no clear focus on life skills in curricular activities, and interventions focus mostly on extra-curricular activities at the preparatory and secondary school levels. Non-formal education tends to target youth who are 16 years old or older, and includes a focus on entrepreneurship and health-related interventions. Few initiatives focus on the pathways to work at the critical pre-employability years from ages 15–18. Initiatives, which do focus on job readiness usually, focus on one of the life skills dimensions, particularly personal development and employability. Overall, there is an issue of quality of life skills programmes. There is no systematic evaluation of the type of skills that are needed. Ad hoc specific training focuses mostly on skills such as communication, entrepreneurship and rudimentary personal discovery. Some of the stronger programmes focus on post-graduation at post-basic level (i.e., TVET and/or university graduates), but more as remedial intervention as students are not receiving life skills training in their formal curriculum. Most training happens at post-basic level with private sector training providers, as it is the case with Professional Development Foundation, a training-provider and job readiness organization.

Partnership frameworks are missing, leading to multiple actors working in a fragmented way. There is little or no alignment between relevant partners, despite existing agreements between the MOE, Ministry of Youth and the private sector. Institutional capacity is also limited. Within the MOE, both pre-service and in-service training (i.e., Professional Academy for Teachers) is burdened with many institutional challenges and lacks a focus on life skills. Other partner institutions and NGOs have the capacity to mobilize life skills instructors. However, they mostly utilize external life skills curricula within ad hoc short-term courses targeting youth outside the formal education system.

Monitoring and evaluation is limited and focuses on formative evaluation and the short-term monitoring of activities with limited data focusing on youth. Overall there are no studies measuring impact of interventions, while existing surveys measure levels of satisfaction of trainees only, without linking interventions with long-term objectives.

Despite these challenges, there are some windows of opportunity:

Development of a life skills and citizenship education strategy: Overall, there is an opportunity to develop a comprehensive life skills strategy involving all relevant stakeholders through national consultations. The stakeholders interviewed indicated a great interest in participating in cohesive meetings to foster exchanges among all partners and to develop a national network of cooperation. According to interview results, stakeholders would endorse the MOE as the key partner to coordinate a national network to ensure the long-term sustainability and scalability of life skills interventions.

Public and private partnerships in TVET: Public/private partnerships could also be further developed and strengthened by building on existing networks (e.g., the MOE, the established training network under the Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Industry, etc.) with the goal of expanding the reach of existing programming on life skills. It is critically important for the TVET system to ensure that the life skills selected for any type of curricular (or even extra-curricular) programming is relevant and address current needs in the labour market.

Human resource development: Specific interventions engaging the MOE could focus on human resource development by expanding existing teacher development programmes and also including life skills and citizenship education in pre-service training for school inspectors, social workers and school principals.

Community engagement: Lastly, existing community engagement structures within the MOE, such as the Student Union and the parent-teacher association structures, could represent avenues for life skills programming, especially to complement citizenship education.

Promising practices in life skills and citizenship education⁶

In Egypt, there are promising practices in life skills and citizenship education that could be further built on, learnt from and expanded. The *Learning and Earning in Cairo's Garbage City Project* is a community-school model for marginalized youth, in which life skills and citizenship education is integrated in experiential learning and community empowerment. It is implemented by the Egyptian NGO, Spirit of Youth Association (SOY), founded in 2004, and located in Manshiyet Nasser, one of the largest *Zabaleen* (garbage collectors in Arabic) community districts in Cairo. The project was funded by UNESCO in 2001, with additional donors including Procter and Gamble and the Bill Gates Foundation, along with Community and Institutional Development (CID) consulting, the Hands on the Nile Foundation and the African Star Foundation, as programme partners.⁷

The association's run the Recycling School for Boys, which was founded by CID and the UNESCO Cairo Office in response to the socio-economic change felt by the community when the multinational trash recycling systems were introduced. The school aims to enhance the diffusion of practical knowledge to enhance qualification levels and empower the community in the recycling business, while promoting cooperation between the *Zabaleen* recycling system and multinational companies. By 2015, 130 boys aged 9–17 had graduated from the school. 50 of them later enrolled in formal basic education, with 20 enrolling in post-basic education. Four students received high school certificates. 129 of their parents obtained the literacy certificate.⁸

The school implements innovative methods of non-formal basic education, specifically designed for individuals and families that are caught in the poverty trap and are unable to access formal schooling. This is done by linking the learning process to work-related contexts. Flexible school hours are in place at the recycling school to allow students to continue working with their parents, enabling thousands of youth in Cairo to access alternative learning opportunities where they learn and acquire skills.⁹ The learning process includes a standardized package of teaching and learning of life skills for marginalized children and youth that could be replicated in similar contexts.

Another alternative schooling model for economically marginalized female youth with a focus on health, financial literacy and citizenship education is the *Neqdar Nasharek Project*, 'We can participate' in Arabic, which is implemented by the Population Council. The project's activities include life skills and business education, vocational training as well as training in problem-solving and civic engagement. The programme also works with community members to promote understanding about the importance of women's economic and social participation.¹⁰ There are also nascent initiatives on teacher training implemented by the British Council to integrate life skills methodologies into classroom activities.

An example of private-public partnership models in technical and vocational education is the dual school model funded by Americana (e.g., Zaiton School). The focus is on employability skills with a formal curriculum developed jointly with the private sector.

⁶ These practices have been identified through interviews with country missions and through the desk review.

⁷ UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, *Learning and Earning in Cairo's Garbage City*, accessed at <unesco.org/ui/litbase/?menu=4&programme=203>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See story: *Egypt: Learning and earning in Cairo's Garbage City*, Education for Sustainable Development, Success Stories, UNESCO, 2012, by Hoda Bakara, accessed at <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002166/216677e.pdf>>.

¹⁰ Population Council, *Neqdar Nesharek*, accessed at <popcouncil.org/research/neqdar-nesharek>.

ANNEX 2 Jordan case study

At a glance: The education context in Jordan

Jordan is a small, upper middle-income country with limited natural resources, and education has been a top priority because of its significance in developing the country's human capital as a source of future economic sustainability. Since the mid-1990s, the Jordanian education system has improved steadily. In 2010, the literacy rate (94 per cent) was well above the MENA regional average of 78 per cent, and amongst the highest in the Arab world,¹ improving even more to reach 98 per cent in 2012.² Jordan enjoys remarkable levels of educational attainment, including nearly universal basic education enrolment (99 per cent in 2012), high transition to post-basic education (99 per cent in 2012),³ as well as high levels of university enrolment by regional standards. The Jordanian education system has succeeded in achieving gender parity in access to basic education services, particularly in terms of literacy rates (99 per cent for both female and male youth), as well as in basic and post-basic education enrolment (UNFPA, 2011).

