



GLOBAL EVALUATION OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Global Evaluation of Life Skills Education Programmes

Evaluation Summary

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 LSE evaluation study

Life skills education programmes are an important vehicle for equipping young people with skills to negotiate and mediate challenges

and risks in their everyday lives, and to enable productive participation in society. UNICEF is an advocate for life skills education (LSE), and has been a source of support for life skills education programmes in many countries.

Table 1: Case study countries, by education and HIV indicators

Indicator	Country						
	Armenia	Barbados	Jordan	Kenya	Malawi	Mozambique	Myanmar
Population (million)*	3.1	0.26	6.1	38.8	14.8	22.4	49.6
Human Development Index rank (2011)	86	47	95	143	171	184	149
Percent GER (primary school) *	104 (M) 106 (F)	No data	97 (M) 97 (F)	113 (M) 110 (F)	119 (M) 122 (F)	121 (M) 107 (F)	117 (M) 117 (F)
Percent NER (primary school) *	83 (M) 86 (F)	No data	89 (M) 90 (F)	81 (M) 82 (F)	88 (M) 93 (F)	82 (M) 77 (F)	No data
Out-of-school children (primary school age) *	8,000	No data	53,000	1,088 million	235,000	863,000	No data
Percent GER (secondary school) *	86 (M) 90 (F)	No data	87 (M) 90 (F)	61 (M) 56 (F)	32 (M) 27 (F)	24 (M) 18 (F)	53
Percent NER (secondary school) *	83 (M) 88 (F)	No data	80 (M) 84 (F)	50 (M) 48 (F)	26 (M) 24 (F)	6 (M) 6 (F)	49 (M) 50 (F)
Out-of-school children (adolescents)*	24,000	No data	39,000	No data	98,000	448,000	1,193 million
Percent estimated HIV prevalence (15–49 yrs)**	0.1	1.4	No data	6.3	11	11.5	0.6
Percent schools with LSE based HIV programmes **	No data	41 (2007) 85 (2009)	No data	100 (2009)	No data	No data	100 (2007)
Percent correctly identifying ways of preventing sexual transmission of HIV **	15 (M) 23 (F) (DHS, 2005)	52 (M) 49 (F) (DHS, 2009)	No data	47 (M) 34 (F) (DHS, 2003)	36 (M) 24 (F) (DHS, 2005)	34 (M) 36 (F) (DHS, 2009)	47 (M) 48 (F) (DHS, 2007)

No data; *EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO, 2011; ** Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, 2010, UNAIDS



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A global evaluation was commissioned by the UNICEF Evaluation Office to assess the relevance, coverage, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of LSE initiatives, and to consider UNICEF's role and additionality in support of the programmes. The evaluation also examined the situation of a range of countries with respect to accepted knowledge about the content, standards and benchmarks for successful LSE programmes, both in schools and in non-formal education settings.

The evaluation was executed in four phases – a literature review, an analysis of country documents, country case studies, and a Delphi survey on emerging evaluation findings.

Country case studies were undertaken in seven countries to explore issues of LSE policy, programming and practice.

Two types of case study countries were selected: Malawi and Mozambique, representing countries with hyper-endemic HIV prevalence where life skills programming was characterised by a strong HIV and AIDS focus; and, the rest of the countries where life skills programming covers a range of thematic concerns beyond HIV and AIDS (reproductive health and rights, drug use and abuse, violence prevention, peace education, etc.). Table 1 presents demographic, education and HIV indicators in case study countries.



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2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

2.1 Key messages

A literature review of key concepts, trends and issues around life skills education was carried out. Also, an analysis of LSE programme documents, curricular and related policy documents obtained from 40 of 70 countries identified in UNICEF's 2007 stocktaking exercise as implementing an LSE intervention was undertaken. Key messages from the literature review and document analysis are summarised below.

The term 'life skills' has gained currency in the fields of health, education and social policy, yet it remains without a full and widely accepted definition. While the concept embraces a very wide range of skills and has a virtue of linking personal and social skills to the realities of everyday life, it suffers because it is difficult, and potentially contentious, to determine which skills are relevant for life and which are not. This is problematic because if all skills are indeed relevant for life, then the concept has little utility.

