Reimagining Life Skills and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa
A Four-Dimensional and Systems Approach to 21st Century Skills

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following organizations contributed to the development of the Conceptual and Programmatic Framework:

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BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY
Deutsche Post DHL Group
International Youth Foundation
Mercy Corps
NRC
Save the Children
UNICEF
UNIQA Foundation
UNICEF Norway
UNHCR
UNRWA
WFP
World Bank Group
E4C
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Executive Summary

1. The case for life skills and citizenship education in MENA

Children, youth and all learners in the Middle East and North Africa face unprecedented challenges in terms of learning, employment and social cohesion, aggravated by a context of political instability and conflicts. The general consensus is that education systems are broadly failing to deliver the outcomes needed to advance individual and social development, and that the increasing number of education opportunities in the region has yet to translate into economic growth.

Globally, a growing body of evidence suggests that successful performance in school, work and life needs to be supported by a wide range of skills and values, the development of which should be fostered by education systems. Ongoing education reforms in MENA have certainly led to positive achievements in the past 15 years, such as improving the access to formal basic education and closing the gender gap. However, there is a skills deficit in the region that is yet to be addressed in a qualitative, concerted and systemic way, and a comprehensive education reform in this regard remains a ‘road not taken’.

Constrained by traditional classroom teaching, learning techniques and examination practices, children and youth in MENA generally do not receive an education that is aligned with contemporary realities and labour market requirements. A far-reaching consequence is that they typically lack the skills to be successful at school and at work, and to become positive and active members of society. In addition, fragile learning environments exist where education has been increasingly used as an element of radicalization, by which the propagation of extreme belief systems taints children’s and youth’s educational experiences.

This situation calls for a holistic and transformative vision of education that maximizes the potential of all children and better equips them with life skills to face the transitions from childhood to adulthood, from education to work, and from unreflective development to responsible and active citizenship.

The MENA Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) Initiative represents a country and regional collaborative endeavour towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. It seeks to reformulate traditional understandings of life skills and citizenship education in the region, while recalling fundamental questions about the purpose and role of education in societal development that are relevant to the current context.

The LSCE Initiative focuses on three inter-locking challenges:

- An elusive knowledge society, as a result of poor quality of education, low levels of learning outcomes, and limited equity and inclusion.
- Declining economic growth, as a result of a lack of employability skills, high youth unemployment rates, gender disparities in accessing the labour market, lack of job creation, and a weak business environment.
- Weak social cohesion, as a result of mounting violence and radicalization as well as weak civic engagement.

The theory of change for the MENA LSCE Initiative is driven by the compelling need to achieve tangible impact in these three inter-related areas where life skills and citizenship education can make a difference: the achievement of a knowledge society through improved education outcomes; the realization of economic development through improved employment and entrepreneurship; and the attainment of enhanced social cohesion through improved civic engagement.

At the heart of the LSCE Initiative is the proposition of a rights-based and transformative vision of education that fosters successful individuals in the context of the workplace while fulfilling education’s role to enhance academic and personal development as well as social cohesion.
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2. The LSCE Initiative as a conceptual and programmatic collaborative endeavour of country, regional and global partners

The LSCE Initiative seeks to provide diverse stakeholders in MENA with an evidence-based framework for action towards the achievement of the above three inter-connected outcomes. It has two main components: (i) the development of a Conceptual and Programmatic Framework (CPF) on life skills and citizenship education that serves as a guide to strategy development and programming at the country level, and (ii) the organization of technical support to countries on planning and implementation.

An Analytical Mapping (AM) has been developed to provide the evidence for the CPF, including an overview of the status of life skills and citizenship education in MENA, and an indepth analysis of major initiatives and programmes at regional and national levels.

The LSCE Initiative brings together the active contribution of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), along with ministries of education and other national institutions responsible for education across the MENA countries.

The United Nations agencies partnering in the Initiative include: The International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), the World Bank, and the World Food Programme (WFP). NGOs and academic institutions include: Aflatoun International, the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR), Birzeit University (BZU), the International Youth Foundation (IYF), Mercy Corps, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and Save the Children. The Deutsche Post DHL is part of the Initiative as a representative of the private sector.