These positive achievements in educational outcomes were the result of intensive education reforms that the country has undertaken since the early 1990s. In 2002, His Majesty King Abdullah II launched a *National Vision and Mission for Education*, calling for the transformation of Jordan into an international technology centre in the region. In 2003, the *Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy Project* (ERfKE) was launched with the support of multiple donors. Its goal was to align national educational policies and programmes with the needs of a knowledge-based economy, enhance the physical learning environment and encourage pre-primary education (Georg Eckert Institute, 2009). Setting directions for the educational reform, the vision for national education, devised in the 2006 National Education Strategy, is that Jordan develop “the quality competitive human resource systems that provide all people with lifelong learning experiences relevant to their current and future needs in order to respond to and stimulate sustained economic development through an educated population and a skilled workforce”. The mission calls for creating and administering “an educational system based on excellence, energized by its human resources, dedicated to high standards, social values, and a healthy spirit of competition, which contributes to the nation's wealth in a global knowledge economy”.⁴

Guided by this vision, the second phase of the ERfKE project started in 2009 and was completed in 2015. It focused on transforming regional field directorates and schools and engaging the community by: (i) establishing a national school-based development system; (ii) fostering change in implementing policies, planning and organization; (iii) developing teaching and learning resources; (iv) developing special focus programmes for pre-primary, technical and vocational education, and special education; and (v) improving the quality of physical learning environments.⁵ The National School-Based Development System, in particular, focuses on ensuring a school-based development process as the key mechanism to provide all youth in Jordan with a quality education by developing the abilities, skills, attitudes and values associated with a knowledge-based economy. Furthermore, a National Committee for Human Resources Development was formed by the government in April 2015 and is responsible for reforming the educational system to ensure that graduating youth acquire the skills needed for the 21st century.⁶ An apprenticeship programme has been initiated, and the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance was established to monitor apprenticeships in both the private and public sectors, under the Employment, Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council Secretariat at the Ministry of Labour (Barucci and Mryyan, 2014).

¹ SABER Jordan Country report 2015: School Autonomy and Accountability, accessed at <http://wbfiles.worldbank.org/documents/hdn/ed/saber/supporting_doc/CountryReports/SAA/SABER_SAA_Jordan.pdf>.

² World Bank Data Bank, *UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Adult literacy rate, population 15+ years, both sexes (percentage)*, accessed at <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?contextual=aggregate&locations=JO>>.

³ SABER Jordan Country report 2015: School Autonomy and Accountability, accessed at <http://wbfiles.worldbank.org/documents/hdn/ed/saber/supporting_doc/CountryReports/SAA/SABER_SAA_Jordan.pdf>.

⁴ Source: Jordanian Ministry of Education, *National Education Strategy*, 2006, p. 13.

⁵ SABER Jordan Country report 2015: School Autonomy and Accountability, accessed at <http://wbfiles.worldbank.org/documents/hdn/ed/saber/supporting_doc/CountryReports/SAA/SABER_SAA_Jordan.pdf>.

⁶ Oxford Business Group, ‘Jordan – Education: Greater student numbers leading to education sector innovation in Jordan’, in *The Report: Jordan 2015*, 2015, accessed at <www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/overview/covering-new-ground-growing-student-numbers-and-market-demand-are-leading-more-innovation-0>.

The Government developed a National Employment Strategy for the 2011–2012 period. This included mid-term provisions to scale up school-to-work transition programmes and reform TVET. The longer-term investments are focused on pre-primary education.

Despite this intensive reform process and impressive educational achievements in terms of access to all levels of education, the education sector continues to face challenges, and the quality of education remains uneven and uncompetitive by international standards, especially in poorer urban and rural areas.⁷ There are wide learning gaps between socio-economic groups. In 2009, only 16 per cent of female children and youth from poorer households were at, or above, level 2 in mathematics, compared to 57 per cent of female children and youth from wealthier households. Furthermore, there has been a steady rise in dropout rates. It is estimated that 41 per cent of five-year-old children at pre-primary school age are still out of school, 1.1 per cent of basic education-aged children are still out of school, and 4.2 per cent of lower secondary aged children are out of school. Children who drop out of school are mainly refugees, children of migrant workers with illegal status, children from poor socio-economic backgrounds, child labourers and children with disabilities (UNICEF, 2014). Quality education is further limited by teachers' capacities, due to the lack of proper pre- and in-service training. Teachers lack experience in their subject areas and are often inappropriately trained to use in-classroom technologies to benefit their students.

In addition, there is an increasing pressure on resources and capacities, in both local schools and national universities, due to sizeable student population, which has been exacerbated by the influx of Syrian refugees. In fact, the impact of the Syrian civil war has been profound, compounding problems of youth unemployment and putting the education system under further strain as refugees are admitted into Jordanian schools. This has resulted in doubling tracks in urban schools with separate tracks for Jordanian and Syrian children. Despite efforts to scale up access, around 22 per cent of children (aged 5–17 years) are still out of school (No Lost Generation, 2016). For those children who are enrolled in public schools, quality learning remains a grave concern. Issues of school exclusion, violence and corporal punishment have also been observed and represent a major challenge along with the lack of child-centred and inclusive teaching and learning methods.

Another key challenge is the inadequate relevance of education to the needs of learners and demands of the labour market (UNESCO, 2012a). The majority of new jobs are occupied by workers with a high school education or lower, while only 30 per cent of the new jobs created are available for university graduates, and around 15,000 new university graduates become unemployed every year (ETF, 2014). TVET is less socially accepted by youth and parents as a potential track of education and is a low priority in some schools, given the cultural preference for academic over vocational and technical education. This could create a crisis in education service delivery. The TVET sector also faces many challenges related to the weak coordination between the different responsible bodies and their overlapping mandates, consequently resulting in delays in policy reforms. Finally, the private-sector involvement in the reform process of this sector is still limited (UNESCO, 2012).

In fact, youth unemployment constitutes a critical issue for the country's economy, politics and the Jordanian society. Representing a risk of social and psychological instability, much political attention has been dedicated to enhancing youth employment, by developing policies that focus on education and training, job creation and entrepreneurship, inclusion of youth in the labour market and institutional reform (Barucci and Mryyan, 2014).

Life skills and citizenship education in Jordan: Challenges and opportunities

There is a consensus among stakeholders involved in life skills and citizenship education in Jordan concerning the importance of life skills in preparing children and youth for adulthood. The stakeholders stressed the need to enhance life skills, or 'soft skills', for employability within the framework of lifelong learning. Education sector stakeholders consulted are particularly aware of the relevance of life skills. This is not, however, yet reflected in a conceptual framework strategizing life skills' implementation and assessment. The education vision and the related knowledge-economy reform provide an enabling environment for this to take place, but there appear to be constraints in taking this forward.