Attempts to define 'core life skills' seem to be converging on personal and social (interpersonal) domains of behaviour, as well as psychosocial skills. While there is convergence on what the broad groups of core psychosocial skills might be, they are difficult to isolate from a complex web of interactions and contextual factors that can contribute to their development, usage and impact. They are also equally difficult to define or measure. There is thus a need for further clarity about the boundaries between different categories of skills, as well as a greater understanding of their interrelationships and development, so as to create a common understanding.

A growing body of evidence accentuates the importance of early childhood experiences in the development of an individual's life skills. Similarly, social norms of family and wider community, as well as social structures in which children observe, experience, test and internalize those norms influence the development of relevant skills and behaviours.

For example, prevailing religious and cultural attitudes and conventions (e.g., reluctance to acknowledge or discuss sexual activity among the young or gender-unequal practices) can restrict the opportunities to develop responsible behaviours around these issues. There is a need to extend psychosocial aspects of interventions into early childhood education, and to make the necessary connections between the school, home and community in LSE programmes.

UNICEF's child friendly schools (CFS) principles and approaches as well as its integration of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) in programming informs, complements and overlaps with the main aims and tenets of life skills education. For instance, qualities of a child friendly school as articulated in many CFS programmes include enabling active participation and empowerment of youth; providing space for critical thinking; asking questions and expressing opinions; guaranteeing safe, secure and joyful environments; and, practicing good hygiene and healthy behaviours, to mention a few. However, there is no practical guidance on how to programme CFS and LSE more coherently, despite these significant overlaps in principles and implementation aims.

2.2 Implementation of life skills education programmes

Design of LSE interventions: Evidence confirms the positive effect of the involvement of national leadership from the planning stages, building commitment and urgency for LSE programmes by advocating for and listening to communities, particularly in the face of cultural sensitivities around issues such as sexual and reproductive health.¹ This is critical to sustainability and improving the relevance of programmes. Reviews of programme evaluations² further suggest that at least 14 hours of teaching is needed per academic year for LSE-focused HIV



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prevention interventions, although some intense programmes have used small groups, and subsequent booster sessions to sustain outcomes. These reviews also note the importance of age-appropriate programming, focusing on clearly articulated behavioural goals, providing medically accurate information, individualizing and continually reinforcing key messages, and introducing practical skills and examples for dealing with social pressures or specific situations.

UNAIDS identifies 17 characteristics of effective programmes, based on systematic review of evidence on preventing HIV among young people in developing countries³, and affirms the role of school-based life skills-based programmes in reducing sexual risk behaviour and increasing HIV and AIDS-related knowledge. Five of the 17 characteristics speak to the design of the curriculum for such interventions and identify the need to:

1. Involve multiple stakeholders with different backgrounds in theory, research and sexuality and HIV education;
2. Assess relevant needs and assets of target groups;
3. Use the programme logic model approach to develop a curriculum that specifies goals, behaviours affecting those goals, risk and protective factors affecting those behaviours, and activities to address risks as well as protective factors;
4. Design activities consistent with community values and available resources (such as staff time, staff skills, facility space and supplies); and,
5. Pilot-test interventions.

Intervention logic: The evaluation summarised the intervention logic and accompanying assumptions of the logic

chain found in most countries implementing LSE interventions, as shown in Figure 1 below. The intervention logic is restated in Table 4 of the main report of the evaluation⁴, also elaborating on the risks that may threaten the results chain.

