

## The Twelve Core Life Skills

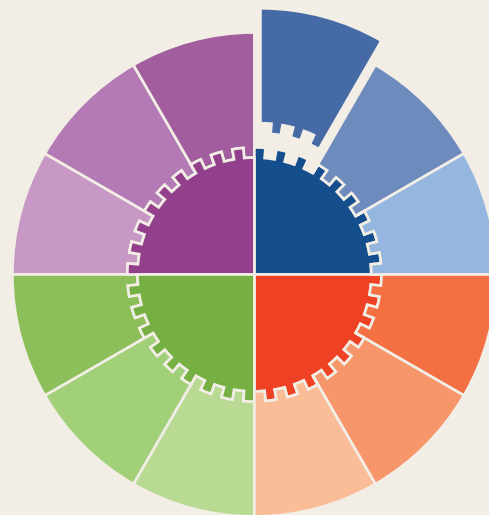
# CREATIVITY

## Cognitive Dimension

Creativity is a core life skill that children should develop from an early age. It supports academic performance and helps uncover children's various talents. An essential component of the Cognitive Dimension, creativity is one of the most sought after life skills in the Instrumental Dimension: It is a necessary, constructive element of innovative thinking processes and is a crucial life skill in sciences and the world of work. Being creative helps to address and, more importantly in MENA, to partake constructively in complex and evolving technological and digital settings. Creativity allows for adaptability in various life situations by leading to solutions, methods and processes to tackle old problems and contemporary challenges. Using creativity, learners develop a sense of self-efficacy and persistence, which leads to feeling empowered, one of the key outcomes of the Individual Dimension. Social creativity, a collaborative phenomenon, encourages individual learners to be even more creative by combining different ideas, sometimes across cultures. Creativity adds value to the Social Dimension.

### DEFINITION

Creativity, or being creative, is the ability to generate, articulate or apply inventive ideas, techniques and perspectives (Ferrari et al., 2009), often in a collaborative environment (Lucas and Hanson, 2015). In conjunction with critical thinking and problem-solving skills, to which it closely relates, creativity is a major component of purposeful thinking, i.e., a non-chaotic, orderly and organized thought process. Being creative is, to a large extent, connected to the learner's cognitive abilities, including analytic and evaluative skills (Sternberg, 2006). Moreover, ideational thought processes are fundamental to creative persons (Kozbelt et al., 2010). Creativity intersects with social and personal management skills; therefore, while related to the arts, creativity is also a pre-condition for innovation and adaptive behaviours and solutions in all life settings, including in learning settings and in the workplace (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015).



Creativity is linked to the effectiveness of other life skills, in particular: critical thinking, problem identification (Sternberg, 2006), problem-solving (Torrance, 1977), and self-management.

With regards to a renewed vision for education in MENA, creativity is relevant at two levels. First, it is intrinsic to the learning process of all learners, at all ages across the curriculum. Creativity is a means of knowledge creation that can support and enhance self-learning, learning how to learn and lifelong learning (Ferrari et al., 2009). Thus, the promotion of creativity is a core component of improved learning processes and education systems. Second, promoting creativity in and beyond education settings helps children, youth and other learners to unearth their resources in multiple disciplines and subject areas, while developing their capacity to brainstorm, cast a fresh look on every day, family, health and workplace situations, and offer constructive suggestions. Recurrent in national skills documents, creativity and creativity-related skills, such as innovative thinking, collaboration and self-efficacy, are valued throughout life (Care et al., 2016). For this reason, psychologists, such as Vygotsky and Guilford, have long maintained the importance of fostering creative development in children in order to prepare them for a changing future (Kozbelt et al., 2010; Guilford, 1950), which in turn is a priority in the MENA context, as children and youth face particularly complex life environments.

Interventions targeted at improving creative thinking have been successful at increasing students' academic achievement (Maker, 2004); this is of specific relevance in MENA where education service delivery generally does not set out to encourage creativity due to teacher-centred pedagogy that tends to suppress innovative ideas (Beghetto, 2010). In addition, school environments are not systemically felt as safe by children and this may inhibit creativity. Fostering creativity by adapting new teaching methods and building safe educational environments could, therefore, support overall improved performance of the schools in the region, while preparing learners to be innovative in life and the world of work. Creativity develops from potential to achievement as children grow up; therefore, it is necessary to start encouraging creativity at an early age. There have been successful efforts to improve creativity of children through facilitation of pretend play skills (Russ and Fiorelli, 2010). Other success factors include:

- i) the exploration of different activities so that children can find what they enjoy and develop their talents and abilities; and
- ii) caring environments, in which children feel safe to express even unconventional ideas, where every-day acts of creativity are reinforced, and independence in problem-solving encouraged (Russ and Fiorelli, 2010).

According to Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, creativity is critical to the "development of the child's personality, and mental and physical talents, to their fullest potential" (UN General Assembly, 1989). Hence, beyond the development of children's intellectual abilities, a task traditionally viewed as the sole responsibility of schools (UNICEF, 2007b), there is a rights-based justification for educational settings to be conducive to creativity. This can be done by encouraging and fostering dynamism, playfulness and trust, while promoting tolerance of differences and personal commitment (Siegel and Kaemmerer, 1978). An environment conducive to creativity should also include organizational encouragement and work-group support (Amabile et al., 1995) to emphasize the Social Dimension of creativity.

## CREATIVITY AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

### 'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension

As a core life skill, the contribution of creativity to the Cognitive Dimension of Learning brings about the advantages of purposeful thinking, especially creative thinking, for MENA learners and, by extension, for MENA educational systems and their outcomes. Creativity is sometimes misunderstood as resulting in chaotic thinking processes, however, it actually encourages orderly and organized thoughts, thus expanding in learners, at any age, the ability to constructively think anew and perform better.

Creativity can be fostered through teaching and is not the preserve of any particular subject discipline. It can be considered integral to quality education and is acquired through training and the right classroom environment (Gutman and Schoon, 2013). Teaching approaches that emphasize acquisition of facts over the development of thinking skills are, on the other hand, associated with the suppression of creative expression (Kozbelt et al., 2010).

Creativity is related to both innovative and divergent thinking; the latter, in particular, involves imagining several responses to a single problem, rather than focusing on a single correct answer, a thought process that can lead to creation and innovation. Meta-cognitive processes, such as tactical thinking, are also tied to creative thinking (Kozbelt et al., 2010).

Research exploring behavioural and brain function has evinced that, while men and women were indistinguishable in terms of behavioural performance across all tasks, the pattern of brain activity while engaged in divergent thinking indicated strategy differences between the genders. During divergent thinking, declarative memory related regions of the brain were strongly activated in male learners, while the regions involved in self-referential processing were more engaged in female learners. The implications of these gender differences beg further exploration in the field of gender differences in higher-order cognition, where the crucial question is not intellectual abilities, but the employed strategies, functional task approach and cognitive style adopted by each gender under specific conditions

(Abraham et al., 2014) in order to then foster each with the adequate educational activities to obtain the best performance.

## **‘Learning to Do’/ the Instrumental Dimension**

Creativity and creativity-related life skills are widely sought after in the workplace. Like findings elsewhere, creative thinking skills were considered among the most important life skills at recruitment, according to a survey of MENA chief executive officers (Al Maktoum Foundation, 2008). A survey of the skills gap in MENA found that creative thinking was considered an important skill for junior/mid-level positions, and especially important for senior-level positions (YouGov and Bayt, 2016). Difficulties in finding these skills were encountered by 63 per cent of companies from the region that responded.

Creativity and creativity-related life skills are important for fostering innovation and problem-solving, and for improving productivity. Innovation is a process by which people, or groups of people with an entrepreneurial mindset, develop new ideas or adapt existing ones (World Bank, 2010a). By extension, these life skills are highly relevant in any entrepreneurship endeavour, both at the start and for later business growth. Beyond innovations in the economy encompassing products, processes and services, creativity is linked to improvement in society as new ideas can help solve pressing problems (Moran, 2010). This includes developing workers in MENA who can think ‘outside the box’ to be competitive in the global economy by fostering their capacity to think in a digital and technology-oriented economy (Jalbout and Farah, 2016).

Creativity skills are often lacking in the labour market (World Bank, 2010a) and MENA enterprises are looking for solutions to encourage this core life skill (Nosseir, 2015). To support creative behaviours, organizations should be aware of existing gender bias with regard to creativity, which is sometimes linked to qualities traditionally associated with male workers, such as boldness, risk-taking and independence. This bias may lead to dismissing women’s ideas and creative output, thus missing out on collaborative and inclusive innovations (Adams, 2015).

## **‘Learning to Be’/ the Individual Dimension**

Creativity, which is at the heart of “being human” (Robinson, 2015), is both integral to the fulfilment of individual talent and is an element leading to persistence (Simonton, 2010) and resilience, another core life skill. More specifically, creativity skills are a key factor in having a successful life (Sternberg, 2006) as they foster self-esteem and self-worth, and contribute to self-efficacy. Creativity also draws on individual skills and resources such as motivation and drive. Characterized as a way of coping with the challenges of life (Crompton, 1996), creative thinking can help people respond adaptively and with flexibility to problematic situations in daily life (WHO, 1997). Hence, in the volatile and sometimes violent context that children and youth face in MENA, being creative appears to be a constructive asset, conducive to personal empowerment.

As creative individuals are often intrinsically motivated (Kaufman and Sternberg, 2010; Van Tassel-Baska and MacFarlane, 2009), they are willing to take intellectual risks, ask questions and place themselves at risk of making mistakes (Sternberg, 2006; Kozbelt et al., 2010) to better learn from them. They are open to new ideas and tend to have high creative self-efficacy or belief in their ability to generate new and meaningful ideas (Kozbelt et al., 2010; Russ, 1996; Sternberg, 2006). This disposition, motivation, intellectual risk-taking and creative self-efficacy can be critical in the face of the natural resistance that society often displays toward creative ideas that are new and untested (Sternberg, 2006). Yet, like all core life skills in the framework of the Individual Dimension, creativity does not spur opposition; on the contrary, it is known to enhance the ability of children and youth to positively, constructively and innovatively face every day challenges in their social environment.



## 'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension

Although creativity may be associated with individuals, it is now largely conceived as a collaborative and social phenomenon developed in and through communities and groups (Carlile and Jordan, 2012). Social creativity shapes creative individuals within it, encourages social cohesion and celebration, suggests a dynamic inter-relationship between the personal and the social, involves an ethical dimension, and may arise from the interaction of differing cultures and values (Carlile and Jordan, 2012). In order to promote the social aspect of creativity, teachers should be aware of the extent to which different

cultures value creativity to show learners how subjects and disciplines are socially constructed, and of how to use group diversity to stimulate creativity and explore the ethical dimensions of creativity (Carlile and Jordan, 2012).

The growing relevance of creativity to address complex challenges in society is evinced through a myriad of citizenship discourses and research currently fostering creativity (e.g., the "Creative Citizens" programmes in the UK). In its most practical dimension, creativity is key for the exploration of everyday problem-solving at the community level and for enabling positive social transformation.

### Relevance of creativity (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
<b>'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension</b>	To sharpen learning processes and outcomes To prepare children for success in a fast-changing world To enhance enjoyment and relevance of learning	Innovative thinking, divergent thinking, articulating ideas, analysis and synthesis
<b>'Learning to Do' / the Instrumental Dimension</b>	To develop successful entrepreneurs To facilitate problem-solving in the workplace To improve employability and promotion, regardless of gender	Productivity, collaboration and teamwork, risk taking
<b>'Learning to Be' / the Individual Dimension</b>	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To support development of coping skills	Self-efficacy, self-worth, self-esteem, persistence
<b>'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension</b>	To contribute to societal problem-solving towards inclusive citizenship To improve social cohesion through creative approaches to conflict management To facilitate social engagement in the promotion of common good	Social transformation and agency, positive change

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## The Twelve Core Life Skills

### CRITICAL THINKING

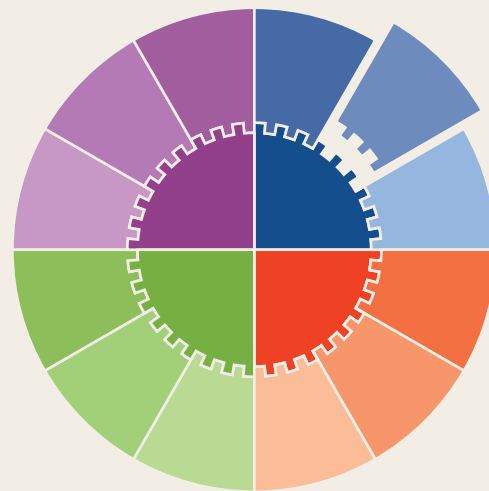
### Cognitive Dimension

Equipped with higher-order functioning skills, critical thinkers analyse information in a more objective manner to make balanced decisions and are better problem solvers. A core life skill of the Cognitive Dimension, particularly sought after by employers in MENA, critical thinking is instrumental to enhancing learning and contributes to academic success, as learners ask questions, identify assumptions and develop the capacity to assess facts. Equipped with these abilities, individuals can access and progress in the changing world of work in MENA. Critical thinkers can reconsider and adapt existing business strategies and processes to be more efficient, make the workplace safer, increase customer care, and are ready to evolve within the knowledge and digital economy. Conducive to self-efficacy and resilience, thinking critically also fosters self-management, leading to safer choices with regard to health and community issues. Hence, hand in hand with the Individual Dimension, critical thinking brings about constructive social behaviours in individuals by enhancing their self-determination and will to be engaged in their community. Children, youth and all individuals who develop their capacity to think critically can try to prevent violence, radicalization and environmentally unsustainable attitudes. Thus, critical thinking is an essential outcome of citizenship education.

#### DEFINITION

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

Dewey, in his classic work *How We Think*, described critical thinking as the "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the



grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey, 1910). Critical thinking is a universally applicable complex mental process that involves multiple skills: separating facts from opinion, recognizing assumptions, questioning the validity of evidence, asking questions, verifying information, listening and observing, and understanding multiple perspectives (Lai, 2011). It includes an ability to analyse information in an objective manner. This is essential for children's and individuals' wellbeing, as it helps them to recognize and assess factors that influence their attitudes and behaviours, such as values, peer pressure and information from the media (WHO, 1997), thus helping them to protect themselves from violence, negative influences and radicalization.

Thinking critically allows each learner to pose, gather, evaluate, synthesize and then assess facts, before drawing conclusions and preparing an answer. Therefore, critical thinking not only translates into a complex process, it also is a thoughtful and constructive one that prepares individuals to face complex economic changes and life environments.

Critical thinking is a lifelong life skill and, in theory, all people can be taught to think critically (Lai, 2011). At best, children should be taught early, as empirical research suggests that people begin developing critical thinking skills at a very young age. Critical thinking should be practiced



often, in various educational and work settings, and should not be pushed from core content designs (Trottier, 2009). Critical thinking is one of the hardest skills to practice well and adults often exhibit deficient reasoning, maybe due to deficient educational experiences (Lai, 2011).

Developing a critical mindset is key to enhancing children's capacities towards self-protection, particularly in the face of violence and fragile environments, such as those existing in some locations in MENA. Critical thinking is also a crucial aspect in the competence of citizens to constructively participate in a plural and democratic society, enabling them to make their own positive contribution to their society (Dam and Volman, 2004). Without critical thinking, education cannot fulfil its social role to equip children with the necessary skills to face life challenges and participate in society.

### CRITICAL THINKING AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

Critical thinking is sought after in the world of work and knowledge economy and it is an essential element of active and constructive citizenship, leading to positive and socially cohesive behaviours. It stands among those life skills most frequently identified in national documents (Care et al., 2016). This core life skill has wide applicability in many fields of life and international skills frameworks (WHO, 1997; IYF, 2014b; UNFPA, 2014). Critical thinking skills are closely related to other higher-order thinking skills, such as problem-solving, analytical thinking, reflection, creativity, and decision-making.

#### 'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension

Critical thinking is an important constituent of 'Learning to Know' and 'Learning to Learn'. However, in MENA, school instruction too often employs learning through emphasis on the coverage of curriculum content and its recall by the learner. Research evidence suggests that many people struggle to think critically, however it is known that critical thinking is malleable and students of all ability levels, not only the gifted, can benefit from appropriate instruction and practice in critical thinking skills (Lai, 2011), which entails teachers using methods that show students

how to think without fearing dissent, thus enhancing their overall learning abilities.

Background knowledge is considered an essential condition to think critically since students need something to think critically about. Critical thinking skills may be domain-specific, such as in mathematics or in the sciences, while some are more generalized (Lai and Viering, 2012). Critical thinking skills are best practiced in diverse disciplines and are an important aspect of academic learning outcomes (Lai, 2011).