The LSCE Initiative was launched at the 2015 UNICEF MENA Education Network (MEdNet) Meeting, where country delegations endorsed the Initiative and expressed their intention to take the work on life skills and citizenship education forward at the country level. The development of the CPF advanced through multiple country and regional consultations, and technical meetings, earning the engagement of more than 600 stakeholders at national, regional and global levels, including representatives from government institutions (ministries of education, youth, social affairs and labour), regional and global organizations, United Nations agencies, NGOs, academic institutions and experts, the private sector, and children and youth.

3. Towards a conceptual understanding of life skills and citizenship education

The LSCE Initiative revisits the concept of life skills and citizenship education in MENA, while providing a roadmap that is relevant to the regional 21st century context. The development of the CPF has included an extensive mapping and review of national, regional and global definitions that reveal a lack of consensus on what should define and constitute the skills of the 21st century. Overall, the lack of clear definitions is coupled with conceptual confusion between ‘competencies’, ‘skills’ and ‘life skills’, and in many instances the terms are used interchangeably. Typically, the term ‘competency’ is used within the specific technical domain of curriculum development. In other cases, diverse and broad definitions of skills and life skills are adopted as part of ad hoc and dispersed social initiatives undertaken by the United Nations or international NGOs within the non-formal sphere. While the term ‘skill’ is mostly used to mean technical vocational abilities, the term ‘life skills’ often refers to the softer forms of skills related to daily life and civic engagement. Finally, in many cases, the discourse and practice on competencies, skills and life skills is not accompanied by rights-based values that are so much needed to address the challenges of the 21st century.

Within this context, a revised, holistic and clearer definition of the term ‘life skills and citizenship education’ is proposed, addressing both the existing conceptual and programmatic gaps through four essential premises:

- **A holistic approach to education**: The vision is underpinned by a holistic approach to education, considering the whole learner by acknowledging the multi-dimensionality of education, which plays not only into the cognitive, but also the individual and social realms, especially with regard to personal development, social cohesion and sustainable development. Quality education, within this framework, is envisioned as fostering empowered individuals who can learn effectively and fulfil their social responsibilities while also being successful in the context of the workplace.
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- **A humanistic and rights-based approach:** In relation to the above, quality education is not value-neutral and must have a transformative effect. Quality education needs to be sustained by a strong ethical foundation, which recognizes that education fosters human dignity, before economic performance, and promotes human rights-based values.

- **A lifelong learning cycle:** Life skills acquisition is understood as a cumulative investment from an early age, not only for adolescents and for adults. It builds on the assumption that, at every age, every individual is a learner in the context of a society that offers multiple opportunities throughout life to learn and fulfil personal potential, thus going beyond the traditional distinctions between initial and continuing education.

- **A multiple pathways and systems approach:** Quality education can be effective in fostering learning and individual empowerment, and creating an environment that enables social inter-connectedness. If life skills and citizenship education is furthered through multiple learning pathways, from formal education to informal settings to the workplace, it can reach all individuals. In turn, quality learning through life skills and citizenship education can be sustained only if it is mainstreamed in educational systems.

The following two sections provide an overview of the conceptual and programmatic components of the CPF.
4. **The Conceptual Framework**

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<th>Subject Areas</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive Dimension</strong></td>
<td>Skills for Learning</td>
<td>Curricular Disciplines (language, math, science, social studies, gender, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or 'Learning to Know'</td>
<td>(creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving)</td>
<td>Vocational Disciplines (carpentry, plumbing, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Instrumental Dimension</strong></td>
<td>Skills for Employability</td>
<td>Career Education (career guidance, financial literacy, job searching, etc.)</td>
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<td>or 'Learning to Do'</td>
<td>(cooperation, negotiation, decision-making)</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship Education (goal setting, business planning, marketing, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Dimension</strong></td>
<td>Skills for Personal Empowerment</td>
<td>Computer Literacy (ICT, social media, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or 'Learning to Be'</td>
<td>(self-management, resilience, communication)</td>
<td>Health Education (reproductive health, sexuality education, HIV/AIDS prevention, drug prevention, nutrition, hygiene, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social Dimension</strong></td>
<td>Skills for Active Citizenship</td>
<td>Environmental Education (water, pollution, climate change, recycling, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>or 'Learning to Live Together'</td>
<td>(respect for diversity, empathy, participation)</td>
<td>Emergency Education (disaster risk reduction and risk informed programming, mine risks, etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Peace Education (conflict resolution, negotiation, etc.)</td>
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<td>Civic Education (institutions of governance, duties and rights of citizens, etc.)</td>
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<td>Arts, Culture, Sports</td>
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4.1 The four Dimensions of Learning: a transformative vision of education for the 21st century