⁷ USAID, 'Education in Jordan', accessed at <www.usaid.gov/jordan/education>.

Life skills development, although central to the achievement of the vision for education, appears to have been at the periphery of curriculum development. A major focus has been on ICT with the aim of supporting a blended learning approach in all schools. A major challenge has been putting in place the necessary ICT infrastructure and the associated teacher training programmes. Limited capacity building has been supported by the Jordan Education Initiative, a public-private partnership which is now a national programme. Life Skills through Sports is one programme, which has explicitly focused on life skills development.

Discussions with stakeholders suggested that the curriculum is overcrowded with academic content and there is little space for life skills and citizenship education. The main focus of teaching and learning is academic, directed at delivering examination results and theoretical in approach rather than practical. Focus groups with school teachers further indicated that the skills included in the curriculum are presented theoretically that is separate from the reality of children; the transmission of life skills often depends on teachers' ability and their knowledge of how to teach them. Stakeholders stressed that integrating life skills and citizenship education into the core curriculum appears to be a significant challenge. The current and more traditional teaching and learning approaches used by teachers in the classroom are a barrier to effective life skills and citizenship education. These are characterized as being didactic and largely teacher-centred. Students subsequently become dependent on 'spoon-feeding'. Focus groups with school students often highlighted that the use of theatre to present topics, such as children's rights and tolerance, are mostly employed as techniques in teaching life skills, but these have limited scope and most teachers focus generally on theoretical information.

Stakeholders insisted that the classroom culture needs to change including teachers' perceptions of what they can do in teaching and learning. Investments in teacher education are needed to embed life skills and citizenship education in routine classroom's teaching approach. This may be the most important area to intervene in, to advance life skills and citizenship education. Attention needs to be paid to enhancing the status of the teaching profession, especially for male teachers.

On another note, school counsellors provide a range of services in the school including psychosocial support and can provide resources for life skills development. They appear to be under-resourced and stretched in terms of function. Training opportunities are fragmented and implemented on an ad hoc basis. In this regard, a comprehensive and harmonized capacity development programme focusing on life skills and citizenship education needs to be introduced.

Furthermore, life skills relevant to employability are still missing from basic education and stakeholders interviewed highlighted the need for their introduction. These skills are transferable into a wide range of occupations. This agenda also needs to include education to change the attitudes towards work as well as to foster an 'entrepreneurial spirit'. Changing attitudes about the employment of female youth is another important issue. Discussions held with youth indicated that they consider life skills and citizenship education to be important to their development. Among the issues they raised were the need for problem-solving (e.g., personal problems), self-management (e.g., assertiveness and self-confidence, facing fear, self-starting, stress management and self-development), interpersonal skills (e.g., understanding and accepting others) and communication skills (speaking, listening and writing). Youth become more aware of the need for life skills when they leave school by which time it is too late for the education system to assist them. The role of NGOs seems to include remedying the education service delivery deficiencies in this area.

Additionally, consultations showed that Syrian refugees are finding the transition to school in Jordan a challenge, which is reflected in their performance. Some Syrian refugee families that were interviewed during the country visits expressed their need for psychosocial support and life skills for personal management. Discussions with parents of refugees indicated that their children face discrimination and physical violence in school, even from teachers.

Overall, the ERfKE provides an enabling framework for life skills development. In this regard, life skills and citizenship education can be a catalyst for improving the quality of teaching and learning in education. Given the current context of life skills and citizenship education in the country, and based on the country mission and the desk review, four main elements were identified as potential entry points to strengthen programming in this area:

Curriculum review: This area of work generally constitutes an entry point and an opportunity to leverage the added value of life skills and citizenship education. The problems in curriculum development and its implementation will remain in the foreseeable future and a strategic approach is required. This could include undertaking a national consultation on life skills and citizenship education and quality education; working more closely with the ERfKE development partners on policy dialogue with the MOE on life skills and citizenship education; and providing technical assistance to help to better conceptualize life skills in the ERfKE.

Life skills curriculum development in TVET is still in the early stages. A strategic approach could include undertaking a national consultation on life skills and citizenship education and quality education in the context of TVET, working more closely with the MOE and UNRWA on piloting life skills programmes in TVET service delivery, and building on NGOs' programmes focusing on employability skills to integrate relevant life skills elements into the school curriculum and co-curriculum.

Teacher professional development and training: Teacher training and teacher education provide another entry point for life skills and citizenship education. This is one of the major areas identified by stakeholders, through which further investments could increase the quality, impact and sustainability of life skills interventions. Thus, it is important to support innovative approaches to introduce life skills and citizenship education into teaching and learning processes across the curriculum in basic education. Strategic partnerships with existing pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes provide a promising practice to be further explored. Collaborating with school counsellors to develop their capacity to support life skills and citizenship education in schools with both teachers and students is also vital.

Extra-curricular Initiatives: NGOs' extra-curricular programmes that include life skills and citizenship education are important opportunities to expose school management, teachers and students to new ways of teaching and learning. They enrich the curriculum and provide potential leverage for a more comprehensive approach to life skills and citizenship education in the core curriculum. They can be used as incubators for new activities and as examples of effective programmes. To enhance life skills and citizenship education through NGOs, programming stakeholders and the MOE should engage in a policy of dialogue to better define policy on NGOs partnerships and coordination in co-curricular activities, as well as to reposition extra-curricular activities within the MOE when relevant, in order to promote a more holistic approach to the life skills curriculum and strengthen schools' ownership and engagement in these programmes. Another pathway to foster life skills and citizenship education is to inform policy development by reviewing existing NGOs' life skills programmes in order to map life skills concepts, activities and lessons learned.

Supporting a life skills enabling environment: NGO programming also needs to help to support a conducive environment for life skills and citizenship education. There are opportunities for NGOs to work on school communities' awareness of life skills and citizenship education as quality education by supporting school principals' and teachers' life skills development and cooperating with youth advocates.

Promising practices in life skills and citizenship education

Along with UNRWA's experience in Jordan, there are models of good practice in life skills programming in the private sector as well as from the United Nations and diverse NGOs. Donor-funded, non-governmental programmes largely focus on developing life skills related to employability, while some target vulnerable populations and include female empowerment. One good practice is UNICEF innovative *Makani – My Space* approach that aims at enhancing learning opportunities for all children with no access to any form of education in Jordan. *Makani – My Space* centres are run by national and international NGOs and CBO partners, and include a network of 200 centres. These centres run on a holistic approach that provides all vulnerable children and youth, particularly out-of-school Syrian refugees, with learning opportunities, life skills training and psychosocial support services. The life skills training offered includes self-management skills (self-awareness, self-esteem and confidence, identity, responsibility and resisting pressures), cognitive skills (creative and critical thinking, taking decisions and problem-solving), social skills (listening, communicating, understanding, accepting others, self-assertion and negotiation), and collective action skills/civic skills (planning, team work, leadership and campaigning).⁸

Zain Jordan and Al-Quds College (Luminus Education) are other examples of good practice in life skills programming implemented by the private sector: Zain Jordan,⁹ a major telecommunication company in the country, developed *Zain Academy* that provides training, among others in life skills, to its employees. The life skills training, particularly targets fresh graduates who lack such skills that are not acquired in schools or universities. In 2015, the company also launched *Zain Innovation Campus*, through which it works with entrepreneurs and start-ups. It also runs a programme called *Zain Al-Shabab*, a youth incubator. Al-Quds College¹⁰ 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 adopting both IYF's PTS and BYB curricula.