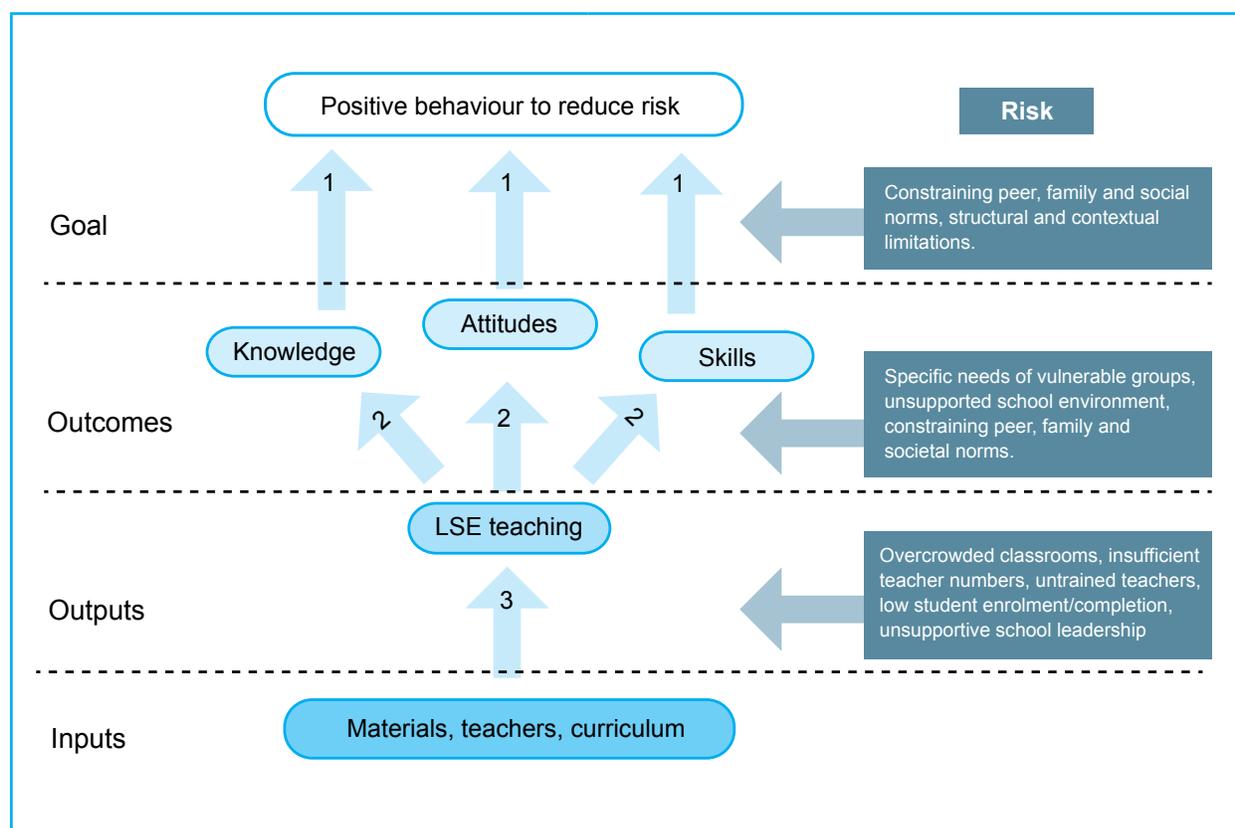
2.3 Monitoring and evaluation of life skills education programmes

M&E at the international level: At this level, monitoring and evaluation of LSE programmes has largely been confined to one indicator of participation - ‘percentage of schools that provided life skills-based HIV education in the last academic year’ (UNGASS Indicator 11)⁵, with no indication of coverage (i.e., percentage of illegible learners that actually participated in the programmes in each country). In the

2009 reporting round, 88 countries reported on UNGASS indicator 11, using the most recent data available.

Life skills standards, benchmarks and indicators: UNICEF has developed comprehensive guidelines for M&E processes for CFS⁶ as well as standards and benchmarks for teaching and learning of LSE programmes. Standards suggests that continuous assessment is one of the most effective ways of measuring effectiveness of long-term LSE interventions, with the pre/post-test model being more suited to assessing short-term programmes. Programme evaluation is also mentioned as a way to measure how learning is applied. Subdivided further into benchmarks,⁷ the standards provide a framework for creating indicators that measure process and aid in the design of effective programmes.

Figure 1: Intervention logic





Box 1: Quality standards for LSE⁸

- **Standard 1.** Outcomes: LSE is needs-based (that is, child-centred)
- **Standard 2.** Assessment: Life skills learning is results-based;
- **Standard 3.** Activities: Life skills learning is knowledge, attitudes and skills-based;
- **Standard 4.** Teaching: Teachers are trained on methods and psychosocial support;
- **Standard 5.** Learning environment: Life skills education is provided in protective and enabling environments with access to community services.

For completeness, the evaluation also cited other sources that contain guidance for monitoring and evaluation of life skills related programmes. These include UNESCO's guidance on M&E of life skills programmes at the field-level, school-level and for teacher training and professional development⁹, INEE minimum standards that highlight the importance of community participation in monitoring and evaluation arrangements¹⁰, and the M&E Framework for school health interventions that provides a checklist for measuring the level of effective LSE programmes¹¹.