The CPF proposes a conceptual and definitional understanding of 21st-century skills based on a four-dimensional model of learning. This model consolidates and broadens the lifelong learning paradigm developed in the 1996 Delors report titled *Learning: The Treasure Within*, taking into consideration the subsequent developments in education and society. The CPF repositions the Delors report pillars of education as Dimensions of Learning to emphasize their dynamic nature.

The following four Dimensions of Learning underpin the working definition of life skills and citizenship education in the CPF:

- **‘Learning to Know’ or the Cognitive Dimension:** This Dimension includes the development of abilities involving concentration, problem-solving and critical thinking, as well as emphasizes curiosity and creativity as the desire to gain a better understanding of the world and other people. The concept of ‘Learning to Know’ has become increasingly prominent, since it further underpins the acquisition of fundamental basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and Information Communications Technology (ICT) skills. The Cognitive Dimension of Learning is therefore necessary to develop new skills and to ensure acquisition of new knowledge.

- **‘Learning to Do’ or the Instrumental Dimension:** This Dimension considers how children and youth can be supported to put what they have learned into practice and how education can be adapted to better serve the world of work. This is anticipated in Bloom’s 1956 *Taxonomy of Learning Domains* with the concept of application, i.e., putting theoretical learning into practice in everyday contexts. Learning for the fast-changing world of work should respond to the evolving demands of the labour market, new technologies and the needs of young people as they make the transition from education to work.

- **‘Learning to Be’ or the Individual Dimension:** This Dimension entails learning as self-fulfilment, personal growth and supportive of self-empowerment and includes cognitive, intra-personal and interpersonal skills. Personal growth encompasses both personal and social factors. Skills developed under this Dimension are important for self-protection, violence prevention and resilience, as such they should be considered as enablers for other Dimensions of Learning.

- **‘Learning to Live Together’ or the Social Dimension:** This is the ethical Dimension that underpins the vision for citizenship education in MENA. It adopts a human rights-based approach consistent with democratic and social justice values and principles, and it constitutes the ethical foundation of the three other Dimensions of Learning (Cognitive, Instrumental and Individual). Equally important, citizenship education aims to be relevant in MENA by engaging with the most poignant challenges facing the region.

These four Dimensions of Learning should not be considered as distinct and mutually exclusive; the reality is much more dynamic. The four Dimensions of Learning **overlap, inter-connect and reinforce one another** to combine in the individual learner. As such they offer a framework for looking at life skills in relation to different purposes of learning, and that constitute a practical tool for informing the selection of skills that are relevant for quality learning. It should be noted that many life skills can be applied simultaneously in all four Dimensions of Learning. The selection of skills for each Dimension includes a necessary judgement about their relative importance for the particular Dimension.
4.2 The twelve core life skills for MENA

Life skills are defined within the CPF as cognitive and non-cognitive, higher-order, transversal and transferrable skills for learning, for employability, for personal empowerment, and for active citizenship. Citizenship education is an inseparable component of life skills education that emphasizes the need for social transformation and refers to the capabilities and energies that can foster open societies, harness the enthusiasm and motivation of younger generations, and provide them with the tools to build a better future for their communities and the region.

A set of 12 core life skills for MENA has been identified using the four-dimensional model. They are: creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, cooperation, negotiation, decision-making, self-management, resilience, communication, respect for diversity, empathy and participation (see figure on the next page).