Educators have long been aware of the importance of critical thinking skills as an outcome of student learning; and these skills and abilities are unlikely to develop in the absence of explicit instruction (Abrami et al., 2008; Case, 2005; Facione, 1990; Halpern, 1998; Paul, 1992). Specifically, in the framework of MENA educational reforms, the development of critical thinking skills can become central to every subject at school and practiced regularly in teaching and learning, which would ultimately also enhance student achievement and school outcomes. Explicit instruction appears to be a key component to teaching critical thinking skills successfully: Halpern (2011) found evidence that students who were explicitly taught critical thinking skills, for example, the students taking a critical thinking course, performed better than students who were simply taking a course with the skills embedded within it.

A number of researchers have recommended using particular instructional strategies to encourage the development of critical thinking skills and abilities, including explicit instruction, collaborative or cooperative learning, modelling, and constructivist techniques (Lai, 2011). Looking at student reactions to scepticism and developing personal viewpoints, students often appear to initially be better critics than critical thinkers. The acquisition of content typically requires choosing whether a concept is true and then applying that truth to a given situation. Yet, when given the opportunity to ask and explore openly, or to think critically, students learn and thrive by evaluating, questioning and synthesizing new information. This opportunity must be provided by the educator if students are to learn to be critical thinkers rather than critics (Knodt, 2009). Hence, equipped with the proper critical thinking skills, youth and children do not just disagree or dissent, they actively participate, positively weigh in and can make informed decisions.

### **‘Learning to Do’/ the Instrumental Dimension**

Critical thinking skills are helpful in all work situations to assess demands from the market and relations with others, and to propose alternative perspectives to problem-solving, which is at the core of the knowledge economy. Improving critical thinking skills is extremely important as employment demands are growing more complex and multifaceted, with MENA enterprises and industries seeking higher productivity and the use of new technologies. Therefore, employees, including persons in management positions and entrepreneurs, need to be able to assess the situation in front of them and determine the costs/benefits for them, the company and the market. Critical thinking allows individuals to take ownership of the situation and the decision. Effective leadership by all relies on critical thinking skills, enhancing problem-solving and decision-making skills (Abdulwahed et al., 2016).

In addition, critical thinking can improve team-building efforts and team performance: Knowledgeable and/or experienced team members who think critically can offer ideas that encourage discussion and strengthen teamwork. All team members – not only managers – need to analyse ideas and suggestions and consider them from all angles to come to a reasoned conclusion. Both critical thinking and creative thinking are important in the workplace and are fundamental for success in business. Critical thinking contributes to employability and entrepreneurship, helping to address MENA youth unemployment (World Economic Forum, 2014).

Deficits in critical thinking in the workplace can have serious consequences leading to accidents, mismanagement of finances and resources, conflict among personnel, and other functional difficulties. Critical thinking is a necessity for health and safety in the workplace.

### **‘Learning to Be’/ the Individual Dimension**

Critical thinking is an important characteristic of successful individuals throughout life as it raises decision-making to the level of conscious and deliberate choice. This helps to improve people’s quality of life and maximize their chances of happiness, successful living and personal fulfilment. Certain dispositions or attitudes are relevant to critical thinking, such as open-mindedness, inquisitiveness, the desire to be well-informed, flexibility and respect for others’ viewpoints (Lai, 2011).

Equally, critical thinking is essential for the wellbeing of people by helping them recognize and assess certain factors, such as values, peer pressure and the media, which influence their attitudes and behaviour (WHO, 1997). This can help protect individuals from violence and radicalization. Individuals who think critically develop a heightened sense of self-worth and self-efficacy, which equips them to make balanced decisions taking into account both their health and wellbeing, as well as their environment’s demands, all of which find direct application in MENA.

### **‘Learning to Live Together’/ the Social Dimension**

The development of critical thinking is one of the main aims of citizenship education as it is an essential tool for self-determination and civic engagement (Giroux, 2010). It allows individuals to participate critically and ethically in their communities and social practices. From a Social Dimension point of view, critical thinking refers to “making choices and knowing why one is making that choice, respecting the choices and opinions of others, thereby forming your own opinion and making it known” (Dam and Volman, 2004). Deficits in critical thinking at the societal level can have serious repercussions at both national and community levels, for example through decisions that lead to conflict, misuse of funds, inappropriate policies and interventions, etc.



## CRITICAL THINKING

In the digital era, where people are bombarded with information and opinions, there is an urgent need for individuals to be able to separate facts from opinions, honesty from deception, and sense from nonsense (Robinson, 2015). Critical thinking gives individuals the tools to eliminate bias, prejudice and stereotyping, and is needed for effective active citizenship, bringing about

sustainable and equitable changes in society, as well as promoting social justice. Youth in MENA whose critical thinking skills are enhanced, develop a constructive voice and seek, through positive debates, to bring a 'fresh look' to challenges posed by extremism and radicalization and want 'to be part of the solution' (Spencer and Aldouri, 2016).

### Relevance of critical thinking (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
<b>'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension</b>	To be able to make a reasoned argument both orally and in writing To enhance scientific thinking	Thinking about thinking, questioning, interpreting information and synthesizing
<b>'Learning to Do' / the Instrumental Dimension</b>	To ensure successful entrepreneurship and business development To ensure effective working with other people To ensure wellbeing and safety in the workplace	Career planning, solving work related problems, effective reasoning, innovative and creative thinking
<b>'Learning to Be' / the Individual Dimension</b>	To support development of self-confidence and personal fulfilment	Self-protection, self-discipline, goal-setting, life planning
<b>'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension</b>	To foster critical engagement in society To be able to recognize forms of manipulation and persuasion To promote sustainable and equitable social transformation To recognize and value other viewpoints	Ethical reasoning, social responsibility, ethical decision-making

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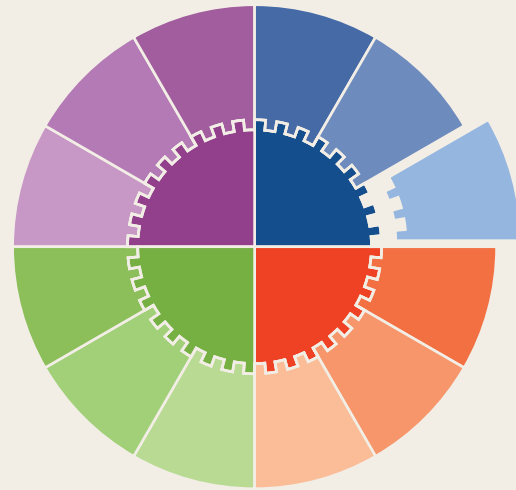
### PROBLEM-SOLVING

### Cognitive Dimension

Problem-solving is the ability to think through steps that lead to a desired goal by identifying and understanding a problem and devising a solution to address it. Problem-solving is a core skill relevant throughout life and is a prerequisite for academic success, particularly for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and is best practiced and developed in various educational settings from early childhood onwards through problem-based learning. Problem-solving represents an opportunity for MENA educational systems to rethink their pedagogy and make teaching outcomes relevant for children and learners with regards to their everyday life problems, the 21st century challenges of the world of work and the conflicts that their community may face. Problem-solvers in the world of work are more employable, more efficient entrepreneurs, better decision-makers and should be able to work collaboratively. Individuals with developed problem-solving skills have an increased sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Consequently, problem-solvers tend to be active in their community and contribute to developing community-based solutions to problems, which includes working collaboratively to devise conflict-exit strategies acceptable to all members of the community.

#### DEFINITION

A problem solver has the ability to “think through steps that lead from a given state of affairs to a desired goal” (Barbey and Baralou, 2009). Problem-solving is a high-order thinking process inter-related with other critical life skills, including critical thinking, analytical thinking, decision-making and creativity. Being able to solve problems implies a process of planning in the formulation of a method to attain a desired goal. Problem-solving begins with recognizing that a problematic situation exists and establishing an understanding of the nature of the situation. It requires the solver to identify the specific problem(s) to be solved, plan and carry out a solution(s), and monitor and evaluate progress throughout the activity (OECD, 2015). In relation to cooperation and decision-making skills,



as well as other core life skills identified in this model, problem-solving is central to conflict management and conflict resolution processes, as it allows individuals to devise various conflict-exit strategies, which are especially integrative with ‘win-win’ solutions (Weitzman and Weitzman, 2000).

Evidence from cognitive psychology highlights the importance of recognizing, defining and representing problems in the problem-solving process. There are two classes of problems:

- i) the well-defined ones, with clearly defined goals, paths to a solution and obstacles to solutions; and
- ii) the ill-defined ones with no clear path to a solution(s).

The main challenge in solving ill-defined problems is in clarifying the nature of the problem. Neuroscience suggests that depending on whether a problem-solving task is well-defined or not, different brain systems are involved (Barbey and Baralou, 2009) and the exercises conducive to a coherent and efficient practice of solving problems should be varied to present learners with various types of issues.

The ability to solve problems is an important part of the PISA (OECD, 2015), which has identified and grouped cognitive processes involved in problem-solving into four areas:

- *Exploring and understanding:* exploring the problem situation by observing it, interacting with it, searching for information and finding limitations or obstacles, and demonstrating an understanding of the information given and discovered while interacting with the problem situation.
- *Representing and formulating:* using tables, graphs, symbols or words to represent aspects of the problem situation, as well as formulating hypotheses about the relevant factors in a problem and the relationships between them in order to build a coherent mental representation of the problem situation.
- *Planning and executing:* devising a plan or strategy to solve the problem and executing it. This may involve clarifying the overall goal, setting sub-goals, etc.
- *Monitoring and reflecting:* monitoring progress, reacting to feedback, and reflecting on the solution, the information provided on the problem or the strategy adopted.

While problem-solving is sometimes equated with one person figuring out and tackling a problematic situation alone, collaborative problem-solving is an increasingly critical and necessary life skill across educational settings and in the workforce. It is strongly driven by the need for students to prepare for careers that require abilities to work effectively in groups and to apply their problem-solving skills in these social situations (OECD, 2015). Accordingly, in the 2015 PISA, collaborative problem-solving is defined as “the capacity of an individual to effectively engage in a process whereby two or more agents attempt to solve a problem by sharing the understanding and effort required to come to a solution and pooling their knowledge, skills and efforts to reach that solution” (OECD, 2015). That is why problem-solving is logically valued throughout life (Care and Anderson, 2016) and is therefore frequently included in international skills frameworks, including health and work-related frameworks (WHO, 1997; IYF, 2014a; Brewer, 2013).

## PROBLEM-SOLVING AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

### ‘Learning to Know’/ the Cognitive Dimension

A prerequisite for academic success, problem-solving is particularly important for STEM, both for teaching and learning. Problem-solving is linked to education systems that better prepare learners to use their knowledge in real-life contexts, to be at ease with cognitive processes to solve everyday problems, and to interact with unfamiliar technological devices (OECD, 2014). However, PISA results indicate that education systems are failing to equip youth with even basic problem-solving skills (OECD, 2014 and 2016). Education systems currently better prepare learners to solve problems that are “well-defined and presented to them in the classroom”, rather than equipping them to begin with formulating the nature of problems (Pretz et al., 2003). The skills involved in solving well-defined problems differ from those in recognizing, discovering or creating a problem. Thus, some educational settings in MENA miss out on the opportunity to engage learners, even at an early age, in actively trying to not only think about, but also sort through everyday life situations in order to identify problems, well-defined or not, and creatively, yet in an orderly fashion, imagine a way to resolve the issue.

Problem-solving skills can be developed through both experiential learning as well as within disciplines, such as engineering (Abdulwahed et al., 2016). To develop problem-solving skills in all MENA learners, it is important to equip them with ‘problem-based learning’, which is an approach that develops problem-solving skills with learners at the centre and empowers them to conduct research, integrate theory and practice, and apply knowledge and skills to develop a viable solution to a defined problem (Savery, 2006). First introduced in medical education, ‘problem-based learning’ has since been introduced into school systems.

The essential generic characteristics of the 'problem-based learning' approach include the following:

- i) Students are responsible for their own learning, which suggests a certain level of autonomy and leeway for experimentation granted by the instructor;
- ii) The problem simulations used in problem-solving must be ill-structured and allow for free inquiry;
- iii) Collaboration is essential;
- iv) The activities carried out in problem-based learning must be those valued in the real world; and
- v) The problem-based learning must be the pedagogical base in the curriculum and not part of a didactic curriculum.

Critical to 'problem-based learning' are both the selection of ill-structured problems and teachers who can guide the learning process.

Another pathway to reform pedagogy and foster problem-solving is 'inquiry-based learning', frequently used in science education. Similar to 'problem-based learning', it is based on problem-solving, critical thinking and questioning. Activities begin with a question followed by investigation of solutions. In this approach the teacher is both a provider of information and a facilitator of learning (Savery, 2006).

### **'Learning to Do' / the Instrumental Dimension**

Problem-solving is an important skill for employability and success in the world of work, especially for entrepreneurship. The World Economic Forum ranked complex problem-solving as the top skill for jobs in 2015 and predicted it would remain in first position in 2020 (World Economic Forum, 2016).

Problem-solving skills in the workplace involve recognizing the long-term consequences of solutions to problems and developing action plans for problem resolution. Employers want workers who take personal responsibility for meeting targets and who can see that there might be a better way of doing things, people who seek a way around a problem and do not panic when things go wrong (Brewer, 2013). While problem-solving may involve personal independence and initiative, in the workplace it is often carried out in teamwork situations. It may also involve resolving customer concerns.

The development of problem-solving is critical for employment and entrepreneurship in MENA. A survey of the skills gap in MENA found that problem-solving was considered to be an important skill for positions at junior, middle and senior levels. Yet, difficulties in finding these skills were encountered by 63 per cent of companies that responded (YouGov and Bayt, 2016).

### **'Learning to Be' / the Individual Dimension**

The ability to effectively solve problems is important for the all-round development of a person at all stages of life. Successful problem-solvers are flexible and adaptable. The skills related to the process of problem formulation, such as thinking divergently and flexibly, intrinsic motivation, openness and curiosity, all of which complement problem-solving as a core life skill, imply that a person is in a state of constant meta-cognitive attentiveness to the environment (Pretz et al., 2003).

Therefore, effective problem-solving supports the development of self-efficacy and personal empowerment, and anchors the learners in their environment by giving them the tools to interact with it. While significant problems that are left unsolved can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strain (WHO, 1997), problem-solving skills combined with effective decision-making and critical thinking support the individual in achieving better health and wellbeing.

## 'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension

Problem-solving contributes to active citizenship through engagement, either on an individual basis or at the community level, not only by helping to identify and report problems, but also by helping to conceptualize, develop and implement solutions to everyday problems that affect the community. This skill enables the individual to become an active and informed partner in community life. Problem-solving and collaborative problem-solving are important for operationalizing human rights and are central to conflict management and conflict resolution (Weitzman and Weitzman, 2000), as problem-solvers seek rational-yet-acceptable resolution strategies for all members of the community.

Community problem-solving has been included in UNESCO's initiative for *Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future* as one of the key areas to be addressed. The approach is defined as a teaching and learning strategy that helps students participate actively in addressing local community concerns with a view to creating a more sustainable future. It revolves around the steps to guide students through the process of community problem-solving.

Community problem-solving is key to addressing challenges related to sustainable development and the environment, as well as enhancing a sense of common identity and agency required to improve social cohesion in MENA.

### Relevance of problem-solving (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension	To improve learning processes and outcomes To prepare children for success in a fast-changing world To foster learning that is relevant to everyday life	Curiosity, attentiveness, analytical thinking
'Learning to Do' / the Instrumental Dimension	To improve decision-making and planning skills To enable efficient working with co-workers, improved productivity, innovation, decision-making, effective team working, etc.	Autonomy, collaborative work, personal responsibility, entrepreneurship
'Learning to Be' / the Individual Dimension	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To improve health and wellbeing	Flexibility, self-efficacy, reflective thinking
'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension	To foster positive social transformation To contribute to community-based solutions to community problems To enhance social engagement in community work and voluntarism	Active engagement, solidarity, collaborative thinking, social responsibility, conflict management, conflict resolution

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## The Twelve Core Life Skills

### COOPERATION

An essential and instrumental core life skill, cooperation skills include teamwork, respecting others' opinions and inputs, accepting feedback, resolving conflict, effective leadership, working towards consensus in decision-making, and building and coordinating partnerships. Learners who develop cooperation skills, especially young learners who are taught to work collaboratively, take more pleasure in learning and perform better with regards to academic achievement. Moreover, they demonstrate stronger socially desirable behaviours, while their sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy increase. These positive outcomes are related to the Cognitive and Individual Dimensions of cooperation and make this core life skill highly relevant to enhance learners' results and psychological wellbeing in MENA. They are supported in the Instrumental and Social Dimensions. Cooperation and teamwork are among the most sought after life skills by the private sector in MENA, despite not being currently developed enough in youth (Al Maktoum Foundation and UNDP, 2014; YouGov and Bayt, 2016); indeed, cooperation and teamwork are key for both employability and success in entrepreneurship, as cooperative individuals work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams to achieve common goals. Building on this, and the Individual Dimension of the skill, individuals who act cooperatively, not competitively, and use 'fair play', are more engaged citizens, seeking favourable processes towards inclusion and conflict resolution.

