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Abstract

The present thesis examines the different theories and approaches of life skills and life skills education. First, the concepts are explained and the terminology is outlined. Then the historical development of the approach is presented. The focus is put on the primary education sector in Uganda as well as the development and implementation of a countrywide life skills education programme. Furthermore, the effects of life skills education are analysed with the help of a case study, conducted at a specific Ugandan primary school. Additionally, the link between education and development, as well as a historical overview of their connection, is described.

Kurzfassung

In der vorliegenden Arbeit wird der Bildungsansatz der sogenannten Lebenskompetenzen (Life Skills Education) untersucht. Hierbei werden einerseits das Konzepte und die verschiedenen Begrifflichkeiten erläutert, andererseits wird auf die historische Entwicklung des Ansatzes eingegangen. Ein besonderer Fokus wird auf die Volksschulbildung in Uganda gelegt, wobei sowohl das Volksschulsystem als auch das Life Skills Bildungs-Programm des Landes betrachtet wird. Anhand eines Volksschulprojekts in Kampala werden die konkrete Anwendung und Vermittlung von Lebenskompetenzen dargestellt und deren Effekte analysiert. Außerdem wird der Zusammenhang zwischen Bildung und Entwicklung anhand unterschiedlicher Theorien und Debatten dargestellt.

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1. Introduction

‘Change is the end result of all true learning.’

(Leo Buscaglia)

Like Leo Buscaglia, many people see learning and education as the key to bringing about change in the world. For each and every person, this has a different meaning. Whereas some people strive for a positive change in their own lives in the form of wealth or work-related success, others want to promote freedom and a peaceful coexistence. What unites most of them is the idea that education improves their lives and empowers them to act.

Education can happen in many different ways and, at best, leaves people with skills that allow them to unlock their full potential, to reach their goals, and to effectively tackle daily challenges. In several curricula around the world, special life skills education programmes are implemented. They promote competencies, which every person should have to optimally develop oneself both mentally and physically, and which consequently enable people to take responsibility for their lives.

Several development agendas, which mostly promote a positive correlation between education and development, also support life skills. As a consequence, some governments have already adapted these programmes and started to implement them. The government of Uganda, for instance, introduced a life skills education curriculum in their primary education sector, hoping to tackle the country’s various challenges. Nationwide, schools are required to implement life skills education into their lesson plans. This has brought many new challenges for teachers, school directors, and the Ministry of Education, as well as for the pupils.

In the present study, the different theories of life skills and life skills education are represented. Furthermore, the development and implementation of a life skills education programme, focussing on the primary education sector in Uganda, is outlined. The effects of life skills education are analysed with the help of a case study, conducted at a specific Ugandan primary school. Additionally, the link between education and development, as well as a historical overview of their connection, is described.

2. Methodology and Research Design

Below, an overview is given about the background of the study and its objectives. The research question and research goals are then outlined, and the methodological approach of the study is explained.

2.1 Background of the Study

The effectiveness and value of education in development are main issues when it comes to the development discourse. The phase of Enlightenment and the pedagogy of Humboldt have shaped the picture of education as a helpful means to bring about positive change in society. Besides that, the human capital theory contributes to this idea of education as it tries to measure how investments in education can lead to economic growth and to an increase in income. Additionally, the theory shows how education can promote social cohesion, health, and lower crime rates. Nevertheless, there are critical voices who question an overall positive impact of education, such as critical social and educational studies. They claim that education can also increase social inequality and intensify social conflicts (Langthaler 2013:1).

Meyer and Ramirez have discovered that education faces a global institutionalisation. This means that national states follow certain goals (e.g. higher employment rates), which they attempt to reach through standardised solution approaches. In these processes, education is an important element to reach said targets. Consequently, governments see education as an essential component of modern national states. The global institutionalisation and standardisation of education has also placed high pressure on national governments and their education policy. For this reason, developing countries have mostly tried to copy the education systems of the dominant Western world, whose education approaches and goals were also adopted in international organisations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, or the OECD (Meyer/Ramirez 2005: 216-229). Nevertheless, it is important to mention that the education systems were often forced on developing countries by their respective colonial powers, rather than voluntarily copied.

In accordance with a worldwide convergence of educational systems, development cooperation mostly follows a very functionalistic perspective of education, which has been strongly influenced by the human capital theory since the 1980s. Consequently, education was and often is seen in a very positive and optimistic way, as evidenced by international programmes such as the Education for All approach, the Millennium

Development Goals, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Nevertheless, this convergence on an international level also comes with several disadvantages, which have led to alternative education approaches (Langthaler 2013:1).

Life skills education refers to this positive view of education and, in earlier days, life skills were taught in several regions of the world to improve child and youth development, as well as promote better health within societies. Nevertheless, life skills education started to gain international attention in the *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion* of 1986. In the 1989 *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, life skills were linked to supporting children and adolescents to fully unlock their potential. Other international conventions and declarations have been signed, in which life skills education programmes are seen as a method to overcoming certain (health) problems and other challenges in society. In addition, a positive outcome is expected in children's lives, in the form of better performance in school, a better understanding of themselves and their bodies, critical thinking, and better social interactions (WHO 2015).

In Uganda, the basis for life skills education is set by the agenda of *Universal Primary Education* (UPE). In the country, the implementation of UPE is also a consequence of a series of different initiatives, laws, and programmes. One example is the Constitution of Uganda (version of 1995), in which the importance of and the right to education for children is emphasised. Additionally, other major international initiatives like *Education for All*, the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs), and the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) support the idea of teaching life skills in schools. The introduction of UPE has especially led to a drastic increase in school enrolment in primary education. Still, there are other major reasons why life skills education was introduced in Ugandan primary schools: first, Uganda has one of the youngest populations on earth and, therefore, faces certain challenges. These include a high unemployment and poverty rate among children and adolescents, a high demand for appropriate educational opportunities, and social work for children growing up under difficult circumstances. Second, the high HIV/AIDS rate in Uganda renders many children orphans. As a result, these children must leave school and work to earn their living, and are at risk of becoming criminals or drug addicts. To appropriately react to all of these challenges, the government of Uganda has implemented a life skills curriculum at their primary school level (Ministry of Education and Sports 2011: 1-3). Since the implementation, several primary schools in Uganda

have adopted the life skills curriculum and teach life skills in daily lessons. Still, there is a long way to go until life skills are taught in every primary school in Uganda.

The author of this master's thesis was involved in the foundation of a school project in Kampala, Uganda, where life skills education was implemented: *Daystar Nursery and Primary School Kirombe (Uganda)*. The primary school project was initiated with local partners who live in Kirombe and have much experience in teaching life skills to children and adults. The project and the school are described in detail in chapter 7.

2.2 Research Goals and Research Question

The purpose of this study is to explore the implementation of life skills education in Ugandan primary education. The primary education sector is chosen because various international organisations and life skills education programmes put their focus on it. In this context, Uganda has introduced its own life skills curriculum for primary school teachers. On the basis of a case study of *Daystar Nursery and Primary School Kirombe (Uganda)*, a closer analysis is made on how life skills education programmes are implemented in Uganda and in what way they can be a tool to tackle local problems, while especially considering given local conditions.

Furthermore, it is the goal of this study to give an overview of the definitions and international understandings of life skills and life skills education and to illustrate possibilities and challenges of the concept, as well as to show how such programmes can be implemented in schools. Additionally, the study analyses the possibility for life skills education to include social and economic conditions, and consequently, to take account of the needs and demands of the people involved in life skills education programmes.

As a basis for the study on life skills and life skills education, several theories and approaches are examined, and the link between development policies and strategies concerning education is analysed. In this perspective, the different theories and debates of international actors, and their positive and negative consequences for education policies and the people which they are affecting, are in focus. The goal is to collect various scientific information and findings from research papers and dissertations and to demonstrate how they have also influenced the discussion of how education affects development. In this regard, life skills education programmes are analysed based on how they can support development as well.

The major focus of the research is placed on the concepts of life skills and life skills education. In-detail definitions and concepts of different actors implementing life skills and life skills education are given. This also includes a historical overview of how the concept of life skills developed. Additionally, the concept as a whole is introduced and explained. Risks and difficulties of life skills education programmes are analysed as well.

To analyse the implementation, effects, and impacts of life skills education in the primary education sector, Uganda is used as an example. Country-specific problems, which, according to the Ugandan government, make life skills education in primary schools necessary, are taken into consideration. Furthermore, the challenges concerning the implementation and use of life skills education are discussed as well.

Specifically, the above-mentioned school project of Daystar School is used as an example of how a life skills education programme is integrated into the daily schedule of a primary school in Uganda, and how it affects the daily lives of the children in the community. In detail, the goals are, on the one hand, to explore the implementation of life skills education in the school and to analyse the learning progress of the pupils involved. On the other hand, cooperation between the parents, the community, and the Ministry of Education, when it comes to the life skills education programmes, is a focus of the research. Positive effects and difficulties of life skills education are outlined. In addition, certain challenges faced during the implementation process of life skills education within the school are discussed.

Based on the goals above, the main research question is:

How are life skills education programmes implemented in Ugandan primary education, and what effects can they bring?

The following specific sub-questions also guided the study:

- What role does education play in the development context?
- What definitions and concepts shape the discourse concerning life skills and life skills education?
- How can life skills education programmes be implemented in schools?
- How are life skills implemented in a Ugandan primary school (case study of Daystar School, Uganda)?

- What effects does the implementation of life skills have at a Ugandan primary school (case study of Daystar School, Uganda)?
- Does life skills education offer a chance to include local conditions and needs in education programmes in the context of development?

It is important to emphasise that the research and analysis of the life skills education at Daystar Primary School only focus on a very limited area in and around the school. Also, at the implementation of the study, the school project had just been founded with limited classes, and it is still in the process of growing today. Therefore, research could only be conducted in three classes (Primary 1, Primary 2, and Primary 3). Consequently, the findings cannot be generalised to all of Uganda, all primary schools, classes, or even age groups. Also, the problem and biggest challenge remains to accurately measure the effects of education in general.

2.3 Methodological Approach

To effectively follow the different research goals, several research methods are used in this study. Accordingly, the methodological approach is composed of a literature review, participant observation, which includes the use of a research diary, and a guideline-based interview.

The literature review of different research studies is used to outline the connection and mutual interdependency of education and development. Furthermore, the different notions of education in the development discourse and their impact are depicted. Also, the various theories on life skills and life skills education are analysed in a review of several working papers and (inter)national conventions that support such education programmes. This also includes an analysis of the life skills education programmes of the Ugandan government and their goals and methods. In this analysis, the '*Life Skills Curriculum for Ugandan Primary Education*' plays a major role. In addition, a study conducted by John Kissiibo Wilson Bwayo, which deals with the topic of '*Primary School Pupils' Life Skills Development: The Case for Primary School Pupils' Development in Uganda*', is used as a major reference point for how life skills education was developed and is implemented in the Ugandan primary school system. Bwayo's study is especially helpful, as there is only limited (access to) data concerning life skills education in Uganda.

In this paper, a case study is used as a qualitative research method to supplement the literature review. The case study focusses on Daystar Nursery and Primary School, Uganda, and is used for several reasons. On the one hand, the advantage of the case study is that it helps to analyse real life situations and, consequently, makes it possible to directly observe an implemented life skills education programme as it unfolds in practice (Flyvbjerg 2006: 235). On the other hand, the case study makes it possible to find information that was not initially anticipated to be found (Krusenvik 2016: 5). Besides that, the method supports '*the understanding of interwoven complexities associated with interpersonal processes that emerge in a wider social context*' (Cronin 2014: 20). Lastly, the case study offers the opportunity to make direct observations in the specific environment being analysed and, it gives access to subjective factors like opinions and attitudes (Krusenvik 2016: 5-6). This particular case study consists of a four-week participant observation of the life skills lessons conducted in the different school classes (Primary 1 – Primary 3) at Daystar School. In addition to lesson observations, the general behaviour of the pupils at the school was observed, and possible changes due to life skills education were analysed. A research diary was used to record the results. Additionally, guideline-based interviews with pupils, parents, teachers, the school administrator, and an employee at the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports were conducted to more precisely analyse the implementation and results of life skills education. As mentioned above, Daystar School is a relatively new school, and the research concerning the effects of life skills education was conducted in 2015 when the school was opened. Still, continuous interviews and discussions (summarised in Interview 1) with the school director within the last three years support and enhance the findings.

3. Education and Development

Since its beginning, education has played a key role in the development discourse. Despite its importance, there are many ups and downs in the history of the connection between education and development. The following chapter takes a closer look at different theories of education in the context of development, as well as some debates and criticism.

3.1 Theories and Debates

When talking about education and development, two main notions are focussed on in the debate. The first concept deals with the idea of education having a linear impact on development. This includes the human capital approach of the neoclassical economy and sociological theories based on structural functionalism. The former emphasises the importance of technical progress, and higher productivity through better education, for long-term growth of the economy. The latter views education as a means to tackle different types of social issues such as economic growth, income, birth rate, health, level of crime, or political engagement. These approaches have a strong influence on education in the development discourse, as they are the basis for different actions of the World Bank (Langthaler 2015: 33-34).

The second concept, with its theoretical approaches, sees the relationship between education and development as a more contextual one. Here, education has an indirect and contingent influence on development. This means that there is mutual influence between education on the one hand, and economic, political, social and cultural conditions on the other hand. Representatives of this concept emphasize that education alone cannot initiate development. It also requires other advantageous economic and social parameters (Langthaler 2015: 34-35).

As outlined in chapter 4, life skills education takes a great deal from the first linear concept, as it focuses on 'a training for life', in which the individual can overcome any obstacle by learning the relevant life skills. The life skills concept considers the basic economic, political, and social conditions. Nevertheless, the focus lies on the individual and a proper education which makes it easier to adapt to given circumstances and which can change life for the better.

Postcolonial and post-development theories proclaim that '*development is thus a central organizing principle of the entire Western episteme*' (Tikly 2004:181). In their

opinion, language and social practices, such as education, postmark inhabitants of the Global South as 'others' and force them into a certain role in the development discourse. Therefore, educational scientists criticize that education is just another form of replication of Western epistemologies (Langthaler 2015: 35). When it comes to life skills, it is essential to emphasize the importance of the concept not being forced on people. This means that life skills education must not be used as a top-down approach by (international) development organisations or foreign governments. Moreover, it needs to consider the local population and government, to adapt the life skills approach to their needs, culture, and lifestyle. On an international level, it makes sense to also discuss certain basics for life skills education in general, and to exchange ideas and best practices to agree on certain standards. Nevertheless, the approach needs to include regional, national, and local traditions. This is especially challenging as an increasing convergence of educational processes on a global level can be observed. Meyer, for instance, sees this phenomenon as a result of the global spread of the Western school model after World War II, as he notes in his world culture approach (cf. Meyer 2005). Life skills education follows a similar story: since the 1990s, when the life skills education concept was adapted and elaborated by the WHO, growing discussion and implementation of it can be seen on a global scale. After several other organisations and institutions took up the idea, it also spread into national curricula and development plans.

The concept of the 'globally structured education agenda' emphasizes the strong influence of globalisation on education. Thus, globalisation and the global capitalistic economy change the circumstances under which education policy can be implemented. This can be problematic as the globalisation process and neo-liberal economic approaches force national governments to save money, which consequently also strongly influences the educational sector. Moreover, today, education is seen as a means to gain competitive advantages. The consequences can include educational inequality on a global scale, as well as weakened national governments, as certain structures and planning are transferred to transnational actors and institutions (Langthaler 2015: 36).

As has been noted, the different theories influence the discourse of education in development as well as the implementation of life skills education. Next, a historical overview is given of how education was used and put into practise in the

development context. As life skills education was most notably gaining support in the 1990s, the main focus is placed on this period until today.

3.2 Historical Overview

The historical development of aid can be roughly divided into several phases, which are partly fluent and overlap each other. The post-war years after 1945 were strongly marked by a prioritisation of investments in infrastructure, rather than education. This hints at the fact that during this time, development was seen as a process in which the main responsibility lay with the development countries themselves (Langthaler 2015: 36-37).

The 1960s and 70s were a time when a certain 'optimism in education' took root in the development community (Bodenhöfer 1983: 31). In this context, education gained more importance in the development process, particularly in areas such as human capital and economic growth. Furthermore, a lack of education was seen as one of the main factors of underdevelopment. Consequently, more and more investment was undertaken in the educational sectors of developing countries, particularly in vocational training and education for adults. International organisations and institutions such as UNESCO and the World Bank focussed on fundamental education, literacy focussing on rural development, and job training. Education was seen as the main incitement to reach social development goals (Langthaler 2015: 37).

Diverging approaches during this time, such as the dependence theory, saw underdevelopment as mainly being rooted in a dependent relationship between the modern centres and the less developed periphery. According to these theories, the dependence was caused by colonialism and finally led to educational structures and contents, which were used as instruments by the centres to exercise power over the peripheries. One representative of a diverging approach was Paulo Freire, whose ideas were mainly implemented in Latin America and are still of a certain significance in some continents' education systems. His main focus lies on the education of adults, with the goal to help them raise awareness of their own environment. Ivan Illich, another advocate for a diverging approach, postulated the idea of 'Deschooling', criticizing the overall schooling of society. Illich saw a significant problem in discriminatory school systems in which certain privileged groups were prioritised. In addition to this, he also criticized the pedagogical methods of Western

schools, where children did not learn the things they would need in life, but instead were taught how to best adapt themselves to society (Langthaler 2015: 38).

At the beginning of the 1980s, Latin America was shaken by a debt crisis. As a consequence, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Washington Consensus) radically changed their policy. Their main goal now was to ensure that developing countries were able to pay back their debts, through the implementation of structural adjustment programs (Langthaler 2015: 38-39).

In detail, ten policy recommendations were outlined by economist John Williamson on how to effectively implement the Washington Consensus:

- **Fiscal Discipline:** Large and sustained fiscal deficits contribute to inflation and capital flight. Therefore, governments should keep them to a minimum.
- **Public Expenditure Priorities:** Subsidies need to be reduced or eliminated. Government spending should be redirected toward education, health, and infrastructure development.
- **Tax Reform:** The tax base “should be broad” and marginal tax rates “should be moderate”.
- **Interest Rates:** Domestic financial markets should determine a country’s interest rates. Positive real interest rates discourage capital flight and increase savings.
- **Exchange Rates:** Developing countries must adopt a “competitive” exchange rate that will bolster exports by making them cheaper abroad.
- **Trade Liberalization:** Tariffs should be minimized and should never be applied toward intermediate goods needed to produce exports.
- **Foreign Direct Investment:** Foreign investment can bring needed capital and skills and, therefore, should be encouraged.
- **Privatization:** Private industry operates more efficiently because managers either have a ‘direct personal stake in the profits of an enterprise or are accountable to those who do’. State-owned enterprises ought to be privatized.
- **Deregulation:** Excessive government regulation can promote corruption and discriminate against smaller enterprises that have minimal access to the

higher reaches of the bureaucracy. Governments have to deregulate the economy.

- Property Rights: Property rights must be enforced. Weak laws and poor judicial systems reduce incentives to save and accumulate wealth.

(Symoniak 2010/2011: 2)

For the developing countries, these methods and strategies mainly meant austerity policies – measures for deregulation and market liberalisation. The educational systems of the countries were strongly affected as well, as they had to face enormous financial cuts that led to a high number of school drop-outs and massive cuts in educational spending. Primary education was prioritised, which ended in a decrease of secondary and tertiary education for less privileged children. Decentralisation, privatisation, and market reforms did the rest to increase educational inequality in many developing countries (Langthaler 2015: 39). While researching the outcomes of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) of the Washington Consensus, and their influence on education, Bonal distinguishes between direct and indirect effects. According to him, the direct effects are the reduction of public expenditure (e.g. lower teacher salaries) and its negative consequences for the quality of public education. In addition, the prioritisation of basic education led to a decline in enrolment in secondary and tertiary education, and consequently increased private costs, which again led to inequality in access to post-compulsory education. Privatisation and decentralisation further added to the increased inequality (Bonal 2002: 8-10). Indirect effects of the SAPs are certain reforms in other sectors (e.g. economy) which also affect the education sector. Thus, for example, the fall of per-capita income increased the opportunity costs for schooling. Aside from this, the rise of other costs of education, such as tuition fees, books, uniforms, or school transport, led to an increase in private costs of education, and consequently hindered poorer families from investing in schooling for their children. Economic liberalisation strategies, in combination with a decrease in real earnings, additionally made it difficult for poor families to access education. Hence, sinking fiscal revenues and certain austerity measures made it challenging for low-income countries to invest in their education sectors. This finally led to a lack of qualified labourers which, in combination with a decline in foreign direct investments, kept these countries at a low-income level. Economic liberalisation also changed the

patterns of educational demands because of the growing pauperisation of the middle class (Bonal 2002: 10-12).

The period of the Washington Consensus and its SAPs was when the World Bank realised the importance of education in the development discourse, and strongly influenced the worldwide process. Hence, a strong emphasis was placed on the human capital theory, and a focus was put on primary education as expectations were high to gain the most private and social benefits from it. The new World Bank policy included the shift in public spending from vocational education to basic and primary education, and the raise of tuition fees and other private costs at universities and individual borrowing facilities for their students. Also, the structural adjustment programs put their focus on primary education and forced developing countries to adapt their education systems accordingly. This process brought several problems with it. First, developing countries became technologically dependent on donor countries, as there was a growing shortage of skilled manpower in key industries. Second, low-income countries were exploited as suppliers for cheap labour so that the rest of the world could produce low-priced products. Last but not least, the reorientation of education policies in development did lead to a growing educational inequality on a national and global level (Langthaler 2015: 39-40).

It was in the mid-80s that life skills education came up on an international level in the *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion*. In the agreement, the importance of life skills was emphasized so that people could make better health choices (WHO 2015). During this time, the concept of life skills fit well into the global agenda of privatisation and deregulation, as it was consequently leaving the responsibility for one's physical and mental health, as well as one's professional success, with oneself.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War marked the beginning of the era of globalisation. Dale saw this era as a '*complex, often contradictory process, constructed through three related sets of activities: economic, political, and cultural. These may be characterized as hyper-liberalism, governance without government, and commodification and consumerism, respectively*' (Dale 2000: 436). Other authors, such as Verger, Novelli, and Altinyelken, described globalisation as '*the new context of the contexts of education policy*' (Verger, Novelli, Altinyelken 2012: 7). According to them, this context defines the political agenda as well as the

ability of governments to respond to it. Hence, they drafted various effects of globalisation on the international education policy:

- New labour market policies and the reorganisation of labour lead to the necessity for each country to keep its level of competitiveness. This can only be achieved through knowledge-intensified products and services and automatically brings new challenges for national education programmes.
- The process of globalisation also strengthens the role of international and multilateral organisations in education policy. It further involves new actors, like civil society organisations and the private sector, and leads to a decrease in governmental centrality in education policy.
- Globalisation creates a transnational, private market for education, which strongly questions the role of national states in education policy.
- Neoliberalism in combination with globalisation leads to liberalisation and privatisation of the education sector. It also supports the introduction of market mechanisms and management techniques in education policy.
- Globalisation supports the formation of transnational social movements, which claim the right to education and education as a public good.

(Langthaler 2015: 41)

The different processes of globalisation strongly influence education in the development context, and consequently affected the way life skills and life skills education were introduced into the global context of education. In the global process of strengthening the role of international and multilateral organisations, for example, organisations such as WHO, UNICEF, and UNESCO adopted the life skills concept and implemented it into several programmes and concepts. Also, different non-governmental organisations were founded, based on life skills and their conveyance (cf. chapter 3).

In the late 1980s and early 90s, the criticism of the Washington Consensus, its neo-liberal approaches, and the adjustment policy of the World Bank and IMF increased. As a consequence, a new development paradigm was formed in the 1990s: the Post-Washington Consensus. The concept postulated an increasing role and influence of governments towards the (international) market. Furthermore, state and market were

no longer seen as opponents, but rather were complementary partners. Nevertheless, on closer inspection, it was predominantly a continuation of the Washington Consensus. In reality, the role of the governments was mainly seen as supporting and strengthening the private sector and its economic value. Besides that, the civil society was held accountable for controlling the state and its actors (Langthaler 2015: 41-42).