The identification and selection of the core life skills was informed by an extensive literature review, and by regional and national consultations conducted as part of the LSCE Initiative. Identification and selection was achieved through a threefold process. First, it included a comprehensive analytical listing of a ‘cluster of skills’ under each of the four Dimensions of Learning, guided by the key socio-economic issues to be addressed: enhancing quality education and learning outcomes, enhancing employability and entrepreneurship, and enhancing individual empowerment and civic engagement. Second, for each of the four Dimensions, a set of three skills was identified based on their relative importance and implication for the particular Dimension, and on their inclusion of several other skills (or sub-skills). Third, an in-depth analysis was conducted for each of the 12 core life skills, highlighting, through evidence, their objectives, their particular contribution to their related Dimension, as well as their contribution to the other three Dimensions of Learning. Each of the 12 core life skills, therefore, when analysed and applied from this perspective, provide learners with a solid comprehensive approach to learning that is value-based.

Indeed, it is important to note that the 12 identified core life skills are not value-neutral. They reflect a holistic and transformative vision for quality education based on a strong ethical foundation, which recognizes that education needs to foster human dignity and promote human rights-based values. Unlike existing frameworks at use, the focus of the 12 core life skills for MENA does not solely aim to gear education towards the achievement of successful individual performance in the context of the workplace and does not consider education primarily as an economic activity geared to maximize growth and productivity. Equally important, the 12 core life skills are featured within an approach to ‘rethink education’ in a way that fulfils its role in enhancing social cohesion; they are aligned with relevant citizenship and humanitarian frameworks conceived to care for and respect other human beings, as well as to minimize or prevent the use of violence.

The 12 core life skills are lifelong and they build on evidence that underlines the importance of skills acquisition from an early age, addressing the ‘bias’ that exists in the education community of linking skills acquisition only to the adolescent and youth ages. The importance of the cumulative investment in skill acquisition is recognized in the CPF. Furthermore, the 12 core life skills are acquired and sustained through all forms of learning in a systems approach that recognizes multiple pathways of learning, formal, non-formal and informal.

4.3 The twelve core life skills and subject areas

The CPF provides examples that clarify the difference between skills and relevant subject areas. It also defines key opportunities where learning could be improved through a focus on the 12 core life skills. Subject areas should be understood as thematic, technical, academic or knowledge subject areas where life skills and citizenship education need to be integrated. They include curricular and vocational disciplines, career and entrepreneurship education, computer literacy, health and environmental education, emergency education, civic education, arts, culture and sports, etc. Subject areas are often confused with life skills. However, they need to be seen as areas to be underpinned by life skills and citizenship education in order to support the acquisition of the core life skills.

For example, curricular disciplines refer to the main subjects of national curricula, such as language, mathematics and science, social studies, etc. A life skills and citizenship education approach is relevant to all of these, and a key issue is to ensure consistency across the curriculum. It is likely to be an ineffective strategy to only focus on the core life skills in one subject among many in the curriculum without ensuring a coherent and comprehensive approach.
Vocational disciplines are also key subject areas where life skills and citizenship education need to be embedded in order to increase access to these disciplines and enhance their relevance. Good quality demand-driven Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (based on life skills and citizenship education) is potentially one of the most important pathways for providing young people with skills, and enhancing employability. In addition, career and entrepreneurship education within the framework of employability programmes in MENA represent key subject areas where life skills and citizenship education need to be embedded. Beyond the theoretical understanding of entrepreneurship, children and youth need to be supported in the development of core life skills to ensure that they can effectively achieve the objectives of these programmes.
5. **The Programmatic Framework**

### Systems Approach

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<td>Social Engagement (volunteer and community work; scouting; social media)</td>
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### Teaching and Learning Approaches

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<td>Stand-alone and Integrated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-learning, Face-to-face, Online, Media, Blended, Open and Distance Learning</td>
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### Conceptual and Programmatic Framework (CPF) for LSCE

- **School-based Management**
- **Emergency Education** (disaster risk reduction and risk informed programming, mine risks, etc.)
- **Peace Education** (conflict resolution, negotiation, etc.)
- **Civic Education** (institutions of governance, duties and rights of citizens, etc.)
- **Arts, Culture, Sports**
- **Etc.**

**Curricular Disciplines** (language, math, science, social studies, gender, etc.)

**Vocational Disciplines** (carpentry, plumbing, etc.)

**Career Education** (career guidance, financial literacy, job searching, etc.)

**Entrepreneurship Education** (goal setting, business planning, marketing, etc.)

**Computer Literacy** (ICT, social media, etc.)

**Health Education** (reproductive health, sexuality education, HIV/AIDS prevention, drug prevention, nutrition, hygiene, etc.)