PTS is a 78-module programme implemented with at-risk youth living in Jordan's most vulnerable neighbourhoods. It delivers six main units, 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, and tools to help youth to understand how to be a good employee. Participants develop a career plan and carry out a community service project to practice the skills they learned, while contributing to society (IYF, 2013). 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. Similar to PTS, students develop business plans at the end of the training course. Examples of business plans' ideas have included selling herbal medicine or leveraging volunteers for social impact.¹¹

Programming by IYF, including trainers' training and materials development, has been influential in developing life skills training for employability within many private and non-governmental organizations in Jordan. In particular, the USAID/Jordan Youth for the Future (Y4F) project, a US\$33 million project implemented by the IYF from March 2009 through December 2014, aimed at "creating an enabling environment with a greater capacity to more effectively serve at-risk youth". Working through selected CBOs, Y4F focused on establishing sustainable delivery mechanisms for PTS, to teach youth personal competency, problem-solving skills, productive work habits, résumé writing and job search skills. Vocational Training Corporation has made the training a mandatory component of its hospitality curricula and certifies its staff to be trainers in IYF's proprietary PTS life skills training package (USAID, 2014).

⁸ United Nations Children's Fund, *No Lost Generation, MAKANI: All Children in Jordan Accessing Learning*, accessed at <www.unicef.org/jordan/overview_10143.html>.

⁹ Zain Jordan website, accessed at <jo.zain.com>.

¹⁰ Al-Quds website, accessed at <www.quds.edu.jo/ar>.

¹¹ UNESCO, *Job Readiness and Life-skills programming helps 543 Young Jordanians see a Brighter Future*, News Note, 04 May 2016, accessed at <www.unesco.org/new/en/amman/about-this-office/single-view/news/job_readiness_and_life_skills_programming_helps_543_young_jo/>.

ANNEX 3 Morocco case study

At a glance: The education context in Morocco

As a result of the *National Charter on Education and Training*¹ in 1999, Morocco undertook a major education reform from 2000–2009 (UNESCO, 2005), which was followed by the 2009–2012 Emergency Programme.² The main priority of the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training strategy has been to ensure compulsory education for children until the age of 15 (UNESCO, 2014b). The emphasis has been on the development of basic education through projects, including: school construction, the improvement of teaching methods, and innovative projects involving social support and addressing systemic inequalities. As a result, Morocco has largely achieved universal primary education. In 2013, the primary net enrolment rate was estimated to be 99 per cent for both male and female children, thus also achieving gender parity (UNESCO, 2015a). The number of out-of-school children at the primary level has decreased significantly from the year 2000 when 25 per cent of all primary-age children did not go to school. In 2001, the estimated dropout rate before the last grade of primary education was only 8 per cent. In lower post-basic education, however, the picture is quite different. In 2012, an estimated 25 per cent of lower-children of post-basic education-age were out of school and the dropout rate before the last grade of lower secondary school was estimated at 12 per cent (UNESCO, 2015a).

While the Moroccan education system has witnessed a significant surge in enrolment over the past 10 years, the quality of student achievement has remained low compared to middle income countries, both in basic education as well as in lower post-basic education. The 2015 TIMSS scores were well below the international average.³ With significant quantitative progress made in the education system's performance, the main challenge now is to improve efficiency and learning outcomes. The education system does not currently produce individuals with the skills and training required by the labour market. There is an undersupply of engineers, scientists and technicians to drive innovation and spur economic growth, and most youth lack work-ready 'soft skills', such as problem-solving and creative thinking. Moreover, students' basic skills are not yet of a high enough level to enable them to compete in an open, global market.

Recognizing the problem of quality education, the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation de la Formation et de la Recherche Scientifique* (Higher Council of Education for Scientific Training and Research) has put in place a strategic vision for its education reform for the period 2015–2030. *Pour une École de l'Équité, de la Qualité et de la Promotion* (Towards School Equality through Quality and Promotion) is centred on school development around equity and quality. The approach contains eight levers for equity, seven levers for equality education for all, and six levers for the advancement of the individual and the society.

Among the policy priorities are a better linkage between life-long education and the needs of the economy, a knowledge society and a democratic society. Teaching and learning will be reformed. Scientific research and innovation will be promoted. A total of 26 projects have been identified to translate the vision into reality. There is no mention of life skills and citizenship education in the sections concerned with curriculum development or teacher education. Emphasis is put, however, on the acquisition of competencies and values in basic and early post-basic education. Citizenship education and ICT in schools are among the priority areas to be developed.

¹ Commission Spéciale Education Formation, Charte Nationale d'Éducation et de Formation, July 1999.

² UNICEF, *Morocco Country Programme Document 2012-2016*, 15 September 2011, p. 3.

³ National Centre for Education Statistics, *Trends in TIMSS 2015*, accessed at <https://nces.ed.gov/timss/timss2015/timss2015_table02.asp>.

The TVET system in Morocco aims to improve the employability and productivity of youth workers by offering specific skills and providing concrete work experience. Since the skills mismatch is one of the main challenges that youth face when entering the labour market, the education system needs to be flexible to adapt to companies' needs. TVET can be viewed as a vital contribution to economic growth and social cohesion, facilitating access to lifelong learning. TVET programmes include those offering classroom training, on-the-job training and apprenticeships, providing youth with either general skills (languages, ICT, etc.) or specific vocational skills (industry-sector-specific skills).

The key agencies in TVET are the *Office de la Formation Professionnelle et de la Promotion du Travail* (Office of Vocational Training and Work Promotion or OFPPT and the *Agence Nationale de Promotion de l'Emploi et des Compétences* (National Agency for Promotion of Employment and Skills or ANAPEC). The size of the TVET sector remains limited. In 2007, around 11 per cent of upper secondary students were participating in TVET programmes, one of the lowest rates in the region. However, there has been a significant increase in the number of students as enrolment rates rose from 154,000 in 2003 to 290,000 in 2010, representing an increase of 9.5 per cent annually.