#### DEFINITION

Cooperation is the act or process of working together to get something done, to achieve a common purpose or mutual benefit, either for an individual being cooperative or acting cooperatively (Tyler, 2011). It can involve teamwork and active collaboration and it is central to problem-solving in the everyday world, including challenges encountered by children, youth and all learners in school, home life, at work, in the community and at the regional level. Because cooperation is useful for problem-solving

### Instrumental Dimension



and forms the basis for healthy social relationships, it is a core life skill directly related to family, social, and political conflict management and resolution in MENA.

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



Cooperation is closely related to, supported by, and also complements the following life skills: communication, empathy, respect for diversity, and problem-solving, which are all core life skills identified under the present model and prevalent in the Cognitive, Individual, and Social Dimensions. Particularly important are communication skills, involving actively listening to other people's ideas and opinions, and being supportive of those. Often identified in other life skills frameworks, collaboration is linked to communication in the 21st-century skills framework under the umbrella of learning and innovation skills.

Notably, cooperation, an ethical foundation and outcome of this model, is both a goal and the means through which human rights are effectively realized. Indeed, according to Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights "everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible" (UN General Assembly, 1948).

### COOPERATION AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

Cooperation depends to a great extent on the following core skills: communication, respect for diversity and empathy.

#### 'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension

An element in 'Learning how to Learn', cooperation skills are important for success in learning outcomes; work completed collaboratively produces higher scores than other types of work, even when students turn in separate products (Fall et al., 1997; Rojas-Drummond and Mercer, 2003; Saner, et al., 1994; Webb, 1993). Furthermore, learning that occurs in collaborative settings persists (Saner et al., 1994; Webb, 1993). In other words, after collaborating with others, a student's performance on subsequent, related tasks completed individually tends to be better than the performance of students with similar ability who have only worked alone; it furthermore supports a student's social skills (e.g., conflict resolution skills and use of helping behaviours) and "academic self-concept" (Ginsburg-Block, et al., 2006).

Cooperation through group work enables students to draw on each other's strengths, mitigates weaknesses and allows for sharing and developing ideas.

Relevant teaching and learning approaches are critical for developing cooperation skills. In many schools in MENA however, youth largely work on their own; they may learn 'in' groups but not 'as' groups (Robinson, 2015). An advantage to fostering both the learning of cooperation skills and the teaching of methods conducive to cooperative behaviours early on is that children learning collaboratively in basic education develop social skills and tend to demonstrate "less impulsive behaviours" (Lavasani et al., 2011).

To that end, cooperative learning is an educational approach that involves structuring classes around small groups working together in such a way that each group member's success is dependent on the group's success. This is conceptually different from competitive or individualistic learning, as well as different from putting students into groups to learn. Five key elements distinguish cooperative learning:

- *positive inter-dependence* among the group members;
- *individual accountability* where students learn together but perform alone;
- *face-to-face interaction* that includes oral explanations of how to solve problems, discussing the nature of the concepts being learned and connecting present learning with past knowledge;
- *interpersonal and small group social skills*, since the group must not only know the subject matter but also how to provide effective leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication and conflict management; and
- *group processing*, in which students are given time and procedures for analysing how well their learning groups are functioning and how well their social skills are being employed. It involves both task work and teamwork, with an eye to improving them on the next project (Johnson et al., 2007).

Cooperative learning is associated with improved learning outcomes, critical thinking skills, creativity, motivation and preparation for the school-to-work transition. Research comparing cooperative learning with traditional classroom

instruction using the same teachers, curriculum and assessments has found that students who engage in cooperative learning enjoy their classes more, learn significantly more, remember the lessons for longer and develop better critical thinking skills than their counterparts in traditional lecture classes. Furthermore, it helps students develop the skills necessary to work on projects too difficult and complex for any one person to do in a reasonable amount of time (Johnson et al., 2007).

### **'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension**

MENA CEOs consider cooperation and teamwork together with communication skills to be the most critical life skills for hiring and remaining employed (Al Maktoum Foundation, 2008). A 2016 survey on the skills gap in MENA confirmed these results for junior, middle and senior level positions equally (YouGov and Bayt, 2016). Yet MENA youth still lack cooperation skills, as the educational systems, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), do not foster practicing these skills and do not seem to promote how important they are for employability, as well as the direct advantages for learners to develop this core life skill.

Cooperation is frequently included in life skills frameworks for the world of work, employability and entrepreneurship as an umbrella skill complemented by, and in connection with, a variety of other life skills and attitudes. In its Instrumental Dimension, cooperation involves a demonstrated ability to:

- i) work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams both within an organization as well as with external teams;
- ii) exercise flexibility and a willingness to be helpful by making the necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal and assume shared responsibility for collaborative work; and
- iii) value the individual contributions made by each team member (Partnership for 21st Century Skills Framework, 2015).

In the ILO's core work skills, teamwork includes: respecting others' opinions and inputs, accepting feedback, resolving conflict, effective leadership, working towards consensus in decision-making, and building and coordinating partnerships (Brewer, 2013).

Cooperation skills, including teamwork, are a high priority for most employers, as working well with colleagues and third parties is essential for the fluidity of enterprise processes and for growth. Employers are looking for individuals with cooperation and leadership skills, including: organizing groups to accomplish a task, helping others to do things their way, understanding the strengths of others and teaching others new (life) skills. By extension, cooperation is also about understanding orders and instructions, respecting leadership and knowing how to communicate concerns. Cooperation skills also involve negotiating, influencing, advising, managing and resolving conflicts, and interpreting (Brewer, 2013). The enthusiasm with which people engage in their jobs has been recognized to be a factor conducive to acting cooperatively, even in settings of highly repetitive jobs, where studies find that managers view the willingness to voluntarily help and cooperate as a highly desirable employee characteristic (Newman, 1999).

### **'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension**

In its Individual Dimension, the ability to cooperate is an important factor of self-identity, as individuals integrate into or are members of communities. Cooperation skills are dependent on the acquisition of self-management skills, such as self-control and self-awareness, which give individuals basic grounding and the capacity to define and position themselves before turning outwards and engaging in collaborative behaviours with others.

Relevant in MENA, especially for children and youth, is the positive correlation between cooperation and psychological health. Studies in MENA and the United States have found that cooperation promoted higher self-esteem than competitive or individualistic behaviours, as well as better social skills (Johnson and Johnson, 1999; Lavasani et al., 2011). Furthermore, cooperative learning may increase students' academic self-concept and self-efficacy, and their ability to formulate meaningful goals, deal with uncertainty and initiate, form and maintain meaningful relationships, which are factors relevant to personal empowerment (Tinto, 1993).

## 'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension

Cooperation skills are key to thinking and solving many of the problems and conflicts faced by real-world groups, organizations and societies. From a Social Dimension perspective, cooperation's common theme is the desirability of motivating individuals to act in ways that transcend their self-interest and serve the interests of their groups (Tyler, 2011). Since cooperation in society draws upon common values, attitudes, emotional connections, shared identities, trust and motivation, it should be considered a key aspect of active citizenship and therefore a major element of social cohesion in MENA.

Linked to effective cooperation skills, particularly in its Social Dimension, are those life skills of problem-solving, respect for diversity and empathy. This connection is particularly relevant in relation to the theory of 'Cooperation and Competition' for conflict management, providing insight into what can give rise to a constructive or destructive process: "A cooperative or win-win orientation to resolving a conflict enormously

facilitates constructive resolution, while a competitive or win-lose orientation hinders it" (Deutsch, 2006). Furthermore, a cooperative process as compared to a competitive one, leads to "greater group productivity, more favourable interpersonal relations, better psychological health and higher self-esteem" (Johnson and Johnson, 1989) for the individuals and the groups involved, thus raising the wellbeing of all parties.

A cooperative orientation is defined through the norms of cooperative behaviour, some of which have been identified in the context of conflict as: "placing the disagreements in perspective, addressing the issues and refraining from making personal attacks, seeking to understand other views, building on the ideas of others, fully acknowledging other values, emphasizing the positive in others and the possibilities of constructive resolution of the conflict, taking responsibility for harmful consequences, seeking reconciliation rather than nurturing a grudge, being responsive to the legitimate needs of others, empowering others to contribute effectively to the cooperative effort, and being appropriately honest" (Deutsch, 2006).

### Relevance of cooperation (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension	To enhance learning skills, processes and outcomes	Self-monitoring, cooperative learning, active listening
'Learning to Do' / the Instrumental Dimension	To work more effectively with co-workers and customers including through effective team work To ensure sustainable entrepreneurship and development	Teamwork to achieve common goals, collaboration in the workplace
'Learning to Be' / the Individual Dimension	To contribute to social skills including relationship management To cultivate good relationships with diverse individuals and groups	Self-concept (being cooperative), relationship management, self-esteem
'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension	To enhance social engagement towards the promotion of common good To foster pro-social processes for conflict prevention and resolution	Respect for others, active listening, empowerment of others, interpersonal relations, responsible behaviour, conflict management, conflict resolution

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## The Twelve Core Life Skills

### NEGOTIATION

Negotiation skills help reach acceptable agreements with other parties. Negotiation processes happen in everyday life and in all settings. In early childhood, negotiation skills develop through play and simulation teaching methods, and children learn how to identify their own and others' interests, use verbal arguments rather than violence, and grow confident while respecting others and others' perspectives. Negotiation skills can also help protect their health, in particular the ability to refuse pressure to become involved in risky behaviours. In the working environment, negotiation skills are a key element of entrepreneurial success and help workers protect themselves from exploitation, abuse and bullying. Negotiation processes promote acceptable outcomes for all parties involved in conflict, thereby fostering a culture of respect and social cohesion.

#### DEFINITION

Negotiation can be defined as a process of communication between at least two parties aimed at reaching agreements on their "perceived divergent interests" (Pruitt, 1998). While negotiation relates to a process, it translates into the ability of an individual to interactively and effectively partake in a negotiation process by respecting others while being assertive, being cooperative, using communication skills, showing leadership skills and saying no when one's wellbeing is threatened.

Individuals regularly negotiate with others in family life, in school, at work, in public spaces and with different types of parties – with potentially different negotiating styles. Negotiation is applied in various fields, including psychology, sociology, conflict management, economics, law and international relations. The perspectives on the nature and meaning of 'a successful negotiation' may vary across fields and in different contexts. In line with existing policy guidance on humanitarian negotiation (Grace, 2015), as well as with the goals of citizenship education, an 'integrative approach' to negotiation is proposed here, emphasizing cooperative processes, rather

### Instrumental Dimension



than 'competitive-distributive' ones. This cooperative process focuses on developing mutually beneficial agreements based on the interests, needs, desires, concerns and fears that are recognized as important for all parties involved (Fisher and Ury, 1981). In other words, for the negotiation process to be successful, it requires that parties come to an agreement that is acceptable to all parties involved.

In an 'integrative approach', negotiation and communication skills are closely linked (Alfredson and Cungu, 2008). Negotiation skills supported by effective communication can change attitudes, prevent or overcome impasses and misunderstandings, and help improve relationships, particularly in multicultural contexts in which culture may shape negotiating styles (Wondwosen, 2006). Listening is a key element of communication skills as it provides important information about others and "demonstrates that the party is being attentive to the other side's thoughts and is respectful of their concerns" (Alfredson and Cungu, 2008). In addition, since the integrative approach focuses on building mutual trust relationships between parties, sharing information is paramount for exposing interests and helping parties to explore common problems or concerns.

Negotiation skills are learned from early childhood. Evidence shows that negotiations form a large part of children's play and that these negotiations have a clear purpose: to agree both on how they can be together in their play and on the content of their play. Therefore, these skills can also be reproduced, integrated and practiced in educational settings in early childhood education.

One question relevant to all four Dimensions of Learning of the negotiation core life skill is whether the negotiation process is influenced by perceived gender roles, meaning the societal and constructed beliefs about behavioural expectations of men and women (Hellman and Heikkilä, 2014). Perceived gender roles potentially challenge neutrality, fairness and equity of the negotiation process, modifying the way the negotiation is conducted. Pre-expected behaviours from the negotiating partners can influence the outcome of the negotiation. While evidence and results with regards to the role of gender in the process or the outcomes of negotiating are conflicting (Alavoine and Estieu, 2014; Mazei et al., 2014), gender roles can exert a strong influence on negotiation, with the expectation that women in negotiations would be accommodating, concerned with the welfare of others and relationship-oriented, whereas men would be competitive, assertive and profit-oriented. These expectations of gender roles may affect how women and men behave. For example, women may feel social pressure in negotiations to adhere to a perceived and socially-constructed female role and display these gender-consistent behaviours, such as accommodation or cooperation, while deviations from these expectations may be evaluated negatively by their negotiating counterparts (Mazei et al., 2014).

## NEGOTIATION AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

### 'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension

Negotiation skills are important in learning on several levels. First, negotiation skills support positive and healthy interactions between peers. Second, they contribute to a positive learning climate and enable children and youth to resist negative peer pressure, thus self-regulating and maintaining control over their own wellbeing.

Negotiation skills are also relevant in the learning process itself with regards to teacher-learner interactions in the negotiation process.

Negotiation skills can be taught and learned. Providing relevant contextual opportunities for learner observation and practice in negotiation appears to be important to teaching effectiveness (Cukier, 2006). While negotiation training courses are in high demand in tertiary education disciplines, such as law, business and economics, negotiation is also considered a key life skill that needs to be included in all early childhood development curricula. This is important for teaching children how to resolve, together under teachers' oversight, disagreements over a toy or play, providing opportunities for children to learn to read emotions and use language instead of violence to address disagreements. Moreover, negotiation can be featured in teaching and learning approaches that focus on role playing linked to real-life interactions that further foster questioning, listening and debating skills (Nelken et al., 2009).

In schools, the curriculum may include elements of negotiation. Negotiated projects may focus on local real-life investigations in response to children's personal experiences and their participation in community events. Teachers need to help children develop negotiating skills to handle conflict situations and children must use negotiation skills to resolve issues in a manner that benefits them and is acceptable to others (Berk, 2002). This acknowledges children as agents of their own learning, whereby they make choices about, and begin to take increased responsibility in their learning. Interactive pedagogical techniques have become popular vehicles by which the negotiation process can be taught.

There is basic consensus that negotiation role playing simulations are effective teaching approaches. Teaching negotiation 'by doing' has become common. In addition, successful peer negotiation, a component of peer education, requires a range of communication and personal skills, which include self-esteem, empathy, assertiveness (but not aggressiveness), active listening, good questioning to clarify points, and reflection of what went well and less well.



Thus, by developing negotiation skills early in educational settings, children and youth are better equipped to handle home and life situations, without the use of violence, while being assertive and respectful of themselves and the viewpoints of others. This also prepares children and youth to assess and navigate situations which may be threatening to their own and others' health and wellbeing, and prepares them for the world of work.

## **'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension**

A core life skill in the work place, negotiation is frequently cited as being both conducive to employability and essential for navigating career development, as well as key to successful entrepreneurial endeavours, e.g., when negotiating with financial institutions or with trading partners. Associated with influencing and leadership skills, it is also measured in the OECD Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (OECD, 2016).

Negotiating skills are needed for positive interactions among co-workers and with managers, and are especially relevant with regards to safety in the workplace. Furthermore, workers with developed negotiation skills can, at any age, better protect themselves against potential exploitation, abuse and bullying. With rising occupational health and safety concerns, increased hazards in industrial settings, and gender-based violence in the workplace reported in MENA, equipping workers with communication and negotiation skills would benefit both the workers and employers with greater productivity (Shikdar and Sawaqed, 2003).

Research on gender differences in economic negotiation outcomes shows that differences between men and women in economic outcomes strongly depend on the context. For example, specific social norms within organizations may override the influence of gender roles as guidelines for negotiators' behaviours (Mazei et al., 2014). Negotiation skills are important for business success and some aspects of the process will generate competitive interactions, while others will require cooperation if agreement is to be reached (Fells, 2009). When negotiation in the business world occurs between people with different interests (e.g., trade unions and business partners), both parties are usually well-informed and clear on the purpose.