Challenges in measuring effectiveness of LSEs: Conceptualization of life skills is not static. It is an ever evolving phenomenon, taking into account the social background of societies, gender and the labour market, as well as national and international cultural variations."¹² Measuring the effectiveness

of LSE necessitates identifying measurable outcomes – skills, attitudes, values and behaviour, with appropriate process and outcome indicators.

Hence the review highlighted the need for indicators to be holistic, taking into account values such as living together, respect for and tolerance of differences and diversity, active participation in community work and social life, living and working in dignity, as well as and making informed decisions. Few tools or frameworks exist, however, that are able to capture and evaluate progress meaningfully in these areas. Difficulties in measuring effectiveness of LSE interventions arise, in part, from the lack of an agreed definition of life skills, and in the difficulty of measuring complex and abstract outcomes such as behaviour change¹³ as opposed to basic skills¹⁴ for which there is more experience of assessment.



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3

EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.0 Evaluation criteria and ranking system

Evaluation findings were derived from the literature review, country document analysis, as well as country case studies. This section presents only a selection of results (a complete presentation of results can be found in Chapter 5 of the full report).

Findings are organised around an evaluation framework¹⁵ delineating five evaluation criteria (relevance, coverage, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability) as well as UNICEF additionality, that is, the extent to which UNICEF's engagement and/or inputs in LSE interventions add to national efforts and enhances the results and efficacy of programmes. A key evaluation questions is stated under each criterion, with indicators specified for each question. The evaluation presents tables comparing case study countries on indicators for each criterion, using a ranking system as follows:

- ◆ Low application
- ◆◆ Moderate application
- ◆◆◆ High application

The ranking system is a tool for comparing indicators across countries on each criterion. Based on evaluators' assessments during the case study research, rankings are an absolute assessment of LSE programmes examined in case studies against qualitative criteria outlined in the evaluation framework. They do not, therefore, incorporate adjustments for the different educational or social contexts in which these programmes operate in the different countries.

3.1 Relevance

Key evaluation question:

Are interventions resulting in more positive behaviours by young people in response to the life challenges that they face within the national context? According to the evaluation framework, relevance issue were interrogated under the following sub-questions:

- LSE is relevant to the life and challenges of all learners;
- Intervention recognizes and addresses social norms and behaviours;
- LSE addresses national needs;
- LSE content and delivery embody the CRC principles;
- Intervention is aligned with international commitments; and
- There is opportunity to respond to changing circumstances.

Relevance of LSE programmes to the life and challenges of all learners:

While learners, parents and teachers found the content and themes of LSE interventions to be relevant to the challenges faced by learners, there was mixed evidence on whether there was adequate consultation of learners, communities and teachers, and little evidence of systematic and meaningful participation of these groups in design and implementation of LSE interventions.

Relevance of LSE interventions to learner's social norms and behaviours:

The evaluation also found that social norms (both supportive and constraining) affect the design, implementation and outcomes of LSE at all levels. There are few examples of detailed analysis of the social norms and LSE programming to address constraining social norms across case study countries as shown in Table 2.

The tension between LSE programmes which seek to empower and inform children, and conservative social norms, is almost universal. LSE has been the subject of heated public debate in the mass media in many countries, involving a political discourse to negotiate compromises that seek to maintain the support of influential social or religious leaders, for example. This is a proper process in which UNICEF and other partners can play a role in advocacy and information. However, if LSE interventions are perceived mainly as owned by foreign agencies, they can fuel negative perceptions and attitudes.

Table 2: Relevance of LSE interventions to learner’s social norms and behaviours

Criteria	Indicator	Country						
		Armenia	Barbados	Jordan	Kenya	Malawi	Mozambique	Myanmar
Intervention recognizes and addresses social norms and behaviours	Supportive norms are identified and analysed in the design	◆	◆◆	◆	◆◆	◆◆	◆	◆◆
	LSE builds on supportive norms	◆	◆◆	◆	◆◆	◆◆	◆	◆◆
	Constraining norms and attitudes are identified and analysed in the design	◆◆	◆◆	◆◆	◆	◆◆	◆	◆◆
	LSE planning addresses such constraints	◆	◆◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆◆

Modelling CRC principles: There was frequent reference in LSE documentation to the intent of enhancing children’s awareness of their rights and how to claim them, and to contribute to children’s survival, development and protection. An explicit focus on rights formed an important strand in the aims and content of many of the LSE interventions and curricula across the countries reviewed in the document analysis (for example, Armenia, Lesotho, Mozambique and Romania).