There are three major policy objectives outlined in the TVET reform, which is part of a wider strategy geared to the systematic development of demand-led training. These include fulfilling the needs of enterprises, promoting employment for youth and improving the employability of employees. A competency-based approach, developed with the support of the Canadian Government, was implemented in 2003 in seven training institutions representing the most important employment sectors in the country (e.g., textiles, tourism, services, crafts and agriculture). The long-term objective is to apply a competency-based approach throughout the TVET system. Practical barriers to full implementation, such as the difficulty in operationalizing the large number of published qualification profiles, remain important.

Furthermore, 1,407 Education and Training Centres (ETCs) have been established under the National Cooperation Programme. These target illiterate females, and out-of-school female and male children in disadvantaged areas – 93 per cent of beneficiaries are female. They provide training in traditional and modern cutting and sewing, embroidery, knitting, computer, home management, hairdressing and beauty, mountain guiding, early childhood female education, painting on glass, painting on silk, ceramics, pottery decoration and jewellery. Literacy classes, health education, citizenship education and training sessions for the strengthening of life skills for women, children and youth are also provided.

Private sector organizations, including NGOs, contribute around 40 per cent of the delivery of the training. Rules for the participation of private training organizations are defined in a detailed legal framework called Law No 13-00 of May 2000. A national programme to implement internal quality management systems in training, based on a self-assessment approach, was launched in 1997. The Quality Framework in Training now covers all regions in the country.

The European Union has been providing assistance through the European Training Foundation (ETF) to developing the TVET system as part of technical assistance package for the Mediterranean region. Many of the challenges faced by TVET in Morocco identified by ETF are the same as the ones mentioned above. The World Bank's SABER programme also places a strong emphasis on improving TVET governance in Morocco.

The main challenges for the transition from school to work in Morocco include a weak business environment, low levels of qualification and enrolment in TVET, the lack of life skills and weak geographical mobility of youth job seekers who are unable to afford the cost of daily transportation. The *Confédération Générale des Entreprises au Maroc* (the General Confederation of companies in Morocco or CGEM), in its labour market reform suggestions, proposed that specific financial support be given to job seekers who need to travel for a job interview (Rosso et al., 2012).

Specific training and mentoring measures to foster entrepreneurship need to be included in schools and universities, to promote entrepreneurial thinking among youth. The Moukalawati programme, for instance, is financed by the government and is aimed at supporting business start-ups and self-employment. It offers financial support (*prêts facilités*) and business plan support programmes, but with low participation, the results seemed to have fallen far short of the initial objectives.

Life skills and citizenship education: Challenges and opportunities

The latest curriculum reform was conducted in 2002. Since then stakeholders have recognized the importance of life skills and citizenship education. Five skills, identified and integrated in the curriculum, could be reinforced through life skills and citizenship education. They include: strategic skills (linked to self-awareness), communication (mostly confused with basic literacy skills), cultural skills (awareness of cultural heritage and identity), methodological skills (cognitive skills linked to higher order thinking skills) and technology (mostly confused with the thematic area 'computer literacy'). These life skills are, to some extent, already embedded in the curriculum. For example, in Arabic class, students can be asked to read and critique a text on citizenship; the skill of critical thinking, however, is not introduced, emphasized or evaluated formally within the curriculum. There is no common agreed upon framework or methodology for life skills. Often the terminology of 'life skills' is confused with subject areas in which life skills can be integrated, such as in HIV/AIDS health education, citizenship education, entrepreneurship, etc. The National Programme for School and University Health (NPSUH) offers one subject area in which life skills and citizenship education can be practiced.

Stakeholders agree on the key role that teachers play. As of now, teachers do not use interactive approaches, but rather use very traditional teaching techniques. There is widespread awareness of both the limitations of current teacher development programmes and the need to review both pre-service and in-service teacher training. Given the current context and the difficulty to change classroom practices, however, it is easier to intervene through extra-curricular or co-curricular activities focusing on life skills. These interventions, however, need to be harmonized and linked with the national curriculum. The current lack of coherence reflects the lack of understanding of the meaning of life skills, the lack of a unified vision at national level, and the variety of partners engaged in scattered interventions.

The stakeholders interviewed argue that life skills and citizenship education be sequential and consistent throughout the students' school trajectory. According to them, the general curriculum – and especially life skills and citizenship education – should be more closely coordinated with labour market realities, and coordination opportunities around the work done by different directorates on life skills should be explored. Further, monitoring and evaluation of life skills remain a major challenge, as it is not currently embedded in the current school plan.

Existing life skills initiatives implemented as extracurricular activities operate both inside and outside of school. Their objective is to foster an engaging, participatory school environment for students aged 12–18 years through the life skills clubs. In 2016, around 25,000 educational/life skills clubs were operating in Morocco, in the forms of both personal project clubs (elementary school) implemented in partnership with UNICEF, and thematic area clubs (lower secondary) addressing issues such as health, i.e., drugs, sexual and reproductive health (in some areas), science/environment, citizenship, journalism and life skills using IYF's PTS model (in certain areas). Clubs are facilitated by volunteer teachers; youth participants are also volunteers. The model at the national level is quite decentralized. Teacher mentors/facilitators do receive some training in how to facilitate these clubs and a national-level guide, developed by UNFPA, is available, yet, it is not clear how widely it is used or how closely this guide is followed at the individual school level. Teacher mentors/facilitators encourage youth to take leadership and responsibility of all aspects of the clubs, from choosing topics to management/organization and recruitment of other students.

In non-formal education settings, many NGOs are implementing life skills initiatives, but the stakeholders mentioned that efforts remain fragmented, without clear processes of quality assurance or coordination. As schools have a high degree of autonomy, NGOs can partner with them and the regions directly without the approval from the central MOE. While this has facilitated the development of extra-curricular activities and expanded the provision of alternative education modalities at the local level, the lack of a harmonized approach and control mechanisms is hindering the impact, and affecting the quality, of the interventions.

NGOs and CBOs play a key role in providing second chance education, mostly targeting dropout students and responding to service delivery gaps, especially in pre-primary education and inclusive education; yet, there are governance issues and missed opportunities when it comes to mainstreaming lessons learned and successful experiences. For instance, teachers/facilitators in second chance education settings are appointed and trained directly by NGOs without common standards or qualifications, while their salary is covered by the government which finances these NGOs for second chance education.

Links between formal education and non-formal education (second chance education) are missing. A unified approach and vision, along with the standardization of resources and training programmes are lacking. Conflicting messages between the practices in schools and the interventions conducted by NGOs were observed. At the national level, the Directorate of Curriculum plays a key role in ensuring the standardization of programmes, but a common approach still needs to be developed. Working on creating a positive enabling environment is also crucial. NGOs play a key role in community mobilization and best practices show the importance of the alignment between the school (teachers and principals), the parents and the community.