Concerning the educational sector, the financial cuts of the 80s took its toll in the form of dropped rates in educational participation. As a consequence, several international conferences were held to find solutions to the problem. The overall goal was to increase international funding for education. The world education conference *Education for All*, in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, adopted six goals for basic education. The overall target was to substantially increase participation in early childhood, vocational, and adult education. Furthermore, every person was to have access to primary education by the year 2000. The conference was organised by the World Bank, UNESCO, and several other multilateral organisations, which each followed its own goals (Langthaler 2015: 42-43). The final paper of the Jomtien conference also explicitly mentions life skills in one of its principles of action:

'Addressing the basic learning needs of all means: early childhood care and development opportunities; relevant, quality primary schooling or equivalent out-of-school education for children; and literacy, basic knowledge and life skills training for youth and adults' (UNESCO 1990: 19).

Above that, the conference acknowledged the importance of literacy for the transfer of knowledge:

'The basic learning needs of youth and adults are diverse and should be met through a variety of delivery systems. Literacy programmes are indispensable because literacy is a necessary skill in itself and the foundation of other life skills' (UNESCO 1990: 10).

In 2000, the World Education Forum was held in Dakar, Senegal, with the goal to renew and strengthen the Education for All goals of 1990. Despite the fact that many countries made progress in providing universal primary education, the overall targets, set in Thailand, were not fully achieved. Therefore, the final paper of the Dakar conference also set six main goals in basic education, which they aimed to reach by

2015: early childhood development, universal primary education, vocational training, adult literacy, gender equality, quality in education, and skills development. The latter, also in the form of life skills, gained more importance as compared to the conference in Jomtien. One of the priorities was, for example, to develop *'conceptual framework and methodologies for assessing life skills'* (UNESCO 2000[2]: 20). Aside from this, one major goal taken from the conference was to ensure that *'learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes'*, as well as *'improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills'* (UNESCO 2000[2]: 36). The paper also mentions the importance of life skills for local populations, as *'education programmes should emphasize life skills relevant to local communities [...]'* (UNESCO 2000[2]: 23). The significance of life skills education was further emphasized as *'The information needs of young people in today's fast changing world are changing rapidly and it is particularly important that educators in both the formal and non-formal sectors find ways to enhance teaching about life skills and reproductive health'* (UNESCO 2000[2]: 28). The growing importance of life skills education also brought critical voices into the discourse. For some, the improved need for life skills education at schools was more seen as a strain for the educational institutions: speakers in a strategy session at the Dakar conference included one Senegalese secondary school student who *'emphasized the extent to which economic and social crises over the past two decades have placed new burdens on schools to equip young people with practical life skills'* (UNESCO 2000[2]: 28). Nevertheless, the importance of life skills education for health issues was widely acknowledged in the paper: *'Instructional programmes should include skills-based health education focusing on the knowledge, attitudes, values and life skills required for positive health-related decisions'* (UNESCO 2000[2]: 29). The importance of life skills education for girls was explicitly mentioned, as school should prepare them for life *'by developing curricula and materials, and by encouraging attitudes among teachers, that emphasize the life skills these girls will need'* (UNESCO 2000[2]: 41).

Another conference took place in 2000: the Millennium Summit of the United Nations. Following this, the United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted with the overall goal to achieve eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

(United Nations 2018)

As goal number two illustrates, an emphasis was placed on universal primary education. This included the notion that by 2015 all children should have the opportunity to complete their primary education. More specifically, the main targets were to increase enrolment in primary education, to decrease the number of out-of-school children, and to improve the literacy rate. Additionally, goal number three followed the target of eliminating gender disparity in all levels of education (United Nations 2018).

Life skills also played a specific role in the MDGs, as schools should also support kids with essential life skills to help them prevent diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria (UNDG 2010: 18). Following goal number two, life skills education found its way into several national curricula for primary education, such as in Uganda, where a life skills education programme for psychosocial development was established in 2000 (Bwayo 2014: 6).

One main point of criticism of the MDGs and their understanding of education was that they mainly focussed on primary education, excluding the other sectors. In addition, the goals only focussed on developing countries and completely left out Western nations and their education systems. Although the enrolment rates in primary education rose on a global scale, those improvements do not reflect huge differences within individual countries. Furthermore, important aspects such as the correlation between social inequality and education were largely ignored in the MDGs (Langthaler 2015: 44-47).

In 2005, the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was initiated. The overall goal was to empower people so that they could make informed

decisions and take responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and a fair society for themselves and future generations. A mutual respect for each other and for cultural diversity was also a focus of the programmes. Education was emphasized in all forms (formal, non-formal, and informal) and they believed learners of any age should be empowered in any educational setting (UNESCO 2018). In detail, emphasis was placed on the following targets:

- *'Enabling a transition to greener economies and societies:*
 - *Equipping learners with skills for "green jobs".*
 - *Motivating people to adopt sustainable lifestyles.*
- *Empowering people to be "global citizens" who engage and assume active roles, both locally and globally, to face and to resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to creating a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world.'*

(UNESCO 2018)

The ESD ended in 2014 and was followed by the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development. The programme aims to generate and scale-up ESD and to accelerate the progress towards sustainable development (UNESCO 2018[2]). It therefore focusses on two major objectives:

- *'Reorienting education and learning so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to a sustainable future.*
- *Strengthening education and learning in all agendas, programmes and activities that promote sustainable development'.*

(UNESCO 2018[2])

The implementation of life skills education fits well into the different sub-programmes of ESD and GAP. First, life skills education follows the goal of teaching self-respect and respect towards others, as well as tolerance. This supports the ESD idea of creating a more just, peaceful, and tolerant world. Second, life skills education provides learners with the necessary skills that empower them to contribute to a more sustainable and peaceful future, as demanded by the GAP (e.g. communication skills, decision-making skills, empathy, etc.) (WHO 1994: 1-3).

After the Millennium Development Goals expired in 2015, the United Nations adopted a new set of goals, which shall be reached by 2030: *‘to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all’* (United Nations 2018[2]). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are as follows:



(United Nations 2018[2])

In the SDGs, education plays an important role. In particular, goal 4 follows several targets:

- *‘ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes*
- *ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education*
- *ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university*
- *substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship*
- *eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations*
- *ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy*
- *Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all*
- *substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries*
- *substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states*

- *ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development'.*

(Langthaler 2015[2]: 21)

The last target, especially, mentions specific skills which can be found in life skills education, therefore promotes goal 4. In addition, the goal draws lessons from the MDGs and other former education programmes as an emphasis is put on educational justice and equality. The SDGs, furthermore, do not limit education to only the primary sector. Teachers and their central role in the education process are also acknowledged. Another progress is that inclusive education found its way into the agenda (Langthaler 2015[2]: 15-16).

The SDGs, compared to the MDGs, are also applicable to the Western world. Consequently, life skills education programmes, which are mainly conducted in developing and emerging nations, have the chance now to make their way into Western education systems. This also offers the possibility to effectively conquer challenges that most societies have to face in a globalised world, and additionally focus on important issues such as communication, responsibility, decision making, critical thinking, and self-awareness.

While the education approaches mentioned above mainly come from international and Western-dominated organisations, there are also several approaches for education and development from the Global South. Particularly, the rise of the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) also influenced the development discourse and the way education was seen and used in the discourse. The BRICS nations emphasize the importance of an eye-level relationship between donor and recipient nations as equal partners. Nevertheless, China, for example, strongly focusses on exchange programmes between universities (students and professors) as well as capacity building in its partner countries. India, on the other hand, emphasises providing expertise and institutional capacity development. Russia not only supports a global partnership for education, but also provides educational funding in bilateral programmes. Still, the question remains whether the education

initiatives of the BRICS countries profoundly differ from the approaches of the international actors. Another education cooperation is found among the ALBA countries (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America: Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Dominica, Ecuador, Cuba, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Venezuela, and Surinam). ALBA sees itself as a cooperative in economic and political questions, based on shared values such as solidarity and cooperation. Several arrangements were made in the education sector, such as literacy campaigns and the development of regional structures in higher education. In that respect, the ALBA countries strive to distance themselves from the global neo-liberal approach and for their part focus on socialistic values as well as on the education approaches of the Latin-American liberty movements (Langthaler 2015: 47-48).

An important discussion in the global education debate is the question of whether education on an international level is marked by continuity, convergence, or divergence. In this connection, sociologist Daniel Künzler notes that the world is on the move as the global education debate is shifting from the influence of the MDGs and the Education for All Agenda to the era of the SDGs. The strong emphasis of primary education in the MDGs led to an overall increase in school enrolment figures in the developing countries. Nevertheless, the goal of reaching 100% school enrolment in the primary sector was not achieved, and the region south of the Sahara particularly fell short of the expected outcome. A similar development can be realised in gender disparity in all levels of education; the lowest rate can be found in sub-Saharan Africa. Künzler further emphasises a global assent that socio-economic inequalities are closely linked with access to education, and that this challenge needs to be tackled urgently. Thus, in developing countries, a clear difference in this access can be observed, and poverty, gender, place of residence, and disabilities are central factors in the process. Especially affected by the problem are children with disabilities. Additionally, language barriers add to the challenge. Künzler adds that disadvantages in education are not just limited to socio-economic factors, and include other aspects such as culture, tradition, and religion. Furthermore, the question remains whether the increase in educational participation comes with a decrease in quality. From this perspective, Künzler refers to several studies that discovered that children may be able to visit schools, but find poor learning conditions in them and, consequently, do not have a successful or satisfying learning experience. Still, it is

important to emphasise that a lack of quality in education does not necessarily correlate with higher school enrolment. In addition, education is specifically dependent on the context in which it takes place and cannot simply be transferred from one country to another. Accordingly, Künzler questions the connection between international education ratings, such as PISA, and an economic benefit. Nevertheless, for a considerable time, international organisations like UNESCO and the World Bank widely adhered to this optimism concerning education and proclaimed economic progress through education (Paulo Freire Zentrum 2015). The recently published World Development Report 2018 demonstrates a shift in the thinking of the World Bank. The report still outlines the positive effects of learning on economic growth, increased income, individual freedom, and democracy. Nevertheless, it acknowledges a more complex view of the connection between education and development, as it also includes other aspects such as human development, capability theories, and references to the rights-based approach (Langthaler & Hartmeyer 2018: 3). In addition, the report also emphasises the importance of learning certain skills such as self-control, effective communication, and prosocial behaviour, which can be central to economic outcome and life outcomes in general (The World Bank 2018: 96).

Also, in international development agendas, labour market-relevant competencies and life skills are promoted and emphasised. Still, different countries often attempt to transfer successful education programmes from one to another without considering the equivalent context. This approach is continued in new discussions and concepts, which also include education, such as the SDGs. As a consequence, the global education debate may be shifting from one era to another but is still dominated by the same structures and actors, who keep following their hardened positions and views (Paulo Freire Zentrum 2015).

As shown above, education in development went through several stages and was influenced by the development discourse of each respective era. Additionally, strong international actors, their education programmes, and the neo-liberal agenda affect the global education discourse. Nevertheless, regional collaborations found their way into the global education discussion. Life skills education also was and is influenced by various discourses and approaches. Today, life skills education is an elaborate approach implemented in the education sectors of several countries and in international education programmes. The next chapter takes a closer view of the

concept of life skills and life skills education, and also discusses the importance of and challenges within the concept.

4. Definition, Concept, and Development of Life Skills and Life Skills Education

Throughout the specialized literature concerning life skills, a vast variety of definitions and concepts can be found. The understanding of what life skills are differs across societies and settings. Therefore, skills that can be seen as life skills are numerous. Consequently, no commonly used definition of life skills can be found on a global basis. In the following chapter, an overview will be given about the different definitions and concepts of life skills and life skills education.

Additionally, the expressions ‘trained teachers’ and ‘teacher training’ are used in the following chapters occasionally. To clarify their meaning, a description of the understanding of the expressions is as follows. By definition, a trained teacher has:

...fulfilled at least the minimum organized teacher-training requirements (pre-service or in-service) to teach a specific level of education according to the relevant national policy or law. These requirements usually include pedagogical knowledge (broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that transcend the subject matter being taught - typically approaches, methods and techniques of teaching), and professional knowledge (knowledge of statutory instruments and other legal frameworks that govern the teaching profession). Some programmes may also cover content knowledge (knowledge of the curriculum and the subject matter to be taught and the use of relevant materials) (UNESCO 2018[3]).

Besides their formal training, it is important to note that teachers also bring their own experiences, attitudes, competencies, and opinions. Teachers are not only ‘functional factors’ in the education system, but individual personalities who form the education system and its processes. From this perspective, the given political, economic, social and cultural circumstances need to be considered, as they can and will strongly affect the teacher’s positioning, influence, and motivation. Especially in life skills education, openness and freedom are essential to constructively address social as well as other issues and challenges.

The expression ‘teacher training’, on the other hand, is ‘*designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behaviour and skills required for teaching at the relevant*

level' (UNSECO 2018[3]). Concerning life skills education, teacher training is chiefly implemented by the government, (international) organisations, or NGOs.

4.1 The Concept of Life Skills

In general, life skills are seen as those capabilities that support well-being, positive health outcomes, and a productive development for individuals and for the society as a whole. Especially for young people, a set of core skills is said to empower them to take positive steps to promote health, positive relationships, and a positive impact on society. From this perspective, it is notable that, to the state, life skills are important for people to help them shape their world instead of living in and coping with it (Jacobs Foundation 2011: 9).

Particularly the early studies about life skills focussed on finding a proper definition of the concept (Özmete 2011: 1): in 1985, Gazda and his associates put life skills in the frame of a mental health aspect, and defined life skills as a behaviour-based psychological learning which is essential for people to be able to deal with predictable development tasks (Özmete 2011: 1). In their view, life skills are necessary in four areas of life: family, school, community, and career. In that regard, they have found a positive correlation between functional and emotional adjustment. The empirical evidence of several authors points out that if people do not acquire necessary life skills, the results can include delinquent behaviour, among others (Yuen 2011: 4). In addition, Gazda and Brooks have grouped 222 life skills under seven different categories: personal development, problem solving, communication, assertiveness, self-awareness, critical thinking, and central thinking (Özmete 2011: 3). Powell views life skills as 'life-coping skills' which are central to the development tasks of the human development process. According to Powell, this developmental task is essential to the understanding of life skills. He includes life skills such as interpersonal communications/relationships, assertiveness, rational-emotive therapy, exploring leisure time, physical fitness, weight management, purpose in life, problem solving, stress awareness, yoga, relaxation, and vocational development. Powell's theory and ideas are supported and enhanced by Winston, who defines life skills as '*an interrelated set of behaviours and attitudes which the culture specifies*'. In his study, he classifies development tasks of students into six categories: educational involvement, career planning, lifestyle planning, interpersonal relationships, life management, and cultural participation (Özmete 2011: 1-3).

In 1997, the World Health Organization (WHO) published its definition of life skills, which mainly focusses on health promotion and psychological issues. According to them, life skills are '*abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour, that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life*' (WHO 1997: 1). In that regard, the WHO acknowledges that the skills defined as life skills are countless, and that their understanding also strongly depends on the culture and the setting in which they are defined. However, the organization points out that, according to their research, a set of core skills can be highlighted. These core skills mainly follow the goal to improve the mental and physical health of people, and include:

- *Decision making* as a skill that helps people make constructive decisions about their lives.
- *Problem solving*, which similarly helps people to handle their problems constructively.
- *Creative thinking* as a life skill that contributes to decision making and problem solving by supporting people to explore alternatives and consequences of their actions or non-actions. Furthermore, creative thinking makes it possible to look beyond people's experiences and helps them to respond adaptively and flexibly to the various situations in their daily lives.
- *Critical thinking* as an ability to analyse certain information and experiences properly and in an objective manner.
- *Effective communication* includes the ability to express oneself both verbally and non-verbally in an appropriate manner to one's culture and to certain situations.
- *Interpersonal relationship skills* help people to interact properly. This includes establishing and maintaining friendly relationships with others as well as with family members. It also contains the ability to end relationships constructively.
- *Self-awareness* as a skill that makes it possible to recognize oneself. This includes the character, desires, and dislikes, as well as the strengths and weaknesses.

- *Empathy* is the ability to imagine how other people feel in their lives. This also includes situations with which one might not be familiar. Hence, this skill gives one the ability to accept and understand others who might be different from oneself. It also can improve social interactions as, for instance, in situations of cultural and ethnic diversity.
- *Coping with emotions* involves the capability to recognize emotions in oneself and in others. Furthermore, it includes awareness of how emotions can influence one's behaviour and the ability to respond to emotions in an appropriate way.
- *Coping with stress* involves identifying the different sources of stress in one's life and recognizing how stress affects one's way of thinking and behaviour. In that regard, this life skill can make it possible to control one's stress level by using the appropriate actions to reduce the source of stress. Moreover, it can also help to relax and ease tensions.

(WHO 1994: 1-3)

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also use the commonly agreed-upon definition of the WHO. That being said, the choice of and emphasis on different skills can vary according to the topic at hand. Whereas the life skill of conflict management may be emphasized for peacebuilding, the skill of decision making might, for example, be more appropriate for HIV/AIDS prevention. Nevertheless, the crucial aspect that produces strong behavioural outcomes lies in the interrelation of the different life skills. In addition, the different approaches are supported by other strategies such as media, policies, and health services (Singh 2003: 2).

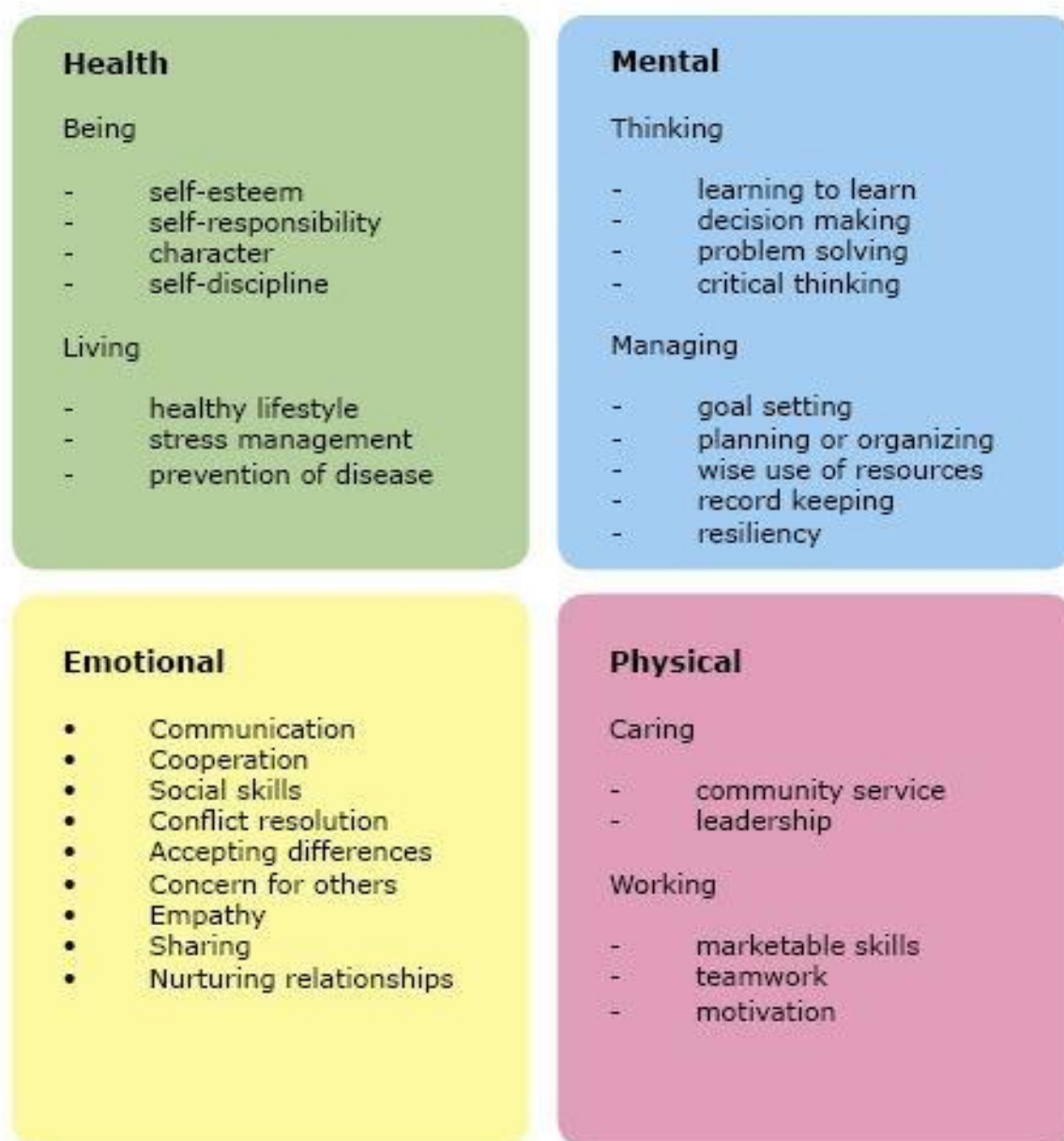
The Pan-American Health Organization likewise emphasizes the health aspect of life skills. In this perspective, the organization defines life skills as social and interpersonal skills such as communication, refusal skills, assertiveness, and empathy. The concept further includes cognitive skills such as decision making, critical thinking and self-evaluation. Additionally, emotional coping skills – namely stress management and an internal method of self-control – are part of the concept (Jacobs Foundation 2011: 9).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also gives a definition of life skills in its own, general way. It defines life skills on three general criteria, namely that 1) key competencies help to live an overall successful life and therefore lead to a well-functioning society, 2) they are contributory to meeting important challenges in an extensive range of relevant settings, and 3) they are applicable to all people. According to the OECD, these key competencies are functioning in socially heterogeneous groups. Apart from that, they are acting autonomously and using tools interactively (Singh 2003: 3). In its definition, the OECD further specifies three key competencies; the first one contains the ability to interact constructively in a certain social context through the ability to use a wider range of tools, which are either physical (e.g. application of information or technology) or sociocultural (e.g. language). Adopting those tools is only possible if people understand them properly and are able to use them interactively. The second competency includes the capability to engage with other people in an increasingly interdependent world. This is of particular importance as individuals often encounter each other from diverse backgrounds, and therefore need to be able to interact in heterogeneous groups. The third competency involves the capability of managing one's life and putting it in a broader social context. This also includes the ability to behave in an autonomous and responsible way. A central aspect of the aforementioned competencies is the need to think and act reflectively. This also involves the ability to apply a formula routinely, to deal with certain challenges and changes, to learn from past experiences, and to think and act critically (Jacobs Foundation 2011: 9-10).

As outlined above, life skills are widely viewed as a method to promote mental and physical health. Consequently, they are utilized in a variety of contexts such as preventing drug use, sexual violence, teenage pregnancy, suicide, and HIV/AIDS.

In his work, Özmete summarizes life skills under four major categories: health, mental, emotional, and physical. Each of the categories is again divided into various sub-categories (cf. fig. 1).

Figure 1: Life skills to empowerment of young people



Source: Özmete 2011: 5

As Özmete additionally points out, several authors' definition of life skills extends beyond the health aspect to include other skills such as conscious consumption, environmental awareness, peace ethics, skills for development, and livelihood or income generation. These skills should help people to empower themselves, to take positive action, to protect themselves from any harm, and to promote health and positive social relationships (Özmete 2011: 2).

For clarification, it is also important to note that in some cases and publications the expression 'livelihood skills' is also used. This term mainly refers to income

generation, and therefore includes technical and vocational skills such as carpentry, sewing, or computer programming. In addition, job-seeking skills such as interviewing, business management skills, entrepreneurial skills, and money management may also be included in the concept (UNICEF 2012: 2).

As outlined in this chapter, there are many different ways of defining and understanding life skills. The various focusses lie on different areas of life, as well as on different cultural settings or generations. Additionally, life skills are a product of the synthesis of several different skills. This means that they can be developed simultaneously. For instance, one might consider the skill of 'decision making': most of the time, this skill also involves 'critical thinking', as one must ask which decision might result in the best outcome, and which one would not. This interplay, in addition to other strategies such as educational methodology, is expected to offer the best results (UNICEF 2012: 20).

4.2 The Concept of Life Skills Education

As with life skills, there also are a variety of definitions for the term 'life skills education' (LSE). Consequently, several authors and organisations have their own understanding of what life skills education contains, how it is to be designed, and what its objectives are.

