

A new learning agenda for the realization of SDG 4 in MENA

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



JORDAN

Life Skills, Social Cohesion and
After-School Activities Programme



The **Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) Initiative**

has advanced at country level through national consultations and in-depth mappings undertaken in most of the MENA countries. LSCE is about reimagining what we learn and how we learn, and promoting open learning systems that put life skills at the core of the 21st century learning agenda at all levels. This requires reform of learning contents and teaching methods, curriculum, delivery and assessment systems, as well as the institutional environment in which learning takes place.

Engagement with this agenda may be approached from a different angle in different countries, depending on where the country is, and what provides a good entry point to push for the larger LSCE agenda.

In the case of Jordan, the focus has been on promoting school participation through creating safe and supportive school environments, fostering students' relationships, communication, conflict resolution and self-protection. This included the development of extra-curricular life skills interventions with a focus on the 12 core life skills of the LSCE Initiative for children aged 6 to 16.

Advancing life skills and social cohesion education in Jordan

Jordan's education system has been facing challenges in terms of offering quality learning opportunities to all children across the country. These challenges were exacerbated by the large influx of Syrian refugees. The Ministry of Education (MOE) together with partners have made significant efforts to increase equitable access to pre-primary, basic and secondary education for all children in Jordan, regardless of their nationality and status.

In March 2018, MOE launched the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2022. Anchored within Jordan's National Agenda for Human Resource Development and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), the ESP seeks to orchestrate collective efforts and leverage resources to strengthen the education system in the following six domains: early childhood education (ECE), access and equity, quality, teachers' development, system strengthening, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

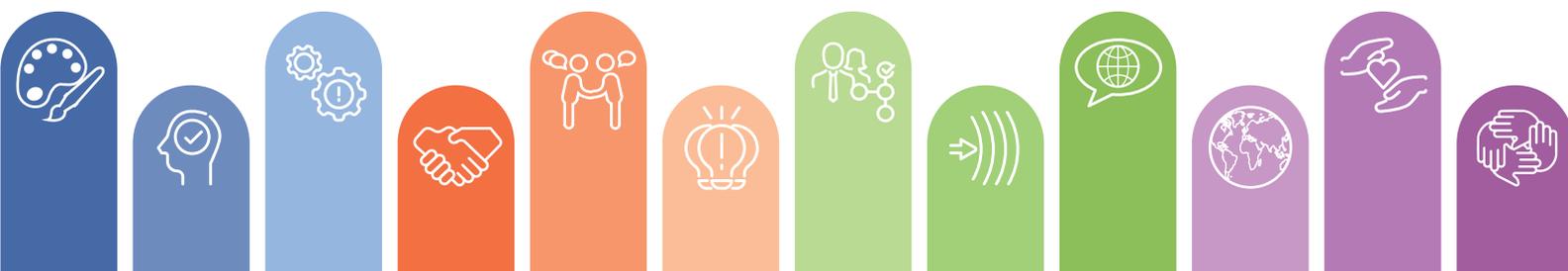
The new ESP adopts a student-centred approach to education and highlights the importance of combined curriculum activities in shaping the personalities of students and widening their horizons. This strategic shift is reflected in allocating 20 per cent of student's learning time to **complementary extra-curricular activities that focus on developing life skills**, an important development that will enable more children to participate in important extracurricular programmes like *Nashatati*.

In the fall of 2017, MOE launched the *Nashatati* (my activities, in Arabic) programme in public schools, in collaboration with UNICEF and Generations for Peace. The *Nashatati* Model of education programming is aligned with the vision of the LSCE agenda and aims to foster life skills and social cohesion, while increasing access for all vulnerable children to quality after-school activities. It aims to increase participation and greater psycho-social wellbeing of children and youth, ultimately leading to greater tolerance and appreciation of diversity, inter-personal acceptance, team-work, and shared sense of belonging.