CRC principles (non-discrimination in terms of gender, HIV status, orphans and vulnerable children, disability, ethnicity, etc.) were embodied in the content in case study countries (e.g., Barbados, Malawi, Barbados, Myanmar) as indicated in Table 3. However, many LSE interventions did not make specific reference to the CRC, or use the language of rights.

Table 3: Relevance of LSEs in modelling CRC principles

Criteria	Indicator	Country						
		Armenia	Barbados	Jordan	Kenya	Malawi	Mozambique	Myanmar
LSE content and delivery embody CRC principles	Non-discrimination	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆
	The best interests of the child	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆
	The right to life, survival and development	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆
	Learner participation in design	◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆	◆◆◆	◆	◆◆◆
	Knowledge of human rights and related responsibilities	◆◆	◆◆	◆	◆◆	◆◆	◆◆	◆◆
	Specific learning needs taken into account	◆	◆◆	◆	◆	◆◆	◆	◆◆
	Factors leading to educational disadvantaged catered for	◆	◆◆	◆	◆	◆◆	◆	◆◆

◆ Low application, ◆◆ Moderate application, ◆◆◆ High application

3.2 Coverage

Key evaluation question:

Is LSE reaching all students, providing then with adequate learning opportunities differentiated as necessary to their different needs and circumstances?

Issues of coverage were interrogated under the following sub-questions according to the evaluation framework:

- LSE intervention reaches all intended groups: geographical, socio-economic, ethnic and language groups that are marginalized;
- LSE intervention is adapted to the needs and circumstances of beneficiaries, including marginalized, vulnerable and at-risk groups;
- LSE (or complementary initiatives) addresses out-of-school children;
- LSE interventions are targeted at ages or groups appropriately for knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviour change;
- LSE interventions are gender sensitive and inclusive; and,
- Resources reach all points of delivery

Coverage: summary of findings

- LSE programmes are intended to have wide coverage in many countries, often by their inclusion in formal schooling. However, implementation at the school level rarely matches intentions because of lack of teachers, low priority for LSE by both teachers and students, and a shortage of materials.
- Where life skills education is integrated into the school curriculum, participation in schools includes all learners regardless of socio-economic, ethnic, linguistic or other differences. Hence formal life school education can only be as inclusive as the school system.
- There has been little differentiation of content or approach at the classroom level to cater for specific needs and interests among learners.
- There has been limited data on out-of-school and other marginalized groups; LSE provision to these groups is largely the responsibility of NGOs typically in small-scale and fragmented non formal settings.
- In many countries there is a wide range of non-formal LSE interventions. Even though limited, available data suggests that targeting, coverage, and quality of interventions is variable within and across countries.
- School-based LSE interventions initially focused on the primary level, with junior and senior secondary levels being incorporated over time. There is very little evidence of active LSE initiatives at the early childhood/pre-primary level, however.
- LSE curricula seem to be age-appropriate and incremental, although there have been debates and negotiations around appropriate content related to sex and sexuality for younger learners.
- There has been little attention to the issue of delivering an appropriate LSE curriculum for students enrolled in classes for which they are over-aged.
- LSE interventions vary considerably in the extent to which they address issues of gender in either design or implementation, with little coverage of gender and power relations, or opportunities to challenge and transform gendered identities for both girls and boys.
- Still on programme implementation, girls and boys are rarely separated to receive target content and messages in LSE classes, due to resource restrictions.

3.3 Efficiency

Key evaluation question:

Is LSE delivered in ways that make good use of resources to deliver and maintain quality learning? Efficiency measures outputs, both qualitative and quantitative, in relation to inputs. Issues of efficiency were interrogated under the following sub-questions according to the evaluation framework:

- LSE intervention makes good use of available resources;
- Resources have been adequate;
- LSE is of acceptable quality for the resources provided; and
- LSE interventions are complementary and coordinated.