According to Gazda and Brooks, the overall objective of life skills education is to support people in coping with their daily problems in a successful manner and, thus, help them to positively develop. This concept includes both formal and non-formal education (Özmete 2011: 4).

Larson and Cook view life skills as a '*training for life*'. According to them, life skills enable young people to live a healthy and high-quality life. Therefore, certain skills that help people cope with their lives should be incorporated into the education program as an essential component (Özmete 2011: 5).

That being said, Özmete summarizes the following overall goals of life skills education:

- Providing young people with certain strategies that enable them to make healthy choices for a meaningful life,
- Helping young people to analyse their capacities and to use them in the most productive way,

- Allowing youth to interact properly with others and be able to adapt to their environment,
- Enabling learners to develop a positive self-perception as persons with dignity and value,
- Helping people to understand themselves and leading them to personal growth and responsibility,
- Empowering people in challenging situations.

(Özmete 2011: 6)

In the development discourse, life skills education was established among several efforts to improve basic education. In this discourse, different international and national development agencies have acknowledged the importance of life skills when it comes to enabling children to adapt to and cope with the challenges of everyday life. The UN organisations have adopted their own definition of life skills education. According to them, life skills education is *'a structured programme of needs- and outcomes-based participatory learning that aims to increase positive and adaptive behaviour by assisting individuals to develop and practise psycho-social skills that minimize risk factors and maximize protective factors'* (UNICEF 2003). In their perspective, the life skills education programmes are theory- and evidence-based, learner-focused, delivered by experienced facilitators, and properly evaluated to guarantee constant improvement of results. Furthermore, a distinction between life skills education and life skills-based education is made. Life skills-based education is a part of life skills education that addresses specific content or aims at one particular goal. Examples include life skills-based peace education and life skills-based HIV/AIDS education. The term clarifies that a life skills approach is used to teach the subject. This also includes participatory learning methods to help learners develop a certain type of knowledge, and to support them with psychosocial life skills, which they may need in order to use the knowledge and to carry out the behaviour (UNICEF 2003).

For approximately 30 years, life skills education has been establishing its position in supporting child development. In 1986 the *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion* recognized life skills as a way to promote health by giving people the ability to take control of their health issues (WHO 2015). Three years later, in 1989, the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) linked skills and education

directly to survival and developmental rights of children, stating that they are necessary for a full development (UNICEF 2014). This idea was enhanced in the 1990 *World Declaration on Education for All* in Jomtien, Thailand. Here, life skills education was included in one of the principles of action for addressing the basic learning needs of youth and adults (UNESCO 1990: 4).

In 1998, there also was a United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting held at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, with the main goal to generate consensus amongst United Nations agencies concerning a broad definition and objectives of life skills education. Furthermore, strategies were to be found to implement the programmes and to facilitate collaboration between organisations which support life skills education (WHO 1999: II). In addition to finding common general definitions, of which some are described above, the meeting found several main reasons that life skills education is essential for the development of children and adults:

- promotion of healthy child and adolescent development
- primary prevention of some key causes of child and adolescent death, disease, and disability
- socialization
- preparing young people for changing social circumstances

(WHO 1999: 4)

Consequently, a general description of life skills education was established: *'Life skills education is designed to facilitate the practice and reinforcement of psychosocial skills in a culturally and developmentally appropriate way; it contributes to the promotion of personal and social development, the prevention of health and social problems, and the protection of human rights'* (WHO 1999: I).

Additionally, the agencies agreed on the statement that life skills education contributes to basic education, gender equality, democracy, good citizenship, child care and protection, quality and efficiency of the education system, the promotion of lifelong learning, quality of life, and the promotion of peace. It was also suggested that life skills learning might support the operation of health services by young people. In addition, several areas of primary prevention for which life skills are expected to be essential were listed, including adolescent pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, violence, child abuse, suicide, injuries, accidents, racism, conflict, environmental

threats, and problems related to the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other psychoactive substances (WHO 1999: 4). It was also emphasized that life skills education was already being implemented in schools around the world, and that the UN might help to further its development at the country level, as teachers need support to create effective approaches to life skills education and health promotion. Furthermore, teacher training was seen as a key criterion to promote successful implementation of the programmes (WHO 1999: 5-6). Besides life skills education in schools, out-of-school life skills training was acknowledged in the following areas:

- *Life skills in action*: modelling of life skills with the help of videos, films, puppet shows, and cartoons. These initiatives can be supported with additional materials to encourage discussions about particular scenarios.
- *Life skills training workshops*: short courses of life skills training addressing children and adolescents who participate in sports and recreational clubs. Life skills training courses can also be incorporated into existing courses dealing with livelihood or vocational skills training.
- *Life skills for vulnerable children and adolescents*: life skills interventions attempting to reach vulnerable children like street children, sexually exploited and working children, and orphans.

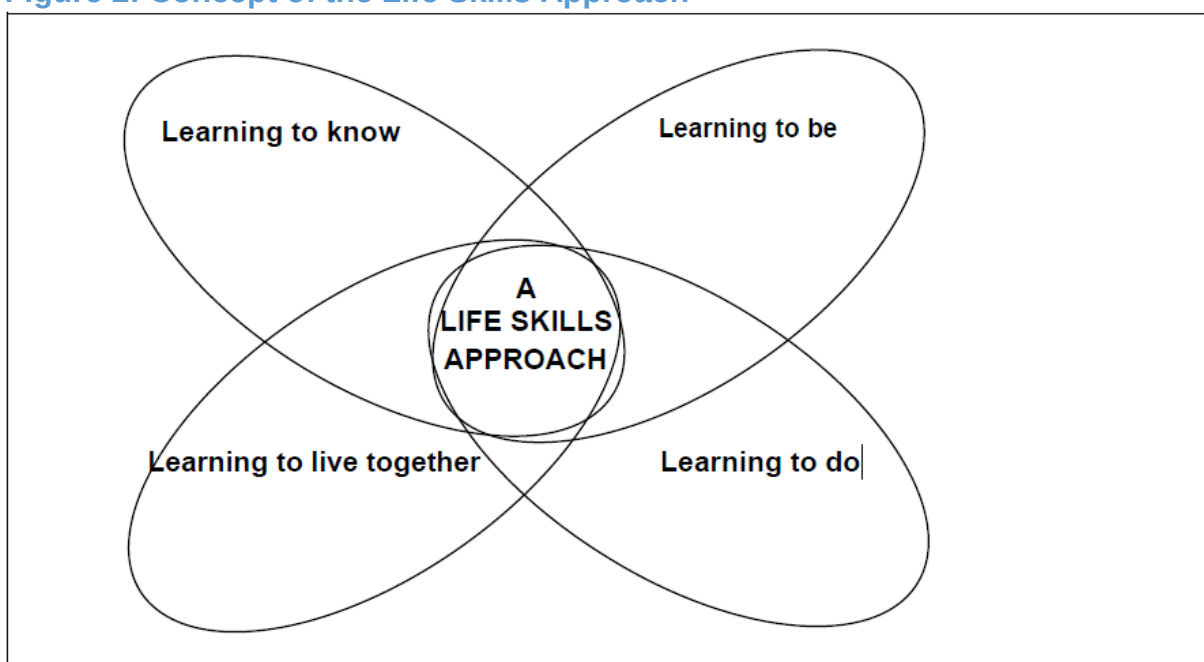
(WHO 1999: 7)

To meet all of the commonly agreed-upon challenges, it was noted that a close collaboration between the UN organisations was needed to accelerate programming, monitoring, and evaluation for life skills education. This also included their regional offices working onsite. Further, efforts were agreed upon to extend the cooperation to include partner agencies working on and addressing life skills issues (WHO 1999: 7-8).

Following the Jomtien declaration of 1990, the international community launched another worldwide education programme at the World Education Conference in Dakar in 2000: the *Education for All* (EFA) initiative. Six goals were set in an ambitious agenda to improve education worldwide. Goal number three, in particular, addressed life skills. It recognised the necessity and importance of life skills education in different areas and in different ways. This includes HIV/AIDS prevention, general health issues, teachers as life skills models, and education for peace and global understanding, among others. Therefore, the participating states agreed on

'ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes', as well as on assuring that schools encourage basic life skills training (UNESCO 2000: 16-77). In addition, the Dakar Framework for Action states that all young people and adults have *'the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be'* (Radj/Hoffman/Bakhshi n.y.: 7). The framework is based on the following four pillars of education and offers a conceptual basis for a life skills approach.

Figure 2: Concept of the Life Skills Approach



Source: Radj/Hoffman/Bakhshi n.y.: 7

The life skills approach proposes an education framework, and consequently interlinks and combines three psychological life skills (learning to know, to be, and to live together) with practical psychomotor skills (learning to do). The purpose of the life skills approach is to strengthen the capability of people to develop along with the necessities and demands of the labour market. In this perspective, the life skills approach describes a multi-dimensional and dynamic process which ushers in new aspects to educational concepts and debates. The four pillars of the approach refer to central human capabilities and are described as follows:

- 'Learning to know' focusses on cognitive skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making skills. In this regard, 'learning to know'

refers to the acquisition of knowledge, as well as to the use of acquired knowledge.

- 'Learning to be' relates to self-management life skills such as self-awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence, and skills for managing feelings and stress. It has the additional goal of enabling people to see themselves as the main actors in defining their future.
- 'Learning to live together' refers to interpersonal and social skills such as communication, negotiation, refusal, assertiveness, co-operation, and empathy. 'Learning to live together' combines skills that define the human being as a social being. Furthermore, it implies an affiliation link to a group, a society, and a culture.
- 'Learning to do' is linked to the actions of a person, and therefore to practical skills. It is important to realize that these skills need to be addressed in an educational approach combining the four pillars. If 'learning to do' is addressed alone in an educational programme, the result of this pillar is likely to be conquered by practical and psychomotor skills for immediate needs, as well as by day-to-day functioning.

(Radj/Hoffman/Bakhshi n.y.: 7-8)

All the above conventions and declarations have helped to establish life skills education as a methodology to address various health and psychological issues, as well as other aspects of personal development. Consequently, the concept was also addressed in several UN assemblies and conferences. It was, for example, incorporated into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) under goal number two: achieve universal primary education. In this perspective, schools should also support kids with essential life skills to help them prevent diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria (UNDG 2010: 18).

Furthermore, life skills education also made its way into the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) from 2005 until 2014. The ESD was designed to provide a movement '*towards implementing universal quality education that fosters the knowledge, skills, perspectives, and values that lead to a more sustainable future*' (UNESCO 2005: 1). The ESD was therefore oriented to quality education, which is deeply rooted in the history of the United Nations and

international declarations. Hence, UNESCO states: *'At the centre of quality education for all is the development of life skills'* (UNESCO 2005: 5). The ESD also included the life skills approach to reorienting education to address issues of sustainability. The intention was that, by learning a variety of life skills, learners should be prepared for a more successful life at home, in society, and in their jobs. The ESD goals for life skills education were closely linked to the four pillars of the previously described Dakar Framework for Action, attempting to teach individuals necessary cognitive, reflective, self-management, and social skills (UNESCO 2005: 5).

The 17 newly elaborated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which succeeded the MDGs in 2016, have adopted the concept of life skills education. This was necessary, as there was *'little progress on EFA goals like early child care and education, life skills and literacy'* (UNESCO 2012: 5). Particularly SDG goal number four, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, incorporates imparting certain skills (e.g. technical and vocational), as well as skills needed to promote sustainable development. In this perspective, a large number of NGOs called on the Open Working Group, which has elaborated the SDGs, to adopt an ambitious equitable learning goal in the Sustainable Development Framework. This included the demand for incorporating transferable life skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, civic values, mental health, and wellbeing skills, as well as twenty-first century skills such as communication and technological literacy (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2014: 2-3). Nevertheless, a clear statement concerning life skills education cannot be found in the finalised text for adaption of the SDG agenda (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2015). This fact again leaves life skills education open to a wide range of speculations, definitions, and forms of implementation.

Consequently, the regional approach of the WHO including local governments might be of particular help: as specific cultural and social factors regulate the nature of life skills, the exact content of life skills education must be determined by the administrations of the countries or even by local governments. Nevertheless, it is notable that life skills are being taught in a wide variety of countries, and consequently, their importance can be observed across different cultures and regions (WHO 1994: 3).

4.3 Importance and Challenges of Life Skills Education

Importance of life skills education

Referring to the UN definition above, life skills education can ‘*increase positive and adaptive behaviour*’. In this perspective, life skills education assists individuals to develop and practise certain psychosocial skills. On the one hand, these skills can minimize risk factors. On the other hand, special protective factors can be maximized (UNICEF 2003). This is important, as our world is getting more complex and children are particularly vulnerable to the many risks. Facing these risks, life skills can help children to make informed decisions as they learn to assess their own decisions and the environment around them and, therefore, are in a better position to foresee future consequences. That being said, life skills can not only prevent individuals from harm, but they can also help to identify available chances which can be taken to improve one’s life. Additionally, they can help in knowing how to deal with and reflecting on emotions (Bwayo 2014: 41).

In general, life skills education not only addresses psychosocial skills, but also the development of certain behaviours that support physical health. To be able to face the challenges and health risks, special strategies need to be acquired. In that perspective,

‘developing life skills helps children translate knowledge, attitudes and values into healthy behaviour, such as acquiring the ability to reduce special health risks and adopt healthy behaviour that improve their lives in general (such as planning ahead, career planning, decision-making, and forming positive relationships). With life skills, one is able to explore alternatives, weigh pros and cons and make rational decisions in solving each problem or issue as it arises. It also entails being able to establish productive interpersonal relationships with others’ (Bwayo 2014: 42).

Continuous life skills education can also support economic and political participation, as well as gender equality. Furthermore, a reduction in anti-social behaviour and in crime has been observed (Bwayo 2014: 42).

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) discovered that life skills education:

'lessened violent behaviour; increased pro-social behaviour and decreased negative, self-destructive behaviour; increased the ability to plan ahead and choose effective solutions to problems; improved self-image, self-awareness, social and emotional adjustment; increased acquisition of knowledge; improved classroom behaviour; gains in self-control and handling of interpersonal problems and coping with anxiety; and improved constructive conflict resolution with peers, impulse control and popularity.'

(UNDOC 2006: 5)

Research studies also show that sex education in the context of life skills lessons increases the use of contraceptives and, therefore, helps to develop attitudes which prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. It also supports a delay in the first sexual contact and brings about positive changes in the use of alcohol and drugs (UNDOC 2006: 5).

Life skills education also promotes positive aspects and behaviours which are interlinked and support each other. Thus, for example, developing skills such as tolerance, self-awareness, and conflict management can support the development of positive relationships and friendships. Therefore, peer problems and peer isolation can be prevented, which again helps to limit the risk of depressions, lonesomeness, and children dropping out of school. The continuous interaction with friends and peers again strengthens relationships and improves skills such as communication, empathy, and cooperation (Bwayo 2014: 44-45).

Social and emotional skills such as social management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making also have different benefits for the students and for the daily school life. First, a certain social and emotional competence increases the likelihood for school graduation, career success, positive relationships, and engaged citizenship. Second, the skills can positively influence the school climate and vice versa. On the one hand, a positive and safe school climate and culture can positively affect behavioural and mental health outcomes for students. On the other hand, teaching social and emotional skills can lead to a positive school climate in which students can learn properly and are able to unlock their best potential (Edutopia 2016).

In addition to the positive outcomes of life skills education for the pupils and the school, the teaching of life skills can also affect families and communities. On the one hand, family and community partnerships with the school can support the impact of

the school approach and can lead to extended learning in the home and neighbourhood. On the other hand, pupils get an opportunity to apply the skills they have learnt during the lessons after school, when they play with friends or interact with family and community members. As such, the skills and values are transported into the families and communities and can positively affect them. Furthermore, the school can also offer life skills courses for parents and other community members as a holistic approach to spread the knowledge and the use of life skills in and around the school (Edutopia 2016).

Challenges and difficulties

Although life skills education offers many opportunities, there are also some difficulties when it comes to the implementation of life skills education programmes. First, teachers play a key role in the transfer of life skills and can therefore also be a hindrance. As interactive and participatory methods are essential to changing behaviour, teachers need the qualification to use these methods. If a teacher does not know how to incorporate the opinions and ideas of pupils into the life skills lessons, the question remains whether the desired goals will be reached. This means that teachers should not only stick to traditional teacher-centred methods, but also use activities in which the pupils can fully express their own desires and thoughts. Otherwise, there is the danger that pupils only focus on giving correct answers instead of voicing their opinions (Wamahiu 2000: 15-16). Moreover, the learners will end up being dissatisfied, as Wamahiu found in his study:

'Teachers are a big hindrance; participatory methods are lacking. Teachers are only humans and some of them may not be able to use these methods. We need creative teachers who have the ability to teach Life Skills. For example, in Social Education and Ethics, if you express your view it is put down by the teacher. We need somewhere where we can express our opinion. The common approach that teachers use is boring-traditional teaching - they only write notes and that's it. We also have ideas that are burning in our heads. (Wamahiu 2000: 15)'

Second, the life skills education material is an important factor as well. All materials must be thoughtfully arranged and suitable for the respective target group. This includes that teacher manuals must give clear guidance on how to organise the life skills lessons. As life skills education should not simply be taught detached from

other subjects, but should instead be included in all lessons, it is essential that the manuals not only focus on how to teach the subjects. They should additionally give advice on how to organise the life skills element of the lesson (Bwayo 2014: 45-46).

Furthermore, the socio-cultural environment strongly influences the teaching of life skills. The WHO states that *'Inevitably, cultural and social factors will determine the exact nature of life skills. For example, eye contact may be encouraged in boys for effective communication, but not for girls in some societies, so gender issues will arise in identifying the nature of life skills for psychosocial competence'* (WHO 1994, 3). Gender inequality in society plays a key role when it comes to the influence of the socio-cultural environment on life skills education. Girls often struggle to acquire life skills such as communication, negotiation, decision making, critical thinking, assertiveness, and stress management. Additionally, society often sets different roles for men and women. While men are the decision makers when it comes to business, household, marriage, and sex, women struggle to defend themselves against the traditional gender clichés and unequal power structures. Moreover, girls and women face general difficulties in society such as strict segregation of sexes, not being allowed to play in the streets, and being forbidden to talk to boys or even to leave the house. Sexualisation and gender-based violence is also a big hindrance while acquiring life skills. For instance, whereas a girl might be taught self-esteem and confidence at school, sexualisation in daily life will strike her as odd and work counterproductively to the life skills education. Therefore, it is important for women and girls, and for societies as a whole, to overcome certain cultural and social traditions which relegate them to a lower social status. Otherwise, any life skills education will have a very limited effect as the acquired skills do not match the social and cultural reality (Bwayo 2014: 46-49).

Another critical aspect is the fact that some contents of life skills education are sensitive. This is particularly the case when it comes to the teaching of reproductive health. Some teachers are embarrassed to talk about sexual desires, sexual maturation, or HIV/AIDS.

The pupil-teacher interaction is a key element in education. While growing up, pupils use role models to develop their own lifestyle and behavioural patterns. Consequently, teachers play an important role in the lives of the pupils. Moreover, for a proper life skills education and a lasting behaviour change, the whole school must

follow the life skills spirit. The school staff need to act as role models in their behaviour and in their actions. It wouldn't make sense to teach the virtue of respecting each other when, for example, the teacher puts down his pupils and does not consider their needs and opinions. Because of this connection, it is advisable to offer life skills trainings for the whole school staff (Bwayo 2014: 49).

The number of pupils in a classroom also affects the education of life skills. As Srikala and Kishore note, *'life skills education is an approach to teaching generic life skills through participatory learning methods like games, debates, role-plays, and group discussion'* (Srikala and Kishore 2010: 347). In a class with too many pupils, it is very difficult to use these participatory methods. This is critical, as such methods help learners to find creative and alternative ways of solving problems and promote self-esteem and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, there often is minimal individual pupil attention in large classes, which can quickly lead to frustration on both the pupils' and the teachers' side (Srikala and Kishore 2010: 347).

The best life skills curriculum cannot live up to its expectation when there is no proper training for the teachers. In accordance with the national plan to implement life skills education in schools, it is essential to establish facilities where stakeholders can get advanced training in how to teach life skills. If these facilities do not exist, or if the quality of the training is poor, it is impossible to provide a satisfying standard of life skills education. Furthermore,

'it is clear that, in order to achieve full-scale change, schools need to ensure that strong professional development programs are in place and that teachers have a variety of opportunities for learning and growth. This is because teachers must have frequent opportunities for in-depth and active learning that is authentic and useful in their daily practice' (Bwayo 2014: 288).

Additionally, if there is no proper training, there exists the danger that schools are left without a teacher capable of teaching life skills or that the quality of life skills education is very poor (Bwayo 2014: 288). Similarly, teachers need certain capabilities of teaching and addressing sensitive topics of life skills education like, for instance, the prevention and the handling of HIV/AIDS. If the teacher does not know how or is reluctant to talk about these topics or, even more, is not able to overcome social prejudices himself, a proper life skills education cannot be provided.

Eventually, the language used during the life skills lessons can play an important role as well. If a language other than the mother tongue is used in life skills education, there is the danger that essential aspects and messages get lost or that the learners cannot follow or oppose to following the lesson. Particularly in primary education, UNESCO emphasizes the advantages of mother tongue education:

- children are more likely to enrol and succeed in school
- parents are more likely to communicate with teachers and participate in their children's learning
- girls and rural children with less exposure to a dominant language stay in school longer and repeat grades less often

(Global Partnership for Education 2017).

Nevertheless, more data and research are needed when it comes to the effects and consequences of mother tongue education, particularly in life skills education.

As shown above, life skills education offers a wide range of opportunities to improve the lives of pupils, parents, communities, and society as a whole. Nevertheless, the challenges and pitfalls need to be taken into consideration and addressed to guarantee proper and adequate life skills lessons.

5. Life Skills Education Programmes in (School) Development

The various concepts of life skills and life skills education, which are mentioned above, offer different approaches to how equivalent programmes can be integrated into the education system of a country and, consequently, into the daily routine of schools. However, there are also many challenges that need to be overcome. The following chapter offers an overview of how life skills education programmes can be realised.

5.1 The Development and Implementation of Life Skills Education Programmes

Developing and implementing life skills education programmes contains many challenges for a nation as a whole, as well as for the school system of a country. As a consequence, there are several aspects and necessities that must be taken into consideration for the realisation of life skills education programmes:

1. Developing a life skills support infrastructure
2. Life skills-based education in the context of education sector reform
3. Formulating objectives and a strategy for life skills education programme development
4. Creating implementation processes for in-school and especially vulnerable children and adolescent programming
5. Designing a life skills education programme
6. Designing life skills lessons
7. Designing life skills manuals and materials
8. Building life skills programming capacity and confidence
9. Building acceptance of life skills programming
10. Coordination, networking, and linkages
11. Pilot testing and evaluating a life skills education programme and training
12. Implementing a life skills education programme
13. Defining and measuring performance
14. Maintenance of a life skills education programme

(modified in accordance with UNICEF 2005: 10 & WHO 1994: 9-36).

Developing a life skills support infrastructure

The first important aspect to take into consideration when establishing a life skills initiative is the requirement of a national or regional infrastructure that makes it possible to develop a life skills education programme of widespread importance and acceptability. Furthermore, the provided infrastructure should also deliver an efficient management and proper evaluation system for the programme. The WHO suggests that the infrastructure take on the form of two bodies. The task of the first body would be to manage the technical tasks of programme design, implementation, and evaluation, and could, for example, be called the 'Life Skills Development Group'. The second body, then, would be responsible to advise and supervise the whole process and could be named 'Life Skills Advisory Panel'. The initiative to form such bodies may come from already-established agencies which are responsible for education, such as a school curriculum development group. In addition, a group dealing with a specific aspect like, for example, health education, drug abuse, or violence prevention might be able to take up the job. As a Life Skills Development Group should have responsibilities in areas like school curriculum development, or a major role in planning and developing school curriculum materials, the group needs the ability to establish links with government agencies which have to be mobilised to back the life skills education programme. Additionally, the group members should come from a multidisciplinary background and include professionals from areas such as school curriculum development, health education, prevention education, public health, teacher training, developmental and/or educational psychology, and social services (WHO 1994: 9-10). The tasks of the 'Life Skills Development Group' should include:

- formulation of objectives for life skills education;
- formulation of strategies for life skills education programme development;
- management of resources for life skills education;
- the design of life skills education programme teaching materials;
- the development of training sessions for life skills trainers and educators/teachers;
- pilot-testing a draft version of the life skills education programme;
- making plans for the implementation of the life skills education programme;

- maintenance of the life skills education programme once it is in place.