## **'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension**

Negotiating is essential for personal empowerment, particularly in relation to sexual and reproductive health, as it allows for "maintaining health by refusing pressure to become involved in risky behaviours" (Sinclair et al., 2008). The global prevalence of HIV and other sexual and reproductive health issues, especially among youth, has raised concerns and demonstrated the need to enhance their negotiation skills (Adamchak, 2006).

Negotiation skills combine thinking and social skills relevant to enhancing child protection. For better physical, social and mental health, youth require strong negotiation skills to resist peer pressure, especially related to health risks such as drugs, alcohol, tobacco and sex. Sometimes called 'refusal skills', negotiation skills are important for the development of assertiveness and resisting pressure from peers and adults to use violent or risky behaviours (WHO, 2003). In situations involving family members and friends, emotional bonds complicate negotiations. Constraints related to power structure and hierarchy within the family and social environment make it more difficult to ensure developing mutually beneficial agreements based on the interests, needs, concerns and fears that are important for both parties involved.



## 'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension

Principled negotiation, or an integrative approach to negotiation, is key in fostering a democratic culture. In fact, it has been highlighted as the preferred approach in humanitarian negotiation (Grace, 2015).

Principled negotiation seeks 'win-win' solutions, acceptable to all those involved in the conflict.

Negotiators see each other as partners in an effort to solve a mutual problem, sharing their own needs and interests while also listening to the needs and concerns of others. Furthermore, they recognize that their needs and interests are interdependent and that it will be difficult for them to meet their own needs and interests without examining the needs and interests of others. Principled negotiation involves problem-solving brainstorming and building relationships to cooperate rather than compete with each other.

### Relevance of negotiation (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension	To foster negotiated learning processes and ensure children's ability to be agents of their own learning To prevent bullying and violence in school	Assertiveness, active listening, questioning to clarify points, reflection
'Learning to Do' / the Instrumental Dimension	To enhance prevention of abuse and exploitation in the workplace To foster adequate and productive work environments To improve employability and entrepreneurship of youth	Influencing and leadership cooperation, customer relationship, career planning
'Learning to Be' / the Individual Dimension	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To strengthen individual coping skills for self-protection	Refusal skills, self-awareness, self-esteem/self-efficacy
'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension	To promote outcomes that are acceptable to all parties involved in conflict To foster a culture of human rights	Effective communication, active listening, positive interaction, respect for others



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## The Twelve Core Life Skills

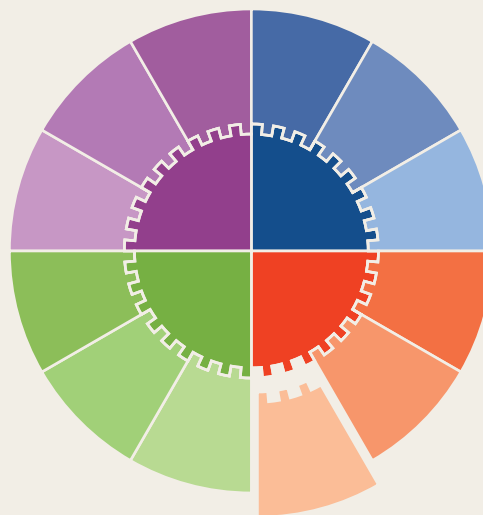
### DECISION-MAKING

Decision-making refers to the cognitive ability to choose between at least two options within a set of influencing factors and constraints. Decision-making skills are instrumental in the Cognitive Dimension and can be learned and practiced early in various educational settings in which learners, through real-life tasks, learn to consciously determine the alternative that is best for them at a particular moment. Linked to cooperation and negotiation, decision-making is a key to success in the world of work and is the basis of competitive advantages and value creation for business organizations, as poorly prepared decisions can be costly. Thus, with regards to individual empowerment, decision-making skills include the ability to understand and manage risks in daily life, and can also have a protective value in negative power dynamics and/or violent environments. Responsible decision-making is seen as the ability to make constructive and responsible choices about personal behaviour and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic consequences of actions and the wellbeing of others.

#### DEFINITION

Decision-making skills relate to “one of the basic cognitive processes of human behaviour by which a preferred option, or a course of action, is chosen from among a set of alternatives based on certain criteria” (Wang, 2007). Decision-making is used by all individuals on a daily basis. Notably, decision-making has consequences on all individuals’ wellbeing through the effects of the choices they make (WHO, 1997). The various elements of this skill come from multiple disciplines, including cognitive science, psychology, management science, economics, sociology, political science and statistics. Decision-making is thus a composite life skill that closely inter-relates with critical thinking, cooperation and negotiation skills. Several factors influence decision-making, including information, time constraints, clarity about objectives, past experience, cognitive biases, age, belief in personal relevance and other individual differences (Dietrich, 2010; Thompson, 2009).

### Instrumental Dimension



Decisions can be made through intuition, on the basis of feelings and instincts, through a reasoned process, weighing facts and available information, or they can be made using a combination of the two (Gigerenzer, 2014). More complicated decisions tend to require a more formal, structured approach involving both intuition and reasoning. To support decision-making, self-management skills are important for controlling impulsive reactions to situations. The decision-making process is often conceptualized as a step-by-step process. For example, one five-step model consists of (i) defining objectives, (ii) collecting information (for informed decision-making), (iii) developing options, (iv) evaluating and deciding, and (v) implementing (Adair, 1985).

A major challenge for decision-making is overcoming bias, as psychology has long recognized that people show bias and utilize shortcuts in their reasoning. Some biases are motivational and some are more cognitive depending on the enormity and complexity of the information (Nemeth, 2012). Attempts to reduce such biases in decision-making have involved encouraging people to reassess the shortcut or to consider alternatives. This includes education about how biases operate, training, the technique of ‘considering the alternative’ and inviting dissenting viewpoints (Bazerman and Moore, 2008; Nemeth, 2012).

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

### DECISION-MAKING AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

#### 'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension

Decision-making is a life skill that can be learned and can help learners to take responsibility at school and in their subsequent career choices. Better decision-making is likely to improve study habits and support the achievement of classroom learning objectives. The teaching and learning of decision-making skills can be introduced at school in basic education. The earlier the skill is taught, the greater the potential for improvement (Joshua et al., 2015). Teaching skills for decision-making and risk management should involve real-world tasks by including teaching and learning approaches that rely on experiential learning and that foster the capacity of students to make choices and identify the pros and cons of actions in order to make a balanced judgement (Gigerenzer, 2014).

Skills related to decision-making can be practiced in all classroom activities and in collaborative activities among peers. In these activities, students develop their communication, cooperation, problem-solving, creativity and critical thinking skills, becoming more actively engaged in the learning process. Cooperative learning provides a suitable environment for developing decision-making skills (Johnson et al., 1986; Gregory et al., 1994). Teaching and practicing decision-making skills are important for children and adolescents, as they are more likely to take risks than adults (Aggleton et al., 2006).

#### 'Learning to Do' / the Instrumental Dimension

Decision-making is important in the world of work, even more so in MENA's changing economy. Decision-making is the basis of competitive advantage and value creation for business organizations, as improving decision-making is key to the strongest business performance (Harvey, 2007). In addition, decision-making is needed at the individual level for success in the workplace and to ensure health and safety. It is a basic feature of the workplace, particularly in the service sector, as it is unrealistic to expect people to be able to carry out tasks in complex situations simply by following instructions (Thompson, 2009).

"Effective decisions result from a systematic process, with clearly defined elements, that is handled in a distinct sequence of steps" (Drucker, 1967). Biases in judgment can lead to individuals accepting the wrong job, engaging in unnecessary conflict and making the wrong investments. Errors in decision-making can be costly for individuals and businesses. In knowledge economies, errors are becoming more costly in relation to deliverables and globalization may result in wider negative economic implications. The skills involved in making good decisions in the workplace and business include the ability to manage knowledge and analyse information, analyse and appraise competing options, delegate and empower people, lead successful teams, resolve problems and remove obstacles effectively, foster creativity and motivate people, as well as understand customer and market needs (Kourdi, 1999).

### **'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension**

Decision-making is critical to feeling successful, as it is at the root of all actions individuals take. Skills related to decision-making include the ability to understand and manage risks in daily life, a process called 'risk-literacy' (Gigerzner, 2014). Decision-making about risks, which is more complex than deciding whether or not to take a particular risk, frequently involves "balancing these risks" (Thompson, 2009). In other words, a decision on a course of action may involve avoiding one set of risks and accepting another set. Decision-making skills can have a protective value. In the framework of negative power dynamics, developed decision-making skills may allow individuals to protect their wellbeing. Decision-making is also associated with self-determination, which is defined as the intrinsic motivation to achieve specific goals and overcome significant challenges and shocks. As such, it is a core skill for empowerment, particularly among children with disabilities, implying self-monitoring, self-evaluation, self-reinforcement and self-instruction skills (Wehmeyer, 1998).

### **'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension**

Decision-making is fundamental to an individual's ability to develop relationships and make new ones. As the decision-making process can be complicated and overwhelming, it is valuable for individuals to learn a model to follow that may be applied to both everyday decisions and life-changing choices (Dietrich, 2010). Ethical and responsible decision-making generates and sustains trust, respect, fairness and caring, and is consistent with human-rights values. Responsible decision-making is defined by CASEL as "the ability to make constructive and responsible choices about personal behaviour and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic consequences of actions and the wellbeing of others" (CASEL, 2017).

Responsible decision-making is anchored in the evaluation of ethical considerations and grounded by principles of human rights and social justice. Decision-making involves the exercise of power and needs to be understood in its political context, where the role of political pressure is prevalent. Other issues include transparency in decision-making, the problem of hidden agendas and socio-economic status. People in lower socio-economic groups may have less access to education and resources, which may make them more susceptible to experiencing negative life events, often beyond their control; thus, these individuals may make poor decisions based on past decisions (Dietrich, 2010).





## DECISION-MAKING

### Relevance of decision-making (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
<b>'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension</b>	To prepare children for success in a fast changing world, supporting them in making the right choices about learning and for a career  To foster independent learning and better learning outcomes	Knowledge management and analysis of information, self-instruction
<b>'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension</b>	To ensure development of entrepreneurship and encourage self-employment  To foster organizational management and leadership	Action planning, goal setting, leadership skills, risk taking, safety skills
<b>'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension</b>	To foster holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy  To promote responsible decision-making and enhance long-term wellbeing	Self-determination, self-reinforcement, time and stress management
<b>'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension</b>	To guide individuals and communities in making ethically grounded responsible decisions regarding sustainable development and inclusiveness in society  To enhance effective involvement in school management decision-making bodies	Analytical thinking, ethical reasoning



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## The Twelve Core Life Skills

### SELF-MANAGEMENT

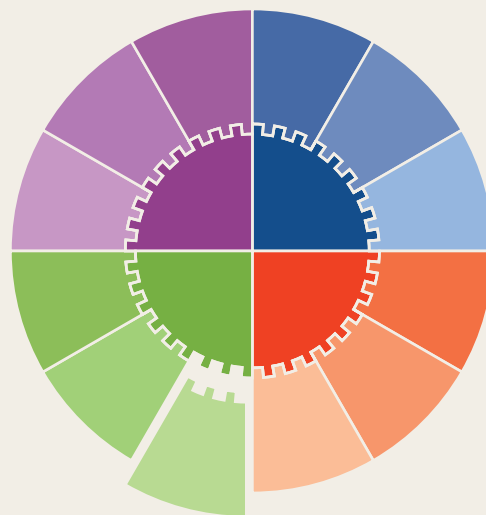
#### Individual Dimension

Self-management is the ability to regulate and monitor one's behaviours, emotions, feelings and impulses. It is a core life skill towards self-realization. It is related to personal empowerment, and includes personal goal-setting and life-planning. Self-management enhances a child's autonomy, agency and sense of self-help, which are critical to reducing the risks of exploitation and abuse. Yet, self-management skills are not explicitly included in most education curricula in MENA (UNICEF, 2017a). In the workplace, self-management skills, including self-control, staying on task and stress-management are essential for employability and to address complex challenges. Self-confident and self-directed individuals, who feel comfortable respecting, relating to and empathizing with others, tend to work more collaboratively and seek long-term, sustainable solutions to community and social issues, thus fostering solidarity. Therefore, self-management skills are at the core of an ethically grounded vision of education.

#### DEFINITION

A core life skill, self-management, or both self-managing and 'being self-managed', is the ability of individuals to regulate and monitor their behaviours, emotions, feelings and impulses. Thus, it constitutes a broad category of related skills that include self-control, self-efficacy and self-awareness, as well as positive attitudes, reliability and self-presentation. Self-management is closely linked with the core life skill of resilience. It has wide applicability in all domains of life, from family relationships at home to peer-relationships at school, and has been identified as a common employability skill applicable to a range of jobs (Brewer, 2013).

Self-management is possible because the brain has mechanisms for self-regulation, the set of capabilities that help individuals to draw upon the right skills at the right time, manage their responses to the world, and resist inappropriate responses (Zimmerman and Schunk, 2011).



The ability to inhibit inappropriate behaviour develops relatively slowly in childhood, but improves during adolescence and early adulthood (Blakemore and Choudhury, 2006). There are large individual differences in ability to exert self-control and these persist throughout life (Royal Society, 2011).

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

Self-management brings about self-efficacy, a belief in one's capabilities and ability to learn, achieve goals and succeed. This implies that people will generally attempt to do what they believe that they can accomplish and will not attempt to do what they believe they will fail to accomplish. However, people with a strong sense of self-efficacy will see difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered, rather than threats to be avoided (Bandura, 1994). They set themselves high goals and maintain a strong commitment to achieving them. This outlook contributes to reducing stress, and supports the readiness to face complex economic and security environments. Findings suggest that self-efficacy is an essential precursor to life skills (Gutman and Schoon, 2013).

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

Self-management and its associated skills play a fundamental role in "fostering the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential" which, according to Article 29 paragraph 1(a) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is the goal of education (UN General Assembly, 1989). Consequently, education systems must ensure that they address self-management in order to fulfil one of education's most important mandates.

### SELF-MANAGEMENT AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

Self-management covers a wide range of skills and different skills frameworks set them out in different ways according to their priorities. For example, the P21 Skills Framework emphasizes flexibility and adaptability as well as initiative and self-direction, while self-control is often included as a separate skill (Brewer, 2013; IYF, 2014), as are self-efficacy and self-awareness. Consultations with partners in MENA indicated the need for a comprehensive approach to self-management and to include the relevant skill areas under this term (UNICEF, 2017a).

#### 'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension

Self-management skills are important for success in learning, and have a constructive impact on children and youth later in life. Children and youth suffer from stress, anxiety, and/or depression as a result of their educational experience; instances of violence in school environments, family life, fragile – if not violent – social contexts, or a combination of these, which can lead to feelings of disengagement, anger and boredom (Robinson, 2015). With an increase in anxiety-related disorders in MENA (Tanios et al., 2008), and more so among children and youth experiencing displacement in the region, strengthening the self-management skills of children and youth can help them cope better with difficult situations.

Research suggests that childhood self-control predicts achievement outcomes even in adulthood. Better self-control is associated with higher education attainment (Mischel et al., 1989) and it is an important predictor of academic success (Duckworth and Seligman, 2005). Furthermore, similar correlations exist between self-efficacy and higher academic achievement.



Particularly relevant for MENA educational systems' outcomes are focus and persistence, two self-management related life skills that have been shown to contribute to learning achievement. Persistence, defined as an intentional effort to positively adapt and continue to master a skill or complete a task in spite of challenges, obstacles and distractions, also includes concepts of 'engagement' and 'grit'. Psychologists and educators are increasingly interested in measuring students' capacity to work towards long-term goals, including their aptitude for self-discipline and perseverance in the face of difficulties, and their ability to focus on clearly aligned goals and objectives (OECD, 2013a).

PISA 2012 results show that students' self-reported levels of perseverance varied across countries and that socio-economically advantaged students reported higher levels of perseverance than less advantaged students. The results, however, did not provide any conclusive findings regarding gender differences. While in 26 countries and economies boys reported higher levels of perseverance than girls, in 17 countries and economies girls reported higher levels of perseverance than boys. In general, countries with large gender gaps in self-reported levels of perseverance are countries with above average gender gaps in mathematics performance (OECD, 2013a).