Efficiency Issues and conclusions

Teachers: The main cost for LSE is professional preparation of teachers. LSE demands personal and professional attributes that are difficult to develop through existing systems of teacher selection and training. These include empathy for children, classroom management for collaborative learning, and understanding of children's psychology and development. Sensitive thematic areas of LSE demand confidence, sound knowledge and sensitivity, and may make demands on LSE teachers, similar to a counselling role, for which they are not equipped to provide.

LSE teachers have no professional 'identity' as specialists with specific job descriptions, and their training and experience with LSE has not been formally recognized in career development. This risks reducing the status of LSE and losing teachers of LSE if they move schools or simply decide to revert to their original subject (and may not be replaced in the LSE programme).

The selection, preparation and deployment of suitable teachers is a challenge for all systems, but the impact on LSE, which seeks to establish new teaching paradigms with new content, is a risk to efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

Resources materials: UNICEF has often contributed to the initial input of materials, within pilots and to support training. Sustaining resource provision is problematic, especially where original materials were expensive. There is no consensus as to how much material resource is needed. Some programmes provided a wide range of games and activities to stimulate students in the pilot phase, which proved financially unsustainable, while others relied simply on teacher's guides. The evaluation established that the efficiency of programmes will be enhanced if learners are able access to honest information on sensitive subjects through age appropriate reference books.

Coordination and complementarity: Coordination and complementarity between United Nations agencies in individual countries seems to have been effective and useful (particularly between UNICEF and UNFPA). UNICEF has been instrumental in developing stronger national coordination mechanisms for LSE alongside Ministries of Education and other partners to improve the efficiency of formal school inputs into LSE.

There are, however, significant areas for improvement. In the context of the broad array of aims and objectives that can be incorporated under the concept of LSE, and given that non-formal interventions are often, by their nature, smaller scale, more flexible and able to target specific groups, the LSE non-formal sector is highly fragmented. While some attempts are being made to map this landscape (an important first step), there is a significant need for coordination mechanisms to be developed that can maximize the complementarities and efficient use of resources between non-formal interventions, and provide a more consistent and holistic approach to life skills across both formal and non-formal sectors.

3.4 Effectiveness

Key evaluation question:

Is LSE delivering the intended outcomes and impacts for learners? Effectiveness focuses on whether programmes have demonstrated plausible and feasible pathways to achieving results as represented in the results framework and programme activities. Effectiveness of programmes was interrogated under the following sub-questions:

- LSE is delivered to quality standards (as per UNICEF 2010);
- LSE intervention logic is explicit and robust;

- There is a method and resources to monitor and to evaluate outcomes;
- LSE intended learning outcomes are clearly stated;
- LSE intended learning outcomes are substantially achieved; and
- LSE behavioural outcomes are demonstrated in life outside school/centre.

The section above summarises selected findings associated with effectiveness, namely the intervention logic, whether learning outcomes are clearly stated and achieved, and a comparison of indicators in case study countries, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: LSE intervention logic and clarity of intended outcomes

Criteria	Indicator	Country						
		Armenia	Barbados	Jordan	Kenya	Malawi	Mozambique	Myanmar
LSE intervention logic is explicit and robust	Clear description of design logic	◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆◆◆
LSE intended learning outcomes are clearly stated for attitudes, knowledge (including thematic knowledge) and skills	Command of critical knowledge	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆◆◆
	Identified skills	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆◆◆
	Caregivers and learners recognize and can identify their changes in these areas	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	N/A ^a	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆	N/A ^b
LSE intended learning outcomes are substantially achieved for attitudes, knowledge (including thematic knowledge) and skills	Learners assessments	◆	◆◆	◆◆	◆	◆◆	◆	◆◆
	Command of critical knowledge	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆	N/A ^b
	Caregivers and learners recognize and can identify their changes in these areas	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	N/A ^a	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆	N/A ^b
LSE behavioural outcomes are achieved and demonstrated in life outside school/centre	Learners, caregivers identify behaviour changes	◆◆	◆◆	◆◆	◆◆	◆◆	◆◆	◆◆
	Secondary data on behaviours show changes	No data	◆◆	◆◆	No data	◆◆	◆◆	◆◆

◆ Low application, ◆◆ Moderate application, ◆◆◆ High application

^a No direct data from caregivers and learners gathered in the Jordan case study, but teachers report changes in these areas.