Although there is a shared understanding within the MOE of the need for a comprehensive strategy on life skills and citizenship education, a clear argument supporting its development has yet to be formulated. Another key priority for the Ministry is the measurement of learning outcomes.

The following windows of opportunity were identified that could be entry points to strengthen programming on life skills and citizenship education in Morocco:

Political will and enabling environment: Despite some confusion between the concepts of ‘life skills’ and ‘thematic areas’, policy makers, educational practitioners and programme implementers have a common, basic understanding of the concept and importance of life skills, and, there is a strong political will towards, and belief in, life skills at all levels of the system. Furthermore, the current examples of innovative programming within the system, even if delivered outside of normal school hours, are encouraging. The Government of Morocco is open to accepting efficient models and scaling them to fit national needs, though more impact results and guidance are needed in this area. Some good entry points could be the summer camps that are run by the MOE.

Curriculum reform: Morocco is planning a curriculum reform that will, however, take time to materialize. The importance of mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education in the national curriculum is recognized. As this is a matter of national sovereignty, however, high-level coordination with partners is necessary.

Teacher professional development and training: This is a key area of focus for Morocco, especially in the area of in-service training, which is strongly supported by the MOE. Pre-service may also be a possible entry point. Teachers need to be trained both in life skills content and in classroom management, interactive techniques, planning skills (i.e., lesson planning), etc. Teachers can also benefit from the development of teaching and learning resources to mainstream life skills into curriculum disciplines, such as a life skills resource bank for teachers. Other potential opportunities include conducting a comprehensive review of teacher development programmes and teacher qualifications to include life skills and citizenship education as a key component as most training does not currently focus on teaching and learning approaches. Modelling in this area is essential.

TVET: Another possible entry point in TVET is improving the coordination between the Department of Professional Training (DCP) and Office of Professional Formation (OFPPT) within the MOE. This could be through engaging in national consultations to identify a shared vision and coordinate among partners, as well as continue the work on co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that could further inform the curriculum development process through best practices.

Promising practices in life skills and citizenship education

The Youth Peer Education Network (Y-Peer) is a project implemented by UNFPA in 32 countries, particularly in MENA, including Morocco. The focus of the project is to inform on sexual and reproductive health through “edutainment” and life skills by using interactive activities, such as theatre, games, youth camps, etc. Topics covered include HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. The project uses a school-based approach by identifying volunteer peer educators in schools and creating clubs in partnership with local NGOs/local association networks. Life skills, such as decision-making, communications and self-confidence, are embedded in content delivery. A toolkit has been developed by UNFPA and Family Health International to assist programme managers and master trainers of peer educators, and to develop and maintain more effective peer education programmes.⁴

⁴ UNFPA and FHI360, *Youth Peer Education Toolkit*, 2006, accessed at <www.unfpa.org/resources/peer-education-toolkit>.

In TVET, the IFMIA Automobile Training Centre is an example of a public private partnership in life skills programming. The Centre has developed a curriculum model supported by the European Union in partnership with over 60 automotive companies, and includes practical methods for teaching and learning delivered by in-person and blended learning strategies. The Centre's e-learning platform hosts more than 500 automotive technical courses from global automobile manufacturers, adapted to the Moroccan context. Teachers who use the curriculum receive a three-month training in Korea. Newly enrolled students receive a three-week training course focused on citizenship, respect for other, health education and self-confidence. There is currently no standard material or approach to life skills instruction, but the Centre is considering this option. The current demand for the course outnumbers the numbers of spots offered, with 4,000 applications received annually for 90 spots in the training course. One advantage of this programme is that partner companies pay the students' fees as part of the pre-hire agreement signed between the companies and the TVET.

ANNEX 4 The State of Palestine case study

At a glance: The education context in the State of Palestine

Education in the State of Palestine displays a contrasting and complex picture. Although literacy rates are some of the highest in the world,¹ the education system is facing tremendous challenges delivery quality education for all children due largely to the on-going Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, along with intra-Palestinian divisions and a deteriorating socio-economic situation. These various compounding factors hamper positive education outcomes for Palestinian children and youth. Insufficient school infrastructures, lack of qualified teachers and obstructed access to education in Area C and East Jerusalem are some of the pressing problems that the Palestinian MOE and Higher Education (MOEHE) is trying to address (UNDP, 2015).

The vast majority of children in the State of Palestine have access to basic education, but many of them underperform and drop out of school before completing a full cycle of education. While the dropout rate for basic education in public schools in both West Bank and Gaza is, at 1.3 and 1.55 respectively, relatively low, secondary education sees increased drop-out rates, especially among male youth. Net attendance in post-basic education settings is only 72 per cent, significantly lower for male youth (63 per cent) than for female youth (80 per cent). According to the 2015 School-to-Work Transition Survey, failed examinations (20 per cent) and lack of interest in education (37 per cent) were the major reasons for dropping out of school. In fact, the issue of out-of-school children persists to be a significant concern, as 87,557 out-of-school-aged children were out of school in 2014, amounting to 7 per cent of the school-age population from ages 6 to 17 years.²

The *Educational Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) 2014-2019: A Learning Nation* offers a vision for a “student centred and inclusive education system that provides 21st-century relevant education services at all levels with high quality and full equity considering individual needs and being at the heart of the political, economic and social development in and for Palestine”. The plan sets out three goals ensuring safe, inclusive and equitable access to education at all levels, developing a student-based teaching and learning approach and environment, as well as enhancing accountable and results-based leadership, governance and management. Under the second goal, a high priority is placed on curriculum reform to emphasize 21st-century skills and to put in place learner-centred teaching and learning methods, as well as enhance quality of vocational education and create an appropriate environment that is supportive of teachers.³

As part of the curriculum reform process, a desk review of the curriculum content was conducted by the Ministry to inform the revision process. Several thousand teachers and education practitioners were consulted through an on-line survey on the needs and requirements of the reform. A reduction in the number of subjects was considered as well as a reorganization into thematic areas. The vision was to better align the curriculum, teacher training and assessment, specify competencies for each grade, as well as include life skills in each subject area.

The curriculum reform started with the revision of textbooks for grades 1-4, which have been developed in a three-month period and distributed for the academic year 2016/2017. More comprehensive and robust teacher training efforts are needed to ensure that the new curriculum is delivered in a child-centred and student-based way. This will provide an entry point for students to practice life skills in the core curriculum through active learning instead of the current non-participatory and didactic approach.

¹ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics: Press Release on the Eve of International Literacy Day, 8 September 2016.

² United Nations Children's Fund, *Out-of-School Children Study Profile*, UNICEF, 2016.

³ Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, *Education Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) 2014-2019: A Learning Nation*, March 2014, p. 64.