### **'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension**

Self-management is a key life skill commonly included in life skills frameworks for employability (Brewer, 2013; Lowden et al., 2011). In MENA, while some of the life skills related with self-management capabilities, such as the ability to work under pressure, organizational skills and adaptability, are considered important by companies, they remain relatively hard to find in job applicants (YouGov and Bayt, 2016).

To foster employability, MENA educational systems should encourage the practice of self-management skills in various pathways. These skills are important for staying on task and emotional regulation, as well as anger management, all of which help maintain healthy and positive interactions with co-workers. At the individual worker's level, this is important for stress-management and resilience.

Self-control is a key life skill for managing challenging situations in the world of work. All jobs involve a degree of pressure and the risk of stress, as does schoolwork with pressure to perform academically. Stress is a personal response to too much pressure or too little stimulation (Thompson, 2009). Working with other people can result in stress, which can have a number of harmful effects including stress-related illness, loss of motivation, tension, irritability and proneness to error. Worst, stress can lead to violence and undermining relationships.

### **'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension**

Self-management is a core life skill for self-realization and personal empowerment. In the MENA context, self-management skills enhance the individual child's autonomy, agency and sense of self-help, which are important for reducing risks of exploitation and abuse. These contribute to better child protection and long-term individual outcomes for children.

Self-management skills include personal goal setting and life planning, which are life skills necessary to be able to manage emotions on a daily basis, particularly those which can lead to adverse consequences, such as anger. These skills are important for the maintenance of wellbeing and successful functioning in society. Further, self-awareness includes the recognition of one's strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes. Self-awareness skills can help individuals recognize when they are stressed and under pressure. As such, they can be considered a prerequisite for effective communication and for developing empathy for others (WHO, 1997).



## 'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension

Self-management skills constitute the foundation upon which learners build ethically grounded behaviours and attitudes needed to live in society. Self-management skills are key to developing autonomous, self-confident and self-directed individuals who feel comfortable, respecting, relating and empathizing with others, thus able to work collaboratively towards peace beyond appeasement, fostering solidarity and active tolerance. Community group processes are increasingly finding empowerment in

self-direction, and in having a voice in demanding citizen rights and social justice (Mazzer Barroso, 2002).

From a Social Dimension perspective, the self-awareness associated skill of self-management is one of the means of developing an understanding of the world in which one lives in its economic, political and psychological dimensions. It is related to critical consciousness, developed through critical and socially responsible thinking (Freire and Macedo, 1987).

### Relevance of self-management (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension	To improve students ability to manage their emotions at school and focus on learning To improve learning processes and outcomes	Self-control, self-efficacy, perseverance, grit, persistence
'Learning to Do' / the Instrumental Dimension	To develop efficient and successful entrepreneurs To enhance management and productivity in the workplace	Self-efficacy, time management, organizational skills, reliability
'Learning to Be' / the Individual Dimension	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To develop personal goal-setting and life-planning To develop self-confidence	Goal setting, life planning, autonomy, agency, self-help
'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension	To foster critical social awareness To contribute to social cohesion through social engagement	Self-direction, self-reflection, self-awareness, critical consciousness, social awareness

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## The Twelve Core Life Skills

### RESILIENCE

### Individual Dimension

As the content of resilience is still debated, the context in which it comes to the fore and is realized by an individual is a major factor in determining its scope, especially in highly politicized or fragile environments, such as MENA. Resilience includes coping skills, steadfastness, perseverance, grit, and bouncing back from some form of disruption, stress or change. This is a core life skill with an active, conscious and constructive component on the part of the individual. Since resilience contributes to the ability of self-development in times of hardship, it draws upon personal wellbeing, and, at the same time, reinforces good health. In its Cognitive Dimension, resilience provides a basis for academic success, as the learner is able to cope with disappointment or failure and overcome learning difficulties. This also holds true in its Instrumental Dimension and the world of work, as it is a crucial life skill towards employability and entrepreneurship. At the social level, promoting resilience is a way to ensure continuum between short-term disaster-response and long-term development programming (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013). Above all, the 'rights-based approach', with the outcome of a good and secure life in mind, addresses the risk of reproducing the same institutional structures and conditions that created the initial problems, and recognizes that the adaptive capacity of humans is contingent upon the access to, and the quality and quantity of resources needed.

#### DEFINITION

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



This goes beyond the restrictive understanding, according to which resilience is confined to the capacity to survive, or accept, by resigning oneself to an otherwise unacceptable situation.

Therefore, being resilient in a given situation translates into being actively engaged and in full consciousness by (i) maintaining good mental health while enduring challenges and adversity from daily or exceptional stressors (Waugh et al., 2011), and (ii) "overcoming these challenges that have a negative impact on [one's] emotional and physical wellbeing" (UNESCO, 2017). Being resilient does not mean that the person will not experience difficulty or distress. Emotional pain and sadness are common in people who have suffered adversity or trauma. Developing resilience is likely to involve emotional distress and it does not mean that the individual always functions well (O'Dougerty et al., 2013).

Being resilient implies that a person both struggles and copes with adversity, and does this 'constructively'. Hence, to fully capture its meaning in the framework of highly politicized environments with specific cultural socio-ecologies, such as those in MENA (Marie et al., 2016), resilience should be the umbrella-term for the life skill which allows for addressing threatening issues in a tenacious, systematic, active and constructive way.

In situations of radicalization and conflicts, resilience encompasses an element of resistance against negative views and behaviours that “legitimize hatred and the use of violence” (UNESCO, 2017). Particularly in a rights-based approach, it includes challenging the status quo and not capitulating to its negative impact in order to remove barriers and open new pathways. Thus contextualized, resilience takes into account the adversity of the situation itself, the ‘coping’ mechanisms as processes, the psychological wellbeing of the person, and the long-term perspective and motivation to overcome the challenge.

Resilience demands perseverance, steadfastness and adaptability. Another similar concept, is ‘grit’, which relates to the capacity to orient oneself and one’s actions towards the long-term, also described as the “perseverance and passion for long-term goals” (Duckworth et al., 2007). Hence, in a politicized context, ‘grit’ can be understood as one of the components of resilience and needs to be complemented with the core life skill of self-management. Both being resilient and having grit build upon an individual being ‘steadfast’, i.e., being both resolute and determined.

Researchers increasingly view resilience as an alterable set of processes that can be fostered and cultivated (O’Dougerty et al., 2013). This is of utmost importance for children and youth in MENA, as well as for educational systems, as resilience is not considered a trait that people either have or do not have, but rather involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone.

Furthermore, as a developmental process, resilience has been shown to be expressed differently according to gender, culture and age. In childhood and adolescence, resilience is greatly underpinned by family processes and related developments of effective coping skills (Masten, 1994). It involves a complex interaction of multiple mechanisms ranging from the individual level to the structural. The influence and importance of caring and supportive school environments as protective factors is also commonly argued.

Beyond its psychological aspects, resilience has become popular in development thinking in relation to volatility, sustainability and wellbeing. The ‘rights-based approach to resilience’ argues that it should always be used with the outcome in mind – resilience for a good and secure life.

Achieving resilience is a process of learning, organization and adaptation that enables people to respond to and cope with internal and external stresses, and, above all, build and defend healthy, happy, and meaningful lives and livelihoods (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013). Hence, relevant in the MENA context, the ‘rights-based approach’ to resilience includes rights, power and agency.

### RESILIENCE AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

The concept of resilience has been advanced in numerous fields. While the most developed and influential approach has emerged in the ecological sciences, other disciplines, such as psychology, medical sciences, hazard and disaster management studies, and the social sciences, have provided important insights to understanding the dynamics of social-ecological systems (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013; Marie et al., 2016).

#### ‘Learning to Know’/ the Cognitive Dimension

Resilience is “the result of a developmental process, unfolding over time and circumstances” (Graber et al., 2015). Childhood and adolescence are critical periods to lay foundations for functioning in adulthood, taking into account that individuals change and grow throughout life. Opportunities for social learning are important contributors to resilience because they provide mechanisms through which knowledge can be harnessed and shared, and because learning improves creative capacities (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013). Resilience is important for learners’ capacity to maintain a positive outlook on their education, even in contexts of adversity, such as conflict or emergency. Further, if resilience does not necessarily lead to academic achievement in a direct, causal way (Rimfeld et al., 2016), ‘academic grit’ supports the learning process, as learners are able to cope with disappointment or failure, and overcome difficulties, thus persevering in their education and related goals. Education is needed to develop resilience in situations of conflict and crisis, granted that school environments are protective in such situations. Teaching coping strategies appears to be an effective method of helping youth develop resilience and deal with the everyday stresses of their lives (Gutman and Schoon, 2013).

Education also improves the ability to predict and prepare for shocks. Learning can take place in a variety of settings, including formal and informal education, or extension services, or through apprenticeships and intergenerational learning networks. Like other sets of resources, from a resilience perspective, learning can and should involve multiple forms and mechanisms of knowledge acquisition and generation. While formal education opportunities may be the most obvious, there are many informal forms of learning and knowledge sharing that can also contribute to generating creative solutions (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013).

### **‘Learning to Do’/ the Instrumental Dimension**

Resilience is a necessary skill underpinning employability. First, youth and other applicants have to face the possibility of rejection during the hiring process, and yet keep on searching for work. In MENA, resilience, and its related life skills, grit and perseverance, may support post-basic education graduates who cannot find jobs in the industry for which they prepared. Second, resilience is important for coping with difficulty at work, including stress and disappointment, while faced with multiple pressures in home life. Resilience can also help in recognizing and addressing situations of bullying and abuse.

Resilience is also important for coping with long-term unemployment, equipping the individual with strength to keep searching for suitable job opportunities. More specifically, in MENA, where most of the private sector jobs come from very small and small enterprises, resilience is valuable to all entrepreneurs, even more so when their business decisions and the protection of their assets are constrained by external, non-economic factors. As a core life skill, resilience in such contexts can help create strategies to maintain one’s livelihood or rebuild it.

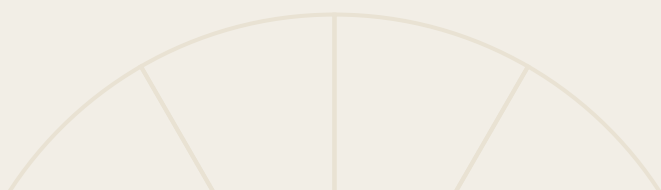
### **‘Learning to Be’/ the Individual Dimension**

Resilience is important for self-efficacy and empowerment and, at the same time, draws on these for effectiveness. Resilience contributes to the ability to continue self-development in times of hardship, difficulty and stress. Specifically in fragile and violent environments, resilience means that the individual is able to resist negative

discourse (UNESCO, 2017), i.e., act consciously to not fall prey to this discourse, while also recognizing the pain caused by the adverse situation. By using self-control and self-efficacy, resilience supports the ability to construct pathways allowing for both self protection and a means of moving forward.

The interactive processes between the individual and environment, and between risk and protective factors, are the crucial underpinnings of developing resilience. Resilience involves capacity, negotiation and adaptation (Graber et al., 2015). While research identifies key personal characteristics that correlate to resilience building, it is recognized that personal characteristics of an individual are continually shaped by the interactions with aspects of the environment. As a result, and with regard to policy and intervention, attempts to improve isolated skills in children without consideration of the surrounding ecology are deeply misguided (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013, citing the works of Pianta and Walsh, 1998; Luthar et al., 2000).

At the individual level ‘coping skills’ can be considered as a core component of resilience. Specific coping mechanisms that are known to facilitate resilience include reappraising a situation more positively, regulating emotions, utilizing social support, accessing tangible resources and planning (Graber et al., 2015). Coping with stress involves recognizing the sources of stress and how stress affects oneself, and acting in ways that helps control levels of stress. It can involve taking action to change lifestyle or learning how to relax so that tensions caused by stress do not create health problems (WHO, 1997). Psychological flexibility has been highlighted as key factor in how resilient people adapt to these changes successfully. A list of relevant characteristics correlating with the adaptive ability that supports resilience includes good cognitive abilities, problem-solving skills and executive functions, the ability to form and maintain positive peer relationships, effective emotional and behavioural regulation strategies, a positive view of self (self-confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy), a positive outlook on life, and characteristics valued by society (sense of humour, attractiveness to others, etc.) (Masten, 2007).



## 'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension

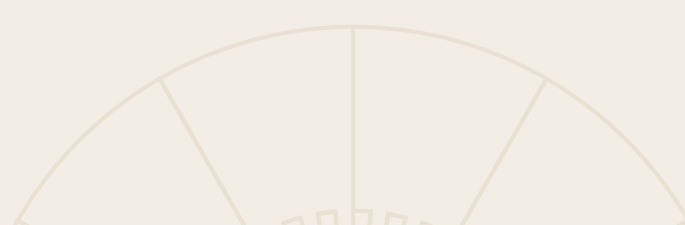
Resilience is important for coping with adversity and the effects of conflict in a socially constructive manner. Resilience frameworks focus on understanding and promoting the capacity of local communities to respond to, negotiate and transform shocks such that disturbances do not initiate a downward spiral, and may even provide opportunities for improvement. As such, promoting resilience is seen as a way to connect short-term disaster response and humanitarian interventions with long-term development programming (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013). The disaster resilience approach has its roots in the work on disaster risk reduction and hazard mitigation. Disaster risk is the potential for severe alterations in the normal functioning of a community or a society due to particular hazardous events, which is derived from a combination of physical hazards and vulnerable social conditions. These frameworks emphasize mitigation as the key mechanism to build resilience. Hazard mitigation is any action taken to reduce or avoid risk of damage from hazardous events. Understanding, managing and reducing disaster risk is the key to building resilience (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013, citing CINRHD, 2012).

A rights-based approach to resilience addresses the vulnerability to reproducing the same institutional structures and conditions that created the existing problems. This is to avoid strategies that naturalize socially created differential vulnerability (e.g., by gender, class, and so on) or that lead to inaction by accepting that shocks are inevitable and that encourage individuals to focus more on weathering them rather than preventing or changing them. By contrast, a rights-based approach to resilience recognizes that the adaptive capacity of humans is contingent upon the set of resources that they have access to, the quality and quantity of these resources, and the nature of this access. Equity, among other factors, is a central element in this approach. In this regard, "lack of equity is not just an outcome of failed resilience; inequality itself diminishes the possibilities for resilience building" (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013). A rights-based approach requires careful engagement with relations of power and the legacies of history. Supporting resilience involves efforts to uncover and work against the root causes of vulnerability and poverty (Walsh-Dilley et al., 2013).

### Relevance of resilience (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension	To prepare children to face difficult challenges in school and later life To enhance prevention and coping strategies of learners in emergency contexts	Coping with stress, analytical and creative thinking, positive peer relationships
'Learning to Do' / the Instrumental Dimension	To overcome difficulties in the workplace To cope with unemployment	Stress control, adaptability
'Learning to Be' / the Individual Dimension	To develop holistic coping mechanisms based on self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To enhance healthy behaviours	Self-efficacy, self-development, agency, emotional and behavioural regulation
'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension	To promote the capacity of local communities to respond to emergency contexts To transform shocks into opportunities for development To uncover and work against the root causes of vulnerability and poverty	Adapting to adversity, solidarity, mitigation, emergency preparedness

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## The Twelve Core Life Skills

# COMMUNICATION

## Individual Dimension

Communication is a two-way exchange of information and understanding. Communication skills include verbal, non-verbal and written communication. As a set of primary skills necessary to establish interpersonal relations, communication skills are an essential source of self-worth and self-efficacy, and foster self-realization. They are relevant in society and relationship management, including gaining and maintaining friendships. Communication skills are integral to learning, which applies and fosters the development of effective speaking and active listening abilities. The complexity of communication has increased with information technology and new media. Interactive and participatory pedagogies, particularly with the growing relevance of digital communication skills, are effective tools to enhance communication skills. Communication skills are conducive to employability and instrumental to the various levels of relations in the world of work. Along with cooperation and teamwork, they are the most sought after life skills by MENA employers. A key to active citizenship, effective communication skills are vital to understanding, and contributing to public debate in a civil manner. Equally important, they can support the ability of learners and all individuals to avoid discriminatory language, thus enhancing social understanding.

### DEFINITION

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



communication. Mastery of language in early childhood is key to success later in life and there is evidence that communication skill development requires both a social context and social interaction to be effective (Kuhl, 2011). Research from neuroscience suggests that changes in brain plasticity with age result in greater difficulty in learning second languages after puberty (Royal Society, 2011).

Communication skills are integral to the acquisition, practice and development of all other core life skills. Closely linked to communication are life skills related to negotiation and refusal, empathy, cooperation and participation. While it has been argued that there are different communication styles for men and women (Gray, 1992; Tannen, 1990). Communication is used to construct gender and reinforce gender stereotypes, i.e., certain communication behaviours are expected from either men or women based on socially-constructed notions of men's and women's roles in school, at work, and in society, and some men and women conform with, or reproduce, these pre-determined behaviours.