^b No direct data gathered from caregivers and learners in the Myanmar case study, but data collected directly from participants in a previous evaluation of the EXCEL programme show positive results.

By and large, the evaluation found programmes in case study countries to have clear intervention logic, and a good command of critical knowledge. Other positive outcomes of LSE interventions include improved knowledge about HIV and AIDS, particularly methods of transmission; changes in attitude towards marginalized groups; shift in perceptions and stereotypes about girls and boys; improvements in personal hygiene; reduction in peer pressures and societal influences on unhealthy behaviours; increased learner confidence; improved relationships with family; increased assertiveness and self-confidence for teachers; increased learner participation; and increased awareness of the environment and how to care for the world around them for learners.

However, very few assessments go beyond classroom tests and examinations in any

country, hence knowledge acquisition tends to dominate. By extension, there is little formal or systematic evidence on the achievement of attitudinal and behavioural outcomes for both in-school and out-of-school interventions, with the results that LSE behavioural outcomes were not apparent in life outside the school.

3.5 Sustainability

Key evaluation question:

Is LSE provision sustainable and likely to be sustained? This section on sustainability aims to determine if LSE programmes are planned and implemented in gender sensitive and sustainable ways through the education system response (e.g., whether they are reflected in plans, curricula, examinations, pre-service teacher training efforts, and inspections).

Sustainability: issues and conclusions

LSE in national structures: The evaluation considered countries that have taken different trajectories towards national implementation and found that important elements of institutionalization for sustainability are in place. LSE has moved into the national curriculum, with operational funding for teachers and materials replacing project support. However, institutionalization in other parts of the system (pre-service training and professional development, inspection and supervision, and the career structure of teachers) has not been achieved in many countries.

LSE resources are committed: Where LSE has been institutionalized, curriculum resources have followed. For example, posts or salary funding is committed and material resources are made available, albeit to the limited level possible within strained budgets and capacity to develop and distribute resources.

There is a legitimate concern in the structural sustainability of teacher supply for LSE, which frequently relies on those who volunteered in earlier projects or have been carried into this area as LSE has become aligned with their subject area.

LSE has public and professional support: Sustainability is enhanced by strong demand from parents and their communities. In most cases, an earlier phase of work in life skill education sought to raise awareness and address concerns, and managed to create support and demand within school communities. This model was replicated consistently when moving to scale, hence misunderstandings and tensions for teachers in some countries. LSE will struggle to sustain an empowering and honest approach where social and religious constructs are in opposition, and manifest themselves strongly in the school community.

This section is presented according to the following criteria, as specified under the sustainability section in the evaluation framework:

- LSE is institutionalized in the national structures for education (formal, non-formal, school and teacher training curricula, examinations/assessments, inspections) and/or other sectors in a coherent way;
- Material and human resources for LSE are committed; and
- LSE has been recognized in public and professional opinion.

3.6 UNICEF Additionality

Key evaluation question:

Has UNICEF contributed to LSE that is of high quality and matches standards,

reaches intended learners and is making an impact on their lives? This section assesses the added value of UNICEF investments in life skills education - the extent to which UNICEF's engagement and/or inputs in LSE interventions add to national efforts and enhances the results and efficacy of programmes. Additionality of UNICEF engagement in LSE programmes was interrogated under the following sub-questions:

- UNICEF support contributes to quality design and implementation of LSE;
- UNICEF support has worked to develop national ownership and a basis for sustained LSE in national education contexts; and
- UNICEF has taken account of evidence and formative evaluation.

UNICEF Additionality: summary of findings

- UNICEF has a clear role as an innovator in life skills education through the promotion of new ideas and supporting pilots.
- UNICEF has been an important player in engaging at the policy level, developing or supporting the development of curricula and teaching materials, and advocating for life skills education.
- UNICEF has played an important role in designing, developing and disseminating curriculum and learning materials.
- UNICEF plays a significant role on initiatives in education with its substantial inputs to LSE programmes, CFS and inclusive education, but greater efforts are required to define the relationships and coordination between these areas of programming.
- There is evidence of the child rights agenda being promoted by UNICEF, but not necessarily linking or integrating this with its LSE programmes.
- UNICEF support has worked to develop national ownership and has created a basis for sustained life skills education.
- Where evaluations exist, UNICEF seems to respond to them. UNICEF has supported or initiated evaluations in several contexts, and is often the only body doing so.