(WHO 1994: 10)

Furthermore, the 'Life Skills Development Group' is asked to undergo a certain training in the theoretical basis, objectives, and methods of life skills education, as well as in the design and evaluation of a life skills education programme. Ideally, the training is provided by a consultant who has gained experience in the field of life skills education. This also includes the possibility to invite a life skills consultant from another country. However, if there are no resources available, there still is the chance to include people with related experience, such as professional groups using active learning methods and including at least one life skills area (WHO 1994: 10-11).

The so-called 'Life Skills Advisory Panel', which makes up the second body of the life skills infrastructure by giving advice and supervising the whole process, plays a very important part as it helps to gain support, resources, and commitment to life skills education. Furthermore, the panel could offer a certain guiding policy, as well as support the decision-making process. To give credence to the panel and dismiss criticism, the advisory panel should contain respected individuals and agencies such as:

- education authorities
- health authorities
- social services
- relevant departments of universities and colleges
- youth organizations
- minority groups
- non-governmental organizations
- police
- religious institutions
- media,
- popular personalities
- charities
- public sector agencies (including potential sponsors from business and industry)
- parents and teachers associations

- teachers' unions
- international agencies working in the country

(WHO 1994: 11)

To maximise efficiency, the 'Life Skills Advisory Panel' needs to be convinced of the necessity and relevance of life skills education and the benefit for a particular country. This thinking could be supported by trainings, briefing sessions, and workshops for the panel (WHO 1994: 11).

Life skills-based education in the context of education sector reform

According to UNICEF, it is also important to place a life skills education programme in the context of a wider education sector reform. This means that, in order to be effective, life skills need to be taught in a school system that is inclusive, child friendly, properly resourced, and organised. Furthermore, the education system needs well-trained and motivated teachers who also know how to use participatory and experimental methods. In that perspective, it is also important to get children and adolescents, who are not in school yet and are not exposed to high levels of risk, into school. Expanding school enrolment and finding other methods to strengthening the education sector are therefore the most important aspects for the stakeholders in charge. Furthermore, short-term goals like training life skills teachers or organising life skills-related extracurricular activities also need to be pursued. This is especially significant as, in general, teachers can be trained more quickly than systems can be reformed. Consequently, if an education system is still weak, life skills teachers can play a positive role through extracurricular activities containing life skills. In addition, further efforts need to be made to include life skills education into 'child friendly' primary education, as well as into initiatives concerning education, such as the former Education for All initiative. This includes incorporating behavioural topics into life skills education programmes. The years before adolescence and before students end their formal education are of particular significance (UNICEF 2005: 10-11).

Formulating objectives and a strategy for life skills education programme development

The third essential aspect in establishing a life skills education programme is to formulate objectives and a strategy for the programme development. The WHO emphasises that '*objectives for life skills education should be based on a needs*

assessment' (WHO 1994: 12). That kind of assessment is supposed to identify the most relevant prevention and promotion objectives for life skills education. By using already-existing reports and statistics, if available, particular problems can be identified and lay the foundation for life skills initiatives to prevent these problems. Relevant statistics could include: substance use and abuse (extent and type), HIV/AIDS prevalence, pregnancy rates in school children, teenage suicide rates, rates of childhood psychiatric disorder and psychological problems, and extent of violence in schools (WHO 1994: 13) or school dropout rates. In addition, the design of goals of a life skills education programme should also contain an evaluation of the education (and health) system of the country. In that perspective, the life skills education programme could be implemented within the already-existing policies and priorities. Where the existing policy is insufficient, the 'Life Skills Development Group' will have to push for necessary policy changes, with the help of the 'Life Skills Advisory Panel'. Additionally, the life skills education programme should be related to already-defined objectives, as for instance article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

'... the education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential; ... the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes, and friendship among all peoples...' (WHO 1994: 13).

For a successful life skills education programme, it is also vital to take into consideration the religious, cultural, political, and socio-economic conditions that influence the daily life, policies, and the various systems (WHO 1994: 13). Furthermore, two main questions need to be addressed: what kind of life skills should be taught? And for which groups and ages? Answering the first question, the WHO suggests a list of complementary life skills:

decision making problem solving	creative thinking critical thinking	communication interpersonal relationships	self-awareness empathy	coping with emotions and stress
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Source: WHO 1994: 14

The list of life skills, which is addressed in detail below, can be supplemented and changed according to the country's needs. Consequently, it is the task of the 'Life Skills Development Group' to decide which specific skills should be incorporated into the life skills education curriculum (WHO 1994: 14). In that perspective, it is important to cooperate closely with different relevant actors and agencies such as schools, communities and their leaders, teachers associations, parents, and the affected children and adults themselves.

The second question regards the target group of the life skills education programme. Ideally, the programme should be targeted towards all children and adolescents as a positive response to certain identified needs, instead of addressing those who already are at risk (WHO 1994: 14). Nevertheless, from the author's own experience, life skills education programmes can also include people who currently have problems and, therefore, give them the chance to improve their situation.

In case in which the life skills education programme is designed to address the whole country, the WHO recommends that the original programme should first be designed for the majority language and cultural group in the country. Once the programme is established and is being maintained, plans can be made to extend the programme and to tackle specific problematic issues of minority groups (WHO 1994: 14).

As experiences of the WHO in countries with an already-established life skills education programme show, the age range from 6 to 16 is the most significant time for life skills learning (WHO 1994: 14). This does not mean that life skills education at other ages is a waste of resources. As described in the chapters below, the author made the observation that particularly younger children can benefit from life skills lessons, which can lay the foundation for a later, more in-depth life skills education. Additionally, according to the WHO, which age groups are targeted by life skills education programmes is strongly dependant on the education policy of a country and the resources available, as well as on the age at which children are most likely to be in school. In that perspective, the 'Life Skills Development Group' in cooperation with state authorities and other important actors has the duty to decide which life skills sessions will be designed for which age group, and for how many years the education takes place (WHO 1994: 14).

One very important question when establishing a life skills education programme is whether to design a new programme, or simply to adopt one that is already being

used elsewhere. Therefore, it can be helpful to analyse several other life skills education programmes and decide whether an adoption is appropriate for the needs of the own country and its problems. The advantage of implementing an already-existing life skills education programme is, on the one hand, that it can involve valuable experience. On the other hand, other life skills education programmes can form the basis for further development of a school's own life skills education programme (WHO 1994: 15).

Costs and time are other important factors to consider. In practise, programme adoption does not automatically need to be cheaper than programme development, as license fees or royalties might occur. Likewise, programme adoption can take up as much time as establishing a new programme. From their own experience, the WHO claims that *'the process of life skills development or adaption can take from 2 to 4 years to complete'* (WHO 1994: 15).

When adopting a life skills education programme, three main steps should be taken into consideration. The first step includes language translation. Even if the programme to be adopted is written in the same language, cultural specific expressions, which may have no meaning in other countries or regions, might need to be translated. The second step contains a reverse language translation, which essentially means that the translated version of the material is translated back into the original language. As such, it can be made sure that what has been translated from the original does not alter the basic concept and contents of the programme. This is necessary, as there very often is no appropriate direct translation for a specific word or concept. Consequently, when it is translated, there is the danger that it can take on a new, unintended meaning. The third step is cultural adoption, which focusses on the content of the programme. Hence, the life skills, as well as the activities to teach the skills, need to be examined individually for importance and suitability. Thus, it is essential to only embrace the most culturally applicable content. That can also mean that other aspects of the programme, which do not lead to culturally sensitive activities, might need to be re-written (WHO 1994: 16).

Creating implementation processes for in-school and especially vulnerable children and adolescent programming

UNICEF states that *'the integration of life skills-based education into entire school systems is complex, involving many agencies and multiple stages and levels of*

approval. It is also often political, particularly if the curricula content challenges cultural beliefs, or there are jurisdictional issues' (UNICEF 2005: 11). As a consequence, there is a large number of extracurricular life skills activities offered on a school or local basis. As such, complicated formal approval processes can be avoided. This fact has also brought a huge variety of programmes with no clear coordination, quality control, sustainability, or cooperation with education systems. On the other hand, several countries, which have already introduced a nationwide education system, had to face a complex advocacy process to build awareness and support. What has helped them cope with the process was the close cooperation of agencies and ministries, as well as the already made, successful experience of programmes on a local basis. After successfully implementing a life skills education programme, the challenge is to bring quality into the programme through step-by-step improvements over time. The basis for these improvements is the development of a sustainable structure of the programme within the education sector (UNICEF 2005: 11).

In advance of an education sector reform, there are many challenges a country has to face, such as conflicts with teachers and students who are already under pressure by a packed curriculum and challenging exams. To highlight the significance of life skills, it therefore can make sense to make them an examinable subject. However, this can also lead to the impression that life skills is just another subject based on knowledge that the students need to attend to and learn. Further, there is still the question of whether life skills can be assessed properly in written tests. Nevertheless, cultural issues can make the teaching of life skills attractive, especially when it comes to sexual education in the frame of HIV/AIDS prevention (UNICEF 2005: 12).

Designing a life skills education programme

When designing a life skills education programme, two main factors need to be considered: the delivery mechanism and the content of the programme. UNICEF identifies several delivery mechanisms:

- Stand-alone life skills curriculum: a life skills curriculum that stands for itself and is not integrated into another curriculum
- Integrated into an existing curriculum (e.g. health curriculum)

- Extracurricular activities: a life skills education programme which is integrated into extracurricular activities (e.g. life skills courses, life skills projects)
- Blended programming: integrated curriculum and extracurricular activities

(UNICEF 2005: 12)

The motivation for many in-school life skills education programmes is HIV/AIDS and other health issues. Consequently, there has been a tendency to integrate life skills education into health and science classes. On the one hand, this supports the goal to address certain health issues. On the other hand, this may neglect the use of life skills education programmes for other pressing issues such as discrimination, violence, or communal conflict. The greater part of literature, therefore, supports the idea of integrating life skills into all curricula (UNICEF 2005: 12).

Life skill delivery mechanisms for those who are particularly vulnerable can vary from non-formal education programmes, to structured short-term courses, to less structured open classes held in special centres, clinics, clubs, or even public spaces. Thus, it is important to guarantee a focus on certain important issues, clear messages, and opportunities to practice the learned skills. Besides that, a stable learning environment, combined with a programme which can be delivered on a regular basis, is essential in providing the children and adolescent with life skills initiatives. Additionally, other challenges include:

- The impartation of life skills to illiterate or semi-illiterate children and adolescents, including the design of proper learning materials
- Designing life skills education programmes for the various types of vulnerable learners (e.g. female/male, urban/rural, etc.) including the different types and levels of vulnerability and risk
- Developing life skills education programmes for a variety of non-formal education programmes addressing vulnerable populations and which are government-supported and/or officially approved

(UNICEF 2005: 13)

Worldwide, there are a wide range of programmes addressing vulnerable children and adolescents. This reflects the fact that, for one thing, there is a lack of a widely accepted or agreed-upon methodology. Furthermore, vulnerabilities and risks are highly localised and have to be considered individually for each country or region,

and even each group or individual. Besides that, the programme environment for addressing the needs and issues of vulnerable persons is difficult, as clients are mobile, operating conditions are fluid, and appropriate measurement methods are difficult to define. Also, the programmes generally involve higher expenses compared to public education, which often is more cost efficient. In conclusion, when trying to address the needs of vulnerable children and adolescents with the help of life skills education programmes, it is difficult to find proper models beyond the usual programming principles, which are applicable in all situations (UNICEF 2005: 13).

Another important aspect when designing a life skills education programme is the content of the programme. Therefore, the experience of UNICEF in their programmes in South Asia shows that the content of the programmes should be debated and regarded from multiple views. Consequently, several questions can be used, which may help to find proper contents for a programme or to revise already decided-on contents:

- **How should the life skills education programme be prioritised?** What decision making process can be used? What evidences can be used?
- **Which life skills should be taught?** Are the WHO's ten core life skills the only life skills? Do any life skills have to be added? Can some life skills be neglected?
- **Does the life skills education programme differentiate between types of learners (e.g. boys/girls, urban/rural)?**
- **Does the programme precisely and clearly address the vulnerabilities and risks faced by children and adolescents, including those who are in school?** Does it relate to authentic situations and does it emphasize the required protective and positive behaviours? Are there opportunities given to practice the newly acquired skills? Are certain 'difficult' topics (e.g. sexual health) taught prior to the age of possible exposure to risks?
- **How to present certain 'difficult' topics (e.g. sexual health) properly?** How to consider certain specific cultural and social values? How to prevent HIV/AIDS programmes from delivering a negative view of sex and sexuality (i.e. immoral, dangerous, etc.)?

- **What kinds of values should be taught?** What is the benchmark for values?
- **Is there enough room for including important issues, such as societal exclusion and marginalisation, as well as gender issues?** Which country/region-specific problems need to be addressed?
- **How can life skills be promoted?**

(UNICEF 2005: 14; altered by the author)

Designing life skills lessons

As the acquisition of life skills is based on learning through active participation, it is essential to design life skills lessons in a way that gives opportunities to practice the skills in a supportive learning environment. Thus, life skills lessons need to be both active and experimental. To this aim, the WHO suggests that the lessons be designed as follows: first, in a passive learning way, the teacher passes on the knowledge to the students, who are the recipients of the information. Nevertheless, when using methods such as brainstorming, group discussions, or debates in an active learning process, the goal is to engage the teachers and the pupils in a dynamic process of learning. With the help of experimental learning methods such as games and role-play, it is possible to practise what is being taught and discussed. The life skills lessons should also include homework assignments to give pupils an opportunity to analyse and practise the acquired skills at home and in their communities. In addition, including traditional children's games into life skills lessons offers the possibility to learn life skills through doing and to continue to use these skills outside of the classroom. These games can, for instance, include being led blindfold around a room to teach pupils to trust each other, or whispering games to teach listening skills (WHO 1994: 19).

Two methods that are regularly used in life skills lessons are brainstorming and role-play:

- **Brainstorming** is used as a technique to create new ideas and suggestions on a specific topic. This method can work for any topic of interest. In brainstorming, the teacher will raise a question on a certain topic. Each of the students is then asked to give a short suggestion on the topic, preferably in one word or a short phrase. All ideas should be listed so that the whole group

can see them. This technique makes it, on the one hand, possible to appreciate and value everyone's answer. On the other hand, the life skills teacher gets an idea of how thoroughly the pupils already understand the topic and how they describe it in their own words. It, further, is an effective way of getting to know the ideas of the whole group in a short time. During the life skills lessons, the teacher can always refer to the various answers to show the pupils how they relate to the concepts being taught.

- **Role-play** involves the acting out of a certain scenario, which can be based on example situations or on a text. The advantage is that in the role-play, different variations of the same situation can be tried out. The pupils can experience the life skills being taught first-hand, and apply them immediately. The method also helps to deal with certain sensitive issues, which might cause anxiety in real encounters. Learners get the opportunity to practice different behaviours in a safe and controlled environment before having to face real-life situations.

(WHO 1994: 19-20)

The above-mentioned activities imply that the students cooperate in pairs or groups. As this often is not the case in many classrooms, effective group work will depend upon the special training of life skills teachers on group work methods and as group leaders. The tasks of the life skills teacher would then, for example, be to establish rules for group participation and to assign pupils to specific roles in the group, such as timekeeper or reporter. Furthermore, the teachers must give clear instructions and need to be able to handle students who are not participating in the group activities (WHO 1994: 20). All of this needs certain teacher training, which is addressed in an outline below.

To structure life skills lessons reasonably and to maintain student involvement, as well as promote reflection on what is being taught, teachers can use certain processing questions:

What?	What is the lesson about?
So what?	What have I learned from the lesson? What thoughts and feelings did the lesson stimulate?
Now what?	What can I do with what I have learned/experienced? How can it be applied to my everyday life?

Source: WHO 1994: 20

These processing questions are useful in finishing a course or lesson, as it is inherent in all experiential learning because it gives pupils an opportunity to reflect on the lesson. In addition, it helps children to transfer the learning from a school environment into the real world and to begin to apply it. Therefore, the processing part should not be disregarded, even though sometimes this can be tempting due to a lack of time in the lessons (WHO 1994: 20).

For a broad life skills education programme, the individual life skills lessons need to be designed as a part of a sequential programme. In that perspective, life skills lessons are only one part of the whole design of a life skills education programme. Thus, the life skills lessons need to be taught in a certain order, so that lessons taught earlier can be referred to in later lessons of the programme. The WHO designed a specific model, which describes three basic levels of life skills lessons, and which should be taught in sequence in a life skills education programme:

- Level 1: The teaching of basic components of core life skills, practised in relation to common everyday situations.
- Level 2: The application of life skills to relevant themes that are connected to various health and social problems.
- Level 3: The application of skills in relation to specific risk situations that can give rise to health and social problems.

(WHO 1994: 21)

Below is an example of a life skills education programme based on an illustrated sequence of life skills lessons. The model is fictional, and is meant to show how a life skills education programme can be implemented to covers a wide area of life skills basics. The model shows 30 different lessons, which can be taught over a period of three years:

	Year 1 (Level 1)	Year 2 (Level 2)	Year 3 (Level 3)
Self-awareness	Learning about 'me as a special person'	Self-control	My rights and responsibilities

Empathy	Understanding how people are alike and how we differ, and learning to appreciate the differences between people	Avoiding prejudice and discrimination of people who differ	Caring of people (with AIDS)
Interpersonal relationship skills	Learning to value relationships with friends and family	Forming new relationships and surviving loss of friendships	Seeking support from others in a time of need
Communication	Basic verbal and non-verbal communication skills	Assertive communication in the face of peer pressure	Using assertiveness to resist pressure to do potentially health-damaging activities (e.g. unprotected sex)
Critical thinking	Learning the basic process of critical thinking	Making objective judgements about choices and risks	Resisting media influence on attitudes towards smoking & alcohol
Creative thinking	Developing capacities to think in creative ways	Generating new ideas about things that are taken for granted	Adapting to changing social circumstances
Decision making	Learning basic steps for decision making	Making difficult decisions	Decision making about important life plans
Problem solving	Learning basic steps for problem solving	Generating solutions to difficult problems or dilemmas	Conflict resolution

Coping with stress	Identifying sources of stress	Methods for coping in stressful situations	Coping in situations of adversity
Coping with emotions	Recognition of the expression of different emotions	Understanding how emotions affect the way we behave	Coping with emotional distress

Source: WHO 1994: 22

Designing life skills manuals and materials

One of the most important aspects in designing a life skills education programme is to provide a teaching manual. In such a manual, life skills teachers can find guidance on how to conduct the lessons and which methods they can use. Furthermore, the manual should also include other aspects:

- An introduction to life skills education, which explains the basic principles, theories, values, and methods.
- A variety of activities to support the life skills lessons, which can help the pupils to feel more comfortable and, consequently, be more open to the contents
- A variety of activities that facilitate the development of life skills by providing exercises which the kids can do at home within their families and communities

(WHO 1994: 23)

As life skills education likely is a new topic for most teachers, the design of the manuals should be as clear and easy to understand as possible. In this way, the approach, the pedagogy, and the structure of the sessions can easily be passed on. Thus, each life skills lesson could use the same frame as follows:

- Lesson purpose and goal
- Learning objectives
- Listing and explanations of materials needed for the lesson
- Background information, helpful hints, and links to other lessons and to the curriculum

- Lesson activities:
 - Exploring and discovering
 - Connecting new concepts and skills
 - Practice new skills
 - Apply skills to everyday situations
- Evaluation (processing questions as mentioned above)
- Homework assignments
- Additional resources and activities related to the lesson

(WHO 1994: 23-24)

Nevertheless, not just teacher manuals are necessary for successful life skills lessons. Student workbooks are of a certain importance as well, especially as the pupils often are asked to write down their feelings and what they have learned in their own journals. If the costs of student workbooks are so high that they become unaffordable for the learners, it is possible to incorporate the materials within the teaching manual, out of which they can be reproduced when needed (Who 1994: 24).

To guarantee and facilitate a closer cooperation within schools and between different actors, additional supporting materials might be included, such as:

- An introduction to life skills education for parents, to explain the concept and the objectives of life skills education to them. In addition, such an introduction could provide the parents with suggestions for activities that they can do with their children at home to practise life skills.
- A guide to assist teachers' work with parents, which might, for example, include an agenda for parent-teacher conferences. The guide should also include suggestions on how teachers can encourage parents to support their children's acquisition and practise of life skills in their daily lives.
- An introduction to life skills education for school principals, which explains and emphasises the benefits of a life skills education programme for the goals and for the curriculum of the school. It can also stress the importance of teacher training and review periods once the programme is implemented.
- A leaflet describing life skills education for other teachers, as well as for school health personnel, school social workers, and other affected staff. It can also

provide information for the community on contents and objectives of life skills education.

(WHO 1994: 24)

Building life skills programming capacity and confidence

Life skills education programmes can only be as good as the capacity and confidence of those who deliver it. Consequently, a crucial aspect of designing a life skills education programme is to invest in the proper training of life skills teachers. Therefore, certain aspects must be kept in mind:

1. Teachers generally have limited experience with experiential, participatory, and activity-based learning. Additionally, there is often a lack of confidence among teachers concerning sensitive topics such as reproductive health.
2. Often the life skills training provided for teachers face problems such as low quality, short duration, and/or a lack of continuing in-service support.
3. High expectations are placed upon peer educators to deliver complex life skills modules with short duration and low-quality training, as well as limited supervision and support.

(UNICEF 2005: 13)

For teachers who have never experienced experiential, participatory, and activity-based methods, life skills-based education can be a challenge. Hence, a first step in teacher training is to revert to familiar didactic teaching approaches. From that perspective on training, courses must provide content and methods, as well as a certain confidence, by helping the future life skills teachers to become more comfortable with the life skills topics. Aside from that, the courses can help the teachers to establish closer relationships based on trust with their students. The life skills teachers also must be made aware of the fact that life skills education transfers power from the teacher to the pupils. Thus, the teachers also need to be trained to lead classes of independent and critical thinkers. In addition to teacher training, more thought on the selection of life skills teachers is necessary. Effort is required to identify specific competencies of life skills teachers, and accordingly select candidates based on their personal suitability (UNICEF 2005: 14).

As the success of life skills education is strongly linked with the quality of teaching, the proper training and on-going support of life skills teachers is essential. Very often, a lack of training courses and low quality of such courses even prevent the teachers from practicing and internalising life skills. Additionally, life skills education also touches on critical and sensitive issues which often are not properly addressed by the teachers due to a lack of experience in the teachers themselves. Often, teachers are placed in classrooms without any support or supervision that could help them to monitor and to improve the quality of their lessons (UNICEF 2005: 15). Hence, a cascade strategy, which is already used in many countries, can be of a certain use. Cascade training means that the teachers, who take part in the training session, then go on to train others using the same training schedule. In this way, life skills teachers, instructors, and peer educators can pass on their knowledge to others. Nevertheless, care must be taken to maintain the quality of the training on all levels (WHO 1994: 25). As cascade training is cost effective and quite successful, more effort needs to be made to develop and support trainers. This could also include life skills courses and modules in pre-service teacher training, the improved selection of life skills training candidates, the development of district-level in-service support systems, improved in-service training, teacher self-assessment tools, teacher involvement in programme design, and the development of networks. That being said, it is important to start with the teacher training as quick as possible, even though no curriculum exists thus far. This is due to the fact that teachers can be trained quicker than systems can be changed and, therefore, life skills teachers can be of importance in extracurricular activities or face-to-face interactions (UNICEF 2005: 15).