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

Communication skills must ensure that children and youth have the tools to express their views, and enable them to enjoy their human rights and participate in society. In the MENA, where most of the workforce is made up of male workers, improved communication skills could benefit girls and women, as well as their families, as a tool to engage with their environment, thus conducive to greater employability and improved productivity (Bruder, 2015). Enhanced communication skills also foster protection from abuse and violence (WHO, 2003).

### COMMUNICATION AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

The development of communication skills is especially important for the MENA, as current educational approaches are heavily didactic (World Bank, 2008), and have a limited focus on developing and practicing the gamut of communication skills needed for a knowledge society gained through more interactive learning.

#### 'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension

Communication is integral to learning, supporting the development of effective speaking and active listening abilities. It is strongly linked to literacy and numeracy skills, and as technology evolves, increasingly with information and communication technology literacy and skills. Skills involve the ability to use oral, written and non-verbal communication for a wide range of purposes, such as informing, instructing, motivating and persuading in a variety of social contexts, including at home, school and work, sometimes in a second or additional languages (Partnership for 21st Century Learning Framework, 2009). Communication is essential for academic, personal and professional success, as well as being vital to the all-round development of the individual. Specific problems in understanding or speaking due to specific language impairments in children, as well as developmental dyslexia or dyscalculia

affecting the mastery of reading or mathematics, render learning attainment more difficult (Royal Society, 2011).

Teaching and learning activities apply and foster in children and learners a wide range of communication skills important for both learning and the construction of knowledge. Interactive participatory learning uses and develops more communication skills than lecture-based teaching. At school, there is an expectation that children will listen to language from adults and peers, understand what is being said to them, and respond with well-structured, clear and appropriate sentences. To do this effectively, active listening and questioning skills are clearly important. Spoken language is an important vehicle for early learning. Thus, it is key to acknowledge the importance of talk to support and extend children's thinking and to advance their learning and understanding (Alexander, 2006). This involves a transition towards reading and writing as key performance indicators, accompanied by increasingly complex and challenging expectations on the part of the teacher and learner.

#### 'Learning to Do' / the Instrumental Dimension

Communication skills are key for employability (Brewer, 2013), both for finding a job and retaining it. These skills are vital for effective co-worker and customer interactions, as they involve the ability to work effectively with others in teams and collaboration. MENA CEOs identify communication along with teamwork as the most important skills in an applicant (Al Maktoum Foundation, 2008). Further, a survey of the skills gap in MENA found that communication skills were considered to be among the most important skills for junior-, mid- and senior-level positions (YouGov and Bayt, 2016). Yet, 53 per cent of companies have difficulties in finding qualified applicants.

The mastery of a variety of communication skills and their associated skills that are required in the workplace include effective speaking, active listening and asking questions. These should, therefore, be fostered in all educational settings, as well as within society. Especially in the region's technology-driven economy, people communicate using a variety of modalities, including text, telephone, email, written correspondence and direct verbal communication. Internet use has increased among workers, notwithstanding their career level, and has led to the expansion of information occupations.

Effective communication entails the choice of the communication method best suited for the message. Although not exclusive of the Instrumental Dimension, it is a concept strongly associated with the world of work. Effective communication is the most frequently sought skill among employers. The strong support for communication holds true across regions of the world, for both formal and informal positions, and for entry-level employees (Lippman et al., 2015).

Effective communication, while fundamentally interpersonal in nature, draws on cognitive life skills, such as critical thinking, and on intra-personal skills, such as self-management, thus enabling people to work more successfully in groups or teams. Effective communication involves the ability to understand and use language efficiently, which is important for developing higher-order thinking skills, such as reasoning and inference. A review of engineering graduates in MENA found that managers felt that communication was one of three skills identified that needed most improvement (Ramadi et al., 2016).

### **'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension**

Communication is an important source of self-worth and self-efficacy, underpinning relationship management and social cohesion, including gaining and maintaining friendships, as well as a fundamental element of self-realization. As communication skills are becoming more complex, individual coping skills are required in this era of rapidly changing communication technologies and accelerated information flows (Webster, 2014).

Effective communication is the ability to express oneself verbally and non-verbally in ways that are appropriate to social situations and cultures. Hence, with regards to self-realization, it entails being able to express opinions and desires as well as needs and fears, and includes being able to ask for advice and help in times of need (WHO, 1997). More specifically, language skills are essential for the development of thinking skills, expression of personal feelings and creativity, which are important for interpersonal relationships management, self-realization and self-presentation.

Consequently, communication is critically important for lifelong personal development and to optimize one's potential, as it enables the individual to be able to act in society with greater autonomy, exercise better judgement and personal responsibility. Communication skills are key to people being able, as much as possible, to be in control of their lives. They are fundamental to empowerment and personal effectiveness in all domains of life.

### **'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension**

Communication is vital to functioning in society, for the performance of other interpersonal skills, and is a key to active citizenship. Communication skills enable capacities for action in society, which include the capacity to take part in public debate, and make choices, thus allowing the individual to make a contribution to the way the community runs itself. (Faour and Muasher, 2011). This involves being able to explain one's point of view clearly on issues that affect people while considering – and heeding – the viewpoints of others. Within the Social Dimension,

## COMMUNICATION

communication skills involve expressing ideas in the context of diverse audiences. Influencing, dialogue and debating skills are important to fulfil the social purpose of communication (Sinclair et al., 2008).

Equally important, in alignment with the ethical foundation of a renewed vision for education, communication skills are a powerful tool to combat discrimination and minimize the risk of conflict. Communication skills, in this Dimension, encompass the avoidance of the use of discriminatory and inflammatory language, a choice and a process that requires also

self-management skills. In this regard, communication should be understood as ‘two-way communication’, thus intrinsic to attitudes, such as civility, and core life skills, such as respect for diversity and empathy (Sinclair et al., 2008). It helps to enact everyday human rights principles and values of dignity, active tolerance and solidarity. Freedom of opinion and expression is a human right in itself that includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media, regardless of nationality (Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19).

### Relevance of communication (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
<b>‘Learning to Know’/ the Cognitive Dimension</b>	To be able to express a reasoned argument both orally and in written texts  To develop the habit of reading fluently and writing clearly, accurately and coherently for a range of purposes and audiences	Presentation skills, articulating and explaining ideas and concepts clearly, awareness of purpose of communication, context and audience, active listening
<b>‘Learning to Do’/ the Instrumental Dimension</b>	To enable effective working with other people  To effectively use different communication media for enhanced efficiency and productivity  To improve employability for finding and retaining work (including interview skills, workplace behaviours and customer relations)	Job application skills, interview skills, persuasion skills, formal oral presentation skills, planning and self-evaluation of written communication
<b>‘Learning to Be’/ the Individual Dimension</b>	To develop self-confidence and personal empowerment through effective self-presentation and social/relationship skills	Relationship management, self-realization, self-presentation
<b>‘Learning to Live Together’/ the Social Dimension</b>	To communicate ideas to diverse audiences while respecting other viewpoints  To avoid communications that are discriminatory and likely to result in conflict  To foster understanding across diverse populations and contribute positively to community management	Dialogue skills, active listening, two-way empathic communication, avoidance of discriminatory language, appropriate assertiveness

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## The Twelve Core Life Skills

### RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

### Social Dimension

By being respectful of diversity, individuals remind themselves and are reminded that all participants in society are equal, in a common ethical world, by virtue of their human rights, while fully recognizing individual differences. More than tolerance, respect for diversity is a deeply interpersonal skill, which underpins an inclusive and equitable education, as it contributes to the prevention of discrimination and violence, while promoting a positive learning climate that supports better learning processes and outcomes. This holds true in its Instrumental Dimension and the world of work, where respect for diversity enhances productivity by preventing workplace conflict. It is especially important in the MENA context of a diverse workforce. Respect for diversity in its Individual Dimension is a complex life skill that requires one's personal self-esteem and self-management skills to help the individual to function effectively in socially complex societies. Thus, in non-conflict contexts, it enables pluralism in conflict management, and in conflict situations, it can promote reconciliation. Respect for diversity allows for the possibility that legitimacy may lie in beyond one's own perspective and is a key element towards inter-connectedness, and thus, sustainable development.

#### DEFINITION

In the context of the LSCE Initiative, 'respect for diversity' – or being respectful of diversity – is conceptualized as a key interpersonal life skill. It is based on the understanding developed by moral philosophers that acknowledges that human beings are equal participants in a common ethical world by virtue of their human status (Janoff-Bulmann et al., 2008). In this composite life skill, the concept of diversity means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing each other's individual differences. These can be defined by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other characteristics. Respect for diversity implies more than tolerance and understanding, which are related to accepting differences passively, it means



“acknowledging and promoting the equal worth of peoples, without condescension” (UNICEF, 2007b).

Especially in MENA, diversity, as a social reality, represents both a challenge and an opportunity for education. Although it can strengthen social cohesion in a society, diversity can also lead to conflict. Where diversity of gender, ability, disability, language, culture, religion and ethnicity map onto inequalities of power and status among groups, it becomes easier to mobilize attitudes of prejudice and intolerance, which may ultimately lead to violence and conflict (Smith, 2005).

In conflict and post-conflict situations respect for diversity may be easier to encourage and promote than other related life skills such as sympathy, empathy and altruism. In these contexts, “respect does not mean agreeing, but rather listening and acknowledging that the other has a right to shape outcomes as well” (Janoff-Bulmann et al., 2008).

In non-conflict contexts, respect for diversity is a pre-condition for acceptance of diversity and critical pluralism, and acknowledges differences in status, privilege and power relations among groups within society and among societies.

More importantly, respect for diversity means the willingness to identify the underlying causes and explore the possibilities for action to address social injustice (Smith, 2005). As such, it is closely related to the principle of equality (Dobbernack and Modood, 2013). Yet, critical pluralism of views also invokes critical thinking skills, which help to balance between constructive perspectives on the one hand, and radical and violence-spurring ideas on the other hand.

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

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

## RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

### 'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension

Respect for diversity is essential for achieving equity and inclusive education. It contributes to the prevention of discrimination and violence, while promoting a positive learning climate that supports better learning processes and outcomes.

Education can build respect for diversity by helping to develop life skills for deconstructing stereotypes of individuals and groups that are considered to be lower in status. The ability to listen respectfully to others rather than confrontationally is important in this regard. Respect for diversity also enhances 'Learning to Know' by refining the analytical thinking process through meta-cognitive skills, as it leads to testing assumptions that are key in critical thinking.

With regard to rethinking pedagogies in MENA educational systems, the key characteristics of teachers who want to foster respect for diversity include "basic training in rights and responsibilities; an interdisciplinary awareness of social, cultural, civic, political, legal, economic, environmental, historical and contemporary affairs; disposition to interdisciplinary learning; commitment to inquiry-based learning; skill in facilitating experiential learning; and confidence in addressing controversial issues" (Smith, 2005).





Difference and respect for diversity is one of the nine topic areas of Global Citizenship Education. This topic has distinguished several age-appropriate learning objectives, including “the values and skills that enable people to live together peacefully (respect, equality, caring, empathy, solidarity, tolerance, inclusion, communication, negotiation, managing and resolving conflict, accepting different perspectives, and non-violence); recognition for how diverse identities (ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic, gender, age) and other factors influence the ability to live together; and critical engagement in actively promoting these values” (UNESCO, 2015b).

### **‘Learning to Do’/ the Instrumental Dimension**

Respect for diversity is essential for a workforce that cooperates and can function in effective teams. Respect for diversity in the workplace means accepting other people’s different levels of competence, such as abilities and skills, as well as differences including gender, ethnicity or religion. It helps to prevent discriminatory practices, encourages respect among employees in a diverse workforce and contributes to a decrease in the incidence of workplace conflict. In a diversified workforce, respect for diversity is also a key to enhancing productivity (Saxena, 2014). Furthermore, diverse teams tend to be more creative and innovative, an asset in the knowledge economy.

### **‘Learning to Be’/ the Individual Dimension**

Respect for diversity is at the core of the Individual Dimension, as it helps individuals to contrast and test assumptions about themselves. Respect for diversity is a part of human development that helps the individual to function effectively in socially complex societies, a current reality in many countries in MENA. Respect for diversity is linked to one’s personal self-esteem in that respect begins with oneself, and is also closely associated with self-management skills, which are essential for respecting others in case of disagreement.

Through observing respect, people are able to treat each other as individuals of goodwill and competence. Respect of others helps to explain why people, including strangers, trust each other. It also explains a host of other interpersonal behaviours, such as helping and avoiding confrontation. Respect of diversity in this context is not easy as it works often against an individual’s underlying preferences rather than for them. It has been defined as constituting “what people think they should do rather than what they want to do; it focuses on regulating actions; and is more *moral* – private and personal – than *social* – honoured only because it is actively enforced by others – in nature” (Dunning et al., 2016).

### **‘Learning to Live Together’/ the Social Dimension**

“For any society to thrive, it must possess a behavioural code that tempers self-interest, and promotes instead coordinated, cooperative, and self-sacrificing action among its members” (Dunning et al., 2016). Respect for diversity is an essential precondition for this behaviour. Consequently, respect for diversity enables pluralism and democratic practices. Respect for diversity is critical for social cohesion and accepting without prejudice other groups in society that may differ from one’s own. It is important to learn how to interact with other social groups, and to display respect in communication and social behaviours.

Respect for diversity can play a key role in conflict management. Overall it has been found that respect of others inhibits aggression (Pruitt et al., 2003), and can facilitate and promote reconciliation. It involves treating adversarial others as equal participants even if their views are not shared (Janoff-Bulmann et al., 2008).

## RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

In the long-term process of reconciliation, respect-enhancing strategies include specific procedures that are directly aimed at fostering the recognition and visibility of diversity.

In the context of MENA, respect for diversity remains elusive. “While the ethnic and religious diversity in the region is a social reality, no one seems to really celebrate this diversity” (Muasher, 2014). Respect for diversity implies respect for the various ethnic, religious and gender identities, and their accommodation in public institutions and school life, and access to health, politics and employment. For socio-economically marginalized populations, respect for diversity requires most

importantly socio-economic inclusion and measures that work towards substantive equality (Accept Pluralism Project, 2013). It has been suggested that education and educational policies must be revisited in MENA in terms of the values that are taught to the young generation. Education needs to include learning tolerance, acceptance of other points of view, an understanding of truth being relative and not absolute, and critical thinking. In addition, learning about “how to question, how to research and how to communicate provides the necessary foundation to foster a pluralistic culture” (Muasher, 2014).

### Relevance of respect for diversity (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
<b>‘Learning to Know’/ the Cognitive Dimension</b>	To foster inclusive and equitable education delivery To promote a positive learning climate	Analytical thinking, active listening
<b>‘Learning to Do’/ the Instrumental Dimension</b>	To prevent conflict in the workplace To prevent discriminatory practices in the workplace	Adaptability and flexibility, client orientation, teamwork
<b>‘Learning to Be’/ the Individual Dimension</b>	To test assumptions and understand personal biases	Self-esteem, self-control
<b>‘Learning to Live Together’/ the Social Dimension</b>	To enhance active tolerance in society To foster processes of reconciliation in the context of conflict To foster inclusion and participation of marginalized communities in society	Active tolerance, social interaction

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## The Twelve Core Life Skills

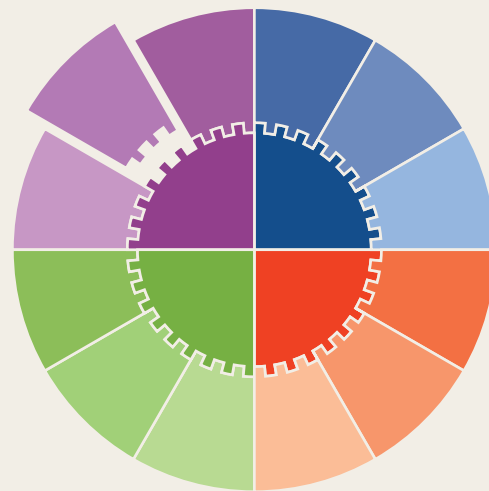
### EMPATHY

### Social Dimension

Central to emotionally intelligent behaviour, empathy is a life skill that helps individuals to pursue positive relationships and plays an integral role in conflict management and conflict resolution in the family, at school, in communities and in conflict situations. It is a motivator for altruistic behaviour and is the basis of social perception and social interaction, paving the way to moral reasoning. A key element underpinning citizenship education, it helps learners from an early age onward by supporting academic excellence and strengthening their sense of self as well as their ability to connect to and collaborate effectively with others. In the world of work, empathy enhances a culture of service orientation, which means putting the needs of customers first and looking for ways to improve their satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, as empathy is key to the development of quality relations, it is essential in the establishment of long-lasting and reliable professional connections. With regard to the Social Dimension of this core life skill, an education that fosters empathy focuses on a culture that values inclusion, responds in caring and practical ways to victims of violence, and nurtures a respect for and sense of responsibility to one another. This supports collaboration and solidarity, and safe behaviours towards the environment and sustainable development.