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4 MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation recognizes the importance of life skills education in promoting psychosocial skills as a necessary part of learning and addressing the important risks facing children. To strengthen life skills education, several recommendations are made under the themes provide below.

International policy

1. UNICEF and partners should take a lead in developing the taxonomy of the learning outcomes of LSE interventions that includes both the psychosocial skills and the knowledge associated with the major themes.
2. UNICEF should develop standards for expected results and outcomes at individual, school and national levels. UNICEF should seek to establish a result/outcome framework for life skills education in its target countries.
3. UNICEF should consider integrating life skills education into the child-friendly schools programming strategy, child-friendly schools being the vehicle to carry UNICEF's rights mandate into education.

National planning

4. UNICEF should develop guidelines for understanding and addressing social norms and religious contexts that are likely to affect implementation, and advice on how advocacy should proceed within that context.
5. It is recommended that guidance on participation – particularly of parents and of community groups, which recognize and address the potential tensions between life skills education aims and practices and social norms – be strengthened to support

practitioners to mediate concerns and deliver life skills education that addresses children's needs.

6. UNICEF should recognize and support national plans to build capacity at institutional, organizational and personal levels to lead and support life skills education.
7. UNICEF should support the use of better data on the changing context and possible impact of life skills education.
8. It is recommended that in design and implementation, and particularly in going to scale, the opportunities for children to influence the content and methodology of life skills education be prioritized, from national to institutional levels.
9. The integration of life skills education into the formal education system has expanded its reach significantly, but there has been limited attention to how this integration can accommodate the needs and interests of the most vulnerable and excluded groups of learners. It is recommended that specific emphasis be placed on identifying and addressing the needs of these groups in curricula and learning materials.
10. Non-formal LSE interventions are playing an important role in reaching out-of-school children and to a holistic approach. It is recommended that support be given to improving coordination for non-formal LSE interventions at national and local levels.
11. UNICEF should support national plans to integrate quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation processes and tools for life skills education among those partners implementing non-formal interventions.

Implementation of LSE interventions

12. UNICEF needs to build on the experience gained in LSE curriculum development to support national curricula that are more child-friendly, focused on equity and meet the real life needs of all children.
13. It is recommended that life skills education knowledge content should, wherever possible, be integrated within the school curriculum so that it is not perceived as an add-on that contributes to curriculum overload but as a core curriculum component that can be assessed within the standard assessment processes.
14. UNICEF should develop clear guidelines on life skills education assessment that can support the integration of effective life skills education assessment into education systems, schools and classrooms.

15. UNICEF should continue its valuable support for institutionalizing school-based HIV education and sexual and reproductive health life skills education in generalized epidemics so that it includes HIV and stigma prevention among young vulnerable populations in concentrated epidemics.

Self-review of existing LSE programmes

16. UNICEF country and regional offices engaged with LSE programming should review their existing progress on LSE systematically, and make use of an analytical framework that asks about critical elements of design and implementation. A draft analytical framework is presented in the full evaluation report.

ENDNOTES

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- ⁴ http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/UNICEF_GLS_Web.pdf
- ⁵ UNAIDS (2009), *UNGASS Monitoring the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: Guidelines on Construction of Core Indicators*
- ⁶ United Nations Children's Fund, *Child Friendly Schools Manual*, UNICEF, New York, 2009.
- ⁷ United Nations Children's Fund, *Life Skill Learning and Teaching: Principles, concepts and standards*, UNICEF, 2010.
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- ⁹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute International Bureau of Education and GTZ (2008), *Learning to Live Together*, 2008.
- ¹⁰ Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, *Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, response, recovery*, INEE, 2010.
- ¹¹ Focusing Resources on Effective School Health, *FRESH M&E Framework: A generic framework for monitoring and evaluation of school health interventions*, 2010.
- ¹² Singh, M., *Understanding Life Skills*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Education, 2003, p. 5.
- ¹³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization International Bureau of Education, *Manual for Integrating HIV and AIDS in School Curricula*, 2006.
- ¹⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Report of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Life Skills in EFA*, 2004.
- ¹⁵ The evaluation framework is presented in the full version of the report as Annex 2, found at http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/UNICEF_GLS_Web.pdf