As schooling is weak and inaccessible in several parts of the world, especially for adolescents, peer educators can also play an important part in programme delivery (UNICEF 2005: 15). The peer education system places pupils in the role of educators and is based on the fact that many people make changes not only on what they know, but also on the opinions and actions of their trusted peers. The advantage of peer educators is that they can communicate and understand the target group, as they are a part of it; consequently, they can serve as role models for change. As such, educators do not necessarily need to be used for school-based programmes. They can also be used in a wide range of contexts with different people and personalities, such as street youths, factory workers, sex workers, drug users, migrant populations, people living with HIV/AIDS, military, police, or prisoners

(UNAIDS 1999: 5-10). Furthermore, peer educators can also promote child participation, extend the reach of programmes, and connect with the community (UNICEF 2005: 25). Normally, peer educators are approximately the same age as the target group. They can work alongside teachers or run their own life skills activities. They also can take a leading role in organising school-based life skills activities. With the help of peer educators, awareness on a specific topic can be risen, accurate information can be provided, and skills for a behavioural change can be provided. Nevertheless, programme experience, made by UNICEF, has shown that the presence of a teacher or coordinator can improve the quality and general flow of the programme (UNICEF 2012). Further experience has pointed out that:

- If a peer-led intervention is properly designed and supervised, pupils appreciate the programme and are influenced in a positive way.
- Serving as a peer educator can already improve life skills for the educators themselves, as being a peer educator provides a challenging, rewarding opportunity for young people to improve leadership skills and gain the respect of their peers, as well as to improve their own knowledge and skills. Therefore, peer educators often change their own behaviour in a positive way after becoming a peer educator.
- It can initiate and improve relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Concerning sexual issues, peer education provides girls an opportunity to discuss sexual topics without the risk of being stigmatised as sexually immoral. This is particularly the case when peer led activities take place in single-sex groups.
- Concerning health issues, peer educators can be a valuable link to health services.
- Peer education has had a positive effect on reported attitudes toward persons living with HIV/AIDS.
- In some cases, peer education has shown to be more effective than adult education concerning the establishment of norms and attitude changes. Nevertheless, peer educators and teacher-led education can complement

each other. A study conducted by UNICEF illustrated that a mixture of classroom-based and peer-led education is more effective than one or the other in isolation. Consequently, the combination showed the greatest positive effects concerning information, motivation, behavioural skills, and behaviour in general.

(UNICEF 2012)

Despite the positive aspects of peer education, the following challenges need to be addressed in setting up a system of peer educators:

- Replication of the hierarchical and gender relations that can be found in society.
- Return to familiar pedagogical methods which are based on a certain didactic and certain information.
- Requirement to sometimes deliver programmes in environments which are not appropriate for life skills learning (e.g. public markets or bus parks).
- Frequently unsupervised or under-supervised.
- Despite the fact that, very often, only limited training, quality variation, low resource levels, no incentives or recognition, and limited support are available to peer education, high expectations are put on the programmes.

(UNICEF 2005: 15)

Despite the challenges and possible problems, the role of children and adolescents in life skills education is mainly restricted to peer education. Notably few countries and programmes involve the interests, wishes, ideas, and criticisms of the addressees. Consequently, if a programme is to be effective and legitimate, the children and adolescents need to be involved in the decision-making, monitoring, and governing process (UNICEF 2005: 15).

Building acceptance of life skills programming

Life skills education programmes can play an important role in promoting social inclusion, equality, a more beneficial teacher-pupil relationship, and a public

discourse on issues that are normally considered taboo in a society. For this reason, efforts need to be made to build awareness and acceptance for the life skills education programmes. Several challenges to the acceptance of life skills education programmes must be taken into consideration:

1. Creating a supportive environment for the practice of life skills
2. Advocating and orienting politicians, policy makers, and social leaders
3. Building support in communities and schools for life skills education programmes

(UNICEF 2005: 16)

The first challenge can be addressed by recognising the fact that children and adolescents are more likely to make proper decisions if they have the impression of having control over their lives. This also includes the acquisition of a certain sense of self-respect and recognition from others, such as teachers and parents. These requirements are part of the basis for a successful life skills education programme. On the other hand, a lack of future prospects, little support from family members, and low community status and support undermine the efforts of life skills education programmes. To create a supportive environment, pupils need to be given the opportunity to practise life skills outside of the classrooms, to question stereotypes, and to build support for self-determination. Simply speaking, schools, families, and communities must permit children and adolescents to actively influence the decisions affecting them, so that life skills learned in class also can be applied in the real world. In addition, life skills education programmes can also follow the goal to empower girls and women. Therefore, it is not only necessary to teach life skills to females, but also to take into account their relationship with male behaviour. This means that an understanding of how social factors such as patriarchy affect girls and women must be developed. Then, the individual and collective strategies, which are required to overcome the challenges, need to be developed. In that perspective, life skills education programmes must support learners with a learning environment free from gender-, caste-, ethnicity-, and religious-based discrimination and harassment (UNICEF 2005: 16-17).

To address the challenge of advocating and orienting politicians, policy makers, and social leaders, it is essential to consider that societal change requires a particular leadership. Experience demonstrates that successful life skills education programmes also invest in advocacy with political, policy, and social elites to involve their leadership. Consequently, advocacy efforts must be made to convince decision makers to effectively and decisively act on the various risks and vulnerabilities which children and adolescents face. Proper and target-aimed advocacy activities must build a basis for the confidence and knowledge required to challenge special established cultural values, concerning public health and human rights, which are irrelevant or harmful. Furthermore, advocacy efforts also must convince decision makers to lead a more general discourse on the several responsibilities of the society and of the government to protect and support vulnerable children and adolescents (UNICEF 2005: 17).

The challenge of building support in communities and schools for life skills programming depends on the ability to initiate mobilisation activities. Additionally, there is a necessity to address complacency and denial within the society that concern the risks children and adolescents face. This also means building awareness of the advantages of life skills and, especially, to reject the idea within society that life skills is a foreign concept which threatens traditional values. On the one hand, families are the best supporters for life skills in the communities. On the other hand, in a modern, rapidly changing world, many parents are unaware of the various threats their children face, such as HIV/AIDS, trafficking, or specific forms of violence. Additionally, when it comes to sensitive or taboo topics, such as sexual issues, many parents are unwilling to address said topics. Nevertheless, parents, local officials, school staff, and religious leaders are essential in establishing a life skills education programme. This also leads to the necessity of teaching life skills to parents and other community members. Although there is a need to be sensitive to community values, stakeholders must take a leadership role when it comes to questioning traditional practices that make children and adolescents more vulnerable (UNICEF 2005: 17-18).

Coordination, networking, and linkages

Like other aspects, the coordination and networking of life skills education programmes must face several challenges:

1. Programme coordination
2. Leadership and networking on life skill-based education
3. Availability of services to children and adolescents

Throughout the world, there is great variation in programme coordination concerning life skills education programmes. On a national level, the coordination can differ from inter-ministerial collaboration to intra-ministerial coordination. Problems can arise when several ministries, like the ministry of education and the ministry of health, do not know what the other is doing, or when different agencies of the same ministry are working on life skills topics isolated from each other. The same problems can come up in international organisations and non-governmental organisations. Thus, there is a need among United Nations agencies like UNAIDS, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA and UNSECO to effectively work on their life skills education programmes without interfering with the other agencies' work. In this way, duplication can be avoided and a basis for cooperation can be built in which several ideas are exchanged and brought into joint initiatives. In in-school extracurricular activities for vulnerable children and adolescents, delivered by civil society groups, there is a high chance of limited coordination, quality, and coverage, as well as loss of oversight and duplication. Therefore, governments with a large number of small stakeholders delivering life skills education programmes must be aware of these possible problems. Consequently, it is also important to align individual life skills activities with national life skills education programmes (UNICEF 2005: 18).

Due to an increasing number of stakeholders, different capacity levels, and a growing demand for life skills education programmes, larger and financially better-off stakeholders get the chance to take on a leadership role when it comes to promoting and advocating life skills education programmes, designing pilot projects and monitoring tools, capacity building, and initiating life skills networks. Furthermore, leading life skills stakeholders could ensure that life skills education is included in national or even international policy documents. Additionally, the leading stakeholders could help to create standards, offer orientation and training for other

actors, and support government involvement and oversight, especially for vulnerable people. Concerning networking activities, leadings stakeholders could bring together other actors and stakeholders in special networks which intend to promote life skills education, encourage cooperation activities, and support the sharing of information, experience, and best practices. In this perspective, the networks should also try to increase the cooperation of governmental actors and non-governmental organisations (UNICEF 2005: 18-19).

It is also essential to guarantee proper access for vulnerable children and adolescents to services such as social services, vocational training, and recreational activities which can be linked to and complement life skills education. If learners cannot access such services, life skills education programmes promoting protective and positive behaviours will be difficult to implement (UNICEF 2005: 19).

Pilot testing and evaluating a life skills education programme and training

After the above aspects are initiated and implemented, a small-scale pilot test of the whole life skills education programme is required. This helps to assess the life skills education programme and to find out what necessary changes need to be made before materials are produced and distributed on a large scale. Additionally, the pilot test evaluation is essential to suggest that the programme has the potential to achieve what is expected of it. Furthermore, mistakes or gaps in the programme and in the materials can be seen when the designed life skills training schedule is put into reality. Also, the pilot test evaluation can show how assessments of the life skills education programme might look in the future, and whether it is appropriate. Tools that can be used in the evaluation process include: questionnaires given to pupils, teachers, and trainers, individual and group interviews, and observation assessments such as those of teachers teaching a life skills lesson. Which and how many schools should be included in the pilot test strongly depends on the scale of the planned implementation of the programme. This means that, if a life skills education programme is to be put in place on a wide scale within a country, a representative sample of urban and rural schools, plus a sample of different school types, needs to be selected. This includes a minimum of 8-12 schools with at least two teachers and 50 pupils from each school (WHO 1994: 29).

The main questions when conducting a pilot test are what exactly to evaluate and what the indicators of life skills education programme effectiveness are. The evaluation questions listed below contain process evaluation questions, as well as outcome evaluation questions:

Process evaluation questions
• Is the programme implemented as expected? • How well does the programme fit the socio-political, socio-economic and cultural climate? • How do teachers, trainers, and the young people themselves perceive the life skills education programme? • How do parents and community leaders perceive the programme? • How easy to use, are the materials and training? • Are the programme contents, and the concepts behind it, understood by the users (trainers, teachers and students)? • What is the potential relevance of the programme to different ethnic groups in the country? • Do participants enjoy the life skills education programme? • Does it seem relevant to the user's needs?

Source: WHO 1994: 30

Outcome evaluation questions
• Does the programme achieve what it sets out to achieve? - do the children learn life skills? - are there any indications of changes in (health-related) behaviour? - are their changes in indicators of mental well-being, e.g. improved self-esteem and self-confidence? • Does the programme bring about other changes?

Source: WHO 1994: 30

What is missing in the evaluation process of the WHO above is the impact measurement of the life skills education programme. Nowadays, a strong emphasis is placed on impact when it comes to designing education programmes, as this can show the difference the programmes make in people's lives (Diem 2002). Impact measurement can further be important for the following reasons:

- To justify the investment of time and effort, as well as the dedication of public and private funds.
- To earn and build professional, organizational, and political credibility and support.
- To yield tangible results that serve as a basis for scholarly publications, as well as awards and recognition.
- To satisfy the requirements of political bodies and funding agencies.

(Diem 2002)

In addition to attitude and behaviour changes and the acquisition of life skills, the effectiveness of a life skills education programme is also measured according to other indicators:

- Improvements in teacher-pupil relationships
- Improved academic performance
- Reduction in school dropouts
- Improved school-family links

(WHO 1994: 31)

The acquired test data can be summarised in a report to demonstrate the value and effectiveness of the life skills education programme. Such a report can also be used when it comes to promoting the programme or validation if its use is questioned. The report can be handed out in combination with the training and teaching manual at the phase of wider implementation of the programme (WHO 1994: 31).

To evaluate and pilot-test the teacher training, an evaluation form can be handed out to all participants of a training course. All of the feedback from the courses then should be recorded, and future courses should be revised based on feedback (WHO 1994: 31).

Implementing a life skills education programme

After the pilot testing and evaluations of the training and life skills materials, the actual implementation of the life skills education programme can begin. Therefore,

the financial resources that are needed for training teachers and printing and distributing materials are essential, as enough money is needed to implement the programme properly. Besides financial aspects, the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of a country or region needs to be taken into consideration. In that respect it might be easier and quicker to implement a life skills education programme in a relatively homogenous surrounding, as in countries with greater diversity, cultural or ethnic adaptations may be necessary (WHO 1994: 33).

As life skills education can take place in school programmes as well as in other settings, certain minimum criteria should be met for life skills education to be effective. To achieve a certain standard in life skills education programmes, the following list from the WHO gives an overview of the different criteria:

- The teaching of life skills requires a learning environment in which a teacher/group leader can organize active and experiential learning activities.
- It is important that the teacher/group leader has had training in active and experiential teaching methods, and in facilitating the learning of life skills. He/she should be equipped with a teaching manual that describes life skills lessons.
- The life skills activities should, ideally, be led by a teacher/group leader that the group can work with over a period of time, e.g. over a one-year period.
- The teacher/group leader should be sensitive to the capabilities and understanding of those taking part in the life skills education programme, and be able to adapt life skills lessons accordingly.
- The life skills teaching should have continuity and sequence over time; i.e. life skills lessons should, to some extent, relate to and build upon previous lessons. One-off life skills lessons are unlikely to be effective.

(WHO 1994: 33)

Schools have a certain advantage when it comes to implementing a life skills education programme, as school settings are more likely to meet all of the criteria. Nevertheless, different persons can play the role of a life skills educator, such as trained teachers, (school) psychologists, social workers, or guidance counsellors, all

of whom need to be trained on the topic. Consequently, persons who have participated in the life skills education training sessions might be most appropriate and qualified to implement the programme. If schools still lack the competencies of teaching life skills, it might make sense to first send the life skills education materials to training centres, where they are then distributed to the participants of the teacher training. This can be especially important as it is necessary to distribute the life skills materials efficiently and to provide proper teacher education, as this might be an indicator of the success of the programme and, therefore, helps to secure future financial resources. Furthermore, additional information on the distribution, destinations and implementation of the life skills education programme needs to be collected. This might, for example, be possible through special inventory systems and might help to convince different actors of the programme and to secure future investments (WHO 1994: 34).

When it comes to disseminating and facilitating the life skills education programme, special coordinators can be put in place acting in accordance with the following recommendations:

- A network of coordinators at local or regional level (depending on the geography of the country) is needed, to support the distribution of programme materials and training.
- Regional level coordinators would be trained as trainers of trainers. Local level coordinators would be trained as teacher trainers.
- Life skills coordinators would receive support and further training together with other local or regional coordinators.
- Funding will be necessary for the posts of local and regional life skills coordinators. In many countries, this has been provided by local or national governments, thus stressing the importance of involving key senior governmental officials in the development of life skills education.
- The experience in many countries is that the appointment of local coordinators is the best strategy to ensure implementation and further development of life skills education. There need to be people 'on the ground' who will take on the

day-to-day management tasks, cultivate networks, and offer encouragement and support.

- Training in working with parents and involving the community should be offered as part of the training of life skills coordinators.

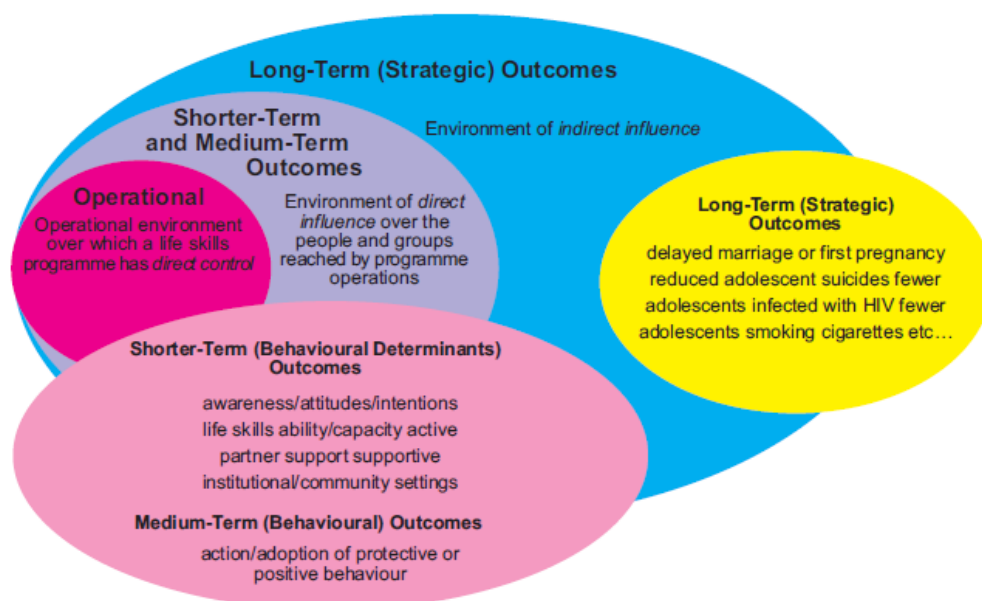
(WHO 1994: 34)

Defining and measuring performance

When it comes to defining and measuring performance, there are several challenges to consider. First, it is essential to identify priority vulnerabilities and risks, as well as articulate behavioural outcomes. Therefore, a certain evidence base is needed when establishing an effective life skills education programme. This can help to identify risks and establish priorities. Thus, studies on knowledge, attitudes, practices, and behaviour can be used as a method to define target groups and different types of vulnerabilities. Nevertheless, problems might arise when there is a perceived lack of technical expertise which might finally lead to a negligence of measuring any behaviour or performance. This can especially become a problem in in-school programmes, as life skills education generally faces the challenge of being directly attributed to a particular behavioural outcome. In general, the more focussed a programme is on a certain topic, the easier it is to articulate and measure behaviour (UNICEF 2005: 8).

Besides judging the success of life skills education programmes by their commitment to positive and protective behaviour, it is also essential to articulate and measure behavioural outcomes properly. One way to do this is to build capacity in behaviourally-focused programmes. Thus, UNICEF recommends the use of methods such as *Results-Based Management (RBM)* or *Mapping of Adolescent Programming and Measurement (MAPM)*, which rely on a specific results chain.

Figure 3: Results Chain for Life Skills Education Programmes



Source: UNICEF 2005: 9

Figure 3 shows that, in MAPM, a clear distinction is made between behaviours and their determinants. Consequently, activities support the target population in achieving short-term goals such as:

- Awareness (e.g. knowledge of family planning: risks, methods, etc.)
- Attitudes (e.g. believe in the positive aspects and outcomes of family planning)
- Skills (e.g. using birth control, seeking medical help)
- Supportive institutions, communities and broader environment (e.g. medical facilities/staff/religious leaders and policy framework).

If these short-term goals are successfully achieved, there is a greater possibility that the target population will also practise the desired behaviour and, therefore, reach the long-term goals (UNICEF 2005: 9).

When it comes to the measurement of life skills education programmes, attribution is one of the main challenges, as the various influencing factors and, therefore, the link between the programme activities and the behavioural outcomes, are difficult to control. In that perspective, the measurement of short-term goals helps a programme to better assess its contribution to a specific behavioural outcome. To successfully measure behaviour, a commitment to establishing technical capacity and pushing for

the use of already-existing statistical tools is essential. This also includes the development of a certain capability which makes it possible to define and use indicators in a correct and beneficial way (UNICEF 2005: 10).

Maintenance of a life skills education programme

After developing and implementing a life skills education programme, it could be the task of the Life Skills Development Group (explained above) to manage and maintain the programme. If the Life Skills Development Group cannot fulfil this task, it should ensure that another agency or institution takes on this responsibility. This includes incorporating review methods, organising follow-up trainings for teachers, funding and supporting the life skills education programme, and adapting it to other contexts and target groups (WHO 1994: 35).

The first aspect contains a systematic review of the use of the life skills education programme. This is essential to ensure the long-term value of the programme. An ongoing assessment and revision is essential, even though the programme might run successful, in order to guarantee that the programme meets the various needs of the target group(s). For a long-term analysis, the reviews of each year should be recorded and included in periodic progress reports (WHO 1994: 35).

Furthermore, follow-up training sessions for teachers need to be provided. This is necessary even if the programme and training was not changed, as it helps the teachers to understand and be included in the long-term use and design of the programme. In addition, the trainings provide a chance for teachers to ask questions concerning the content and methods of the programme. For successful and regular training sessions, it can be useful to institutionalise the training by, for instance, including it in teacher training colleges (WHO 1994: 35).

In order to continuously promote the life skills education programme, a life skills coordinator should be appointed for each district. He or she would also be responsible for encouraging relevant groups and agencies, such as local authorities, parent and teacher groups, businesses and charities, to support and/or fund the programme in the long run. This means that the life skills coordinator must overview and organise a network of life skills supporters in his or her location. Additionally, he or she should encourage relevant people to back the life skills education programme by, for example, inviting them to special meetings or giving out progress reports. The

life skills coordinator also needs to facilitate the involvement of children and adolescents in community projects, as well as projects to improve the school environment, so that the objectives of life skills education are supported. Furthermore, he or she should facilitate the communication between teachers and parents (WHO 1994: 35-36).

After implementing a life skills education programme, it is very likely that the programme will be used on a wider scale. Consequently, the programme can also be implemented with ethnic and cultural groups other than the target population for whom it was originally designed. This might affect the effectiveness and relevance, as the programme might be diluted. Therefore, it is essential that proper and appropriate adoptions are also part of programme maintenance (WHO 1994: 36).

6. Life Skills Education in Ugandan Primary Schools

The following chapter illustrates how life skills education is integrated into the education curriculum of a country, using the example of Uganda. Besides discussing life skills education in Uganda in general, a special focus is put on the primary education system. Additionally, an analysis is made of country-specific challenges that make life skills education necessary.

6.1 Primary School Education in Uganda

The Ugandan primary education system comprises seven sections from primary one (P1) up to primary seven (P7). Children can be enrolled from the age of five onwards. A clear distinction between public primary schools and private schools can be made. Whereas in public schools, promotion to the next class happens automatically, the promotion in private schools depends on the pupil's performance in an end-of-year examination. Nevertheless, at the end of the primary cycle of education, all pupils must pass public examinations: Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE). Depending on the results of PLE, admission to secondary education may be granted (Itaaga & Kiggundu 2015: 81).

In 1997, the Ugandan government introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE). Consequently, UPE plays a key role in Uganda's policy on reducing poverty and supporting human development. Thus, UPE follows different goals:

- To provide quality education to school-going age children.
- To transform society in a fundamental and positive way.
- To provide the resources to enable every child to enter and stay in school through P7.
- To make education accessible and relevant to the learner.
- To eliminate disparities and inequalities in education.
- To ensure that education is affordable by the majority of the population.
- To eradicate illiteracy.
- To equip every individual with the basic skills and knowledge with which to exploit the environment for both self and national development.

(Ministry of Education and Sports 2004: 10)

When UPE was introduced in 1997, it included a commitment by the Ugandan government to give access to primary education to everyone. Consequently, all

tuition fees, as well as charges for parents and teachers associations, were abolished. The newly introduced education programme led to an enormous increase in primary school enrolment in Uganda. Nevertheless, primary education did not become compulsory, and is not completely free, as the pupils still need to pay for their own pens, exercise books, and school uniforms – a large burden for children with a poor family background. Sometimes, children must even bring bricks and help with classroom construction (Overseas Development Institute 2005: 1).

Key actors when it comes to the implementation of UPE are Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), regional and local authorities, and the different school management committees which are elected by the parents. The Ministry of Education and Sports focusses on different main topics such as the training and retraining of teachers, providing instruction materials (e.g. textbooks, guidelines for teachers), supporting the construction of basic school facilities (e.g. classrooms, libraries), supervising, monitoring, and evaluating UPE, and providing the school curriculum and monitoring and assessing education standards. Another major task of the MoES is to provide grants for school facilities (e.g. maintenance, water, and electricity) and for each child enrolled in the school (monthly cost for education). The different local authorities are, under the leadership of the Chief Administration Officers (CAOs), responsible for making sure that all of the planned and promised UPE funds are transferred to them by the MoES, and are not used for any other purpose. Additionally, the CAOs oversee whether the UPE grants are disbursed properly to the schools, as well as whether the education budget is formulated and fulfilled correctly. On a sub-country level, the CAOs are represented by sub-county chiefs who make regular visits to the schools, implement local government regulations on UPE, keep statistical records, submit reports to the CAOs, ensure safe water and sanitation in schools, and guarantee a proper use and accountability for UPE grants. At the school level, school management committees represent the government. Their tasks include giving direction concerning the school operation, overseeing the school development plans, approving and managing the school budget, monitoring school finances, and guaranteeing transparency in the use of UPE grants. Furthermore, head-teachers in every primary school must report directly to the District Education Officers. They also cooperate very closely with the school management committees (Overseas Development Institute 2005: 2-3).