#### DEFINITION

Empathy, or being empathetic, is “the ability to comprehend another’s feelings and to re-experience them oneself” (Salovey and Mayer, 1990), while never being judgemental. A key construct in social and developmental psychology, as well as in cognitive and social neuroscience, the ability to empathize is important for promoting positive behaviours toward others and facilitating social interactions and relationships. Empathy involves the internalization of rules that can play a part in protecting others, and it may be the mechanism that motivates the desire to help others, even at a cost to oneself.



In addition, empathy plays an important role in becoming a socially competent person with meaningful social relationships (McDonald and Messinger, 2012). Consequently, empathy motivates altruistic behaviour and has the potential to enhance the process by which rights are realized, which is an important outcome (Jönsson and Hall, 2003).

According to developmental psychologists, the ability to empathize typically develops early and rapidly (McDonald and Messinger, 2012). A 1999 longitudinal study with children and youth from 4 to 20 years of age demonstrated that empathy may be conceptualized as part of a larger prosocial personality trait that develops in children and motivates helping behaviours into early adulthood (Eisenberg et al., 2000). Furthermore, empathy has been highlighted as a key skill of successful learners (Jones, 1990).

Among the many factors explaining empathy skills are genetics, neural development and temperament, as well as socialization factors (McDonald and Messinger, 2012).

Since empathy skills are developed from an early age, it can be developed through childrearing practices, e.g., reasoning with children, parental models of empathetic and caring behaviour, and encouraging discussion about feelings; empathy training, e.g., training in interpersonal perception and empathetic response, and focusing on one's feelings, as well as classroom strategies and programme designs, e.g., through cooperative learning, and cross-age and peer tutoring (Gordon, 2005; Cotton, 1992).

## EMPATHY AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

Empathy is a prosocial skill that strengthens the social fabric of communities. Scholars have identified four main social outcomes associated with empathy that are key to the four Dimensions of Learning:

- **Internalization of rules:** The ability to empathize with others' distress may be an important factor in learning right from wrong.
- **'Prosocial and altruistic behaviour':** Empathy is considered an important precursor to, and motivator for, prosocial, or helping, behaviour (De Waal, 2008).
- **'Social competence':** Higher levels of empathy in children are associated with more cooperative and socially competent behaviour (Saliquist et al., 2009; Zhou et al., 2002).
- **'Relationship quality':** The ability to empathize also seems to be important for relationship quality by facilitating the maintenance of meaningful relationships (Joireman et al., 2002), and it has also been associated with higher levels of conflict resolution skills in adolescents (de Wied et al., 2007).

## 'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension

Empathy lies at the foundation of academic success. Focusing on the development of empathy opens the doors to social and emotional learning for children, giving them skills of emotional perception that strengthen their sense of self as well as their ability to connect to and collaborate effectively with others throughout childhood and adolescence. Focusing on empathy provides the critical blending of emotion, cognition and memory that will make children successful learners (Gordon, 2005).

Emotion regulation has been described by neuroscientists as "one of the basic macro-components of empathy" (Decety and Jackson, 2004). Along with motivation, emotion regulation stands at the core of academic achievement independent of measured intelligence (Gottfried, 1990; Skinner et al., 1998). Indeed, researchers examining self-regulation in adolescence and adulthood have long recognized the relevance of emotional state and emotion-related processes to the functioning of component processes of cognitive regulation (Blair, 2002). Teachers who have implemented programmes that foster empathy in six-year-old children highlight how it enhances children's collective abilities to engage in critical thinking, while individually they are able to make independent decisions (Gordon, 2005).



## 'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension

Learners who have good job skills, but poor social and emotional skills may get a job, but may have trouble keeping it or being promoted. In the workplace, empathy is key for moving businesses forward as it enhances a work culture of service orientation, which means putting the needs of customers first and looking for ways to improve their satisfaction and loyalty (Goleman, 1996). Moreover, empathy is key in the development of quality relations, which is essential in the establishment of long-lasting and reliable professional connections. These relationships are the product of taking an honest and dedicated interest in others and their businesses. Successful people do not operate alone; each needs the support of others to achieve positive results that push one toward one's own goals (Boyers, 2013). Furthermore, business success depends on empathetic leaders who are able to adapt, build on the strengths around them, and relate to their environment. An empathic leadership and environment that shows a deep respect and care for co-workers and displays this care, as opposed to just going by rules and regulations, can make everyone feel like a team and increase productivity, morale and loyalty (Boyers, 2013).

## 'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension

Empathy is core to literacy of emotions. According to neuroscientists, empathy is the basis for much of social perception and smooth social interactions. "Empathy-related responding, including caring and sympathetic concern, is thought to motivate prosocial behaviour, inhibit aggression and pave the way to moral reasoning" (Decety, 2010). As humans are predominantly social, understanding emotions in oneself and others is an important skill to have, and a good part of the brain is devoted to that effort. Basic emotions, such as happiness or fear, differ from the so-called moral emotions, e.g., shame, guilt, pride, etc., that arise in social interactions, where a normative or ideal behaviour is either explicitly or implicitly established. Understanding and managing moral emotions requires internalization of norms and moral principles shared by the community. It is also necessary to perceive and understand other people's emotions, and make attributions of their mental states, including an understanding of their beliefs and attitudes. As such, emotional and social development are tightly linked to one another (Rueda and Alonso, 2013).

Literacy of emotions is deeply gendered in many cultures. However, this can be overcome. In the context of Canada, it has been argued that, since male children are not often encouraged to talk about their feelings, they might lack the vocabulary to express emotions, yet, when exposed to programmes targeting empathy, male children developed a vocabulary as large as that of female children, and were more likely to talk about problems and emotions than the female children (Gordon, 2005). This outcome is relevant, especially when children need, for self-regulation and their wellbeing, to express their emotions in the face of violence or conflict situations.





## 'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension

Because empathy plays a profound and often complex and fundamental role in the healthy functioning of human relations, it is an essential element of life skills and citizenship education, particularly in MENA. "The failure of empathy leads at best to apathy; at worst it leads to cruelty and violence" (Gordon, 2005). Research on bullying confirms that a strong characteristic of bullies is their lack of empathy. An education that fosters empathy leads to a culture that values inclusion, responds in caring and practical ways to victims of violence (bullying), and nurtures respect for, and a sense of responsibility to, one another. Consequently, empathy skills enable an individual to also care for future generations, fostering safe societal behaviours and actions towards the environment (Gordon, 2005).

Empathy is integral in conflict management and conflict resolution in the family, school, communities and in conflict situations. As such, it has the potential to enhance the process by which rights are realized (Jönsson and Hall, 2003). As exercised by adults, it provides safe emotional space for children to exercise their right to be heard and understood.

A unique attribute of empathy is that it is a motivator for altruistic behaviour, a key attitude for enhancing social cohesion, as it fosters collaboration and solidarity. Empathy also contributes to fostering the levels of appreciation needed to assert values related to people's common humanity in light of diversity, as well as the promotion of active tolerance.

### Relevance of empathy (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension	To foster the critical blending of emotion, cognition and memory for successful learning	Respect for others, collaboration, self-regulation
'Learning to Do' / the Instrumental Dimension	To facilitate successful businesses through responsive leadership and a motivating work environment	Service and customer orientation, active listening, teamwork
'Learning to Be' / the Individual Dimension	To motivate prosocial behaviour, inhibit aggression and pave the way to moral reasoning	Understanding and managing emotions, active listening, respect for others, agency
'Learning to Live Together' / the Social Dimension	To develop a culture that values inclusion, responds in caring and practical ways to victims of violence, and nurtures a respect for and sense of responsibility to one another	Understanding others, caring for others, identifying abusive and non-abusive behaviours, altruistic behaviour, conflict resolution

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## The Twelve Core Life Skills

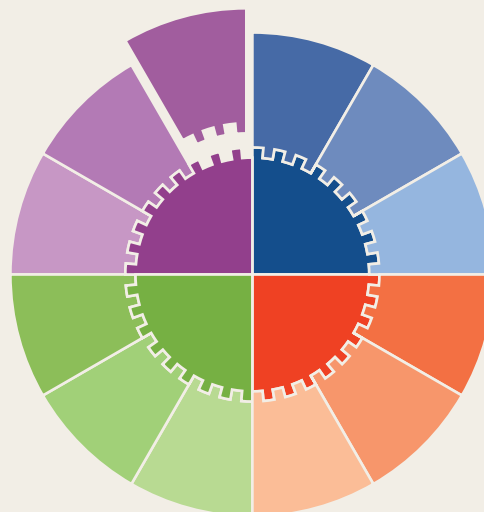
### PARTICIPATION

### Social Dimension

Participation is a life skill related to empowerment in relation to both the individual and the community, therefore, a quintessential aspect of citizenship education in MENA. Participation involves giving children a say in their education, listening to them and involving them as much as possible in school life. It entails valuing children's opinions and ideas, and giving them control of their learning. More specifically, participation is concerned, in its Cognitive Dimension, with equipping learners with capacities to engage proactively, thus promoting equity among all learners by enabling effective, active and experiential learning to take place in the classroom. Participation also enhances ownership of governance systems in schools and communities. The ability to participate effectively is important for personal empowerment and agency, as well as for the development of self-efficacy and social connectedness. Further, being participative leads to 'worker empowerment', a condition for a healthy workplace, which also ties to the human rights-based approach of fair employment (WHO, 2010). The core life skill of participation, which is anchored in human-rights instruments, enables people to play an active role in society, working towards improving life of the community and owning responsibility towards others and the environment through meaningful political participation or involvement at the community level.

#### DEFINITION

In its most basic sense, participation or being participative can be defined as partaking in and influencing processes, decisions and activities (adapted from UNICEF, 2001). Therefore, both a contextualized process and a core life skill, participation is an action of empowerment in relation to the individual and the community. Being participative is interlinked with the core life skill of creativity, and learners and individuals who are participative, especially in MENA, actively contribute to a democratic society, exercising a human right.



Participation skills are needed and acquired from early childhood, and help children develop the required skills to participate effectively in class to maximize their learning opportunities. Being participative, for example, by having the opportunity to ask questions, volunteer to help others during classroom activities, etc., allows children to have a say in their education, and requires listening to them and involving them as much as possible in school life. It means valuing their opinions and ideas, and giving them control of their learning. When children have a say in their education, they not only exercise their rights but also achieve more. They have improved self-esteem, they get on better with their classmates and teachers, and they contribute to a better school environment, with better discipline and in a culture where learning is a shared responsibility.

Participation skills reflect a series of fundamental human rights, recognized in a number of international human-rights instruments, starting with Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides for the right to participate in government and free elections, the right to participate in the cultural life of the community, the right to peaceful assembly and association, and the right to join trade unions.

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

### **PARTICIPATION AND THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING**

#### **'Learning to Know' / the Cognitive Dimension**

The ability to participate effectively is critically important for learning outcomes and quality of teaching and learning. Participation enables active and experiential learning to take place effectively. Participation in the classroom is more than students raising their hand. This life skill implies that learners are given the chance to actively support each other, make choices, volunteer, etc. Good classroom participation promotes equity in that all learners are able to participate, enhances learners' focus and engagement, and increases a range of social skills. These skills include "cooperation, sharing, helping, communication, empathy, providing verbal support or encouragement, and general friendliness or kindness" (Gutman and Schoon, 2013). Moreover, learners' participation in active learning can strengthen student-teacher relationships, improve the classroom climate, accommodate a variety of learning styles, and provide alternative ways of learning (WHO, 2003).

Participation is concerned with equipping learners with capacities to launch and engage in proactive actions. In this context, the curriculum should give priority to students' choices and voices, and encourage student leadership through planned action (UNESCO, 2014a). Through enhancing participation in the classroom, learners should be able to develop and apply skills for effective civic engagement, including critical inquiry and research, assessing evidence, making reasoned arguments, planning and organizing action, working collaboratively, reflecting on the potential consequences of actions, and learning from successes and failures (UNESCO, 2015b).

As an essential component of the renewed vision for education in MENA, participation in sports at school can create long-lasting lessons in justice, tolerance, diversity and human rights. Sports can promote social values and goals of collaboration, persistence and fair play, while also promoting respect for peers, teachers and families. Because sports promote social cohesion, and mutual understanding and respect, they can also be used to promote diversity and conflict resolution (UNESCO, 2014a).

Furthermore, participation enhances ownership of governance systems in schools, and is inclusive of the community, a necessity for MENA schools and communities. Learners, parents, community workers and peer educators all participate in the design and implementation of school programmes, identifying which needs and concerns are met in appropriate ways, thus enhancing the effectiveness of schools. This is also particularly relevant in the context of health programmes (WHO, 2003).



## **‘Learning to Do’/ the Instrumental Dimension**

A common theme in the literature regarding healthy workplaces is the importance of worker participation. Phrased either as ‘control over work’ or ‘input into decisions’ or ‘worker empowerment,’ active involvement of workers is one of the most important aspects of a healthy workplace (WHO, 2010). The relationship between participation and health as related to the workspace has led to the inclusion of fostering active participation in the workspace. This practice is recognized by a variety of declarations and frameworks fostering healthy workspaces, such as the 1997 Luxembourg Declaration on Workplace Health Promotion in the European Union (WHO, 2010).

Employee participation involves management actively encouraging staff to assist in running and improving business processes and operations. Also known as employee involvement, employee participation includes management encouraging and recognizing individual employees’ opinions and inputs. Evidence has consistently highlighted the linkage between employee participation, job satisfaction and increased productivity, particularly when participation is linked to decision-making (Summers and Hayman, 2005). On the other hand, WHO research on psychosocial risk management, highlights low participation in decision-making among the psychosocial factors having the greatest risk to workers’ health (WHO, 2010).

Being participative in the workplace is underpinned by a rights-based approach: First, it is one of the features included in the concept of ‘fair employment’, defined as a “just relation between employers and employees that requires certain features to be present: freedom from coercion; job security in terms of contracts and safety; fair income; job protection and social benefits; respect and dignity; and workplace participation” (Benach et al. 2013). The concept of ‘fair employment’ complements ILO’s notion of ‘decent work’, and ties into the principles that link business ethics with human rights, labour standards, environmental protection and protection against corruption (WHO, 2010).

## **‘Learning to Be’/ the Individual Dimension**

The ability to participate effectively is important for personal empowerment and agency, as well as the development of self-efficacy. Participation skills help to build social connectedness, which is important for resilience and wellbeing more generally. Participation varies according to one’s evolving capacities, but all children and youth can participate in different ways from the earliest age. Competence is learned through experience, not endowed at a certain age. Maturity and growth are an ongoing process that can be supported through participation. This is a virtuous cycle: the more one participates meaningfully, the more experienced, competent and confident one becomes, which in turn enables more effective participation (UNICEF, 2001).

## **‘Learning to Live Together’/ the Social Dimension**

“Human activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is a transformation of the world.” (Freire, 1970). Paulo Freire’s conceptualization of ‘praxis’ was intended for people to actively engage standing and perspectives, as well as respecting diversity, questioning the status quo in hopes of change, and forming a truly democratic citizenship (Levinson and Stevick, 2007), thus putting participation skills at the core of citizenship education in the region.

Participation relates to the life skills that are required to play an active role in society towards improving life be it through political participation, participation at the community level, or participation in other aspects of civic life, including fostering inter-connectedness through sustainable development. In order for citizens to be capable of fully engaging in civic and political life, they must possess skills that include personal communication skills, knowledge of political systems, and, most important, the ability to critically think about civic and political life (Comber, 2003). Participation skills enable individuals and communities to make their voices heard to influence decision-makers, achieve change and eventually take charge of their own lives.

## PARTICIPATION

As a right in itself, participation of children and youth must be sought and encouraged. However, it is worth remembering that although voluntary participation is crucial, it cannot solve everything. Structural concerns such as macroeconomic arrangements, patriarchy, racism, and other forms of institutionalized discrimination have an enormous bearing on the development and

wellbeing of children and youth, and cannot be dealt with simply through participatory processes. The last thing children and youth need is to be burdened with the responsibility for solving many of the world's intractable problems, and forcing them to do so can cause serious harm (UNICEF, 2001).