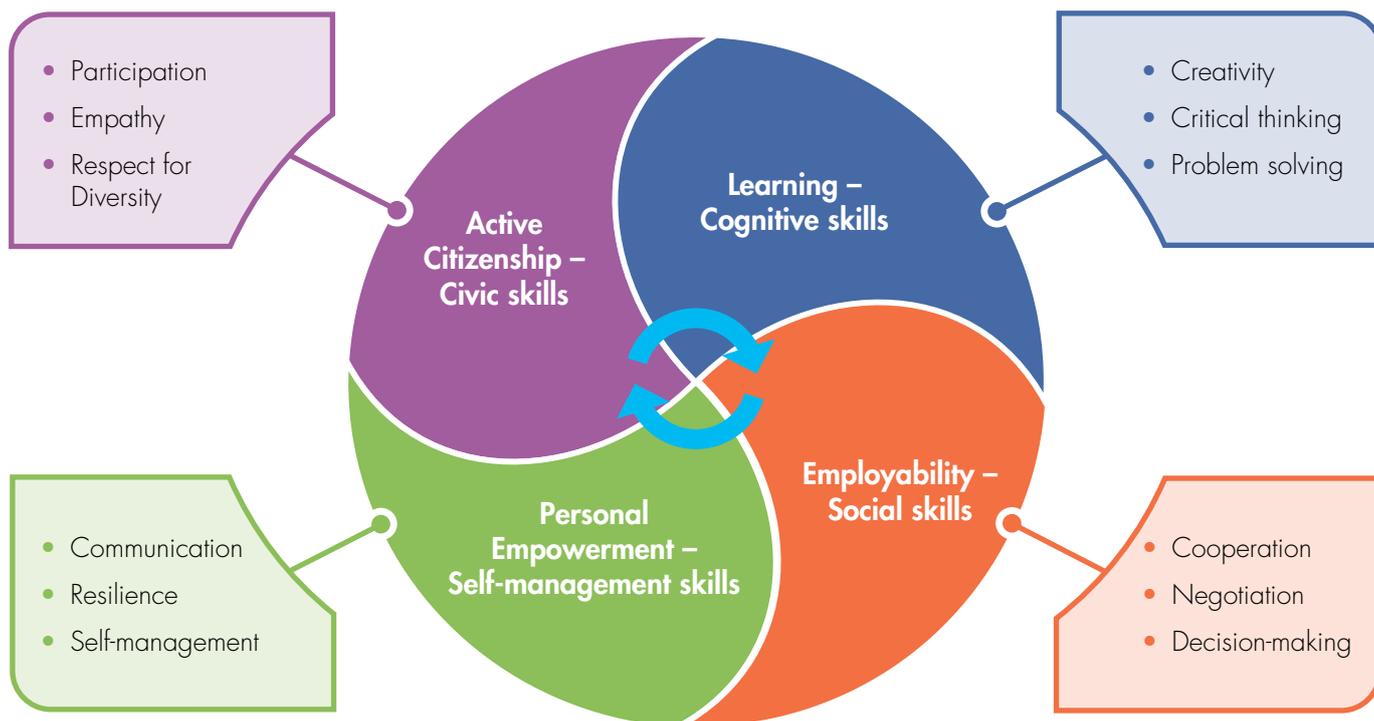
***Nashatati*: A cross-sectoral innovative approach for integrating life skills and social cohesion through after-school activities**

Nashatati targets all vulnerable school-age children aged 6 to 16, across all 12 governorates of Jordan, with creative learning activities such as sports and games that develop life skills and foster social cohesion, healthy living and personal development. In developing this programme, UNICEF, Generations for Peace and MOE considered a number of data and sources on the situation for all children in schools to ensure the extra-curricular programme would respond to a number of needs and issues facing children in schools. Violence is widespread in the school system in Jordan, with 15 per cent of children reporting staying out of school at least one day per year for fear of bullying or being physically attacked. In Jordan Global School-Based Student Health Survey from 2007, 41.6 per cent of students reported being bullied during the past 30 days. Compared with this statistic, 70 per cent of Syrian students in Jordan report being bullied in public schools.