**Environmental Education** (water, pollution, climate change, recycling, etc.)

**Emergency Education** (disaster risk reduction and risk informed programming, mine risks, etc.)

**Peace Education** (conflict resolution, negotiation, etc.)

**Civic Education** (institutions of governance, duties and rights of citizens, etc.)

**Arts, Culture, Sports**

**Etc.**

**Social Engagement** (volunteer and community work; scouting; social media)

**Child Protection** (child entered safe spaces; child protection centers)
5.1 The pedagogical strategies supporting the acquisition of the twelve core life skills

Teaching and learning approaches are positioned at the intersection between concept and programming. This is in recognition of the pivotal role of effective pedagogy and the high importance of skilled and motivated teachers and facilitators to ensure quality learning. The CPF highlights the pedagogical strategies needed to foster the acquisition of the 12 core life skills. These include socio-emotional learning (SEL), child-centred methodologies, activity-based learning, positive discipline and psychosocial support, among others.

The experience of successful education reforms indicates that equipping and supporting teachers to practice active learning methods can bring about significant change in learning outcomes and best supports life skills and citizenship education. It involves a learner-centred approach in which the process of teaching and learning is highly important; so much so that it can be considered more process-centred than product-centred. Participatory teaching and learning approaches are important in all aspects of life skills and citizenship education, where the rationale is to engage children and youth in the learning process and enable them to personalize knowledge and apply it to their own lives. Children and youth need to become reflective, self-aware learners, conscious of their strengths and weaknesses, and capable of setting their own learning goals.

Creating a safe learning environment in which all learners can participate is fundamental to effective life skills and citizenship education. This means that learners are physically protected, socially and emotionally safe, and all are treated equitably, respectfully and fairly. The classroom climate should be positive and free from fear. Discipline should be positive and not punitive (which is counter-productive to the ethos of life skills and citizenship education).

Teachers and facilitators have a critical role in putting active learning into practice. The teacher, in an active classroom environment, is an enabler, facilitating learning rather than transmitting knowledge to the learner. Instead of focusing on asking questions, the teacher needs to encourage learners to ask questions themselves and to play a role in their own learning. The role of the teacher is often that of a facilitator, supporting learners as they learn and develop skills. In this approach, it is important that the teacher has a full understanding on the methods that enable the learner to learn effectively.

The figure below illustrates the main teaching and learning principles that contribute to the operationalization of the 12 core life skills.
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5.2 A multiple pathways approach: channels and modalities of delivery

A multiple pathways approach is essential for mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education and recognizes that life skills need to be developed along several and different educational pathways, from pre-primary to post-basic education, including formal and non-formal education, on the road to and in the workplace, through social engagement and child protection. It also acknowledges the different modalities through which life skills and citizenship education can be delivered, such as traditional face-to-face instruction and more innovative blended learning. A multiple pathways approach meets the increasing complexity of the knowledge-based economy and the rapid changes taking place in society more generally. It acknowledges that learning can take place at different times and in different settings. The same qualifications can be attained by following different learning pathways with different providers.

A multiple pathways approach has further benefits. It maximizes participation and safeguards equity and inclusiveness through targeting of marginalized populations. It is also needed to ensure coherence in interventions and messages within different environments where children and youth learn.

In addition to the various channels, there are multiple delivery modalities available for programming. These include curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular approaches. The CPF highlights several curricular options used to mainstream life skill and citizenship education in national curricula. In MENA, the common approach has been to introduce life skills and citizenship education as a stand-alone subject in the curriculum. This has often been a result of different initiatives that have variously supported HIV education, school health and nutrition, and education for sustainable development. However, life skills and citizenship education should ideally be progressively integrated across the curriculum in all subjects, within the framework of curriculum reforms. In Tunisia, the 12 core life skills are being integrated as part of the national curriculum reform, representing a unique and visionary example for their operationalization through the curricular modality.