With regards to TVET, there is increasing recognition of the need for demand-driven TVET services in the State of Palestine. The National Employment Strategy was published by the Ministry of Labour in November 2010. Out of all students enrolled in upper-secondary education however, only 2 per cent are on the vocational track, with female participation at particularly low levels. One of the key challenges hindering TVET development is its weak relevance to the labour market and the socio-economic development needs in the country. Furthermore, more effective links with tertiary education are required. Other challenges include the lack of coordination between the different stakeholders engaged in TVET, limited involvement with the private sector, weak integration of life skills, lack of funding and accreditation of TVET courses, and low female participation. There appears to be consensus on the need for life skills and citizenship education (often referred to as 'soft skills') in TVET programme delivery. Among the skills mentioned in stakeholder interviews were communication and presentation skills, personal management skills, problem-solving, conflict resolution, creativity and critical thinking skills.

The revised TVET strategy was approved by the Palestinian Authority in 2010 with support from GIZ. This provides the basis for governmental and non-governmental cooperation and coordination. The strategy provides a clear vision for standardizing TVET provision. A priority is to make TVET more relevant to the labour market; this represents a key and on-going challenge. Governance of TVET is also major challenge. The Higher Council of TVET, formed in 2005, was reactivated in 2016 with the involvement of both the Ministry of Labour and the MOE and Higher Education. It will attempt to address the problem of fragmentation in TVET.

Life skills and citizenship education: Challenges and opportunities

The Palestinian MOEHE considers itself to be a pioneer in life skills and citizenship education. Life skills are included in the concept of '21st-century skills', which are central to the ESDP 2014–2019. The ministry defines life skills as the "abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life". In addition, the EDSP calls for enhancing programmes that support citizenship and improving life skills for students, with special emphasis on male children and youth's schools.

In the framework of the monitoring of EFA goals, a national study to assess certain life skills (critical thinking, communication skills and openness towards other cultures, awareness regarding the environment, self-confidence, problem-solving, decision-making and facing pressure) in students in grades 4, 8 and 10 was conducted in the years 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012. Two models of tools were used depending on situations and attitudes by placing the students in life situations, in which they had to apply life skills. Despite high rates of life skills acquired by students in 2012, reaching 76 per cent, there has been a slight decrease since 2009, particularly among male children and youth.⁴

Analysis of the national curriculum and its contents indicates that textbooks fail to enable students to acquire life skills. In fact, up until now, life skills are not clearly embedded in the core curriculum. There is a lack of an agreed framework or methodology for life skills. In Gaza only, the Ministry has introduced life skills and citizenship education in grades 7–10 in Health and Environment. This is a curricular subject that is only adopted in Gaza. Furthermore, an activity-based life skills manual for teachers is being developed with support from UNICEF for a pilot-project in grade 1. This includes seven life skills (communication, empathy, decision-making, critical thinking, creativity, cooperation and problem-solving), which will be included in the curriculum. However, one of the main challenges faced in this area is the low teachers' capacity and low motivation in integrating the manual into the curriculum. Furthermore, the manual is seen as a 'new burden' for teachers.

⁴ Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, *Education for All 2015 National Review: Palestine, 2015*, pp. 142-143. Central Bureau of Statistics: Press Release on the Eve of International Literacy Day, 8 September 2016.

In terms of classroom environment, the education environment is not conducive to empower students with life skills. In 2012, active involvement by students exists in only 11 per cent of all classroom activities. It is estimated that 58 per cent of classroom activity was generated by teachers and 38 per cent by students, of which 87 per cent was in response to a question by the teacher. This indicates that education in Palestinian schools is far from being student-centred, and there is an urgent need for a classroom environment that encourages research and allows students to employ educational resources in a comfortable and stimulating environment that responds to their needs and offers diverse forms of education.⁵

Additionally, life skills-based school health was initiated in 1998 and has been a component of the Child Friendly Schools approach since. The approach has not been systematic and is dependent on donor support. A baseline study on life skills was conducted in 2014 in grades 4 and 10. However, a major challenge in this area is the absence of policy on school health and on life skills and citizenship education in general.

A significant amount of what constitutes life skills and citizenship education takes place in school settings using extra-curricular NGOs-based programmes that are focused on issues such as employability, arts, culture, citizenship, as well as support in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. It is recognized that NGOs provide added value in a range of participatory teaching and learning activities including life skills and citizenship education. They also constitute an important source of innovation if interventions are structured within a system-based approach led by the MOE. However, some of the key challenges faced by NGOs in this area is a lack of clear governmental policy and strategy on NGO partnerships in education, low scalability, coverage and sustainability, limited programme coordination between the different stakeholders involved to ensure that duplication does not occur at the school level and limited monitoring and evaluation- activities around life skills, particularly in terms of impact assessment.

With regards to TVET, some efforts have been made by the MOEHE and MOL to ensure integration of life skills into curricula of TVET schools and vocational centres run by the Ministry of Labour. However, much like the formal education, there is neither a systematic approach nor integrated curricula for life skills in TVET.

Overall, there is a widely recognized problem of fragmentation of efforts around life skills and citizenship education as a result of multiple donor projects and poorly coordinated NGO activities. This tendency is exacerbated by the conditions of the occupation and the lack of formal coordination mechanisms. Meetings with NGO partners highlighted the issue of dispersion and fragmentation both in terms of targeting and scope of life skills programming due to a project-based approach. Partnerships with the Palestinian MOEHE are not based on a coherent and structured package of interventions on life skills. Currently, the interventions at school level are based on specific projects, with different activities being implemented in schools with a duplication of efforts. This is due to several reasons including limited coordination between all stakeholders, competition between NGOs, lack of funding, weak sustainability of projects and donor driven agendas. The school visit (Spanish school in Ramallah) highlighted the issue of fragmentation and the importance of investing in school-based management and leadership. The school has been the recipient of five different programmes implemented by different organizations, most of them with similar objectives (i.e., increasing social cohesion). The impact and sustainability of such initiatives remain an issue of concern that call for further investments in school leadership as well as measures to increase the effectiveness of coordination at school level.

⁵ Ibid, p. 125.

Despite these challenges, there exist several windows of opportunity that represent potential entry points to strengthen programming on life skills and citizenship education in the State of Palestine. The ESDP 2014–2019 provides an enabling framework for life skills development related to the rubric of 21st-century skills. In this regard life skills and citizenship education can be a catalyst to improve the quality of teaching and learning in general education. The ESDP provides a number of potential entry points for life skills and citizenship education. These include:

Curriculum reform: This area of work generally constitutes an entry point and an opportunity to leverage the added value of life skills and citizenship education. While the process of curriculum reform is currently being implemented, as a pilot phase, there seems to be an overall lack of clarity on the overall process and on the technical support that will be requested from partners. Curriculum development and implementation, however, are long-term processes and the full integration of life skills will take time. For this reason, a strategic approach is required. This could include undertaking a national consultation on life skills and citizenship education for quality learning, working closely with the EDSP development partners on policy dialogue with the Ministry on life skills and citizenship education, activating the curriculum reform Technical Working Groups, as well as building on UNICEF support with the Ministry's School Health Department to develop a template for life skills curriculum development.