The schools where *Nashatati* is implemented are selected based on defined criteria, including vulnerability of students, availability of a playground or safe outdoor space to accommodate activities, occurrences of violence (as the programme promotes social cohesion), and lack of existing extra-curricular interventions. During its pilot in the 2017/18 school year, the programme ran in 100 public schools, reaching 10,000 female and male students. It is expected to continue in the 2018/19 school year, providing a total of 60 hours of quality programming for each participating student during the school year, including sessions on Saturdays to receive both students and parents within a community and in support of sustained behaviour-change outcomes.



The *Nashatati* Conceptual Model and the 12 Core Life Skills



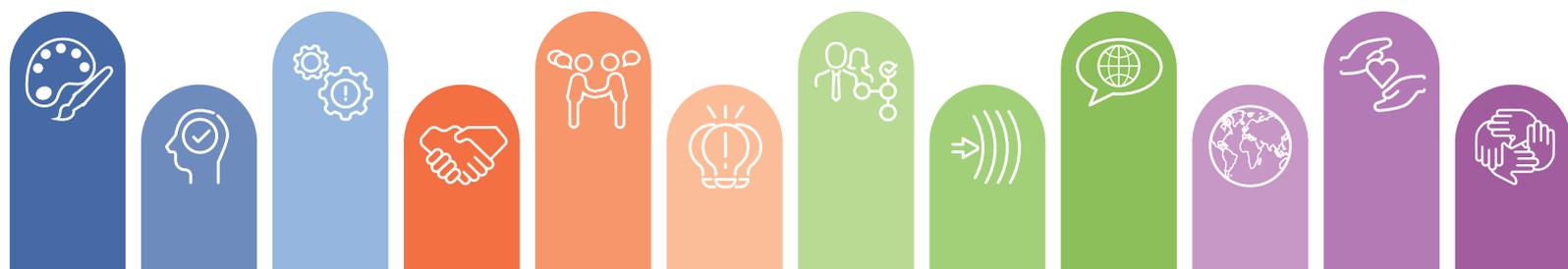
Preliminary results, lessons learnt and next steps

A participatory evaluation approach was taken to measure changes in participants' attitudes in terms of enhanced communication skills, self-esteem, appreciation of diversity, social cohesion, sense of belonging and hope for the future. The evaluation process engaged both teachers and students through focus groups, group discussions and writing and experience-sharing exercises. The process provided opportunities for all voices to be heard, and helped generate a sense of ownership among teachers and students.

The results from the participatory evaluation demonstrated that school teachers and students participating in the programme improved peer-to-peer relationships, increased confidence and tolerance, and enhanced communication and problem-solving skills and a greater sense of community. These results were further confirmed by comparison of the baselines set by an initial survey.

Nashatati and the impact on children and youth

- An increase of **20 per cent** among target group members' confidence in speaking in front of others.
- An increase of **20 per cent** of target group students reporting they would deal calmly with confrontation and not resort to violence.
- An increase of **21 per cent** of participant students who agreed that they are willing to play and work with other students of different ages and nationalities.



The pilot phase of *Nashatati* led to a number of lessons learnt that further inform the scale-up of the programme:

- The flexibility of learning interventions included in the programme curriculum design enabled *Nashatati* to best serve the needs identified at community level. This approach complements the available instructional time at school level in a way that best suits the community, children and school staff of each implementing school.
- One of the key factors leading to the success of the pilot is the ownership and support of the MOE from the onset of the programme. This led to smooth implementation and taking the programme to scale.
- The *Nashatati* programme has been designed to respond to UNICEF's strategic shift in terms of supporting and strengthening the capacity of national institutions in Jordan, ensuring cost efficiency and long-term sustainability.

UNICEF is exploring options with MOE for a gradual institutionalization of the programme within the instructional time allocated to extra-curricular activities across all schools in Jordan. The positive achievement of the *Nashatati* after-school programme within the early stages reveals the flexibility and scalability of the programme and possible integration within in-school activities. The flexibility in implementing the model can seamlessly suit different community needs and requirements.

Furthermore, the curriculum provides teachers with the flexibility to deliver the sessions as per the identified needs of specific student groups of different grades or schools.

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