Along with the curricular modality, life skills and citizenship education is often implemented through co-curricular and extra-curricular interventions. In MENA, the main focus is on extra-curricular approaches, as confirmed by the findings of the AM. On the other hand, promising practices highlight the importance of accompanying the curricula with co-curricular interventions. An example is the 'learning objects’ approach, which has been piloted and evaluated by the Center for Continuing Education at Birzeit University in the State of Palestine and is aligned with the requirements of the Palestinian curriculum. Consideration of what is the best modality to adopt has been part of the discourse of the LSCE Initiative. The CPF advocates for the optimal combination of these modalities for effective teaching and learning of the 12 core life skills.

5.3 A systems approach

The findings of the AM show that life skills and citizenship education is poorly integrated in existing national policies, strategies and plans, with limited national assessments and weak participatory involvement of different stakeholders. This is coupled with a lack of effective national coordination frameworks representing the different stakeholders involved in life skills and citizenship education. Programmes in MENA have limited scalability and coordination among relevant governmental organizations, and the private sector is weak. Overall, they remain sporadic, unsupervised and face sustainability risks. In addition, there are limited regulatory frameworks linking formal and non-formal education with limited or no recognition or accreditation of alternative learning opportunities.

The CPF proposes a systems approach to programming for life skills and citizenship education, anchored to national education systems. A systems approach is required to achieve critical mass; national impact cannot be realized through the implementation of unconnected small-scale interventions at the margins of the education system. The systems approach to programming for life skills and citizenship education also warrants an equity focus because it can invest data, analysis and monitoring in tracking and targeting as means to maximize the impact of learning opportunities available to children and youth.

The mainstreaming of life skills and citizenship education within national education systems requires coordinated programmatic interventions that look at the totality of system components. To ensure national coverage, quality of learning processes and outcomes, as well as financial sustainability, it is necessary for countries to have national policies, strategies and plans with budgets to support the implementation of life skills and citizenship education.

Coordination and partnership frameworks between the ministries of education and other ministries, NGOs and the private sector – as part of a systems approach – are also key to ensuring coherent...
approaches and efficient use of resources (human and financial). This calls for the identification of complementary and supportive roles within a coherent framework, together with regulatory mechanisms to ensure quality delivery as well as accreditation and certification.

Schools play a critical role in ensuring the realization of life skills and citizenship education. A systems approach recognizes that schools need to be supported within the framework of clear national policy mandates and the provision of necessary resources for them to build a conducive school ethos that fosters learning. In particular, schools need to have control over their interventions, as well as the tools for performing their own monitoring.

Human resources are the fundamental basis of effective life skills and citizenship education programming. These include not only teachers, but also head-teachers and all education personnel involved in supporting teaching and learning processes, whether in formal, non-formal or informal education settings. Specific attention should be given to the role of school counsellors as an important resource for skills development.

An enabling environment, political will, commitment and cooperation among partners, and a shared vision are the assumptions that underpin the theory of change for the LSCE Initiative. In particular, parental and community mobilization are essential for creating and sustaining a conducive environment for life skills and citizenship education. In this context, the development of coherent Communication for Development (C4D) strategies reflect the need for a multi-pronged approach that addresses further communication with care-givers, children and youth.

6. Travelling the road: the operationalization of the twelve core life skills at the country level

Achieving the vision set forth in the CPF requires a strategic approach towards the reforms needed to strengthen and mainstream life skills and citizenship education within and around education systems. This calls for the adoption of a ‘strategic incrementalism’ that aims at maximizing the opportunities available for programming. Through the multiple pathways and systems approach the CPF further identifies the key entry points that can become pressure points to achieve scale, sustainability and long-term change within national education systems.

In this regard, the strong commitment, leadership and engagement of ministries of education are of paramount importance in fostering substantial change in the education system, and beyond, to achieve quality and regulation of interventions, scale, sustainability and impact on learning, employability and social cohesion. Other ministries (for example ministries of youth) and other stakeholders (such as NGOs) engaged in life skills and citizenship education would need to be brought together within frameworks of collaboration, to ensure quality, sustainability and impact.

The operationalization of the 12 core life skills, identified as part of the LSCE core life skills, will be further supported through the development of an evidence-based assessment methodology and tools to measure the 12 core life skills. The methodology will offer a standardized approach to be adapted for localized interventions both in formal and non-formal settings across the region.