The introduction of UPE in 1997 had enormous consequences on the enrolment rate in primary schools. The registration increased from 3.1 million pupils in 1996 to 8.4 million in 2013. There is even a clear balance between boys and girls. Additionally, UPE helped Uganda to reach more than 90% of the MDGs, which aimed for both boys and girls to receive access to primary education (Mwesigwa 2015).

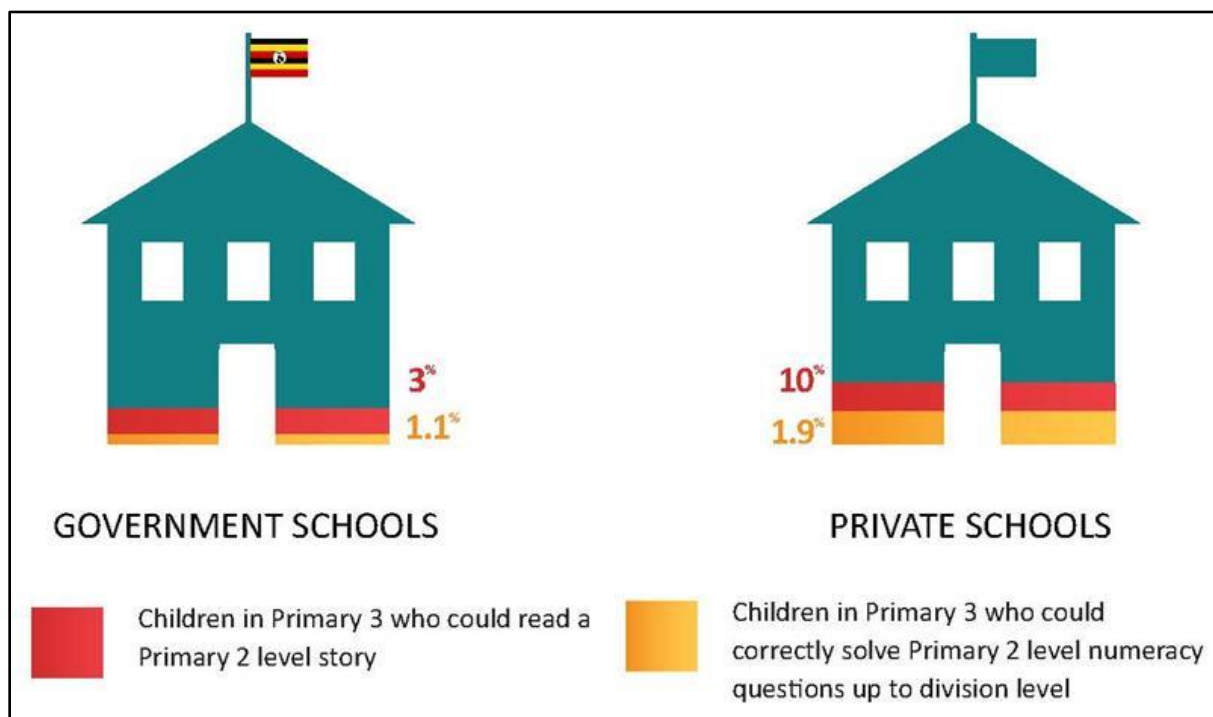
Nevertheless, the initial success of UPE seems to come to an end as the school dropout rate increases steadily (Mwesigwa 2015). Consequently, UNESCO emphasizes that approximately 68% of all primary school children in Uganda are likely to drop out before finishing primary seven (UNESCO office in Dakar 2012). In addition, other issues such as gender challenges, child labour, early marriages, less motivated teachers, and a lack of awareness among parents, have a negative influence on the effectiveness of UPE. Still, the main challenge is poverty, as education is not completely free and parents must pay for scholastic materials like pens, exercise books, and school uniforms. Particularly in poorer rural areas, some parents cannot even afford to pay for their children's school meals (Mwesigwa 2015).

Some pupils also suffer from a poor quality of education. Three out of 10 pupils in primary three are unable to read and understand a story written for primary two. In primary seven, which is the last class of primary school, 2 out of 10 pupils cannot read a primary two story (Twaweza 2012). While government representatives are asking why parents take children out of school before finishing private school and are trying to restructure UPE, Uganda's National Teacher Union blames these failures on a lack of governmental funding (Mwesigwa 2015).

The consequence of these omissions is the creation of a knowledge gap between children who can afford to go to fee-required private schools, where they often receive a better education, and those who visit government schools. Consequently, pupils in private schools perform better than those in government schools in literacy and numeracy in the lower levels (Twaweza 2012).

The distinction between private schools and government schools also is an important issue when it comes to the quality of teachers. Public schools often have the most well-trained teachers, but they are also less motivated to work, as they are among the lowest paid public servants in Uganda (Twaweza 2012). As Figure 4 shows, the consequence is better performance in literacy and numeracy of pupils attending private primary schools as compared to pupils in government schools.

Figure 4: Comparison between performance of pupils in government schools and in private schools



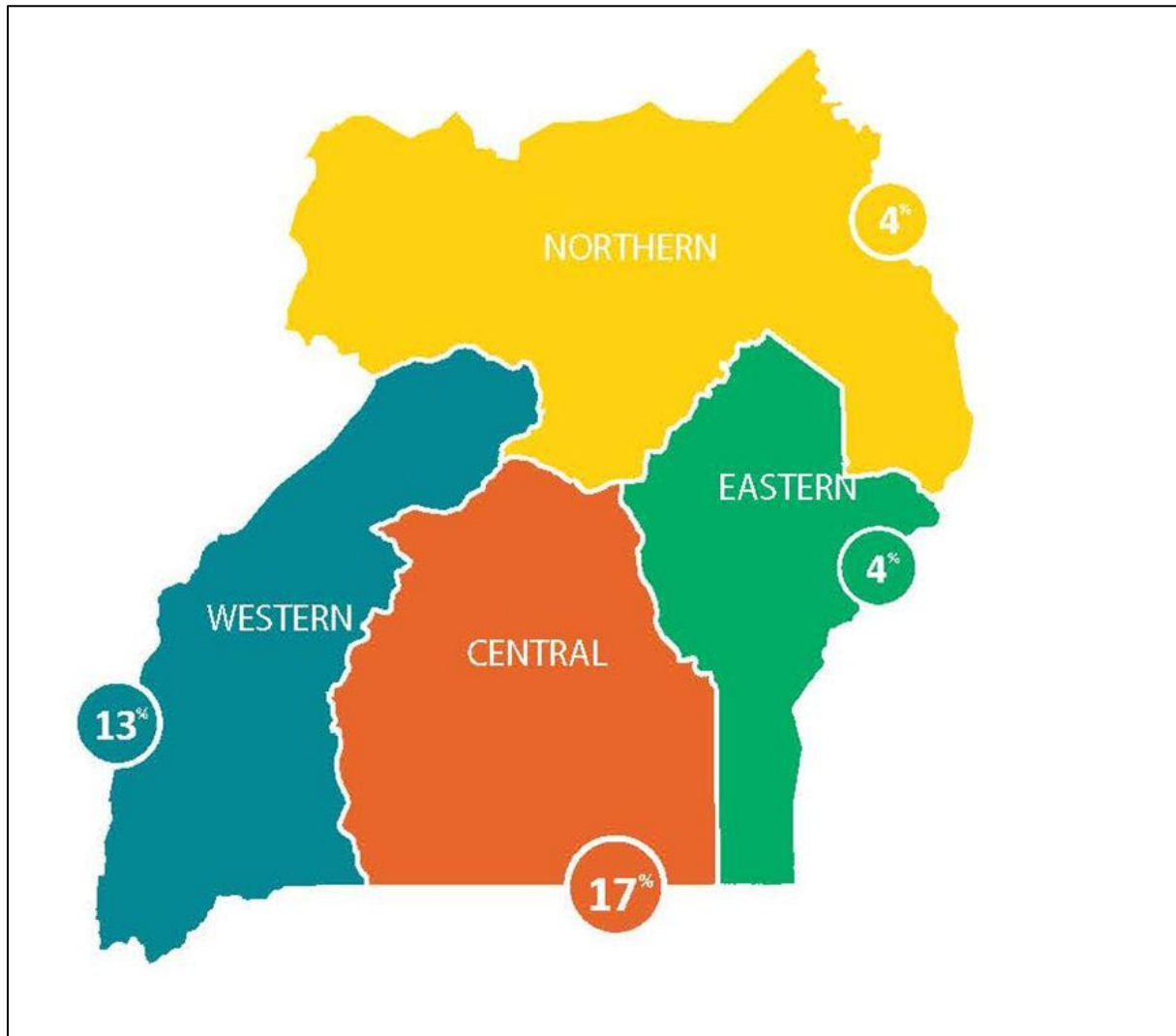
Source: Twaweza 2012

The growth of private schools in Uganda is, for one, the result of the government's decision of 1993 to liberalize the education sector, and therefore to allow private investors to participate in the educational system (Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports 2015). In addition, the often poorer education, which pupils receive in public schools due to large class sizes, as well as a lack of education materials and teacher motivation, increased private education initiatives. Additionally, private schools vary enormously in quality and tuition fees, which are charged for their services. This again increases the gap between children whose parents can afford to send them to private schools and pupils who must attend public schools due to their inability to afford school materials (Mwesigwa 2015).

Whereas the number of girls and boys is almost evenly spread in primary education, main differences in the quality of education occur between the several regions of Uganda. Thus, especially the poorer regions of northern and eastern Uganda, which still suffer the consequences of the armed rebellion of the Lord's Resistance Army by which many children have been abducted and recruited as child soldiers, experience higher school dropout rates. Additionally, there are significant differences in literacy and numeracy. Figure 5 illustrates that, for example, almost 2 out of every 10 children

in the Central Region can read a primary two-level story, as compared to less than 1 out of 10 children in the Eastern Region (Twaweza 2012).

Figure 5: Percentage of children who can read a Primary 2 level story



Source: Twaweza 2012

In addition to differences between the regions of Uganda, there is also dissimilarity between rural and urban areas. Hence, schools in urban regions perform much better on national exams than UPE schools in rural areas. This is especially the result of the public expenditure per pupil, which is higher in urban regions than in rural ones. Furthermore, the differing parental contribution to education can also be seen as, in rural areas where the majority of poor people live, the contribution is nearly zero. This fact additionally increases inequality in terms of total resources per pupil (Overseas Development Institute 2005: 3-4).

6.2 Life Skills Education in Uganda

The table below shows the various life skills initiatives in Uganda. Different stages and attempts of implementing life skills can be identified.

Table 1: Life skills initiatives in Uganda

Dates	Initiative	Goals
1985-1989 & 1990-1995	School Health Education Project (SHEP)	Reducing infant and child morbidity and mortality & reducing Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and HIV infection among youth aged 6-20 years.
June 1994	Workshop in Entebbe	To reach a common understanding of life skills and how it could be adapted to the African context
1994	Workshop in Jinja	Further discussion of life skills in the Ugandan context.
Late 1994 & early 1995	Undocumented workshops	Further discussions & planning
1995-2000	Basic Education Child Care and Adolescent Development (BECCAD)	Stressed positive change of behaviour with a special emphasis on women, children, and adolescents. Intended to promote holistic cognitive and psychosocial developments.
2000-present	Life skills education programme	Psychosocial development of primary & secondary school children.

Source: Bwayo 2014: 6; slightly altered by the author

Approximately 30 years ago, the first life skills-related programme was introduced to Uganda's primary education in form of the School Health Education Project (SHEP). Although it was not an extensive life skills education programme, as it mainly focussed on the reduction of infant and child morbidity and mortality as well as sexually transmitted diseases, it was a starting point for linking life skills aspects with school education. As one study discovered, in SHEP, even though the children's knowledge on health issues increased, there was no significant change in the children's behaviour. Life skills were seen as the missing link between the acquired knowledge and positive (health) behaviour (Bwayo 2014: 5).

It was soon realised that there was a greater need for life skills in the East and Southern Region of Africa (ESAR). Consequently, broader approaches for life skills initiatives were implemented and a life skills manual for the whole ESAR region was published, stating that:

- Educational programmes in and out of school mostly ignored the needs and life skills of children and adolescents
- Life skills play a major role in fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other social problems which young people face

(Bwayo 2014: 5)

Subsequently, a workshop was organised by UNICEF in cooperation with ESAR in Entebbe, Uganda in 1994. The overall goal was to develop a common understanding of a life skills concept and how the concept could be placed into the African context. Additionally, another workshop took place in Jinja, Uganda, in which a life skills manual was written, focussing on the different needs and problems of Ugandan youth. In addition, the manual stated that life skills activities should be included in the syllabi of schools and colleges instead of creating a separate life skills curriculum. This infusion approach was first implemented in the health and science syllabus. Later on, it also found its way into other subjects (Bwayo 2014: 5-6).

In 1995, the SHEP programme was replaced by the Basic Education, Child Care and Adolescent Development (BECCAD) programme, which was designed by the Ugandan government and UNICEF. Its main aim was *'to promote full cognitive and psychosocial development of children and adolescents within a supportive family and community environment which is conducive to education for all, prevention of*

HIV/AIDS/STDs, adequate care and protection of children and adults from birth to adulthood.’ (Republic of Uganda/UNICEF 1997: 3).

After a further developing and pre-testing phase, the psychosocial life skills education programme, which included the life skills of knowing and living with oneself, the life skills of knowing others and living with them, and the life skills for making effective decisions, was implemented in primary and secondary schools. Additionally, life skills education manuals for teachers were produced (Bwayo 2014: 8-9).

In 2000, a new life skills education programme, which is still used today, was introduced. The curriculum focusses on primary schools in all levels, from primary one to primary seven (Bwayo 2014: 9). Next, a more detailed focus is put on the life skills education in Ugandan primary schools.

6.3 Life Skills Education in Ugandan Primary Schools

The life skills curriculum, which is used in Uganda’s primary education today, was developed in three stages. In 2000, at the time the general life skills education programme was introduced, a subject-based curriculum was implemented on all primary school levels. In the following years, from 2002 to 2007, a reform was undertaken which launched a thematic life skills curriculum in the primary education system. Finally, in 2012, primary seven, the last year of primary school, was fully included in the programme (Bwayo 2014: 9).

Table 2 illustrates the structure of the primary school curriculum in Uganda. The primary school structure is organized in three different cycles:

1. Cycle 1 (P1-3): Basic skills,
2. Cycle 2 (P4): The transition year,
3. Cycle 3 (P5-P7): Subject-based development

(Bwayo 2014: 9)

The reform of 2002 was introduced step by step into the different cycles. Moreover, it took the years from 2007 to 2012 to complete the third reform, which introduced a thematic curriculum and a transition curriculum, and which also completely implemented the upper primary curriculum. Nevertheless, in practice, the primary school curriculum is divided into two major blocks. The first block consists of the literacy, numeracy, life skills and values-based curriculum for primary one up to

primary three. The second block contains the competence-based curriculum, which is implemented in primary four to primary seven (Bwayo 2014: 9).

Table 2: The structure of the primary school curriculum in Uganda

Class	Type of Curriculum	Cycle	Level/Block
Primary one	Thematic	Basic Skills	Literacy, Numeracy, Life skills and Values based
Primary two			
Primary three			
Primary four	Transition	Transition	Competence-based
Primary five	Subject based	Subject based development	Language and subject competencies
Primary six			
Primary seven			

Source: Bwayo 2014: 10

Table 2 illustrates that the lower level primary school (P1-P3) focusses on a thematic approach, which is used to organise the competence and knowledge content in these classes. Thereby, the focus is placed on topics most likely to be relevant for the children according to their interests and activities, as well as in compliance with the national educational goals. Primary four is the transition year, in which a change from the theme-based to the subject-based curriculum occurs. Furthermore, there is a change in the language of instruction, as English replaces the local language in the lessons. In primary five to seven, the concept, knowledge, and skills are arranged in different subjects (Bwayo 2014: 9-10). Each of the curricula was developed including a list of specific life skills and values. Life skills in the primary school curriculum include:

- **Life skills for knowing and living with oneself:** Self-esteem, assertiveness, self-awareness, coping with stress, and coping with emotion
- **Life skills for knowing and living with others:** Creative thinking, effective communication, friendship formation, interpersonal relationships, empathy, peer resistance, negotiation, and non-violent conflict resolution
- **Life skills for decision-making:** Critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, and problem solving

(Bwayo 2014: 15)

The thematic classes (P1-P3) consist of a broad field curriculum which follows the goal to link different subjects and emphasize their relationship. Thus, for instance, the subjects of technical career learning, professional and personal growth, supporting sciences, and the like can be interlinked with the support of life skills education. Table 3 illustrates an example of themes and sub-themes for primary two, term one (Bwayo 2014: 11).

Table 3: Themes and sub themes for primary two term one

Number	Theme	Sub-themes
1	Our School and Neighbourhood	Location, symbols, and benefits of our home. Benefits to the neighbourhood and causes of problems between school and neighbourhood.
2	Our Home and Community	Relationships among family members. Roles of different people in the community and cultural practices and values in the community.
3	The Human Body and Health	Parts of the body and their functions. Sanitation areas that need to be kept clean and personal hygiene skills for keeping clean.
4	Food and Nutrition	Classification of foods. Good feeding and effects of poor feeding.

Source: Bwayo 2014: 11

This exemplifies how life skills education can be integrated into the teaching of each subject area. Thus, for instance, the theme ‘Our school and neighbourhood’ can easily incorporate the life skills for knowing and living with others such, as effective communication, interpersonal relationships, or empathy. Likewise, the theme ‘The human body and health’ may deal with the life skill of decision making, to help people to make proper health choices.

When it comes to the available educational material for life skills education programmes, the initial stage of life skills education in Uganda was backed by the life skills education material of 1997. The material supported the idea of integrating life skills education in one subject, namely Science and Health Education. In 2007, the primary one thematic curriculum was introduced and mainly followed the goal of introducing health education for both the teachers and the pupils. The approach was supported by the Primary Teachers’ Training Manual, which emphasizes the importance of making positive health choices, making informed decisions, practicing

health behaviours, and recognizing and avoiding risky health situations and behaviours. The same manual also stresses that life skills must not be taught isolated from other subjects, but that they need to be an integral part of a variety of education programmes, such as HIV/AIDS prevention, drug abuse prevention, peace education, suicide prevention, or programmes for vulnerable youth like street children and orphans (Bwayo 2014: 11). Next, some of these problems addressed in different education programmes, which are a challenge for the Ugandan government and education system, are discussed.

6.4 Country-specific Areas for Life Skills Education in Uganda

Uganda faces many country-specific challenges, especially for young people, which open many opportunities for life skills education. Still, it is important to remember that life skills education in primary schools cannot be the only solution to all challenges. Further, it is essential that the education system as a whole, in combination with politics, the economy, and society, address these challenges and find solutions. Nevertheless, life skills education in primary schools can mark a starting point where the children are introduced to basic skills and learn how they can make a positive influence and prevent and address certain challenges.

Health

One specific area when it comes to life skills education is health. While health is often reduced to physical well-being, life skills education additionally emphasizes the importance of mental health. Consequently, psychological health in terms of personal well-being includes aspects such as the development of healthy relationships with others and with oneself. Furthermore, life skills also play an important role developing behaviour that supports physical health. To this end, life skills education is directed towards taking personal actions or actions towards others, as well as being able to change one's personal environment to improve the individual health situation. Children in Uganda are very often exposed to several dangerous and challenging situations, which also go beyond the issue of health (Bwayo 2014: 41-42).

Sexual and reproductive health

Young people in Uganda often face health problems related to sexual and reproductive health issues. Furthermore, they are also engaging in so-called high-risk sexual behaviours, including such aspects as non-marital sex, extra-marital sex, non-

consensual sex, commercial sex, transactional sex, intergenerational sex, and sex for survival. Also, having sexual intercourse with multiple concurrent partners can increase the risk of contracting sexual diseases. Given the engagement of young people in risky sexual behaviour, they have a large share in the country's number of HIV-affected persons. Consequently, 4.8% of females and 2.3% of males aged 15 to 24 are infected with HIV (International Youth Foundation 2011: 26-27).

Population structure

Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world. 48.7% of the population are under the age of 15, and 21.2% are between 15 and 24 years (IndexMundi 2015). Additionally, Uganda's population still grows at a rate of 3.2%, and therefore is much higher than the region's average population growth (The Republic of Uganda 2014: 3). In combination with certain other aspects, such as poverty, Uganda's young population has to face considerable challenges, which can be addressed with the help of life skills education and are addressed in detail below.

Unemployment and underemployment

At 62%, Uganda has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in Sub-Saharan Africa (New Vision 2015). Therefore, young people are disproportionately affected by high unemployment and underemployment. Additionally, youth comprise 80% of the total unemployment. There is a slight difference between urban and rural areas, with the former counting 72% and the latter 83%. Among gender differences, the unemployment rate for males (ages 18-24) totals 9%, while for females in the same age group, the number was recorded at 27% (International Youth Foundation 2011: 16).

There also is a particular lack of access for young people to relevant, high-quality, and practical skills training. Due to the lack of skills, in combination with a lack of formal sector employment opportunities, many adolescents must engage in informal sector work to make a living. This also includes engaging in illegal activities, where corruption and exploitation are a daily fare (International Youth Foundation 2011: 24-25). In addition to the practical skills, life skills can, for instance, facilitate finding the most suitable job for oneself by teaching self-confidence and helping people to also assess themselves and identify their personal strengths.

Poverty and its consequences

The high unemployment rate, in combination with no prospects for the future, leads to enormous adolescent engagement in criminal activities such as drug consumption and drug dealing, alcoholism, and prostitution (New Vision 2015). However, poverty, which leads to child-related offences, relates to young people both as offenders and victims. Thus, in 2011 – 2012, there were 1,256 juvenile offenders registered, and in 2012 the Ugandan Police Force arrested an average of 6 adolescents per 100,000 children (UNICEF 2015: 75). Additionally, to be crime offenders, young people in Uganda also face serious threats of being victims of crimes. This includes child trafficking, unlawful child marriage, and violence against children (UNICEF 2015: 67-75).

Life skills education can also address risky behaviour like drug consumption. It further shows how people can live with each other by explaining how certain behaviour affects oneself and the community around them.

Women and LGBTI rights

Women face additional challenges, ranging from being forced into early marriages and becoming teenage mothers, to being victims of sexual assaults and forced prostitution. In addition, they are often affected by issues such as discrimination, low social status, lack of economic self-sufficiency, and a greater risk of HIV/AIDS infection (Foundation for Sustainable Development 2016).

In recent years, Uganda's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people have faced increasing discrimination, harassment, and violence. These atrocities do not only come from civilians, but also include actions by the government and its authorities. Thus, for instance, an Anti-Homosexuality Act was passed in December 2013, which punishes homosexuality and declares it illegal (Amnesty International 2016: 375-376).

From this perspective, life skills can help to a person learn to live with others and respect their beliefs and attitudes. Furthermore, the equality of women and their role in the household and in the society can be addressed and discussed. Nevertheless, when it comes to critical topics such as LGBTI rights, where the society, religious leaders, and the government have strong reservations, it might be difficult to implement those topics in life skills education.

Orphans, vulnerable children, children unable to attend school, and youth affected by conflict and violence

Children (under 18 years) in Uganda make up over 50.7% of the population. Of these 17.1 million children, 11.3% are orphans, 8% are critically vulnerable, and 43% are moderately vulnerable. HIV/AIDS is a serious problem, as of those who are orphaned, almost half have lost their parents due to the disease. Furthermore, other aspects are predominant in the lives of orphans and vulnerable children in Uganda. This includes high child mortality, malnutrition, abuse, inadequate access to education, increase in commercial exploitation, and neglect. Additionally, due to poverty and orphanage, many children are homeless and are consequently forced to live on the streets. There, they often become victims of violence by the public, urban authorities, other homeless adults, their homeless peers, and sometimes the police and local government officials (UNICEF 2015: 70). Life skills can especially focus on the needs of orphans and children living in the streets. Even though there are some programmes that teach life skills in a non-scholastic context, most life skills education takes place in schools. Consequently, it also is important to get all children to go to school so they can access life skills education. Free public schools make it theoretically possible for all children to go to school, and some private schools are also providing free accommodation and education for street children and orphans. Nevertheless, there are still many school-aged children in Uganda who do not go to school, or leave at an early stage. Table 4 illustrates the different reasons a child has never attended school, by region, sex of household head, and refugee status.