Curriculum development for life skills in TVET appears to be at an early stage of development. There are opportunities to work with UNRWA and the MOEHE to develop a relevant package of life skills for TVET trainees in the West Bank and Gaza. As with curriculum reform in general education, a strategic approach is needed in TVET. This could include ensuring that TVET is included in the proposed national consultation on life skills and citizenship education, working more closely with the Ministry and UNRWA on piloting life skills programmes into TVET service delivery, building on UNESCO's skills forecasting exercise and ILO and NGO programmes for employability skills to integrate relevant life skills elements into school curriculum and co-curriculum.

Teacher professional development and training: Teacher training, and teacher education more generally, provide another entry point for life skills and citizenship education. Throughout the country visit, this was identified as a major area that could be further invested in, to increase the quality, impact and sustainability of life skills interventions. Teacher professional development and training remain highly fragmented and compartmentalized in the State of Palestine. The lack of a national harmonized system for teacher professional development and training further contributes to dispersion and duplication of efforts. At the institutional level the teacher training and supervision department plays a strategic role that provides an entry point for mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education into the formal system. The following are specific opportunities to strengthen programming in this area:

- Supporting innovative approaches to introduce life skills and citizenship education into teaching and learning process.
- Support further development and implementation of a life skills manual for grade 1 (currently under pilot phase), developed by MOEHE, which constitutes a valuable effort towards mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education in the formal curriculum. The impact of this initiative including its quality and relevance could be further strengthened with the establishment of strategic partnerships with the Teacher Training and Supervision Department. The teaching and learning approaches are an area that could be further reviewed to benefit from other similar initiatives being currently implemented.
- Exploring strategic partnerships with existing pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes. As an example, further engagement could be explored with a World Bank-funded project under the Education Quality improvement Project, The Teacher Education Improvement Project, which targets basic education classroom teachers (grades 1-4) with both pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes. The project started in 2012 and a second phase was been signed in 2015 to lead through to 2018. As part of the project, the British University of Canterbury has been contracted to develop the training resources and methodology.
- Working with school counsellors to develop their capacity to support life skills and citizenship education in schools with both teachers and students.

Co-curricular/extra-curricular initiatives: NGOs' extra-curricular programmes that include life skills and citizenship education are important opportunities to expose school management, teachers and student to new ways of teaching and learning. They are important to enrich the curriculum and also for the potential to leverage a more comprehensive approach to life skills and citizenship education in the core curriculum. They can be used as incubators for new activities and as examples of programmes that have been proven to be effective. Opportunities for enhancing life skills and citizenship education through NGO programming include the following:

- Policy dialogue with MOEHE to better define policy on NGO partnerships and coordination in co-curricular activities.
- Policy dialogues to reposition extra-curricular activities as co-curricular activities, when relevant, in order to promote a more holistic approach to the life skills curriculum and to strengthen school-level ownership and engagement in these programmes.
- Review existing NGO programmes in schools in order to map life skills concepts, activities and lessons learned to inform life skills and citizenship education policy development.
- Build on existing NGO resource centres to support teacher and school development for effective life skills and citizenship education implementation.

Monitoring and evaluation: The MOEHE is currently working on pre-and post-tests to measure knowledge and attitude changes. Tools are being developed to assess lessons learned in the area of life skills and citizenship education.

Enabling Environment: NGO programming is also needed to foster an enabling environment for life skills and citizenship education. There are opportunities for NGOs to raise awareness within school communities on the importance of life skills and citizenship education as quality education, to engage communities on the issue life skills and citizenship education, as well as to develop youth advocates for life skills and citizenship education.

Promising practices in life skills and citizenship education

The "Learning Objects" is a promising model of life skills and citizenship education, piloted and evaluated by the Centre for Continuing Education at Birzeit University. A National Learning Object Bank has been already developed (for both grades 8–9 mathematics and 6–10 science) and includes high quality support material including learning activities and resources for teachers on how to actively improve teaching and learning through life skills and citizenship education at the school level. The model has been recently endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and is aligned with the requirements of the State of Palestinian curriculum. The approach could be further linked to a new curriculum since it focuses on experiential and deep learning rather than content memorization.

The MOEHE is also implementing professional development programmes for teachers to enhance their learning and teaching approaches and their life skills, particularly communication, active listening, self-confidence, cooperation, persuasion and influencing others, decision-making, critical thinking, problem-solving, self-assessment, time-management, etc.

There are also other promising life skills and citizenship education programmes implemented by NGOs. Al Nayzak, for instance, is currently implementing the "Young Researchers" programme for children and youth to practice critical thinking skills (one class a week for grades 8 and 9). The NGO operates the Science House as an extra-curricular resource to promote learning in science and technology. It also implements the Palestinian Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Programme.

The Al Qattan Foundation is also implementing a Culture and Art programme for teachers and youth, including the use of drama for education. The Qattan Centre for the Child in Gaza City includes a library, multi-media and an information resource for schools. Welfare Association also implements programmes on life skills through art and culture (e.g., the Ta'bir project on cultural heritage). A new project launched by Bridge Project in 2015 to support the transition from secondary to tertiary education targets 4,000 students in grades 10–12, in West Bank and Gaza and includes professional career development.

The Tamer Institute for Community Education is also working in schools and communities on various life skills initiatives, particularly focusing on culture and arts, including establishing reading clubs and libraries within schools and communities (e.g., established a network of 78 libraries in West Bank and Gaza).

In regards to entrepreneurship, there are also programmes with promising practices. The Palestinian Vision, for example, is working on different life skills dimensions and thematic areas (e.g., programmes on career guidance and entrepreneurship as well as interventions on social cohesion that are implemented under the framework of different projects, but require further packaging and modelling to be scaled up and sustained). INJAZ is also implementing programmes in schools to develop leadership, entrepreneurship and personal life planning. Similar to its experience in Jordan, IYF and its local partners are responsible for PTS, which is a life skills-based approach to developing skills for the world of work. The IYF PTS is considered effective in delivering life skills for employability. The ILO is supporting the integration of the 12 modules of Know about Business (KAB) in the national curriculum at grade 9. The World Bank is providing financing for the Quality Improvement Fund (QIF) under the Education to Work Transition Project. The QIF is focused on post-basic education institutions to help to foster partnerships with private sector employers to develop curricula, update teaching practices and provide practical training to students.

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