The CPF is an evolving regional framework to be tested and refined at the national level. The main recommendations of the CPF define a way forward for life skills and citizenship education programming in MENA that includes short, medium and long-term perspectives. Technical support will be provided to countries in terms of upstream engagement towards multi-sectoral collaboration, policy and strategy development, integration of life skills and citizenship education in national curricula, as well as programmatic interventions including the piloting of co-curricular and extra-curricular interventions within the multiple pathways and systems approach.

Functioning as a roadmap for the region, the CPF is a comprehensive framework that combines three main building blocks: (i) a holistic vision and working definition of life skills and citizenship education; (ii) a multiple pathways approach through which life skills and citizenship education can be implemented; and (iii) a systems approach to anchor interventions within national education systems. The figure on the next page provides the complete visual representation of the CPF that defines the impact and outcomes that it aims to achieve, while unpacking the main components already described within each building block.
Executive Summary

**Clear Holistic Vision and Working Definition of Life Skills and Citizenship Education**

**Skills Clusters**
- Skills for Learning (creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving)
- Skills for Employability (cooperation, negotiation, decision-making)
- Skills for Personal Empowerment (self-management, resilience, communication)
- Skills for Active Citizenship (respect for diversity, empathy, participation)

**Dimensions of Learning**
- **Cognitive Dimension** or Learning to Know
- **Instrumental Dimension** or Learning to Do
- **Individual Dimension** or Learning to Be
- **Social Dimension** or Learning to Live Together

**Channels of Delivery**
- Formal Education
- Non-formal and Informal Education
- Workplace and Road to Workplaces
- Social Engagement (volunteer and community work; scouting; social media)
- Child Protection (child entered safe spaces; child protection centers)

**Modalities of Delivery**
- Curriculum, Co-curricular and Extra-curricular
- Stand-alone and Integrated
- Self-learning, Face-to-face, Online, Media, Blended, Open and Distance Learning

**Teaching and Learning Approaches**
- Child-centered and inclusive approaches
- Classroom management
- Positive discipline
- Psychosocial support

**Impact Outcomes**
- Knowledge Society through Improved Education Outcomes
- Economic Development through Improved Employment and Entrepreneurship
- Social Cohesion through Improved Civic Engagement

**Systems Approach**
- National Policies
- Plans and Strategies
- Coordination and Partnership Frameworks
- Budgeting and Financing
- School-based Management
- Human Resources and Capacity Development
- Communication and Community Participation

**Multiple Pathways**
- Impact
- Knowledge Society through Improved Education Outcomes
- Economic Development through Improved Employment and Entrepreneurship
- Social Cohesion through Improved Civic Engagement

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**Subject Areas**
- Curricular Disciplines
- Vocational Disciplines
- Career Education
- Entrepreneurship Education
- Computer Literacy
- Health Education
- Environmental Education
- Emergency Education
- Peace Education
- Civic Education
- Arts, Culture, Sports

**School-based Management**
7. **Navigating the Conceptual and Programmatic Framework**

The CPF is structured in the following four chapters:

1. **A transformative vision of education for the 21st century**: This chapter outlines first the challenges that the LSCE CPF seeks to address through the proposed rights-based and holistic vision of education. It then unpacks the conceptual field around life skills and citizenship education, and provides a renewed understanding that builds on the strengths and resolves weaknesses of existing frameworks. Finally, the chapter presents the contours of the proposed LSCE CPF based on conceptual and programmatic building blocks as well as a higher-order theory of change.

2. **The Conceptual Framework**: This chapter analyses first the holistic vision of the four Dimensions of Learning. It then unpacks each Dimension through the identification of related life skills. It further presents the selected 12 core life skills in detail together with their relevance to each of the four Dimensions of Learning. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the subject areas through which life skills and citizenship education are realized.

3. **The Programmatic Framework**: This chapter outlines first the necessary teaching and learning approaches for life skills and citizenship education. It then unpacks the diverse channels and modalities for delivering life skills and citizenship education. It also analyses the key components of a systems approach and the final section proposes a three-pronged monitoring and evaluation strategy.

4. **Travelling the road**: This section proposes steps for translating the CPF into action and operationalization at the country level. It advocates particularly for strategic incrementalism as an approach to ensure sustainable, scalable, system-wide and lifelong interventions, recognizing especially the leadership of ministries of education.
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