### Relevance of participation (and related skills) by Dimensions of Learning

Dimension	Relevance	Related skills
<b>'Learning to Know'/ the Cognitive Dimension</b>	To improve learning processes and outcomes To enhance democratic practices in the school	Active listening, planning and organizing, dialogue, presentation, focus, analytical thinking
<b>'Learning to Do'/ the Instrumental Dimension</b>	To promote healthy workspaces To enhance business ethics and human rights in the workspace	Organizational management, effective communication
<b>'Learning to Be'/ the Individual Dimension</b>	To contribute to holistic self-development, self-esteem and self-efficacy To develop personal goal setting and life planning	Self-confidence, agency
<b>'Learning to Live Together'/ the Social Dimension</b>	To contribute to a truly democratic citizenship To improve the wellbeing of the community	Dialogue, active listening, analytical and critical thinking



For more information, visit: [www.lsce-mena.org](http://www.lsce-mena.org)



## The Twelve Core Life Skills

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- Wondwosen, M. 2006. Negotiation: A Concept Note. Mimeo. Rome: FAO.
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- World Bank. 2010a. Active Labor Market Programs for Youth: A Framework to Guide Youth Employment Interventions. World Bank Employment Policy Primer No 16. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Economic Forum. 2014. Rethinking Arab Employment: A Systemic Approach for Resource-Endowed Economies. Available at: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_MENA14\\_RethinkingArabEmployment.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_MENA14_RethinkingArabEmployment.pdf)
- World Economic Forum. 2016. The Future of Jobs Employment, Skills and Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Geneva: World Economic Forum.
- YouGov and Bayt. 2016. The Skills Gap in the Middle East and North Africa Survey. Available at: <https://www.bayt.com/en/research-report-29942/>
- Zhou, Q. et al. 2002. The Relations of Parental Warmth and Positive Expressiveness to Children's Empathy-related Responding and Social Functioning: A Longitudinal Study. *Child Development*. 73: 893-915.
- Zimmerman, B. J. and Schunk, D. H. 2011. Self-Regulated Learning and Performance: An Introduction and an Overview. In *Handbook of Self-Regulation of Learning and Performance*. New York: Routledge: 1-12.

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## The Twelve Core Life Skills

### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

#### 1 Creativity

Carlile, O. and Jordan, A. 2012. *Approaches to Creativity: A Guide for Teachers*. Open University Press. Literature review regarding creativity as well a practical thematic approach to learning and teaching creativity.

Ferrari, A., Cachia, R., and Punie, Y. 2009. *Innovation and Creativity in Education and Training in the EU Member States: Fostering Creative Learning and Supporting Innovative Teaching*. Overview of education issues concerning the teaching and learning of creativity.

Gutman, L and Schoon, I. 2013. *The Impact of Non-Cognitive Skills on Outcomes for Young People*. Literature Review. Institute of Education. University of London. Review of the current research regarding the links between education and creativity.

Lai, E. and Viering, M. 2012. *Assessing 21st Century Skills: Integrating Research Findings*. National Council on Measurement in Education. Pearson. Literature review on creativity as one of the 21st century skills.

Robinson, K. 2015. *Creative Schools*. London. Penguin Education. Allen Lane. A new vision to transform schools by enabling all youth to flourish, with a strong emphasis on creativity.

#### 2 Critical thinking

Dam, G. and Volman, M. 2004. *Critical Thinking as a Citizenship Competence: Teaching Strategies*. *Learning and Instruction*. 14: 359-379. Available at <http://www.sacme.org/Resources/Documents/Virtual%20Journal%20Club/Critical%20thinking%20as%20a%20Citizenship%20competence.pdf>. This article examines instructional strategies that are 'effective' in enhancing critical thinking and explores a social constructivist approach to learning how to think critically.

Dilley, A., Kaufman, J., Kennedy, C., and Plucker, J. 2015. *What we know about Critical Thinking?* Partnership for 21st Century Learning. This review contains a discussion of definitions and models, interventions and assessment of critical thinking skills.

Giroux, H. 2010. *Rethinking Education as the Practice of Freedom: Paulo Freire and the Promise of Critical Pedagogy*. Truth Out. Available at <http://www.truth-out.org/archive/item/87456:rethinking-education-as-the-practice-of-freedom-paulo-freire-and-the-promise-of-critical-pedagogy>. This article provides a relevant analysis of critical thinking while including analysis on the linkages between critical thinking and the values promoted by the Social Dimension.

Lai, E. 2011. *Critical Thinking: A Literature Review*. Research paper. Pearson. This paper investigates how critical thinking develops and how teachers can encourage the development of critical thinking skills in their students. It reviews best practices in assessing critical thinking skills.

Lai, E., and Viering, M. 2012. *Assessing 21st Century Skills: Integrating Research Findings*. National Council on Measurement in Education. Pearson. This paper includes a section discussing researchers' definitions of critical thinking skills and how these might be assessed.

Partnership for 21st Century Learning. 2015. *What We Know About Critical Thinking?* Part of the 4Cs Research Series, Washington DC, P21.

### 3 Problem-solving

Barbey, A. and Baralou, L. 2009. Reasoning and Problem Solving: Models. *Encyclopaedia of Neuroscience*. 8: 35-43. This article provides an in-depth definition of problem-solving, including analysis of how this core life skill can be developed in children and youth.

OECD. 2014. PISA 2012 Results: Creative Problem Solving: Students' Skills in Tackling Real-Life Problems (Volume V), PISA, OECD Publishing. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264208070-en>. This report is a relevant resource as it builds on PISA Results to define best approaches in promoting problem-solving in learners.

OECD. 2017. PISA 2015: Collaborative Problem Solving Framework. July 2017. Available at <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/Draft%20PISA%202015%20Collaborative%20Problem%20Solving%20Framework%20.pdf>. An important framework that defines collaborative problem-solving and related skills. It includes the definition adopted as part of PISA 2015 with guidance to understand related domains and learning activities.

Pretz, J., Naples, A., and Sternberg, R. 2003. Recognizing, Defining and Representing Problems. In *The Psychology of Problem Solving*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. An in-depth analysis to understand the "early stages of problem-solving: problem recognition, problem definition, and problem representation." This article defines the mental processes undertaken in all setting to address and solve problems.

Weitzman, E. and Weitzman, P. 2000. Problem Solving and Decision Making in Conflict Resolution. In *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass: 185-209. This is a relevant guide that addresses problem-solving as related to the Social Dimension. It includes a definition of problem-solving relevant to conflict resolution and training activities for practitioners.

### 4 Cooperation

Deutsch, M. 2006. Cooperation and Competition. In *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass: 23-42. This chapter outlines and summarizes the basic tenets of the theory of cooperation and competition in the context of conflict management.

Johnson, D. et al. 2007. The State of Cooperative Learning in Postsecondary and Professional Settings. *Educational Psychology Review*. 19: 15-29. Overview of the theory of cooperative learning, its effectiveness and its evolution since the 1960s.

Tyler, T. 2011. *Why People Cooperate. The Role of Social Motivations*. Princeton University Press. This book provides a fresh theoretical perspective on cooperation, giving greater emphasis on social motivations based on identity, attitudes and values rather than instrumental factors.





## 5 Negotiation

Alfredson, T., and Cungu, A. 2009. *Negotiation Theory and Practice. A Review of the Literature*. Rome. FAO. This paper provides an overview of negotiation theory, the basic concepts involved, an analysis of different approaches, and provides practical steps for principled negotiation.

Conley C., and Cukier, N. 2006. Making it Fresh: Ideas for Teaching Negotiation Skills. *ADR Bulletin*. 9(4): Article 2. Available at: <http://epublications.bond.edu.au/adr/vol9/iss4/2>. This paper provides a practical approach to teaching negotiation skills in higher education.

Fells, R. 2009. *Effective Negotiation. From Research to Results*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. A comprehensive approach to the theory and practice of negotiation focused on the business context.

Grace, R. 2015. *Understanding Humanitarian Negotiation: Five Analytical Approaches*. Humanitarian Academy at Harvard. Available at <http://atha.se/thematicbrief/understanding-humanitarian-negotiation-five-analytical-approaches>. An evidence-based overview of five analytical approaches by which humanitarian negotiations can be understood for practical purposes.

## 6 Decision-making

Choices Explorer. 2012. *Decision Making Guide: A fun course in the art of responsible decision making*, available at: [https://access.bridges.com/usa/en\\_US/choices/pro/content/lessons/decisionmakingguide/dmg\\_usa\\_teachers.pdf](https://access.bridges.com/usa/en_US/choices/pro/content/lessons/decisionmakingguide/dmg_usa_teachers.pdf). A teachers' guide with a detailed definition of decision-making. It includes practical examples and activities of teaching and learning activities for basic and post-basic education related to decision-making and life planning.

Gigerenzer, G. 2014. *Risk Savvy. How to Make Good Decisions*. London. Allen Lane. A readable introduction to the science of decision-making and risk from a psychology perspective.

Thompson, N. 2009. *People Skills*. Third Edition. Basingstoke. Palgrave Macmillan. This book contains an accessible section on developing decision-making skills for effective practice in the workplace.

## 7 Self-management

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. 2016. *Building Core Capabilities for Life: The Science Behind the Skills Adults Need to Succeed in Parenting and in the Workplace*. <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>. This paper discusses the importance of developing executive function life skills for success in life.

Duckworth, A. 2016. Op-ed piece in the *New York Times*, 4 June 2016, and more broadly her work on Grit: *The Power of Passion and Perseverance* (2016) as well as her work as founder of Character Lab.

Freire, P., and Macedo, D. 1987. *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. UK: Routledge. A key text to understanding more broadly the social and political dimensions of literacy and education.

Goleman, D. 2013. *Focus. The Hidden Driver of Excellence*. London. Bloomsbury Press. This book discusses the importance of self-awareness, developing attention, self-control and the ability to focus as self-management skills for success in a complex world.

Gutman, L., and Schoon, I. 2013. *The Impact of Non-Cognitive Skills on Outcomes for Young People*. Institute of Education. University of London. This paper includes reviews of research findings on self-control, perseverance and self-perceptions.

Thompson, N. 2009. *People Skills*. Third Edition. Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan. This book includes accessible sections on personal effectiveness skills such as self-awareness, time management, stress management, etc.

## 8 Resilience

Graber, R. et al. 2015. *Psychological Resilience. State of Knowledge and Future Research Agendas*. ODI Working Paper 425. London. Overseas Development Institute. This paper investigates new insights in contemporary research on resilience from a psychology perspective. It examines how resilience evolves as a dynamic psychosocial process.

Gutman, L., and Schoon, I. 2013. *The Impact of Non-Cognitive skills on Outcomes for Young People*. Literature review. Institute of Education. University of London. This review includes a brief evidential review of resilience and coping skills in education.

O'Dougerty, M. et al. 2013. *Resilience Processes in Development: Four Waves of Research on Positive Adaptation in the Context of Adversity*. In *Handbook of Resilience in Children*. New York. Springer Science. This paper provides an overview and analysis of 40 years of research into resilience.

Walsh-Dilley, M., Wolford, W. and McCarthy, J. 2013. *Rights for Resilience: Bringing Power, Rights and Agency into the Resilience Framework*. Available at <http://www.atkinson.cornell.edu/Assets/ACSF/docs/collaborations/oxfam/R4R%20Conceptual%20Framework.pdf>. Academic report that explores the potential of 'resilience thinking,' finding that contemporary frameworks for resilience contain promising elements and directions, but need to be reworked to include rights, power and agency.

## 9 Communication

Castells, M. 2009. *Communication Power*. Oxford. Oxford University Press. A comprehensive analysis of communication issues in the digital age and network society.

Lunenberg, F. 2010. *Communication: The Process, Barriers, and Improving Effectiveness*. *Schooling*. 1(1): 1–11. This article is useful for its discussion of the definition of communication and its application for schooling.

Thompson, N. 2009. *People Skills*. Third Edition. Basingstoke. Palgrave Macmillan. This is an accessible approach to the development of interpersonal skills in general, with and communication skills in particular.

UNICEF. 2013. *Peacebuilding Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills: A Desk Review and Recommendations*. Includes examples for developing communication skills within the context of the Social Dimension.



## 10 Respect for diversity

Accept Pluralism Project. 2013. *Tolerance, Pluralism and Social Cohesion: The Accept Pluralism Tolerance Indicators Toolkit*. European University Institute. The Accept Pluralism Project created a tool for assessing the levels of intolerance, tolerance and/or acceptance of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity in European societies. The indicators aim to evaluate the overall intolerance/tolerance/acceptance 'climate' in a country and not just its public policies.

Dunning, D. et al. 2016. *The Psychology of Respect: A Case Study of How Behavioural Norms Regulate Human Action*. In *Advances in Motivation Science*. 3: 1–34. This article explores the functioning of respect for diversity in diverse social contexts. It provides detailed definition of respect for diversity and shed lights on the understanding of its different implications on human interactions.

Levinson, B., and Stevick, D. 2007. *Reimagining Civic Education: How Diverse Societies Form Democratic Citizens*. Rowman & Littlefield. Edited volume that surveys the many ways that notions of democracy and citizenship have been implemented in recent education policy, curriculum, and classroom practice around the world.

Muasher, M. 2014. *The Second Arab Awakening and the Battle for Pluralism*. Yale University Press. Playing with George Antonious's famous nationalist tract, in this publication the former Jordanian diplomat and close observer of Arab politics analyses the context and characteristics of the popular movements known as the Arab Spring.

## 11 Empathy

Cotton, K. 1992. *Developing Empathy in Children and Youth*. Washington DC: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Available at: <http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/developing-empathy-in-children-and-youth.pdf>. This article is for practical use, with relevant literature and analysis regarding research on childrearing practices, empathy training, as well as classroom strategies and programme designs.

Fox, E. 2008. *Emotion Science. Cognitive and Neuroscientific Approaches to Understanding Human Emotions*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan. A broad review of research on the science of emotion, including analysis of theory and empirical evidence.

Goleman, D. 1995. *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ*. Bantam Books. The book popularized the findings of Salovey and Mayer. It proposed a four-branch model that was further classified into 20 emotional competencies.

Gordon, M. 2005. *Roots of Empathy: Changing the World Child by Child*. Ontario, Canada: Thomas Allen Publishers. Insights into the fundamentals of the 'Roots of Empathy Skills Curriculum,' an evidence-based classroom programme to reduce levels of aggression and bullying implemented in Canada, New Zealand and Japan since the early 2000s.

McDonald, N. and Messinger, D. 2012. *The Development of Empathy: How, When, and Why*. In *Free Will, Emotions, and Moral Actions: Philosophy and Neuroscience in Dialogue*. Springer. Available at: [http://www.psy.miami.edu/faculty/dmessinger/c\\_c/rsrscs/rdgs/emot/McDonald-Messinger\\_Empathy%20Development.pdf](http://www.psy.miami.edu/faculty/dmessinger/c_c/rsrscs/rdgs/emot/McDonald-Messinger_Empathy%20Development.pdf). Description and literature review of empathy from the point of view of developmental psychology among children and youth.

Salovey, P. and Mayer, J. D. 1990. *Emotional Intelligence*. New Haven, CT: Baywood Publishing. Key research article introducing the concept of 'Emotional Intelligence' as a subset of social intelligence.

## 12 Participation

Burton, J. 2010. WHO Healthy Workplace Framework and Model: Background and Supporting Literature and Practices. Available at: [http://www.who.int/occupational\\_health/healthy\\_workplace\\_framework.pdf](http://www.who.int/occupational_health/healthy_workplace_framework.pdf). It is a background document written primarily for occupational health and/or safety professionals, scientists and medical practitioners, to provide the scientific basis for a healthy workplace framework.

Brander, K. et al. 2012. Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Available at <http://www.coe.int/en/web/compass>. First published in 2002 to support the work of facilitators of human rights education with young people, it is available in more than 30 languages. *Compass* has brought human rights education to the lives of countless young people in Europe and other world regions

Freire, P. 1970. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. A key text for educators and citizens everywhere.

UNESCO. 2015. Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives. Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002329/232993e.pdf>. This is a training manual that constitutes an important reference for teachers and practitioners in relation to participation and other related life skills such as respect for diversity and empathy.

UNICEF. 2001. The Participation Rights of Adolescents: A Strategic Approach. Working Paper Series. Available at [https://www.unicef.org/programme/youth\\_day/assets/participation.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/programme/youth_day/assets/participation.pdf). A resource for policy makers, programmers, advocates and activists interested in promoting the meaningful participation of young people, at global, country and community levels.



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