Table 4: Reasons why the child has never attended school, by region, sex of household head, and refugee status

REASON	Region					Sex of household head		Refugee status		Total
	Central	Eastern	Karamoja	Northern	Western	Male	Female	Non-refugee	Refugee	
There is not enough money	83.8	50.0	65.8	40.6	45.5	57.5	58.3	52.5	67.2	57.9
Do domestic work such as caring for younger children or elderly or sick relatives	5.0	16.0	77.2	6.9	22.7	19.8	30.5	35.0	9.2	25.4
He/she is needed to work/help at home	5.0	10.0	73.4	6.9	20.5	19.2	27.3	31.8	9.2	23.5
The school is too far away	3.8	14.0	58.2	12.9	11.4	19.8	21.9	29.6	6.1	20.9
He/she is not interested in attending school	6.3	20.0	12.7	34.7	20.5	19.8	19.3	22.4	14.5	19.5
Child does not want	2.5	22.0	1.3	33.7	27.3	16.2	17.7	17.5	16.0	17.0
He/she is physically or mentally disabled and unable	13.8	20.0	11.4	15.8	22.7	13.8	17.7	16.1	15.3	15.8
It is unsafe to travel to school	2.5	16.0	8.9	11.9	13.6	8.4	11.2	10.8	8.4	9.9
Classrooms are too crowded	3.8	16.0	3.8	5.9	20.5	8.4	8.0	5.4	13.0	8.2
Pupils unsafe at school	5.0	10.0	3.8	10.9	0.0	8.4	4.8	4.0	10.7	6.5
It is a family trend	0.0	8.0	5.1	1.0	15.9	4.8	4.3	3.6	6.1	4.5
School graduates cannot find good jobs	5.0	10.0	3.8	2.0	4.6	3.6	5.4	4.0	5.3	4.5
Got Married	7.3	9.1	4.7	0.0	6.7	1.2	6.8	3.9	5.4	4.4
Teachers do not perform	3.8	4.0	1.3	4.0	11.4	4.8	3.7	2.2	7.6	4.2
Schooling is not important	2.5	12.0	3.8	1.0	4.6	4.2	3.7	4.5	3.1	4.0
He/she would be able to find a permanent job	0.0	18.0	3.8	2.0	0.0	5.4	2.7	5.8	0.8	4.0
Cooking, cleaning, fetching water or wood, etc.	0.3	2.0	5.1	2.0	11.4	1.8	5.4	4.5	2.3	3.7
Buildings pupils un safe	5.2	6.1	1.4	4.2	0.0	3.4	3.6	2.9	4.9	3.5
Became pregnant	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	2.8	2.6	1.9	4.4	2.7
Tend animals, or work on the family farm or in the family business	8.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	4.2	0.5	0.5	5.3	2.3
Other important reasons not mentioned above As explained in the KI interviews and may include; sexual harassment, poor parenting, domestic violence	10.0	48.0	10.1	23.8	45.5	21.0	26.2	22.0	26.7	23.7

Source: Mpyangu et al. 2014: 10

The table illustrates that the lack of money, and therefore poverty, is the main reason children cannot attend school. This is more pronounced in the central region of Uganda and is greater among refugee children (67.2%) compared to non-refugee children. The sex of the household makes no difference in this topic. Despite the fact that schooling in Uganda is free, almost 1 in 6 children, who had never attended school, named the high costs of schooling as the main reason. These costs include school materials, school uniforms, and transportation costs. Other main reasons for children not going to school include having to help in the household or in the family business, the school being too far away, being uninterested in schooling, physical and mental disability, or an unsafe route to school (Mpyangu et al. 2014: 9-11). Especially in northern Uganda, people still suffer from the consequences of the

former conflict with the rebel group Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). In the conflict, which mainly took place from 1986 to 2005, the LRA abducted approximately 20,000 children, killed around 120,000 civilians, and displaced 1.9 million people (Human Rights Watch 2012). Still today, people in Uganda face the trauma experienced during this time. In addition to psychological treatment, life skills could provide some guidance on how to deal with oneself and with others. Though, according to the author's own research in northern Uganda, a proper provision of support for people affected by the conflict does not happen in a sufficient manner.

As described above, Uganda offers many different problem areas for life skills education. However, it is important to note that life skills education in primary schools can only assist in addressing the challenges, and is not the only solution. Politics, schools, other education sectors, and society as a whole need to address these issues in a holistic and sustainable way. In that perspective, the cultural, religious, and political background and interests can play an important role as they might (try to) influence education for their own goals. There also exists the danger that not all elements of life skills are welcomed by government institutions. Critical thinking, for example, might raise the fear that the resulting thoughts and actions might be used to criticize government decisions. Additionally, one major challenge is to grant all people access to those facilities teaching life skills.

7. A Case Study in Life Skills Education

The following case study exemplarily discusses and analyses the theory and concept of life skills education focussing on a school project in Kampala City, Uganda. Using the methodology mentioned in chapter 2, research was conducted on site as well as via Skype, email, WhatsApp, and face-to-face interviews in 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018.

7.1 Profile of Daystar Nursery and Primary School Kirombe - Uganda

Daystar Nursery and Primary School Kirombe - Uganda (Daystar School) is a nursery and primary school which is located in a major slum area of Uganda's capital city of Kampala. The school currently has 8 classes teaching 430 children. The classes are partitioned into nursery and primary sections.

Nursery section:

- baby class (Kindergarten 1, age 3)
- middle class (Kindergarten 2, age 4)
- top class (Kindergarten 3, age 5)

Primary section:

- Primary 1 (age 5, 6, 7, 8)
- Primary 2 (age 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)
- Primary 3 (age 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)
- Primary 4 (age 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)
- Primary 5 (age 10, 11, 12, 13)

The varying ages within the primary section are due to some children not having had proper access to education, and therefore needing to catch up with the standard of knowledge.

Daystar School is planning to grow and to add the other two classes of primary section in upcoming years.

Picture 1: Pupils assembling at the schoolyard of Daystar School



The school opened in January 2015 and was funded by private donors from all over the world. Since then, the school has been able to sustain itself by charging school fees. The fees are calculated to be as small as possible so that the low-income families living in the area can afford to send their children to school.

Mission

The school's mission is to *'introduce valuable lessons to all children to achieve their highest potential'* (Daystar School Kirombe 2018). Therefore, the Daystar School management is committed to providing quality education which *'combines academic excellence with a concern for the, moral, social, emotional, cultural and physical growth of its learners'* (Daystar School Kirombe 2018). As mentioned previously, this education is provided in a life skills-centred environment where mentoring pupils' future and lives is integrated into the total curriculum and school day. Through the career of teaching, the management fulfils its mandate in partnership with the community and the ministry of education in Uganda.

Vision

Daystar Nursery and Primary School follows the goal to *'teach all children the relevant education and life skills they require to successfully function in the world today'* (Daystar School Kirombe 2018). Daystar School additionally stands for the following objectives:

- distinctiveness in purpose and in outcomes
- academic excellence, self-worth, and respect
- being a place where each learner develops his or her potential as an individual
- being a place where each learner can contribute to being a responsible member of society

(Daystar School Kirombe 2018)

7.2 Implementation of Life Skills Education Programmes at Daystar School

Besides teaching the typical subjects, Daystar School puts a focus on the transfer of life skills. Therefore, the school also follows the Life Skills Curriculum for Primary School Teachers in Uganda. Here, the following life skills are taught from primary section onwards (Interview 1, Protocol 1-13):

- **Listening:** This skill is part of the emotional life skills (Özmete 2011: 5). It is essential to enabling effective communication in the school and in the community. Furthermore, it is the basis of social interaction and helps to build healthy relationships amongst the pupils and with the teachers. In addition, 'listening' helps to guarantee lessons in which every pupil gets the chance to learn without auditory distraction. At Daystar, the life skill of 'listening' is seen as crucial as it sets the basis for learning.
- **Child safety:** Child safety plays a significant role at Daystar School. It is part of the overall life skill of healthy living and helps to save the children from dangers which are specific to local conditions. Amongst others, children are taught not to leave school with a stranger and to wear helmets while riding on a boda boda (a Ugandan motorcycle taxi; many children are brought to school on them).
- **Safe playing:** In the community where Daystar School is located, 'safe playing' is a very important topic, as there are many different perils in the slum area. Thus, it is important to teach the children to properly analyse a scenario where they want to play and consequently avoid dangers like, for example, open electric cables, dangerous waste, or traffic routes. In addition to this, 'safe playing' also refers to the school ground. The children are also taught to

appreciate their fellow students and consequently avoid running around or hurting each other.

- **Gaining self-esteem:** The life skill of self-esteem is important in multiple ways. First, it plays an essential part in one's mental health and enables people to appreciate themselves and their character. Second, this skill is crucial when it comes to critical thinking and problem solving, as it strengthens the ability to trust and believe in oneself.
- **Morals & values:** Morals and values are the basis of living and interacting in a community/society. At Daystar School, the training refers to enabling the pupils to make informed ethical decisions. This also includes talking about certain ethical dilemmas and how to judge situations, and deciding what action to take. Other skills such as communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution are strengthened as well and help the children to effectively interact with each other and other people in the community.
- **Respect of others:** At Daystar School, this life skill includes the conveying of self-respect and respect towards others, as well as tolerance. Part of this also includes the strengthening of empathy by showing strategies on how to understand other persons and how to comprehend and respect their actions and ways of thinking. This is especially important at a school where many different opinions and attitudes meet and can easily lead to conflict. Furthermore, the teaching of respect should strengthen ties within the community. Additionally, the life skill also includes proper time management and responsibility, so that appointments are kept and a person remains reliable.
- **Health:** As Daystar School is located in one of Kampala's slum areas, the health issue plays a major part in the life skills education at Daystar. There are many threats to the children's health in this area, such as water pollution, infectious diseases, malaria, and other waterborne illnesses. Therefore, it is essential for the children to know the threats and diseases and be able to understand their origin and, consequently, to avoid them. The lessons on health skills are also aimed at helping the children to understand the importance of washing their hands, cleaning themselves, and brushing their teeth as a basis for avoiding infections. This is especially important as a major

portion of the pupils attending Daystar come from poorer families, and their families very often cannot afford to pay for medical treatment.

- **Building proper relationships:** This important skill is supposed to help the children to improve their social skills and to learn how to make friends and build nurturing relationships. Especially in communities where mutual support amongst the members is important, proper relationships are essential. At school the children can learn to build such relationships playfully and how to respect their teachers. Besides that, the lessons have the aim of showing the pupils what people they can talk to, when they need help, and how to find confidential persons.
- **Attitude/Setting and achieving goals:** A realistic setting and pursuing of goals is part of the mental life skills (Özmete 2011: 5). Daystar School emphasises the importance of knowing one's own strength and setting one's own goals accordingly. The goals are set by the children themselves and include aspects such as getting a good education, finding a well-paid job, or live a healthy life. Furthermore, the children are made to understand why it is important in life to set goals for oneself and live up to those goals. This also is supposed to strengthen their own motivation to reach the goals. The hope is that the children will focus on their education and ultimately get a good job, and therefore are able to live a proper life so that they can avoid the cycle of poverty.

The life skills above, which are taught at Daystar School, do not assert the claim of being a completed list. Continuously, the Daystar staff monitors and evaluates life skills education at the school and how it changes the behaviour of the children and the community as a whole. This happens through talks with children, parents, teachers, and community leaders, as well as through daily observations. The ongoing process consequently includes that some life skills lessons are updated and new life skills are added. Additionally, it is important to note that the different life skills are interlinked and also build upon each other (Interview 1).

At Daystar, life skills are taught as a separate subject on a daily basis. Nevertheless, they are also included in other lessons, if suitable, and in the daily school life in general. Thus, for example, the different body parts are part of the biology lesson and also include talking about health issues and personal hygiene which are also

included in life skills lessons. To be entitled and able to teach life skills, some staff working at Daystar were supported by ARISE Foundation USA, an NGO which specialises in '*evidence-based life skills lessons and professional staff training*' (ARISE 2018). The support included a one month training in life skills and life skills education. Life skills lessons at Daystar School are the result of further development and adjustment of this training and material. To make it possible for all teachers at Daystar to understand the concept of life skills, weekly internal teacher training and learning material is provided (Interview 1).

7.3 Analysis of the Life Skills Education Programme

Following is an analysis about the life skills education programme at Daystar School. In addition, the government's view concerning life skills education in Uganda is included. The analysis contains the results of 22 interviews (Interview 1-22) conducted with children, school staff, parents, and an employee at the Ministry of Education and Sports, as well as the findings of 14 protocols of participant observations (Protocol 1-14). Furthermore, while visiting Daystar School, the author of this study lived in the slum area where the school is located for three months and was able to experience the daily routine, challenges, and problems at the school and in the area around the schoolground first-hand.

Reasons for implementing life skills education at Daystar School

As mentioned in chapter 6, there are many challenges in Uganda that need to be addressed. Life skills education is one attempt to tackle them. Daystar School is located in a major slum area in Kampala city. Consequently, the already severe problems in the country hit the population of the area even harder. That was also the main reason the school was founded and the decision was made to include life skills education into the school curriculum. Specifically, the challenges in the area where the school is located are (Interview 1 & Protocol 14):

- *High rate of school dropouts*: This happens due to extreme poverty, a high HIV/AIDS infection rate where the children are orphaned and end up as child labourers, and alcohol and drug addiction (of relatives).
- *Water-borne diseases*: Typhoid, cholera, and malaria are main killers as the area lacks proper drainage and sewage systems. Consequently, such

illnesses can spread easily. A lack of money for treatment and knowledge of how one can be infected and prevent these diseases adds to the problem.

- *Dangerous playing conditions:* In addition to a lack of proper playgrounds for children, the area has no proper electric cable systems and offers many other dangers to children who are playing outside. As a consequence, children die due to electric shock, are hit by vehicles, and injure themselves with sharp objects. Thus, for example, one pupil mentions that a friend injured himself when he endured an electric shock from an electric cable while they were playing outside (Interview 15).
- *High crime rate and kidnappings:* Several parents report of the fear that their child might get kidnapped and express the wish that he or she does not talk to strangers (Interview 5, Interview 8). This fear is based on the fact that in Uganda, child sacrifices from so-called 'witch doctors' are on the rise again (Daily Mail 2015). Additionally, other crimes such as thefts, (armed) robberies, and gang crime pose threats as well. Particularly the latter attracts many children, as gangs offer a certain structure and solidarity that the children's lives are missing, and they often help to assure children's livelihood through criminal activities (Interview 1). One child also reports that her uncle got robbed on his way home from work, and that the family does not like to go out at night (Interview 18).

The list of challenges above is not complete, but illustrates the main problems and challenges in the area. As a consequence, the Daystar School project was founded, with a special emphasis placed on life skills education. Nevertheless, the school staff is aware of the fact that they cannot tackle all of the problems in the area: *'We know that the solution to the challenges in our area is not only in our responsibility, but we want to give the children the necessary life skills so that they have the best basis to live a happy life and to improve things in the community'* (Interview 1). The Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda similarly expresses the reason they want schools to implement life skills education into their curricula, as it is *'purposely intended to help children flourish within their social and physical environment to ensure a healthy and happy life'* (Interview 3).

In general, very high expectations are placed on reaching positive effects through life skills education, such as (from Interview 3):

- The ability to cope with different life situations
- The ability to survive and sustain oneself
- Non-violent conflict resolution
- Being a productive and acceptable member of the society.

Even though these reasons are valid, it is important to note that life skills education programmes do not substitute government services. For example, Uganda has one of the world's worst healthcare records (Baker 2011: 154). While it is crucial to educate the population about health issues, it is equally important to support citizens with a proper health care system, and not leave the sole responsibility with the citizens. Besides that, 'being a productive and acceptable member of the society' is open to many interpretations and can easily exclude certain parts of the population.

All parents interviewed report that the life skills education programme is one of the reasons that they send their child(ren) to Daystar School (Interview 4-14). Some add that this is because no other primary schools in the area offer life skills lessons (Interview 5, 6 & 10). The school director of Daystar agrees that there are no other primary schools in the area that are teaching life skills, and that, in general, life skills education programmes are not properly implemented in the Ugandan primary school system (Interview 1). However, Mr. Cletus Nankobe from the Ministry of Education and Sports emphasises that the nationwide life skills curriculum is valid for all primary schools using the Ugandan National Primary School Curriculum, and that a life skills education programme is implemented accordingly at each school (Interview 3). A major difference in perception can also be observed in the teacher training of life skills: On the one hand, the government states a '*continuous support, supervision, guidance and re-training in school based and centrally organised workshops*' for teachers concerning life skills (Interview 3). On the other hand, Bwayo emphasises in his study that '*about less than half [of the teachers] confessed deficiency in life skills education competence due to inadequate or no training at all.*' (Bwayo 2014: 192).

At Daystar School, the area-specific challenges are identified by the school staff, discussed, and incorporated into the school's life skills curriculum. As a result, the Daystar life skills curriculum is not entirely identical to the Life skills Curriculum for Primary School Teachers in Uganda, which is provided by the government. It also

includes, for instance, other skills such as listening, which are important for the children living around the Daystar School area, and are not explicitly mentioned in the nationwide curriculum (Interview 1). This shows the strength of life skills education, as its contents can easily be adapted to local conditions, needs, and challenges.

To be able to effectively identify the life skills the children need and are missing, it is essential to have proper access to their everyday lives. At Daystar School, some of the staff have lived around the school area for many years and, therefore, are well-integrated and respected in the community and know many of the children and parents from other activities. In addition, some teachers had already conducted life skills lessons with the parents or older siblings of the school children in former education programmes. This makes it easier to communicate with children and parents, to figure out what problems they encounter every day, and consequently what life skills they need to be able to overcome the challenges (Interview 1, Interview 2).

Implementation, teaching, and evaluation of life skills lessons

At Daystar School, life skills are taught on a daily basis for one hour, and are additionally included in other subjects and in extracurricular activities like sports, drawing, and drama. A typical lesson structure includes the following elements (Interview 1 and 2):

- Ice breaker/Introduction: This can be a short story, an everyday situation, a picture, or a current issue that is important to children and/or teachers.
- The main part of the lesson is oriented along four 'W' questions:
 - What (is the specific life skill that the class is talking about today)?
 - When (does one need the life skill)?
 - Where (does one use the life skill: at home, on the road, at school)?
 - Why (is the life skill important and how important is it to the children)?
- Summary: This is a repetition of the specific life skill the class has been talking about, and it enables the teacher to see how the children understood the content of the lesson.

- Evaluation: It is important for the teachers to also include the opinions and thoughts of the pupils about each lesson, so that the methods and contents can be adapted accordingly. This means that after the lesson, pupils are asked about their opinions, or they can give written feedback in evaluation sheets.

During the life skills lessons, teacher-centred lecturing is the dominant method. Additionally, other methods and techniques are used:

- Brainstorming: e.g. 'How do you properly listen to another person?' (Protocol 1)
- Narrations:
 - Pupils can tell their own stories and report problems they have encountered (Protocol 2, 7, 8)
 - Teachers use storytelling to facilitate the understanding of life skills (Protocol 2, 5, 7)
- Demonstrating: Real-life examples are used to vividly address everyday situations and challenges (Protocol 2, 3, 8, 9)
- Practising: e.g. children practise how to wash their hands (regular repetitions before lunch break and after bathroom breaks) (Protocol 8, 12, 13)
- Single learning: pupils fill in worksheets by themselves. Afterwards, the sheets are discussed in class (Protocol 3).

As mentioned above, teacher-centred teaching with explanations is the main method used to teach life skills. Notes on the blackboard are often collected through brainstorming sessions so that the answers and opinions of the pupils are included. Discussions are evident, but are mainly led through questions and answers (Protocol 1-9). The limited use of methods is mostly due to a lack of funds, which again leads to a lack of material, a high student-teacher ratio, and a lack of space in classrooms (Interview 1). Also, teacher-centred teaching is the main method used in all other lessons at Daystar School. Therefore, the question remains of whether teachers also lack the knowledge of using other methods and techniques, such as partner or group work, discussions, and the like. This is important, as life skills education '*is closely linked to a pedagogy of active learning*' (Bwayo 2014: 31). Consequently, it is

'through participative teaching methods, such as role play, debates, situation analysis, and one-on-one problem-solving, life skills programs can actively engage young people in their own development process' (Mangrulkar, Whitman, Posner 2001: 6). It is also the government that could offer teacher-training concerning methods of teaching in life skills education. Still, the Daystar School staff has not been given any training support by the government (Interview 1), even though the Ministry of Education and Sports claims to offer *'continuous support...and re-training'* for primary school teachers (Interview 3).

The working material which is used in the lessons is mainly limited to the blackboard, exercise books, and worksheets (depending on funds). Also, Daystar School has a computer room with over 20 desktop computers (PCs) that the pupils can use. Nevertheless, the PCs have no internet access and high electricity costs, and regular power cuts make it difficult to work with them. This also shows that life skills education, and education in general, need appropriate (governmental) support, funding, and a stable infrastructure to be implemented and conducted properly (see below: problems, limits, and difficulties).

At Daystar School, graded tests take place after a few months to analyse the learning progress of the pupils regarding life skills. The tests are in written form and mostly consist of writing down features of certain life skills, as well as dos and don'ts. The results of the tests generally range from very good to good (Interview 1, 2). According to the test results, it is evident that most students are motivated to learn the theory of the different life skills. Still, the question remains whether written, graded tests are necessary and, if so, whether there should be additional practical tests based on real life situations where life skills are needed. In an education area where the main goal is to empower people through learning life skills, it may be a good idea to abandon the more 'traditional' way of teaching and focus more on acting in real-life situations, without the pressure of tests. This can, for example, happen through experiential learning, trial and error, or observations.

Besides written tests, the life skills education programme at Daystar School is evaluated through anonymous evaluation forms which are given to the children after life skills sessions. Here, pupils can write down their opinions on and feelings about the current life skills lesson. The feedback given is mostly very positive, and the pupils appreciate the deviation from regular lessons. In addition, the results show that

the children much appreciate the life skills lessons and leave with the feeling of having learnt something important. Some children note that more visual and audio-visual material would be helpful (Evaluation forms). The former head-teacher of Daystar School reports that after the life skills lessons, some children open up to the teachers and tell them about problems in their lives. The teachers then try to discuss this with the parents and to *'support the child the best they can'* (Interview 2). This demonstrates that life skills education addresses important topics in the children's lives, and that it offers children the chance to reflect on their own situations and problems. Having them open up to trusted persons is the first step in empowering them to actively tackle everyday challenges. To gain the trust of the children and to effectively support them with the life skills that they need, a good teacher-pupil relationship and a positive class atmosphere are essential, especially as life skills address personal and sensitive topics. A good relationship is also based on the necessity that teachers are seen as role models, as *'life skills development is character development and teachers are important role models, standard setters, and sources of influence'* (Bwayo 2014: 49).

Effects of life skills education

The expectations for a life skills education are very high from many different sides. Whereas the government expects children to learn how to live a happy life and take responsibility for it (Interview 3), parents also see life skills as a way for their children to live a better life (Interview 9), to overcome daily problems (Interview 6), and to be able to care for themselves and for others (Interview 10 and 14).

Bwayo emphasises the various expectations from a life skills education with parents and teachers:

'The parents, teachers and other educationalists had divergent views on what life skills are and the intended outcome of life skills education. In this case, while some teachers seemed to view life skills education in the context of children's psychosocial competence, parents had a wider scope of viewing life skills education that seemed to include all spheres of a child's nurture and development and in particular, the development of skills that would facilitate employment and further education' (Bwayo 2014: 194).

Pupils similarly expect that life skills education helps them to '*be happy*' (Interview 19), '*live healthy*' (Interview 18), and to '*get a good job*' (Interview 21). Concerning Daystar School, the overall goals of life skills education are to effectively tackle everyday problems in the area and to consequently enable the children to live a better life in the future (Interview 1).

While expectations concerning life skills education are very high, reality is much more complex and diverse. Following is a presentation of the different investigated effects of life skills education.

From the government's point of view, different effects of life skills education have already been realised (Interview 3):

- Learners support each other in solving some problems
- Learners easily open up to teachers and other adults on issues affecting them
- Learners are becoming self-driven and self-directed
- Positive change in behaviour
- Learners democratically elect their school leaders (prefects)

Most of the effects mentioned above are also observed at and reported by the staff of Daystar School, and are elaborated in detail below (Interview 1 & 2, Protocol 13).

At the beginning of the 2015 school year, many children were enrolled at Daystar School who had never been to school before, and also who had never been in contact with life skills education. Consequently, there were many challenges children and teachers had to face during the initial weeks, such as the children not listening during or interrupting the lessons, not washing their hands after bathroom breaks, aggressive behaviour (e.g. beatings), and destroying school property (e.g. plants in the schoolyard) (Interview 1, Protocol 1, 10 & 11). Most of these topics are now directly addressed in life skills lessons, as the problems also directly affect the school atmosphere. In the first lessons, life skills such as listening, attitude, communication, and health are discussed and repeated (Protocol 1-9). In addition, teachers are also being educated in life skills education, so that they can accordingly address the most important problems (Protocol 4). Major changes are noted in the behaviour of the pupils.

First, children are interrupting the lessons less and listening more carefully (Interview 1, 2, Protocol 13). While this might partially be due to a settling-in period, in which the

children adapt to the school setting and follow teacher instructions, how and why to carefully listen to others is also specifically addressed in several life skills lessons (Protocol 1, 3, 5 & 6). In addition, two children report that they now know *'how to talk to each other'* and that *'listening is important'* (Interview 17 & 20). Two parents emphasise that the children started to listen to them more attentively and that communication within the family has improved (Interview 4 & 5). The teachers are equally happy with the improvement in listening and communication skills among the children (Interview 1 & 2). It is also important to note that the atmosphere during the life skills lessons is mostly very relaxed and that the children do not have to be afraid of punishment (physical or otherwise). Additionally, the interaction between teachers and children is based on mutual respect (Protocol 1-3 & 5-13). Therefore, the change in behaviour is less likely to be due to fear and more likely based on understanding and experiencing.

Second, an understanding of basic rules concerning hygiene is established in the children, as the transfer of diseases via dirty hands and unclean conditions is addressed in life skills lessons concerning health (Protocol 8 & 9). As a result, it is observed that children start to regularly wash their hands after toilet breaks and before lunch break (Protocol 12 & 13). In addition, one mother mentions that her daughter started to wash her hands before touching food, and that she asks questions concerning hygiene at home (Interview 12). Also, the teachers notice that the pupils go directly to the handwashing station after using the toilet, without the teachers having to ask them to do so (Interview 1 & 2). When asked why they wash their hands after the toilet break, the children reply that it is because they *'don't want to get sick'* and they *'want to stay healthy'* (Interview 18 & 21). This teaching of the importance of washing hands and a clean environment is supplemented with practical exercises. The regularly repeated exercises are conducted together with the whole class. They quickly became a ritual

Picture 2: Children helping each other to wash their hands after toilet break



and part of the daily routine. Nevertheless, some children do not use soap properly and only briefly dip their hands in the water. Whenever a teacher observes this sort of situation, he or she tries to correct the behaviour (Protocol 12).

In the life skills lessons on communication, as well as sessions about attitude and respect, anger and violence are main focal points. This is mainly due to the fact that some pupils beat others and parents report that children show violent behaviour at home (Interview 2 & 5). While beatings at school decrease, some children still behave violently towards others (Interview 2, Protocol 11 & 12). The head teacher of the school reports that this is due to the fact that *'life skills need time to stick, as it takes time to change the character'* (Interview 2). Nevertheless, one mother mentions that she observed her child telling others during play not to beat each other (Interview 4). One father also emphasises that, since his child learned life skills in school *'he stopped hurting his siblings and friends'* (Interview 13). Another mother notes that her child *'used to fight a lot but since my son is in school it gets less and less'* (Interview 7). When asked about how the other children behaved towards her during the last weeks, one pupil responded that *'sometimes they hurt me'* (Interview 19). Another child, in a class where beatings were a problem at the beginning of the school year, says that the children are very friendly and that they like to play with each other (Interview 16). The different perceptions displayed here illustrate the problem that violent behaviour is very difficult to tackle, as not only school influences the children but also their home, friends, and family. While some children's parents and surroundings strongly promote life skills, others face more difficulties. Consequently, a change in behaviour through life skills education would be difficult to reach solely via school education and needs the support of many actors.

Another positive effect noted is that, after several weeks of life skills education, the pupils predominantly respected the school property, which was part of the life skills lesson about respect. Whereas, for example, at the beginning of the term the plants in the schoolyard were regularly 'beheaded' and desks carved into, as well as toys destroyed, the damage to school property observed after a few weeks is noticeably very little (Interview 1, Protocol 10-13). Further, teachers notice that some children voluntarily begin cleaning the classroom after school without being asked (Interview 2). Aside from learning that respect can refer to personal property, the life skills lesson also addresses respect for other children and adults. Consequently, teachers report that the atmosphere in class improved and that children are mainly polite and

very respectful (Interview 1 & 2). One mother in particular emphasises that communication within the family and respect towards the parents have significantly improved (Interview 4). This example demonstrates that the positive results of life skills education are not only due to the lessons themselves. They also need the consistent acting of teachers who continuously observe the children's behaviour and interfere when necessary to correct said behaviour.

The life skills lesson about attitude not only includes non-violent behaviour, but also emphasises maintaining a positive attitude in life by setting one's own goals. To this aim, the pupils name the most important goals they want to set in their lives (Interview 15-17 & 19-20 & 22):

- Get a good education
- Find a well-paid job
- Stay healthy
- Be happy
- Do well at school
- Be nice to others
- Live a good life

During the life skills lesson, the teacher gives some examples of what one's life goals could be, such as to keep a positive attitude and live a better life. The children then come up with other examples on their own. It is further noted that during the session, the children appear to be highly motivated to invent their own goals, which also might enable them to live a better life (Protocol 2 & 7). Whereas the formulation of the goals is mainly generalised, it is still important to note the significance of showing the children how crucial it is to set one's own goals in life. This also empowers them to see themselves as 'active agents of change' and enables them to take responsibility for their own lives (Interview 1). Thus, one mother reports that her child now has dreams of what she wishes to become in the future, and that she talks about them frequently (Interview 6).

The Primary 1 life skills lesson about communication, in addition to how to communicate with one other, also covers the topic of who to talk to. On the one hand, this includes trusted persons such as parents, other family members, neighbours, or teachers. On the other hand, the children are taught that they should not talk to every person who talks to them, to avoid the danger of being kidnapped. The parents

particularly mention that, after the first weeks of school, their children avoided talking to people whom they did not know (Interview 4 & 6). This is a sensitive topic, as it is important to teach children not to trust everybody, but is equally as important not to scare them into being afraid of everything. Consequently, the topic needs sensitive explaining (Interview 2). In addition to the teaching of not talking to strangers, a security guard at Daystar School staff strictly observes who picks up each child from school. Thus, an overall sensitisation for the problem and a feeling of security is additionally provided to the children and the parents (Interview 1).

Another important aspect when it comes to the health of children is safety. As mentioned above, the slum area where Daystar School is located harbours many dangers by which children can easily hurt themselves. As a consequence, the school staff identifies 'safe playing' as a very important skill for the children (Interview 1). During the lesson, several dangers for children around the area are presented and discussed. This includes threats such as open electricity cables, traffic, sharp objects, and deep trenches (Protocol 8 & 9). The children report that they are already aware of most of the dangers. Still, they say that they will be more careful now while playing (Interview 18 & 21). So far, since 'safe playing' has been taught in the life skills lessons, no child has been severely injured while playing outside (Interview 1). Besides safe playing, another safety issue is discussed as well: wearing helmets during motorcycle rides. This is especially important as many children are brought to school with boda bodas (motorcycle taxis), and the families regularly use this comparably cheap means of transport (Interview 1). Whereas the children learn the importance of wearing helmets in their life skills lessons, it is observed that some children still come to school on the motorcycle without it (Protocol 10-12). This is despite the fact that parents and children know about the importance of a proper protection. When asked why the child was not wearing a helmet, parents reference a lack of money and that the boda boda drivers normally cannot provide an extra helmet for the child (Interview 9-14 + Interview 18 & 21).

The various effects, mentioned above, show that life skills education is a complex area in which many different influences, stakeholders, and synergies need to be considered. Life skills education cannot stand alone and needs the support of and exchange with other sectors of society. Next, the cooperation with different stakeholders is analysed.

Cooperation with parents, community and government

In order to be most effective, Daystar School seeks cooperation with different persons and authorities. This is not just limited to life skills education, but as the programme is an essential part of the curriculum, the consent and support of other concerned parties is crucial.

The cooperation with parents and the community is in general very good (Interview 1). This may be because of life skills education programmes were conducted with many parents around the area by some school staff several years before Daystar School was founded. As a consequence, many parents remember the support given through and the methods used in life skills education. In addition, teachers also meet the parents in other community activities like church, meetings, and other activities and, consequently, often have a close relationship with them. Parents report that life skills education helps them significantly and that they strongly support the life skills education programme at the school (Interview 7 & 9). In addition, some parents wish for the life skills education programme to be expanded to other schools and peer groups, such as among the parents themselves (Interview 5-7). The teachers also express that they are content with the parents' support for and acceptance of life skills education (Interview 2). Parent-teacher conferences are held at Daystar School once per term; these conferences inform parents about the progress of the programme and offer an exchange of ideas and necessities (Interview 1). Still, the main part of the life skills education programme is determined by the Life Skills Curriculum for Primary School Teachers in Uganda and the teachers at Daystar School.

The Ministry of Education and Sports also mentions a different general parental attitude towards life skills education in Uganda. Cletus Nankobe, Coordinating Centre Tutor for the Kampala District, notes that '*there is minimal parent involvement [in life skills education] despite of the existence of government policy*'. Mr. Nankobe also points out that some parents are challenged when their children suddenly become more open, give or demand reasons for doing something, and make requests for alternative ways of doing things. Consequently, Mr. Nankobe emphasises the necessity of parents being sensitised during school meetings and being called in to school whenever needed (Interview 3).

Concerning the government's cooperation with schools, a difference in perception can be realised. On the one hand, the Ministry of Education and Sports emphasises various initiatives in which schools are supported to implement life skills education programmes. The initiatives include programmes such as HIV/AIDS and health awareness programmes and violence prevention programmes (Interview 3). On the other hand, the director of Daystar School reports that so far, no support concerning life skills education programmes has been offered to the school, even though Daystar School is fully registered with the government of Uganda and explicitly places an emphasis on life skills education (Interview 1).

Problems and difficulties

Chapter 4 mentions the problems and difficulties of implementing life skills education in general. Here, a closer look at the specific challenges at Daystar School and in Uganda is provided.

One of the major problems for Daystar School is the lack of material for teaching life skills. As the government does not provide working material, Daystar staff needs to produce it themselves or resort to material offered by ARISE Foundation USA. In addition, it is considerably difficult to find qualified teachers who can also teach life skills properly. As a consequence, teacher training concerning life skills was introduced at Daystar School. These challenges and their removal take much time and money, the latter of which is very difficult to get, particularly in a slum area (Interview 1). More financial resources would also be necessary to expand the life skills education programmes of Daystar to other schools in the area or to offer teacher training to other schools. (Interview 2). The same is true for the rest of the population, as they need to be more sensitised concerning life skills education so that they know what life skills are and how they can use them to improve their own lives (Interview 1). Also, some children report that their families lack money for buying the necessary school materials, like exercise books or pens, and therefore have a difficult time following the lessons (Interview 16, 17 & 20).

Another major challenge is the language barrier. While English is the official language at Daystar School, it is especially difficult for the younger children, who just started to learn English, to follow the lessons or to express their concerns and wishes (Interview 2). As a consequence, it is observed that whenever necessary, translations are given, or complex issues explained, in the mother tongue of the children (Protocol

1-9). As most schools in the area around Daystar School do not teach life skills and the government has not yet offered any support, the school staff is generally left alone with no possibility to exchange experiences and new approaches and methods (Interview 2). Parents also are concerned that children from other schools, who do not receive life skills education, ‘*spoil*’ their kids when playing with each other (Interview 4 & 18). Many new children who come to Daystar School have never had any life skills lesson which, in combination with large class sizes, makes it additionally challenging for the children to follow the lessons and get the necessary individual attention (Interview 2, Protocol 1-3 & 5-7).

The Ministry of Education and Sports reports similar challenges for the schools that teach life skills. Thus, for example, it is recognised that a lack of life skills materials makes it challenging for schools to design lessons. Additionally, a lack of or inadequate knowledge of teachers concerning life skills and how to teach them is acknowledged. The same is valid for some school managers, who have a poor attitude towards life skills education or no awareness of the need for it. Furthermore, (religious) traditions can also contradict with some principles of life skills education (Interview 3). Whereas, for instance, some religious traditions proclaim sexual abstinence, life skills lessons on avoiding HIV/AIDS focus also on why and how to use contraceptives. Likewise, some life skills may contradict some teachers’ personal opinions and lifestyles. In addition, teachers often stick to their traditional way of teaching without considering new alternative methods for life skills lessons (Interview 3).

The lack of governmental support, both for the life skills education programme and for the general area where Daystar School is located, is one of the biggest problems and makes the implementation of such programmes very challenging. Without proper teacher education and working material, the school is dependent on their own creativity and problem-solving as well as on other supporters and partners. Moreover, life skills education can only exist and prosper in cooperation with other political, social, and cultural areas of society. The slum area around Daystar School lacks many basic facilities and consequently, although people might be aware of the methods of protecting and improving their lives through life skills education, reality remains a big challenge for them. Without proper government involvement to help to develop and gentrify the area, life skills education programmes are left alone and their success is limited (Interview 1 & 2, Protocol 14).

The case study above shows the reality of implementing life skills education at a specific Ugandan primary school, which is still in the process of evolving. It is important to note that every situation where life skills lessons are implemented needs to be considered individually, as they each face unique circumstances, needs, and challenges. Even though problems still accompany the development of the life skills education programme at Daystar School, initial success and positive changes are evident.

8. Summary and Recommendations

Life skills education can lead to positive outcomes and support children in dealing with the various challenges in their lives. It can increase positive behaviour, which supports physical health and a peaceful coexistence. Additionally, life skills can help to support one's personal development and promote fruitful relationships with others. Nevertheless, life skills education also faces many different challenges. On the one hand, these problems can be directly observed in schools and in the education sectors, such as a lack of qualified teachers and school material, high pupil-teacher ratios, and no proper governmental support. On the other hand, a lack of basic services and facilities in general, as well as poor sanitary conditions, poverty, crime, and infectious diseases, hamper the success of the programmes.

As life skills education addresses many topics which are in the focus of education programmes in the development discourse, it has already found its way into various international agendas. In this case, it is essential to emphasise that an exchange concerning life skills and life skills education on an international basis is desirable, so that best practise examples can be exchanged and challenges discussed. Still, a top-down approach, in which life skills are passed down from international organisations to local governments or schools, must be questioned. Whereas the concept of life skills education in general can be useful for different settings and challenges, the specific life skills taught in the programmes need to be adapted to given circumstances and problems. It is also important to recognise that life skills education cannot initiate development on its own, as it is only part of the interaction of social, political, and cultural factors. Life skills education rather supports the development process via promoting necessary skills and raising the awareness for certain issues.

That being said, a special responsibility lies within the governments, particularly when there is a plan to implement life skills education on a national level. Consequently, an adequate and elaborate curriculum needs to be developed. In addition, teacher trainings in which the teachers learn how to properly conduct life skills lessons and implement the methods should be offered. Furthermore, adequate materials need to be developed. This whole process is preferably conducted in cooperation with the communities, teachers, parents, and pupils. As a result, local challenges can specifically be included and the problems addressed. Financial support is advisable, especially in areas where schools lack funds to implement the programme. Besides

the support for life skills education programmes, the government needs to provide proper security and community and health services. Thus, the content of the life skills lessons would match up with reality, and pupils are able to experience that which they have been taught in the lessons.

In sum, to generate a positive outcome of life skills education programmes, it is important to consider several conditions: first, it is essential to have well-trained teachers who can analyse the needs of the children, build a trusted relationship with them, properly design and conduct life skills lessons, and be open to new methods of teaching. Additionally, to motivate the pupils to learn the life skills topics, it is necessary to include their needs and living conditions and, thus, to use practical exercises and true-to-life examples. Further, to accompany the children in the learning process, accepting (critical) questioning and individual ways of solving problems, and to be willing to patiently and supportively correct their behaviour whenever needed, is essential for the success of life skills education. Second, the school needs to build up good relations with the parents and the community, as a steady exchange and mutual trust and support are a basis for life skills education. Therefore, it may be advisable to also offer life skills education programmes to parents and to the rest of the community. As a result, it would be easier for every stakeholder to understand and to value it and, in the end, to promote the life skills education approach.

During the research for this study it also became evident that more research needs to be conducted concerning the effects and impacts of life skills education, so that respective results can be compared and life skills programmes adapted and advanced. This includes more exchange of knowledge and experiences on an international, as well as on a regional and national, level. Concerning Uganda, it is important to collect more statistical data to get a clear picture of how many schools have already implemented a life skills education programme, and to record what their findings are. Furthermore, studies should be conducted on how the Uganda population perceives life skills education and whether the desirable outcome is achieved.

After all, life skills education can also be a useful tool to tackle today's difficulties – not only for developing countries but for all nations. In a globalised world in which an increasing inequality, an exploitation of resources and people, and growing conflicts

of interests challenge our personal and collective well-being, life skills can be a part of the puzzle to overcoming these problems through promoting responsibility, problem-solving behaviour, critical thinking, empathy, and respect towards others. Therefore, the question remains whether life skills education programmes should be further integrated into education systems all around the world. As a result, people can be empowered to use life skills to shape their own and the collective future of society. As the saying goes:

*'The past cannot be changed.
The future is yet in your power.'*

(unknown author)

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Appendices

Interview Guide for Interview 1 (Jude Nyanzi)

1. Why did you choose to teach life skills at Daystar School?
2. How do you implement life skills education into your curriculum?
3. What life skills do you teach and why do you teach these specific ones?
4. What makes Ugandan school children need life skills education?
5. Have you realised any changes in the behaviour of the children?
6. How do you monitor/evaluate the life skills education programme?
7. What challenges do you face?
8. How does the cooperation with the parents, the community and other institutions look like?
9. How does the government support you and the life skills education programme?
10. What are the limits of life skills education?
11. What does a life skills lesson look like?
12. How do you train your teachers in life skills education?
13. In what way are the pupils involved in developing the life skills lessons?
14. In what way are the parents involved in developing the life skills lessons?
15. In what way are the teachers involved in developing the life skills lessons?
16. What do you offer the community concerning life skills education?
17. What is the future plan concerning life skills education?

Interview Guide for Interview 2 (teacher Faridah Nambote)

1. How do you teach life skills in your lessons?
2. (How) Is teaching life skills different from the regular lessons?
3. How do the children incorporate the life skills education programme?
4. Have you realised any changes in the behaviour of the children?
5. What are the problems and limits of life skills education?
6. How do tests look like concerning life skills education?
7. What does a life skills lesson look like?
8. How did you get your knowledge for teaching life skills?
9. In what way are you involved in developing the life skills lessons?
10. In what way are the pupils involved in developing the life skills lessons?
11. In what way are the parents involved in developing the life skills lessons?

12. What do the parents think about the life skills education programme at Daystar?

Interview Guide for Interview 3 (Cletus Nankobe, Ministry of Education)

1. Why did Uganda decide to implement life skills education into the primary school curricula?
2. How does the government implement life skills education at schools?
3. What positive effects do you expect?
4. Where did you get the idea for life skills education get from?
5. How many schools have included life skills education into their curriculum?
6. How do you educate the teachers in teaching life skills?
7. How do you monitor/evaluate the programmes?
8. Which problems do you face?
9. What limits of life skills education are there?
10. How do you support the schools (in teaching life skills)?
11. Which effects have you noticed since you started the life skills education programmes?
12. What are the future plans concerning life skills education in Uganda?

Interview Guide for Interviews 4-14 (parents)

1. In what way did the life skills education programme at Daystar School influence your decision to send your children to this school?
2. How do life skills affect your personal/family life?
3. What do your children tell you about life skills education at Daystar School?
4. In what way is there a necessity to teach life skills in Ugandan schools?
5. Have you realised any change in your children's behaviour?
6. In what way are you involved in developing the life skills lessons?
7. Do you see the need of improvement/additions concerning life skills education at Daystar School?
8. Do you see any changes in the community due to life skills education?

Interview Guide for Interviews 15-22 (pupils)

1. How did you like the life skills lesson?
2. What did you talk about in the lesson?
3. What did/didn't you like about the lesson?

4. What are life skills (for you)?
 5. How do the other children behave (towards you)?
 6. What problems do you have in the area you live in?
 7. What can you do to have a good life?
 8. Anything at the school that you would like to change?
- + specific question concerning individual life skills

List of Interviews

Interview number	Name/family member/pupil	Position/description/child(ren) at Daystar	Date of Interview
Interview 1	Jude Nyanzi	director and founder of Daystar Nursery and Priamry School	26.02.2015 + weekly exchange via Skype, WhatsApp and personal visit (2015-2018)
Interview 2	Faridah Nambote	former teacher at Daystar Nursery and Priamry School	25.02.2015
Interview 3	Cletus Nankobe	Coordinating Center Tutor, Ministry of Education, Kampala Division	28.09.2015
Interview 4	mother	2 children in Primary 1	25.02.2015
Interview 5	mother	1 child in Primary 1	25.02.2015
Interview 6	mother	1 child in Primary 1	25.02.2015
Interview 7	mother	1 child in Primary 1	25.02.2015
Interview 8	mother & father	2 children: Primary 1 & Primary 2	26.02.2015
Interview 9	father	1 child in Primary 3	27.02.2015
Interview 10	mother	3 children: Primary 1 & Primary 3	27.02.2015
Interview 11	mother	2 children in Primary 3	27.02.2015
Interview 12	mother	1 child in Primary 3	27.02.2015
Interview 13	father	1 child in Primary 3	27.02.2015
Interview 14	mother	1 child in Primary 2 and Primary 3	27.02.2015
Interview 15	pupil	male, Primary 2	25.02.2015
Interview 16	pupil	male, Primary 2	25.02.2015
Interview 17	pupil	female, Priamry 1	25.02.2015
Interview 18	pupil	female, Priamry 3	26.02.2015
Interview 19	pupil	female Priamry 2	26.02.2015
Interview 20	pupil	male, Primary 1	27.02.2015
Interview 21	pupil	male, Primary 3	27.02.2015
Interview 22	pupil	female, Priamry 1	27.02.2015

List of Observations

Name of protocol	Class	Topic of the lesson/Area	Date
Protocol 1	Primary 1 & Primary 2	Life Skills - Listening	03.02.2015 & 04.02.2015
Protocol 2	Primary 1 & Primary 2	Life Skills - Attitude/Respect	04.02.2015 & 05.02.2015
Protocol 3	Primary 1 & Primary 2	Life Skills - Communication	05.02.2015 & 06.02.2015
Protocol 4	Teacher Training	Life Skills - Communication	05.02.2015
Protocol 5	Primary 1 & Primary 2	Repetition - Life Skills - Communication	06.02.2015
Protocol 6	Primary 1 & Primary 2	Repetition - Life Skills - Listening	11.02.2015
Protocol 7	Primary 1 & Primary 2	Repetition - Life Skills - Attitude/Respect	12.02.2015
Protocol 8	Primary 3	Life Skills - Health/Safety	12.02.2015 & 13.02.2015
Protocol 9	Primary 3	Repetition - Life Skills - Health/Safety	16.02.2015
Protocol 10	all children	schoolyard: in the morning & during breaks	03.02.2015-06.02.2015
Protocol 11	all children	schoolyard: morning, before start of the school	16.02.2015-19.02.2015
Protocol 12	all children	schoolyard: in the morning & during breaks	16.03.2015-19.03.2015
Protocol 13	all children	visiting different lessons (P1-P3)	17.03.2015-19.03.2015
Protocol 14	slum area around the school	guided slum tour	19.02.2015
Evaluation forms	classes P1-P3	pupil's feedback on different life skills sessions	03.02.2015-19.02.2015